Eco-pond saved in Railway Fields rescue

27/01/2010

Railway Fields, a disused British Rail goods yard, has been used a as a local nature reserve for 20 years. Although just one hectare in size this pocket-sized paradise is one of only three local nature reserves in the borough and each year welcomes more than 1,500 children from local schools who use it as an outdoor classroom.

The pond needs to be relined with clay to prevent it drying up. In the past two years the water level has dropped by a metre and, experts fear, unless repair work is carried out, the local population of frogs, toads and newts will be lost. National wildlife charity Amphibian and Reptile Conservation (formerly the Froglife Trust) will carry out the project as part of its work to protect and restore threatened habitats.

“Ponds really are very important places for wildlife and for people too, but so many have fallen rapidly into disrepair over the years. Our work is bringing these wild places back, making our vision of a wildlife-friendly city more of a reality,” said Rebecca Turpin, London Living Water project officer for the organisation.

For the Heritage Lottery Fund, Head of HLF London, Sue Bowers, said: “This project will restore and sustain for the future an important feature of a reserve that provides the local community, especially children, with an opportunity to experience nature in the midst of an urban area. This is an excellent project, given greater significance by the fact that we are in the International Year of Biodiversity.”

Railway Fields is situated close to Haringey’s busy Green Lanes area and is popular with local people, including members of the Turkish and Kurdish community. They will be invited by Amphibian and Reptile Conservation to get involved in the project including the setting up of a friends group to help look after the nature reserve in the future.

Notes to editors

Surveys at Railway Fields have recorded 25 different species of butterfly. Other species include toads, common frogs, smooth newts, slow worms, dragonflies and damselflies. The site provides the main environmental educational centre for children in Haringey.

Amphibian and Reptile Conservation, formerly the Froglife Trust, is a wildlife charity committed to conserving frogs, toads, newts, snakes and lizards, and saving the disappearing habitats on which they depend. Its vision is to see amphibians and reptiles thriving in their natural habitats, and a society inspired and committed to their survival.

Of the UK’s thirteen species of amphibians and reptiles, ten species are listed on the Government’s Biodiversity Action Plan (UKBAP) ‘Watchlist’.

Using money raised through the National Lottery, the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) sustains and transforms a wide range of heritage for present and future generations to take part in, learn from and enjoy. From museums, parks and historic places to archaeology, natural environment and cultural traditions, we invest in every part of our diverse heritage. HLF has supported 33,900 projects, allocating £4.4billion across the UK.

Further information

HLF Press Office, Vicky Wilford on 020 7591 6046 / 07973 401937 or vickyw@hlf.org.uk or Phil Cooper on 07889 949 173.