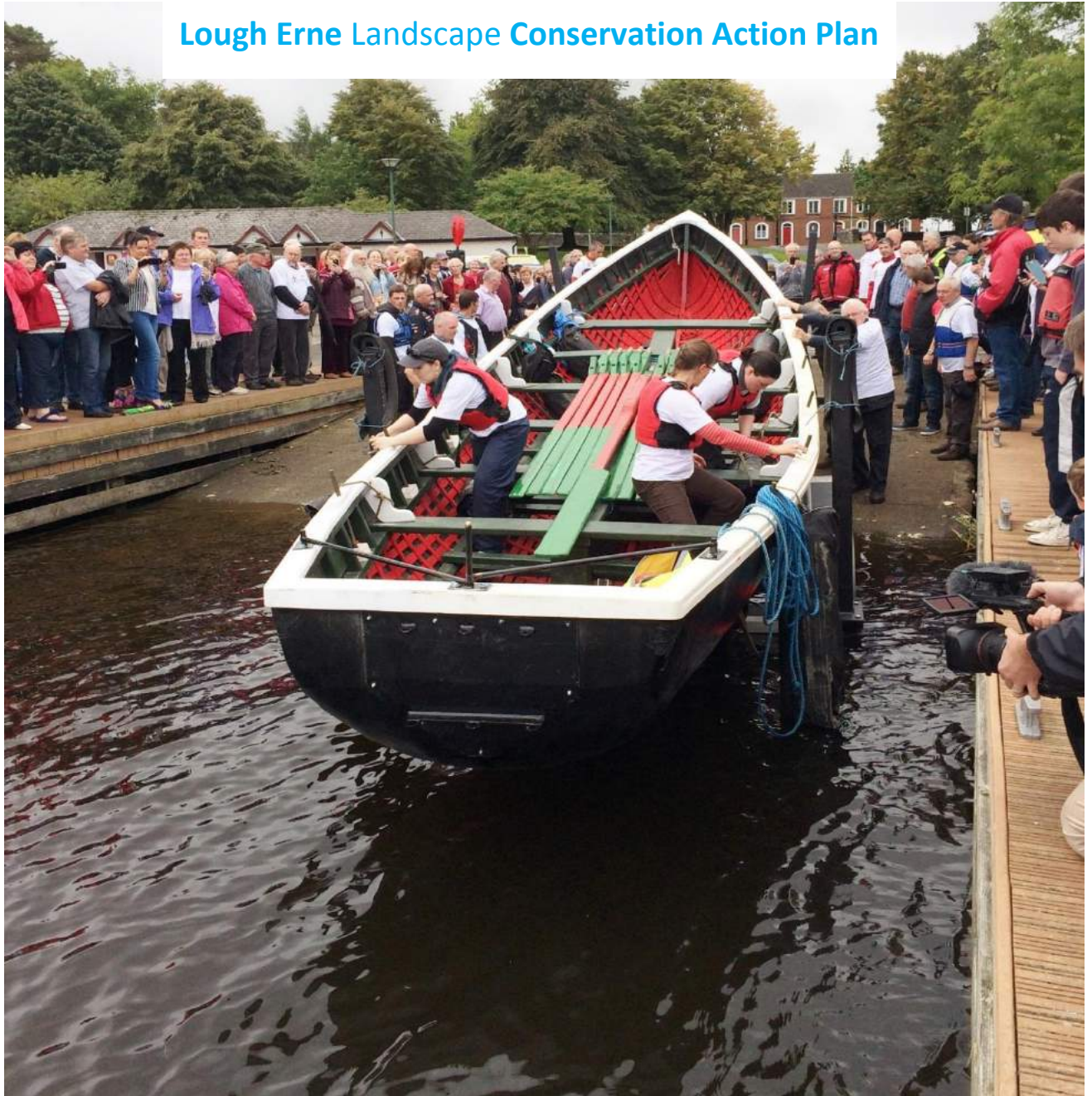


## Lough Erne Landscape Conservation Action Plan



*Row the Erne*



*If I had to offer up just one thing I have learned from my years of environmental campaigning, it would be this: any attempt to protect nature from the worst human depredation has to speak to people where they are. It has to make us all feel that the natural world, the non-human realm, is not an obstacle in the way of our progress but a part of our community that we should nurture; a part of our birthright. In other words, we need to tie our ecological identity in with our cultural identity... Our oldest identity is one that still holds us in its grip, whether we know it or not. Like the fox in the garden or the bird in the tree, we are all animals in a place. If we have a future, cultural or ecological – and they are the same thing, in the end – it will begin with a quality of attention and a defense of loved things. All else is for the birds, and the foxes too.*

**Paul Kingsnorth 2016**

*“When people become interested in being carried back in their lives what they find becomes more than memory, because memory becomes heritage, and when it becomes heritage it becomes precious”.*

**Henry Glassie**

**Battles Bricks and Bridges 2014**

## Foreword

*Who possesses this landscape?*

*The man who bought it or I who am possessed by it?*

*False questions, for this landscape is masterless and intractable in any terms that are human.*

### **Norman MacCaig**

The visitor to Fermanagh today may think more of water than of land, and of loughs and rivers as much as of castles and townscapes, and may of course take to the waters to explore Lough Erne, one of the largest and loveliest of the Irish loughs. To be informed about what may be encountered the visitor might refer to a book by Mary Rogers entitled *Prospect of Erne: A Study of the Islands and Shores of Lough Erne, Co. Fermanagh*. Written in 1967 the book is out of print and is a rare, but still sought-after publication. Indeed, it is no longer available from the shelves of the local library in Enniskillen, and users can access it only as a reference book. However, fortunate browsers in second hand book shops may yet find a copy, whilst those of us who have one regard it as a prized and valuable field guide that has lovingly captured much of the unique landscape, history and heritage of the waters and shores of Lower and Upper Lough Erne.

Written at a time when there were arguably fewer pressures on the environment than today, the book presents a valuable snapshot in time of the cultural, historical, natural and built heritage of the area around Lough Erne. Rogers understood that landscape is created from the interaction between people and their natural environment, and that the unique nature of the place shaped the people that lived along its Loughs and shores. The book could even be a baseline against which we can measure what remains of the heritage she recorded. Much of course remains but some has been lost in the five decades since the book was first published. Salmon and eels are now all but gone and invasive plant and animal species are changing the ecological balance of the area. Citing the disappearance of osprey Rogers noted that two eagles, rare at the time, still visited the Loughs. Thankfully, through recent conservation work across the island of Ireland, such visits are being recorded today as a similar number of eagles and indeed ospreys [which were once lost altogether in the intervening period], have returned to the islands on Upper and Lower Lough Erne.

The landscape area covered in Rogers's book is remarkably similar to the footprint that the Lough Erne Landscape Partnership has chosen for its five year programme of activities. Our boundary has been determined by four landscape character areas linked to the waters and shoreline of the Lough, the characteristics of which are described by specialists using scientific terminology, whereas Rogers loving, informative and descriptive narrative was written for everyman.

Perhaps then, we should adopt *Prospect of Erne* as our totem and guide to all that is good and worth preserving in our Lough Erne Landscape Partnership Area, and to devote our five year programme to protect, enhance and conserve our heritage to her and all our local built, natural and cultural heritage champions and historians who have recorded and interpreted our unique landscape over the years with such passion in order that it might be better appreciated and preserved for future generations.

Like MacCaig too, perhaps, we recognise that the landscape around us is both masterless and timeless and that we are, as they say, simply passing through. Our responsibility therefore must be to leave it in better shape than we found it. Let this then be the leitmotif that runs through our endeavors.

**Darren Roberts**

**Chairman Lough Erne Landscape Partnership**

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## Executive summary

This Lough Erne Landscape Conservation Action Plan (LCAP) was developed by the Lough Erne Landscape Partnership from April 2016 to November 2017 as part of its Stage 2 bid to the Heritage Lottery Fund Landscape Partnership Scheme. The LCAP is based on research and consultation carried out by the partnership and contains projects that relate directly to the conservation of our cultural, built and natural heritage. The enthusiastic and qualified partner organisations worked at both steering and working group levels throughout this period to develop a common vision and to provide strategic direction and advice. The lead partner, RSPB NI, has a track record in developing and delivering two other landscape partnerships in Scotland [Inner Forth] and Wales [Living Levels].

The LCAP is not a standalone, blank canvas initiative. It was developed against a background of ongoing dynamic community interaction, dialogue and complex debates across many sectors of interest in the landscape area. In recognizing what others are doing LELP will provide opportunities that will enhance and support these initiatives, create links, fill gaps, strengthen local action and better engage with the community through existing and proposed activities. The project funding available should be seen in the context of stimulating practical and imaginative responses to the challenges facing, and the opportunities afforded by, the Lough and its environs, and which can also be used as a lever to generate other funding support over the five-year life span of the programme.

In the short term LELP can make a positive economic impact by creating seven new jobs and delivering outcomes for the conservation of the area's natural and built heritage which will increase access to the countryside resulting in greater visitor numbers and health benefits for those who live and work in the LELP area. In the longer term LELP hopes to develop circumstances that bring about additional employment and economic regeneration of the Landscape Partnership Area.

The Lough Erne Landscape Partnership has selected the projects in this Landscape Conservation Action Plan not just for the particular impact that they may make, but also for their ability to demonstrate approaches to heritage conservation that lay down foundations that can be built on, and that can move the community to care for its landscape. The actions within the plan will protect internationally important species and habitats, provide more access to the shoreline and the water, control invasive species and engage our communities to become involved with their history, heritage and culture by providing opportunities for quality learning, training and volunteering.

A key outcome objective of the Partnership is to leave a lasting legacy for people and communities so that they not only recognise ways in which this unique and special landscape was shaped by the cumulative activity and decisions made by previous generations, but also that its future protection and conservation requires an appreciation and understanding by them of its special and unique character, and the desirability of protecting and conserving it for future generations.

The LCAP contains 23 interconnected heritage projects which have been developed by some of the six main partners and other project delivery partners will begin to address the main heritage needs of the Lough and shoreline, and provide positive outcomes and impacts for our unique waterways landscape. Some projects will still be subject to formal impact assessment and statutory permissions.

The Lough has no formal government or interdepartmental management body responsible for its integrated management. This LCAP will act as a tool to address heritage needs, to stimulate people and agencies to take responsibility for the protection of the Lough and its shores and to provide a long-term structure suitable for its future sustainable management.

In writing this plan we are aware that we can but give the reader a mere insight into the rich heritage and culture of the landscape we are trying to protect but we hope that we have included enough information to present a sense of the special nature of the Lough Erne Landscape Partnership area.



## Introduction

*What would the world be*

*Once bereft of wet and wildness?*

*Let them be left,*

*O let them be left,*

*Wildness and wet:*

*Long live the weeds and the wilderness yet.*

### **Gerard Manley Hopkins**

The area covered by the Lough Erne Landscape Partnership [LELP] lies at the heart of County Fermanagh in the west of Northern Ireland. The County covers an area of 1851km<sup>2</sup> and borders Tyrone to the east and north, and the Republic of Ireland to the south and west. Upper and Lower Lough Erne is situated in the basin of the River Erne and is often referred to as the Fermanagh Lakelands. The County has a population of 61,805, and with 33 people per sq. km is sparsely populated. The LELP footprint is comprised of four Landscape Character Areas [LCAs] covering an area of some 500km<sup>2</sup> including over 300km<sup>2</sup> of open water. Within its boundary lie Upper and Lower Lough Erne, its islands and surrounding shoreline along with the county town of Enniskillen, Lisnaskea and several villages around the Lough.

The areas' rich historical legacy is evidenced by its extensive built and archaeological features such as megalithic tombs and forts, castles and churches, grand architecture, vernacular buildings and parklands. These physical reminders of our past provide us with an important link and opportunity to better understand and appreciate our past. We need to value them for their importance as environmental, cultural and economic assets.

The richness of the areas' natural heritage is evident through its varied landscape, internationally recognised natural environments and biodiversity, and in the significant number of designated natural heritage sites. Its cultural heritage is reflected in the deserved reputation of its warm and engaging people and the creativity of their folklore, music, traditions, writing, arts and storytelling. Sometimes, it is the wonder and compliments of strangers and visitors that remind those of us who inhabit this area that we do indeed live in a special place.

Despite this richness the landscape area is under threat. To address this the LELP has developed this program of work that it hopes will support a suite of discrete but inter-related projects so that local people and visitors alike may continue to appreciate, value and enjoy the area's unique landscape of open waters, islands and islets, species rich habitats, historical and archaeological buildings and monuments, and the cultural tapestry woven by its soft voiced people.



The LCAP is presented in four parts.

**Part 1** describes the Lough Erne landscape and its built, natural and cultural heritage, the threats and opportunities it faces, and our vision and strategy for addressing the landscape needs and managing the scheme.

**Part 2** outlines the management and delivery of the LELP Landscape Action Plan. This section explains the rationale for projects and the geographic and thematic linkages between them. An overview of the scheme budget and timetable is presented here.

**Part 3** contains detailed project plans and associated maps. This section will primarily be used by the LELP team and project leads to oversee project delivery, and is therefore submitted in a separate folder. Part 3 of the LCAP is designed to be a living document that will change and adapt over time. Project plans will be updated on an annual basis.

**Part 4** includes a summary of the research studies completed to inform the development of the LCAP.

The Landscape Conservation Action Plan was written by Barney Devine Programme Manager, Teresa O'Hare Community Connections Officer and Hazel Long Finance and Administration officer with input from partners through the LELP steering and working groups. The plan was agreed by the LELP steering group on 20th November 2017.

# Lough Erne Landscape Conservation Action Plan - Part 1

## Development of the Landscape Conservation Action Plan

In November 2015, the Lough Erne Landscape Partnership was awarded a Stage 1 pass and a Development Grant of £253,900 from the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) under the Landscape Partnership Scheme Programme. The development phase began in April 2016 with the aim of submitting a Landscape Conservation Action Plan (LCAP) and second stage application to HLF in November 2017 which, if successful, will be delivered over five years from June 2018 to May 2023.

## Structure of the Lough Erne Landscape Partnership

### Steering and working groups

To oversee the development phase a Steering Group and three working groups were established and a team of 3.0 full-time equivalent (FTE) staff were appointed by the RSPB NI as the lead partner. Staff subsequently coordinated the submission and development of projects for the Stage 2 application and engaged with the wider community to understand its priorities, needs and strategies for future action. Staff also coordinated a project selection process informed by a range of strategic studies and policies including two reports commissioned by the LELP, namely a Built Heritage Audit and Opportunities Report by the Centre for Archaeological Fieldwork at Queens University Belfast [completed in March 2017], and a Landscape Conservation Management Plan by Ove Arup [completed in February 2017]. The LELP steering group and three working groups met throughout the development phase and were instrumental in shaping the commissioning of the reports and the LCAP.

The LELP Steering Group is made up of nine representatives from seven partner organisations and two advisor organisations whose aim is to take strategic and coordinated action to conserve the important heritage assets within the Lough Erne landscape area. Membership of the steering group is comprised of the local authority [Fermanagh and Omagh District Council], three public bodies [Waterways Ireland, Northern Ireland Environment Agency, and Department for Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs], three NGOs, [RSPBNI as lead partner, National Trust, Ulster Architectural Heritage Society], and two community based organisations [Fermanagh Rural Community Network and Upper Lough Erne Region].

Three working groups were formed to advise the Steering Group and staff, and their area of expertise focused on Built Heritage, Natural Heritage and Community Connections [also known as People and Culture] respectively. Overall, the steering and working group's membership included 38 representatives from 15 organisations [and one independent].

Throughout the development phase LELP also worked in consultation with a range of local community groups, regional and national organisations who played a significant role in the development and planning of project delivery.

## LELP aims and objectives

LELP was established to steer the development and delivery phases of the Partnership whose aims are to protect and enhance the built, cultural and natural heritage of Lough Erne and to connect people with this heritage. The main reasons cited in the partnership agreement for forming the partnership are:

- To spearhead the recognition of the need for conservation and promotion of the landscape and heritage of Lough Erne
- To address ecological and conservation issues for the overall protection of the Lough Erne resource
- To reconnect communities in recording, celebrating and becoming involved in the management of what is special and distinctive about where they live
- To bring economic, social and environmental benefits to the community by establishing ways in which people can see opportunities in their landscape resource in terms of built, natural and cultural heritage
- Develop and promote opportunities for all communities to use Lough Erne as a public amenity space
- Create synergies between the various bodies and groups with a remit for Lough Erne in order to realise shared expectations and pool resources and expertise.

The main aim developed by the Steering Group is to:

*Achieve a vision of a vibrant and sustainable rural economy through a coordinated approach to the protection and enhancement of Lough Erne's unique heritage.*

Its objectives are to:

- To connect and engage people with their unique landscape by developing skills, improving confidence and providing opportunities to learn about it, change perceptions and influence its management.
- To improve and protect biodiversity and conserve the built heritage of our unique landscape, and involve communities in its protection, interpretation and conservation
- To create and improve physical and intellectual access to and around the Lough making it a better place to live, work and visit
- To engage with communities to generate pride in their unique cultural heritage, celebrate it and be emotionally and physically involved with it.

These objectives align with the four strategic outcomes of the HLF Landscape Partnership Programme namely:

- Conserving or restoring the built and natural features that create the historic landscape character
- Increasing community participation in local heritage
- Increasing access to and learning about the landscape and its heritage
- Increasing training opportunities in local heritage skills

## Development of key themes

In the lead-up period prior to the development phase award in 2015 RSPB NI organised a series of consultation meetings at which members of the wider community in the area were asked to identify possible project ideas for inclusion in the first round application to the HLF. 263 heritage ideas were received and these were subsequently broken down into four themes and incorporated into the application to the HLF as follows:

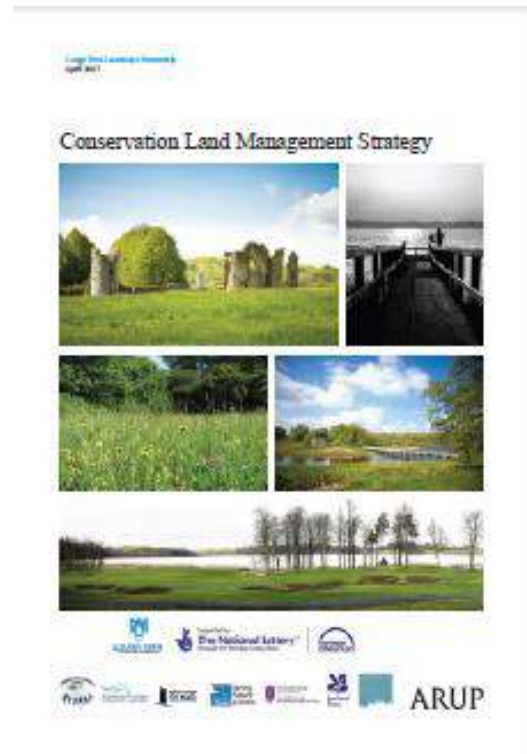
- Coordinated Management of the Landscape
- Built Heritage
- Natural Heritage
- People and Culture

A further set of priorities were identified through community consultation during the LELP development phase and as a result greater emphasis was placed on supporting projects and activities that can work to achieve outcomes in the following priority areas:

- **Improving Access** – Increasing public access to our natural and built heritage through the development of infrastructure such as paths, trails and jetties.
- **Protecting Habitats and Species** – Protecting our animals, plants and habitats.
- **Engaging Communities** – Participation in built and natural heritage and recreational activities through skills training, education, research, citizen science and volunteer development.
- **Sharing our Stories** - Participating in and recording and archiving stories on history, built heritage archaeology, folklore and folk life.
- **Creative Spaces** – Developing and supporting cultural activities that celebrate the special nature of the landscape area.
- **Coordinated management of the landscape** – Working together to coordinate efforts to ensure the future heritage of the LELP area.

## Commissioned reports

In the development phase LELP commissioned two audit and research studies. The first was by the Centre for Archaeological Fieldwork [CAF] at Queens University Belfast which conducted a baseline Built Heritage Audit & Opportunities Report to assess, identify and record the built heritage of sites within the LELP area in order to establish future priorities for preservation, interpretation and access. The report informed the LELP team on the selection of built heritage projects for inclusion in the Stage 2 submission to HLF.



The second commissioned report by Ove Arup was a Conservation Land Management Strategy and baseline study of the natural environment with a particular focus on biodiversity. It included an overview of the risks and opportunities for the area's natural environment and identified where needs exist with regard to protection, enhancement or engagement.

It also suggested how LELP could contribute towards achieving an agreed long-term vision through the identification of a functioning ecosystem mosaic on a landscape scale. The report also helped to inform the LELP team on the selection of natural heritage projects for inclusion in the Stage 2 submission to HLF. Full copies of the reports are available on the website [www.lelp.org.uk](http://www.lelp.org.uk)

## Other Reports

The LELP also referred to a range of other local reports, plans and studies including:

Study	Aim	Author
Fermanagh & Omagh District Council Community Plan 2030	The Community Plan aims to work towards an agreed vision for the area through three key themes: People and Communities, Economy, infrastructure and skills and Environment. LELP is a recognised delivery partner.	Fermanagh & Omagh District Council
Fermanagh and Omagh District Council Local Development Plan.	The Fermanagh and Omagh Local Development Plan aims to meet local needs through housing delivery, job creation, enterprise promotion, tourism support, provision of services and community facilities within the context of a healthy, well planned natural and built environment.	Fermanagh and Omagh District Council
Draft Tourism Strategy for Northern Ireland to 2020	The strategy identifies 9 key tourism destinations in Northern Ireland including Fermanagh Lakelands.	DETI Draft Tourism Strategy for Northern Ireland 2020
A Prospectus for Change	A strategic framework to unlock the potential for heritage-led tourism in N. Ireland	Tourism Northern Ireland
Fermanagh and Omagh District Council Biodiversity Plan	The action plan aims to conserve local habitats and species and to raise awareness of biodiversity.	Fermanagh and Omagh District Council
Fermanagh and Omagh District Council Heritage Audit	Audit of heritage activity including historical societies, and heritage and family history societies.	Fermanagh and Omagh District Council March 2016
Erne Fishery Management Plan	The plan aims to provide a strategic approach to the sustainable management of the fisheries resources and its habitat whilst also maximizing its value to the economy and the environment and ensuring stakeholder input to it.	Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure

## Community Consultation

A team of three staff was appointed in the spring of 2016 and they developed engagement activities aimed at encouraging local community and voluntary groups with links to the built, natural and cultural heritage of Lough Erne to consider participating in the delivery phase of the programme.

Over a period of seven months from April to October 2016 the LELP Community Connections Officer engaged with 99 groups about the proposed activities of LELP and the development of the LCAP and stage two submission to the HLF. It was envisaged that the original LELP partnership submission ideas included in the stage 1 submission to the HLF [along with an additional suite of community-led submissions identified through this open call process] would provide a basis for selecting a range of projects linked to the needs and recommendations within the CAF and Arup reports and, importantly would consequently inform the shape and content of the Landscape Conservation Action Plan.

## Project selection timeline

Following LELP's call for project submissions by the closing date of 31<sup>st</sup> October forty-nine submissions were received from partners and a range of local and regional voluntary and community organisations. The LELP project team then entered into an engagement process with the submitting groups in order to sift and cluster the proposals where possible within the LELP themes and link them with other groups to encourage partnership-working and connect them with emerging need being identified from the CAF and Arup research reports.

During this same period from October 2016 to March 2017 a round of consultations were organised by the LELP team designed to assist CAF and Arup to gather feedback from submitting groups and the wider community for consideration by the consultants to help inform their recommendations.

Recognising that the development phase was both an iterative and a co-design process it was nevertheless deemed important by LELP Steering Group to agree a set of tools to aid the selection of projects. Criteria were developed by LELP staff and signed off by the steering groups and working groups. Projects were initially screened using the essential HLF criteria check list, and if suitable were then assessed against further tools designed for each of the Built, Natural and People and Culture themes.

The LELP steering group agreed a sifting and selection process for the project proposals received as follows:

Date	Activity
November to December 2016.	Initial project sifting criteria applied to project submissions using essential HLF criteria.



January to February 2017	Submitting groups were assisted to refine their submissions with staff who identified opportunities for potential partnership working between groups.
February to March 2017	Further refinement of submissions with ongoing support from LELP staff as needs and opportunities emerged from the CAF and Arup commissioned reports.
April 2017	Following publication of the final CAF and Arup needs and opportunities reports the final selection criteria were agreed. Further emphasis was put on projects likely to secure match funding in year 1. Successful projects and those most likely to secure match funding in year 1 were invited to develop business cases for inclusion in the draft LCAP.
May to July 2017	Draft LCAP complete and consultations with working and steering groups and project business cases developed. Draft LCAP submitted to HLF end of July 2017.
September to November 2017	Revision of LCAP and following feedback from HLF reworking of final project selection and submission

Following publication of the CAF and Arup reports and subsequent feedback from the HLF on a draft LCAP submitted to it in July 2017 projects were finally selected for inclusion in the Landscape Conservation Action Plan.

### Changes to the stage 1 bid

During the development phase clarity was sought from HLF as ideas emerged during our community consultations and followings visits to other Landscape Partnerships which helped refine thinking particularly on the staffing structure and systems required for the delivery phase. We recognised need to reflect strategically about how we could deliver outcomes imaginatively. The overall objectives of the original submission have not changed significantly but three changes have been made.

The first came about through recognition that there was a difficulty in developing a strategic approach to the delivery of accredited paid work training placements. To overcome this LELP will instead provide accredited or certificated training [on a less ambitious scale than that stated in the original application] through supported training opportunities in for example, building and thatching skills, surveying, traditional crafts and heritage guiding.

The second change to the original submission is the staff structure for the delivery phase which is now based on the staff team model, three of whom will be project staff directly supporting and managing

the Built, Natural, Cultural and community connections and volunteering themes. All will have a shared role in delivering training, citizen science and volunteering activities. Project staff will work with, and manage delivery partner's projects within their respective themed area and also develop tangential audience development activities in the wider community as the partnership evolves throughout the life of the five year programme. Advice from other landscape partnerships suggested that staff should not be tied to overly prescriptive work programmes and should be encouraged to bring their own skills and ideas to the development of other activities over time, and to take up opportunities as they present themselves "in-flight". All staff will play a key role in identifying and applying for funding throughout the life of the programme and the Community Connections and Learning plan [which was included as an action in the development phase] has now been subsumed within staff activity and audience development.

The third change relates to education activities linked to the curriculum. Many of the larger submissions to LELP from voluntary and community-based groups contained formal education and training components. Despite attempts to mould these into a clustered education and training plan in the development phase, it was deemed too complex to achieve this in the time available to us [although this will be addressed in part by the annual natural heritage convention for primary school children]. It was agreed therefore to focus more broadly on citizen science through a Young Amateur Naturalist project whilst keeping open the possibility of taking up opportunities that may arise in the formal education sector as the programme progresses.

Our boundary is governed by the four Landscape Character Areas described in the following section. Where our boundary cuts through town lands it was agreed with HLF that we extend the LELP boundary to the outermost extent of these town lands from the shoreline of the Lough.



## Explanation of our landscape boundary

### Characterisation

The geographical boundary of the LELP area is based upon four local landscape character area assessments from a total of sixteen in County Fermanagh which were developed by the Northern Ireland Environment Agency (NIEA) in 2000. In 2016 the NIEA published a revised regional characterisation called the Northern Ireland Regional Landscape Character Assessment which resulted in our four chosen local landscape character assessment areas being largely subsumed into two revised regional areas.

The four LELP landscape character areas were chosen because they formed a cohesive ring around Upper and Lower Lough Erne, whereas the revised regional landscape character areas extended over a much larger area which went beyond the allowable scale of landscape partnerships permissible by the HLF. The descriptors used for both regional and local designations are important however to the understanding of what is considered significant for the wider landscape scale conservation of our chosen area. Presenting both the local and regional landscape character assessments here help give context and meaning to the influences that the wider regional landscape has on our four Lough Erne Landscape Areas contained within them.

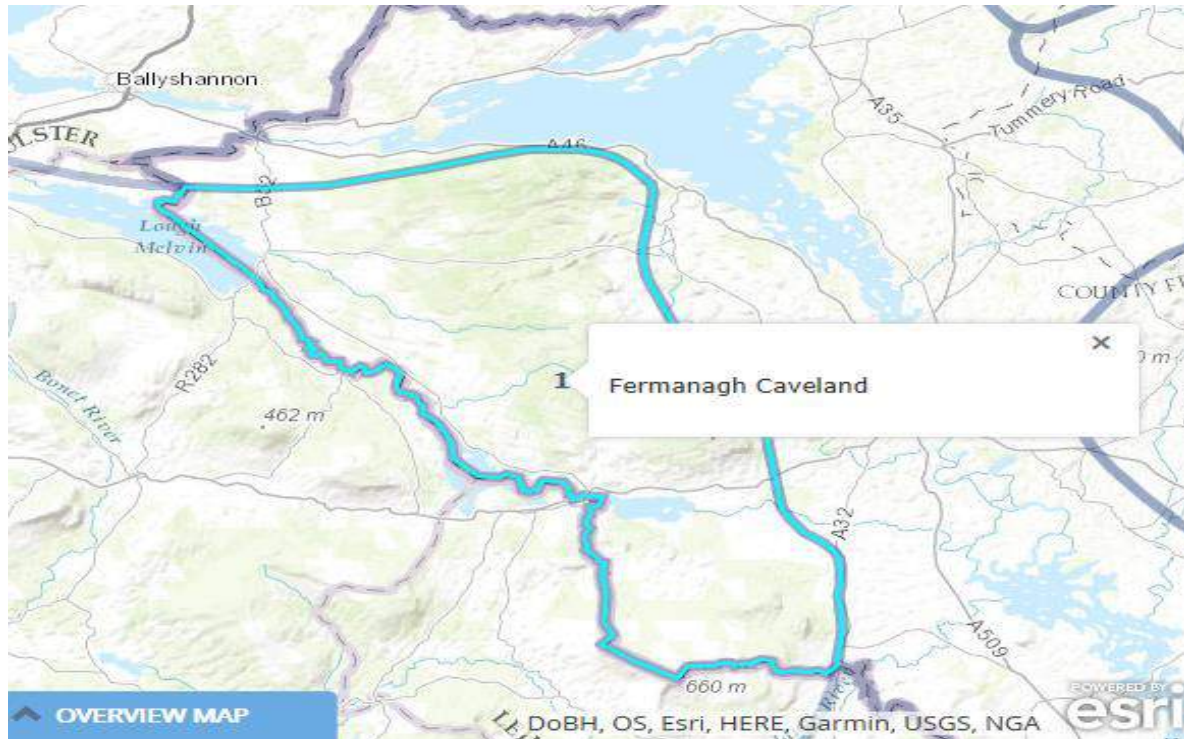
### Fermanagh Caveland Region

Fermanagh Caveland Region is described in the NIRLCA as *“The often afforested cave rich limestone uplands on the Fermanagh border, which also extends south and west into Leitrim. The northern and eastern boundaries are defined by limestone and sandstone escarpments along the Erne, including the Cliffs of Magho and contain Northern Ireland’s only examples of karst landscape.”*

The LELP area is dominated and greatly influenced by the distinctive limestone and sandstone uplands of Cuilgach Mountain on its western flanks. This important karst landscape of caves, sinkholes, limestone pavements and dry valleys was designated as the first UNESCO European Geopark in the United Kingdom and Ireland when the Marble Arch Caves Global Geo-Park was established in 2001. The Lough Erne landscape area fits entirely within the current Geo Park administrative boundary which extends across the LELP area as far as the border between County Fermanagh and County Tyrone and the north eastern part of County Cavan in the Republic of Ireland.

The landscape of Lower Lough Erne is dominated by the dramatic limestone cliffs and escarpments linked to the Geopark and other landmark features. It is an area popular with visitors, providing

recreational opportunities and tourist facilities. The lowlands that fringe the Loughs are largely pastoral with intricate patterns of small fields bounded by hedges. There are significant areas of peatland, native woodland, commercial coniferous plantation forest and grass moorland on the higher ground and many upland peat bogs. Calcareous grasslands are protected at national and international levels for priority species and habitats.



The area has a strong sense of tranquility and is a sparsely populated rural landscape without large settlements, and the influence of artificial lighting. The landscape is exposed to high rainfall associated with weather systems coming from the nearby Atlantic Ocean and is perceived as soft and watery. Indeed, it is often said of Lough Erne that it is in County Fermanagh for six months of the year and for the other half County Fermanagh is in Lough Erne. Flood control has changed this picture somewhat but recent flooding events indicate perhaps that the frequency and severity of flood events in recent decades are increasing and are linked to climate change.

The region's scenic landscape of cliffs, rugged hills and lowland areas has a strong pattern of small fields interspersed with brighter green blocks of improved land. Its sheltered loughs reflect the fringing woodlands and dramatic cliffs during calm conditions. Its cliff tops and uplands are exposed and windswept and there are several accessible viewpoints with long westward views of layers of mountains such as Magho Cliffs from which glimpses of the Atlantic Ocean can be seen further to the west. These dramatic cliffs also influence the setting of Lower Lough Erne, especially in views from the northern shore, and the influence of this and other high ground on views over the Loughs is marked. The remoteness of the area is more pronounced in the forested upland, but still remains in the lowland



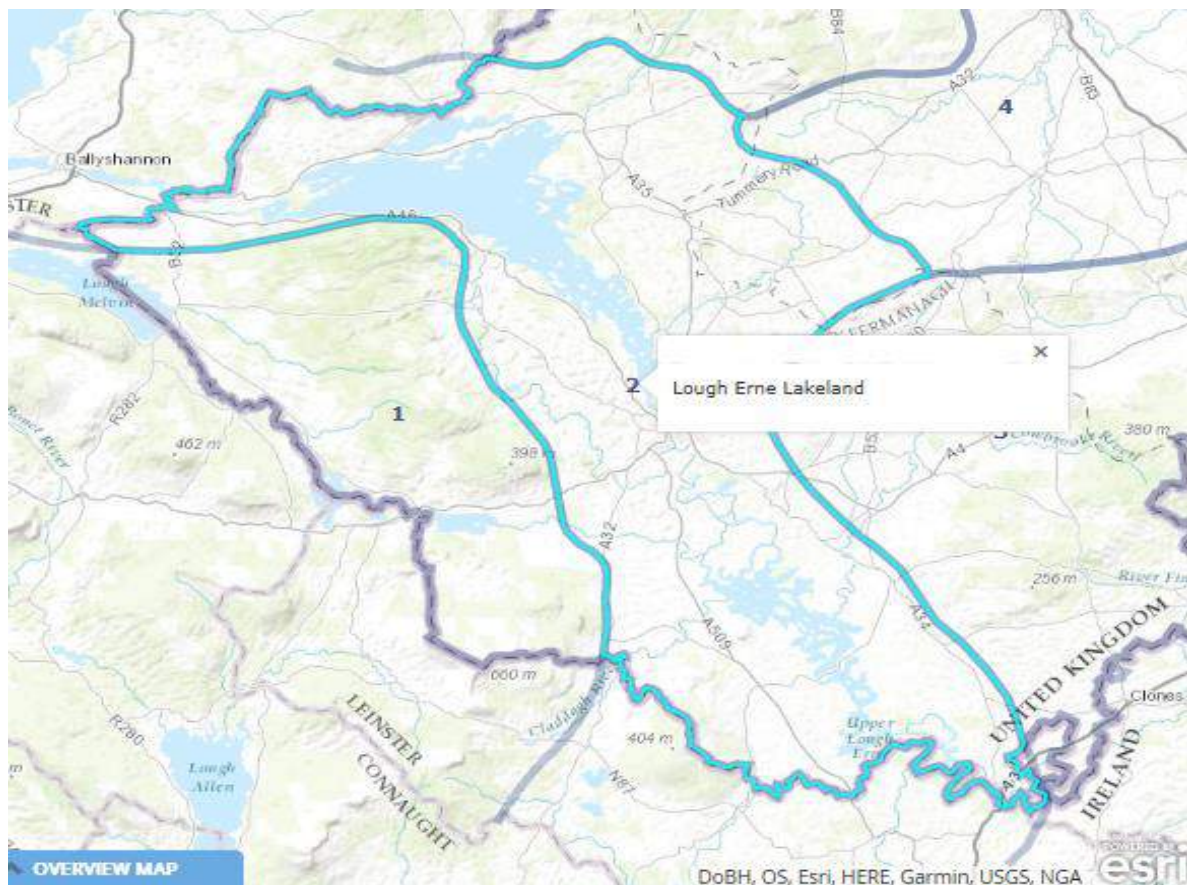
areas where settlement is sparse. Indeed, the hills of western Fermanagh have some of the most extensive dark sky areas of Ireland extending north to Donegal.

### Lough Erne Lakeland Region

The Lough Erne Lakeland Region is described in the NIRLCA as follows: *“This area includes Upper and Lower Lough Erne, as well as the lowlands and drumlins associated with the Erne valley. It extends north-east into Donegal as well as south into Monaghan/Cavan. The area has a strong north-west to south-east orientation, and is bound by the rising ground of the Fermanagh Caveland to the west, and lower hills to the north and east. The Lakelands have a strong identity as a recreational area, though the Upper and Lower Loughs exhibit differences in character.”*

The Lakelands are characterised by the broad expanse of Lower Lough Erne and a myriad of small loughs in and around Upper Lough Erne. The landscape is complex and in places inaccessible and hidden with numerous islands and peninsulas, and is perceived as having wild qualities. This intricate, often peaceful and tranquil landscape is away from main roads and is ringed by wooded shorelines and thick hedges, and is rich in biodiversity. This partially drowned landscape of drumlins shelters the watery island town of Enniskillen located on the River Erne between both Upper and Lower Lough Erne, and at the hub of communication around and through the Lakeland area. The area has a long history of settlement and is one of the principal holiday destinations in Northern Ireland, with tourist developments around the lough that are popular for water sports.

Upper Lough Erne together with associated wetland areas, islands and smaller side loughs, is protected as a Special Protection Area (SPA), Special Area of Conservation (SAC) and Ramsar site.



The lough itself is naturally rich in nutrients and minerals, which at times promotes excessive growths of aquatic plants and algae (i.e. the lough is a naturally eutrophic water body) with distinct assemblages of aquatic plants. Woodland around the Lough is dominated by alder and willow in wet areas and by oak and ash in drier areas so that it is one of the largest areas of semi-natural woodland remaining in Northern Ireland.

Ancient and long-established woodland has survived on many islands which were inhabited in past generations, whilst the more accessible landscapes have been cleared. The tributary Cladagh (Swanlinbar) River is designated as a SAC for its Freshwater Pearl Mussel habitat. The blanket bogs on the rolling drumlins of the Pettigo Plateau to the north of Lower Lough Erne is also designated as SAC, SPA and Ramsar.

The intricate and disorienting landscape of land and water around Upper Lough Erne can make navigation difficult but affords sudden, unexpected views across water. These hidden water bodies and their inaccessible wooded islands, compared to other parts of Northern Ireland, give a sense of mystery and discovery to this landscape. The secret islands, coupled with inaccessible areas, give a



*Upper Lough Erne: Waterways Ireland*

strong perception of this being a wild wooded landscape despite the presence of arterial roads, tourist influences and the fact that it has, at least in part, been created by damming the River Erne. In places, it is very sheltered and tranquil, with dark skies and an absence of artificial light.

This 'soft' landscape, with its perception of natural shores, vegetation, water and reflections presents an ideal place for peace and contemplation. Here again dark skies predominate across undeveloped land and water. This is also a recreational landscape with holiday accommodation, leisure facilities and piers and jetties around the river and Loughs.

## The four LELP Landscape Character Assessment Areas [LCAs]

The LELP area is comprised of four LCAs namely Croagh and Garvary River, Lower Lough Erne, Enniskillen and Upper Lough Erne.

### Croagh & Garvary River

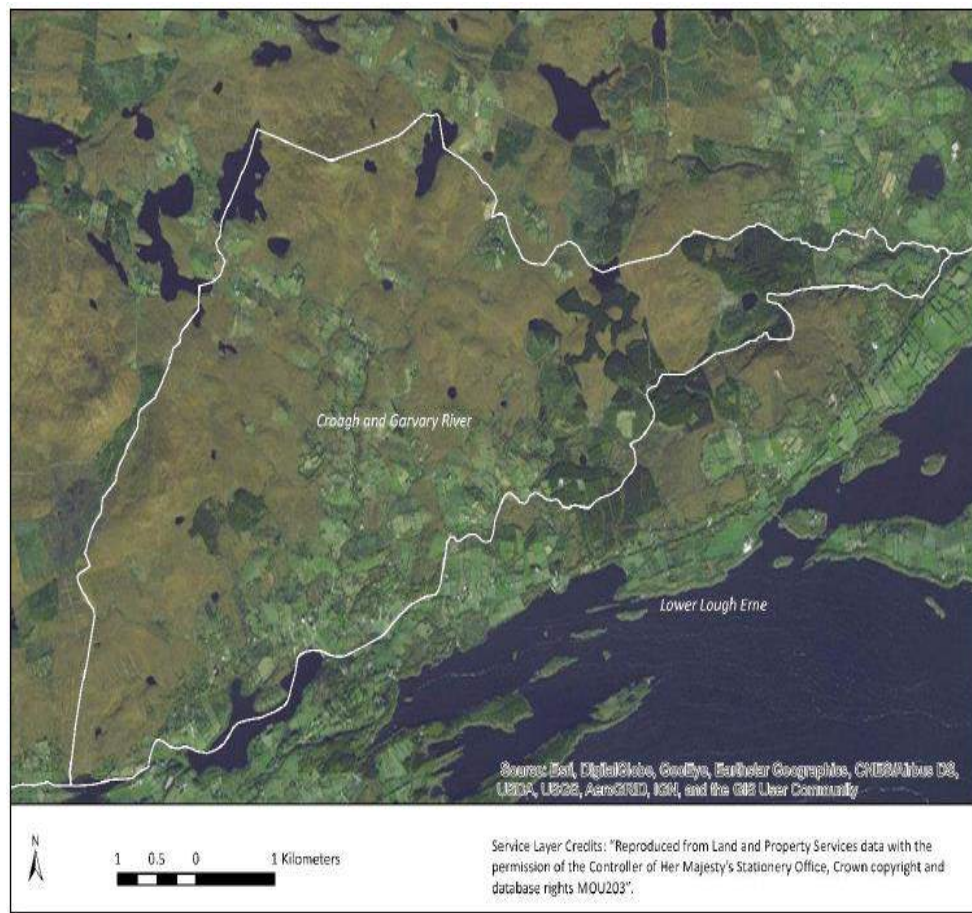
The Croagh & Garvary River LCA is situated on the edge of the Pettigo plateau. It has a rough and rugged appearance with farming on the lower slopes and valleys creating a dense pattern of hedged small fields. The plateau itself, with old enclosures and clumps of trees around ruined farmsteads, is described as having an abandoned feel whilst many farms continue to be worked at low intensity, with rough grazing and small hay meadows. Intact blanket bog, raised bogs and moorland are included in the LCA description, and are highlighted as being extensively worked for turf and forestry.



This LCA area is situated at the most north westerly point of the LELP programme area and is distinct from the other LCAs in a number of ways. It is located at the southern edge of the Pettigo Plateau and is characterised by its isolated and remote nature, with extensive areas of open moorland and blanket bog. The plateau is underlain by the Lough Derg Group of metamorphic rocks of the Proterozoic era



which are the oldest rocks in Northern Ireland and is scattered with small loughs and rocky knolls rising to the high points at Croagh and Mallybreen Hill.

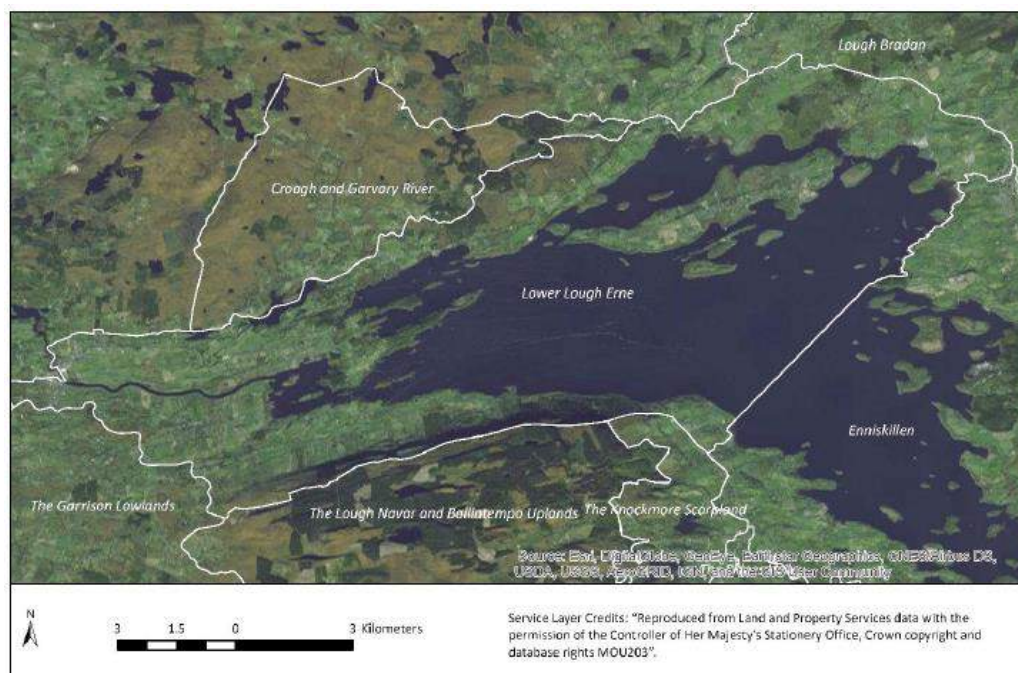


The Garvary and Woodford Rivers make their way through glacial hills and sand and gravel terraces. On the plateau, farms tend to be worked at low intensity and are dominated by rough grazing and moorland is worked for turf. Commercial forestry plantations are located predominantly at the east. Small traditional farmhouses are the common settlement type and many have been abandoned.

### Lower Lough Erne

The Lower Lough Erne LCA is described as the more dramatic of the LCA's with extensive open water, islands and the Magho Cliffs escarpment to its south. The limestone and quartzite rocks here contrast with the low bays and promontories of Boa Island and Castle Caldwell in the north. The LCA assessment describes a narrow strip of farmland with alder woodland borders and a boulder strewn shore below the Magho Cliffs. Along the fringes of the Lough there is a mix of rushy farmland and small fields with larger improved fields on the drained ground of the drumlins. The wooded and scrub-cleared islands are highlighted as tranquil and undisturbed. The area, which takes in the northern shore of Lower Lough Erne, is characterised by the open waters of the lough, the wooded islands and

the Magho Cliffs at the south creating dramatic scenery of outstanding quality. The Lough lies in a deep glacial trough underlain by Carboniferous rocks and is bounded at the south by limestone cliffs and prominent escarpments. Settlement is dominated by scattered, small-scale settlement patterns



along lough-side roads and the small town of Belleek is the main centre of commerce in this area.

### Enniskillen

The Enniskillen LCA includes the southern end of Lower Lough Erne, the town of Enniskillen and the winding rivers and wetlands in the northern part of Upper Lough Erne. It is described as a landscape of open water, wooded islands and richly vegetated shorelines often invisible from the main roads and with several large wooded estate landscapes. This LCA area has a high scenic quality and is characterised by the open views across Lower Lough Erne narrowing to the islands of Enniskillen, and by the splitting of the waterway as it winds its way around the drumlins to the south. The lough and river shore in this area are largely grassy drumlins and fields are divided by hedgerows and wooded off-shore islands. There are a number of large estate landscapes at Castle Coole, Castle Archdale, Lisgoole Abbey and Ely Lodge.

Outside Enniskillen, scattered settlements are mainly located on the principal roads along which is located a combination of both traditional and prestigious new houses. There are also small concentrations of settlement at Kesh, Lisnarick, Killadeas, Church Hill, Tamlaght and Bellanaleck. The centre of Enniskillen is designated a Conservation Area which preserves its 17th century layout as well as many listed buildings. In addition to its secular settlements this landscape has rich built heritage remains relating to the church with 14 ecclesiastical sites including churches, graveyards and monasteries.

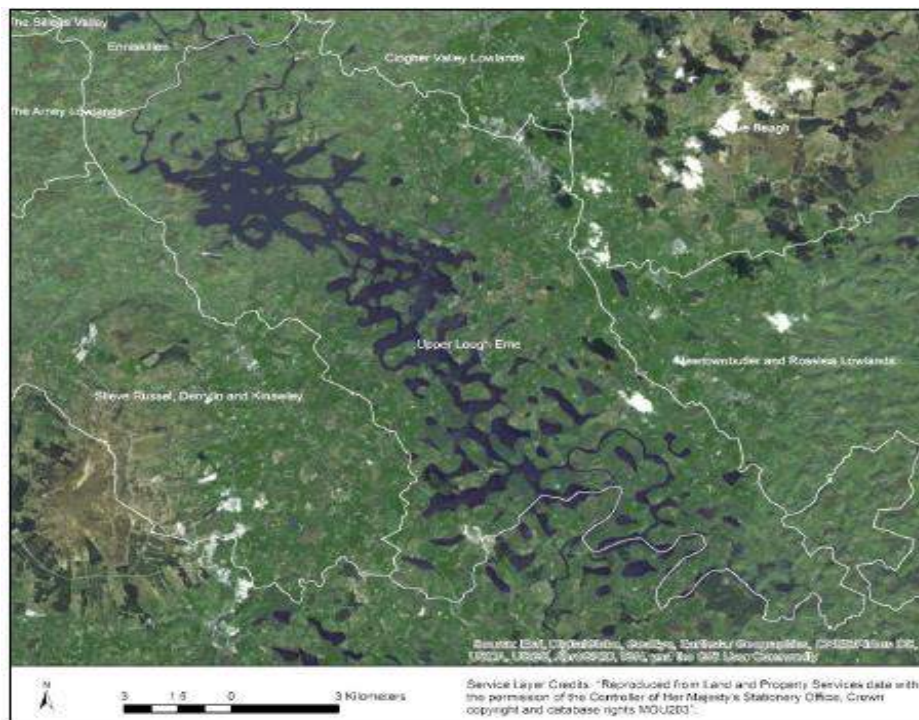




Three of these monastic sites are in State Care namely Devenish Island, White Island and Inishmacsaint. The significance of this aspect of the built heritage is further enhanced by their group value and indicates that the area was once one of great activity during the Medieval period when the ecclesiastical and monastic sites were the focus of learning, worship, burial, craft working, farming and domestic life.

## Upper Lough Erne

The Upper Lough Erne LCA is described as a small scale intricate landscape dominated by water as the channel of the River Erne splits, joins, and widens and narrows around drumlin islands. The shores are thickly wooded in places and the surrounding drumlins are divided by a patchwork of fields and hedges. Small loughs are fringed with reed beds, Carr woodland and the occasional ancient lough dwelling or crannog. Knockninny Hill is the only prominent landmark commanding excellent views over the small settlements and traditional small farms scattered along disorientating narrow twisting



roads. The important landscape features which are highlighted in particular are the grand buildings set within wooded parkland estates such as Crom and Belle Isle. This LCA is the richest in terms of the quantity of significant built heritage features.

## Current landscape management strategies and plans effecting the LELP area

### International and regional management plans

The European Landscape Convention [ELC] defines landscape as *“an area, as perceived by people, whose character is the result of the action and interaction of natural and/or human factors”*. The convention states that:

“Landscape is everywhere and it provides a setting to people’s lives, both physically and through memories and associations.

Is the product of human history and is the meeting ground between natural and cultural influences. It is constantly changing in response to a myriad of different decisions.

Defines identity and sense of place and is central to defining, national, regional, local and personal identity. Differences in landscape character play on all our senses – sight, hearing, smell and taste – day and night and through the seasons.

Is imbued with personal values and it inspires and can take on spiritual values. These values change and evolve.

Provides a sense of continuity and despite change it provides continuity in people’s lives, linking the past with the present and the future and

Provides a wide range of benefits and goods and services essential for human survival and well-being”

The Northern Ireland Department of the Environment has recognised the importance of the definition of landscape quality objectives within the ELC Convention, and has incorporated it into its Planning Policy Statement 2 on Natural Heritage. This and other DOE and NIE policies incorporate other international, national and local directives and conventions to protect designated sites in the Landscape Area such as RAMSAR, the Natura 2000 network, Nature Reserves and Areas of Special Scientific Interest. Locally designated sites are protected under various planning policies and general legislative requirements to protect biodiversity.

### Habitats Directive and EU Directives

**The Conservation Regulations (Northern Ireland)** provide for the designation, protection and management of 'European Sites', the protection of 'European Protected Species' and the adaptation of planning and other controls for the protection of European Sites.

**The designation of Special Area of Conservation [SAC]** is listed under the EC Habitats Directive and Special Protected Areas [SPA] are classified under the EC Birds Directive. Most of the UK's wildlife and environmental legislation is based on EU legislation.

**The EU Biodiversity Strategy** seeks to halt the loss of biodiversity and ecosystems by 2020 and this is reflected in Priority 3 of the Programme for Government (PfG). The Wildlife and Natural Environment Act (Northern Ireland) 2011 places a statutory duty on every public body to further the conservation of biodiversity.

**The Northern Ireland Biodiversity Strategy 2002** sets the framework for biodiversity action and a new biodiversity strategy is being prepared to help halt the loss of biodiversity and degradation of ecosystems up to 2020. The most common form of conserving biodiversity is designation, protection and management of the best sites of nature conservation importance. While areas of international and national nature conservation importance are already protected from development through other statutory designations, conservation of biodiversity is enhanced by designating sites of local nature conservation importance through local Councils.

**The Environment (Northern Ireland) Order 2002** provides DAERA with the power to declare an area of land as an Area of Special Scientific Interest where the land is of special interest by reason of its flora, fauna, geological, physiographical or other features and needs to be protected. Public bodies are required to further the conservation and enhancement of ASSIs and through the appropriate exercise of their functions.

**The Wildlife (Northern Ireland) Order 1985** makes provision related to the protection of wild birds with special penalties for offences related to birds listed on Schedule 1, for which there are additional offences for disturbing these birds or their nests, or their dependent young. **The Wildlife and Natural Environment Act (Northern Ireland) 2011** amended the Wildlife Order by giving protection to a wider range of plants, animals and birds, and providing additional enforcement powers and increased penalties for wildlife related offences. The Act also introduced a statutory duty on all public bodies to further the conservation of biodiversity.

**The Nature Conservation and Amenity Lands (Northern Ireland) Order 1985** provides the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA), with the power to acquire land for the purpose of managing it as a nature reserve.

#### Local management plans and community planning

In recent years local government reform has brought about new administrative boundaries, and where once Lough Erne was located at the heart of both County Fermanagh and the Fermanagh District Council area [which shared the same geographical footprint] it is now situated within a much larger Fermanagh and Omagh District Council area. The newly formed Fermanagh and Omagh District Council has responsibility for developing a long-term strategy for local development using a community planning process known as the Fermanagh and Omagh Community Plan (FOCP). The plan will be delivered through a new partnership involving the public, private and community/voluntary sectors working together to achieve a vision of:

*“a welcoming, shared and inclusive Fermanagh and Omagh District where people and places are healthy, safe, connected and prosperous, and where our outstanding natural, built and cultural heritage is cherished and sustainably managed”.*

The LELP and its proposed programme of work is relevant to twenty-five of the seventy-eight proposed strategic actions across the three themes within the draft community plan as follows:

Theme 1: People and Communities	
Community Plan Outcomes	Proposed Community Plan strategic actions
1. Our people have improved physical health and mental wellbeing	1d. Improve access to and participation in active and creative pursuits, across all life stages
	1e. Develop a local network of partners to coordinate and deliver improved access to and uptake of arts and cultural events programmes
3. Our communities are inclusive and safe, and people feel safer	3e. Promote and increase the use of open and shared space in the district
4. Our communities are vibrant, resilient and empowered	4a. Strengthen community infrastructure, including capacity building across rural and urban areas
	4 e. Develop programmes to encourage and recognise volunteering
	4f. Develop community resilience infrastructure and projects to enable communities to withstand and recover from adverse incidents
5. Our people have the best start in life with lifelong opportunities to fulfill their potential	5g. Develop initiatives to encourage life-long learning and remove barriers to learning for the adult population
	5k. Provide improved opportunities for play, recreation and creativity for all children and young people
Theme 2: Economy, Infrastructure and skills	
Community Plan Outcomes	Proposed Community Plan strategic actions
6. Our economy is thriving, expanding and outward looking	6n. Develop new and enhance existing tourism products, infrastructure and visitor experiences to international standards.



	6p. Develop and promote the Fermanagh and Omagh area as a world class outdoor activities destination [to include greenways, blueways and other outdoor activity provision]
7. Our district is better connected	7.c Improve provision of walkways, cycle ways, community trails and water based infrastructure in our district, connecting to regional and national networks where appropriate
	7e. Develop initiatives to improve accessibility for all, in relation to the physical environment and public transport services
<b>Theme 3: Environment</b>	
<b>Community Plan Outcomes</b>	<b>Proposed Community Plan strategic actions</b>
8. Our outstanding natural environment and cultural and built heritage is enhanced and managed more sustainably	8a Develop and implement management plans for the Sperrins AONB and for the Global GeoPark in partnership with neighbouring areas
	8b Develop a network of walkways, cycle ways, community trails and water based infrastructure that connects people and biodiversity across our district and the wider region [ <i>where appropriate, taking advantage of opportunities brought about through major infrastructure projects</i> ]
	8c Protect and restore vulnerable habitats and increase biodiversity throughout the district
	8d. Develop and promote wildlife/habitat corridor belts
	8e. Protect, manage, conserve and invest in our built heritage and reduce the number of buildings on the buildings at risk register
	8f. Promote and build increased local appreciation of, and access to our natural, built and cultural heritage assets

	8g. Engage people in protecting and enhancing their local environment and in becoming community environment champions
	8o. Promote the development of sustainable infrastructure to assist in flood risk management
	8p. Identify, prioritise and action appropriate means of mitigating against and responding effectively to flooding events
9. Our district is a more attractive and accessible place	9b. Enhance and improve the quality of the public realm to make our towns, villages and neighbourhoods more welcoming, accessible, clean and attractive to business, local users and visitors
	9c. Develop initiatives to encourage and promote civic pride in our area
	9d. Progress the sustainable redevelopment and use of “ <i>key opportunity</i> ” sites in our main towns and across the district
	9e. Increase countryside access across the district, promoting the “ <i>leave no trace principle</i> ”

The Fermanagh and Omagh Community Plan is also linked to the Fermanagh and Omagh Local Development Plan. Whereby Council is legally required to take account of the content of the Community Plan in addition to the Regional Development Strategy 2035 and the Strategic Planning Policy Statement. The Fermanagh and Omagh Local Development Plan (FOLDP) is currently in preparation. It will guide the future use of land in the Council area and inform the general public of the policy framework that is used to determine development proposals. Both the CAF and Arup reports commissioned by LELP have been submitted to the FOLDP.

The FODC Development Plan also takes into account the Strategic Planning Policy Statement for Northern Ireland (SPPS 21] which contains important regional policy objectives to:

- Seek to further the conservation, enhancement and restoration of the abundance, quality, diversity and distinctiveness of the region’s natural heritage
- Further sustainable development by ensuring that biological and geological diversity are conserved and enhanced as an integral part of social, economic and environmental development;

- Assist in meeting international (including European), national and local responsibilities and obligations in the protection and enhancement of the natural heritage;
- Contribute to rural renewal and urban regeneration by ensuring developments take account of the role and value of biodiversity in supporting economic diversification and contributing to a high-quality environment;
- Protect and enhance biodiversity, geo-diversity and the environment; and
- Take actions to reduce our carbon footprint and facilitate adaptation to climate change.

#### Local management plans - natural heritage

Fermanagh & Omagh District Council employs a biodiversity officer who works to implement the Council's local biodiversity action plan which aims to conserve biodiversity through local partnerships and practical delivery of biodiversity conservation. The Council's Local Biodiversity Action Plan Audit 2014 highlighted a number of significant threats to biodiversity including habitat loss and fragmentation; development; non-native invasive species; environmental crime; climate change; vandalism and insensitive management. The Fermanagh and Omagh Local Biodiversity Action Plan 2016-2020 (FOLBAP) outlines a plan of action to help conserve and enhance local habitats and species and raise awareness and knowledge of local biodiversity and involve local people and develop partnerships in its delivery. The plan identifies the following habitats and species as needing support and protection:

Habitats	Local species /species groups	
Wetlands	Bats	Frogs and newts
Calcareous habitats	Breeding waders	Orchids
Bogs and heath	Bumblebees	Red squirrel
Grasslands	Devil's bit scabious and marsh fritillary	Swift
Woodland and hedgerows;	Dragonflies and damselflies	Wild thyme
	European eel	White-clawed crayfish

In 2015 DAERA published the Lough Erne Fishery Management Plan which called for a more effective enforcement programme to protect fish stocks and habitats noting particularly, the adverse impacts on water quality from discharges.

### Local management plans - built heritage

In Northern Ireland, the Historic Environment Division (HED) of the Department for Communities (DFC) is responsible for the protection of the historic environment with the aim of *‘supporting and sustaining vibrant communities and a strong economy through realising the significant, ongoing value of our historic environment’*. HED collates and maintains a number of registers relating to Built Heritage including Historic Monuments, Historic Buildings, Historic Parks, Gardens and Demesnes, Maritime Heritage, Industrial Heritage and Defence Heritage.

The local planning system has a considerable role in conserving built heritage in Northern Ireland. Since April 2015 the LELP area has come under the control of the newly formed Fermanagh and Omagh District Council which is responsible for most planning decisions as well as preparing and publishing its Local Development Plan (LDP) for the area. The plan will determine the type and scale of development which should be encouraged, and where it should be located. As such the LDP is essential to the future management of the built heritage in the LELP area. Historic buildings will have some protection as a result of their location, for example in a Conservation Area, Area of Townscape or Village Character.

Buildings of local importance may also be designated within a Local Landscape Policy Area (LLPA) through the LDP. Local Landscape Policy Areas consist of those features and areas within and adjoining settlements considered to be of greatest amenity value, landscape quality or local significance, and therefore worthy of protection from undesirable or damaging development. This will be significant for the management of built heritage in the LELP area as the LLPAs may include archaeological sites and monuments and their surroundings, listed buildings and – crucially - other locally important buildings and their surroundings.

Designation	Description	Legislation/Policy	Designation Body
World Heritage Sites (WHS)	<p>Sties which have ‘Outstanding Universal Value’ designated for either their ‘cultural’ or ‘natural’ significance.</p> <p>NI currently has one WHS, the Giants Causeway, designated for its ‘natural’ OUV.</p>	<p>‘Operational Guidelines for the implementation of the World Heritage Convention’</p> <p>SPPS, PPS6 LDP’s and policies</p>	United Nations Education, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO)
Conservation Areas (CA)	‘...areas of special architectural or historic interest.... the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance’	<p>Section 104, Planning Act (NI) 2011.</p> <p>SPSS PPS^, LDP’s and policies</p>	District Councils, following consultation with HBC

Areas of Townscape Character (ATC)	...'areas within our cities, towns and villages which exhibit a distinct character normally based on their historic built form or layout.'	SPPS, PPS6, LDP's and policies	District Councils
Areas of significant Archaeological Interest (ASAI)	'Designations seek to identify particularly distinctive areas of the historic landscape in Northern Ireland. They are likely to include a number of individual and related sites and monuments and may also be distinguished by their landscape character and topography'	SPPS, PPS6 LDP's and policies	District Councils through LDP process – (proposed by HED with advice from HMC)
Areas of Archaeological Potential (AAP)	...'those areas within the historic cores of towns and villages, where, on the basis of current knowledge, it is likely that archaeological remains will be encountered in the course of continuing development and change.'	SPPS, PPS6, LDP's and policies	District Councils through LDP process- (proposed by MED)
Local Landscape Policy Area (LLPA)	<p>..'Consist of those features and areas within and adjoining settlements considered to be of greatest amenity value, landscape quality or local significance and therefore worthy of protection from undesirable or damaging development. They may include:-</p> <p>Archaeological sites and monuments and their surroundings;</p> <p>Listed and other locally important buildings and their surroundings</p>	SPPS, PPS6, LDP's and policies	District Councils through LDP process

### Local management plans – cultural heritage

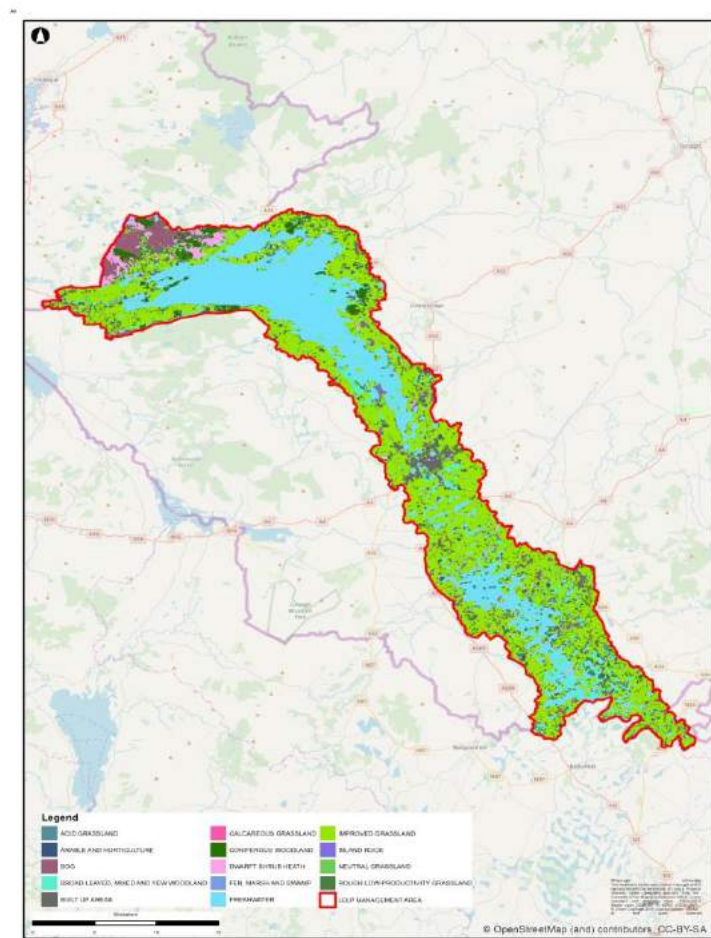
Fermanagh and Omagh District Council commissioned a Heritage Audit in 2016 which found that there was extensive heritage activity within the LELP area through for example local history and writing and that there was also significant cultural activity being delivered through GAA, Ulster Scots and Orange Lodge heritage. Unlike many parts of the UK there is little or no archaeological society activity in the area.

Fermanagh and Omagh District Council is commissioning a Heritage Plan to be informed by the Community Planning process. Council officers see LELP as potentially playing a key role in working with local communities and groups in maximizing the impact and benefits of the areas cultural assets.

## Land Cover type within LELP boundary

The LELP area is dominated by improved grassland (42.6%) with freshwater covering the next greatest expanse of area (27.5%). Other habitats are those which come under the category of broad-leaved, mixed and yew woodland, rough low-productivity grassland, coniferous woodland and bog.

Land cover type	Area [ha]	% of total
Improved grassland	22,403	42.6
Freshwater	14,487	27.5
Broad leaved, mixed and yew woodland	4,412	8.4
Rough low-productivity grassland	2,283	4.3
Coniferous woodland	1,823	3.5
Bog	1,821	3.5
Arable and Horticultural	1,540	2.9
Built up areas and gardens	1,525	2.9
Dwarf shrub heath	1,223	2.3
Natural grassland	788	1.5
Inland rock	236	0.4
Acid grassland	34	0.1
Fen, marsh and swamp	28	0.1
Calcareous grassland	5	0.0





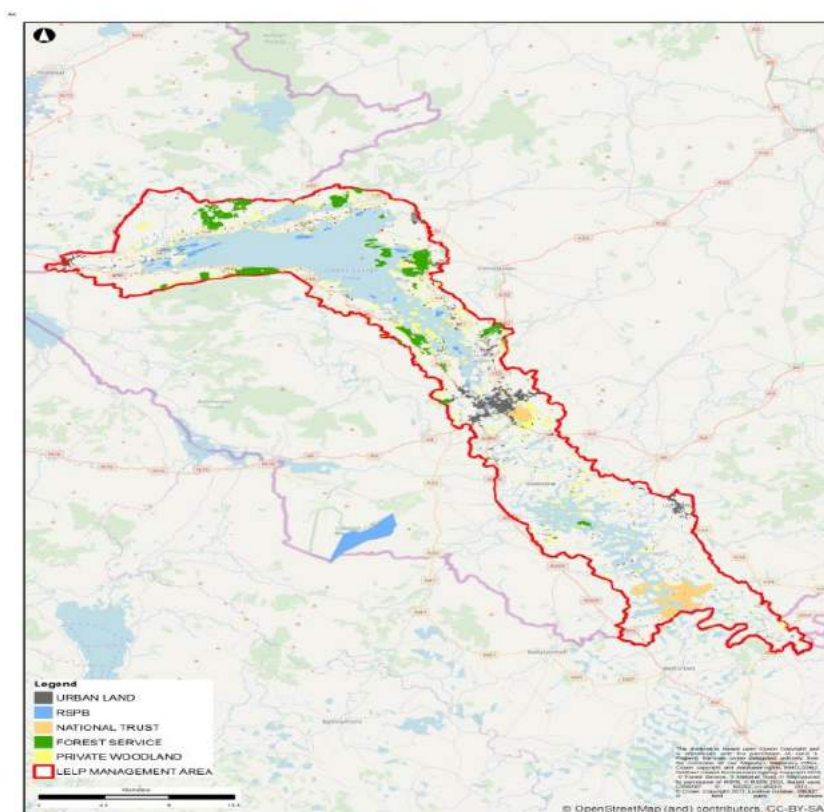
## Local land ownership and management

The Lough Erne landscape is currently managed by a range of landowners and managers. Much of the terrestrial area is managed for agriculture with forestry and built areas and bog being some of the other main land use types. Management of areas using an ecosystems services approach is underway through management plans and programmes such as Futurescapes (RSPB) and Living Landscapes (Ulster Wildlife). Landowners and land managers within the LELP area include:

Private landowners / Farmers	Forest Service Northern Ireland	National Trust	Forest Service, DAERA	Fermanagh and Omagh District Council
Ulster Wildlife	RSPB	Lough Erne Wildfowler's Council	Waterways Ireland	Northern Ireland Water.

## Local coordination of the landscape

A range of statutory and voluntary organisations with strategic and operational requirements to protect, preserve and manage the built and natural environment of Lough Erne and its shoreline currently operate within the Lough Erne Landscape area. To date however no formal local body has been established to coordinate activities at a strategic level.



In 1965 the Amenity Lands Act established for the first time in Northern Ireland a legislative structure for nature conservation and introduced the concept of National Parks and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty [AONBs]. Fermanagh was chosen to be the first National Park covering sixty miles of the waterway of Upper and Lower Lough Erne and the area extending westwards to Cuilcagh Mountain. However, the idea was comprehensively rejected by local farmers, residents and politicians. Moreover, in subsequent years eight AONBs were established in other parts of Northern Ireland, but there are currently no plans by the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs to pursue an AONB designation within the Fermanagh and Omagh District Council area, and by extension, to the Lough Erne landscape area.

Furthermore, two AONBs were proposed for the area in the 1990s, namely Erne Lakeland AONB and Fermanagh Caveland AONB but a 2004 paper entitled *Implementing Shared Horizons – a Discussion Paper on a Strategic Vision for Protected Landscapes* noted that “While broad agreement was reached on the proposed boundaries for these designations, a consensus could not be reached on the proposal to designate the two AONBs”. Unwittingly then, from the 1960’s onwards Fermanagh found itself in the vanguard of the emerging conservation debate in Northern Ireland and over the past fifty years or so conservation has been, to a greater or lesser degree, a high-profile issue in local politics.

The positions adopted by the advocates and opponents of conservation policy remain complex. In the absence of agreed conservation designations and with a lack of strategic coordination LELP will work together to coordinate efforts to ensure the future heritage of the LELP area during its five-year term which, it is hoped, will provide an essential legacy by bringing together voluntary and statutory groups with an interest in the Lough and its shoreline and encourage increased coordination of effort in protecting and enhancing its built and natural environment.

## The Lough Erne landscape, its heritage and its people

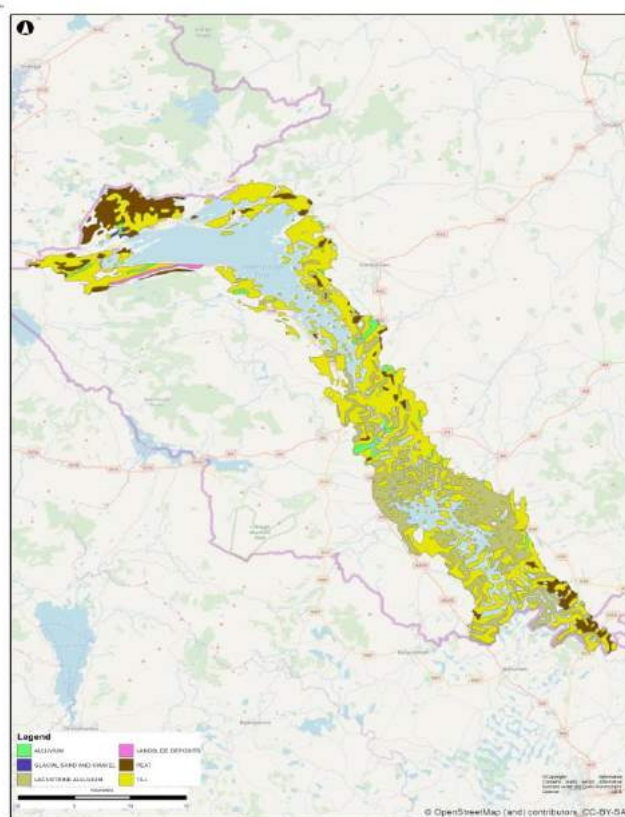
*“The upper and lower lakes of Lough Erne are for the most part sylvan in character; here is nothing of the mountainy grandeur of Killarney and Magillicuddys, but instead a veritable fairyland of blue waters and unbelievably green islands, green down to the water’s edge, green with a greenness which is positively startling”.*

### **Hayward, *In Praise of Ulster* [1938]**

The average area covered by a Heritage Lottery Fund Landscape Partnership Scheme is 260 km<sup>2</sup>. However, and not surprisingly, the Lough Erne Landscape Partnership area is somewhat larger than this because of the amount of water it contains - at 500km<sup>2</sup> the landscape area is made up of 300km<sup>2</sup> of water and 200km<sup>2</sup> of shoreline and islands around Upper and Lower Lough Erne. As described earlier the LELP boundary spreads across four designated landscape character areas nestling within the two larger landscape character regions. It has its own unique qualities, not least of which are the dominant features of the Loughs and islands situated at the core of County Fermanagh, with the LELP landscape footprint at its beating heart.

### Formation of the landscape

Landscapes are dynamic and change over geological time. These changes happened slowly but their impact nonetheless continues to influence the way we live today. Geology has strong ties with



biodiversity in that the nature of the underlying rock is a key factor in determining the distribution of habitats and species in the landscape. The bedrock beneath the Lough Erne valley is comprised of a complex series of faulted sedimentary rocks of carboniferous age. These include sandstones, mudstones and limestone - the last of which is occasionally seen in surface karst features. The limestone hills to the west of the landscape area were formed 360 million years ago in the carboniferous period from the bed of a shallow equatorial sea. A range of dramatic limestone landforms resulted including the 200m high Cliffs of Magho which now dominate Lower Lough Erne. The LELP area includes the shores of Upper and Lower Lough Erne and its immediate hinterland with the low-lying

Lakeland landscape being its defining characteristic.

The Pettigo Plateau to the north is underlain by ancient metamorphic rocks which are pre-Dalradian in age and are Northern Ireland's oldest rocks. The River Erne is a corridor valley dating back to the ice age when numerous drumlins formed of glacial till created the intricately rolling landscape which was subsequently flooded leaving alluvial deposits between the drumlin islands. Clay rich soils are dominant with water logging and poor drainage resulting in wet conditions. The islands give the landscape its unique character. In local lore, there were reputed to be 365 islands on the Lough but there are in fact 154 with 57 in the upper lough, and 97 in the lower. Today only three are inhabited. Several large rivers drain the surrounding catchment area and flow into the Loughs.

### Natural heritage

Lough Erne and its shoreline is peppered with sites of international importance for habitats and species including 4 Natura 2000 Special Areas of Conservation, 2 Natura 2000 Special Protection Areas, 27 ASSIs, 7 Special Areas of Conservation, 3 Ramsar sites, 3 Nature Reserves and 44 non-statutory nature reserves.

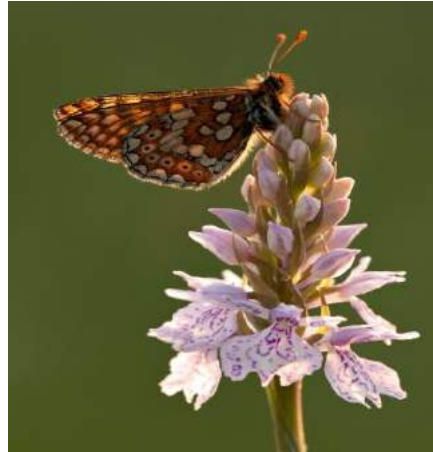
All these sites are within the LELP area and contain a unique range of habitats and species. The most dominant habitat is of course the water of Lough Erne itself, which is in essence a large wild fishery and is an attraction for international anglers more used to fishing in managed stocked lakes. The rare and protected pollan gives the Lough an elevated conservation status, and although the stock is small, it appears to be increasing [Arup 2017]. The river catchments to the north of the LELP area are influenced by the limestone geology and create conditions suitable for freshwater crayfish and fresh water pearl mussels. Semi natural grasslands are still widespread in the area and good examples of broad-leaved woodland can be found at Magho and on the islands of both the lower and upper loughs, where some 209 ha of undisturbed ancient woodland can be found.



Waders nest Giles Knight

On the Pettigo Plateau acid grassland merges into cut-over blanket peat bogs with purple moor grass, and the pools and hummocks are home to three species of sundew and pale butterwort. It is the only extensive area of lowland western blanket bog in Northern Ireland [Arup 2017] and is designated an Area of Special Scientific Interest, a Special Area of Conservation and Ramsar site. Blanket bog is of

major importance on a European scale and is home to plant species adapted to acidic, low nutrient conditions. The Pettigo Plateau supports golden plover, hen harrier, Greenland white-fronted geese and breeding common tern, merlin, dunlin, lapwing, curlew, redshank and snipe. Vertebrate species include pine marten, whiskered bat, shoveler, pochard, brook lamprey, white-clawed crayfish and lunar hornet moth.



Marsh fritillary

The Magho cliffs overlooking Lower Lough Erne have semi natural woodlands and the highest number of woodland species in N. Ireland along with special plant life such as yellow saxifrage at its base, shady horsetail in its open spaces and mossy saxifrage and Welsh poppy along its cliffs. There is a range of other interesting plant species found at Magho, some of which are not known elsewhere in Ireland.

Given its western location the LELP area is also home to mosses, some of which are rare oceanic species. Indeed, the New Forest Beech Lichen is found in one location in N. Ireland just outside the LELP footprint and the hunt is on to locate it within the area as it is quite possible it occurs in similar conditions. Two moth species within Ireland, the Dark Amber and Brown Scallop, are found exclusively in the LELP footprint at Crom NT estate, and on a RSPB Lower Lough island reserve.

The Lough and its shoreline is also host to the largest remaining assemblage of breeding waders in Northern Ireland and is one of the most important sites across Ireland generally for its rich diversity of birdlife such as breeding curlew, lapwing, golden plover, redshank and snipe. The area is home to a unique inland island breeding colony of sandwich tern which normally breeds at coastal locations. Over-wintering wildfowl and waders including whooper swans, geese and ducks arrive from Iceland, northern and central Europe. Sparrow hawks, long-eared owls, crossbills and siskins are found in the forests, with great-crested grebe and little grebe in the sheltered bays. As noted in our introduction white - tailed sea eagles and ospreys have made a return in recent years and can be seen across the LELP area and it is hoped they may breed in the next five years.

Overall the LELP area has 30 out of 40 priority habitat types and 119 of the 481 priority species noted in the Northern Ireland Biodiversity Strategy 2012.

## Early history

The history and heritage of the area was largely shaped by the two great lakes which split the County into two halves from its South East to North West boundaries. The area is rich in built heritage remains and is renowned for its islands, castles, churches and country estates. Its built and natural heritage has been greatly influenced by its landscape setting and the waterway has been a boundary, as well as a route way, since prehistoric times.

There has been human activity in the area since the Mesolithic period around 9,000 years ago. Typified by a hunter gatherer lifestyle, humans had little impact on the landscape during this period and left only ephemeral remains whose discovery usually depends on happenstance. However, late Mesolithic stone tools have been recovered. The LELP landscape area remained unaltered until the Neolithic period, some 6,000 years ago when trees were cut down to make way for crops and livestock and field walls, and large stone monuments were constructed. The megalithic tombs built by these first farmers are still visible in the landscape today and are suggestive of past ceremonies, rituals and beliefs. There is little above-ground evidence of settlement within the LELP area either during this period or the subsequent Bronze and Iron Ages, although the burnt mounds of the Bronze Age are the most common monument type to be found in the area. Ritual and burial monuments of the Bronze Age (2300-600BC) are apparent in the form of barrows, cairns and standing stones.

Evidence of Iron Age activity (600 BC – AD 500) across the island of Ireland is limited but Iron Age log boats and artifacts have been recovered at Crevinish Island on Lough Erne indicating activity throughout this period in the LELP area. The strategic importance of the lakes was such that no passage could take place between Connaught and Ulster without crossing the lakes or the river which joined them. The fords and crossings on and around the rivers and lakes have been sites of conflict, not only between the Irish and the English, but between the people of the region for hundreds of years. Indeed, the weapons found on or near these crossings testify to the struggles which took place over millennia. Fermanagh, of course, reputedly takes its name from the Leinster tribe of Monach, some members of which settled around the shores of Lough Erne just before the Christian era. The correct name is Fir - Monach, The Men of Monach. Apart from the name they left no enduring mark on the landscape.

## Christian Period

The Loughs were a conduit along which people and ideas travelled. Christianity was introduced which was introduced to Ireland in the 5<sup>th</sup> Century AD. The Erne waterway was a major routeway on the trail from Europe to the renowned St Patrick's Purgatory on Lough Derg and, as a result, the area clearly had wide cultural connections throughout this period as a result. Abundant evidence of both secular and ecclesiastical life along Lough Erne dates from the 6th century AD, and this was a time when the area flourished. The raths, crannogs and monastic remains form an important part of the landscape today.





Devenish Island Tourism NI



White Island Tourism NI

The most well-known monument in Fermanagh is the ecclesiastical site on Devenish Island, with its round tower and church remains dating from this period. The significance of Devenish is enhanced when it is considered in context with the numerous other monastic sites on Lough Erne, including iconic features such as White Island with its carved stone figures and Inishmacsaint with its high cross. These remains are testament to a rich period in Fermanagh's history when Lough Erne was the location of monastic sites which survived and developed into the medieval period when their occupants also provided hospitality to travelers and pilgrims who travelled its loughs and rivers.

### Medieval Period

The Norman influence, a major strand in the story of Northern Ireland, had little impact in Fermanagh. Indeed, by the late 12<sup>th</sup> Century when the Anglo Normans had barely penetrated into the area it came under the control of the Maguire lordship. This Gaelic Irish family with its links to Lisnaskea had strongholds in Monea and Enniskillen and evidence from the period shows again that the area was far from isolated, as particularly rich archaeological finds on monastic sites connect it to the rest of Europe, and that the Maguire's also made pilgrimages to Spain and Italy. Crannogs were still being used during this period particularly by high ranking members of society.

A recent exciting excavation of Drumclay Crannog outside Enniskillen from June 2012 to April 2013 uncovered more than 5,500 artifacts and the history of what was previously known about the occupation of these particularly Irish sites of habitation has been rewritten as a result.



Artifacts from Drumclay Crannog FODC

There are few evident upstanding remains in the Maguire landscape today but written sources indicate that there are more sites unaccounted for and much research is still to be done. However, there are many church remains and at this time the castles at Enniskillen and Lisnaskea were appropriated and reused following the defeat of the Ulster chiefs and the collapse of the old Gaelic order.

The effects of the Flight of the Earls in 1607 and the subsequent Plantation of Ulster which commenced in 1609 are still felt today. This period of huge social, political and cultural change was marked by the construction of a number of impressive and strategically sited Plantation castles that ring the Lough shoreline where communication and transport was easiest. Their impressive ruins can be found throughout the LELP area.

### Early modern period

It was at the time of the Plantation of Ulster in 1609 that Sir John Davies, the Attorney-General of Queen Elizabeth 1 wrote of County Fermanagh

*“It is so pleasant and fruitful a country that if I should make a full description thereof, it would rather be taken for a poetical fiction than a true and serious narration. The fresh lake called Lough Erne, being more than 40 miles in length, and abounding in fresh water fish of all kinds, and containing a hundred dispersed islands, divides that country into two parts. The land on either side of the lough, rising in little hills of 80 or 100 acres apiece, is the fattest and richest soil in all Ulster”.* [Mary Rogers Prospect of Erne 1967]

In 1631 Michael O’Cleary the chief of the Four Masters was invited by Brian Ruaidh Maguire Lord Enniskillen to Lisgoole abbey, which had been a Franciscan Friary prior to the Nine Years War, to compile the Book of the Invasions. Indeed, Lisgoole had been considered as a site for the County town of Fermanagh by Sir Arthur Chichester at the time of the Plantation, but he was persuaded to choose Enniskillen instead due to its more defensive location. In 1688 the inhabitants of Enniskillen took up arms to defend the town against the threat of occupation by the forces of James II. This led to the establishment of the Inniskillingers Foot and Dragoons which over time became known as the world famous Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers and the 5<sup>th</sup> Royal Inniskilling Dragoon Guards.

The unique island setting of Enniskillen as we know it today began following the appropriation of Maguire’s Castle and Lisnaskea developed following the construction of Castle Balfour on the site of Castle Skeagh. The character of the development of the landscape in this early modern period was defined by scattered settlements of vernacular dwellings, country houses and large period homes with accompanying estates.

Fine churches and graveyards and bridges added character to the area and small settlement concentrations were dotted around the lough shore at Belleek, Kesh, Carran Beg, Church Hill, Carry Bridge, Killadeas, Lisnarick and Bellanaleck. Notable is the survival of a number of thatched and vernacular buildings at a time where rapid decline or complete loss in other areas has been identified.



Castle Balfour Lisnaskea



Traditional wooden cot on Upper Lough Erne around 1930: LEH

### Transport on the Lough

For centuries, the use of wooden boats and cots were indicative of everyday life and were the principle mode of transport on a network of routes between the shores and the inhabited islands dotted across Lough Erne. As a result of this reliance on water transport traditional boat building was an important industry in the LELP area. Wooden boats facilitated the transport of people, livestock and goods. Many ferries traversed the Lough, and goods such as iron, timber, coal and slate and stone for building were carried between Belleek and Enniskillen by cot whilst turf was transported across the waterways from Donegal and the Magho cliffs. Fishing was carried out and livestock and crops were also moved around by water. People used cots and clinker built boats to go about their daily routine of outings to school, church and social gatherings but with the shift to rail and road transport along with changes in technology and the construction of road bridges, this way of life declined in recent times. The Lough must indeed have been a hive of activity.

Evidence of this aspect of the Lough's heritage is still apparent on the islands of Lower and Upper Lough Erne. On Lower Lough Erne for example, there are ten islands with houses still remaining on them. As well as these island houses, there are built navigation markers from the 1840s and stone-built jetties. On the Upper Lough, there are the remains of sloping stone-built jetties and slipways designed to land a cot at all water levels. Lough Erne Yacht Club occupies a former WW2 RAF site built in 1941 for Catalina Flying boats at Gublusk on the Lower Lough. Indeed, the club is famous as the oldest yacht racing club in Ireland and has a collection of Fairy Class yachts specifically designed for use on Lough Erne.

Robert Lloyd Praeger in his celebration of the Irish landscape *The Way That I Went* (1937) described the Lough Erne landscape as it existed in the early part of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century. He states that there were:

*“Wonderful water trips from Enniskillen right up to Lough Oughter but the bolder scenery and more open views which obtain on the Lower Lake make it the more attractive”. He describes the islands of Lower Lough Erne as “cleared of timber and grazed, but many occupied by dense native wood which has never been interfered with” and that these “harbour a purely indigenous flora and fauna and are consequently of great attraction to the naturalist; as they tell us what the country-side was like before*

*man began to cut or burn down trees or to graze herds of cows and sheep, or to break up the land for tillage”.*

He also described the rich woodland understory flora and the stony shores with their different vegetation and which were limy, exposed and liable to floods. He notes that the *“most delightful time on Lough Erne is May or early June, for then the trees are at their freshest, the wild-flowers are in full blow, and the bird population of the lake is at its busiest.”*

### The Second World War and the Donegal Corridor

Fermanagh’s Lakeland and geographical location close to the Atlantic Ocean meant that it had immense strategic importance for the allies in the Second World War and an agreement was reached between London and Dublin to permit allied sea planes to fly across the narrow neck of land between the border at Belleek and Donegal Bay at Ballyshannon and then out into the western approaches of the Atlantic ocean.

This access route was known as the “Donegal Corridor” and it was so successful that from 1941 to 1945 the LELP area became the base for thousands of American, Canadian, Australian and British troops at St Angelo Airport, Killadeas, and the flying boat base at Castle Archdale and in camps at a number of other locations.



Catalina Sea Planes above Lough Erne



WWII pontoon bridge to Inishmacsaint island [WI]

As well as the contribution to the war effort these military and aviation activities made an impact on the landscape as evidenced in the remains of Nissan huts, jetties, mooring stations and quadrant towers which are still apparent in the landscape today. Undoubtedly the presence of so many soldiers training and living in the area also made a social impact on local people.

### Erne Hydro-Electric Scheme 1950-57

In 1950 the Erne Drainage & Development Act was passed in both the Dáil and Stormont to develop the Erne Hydro-Electric Scheme. The Electricity Supply Board (ESB) in the Republic of Ireland had been working for some years on a scheme to develop the River Erne’s potential for generating hydroelectricity for some years but the situation was complicated given that the scheme would give the ESB control of water levels within the jurisdiction of Northern Ireland. Difficult as it was for the Unionist government to contemplate this, Prime Minister Sir Basil Brooke the Member of Parliament



for Lisnaskea, recognised the scheme's long-term merit in terms of improved drainage and the alleviation of winter flooding in the region. The scheme attracted a great influx of workers to the area, particularly Ballyshannon, but also involved major works on the Fermanagh side.



Belleek before the dam: Lawrence Walsh Collection



Lough Erne drainage level. Waterways Ireland

A priority action for LELP is to record stories from the people employed on the scheme and local people living in the area during the works, and people with experience of the Second World War. The resultant memory map will capture what life was like on Lough Erne during this period of great global conflict and social and industrial change.

### Modern times

During the Troubles the LELP area, like the rest of Northern Ireland, was affected by the violence. In the *Stars of Ballymenone*, the American ethnographer, folklorist and anthropologist Henry Glassie reflected on what he found when he came to live for seven years along the shores of Upper Lough Erne to learn how country people endure in violent times.

*"I write of a time when the dead were yet alive, a past era marked by two sets of conditions. It was a time of violence. The year I came began with Bloody Sunday, and the troubles continued, setting real life in a context of political conflict, of bombings and killings, rage and fear. It was a time of deprivation, when the technologies of the modern, long a comfort in other places, were only beginning to come to Ballymenone. When I arrived in 1972, there was no plumbing or central heating or electricity, no telephones, no televisions to trap folks at home, few cars to carry them away to the delights of the town. People laboured through the day, hefting iron pots, turning the soil with spades, and they gathered at night by the fire to chat."*

How times have changed. The Good Friday Agreement in 1998 brought political settlement. Living standards improved and peace came slowly again to the area, but the outside world brought new pressures to bear on the landscape. In recent years applications have been made to undertake fracking for gas extraction adjacent to the LELP area and the potential value of the shale gas resource beneath our feet may be considerable. However, fracking is considered by many to be incompatible with tourism, agriculture and the environment due to the areas' porous limestone and the perceived fragility of the Lough Erne landscape. Moreover, the image of the area as a rural idyll is also

incompatible with the impact of the proposed extraction. The construction of wind farms too is contentious as they are seen by many to affect the perception of the remote and unique nature of the Lough Erne landscape.

In recent years flooding of the Erne system has affected road infrastructure, and flood control measures may have the potential to impact on waterside monuments and archaeology. The further growth of tourism may also lead to pressure for new development along the shore, including [potentially] hotels chalets, marinas, jetties and other infrastructure. As well as physical effects, these developments may bring impacts on habitats and species, water quality and dark skies. The development of increased access to the water may also erode the more tranquil nature of the area and Upper Lough Erne in particular. The need to promote responsible tourism is becoming increasingly important.

### Cultural activity

Fermanagh, and by extension the LELP area is known for its energetic and enterprising community development activity and participation. The arts and cultural sector is particularly vibrant drawing as it does upon the rich legacy left by the area's writers, poets, story tellers, musicians and artists. The Fermanagh-born painter T. P. Flanagan who is widely regarded as having been the most important watercolor landscape artist in Ireland in the second half of the 20th century, painted a number of scenes within the area. He befriended Seamus Heaney whose poem *Bogland* was inspired by a painting by the artist. Oscar Wilde the playwright, novelist, essayist and poet attended Portora Royal School in Enniskillen from 1864 – 71. The school was a prestigious educational institution to which boys came from all over Ireland and in 1919 it attracted Samuel Beckett, who was one of the most influential writers of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century and a Nobel Prize winner for literature. In recent years international festivals linked to both Wilde and Beckett have been held in Enniskillen.

The folklore and storytelling tradition of the area has been well documented, particularly by Henry Glassie the internationally acclaimed American Folklorist, Anthropologist and Ethnographer who lived along Upper Lough Erne for seven years during the early years of the Troubles. He captured and recorded the stories, myths, music and way of life of local people at Ballymenone. He also wrote extensively about the practice of mumming which was dying out in the area and which has now been revived.

The LELP area contains several dynamic Historical Societies which contribute to the knowledge base of local history and heritage, and the local cultural scene includes active drama, music, arts, and writing groups. Musicians of note include Cathal McConnell whose work with The Boys of the Lough has taken his local repertoire onto a global stage and the well-known local classical composer and performer Joan Trimble.

### Living and working in the Lough Erne Landscape Partnership area

The LELP area is made up of 18 electoral wards but as a result of the recent reorganization of local government, there are few up to date social and economic figures available for the Fermanagh District Council legacy area [of which the LELP is a part] and it has now been amalgamated with Omagh Council to form the new Fermanagh and Omagh District Council. However, statistics from the Northern Ireland



Neighbourhood Information Service for the Fermanagh Local Government District available at 30 June 2015 show that the population of the County was 63,126, of which 31,667 (50.2%) were male and 31,459 (49.8%) were female. This figure was made up of 13,405 children aged 0-15 years; 18,535 people aged 16-39 years; 20,679 people aged 40-64 years; and 10,507 people aged 65 years and older. Between 2005 and 2015 the population of Fermanagh Local Government District increased by 4,131 people or 7.0%.

In 2013 the Fermanagh Local Government District was ranked as the 22<sup>nd</sup> most deprived local government district and that 14,214 people [23% of the population] were experiencing income deprivation. Under the Multiple Deprivation measure [MDM] the Devenish ward, which lies within the LELP area was within the top 10% most deprived wards in Northern Ireland, with an MDM rank of 29. Devenish ranked highly in the top 10% most deprived bracket for income, employment, and health and living categories. Other wards in the LELP area within the most deprived category for proximity to services were Belleek and Boa, Belcoo and Garrison and Florence Court and Kinawley. On census day 2011, 59.16% of the population belonged to, or were brought up in the Catholic religion and 37.78% belonged to or were brought up in a Protestant or other Christian religion. 37.20% indicated that they had a British national identity. 36.08% had an Irish national identity and 29.53% had a Northern Irish Identity.

County Fermanagh and by extension the LELP area, has a strong local tradition of economic self-reliance and entrepreneurship with a high percentage of self-employment [85% of local businesses employ less than five people]. The area's business base includes agri-food, construction, manufacturing, farming, retail, tourism and the public sector. Although the rate of educational attainment amongst school leavers is high there is a hemorrhaging of our higher skilled young people out of the area to find work elsewhere. Employment is predominantly part-time in leading sectors such as retail and tourism. The area has a reportedly high quality of life amongst residents as its natural beauty makes it a choice location for retirees and tourism. However, road infrastructure is poor and there is a lack of public transport in rural areas with limited broadband connectivity.



*G8 Youth Summit Fermanagh Trust*

Despite the local economy remaining in recession the tourism, digital, sustainable energy and agri-food sectors have significant potential to grow, and the new Fermanagh and Omagh District Council has powers to assist this growth through the targeting of regeneration activities and community planning. Intervention may

indeed be needed as regional political and economic uncertainties continue around Brexit and the potential impact it may have on cross border trade and investment. Living as we do so close to the border the ebb and flow of Euro/Sterling exchange rates has always been a feature of our local economy and we are all too aware of the benefits or the damage that it may bring to businesses such as food exporting, retailing and tourism.

### Community

There is a strong “pride of place” in the area. In *Fermanagh District Councils Cohesion Strategy 2013* consultees not only identified with the County but also with the area where they lived locally. People associated strongly with living in either rural or urban locations but identified with North, South, East and West Fermanagh as well - in Enniskillen people were also clear about what housing estate they belonged to.

Moreover, people were collectively aware of their relative peripherality and isolation within N. Ireland, particularly those living along the border. This sense of isolation however has engendered a sense of resilience, self-help and community spirit which is a character trait that people proudly recognise in themselves.



Local debate on education Fermanagh

People in Fermanagh, and again by extension the LELP area have prided themselves on the high level of community development and community participation. Estimates on the numbers of active groups vary as not all are registered with the Charities Commission or with FODC Community Services. However, it is estimated that there are up to 300 hundred groups in the County which include for example Sports and social clubs, mother and toddler groups, cultural and historical societies, arts groups, community groups linked to halls and community centres and regional voluntary groups delivering services across a wide range of sectoral interests. Many of these community and voluntary groups operate in the LELP area and will be targeted through its programme, audience development and Community engagement fund in its delivery phase.

## Community Cohesion

As we emerge from many years of sectarian conflict there is a widely held desire to better develop community cohesion in the area and there is a recognition, despite the segregated nature of where many people live, for example in rural areas, villages and urban social housing estates, that there needs to be an improvement in shared services, facilities, and opportunities for community engagement and sharing of spaces. While building community cohesion is not a specific target for LELP *per se* it will nevertheless have regard for activities that positively help to bind communities together with benefits for all.

It is also important that project delivery partners and the LELP Board are aware that its projects, funded as they are for a relatively short period of time, will link where possible with activities within the FODC Community Plan to ensure a lasting legacy not only in targeting heritage activities but also in contributing to the creation of a strong, vibrant, cohesive and united community across the LELP area.

## Statement of Significance

### Designations and protections

*All around, shards of a lost tradition*

*The whole landscape a manuscript*

*we had lost the skill to read*

*A part of our past disinherited*

#### **John Montague**

Our need to connect to, and identify with places and landscapes, and to understand and interpret them is not new. It goes back a long way indeed and is deeply rooted in our psyche. The Romans had a term for the spiritual connections we have with place; *Genii loci* meaning the guardian spirits or souls of places. The Greeks, too, referred to these souls of place as *daemons* and they became, more often than not, the rootstock of our myths and legends which have been passed down to us today. These spirits took numerous forms and protected a place, moulded the character and atmosphere of the landscape, and influenced all life existing within it. Today we might take this to mean the ambience of a place, the qualities of its environment and what makes it special to us. Villages, towns, buildings, rivers, mountains and forests had their unique *genii loci*, or governing spirits of location and for communities to flourish in cultures it was necessary for people to harmonise their lives with them.

To our modern way of thinking this is often forgotten until we reflect on for example, how many Christian churches are built on the same locations as pagan sites which have an accumulation of thousands of years of ritual associated with them. Indeed, we don't have to scratch too far under the surface to see how these connections with our past become very real indeed in modern terms; consider for example the reactive public protest at plans to construct a road through an ancient landscape dotted with prehistoric sites is evidence of our enduring and strong connections to place and traditions.

Today we tend to deconstruct the landscape and hence our connection to it. We compartmentalise it [as we have done in this document] into discrete landscape character areas using categories such as built heritage, natural heritage and cultural heritage. Each category is informed by academic or professional disciplines such as ecology, environmental science, botany, geology, folklore, anthropology, archaeology, conservation architecture and so on. Where, we might ask, can our *genii loci* reside within these designations?

In reality, of course they reside in us, the local people who live in these landscapes and who have shaped them over the millennia. Montague in his poem laments the apparent loss of the skills and traditions we once used to read and appreciate our landscapes, how we have set ourselves adrift and are, as a consequence, disconnected from them and therefore disinherited. Undoubtedly our connection to some of these traditions is lost due to the passage of time and the nature of change itself. Though in many ways we have simply lost our way, and of course all is far from lost. Many traditions and skills have been simply misplaced and can be revived and maintained. New skills can be

learned that will enable us to understand and appreciate our landscapes, to enter into them and to be once again shaped by the special nature, stories and culture of place. We can and must reconnect with our *genii loci* and in so doing, connect with our own identity. Lawrence Durrell encapsulates this well. Writing in the *Spirit of Place: letters and essays on travel* he holds up a mirror to us all to demonstrate that we, and our landscapes, are the same thing:

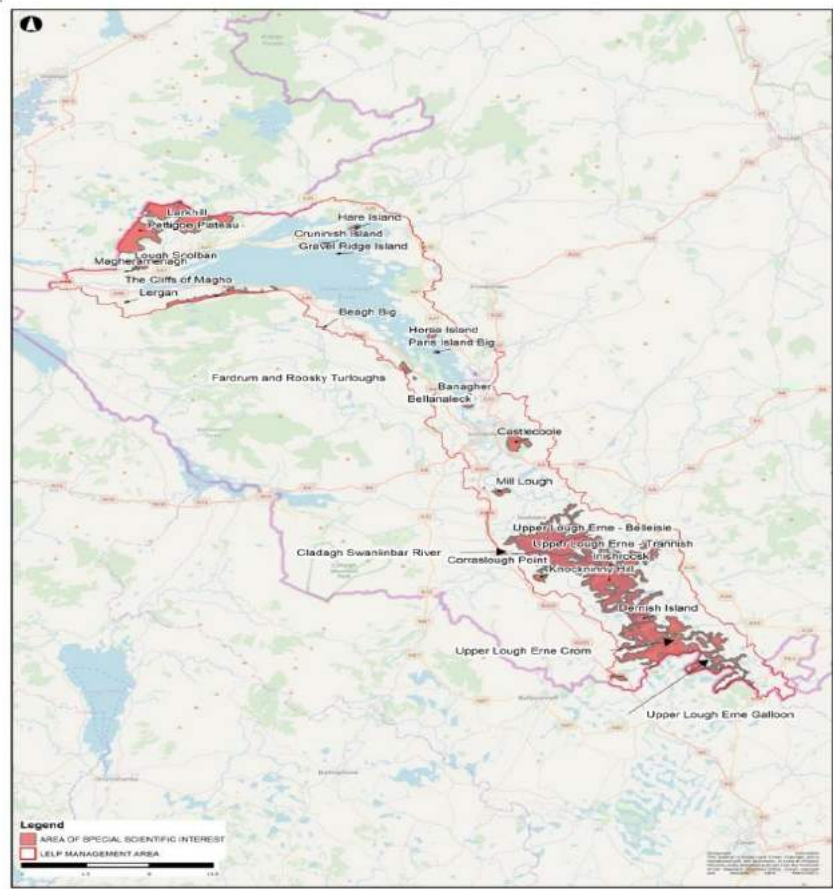
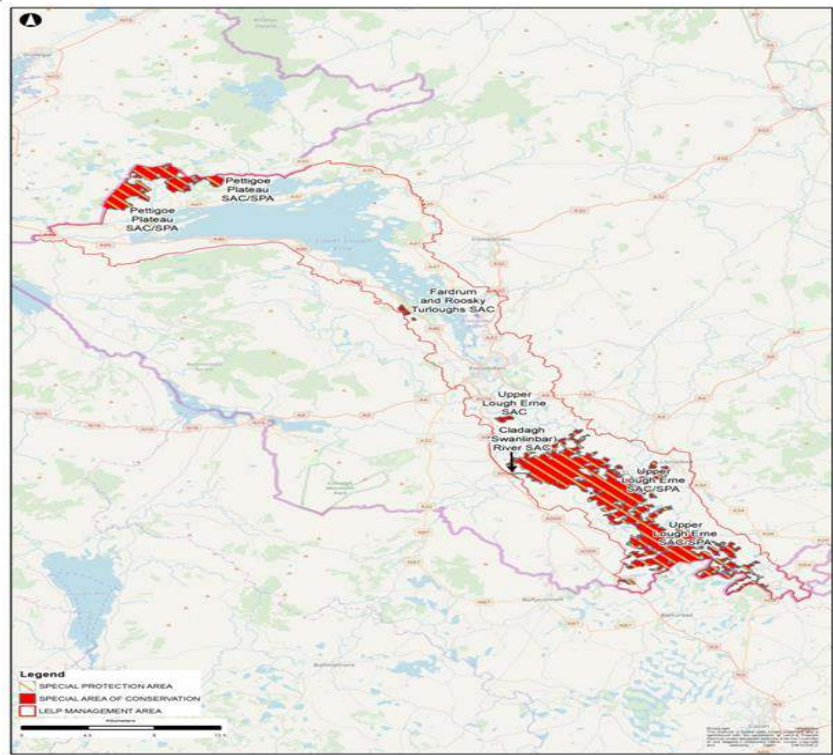
*“All landscapes ask the same question in the same whisper: I am watching you, are you watching yourself in me?”*

### Our natural heritage designations and protections

Of the six counties in Northern Ireland five encircle Lough Neagh and share its 125 km long shoreline. Standing alone and further apart to the west County Fermanagh envelopes Lough Erne’s shoreline which at 383kms is more than three times longer than that of Lough Neagh. Wrapped even closer around Lough Erne and its 154 islands and extensive shoreline is the Lough Erne Landscape Partnership area. Its manifest lists are rich indeed as demonstrated in the important designated natural heritage sites below.

Natural heritage	
Designations	Number
Natura 2000 Special Areas of Conservation Sites	4
Natura 2000 Special Protection Areas	2
Areas of Special Scientific Interest	27
Special Areas of Conservation	7
Nature Reserves and National Nature Reserves	3
Ramsar Sites	3
Local Nature Reserve and Wildlife Refuge	1
Nature reserves	44







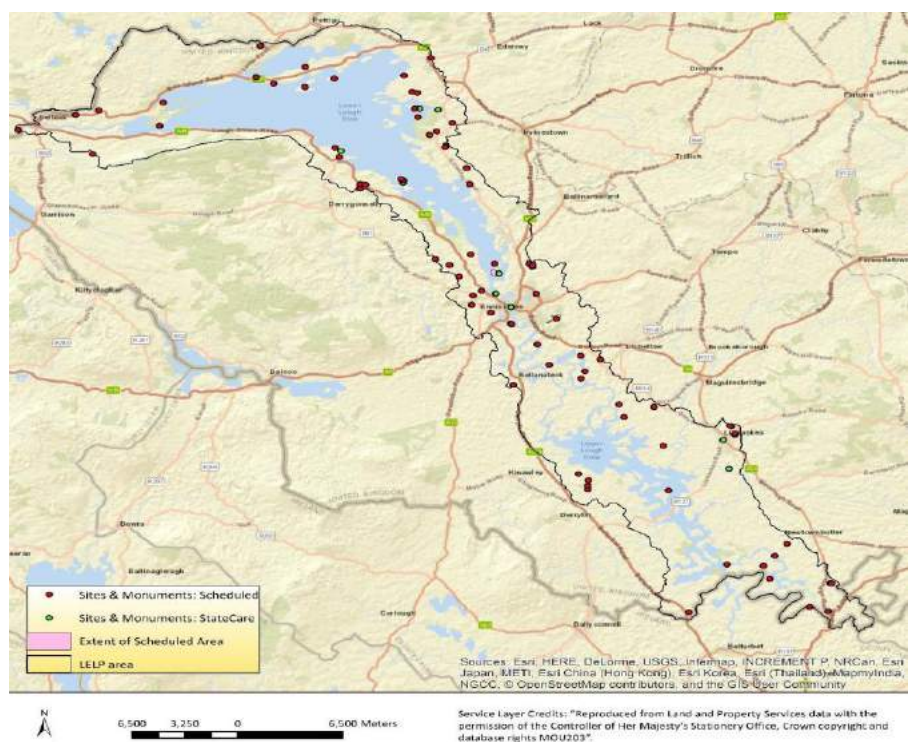
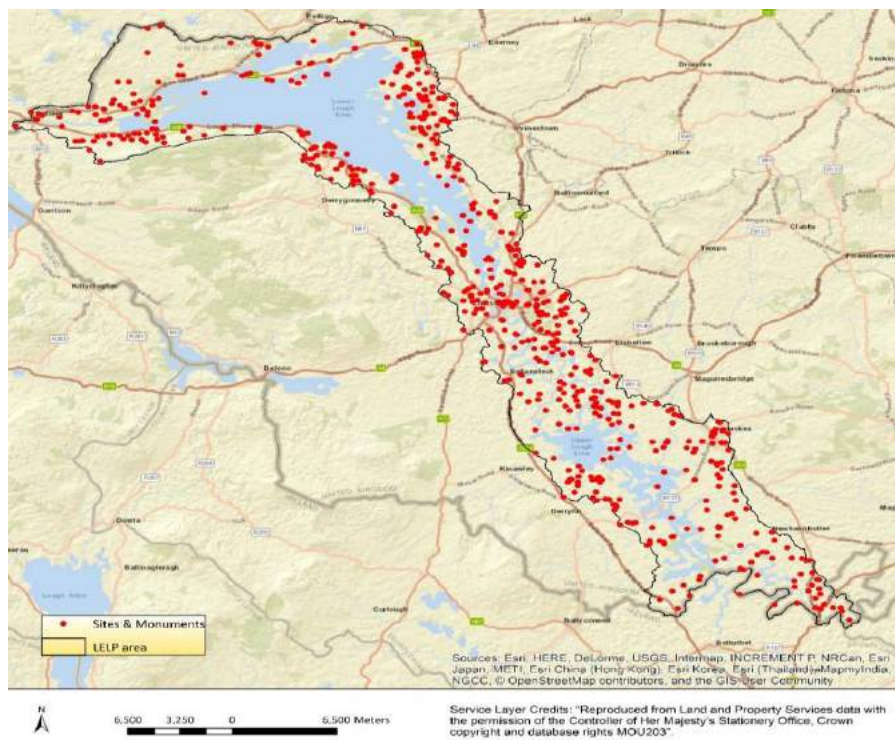
## Our built heritage designations and protections

Within the LELP area our important designations and protections include:

Built heritage	
Listed buildings	233: 4 Grade A, 21 Grade B+ and 218 Grade B1 and B2
Built heritage at risk register [BHARNI]	23
Conservation areas	2: Enniskillen and Lisnaskea.
Areas of townscape character status	1 Enniskillen
Areas of village character status	3: Belleek, Kesh and Lisnarick.
Archaeological sites and monuments	635
Scheduled monuments	82
Monuments in state care	9
Industrial heritage register	220
Historic parks, gardens and demesnes	8
Battlefield sites	19
Defense heritage	29
Areas of archaeological potential	2: Enniskillen and Lisnaskea.
Area of significant archaeological interest	1: Devenish Island
Undesignated features	As well as recorded and designated features, there are many other buildings, sites and monuments in the landscape whose significance has yet to be fully realised.

The above lists of the habitats, species and built and cultural heritage contained within our unique landscape are impressive indeed. The task ahead of us now is to show that this storied landscape can still be found all around us and that it is still immensely valuable.

Through the proposed activities in this Action Plan we hope to encourage and stimulate people to recognise the importance of rediscovering, even in a small way, a sense of connection to this place and the pleasure of moving once again through the slow Lough Erne landscape of land and water. It is, after all, a significant place.



Sites and monuments in the LELP area

## Threats and opportunities: natural habitats

The Centre for Archaeological Fieldwork and Arup facilitated two workshops hosted by LELP to engage directly with local groups and individuals, and to report their interim audit and research findings, and to discuss and identify threats and opportunities to heritage throughout the area. The feedback from these consultations, coupled to the recommendations contained within the subsequent final reports identified the following threats and opportunities.

### Agriculture and fresh water quality

The habitats and species in the LELP areas were formed through natural processes during thousands of years of agricultural activity. The past 70 years has seen an intensification of agriculture which has led to increased nutrient input into the Loughs, the drainage of wetland, reseeding with fast growing grasses and direct removal of habitats such as hedgerows and scrub woodland. These actions have resulted in the degradation of semi-natural habitats which had up until the last century been created and maintained through traditional farming practices. The loss of semi-natural habitat has had a knock-on effect on species dependent on these habitats. Intensive farming, including the use of artificial and organic fertilisers, is also recognised as a major contributing factor towards a decline in water quality.

Upper and Lower Lough Erne are the dominant features of the LELP landscape. There are also a number of smaller lakes and a network of freshwater streams and rivers within the Lough Erne basin. The catchment to the south of the LELP area is influenced not only by inputs from Northern Ireland but also from the Republic of Ireland. Notable rivers within the cross-border catchment area include the Cladagh River, Erne River, Sillees River, Finn, Arney and the Colebrooke Rivers. The water quality of the Lough Erne basin, including lakes and running waters, provides ecosystem services such as freshwater fisheries, aquaculture, drinking water, tourism, public access and angling.

Recent research has found that nutrient levels in Upper Lough Erne are too high for high biodiversity levels to be sustainable in the long term. Water quality status within the lakes is also impacted by non-native invasive species. A combination of high nutrient levels and invasive species in particular is causing change, in Upper Lough Erne lakes, from their current state dominated by aquatic plants to a state dominated by phytoplankton. This will have significant implications for lake functioning and contribute towards resultant loss of biodiversity and ecosystem services. One of the major contributing factors to declines in declining water quality is inappropriate land management through agriculture and forestry.

An opportunity exists through the better coordination of agencies in the LELP area to work collaboratively with local NGOs and farmers to better manage water quality and curb invasive species.

### Fen, Marsh and Swamp

Fen, marsh and swamp consisting of rush-dominated vegetation of peaty soils, marshy grasslands and water inundated vegetation provide valuable transition zone opportunities for wildlife including plants, invertebrates and wildfowl. This is considered a key habitat for the LELP area and is subject to pressures including a lack of clarity regarding shoreline ownership, development, and agricultural

pressures such as scrub clearance and drainage. There are opportunities to work with statutory agencies and farmers to highlight these issues.



Wetlands and Lisnaskea Upper Lough Erne FODC

### Uplands, Bog and Heaths

Uplands, bogs and heaths are important reservoirs for biodiversity, and are valuable as carbon sinks and provide an important flood alleviation role. The largest expanse of bog in the LELP area is in the Pettigo Plateau in the North West. This area is not currently considered to be under threat from recreation but there exists an opportunity to increase use of the area for both recreational and educational purposes.

### Semi-natural Grasslands

Semi-natural grasslands are still widespread in the LELP area but have declined in recent decades due to agricultural intensification. There are four Northern Ireland priority habitat types present in the LELP area namely lowland meadows, calcareous grassland, lowland dry acid grassland, and purple moor grass and rush pasture.

An opportunity exists to highlight the importance of these habitats for breeding waders, Irish hare, marsh fritillary and other lowland species. Threats to this habitat include land drainage and agricultural intensification. The LELP plan includes a set of actions to support the maintenance and restoration of wet grassland within the LELP area particularly where they affect breeding waders.



## Broadleaved Woodland

Good examples of broadleaved woodland within the LELP area include ash woodland at the Cliffs of Magho and on many of the islands within Upper and Lower Lough Erne. Wet woodlands within the area are dominated by birch, alder or willow, and because of the lowering of the Lough are frequently found along the fringes of lakes and rivers with particularly good examples identified along the shores of Upper Lough Erne. The most imminent and significant threat to this habitat is from ash dieback which has the potential to destroy all ash tree related habitats within the LELP area. Other ongoing threats are grazing by domestic and wild stock, and potential impacts from recreational visitors.

Ancient woodlands are by definition areas which have had woodland cover for centuries and remain relatively undisturbed. There are 209ha of this valuable habitat within the LELP area. Over hundreds of years they have evolved into complex communities of trees, plants, fungi, microorganisms and insects that rely on these undisturbed ecosystems and because of the area's Atlantic climate they contain lush growths of epiphytic lichens and bryophytes. Some of the most interesting sites of ancient and long-established woodland cover in Fermanagh occur along the shores and on the islands of Lough Erne, particularly at Crom, Castle Archdale, Castle Caldwell and Magho.

Some of the major threats to ancient woodland in the LELP area are developments which are deemed to be inappropriate in places where ancient woodland has not been mapped; inappropriate levels of recreational use in ancient woodland causing degradation of habitat; inappropriate levels of grazing by domestic and wild herbivores and again ash dieback which threatens to wipe out all ash woodlands and individual ash trees both within the LELP area and beyond. LELP will take the opportunity to liaise regularly with its partners such as DAERA to get up to date advice on the status of dieback and make sure that all partners are educated about the potential implications.

Large diverse hedgerows are also a feature of the LELP area providing foraging and refuge for animal species and are identified as a habitat for action as they were decimated under the previous round of DARD Single Farm/Basic Payment CMS funding when it had been understood that thick hedges would result in penalisation of subsidies. Field sizes have also increased to facilitate larger farm machinery which has also resulted in the loss of hedgerows.

Threats to this habitat have been identified to include an increase in fencing throughout the area which has been matched by a reduction in hedgerow of almost the same extent and the spread of ash dieback.

## Coniferous Woodland

The extensive coniferous forests in the LELP area and its hinterland contribute to one of the largest continuous blocks of forestry in Northern Ireland. Because of their lack of native tree stock, and their potential to cause and increase freshwater acidification and sedimentation, coniferous forests are not highly valued for their Biodiversity value. However, they provide a valuable recreational resource and a potentially very important refuge for red squirrel populations. The opportunity exists for LELP to work with partners to develop trails and recreational activities and to liaise more closely with the Forest Service now based in Enniskillen.

## Lack of land access for recreation

The lack of access for recreation in the LELP area is a major constraint to opening up the area to sustainable recreational and tourism opportunities and in connecting people with the Lough. The shoreline of Lough Erne is 383 kilometers long with only a few kilometers of footpath available to the public to use for access [Arup]. The lack of marked trails and a reluctance by landowners to allow walkers across their land due to liability issues linked to liability is restricting the potential for the lough shore to be opened up for use by locals and tourists alike. The LELP plan includes a set of actions that will improve and develop a further 15 plus Kilometers of footpaths along the shoreline of both Upper and Lower Lough Erne. Linked to this is the need for raising awareness and for consultation with the public, farmers, and the local community in order to develop public buy-in to nature conservation and tourism initiatives.

## Threats and opportunities: species

### Plants

There are currently 17 priority plant species in the LELP area which also contains a number of locations suitable for interesting assemblages of bryophytes including wetlands, limestone outcrops (especially north facing) and woodlands which are far enough west that they can support some oceanic species. There are 2 NI priority bryophyte species both of which occur in the Cliffs of Magho area.

Lichens are found in abundant and diverse communities within the LELP area. The New Forest beech lichen is a NI priority species found in only one mature ash tree in woodland in Northern Ireland, which clings to the north-facing limestone scarp at Hanging Rock National Nature Reserve. Although it is not located within the LELP area it is quite possible that this species occurs in similar situations within our boundary area such as Inishturk Island in Lower Lough Erne which contains broadleaf woodland habitat, and is considered to be one of the most important sites in NI for lichens. Threats to highly sensitive lichen communities and other species are the development or clearance of habitat that support lichen, and the spread of ash dieback resulting in the destruction of ash trees which might support as yet unidentified communities. There is an opportunity for LELP through citizen science activities to raise awareness of these species and their importance to the biodiversity of the area through citizen science activities

### Mammals

There are eighteen NI Priority mammal species in the LELP area and it is home to all non-marine species on the list which includes:

West European hedgehog	Nathusius' pipistrelle	Red squirrel
Common pipistrelle	Brown long-eared bat	Pine marten
Soprano pipistrelle	Irish hare	Otter



All eight native species of bat can be found within the LELP area and opportunities exist for LELP to support continued conservation efforts for this species and for the red squirrel through actions such as increased deciduous tree planting and connecting corridors to other plantations. Opportunities also exist with other specialist interest groups through targeted activity, volunteer development and citizen science.

## Birds

The LELP area is home to a rich diversity of bird species and is particularly important for several key species of conservation concern. There are eleven red listed breeding species, seven red listed wintering species, thirty-six amber listed breeding species and five amber listed wintering species in the area. The Lough Erne basin holds the largest remaining assemblage of breeding waders in Northern Ireland and is one of the most important areas for this group across the whole of the island of Ireland. Specifically, this includes breeding curlew, lapwing, redshank and snipe. The first three species are red listed whilst snipe is amber listed. These species are important because they breed within the LELP area and don't just pass through or spend the winter months here. Large numbers of lapwing, snipe and curlew may be seen during the non-breeding season but these are most often migrants who breed in other countries including Iceland, Scotland, Scandinavia or other countries in northern and central Europe. Threats include agricultural improvement, dereliction through abandonment and disturbance due to inappropriate development and recreation.

LELP will work with project delivery partners to restore 37.5 ha of lough shore land to increase the numbers of breeding curlew, lapwing and snipe over the five-year life of the programme which will provide a solid base to develop relationships and information exchange with landowners, canoeists and other recreational users of the loughs.

## Fish

Lough Erne is home to 2 Northern Ireland priority fish species namely European eel and brown trout. The fish community of Lough Erne is relatively simple and is internationally renowned for trout, pike and coarse angling, and is currently dominated by the non-native species of perch and roach. Fishing, which is linked to the recreational use of the water along with boating and sailing, is hugely important to the economy of the area. Pike, which is probably non-native, is the major predatory fish species in Lough Erne and there are also large specimens of perch and trout also. The rare and protected pollan is a whitefish and only occurs in five large lowland water bodies namely Lower Lough Erne, Lough Neagh, Lough Allen, Lough Derg and Lough Ree. It is thought that each population has been isolated since the ice age around 10,000 years ago and therefore gene flow between water bodies is unlikely. The presence of pollan in Lough Erne affords the lake an elevated conservation status, and although the pollan stock is small early signs suggest it may be increasing.

The opportunity exists for LELP to support project delivery partners in research and citizen science activities on fish and white clawed crayfish populations in the loughs and rivers and to liaise with statutory agencies in support of a genetic study and the Erne Fishery Management

## Invertebrates, Butterflies and Moths

There are a number of species that are rare or protected in the LELP area. Small Amber snail, White Clawed Crayfish, Dingy Skipper and Marsh Fritillary are examples of invertebrates which are in need of action to help in their conservation. Butterfly Conservation NI promotes a landscape-scale approach to butterfly and moth conservation by coordinating conservation management in numerous sites across a large natural area for a range of species; this is a recognised way of improving and connecting land for wildlife. The approach also shows that measures to conserve rare butterflies and moths have helped other threatened species as well as the habitats in which they live.

Two moth species which are found nowhere else in Ireland except within the LELP area are the dark umber and brown scallop. These moth species are only known at Crom National Trust Estate and RSPB Lower Lough Island Reserve. Through its citizen science programme LELP will work with our partners and the local River Trust, bee keepers and butterfly conservation groups in projects linked to the national pollination plan, and with statutory organisations and landowners.

## Non-native invasive species and diseases

Non-native invasive plant and animal species and introduced diseases are some of the greatest threats to biodiversity worldwide. They can negatively impact on native species, can transform habitats and threaten whole ecosystems and cause serious problems to the environment and the economy. These concerns have been highlighted by a number of partners as the most relevant issue that warrants a multi-organisational, landscape management approach.

The major pathways for terrestrial and aquatic non-native invasive plant species are through transport and recreational networks throughout the LELP area: Himalayan balsam is transported along river corridors through wind and water borne seed dispersal; Japanese Knotweed is transported similarly along river corridors and along roads and recreational routes, and Nuttall's waterweed is transported mostly through watercraft along navigable routes. Other non-native invasive species considered to have most relevance within the LELP area are Signal Crayfish, Crayfish Plague, Zebra Mussel, Grey Squirrel, Ash Dieback and Asian clam.

Liaising with NIEA and others and in partnership with the Biodiversity officer with Fermanagh and Omagh District Council, LELP will pilot a training and information programme for 150 trainees with 50 volunteers including 5 FODC staff across 10 sites. LELP will also focus on Ash Dieback with a primary focus on awareness, surveillance and reporting whilst seeking to survey and control it in locations identified in the Arup report.

## Threats and opportunities: built heritage

### Threats

The built heritage in the LELP area has remained largely unspoilt compared to elsewhere in Northern Ireland. With little arable farming and with limited development this has resulted in good survival conditions for built heritage remains. For example, survey work undertaken in 2004 found that 57% of remains are complete compared to the Northern Ireland average of 43%. The condition of sites in Fermanagh compares well with the rest of Northern Ireland too, with 54% of Northern Ireland sites determined excellent, good or fair compared to a figure of 67% for Fermanagh. Care and respect shown by local people, landowners and farmers has resulted in comparably good survival and condition rates for monuments in Fermanagh. There is already extensive interest in built heritage within the community which is evident through the many thriving and active historical and heritage groups.

However, the condition and access to key monuments was highlighted by the heritage community in the LELP consultations, and concerns were also noted in the CAF audit as to how important monuments in the area are being presented to the public and tourists alike. Similarly, concerns were noted about the lack of access to many sites, the overgrown and dilapidated state of some monastic [and other] sites, and poor signage and information.

### Opportunities

As we have seen the LELP area is rich in built heritage of all periods, but particularly significant and valuable are the medieval ecclesiastical and monastic remains which dot the islands and shores, and the significance of this aspect of our built heritage was recognised when a bid for World Heritage status was submitted over 30 years ago. The process stalled, but it is an indicator of the high value and international significance put on this group of sites and monuments in both the Upper and Lower Lough. Moreover, within the LELP boundary there is one Area of Significant Archaeological Interest [ASAI] located at Devenish Island. With its group of ruined ecclesiastical buildings within the landscape setting of Lough Erne the site is unique in Northern Ireland and is of national significance. The other monastic and ecclesiastical sites within the area are more significant for their group context and the relationships between these sites and locations increase their value.

The value and significance of built heritage in the LELP area is further acknowledged by other designations. The nine State Care sites for example are of regional or national significance and their value and importance merit a high level of protection through planning policy. Scheduled sites are of high local or regional significance and their significance merits protection by legislation and planning policies, whilst the remaining undesignated sites and monuments are of local or regional significance as indicated by protection through planning policies. The listed historic buildings and Conservation Areas in Enniskillen and Lisnaskea indicate the significance of these remains. Grade A and B+ buildings are of national importance and there are 25 in the LELP area along with 218 Grade B1 and B2 buildings. The significance of the villages at Belleek, Kesh and Lisnarick has been recognised by their designation as Areas of Village Character. The development of these areas through the Plantation and into the Early Modern periods provides opportunities for improving knowledge and engagement with the historic fabric of the LELP area.

There are also valued and significant built heritage remains in undesignated sites in the LELP area. They are primarily located on the islands which are an aspect of heritage unique in Northern Ireland. Moreover, the main priorities identified by communities that were engaged in the CAF consultations appear to be the study of local built heritage of the recent past and the gathering stories and folk life memories centering on everyday lives with a focus on the remaining structures before they are lost.

There is an opportunity to enhance the significance of known sites and monuments through further investigation. The secular landscape in the medieval period, for example, provides the prospect of identifying and recording further aspects of this landscape making it possible to realise the full potential of the remains of the Maguire Lordship. There are opportunities too for improving the condition of other significant but neglected buildings. There are 23 at risk buildings within the LELP boundary including vernacular buildings and thatched buildings which are under pressure more widely in Northern Ireland. The LELP area has a group of valuable and significant thatched houses particularly in the Upper Lough Erne LCA, which is not the case for many other areas elsewhere in Northern Ireland.

The LELP plan includes a set of actions identified through consultation [and which are included within the CAF Audit and Opportunities Report] to:

- Record the stories and oral history of the built heritage associated with the last 100 years of life in the LELP area including the islands which are at immediate risk of loss and their recording should be prioritised and heritage wardens trained to record this history [memory mapping and digitization of archives].
- Improve access, maintenance and condition of key built heritage sites.
- Establish a pilgrim trail linked to the great island monasteries.
- Explore the archaeology of the Maguire landscape.
- Map the unique heritage of island life.

### Climate change

The impacts of climate change on the biodiversity of the species-poor but unique ecological communities of Northern Ireland could be considerable and invasion of more southerly, warmth-loving species or diseases may occur at different rates depending on habitats and types of species. Farming in the LELP area may become more marginal as wetter winters adversely affect agricultural activities such as silage and hay-making. Forestry and agriforestry may however benefit from climate change with emerging opportunities to improve the landscape in continuation of the current shift from upland conifer planting to broadleaved planting on land displaced from agriculture.

### Planning, EU habitat and species post BREXIT

As outlined earlier there are a range of EU environmental directives which will require equivalent UK legislation once the UK has left the EU. It is unclear how the Natura 2000 network of sites and associated Annex habitats and species will be protected and concerns have been raised that protection of these areas will be weakened. LELP will liaise with the Fermanagh and Omagh District Council Biodiversity Officer and continue to monitor and lobby for legislative and legal protection action to protect and enhance the environment in the LELP area.

The recent delegation of planning powers to the local District Council provides LELP with an opportunity to influence this process based on local environmental and heritage sector needs.

### Social, Economic and Political changes

Funding cuts to government departments may increase throughout the lifetime of the LELP programme with subsequent negative knock-on effects for financial support to voluntary sector organisations working in the heritage sector, including LELP. However, local Council reorganisation means that an opportunity exists to build strong relationships with local politicians and to assist with the delivery of the targeted community planning outcomes. As we have already seen LELP has identified how it can be a delivery partner for many of the targeted outcomes in the Plan.

At the time of writing future European funding opportunities are linked to the current Brexit negotiations. LELPs proximity to the border and the continuing uncertainty as to whether the border will be soft or hard remains unclear as does the impact it may have on trade and tourism locally. The need for fossil and renewable energy sources continues and recent controversies over fracking and windmill development are likely to continue.

### Threats and opportunities: access, appreciation and value

Despite the proximity of Lough Erne for many people going about their daily lives there remains a lack of understanding and awareness of its rich built, natural and cultural heritage. Surprisingly, physical engagement with the Lough can be difficult and pedestrian access to the Loughs in particular is extremely limited. Ironically, the secluded nature of the loughs, folding as they do around the drumlin islands often means that motorists travelling along the shoreline by road can catch only an occasional glimpse of the waters. Travelers by boat fare much better as they can gain access to all areas where jetties and mooring facilities are located.



Lower Lough Erne and the Cliffs of Magho Waterways Ireland

The LELP landscape, including the habitats and species that make up its ecosystem, can collectively be termed the area's natural capital. The importance and fragility of this natural capital is not currently appreciated sufficiently and a greater public awareness of the need to improve habitats and species numbers as the mainstay of this ecosystem within the landscape is essential. Aligned to the need to

protect and conserve our natural capital and its economic value is the sometimes apparent contradictory need to open up the landscape to users in order that they may better understand and appreciate how special it is so they may work towards its protection.

Economic value can also be placed on the areas built and archaeological heritage. For example, a study on the economic value of Northern Ireland's historic environment carried out for the NIEA in 2012 found that the total estimated GVA or Gross Value Added [the measure of the value of goods and services produced in an area, industry or sector of an economy] per annum in relation to its historic environment was £239.5m. However, GVA outputs in Northern Ireland were significantly lower than equivalents for Scotland, Wales or the rest of Ireland, indicating that there is potential to further develop the historic environment sector in the LELP area [CAF].

The built heritage environment can also add value through linked conservation actions which contribute to community cohesion, social inclusion and civic pride. The beneficial effects on individuals who take part in heritage activities, in terms of learning, identity, belonging and well-being, are likely to benefit the wider community. These are likely to be particularly significant in post-conflict societies such as Northern Ireland, where communities can together explore their shared heritage and thereby contribute to increased respect and community cohesion and development.

### Recreational activities

Tourism numbers linked to the area's built and natural heritage attractions are expected to rise. Fermanagh attracted almost 420,000 visitors in 2015. These figures include destinations within the LELP area such as Belleek Pottery which had 190,000 visitors; Crom Estate Guided Wildlife Walks attracted 19,000 visitors and White Island 19,500 visitors. Marble Arch Caves Global Geopark [the footprint of which extends across the LELP area] had 58,000 visitors. Other key natural attractions within our footprint such as Castle Archdale Country Park and Lough Navar are not included in the statistics. The main recreational activities in the LELP area are

:

Land	Water	Air
Archery	Angling	Aero-modelling
Clay Pigeon Shooting	Boat cruising	
Cycling (On- and Off-Road)	Canoeing (including Kayaking and Slalom)	Hang Gliding/Paragliding
Horse riding	Jet – skiing	Micro-light Flying
Orienteering	Rowing	
Walking	Sailing	
	Small day boat hire	
C	Stand Up Paddle boarding (SUP)	



Climbing	Swimming	
Fell running	Water-skiing/Wakeboarding	

### Angling

Lough Erne provides one of Ireland's most diverse inland fishing waters and is an important recreational tourist and commercial fishery. Recreational fishing concentrates particularly on brown trout, roach, perch, bream and pike, with eels being fished almost exclusively on a commercial basis. Competition coarse fishing is an important draw for tourists and many continental visitors also use and support the local cruiser and day boat hire businesses. Local game anglers concentrate on angling for brown trout which can grow to particularly large sizes. Lower Lough Erne reaches depths of over 200 feet which makes it an ideal habitat for Pike, Perch and Brown Trout whilst Upper Lough Erne is a maze of channels and islands with vast reed beds and ideal habitats for Pike and Perch.

### Walking

Walking is one of the most popular and well-developed forms of outdoor recreation activities. It is enjoyed by a diverse range of participants from those taking short strolls with the family to avid hill walkers. Walk NI promotes the formal trails in Co. Fermanagh including 23 short walks (up to 5 miles), 5 medium walks (5 to 20 miles) and 4 long distance walks which are sections of the Ulster Way.

### Road Cycling

There are a number of National Cycling Network Routes throughout the Lough Erne Landscape Partnership area including Route 91 Belfast to Ballyshannon, Route 92 Enniskillen to Derry /Londonderry and the Kingfisher Trail.

### Off Road Cycling

There are a limited number of sites each providing short sections of formal off-road cycling at Castle Archdale Country Park / Forest, Crom Estate, Castle Caldwell, Belmore Estate and Ely Lodge Forest. Lough Navar Forest is an informal off-road cycling site.

### Boat Cruising

Lough Erne has a strong boat cruising tradition although the core of users resides outside Co. Fermanagh. Waterways Ireland's boat registration scheme has highlighted that although 6,082 boats are registered for Lough Erne, only 1,735 (c.29%) of these are registered to a Co. Fermanagh address. However, it should be noted that only boats with an engine above 10hp need to be registered and many local people have engines below this size. Waterways Ireland provides strategically placed jetties, slipways and moorings. Private marinas throughout the LELP area also provide boat cruising facilities.

### Canoeing

The Lough Erne Canoe Trail was launched in 2005 and primarily utilises the boat cruising infrastructure. The trail is one of the most popular of the nine available canoe trails in Northern Ireland. In terms of future development, there are opportunities for more campsites along the trail. Erne Paddlers provides a range of community based activities providing access and training.

### Jet – skiing

Jet-skiing also relies on the boat cruising infrastructure and this recreational activity is widely practised throughout Lough Erne with a particular co-occurrence with caravan parks.

### **Sailing**

The primary area for sailing is Lower Lough Erne with a key concentration around the Lough Erne Yacht Club at Killadeas. The club hosts weekly races and also regional and national events. The club is mainly utilised by private members although it also has a sailing school and offers an annual try sailing day.

### **Rowing**

‘Row the Erne’ is a community based project that has constructed a traditional Curragh with recreational rowing opportunities provided in different locations around Lough Erne. There is a strong tradition of competitive rowing in Lough Erne in and around Enniskillen. Day hire row boats are available at Crom.

### **Stand up Paddle boarding (SUP)**

Stand up paddle boarding is a fast-growing activity where participants stand on a board similar to a windsurfing board which is propelled by a long-shafted paddle. It is enjoyed by increasing numbers on Lough Erne using resources on the Lough Erne Canoe Trail.

### **Water-skiing / Wakeboarding**

The cruising boat infrastructure provides jetties and slipways on sections of uninterrupted water which are ideal for these activities. Key locations for these activities include Cully, Killyhevlin, North of Boa Island Kesh and Muckross.

### **Aero-modelling**

A small aero-modelling club operates from St Angelo airport and hosts an annual ‘Splash In’ event near Killadeas.

### **Archery**

Archery is primarily delivered either by organised clubs who are affiliated with the Northern Ireland Archery Society (NIAS) or private activity providers both site based and mobile.

### **Clay Pigeon Shooting**

Lough Erne Clay Pigeon Club is located near Killadeas by agreement with a private landowner.

### **Climbing**

Climbing is primarily offered by activity operators and clubs using artificial climbing and crags access with the permission of private landowners. Boulderling is becoming increasingly popular at sites such as the boulder fields at Lough Navar Forest.

### **Fell Running**

Fell running, also known as mountain running, is governed by the Northern Ireland Mountain Runners’ Association. Although there is no formal provision for fell running in Lough Erne there are informal fell running events.

### **Horse riding**

Forest Service Northern Ireland provides a number of sites within the LELP area which can be accessed through the purchase of a horse riding permit.

### **Micro-light Flying**

A Micro-light is a small aeroplane, capable of flying at low speed. A small group of participants utilise St Angelo Airport.

### **Orienteering**

Orienteering is relatively well developed with support from Northern Ireland Orienteering. There are numerous sites with permanent orienteering courses (mapped with wooden posts and punches in position).

### Speleology

The study of caves is particularly well-developed in the area with much interest around the Marble Arch Geo Park.

### Triathlon

The FEARmanagh provides an annual triathlon event. The entire area of Upper and Lower lough has significant potential for additional triathlon events

### Activity & community hubs

The 2007 Fermanagh Area Plan contained a number of policies relating to tourism and identified the potential for tourism and recreational development whilst emphasising the need to protect Lough Erne and its immediate hinterland. The capacity of each landscape character area was assessed for nature conservation interest, built heritage, existing facilities, potential pressure and opportunities and subsequently categorized into Conservation Zones, Sensitive Zones or Opportunity Zones. Lough Erne's shoreline was designated as a Special Countryside Area.

The FODC Corporate Plan 2015-2019 described "Activity Hubs" and 'Community Hubs' as sites where recreation could be focused on investment and sustainable development for activities and visitor services in a confined area by providing support for local and multiday trip users. Activity hubs typically have a range of outdoor recreation activities with good connectivity between all resources and visitor facilities such as toilets and catering. 'Community Hubs' were proposed as non-car dependent and with activities such as walking, cycling or multi-use trails. Waterways Ireland is currently developing its Blueways Trail linked to a series of hubs along the Lough.

As noted previously a lack of coordinated strategic management and protection of the Lough by statutory agencies and others is of ongoing concern for LELP. Responsibility rests with us all for the [seemingly contradictory] use of its waters and shoreline for recreational purposes on the one hand, and a counter balancing requirement to protect the area's ecosystem on the other.

Increased recreation in the area should however be monitored on an ongoing basis as it is often the little noticed incremental effect of individual developments within an area which can have a cumulative negative effect on the landscape character. It is therefore important that development sites are not seen and analysed in isolation.

# Lough Erne Landscape Conservation Action Plan: Part 2

## Strategy for the delivery of the LELP Landscape Action Plan

### Structure and Roles

The Partnership will develop the following structure between Partners and other stakeholders to deliver the programme:

#### **Senior Responsible Owner [SRO]**

RSPB NI is the lead Partner and as such will manage the LPS Common Fund, employ the programme staff, receive and manage the Heritage Lottery Fund grant and any other match funding provided by Partners and other contributors directly to RSPB NI. RSPB NI will nominate one of its employees to act as Senior Responsible Owner ("SRO") for the Partnership.

#### **Lough Erne Landscape Partnership Board**

The Board will be comprised of senior representatives from Partner organisations. The Chairperson of the Board shall be agreed by a majority decision of the representatives of the Board members. The Board will meet four times a year at times which will align with key activities such as dates of submission of HLF claims. The Board will provide strategic direction and oversight of the development and delivery of the Partnership vision, and ensure it delivers its planned outcomes within agreed parameters of cost, organisational impact, expected/actual benefit and risk. The Board will approve the Working Group's proposed suite of projects for delivery through the Partnership. Board decisions will be made by a majority vote, with each Board member having a single vote and the Chairperson having a casting vote.

#### **Lough Erne Landscape Partnership Working Group**

The Working Group will be comprised of representatives from each Partner organisation and the Landscape Partnership Programme Staff Team. The Working Group will coordinate the development and delivery of the Partnership vision, set the work programme for the Programme Team and provide a key contact point between the Partnership's activities and the Partners. The Working Group agrees the projects to be implemented through the Partnership and will meet every two months.

#### **Lough Erne Landscape Partnership Programme Team**

A team of officers will be employed by RSPB NI in accordance with RSPB NI's standard employment Terms and Conditions to coordinate and support the implementation of the agreed project elements of the Partnership. The work plans of the Programme Team will be directed by RSPB NI.

#### **Lough Erne Landscape Partnership Advisory Groups**

The Partnership may agree to establish advisory Groups for the purpose of bringing together specialist knowledge from within the Partnership and wider stakeholders around particular thematic issues and to deliver agreed projects on behalf of the Working Group. Groups will have terms of reference with delivery timescales agreed with the Working group, and shall report on progress to the working group.

### Project delivery

The promoters of all projects included within the Landscape Action Plan will be deemed to be project delivery partners and as such will be the nominated lead organisation responsible for the delivery of that project. The lead organisation will enter into a delivery agreement with LELP and develop and convene its own project delivery sub group which will meet on a monthly basis attended by LELP project staff to ensure successful outcomes. The LELP project delivery partnership agreement sets out the principles for the sharing of responsibilities between project delivery partners and liability for projects. Specific agreements will be set out between RSPB as the lead partner and the project delivery partners to ensure that both parties are fully aware of their responsibilities within agreed project plans. Each project partner will take full responsibility and liability for the delivery and maintenance of the projects for which they are the lead. RSPB will take full responsibility and liability for the delivery and maintenance of projects where RSPB or the LELP team is the project or lead partner. Where there is a lack of clarity or agreement the parties will reach agreement before each project commences.

#### LELP lead partner and staffing

The RSPB will maintain the role of lead partner in the delivery of the Stage 2 Landscape Conservation Action Plan and will recruit and employ a complement of five staff required for its delivery. It will provide the necessary cash flow, financial oversight and governance in accordance with its own policies and those of HLF. RSPB will have responsibility for appointing and managing staff, overseeing their conditions of employment and managing the LELP office in Waterways Ireland in Enniskillen. The staff will coordinate the day to day management of the programme, distribute HLF funds and report on progress to funders. The Lough Erne Landscape Partnership Programme Manager will be directly responsible for the management of staff and ensuring that strategic outputs and outcomes [as agreed in the Landscape Conservation Action Plan] are met. Staff work plans will be set and approved by the RSPB manager. There will be five members of staff. Details of the job descriptions are included in the appendices.

- Landscape Partnership Manager (F/T)
- Finance and Administration Officer (F/T)
- Community Connections and Volunteering Manager (F/T)
- Natural Heritage Manager (P/T)
- Built Heritage Manager (P/T)

Staff will provide the continuity needed to develop the projects and deliver on the desired outcomes. The Community Connections and Volunteering Coordinator has a particular importance in anchoring the programme within the wider community through LELPs volunteer and citizen science programme, organizing events and conferences, and promoting the Community engagement fund. All staff will have a fundraising duty throughout the life of the programme.

#### Financial management

As lead partner RSPB will receive and manage the HLF grant. Funds will be drawn down from HLF quarterly as agreed following submissions of financial and progress reports and claims. RSPB has

extensive experience of managing substantial financial programmes. It is essential however, that project delivery partners manage their own funds and pay their costs accordingly, although attempts will be made to synchronise claims and payments around the quarterly claim to HLF [which aims to turn around claims within two working weeks].

The LELP Partnership Board will be provided with financial reports on the Landscape Conservation Action Plan so that it can monitor cash flow and auditing requirements. A specific cost centre has already been set up for the development phase of the LELP within RSPB and this will continue in the delivery phase and be reconciled monthly. Match funding will be raised by Partners and LELP will retrospectively process its payment quarterly of funding based on agreed percentages as detailed in each project delivery partnership agreement, and only after all invoices and claims from the partners are collectively gathered and forwarded to HLF for processing with associated update reports.

The LELP partnership agreement contains a clause that partners will underwrite the funding shortfall over the five year programme, although it is assumed that the amount will be greatly reduced, or will not be needed, as a core component of LELP staff activity will be to generate funds throughout the five-year period of programme delivery.

#### Match funding and procurement

The RSPB may apply for, and hold match funding on behalf of the partnership including all the partner contributions. These funds will be distributed to projects by the LELP programme team according to project plans and reports. Other grants will be administered directly by a project's lead partner. The LELP team will receive brief quarterly financial progress reports and more detailed end of financial year reports for each project in order to inform programme reporting to HLF, the LELP Board and other funders. Some projects have identified in-kind and volunteer contributions within their budgets. These will be recorded in standard timesheets, signed off by the lead partner for the project and submitted to the LELP team on a quarterly basis. With the exception of delivery partners with limited cash flows, payments will be made to partners on the submission of invoices for work completed. LELPs procurement rules are based on RSPB's own procurement policy suitably adapted to meet the requirements of Heritage Lottery Fund and other funders. Preferred Single Tender Contractors may be identified.

#### Contingency

A contingency budget has been set aside. These funds have been provisionally earmarked for use in exceptional circumstances where project costs increase or unforeseen problems arise and which may fundamentally affect project delivery.

#### Management and maintenance

A management and maintenance legacy budget has been set aside to help with the long-term maintenance of projects where relevant after the programme concludes in 2023. How and where the



funds are spent will be worked out as the landscape scheme progresses and the differing long-term risks and priorities assessed.

#### Community engagement fund

The Lough Erne Landscape Partnership has agreed to set aside £100,000 to develop a small Community engagement and farming fund which will provide £25,000 per year for four years. LELP staff and partners will identify gaps in the current capacity and response to heritage linked to the LCAP. The scheme will also support and signpost small groups in the community to enable greater participation. The Fund will also facilitate LELP to disburse money that has been under-spent from the main programme. The Community Engagement Fund will be overseen by the LELP Programme Manager, the Community Connections and Volunteer Manager and Project Finance Administrator.

## Legacy

### Working together to coordinate efforts to ensure the future heritage of the LELP area

LELP was formed on the principal that actions required to protect our landscape were such that the ambitions or actions of individual organisations could not on their own make the impact needed to bring about effective landscape scale change. Partners subsequently made a determination that a core part of the LELP legacy must be a long-term commitment amongst the partners for LELP to be a catalyst for ongoing coordinated action in order to secure a longer-term legacy for its five year programme.

As noted earlier, the establishment of a Landscape Heritage Trust or similar entity, existing or new may be one way of supporting the long-term legacy of the LELP programme and part of the LCAPs' mid-term review will examine this proposed structure in more detail [if it has not already been developed sufficiently at that point] along with the creation of a legacy plan which will explore and agree the future role of the partnership, how the ongoing management and maintenance of sites will be monitored and managed, and how funds should be allocated in the most strategic and efficient way. The importance of developing or supporting an existing entity will also be discussed through annual networking conferences on the need to protect and enhance the environment and built heritage in the years to come. The ongoing evaluation of the programme will be structured in such a way that it will feed its interim findings into these discussions at the end of year 2 or start of year 3.

By pooling resources and expertise from within the partnership in the short to medium terms LELP will create better networks and linkages into different parts of the community and provide a range of perspectives on the landscape through a range of disciplines. This in turn will lead to new ways of working together. The LELP Partnership has already strengthened during the development phase of the scheme and will continue to do so as projects are delivered and community engagement in the landscape increases and through ongoing training programmes for volunteers, or where training can be provided by partners or outside experts as required. More detailed plans for the maintenance of specific sites and /or the integration of successful approaches into the core work of partners will also be agreed and we will explore the possibility of securing new funding for individual projects, or groups of projects, if and when appropriate.

The LELP website will present information about the programme including videos, photographs, results of projects completed and lessons learned, and include case studies and reports that will demonstrate the results of work undertaken and provide a clear focus for information and discussion on the legacy of the programme.

Theme	Examples of how we will ensure lasting legacy
Better partnership working	New ways of working together can be taken forward and integrated into day-to-day activities e.g. new types of training
Restoration / improved natural heritage	Land owners and managers commit to manage sites for 10 years as part of funding agreements.

New knowledge generated	<p>Biological data generated is uploaded onto CEDaR and shared with Council and biodiversity partnerships.</p> <p>Publication of findings in local journals and pamphlets</p> <p>Archaeological information updated to other specialist portals.</p>
Volunteers and community groups	<p>Skills acquired through training workshops will have a lasting legacy on groups' ability to take action in future.</p> <p>Explore opportunities for groups to continue to share knowledge and ideas</p>
Improved access routes	<p>Upgraded core paths to be maintained by local authorities, trainees and in some cases volunteers.</p>
Interpretation	<p>Exploring new ways to develop interpretation and communication – apps, virtual reality and use of open source mapping as a way of recording new knowledge means this knowledge can be easily updated by individuals and partners over time.</p> <p>Interpretation panels to be updated after the end of the project by partner / local community.</p>
Learning	<p>New relationships will have been established between training providers and partners to develop education activities</p>
Skills and Training	<p>Environmental education and built and archaeological courses and citizen science for volunteers</p> <p>Traditional skills in thatching and crafts for example</p>

## Monitoring and evaluation

Prior to the start of programme delivery we will develop a detailed monitoring and evaluation plan. The plan will set out clearly what information will be collected to monitor progress, how it will be collected, who will be responsible and how it will be used. The plan will put in place a mid-term review and set the criteria for a final evaluation.

The LELP Programme Manager will take overall responsibility for monitoring and evaluation, although the other programme staff and the assigned project manager for each delivery project within the LCAP will play a role in collecting, collating and analysing the information [which is also a HLF requirement]. A mix of quantitative and qualitative information will be collected. This will enable us to gather numerical information (e.g. lengths of path upgraded, areas of wetland managed, number of visitors etc.) as well as peoples' perceptions (feedback from training days / events etc.). We will encourage community groups and project delivery partners to capture stories, videos and photographs to track their progress which will be uploaded onto our website. Where appropriate, we will take 'before' and 'after' photos of sites to demonstrate changes made. The LELP Finance and Administrative Officer will be responsible for tracking progress against financial spend and the Programme Manager will provide regular updates on spend and delivery to the Steering Group using simple project tracking and risk management systems. Regular progress reports will also be provided to HLF in accordance to their reporting requirements.

Reflection and learning events will take place each year to review progress made over the year and to identify changes needed in terms of programme management and delivery. Programme staff, partners and community representatives will be encouraged to participate in these events to share their experiences and lessons from the project, and to consider how they could continue activities after the end of the programme.

A midterm review will take place at the end of Year two or start of year three of the programme supported by an external independent evaluator who will be appointed to carry out both the midterm review and the external evaluation at the end of the programme. The review will collate the outputs achieved to date, review progress against project plans, identify case study examples of good practice, and identify lessons from different projects and approaches to inform the remaining 2/3 years of delivery of the programme, as well as legacy planning. The evaluation will collate and analyse the quantitative delivery of outputs and outcomes across the programme. It will include detailed feedback with project staff, LELP partners, community groups, landowners, visitors etc. about their perceptions of the scheme and what they think has changed in the landscape as a result of the programme and the lessons they have learned.

Specifically, the Lough Erne Landscape Partnership will appoint suitably qualified and experienced individuals or organisations to support the Partnership in monitoring and evaluating the LELP programme over the five-year life of the programme to help it integrate monitoring of project outputs and outcomes into its project management system and develop its legacy plan. This evaluation process will:

- Demonstrate to the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF), to other funders, to partner organisations and other interested parties what is being achieved;

- Provide LELP with a mechanism that will inform and support programme management and programme governance;
- Look forward as well as back – in particular helping LELP to plan project and programme legacy;
- Help the LELP maximise what it (and others) learn from the delivery of the Programme. By embedding monitoring and evaluation into the programme at this early stage means it can use this learning for improvement, as well as building on the evaluation findings when LELP undertakes new programmes of work in the future.

The principal deliverables (in addition to on-going engagement and support) will be:

- An initial evaluation planning workshop with programme staff, partners and Board members (autumn 2018).
- A mid-delivery review, incorporating a provisional legacy plan (autumn 2020).
- An end of programme evaluation and a separate legacy plan (Summer 2023).

Some key outcomes which LELP may seek to monitor through close liaison with project delivery partners are:

- Increase in natural and built heritage conservation
- Sites brought into active management for nature conservation
- New management plans for sites
- Increase in volunteering in nature and built heritage conservation work
- Increased areas of habitats under active management

## Fundraising strategy

From early in the Development Phase LELP debated the amount of match funding it would seek from project delivery partners and it was agreed to set the contributions given by the core partners at an amount which would at least match the required 21% cash needed to balance the 79% HLF funding. This would in turn ensure that the amount in the non-cash and in-kind budget could be better utilized by other submitting groups that may be unable to contribute cash.

Following conversations with the HLF in the early stages of the LCAP development it was agreed that LELP should identify initial projects from its suite of received submissions that had the necessary agreed match funding in place, and were able to start in year 1 of the five year programme beginning in 2018. The process of selecting suitable match funded projects would stimulate the activation of the programme overall. The selected project delivery partners for Year 1 presented in this LCAP have largely secured the required match funding at the time of writing.

LELP has identified a range of funding opportunities during the development phase. Already the project delivery partners have committed a substantial amount to the programme to enable their projects to be delivered. The list below of potential external funding support is by no means exhaustive.

Volunteer network	Training	Projects
FODC	Waterways Ireland - Heritage Fund	Sport NI
Waterways Ireland	NIEA Challenge Fund	Tourism NI
Forest Service, DAERA	ESF Heritage skills	DAERA - Woodland Environment Grants
FODC landfill tax	Historic Environment Division	N. Ireland Housing Executive Cohesion Fund
FODC community grants	European Year of Cultural Heritage	FODC Festival Fund
Esmee Fairbairn	Heritage Council Ireland	Architectural heritage Fund
CFNI community connections	Business Improvement District	Northern Periphery Programme to develop innovation ecosystems
Vincent Trust	Erasmus in partnership with Heritage Ireland for heritage training	INTERREG V for tourism related cycle paths and greenways;
Vaughan Trust		Interreg 2A [Biodiversity] 2.1 Recovery of protected species and habitats
Volunteer Now		
Business in the Community		
LELP partners		



## Audience Development

*"In the end we will conserve only what we love, we will love only what we understand, and we will understand only what we are taught"*

Baba Dioum

Audience development will assist the LELP project delivery partners to connect with communities in geographical areas where they focus their activities, and to provide opportunities for the wider community to engage in heritage activities through a varied experiential learning programme. Audience development links to the findings in the ARUP and CAF reports which suggested an approach that includes Citizen Science, heritage skills development and volunteering as key legacy outputs.

Audience development will focus on six areas of activity:

1. **Volunteering** – A training and skills development programme.
2. **Education for All** - A citizen science programme for people of all ages linked to a range of endangered species and habitats identified in the Arup and CAF reports
3. **Heritage skills** - A craft and heritage skills training programme linked to the need identified in the Arup and CAF reports and including other activities such as storytelling, folklore and folk life linked to the recording, interpreting and disseminating of our cultural heritage.
4. **Wider audience development** - A series of talks, other skills development activities, conferences and celebratory events.
5. **Community engagement fund**
6. **Coordinated management of the landscape** – workshops and conferences

### 1. Volunteering

The LELP Volunteer programme will leave a lasting legacy by providing meaningful and enjoyable activities for 60 people over the life of the programme so that they can engage in projects delivered through the LCAP. By providing skills and participation and opportunities linked to voluntary activity we will build social capital and positive change within the LELP landscape area. The volunteering programme will link with the N. Ireland Volunteering Strategy 2012, Sports NI Everybody Active 2020 and the RSPB Volunteering policy 2015 and utilize the RSPB's current volunteer management system to recruit and support volunteers.

**"Give it a Go"** is an introductory level volunteering programme that will be delivered in partnership with LELP Partners, project delivery partners, Volunteer Now and Business in the Community. It will be of interest to projects within the LCAP that have an appealing entry point to volunteering such as cultural events or large community engagement activities such as community tree planting.

**"Saints and Scholars"** is aimed at encouraging volunteering on monastic islands and shoreline sites. Getting volunteers onto islands will be a rewarding experience for participants and this pilot scheme has the potential to dovetail with the development of the Spiritual Trail and Great Island Monasteries and will seek to engage geographically with local shoreline communities and connect them to their nearest island.

“Vital Volunteers” will recruit, support and provide training for volunteers and engage and develop wider participation to include family friendly volunteering opportunities and disability access.



The programme will also benefit from a series of quality training activities and talks for volunteers as components of our built and natural heritage skills training, archaeology projects and citizen science.

#### Volunteer delivery partners

Networks and local community support organisations such as Lough Erne Yacht Club, Volunteer Now, Row the Erne, Erne Paddlers, Business in the Community (NI), Fermanagh Trust, Share Village, Northern Ireland Environment Link and Enniskillen Rotary Club are interested in the volunteer programme. Fermanagh Rural Community Network will assist rural groups with delivering LELP projects by providing guidance, and as a registered body with ACCESS NI will assist with the LELP volunteer programme where projects involve Children or Vulnerable Adults.

#### 2. Young amateur naturalists

LELP will establish an informal citizen science forum with members drawn from environmental NGOs and the Western Education Authority, and provide £60k to develop structured citizen science activity in years 2-5 of its programme. The activity will create a citizen science programme for 11 – 14 year olds. Students will participate in a programme of data collection activities and initiatives during class time field trips and after school activities and will help to create a legacy of skilled natural history recorders, vital to understanding the health and stability of species and habitats through volunteer information gathering, and which will be recorded in the national data set held by CEDaR.

The funding will also be used to produce learning materials. Staff will coordinate activities and establish a repository of materials which can be shared and better promoted by LELP and project delivery partners, and develop other resources as necessary. The programme will be led by the LELP Natural heritage officer and will be delivered in partnership with LELP partners and other organisations working in Natural Heritage and citizen science. By being the coordinator of this initiative LELP can also identify “what is missing” in terms of need identified by the CAF and Arup

reports such as the need for more information on eels, pollan, white clawed crayfish, beetles and bryophytes, for example.

### 3. Heritage skills training - built and natural

The LELP volunteer network will play an important role in providing opportunities for participation in training in built and natural heritage skills. The Centre for Archaeological Fieldwork in its Audit and Opportunities Report identified a range of projects with potential for linked training activities to encourage wider community engagement. These activities include topographical surveys, training in the appreciation of architectural building styles and periods, storytelling and recording, reminiscing, folk lore and folk life etc. Projects will be delivered by LELP staff and include:

- Mapping the Built Heritage of the Islands
- Study of Vernacular Buildings
- Enniskillen: The Development of our County Town
- Spiritual Trail and Great Island Monasteries
- Memory map of Lough Erne
- Maguire Landscape
- Heritage guiding, building skills [thatching, lime mortar, stone work and carving] and craft training including boat building.

Exciting training and participation opportunities will also be provided through LELP project delivery partners including Paddling on the Lough through canoeing skills, invasive species identification and eradication, habitat restoration and species protection, group and volunteer opportunities linked to pollinators, heritage guiding, mumming and crafts.

### 4. Wider audience development

Wider audience development includes activities delivered by LELP's project delivery partners and through events led by LELP such as conferences and talks and "come and try it" taster sessions. Activity based learning also appeals to the culturally curious tourism sector and can provide opportunities for visitors to get hands-on experience of local heritage.

Events of this kind can also be promoted through Discover Ireland, Tourism NI and local tourism platforms. Some of the activities have been suggested by local communities with an emphasis on fun and include:

- Birds from a Bronze Age curragh. Dawn Chorus Bird Songs guided row to Devenish Island with RSPB experts
- Open source photo record of heritage sites around the area where members of the public are encouraged to upload photos of local built and natural heritage sights.
- Development of website and social media
- Farm walks and talks in conjunction with Young Farmers

These are small cost activities and will be largely developed by the Community Connections and volunteering Manager. LELP will produce a suite of print based materials that promotes events and provides information on trails and heritage circuits to raise awareness on specific sites or topics.

## 5. Community engagement fund

A Community engagement fund of £100,000 [£25k p.a.] will be set up to encourage under-represented local community groups to develop local heritage activities in line with the LCAP and to support projects from groups that may not have been picked up in the initial consultation period, or that were still in the process of development.

## 6. Co-ordinated Management of the Landscape

LELP recognises the importance of partnership working and a coordinated approach to conservation in order to achieve its vision and objectives. Through the suite of activities contained within this LCAP it has made a start on this shared journey. During the five-year delivery programme LELP will identify a range of heritage issues that it considers important for wider debates in the community through an annual series of seminars and workshops. These events will provide an important platform for raising heritage concerns and engaging with policy makers, landowners, local communities and elected representatives, and bring to the attention of the community the need for further coordinated legacy actions such as the establishment of a Heritage Landscape Trust or other entity that will last long beyond the life of the LELP five year programme.

## Selected Projects

During the period leading up to its phase 1 application LELP developed its aims, objectives [see page 2] and a suite of themed headings following community consultation, under which its application was made. The four themes were:

- **Coordinated Management of the Landscape**
- **Built Heritage**
- **Natural Heritage**
- **People and Culture**

During the eighteen month development period from April 2016 to November 2017 and in line with needs outlined in the CAF Built Heritage Audit and Opportunities Report and the Arup Landscape Conservation Management Plan LELP then set out a further set of strategic priority targets as follows:

- **Improving access** – Increasing public access through the development of infrastructure such as paths, trails and jetties.
- **Protecting Habitats and Species** – Protecting our animals, plants and habitats.
- **Engaging Communities** – Participation in built and natural heritage and recreational activities through skills training, education, research, citizen science and volunteer development.
- **Sharing our Stories** - participating in and recording and archiving stories on history, built heritage archaeology, folklore and folk life.
- **Creative Spaces** – Developing and supporting cultural activities that celebrate the special nature of the landscape area.
- **Coordinated Management of the Landscape** – Working together to coordinate efforts to ensure the future heritage of the Lough Erne landscape partnership area.

Projects listed in this section were chosen because of their cross cutting connections with HLF outcomes, LELP aims and objectives, themes, and priority targets linked to need identified in the CAF and Arup reports. Many projects meet more than one theme, priority and target.

## Projects

### A1: Spiritual trail and great island monasteries

The Erne waterway was a major routeway on the trail from Europe to the renowned holy place of St Patrick's Purgatory on Lough Derg. Established from the 6<sup>th</sup> century onwards many of the monastic sites on the route thrived and developed through to the medieval period. Little has been done to date however to make progress on the development of access to many of the sites or in putting in infrastructure facilities such as jetties. This project seeks initially to develop the concept of a Spiritual/Pilgrim trail along the ancient monastic and spiritual sites on the islands and shoreline of Lough Erne, and to create opportunities for visitors and local people to experience this unique part of our ancient heritage. Assessing the historical and archaeological findings of the past 30 years the project will identify key sites and routes of significance, create access points and establish a designated trail. A number of sites will be selected to test signage and the use of the trail as a recreational and cultural tourism destination.

To complement the potential for developing a Spiritual Trail the project will also engage with local people living along the ancient routeway to participate in activities such as geophysical surveys to enable a better interpretation of the monastic sites, and carry out community archaeological excavations. These activities will involve school children and volunteers from shoreline communities adjacent to the islands. This project, if fully implemented, will create visitor experiences and journeys along the trail and will be a major attraction both nationally and internationally.

#### A2: Paddling on the Lough

This project is designed to create greater access for people of all abilities and ages to the waters of Lough Erne through their participation in canoeing and water based activities including water polo, swimming and paddle boarding. The project will purchase canoes and paddling equipment, provide training courses for 300 people including families, persons with disabilities, young people from 8-18, and adults. A key outcome will be that the public will have increased their access to the water around Enniskillen through exciting and supported activities. Other events such as the Irish long-distance swimming championships and Special Olympics are planned to give these activities greater exposure to wider audiences. The project will also link with Waterways Ireland Blueways community hubs initiative and Fermanagh Tourism. LELP funding will fund part of a salary for a full time qualified instructor for three years. Other funding sources will support the position for a further two years [Canoe Association NI] by which time it is hoped to make the post fully sustainable.

#### A3: Nature trail, bird hide and school convention

This multi layered project will develop free access to the shoreline of the Upper Lough through the creation and refurbishment of a 3km nature trail along the shoreline, the construction of a wheelchair accessible bird hide and interpretation signage with information on local and migratory birds and other wildlife in the area. Car parking and toilet facilities are also available.



Share centre Upper Lough Erne

The project will engage volunteers in the construction of a bird hide at the Share Centre on Upper Lough Erne and in collaboration with other project delivery partners in the LCAP it will host an annual natural heritage convention for 350 young people from local primary schools. This four yearlong component of the project is a unique opportunity that will encourage young people to participate in



the natural and built heritage of Upper Lough Erne and to develop skills on how to conserve their natural environment. Young people will also become aware of the LELP supported heritage groups and other groups working to conserve the heritage of the area. Numbers will increase to 500 in years 2, 3 and 4.

#### A4: Accessing the natural heritage of Upper Lough Erne at Crom

Crom Castle is home to a wide range of species and habitats and has a rich cultural and historical heritage. In this four year project the National Trust will build on this legacy by reinstating parts of the 18<sup>th</sup> century historic walking routes in the grounds of the castle and by opening up 10.5 kilometers of footpath giving more access to the public. The project aims to encourage users to engage with this unique landscape and interpret its built and natural heritage. The works will be accompanied by a series of engagement activities designed to involve local communities and schools in co-designing a natural play area in the woodland which will interpret the natural history of the area, and a programme of workshops and citizen science opportunities in collaboration with LELP partners and NGOs. The project will also provide fresh opportunities and free access for local families to discover and explore Crom.



The National Trust intends that Crom will also become an outdoor classroom for local schools and community groups where they can celebrate their heritage. It is hoped this will lead to greater local involvement and partnerships and will contribute to the long-term management of Crom itself. The project will employ a natural play coordinator.

#### A5: Walkway to our Lough

Lisnarick is a small rural village on the outskirts of Castle Archdale close to the shores of Lower Lough Erne. This local community development project will create an entirely new access route to the shores of the Lough through the development of a new footpath on Forestry Service land and the upgrading of an existing path. Giving villagers much needed access to the Lough on the one hand, and pedestrian access to the village for tourists in the Castle Archdale complex on the other, this creates an exciting prospect for both communities and will lead to improved economic and social sustainability for the area.

The local village community in Lisnarick will also develop a series of built and natural heritage activities linked to the shoreline and the Castle in order to generate interest in the path. The path will also attract users from beyond the wider Lisnarick area such as Kesh, Irvinestown and Ballinamallard which will bring further benefits.

#### A6: Community footpath Enniskillen

Devenish Partnership Forum is an umbrella organisation for community groups serving three social housing areas to the north of Enniskillen namely, Kilmacormick, Hill view and Cornagrade. The estates were developed from the 1960's onwards and are an important part of the town's recent social history. This project will develop and improve an existing circular footpath that skirts around the estates taking in the Lough Erne shoreline, the back lough, the nature reserve developed by the local community and the Racecourse Lough. Partnering with FODC this project will encourage people to engage more with the Lough and its amenities and provide a route to health and wellbeing. The project will also engage in exciting activities contained within another LELP project *Enniskillen – the Development of our County Town* such as local community archaeology focusing on the Battle of Cornagrade and the remains of a Plantation Bawn. These excavation activities, coupled with environmental citizen science activities on the lough shore for local school children, will provide the basis for the development of a series of interpretation panels along the access trail, and link directly to the hands-on experiences of local participants of all ages and the interpretation of the discoveries they make. The path will also be part of a wider Enniskillen Heritage Network trail and will connect to other access developments such as the South West College's proposed footbridge over the river.

#### B1: Lough Erne invasive species

This five-year project will raise awareness, and provide advice and training on the presence and management of alien invasive species to a wide range of stakeholders. The project will initially identify sites affected by invasive species through survey work and local knowledge. Sites will be selected and managed and volunteers will be recruited to assist with recording, monitoring and awareness-raising.



The training programme will be accredited and targeted at community groups, public sector and private sector ground staff. There will be four training courses per year with a trial eradication programme at four key sites within the project area. Through the publication of information materials, the public will be better educated and informed about alien Invasive species. The project will be assisted through the LELP volunteer programme and other related activity based events.

#### B2: Island habitat restoration

This four-year breeding wader project will improve habitats for breeding curlew in particular as well as lapwing, redshank and snipe. Curlew are in serious decline across Ireland with only 122 pairs known

in the Republic of Ireland from an estimated 5000 pairs in the mid-1980s, and an estimated 250 pairs in N. Ireland. In the LELP area curlew have declined by 82% in the same period, lapwing by 89%, and snipe by 78% and the numbers were too few to determine the rate of decline in redshank. However, it has been shown that habitat management activity to date on the RSPB reserves on Lough Erne islands has been effective in reversing this decline. This project aims to build on that success to secure a stable and growing population of all four species.



Juvenile Sea Eagle Upper Lough Erne: S McCaffrey



Curlew: RSPB

The project will manage 17.8 hectares to create suitable breeding conditions for the birds mainly on the islands of Lower Lough Erne. There will be opportunities for volunteering for 16 persons along with information open days targeted at farmers. Through LELP other opportunities will be identified to raise the profile of this species conservation work through audience development, further volunteering, farmer engagement and other public awareness raising activities.

### B3: Farmers and wildfowling for diversity

The Wildfowling group has 300 members and has developed strong links with the local community on the island. Working with 10 local farmers and 50 families this project aims to increase the number of threatened breeding wader species on three sites on Boa Island on the northern shore of Lower Lough Erne. With a focus on curlew, snipe, lapwing and redshank the project will clear 20 hectares of scrub in order to restore suitable breeding habitats, carry out sward management including rush cutting, and control re-growth of cleared sites using both professional and volunteer labour. It aims to enhance awareness amongst landowners and shooting communities about the positive role their club can play in conserving wading species and their habitats. The group will carry out the necessary work, map the current baseline and record changes to the population of birds throughout the life of the project. An information and education programme will accompany the project such as public engagement open day events, training and boat trips for farmers and local people. Discussions are ongoing on the possible reuse and conversion of a WWII Nissan hut near the shoreline which may be converted into a bird watching hide for use by the public. A further component of the project is the habitat and species mapping exercise on a raised bog possibly in conjunction with Ulster Wildlife, Butterfly Conservation and other eNGOs.

#### B4: LEAP - Lough Erne amazing pollinators

Pollinators are essential to our economy, landscapes and health and wellbeing, and are in decline nationally and globally. This project will bring together the passion and skills of groups and individuals in order to engage local people and landowners in pollinator friendly activities. Linking with the National Pollination Plan the Butterfly Conservation Group and Fermanagh Bee Keepers will partner with a collector of unique Fermanagh heritage apple species and others to support the spread of both apple trees and pollinators.



Working also with a range of exciting and unusual landowning partners they will identify plots of land for planting fruit trees [such as NI water treatment sites for example]. The project aims to ensure that by growing apples and other fruit trees that their pollinators will be encouraged to spread across the Lough Erne landscape. This project will also connect with community tree planting activities.

#### C1: Volunteer network

The volunteering network will provide participation and training activities for up to 100 people across our main themes particularly in built, cultural and natural heritage activities. The scheme will be managed by LELP staff with support from other volunteer networks such as RSPB and Volunteer Now. Opportunities will be promoted throughout the life cycle of the LELP scheme and threaded through many of the activities developed by project delivery partners.

#### C2: Young amateur naturalists

LELP will establish an informal citizen science forum with members drawn from environmental NGOs and the Western Education Authority and provide £60k to develop structured citizen science activity in years 2-5 of its programme. The activity will create a citizen science programme for 11 – 14 year olds. Students will participate in a programme of data collection activities and initiatives during class time field trips and after school activities and will help to create a legacy of skilled natural history recorders, vital to understanding the health and stability of species and habitats through volunteer information gathering, and which will be recorded in the national data set held by CEDaR. Staff will coordinate activities and establish a repository of materials which can be shared and better

promoted by LELP and project delivery partners, and develop other resources as necessary. The programme will be led by the LELP Natural heritage officer and will be delivered in partnership with LELP partners and other organisations working in Natural Heritage and citizen science.

By being the coordinator of this initiative LELP can also identify “what is missing” in terms of need identified by the CAF and Arup reports such as the need for more information on eels, pollan, white clawed crayfish, beetles and bryophytes, for example.

### C3: Community engagement fund

Up to £20,000 per year up to a maximum of £100,000 over four years will be in the LELP area to develop activities linked to the aims and objectives of LELP. The scheme will be managed by LELP staff.

### C4: Our heritage champions

The Global GeoPark footprint extends across the LELP area and this project is designed to recruit and train twenty “Heritage Champions” who will be trained in an intensive programme which will enable participants to provide guiding services to both local people and tourists wishing to experience the built, natural and cultural heritage within both the LELP and GeoPark areas. The participants on this pilot project are expected to research their own content based upon their personal interests and share their learning with other volunteer guides in year 2 and beyond. Participants will be recruited from throughout the LELP area.

Modeled on a similar training project by the Mourne LPS the guide training will dovetail into the LELPs Heritage guiding, building and crafts skills training programme for further expansion with other volunteers as the LCAP rolls out into years 2-5.

### C5: Mapping the built heritage of the islands

Following training this project will be undertaken by LELP volunteers to record and map the remains of buildings and utilities on the islands before memory of them is lost. The survey will involve training volunteers in survey techniques, which may be as simple as learning how to effectively use a mobile phone to record sites and monuments by taking photographs, as well as accurately recording the location with GPS.

Volunteers will also be given skills in writing descriptions for buildings and industrial features. The information collected as part of the survey will then be used to produce a Story Map depicting the locations of each feature linked to a photograph and description and posted on the LELP website





Navigation marker WI



Castle Archdale beacon WI

## C6: Study of vernacular buildings

Vernacular buildings are an increasingly rare feature in our landscape and this is equally true within the LELP project area. The CAF Audit identified 40 vernacular buildings at risk within the LELP boundary. During the audit four were found to have no visible remains and six have traces only, leaving a total of 30 described as having 'some remains', 'substantial remains' or as 'complete'. A total of 11 were found to be in poor condition. This project will undertake a full internal and external survey of these buildings to identify and record this aspect of the built heritage as well as recording the stories and memories linked to the buildings. This will allow for a greater appreciation of what is left of this important resource and enable a statement of need to be developed. The project will be delivered through the LELP and involve heritage volunteers.

## D1: Access Inniskillings

The Inniskilling regiments are famous around the world and the regimental museum in Enniskillen attracts thousands of visitors every year. The Access Inniskilling project will create an important legacy for the Inniskilling Regiments by preserving and archiving their records collected prior to 1900. The process will involve scanning and digitizing some 7000 items including photographs and prints designed to improve access to this invaluable resource and to foster a greater understanding of the materials held in the museum's collection.

An online archive will be created and linked to the Museums website for audience access which it is



hoped will generate greater interest from both communities on this part of our shared history. An online story map will also be developed with links to digital facsimiles of original archives relating to the Fermanagh Light Infantry recruits and their homes and families between 1853 and 1865. The original archives will also be preserved and stored securely to museum accreditation standards. Trained volunteers will carry out the

digitization, and through schools and community engagement events it is anticipated that more visitors will visit the museum as a result.



## D2: Enniskillen - the development of our county town

Enniskillen is Fermanagh's principle town, located at what has been an important fording point across the Erne since prehistoric times. It was established as a centre of power by a minor branch of the Maguire lordship in the early fifteenth century when the castle was constructed on an island in the river. This project will focus on the development of the town through the centuries with a mapping of the townscape from its earliest years to what it has become today.



Enniskillen Waterways Ireland

The project will include community excavations on the site of the Cornagrade Bawn constructed in 1612 and the site of the 1689 Battle of Cornagrade close by. The creation of a story map will display the results of the architectural study and cartographic research. The results of the survey and excavation will lead to a greater understanding of the development of Enniskillen through to the present day. Hosting the story map on the LELP website will ensure that the information is made widely accessible. This project will also align with the development and upgrade of a community footpath with interpretation panels that include the community engagement findings around the lough connecting the Cornagrade, Hill View and Kilmacormick housing estates. Local people and community groups will be strongly encouraged to take a lead in the development planning for the archaeological components of this activity and that professional collaborators appointed to work on the project will engage fully with them in drawing out and using the local knowledge generated to guide the project.

## D3: Maguire landscape

This project will investigate the secular aspects of the medieval Maguire landscape to further develop the story of the Maguires at the centre of their Fermanagh lordship in the Lisnaskea area. The CAF audit has shown that there is a gap in our understanding of the built heritage of the secular medieval landscape and this project will go some way to addressing this. A community excavation will be carried out at Lisoneill, reputedly the place where the O'Neill overlord was based during the inauguration of the Maguire at one of the Sheebeg enclosures, or at the possible crannog 'bawn' in Derrychulla town land. The community excavation will not only explore lesser known aspects of this important landscape by adding to knowledge and understanding of the period, but it will also offer opportunities for the public to participate in excavations, stimulate the imagination of people in the area and develop an interest in heritage. The excavations will be promoted through the LELP Heritage Volunteer Network and local schools to attract participants from different backgrounds, and include open days,

“walk and talk” events, and public lectures. A general reader publication pulling together all the past and recent research will ensure that the information is disseminated more widely.

This project represents an ideal opportunity for the local community to take the lead and develop activities ahead of the scheduled project in order to generate interest in it. A local history group and tourism and community groups are active in the town and they will be encouraged by LELP to take a role of *primus inter pares* in any relationship with professionals engaged to undertake the project, and to shape it to the needs of the community.

#### D4: Memory map of Lough Erne

Feedback sought during the CAF audit indicated concern that knowledge and memory of built heritage remains associated with the last 100 years of life in the LELP area is at immediate risk of loss. There is a consensus that recording this history before it is lost forever should be prioritised. This project will record stories of life on the lough in the recent past with a focus on associated built heritage features and create a web-hosted GIS based ‘memory map’ which will link histories, stories and photographs to various locations around Lough Erne.

Local volunteers will be trained to record the stories by acquiring new skills in oral history interviewing, research, photography and video and sound recording, desktop publishing, and archive methods. The project will focus on transport, WWII, Erne Electric Hydro Scheme, Social Housing and folk lore and tradition.

#### E1: Heritage guiding, building and crafts skills training including boat building

This programme will offer lifelong learning opportunities for people to learn new skills in natural and built heritage conservation practice and will lead to an increased pool of collective expertise and increased individual employability. People interested in volunteering with LELP and others who wish to consider becoming a guide will be offered specialist heritage guide training in years 2-5 of the programme.

This training will build upon the heritage guide training piloted by the GeoPark in year 1.



Although much reduced there is still a significant corpus of thatched dwellings surviving in the LELP area and a thatching course will be offered along with other traditional building skills focusing on practical measures of maintenance and repair through the use of lime mortars for lime painting and plastering on stone work of many buildings and structures, such as farm buildings, outhouses, walls, quays, slipways and stone navigation markers.

Other courses on straw, willow weaving and stone carving will also be provided. Training courses will target volunteers, owners and students studying construction at local vocational colleges.

## E2: Keepers of Tradition

This project will revive the tradition of mumming within the LELP area and keep it alive and meaningful for future generations. By engaging with a younger generation in communities historically known for mumming along the shoreline of Upper and Lower Lough Erne, the project will encourage young people to reinterpret the tradition and create their own contemporary understanding of mumming which will be stylistically distinct, exciting, vibrant and relevant to them and will be delivered in a way that allows young people to express their own creativity and have buckets of fun into the bargain.



The project will teach young people about the folklore associated with mumming and demonstrate core and essential skills such as straw craft, mask making, music, singing and dance performances. It will also revive old rhyming and integrate it with the new rhymes and verses developed by young people in their performances. By facilitating an intergenerational exchange of folklore between the last surviving custodians of the mumming tradition in Fermanagh and this group of young participants the project will ensure that not only will young people take ownership of the tradition, but they will in turn become the future custodians and interpreters of this important and unique local folk tradition.

## F1: Working together to coordinate efforts to ensure the future heritage of the Lough Erne landscape partnership area

In line with the strategic development of the Lough Erne Landscape Partnership, and as discussed elsewhere in the LCAP, LELP will coordinate efforts to ensure the future heritage of the Lough Erne Partnership area linked to annual strategic seminars and conferences and to its midterm evaluation in year 3. Annual events will provide an important platform for raising heritage concerns and engaging with policy makers, landowners, local communities and elected representatives, and bring to the attention of the community the need for further coordinated action such as the establishment of a Heritage Landscape Trust or other entity, existing or new that will last long beyond the life of the five year LELP programme.

## Projects across LELP themes and Landscape Character Areas

Identified need	Project	People and Culture	Built Heritage	Natural Heritage	Coordinated management	Ref	Croagh and Garvey	Lower Lough Erne	Enniskillen	Upper Lough Erne
LELP Themes						LELP Landscape Character Areas				
Access to island monastic sites	Spiritual Trail & Gt Island Monasteries WI	1	1		1	A1	1	1	1	1
Access to the water	Paddling on the Lough Erne paddlers	1		1		A2			1	
Access to shoreline, wildlife and education	Nature trail, bird hide and school convention Share Discovery Village	1		1	1	A3				1
Access to Lough, woodland and engagement activities	Crom estate footpath and linked activities National Trust	1	1	1		A4				1
Access to the Lough	Community footpath Lisnarick CDA	1	1	1	1	A5		1		
Access to the Lough and engagement	Devenish community footpath Devenish Partnership Forum	1		1	1	A6			1	

Invasive species awareness and training	Aliens on the Lough FODC			1	1	B1	1	1	1	1
Habitat improvement and species protection	Island landscape restoration RSPB			1	1	B2		1		
Habitat improvement and species protection, access	Farmers and wildfowlers for diversity Lough Erne Wildfowlers		1	1	1	B3		1		
Habitat improvement for endangered species and pollination	Lough Erne Amazing Pollinators LELP & partners	1		1	1	B4	1	1	1	1
Volunteer training in built and natural heritage	Volunteer Network LELP		1		1	C1	1	1	1	1
Education and citizen science	Young amateur naturalists LELP	1	1	1	1	C2	1	1	1	1
Targeted calls for submissions	Community engagement fund LELP	1	1	1	1	C3	1	1	1	1
Training of heritage guides	Heritage champions GeoPark	1	1	1	1	C4	1	1	1	1

Volunteer training in built heritage recording	Mapping built heritage of islands LELP		1		1	C5	1	1	1	1
Volunteer training in built heritage recording	Study of vernacular Buildings LELP	1	1		1	C6	1	1	1	1
Protection and dissemination of digitised artefacts	Access Inniskillings - Inniskillings Museum	1				D1			1	
Community mapping, archaeology of key sites	Enniskillen Our County Town LELP	1	1		1	D2			1	
Community archaeology of key historical site	Maguire Landscape LELP	1	1		1	D3				1
Community and volunteering activity to capture stories and heritage	Memory map of Lough Erne LELP	1			1	D4	1	1	1	1



	Revitalising heritage skills	Heritage guiding, building skills and craft training in thatch, boat building, lime etc. LELP	1	1	1	1	E1	1	1	1	1
	Supporting cultural heritage activity	Mumming revival The Mumming Foundation	1			1	E2		1		1
	Strategic and long term coordinated management of the landscape	Coordinate efforts for the future heritage of the LELP area	1	1	1	1	F1	1	1	1	1

## **Lough Erne Landscape Conservation Action Plan: Part 3**

Part 3 contains detailed plans for twenty three projects along with associated business cases, maps and related documents which will primarily be used by the LELP team and project leads to oversee project delivery, and are therefore detailed in a separate folder. Part 3 of the LCAP is designed to be a living document that will change and adapt over time and project plans will be updated on an annual basis.

# Lough Erne Landscape Conservation Action Plan: Part 4

## Summaries of commissioned research

### Built heritage audit and opportunities report

The Built Heritage and Opportunities report was undertaken by the Centre for Archaeological Fieldwork (CAF) of the School of Natural and Built Environment at Queen's University Belfast. The report contained an audit of built heritage features within the LELP project boundary and provided details of opportunities identified during the audit process. The report can be found on the LELP website <http://lelp.org.uk/>

The Built Heritage Audit and Opportunities Report aimed to assess, identify and record the built heritage of sites within this area in order to establish future priorities for preservation, interpretation and access and inform the selection of built heritage projects for inclusion in LELPs stage two submission to HLF. The objectives of the Report were to:

- combine and synthesize all of the existing surveys and audits for the LELP area into a single record
- include an analysis and characterisation of the local built form
- include a statement of overall heritage significance

The report noted three main areas of built heritage impact:

#### 1. Individual Impact

Participating in heritage has been shown to have a significant positive impact (Fujiwara 2014, 5). Of the eight different types of heritage site, visits to historic towns and historic buildings were found to have the greatest impact on wellbeing (ibid.). English Heritage have highlighted the ability of archaeology to create 'pride', 'a sense of place' and 'a sense of community' by providing joint community activities and linking the present with the past

The Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment (CABE) in England also carried out research exploring how people relate to the places in which they live, and it was shown that visiting heritage sites and participating in heritage activities has a significant impact on wellbeing and life satisfaction, further, heritage volunteering has been found to have a positive effect on mental health.

#### 2. Community impact

Built heritage is also important for how local communities perceive themselves and can contribute to community cohesion, social inclusion and civic pride. The effects of taking part in heritage activities are likely to have wider community benefits also, for example through areas of learning, identity and belonging. This is likely to be particularly significant in post-conflict societies such as Northern Ireland, where communities can together explore shared heritage, contributing to increased respect and community cohesion bringing communities together into the future.

Participating in heritage projects also enables people to connect with each other and form new friendships and networks, with positive effects on local communities.

### 3. Economic impact

A study on the economic value of Northern Ireland's Historic Environment was carried out in 2012 by the NIEA. It found that the total estimated Gross Value Added: - the measure of the value of goods and services produced in an area, industry or sector of an economy - per annum in relation to NI's Historic Environment was £249.5m. GVA outputs in Northern Ireland, however, were significantly lower than equivalents for Scotland, Wales or the rest of Ireland indicating that there is significant potential to further develop the historic environment sector in Northern Ireland (eftec and RSM 2012). Noteworthy in the context of the historic towns in the LELP area is the economic impact of the everyday buildings and streetscapes people experience and encounter. Surveys have demonstrated that when asked about where they would most prefer to spend a day out, people regularly list towns and cities known for their heritage, and a strong correlation exists between people's ratings and the number of listed buildings in a visited settlement (ibid). This is particularly significant given the number of listed buildings in Enniskillen and the LELP area.

### Opportunities

An assessment of the character and significance of the built heritage of the LELP area was made through the course of the audit and opportunities clearly lie where significance and value has been established such as for example the monastic and ecclesiastical remains with Devenish at the heart, but which stretch the length of the upper and lower lough. Strengths too clearly lie in the important historic towns, country houses, demesnes and areas of village character with their collection of listed historic buildings, character and distinctiveness. The development of these areas through the Plantation and into the early modern period provides much opportunity for improving knowledge and engagement with the historic fabric.

There is also an opportunity to enhance the significance of known sites and monuments through further investigation, and the secular landscape in the Medieval period is an area where there is the opportunity to identify and record further aspects of this landscape, making it possible to realise the full potential of the remains of the Maguire Lordship in the LELP area. The significance of other aspects of the built heritage of the LELP area too has been highlighted by the community, primarily the heritage of the islands, an aspect which is unique in Northern Ireland to Fermanagh.

There are opportunities too for improving the condition of significant buildings with 23 Buildings at Risk within the LELP boundary. The condition of key monuments is also a concern to the local community. Vernacular buildings and thatch are under pressure more widely and the LELP area has a group of valuable and significant thatched houses remaining, particularly in the Upper Lough Erne LCA, which is not the case for many other areas in Northern Ireland.

### Conservation Land Management Strategy

The Conservation Land Management Strategy report was undertaken by Ove Arup in order to inform the selection of natural heritage projects within the Landscape Conservation Action Plan (LCAP) as

part of LELPs stage two Heritage Lottery Funding application. The report can be found on the LELP website <http://lelp.org.uk/>

The CLMS provided a baseline of the existing natural environment within the LELP area with a particular focus on biodiversity. It also provided an overview of the risks and opportunities which exist for the area's natural environment over the longer term, and where need exists, recommended actions for the protection of habitats and species. The report suggested how LELP can contribute to the achievement of an agreed long-term vision that can support a functioning mosaic ecosystem on a landscape scale, raise awareness of nature conservation and minimise the impact of development on wildlife.

Arup considered that the setting up of a number of high level objectives will be necessary to promote landscape-scale conservation and create a more resilient natural environment. This will require a balance between supporting sympathetic land management for sustainable habitats and wildlife in rural and urban areas on the one hand whilst recognising the importance of developing nature based tourism to ensure the needs of the local economy, on the other.

The report recommended that increased surveying, monitoring and reporting on the state of biodiversity should be undertaken within the LELP area and that enhanced recreation and use of the lough should be in a manner that enhances the conservation of the natural and built heritage assets of the loughs, whilst also supporting surrounding communities.

The achievement of these objectives over a thirty-year period will necessitate longer term management of the area and the report suggests the formation of a Landscape or Heritage Trust or other landscape-scale body as a way to oversee the long-term conservation and enhancement of the LELP area. However, in the short term there are opportunities for LELP to contribute toward building capacity and resourcing in the wider community to aid nature conservation. This can be achieved by developing annual networking conferences for partners and the community, and through ongoing training programmes which are open to all nature conservation volunteers. Through LELP funding the environment should also benefit from the establishment of a small-scale grant scheme for community groups and landowners with objectives aims to create habitats and protect species.

LELP can also assist in the landscape scale conservation of habitats by targeting those areas which can be initially restored over the short term of the lifetime of the LELP partnership i.e. 5 years and thereby contribute to a long-term vision of a habitat mosaic for the LELP area.

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Produced by

### **Lough Erne Landscape Partnership**

Published

On

LELP Website June 2018

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