

Media Release

For immediate release



## £181k awarded to major new project to break down the barriers to Eden's rivers and natural heritage

The climate crisis, pollution and habitat loss are all taking their toll on Eden's rivers. At the same time, rivers have never been more needed by people – for health, well-being and recreation.

River conservation charity, Eden Rivers Trust has been given a helping hand from The National Lottery Heritage Fund to develop a major project that will improve both access to Eden *and* its natural heritage by breaking down the barriers for people and nature to thrive in, and beside our rivers.

Thanks to National Lottery Players, development funding of **£181,190** has been awarded to help the trust and their partners to progress their plans to apply for a full National Lottery grant at a later date.

The project, *Access to Eden: Breaking Barriers, Building Bridges* will remove the barriers that prevent people from accessing the natural heritage of Eden and build the bridges needed to give them the confidence to enjoy our blue and green spaces. Having healthy, thriving natural spaces is key to this, so there are also plans to remove barriers for Eden's special wildlife, connect habitats and promote nature recovery.

*Access to Eden* will focus on improving participants' physical and mental health and well-being in a sustainable and fun way, and future projects include:

- Co-creating and improving accessible green spaces on people's doorsteps in Penrith and Carlisle,
- Exploring, rediscovering and connecting paths and trails along, and in the River Eden by improving access to the river and countryside through a set of trails –

both new ones and refreshed favourites. This will include some fully accessible routes and new 'ways to the water' with train trips to Settle-Carlisle stations and on to the river for all ability and mobility levels, with wheelchair hubs in Appleby and Carlisle, and

- Leading a river revival, where environmental organisations and communities improve and protect wildlife habitats, removing barriers to fish migration and tackling invasive species.

The 15-strong partnership led by Eden Rivers Trust brings together local councils, environmental organisations, river user and transport groups, community groups and accessibility campaigners whose knowledge and expertise will unlock rivers and nature for more people than ever before, providing opportunities to connect them to the wonder that is the natural world found in the wider Eden valley.

**Elizabeth Radford, Chief Executive, Eden Rivers Trust, said:**

*"We are delighted to have received this funding from the National Lottery Heritage Fund to develop our Access to Eden project. We're working with a greater variety of partners than ever before, from Cumbria Wildlife Trust and the Yorkshire Dales National Park, to 4Eden, Penrith and Eden Refuge Network, Cumbria Canoeists, Carlisle Waverley Viaduct Trust, Access the Dales and The Settle-Carlisle Railway Development Company. Many of these partners bring new perspectives, skills and a deep understanding of the challenges faced by those Cumbrians who experience the greatest barriers to getting out into this landscape. We want to involve many more in the course of this project!*

*"We can't wait to get started co-creating innovative and rewarding experiences and conservation activities with all our partners that will break down the barriers to people being able to connect with nature and help more people know and love the Eden and be enthused and empowered to help with its conservation and save our natural heritage."*

**Eilish McGuinness, Chief Executive, The National Lottery Heritage Fund, said:**

*"I'm delighted that we are providing support to this major new project, which recognises the vital role of rivers and lakes as the lifeblood and heartland of communities. The work of Eden Rivers Trust will help to ensure our natural heritage is preserved and enhanced for the benefit of all, thanks to National Lottery players."*

Find out more about the project and partners on the Eden Rivers Trust website

<https://edenriverstrust.org.uk>

Ends

**Notes to Editors:**

**Photo:** Eden Rivers Trust volunteers litter picking along the footpath by the Eden in Carlisle. © Stuart Walker Photography/Eden Rivers Trust

**Contacts for further information:**

Sam Mason, Marketing and Communications Manager: [sam.mason@edenrt.org](mailto:sam.mason@edenrt.org) 01768 866788 / 07834 555179 (Mon-Thurs)

Elizabeth Radford, CEO [elizabeth.radford@edenrt.org](mailto:elizabeth.radford@edenrt.org) 01768 866788.

**We're Eden Rivers Trust** - the Cumbrian conservation charity standing up for Eden's rivers; changing perceptions, enhancing and protecting the river environment so that people and nature can thrive.

We work in partnership with organisations and local communities, changing the conversation and inspiring and empowering others to breathe new life into our rivers. Together, we're finding better ways to ensure the Eden can support a brighter future for all.

We're rethinking Eden's rivers for good.

The River Eden is a Site of Special Scientific Interest and is classed by Europe as a Special Area of Conservation.

For more information about our work and to get involved, visit [www.edenriverstrust.org.uk](http://www.edenriverstrust.org.uk) or call 01768 866788

### **About the Access to Eden: Breaking Barriers and Building Bridges project**

Access to Eden will break down the physical, social and cultural barriers that prevent people from accessing the natural heritage of Eden and build the bridges needed to give them the confidence to enjoy our blue and green spaces. We will remove barriers for Eden's special wildlife, connect habitats and promote nature recovery. Working together, our partnership will break barriers and build bridges for people AND nature in the Eden.

The funding received is to develop the project, pilot some of the projects and submit a delivery bid. If the delivery bid to the National Lottery Heritage Fund is successful, delivery will run for a further 4 years and will total c. £2.4 million.

The project is led by Eden Rivers Trust.

### **Partners and beneficiaries signed up to the project:**

Access the Dales  
Brampton Angling Association  
Carlisle City Council  
Carlisle Waverley Viaduct Trust  
Cumbria Canoeists the delivery partner of the British Canoeing Cumbria Regional Development Team  
Cumbria County Council  
Cumbria Wildlife Trust  
Eden District Council  
Eden Rivers Trust  
Eden Spring to Sea  
4 Eden  
North Pennines AONB Partnership  
Penrith and Eden Refugee Network  
Settle Carlisle Railway  
Yorkshire Dales National Park

### **About The National Lottery Heritage Fund**

Using money raised by The National Lottery, we inspire, lead and resource the UK's heritage to create positive and lasting change for people and communities, now and in the future. [www.heritagefund.org.uk](http://www.heritagefund.org.uk).

Follow @HeritageFundUK on [Twitter](#), [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#) and use #NationalLotteryHeritageFund

Since The National Lottery began in 1994, National Lottery players have raised over £43 billion for projects and more than 635,000 grants have been awarded across the UK. More than £30 million raised each week goes to good causes across the UK.