£1million investment for Ouse Washes

12/03/2014

The partnership has been busy developing the proposals in great detail with a development grant of £90,500 received for the scheme in July 2012; this has now resulted in a diverse and exciting activity programme which it aims to deliver between April 2014 and March 2017.

The partnership's outstanding development work has been recognised by the HLF. Robyn Llewellyn, Head of Heritage Lottery Fund East of England, said: "What really impressed us about this project was the clear vision for celebrating the Ouse Washes. From working with people who live and visit the area, to developing innovative schemes to help wildlife thrive and flourish, our funding will connect the Fen stories of the past with opportunities for the future."

The OWLP area covers no less than five districts and 29 parishes, stretching for nearly 50km from Downham Market in Norfolk to St. Ives in Cambridgeshire. The partnership consists of 27 organisations with a particularly strong emphasis on local community representation amongst the many local, regional and national organisations.

The OWLP partnership aims to improve community interaction and participation to maintain and safeguard the OWLP area's inherent landscape beauty, its wetland habitats of international importance and its hidden archaeological and historical 'gems'. The OWLP scheme will be used as a vehicle through which this overlooked yet highly distinctive landscape will be promoted as a tourist destination, full of significant cultural heritage and local traditions, rare and protected biodiversity and unique drainage engineering assets.

At the core of the OWLP scheme, the partnership will deliver a range of projects which will include:

- community engagement events and activities in the realms of heritage research,
- arts and farming,
- conservation work on the local wetland habitats,
- creation of new films, leaflets and information panels telling the story of the history of the landscape,
- a range of volunteering and skills training opportunities including community archaeological excavations, archival research and land management.

Many of the projects will be focused on community groups, families and school children, landowners and farmers, newcomers to the area and migrant communities, visitors and local tourism business providers. A range of planned events, including a Festival Fortnight planned for July 2015 and July 2016, will provide something for everyone.

By encouraging community engagement and providing lots of opportunities for learning and gaining access to the local, hidden heritage 'gems' the OWLP partnership aims to provide long-term social, economic and environmental benefits for the rural communities in the area and help lay the foundations for a positive legacy for this unique landscape.

Kirsten Bennett, Chief Executive at Cambridgeshire ACRE, the lead partner of the OWLP partnership, said: "We're delighted that the Heritage Lottery Fund has given us this support. As the Rural Community Council for Cambridgeshire, we feel privileged to be leading the Ouse Washes Landscape Partnership and hope to change the way people access, think about and care for this landscape both now and in the future".

Notes to Editors

HLF's Landscape Partnerships (LP) programme is the most significant grant scheme available for landscape-scale projects. LP schemes are led by partnerships of local, regional and national interests which aim to conserve areas of distinctive landscape character throughout the UK and which provide long-term social, economic and environmental benefits for rural communities. Grants range from £100,000 up to £3m.

The Ouse Washes Landscape Partnership consists of 27 key organisations. These are: Arts Development in East Cambridgeshire (ADeC); Bill Blake Heritage Documentation; Borough Council of King's Lynn and West Norfolk; Cambridge Archaeological Unit; Cambridgeshire ACRE; Cambridgeshire Association for Local History; Cambridgeshire County Council; Diocese of Ely; Ely Museum; Environment Agency; Fen Skating Association; Fens Museum Partnership; Green Light Trust; Manea Parish Council; Manea & Welney District Drainage Commissioners; Mepal Parish Council; Mike Petty; Natural England; Prickwillow Engine Trust; Rosmini Centre; Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB); Sutton Parish Council; Welney Parish Council; Wildfowl and Wetlands Trust (WWT); Wildlife Conservation Partnership (WCP); Wildlife Trust for Bedfordshire, Cambridgeshire & Northamptonshire (WTBCN); Workers' Educational Association (WEA).

Cambridgeshire ACRE (Action with Communities in Rural England) is the lead partner within the Ouse Washes Landscape Partnership scheme. Cambridgeshire ACRE is a rural development charity that works throughout the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough area enabling people to take positive action to enhance their rural communities.

Further information

For further information, images and interviews, please contact Mark Nokkert, Ouse Washes: The Heart of the Fens Landscape Partnership programme Manager on 01353 865030 / 078 6453 1867, email: mark.nokkert@cambsacre.org.uk.

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More information about the Ouse Washes Landscape Partnership scheme can be found at: The OWLP Blog; OWLP Twitter page or the OWLP page on the CACRE website.