Future of Northumbria's frontier landscape secures



Redesdale landscape is full of natural, built and cultural heritage

From Julius Agricola, the first Governor of Britain to advance along Dere Street, to the thousands of motorists who take the scenic A68 route today, Redesdale valley has been a strategic corridor across the English-Scottish border for millennia.

Today fewer than 2,000 people live here, the economy is facing problems and the landscape's incredible heritage is largely overlooked.

Natural England has set out to change that. Its Revitalising Redesdale scheme has just gained support from the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) as well as a grant of £115,700 to develop the project and apply for a full sum of £1.8m through HLF's Landscape Partnerships scheme.

Nearly 1,600ha of land will be restored; plans will be put in place with farmers to reduce silt build up, pollution and riverbank erosion in the River Rede and 50 volunteers will help to monitor and tackle non-native invasive species. Built heritage will also benefit thanks to repairs and management plans for Scheduled Ancient Monuments and listed buildings.

The project aims to reconnect people with the landscape's heritage. Those who currently just pass through will be encouraged to become visitors with an awareness and engagement programme to tell the frontier story. Residents and land managers will receive training and new business and training opportunities will be developed.

Ivor Crowther, Head of Heritage Lottery Fund North East, said: "Redesdale is one of 13 areas in the UK benefitting from a combined funding boost of £31m through our Landscape Partnerships scheme – and all thanks to money raised by National Lottery players. We're delighted to offer our support to Natural England, their partners and the residents of Redesdale who are extremely supportive of the plans to finally tell the incredibly story of this landscape and preserve its beauty and heritage for future generations to enjoy."

Natural England will work with residents, volunteers, servicemen and a number of partner organisations to deliver the project.

Brad Tooze, Natural England Northumbria Area Manager, said: "Redesdale is home to some incredibly important natural and cultural assets, including the rare freshwater Pearl Mussel. This bid has been put together with a wide range of partners and the voices of local residents. We are delighted to have been successful with this stage of the process and look forward to developing the Revitalising Redesdale project further in order that this wonderful landscape, its unique heritage and communities can be protected."

Heritage highlights of the Redesdale landscape

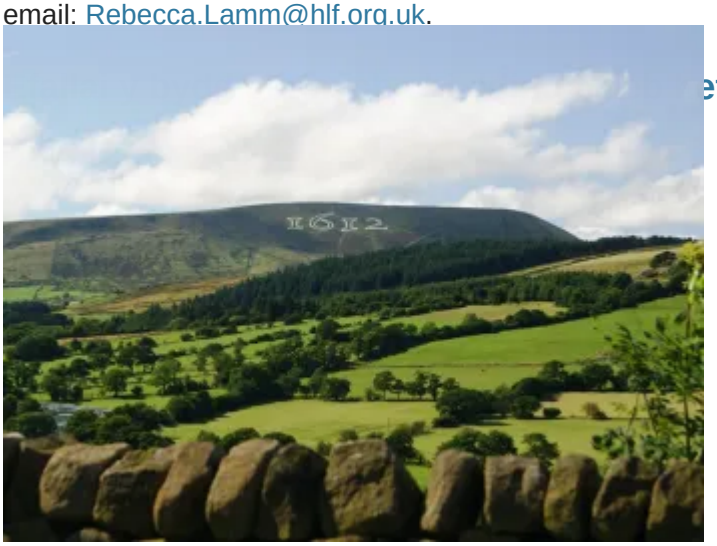
- Cultural and built heritage relating to the famed Border Reivers, including family names and dialects rooted to the area and examples of bastles (defensible farmhouses) unique to the area.
- Centuries of conflicts have delayed intense farming, allowing wildlife to flourish including the rare Pearl Mussel and red squirrel habitats completely unaffected by grey squirrels.
- Six Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) including rare upland hay meadows, blanket bogs of European importance and ancient woodlands.
- 74 Scheduled Ancient Monuments, a number of which will undergo repairs during the project – including Ridsdale Iron Works will be removed from Historic England's Heritage at Risk Register.
- Military training has taken place here since 1911 and the Ministry of Defence currently has its second largest training grounds at Otterburn. Redesdale has one of the best preserved First World War training trenches and is home to the site of the 1388 Battle of Otterburn.

Notes to editors

HLF's Landscape Partnership programme – which has now been running for over a decade - is the most significant grant scheme available for landscape-scale projects. To date, £177m has been invested in 99 different areas across the UK helping forge new partnerships between public and community bodies and ensuring people are better equipped to understand and tackle the needs of their local landscapes. Over its life-span, the LP programme has helped repair over 100 km of dry stone walls, enabled 810,000 people to participate in learning activities and helped more than 45,000 volunteers get involved – the equivalent of 64,000 working hours.The next closing date for LP applications is 1 June 2016 for decisions in October 2016.

Further information

For more information, images and interviews please contact Rebecca Lamm, HLF press office, on 020 7591 6245 or email: Rebecca.Lamm@hlf.org.uk.



efyd mewn ...

Part of Pendle Hill carved with 1612 Alastair Lee

Double, double, toil and trouble: Halloween funding boost for home of Pendle Witches!