North Yorkshire celebrates lottery win for Staveley Nature Reserve extension

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The money will be used by the Yorkshire Wildlife Trust (YWT), which has owned and managed the 40 hectare site near Harrogate and Knaresborough since 2002, to buy another 40 hectares of adjoining land, so extending the reserve to double its existing size.

The announcement comes as 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.** The UN is asking people to celebrate the enormous variety of wildlife and plant life our world has to offer, whilst also encouraging them to take direct action to safeguard biodiversity and protect it for the enjoyment of future generations.

The scheme at Staveley Nature Reserve will feature plans to improve the site ecologically, and run programmes to enable the public to play an active role in management of the natural world on their doorstep. Up to a hundred volunteers will have the opportunity to get involved over a two year period, taking part in the YWT's vision of a 'living landscape' where large areas of land are managed for their ecological interest and connected by green corridors.

Fiona Spiers, Head of the Heritage Lottery Fund for the Yorkshire and the Humber region, said: "HLF is a supporting partner for the International Year of Biodiversity and delighted to play a major part in improving and extending this unique nature reserve in North Yorkshire. Here, lottery players money will bring benefits to people of all ages, whether through volunteering, or simply enjoying the wonderful natural habitat that Staveley has to offer, whilst conserving the delicate ecological environment of the site for future generations."

Formerly known as the Staveley Carrs and part of the natural floodplain of the River Ure, the nature reserve has been popular with naturalists since the 18th century and records of the area feature in early works such as E Hargrove's 'History of Knaresborough' (1789, Blanchard, York). A true wildlife haven, Staveley's picturesque shallow open water lagoons, grasslands and meadows are home to many special and rare species of locally and regionally important flora and fauna. As such the area is highly valued by local people, Harrogate Borough Council (HBC), the district's naturalists and Natural England.

Wildlife at Staveley

Although not yet designated as a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), the reserve could qualify for such status on account of its large number of dragonfly species alone. Nineteen species have been recorded at the reserve, including recent colonisers ruddy darters, and migrant hawkers. A staggering 212 bird species have been also been recorded, ranging from the more commonly known blue tits, yellowhammers, kestrels and songthrushes, to species in serious decline such as tree sparrows and reed buntings. Almost 50 species are known to breed at Staveley Nature Reserve, and feature as priorities in the UK Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP).

Insect lovers will also find over 140 species of moth, ranging from the daylight predator, the five-spot burnet, to wetland specialist, the brown-veined wainscot. Beetles and butterflies are also in plentiful supply, although the YWT maintains visitors would be lucky to find the locally scarce brooklime leaf beetle, even though Staveley is a stronghold for the species.

Planned conservation, access and community activities
The project will enable YWT to purchase around 40 hectares of land and water adjacent to the existing Staveley Nature Reserve. In addition to physical works that will be carried out at the site to promote biological interest and nature conservation, access will be improved with upgraded footpaths, bird hides and car parking for visitors. A programme of activities will also include training opportunities in land management skills, the appointment of an outreach officer, and a range of volunteering and workshop sessions for community groups of all ages to learn about the wildlife and habitats of their local area.

Head of Reserves at the Yorkshire Wildlife Trust, David Hargreaves, said: “Thanks to the Heritage Lottery Fund we have the opportunity to engage with the current and future generation to enjoy, relish and more importantly to participate in saving and expanding a Living Landscape.”

Chief Executive Rob Stoneman, added: “This is brilliant news for wildlife and people in Yorkshire. Staveley Nature Reserve is a gem of site – an oasis of peaceful wetland wildlife; a place to relax in and enjoy; a place to be inspired by and learn from and now doubled in size thanks to the people who play the National Lottery.”

Notes to editors

* The HLF grant to the project Staveley’s Wetland Heritage is for £474,600 (70% of project costs) and is a second-round pass, which means it is a confirmed award.

Using money raised through the National Lottery, since 1994 the Heritage Lottery Fund has not only revitalised hundreds of museums, parks, historic buildings, landscapes and wildlife sites, but has also given new meaning to heritage itself. People from every walk of life are now involved with the heritage that inspires them, making choices about what they want to keep and share from the past, for future generations. HLF has supported more than 33,900 projects, allocating over £4.4billion across the UK, including £341million to more than 2,500 projects across the Yorkshire and the Humber region alone.

To date, HLF has made 146 awards in Harrogate amounting to just under £16.5million, including a major grant of £6million to the Royal Hall, Harrogate.

The **Yorkshire Wildlife Trust** (YWT) was set up over 60 years ago to enhance and protect Yorkshire’s wildlife havens. Through members and volunteers support they are a local charity working for local communities and wildlife. The YWT sees the future of wildlife conservation as a Living Landscape - by identifying key areas to protect for wildlife, improving and joining them up across the county in partnership with other land-owners, they aim to create an inspiring, accessible landscape which is full of wildlife and rich in opportunities for learning and sustainable economic development.

** 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 the International Year of Biodiversity. The diversity of life on earth is crucial for human well-being and now is the time to act to preserve it. www.biodiversityislife.net

Biodiversity projects in Yorkshire – a recent round up
A snapshot of recently awarded projects around the region shows the variety of nature conservation schemes HLF has funded, from large projects spanning the Pennines, to species and river conservation, and even biodiversity in Leeds city itself:

South Pennines Watershed Landscape

In March 2010 Pennine Prospects were awarded just under £1.9million for a four year project to bring the story of the Watershed Landscape to life. The South Pennines Watershed Landscape is the upland habitat where rainwater is divided east from west; North Sea from Irish Sea; Lancashire from Yorkshire. Funded under HLF's Landscape Partnership Scheme (LPS), the project will support landscape restoration, access and heritage projects across the area, which feels remote, wild, and exhilarating having inspired writers and artists across generations (from the Brontës to Ted Hughes; Henry Moore to Barbara Hepworth) whilst also supporting a human population of more than a million people.

HLF's LPS schemes help to bring together members of the community as well as local, regional, and national organisations to deliver schemes which benefit some of the UK's most outstanding landscapes and rural communities. Grants range from £250,000 up to £2million.

Conserving Ripon's Hackfall Woods Landscape

Hackfall Woods, near Ripon, have been undergoing a major restoration – due to complete this summer thanks to a grant of £948,500 given by the HLF in 2007. Work on the 18th-century landscape, which includes repairs to some of four listed 'follies', has provided a greatly improved network of paths with waymarkers and information boards, a new car park, educational facilities, a website, volunteering opportunities and the employment of a part-time officer. An important aspect of the work has been to conserve the ecology of the site, which is a SSSI containing a largely undisturbed example of ancient semi-natural broadleaved woodland. The grant has also enabled the repair of a magnificent fountain which has not been working since the early 1800s.

River Calder – promoting Huddersfield's biodiversity

In 2007 HLF awarded £50,000 to YWT for a two year activity project to promote the natural heritage of the River Calder and the communities that live along it. The River Calder Biodiversity Project saw improved access for everyone and interpretation at three sites, habitat management training for local volunteers, and a part-time officer to manage the access works, produce walks leaflets, and run wildlife talks and walks.

Various events led by bird experts and other conservationists were also hosted. Recently completed, this fantastic project has helped the community develop a sense of ownership and conservation of a sensitive wetland habitat which will continue well beyond the life of the project.

City biodiversity - Chevin Through Time in Leeds

A two year project awarded £48,600 by HLF in 2008, Chevin Through Time aimed to illuminate the geological and heritage features of Chevin Forest Park in Otley, Leeds. Gaining status as a Local Nature Reserve in 1989 and now managed by Leeds City Council, the 180 hectare park attracts 500,000 visitors per year for its wildlife value and is also famous for two Iron Age settlements and links to Turner who painted scenes on the Chevin. Run by the Friends of Chevin Forest Park, and the West Yorkshire Geology Trust, the project featured many initiatives designed to bring the natural heritage of the area to life, including: wildlife spotters guides, geological interpretation panels, new trail leaflets, and a 2010 – 2011 Chevin Through Time calendar. An oral history project examining the stories of the people who lived and worked on the Chevin was also carried out.

Further information

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