



# Gwent Wildlife Trust

Holiday cottage

Living Landscapes

Living Seas

Projects

Planning and Policy

News

Blogs

Staff speakers

Wild About Gwent

GWT Annual Review

Welsh Wildlife magazine

Iolo Williams and the State of Nature Report 2013

LEMUR Training Project

**Circuit of Wales**

► All this will be gone...

Severn Barrage

Nature Matters - The importance of a healthy natural environment

Badgers and Bovine TB

Follow us



## Circuit of Wales

Join us

Protect local wildlife



**There are proposals to build an International MotorSport Facility near Rassau, in Ebbw Vale and this will be devastating for a wealth of wildlife that can be found in the area.**

The current proposals have a development plot of 320ha – an area the size of a town such as Abergavenny or Chepstow, and proposals include a race track, motocross and karting circuits, a technology park, hotels, and car parking for over 30,000 cars. You can view the plans and documents [here](#).

Gwent Wildlife Trust is opposed to this development on principle. We don't believe that mitigation and compensation on this scale, for the important species and habitats present is achievable.

This is not a decision we've taken lightly. We understand that there is a need in the local area for jobs and economic regeneration. However, we believe that a healthy environment is an essential component of all our lives. Development that degrades and erodes the natural environment ultimately damages our own wellbeing. Ultimately, not to oppose this development would be failing in our charitable objective to stand up for wildlife.

See our [take action](#) page for more information on how you can help, or contact Lindi Rich (Conservation Officer) for more information – [Lrich@gwentwildlife.org](mailto:Lrich@gwentwildlife.org).

Our RSS Feed



## Wildlife

The site at Rassau is a mixture of rich acid grassland, heathland and bog, with a stream network throughout. It's home to a wealth of wildlife including rare dragonflies and birds including the hen harrier and grasshopper warbler.

Over 200ha of wildlife-rich habitat will be completely destroyed. The compensation offered by the developer is not equivalent to the value of the wildlife that will be lost, and we have serious doubts as to the success of their proposals for enhancing and creating new habitats.

There will also be negative consequences for wildlife in the wider area, as species will be affected by the increased noise and light, and the increased traffic on the local road network.



## Water

The site is crossed by a network of streams that feed into the Ebbw and Sirhowy rivers. It also forms part of the catchment for the Carno and Llangynidr reservoirs. There is a significant risk of pollution of the watercourses and reservoirs resulting from construction, and the risk of spillages once the racecourse is in place.

The site is partly marshy grassland and peat bog – a habitat that holds water and slows water flow. One hectare of bog can hold over 8 million litres of water. The removal of this natural sponge, infilling and culverting the streams, and constructing non-permeable surfaces could change the flow rates off the land, affecting the watercourses downstream and increasing flood risk.

## Natural Open Space

Currently the land is Common Land and Open Access Land. This means that anyone walk across the hills, enjoying the views and the wildlife. Access to spaces like this has been shown to be important for our health and well being. The Countryside Council for Wales has set a target that everyone should live within 400 m of natural green spaces like this – a target which Blaenau Gwent is currently failing to meet. The loss of more accessible open spaces will only exacerbate this problem.

## Brecon Beacons National Park

The site is directly adjacent to the Brecon Beacons National Park, an area designated for its natural beauty and tranquillity. A development of this type is not in keeping with the natural landscapes of the national park, and special atmosphere of the area will be lost as a result of the increased noise, light, traffic, potential pollution and the enormous scale of the development The Brecon Beacons National Park has recently been awarded international Dark Skies status, which will be affected by light spill from the development.

## Greenhouse Gas Emissions

A large part of the underlying soil is peat. As well as holding large volumes of water, peat bogs capture and store carbon, helping to combat climate change. The developers predict that construction will involve the removal of 500,000 to 700,000 tonnes of peat, releasing over 10,000 tonnes of greenhouse gases into the atmosphere. We do not know whether the site is actively capturing CO2, but whatever potential it has to do so will be lost. The mitigation offered for the release of greenhouse gases is vague, and some of the proposals have little chance of success – some would take 89 years before the emissions would be offset.

The mitigation offered relates to the greenhouse gases released as a result of peat extraction only. The greenhouse gases generated by the overall construction, the races themselves and visitors to the site have not been predicted, and no mitigation offered for this. We know that the site provides around 34,000 car parking spaces, and the business case is based on 500,000 visitors per year. As public transport links are very poor, we can assume that the vast majority of visitors would use private cars.

## Help to stop Circuit of Wales

See our take [action page](#) for more information on how you can help, or contact Lindi Rich (Conservation Officer) for more information – [rich@gwentwildlife.org](mailto:rich@gwentwildlife.org) .

 [View page as PDF](#)  [Printer friendly version](#)  [Share](#)



