



Background information - Coalface to Wildspace, Midlands

Froglife is a national wildlife conservation charity that specialises in the conservation of amphibians, reptiles and their habitats. We believe that the long-term success of conservation can only be maximised through the inclusion of people from wide ranging backgrounds and the activities that we deliver are designed to encourage and enable as many people as possible to play an active role. This includes people from the most disadvantaged backgrounds, people living with dementia and people with mental health issues. We aim to maximise the benefits to us all of working and volunteering in green spaces, both mentally and physically.

Project activities

Coalface to Wildspace will raise awareness and support action to conserve reptiles and amphibians and their habitats. These species have been much neglected locally and nationally. The project is specifically tailored to reach communities and individuals that are currently not engaged in nature conservation. It will be steered by the needs of local communities in the West Midlands, particularly around Walsall and Sutton Coalfield.

We have included a range of innovative activities to engage people of all ages with different interest levels, including:

- Neighbourhood Wildlife Corridors (NWC) providing connections between eight green spaces and urbanised neighbourhoods around these sites. There will be a total of 40 wildlife interventions, including ponds and wildflower meadows. We will deliver 40 Wildlife Gardening Workshops (WGW). A minimum 960 people will be directly involved in creating the corridors and minimum of 600 people attending WGW. The NWC will be underpinned by inter-linking public engagement activities, as follows:

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- **Layers of Time:** An 8-10 minute virtual reality film will be created focusing on the history and heritage present under the surface of the current visible landscape, and connecting this to the 8 sites and the wildlife that now lives here, particularly reptiles and amphibians.
The second phase will be screening of the VR film. It will be distributed to schools and shown at various venues. In total 30 sessions in schools/youth groups reaching 4,500 pupils and 400 sessions in venues reaching a minimum of 12,000 people.
In the third phase we will run workshops using lego to build a 5 layer model reflecting the different stages presented in the film. Lego is a great intergenerational, gender neutral tool for creativity. In total local communities will build eight models through 40 workshops with minimum 480 people contributing directly. The models will be judged by paleologists and will go on tour to 8 venues attracting a minimum of 2,880 visitors.
- **Speaking Sculptures:** We will gather the puzzle pieces through 32 sessions with a minimum of 480 people to identify local wildlife 'jewels'. 'Jewels' will be places that people associate with the sites. This will be followed by the creation of wildlife focused sculptures to be placed in each sites. Sculptures will be unique to the site, such as a sculpture that is also a bird bath. Each sculpture will have a QR code linking to a soundscape consisting of music, poems, bird song, amphibian croaks.
- The sculptures will be unveiled at festivals at each site which will attract a minimum of 4,800 people.

Coalface to Wildspace is funded by The National Lottery Heritage Fund.

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