Forth wildlife, communities and heritage set to



The Inner Forth Landscape Initiative (IFLI) will use the funding over the next four years to help protect historic sites, connect fragmented wildlife habitats, improve access routes, and provide learning and volunteering opportunities.

The IFLI will run in an area stretching from Bo'ness and Rosyth to Stirling, and it is hoped that in the long term, the project will significantly enhance this landscape and raise the profile of the area.

The IFLI partnership is made up of RSPB Scotland, Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH), Falkirk Council, Stirling Council, Clackmannanshire Council, Central Scotland Forest Trust, Sustrans, Historic Scotland and the Scottish Environment Protection Agency.

Anne McCall, Regional Director for RSPB Scotland, said: "RSPB Scotland is proud to lead the partnership that has developed this exciting programme of work. We are incredibly pleased that the Heritage Lottery Fund has announced their support for this programme of fifty projects to be delivered through the Inner Forth Landscape Initiative over the next four years.

"There is huge potential within this landscape for conservation and restoration of not only natural heritage sites, but also those of built and cultural heritage value. Working with communities and partners is a key focus for the IFLI team and through this we believe we can improve and increase access to the Inner Forth landscape for current and future

residents and visitors."

The Forth is internationally recognised as an important site for wildlife, with expansive mudflats providing refuge for thousands of wildfowl and wading birds in winter.

For centuries, the landscape has also been home to Scotland's industries, with evidence of ancient ports and harbours, salt pans, limekilns, mining and whisky production, sitting alongside the industries of today. The layers of history and heritage hidden within the landscape create a fascinating multi-layered story waiting to be told.

Zoe Kemp, operations manager at SNH and chair of the IFLI Board, said: "SNH is delighted that HLF is funding the Inner Forth Landscape Initiative. This funding will help us work with local communities to learn about, enrich and celebrate the amazing nature and culture of the Inner Forth. The scheme will help deliver some really exciting projects with communities around the Forth, such as the chance for local people to learn more about nature on their doorstep and gain new skills in habitat management and wildlife recording."

The IFLI consists of 50 individual projects that will run between now and 2018. These include plans to improve access to heritage sites such as Clackmannan Tower and Black Devon Wetlands; enhancement of Wester Moss and Fallin Bing; management of important wildlife habitats at Bo'ness and Kinneil Estate; and work by community groups across the area to research local mining and trading history.

Colin McLean, Head of Heritage Lottery Fund Scotland, said: "Nature lies at the very heart of what makes Scotland special but the enormous pressures upon it mean that we have to approach its restoration and conservation on a bigger scale than ever before. Our Landscape Partnership programme does just that, and more, and we are delighted that the Inner Forth will benefit from this approach. The area is often perceived as devoid of interest because of its industrial character when in fact its natural resources and meandering river make it rich in both built and natural heritage. The IFLI will help people reconnect with what lies overlooked on their doorstep, taking pride in their community while helping conserve and protect the heritage around them."

Notes to editors

- The Inner Forth Landscape Initiative is a partnership of RSPB Scotland (lead agency), Scottish Natural Heritage (Chair), Falkirk Council, Stirling Council, Clackmannanshire Council, Scottish Environment Protection Agency, Central Scotland Forest Trust, Historic Scotland, and Sustrans. Other organisations contribute knowledge, expertise and links to the community through working groups and other meetings. Its intention is to reveal the hidden cultural, historical and natural wealth of the upper reaches of the Firth of Forth, restore and conserve important features, open up access, provide skills training and ultimately leave a legacy of a richer landscape and new facilities for all.
- The Inner Forth Landscape Initiative area covers 202km2 from Stirling Old Bridge to Blackness Castle and the western edge of Rosyth. This includes both sides of the estuary including the estuary itself, the inter-tidal zone, floodplain, coastal margins and settlements. The fifty projects within the Inner Forth Landscape Initiative programme will be delivered between summer 2014 and April 2018.
- In March 2014, RSPB Scotland, on behalf of the Inner Forth Landscape Initiative, received a confirmed second-round pass of £1.9 million through the Heritage Lottery Fund's Landscape Partnership Scheme programme. This will contribute to delivery of the £4m programme of work developed by the initiative.
- HLF's Landscape Partnerships are helping to 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, from Orkney's Scapa Flow, to the Ochil hills of central Scotland, to the Solway

coast and river valleys.

- Using money raised through the National Lottery, HLF aims to make a lasting difference for heritage, people and communities across the UK and help build a resilient heritage economy. To date HLF has invested £611m in Scotland's heritage.

Further information

For more information/interviews/images, please contact Jenny Tweedie, Media and Communications Officer for RSPB Scotland South and West Region on 0141 331 0993 or 07899 675 131.

For information regarding the Heritage Lottery Fund, please contact Shiona Mackay on 01786 870 638, email: shionamackay1@btinernet.com or Jon Williams on 0207 5091 6035, email: jonw@hlf.org.uk.

A full list of all the IFLI projects, along with further information, can be found on the IFLI website.