

Project Brief – Traditional Boundaries

Introduction

The Forest of Bowland Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) is the lead partner of the proposed Pendle Hill Landscape Partnership (LP). This exciting programme of activity looks to re-connect people with their landscape and their past, to safeguard the area's wildlife and heritage and to improve people's access to this popular countryside area. We will do this by providing opportunities for training and volunteering; by supporting research and devising digital interpretation to inspire a new generation about our heritage; by restoring important landscape features, and by working with communities to re-tell the stories of radical Pendle people. This programme will increase pride in this special place and raise aspirations amongst communities, and it will bring in new investment to support the environment and the economy.

The Pendle Hill LP scheme has three themes:

- To improve the environment
- To build the local economy
- To provide opportunity for everyone to get involved

These themes incorporate a number of projects, and you can read more about these and the area and its heritage here <http://forestofbowland.com/Pendle-Hill-Landscape-Partnership> . The themes will be gathered together with a series of creative and digital threads, bringing the two sides of the hill together and inspiring and involving people in this special place.

Identified Needs and Threats for the project

There is a concern over the neglect of field boundaries in some parts of the LP area, leading to a loss of the landscape fabric and quality. Boundaries, particularly hedgerows, have become redundant in lower lying dairy areas where larger fields are required for grazing pasture and for growing silage for fodder.

Parish boundary surveys in Barley, Roughlee, Downham, and Twiston between 2004 and 2007 found on average 20% of walls required major repair, and 35% - 75% of hedgerows were in poor condition.

Large scale loss of hedgerows and walls can add to the causes of soil erosion, overland flow and flood risk.

The LP area has a number of distinctive holly hedgerows, species diverse hedges on banks, old hedgerow trees, ancient walls, sunken tracks, and banks, as well as estate walls and railings.

In some areas roadside walls and hedges are also in a deteriorating condition and require restoration

Loss of hedgerows and dry stone walls leads to a severing of ecological networks, a loss of habitat and species diversity, and of the traditional rural skills of walling and hedge laying.

Costs of traditional boundary restoration are relatively high due to the need for skilled labour. Modern fences can be installed quickly and cheaply, however fences lack the landscape and biodiversity value and require more frequent maintenance and replacement in the long term. They also offer less shelter to stock.

There is a shortage of suitably qualified wallers and hedgelayers, these rural skills are under pressure and under paid.

Description of the Project

Key aims will be to:

- To restore and maintain traditional boundaries as an essential element of the landscape
- To restore and maintain hedgerows for biodiversity and flood risk management
- To provide training in rural skills (hedge laying and dry stone walling) for trainees, farmers, parish lengthsman, contractors, young farmers groups and volunteers
- To raise awareness of the value of traditional boundaries and of rural skills

The project will consist of three parts:

1. Grants to landowners and farmers
2. Training courses in hedge laying and dry stone walling
3. Supporting farmers and landowners who are restoring traditional boundaries through agri-environment schemes

Identified Outputs

We are aiming to restore at least 1000m of wall (@£45/m) and re plant or lay at least 5000m of hedgerow (@£15/m) through the grant scheme, restoration activity and training courses.

Outputs also include 100 volunteer days to be generated over the 4 years, and 50 training days to be provided (20 at certificated level)

Partners to liaise with

Lancashire & Westmorland Hedgelaying Association, the Dry Stone Walling Association

Landowners, farmers and commoners

Environment Agency

Pendle Farmers Network

Natural England advisors

Other LP schemes

LCC Countryside Service and AONB team

Budget

The outline budget is for £170,000 over 4 years; however this is flexible and could be increased, especially if alternative match funds could be identified

HLF is currently providing £120,000 the AONB £10,000 and the Environment Agency £20,000.

The project also aims to raise at least £20,000 worth of agri environment activity (as project match funding) via these schemes where they meet the priorities of the project.

At least £100,000 should be made available as capital grants, and a small pot of funds (c£6000) will also be retained to be utilised by the project to fund important boundaries and to support small scale improvement works and preparatory works, eg for training courses. 20-30% of project costs can be dedicated to professional fees and project management costs.

The budget is augmented by a contribution of 100 volunteer days over the 4 years @£50 a day = £5000

The LP staff team will provide administrative support for the grant scheme by promoting the scheme and administering grant offers and financial claims.

Development work required (2016-17)

Liaison and discussion with partners – is this feasible, attractive, is there a demand?

Identify target areas for boundary restoration using 2016 survey data and previous boundary surveys, and in consultation with partners

Design a grant scheme, including budget allocations, criteria, standards, and assessment and evaluation methods

Plan for training sessions, including target audiences, numbers, potential trainers, certification etc

Consider farm advisory work, targets, days of support required etc

Draw up detailed costings

Agree HLF outcomes to be delivered

Identify and secure any additional match funds