



HLF Programme Objectives			
Objective	Outcomes	Main Objective (tick <u>one</u> 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 3: Improve the sustainability of high nature value traditional farming systems

#### 3a: Elan Hay Meadows



#### Summary

Across the UK, 97% of our traditional wildflower meadows have been lost. Elan, however, is home to many upland hay meadows - including a coronation meadow - all of which are a wonderful sight in full bloom and are of enormous benefit to pollinators. Elan's meadows retain fantastic floristic diversity and insect life but scientific studies have shown that appropriate management such as liming and occasional applications of farmyard manure are needed to keep these meadows thriving. This

	project will work with farmers to make sure our hay meadows continue to thrive in the future.
<b>Project Details</b>	<p>Elan is home to a nationally rare suite of SSSI upland hay meadows, including a 'Coronation' meadow. These meadows are one part of a relatively rare resource in the Elan Links area – in-by (enclosed) fields. This project will ensure best-practice management on our hay meadows for the future and will set the hay meadows in their wider context enabling opportunities for better management of the in-by resource to be identified for the benefit of farmers and nature.</p> <p>The EVT in conjunction with CCW (now NRW) has recently completed a 10 year scientific project establishing best-practice management regimens for upland hay meadows in Wales. In the past these hay meadows have sometimes been seen as uneconomic because of low yields of fodder and hence have been neglected by farmers. As part of the scientific project methods were developed to improve yield while also improving floristic diversity and value for nature. The results from this study will therefore be used in the current project to promote better management of Elan's hay meadows in the future. Over the medium term farmers are expected to see clear economic benefits from this better management.</p> <p>Since hay meadows are just one part of the in-by field resource the project will also seek to improve management of this wider area by identifying opportunities to deliver more for both farmers and nature in the future. The management of in-by fields is subject to the needs of the farm holding and influenced by Glastir management agreements, SSSI designations etc. and there is not at present a strategy for managing this resource as a coherent whole. Because the resource is so limited (circa 700 hectares or 3.5% of the Elan Links area; see <i>Map of Elan's in-by fields</i>) and yet so important for rare plants and plant communities, for rare upland breeding birds and insect life as well as for farming, this lack of coherency is an important failing. In order to identify the best way to manage Elan's hay meadows in this wider context there is therefore a clear need to work with farmers to develop a strategic management plan for Elan's in-by fields.</p> <p>This project will be co-ordinated by the Natural Heritage Officer and overseen by the Natural Heritage Sub-committee. Monitoring work will be delivered through Project 2b.</p>
<b>Need and Opportunity</b>	<p>This project has been developed to mitigate the threats identified in chapter four of the LCAP, namely:</p> <p><b>4.2.2 Changing land management practices.</b></p> <p><b>4.3.1.1 Reinvigorating farming practices.</b></p> <p>The scientific study examining management of Elan's hay meadows has identified clear evidence that our meadows, in general, are becoming progressively more infertile and acidic. Although in the short term such conditions can result in minor increases in overall species richness (primarily by increases in acid-tolerant species), in the longer term the overall mesotrophic (neutral) character of the meadows and the diversity</p>

	<p>of desirable species is declining.</p> <p>Results from the study have also identified that the best solution to this problem is to apply farmyard manure in relatively low levels to promote a small degree of nutrient enrichment while ensuring that the pH remains around 5.5 by occasional liming. By following these guidelines not only is the diversity of desirable and characteristic species maintained and promoted but there also are benefits for sward productivity and hay yields. The opportunity is therefore to secure better nature conservation management for Elan's hay meadows while at the same time improving farm productivity. PONT, one of the partner organisations for this project has also identified opportunities for better marketing of Elan's hay – for example to local horse owners through the PONT website and Facebook page and this resource will be made available to Elan Links farmers as part of this project.</p> <p>In addition there is the need to secure appropriate management for all of Elan's in-by fields because of the benefits they can bring for nature and for farming. Working with farmers to produce a strategic management plan for this resource represents a significant opportunity to identify ways of better managing these fields for multiple objectives in the future. The plan would develop shared objectives for farming and nature conservation to include details of appropriate management for each field compartment such as liming, farmyard manure, grazing intensity, cutting dates, and management of the aftermath.</p>	
<b>Project Management</b>	Natural Heritage Officer reporting to the natural Heritage Sub-committee and the Partnership Board.	
<b>Project Partners</b>	Lead Partner: EVT Other Partners: Elan Valley Tenants Association, PONT, NRW	
<b>Project Development</b>	Development of this project has been supported by an Agrisgop animateur (funded through the Wales RDP) who brought together interested parties – farmers/EVT/NRW and facilitated discussion. A well-attended site visit to one of the Elan Links farms with a SSSI hay meadow provided additional insight and an opportunity to share ideas and consider links with other projects (see Notes PP5). Scientific expertise has been provided by grassland ecologist Mike Hayes who recently completed a 10 year CCW-funded study looking at management regimes for the Elan Valley hay meadows. Subsequent project development has been undertaken electronically and face-to-face with discussion between NRW officers, PONT, EVT, Mike Hayes and a number of farmers. Recommendations from the Hayes report were that a programme of liming and manuring should be reinstated on Elan Valley neutral meadows. This recommendation was welcomed by the farmers partly because of the likely benefits for hay yields that this would generate. An annual 'stocktake' meeting with farmers will be used to provide an opportunity for sharing best practice and adaptive learning for the project.	
<b>Key audiences</b> (Please see Audience Development Plan, appendix LCAP3, for more details about	Audiences that will be primarily targeted through this project: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li> Land managers including landowners tenants and commoners.</li> </ul>	Secondary audiences who will also benefit as a result of the project: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li> Volunteers;</li> <li> Residents of Elan and Rhayader;</li> </ul>

Elan Links audiences)		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>🌱 Visitors from Birmingham (Birmingham residents);</li> <li>🌱 Visitors who are within an 1 hour's drive away;</li> <li>🌱 Visitors coming for a specific activity;</li> <li>🌱 All other visitors.</li> </ul>
<b>Activities and Timescale</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Hay meadow management: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>🌱 Liming at 2.5 t / hectare x 12 hectares (once during the project delivery period)</li> <li>🌱 FYM application x 8 hectares (twice during the project delivery period)</li> <li>🌱 Soil testing x 12 hectares (prior to liming)</li> <li>🌱 Seed collection and spreading x 3 hectares (once during the project delivery period)</li> </ul> </li> <li>2. In-by field survey and management plan (Years 1 and 2)</li> </ol>	
<b>Outputs</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>🌱 12 hectares of hay meadow under favourable management;</li> <li>🌱 In-by field management plan;</li> <li>🌱 10 people trained in hay meadow management skills;</li> <li>🌱 2 stakeholder days with 10 people attending;</li> <li>🌱 5 demonstrating and volunteering days with 10 people attending;</li> <li>🌱 All Elan Links farmers informed about project;</li> <li>🌱 End-of-project report with recommendations for future management of Elan's hay meadows;</li> <li>🌱 Volunteering activity delivered through Project 2b;</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>🌱 12 hectares hay meadow in management agreement/small grant scheme;</li> <li>🌱 Soil testing on at least 20 hectares to inform hay meadow management and in-by field management plan;</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>🌱 Natural heritage is in better condition and better managed for the future;</li> <li>🌱 Improved ecological condition and economic viability of hay meadows;</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> </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 techniques to manage hay meadow habitat;</li> <li>🌱 Farmers, land managers, policy makers and visitors will have a greater awareness of the natural heritage of Elan, the complex issues surrounding its effective management and the opportunities for managing for multiple benefits in the future;</li> <li>🌱 More people will be aware of the hay meadows of Elan and the</li> </ul>	

	<p>importance of implementing specific land management in order to safeguard their existence.</p> <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 risks for future harm through irresponsible access behaviour, farming activities or neglect;</li> <li>🌱 Elan will become more widely known as a haven for rare habitats and species and this will help to build the reputation of Elan as an eco-tourism destination.</li> </ul>
<b>Monitoring and Evaluation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>🌱 Progress with project implementation will be reported to the Natural Heritage sub-committee annually;</li> <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> </ul>
<b>Evidence</b>	<p>Hayes M.J., Lowther R.A. 2014. Conservation management of species-rich grasslands in the Elan Valley, Radnorshire. Natural Resources Wales Evidence Report No: 8, 75 pp, Natural Resources Wales, Bangor (appendix PP8)</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>This project is set in the context that 97% of the UK's wildflower meadows have been lost. With a suite of SSSI upland hay meadows the Elan Links area is a rare and nationally significant resource.</p>
<b>Legacy and maintenance of benefits</b>	<p>The actions in this project are anticipated to benefit farmers through improvements in agricultural output. It is therefore expected that the project actions and the benefits that flow from them will become embedded into farming practice in the area beyond the life of the project.</p>
<b>Risks and risk mitigation</b>	<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> 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. There is potential to extend the project to improve management of other in-by fields as identified in the management plan.</p>
<b>Links to other Elan Links projects</b>	<p>Objective 2a: Both projects are working to provide a better habitat and as such promotes and provides better resilience for the species which rely</p>

	<p>upon 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 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><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</p>

	currently made up of 17 different organisations who aim to deliver 26 projects under 12 strategic objectives over 5 years.
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