Children and communities across the UK to protect



The Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) has announced support for the UK-wide biodiversity project - Polli:Nation, a programme which supports schools and communities in helping to protect the future of our seriously dwindling pollinating insect population. A grant of £1.4million has now been confirmed by HLF following the successful development of the project.

The award comes after the publication of a report by the Natural Capital Committee that showed the decline in our natural environment is harmful to the economy. 'Free' pollination by bees and other insects has previously been valued at £430m to UK agriculture each year* and is crucial to the survival of our countryside but pollinating insects are in severe decline. One of the main drivers of this decline is thought to be the loss of natural and semi-natural habitats.

The Polli:Nation project will engage pupils, teachers and volunteers in 260 schools across the UK to transform school grounds and local community spaces into pollinator-friendly habitats. Children and young people will learn all about pollinators and make changes to their local environments to improve opportunities for these precious insects.

Launching the first UK-wide pollinator survey, Polli:Nation will equip children and local communities with the tools and skills to help scientists build a picture of the state and potential of habitats for our pollinators.

Juno Hollyhock, Executive Director of Learning through Landscapes. explains: "We are delighted that the Polli:Nation project has been funded by HLF, and that 260 schools can now transform their grounds to become pollinator-friendly spaces. Schools are at the heart of our communities and we hope through the Polli:Nation survey that children and adults alike will be inspired to make the changes needed to help our pollinating insects.

"We believe that this important and inspiring project will help children and young people to learn about the development of their natural environments, both in and out of their school grounds, teaching them that the changes we make to our surroundings can have a profound effect on critical issues such as our deteriorating habitats."

Drew Bennellick, HLF's Head of Landscape and Natural Heritage, said: "The huge contribution that our pollinators make to the country often goes unacknowledged but recent research has shown that they not only help our environment flourish but also have a real economic impact. We need to do all we can to halt the decline in pollinator habitats and schools can play a crucial role in turning the tide. The project reaches an impressive 260 schools nationwide giving it the potential to make a real difference. But it will also equip children with the skills and knowledge to connect to nature, something which HLF sees as invaluable if we are to protect our pollinators for the future."

Learning through Landscapes has developed the Polli:Nation project along with other sector partners including The Field Studies Council, Buglife, Butterfly Conservation, OPAL Imperial College London, Stirling University, Bumblebee Conservation and The Conservation Volunteers.

Notes to Editors

* UK National Ecosystem Assessment Technical Report published in 2011.

About LEARNING THROUGH LANDSCAPES (LTL):

Learning through Landscapes is the national charity working to ensure that every child benefits from outdoor learning and play. It advises government, engages the private sector and empowers school communities and early years settings to make the best of their outside spaces for children's education and well-being.

In a recent survey of schools that improved their grounds with LTL support, 88% said it had resulted in more creative learning and environmental awareness among pupils. Despite such benefits, 80% of teachers in a recent MORI poll said they believe that their school is failing to make the most of their outdoor spaces. LTL aims to change this - and is the only organisation focussing specifically on school environments in order to do so.

Over the past 25 years, LTL has worked directly with over 10,000 schools, raised over 24 million pounds for grounds improvements and trained thousands of teachers and practitioners to help them rethink the design and use of their outdoor environments.

Further information

For any enquiries or information about how to get involved, send your emails to pollination@ltl.org.uk and follow @ltl_pollination for further announcements.

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