Lochbroom Field Club project ‘Selective Test Pitting of Roundhouses in Wester Ross’ wins Heritage Lottery Fund support

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The project will take place in three areas, Achiltibuie, Gairloch and Lochbroom. Led by volunteers from the local community, the project focuses on establishing when and how roundhouse dwellers occupied these houses in our local landscapes. Work will start at the first site in March 2012 and the project should be completed by March 2014.

The project has also received a grant of £1,700 from Highland Council.

The volunteers will dig and investigate small pits at each of at least six sites. School children as well as adult volunteers will be trained in archaeological skills including surveying, drawing scaled plans, trowelling, treatment of finds, photography and soil sampling. The children will be encouraged to explore the settlement landscape, and, while trowelling, to observe carefully in order to detect colour changes in the soil, flecks of charcoal, and any small buried artefacts. All volunteers will have input into explanatory leaflet and poster design, before and after each site dig. When the excavations are complete volunteers will be shown how to analyse and interpret soil samples. These will indicate the use roundhouse dwellers made of the land around them.

Roundhouses in Wester Ross have not been fully studied up to now. Local volunteers have recently taken part in a detailed field survey of roundhouses, and this has sparked an interest in finding out more about these prehistoric settlements. People lived in these over many centuries, from Neolithic times to the late Iron Age. Volunteers will try to understand more about how they fit in to our heritage in Wester Ross. The involvement of local school children is a very important part of the project as this will enable them to understand more about their heritage in their local landscape.

Commenting on the award, Bruce Ing, Chairman of Lochbroom Field Club, said: “We are thrilled to have received the support of the Heritage Lottery Fund and we are confident that the project will give hands on experience in excavation to many volunteers, and will engender an understanding of how prehistoric peoples lived in Wester Ross.’

Explaining the importance of the HLF support, Colin Maclean, the head of the Heritage Lottery Fund Scotland, said: "This is a very interesting project so we are delighted to give it our support. Our local communities have on their doorstep hidden clues to the way our ancestors lived and how our lives developed into what they are today. By delving into this history, volunteers, families and school children will not only expand their knowledge and learn lots of new skills, but it will also provide a unique record of the area for others to learn, enjoy and be inspired by."

Notes to editors

Lochbroom Field Club
The club supports studies in all aspects of our local environment. It has regular lecture meetings and field excursions which are open to the whole community.

Further information

For images and interviews, please contact Anna Welti at Lochbroom Field Club on 01854 612 647 and annawelti@btinternet.com.