

Appendix 1- Action Plan - Shelf projects

1.18) Project Title: Golf Club Forum

Theme

Biodiversity

Background

The remaining parks and demesnes in the Regional Park area have not only left a legacy of public parkland spaces but have also resulted in a number of quality parkland golf clubs. These include Belvoir Golf Club, Malone Golf Club, Aberdelgy Golf Club, Dunmurry Golf Club and Balmoral Golf Club. Whilst these clubs are in private ownership they are also of high landscape character value and so efforts should be made to engage with the associated management teams.

Project Description and outputs

The LVRP manager should meet individually with each golf club manager to develop a working relationship and gain an understanding of the landscape and biodiversity quality of the course and what measures the club are using to conserve its main parkland features and identify improvements to existing biodiversity practice. A possible joint forum of all clubs should be created with a remit to conserve the conservation features of the regional park, identify potential practices and projects to increase biodiversity and promote and improve the profile of the club. There is potential for a win-win benefit to both parties.

Targets

Create a golf forum that meet 2 times a year

Improve biodiversity of 0.5ha of land

Outcomes

Improve the biodiversity of Regional Park

Conserve the natural features of the regional park

Improve relationships with local businesses and develop further partner projects

Timetable

2017 - 2021

Partners

LVRP, Golf Clubs

Cost

Only cost would be staff time of manager of possible max 5 days a year

Further Information and Links

https://www.auduboninternational.org/resources/Documents/Fact%20Sheets/Golf%20and%20Environment/G_E%20-%20Environmental%20Management%20Guidelines%20for%20Golf.pdf

<http://www.sgeg.org.uk/documents/Publications%20and%20Case%20Studies/SGEG%20Env%20Case%20Study%20-%20Nature%20-%20Grassland%20Management%20-%20Coatbridge%20GC.pdf>

<http://www.biodiversityscotland.gov.uk/duty/do-it/open-spaces/golf-courses/>

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1.20) Project Title

Belvoir Park ASSI Management Plan

Theme

Biodiversity

Background

Belvoir Park ASSI is of special scientific interest for its parkland and wood pasture habitat and associated species. Belvoir ASSI largely lies within the area of the original Belvoir Estate and is owned and managed by Forest Service as a commercial forest and recreational park, by Belvoir Park Golf Club as a golf course and by BCC in morelands meadow as an open pasture. The site was only recently declared an ASSI in 2015 and covers 103 ha.

Project Description

There is an opportunity to work closely with the Forest Service, BCC, NIEA and the golf course to develop a joint working management plan to protect and improve the main conservation objectives of the ASSI whilst improving it as a recreational facility. Funding for the project should be sought from the DAERA rural development programme woodland and forestry planting programme, The Forestry Service NI, the Heritage Lottery, and the NIEA Challenge Fund. Potential projects within the programme could include:

- Provide an updated habitat and species survey
- Provide tree planting and regeneration plan
- Plan the retention of large dead branches, fallen deadwood and the remains of old trees in situ, and link to fungi, lichens and invertebrate's conservation
- In parts of the park investigate the introduction a grazing scheme working in partnership with local farmers to maintain the open parkland and wood pasture habitat.
- Through volunteering establish of a steady supply of new generations of trees through planting of appropriate species
- Develop a seed collection and nursery associated with the ancient trees of the Park
- Establish a formal invasive species removal programme through use of trained up LVRP volunteers
- Restore parts of boundary wall for built heritage reasons
- Identify ways to provide invertebrate, small bird, bats and small mammal habitats within the wall
- Put together education programme with local schools and local community associations
- Put together series of tree walks and talks for Belvoir Park Forest

- Provide improved physical visitor facilities at Belvoir Park Forest including shelter and toilet facilities (under agreement/licence with Forest Service)
- Develop further visitor information and pathways

Outcomes

- Increase biodiversity of the Regional Park
- Retain park and landscape character of the Regional Park
- Maximise existing resources available in Regional Park
- Develop strong partnership with Forest Service, private sector and local communities
- Enhance landscape character of area
- Attract private sector investment and start new businesses

Target

- Set up Liaison Group
- Preserve all ancient trees
- Plant 500 trees per year over 5 years
- Remove 3 ha of invasive species from Regional Park
- Attract investment
- Set up or assist two/three new businesses that can operate within the ASSI conditions
- Involve 200 volunteers over 5 years
- Improve 3 km of paths

Time table

2017 – 2021

Partners

LVRP, Forestry NI, Woodland Trust, LCCC, BCC

Costs

Survey and plan	£20,000
Planting	£70,000
Visitor facilities	£200,000
Path improvement and signage	£130,000
Wall preservation	£30,000
Nursery	£30,000

New ranger £200,000

Total estimated Cost £680,000

Further Information

<https://www.daera-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/doe/Belvoir-ASSI-citation-documents-and-map.pdf>

http://jncc.defra.gov.uk/pdf/CSM_woodland.pdf

<http://www3.hants.gov.uk/woodland-woodpasture.pdf>

https://www.royalparks.org.uk/data/assets/pdf_file/0007/41767/richmond-park-management-plan.pdf

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1.21) Project Title: Filling the Gaps

Theme

Biodiversity

Background

There are many hedges throughout the park that need managed and maintained. In particular, there are a number gaps and spaces that have developed and need repaired whilst some hedges have been successfully laid and are being maintained well. There is an opportunity to fill gaps and repair many hedges through planting with native species mixes, whilst the well maintained and laid hedges can be used as demonstrations to showcase the benefits of laid hedges and to continue to lay more sections.

Project Description

Identify hedge gaps and improve with volunteers. Also, hold two hedge laying and repair training events a year

Outcomes

- Increase biodiversity of the regional park
- Enhance landscape character of park area
- Develop skills of volunteers

Target

- Hold two training events
- Restore 200 m of hedge

Time table

2017 – 2021

Partners

LVRP, Volunteers, LCCC, BCC, DfI, TCV, CAFRE

Costs

Hedging tools £450

Hedging whips £1,200

Training per day £700 (2 days)

Total £2350

Further Information

<http://www.ydmt.org/get-involved-details-introduction-to-hedgelaying-23138>

<http://www.hedgelaying.org.uk/>

<http://www.hedgelaying.ie/>

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1.22) Project Title: Road Verges, A biodiversity resource for everyone

Theme

Biodiversity

Background

Within the park, semi-natural grassland, more so than other habitat has been in major decline due to agricultural intensification and urban creep. The only area left in Northern Ireland of any significant semi improved grassland is in Fermanagh and Tyrone. However, there is a considerable area of road systems networked throughout the park, with associated grass verges. These verges have a potential to bring back some semi natural grass areas and provide a greater level of biodiversity if managed differently. Outside the main public parks within the Regional Park, road verges represent a vital repository for this natural feature, and can potentially create new natural corridors. There is therefore an opportunity of reclaiming the Regional Parks previous natural floral diversity within a present day urbanised or intensively farmed landscape. See pilot project carried out by Envision and the Roads Service NI (Transport NI).

Project Description

LVRP staff work in partnership with Transport NI and the Councils to survey, identify, map and prioritise specific verged area and set up a working group. After discussion and agreement LVRP staff could enter into a service level and management agreement with Transport NI not to cut the grass at certain times and not leave cuttings.

Outcomes

- Increase biodiversity of the Regional Park
- Maximise existing resources available in park
- Develop strong partnership with Transport NI and the Councils for future projects
- Enhance landscape character of area

Target

- Set up Liaison Group
- Create small site and maintenance plan
- Enhance 1 ha of grass verge on roads to semi natural grassland

Time table

2017 – 2021

Partners

LVRP, Transport NI, LCCC, BCC

Costs

Staff time of 5 days

Consultant survey and site identification £4000

£3200 for seeds,

£2309 for plugs

Sustainability

£2200 annual maintenance costs for service level agreement

Costs savings from reduced maintenance costs of Transport NI

(Apply to challenge fund)

Further Information

<https://nmni.com/Documents/UM/CEDaR/Road-verge-pilot>

[https://www.dorsetforyou.gov.uk/...Road-Verges.../Guidance sheet road verges](https://www.dorsetforyou.gov.uk/...Road-Verges.../Guidance%20sheet%20road%20verges)

<http://www.essexbiodiversity.org.uk/species-and-habitats/roadside-verges>

3.7) Project Title: Connecting with Nature

Theme

Community

Background

The new draft “Northern Ireland Executives Programme for Government Framework 2016 – 2021”, which is still at consultation stage, identified its overall purpose as to: “Improve the wellbeing for all by tackling disadvantage and driving economic growth.” Addressing the issues associated with social disadvantage and inequality are therefore a priority for regional and local government and the Lagan Valley Regional Park can play its part in helping to implement this policy.

Project Description and outputs

The basis of this proposal is to engage with 5 groups of people from more disadvantaged areas around the park and in the wider Belfast area to develop links with the natural world and inform them of the huge health, learning and recreational benefits that are available within the park. The project will target a number of specific wards and housing estates that are within the top 20% of disadvantaged communities that live close to the park. These include Upper Malone 2, Minnowburn, Hilden 1. Estates could include Seymore Hill, Belvoir Park and Taughmonagh. Five outdoor walks and talks will be held outside and include areas such as local history, foraging, nature identification, nature senses, and woodland trees.

Outcomes

- Develop links with the Regional Park and social disadvantaged groups
- Use the park as a learning resource
- Improve the well-being of people who live beside the Regional Park
- Enhance landscape character of the area through conservation volunteering

Target

- Engage with five disadvantaged groups
- Engage with 50 people
- Hold five walks and talks
- Recruit 5 volunteers from 50 participants

Time table

2017 – 2021

Partners

LVRP, LCCC, BCC, DC, South Belfast Partnership

Costs

Costs 4 days of staff time

Further Information

<http://www.cumbernauldlivinglandscape.org.uk/flagship-projects/natural-connections/>

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/nature/22691839/>

<http://blogs.ei.columbia.edu/2011/05/26/why-we-must-reconnect-with-nature/>

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3.8) Project Title: Our Remarkable Trees

Theme

Community Engagement

Background

The Lagan Valley Regional Park has some of the oldest trees in Ireland and Northern Ireland. Trees have a strong spiritual, religious and cultural connections with people and there is an opportunity to develop this often lost connection and link with the cultural traditions of people who live in Northern Ireland.

Project Description and outputs

The project will connect with three different groups from different religious and cultural traditions in Belfast. The three groups include a Protestant, Roman Catholic and East European group. The basis of the project will be to:

- Talk on the trees of the Lagan Valley Regional Park providing an explanation of their importance to history of Ulster and Ireland and the connection with wider ancient European forests
- A walk in the various parks and forests to have a “meeting with the remarkable trees”
- Each group will identify their own tree or group of trees and its significance to their religion or cultural background. Eg Oaktree to ancient Irish traditions, the ash tree to hurling and sport, the yew tree to cemeteries and its importance as a symbol of eternal life, the clearing of ancient oak forests in the plantation of Ulster, building of ships from oak as part of Royal Navy ships, importance of wider European forests, importance of foraging in Eastern Europe and food traditions, the creation of demesnes and land ownership issues in Ulster etc.
- A presentation will then be carried out by each group on the importance of some cultural and spiritual aspect of trees in the park that relate to each of the group’s own cultural heritage tradition.
- There will then be a joint discussion and identification of a possible joint project that crosses cultural and religious divide and that all participants could become involved with eg making of cross or other item or object with spiritual significance, the planting of new trees from ancient tree seeds, creation of ancient spiritual oak grove, planting of new yew trees in park cemeteries etc
- Final joint celebration and promotion by all three groups of the trees of the Regional Park and their joint recognition.

Outcomes

- Develop cross community links between different cultural traditions and communities

- Link local communities to Regional Park and build positive relations at the local level
- Increase our understanding of the past
- Develop Regional Park as a shared public space
- Develop the Regional Park as a cultural and spiritual resource
- Improve the well-being of people who live beside the park
- Promote the park and its ancient trees

Target

- Engage with 3 groups from different cultural traditions who live near the Regional Park
- Engage with 100 people
- Progress joint final tree project (To be determined by groups)
- Recruit 5 long term volunteer's participants
- Gain three press releases and radio/to interview about project

Time table

2018

Partners

LVRP, LCCC, BCC, South Belfast Partnership, SEUPB

Costs

Costs 4 days of LVRP Staff time

Engagement of consultant to manage and deliver project over 6 months £25,000

(Examine and possibly apply to SEUPB Peace programme)

Further Information

<http://www.fao.org/3/a-i4206e.pdf>

<http://www.forestryfocus.ie/social-environmental-aspects/cultural-heritage/trees-and-folklore/sacred-and-magical-trees/>

http://www.livingtreeeducationalfoundation.org/trees_ireland.html

<http://www.satmya.ie/the-ancient-trees-of-ireland/>

5.4) **Project Title:** The Archaeology of the Lagan Valley Regional Park

Theme

Heritage

Background

The Lagan Valley Regional Park has in the past focussed mainly on the conservation of natural heritage of the park. However, the landscape character of the park has important built heritage and significant archaeological and monumental heritage features. Most of these scheduled and non-scheduled sites have been identified and many have been researched and recorded by the Historic Environment Division. However there has never been a specific record of the monuments that exist within the boundary of the Regional Park and this is an important need that should be addressed so that future potential conservation measures and partnership arrangements can be developed.

Project Description and outputs

The project will employ a consultant to gather the existing data on all of the monuments within the Regional Park boundary and identify other potential important sites that are not recorded but may be of significance. This will involve gathering data from the Historic Monuments Division of the Department for Communities but will also involve research and consultation with landowners, Queens University Centre for Archaeological Research and other relevant stakeholders. The project will also involve local volunteers and skill them up to carry out important field survey work and research existing data sources and identify a follow up research project that will require some sort of excavation.

Outcomes

- Record built heritage of Regional Park as tool for future conservation
- Promote the park and its archaeological heritage
- Increase our understanding of the Regional Park's heritage
- Increase skills and knowledge of local volunteers
- Identify potential future archaeological excavation site

Target

- Train 10 volunteers
- Carry out 5-day training course
- Recruit 5 volunteer's participants
- Gain two press releases about project

Time table

2019

Partners

LVRP, LCCC, BCC, DC, QUB CAF, Local Volunteers

Costs

Costs of 4 days of LVRP staff

Engagement of consultant to manage and deliver project £7000

Train volunteers 3000

Further Information

<https://www.hlf.org.uk/archaeology-guidance>

<https://www.hlf.org.uk/our-projects/xarch-exploring-archaeology>

<http://www.archaeologyscotland.org.uk/our-projects>

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5.5) **Project Title:** The Big Lagan Dig

Theme

Built Heritage

Background

The Lagan Valley Regional Park has in the past focussed mainly on the conservation of its natural heritage. However, the landscape character of the Park has important built heritage and significant archaeological and monumental heritage features. Following on from the gathering and recording of all data information and field surveying in the “Archaeology of the Lagan Valley Project” there may be a need to carry out further intrusive research at a targeted site to carry out further archaeological excavation.

Project Description and outputs

The project will work with the Queens University of Belfast, Centre for Archaeological Research to carry out an archaeological excavation and will involve 10 local volunteers in the actual excavation working in partnership with students from the centre. QUB will oversee and arrange all licencing and recording.

Outcomes

- Promote the Regional Park and its archaeological heritage
- Increase our understanding of the Regional Parks’ built heritage
- Increase skills and knowledge of local volunteers

Target

- Train and involve 10 volunteers in excavation
- Carry out dig and produce archaeological gazetteer
- Gain two press releases about project

Time table

2019

Partners

LVRP, LCCC, BCC, DC, QUB CAF, Local Volunteers

Costs

Costs for QUB involvement and equipment and training £12000

Further Information

<http://www.yorkarchaeology.co.uk/get-involved/community/>

<http://belfasthills.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/07/Divis-Archaeology-Ireland-Article.pdf>

<http://www.heartoftheglens.org/projects/community-archaeology/>

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6.4) **Project Title:** 5 steps in the Park

Theme

Health and Recreation

Background

The Belfast Strategic Partnership identified the need to reduce health inequalities in its document, “The Framework for Action Improving Health and Wellbeing, Reducing Health Inequalities 2011 - 2015”. It highlighted the importance of engaging with disadvantaged groups in areas such as mental health and emotional wellbeing and lifelong learning. There are opportunities to use the natural resources of the Regional Park to link with these disadvantaged communities to help them learn about the natural world and improve mental and emotional health problems. Recent research has also found that contact with the natural environment can offer considerable mental and physical health benefits and has a quantifiable health value.

Project Description and outputs

The project will involve developing linkages with the Public Health Agency, and the Belfast Health and Social Care Trust to bring disadvantaged groups who live nearby into the park to become involved in a series of events geared at improving the participant’s mental health and well-being. Participants will be identified by the Public Health Agency and the local health trust using Public Health Agency staff and resources to deliver the five steps to well-being programme. The focus will be on improving people’s mental health but within a natural environment. The focus of the events will be on being active, mindfulness, learning connecting with other people and giving and sharing. In effect the project is trying to persuade the PHA to provide the “Take Five courses” tailored to the environs of the Regional Park.

Outcomes

- Promote the Regional Park as a health resource.
- Improve the mental health and well-being of local residents from disadvantage areas.

Target

- Link with PHA and BCC regarding provision of existing mental health and well-being services within LVRP
- Involve 100 people over 5 years
- Gain two press releases about project

Time table

2017 - 2021

Partners

LVRP, LCCC, BCC, PHA, BHSCT

Costs

Costs of LVRP staff to co-ordinate 5 days per year

Costs of PHA staff delivering courses 10 days per year

Further Information

http://www.publichealth.hscni.net/sites/default/files/Take%205%20Leaflet%20LR%2005_16.pdf

<http://www.publichealth.hscni.net/directorate-public-health/health-and-social-wellbeing-improvement>

<http://www.choosetolivebetter.com/>

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6.5) Project Title: The Green Gym

Theme

Health and Recreation

Background

The Belfast Strategic Partnership identified the need to reduce health inequalities in its document “The Framework for Action Improving Health and Wellbeing, Reducing Health Inequalities 2011 - 2015”. It highlighted the importance of engaging with disadvantaged groups in areas such as physical health. There are opportunities to use the natural resources of the park to link with these disadvantaged communities to help them learn about the natural world and improve their physical health through carrying out real conservation and invasive species removal work.

Project Description and outputs

The project will involve developing linkages with the Public Health Agency, the Belfast Health and Social Care Trust to bring disadvantaged groups who live nearby into the Regional Park to become involved in a series of planned conservation work geared at improving the participant’s physical health and fitness levels. Participants will be identified by the Public Health Agency and the local health trust and the groups of people will be linked to any planned volunteer conservation work to be carried out throughout each year. The focus of the conservation work events will be on active physical work.

Outcomes

- Promote the Regional Park as a health resource
- Improve the physical health of local residents from disadvantage areas

Target

- Link with PHA and BCC regarding provision of existing mental health and well-being services within LVRP
- Involve 100 people over 5 years
- Create 10 new full time volunteers
- Gain two press releases about project

Time table

2017 - 2021

Partners

LVRP, LCCC, BCC, PHA, BHSCT

Costs

Costs of LVRP staff to co-ordinate existing conservation work

Costs of PHA staff delivering courses 10 days per year.

Further Information

http://www.publichealth.hscni.net/sites/default/files/Take%205%20Leaflet%20LR%2005_16.pdf

<http://www.publichealth.hscni.net/directorate-public-health/health-and-social-wellbeing-improvement>

<http://www.choosetolivebetter.com/>

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