

Information Sheet for Invasive Species Clearance on Winter Hill

Saturday 27th and Wednesday 8th December

Why it's worthwhile:

Winter Hill is the large peatland moor north of Bolton. Ravaged by a moorland fire in 2018, the burnt peat is now being colonised by rhododendrons. Although attractive to look at, rhododendrons are an invasive species, which outcompete all native plants, so nothing grows underneath, reducing biodiversity. With heavy rain the bare peat underneath washes away, adding to erosion, reducing quality of drinking water and increasing flood risk. We want to keep the peat on the hill where it stores huge amounts of carbon.

Removing rhododendrons will benefit nature, reduce flood risk, improve our water quality and help fight climate change.

When:

Join us in this invasive species clearance project on:

Saturday 27th November and/or Wednesday 8th December.

You don't need to attend both days!

Meeting point and start time

About 1km SE of Belmont, meet at small parking area through farm gates off the south side of the main road A675 (Grid reference SD680153), next to public footpath, at 9.45am for 10.00am start. There are no facilities at the start point. We aim to be finished by 3.00pm.

What will the work involve?

We will walk a short distance, about 1km to the work area. Spending around 4 to 5 hours, working as part of a small team, we will remove the smaller rhododendron plants from an area of about one square kilometre on the north eastern slopes of Winter Hill (circa SD674148). Under guidance from United Utilities, the landowner, and Natural England we will dispose of the plants initially by gathering into heaps, for later removal.

What to bring

Participants will be expected to wear or carry weather resistant clothing (including gloves and headwear) suitable for the conditions prevailing on the day which may be cold, wet and windy (meaning warm clothing and waterproofs). Footwear should be warm solid boots with grippy soles. The distance to walk is short, and the moor may be wet, so good comfortable Wellington boots with warm socks is a valid option. Carry sufficient food and fluid (a thermos with hot drink is good at this time of year) for a full-day hill walk. There will not be any opportunities to buy refreshments during the day so bring everything you want with you.

The event is planned to finish well within the hours of available daylight, but daylight hours at this time of year are short so participants **must** bring a small torch/head torch in case an emergency results in a very severe delay to the event.

During the pandemic sharing of food and equipment between party members is strongly discouraged (as doing so can lead to virus transmission) so we ask you to bring hand sanitiser for your own use (those with at least 70% alcohol are currently favoured), and an individual first aid kit (a few plasters and antiseptic wipes to allow self-application). The leader will have an emergency survival shelter. Feel free to bring your own survival shelter if this is in your rucksack anyway!. In addition please bring a face mask or face covering (a buff will do as a minimum), just in case. While we do not intend that participants wear such coverings during the day, should an emergency occur then you will have a face covering available to use as an additional precaution.

For the plant removal work please bring gardening gloves, secateurs and garden fork if you have them. If not, don't worry, these can be supplied! However please do bring if you can, to make things easier to organise.

Who can come

This walk is open to BMC members and accompanying friends, over 18.
All participants must book a place in advance. No dogs.

How do I join in?

You must register, stating which day(s) you wish to attend with the event, together with full name, email address, mobile phone number and whether you have your own gardening gloves, secateurs and garden fork, to organiser Steve Charles on stevecharles25@gmail.com ASAP. Numbers are limited.

You MUST NOT attend this walk if:

- **you have any of the recognised key symptoms of Covid-19 (a high temperature / a new, continuous cough / a loss or change of your sense of smell or taste),**
- **you have been diagnosed with Covid-19 recently or have reason to suspect that you are presently suffering from Covid-19,**
- **you are required to self-isolate.**

You MUST let us know you are coming

As part of the conditions for allowing an event such as this to take place during the pandemic it is a BMC requirement that we have the names (and a contact telephone number) for all participants in advance. If you have not already supplied these then please send to Steve Charles via stevecharles25@gmail.com straight away. These details will be held securely for 21 days after the event and will be given to NHS or local authority track and trace services should we be required to do so.

BMC approval for this event has been requested

SJC 26.10.21