Lough Erne Landscape Partnership receives



The Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) confirmed the award for the new Landscape Partnership project at Lough Erne led by the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds NI (RSPB NI).

The beautiful Fermanagh Lakeland landscape consists of numerous islands, long shorelines, rivers, wet meadows, blanket bog, grasslands and woodlands. It is home to an array of internationally important species and habitats, and contains a wealth of natural, built, archaeological, cultural and industrial heritage spanning 9,000 years.

The Lough Erne Landscape Partnership (LELP) plans to deliver 23 individual projects to improve access, protect habitats and species, and engage communities with the heritage in 500km2 of landscape. It will support an innovative partnership approach to the ongoing, integrated management of the natural environment, led by the 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.

Funding for LELP was awarded through HLF's Landscape Partnership programme which helps to protect and manage some of the UK's most spectacular landscapes. Announcing the award, Head of HLF Northern Ireland, Paul Mullan, said: "The Fermanagh Lakelands are an area of breath taking 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.”

Activities will include the creation of trails and walkways to improve access. 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.

Welcoming the news, Joanne Sherwood, Director of RSPB NI, added: “Fermanagh is a wonderful place rich in natural, built and cultural heritage. RSPB NI is thankful for HLF support and delighted to take a leading role working closely with partners and the community to make a lasting difference for heritage and people.”

Notes to Editors

- HLF’s Landscape Partnerships are helping bring together members of the community as well as local, regional, and national organisations to deliver schemes which benefit some of the UK’s most outstanding landscapes and rural communities. Grants range from £100,000 to £3m. The programme is now closed for further applications.
- Thanks to National Lottery players, we invest money to help people across the UK explore, enjoy and protect the heritage they care about - from the archaeology under our feet to the historic parks and buildings we love, from precious memories and collections to rare wildlife.

Follow us on Twitter @HLFNI, Facebook and Instagram and use #HLFsupported.

Further information please contact Julie Halliday at HLF Northern Ireland, tel: 07733 100674, email: julieh@hlf.org.uk.

Media enquiries to RSPB NI please contact Brian Campbell, tel: 07736 477526, email: Brian.Campbell@rspb.org.uk.