Millions awarded to protect ancient Ulster



Beaghmore Stone Circle

The Heart of Ancient Ulster Landscape Partnership will conserve and protect 144 sq km of outstanding Neolithic landscape and reconnect the local community to its unique natural, built and cultural heritage.

The proposals from Mid Ulster District Council in partnership with Fermanagh and Omagh District Council and a local stakeholder group include plans to deliver a number of integrated projects across the area over a five-year period. Activities will include the protection and promotion of the landscape's archaeology; creating the first Dark Sky Reserve in Northern Ireland; restoring and maintaining over 25,000 hectares of blanket and raised bog; reducing carbon emissions from the peatland; recruiting volunteers to help plant 100,000 native trees and increasing access to the landscape by installing over 10km of new trails and walks.

Paul Mullan, Head of HLF Northern Ireland, said: "This extraordinary rural and isolated landscape has been preserved in time and allows us to step back 10,000 years to explore and experience it in the same way as our ancient ancestors. It is hugely important in local and national terms and we are delighted that money raised by National Lottery players is helping to protect and conserve it."

Councillor Trevor Wilson, Chair of Mid Ulster District Council, noted the great opportunities provided through the HLF support: "This area is rich in archaeology which shows that communities have been living among its hills and valleys for

at least 7,000 years. We wish to protect a unique environment while also ensuring that an important part of our ancient heritage can be enjoyed.

“The initial funding of £85,000 from HLF is substantial in itself and will allow us to consider our plans in more detail. I’m delighted with the award”.

Over the last decade, HLF’s Landscape Partnership programme has provided £221m across the UK. The programme helps to forge new partnerships between public and community bodies, ensuring people are better equipped to understand and tackle the needs of their local landscapes. Grants range from £100,000 to £3m.

HLF has invested almost £40m in Northern Ireland’s natural heritage. This funding is helping to conserve key species and habitats, restore historic built heritage and protect our precious green spaces right across Northern Ireland, from Lough Neagh to the Glens of Antrim, and the Sperrins to Faughan Valley.

Today’s announcement includes a development award of £85,000 to enable Mid Ulster District Council to fully develop the proposals.

Further information

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