



Is it Time for a Peatlands World Heritage Site?



Background



- 1988 – IUCN + The Nature Conservancy Council identify The Flow Country as a potential WHS.
- 1999 – The Flow Country included on the UK’s Tentative List.
- 2013 + 2015 – The Peatlands Partnership submit Technical Evaluations.
- 2017 – The Peatlands Partnership establishes The Flow Country WHS Working Group.



What is a World Heritage Site?

- Places on Earth that are of outstanding universal value to humanity.
- Belong to all the peoples of the world, irrespective of where they are.
- Protect and celebrate for future generations.



How does a Bog become a World Heritage Site?

Stage 1: Convince the UK Government that The Flow Country is the best candidate on the Tentative List.

Stage 2: Prove to UNESCO that The Flow Country has outstanding universal value.



How might The Flow Country Qualify?

Criterion (ix)... outstanding examples representing significant on-going ecological and biological processes in the evolution and development of terrestrial, freshwater... ecosystems and communities of plants and animals

“The quality and extent of its blanket bog habitat, including its unique species assemblage of plants and birds”



How Might The Flow Country Qualify?

Criterion (x) contain the most important and significant natural habitats for in-situ conservation of biological diversity, including those containing threatened species of outstanding universal value from the point of view of science or conservation

“Blanket bog is a globally rare type of peatland... The proposed Flow Country WHS represents one of the largest, and most intact areas of blanket bog in the world”



What would The Flow Country bring to the World Heritage Site list?



- 32 sites in the UK
- Only 4 are natural (13%)
- Only 6 in Scotland (19%)

- 1,121 sites in total
- 213 are natural (19%)
- 0 are peatlands (0%)

- Carbon storage
- Cultural heritage of the North Highlands

What are the Benefits?

- ❑ Eco and heritage tourism
- ❑ Educational activities
- ❑ Raise awareness of peatlands
- ❑ Encourage slow tourism
- ❑ Spread economic benefits
- ❑ The #1 heritage accolade
- ❑ Potential to increase funding
- ❑ Join a global community
- ❑ Protect and promote heritage



Volunteering at Durham Cathedral

- Good work experience/ learn new skills
- Community spirit/ socialising
- Connection to local heritage



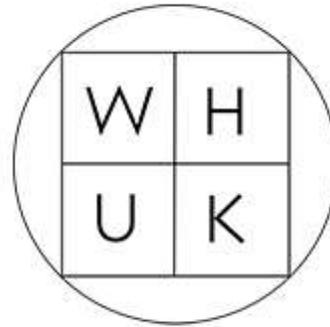
Jurassic Coast Ice Cream

- Partnership between Purbeck Ice Cream and the Jurassic Coast Trust.
 - ▣ 5p of every tub goes to the Trust
- Purbeck Ice Cream are now a “lead business partner” (contribute at least £3k per year)
 - ▣ Advertised on the Jurassic Coast website
- Funds are used “to preserve the scenery and heritage” of The World Heritage Site.



World Heritage UK

- Networking, advocacy and promotion for the UK's World Heritage Sites and Tentative list sites.
- Annual Conference, Technical Workshops, Networking meetings and World Heritage Chairs meetings.



World Heritage UK



England's World Heritage Story – The North

- A tour of England's six northern WHSs
- Encouraging people to explore beyond the “honeypot” sites



HOME

THE SITES

ITINERARIES

ACCOMMODATION

MORE ATTRACTIONS

BUYER'S GUIDE

CONTACTS



Potential Challenges

- Breaking new ground
- Creating a boundary
- Huge variety of land use
- Communicating the value of peatlands
- Spreading the word in rural communities
- Working with “OUV”



Benefits of the Process

- Raising awareness
- UNESCO Volunteers Programme
- Local and national media coverage
- Oral and local history
- School talks
- Community Engagement
- Gaining political support
- Encouraging important conversations about land use



World Heritage Volunteers



- A group of young volunteers from 6 different European countries
- Meeting like-minded people and sharing a passion for nature and heritage
- Giving us new perspectives in their feedback



The past year

Community Consultation

- 15 drop-in events across Caithness and Sutherland
- Big events in Lairg, Thurso and Inverness
- Online consultation
- Feedback forms at Edinburgh Botanical Gardens
- Community Council meetings + much more!

Technical Evaluation

- Developing a draft boundary
- Bringing in planning and World Heritage expertise
- Liaising with UK Government and advisory agencies

Out and About



Edinburgh Botanical
Gardens – August 2019



Wick drop-in session, May
2019



Full Flow Event in Inverness,
July 2019



Mairi Gougeon MSP, Gail
Ross MSP, Frances Gunn



Sutherland Show, July 2019



Volunteering on a croft,
February 2019

What happens next?

- Community consultation report
- Technical Evaluation submission

Then, hopefully...

- Confirmation of The Flow Country as the UK's next World Heritage Site candidate
- Full nomination to UNESCO (alongside much more consultation!)



The Flow Country – A Future World Heritage Site?

