

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 3: Improve the sustainability of high nature value traditional farming systems**

### 3d:Elan Cattle Grazing



**Summary**

Traditionally, small-scale cattle keeping formed a key part of farming in Elan, but today, only a handful of farms continue this practice. We know that having cattle grazing extensively on the open hill and on some enclosed habitats is hugely beneficial for nature – helping to maintain an open sward where a host of different plants, fungi and animals can thrive. We want to encourage Elan farmers to carry on keeping cattle, to keep more cattle and to graze cattle on key habitats where they can be most beneficial for nature. This project will support farmers to do this by helping to overcome some of the barriers that exist to cattle farming.

<b>Project Details</b>	<p>The project will encourage and facilitate small scale cattle keeping on farm holdings in the Elan Links area. This will benefit nature and species diversity. Importantly there is also good evidence that keeping cattle helps to improve grazing quality for sheep, creating a win-win for nature and farm productivity. It is anticipated that by re-establishing cattle in quite small numbers initially and quantifying the benefits that this will encourage more farmers to keep more cattle over time. Indeed, in days gone by nearly all holdings used to keep some cattle all year round and/or graze cattle during the summer months.</p> <p>During project development it became very clear that there are many reasons why farmers no longer keep cattle, but that these reasons are dependent upon the circumstances of the individual farm. For example, it may be lack of a muck store, winter housing or handling facilities. On the other hand it may be difficulties associated with managing cattle on the hill or with cattle health issues. In discussion, however, it also became clear that a simple system of ‘coupled’ payments on a per head basis would provide participating farmers with the confidence and flexibility to overcome these barriers in a way that suited their own farm circumstances.</p> <p>The project has strong linkages with 1a Better Bogs and 2a Rare Birds which seek to target cattle grazing in places that are particularly important for key species or habitats. 3d Elan Cattle Grazing will therefore act as the ‘entry point’ for getting more cattle grazing onto the Elan Links area; while 1a and 2a will provide additional support for ensuring grazing at targeted, more-difficult-to-graze sites at particular times of year and in the required numbers.</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 The threat from changing land management practices</b></p> <p><b>4.2.6 Damage to Elan’s distinct habitats and External impacts and the threat to Elan’s heritage.</b></p> <p><b>4.3.1.1 Reinvigorating farming practices.</b></p> <p>There is a need to increase cattle numbers in the Elan Links area in order to benefit nature and species diversity. In addition, many Elan farmers wish to keep cattle because they know that without them the quality of the grazing for sheep is diminished – this is the opportunity.</p> <p>Support for mixed grazing (cattle and sheep) is supported by Glastir Advanced through individual contracts between farmers and the Welsh Government. However uptake of this option has been <i>extremely</i> low in the Elan Links area due to practical constraints associated with the Wales-wide prescriptions available under Glastir. This project is designed to provide an Elan-specific solution to this issue.</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: NRW, Elan Valley Tenants Association, Cwmduddwr

	Commoners	
<b>Project Development</b>	<p>Development of this project has been supported by an Agrisop animateur (funded through the Wales RDP) who brought together interested parties – farmers/commoners/EVT/NRW and facilitated discussion. A well-attended site visit to one of the Elan Links farms that currently keeps cattle provided additional insight and 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, RSPB, EVT and a number of farmers.</p> <p>The initial project outline envisaged a high proportion of the project spend to be targeted at capital costs, with the remainder used on headage payments. However, following considerable discussion it was felt that headage payments are likely to be the most efficient and effective route to enable farmers to overcome the barriers to keeping cattle that are specific to their farm. Similarly, an over-reliance on agri-environment style prescriptions would limit uptake (this approach has already largely failed to achieve cattle grazing through Glastir). Farmers would however welcome simple guidelines accompanying some basic rules to help ensure project outcomes are achieved. It was generally agreed that an annual event / stocktake should be held on-farm for participating and other Elan Links farmers to feedback, learn lessons, share good practice and promote an element of self-policing of desired outcomes.</p>	
<b>Key Audiences</b> (Please see Audience Development Plan, appendix LCAP3, for more details about Elan Links audiences.)	<p>Audiences that will be 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>🌿 Residents of Elan and Rhayader;</li> <li>🌿 Visitors from Birmingham (Birmingham Residents);</li> <li>🌿 Visitors who are within 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>	<p>Year 1. Confirm scheme rules and sign up participants. Each farm eligible for payments for up to 10 cows (or equivalent in livestock units where 1 adult cow = 1 livestock unit; LU) per holding. It is anticipated that there will be an uptake of an average of 6.5 LU per holding. In the event of being undersubscribed an intervention rate of up to 50% will be available to secure existing cattle LUs within the Elan Links boundary. Undertake annual stocktake.</p> <p>Years 2-5. Monitor uptake. Adapt scheme based on feedback from farm trials, annual stocktake and uptake figures.</p>	
<b>Outputs</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>🌿 At least five farm holdings supported to reintroduce and / or increase cattle numbers;</li> <li>🌿 Development of an Elan Links 'cattle group' for interested farmers to share best practice: 4 stakeholder days with 20 people attending;</li> <li>🌿 45 secured cows grazing the Elan Links area;</li> <li>🌿 All Elan Links farmers informed about project;</li> <li>🌿 End-of-project report with recommendations for future activity;</li> </ul>	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <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>🏡 At least 45 additional or secured cattle livestock units grazing the Elan Links area.</li> </ul>
<b>Outcomes</b>	<p>Heritage Outcomes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>🏡 The trial scheme will deliver improvements in the ecological condition of the in by land surrounding the individual farms, with the potential to roll this out to sections of the open hill as numbers increase;</li> <li>🏡 The impact and benefits of cattle grazing will be monitored and assessed within the context of the long term monitoring regime set out within LCAP;</li> <li>🏡 We know that cattle grazing can make a significant contribution towards an open habitat that is in good condition with the over dominance of our invasive species, Molinia and bracken controlled in this manner;</li> <li>🏡 The resilience of Elan’s natural heritage is strengthened for the future and a legacy for future management has been created.</li> </ul> <p>People Outcomes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>🏡 Farmers will have benefited from a more diverse business income and improved grazing for sheep;</li> <li>🏡 Better understanding between farmers, land managers and statutory and regulatory bodies about how cattle can be kept and used as an effective land management tool to meet conservation objectives;</li> <li>🏡 People from the community, as well as visitors to Elan will gain an appreciation of the complexity of open hill land management and the benefits cattle grazing can bring;</li> <li>🏡 People from the community, as well as visitors to Elan will gain an appreciation of the history of traditional farming practices of Elan;</li> <li>🏡 People will have volunteered time to manage cattle and monitor the changes to the habitat condition;</li> <li>🏡 The increased presence of cattle in Elan will help promote a step change in perceptions and strengthen the case for continued cattle grazing as a viable land management tool for the open hill into the future.</li> </ul> <p>Community Outcomes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>🏡 The community will have a greater sense of the importance of Elan’s open hill spaces and the complexity of their future management will be higher on the agenda;</li> <li>🏡 A greater cross section of the community will associate cattle grazing within the Elan landscape as a positive outcome and understand the links between cattle grazing and better open hill habitat</li> <li>🏡 Elan will become more widely known as an area with a distinctive local farming culture and this will help to build the reputation of Elan as a 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>🏡 Project completion reports with evidence;</li> <li>🏡 Biodiversity monitoring using a mix of expert input / advice and</li> </ul>

	<p>trained volunteers will be implemented through Project 2b and supported by Project 8b;</p> <p>🌱 Stakeholder days will be used to understand the benefits of the project from the point of view of farmers and other stakeholders.</p>
<b>Evidence</b>	<p><i>Examining the role of cattle grazing in delivering improved biodiversity outcomes in the uplands.</i> Countryside Council for Wales: P Silcock et al., (2011) (appendix PP12). This review examines the many benefits and barriers to keeping cattle in the Welsh uplands as well as exploring solutions.</p> <p>Notes from meeting to discuss cattle component of Elan Links. Hirnant Farm, 11/5/16, (appendix PP13)</p> <p>On the ground within the Elan Links area there are already examples of areas where cattle grazing is improving the habitat condition of previously molinia-dominant bogs and other habitats with positive effects for breeding upland birds – e.g. Hirnant farm.</p>
<b>Wider Context</b>	<p>Evidence for the benefits of cattle grazing on both biodiversity and farm productivity in the uplands is well established and the latter in particular is widely recognised by farmers. The less selective grazing habit of cattle than sheep enables a more diverse assemblage of plants to flourish and a more open vegetation structure that is better for many upland breeding bird species. In addition, the farmyard manure produced as a by-product of keeping cattle is highly beneficial in maintaining species diversity in traditional hay meadows and other upland neutral grasslands.</p> <p>Cattle from a number of different sources have traditionally been kept on the Estate: In days gone by each holding would have kept cattle on the in-bye land with turnout on to the hill during the summer months. In addition there is a tradition of tacking cattle on to the hill ground from lowland farms during the summer months. Drovers routes also cross the Estate from the days before motor vehicles when cattle were walked from the rearing grounds of West Wales to the fattening pastures of the Midlands.</p>
<b>Legacy and maintenance of benefits</b>	<p>This project will act as a means of breaking down some of the barriers to keeping cattle. Funding through the project will ‘pump-prime’ the re-establishment of cattle on farms that have not kept cattle for many years, reducing the element of financial risk that is associated with developing a farming enterprise. Since it is well established that keeping cattle benefits other elements of the farm system there will be a strong incentive to keep the cattle once they are ‘up and running’ and these benefits have been seen on the ground. The Elan Links Cattle Group will help to share learning and best practice helping to embed the project outcomes.</p>
<b>Risks and risk mitigation</b>	<p><u>Risk 1:</u> Water course pollution. Cattle are typically seen as creating a higher risk for water contamination than sheep. <u>Mitigation:</u> Farmers will need to demonstrate that there are plans and procedures in place to prevent pollution before they are taken on to the scheme.</p> <p><u>Risk 2:</u> Injury from cattle. In some, rare, circumstances cattle can be dangerous to people. Risks are highest from bulls and cows with very young calves. <u>Mitigation:</u> These types of animal will not be allowed on land with recreational access. In addition, farmers that sign-up to the scheme</p>

	<p>will be strongly encouraged to keep docile breeds of cattle. It is worth noting that there are cattle already in the Elan Links area and to date there have been no reported incidents or injuries.</p> <p><u>Risk 3:</u> The scheme is under-subscribed. If this is the case it will be additional evidence of the considerable barriers that exist to keeping cattle.</p> <p><u>Mitigation:</u>The Natural Heritage Sub-committee will consider the matter following discussion with farmers – options to include switching monies to capital payments to breakdown identified barriers or increasing the intervention rate.</p>
<p><b>Links to other Elan Links projects</b></p>	<p>Objective 1a: The project has strong linkages with 1a, 1b and 2a Rare Birds which seek to target cattle grazing in places that are particularly important for key species or habitats. 3d Elan Cattle Grazing will therefore act as the ‘entry point’ for getting more cattle grazing onto the Elan Links area; while 1a, 1b and 2a will provide additional support for ensuring grazing at targeted, more-difficult-to-graze sites at particular times of year and in the required numbers.</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 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 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 9:Those keeping cattle on the open hill need to be aware of all</p>

	<p>the paths and routes across the estate and more importantly on their own land. If cattle are grazing near a route, land managers need to let the project management aware of this as cattle can be a danger to recreational users. Communication needs to happen between both parties to ensure that both recreational users and cattle area safe.</p> <p>Objective 11: Working to expand the knowledge and the connection between the habitat management 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>