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|  | **Pine Martens Bounce Back**  **The Two Moors Pine Marten Project**  **Community Grants Framework** |  |
|  | Photo: Mark Hamblin/2020VISION  A close up of a logo  Description automatically generated |  |

**Introduction**

Pine Martens Bounce Back: The Two Moors Pine Marten Project is working with local communities, stakeholders and the wider public to enable the return of the pine marten to the South West of England after an absence of more than 100 years.

The aims of the project are:

* Restore a viable pine marten population in Somerset, Devon and the wider South West, restoring vital natural processes that will lead to resilient woodland ecosystems.
* Inspire and support diverse audiences to become Pine Marten Pioneers, participating in activities which bring pine martens back, restore woodlands, and which grow conservation skills, capacity and leadership.

A reintroduction project is complex and requires stakeholders and communities to become:

* Aware of the species – knowing what a pine marten is and understanding how it lives and interacts with its woodland community.
* Pine marten ready – preparing for the return of this previous member of their community, ensuring they have the skills for living with pine martens and have taken measures to maximise the benefits and minimise the challenges of this colourful character.
* Woodland and pine marten champions – spreading the word, supporting others and restoring the key habitats for pine martens and the wealth of wildlife that call woodland their home.
* Nature recovery scientists – monitoring, surveying, measuring and feeding back the data to those who need it – providing the understanding of the recovery of pine martens and woodlands and enabling timely responses where challenges arise.
* Community conservationists – as the project develops and skills and knowledge increase, the community can take a leading role in overseeing pine marten and woodland recovery, leaving a legacy of skilled self-sufficient conservationists.

**What will the Community Grants Scheme pay for?**

The Community Grants Scheme welcomes a broad range of creative applications and ideas. Consideration will be given to all applications that can demonstrate a tangible benefit to pine marten and woodland recovery in the south west through habitat management and by supporting pine marten champions and nature recovery scientists.

For example, the Grant could be used to support habitat management and creation for pine martens (i.e. any work that supports den creation or retention, natural food provision and habitat connectivity across the landscape). It can also be used to support the monitoring of pine martens, to raise the awareness of pine martens, and for training and upskilling of land workers and nature enthusiasts to produce the woodland and pine marten champions of the future.

Anybody with an idea are encouraged to contact the pine marten team to discuss and develop it further at pinemartens@devonwildlifetrust.org

**Where will the Community Grant support projects?**

Grants are open to communities across the South West of England.

**How much can the Grant pay?**

The total budget each year is £3000. The scheme welcomes individual projects up to £500 and will consider larger projects up to £1000.

Applications will be expected to demonstrate match-funding and/or in-kind contributions given.

**Criteria for payments**

The project will be assessed against how far it supports project outcomes and the following criteria:

Main Criteria

* The project can demonstrate a tangible benefit to pine marten and woodland recovery in the south west through habitat management and/or by supporting pine marten champions and nature recovery scientists.
* The project will involve other people. Projects that involve people who are new to nature and/or new to environmental projects will be given greater weight.
* The project will help to raise awareness of pine martens and the project.

Other Considerations

* How will the applicant champion and promote the project?
* Can the project be funded from another source?
* What match funding will the application include? This can take the form of materials, cash, volunteer or staff in-kind time.
* Without the Community Grant funding, is it likely the project would still go ahead?
* Could the work be used for demonstration value?

Projects are expected to meet the main project criteria. It is not expected that projects will meet all of the other criteria, but projects will score higher where multiple criteria are met and/or a project delivers significantly against a criterion.

All projects will be expected to adhere to National Lottery Heritage Fund Terms of Grants and demonstrate how they will acknowledge National Lottery Heritage Funding.

**Assessment and selection process**

The appropriate Pine Marten Bouncing Back Working Groups will assess project applications including the Forestry and Land Management Working Group and the Community and Engagement Working Group.

The Working Groups have representatives from a range of project partners and will occasionally draw in other expert advisory support. As such there will be a range of input to decision-making and independence of the assessing group from the applicant and project staff (who will present the applications only).

The Working Groups will meet quarterly and assessing applications for Community Grants will be a standing item on the agenda for these meetings.

Successful projects that can’t be supported in a given round may be carried forward to the next round.

**Application, management and monitoring**

Two Moors Project Field Officers and Engagement Officers will discuss and work-up projects with applicants. This will ensure only suitable applications are progressed and those officers can present the projects knowledgably to the assessing group.

Applicants will need to complete an application form to explain the project. The relevant project officer will then complete a Project Assessment Form to explain funding rates, justification and any other issues for consideration, which will be submitted to the relevant group along with the application.

Successful applicants will be contacted soon after the decision and asked to complete an agreement letter. The Field Officer or Engagement Officer will then work with successful projects to support delivery and provide advice and support as needed.

Unsuccessful applicants will be contacted to explain the reason for the decision and will be offered advice should they wish to resubmit.

Monitoring of the project will be carried out by the relevant Project Officer to assess whether the project has been successfully completed. Rapid payment will be made once all funded components of the project are satisfactorily completed. Where payment in arrears is a barrier to a community taking part, the project by exception will consider payment or part-payment in advance. Further monitoring to gauge success and impact will be carried out by the applicant according to the agreed plan.