

## **Proposal for Island conservation day 27.1.2011**

Boggart Hole Clough Community Action Trust (**BHCCAT**) works in partnership with, among others, Manchester City Council (**MCC**) the landowner of Boggart Hole Clough (**BHC**).

Documents referred to below can be seen on our website – [www.boggart.org.uk](http://www.boggart.org.uk)

BHCCAT volunteer Conservationists propose to undertake a day's work on the Island on Thursday 27.1.2011. We intend this conservation day to mark **the beginning of a long-term programme of annual conservation work on the Island**: 3 days' work every year during November to January outside the Heron nesting season (February to October).

This is additional to the annual 3 days' work entailed in the Canada Geese eggs management (2 days oiling eggs, 1 day collecting unhatched eggs) which takes place on the Island during April & May, necessarily within the nesting season. This particular conservation task may end in the next few years if Canada Geese numbers continue decreasing.

BHCCAT 'Island biodiversity - preliminary report' (23.12.2006) doc, containing the results of a floral survey & suggestions for conservation priorities, is our main source of information & guide to initial actions to be taken as outlined below. Observations made during the Canada Geese eggs management days (see above) are also taken into account.

All our proposals accord with the 'BHC Biodiversity Management Plan' (Ecology Services UK Ltd, 2007) adopted by MCC & BHCCAT.

On 27.1.2011 we propose to carry out 2 actions:

### 1. Begin programme of **annual woodland thinning**.

We propose felling & uprooting (to prevent regrowth) over-abundant Box / Privet & semi-mature Sycamore at the centre of the Island to increase light through to the ground to stimulate growth of ground cover (presently almost non-existent) & give surrounding trees (Alder, Hawthorn, Holly, Oak, Rowan, Silver Birch, Willow) more space to grow. The felled wood will be used to form deadwood branch piles; if freezing weather some of this wood may be used for a fire to keep warm.

Best conservation practice suggests an ongoing annual programme of incremental tree thinning is preferable to a one-off mass thinning scheme which, by suddenly & dramatically changing the Island landscape, would probably scare the Herons thereby jeopardizing the Heronry.

### 2. Begin programme of **annual ecological surveying**.

We propose checking for any significant changes of flora which may have occurred since the 2006 survey and closely observing the Heronry including measuring & mapping its layout.

Although the Island is included in our 'Nature Conservation Delivery Plan 2010-15 Outline' (29.12.2009) doc we intend producing a separate conservation work schedule / delivery plan for the Island. Our 27.1.2011 observations will give us further useful information upon which to base this plan.

Our annual surveying will gradually build up a comprehensive picture of the Island's flora & fauna enabling further detailed conservation management planning & accurate monitoring of progress.

The aim of this proposed long-term annual conservation work programme is to **radically improve the Island's natural woodland habitat particularly for indigenous waterbirds** thereby increasing the Island's biodiversity health / conservation value / wildlife interest and consequently also increase the Island's aesthetic appeal as viewed from the Lakeside promenade. In this way the Island will become a befitting central component of BHC Local Nature Reserve.

Please see our website for further BHCCAT documents re the Lake environs e.g. 'Lake & Island biodiversity health proposals' (16.6.2008), 'Canada Geese population management 2009' (28.12.2009), 'Lake & Island Waterbirds Sanctuary proposal' (30.9.2010), 'Waterbirds Survey 2004-2010' (survey ongoing).