



ENGLISH HERITAGE

# Floodplain meadows & the historic environment: policy & practice (England)

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# Why ?

- agricultural traditions
- landscape character
- archaeology
  - physical remains
  - past land management practices
- archaeobotany
  - analogues for archaeological assemblages



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# Identification

## physical remains

- earthworks
- built remains
- field patterns
- soil properties

## biological remains

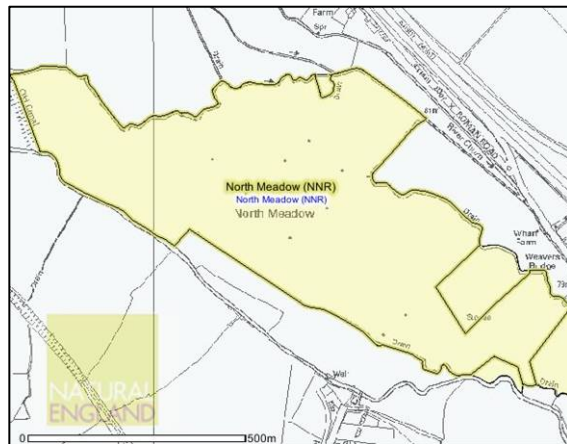
- plant parts
  - waterlogged
  - charred (rare)

} usually reworked (e.g. wells, ditches)
- insects
- snails



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# Floodplain meadows: hay meadow

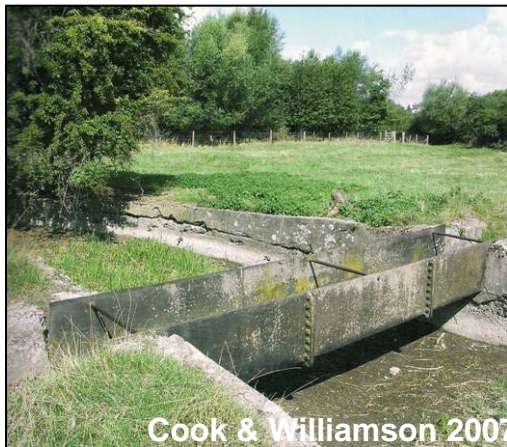


- historic landscape feature
- old boundaries (hedges, stone walls, woodland)
- archaeologically elusive
  - defined by management practice & ecology
  - physical remains hard to find
  - defining plant remains often reworked



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# Floodplain meadows: water meadow



- earthworks (bedwork)
  - drains, ridges
- structures
  - weirs, sluices, channels



Harnham, Wilts.



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# Floodplain meadows: policy

## hay meadows

- difficult to recognise precise locations
- focus on archaeobotany research & interpretation

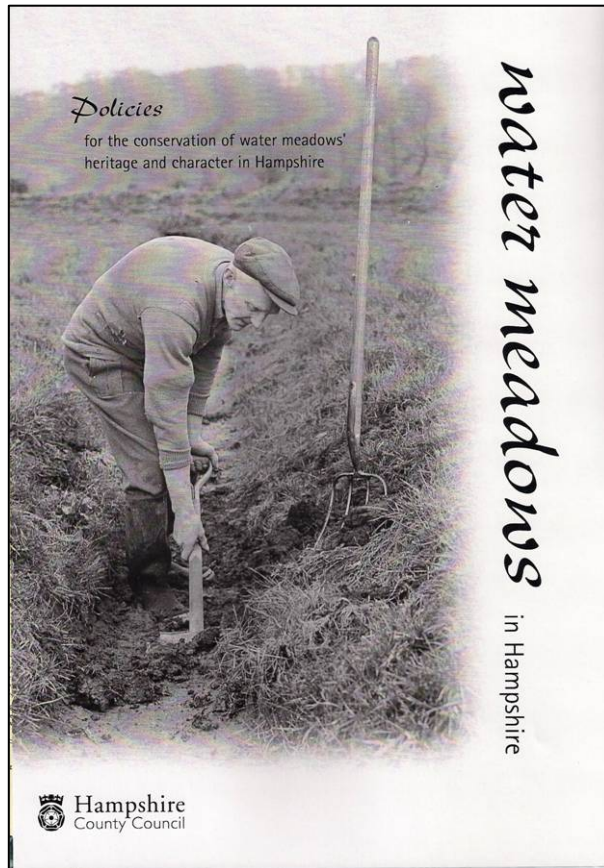
## water meadows

- some designation (n=10), poorly represented
- assessment of character, distribution & significance required



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# Water meadows: policy



Policy 1: retain character & integrity of remaining water meadows

Policy 2: proper recording should precede all irreversible change

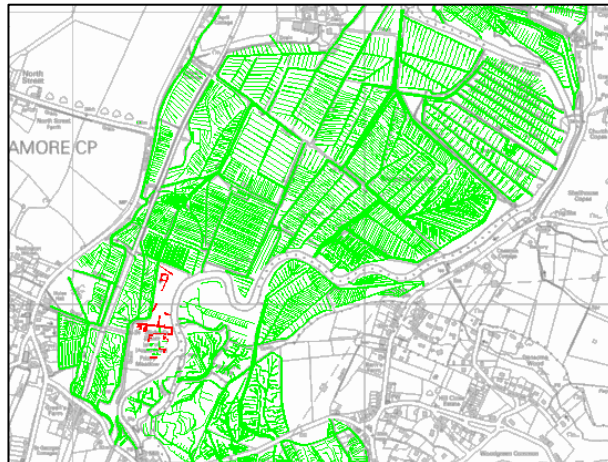
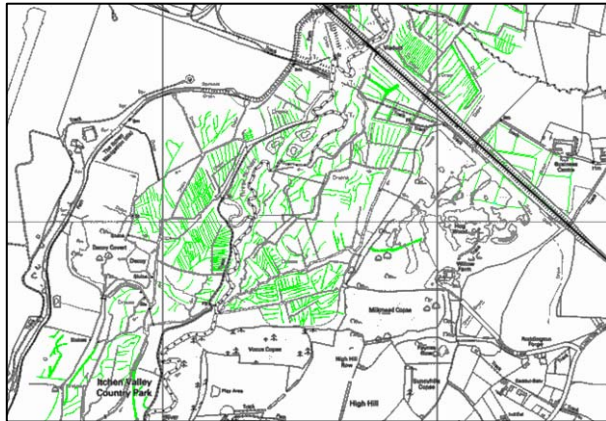
Policy 3: conservation & repair should respect original character & be based on expert advice





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# Water meadows: practice



- Historic Landscape Characterisation - enhanced distribution
- local authority maps
- categories defined locally (emphasis on local characteristics)





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# Wetland Vision: opportunities



“English Heritage will develop priorities for the historic environment elements of the Vision, and identify those sites where immediate (short term) change will have the most benefit. We will use the Vision, on a policy and practical level, to advocate where biodiversity & historic environment interests coincide.”

[www.wetlandvision.org.uk](http://www.wetlandvision.org.uk)