



HLF Programme Objectives			
Objective	Outcomes	Main Objective (tick <b>one</b> box only)	Links to other areas
1	The heritage will be better managed	✓	
2	The heritage will be in better condition		✓
3	The heritage will be identified/recorded		✓
4	People will have developed skills		✓
5	People will have learnt about heritage		✓
6	People will have volunteered time		✓
7	Negative environmental impacts will have been reduced		
8	More people and a wider range of people will have engaged with heritage		
9	The local area/community will be a better place to live, work or visit		✓

### Objective 1: Restore and enhance habitats as identified by the landscape character action plan

#### 1b: Better Dry Heath



#### Summary

Elan has many areas of dry heath supporting important animal and plant populations and providing a fantastic display of colour during the flowering season. At the same time the heathland is used for extensive grazing by livestock at certain times of year.

Some sections of Elan's dry heath are being invaded by species such as bracken and conifers to the detriment of the habitat. In other areas, a uniform age profile of heather makes the heathland vulnerable to heather

	<p>beetle and reduces the diversity of heathland species.</p> <p>Invasive species will be cleared from areas of dry heath and a more varied age profile of heather will be created by burning and cutting in order to protect this wonderful habitat for the future.</p>
<p><b>Project Details</b></p>	<p>The Elan Links area is home to around 250 hectares of dry heath, forming an important, if minor, and component of the mosaic of habitats found on the open hill. The dry heath habitat is important for a range of reasons:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>🌿 it punches above its weight in terms of landscape value adding colour and diversity;</li> <li>🌿 it supports an array of pollinators and there are a number of local beekeepers dependent upon the resource;</li> <li>🌿 it supports breeding populations of red grouse, pairs of hen harriers, merlin and a host of smaller bird species; and</li> <li>🌿 it is a grazing resource on a number of farm holdings.</li> </ul> <p>Over recent years Elan Links dry heath has suffered from ingressions by invasive bracken and self-seeding conifers. At the same time, the long term health and productivity (for nature and farming) of the heath is threatened by a relatively uniform age profile of the heather over much of the area, increasing the risk and severity of attack by heather beetle and uncontrolled fire. While a limited amount of heather cutting in recent years has helped reduce this threat, there is a real need to extend this activity and to add controlled burning as an additional tool to better manage the heather.</p> <p>This project will improve management of our dry heath by equipping farmers and others with the resources and skills to undertake the necessary management actions. In addition, there will be a range of volunteering opportunities to undertake actions on key sites where there is a smaller scale objective and / or that are less accessible by machine. These opportunities will be delivered through Objectives 8 and 10.</p> <p>Delivery of the project will be overseen by the Natural Heritage Subcommittee and co-ordinated by the Natural Heritage Officer (see Implementation of the Natural Heritage Projects, appendix PP3).</p>
<p><b>Need and Opportunity</b></p>	<p>This project has been developed to mitigate the threats and opportunities identified in the chapter four of the LCAP:</p> <p><b>4.2.1 Damage to Elan's distinct habitats</b></p> <p>Over recent years Elan Links dry heath has suffered from ingressions by invasive bracken and self-seeding conifers. At the same time, the long term health and productivity (for nature and farming) of the heath is threatened by a relatively uniform age profile of the heather over much of the area, increasing the risk and severity of attack by heather beetle and uncontrolled fire. This project's aim is to mitigate this threat by <b>4.3.1.1 Reinvigorating farming practices</b> to ensure the mosaic of habitats and the landscape character associated with that is retained.</p> <p><b>4.2.2 The threat from changing land management practices</b></p> <p>It has been identified within the landscape character study and recognised</p>

	<p>by NRW that lack of management of sections of dry heath habitat is eroding the special landscape character and reducing the value for nature, pollinators and farming. In particular, there is the need to improve management to promote the breeding success of key bird species and the long-term health of the heather component of the heath. By enabling farmers and othersto learn the skills needed and to undertake management actions we are turning that need into an opportunity.</p> <p><b>4.2.6 External impacts and the threat to Elan's heritage</b>          With the wider external impacts such as a reduction of upland farming this will increase the ingress of bracken, and conifers to a lesser extent, therefore risking the loss of sight and knowledge of the heritage hidden in the landscape.</p>	
<b>Project Management</b>	Natural Heritage Officer reporting to the Natural Heritage Sub-committee and the partnership Board where necessary.	
<b>Project Partners</b>	Lead Partner: EVT Other Partners:Elan Valley Tenants Association, Cwmduddwr Commoners Association, NRW, TirCoed	
<b>Project Development</b>	<p>Development of this project has been supported by an Agrisgop animateur (funded through the Wales RDP) who brought together interested parties – farmers/commoners/EVT/NRW and facilitated discussion. A farm visit provided an opportunity to share ideas and consider links with other projects. Subsequent project development has been undertaken electronically and face-to-face with discussion between NRW officers, PONT, RSPB, EVT, Cwmduddwr commoners and Elan Valley tenants.</p> <p>Consideration has been given to the best methods for tackling bracken and conifers (cutting by machine/hand; spraying) and improving the age profile of the heather (cutting, burning, grazing) and the various constraints.</p>	
<b>Key audiences</b> (Please see Audience Development Plan, appendix LCAP3, for more details about Elan Links audiences)	<p>Audiences that will primarily targeted through this project:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>🏡 Land managers including landowners, tenants and commoners.</li> </ul>	<p>Secondary audiences who will also benefit as a result of the project:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>🏡 Volunteers;</li> <li>🏡 Visitors from Birmingham (Birmingham Residents);</li> <li>🏡 Residents of Elan and Rhayader;</li> <li>🏡 Visitors who are within 1 hour's drive away;</li> <li>🏡 Visitor coming for a specific activity.</li> </ul>
<b>Activities and Timescale</b>	<p>Year 1. Elan Links 15-year heath management and burning plans developed, training activities to support the plans.</p> <p>Years 1 to 5. Implementation of first five years of management plan – to include burning and cutting heather; cut-to-waste clearance of invasive sitka; crushing invasive bracken (in accordance with bracken management plan developed for Project 2a); cutting invasive Molinia and</p>	

	<p>heather reseeded.</p> <p>At least two open days will be held for stakeholders and the wider public to better understand the project and the benefits of managing dry heath for the future.</p>
<b>Outputs</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>🏡 73 hectares of dry heath restored.</li> <li>🏡 Management and burning plans.</li> <li>🏡 5 people trained in practical heathland management skills.</li> <li>🏡 2 stakeholder days with 10 people attending</li> <li>🏡 All Elan Links farmers informed about project.</li> <li>🏡 End-of-project report with recommendations for future activity.</li> <li>🏡 Biodiversity monitoring and volunteering activity delivered through Projects 2b and Objectives 8 and 10.</li> <li>🏡 Interpretation to a wider audience delivered through Objective 7.</li> </ul>
<b>Output indicators and targets</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>🏡 Management and burning plan signed off by Natural Heritage Subcommittee in Year 1.</li> <li>🏡 Training activities completed by end Year 2.</li> <li>🏡 Management actions delivered Years 2 to 5 as per management plan.</li> </ul>
<b>Outcomes</b>	<p>Heritage Outcomes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>🏡 Elan Links dry heath is in better condition, more resilient and better managed for the future</li> <li>🏡 Improved ecological condition of the dry heath habitat will have provided better habitat for pollinators and a range of upland bird species</li> <li>🏡 Increased knowledge and coordinated action will ensure that farmers, land managers and decision makers make informed decisions that will strengthen Elan as a stronghold for nature</li> <li>🏡 A key component of the landscape will have been secured for the future</li> </ul> <p>People Outcomes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>🏡 Farmers will have been supported with practical help and advice and financially through the grant scheme</li> <li>🏡 Farmers have learned effective land techniques to manage this type of habitat</li> <li>🏡 Farmers, land managers, policy makers and visitors will have a greater awareness of the natural heritage of Elan and the complex issues surrounding its effective management</li> <li>🏡 People will have volunteered time and learned new skills and benefited from being outdoors in the natural environment of Elan</li> <li>🏡 Farmers and beekeepers will have benefitted from improved productivity of the dry heath.</li> </ul> <p>Community Outcomes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>🏡 Communities will have better knowledge and awareness and respect for the natural heritage of Elan and this will in turn reduce the risk of future harm through irresponsible access behaviour, farming activities or neglect</li> <li>🏡 During the duration of the Scheme local communities and regular visitors will notice a step change in the quality of dry heath areas as a result of the project activity</li> </ul>
<b>Monitoring and</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>🏡 Progress with project implementation will be reported to the Natural</li> </ul>

<b>Evaluation</b>	<p>Heritage sub-committee annually.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>🏡 Ecological change will be recorded photographically.</li> <li>🏡 Biodiversity monitoring using a mix of expert input / advice and trained volunteers will be implemented through Project 2b and supported by Project 8b.</li> <li>🏡 Stakeholder days will be used to understand the benefits of the project from the point of view of farmers and other stakeholders.</li> <li>🏡 Ecological biodiversity monitoring surveys.</li> <li>🏡 Specific Key indicators measured for each target habitat.</li> <li>🏡 Project completion reports with evidence.</li> <li>🏡 Data collection – management agreements, small grants, farmer groups active.</li> <li>🏡 Stakeholder feedback.</li> </ul>
<b>Evidence</b>	<p>Lamacraft, D., Vanstone, A. &amp; Thorpe R. I. (2012) Important Upland Bird Areas: Elenydd SSSI. CCW Contract Science Report: No. 944 59pp (appendix PP4). Informing the project by demonstrating the importance of the habitat and the mosaic of conditions required to support bird species.</p> <p>Notes from meeting to discuss: Hay Meadows; Dry Heath; Rhos Hay Henfron Farm, Elan Valley. 18/8/2016 (appendix PP5).</p>
<b>Wider Context</b>	<p>Management of most of Elan’s dry heath areas is supported by Glastir Advanced through individual contracts between farmers and the Welsh Government. The works in the current project tailor the Wales-wide prescriptions available under Glastir with the specific requirements of the Elan Links area in ways that have proved impractical to deliver through Glastir within current constraints.</p> <p>Management of heather moors is practiced widely in some areas of the UK as an economic activity for red grouse shoots. There is therefore a good understanding of how to manage heather for this purpose. While in the context of Elan Links such activity is not compatible with other objectives – such as increasing access for recreational users - it does mean that there is a strong body of evidence available to guide best-practice for managing dry heath areas.</p> <p>The project has strong links with a number of the other natural heritage projects. Many elements of the other projects are designed in such a way that they will have positive benefits for birds. The more specific and focused bird actions will however be delivered through this project. The principal delivery mechanism will be through a Natural Heritage Delivery Contract for farmers and the scheme will be coordinated by a Natural Heritage Officer (for further details please refer to the Natural Heritage Implementation Plan, appendix PP3).</p>
<b>Legacy and maintenance of benefits</b>	<p>In discussion with farmers it is clear that there is a long history of heather moor management by burning in the Elan Links area but recent changes to farming systems and agricultural policy has meant that the practice has died out. Since heather moor management can increase agricultural productivity once barriers to this management are overcome – such as through training, development of a burning plan, obtaining consents, recent evidence of agricultural benefits – there is a strong likelihood that</p>

	<p>management is likely to continue into the future guided by the management plan.</p>
<p><b>Risks and risk mitigation</b></p>	<p><u>Risk 1.</u> The natural heritage projects in Elan Links are designed to complement and tailor agri-environment provision in Wales. Following the Brexit vote there is considerable uncertainty associated with the future shape of this provision. Any changes may impact on the suitability of components of the natural heritage projects delivered through Elan Links. <u>Mitigation:</u> Uptake and suitability of the natural heritage projects will be monitored by the Natural Heritage Sub-committee. This committee will consider and recommend alterations to the projects to ensure they are fit-for-purpose and deliver best value-for-money.</p> <p><u>Risk 2.</u> Risks associated with heather burning. <u>Mitigation:</u> A burning plan will be developed which includes safety provision and guidance on weather conditions, creation of fire breaks etc. Practical training will be provided for personnel implementing the burning plan. In the long run, controlled burning reduces the risk of uncontrolled and hence larger burns.</p> <p><u>Risk 3.</u> Uptake by farmers is lower than expected. <u>Mitigation:</u> This project has been developed in conjunction with Elan Links farmers and is supported by them – this reduces the risk of this happening. The project will be reviewed annually by the Natural Heritage Sub-committee which will recommend alterations if uptake is low.</p>
<p><b>Links to projects</b></p>	<p>Objective 2a: Work to improve Elan's dry heath should in term improve habitats for many of Elan's upland bird assemblage. These projects will therefore be delivered in conjunction with one another to maximise the benefits to the habitats and the species within them.</p> <p>Objective 2b: 2b completes the majority of the survey work to ensure projects are developing and achieving the wider outputs.</p> <p>Objective 3d: Cattle are a beneficial element to the control of bracken and dry heath conditions. Upon completion of dry heath actions the follow-up of cattle will have a greater and more lasting effect for the habitats.</p> <p>Objective 4: The actions and management agreements are better informed by the Heritage at Risk survey and actions are considerate of the goals of this project. Vegetation works can be agreed as capital works within these management agreements.</p> <p>Objective 5a: Capital work actions under these projects can be completed in harmony with works necessary under Project 4a and clearing works which may be necessary to this project. It is essential that capital works are assigned and completed with a holistic view across the projects.</p> <p>Objective 6: Monitoring of this project is important and as noted above, photographic recording of the project will happen. This will be implemented through project 6.</p> <p>Objective 7a: This project will be interpreted through objective 7a in various ways dependant on the project requirements.</p>

	<p>Objective 7b: Information about this project will appear on the app as well as on the Elan Valley website and Elan Links' social media platforms. All of the events that are organised will be promoted on all of these platforms and they will be updated regularly to show the work that is carried out through the whole Scheme. Any content that is being recorded, either through photograph or film, will be shared and place on all of the platforms to ensure that the profile of Elan is raised and that all followers that have been gathered during the development phase are kept up to date and interested in the project throughout the delivery.</p> <p>Objective 7c: Artists will take inspiration from some of the themes in these objectives. As well as inspiration, it is possible that some of the artists may wish to interpret the different themes in their own way.</p> <p>Objective 7d: All events that will happen through this project will be organised through the work carried out in objective 7d.</p> <p>Objective 8: The volunteers that are required for this project can be selected from the database of volunteers that is collected through objective 8. Volunteers who participate in activities that aren't already part of Friends of Elan can be referred over and from there they will be offered a wider range of volunteering opportunities.</p> <p>Objective 9: The proposed routes and rights of way may go through some of the habitat areas in these projects. Project management for these projects as well as the project management for objective 9 need to be aware of the different habitat areas and ensure that the proposed routes does not interfere with the work proposed to the habitat and does not effect the rare upland birds in objective 2a.</p> <p>Objective 10a: There is a possibility that the participants and trainees, who are taking part in the training courses at Elan, will undertake some of the work that is required in this project.</p> <p>Objective 11: Working to expand the knowledge and the connection between the habitat and water management to the people who benefit from the water. Engaging in this elements supports the principles of payments for ecosystem services and raise the public profile of this concept between Elan and Birmingham. Thus developing a longevity to the actions.</p>
<p><b>Background information</b></p>	<p>Elan is located in the Cambrian Mountains, Mid Wales, 5 miles to the east of the Market town or Rhyader. Elan's 20,000 hectares comprises 1% of Wales and is a unique landscape combining remote hill land, isolated farmsteads, steep-sided wooded valleys and the extraordinary feat of Victorian engineering that brought clean water to Birmingham.</p> <p>The community of farmers, tenants, the town of Rhyader and the village of Elan are the backbone of this vast area, with farming and tourism activities being the most significant economic activity in the area.</p>

	<p>Elan Links: People, Nature &amp; Water Landscape Partnership has an ambitious vision: to generate a step-change increase in beneficial outcomes for people, communities and heritage.</p> <p>Elan Links is a £3.5 million project with a significant £1.8 million secured from the Heritage Lottery Fund Landscape Partnership Scheme.</p> <p>The Elan Links: People, Nature &amp; Water Landscape Partnership is currently made up of 17 different organisations who aim to deliver 26 projects under 12 strategic objectives over 5 years.</p>
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