

## Highfield Moss Volunteering

### Lowton, Warrington

Costain Ltd & The Wildlife Trust

*BIG Challenge 2015 submission category: Small scale permanent*

#### Project overview

Highfield Moss is one of Greater Manchester's most important bog sites and has been designated a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) reflecting its national importance.

It is home to a wide range of bog (Sphagnum) mosses, bog plants and dragonflies, as well as being the largest site in the North West for the rare Marsh Gentian.

Bogs need to be kept wet and whilst part of the site is in good condition the rest of the site has dried out due to two drainage ditches running through the site.

Seven Costain staff helped the Wildlife Trust create 4 peat dams to block the drainage ditches to help retain more water on this rare site and restore natural conditions.

This is a rural setting and was carried out as part of Costain's Wildlife Week to help raise awareness of biodiversity. The only cost was staff time away from work.

#### What were the biodiversity conditions on site, prior to the enhancement?

It is home to a wide range of bog (Sphagnum) mosses, bog plants and dragonflies and rare Marsh Gentian.

Part of the site is in good condition however the rest of the site has dried out due to two drainage ditches running through the site.

#### Were there any specific conditions that led to you carrying out this work?

Costain held a wildlife week to help raise awareness of biodiversity issues and where possible enhance biodiversity on our projects and within our offices.

The Manchester office decided to help the Wildlife Trust and the local population of Lowton restore their bog to its natural conditions.

#### What were the biodiversity measures taken?

This project was replicable and can help restore peat bogs to their natural conditions if they have dried out due to poor land management.

I believe the Wildlife Trust have more peat dams to build to further increase the

amount of water held within the bog.

If the peat dams work and retain more water which it is believed they will do due to the successful building of other dams then there should be an increase in bog mosses, plants, Marsh Gentian and dragonflies.

Costain employees and a representative of the Wildlife Trust took time away from work to help restore this important landscape.

The Wildlife Trust works with the local community. The original material dug to create the ditches was used to create the dams and therefore no new material was sourced and no waste was created.

#### How would you best describe the project?

An enhancement.

#### Further information

The ditches have to be spaced out to ensure maximum effectiveness.

This calculation was done by the Wildlife Trust. The team was split into two groups. One group cut a section of both sides of the

bank away within the ditch to make sure that the peat could be placed in a way to prevent wash out.

The second group cut squares of peat from the original drainage ditch material. These squares were then placed within the ditch and compacted to create a dam.

Finally a piece of corrugated plastic was placed in the middle of the dam to increase the strength.

**What was your personal motivation for carrying out the enhancement?**

I've always wanted to volunteer for something that is important to me and Wildlife Week gave me that opportunity with the added benefit of working with my colleagues.

The task was difficult but enjoyable all the same as I got to know them better and we ended up having fun!

## Costain Wildlife Week – What we did!

Costain Wildlife Week is our second environmental campaign of the year and it ended last week.

It focussed on raising awareness and improving management of biodiversity on our projects and within our offices. Various activities were organised and lots of people got involved across the business.

### **Manchester Office carried out a volunteering day at Highfield Moss!**

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Seven staff helped create 4 peat dams to block the drainage ditches to help retain more water on this rare site and restore natural conditions.

