# Down to the coast

30/10/2013

The Isle of Wight Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (Wight AONB) has received an earmarked grant of just over £1.5million from the HLF through its Landscape Partnership (LP) programme for the Down to the Coast - East Wight Landscape Partnership project, it was announced today.

The Down to the Coast - East Wight Landscape Partnership programme focuses on the uniquely intricate and diverse landscapes formed by the rivers draining the eastern tip of the Isle of Wight (the East Wight). The East Wight is among the UK's richest areas for wildlife with a complex geology underpinning the incredibly varied landscapes. However, social, economic and environmental processes are both contributing to and detracting from the diversity and distinctiveness for which it is valued.

Through the Down to the Coast programme, local people will have an opportunity to work together with conservation organisations to help manage these landscapes in a conservation-led scheme with an emphasis on training and community participation that will leave a lasting legacy for the East Wight landscapes and the people who enjoy them.

Development funding of £103,000 has also been awarded to help the East Wight Landscape Partnership progress their plans to apply for a full grant at a later date. Some of the historic and cultural heritage contributing towards the unique character of the Down to the Coast landscapes is at risk of degradation or loss.

While in some instances this risk is tangible and broadly understood such as dilapidated structures or degraded habitat, others are more subtle, such as unsympathetic management practices or a lack of young people developing the skills required to look after the heritage in the longer term. Over the course of the programme, projects will look to improve the landscapes and provide young people with the skills and opportunities they need to develop a lasting relationship with their local areas.

Although very different it is hoped that the Down to the Coast scheme will equal the achievements of the West Wight Landscape Partnership.

Fiona Hanna from Wight AONB, said: "We are ecstatic to receive this funding from the Heritage Lottery Fund. The East Wight has some of the most diverse and interesting landscapes found anywhere in Britain and this money will help to safeguard them as well as provide opportunities for people to learn the importance of their local area and how to help manage it for the Island's future generations to enjoy."

Stuart McLeod, Head of HLF South East, said: "The East Wight is a stunning part of the UK's distinctive landscape. HLF has already supported a very successful Landscape Partnership scheme to the west of the Island and these new proposals will complement what has already been achieved there. The Island is known for its scenery, wildlife and outdoor activities and our investment will play an important part in protecting the existing natural heritage assets as well as increasing the local community's understanding of their environs."

**Notes to editors**

A Landscape Partnership (LP) earmarked grant means that money has been set aside by the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) for the scheme in question. The applicant then progresses to the second round and submits a further, fully-

developed application to secure the full award. This early level of strong financial commitment means that LPs can build strong partnerships with the assurance that funding for their scheme is in place provided that their final proposals fully meet the programme's criteria.

HLF's Landscape Partnerships are helping bring together members of the community as well as local, regional, and national organisations to deliver schemes which benefit some of the UK's most outstanding landscapes and rural communities.  Grants range from £100,000 up to £3m. The next closing date for LP applications is May 2014.

**About Isle of Wight Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (Wight AONB)**
Wight AONB is one of the finest landscapes in the country. It was designated in 1963 and covers approximately half of the Island (191 sq. km). The Isle of Wight AONB incorporates a rich variety of distinctive landscapes and is often likened to lowland England in miniature. The purpose of designation is the conservation and enhancement of natural beauty.

The Isle of Wight AONB Partnership oversees the management of the AONB. It is an independent organisation made up of key stakeholders with a direct management role or interest in the AONB. This is jointly funded by Defra and the Isle of Wight Council.

**Further information**

Fiona Hanna, Wight AONB Lead Officer on 01983 823 855, email: Fiona.Hanna@iow.gov.uk.

HLF press office: Katie Owen on 020 7591 6036 / 07973 613 820.

## You might also be interested in...

### Nine precious landscapes to be restored