New joy for Joyden’s Wood, thanks to HLF

07/07/2010

Joyden’s Wood, on the borders of Bexley and Dartford, is owned and managed by the Woodland Trust which will be recruiting volunteers for a number of tasks including historical research, environmental work, and leading guided walks. New information leaflets, signage and a series of sculptures will be created.

The project also includes a major educational element including a series of bushcraft and outdoor survival workshops for the 11 to 18 age group and providing teaching material for teachers, targeting more than 80 primary schools within a five mile radius.

2010 is the International Year of Biodiversity* and the project will emphasise the rich array of species and habitats within the 331-acre site. Joyden’s Wood is ancient semi-natural woodland with areas of rare heathland where heathers and butterflies flourish. It also contains some significant archaeology including Faesten Dic (pronounced Feston Ditch) a kilometre-long series of defensive earthworks built by the Saxons around AD457.

Volunteers will be recruited to receive hands-on experience in coppicing techniques and other conservation tasks and workshops will be run to encourage local teachers to use parts of the site as an outdoor classroom. Nature trails will be devised for families and a healthy walking group is planned.

Then, in late summer 2011, a weekend celebration will include a range of practical activities, craft displays, re-enactment of a battle between the Saxons and the Romans at Faeston Dic, and recording sessions for local people to recount their memories of the woodland.

For the Heritage Lottery Fund, Head of HLF for London Sue Bowers, said: “This project presents a wonderful opportunity for new and existing audiences to rediscover their local heritage while helping to ensure that Joyden’s Wood is a natural resource for future generations to enjoy.”

For the Woodland Trust, site manager Simon Bateman, said: "We are delighted that the HLF has awarded the funding. It gives us a real opportunity to build on the work that has already made the site such a popular local resource. I would encourage everyone in the vicinity to pay Joyden's Wood a visit and experience the beauty of Mother Nature which is right on their doorstep."

Find out more about Joyden's Wood.

Notes to editors

The Woodland Trust was established in 1972 to protect, restore and create native woodland areas across the UK. It now owns and manages 1,266 sites, covering more than 54,000 acres all open to the public free of charge. The greater part of Joyden’s Wood was purchased by the Trust from the Forestry Commission in 1987 with support from the local community. In 1993 Dartford Borough Council gave the north-eastern corner of the Wood to the Trust. The Wood is designated an area of ancient semi-natural woodland (ASNW). It contains a priority Biodiversity Action Plan and the Faeston Dic is a Scheduled Ancient Monument.

*2010 has been declared as **International Year of Biodiversity** (IYB) by the United Nations – the year that celebrates the diversity of life on Earth, including every plant, animal and micro-organism. HLF is supporting IYB. The diversity of life on earth is crucial for human wellbeing and now is the time to act to preserve it.

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 33,900 projects, allocating £4.4billion across the UK.

Bexley has been identified as a priority development area in London by the HLF because it had received less funding than the regional average amount. Local organisations have been encouraged to work up schemes and submit them for consideration.

Further information

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