‘Saving Gower’ landscape

31/07/2013

The £1,315,200 funding provided to the 'Saving Gower – for All its Worth' project means that the beautiful but fragile landscape of this popular tourist destination will now be safeguarded for the future.

The Gower is one the UK’s most renowned landscapes and the project will seek to open up this space for more people to enjoy and understand this largely unspoilt part of South Wales. The project will aim to conserve the industrial heritage of the area whilst also safeguarding its natural history by re-establishing coastal walls and by helping people to improve the landscape and learn about how issues such as climate change may affect Gower.

The award was approved by the Heritage Lottery Fund’s Committee for Wales and welcoming the announcement, the Committee Chair, Manon Williams, said: “Ensuring that our rich, natural heritage is well looked after is just as important to us at HLF as protecting our historic built environment. As the UK’s first designated Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and as a tourist attraction in itself, it is vital that the landscape of the Gower Peninsula is preserved and maintained. We are very glad to be working with the project partners and local communities in this very good cause.”

Outstanding Natural Beauty

The funding has been provided through the Heritage Lottery Fund’s Landscape Partnership programme which provides grants for schemes led by partnerships aiming to conserve areas of distinctive landscape character. As a Landscape of Outstanding Historic Interest, a designated Heritage Coast and the first Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty in the UK, this project will now ensure that the Gower remains a tranquil destination for those who visit.

In addition to the protection of the area’s green spaces, the project also aims to restore some of its distinctive built heritage. The peninsula is home to historic sites from the prehistoric to industrial period and includes Upper Palaeolithic caves, a Bronze Age funerary and ritual sites and Iron Age hill forts. Working with local landowners, the project will look to conserve these sites and protect them from invasive species.

Nature and Wildlife TV presenter, Iolo Williams, said: “When visiting it is easy to see why this area is recognised for its beauty but the landscape is also fragile and needs to be looked after; the Loughor estuary is an important feeding ground for both birds and grazing ponies and there are also a number of Sites of Interest for Nature Conservation across Gower. I am therefore thrilled to see this successful application bid that will ensure the protection of the landscape, the habitats and the wildlife living in the Gower peninsula.”

Community conservation

At the heart of the four year scheme is a programme of activities to encourage the local community, schools and universities to get actively involved in conserving and learning more about the heritage and character of their local landscape.

Plans also include volunteer training so that local people can get involved and play a central role in protecting their area, from undertaking surveys on ancient hedge banks to launching a virtual visitor centre.

Assembly Member for Gower and Minister for Economy, Science and Transport, Edwina Hart, said: “Thousands of people will enjoy this special place over the summer and I’m delighted that this funding will ensure it is now protected for

future generations to enjoy as well. The Gower has so much to offer both local people and visitors and this project will help the annual two million tourists to better understand the heritage of the peninsula."

Notes to editors

This £1,315,200 grant has been awarded by the Heritage Lottery Fund to the City & County of Swansea Council and its partners, which include the National Trust, Wildlife Trust of South & West Wales and Gwent Glamorgan Archaeological Trust; the partnership is made up of 9 cross-sector organisations.

HLF's Landscape Partnerships are helping bring together members of the community as well as local, regional, and national organisations to deliver schemes which benefit some of the UK's most outstanding landscapes and rural communities. Grants range from £250,000 up to £2m.

Plans for the project include:

- Engaging with the different communities of Gower to conserve, restore, and enhance the built and natural heritage whilst creating sustainable viable development as well as sustaining the biologically diverse environment.
- Re-establishing customs and skills and build the capacity of people to protect, conserve, understand and pass on what makes Gower special. The project will celebrate the unique qualities of Gower through participation in a range of heritage activities by:
- conserving and recording information about the Industrial Heritage of the north Coast;
- safeguarding the natural history and traditional management of the south Gower Coast; re-establish coastal walls to enable grazing; help people understand landscape and climate change and how it might affect Gower;
- re-establishing and reinforcing links to the land through celebration, participation and interpretation.
- Six clusters will be established involving partners, organisations and communities with an interest in particular projects. The clusters include:
- Subprojects in Rhossili to restore features, train and educate people to conserve the important features and reintroduce grazing practices to overgrown areas;
- Archaeology/Built Heritage - people will be informed, trained and guided to identify, conserve, record and discover the archaeology of Gower;
- Intellectual Access, Walks Talks and Events - subprojects aims to increase access to information about the landscape and its heritage;
- Loughor estuary – create better access to information regarding this important feeding ground for birds and common grazing for ponies and sheep;
- Improved management of a number of lower level. Sites of Interest for Nature Conservation by controlling vegetation, restoring boundaries and offering training to landowners.

Further information

Llyr Roberts on 07981 014 164 or llyr@positifgroup.co.uk