Communities to help revitalise Ryedale's rivers

The National Lottery Heritage Fund has awarded nearly £2million to a "fantastic" four-year project set to look after the landscapes of the River Rye.

The project, called Ryevitalise, is being run by a partnership lead by the North York Moors National Park Authority. It will improve water quality and restore biodiversity around the landscapes of the River Rye.

Ryevitalise will cover a huge area of 413m² from Cleveland Hills to Hovingham in the Howardian Hills, the River Seph, River Riccal and River Rye.

It aims to:

- reduce diffuse pollution
- control invasive species
- restore woodland
- establish wildlife corridors

Ryevitalise is particularly focusing on the rare and mysterious Alcathoe bat, which lives in woodland around the Rye, and the white-clawed crayfish, which is threatened by reduced water quality and non-native species.

Alcathoe bat. Credit: Cyril Schonbachler.

Learning about the landscape

The scheme will have education and community engagement at its heart, with three vital themes:

- **water quality and environment** – restoring and conserving aquatic habitats and rare and threatened species that live in the area
- **water level management** – harnessing natural flood processes to create a more naturally functioning river
- **reconnecting people** – improving people's understanding of the river landscape and encouraging people to protect their heritage

Schools will be given fieldwork and classroom opportunities to learn more about their local rivers, wildlife and connections to local history. There will also be a programme of expert talks, exhibitions and discovery events.

Connecting communities to their local nature

David Renwick, Director of England, North, said: “This is a fantastic scheme. It is built on a strong partnership that aims to revitalise the Rye’s heritage by restoring large swathes of waterways in and around the North York Moors.

> "At the same time it will reconnect people to the river landscape around them so that everyone – people, wildlife, and cultural heritage – all benefit."

Junior rangers investigating wildlife.

Briony Fox, Director of Conservation at the North York Moors National Park Authority, said: “We are absolutely delighted with this news and would like to thank players of the National Lottery who have made it possible.

> "The funding will allow us to work with local people, farmers and community groups to help them take ownership of the region’s rivers, ensuring these rich ecosystems teem with life for many generations to come.”

"We’ll also be creating lots of opportunities for volunteer involvement, enabling people to learn practical conservation skills, and the project will employ six core members of staff, along with a graduate trainee and two apprentices.”

Find out more

Ryevitalise is a Landscape Partnership scheme supported by the North York Moors National Park Authority and other collaborators. The total project value is £3.4m.

For more information, visit the North York Moors National Park Authority website.