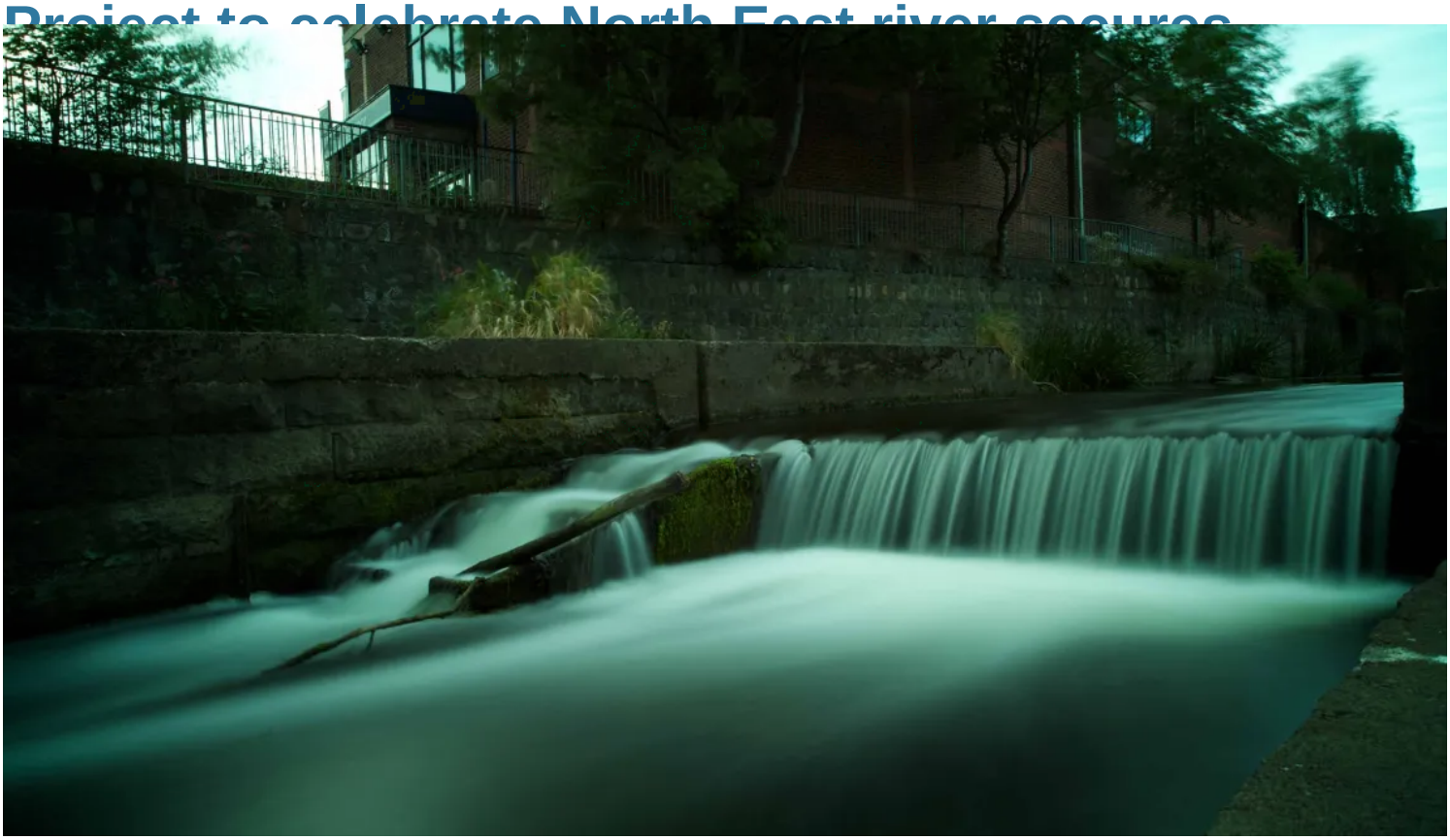
Project to celebrate North East river secures



Heritage of the River Skerne will be celebrated Andrew Gill Aelphotography

The money for the Bright Water Landscape Partnership will be used to develop a detailed action plan to preserve and enhance the landscape of the catchment of the River Skerne and, if successfully delivered, will lead to more than £2.6million of further funding from HLF and a further £500,000 from other sources.

The Bright Water Landscape Partnership covers 200 sq km within lowland County Durham and Darlington, focusing on the River Skerne from Hurworth Burn reservoir in East Durham to South Park in Darlington. The project area includes Great Aycliffe, Sedgefield, Bishop Middleham, Fishburn, Heighington, Brafferton, Barmpton and Darlington.

This landscape was formerly dominated by wetlands and has undergone significant change, particularly over the past 200 years. The area has a heritage of globally significant innovation that influenced both the agricultural and industrial revolutions.

The project will develop initiatives to conserve natural habitats and protect important industrial and agricultural sites, provide educational opportunities for the public as part of the schemes that will bring together everyone from ecologists and historians to artists.

The bid was brought together by Durham Wildlife Trust and the Three Rivers Local Nature Partnership, with staff from both organisations working on the proposal. The Environment Agency were also heavily involved and their funding allowed the project to get off the ground and provided much of the match funding required by HLF.

Darlington Borough Council, Durham County Council, Groundwork North East, Tees Rivers Trust, local built and natural heritage groups and community organisations have all played a significant role in developing the project.

The result was a wide-ranging project that celebrates and conserves the natural environment and built and cultural heritage of the River Skerne catchment.

DWT Trust Director, Jim Cokill, said: “This is by far the largest project bid DWT has submitted and shows just how well organisations across the region can work together to draw in investment. Bright Water will make a real difference for wildlife and all the other aspects of the landscape’s heritage. We can’t wait to get started.”

Ivor Crowther, Head of Heritage Lottery Fund North East, said: “Money raised by National Lottery players is helping to secure the future of landscapes, and people’s love and involvement in them, across the North East. The Bright Water Landscape Project will bring a wide range of people together to celebrate and preserve an even wider range of natural, built and cultural heritage. We are delighted to offer our support to this project and look forward to seeing the plans develop.”

Notes to editors

Durham Wildlife Trust's purpose is to protect wildlife and promote nature conservation in County Durham, the City of Sunderland and the boroughs of Gateshead, South Tyneside and Darlington. Through the management of 31 nature reserves and a variety of species and habitat recovery projects, the trust is one of the most active environmental organisations in the region. By acting as a focus for a variety of community groups, schools and individuals, the trust engages people in the issues around nature conservation and the wider environment. It also manages two visitor centres and campaigns on behalf of more than 8000 members.

Further information

For further information, images and interviews, please contact Jim Cokill, Durham Wildlife Trust, on 0191 584 3112.



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Part of Pendle Hill carved with 1612 Alastair Lee

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