



Carmarthenshire Bogs Project

Exploring their past, celebrating their present and conserving their future

Introduction

The Carmarthenshire Bogs Project funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund is working on a project on key bog habitats in the county that seeks to explore the history of our bogs, celebrate the special bog habitats and species, and take action to conserve these important habitats for the future.

The benefits of restoring these bogs?

- They are home to a wonderful mix of specialist and rare plants and animals
- Welsh peat bogs provide a unique historical environmental record since the last ice age
- They store water like a sponge and help reduce flooding.
- Healthy bogs store carbon from the atmosphere; damaged ones release it (contributing to climate change).

Why bogs need our help

- Lowland raised bog is one of western Europe's rarest and most threatened habitats.
- Around 94% of this unique habitat has been destroyed or damaged in the UK.
- 800 ha of the lowland bogs that remains is within Wales.
- Much of it needs restoration to bring it back to its natural state.



Cranberries

What are Lowland Raised Peat Bogs?

- They have formed since the last ice age, in shallow basins that have poor drainage (often with a clay base), where water-logged conditions have slowed the decay of plants and limited the types of plants that can grow there. Over thousands of years the partially rotted plants, mainly sphagnum mosses, have developed into peat and built up into a dome that is higher than the surrounding land – hence the name 'raised'.
- Now often isolated by surrounding agricultural land. The peat bogs within Carmarthenshire can be up to 9 m deep - holding a huge amount of peat, the water within it and the carbon that has been locked up by the plants over the years.

L-R

- Evening walk on bog
- Peat core
- Green hairstreak butterfly
- Sphagnum moss



What are we doing?

Restoration

- blocking ditches to keep the bogs wet
- treating invasive Japanese knotweed
- removing fly tipping
- cutting firebreaks

Research

- analysing a peat core to reveal the history of our local environment by looking at:
 - pollen grains and plant remains
 - charcoal fragments to study ancient burning of sites
 - heavy metals to reveal recent industrial history

Engagement

- taking local schools to discover the bogs
- creating a web page where the results of the project can be seen
- holding public events so people can discover the wonders of bogs
- working with tourism providers to see how the local bog sites can be used by visitors

Did you know?

- ➡ In favourable conditions peat grows at a rate of approximately 1 mm per year so it would take 1000 years to grow 1 m.
- ➡ Healthy peat bogs consist of about 95% water (by weight), the rest is made up of bog plants especially sphagnum moss.
- ➡ Bogs are one of the few ancient landscapes that still look almost exactly the same as they did thousands of years ago. They are a link to our past.
- ➡ Agriculture and forestry have damaged large areas of peatland. Commercial peat extraction to supply gardeners and nursery growers is a major threat in some areas. Gardeners have not always used peat - its use on a large scale started only in the late 1950s.
- ➡ Peatlands cover less than 3% of the land surface of Earth in total, but are thought to contain twice as much carbon as the world's forests. Maintaining and conserving peatland in Wales is a Welsh Government priority.



What can I do to help?

Most importantly, buy peat-free compost for your garden or make your own compost. When buying plants from garden centres ask to see if they supply plants grown in peat-free compost – if not why not!?



For more information about the Carmarthenshire Bogs Project and see the bogs the project is focused on visit: www.carmarthenshire.gov.wales/biodiversity

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This leaflet is available in Welsh