

Thanks to funding secured from the Green Recovery Challenge Fund, nature is on the road to recovery in Greater Manchester. The bid, fronted by the newly established Greater Manchester Environment Fund (GMEF), put forward a programme of priority projects that will establish a network for nature across the county.

And it is great news for people working in the environment and those looking for green careers; 37 jobs will be created and safeguarded including new 12 traineeships.

The Greater Manchester Environment Fund (GMEF) is being established to deliver Greater Manchester's ambition for a "clean, carbon-neutral, climate resilient city region with a thriving natural environment", by aligning public and philanthropic funding, attracting private investment, prioritising limited resources and facilitating collaborative bids.

Managed by the Wildlife Trust for Lancashire, Manchester and North Merseyside, the fund will be launched in spring, but with the success of a collaborative bid to the Green Recovery Challenge Fund, some projects will start now to demonstrate a desire to provide networks for nature to flourish.

The bid is a collaboration between Environmental Non-Government Organisations who work across Greater Manchester and have been hardest hit by the pandemic. Mersey Rivers Trust, Canal and Rivers Trust, Northern Roots, RSPB, City of Trees, The Conservation Volunteers, Finance Earth, the Wildlife Trusts and the Great Manchester Wetlands Partnership have come together to support Greater Manchester Combined Authority's Build Back Greener campaign.

The fund will support Greater Manchester's Local Nature Recovery Network Strategy delivering 537 hectares of habitat restoration, which will benefit 2,758ha of connected landscapes:

- 48ha of wetland and lowland peat on the mosses in Salford and Wigan;
- 117ha of moorland peat on the Pennines above Oldham;
- 58ha of improved habitats, including innovative island habitat along the Ashton and Rochdale canals;
- 59ha of habitats along the River Croal and River Tame and areas within the Northern Roots project in Oldham;
- 255ha in woodland in Bury, Oldham and Trafford.

The aim is to fund natural flood management projects and peatland restoration transforming areas into carbon stores. There are pioneering plans to develop areas to attract private investment in carbon capture and storage, helping in the battle against Climate Change.

The fund will also support volunteering projects and campaigns to get children and families out into nature to improve health and wellbeing and encourage them to make lifestyle changes to benefit them and the natural world around them.

The Green Recovery Challenge Fund is a short-term competitive fund to kick-start environmental renewal whilst creating and retaining a range of jobs. It is open to environmental charities and their partners to deliver projects in England, delivering against the goals of the Government's 25 Year Environment Plan (25YEP), whilst helping to sustain and build capacity in the sector.

The Green Recovery Challenge Fund is funded by Defra and is being delivered by The National Lottery Heritage Fund in partnership with Natural England and the Environment Agency