

Lough Neagh's heritage receives £2.49m grant

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Ardboe High Cross near Lough Neagh

The five-year Lough Neagh Landscape Partnership will deliver 27 integrated projects around the lough shore area. Activities will include restoring and protecting the Lough's wetlands, peatlands and boglands, providing skills and training opportunities for the local community, and using the lough's rich heritage to regenerate areas and make them better places to live. The project will provide training for 240 people, full-time jobs for five people and 200 volunteering places.

Today's announcement brings HLF's investment in land and biodiversity projects in Northern Ireland to £37.6m, helping to conserve key habitats and species, restore historic built heritage features and reconnect people to their local landscapes.

Commenting on the award, Paul Mullan, Head of HLF Northern Ireland, said: "Lough Neagh dominates our local landscape and has played an important role in local lives for many centuries. We are delighted that, thanks to National Lottery players, this ambitious project will deliver real benefits for the both the heritage of the lough and its current communities, through job creation and training opportunities, while safeguarding its future for the next generation."

Lough Neagh is bounded by five counties and sits at the geographical heart of Northern Ireland. It is the largest lake in the UK and Ireland and is hugely significant to Northern Ireland's heritage. It is home to several unique species including freshwater herring, trout and the abundant Lough Neagh Fly. It is also the site of one of the few remaining wild eel fisheries in the UK. It has been a base for prehistoric settlements, Viking raiders, the Plantation of Ulster and was used for RAF and United States Air Force training during the Second World War.

Welcoming the award, Conor Corr, the Chairperson of Lough Neagh Partnership, added: "This award from HLF is tremendous news for Lough Neagh. A significant amount of consultation and preparation has already taken place and we are now in a position to start the project which will be delivered over the next five years.

"We would like to pay tribute to our partners, in particular the Councils, RSPB and community groups, who have agreed to provide match funding so that the overall value of the project exceeds £3.5m."