

Call for EOI for Propagation and Translocation of *Luronium natans* and *Potamogetons sp.* as Part of the LUF Montgomery Canal Restoration

Intro

Canal & River Trust, the charity that look after over 2000 miles of canals and rivers, are looking for a Propagator of specialist aquatic species who have the skills and capacity to deliver large scale propagation programmes. The specific aquatic species that we wish to target for propagation are *Luronium natans* and *Potamogetons sp.*, both predominately submergent/floating vegetation.

Please note, this project is subject to statutory approvals. We are working closely with National Resources Wales to ensure these are granted.

Background

Spanning the border between England and Wales, the Montgomery Canal; was built over 200 years ago to connect the rural towns and villages of Montgomeryshire to the booming economy of the Industrial Revolution, through the national canal and rivers network. Over the years, as navigation was replaced by rail and motor transport, its use declined, and the canal fell into disrepair before it was formally closed in 1944.

Faced with the permanent loss of this important economic, cultural and heritage asset, restoration groups, public organisations and volunteers combined forces to reverse the decline. In 1969, works were undertaken to dredge, repair and reinstate the first and most symbolic section of the canal at Welshpool. This provided the impetus for further phases of restoration in subsequent years that have, to date, successfully delivered the restoration of 60% of the 35-mile canal (25 miles in Powys, 10 miles in Shropshire).

In 2016 the Canal & River Trust and Montgomery Canal Partnership agreed a [Strategy](#), focusing on sustainable restoration, to accelerate and complete the remaining disused sections of the canal. This Strategy identified four remaining stages for completion by 2029 (subject to funding).

Thanks to a successful Levelling Up Fund bid, the LUF Montgomery Canal Restoration aims to achieve one of these stages and therefore is an enabling project as part of a wider waterway restoration programme. It is supported by the Montgomery Canal Partnership and delivered in partnership between Powys County Council and the Canal & River Trust. There are five work packages within this project spanning dredging, to the reconfiguration and rebuilding of two bridges and the creation of three offline nature reserves.

All of the Welsh section of the canal is designated SSSI, highly recognised for its populations of rare macrophytes. Individual Species Action Plans (SAPs) exist for both *Luronium natans* and *Potamogeton compressus* and the canal is believed to hold over 90% of the entire UK population of *Potamogeton compressus*. It has the largest population of *L.natans* in the UK too and this is its primary feature for it's SAC designation. Hence the

L.natans and *P. compressus* are vital to achieving the favourable condition of the canal/reserves.

Nature Reserves

In line with the CMS of the site and the SAC and SSSI citations, the project delivery team will create three offline nature reserves to help compensate for the dredging works and the restoration of the canal channel. These new nature reserves, totalling 6 hectares, will have to reach a favourable condition containing those species that have been displaced from the canal.



Photos from a previous *Luronium natans* propagation project on the Rochdale Canal and Brunclough Reservoir in early 2000's. Credit: Nick Birkinshaw.

Timeline of Project

Spring/Summer 2023 – Collect in-situ specimens from identified locations along the Montgomery Canal for propagation purposes

April 2023 – March 2024 – Propagation & maintenance of specimens

March 2024 – Translocation of specimens

Please note, the above timeline is approximate, and we will work with you to agree on a timeline that aligns with other workstreams within the project.

Requirements

- Propagator with skills and capacity to carry out large scale propagation of submergent aquatic species. This includes a suitable facility/location for growing and maintaining the collection till the translocation process commences. We expect to require a minimum of 2000 seed trays.
- The capacity to support the project delivery team on the translocation aspect of the project (expected early 2024)
- Assist the Canal & River Trusts' environmental teams where necessary to develop an effective long term management plan for the site.

Contact Details & Application

If you feel you can meet the above requirements and wish to submit an EOI, please email Kathryn.woodroffe@canalrivertrust.org.uk with the following:

- You/your teams background and experience with macrophyte propagation
- Information on your growing facility, including photos where possible
- Any evidence/supporting documents on past similar projects you have been involved in.

We will then arrange a Teams call to chat about the project with you.

We look forward to hearing from you soon.