



CHANGING SPACES

ACCESS TO NATURE

SPRING/SUMMER ENEWSLETTER

Access to Nature – one year on

Welcome to the first e-update for Access to Nature, funded through the Big Lottery Fund's Changing Spaces programme. Our aim is to keep you informed about progress including those that have been awarded funding, those applying or in the process of applying for funding, as well as people involved more broadly in encouraging access to the natural environment.

Coming up to Access to Nature's first anniversary we have achieved our target for the year and have now offered 23 grants with a value of £7.03 million - with a total project value of over £10.5 million. Next year looks to be an exciting one with plenty of high quality applications in the pipeline. We anticipate awarding in the region of £11 million in the forthcoming year.

Our website is updated with details of the latest projects funded as soon as the applicants have formally accepted our grant offer and with any other information we think would be useful for applicants – so do check back regularly for new information. Please do pass this newsletter on to others who may find it of interest and feel free to suggest any potential items for inclusion or anyone to add to the mailing list by contacting us at accesstonature@naturalengland.org.uk

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Off to a flying start

The incredibly high level of interest in Access to Nature since it opened for applications in April 2008 shows that there is a real desire out there for people wanting to explore the countryside – however, it does mean that competition for funding is going to be particularly stiff.

We have made some exciting grants from the first batch of applications – here are just two that demonstrate the breadth of what we can fund.

In Warrington and Runcorn there is a series of 10 urban woodlands that at best could be described as a blight on the local community not an asset. Undervalued by local residents they have become a hub for antisocial behaviour and a dumping ground for rubbish. With a grant of £213,000 from Access to Nature, the Woodland Trust will work with the local community to kick-start putting the woodlands back at the heart of local activities - setting them up as outdoor community centres, providing a focus for family leisure and wellbeing as well as a resource for ongoing events and activities. Approximately 1,800 people will be directly involved over three years, with many more in the local community benefiting.

As well as locally focused projects Access to Nature is also supporting projects that have an impact across the whole of England. With a grant of £932,000, Mosaic is a project that will be run by the Campaign for National Parks. This national flagship project will develop Community Champions for National Parks within black and minority ethnic groups in 20 cities as currently people from black and minority ethnic groups make far fewer visits to National Parks than any other groups in society.

As well as creating a range of events, the Community Champions will also work with the National Parks and YHA to influence their policy development to ensure their activities are appealing and tailored to the needs of ethnic minority communities to encourage their ongoing involvement and interest.



Community volunteers clearing woodlands to make a great resource for local people



Encouraging BME communities to enjoy and get more involved with the natural environment is a key aim of the Mosaic Project

Top tips for applicants

As you may be aware, if you are in the process of applying, we aim to support you in your application with our two-stage process and by providing guidance through our network of regional and national advisors who are there to help you develop your projects to meet the criteria of the programme. However, do remember that should you get through stage 1 of the process there is still a strong element of competition at stage 2.

As the programme is progressing we are gathering feedback about the application process and we thought it would be useful to include a number of 'top tips' that we have gathered from across the Access to Nature team to help those of you who are in the process of applying.

- Be innovative – we are unlikely to fund existing projects that are simply running out of funding. This is a competitive process for funds so you need to stand out and have impact.
- Be clear and focused on what is to be delivered and to whom. Ensure you describe activities you plan to undertake in the natural environment to provide us with a good picture of what you hope to do, with a good financial plan to back it up.
- Make sure you identify the current barriers that are discouraging people from accessing the natural environment – applications need to be well developed and supported by robust evidence of need when you get to Stage 2.
- Don't forget we only fund new posts that are openly recruited. We can't fund existing posts except the elements of those that are managing staff within the project. However, existing staff time can be used as applicant's cash contribution.
- Make sure you demonstrate clearly how your project fits with regional targeting plans for Access to Nature, and provide reasons and evidence of fit with regional, sub-

A call out to the East Midlands and London

Our application process is based on criteria that is clearly set out to encourage over 1.7 million people to gain greater access to the countryside. As well as having a range of projects from small local project to large flagship projects, we are also keen to have a good geographical spread of projects across England.

Currently we are keen to encourage applications from the East Midlands and London as these areas are not so well represented. If you are based in those areas and would like to discuss a project please contact Kristina Gould (EM), Tel: 0115 900 5402, kristina.gould@naturalengland.org.uk or in London contact Jo Watson, Tel: 0300 060 2436 or email joanna.watson@naturalengland.org.uk.

regional and national strategies. For national projects you will need to demonstrate that your project is addressing national scale issues.

- Provide information on the level of input (financial and otherwise) you are expecting from partners. You may need a partnership agreement, especially if the project's success depends on one of your partners.

These are just some of the things we thought it would be useful to highlight.

Don't forget, for further up-to-date information on Access to Nature, guidance for applications and online forms visit our website at: www.naturalengland.org.uk/accesstonature



Natural England is here to conserve and enhance the natural environment, for its intrinsic value, the wellbeing and enjoyment of people and the economic prosperity it brings.

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For more information about Access to Nature, please contact

**The Changing Spaces Advice Line:
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