# North East’s vast landscape scoops lottery cash

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Head of the Heritage Lottery Fund in the North East, Ivor Crowther, said “The North East is home to some of the UK’s most breathtaking landscapes that not only provide much loved green spaces and varied habitats for wildlife, they also are a reminder of times gone by. Examples of these can be found in projects we’re supporting today – ranging from quarries and fossils to disused coalmines. We are delighted to help preserve these precious places and make sure they continue to thrive for many generations to come.”

**Alum, Alchemy and Ammonites**
In East Cleveland lies a very unique area of land once used to quarry Alum. Alum is a chemical compound used in many industries, including leather tanning, candle making, papermaking and to fix dye in cloth. The Tees Valley Wildlife were awarded £46,300 from the HLF for the project ‘Alum, Alchemy and Ammonites’. The project will explore the effects of alum quarrying on the landscape, and the contributions it made to industrial history and earth science.

The quarries not only provided the alum, they also unearthed other fascinating fossils, namely ammonites. The project focuses on the study of the ammonites by Louis Hutton, a local geologist and son of an alum works manager. The project will raise public awareness of the geological and industrial heritage of the area through a series of learning activities.

A series of talks and presentations will involve community groups and volunteers in discussing Louis Hutton’s research. The volunteers will organise and deliver guided walks at sites linked to alum quarrying across the Tees Valley. After leading walks and conducting extensive research into the history of Alum ,the volunteers will create an exhibition that will tour eight different venues. The display boards from the exhibition will be on permanent display at Tees Valley Wildlife Trust. The information from the display will also be used in web pages, maps and will be discussed and taught in local schools. Volunteers will have the opportunity to learn in depth about alum quarrying and pass on this knowledge to local young people, showing them how valuable the landscape that surrounds them really is.

Beth Andrews, the Tees Valley Wildlife Trust Heritage Officer, said: "I am looking forward to working on this project. East Cleveland has a wealth of heritage assets and this project will raise the profile of a local geologist Louis Hutton and his work. The project will include guided walks, talks and displays making the Alum, Alchemy and Ammonites accessible to all.”

Low Burnhall is a designated conservation area that sits within the City of Durham’s green belt and is made up of 68 hectares of precious ancient woodland and former arable and pasture land. The land and its immediate vicinity are also home to two great halls listed as historic parks and gardens, a coalmine, remains of a brick house, an old clay pit and pond and an engine house.

The HLF awarded £50,000 to the Woodland Trust, which will go towards conserving this important piece of land ensuring its survival for future generations. The project will also extend the ancient woodland by planting 86,000 new, native, broadleaf trees. It also aims to increase the area’s biodiversity by creating three hectares of wildflower meadow habitat; it is hoped that this will encourage a range of new species. Additional features such as a wetland with an otter holt will provide shelter and a nesting area for riverside otters, as well as contributing to flood alleviation in the area.

However, it's not all about preserving the landscape; the project is also about getting the local community involved and creating an understanding among the public, increasing the chances of the woodland's long-term survival. Improving access through new walking routes is also a priority, allowing a wider audience to appreciate the woodland. A range of interpretation features will be put in place and learning facilities such as guided walks, discovery days and activity sheets will be offered. These measures will help open up the landscape for people to learn from and enjoy.

Between 2010 and 2012, 11 weeks of woodland activity days will be held here for local schools, allowing over 3,000 children and community groups to plant trees and take part in other environmental activities.

Gary Haley, the Trust's Woodland Officer for Low Burnhall, said: "HLF's generous funding is critical if we are to realise our vision for this site. We are lucky to have such a fantastic landscape to start with, and the Trust is looking forward to turning it into a multi-habitat haven for lots of different types of wildlife. With 43,000 people within two miles of the site, we also have a great opportunity to provide a green space for people on the edge of a wonderful city, which will be an important link up in the woodland chain along the River Wear."

**Notes to editors**

This year marks the 15th Anniversary of the National Lottery. 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 more than 28,800 projects, allocating over £4.3billion across the UK, with over £209 million has granted in the North East alone.

**The Woodland Trust**
Low Burnhall - awarded £50,000. Founded in 1972, the Woodland Trust is the UK's leading woodland conservation charity and relies on the support of its many members and other supporters to continue its work.
www.woodlandtrust.org.uk

**Tees Valley Wildlife Trust**
Alum, Alchemy and Ammonites - awarded £46,300
Tees Valley Wildlife Trust works with local communities to conserve the Tees Valley's wildlife. www.teeswildlife.org/

To do this it:

- Works with local authorities, businesses and others to protect, manage and enhance land for wildlife.
- Promotes lifelong learning in environmental matters through a programme of education and training.
- Manages its nature reserves as examples of good practice.
- Works with local partners to ensure that wildlife and natural places contribute to the environmental, social and economic regeneration of Tees Valley.

**Further information**

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