

Young visitors explore with Claire Garrity, College Lake's environmental education manager Rob Lewis

College Lake, the wildlife trust's flagship nature reserve near Tring, is located in an old chalk quarry, which has been yielding prehistoric specimens and geological mysteries for decades.

Now the wildlife trust will develop a broad ranging project covering the geology and agricultural heritage of the site, which was a farm before the land was opened up to extract chalk.

Christopher Williams, Head of Conservation and Education for Buckinghamshire is looking forward to starting work. He said: "College Lake is such an amazing place to learn about geology and how soil creates wildlife habitats. For the last 30 years we've been collecting fossils and specimen from the chalk, and now we will be able to display these and use them in our education work. We have an impressive collection of historic tools and agricultural equipment which will form part of the exhibition. New interpretation displays will help visitors gain a better understanding of the ways the land was cultivated in the past."

Earth Explorers will become a central part of the College Lake education programme. More than 3,500 schoolchildren visit every year from schools across Bucks, Herts and Beds. When the project is up and running in 2016 it will be linked with the Key Stage 2 curriculum focus on rocks, soils and evolution to give children first-hand experience of the region's only geological Site of Special Scientific Interest.

Stuart McLeod, Head of HLF South East, said: “Thanks to money raised by National Lottery players we’re delighted to support this project which will finally uncover the fascinating geological story of College Lake. As well as enhancing current collections at the popular nature reserve, visitors – particularly local schoolchildren – will get a glimpse even further back into the site’s past to see how its formation and use has created the environment we can see today.”

Notes to editors

BBOWT is one of 47 wildlife trusts across the UK working to achieve the shared aim of securing a better future for wildlife. BBOWT’s vision is to create a region rich in wildlife and appreciated by all. BBOWT manages 86 nature reserves across the three counties, works with other agencies and individuals to help safeguard the wider countryside, and aims to inspire people to take action for wildlife. BBOWT has over 52,000 members. Find out more on the BBOWT website.

Further information

For further information and photos of College Lake contact Wendy Tobitt, BBOWT Media & Campaigns Manager, on 01865 788 318.