



Southend Environmental Projects' Update: May 2010

Dear All,

It has been a busy few months for all the Southend Projects - most excitingly is that we have started the Two Tree Island project, and there is good progress with Funding the Belfairs Park Woodland Resource Centre project.

The February 2010 - May 2010 Update:

Belfairs Park Woodland Resource Centre Project

- The Project's Steering Group have since met in March and April to discuss ongoing fundraising, an updated timetable to develop the project inline with Heritage Lottery Funding (HLF) milestones, the Hadleigh & Daws Heath Living Landscape vision and the updated brief for the new Woodland Centre building.
- A lot of work has been happening in the background to prepare our Round 1 bid to the HLF that will support a large portion of the project's costs. This will be our 2nd bid to the HLF, after last years application was not successful. Everyone has worked very hard to take on board the comments from the team at Heritage Lottery to improve our proposal and reduce the project costs, and we are very positive that our bid is well positioned this time - but now we can only wait and see. The deadline is the 31st May, and we will have to then wait until September before we hear the news of a decision. Remember that this is just Round 1, and if successful we would need to submit a Round 2 application (planned for submission in approximately March 2011)
- We also have some other great news, as we have secured £28,000 support funding from Network Rail - who will be working with us to develop the project.

Plans for the coming months:

- Submit HLF bid, continue exploring and developing fundraising strategy, develop framework for a Consultant to prepare a Conservation Action Plan for Hadleigh & Daws Heath Woodlands, prepare tender for the Woodland Resource Centre building and make progress on outlining the terms for a lease agreement (this will be progressed in more detail once we have secured HLF Round 1 funding).

Gunners Park Heritage-Visitor Centre Project

- Consideration is being given to preparing an Expression of Interest to a new Flagship Funding Scheme that could give significant investment into this

fantastic scheme, if all the criteria for our project and the funding are well matched

- Still a requirement for monies to carry out contaminated land investigations at the site where the centre is planned to be located.

Two Tree Island

- The externally funded project to restore habitat and improve access on Two Tree Island West has now started. The lease for the whole island has since been agreed with Essex Wildlife Trust, and from now and through the summer a series of wildlife surveys including Reptiles, Breeding Birds, Invertebrate, Plants and on the lagoon will be carried out before we progress any management activities. Initial discussions have also taken place to improve the sites interpretation. The project will carry on into 2011, as we have to time all activities in line with the appropriate season for wildlife, but it will be fantastic once finished.
- The Avocet Egg Watch begun in April and is now in full swing. There has been a record breaking response from Volunteers so far, and already we have more 20 Avocet chicks and still many more eggs to hatch. The Watch will run through till June 5th so we will give a final count in the next project update.

Finally there is also some sad news on my part - as I will be leaving my post with Southend Council and Essex Wildlife Trust. I have had a fantastic 2 years here and would like to think we have made really good head way on the projects. I will now be moving to Cambridgeshire to take up a fantastic opportunity developing an environmental research project in West Africa with Cranfield University. I am positive that my departure has happened at a time that will cause minimal disruption to the projects' progress as we now await feedback from HLF over the summer, and a replacement person is being advertised in the next couple of weeks, who will hopefully be in post very soon. You can contact Claire Cadman for queries relating to the projects between now and then on clairec@essexwt.org.uk

I would like to thank everyone who has been involved in the projects for all their help, enthusiasm and support - I looking forward to attending the Woodland Resource Centre opening day and seeing you all again in the very near future!

If you would no longer like to receive these updates then please reply to this e-newsletter and I will remove you from the database.

I have over 200 people on the project update database, if you would like someone to be added to the list, please ask them to send me their name and email address.

Keep an eye out for the next update in August!

Stephanie Campbell, May 2010 End.

