

"The importance of our Peat Bogs" Competition Guidelines

Instructions for Teachers:

1. The pupils are asked to draw a poster highlighting why it is important to look after our **peat bogs** and what we can all do to help.
2. Competition is open to all KS2 pupils with a category for Special Needs Schools.
3. Prizes for each primary school year group P5, P6 and P7 and for the Special Needs Schools category (all ages groups).
 - a) First prize - £200 donation for the winning school in each category/ with a "goody bag" for winning pupil.
 - b) Second prize - £100 donation for the winning school in each category/ with a "goody bag" for winning pupil.
 - c) Third prize - £50 donation for the winning school in each category/ with a "goody bag" for winning pupil.
3. Posters **MUST** be A3 size and can be drawn by hand or ICT.
5. Each poster **MUST** have the pupils name and class clearly written on the back of the poster alongside the schools name and address. **Unfortunately, any posters, which do not include this information, clearly will be disqualified.**

NI Water lawfully and securely processes the personal information you enter on the posters, under your and our legitimate interests and more information on how the Company processes personal information is available on our online Privacy Notice
6. Entries should reach NI Water by 5pm Friday 13th May 2022.

7. Entries must be sent to NI Water, Schools Competition, Education Office,
Westland House, Old Westland Road, Belfast, BT14 6TE.
8. NI Water is not responsible for any entries lost in transit. Entries will not be returned.
9. Winning schools will be notified of the results in May 2022.
10. Current guidelines permitting prizes will be distributed at an Award Ceremony at
NI Waters Wastewater Heritage Centre, Duncrue Street, Belfast the week
commencing 6th June 2022.
11. Winners will be required (seeking consent where appropriate) to participate in
publicity surrounding the competition. You can read more about how NIW
lawfully processes personal information on our online [Privacy Notice](#)
12. We may wish to reproduce the winning submissions for promotional materials or
publicity purposes.

The importance of our Peat Bogs

Inspiration for Teachers

Why not book a classroom visits covering the importance of our peat bogs alongside our NI Water catchment officers who have expert knowledge of how special our peat bogs are? To arrange a visit contact anna.killen@niwater.com

Background Information

What are peat bogs?

Bogs are very wet areas of land without trees. They consist of soft spongy ground consisting mainly of partially decayed plant matter called peat.

Bogs take thousands of years to develop – plants decay slowly in bogs and create soggy soil which eventually forms peat.

Peat is a fossil fuel, and many bogs are drained to collect the peat for people to burn for heat.

Bogs are delicate and fragile ecosystems and once they start to dry out this can cause lots of problems.

Northern Ireland

12% of Northern Ireland is covered in peat bog but much of this is in poor condition.

NI Water owns around 3000 hectares of peatlands and working hard to protect and restore bogs that are in poor condition.

Garron Plateau in North Antrim is the largest blanket bog in Northern Ireland.

Why are peat bogs important?

1. Peat bogs store carbon – if peat is removed and burnt it releases a large amount of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere adding to global warming.
2. Peat bogs cover just over 3% of the world's land but store twice as much carbon as all the trees combined.
3. The better condition the peat bogs are in the more carbon they can remove and store in the peat. They can take in carbon from the atmosphere through the plants and mosses growing there but if in bad condition (dried out) they release more carbon than they store as the moss layer is lost and the peat starts to give off carbon.
4. Healthy peat bogs can play a key role in tackling climate change by preventing the escape of carbon.
5. Bogs absorb large amounts of rain especially through the Sphagnum moss which grows there and can prevent flooding.
6. Bogs can help our drinking water by helping to slow the flow of water to nearby reservoirs – if bogs are in poor condition more particles of peat enter the reservoir and it is harder to clean the water at the Water Treatment Works.
7. Biodiversity- Sphagnum moss is the most common bog plant, but reeds, sedges and heathers also grow here. Some bogs are good for cranberries, blueberries and huckleberries.
8. Bogs attract lots of insects which also attract amphibians such as frogs, salamanders and newts.
9. Bogs don't have many nutrients for plants to grow so carnivorous plants that get nutrients from insect prey are common- sundews and pitcher plants trap insects.

How can we protect peat bogs?

Keep the bogs wet- looking after the bogs by blocking drains, preventing animals grazing and limiting peat cutting can help keep the bogs damp and waterlogged ensuring the plants and animals that live there stay happy and healthy!

The below videos offer some great follow up information on peat bogs across the UK, Ireland and our NI Water work at Garron Bog.

<https://www.niwater.com/garron-plateau-bog-restoration-project/>

[Lowland peat bogs animation - YouTube](#)

[Chapter 1 - What is a Bog and Why Should We Conserve it? - YouTube](#)

[Chapter 2 - Threats to the Bog and Project Actions - YouTube](#)