

Project officer Emily McGregor at one of the dew ponds

A threatened feature of Yorkshire's rural landscape is to be revived to benefit the region's natural and cultural heritage in an ambitious new project led by Yorkshire Wildlife Trust, and made possible thanks to National Lottery players.

Over the next two years the Wolds Water project will see Yorkshire Wildlife Trust working with local farmers to restore a network of historic dew ponds stretching more than 20 miles from Thixendale to Fordon in the heart of the Yorkshire Wolds.

The dew ponds were created predominantly in the 18th and 19th centuries to provide crucial water for livestock in the dry landscape of the High Wolds. Whilst few are used by livestock today, they are a haven for wildlife and an important historic feature of the landscape.

[quote=David Renwick, Head of HLF Yorkshire & the Humber]"We're delighted that, thanks to National Lottery players, we've been able to support this project."[/quote]

David Renwick, Head of HLF Yorkshire and the Humber, said: "The Wolds Landscape is one of Yorkshire's best kept secrets, but it's becoming increasingly well known as a result of David Hockney's paintings and the BBC 2 mini-series 'Hidden Treasures of the Wolds'. One of these hidden treasures are its Dew Ponds. Significant in terms of their landscape and wildlife importance, they demonstrate the connection that people have with their countryside – created to water livestock they now provide a home for rare plants and animals. We're delighted that, thanks to National Lottery players, we've been able to support this project, and give local people the opportunity to explore and preserve the

natural heritage on their doorstep.”

The Wolds Water project will also capture memories and stories from members of the local community who remember the ponds in use in a bygone farming age. These oral histories, together with the natural and cultural heritage identified and recorded through the project will be developed into a new online resource.

Leading the project for Yorkshire Wildlife Trust is Emily McGregor, Wolds Dew Pond Project Officer: “People are at the heart of this project and we are keen to involve the local community in the full range of activities. We want to reconnect people with the history and wildlife of dew ponds so that these features once again become a core part of the culture and landscape of the Wolds.”