

**Workshop on Fen Ecology, Hydrology and  
Holistic Water Management in the Broads**  
Report by Head of Strategy and Projects and Senior Ecologist

**Summary:** The Authority takes a leading role on the strategic and operational management of fens as well as being a consultee to the Environment Agency in their decision making for water abstraction and is proposing to hold workshops to raise awareness of and discuss fen ecology and hydrology and holistic water management. This report seeks the Forum's views on the objectives and who should be considered for involvement in these workshops.

## **1 Introduction**

- 1.1 Holding a workshop on fen ecology, hydrology with partners to agree a research programme is one of the 2014/15 Strategic Priorities of the Broads Authority. This paper seeks to obtain input on the planning of a workshop that Authority aims to facilitate in 2015. Broads Forum members' views on what objectives and who should be considered for involvement in these workshops would be welcomed.
- 1.2 The matters identified by the Forum will be considered by the appointed steering group who will be responsible for workshop. The steering group will have the task of generating a detailed agenda, inviting the speakers and organising the facilitation and administration of the day.
- 1.3 It should also be noted that the background for this meeting is politically sensitive with the decision making process of water abstraction around Catfield Fen area ongoing by the Environment Agency. It is intended to hold this workshop in the second or third quarter of 2015.

## **2 Proposed Structure of Workshop and Involvement**

- 2.1 The objectives of these workshops include:
  - Increase understanding of the technical findings of some of the existing and recent research and monitoring of the ecology and hydrology of Broadland fens
  - Share experience from Dutch fens
  - Increase understanding of the fens within both hydrology and ecology specialist areas and summarise some of the important new findings
  - Increase understanding of water management decision making
  - Share experience of holistic water management and discuss options for the Broads
  - Agree the required outcomes, including new research and monitoring

- 2.2 A steering group, with representatives from conservation organisations (selected from EA, NE, BA, RSPB), National Farmers Union, will be appointed.
- 2.3 The workshops will be divided into:
- Technical ecology and hydrology workshop
  - Summary workshop on ecology and hydrology for the non-specialist audience and holistic water management
- 2.4 The audience and invitations for the technical ecology and hydrology workshop is intended to be technical EA, NE, BA, RSPB officers, specialist ecological consultants, technical officers in NFU.
- 2.5 The audience and invitations for the summary workshop on ecology and hydrology and holistic water management is intended to include strategic Water Company, NFU, EA, NE, BA, RSPB officers, BA members, stakeholders (such as representatives of reed and sedge cutters, farmers and landowners).
- 2.6 The steering group will agree on the speakers and the discussion topics on the agenda.

### **3 Identification of Areas of Work to be Addressed**

- 3.1 At this stage, members' views on the objectives and invitees to the workshops are sought. It is not expected that members prepare detailed list of agenda items for these workshops, but it would be helpful to provide high level steer on creating a positive and forward looking agenda that will support greater understanding of water management and the timing of the workshop given the political sensitivity of the topic.

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Broads Plan Objectives: None

Appendices: None