

Boglands of Ireland – the future in our hands

A talk by Marcus Collier: Prince of Wales Hotel, Church Street, Athlone, Thursday 23rd June, 8pm.

Ireland's peat bogs are highly unique landscapes. They feature throughout Irish history, art, music and folklore, and they appear to be ever present, never ending. They inspire poets and attract visitors. They are a repository of historical and archaeological information and are places of unique flora and fauna. Throughout the world humans have been using peat for many centuries. In Ireland this ensured survival. Hand cutting of turf has yielded to machine cutting, and over time the industrial use of peat has built communities, supported households and supplied electricity to the nation. But it has come at an environmental cost, and since Ireland is a heavy user of these rare landscapes there is ever increasing pressure to conserve the last remaining examples. While some see this as our duty to the rest of the world, others see this as a threat to communities and traditions. It is only when such conflicts arise that we realise how little is understood about the bogs.

To address these issues, UCD recently completed a four year study – the BOGLAND research project (2006-2010). The project looked at all aspects of Ireland's bogs, including how people view bogs and their thoughts on the future of these landscapes. This presentation will look at some of the results of the project. We will show that Irish people have a strong association with bogs, and that many people who live and work on the bogs are keenly aware of the future possibilities of these landscapes. Communities desire to take an active role in conserving existing bogs, restoring damaged bogs and, for those that are beyond repair, devising novel uses for abandoned industrial bogs. So, while the hand cutting of turf is largely behind us, the future use of bogs is still in our hands.



The Environmental Research Seminar Series

The UCD Environmental Research Seminar Series discusses the results of recent research conducted at University College Dublin. The objective is not simply to present research, but to obtain the comments and opinion of the audience with a view to informing future policy. Draft policy documents will be circulated to anybody who wishes to be kept informed.

The series is funded by the Irish Research Council on the Humanities and Social Sciences. The objective is to communicate the results of applied academic research back to the people and communities who assisted with the work or who were the subject of the research. The particular focus is on contested environmental policy issues.

Talks will be held across the country. Other presentations in the series will address such topics as rural quality of life, rural planning and rural housing, sustainable transport, farm household innovation and environmental pollution and flood risk. Each will be accompanied by a policy document.

The project is being coordinated by Dr. Eoin O'Neill (UCD Geography, Planning & Environmental Policy) and Dr. Finbarr Brereton (UCD Urban Institute Ireland).



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