

WOODWALTON DRAINAGE COMMISSIONERS

Conservation Statement

INTRODUCTION

The Woodwalton Drainage Commissioners District covers about 500 hectares and approximately 12,250 metre length of drainage channels. The district contains many varied environments and conservation needs. The ecology and conservation needs vary and are considerable, this fact being recognised by the Commissioners. Part of the District has been converted to wetlands under the Great Fen Project scheme and the Commissioners are working closely with Natural England and the Wildlife Trust to enhance and further the scheme.

The Woodwalton Drainage Commissioners Conservation Statement is an all embracing one and recognises the need for a positive move to identify and safeguard the existing nature conservation resource, assess proposed and future developments, and enhance the environment in relation to both maintenance and capital works carried out. The Commissioners are committed, wherever possible, to adopt such a practice, where they are possible and economically viable and to comply with Natural England's recommendations and legislative requirements. Only herbicides cleared for aquatic use will ever be used in or beside water. They will be used and stored in accordance with the appropriate Regulations.

WATER LEVEL MANAGEMENT

Wherever the principle of Water Level Management can be applied without putting at risk life or property it should be adopted with agreement of all interested parties.

CONSERVATION STRATEGY

To help attain enhancement of the environment in the carrying out of the Board's operations the following strategy will be adopted, taking into account the needs and views of the farming community and other landowners.

In view of the size of the District and the fact that it will form part of the Great Fen Project operational guidelines will be adopted with Natural England and be incorporated within the Commissioners's work programmes to safeguard and enhance the existing agricultural land without decrement to the Great Fen Project. The Commissioners will promote the enhancement of conservation interest and identify and assess areas of special interest. Consider alternative working and water level management practices which other conservation bodies may develop and which could then be included within the maintenance/capital works programme.

STATUTORY OBLIGATIONS

Section 12 of the Land Drainage Act 1991 obliges the IDB's and Ministers to:

- a) further the conservation and enhancement of natural beauty, consistent with any enactments relating to their functions;
- b) further the conservation of wildlife and geological and physiographical features of special interest, consistent with any enactments relating to their functions;
- c) have regard to the desirability of:
 - i) protecting and conserving buildings, sites and objects of archaeological, architectural or historical interest; and
 - ii) preserving public rights of access to areas of mountains, moor, heath, down cliff or foreshore and other places of natural beauty; and
- d) take into account the effects of any proposals on the preservation of rights of access and on the beauty or amenity of an area, or on wildlife, features, buildings, sites or objects.