Stunning Lough Erne area receives £2.6million

Crome Estate, Lough Erne

A major new initiative to protect and conserve Lough Erne and its surroundings is underway thanks to a £2.6m National Lottery grant.

The award to the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds NI (RSPB NI) and partners is for a new five-year Landscape Partnership project.

The Lough Erne Landscape Partnership (LELP) will deliver 23 individual projects to improve access, protect habitats and species and engage communities with the heritage in 500 square kilometres of landscape.

Activities will include the creation of trails and walkways, invasive species will be better managed to allow native plants to thrive and conservation works will support the breeding populations of waders such as curlew, snipe, and lapwing, which have seen a catastrophic decline of more than 80% over the last 30 years.

Local people will be encouraged to get involved in the project, with a dedicated training and volunteering programme providing opportunities to become a heritage champion for the landscape, lead guided tours or develop traditional skills such as stone carving, thatching, and heritage crafts. Engaging with people and communities is at the core of the Partnership Scheme.

An area of breathtaking beauty

Announcing the award, Head of HLF Northern Ireland, Paul Mullan, said: “The Fermanagh Lakelands are an area of breathtaking beauty, rich in history and culture and treasured as a space for relaxation and enjoyment.

“However the area has suffered from habitat loss and species decline, largely due to the lack of a co-ordinated management strategy. So we are delighted that, thanks to National Lottery players, RSPB NI and partners can progress their vision for the area, safeguarding the landscape and reconnecting people to the heritage of this amazing landscape.”

The LELP is led by RSPB NI in partnership with Fermanagh and Omagh District Council, Waterways Ireland, Fermanagh Rural Community Network, Upper Lough Erne Tourism Development Association, and the National Trust.

Carved stone figure on Boa Island Fermanagh and Omagh DC

ottery funding boost

View to Knockninny, Lough Erne Giles Knight

Making a difference to the heritage of Northern Ireland