Support for Scottish natural heritage projects reaches over £50million

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It is one of five major natural heritage projects to benefit from HLF funding announced today, bringing HLF's total support for Scotland's natural environment to over £50million. The other projects to receive funding include the reconstruction of Botanic Cottage in the Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh, heritage skills training on the Forth & Clyde and Union Canals, the preservation of Castle Lachlan and interpretation of its wild landscape, and a new gallery at Dynamic Earth celebrating Scotland's central role in the development of modern geology.

Commenting on the awards, Colin McLean, Head of the Heritage Lottery Fund in Scotland, said: "This year, the Year of Natural Scotland, brings into focus the natural beauty and biodiversity that surrounds us. It is one of our greatest national assets, attracting visitors from home and abroad and making a valuable contribution to our tourist economy.

"However it's not just visitors that benefit. With a bit of innovative thinking, we can protect our natural heritage in a way that helps people and communities. We want people to have the opportunity to get involved, to have a say in how the environment is managed, to learn new skills and apply new technologies. We want to help ignite a passion for our natural world and its long-term conservation."

Since its inception, the Heritage Lottery Fund has invested £52.12 million in over 310 projects which conserve Scotland's landscape and biodiversity, from the Flows of Caithness to the valleys of the Tweed.

The Great Trossachs Forest
Woodland Trust Scotland
HLF Grant Award: £848,000

Situated in the heart of Loch Lomond and The Trossachs National Park, The Great Trossachs Forest is set to become a showcase for wildlife, tourism, outdoor leisure, learning and research. Covering an area of 16,650 hectares, close in size to the City of Glasgow, it is one of the most significant woodland regeneration projects to take place in a generation. Large scale restoration of native woodland will extend the woodland corridor from Loch Lomond to Kilmahog, allowing native woodland plants and animals to thrive. Gateway centres will be developed at RSPB Inversnaid nature reserve and Woodland Trust Scotland's Glen Finglas Estate to provide information points for visitors. Better path networks will improve access to the forest, and learning and play elements will be introduced to attract young families and primary school groups. Over 70 volunteers will take part in the project including wildlife surveying, an adopt-a-path scheme and internships The Great Trossachs Forest is a partnership project between Forestry Commission Scotland, RSPB Scotland, and the Woodland Trust Scotland.

The Botanic Cottage Project
Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh
HLF Grant Award: £708,700

The Botanic Cottage was the gateway to the original Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh site on Leith walk from 1764 to 1821. Designed by John Adam of the renowned Adam family, it has connections to eminent architects and scientists

and was where enlightened botanical teachings of the time took place. The cottage was threatened with demolition but as a result of tireless campaigning by the community, it was painstakingly dismantled stone by stone in 2008. It will now be resurrected less than two miles away at the current Royal Botanic Garden site as a hub for practical education and community engagement. It will once again thrive as a place of learning with training workshops in traditional building and craft skills for young apprentices, horticulture-themed projects for local schools, and history and heritage events and exhibitions for the general public.

Canal College
Scottish Waterways Trust
HLF Grant Award: £195,200

Up to 500 people are set to benefit from a major skills and employability programme centred on the Forth & Clyde and Union canals. Twelve 14-week programmes will help address youth unemployment in Falkirk and Edinburgh by teaching heritage and environmental skills to disadvantaged 16-25 years olds. They will undertake practical projects, conserving and interpreting the built, natural and cultural heritage of the canals. The canals, which are recognised as feats of Georgian engineering, played a fundamental role in the history of Scottish transport and industry. Today, the revitalised canals play a wider social role and are important wildlife corridors providing a variety of crucial habitats. The wider community will also be given the opportunity to take part in canal college through guided walks, talks and celebration events.

Explore Strathlachlan
The Lachlan Trust
HLF Grant Award: £411,100

The 15th Century Old Castle Lachlan, the ruined ancestral home of the Maclachlan Clan in Argyll, is in danger of collapse. Situated on a rocky headland on the Cowal peninsula, it is inaccessible to the public due to the loss of the bridge over the Lachlan River last November. The castle will now be partially consolidated and a heritage trail, with a new bridge and pathworks, developed to introduce visitors to the built and natural heritage and the designed and wild landscapes of east Loch Fyne.

Uncovering the Heritage of the Earth
Dynamic Earth Heritage Charitable Trust
HLF Grant Award: £622,800

A new gallery at Our Dynamic Earth will be created to celebrate the lives of five geologists, all with Scottish connections, whose work has shaped the understanding of our landscape. It will focus on the work of James Hutton. Although not particularly well known in Scotland, this Edinburgh farmer and naturalist is recognised worldwide as the father of modern geology. The new gallery will use entertaining and engaging interactive exhibits to tell the story of Hutton and his ‘Theory of the Earth’. It will show how his discoveries, and those of the geologists who came after him, laid the foundations for the way in which we understand how the Earth works and the hazards like volcanoes and earthquakes that affect the lives of people around the world. The themes of the exhibition will also be taken out, engaging through the science festivals across Scotland.

Notes to editors

The Heritage Lottery Fund awarded a grant of £965,500 to the Great Trossachs Forest project in 2008 to restore and enhance native woodland around Loch Katrine and Loch Arklet. The project which also includes new paths and

interpretation is due for completion in 2013. HLF has also help fund two projects in Glen Finglas.

Historic Scotland is an executive agency of the Scottish Government charged with safeguarding the nation's historic environment. The agency is fully accountable to Scottish Ministers and through them to the Scottish Parliament. Historic Scotland website

Further information

Heritage Lottery Fund: Shiona Mackay on 01786 870 638 / 07779 142 890 or Jon Williams on 020 7591 6035.

Woodland Trust Scotland: Sue Morris on 07775 034 851. The Great Trossachs Forest website.

Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh: Shauna Hay, Press and Marketing Manager on 0131 248 2900.

Canal college: Joanna Harrison on 07884 187 404.

Explore Strathlachlan: Marion Bowman 07957 232 932.

Our Dynamic Earth: Prof. Stuart Monro, Scientific Director on 0131 523 1230.