Groups take action for future of natural heritage



Eric Ennion's drawing of grey wagtails Estate of E.A.R. Ennion

Ivor Crowther, Head of Heritage Lottery Fund North East, said: “From protecting rare heavy horse breeds to collecting never heard before stories from the Pennines, these projects demonstrate just how fantastic the North East’s heritage is – and the work that needs to be done to protect it. Thanks to money raised by National Lottery players, as well as the help of volunteers and hands-on activities, we look forward to seeing these projects succeed.”

Looking to the future for heavy horses

Milfield Heavy Horse Association £9,500

As well as a key role in farming, heavy horses, including the Shire and Suffolk Punch, were a powerful force in the industrial revolution.

The Milfield Heavy Horse Association, at Hay Farm in Berwick-upon-Tweed, is dedicated to the preservation of rare breed heavy horses and keeping traditional skills alive.

The grant will enable the association to develop their future plans and build on the skills of their committed group of volunteers. They will also work towards gaining Museums Accreditation and their ultimate goal of developing an accessible visitor attraction and training venue for disappearing rural crafts and skills.

Gaining new skills to restore a pond

Billingham Town Council £26,700

An overgrown and litter-strewn pond is set for a makeover thanks to the Billingham Youth Council.

More than 70 young people will descend on Harrington's Pond to carry out litter picking, scrub clearance, restoration of historic pathways and improving the area for both people and wildlife.

[quote=Ivor Crowther, Head of HLF North East]"These projects demonstrate just how fantastic the North East's heritage is – and the work that needs to be done to protect it. "[/quote]

As well as a new boulder seating area and interpretation board, the project will see the installation of bird boxes, an amphibian hibernaculum for wildlife to use during the winter and the introduction of a range of wildflower species around the pond's edge.

A wildlife survey will be carried out before and after the project to discover how the work has helped and what still needs to be done.

Under the guidance of Tees Valley Wildlife Trust, the young volunteers will gain skills in habitat conservation and have the opportunity to gain a bronze, silver or gold award from the trust or use their efforts to achieve a John Muir award.

The wider community will also be able to get involved thanks to drop-in sessions and a range of activities.

Giving a voice to the people of the Pennines

North Pennines AONB Partnership £9,900

As an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, the stunning natural heritage of the North Pennines is well-known. The stories of those who have worked there however have rarely been told.

While the area appears largely untouched by people, in reality it takes a huge amount of time, effort and skill to conserve and enhance it.

The project will give farmers, conservationists, land managers and landowners the opportunities to share their memories of the different roles they have played over the years.

Looking back over the past 60 years, project volunteers will search local archives, host field days and share their findings at an exhibition at Bowlees Visitor Centre.

Creative connections with a wildlife artist

University of Sunderland £10,000

Eric Ennion, celebrated 20th century bird illustrator, lived and worked on the Northumberland coast during the 1950s and made major contributions to the knowledge of bird migration in the area.

Ennion's drawings and watercolours captured movement, posture and characteristics of birds which photographs were unable to. He and his wife also founded the Field Centre and Bird Observatory at Monk's House.

Despite his achievements however, his work and life is largely unknown.

The University of Sunderland and Sunderland Museums and Winter Gardens are setting out to change that. With help from volunteers, the Natural History Society of Northumbria and Tyne and Wear Museums Eric Ennion's work will be researched, catalogued and exhibited at Sunderland Museum.

WEA Botanical Drawings group, Durham Bird Club and Durham Wildlife Trust members will also be involved.

Bird handling, identification, research and drawing sessions will enable the local community to gain a hand-on insight into Ennion's craft and his feathered subjects. Four drawing workshops will be held in local schools.

Further information

For more information contact Rebecca Lamm, HLF press office, on 020 7591 6245 or Rebecca.Lamm@hlf.org.uk.



At work on the North Pennines in the 1930s

Taking action for the North East's natural heritage