Heritage Lottery Fund invests over £2.5m in skills

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Today, the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) has announced an investment in seven projects under its Skills for the Future programme. This money will deliver 93 placements and adds-up to an impressive 113 years worth of paid training opportunities for people across Scotland seeking a career in heritage. It will not only support traditional conservation training but also a wide variety of more contemporary skills, such as managing volunteers and digitising collections, that will help reinvigorate and broaden the appeal of heritage to job-seekers.

Dame Jenny Abramsky, Chair of the HLF, said: "When the recession kicked in last year we thought very hard about how the Heritage Lottery Fund could make a difference to people's lives at a time of real need. The answer was an innovative and ambitious programme focusing on equipping people with practical skills to help them secure future employment.

"We have been astounded by the response which clearly shows a great hunger for skills training within our sector. We're delighted to be supporting seven projects - from learning how to laser scan a building to traditional woodworking crafts - and we know that the range of placements on offer will attract people who might not previously have considered working in heritage."

Keith Brown, Minister for Skills and Lifelong Learning, said:
"It is vital that no section of the economy is overlooked when ensuring our people have the skills employers need to see us through the downturn and the recovery that will follow. Today's very welcome announcement will help provide our heritage sector with the skilled workforce it will need for the years to come.

"Skills are a critical element to support economic growth - a more flexible approach to offering training opportunities is right for meeting future opportunities.

"Innovative and ambitious programmes like this, coupled with this Government's commitment to prioritising investment in a range of skills and training opportunities, will go a long way towards accelerating our recovery and increasing sustainable economic growth over the long-term."

Skills for the Future offers work-based training in a wide range of skills that are needed to look after buildings, landscapes, habitats, species and museum and archive collections, as well as equipping people to lead education and outreach programmes, manage volunteers and use new technology. Its focus is on vocational learning, helping meet the skills gaps identified by heritage bodies, and on encouraging potential trainees from all walks of life. Trainees will learn how to engage families, schools and communities with their heritage, bringing heritage sites and collections alive for the next generation.

Skills for the Future is complementary to HLF's existing £10m Training Bursary Programme which has been running for the last four years delivering a wide range of skills training - including blacksmithing, botanic gardening, stone masonry, thatching and book conservation. In the UK, over 700 placements have been created providing accredited work-based training with highly-skilled crafts people and environmental specialists. In combination with the Skills for the Future placements, this means over 1,500 training opportunities have been created by HLF.

Projects from across Scotland are benefiting and include:

Developing Ecological Survey Skills - Scottish Wildlife Trust
The Scottish Wildlife Trust has been awarded a grant of £358,400 to deliver a unique training programme which will combine ecological survey skills with technical and business training. The two year training course will concentrate on nationally recognised survey methodologies as well as supporting skills such as statistical analysis, database management and report producing. There will also be training in business skills and the course is expected to produce a number of highly skilled ecologists who will be able to provide information to planning authorities, local record centers, the National Biodiversity Network and other environmental organisations.

Taking place in both the field and the classroom, the information gathered during the project will be available to Government to deliver a range of policies including the Scottish Biodiversity Strategy.

Skills for the Past and Future - Historic Scotland
Historic Scotland has developed a training programme which focuses on the built environment and a number of skills gaps which are essential to conservation. The Heritage Lottery Fund has awarded a grant of £498,200 which will enable the programme to take place and substantially improve the skills available to heritage employers.

An equivalent of 20 one-year placements will be offered in four different heritage strands: engineering heritage; digital documentation and visualisation of traditional buildings (laser scanning); energy saving and carbon reduction in the heritage sector; and a suite of practical conservation and repair skills. There will be targeted recruitment for young people, females and ethnic minorities to encourage them into the heritage sector.

Across the Minch: Traditional Boatbuilding in Uist and Wester Ross - Grimsay Boatshed Trust
A grant of £198,500 will allow the Grimsay Boatshed Trust, with heritage training programme Am Bata, to strengthen traditional boatbuilding kills from the West of Scotland and increase the understanding of the heritage connected with these vessels.

Apprentices will learn the woodworking techniques required for the conservation of traditional wooden boats through workplace-based placements. Oral history training will help record the history and significance of the various local styles.

Building Curatorial and Learning Skills for the Heritage Sector - Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Scotland (RCAHMS)
A grant of £484,100 from the Heritage Lottery Fund will allow RCAHMS to deliver a programme of skills training in the documentation and dissemination of archive and museum collections.

RCAHMS will offer a total of 21 one-year placements to people currently under-represented in the archive and museum sector. These will provide the opportunity to learn essential and transferable sectorial skills, including how to document, conserve and digitise collection items, and how to develop communications and education programmes which inspire learning, participation and enjoyment.

The project will also create a distance learning module with a number of Higher Education institutions.

Breaking Down Barriers to Skills - West Dunbartonshire Council

A grant of £153,800 has been awarded to West Dunbartonshire Council, as lead partner with The Scottish Maritime Museum and Clydebank Rebuilt's Titan Crane, to deliver a training programme designed to give participants the skills essential for the daily operation of museum and heritage attractions. The Council has identified a skills shortage in this area and recognises that there are few opportunities for people to receive formal training.

Over a period of five years the project will offer nine 'apprentices' each a twelve month placement. Placements will start with a general introduction to museum skills followed by the opportunity to specialise in areas such as education, volunteer management, collection care and visitor services. The project will promote these opportunities to the financially disadvantaged and those without higher education qualifications. In addition four of the nine placements will be offered to disabled candidates.

Museums Galleries Scotland Intern Programme - Museums Galleries Scotland
A grant of £413,800 means Museums Galleries Scotland can deliver an Interns Programme which will create 20 one-year placements for new entrants to the sector or to learn from expertise in the workplace.

The interns will be hosted by Museums Galleries Scotland's member museums, of which there are 350 all over Scotland, and will have the opportunity to develop skills in collections management, managing volunteers, delivering programmes to the public or development using digital technology. The interns will also receive additional support throughout their one year placement - including mentoring, networking opportunities and dedicated training days.

Natural Communities Programmes - BTCV Scotland and Conservation Volunteers Northern Ireland (CVNI)
HLF's grant of £520,700 will make possible this joint BTCV/CVNI programme, designed to help people understand, value and conserve their natural heritage. Twenty-four trainees will be equipped with the skills to work closely with communities to identify local environmental needs, responsibilities and opportunities and to help them put their ideas into action.

Anyone interested in applying for a placement with the successful applicants can find details on how to contact them here. Placements with these organisations will start towards the end of 2010/beginning of 2011

Notes to editors

Launched in July 2009, Skills for the Future is a one-off HLF programme supporting organisations across the UK to create new training places. Grants range from £100,000 to £1million for a number of traineeships over a period of up to five years with an emphasis on high-quality work-based training.

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. to date, HLF has invested over £500million in Scotland.

Further information

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James Crawford, RCHAMS on 0131 622 1456.

Mary Norton, Grimsay Boatshed Trust on 01870 602 954.

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Lisa Nicholson Historic Scotland on 0131 668 8852 or 07500 065 438.

Kerry Riddell, BTCV on 01848 200 381.

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