Naturally Scottish

20/05/2010

Today, the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) awarded a grant of £999,000 to the rugged Applecross peninsula and earmarked a further £2m to the fertile Clyde & Avon Valley with a first-round pass* through its Landscape Partnership (LP) programme.

The Landscape Partnership is an innovative programme which helps conserve our landscape by helping forge public and community partnerships. People work together, through many interlinked projects, to tackle the environmental needs of their local landscape, conserving and restoring the natural and built heritage while celebrating the history and heritage of the area. In doing so it brings economic, educational and social benefits to the people who live, work and visit there.

Over the past six years, HLF has been helping protect some of the UK's most treasured landscapes thanks to an investment totalling £72m. The landscapes which have been supported in Scotland reflect the diverse natural heritage of the country from Orkney's Scapa Flow to the floodplains of the River Tweed.

Colin McLean, Head of the Heritage Lottery Fund in Scotland, said: "Landscapes play a huge role in our lives and are often the backdrop to daily routines - but we mustn't take them for granted. This significant investment by the Heritage Lottery Fund is important, particularly in the International Year of Biodiversity, because it not only encourages people to work together effectively but gives them a greater sense of involvement and connection to their own local landscape."

Nicholas Crane, writer and broadcaster, said: "My work has enabled me to travel the world and see some breathtaking scenery along the way. But I remain in awe of the range of landscapes we enjoy in the UK. I'm passionate about conserving our beautiful countryside and coastlines, and am particularly delighted that HLF is funding schemes that ensure that they are properly managed and enjoyed by as many people as possible."

Applecross LP – grant of £999,000
The Applecross Peninsula, located opposite the Isle of Skye, is famous for its dramatic alpine-style mountain pass approach – the Bealach na Ba. Although part of the Scottish mainland it is extremely remote and home to its own distinctive heritage with a rugged landscape of mountains, crofting settlements and moorland, surrounded by Atlantic coast.

The project's proposals, which will be led by the Applecross Trust, cover an area of 105km2 and are divided into five main programmes: Worship & Burial; People & Places; Trails & Thoroughfares; Woodland, Grassland & Wildlife; and Drystane Dykes & Historic Buildings.

Within these programmes, there will be many projects designed to restore important built and natural heritage features, including Clachan Church, Holy Well, Applecross Broch and the limekilns, while promoting both its culture and language to residents and the 200,000 tourists who visit every year.

Archie MacLellan, Applecross Trust Administrator, commented: "The grant award by HLF has provided the catalyst for the securing of match funding in order to deliver the comprehensive range of heritage development measures proposed at Applecross. Developing the scheme to this stage has taken over 3 years and much effort has been put into the

programme by local Community groups and Stakeholder Partner organisations. Collectively, we would like to thank HLF for their support throughout the planning and development phases of the programme and we now look forward to implementing the projects we've designed."

Clyde and Avon Valley LP – first-round pass of £2,000,000 including £100,000 development funding
Cutting through the industrial heartland of Scotland, the character of Clyde and Avon Valley shows the relationship between man and landscape. In the valley, from New Lanark to Chatelherault, the Clyde flows through a dramatic, wooded gorge and over spectacular falls before entering a flat-bottomed valley, with sides that are gentle and verdant. The rich alluvial soil here has long been associated with horticulture and fruit growing. Historically, local coal was extracted to heat the glasshouses, the power of the river harnessed for the mills and the valley's microclimate put to use in growing fruit. The rivers' gorges are home to ancient broadleaf woodlands and orchards, where a wonderful array of birdlife – such as warblers, bullfinches and kingfishers – can be spotted.

The LP programme covers an area of 129km2 with over two million people living within 15 miles of it, including six of the most deprived areas of Scotland. The project will develop improved physical, social and cultural paths through the landscape that will create a better understanding and stronger connections between people and the landscape Plans include running a programme of practical activities to encourage local volunteering and help people reconnect with their natural heritage. This will include woodland and orchard management, countryside skills, traditional crafts and soft fruit production.

Councillor Christopher Thompson, Chair of South Lanarkshire Council Enterprise Resources committee, said: "The HLF Landscape Partnership award is a fantastic opportunity for all the partners to work closely with the local residents and land owners to preserve and enhance the beautiful landscape in the Clyde and Avon Valley.

''The project title, 'Our People, Our Land, Our History: Shaping Our Future', shows that the project is intended to be achieved by building on the unique cultural and natural history of the area to support communities in developing a strong, interconnected, sustainable local economy for the future.

"The valleys are a tremendous natural landscape and this project will increase people's understanding and enjoyment of their landscape."

Work with partners and communities will start soon on the detail of the stage 2 application.

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 range from £250,000 up to £2m.

To date, HLF has awarded £416m to over 2,785 projects for support of the UK's natural heritage.

Using money raised through the National Lottery, the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) sustains and transforms a wide range of heritage for present and future generations to take part in, learn from and enjoy. From museums, parks and historic places to archaeology, natural environment and cultural traditions, we invest in every part of our diverse heritage. HLF has supported almost 3000 projects, allocating over £500million across Scotland.

Further information

Shiona Mackay, HLF Scotland on 01786 870 638 / 07779 142890.

Katie Owen/Laura Bates, HLF Press Office, on 020 7591 6036 / 6027 or 07973 613820.

Archie MacLellan, Applecross Trust on 01463 715 961 / 233 266.

James Davitt, South Lanarkshire Council on 01698 453857.