



Little Ouse Headwaters Project



PRESS RELEASE

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Little Ouse Headwaters Project wins Heritage Lottery Fund support for New Fen

The Little Ouse Headwaters Project (LOHP) has received £75,000 from the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) for an exciting new project, the Restoration of New Fen, in Thelnetham, Suffolk. Led by volunteers from the local community, the LOHP manages land on the Suffolk/Norfolk border for conservation and public access. The new Our Heritage award has enabled the charity to purchase 2.2ha of land adjacent to its existing sites in Thelnetham, Thelnetham Fen nature reserve, which is internationally important for its rare plants and animals. New Fen adds another important piece to the jigsaw of wildlife sites in the Little Ouse valley. Formerly part of the edge of Thelnetham Fen, the site has been used for arable agriculture and as a tree plantation in recent decades. Over the next two years the HLF award will allow surveys to be undertaken to assess how best to restore its fen wildlife. Public access will be created and funding will allow training for LOHP volunteers and more editions of the LOHP's successful newsletter (News from the Ouse).

The LOHP is a charity that is run entirely by volunteers, and now manages over 67 hectares of land in the valley. This new grant follows the successful completion earlier this year of another HLF funded project, which, among other activities, enabled the purchase and restoration of Webbs Fen, also in Thelnetham.

Commenting on the award, Dr Jo-Anne Pitt, LOHP Chair said: "We are thrilled to have received the support of the Heritage Lottery Fund again, and our volunteers are looking forward to the challenge of starting to restore the new land as part of the complex of wonderful wildlife sites in Thelnetham and Blo' Norton"

Explaining the importance of the HLF support, the Head of the HLF in the East of England, Robyn Llewellyn said: "Our natural heritage is of crucial importance and this project is a great example of the impact HLF funding can have on heritage, people and communities."

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Notes to editors

About the Little Ouse Headwaters Project

The project is a registered charity, established in 2002 by local residents keen to take practical action to help protect and restore threatened aspects of the local landscape and its wildlife. It is located on the Norfolk/Suffolk border at the headwaters of the Little Ouse River (which forms the county border).

The LOHP is a community-based, volunteer run project – it is managed by a Board of Trustees drawn from the local area. We currently manage over 67 hectares of land adjacent to the river. Our overall aim is to encourage the creation of a continuous corridor of land along the headwaters of the river that is managed in a way that benefits wildlife and people, and helps to preserve the character of the local landscape.

The upper Little Ouse valley contains sites of local, national and international importance for wildlife, most notably the small remaining fragments of valley fen. Some of the sites we manage are protected by conservation designations (national – Site of Special Scientific Interest, or European – Special Area of Conservation)

We are committed to increasing public access and enjoyment of the project area by creating new footpaths, providing guided walks, and encouraging people to become involved in the project as volunteers.

Since 2002 we have raised over £1 million to support land acquisition, habitat restoration and management, and public access improvements and interpretation on our sites. We have been funded by a very wide range of charitable trusts and received major grants from the Heritage Lottery Fund, the EU, Natural England, Biffaward, the Tubney Charitable Trust and Plantlife, as well as funding from Natural England's Environmental Stewardship schemes.

In 2010 we were awarded a £370,000 Heritage Lottery Fund grant for a 3 year project "Conservation and Learning in the Upper Little Ouse Valley". This enabled us to undertake a range of activities in addition to wildlife conservation, including education work with a local school, heritage walks, newsletters, photography, volunteer training, and a significant collaboration with the Sainsbury Centre for Visual Arts to establish a Creative Group, drawing artistic inspiration from the valley.

The LOHP has won a number of national and regional awards for its work. Further information about the project can be found on our web site: www.lohp.org.uk

About the Heritage Lottery Fund

Using money raised through the National Lottery, the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) aims to make a lasting difference for heritage, people and communities across the UK and help build a resilient heritage economy. From museums, parks and historic places to archaeology, natural environment and cultural traditions, we invest in every part of our diverse heritage. HLF has supported almost 35,000 projects with more than £5.3bn across the UK. www.hlf.org.uk.

For further information, images and interviews, please contact:

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