

Blanket bog discovery day

A Mountaineering Ireland Club Environmental Officer Workshop

Bluestacks - Saturday 8th April 2017

The overall aim of the day is to provide Environmental Officers with an introduction to the blanket bog habitat found on many of Ireland's mountains (the formation, flora and fauna and uses of blanket bogs) and to brief participants on Mountaineering Ireland's current work on access and conservation matters. The workshop will be delivered in conjunction with the Irish Peatland Conservation Council (IPCC). The IPCC is a charity which aims to conserve a representative sample of Irish bogs for future generations to enjoy. The day will start in the Bluestack Centre (www.donegalbluestacks.ie), from where we will car-pool to and from the Liffey Head bog area.

PROGRAMME

Indoor Session (9.30 – 11.00am), Bluestack Centre (for location information see: www.donegalbluestacks.ie, accommodation available – see 'Notes for participants').

- Tea, coffee and scones on arrival
- Introduction to the day, overview of Mountaineering Ireland's current work on access and conservation, including Mountaineering Ireland's vision for the future of Ireland's mountains and upland areas (Helen Lawless, Mountaineering Ireland).
- Information talk on the work of the Irish Peatland Conservation Council, blanket bog habitat and the IPCC's new Citizen Science Blanket Bog Survey (Nuala Madigan, IPCC)

Field Trip (11.15am – 4.30pm) with Nuala Madigan & Helen Lawless

This workshop will continue outdoors in the Bluestacks, a range well known for its wild blend of rock and bog, and also for the 65km Bluestack Way. We'll use a section of the Bluestack Way to get up onto the hills where we will explore the blanket habitat, looking at the variety of peatland plants and possibly taking time to discover some wetland invertebrates by doing a pond dipping session. During the day we will encounter a variety of upland habitats, such as heathland, grassland and eroding blanket bog; we will discuss the value of blanket bog habitat for all the people of Ireland and the possibilities for bog restoration in the uplands.

Participants will be encouraged to contribute to the discussions and share their own ideas about how their club members could take action to help protect Ireland's mountains, including our blanket bogs. Participants will be provided with sample surveys that they can complete and submit to the

Irish Peatland Conservation Council to assist with the IPCC's citizen science project by reporting their views on the state of blanket bog habitat throughout Ireland.

At the end of the field trip the group will return to the Bluestack Centre for a very brief wrap with the aim of finishing by 5.00pm.

Nuala Madigan

Nuala Madigan is the Environmental Education Officer with the Irish Peatland Conservation Council and for the past eleven years has facilitated workshops with schools and community groups throughout the island of Ireland. Nuala is passionate about Irish peatlands accepting that they have been a source of fuel for this country but believes with so many alternatives available today it is time to celebrate and highlight the hidden values of Irish peatlands including their carbon storage and water holding capacity as well as the unique flora and fauna of these habitats.

BOOKING

This workshop is free of charge, to book a place email helen@mountaineering.ie or phone 086 8046687 or 01 6251103. Preference will be given to Environmental Officers from clubs in the north west. As we want as many clubs as possible to benefit from this opportunity, places will initially be limited to one per club. Second preference will be given to other representatives of clubs from the north west, Mountaineering Ireland representatives on other organisations and Mountaineering Ireland training providers.

NOTES FOR PARTICIPANTS

- As we will be outdoors for much of the day, and crossing some rough and boggy terrain, participants should have full hillwalking gear, including suitable footwear, raingear, a packed lunch and something to drink.
- Camera, binoculars, a notebook and field guides (if you have them) will all be useful.
- Plans for the field trip may be adjusted on the day depending on weather conditions or the needs and interests of the group.
- To minimise environmental impact and enable all participants to hear what is said while we're outdoors, this workshop is limited to a total of 15 participants.
- Dormitory accommodation is available in the Bluestack Centre Hostel for the night before and the night after this event at a reduced rate of €15 per night. To book accommodation please phone the centre on 074 9735564.