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|  | **Pine Martens Bounce Back**  **The Two Moors Pine Marten Project**  **Creative commissions - brief** |  |
|  | Photo: Mark Hamblin/2020VISION  A close up of a logo  Description automatically generated |  |

**Creatives Commissioning Brief**

**1. The Background**

‘*The last word in ignorance is the man who says of an animal or plant: "What good is it?" If the land as a whole is good, then every part is good, whether we understand it or not. Who but a fool would discard seemingly useless parts? To keep every cog and wheel is the first precaution of intelligent tinkering.’* (Aldo Leopold)

Shy, curious and playful. The pine marten is a stealthy, acrobatic hunter that relies on the cover of woods and trees for its foraging missions. It was once a fundamental part of our woodland ecology, but it is now critically endangered in England and Wales and completely extinct on the south west peninsula. As a result, we have lost a beautiful, fascinating wild creature that plays a key role in our woodland natural processes.

The Two Moors Partnership, comprised of both Dartmoor and Exmoor National Park Authorities, the National Trust, Devon Wildlife Trust, the Woodland Trust and, more recently, Somerset Wildlife Trust and Forestry England, was formed to explore the feasibility of bringing back a viable pine marten (*Martes martes)* population to the wooded landscape across Somerset and Devon. *Pine Martens Bounce Back: The Two Moors Pine Marten Project* is the result of this partnership. Over three years the project aims to:

a) Restore a viable pine marten (Martes martes) population on a landscape scale in Somerset and Devon, bringing back a vital component of our woodland ecology across the South West, restoring a natural process and driving activities which support more resilient woodlands.

b) Inspire and support diverse audiences to become Pine Marten Pioneers, and participate in activities which bring pine martens back, restore woodlands, and which grow conservation skills, capacity and leadership.

The project is about:

* Bringing back a missing link in our woodland ecology and creating another centre from which these charismatic creatures can spread out and join up with other populations, helping us to create better protected and connected woodlands and engage new audiences in conservation work.
* Helping people to understand why pine martens are so important to ensuring the survival of the woodlands that many people love, helping them understand how fascinating and inspirational woodland ecology actually is and to feel able/empowered to take a range of actions to bring back lost wildlife and help our woodlands – proving it can be done.
* Opening new and different doors/pathways to practical and science-based learning to audiences who may think that science (or learning/education) is not for them, that nature conservation is only something experts can do, who may have a patchy education or work background, who have struggled to engage with learning in the past.
* Opening up our organisations to new ways of working which involve different audiences and different leadership and working models – building training, skills, enthusiasm within the staff team to work with new audiences and in new areas.

The heritage focus of this project is on bringing back something that we have lost where species reintroduction becomes the key driver for wider habitat restoration and a rebalanced ecosystem, but at its heart, the project is all about people – how people can become ready to co-exist with a new species and how pine marten impacts and human activity are managed in one shared landscape. And what bringing back what is lost can do for our optimism and our ability to affect transformational change when faced with environmental challenges that can often seem, and feel, overwhelming.

**2. Calling Local Artists and Creatives!**

You are invited to be part of a transformational change, and to ignite the spirit of nature and heritage in the hearts of those who experience your creations.

At its heart, this project is about **people** and how we can get ready to coexist with a new species, and to explore the profound impact that the return of pine martens can have on our landscapes, our communities, and our collective optimism.

We're in search of imaginative artists, crafters, makers, practitioners, and performers who share our devotion to nature and heritage, and who are passionate about making a positive impact on their communities. Your creativity will serve as the tool to depict the narrative of **rediscovering what is lost**, the melody that resonates with the **edge of preservation**, and the skill that forges a **bond with woodlands**. Through your artistic expression, we'll unveil the stories of **species loss and recovery** and delve into - **What else have we lost? And how can we revive it?**

We’re seeking proposals which will captivate, inspire and engage people in the project interpretation themes which are:

* *‘If you go down in the woods today…*': audiences are encouraged to connect with woodlands and learn why they are special, and the role pine martens play in the amazing woodland community.
* *'Pine Martens ~~Were~~ Are Here'*: responses to the theme of species loss and recovery. What else have we lost? How do we bring it back? We can bring them back!
* *Visible Martens* - the mysterious (but wonderful) life of Pine Martens: bringing pine martens to people and making their mysterious lives, and their travels, tangible and visible.

**The process:**

We’ll be commissioning projects in the Two Moors Areas (Dartmoor and Exmoor)

Please complete and submit your proposal by: Sunday 22nd September.

Shortlisted proposals will be announced by: 4tht October 2024

Proposals will be considered by a panel of people which will include representation from Devon Wildlife Trust, partner organisations and members of the project’s stakeholder, youth and volunteer forums. It will not include organisations or people who may wish to apply.

Successful commissions will be contracted via Devon Wildlife Trust that will follow National Lottery Heritage Fund rules and guidance.

**Locations:**

Please indicate in your proposal if your idea is site based (for example it may be suitable for outdoors in woodlands) or exhibition (in a gallery or indoor public space). If you have a particular space or place in mind, please be specific as this will help us consider the viability of the project.

Please bear in mind that the hub communities that we will focus our activities in are: Ashburton/Buckfastleigh, Bovey Tracey, Moretonhampstead, Dulverton, Minehead and Porlock.

**Budget:**

The suggested budget range is between 300-£2,000 so can be tailored to suit individual projects. Please submit a detailed budget. This must include artist costs, materials, transportation (if required). Contact us if you’re considering applying for a grant to achieve a bigger project.

**Concept and criteria:**

Ideas that capture all or most of these aspects will be favoured:

Themes – capture at least one of the themes in your idea

Audience experience – your idea must demonstrate how it will help raise awareness of the pine marten project, particularly amongst audiences who are new to nature, and how it will inspire and create stronger community engagement with the project. Projects that are community led, participatory and interactive will be prioritised, as well as thoughtful design that considers diversity of the audience – creating inclusive and accessible experiences that can engage a broader and more representative audience.

Practical -

* Technical requirements for realisation of the work/project
* Alignment with other projects and activity
* Installation and spatial requirements
* Previous experience, particularly with wildlife-themed projects
* Realistic budget and considerations
* Proposals from/near and that include hub locations will be prioritised\*

**Commission Management and Monitoring**

Commissions will be managed by the Wilder Communities Team Leader. Activity coordination will be through the project Exmoor and Dartmoor Engagement Officers.

Those who are commissioned will be expected to find creative ways of capturing responses to and engagement with the activity in line with the project monitoring plan and for sharing that with the Project Lead.

We will also expect you to provide a plan for delivery within one month of being commissioned, which will be reviewed by the Wilder Communities Team Leader.

**Pine Martens Bounce Back: The Two Moors Pine Project is made possible with support from The National Lottery Heritage Fund and with thanks to the National Lottery players. This project aims to restore healthy populations of pine martens to the South West of England.**

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