

Environmental Standard Operating Procedure 26

Reed Rond Disposal & Re-use

Reed rond is a valuable habitat, offering many lifecycle opportunities for birds, mammals, invertebrates and birds as well as wider benefits in terms of erosion protection and flood capacity. Where reed rond habitat has been identified as desirable for sediment disposal, certain considerations and procedures should be followed to ensure rond habitat is maintained/improved/recreated as part of the dredging disposal process.



Aim

Identification of suitable areas of reed rond habitat to use as temporary storage of wet dredged sediment. Sediment to be re-profiled and re-used to provide additional material for floodbank strength and/or folding improvements.

Environmental Risk

Impact	Likelihood	Mitigation
Damage/destruction of reed rond habitat over the longer term (changes to levels preventing reed recovery)	High	Storage of sediment to be temporary; land level of rond to be recorded and agreed; level to reinstated as part of restoration process
Damage/destruction of protected species habitat, including death of individuals	Medium	Survey and mitigate for water voles, reptiles & birds (refer to ESOPs 10, 11 & 14)
Temporary and/or long term loss of commercial reed rond	High	Avoid commercial areas where possible; communication with commercial cutters; reinstatement of suitable rond level following sediment storage; improvements to access.
Establishment of invasive species	Low	Should not occur if correct level achieved; monitor and treat as necessary (Refer to ESOPs 16-19,21)

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Delivery Method

- Strategic site selection process to be carried out to identify and map preferred dredging disposal areas (from dredging disposal perspective). Criteria will include distance from dredging site, volumes required, possible re-use and whether return disposal is likely.
- Selected sites to then be assessed for their general ecological features and wider use, e.g. flood/erosion protection, commercial reed harvest and the proportion of rond being proposed for disposal.
- From this selection, individual disposal sites to be chosen where there is least ecological impact with follow-up detailed Ecological Assessment.
- Width of rond will dictate whether disposal is linear (for narrow ronds) or over a concentrated area (wider ronds).
- Ground conditions & substrate type will guide type of machinery and methodology, e.g. limited tracking on soft surface to limit compaction.
- Sediment disposal on ronds should only be for a temporary period to allow for the dewatering and drying of sediment.
- Sediment to be reprofiled 12 to 18 months after disposal, either onto folding if habitat, space and landowner allow or to widen existing floodbank; this can then be used for future bank strengthening.
- Sediment to be removed from majority of rond surface to reinstate/improve ground level and allow free flow of water on and off the rond; this is required for good reed growth.

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- Environment Officer to carry out an Ecological Assessment of the site, surveys for protected species, breeding birds and advise on mitigation required and timings for works (see ESOP's 10, 11 & 14). Further measures may be recommended, including consideration of commercial reed harvesting and plans for reprofiling/restoration.
- As ronds are generally quite open habitats. existing features such as trees and shrubs should be retained where possible, or consider coppicing.
- Retain/reinstate existing water features where possible to maintain water flow. Additional 'low points' to be created as part of reprofiling.
- Ensure that the overall level is left low (e.g. mean water level), as this promotes optimal conditions for reed establishment and discourages the establishment of nettles and willow. Assess each site on an individual basis to determine optimal final fill level.
- Monitor vegetation establishment over two seasons, and record results for future projects. Treat any invasive species/scrub as necessary.
- If rond area is cut for commercial reed or has potential to be managed commercially, communication with reed cutters should commence at an early stage. Compensation, access & water flow considerations should be included within disposal plans.

Consultation Required

- **Broads Authority** – Planners; **Natural England** – if designated site; **Environment Agency** – flood defence consent; **Reed cutters** – if commercial reed harvested from site