Go ahead for Routes to the River Tone project

10/10/2013

The project aims to engage local people with the wildlife on their doorstep and, with their help, to improve the town's green spaces and waterways protecting rare species like water vole and four species of bat including brown long-eared and lesser horseshoe bats.

Through the project the trust will be working with local people to improve wildlife habitats along the River Tone, its tributaries, and the associated green spaces. The project will also uncover some of the history of the Tone and how it has changed and shaped Taunton during the town's development. Activities will include wildlife surveys of rare and threatened species such as water voles and bats, and the creation of a dedicated wildlife website for the town. Themed wildlife walks will be developed that explore the tributary streams that run through the town and there will be a variety of events, volunteering opportunities and training available. The project will work with local schools to encourage children to value their natural environment and create opportunities for children to enjoy wild play.

“Amongst the traffic, houses and businesses of Taunton a surprising array of rare and threatened wildlife species survive and thrive," said Janet Keeble, Community and Outreach Manager for Somerset Wildlife Trust. “We are thrilled that the Heritage Lottery Fund has given us this award and look forward to making a difference in the town for the benefit of people and wildlife. Taunton has some great spaces for nature and we look forward to working closely with the Taunton Deane Borough Council and local people to protect these spaces for current and future residents to enjoy.”

Nerys Watts, Head of Heritage Lottery Fund South West England, said: “The River Tone is fundamental to the survival of Taunton's richly diverse and, in many cases, rare wildlife. This project provides a huge opportunity for local people to discover more about the nature on their doorstep and get involved in helping to conserve it for the future.”

Routes to the River Tone is a partnership project led by Somerset Wildlife Trust and including Taunton Deane Borough Council; Environment Agency; Somerset County Council the Canal and Rivers Trust and the Taunton Deane Area group of Somerset Wildlife Trust.

Notes to editors

- Somerset Wildlife Trust is the county's leading environmental voluntary body, with around 21,000 members.
- The charity owns and / or manages 71 nature reserves all over the county.
- Money raised is spent to restore, recreate and reconnect our damaged countryside by creating living landscapes for wildlife and people. We help wildlife adapt to climate change, encourage sustainable living, fight to save sites where wildlife is threatened by monitoring development and inspire people to create more green space bringing environmental, social and economic benefits.

Further information

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