Two diverse Scottish landscapes to be protected

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The distinctive volcanic landscape of the Lomond Hills in Fife has been awarded £1.71m while the ‘silvery’ Tay near Perth have received £1.43m through HLF’s Landscape Partnership (LP) programme.

Colin McLean, Head of Heritage Lottery Fund Scotland, said: “Our species and habitats are under constant threat. Recent reports such as State of Nature launched by Sir David Attenborough, and the Scottish Government’s 2020 Challenge for Scotland’s Biodiversity plan, highlight the need to act now if we are to protect our biodiversity and the massive contribution it makes to our economy.

“Nature lies at the very heart of what makes Scotland special but the enormous pressures upon it mean that we have to approach its restoration and conservation on a bigger scale than ever before. The LP programme does just that, and more. What communities have often already started on a small scale, HLF is delighted to take forward, bringing real cohesion to the natural and built heritage of a region and reconnecting people with what often lies overlooked on their doorstep.”

Environment and Climate Change Minister Paul Wheelhouse said: “Scotland’s natural environment is iconic and admired across the world, but it’s also crucial to our way of life. It contributes to our economy, it is part of our identity and well-being, and our commitment to making a step change in how it is managed was set out in the recently published ‘2020 Challenge for Scotland’s Biodiversity’, our refreshed Scottish Biodiversity Strategy.

“We need to preserve our species and natural habitat for future generations. The two projects funded by the Heritage Lottery Funding aim to do just that and I warmly welcome the HLF’s investment in Scotland. The areas covered by the two projects are home to some of Scotland’s most fascinating species and the work carried out by local communities will protect those landscapes which are unique to their area and unique to Scotland.”

The Landscape Partnership is an innovative programme which helps conserve landscape by helping forge public and community partnerships. People work together, through many interlinked projects, to tackle the environmental needs of their local landscape, conserving and restoring the natural and built heritage while celebrating the history and heritage of the area. Over the past six years, HLF has been helping protect some of Scotland’s most treasured landscapes, from Orkney’s Scapa Flow, to the Ochil hills of central Scotland, to the Solway coast and river valleys.

The Tay Landscape Partnership – grant award £1,435,500
The natural and cultural importance of the River Tay and its firth, to the south of Perth and including the Carse of Gowrie, has been for long undervalued and little understood by the public. The rift valley, which inspired Sir Patrick Geddes’s vision of the valley section, is rich in biodiversity, agriculture, and history, and so an ideal setting in which to bring culture and environment together. It contains the largest single area of reed-beds in the UK while the river contains the greatest volume of freshwater of any UK river. Its wetlands, drained by medieval monks, were the home of massive orchards which in more recent times have given way to Tayside’s famous soft fruit industry. They are also an important breeding site, particularly for the rare bearded tit, water rail (a highly secretive small bird) and marsh harrier.

The area also has nationally important archaeological remains, including evidence of prehistoric human activity, such as Neolithic and Bronze Age ceremonial sites, and the site of the palace of Forteviot, dating back to the Pictish aristocracy

of the 8th and 9th centuries. The earliest identified royal centre in Scotland, it has been described as ‘the cradle of Scotland’, where the Picts and the Gaels united to form the medieval state of Alba. There is also one of the largest concentrations of temporary Roman camps in Britain, a reminder that Tayside was one of the earliest frontiers of the Roman Empire.

The Landscape Partnership Scheme, led by Perth & Kinross Countryside Trust and Perth and Kinross Heritage Trust, covers an area of 250km2 and will involve over 40 organisations in delivering 29 projects. The scheme will include a programme of archaeological excavations, and the protection and enhancement of the distinctive clay buildings of the Carse of Gowrie, while the surviving historic orchards will be protected. Access to the Tay will be improved with new path networks and other initiatives to encourage people down onto the river. Many volunteers will be involved in carrying out the works while community and school events such as orchard festivals, talks and workshops will engage the public in the area’s landscape and history.

Bob Ellis, Chair of Perth and Kinross Countryside Trust said “I cannot stress enough how exciting this news is for Perthshire. Landscapes speak to the heart, inspiring people in all sorts of way. Sadly, they can often be taken for granted. We are fortunate that the Heritage Lottery Fund understands the importance of our natural heritage and has given The Landscape Partnership the go ahead to deliver an exciting range of 29 diverse yet interconnected projects. These have been developed through close working with communities, interest groups and national organisations and will help conserve and restore wildlife, habitats, historic buildings and traditional skills and encourage people to get actively involved in learning about and caring for their local environment.”

While Sue Hendry, Chair Perth and Kinross Heritage Trust, and the Tay LP Steering group said: “This is wonderful news from HLF and all of us who have been involved in securing the funding are delighted. The Tay Landscape Partnership project is a truly ground-breaking initiative, for Perthshire and demonstrates just what can be achieved when organisations work together on landscape-scale conservation. The Tay LP team has brought together more than 40 active partners including Perth and Kinross Council and the Gannochy Trust. We have worked really hard to develop a scheme that will appeal to lots of people and reflect the significance of this unique landscape. I truly believe there will be something of interest for everyone, and that this beautiful and important landscape will be improved upon and safeguarded for future generations. We are in for an exciting (and busy) time ahead.”

The Living Lomonds Landscape Partnership – Grant award £1,709,800
The Living Lomonds focuses on a 138km2 area of Fife taking in the Lomond Hills and contrasting communities to the north and south of them, including Falkland, Scotland’s first conservation village and historic mining communities such as Benarty. The hills, dominated by two distinctive volcanic plugs and the lowland plain between are home to significant cultural and natural heritage and support a wide variety of wildlife such as ospreys, peregrine falcons, hen harriers, red squirrels and green tiger beetles.

The area tracks the history of mining with some of the oldest examples of small scale mining from medieval times through to the deep pits of the 19th century. Channelled water from Loch Leven fed many of the area’s other industries such as flax spinning, weaving, bleaching, grain milling, distilling and papermaking.

Led by Fife Coast and Countryside Trust, the Landscape Partnership aims to reconnect people with the hills so that they can understand, enjoy and celebrate the built and natural heritage that they share. Woodlands, dry-stone walls and historic walking routes will be restored and new all access paths created. Volunteering, training and employment opportunities will be created in heritage skills while a programme of activities such as the re-enactment of a medieval deer hunt and exploring the Lomonds heritage through place names aim to provide a stronger connection between

people and the landscape.

Amanda McFarlane, Chief Executive of Fife Coast and Countryside Trust and Chair of the Partnership said: “We are absolutely thrilled to have been awarded this funding. All of the partners have put in a tremendous amount of hard work to develop this application and its diverse range of projects. We have worked on this idea since 2009 so this award really makes all the time and effort worthwhile.

“This wonderful news means that we can now start to deliver projects on the ground with local communities. This funding will allow us to create five new posts to support communities and partners to deliver this work. While we still have a challenge ahead to secure more funding for the second and third years of the project, we are very optimistic that with the continued support of our partners this can be delivered.

“I would like to take this opportunity to say a huge thank you to HLF for its support and to all of our partners, the landowners, land managers, communities and individuals who came to our drop-in meetings and completed the questionnaires in 2012. Their ideas have helped to shape this exciting programme. All of us in the partnership believe that this work will really help people to reconnect people with the hills for generations to come.”

Notes to editors

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.

The Living Lomonds Landscape Partnership is made up of the following partner organisations:

- Fife Coast and Countryside Trust (Lead Partner)
- The Centre for Stewardship based on Falkland Estate
- Markinch Heritage Group
- Kinross Museum Trust
- Lomond Hills Regional Park Partnership
- Fife Council
- TRACKS
- Benarty Community Forum
- Forestry Commission Scotland

The Tay Landscape Partnership is made up of the following partner organisations:

- Perth & Kinross Countryside Trust
- Perth and Kinross Heritage Trust
- The Gannochy Trust
- Perth and Kinross Council

Further information

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