

WHV - The Flow Country World Heritage Site Project

Flow Country, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland

Natural site inscribed on the Tentative List since 2012

12/08/2019–23/08/2019



'The Flow Country' is an area of deep peat, dotted with bog pools, that forms the heart of the Caithness and Sutherland peatlands. Covering about 200,000 hectares, it is more than twice the size of Orkney. Altogether, this corner of Scotland holds more than 400,000 hectares of blanket bog, making it the largest expanse of this remarkable, wild habitat in Europe. Blanket bog only forms in cool places with plenty of rain. The few plants that can grow here don't rot away, but build up to form deep layers of peat. The Flow Country's bogs have been growing for over 10,000 years, ever since the glaciers melted away at the end of the last Ice Age, and the peat is now up to 10 metres deep.

Project objectives:

The project will give a diverse mix in national and international young volunteers the opportunity to develop new skills, learn about the value of World Heritage and meet like-minded people from different cultures and backgrounds. It will help to raise awareness of the value of peatlands as an ecosystem, as well as being vital in the fight against climate change. Volunteers will learn how and why peatlands are being re-wetted in the north of Scotland, as well as why this is starting to happen all around the world. The techniques involved in re-wetting a bog require teamwork skills and the ability to consider the long-term implications of one's actions; these are skills which certainly improve employability. While on-site, volunteers will also gain an appreciation of the scale, beauty and importance of The Flow Country as a world-class peatland ecosystem.

Project Activities:

The restoration of The Flow Country involves many different stages, with the ultimate goal of re-wetting areas which have been drained, planted on or otherwise damaged. The volunteers will concern themselves chiefly with drain-blocking and monitoring the health of the bog. The RSPB has an experienced restoration team who will be able to expertly train and monitor volunteers as they learn these fascinating and important skills. In addition, the volunteers will contribute to the educational element of this project, whereby they will work in groups to consider World Heritage Sites around the world and then draw comparisons to The Flow Country, before presenting their findings to their peers and a panel of judges formed from The Flow Country World Heritage Site Working Group.

Partners: The Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB).

The Flow Country World Heritage Site Project

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