£20m HLF investment in 13 distinctive landscapes across UK

23/07/2012

This investment will help conserve some of the UK's most diverse and locally distinctive landscapes by supporting schemes that provide long-term social, economic and environmental benefits for rural areas.

HLF's LP programme - which has been running for eight years - is the most significant grant scheme available for landscape-scale projects and is at the cutting edge of delivery. HLF has to date invested a total of £132m in 83 different areas, helping forge new partnerships between public and community bodies and ensuring people are better equipped to tackle the needs of their local landscapes in a co-ordinated and practical way. Alongside essential conservation work to the built heritage and a wide range of training opportunities which enable people to learn new skills, the projects also help protect valuable habitats and enhance local biodiversity.

The 13 landscapes receiving HLF support today include: Cambridgeshire's Ouse Washes; the UK's highest mountain, Ben Nevis; the much-visited Dartmoor National Park; the floodplain of the Tame Valley; and the Dearne Valley in the Pennine foothills, one of the 12 Nature Improvement Areas selected in response to the recommendations of the Natural Environment White Paper[3].

Dame Jenny Abramsky, Chair of HLF, said: "The Heritage Lottery Fund's Landscape Partnerships are helping change the way people think about and care for some of the UK's most spectacular scenery. We're very proud of this groundbreaking funding programme - the first and only one of its kind - and we plan to continue to build on its achievements in the coming years. "The power of landscapes at both a physical and a creative level should not be underestimated. Many people have become disconnected from the natural world, particularly those of us living in urban areas, so these partnerships are designed to conserve, celebrate and share the importance of landscapes in all their magnificent diversity."

Caroline Spelman, Environment Secretary, said: "These thirteen excellent projects will complement conservation work already taking place in our Nature Improvement Areas, restoring wildlife habitats and safeguarding the natural environment for generations to come."

The LP projects are:

- **Ouse Washes LP, Cambridgeshire - first-round pass of £995,600, including £90,500 development funding**
  The Ouse Washes LP stretches from Downham Market in West Norfolk to Fen Drayton Lakes in South Cambridgeshire and includes a number of important wildlife reserves. It is vital to the distribution of water in the region and distinctly East Anglian. The scheme will promote the landscape as a tourist destination and encourage people to learn more about it and get involved in its management and conservation for the future.
- **Norfolk and Suffolk Brecks LP - first-round pass of £1,495,200, including £78,500 development funding**
  The Brecks, one of the driest parts of the country, is a landscape made up of coniferous forest, grass heath and agricultural land and is home to a number of rare species such as the Spanish Catchfly plant and brush-thighed

seed-eater beetle. The area has suffered socially and economically, this scheme will provide training opportunities to help local people learn more about the landscape and so care for it more effectively in the future.

- **Nevis LP, Fort William – first-round pass of £1,927,700, including £75,800 development funding**
  Every year thousands of people climb to the summit of Ben Nevis, making it an important tourist attraction. In addition to the obvious draw of the mountains, Ben Nevis, Glen Nevis and the surrounding area are home to a wealth of species and archaeological sites. The scheme will not only conserve this famous landscape but also get local communities involved with managing it more effectively.
- **Inner Forth LP, Central Scotland – first-round pass of £1,975,900, including £75,900 development funding**
  Alongside the industries that dominate the skyline, the upper reaches of the Firth of Forth (between Stirling and the Forth Bridge) have many natural resources and important areas for wildlife as well as a number of scheduled ancient monuments and historic properties. This densely populated part of central Scotland suffers pockets of significant deprivation; one of the challenges of the project will be to get the surrounding communities much more involved with and enthused about the stewardship of their local heritage.
- **Dartmoor LP, Devon – first-round pass of £2m, including £100,000 development funding**
  Dartmoor National Park is one of the UK's most popular visitor destinations; the LP will focus on its historic environment which reveals a story of people in this landscape over 4,000 years. The area has an abundance of well-preserved archaeology and is famous for its wildlife, boasting a number of nationally rare species such as Marsh fritillary butterfly, bog hoverfly and red-backed shrike, as well as a diversity of habitats including heathland, blanket bog and ancient oak woodland. Conservation work will take place over 280km² of the landscape with local communities being encouraged to get involved in looking after one of Devon's highly prized environments.
- **Lower Severn Vale LP, South Gloucestershire – first-round pass of £1,115,500, including £98,300 development funding**
  Covering 173km² of floodplain north-west of Bristol, the LP involves conserving the Lower Severn Vale Levels and promoting awareness of it. This will create new areas of wetland for European waterfowl and help revive traditional local practices such as cider and cheese making and the raising of salt marsh lamb. Schools will get involved through classroom workshops and field days.
- **River Tees LP, County Durham - first-round pass of £1,990,00, including £99,500 development funding**
  This five-year scheme covers 120km² of the distinctive River Tees corridor, running through a number of Tees Valley communities which start at Piercebridge and end at Teesmouth. It will reconnect local people to the river's history as a major trade route, giving much better access to the landscape.
- **Allen Valleys LP, North Pennines AONB – first-round pass of £1,811,100, including £74,500 development funding**
  These two valleys are distinctive for their peatlands, ancient woodlands, hay meadows and abandoned industrial heritage. HLF's initial support will enable the project to move towards achieving its vision of putting the area's natural and cultural heritage assets at the heart of the community with a focus on boosting the local economy.
- **Ring of Gullion LP, Newry and Mourne – first-round pass of £1,040,200, including £60,200 development funding**
  South Armagh's Ring of Gullion is the product of millions of years' worth of turbulent geological activity and one of the best examples of a ring dyke in the UK. The surrounding community is keen to get back in touch with its natural heritage and also raise wider awareness of the area as a great place to visit. The project involves training people in local heritage skills, teaching the younger generation about the area's culture and history and conserving features that have been neglected in the past.
- **Tame Valley Wetlands LP, Warwickshire and Staffordshire – first-round pass of £1,806,100, including £86,500 development funding**

The LP runs from Tamworth in the north to Coleshill in the south following the linear feature of the River Tame and its alluvial floodplain corridor. Secluded pastoral areas are mixed with hedgerows and open arable land; it is also a key migratory route for wetland birds. The scheme involves the creation of a wetland landscape with the aim of restoring the character of the river and floodplain and making it better appreciated and easier to access. A key feature will be the Tame Way, a pedestrian and cycle route running from Tamworth to Castle Bromwich. Much-needed training opportunities will be put in place to help alleviate a lack of employment and skills in the area.

- **Dearne Valley LP, South Yorkshire – first-round pass £1,882,000, including £89,500 development funding**
  Dearne Valley has a fascinating past but has suffered greatly due to rapid de-industrialisation, particularly the loss of the coal mining industry. The area has a comprehensive range of built, natural and cultural heritage and this scheme aims to enhance and reconnect people with them, focusing on the unifying theme of industrial heritage. Complementing this conservation work will be a programme of community outreach, including oral history, exhibitions, workshops and festivals. A community forum will help energise existing and new volunteers with the aim of involving people in the development and implementation of the scheme.
- **Upper Nidderdale LP, Yorkshire – first-round pass of £1,213,400, including £48,400 development funding**
  This dramatic upland valley landscape is characterised by moorland, drystone walls and gritstone farmsteads and barns. It is internationally important for its flora and fauna, such as the Elephant Hawk Moth, marsh ragwort and ragged robin, and also has a large population of breeding upland birds, including merlin, curlew and golden plover. It has vast reserves of peat which are important to the prevention of downstream flooding. Training in local heritage skills is a highlight of the scheme and includes: training days; practical skills courses for schools; upland management apprenticeships for young people; and landowner training days.
- **Saltscape LP, Cheshire – first-round pass of £935,300, including £48,800 development funding**
  This three-year scheme will conserve and open up the natural habitats of the Weaver Valley and its surrounding towns which are steeped in the history of the salt industry. Plans include looking after ancient woodlands and grazing meadows along with restoration work to locks and toll buildings. Volunteering will be a key element of the project with training delivered by staff from Cheshire Wildlife Trust and the National Waterways Museum.

Notes to editors

- A Landscape Partnership (LP) earmarked first-round pass means that money has been set aside by the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) for the scheme in question. Competition at this stage is tough, and while it does not guarantee funding, it is an indication of positive support. 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 currently range from £250,000 up to £2m. From 2013 this range changes to £100,000 up to £3m. The next closing date for LP applications is May 2013.
- [3] Nature Improvement Areas were a flagship policy contained in last year's Natural Environment White Paper 'The Natural Choice' which set out aims to improve the quality of the natural environment across England, halt the decline in habitats and species, and strengthen the connection between people and nature. It committed Government to supporting the natural environment to function more effectively through joined-up action at local and national levels to create an ecological network which is resilient to changing pressures.
- To date, HLF has awarded £392m to 3,126 natural heritage projects.

Further information

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