Leap forward for East of England’s frogs

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The Peterborough-based Froglife Trust has been given the green light to finalise details of an education project that would involve hundreds of pupils from eight schools and develop learning materials that could be used in future by many more.

The project – Leapfrog – aims to create a high quality wildlife pond at each of the eight schools and to train teachers, parents’ association members and grounds staff in the proper care and management of the sites.

The ponds would not only be used as learning resources but would help to encourage local communities to build their own ponds creating a network of habitats for amphibians and other wildlife throughout the area. Special training events would be staged targeting groups such as scouts, youth organisations and allotment societies. Included in the project would be employment of a project officer to oversee the technical aspects of pond development a part-time community liaison officer would also be recruited to raise awareness among local people and encourage their involvement.

School pupils and volunteers engaged in the project would learn about ecological surveying and record keeping so as to monitor the frogs and other wildlife attracted to the newly-created habitats. The project comes during the International Year of Biodiversity established by the United Nations to celebrate, value and understand the diversity of life on Earth.

An initial £8,300 grant has been awarded by HLF for The Froglife Trust to work up precise details of the project and to come back within two years with the fully developed scheme.

Commenting on the Leapfrog project, Robyn Llewellyn, Head of Heritage Lottery Fund East of England, said: “2010 is the International Year of Biodiversity and projects like this one are fundamental to raising awareness of the importance of our local natural heritage and encouraging communities to celebrate and care for it. We look forward to seeing how The Froglife Trust develop their project over the coming months.”

Commenting for The Froglife Trust, Kathy Wormald, said: “We are delighted to have been awarded a grant to develop this project. We believe that it is essential to engage young people in outdoor wildlife focused activities. This project will provide the selected schools with an exemplary outdoor classroom, however it will also be used as a training facility for other schools and groups. This will maximise the benefits of this funding enabling many people within the region to benefit from this project.”

Notes to editors:

* The Leapfrog project has been awarded a first round pass. This means the project meets HLF’s criteria for funding and HLF believes it has potential to deliver high-quality benefits and value for Lottery money. The application was in competition with other supportable projects, so a first-round pass is an endorsement of outline proposals. Having been awarded a first-round pass, the project now has up to two years to submit fully developed proposals to compete for a firm award.

Further information

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