



Final report 2022



The all-5-senses educational program about peatlands
Designed for youth by youth



Audio from Kate Flood's tour of Girley Bog, voices are students from Carnaross NS

Why should young people learn about peatlands?



Peatlands (otherwise known as "bogs" or "fens") are an important ecosystem for carbon storage, biodiversity, clean water, flood protection and cultural heritage.

Peat soils cover approximately 21% of Ireland, making it one of the most peat-rich countries in Europe.

Sadly, many peatlands across the world are degraded or threatened, meaning many of these qualities are reversed.

The Bog Academy programme was created to inspire young people between the ages of 7-12 about the multiple and largely under-appreciated wonders of the peatland ecosystem.

As a youth-led collective, we view young people as a major stakeholder when it comes to climate, ecological, and social justice issues, seeing them as leading drivers for positive transformation in the present and for the future.

That being said, restoring and safeguarding our peatlands is, and will be, an inter-generational task that will require everyone.



About the programme

The Bog Academy programme takes an 5-senses approach. It encourages children to experience peatland ecosystems in a non-conventional and tangible way. Through this in-depth exploration of peatlands, the program also allows them to develop ideas about life, space, time, local heritage, and culture.

Rather than a grading system or other quantitative forms of testing, the in-class activities require the students capture and distil the knowledge in a creative outputs. While the field trip is all about learning through doing and exploring.





We geared much of the program content to locally relevant cultural references and stories, which helped to demonstrate the place-based and historic connection that the children have with the peatlands around their school.

The programme is divided into three different courses that are adjusted to the range of knowledge levels between the young people and have different themes, namely Life, Space & Time.

'Life' class

Schools that took part



1. Knocktemple National School
2. Eyrecourt NS
3. St. Kilian's German School
4. Loreto Primary School
5. Cloughjordan
6. Cannistown School
7. Carnaross NS

Total number of pupils: 379

Age Range: 7-12

Peatlands visited

Special thanks to the local bog tour guides:

Kate Flood - Girley Bog

Ray Stapleton - Lullymoor Bog

Gearoid Ofoighil - Schohaboy Bog

Bernie Henry - Clara bog

Schohaboy Bog

Clara Bog

Girley Bog

Lullymoor Bog





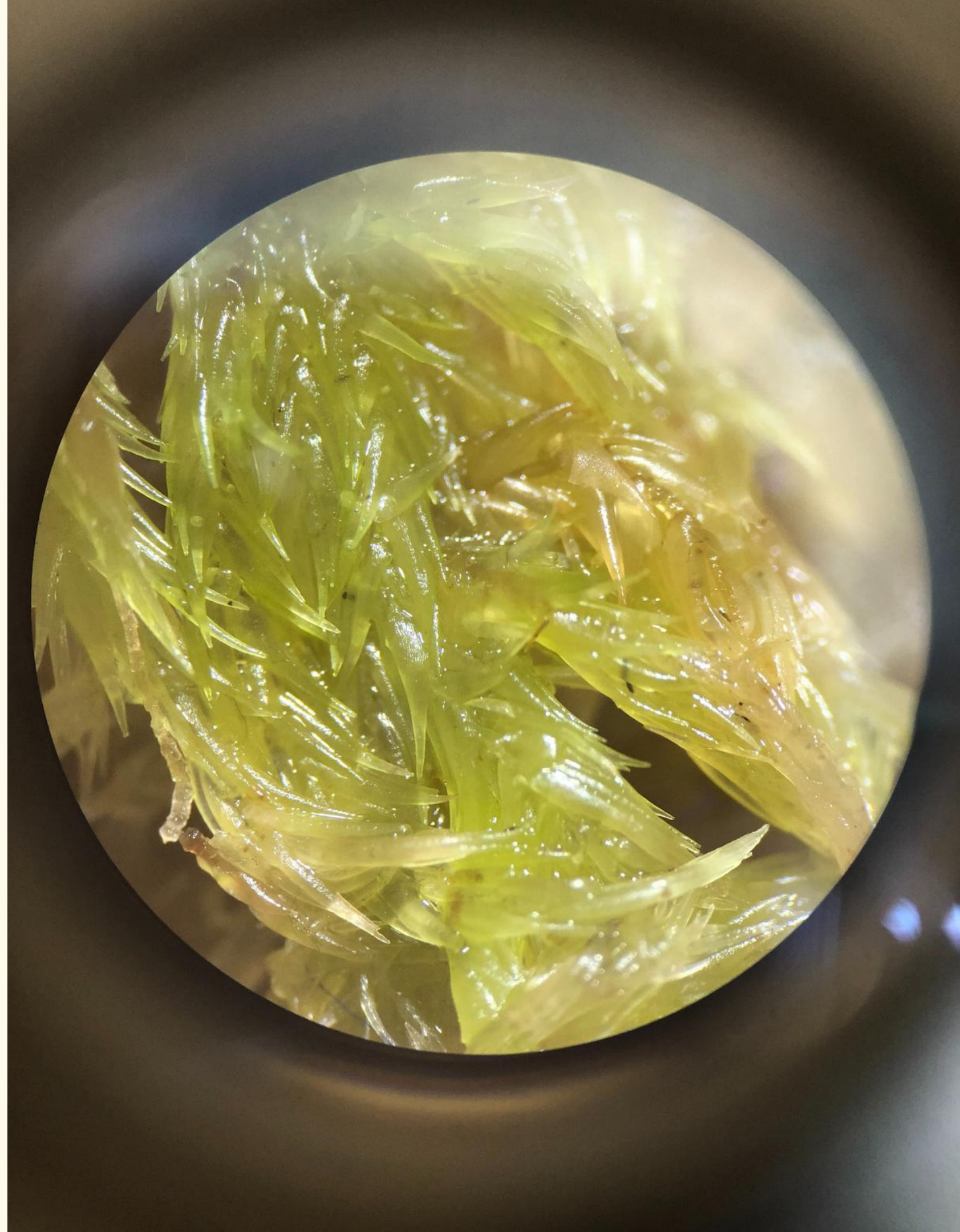
Teachers Workbooks

The teacher workbooks are compiled so that the school teachers could easily implement the programme during their normal lesson time. Included in the teacher workbooks are the specific learning objectives of the lesson, instructions for use, lesson plans and all other relevant information that was needed for that particular course.

We made sure that the teacher workbooks were as accessible as possible without requiring prior-knowledge of peatlands and considering teachers high workloads.

Bog-in-a-Box

Contained within the three boxes (Life, Time, Space) were a number of different learning resources, including worksheets, hand-made instructions and ingredients for a pre-tested “bog potion”, sphagnum moss experiment set, personalised bog diplomas, big fold-out map of the bogs of Ireland, miniature bottles containing bog perfume and more.



Feedback and learnings

Overall we received positive feedback from the bog tour-guides and teaching staff. It was noted that the students got a lot out of the in-class activities and learnt a lot about the topic of peatlands. They especially enjoyed the opportunity for outdoor and more hands-on learning.

One of the biggest challenges that we faced throughout this iteration of the programme was maintaining a clear line of communication with all parties to make sure to have everything ready before the end of the year. In terms of the content, we received the feedback that some exercises could be adjusted to make them more age-appropriate. This is something to be revised going forward.

As a result, we have created an adjusted workflow for next year with a more clearly defined milestones and feedback integration.

"The idea of visiting the bogs is excellent and it gave children access to a local amenity they may not have visited otherwise"

-Teacher from Cloughjordan

The shoot went well yesterday and the trip was great, the kids really enjoyed it.

- Videographer Phillip Walsh

Conclusion

Bog Academy team was pleased to see a high interest from schools around Ireland who signed up to be part of the programme. This demonstrated a clear desire from primary schools to have the topic of peatlands featured as part of the school curriculum.

In addition to last year, we were glad to have the opportunity to include bog field-trips as part of the programme. Through organising these field trips we got the chance to work with local tour-guides. These peatland experts had valuable experiences and stories to tell, enriching the learning for the students.





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Visuals - Phillip Walsh, Philm Productions



**An Roinn Cultúir,
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