



Pevensey and
Cuckmere

Water Level Management Board

Standard Maintenance Operations Policy Document

Pevensey and Cuckmere Water Level Management Board

Version 2.0

Training and Revision Register

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Standard Maintenance Operations Policy Document

1.0 Introduction

Many of the ditches maintained by the Pevensey and Cuckmere Water Level Management Board (PCWLMB) are of outstanding importance for nature conservation. Many nationally scarce freshwater plant species such as water soldier and several pondweed species are present within many of the Board's IDB maintained drains. The area is also home to many Species and Habitats of Principal Importance and a Special Area of Conservation is designated for the presence of the lesser whirlpool ramshorn snail. Working practice is important to conserve and enhance these features of interest, whilst still maintaining the conveyance to the pumps and the water management requirements of the district. Further it is essential to prevent the spread and manage the presence of alien species, particularly floating pennywort and *Crassula helmsii*.

The PCWLMB manages the water levels and watercourses in predominantly agricultural surroundings within three areas, Cuckmere valley, the Pevensey Levels and a small length of ditch within Combe Haven. The Pevensey Levels are pumped drained and comprise 95417 metres watercourses controlled by 6 pumping stations. Cuckmere area has 7206 metres watercourse and Combe Haven 454 metres. Both are gravity drained. Maintenance of the drainage infrastructure has always been achieved by the regular weedcutting of stretches of watercourses. However, some desilting has always had a place in the maintenance schedule, to allow for the capacity of drains to be retained and ensure conveyance to pumping stations.

This is the first Standard Maintenance Operations Document and its aim is to allow a uniform maintenance procedure to be carried out to a consistently high standard in designated wildlife sites and in Board-maintained ordinary watercourses alike. There is also a necessity to recognise the growing evidence of climate change predictions and consider the potential this has to adversely impact on future operations and flood risk of the catchment served.

The drains within the PCWLMB catchments are mostly that of artificial or heavily modified watercourses draining toward their respective pumping station. This document has been aligned with the recently published ADA and relevant sections of the Environment Agency document, "Guide to Management Strategies and Mitigation Measures for Achieving Good Ecological Potential in Fenland Waterbodies" (2017) where the core function of the watercourses of

ensuring efficient conveyance and flow to the pumps.is balanced with ensuring opportunities to enhance and achieve good ecological potential (as defined within the Water Framework Directive) are undertaken. A sustainable and well planned maintenance programme is also key to this ambition. Consideration has been given to the possibility of increasing sinuosity in the Cuckmere valley but it is considered that the size of the watercourse precludes techniques which might otherwise be employed in a gravity (albeit low energy) system.

The document recognises the importance of the sustainable management of drainage catchments as natural environmental systems and as an ecosystem service and acknowledges the importance of managing the Boards drains appropriately in moving toward, helping the UK Governments aim to halt decline in biodiversity by 2020. The PCWLMB Standard Maintenance Document aligns itself naturally alongside the PCWLMB IDB Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP), whereby the Board seeks to maintain and enhance Species and Habitats of Principal Importance whilst carrying out its statutory function.

2.0 Legislation

As a Statutory Risk Management Authority, the PCWLMB operates under the powers of the Land Drainage Act (1991) and complies with various employment focused statutory instruments. As a Drainage Authority it must comply with a number of National and International legislative duties, regarding the aquatic environment, biodiversity and wildlife sites within the District. It should be noted that failure to comply with any of these statutory obligations, has the potential to result in both Personal and Corporate Liability being brought about to both individual Board Members and the Board, by the Enforcement Body. As a result, the Court may issue a fine dependent on the severity of the offence and insist on restorative works being carried out and paid for by the offender; some fines of which may be unlimited. Furthermore some offences may attract a custodial sentence.

The main legislative drivers are as follows:

2.1 European Legislation

- The Water Framework Directive (2000) – a statutory duty to ensure that reasonable actions are taken to improve the physical and chemical nature of the waterbodies under their management, with the aim of achieving

good ecological status or potential of surface waters by 2021. (The first Tranche of the WFD was completed in 2015.) This can be achieved by putting in place environmental improvements or mitigation measures where applicable and undertaking sensitive management of watercourses.

- The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations (2017) - a statutory duty in the exercise of any functions, to have regard to this EC Habitats Directive which provides for the designation and protection of 'European sites', the protection of 'European protected species', and the adaptation of planning and other controls for the protection of European Sites.

2.2 National Legislation

- Wildlife and Countryside Act (WCA Act) (1981) imposes a statutory duty to protect native species (especially those at threat), control the release of non-native species and protect SSSIs.
- The Countryside and Rights of Way Act (CROW Act) (2000) – this act amends the WCA Act and enforces a duty for Statutory Authorities to be responsible for conservation and enhancement of SSSIs. It also enhances Natural England's enforcement power.
- Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act (NERC) Act (2006) - a statutory duty to maintain and enhance the natural environment (Habitats and Species set down in Section 41 of the NERC Act (2006)) when carrying out flood risk management activities and meet objectives and targets set out in the PCWLMB Biodiversity Action Plan.

2.3 Protected Species and Habitats and Other Considerations

There are networks of protected species and habits across the UK. Some of these species such as water voles, breeding birds, otters and bats are given full protection under the law for both the individual species and their habitats. Some habitats and species are identified in Section 41 of the NERC Act (2006) and classified as Habitats and Species of Principal Importance, which require specific consideration by public bodies to ensure these habitats or species are maintained or enhanced by the IDB, whilst carrying out our duties as a public body.

Some habitats and species are covered by separate and specific legislation; such as the Badgers Act (1992), the Salmon and Freshwater Fisheries Act (1975), Hedgerow legislation and Tree Preservation Orders. We need to ensure that this legislation is considered and complied with when undertaking our works.

2.4 Non Native Invasive Species and Biosecurity

The spread of Non-Native Invasive Species has the potential to cost the PCWLMB dearly, both in economic terms and in the loss of biodiversity interests. Allowing the spread of non-native species eg. Japanese Knotweed, floating pennywort and Australian swamp stonecrop or signal crayfish is illegal under Schedule 9 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act (1981) (as amended). It is therefore unlawful to cause these species to spread as a result of any IDB operational activity.

Biosecurity is key to preventing the spread of these organisms into and around the PCWLMB watercourses. The PCWLMB staff currently do all they can to help prevent the spread of non-native invasive species whilst undertaking operations. Staff have undergone training on Non Native Species and sightings are reported to the NNNSI via the “That’s Invasive” app. Training is reviewed and undertaken regularly.

Where feasible, machinery is cleaned prior to being moved between catchments using a portable cleaner system.

2.4 Conservation Sites – Statutory and Non- Statutory

Where operational activities are to be carried out within or adjacent to statutory designated conservation sites such as SSSIs, SACs, RAMSARs or SPAs assent is required from Natural England before any work can start.

Non-statutory sites such Local Wildlife Sites (LWS) do not require any formal written permission; however these sites are noted for their habitats and species, some of which may be protected. These sites have a significant value within the county and it is within everybody's interest to ensure that work does not impact on these sites. Where PCWLMB are required to work on or near LWS, then we will liaise with the Sussex Wildlife Trust prior to starting works.

2.5 Emergency Works

Emergency works may be required during exceptional or unmitigated circumstances; such as in the event of structural failure, pump seizure or during periods of extreme weather conditions, such as a tidal surge or flood event. In many of these circumstances, third parties and their property may be put at risk. However, these emergency procedures may have the potential to impact on a SSSI or European Protected site. In an emergency situation, it is reasonable to carry out operations in or near the protected site. However, Natural England must be informed of the operation as soon as practicable.

Reporting the emergency operation to Natural England is key to determining a satisfactory outcome to the emergency situation and prevents the deterioration of the site and the well being of species therein. Reporting the operation is fundamental to prevent legal action being taken against the Board for carrying out an illegal operation in a designated site.

2.6 Cultural and Heritage Sites

Landscape, cultural and heritage sites may be present within work areas or adjacent land, some of these such as Scheduled Ancient Monuments and Conservation areas require permission to undertake work on or adjacent to them.

3.0 Meeting Good Ecological Potential in PCWLMB Watercourses

Meeting good ecological potential within the PCWLMB watercourses is of course a goal for the Board. However, this can only be achieved effectively where mitigation measures are selected that do not have a significant adverse impact on the use that the watercourse is designated for, such as flood protection or land drainage.

Some of the PCWLMB catchment falls below sea level and relies on water flowing to a pumping station to where the water is evacuated to a higher level, a river or an estuary. As such, the majority of the watercourses have historically been artificially created or heavily modified, with the purpose of conveying water to a pumping station in times of high flow. These watercourses are not dynamic or fast flowing like those of a gravitational system and their purpose needs to be recognised first and foremost prior to undertaking opportunities to improve their ecological potential. The appropriate balance between conveyance and good ecological potential must be met. The PCWLMB will however look for opportunities to conserve or enhance the physical and ecological parameters of the waterbodies where this is either achievable to do so without inhibiting the dedicated function of the watercourse. The recently published ADA and Environment Agency “Guide to Management Strategies and Mitigation Measures for Achieving Good Ecological Potential in Fenland Waterbodies” is a useful guide and should be looked to on a case by case basis for guidance on determining mitigation for WFD designated watercourses.

3.1 Maintaining Successional Processes within Watercourses

Sensitive maintenance of a watercourse will be beneficial for wildlife and necessary for achieving a habitat mosaic of watercourses. This will have benefits for many species and communities within the drainage channel network. The key to maintaining significant ecological interest is to maintain watercourses at differing stages of the successional process. For example a newly desilted drain will exhibit an array of early colonisers such as charophytes or certain pondweed species. Drains left for a longer rotational period prior to vegetation cutting or desilting may exhibit a larger abundance or diversity of macrophytes while those that are unmanaged may be dominated by common reed to the near exclusion of other species. Many riparian owned drains may not be maintained for several years but the regular and rotational maintenance of IDB watercourses ensures a small percentage of the entire drainage network in the catchment retains areas of open water, which is so important to so many animal and plant species.

With the differing successional stages, water depths and maintenance cycles,

there will be an improvement in ecological diversity. The other important factor which is key to maintaining this habitat mosaic, is good water quality.

4.0 How the Standard Maintenance Operations Document will work in practice

This document will be called the Standard Maintenance Operations Policy Document and will be used to inform outside bodies of the way in which the PCWLMB intends to carry out all future maintenance practices and will act as the basis from which all maintenance practice will initiate. The document will be subject to review on a regular basis. Version control will allow any changes to be recorded.

All Operatives, Contractors and Supervisors asked to carry out maintenance for PCWLMB now and in the future, will undertake a Training session based on the Standard Maintenance Operations Policy Document. Training needs will be reviewed regularly, in line with any amendments made to the Standard Maintenance Operations Policy Document.

Prior to initiating any maintenance activity, operatives and contractors will receive a job specific tool box talk, All watercourse maintenance will receive close supervision by a trained Supervisor, the Project Engineer or a member of the Environmental Team.

4.1 Mowing of Bankside Vegetation

The aim of mowing is threefold:

1. It allows unimpeded visibility for the driver.
2. It improves the conveyance of a watercourse.
3. It prevents the establishment of woody vegetation along the waters edge.

Mowing of the bankside vegetation will be carried out by a tractor and flail or a side mounted flail on a 360° hydraulic machine. In some areas where access cannot be achieved or is considered inappropriate for a machine, then strimmers and hand tools will be utilised.

Mowing of bankside vegetation will be undertaken throughout the year. In the bird breeding season, works will only take place if necessary in low risk environmental areas and where breeding birds are not present.. Irrespective, prework checks will take place prior to maintenance between March to

September to ensure nesting birds are not present and the PCWLMB's statutory responsibilities set out in the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) are fully met.

Where breeding birds are found then effective mitigation will be put in place to ensure compliance with the law. This may mean delaying works or leaving a buffer zone of 5m on either side of a nest.

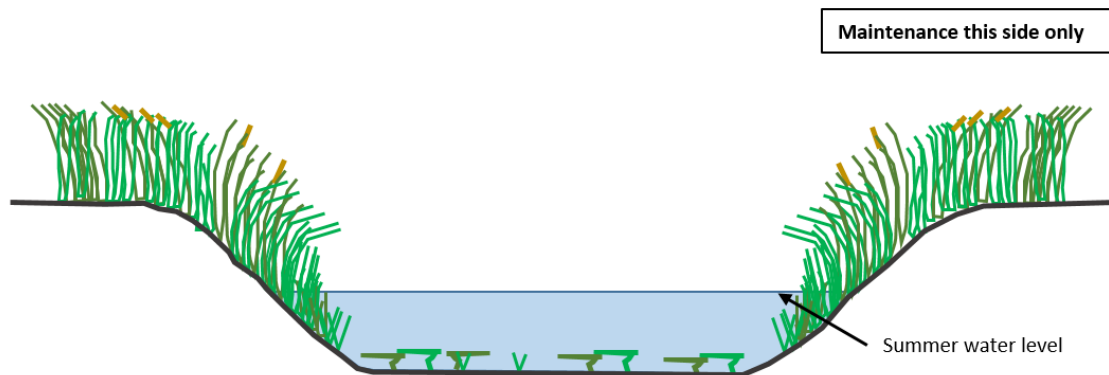
4.1.1 Mowing Method

- This method will be undertaken on drains of all widths.
- Mowing should take place from one side only, down the nearside batter to the waters edge and where necessary one cut along the nearside bank top. A toe margin can be left on both banks if the watercourse is wide enough.
- The flail height should be set to 150mm to ensure water vole are not disturbed or displaced by the mowing activity (*as per Annex B Management Activities IDB Water Vole Class Licence*). The flail height will be set to a minimum of 150mm.

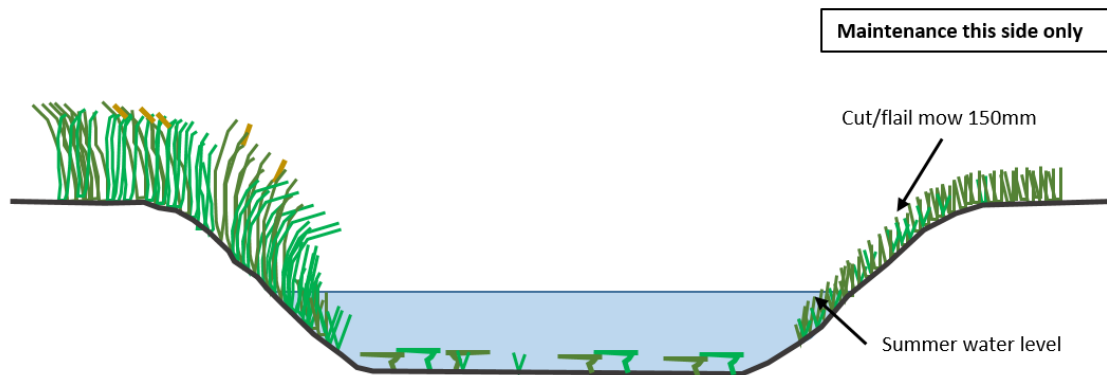
No WFD assessment is required prior to using this method.

Mowing of Bankside Vegetation

Before operation



After operation



4.2 Emergent and Instream Weed Control

The Board removes vegetation from watercourses mechanically, using a weed cutting basket attached to a 360° hydraulic machine. Where this is not practical, due to the size of the watercourse or impeded access, then manual clearance may be undertaken using hand tools, such as a chrome.

Emergent and instream vegetation clearance will be undertaken throughout the year, though in the bird breeding season works will only take place where necessary in low risk environmental areas, such as open grazing marsh. Irrespective however, prework checks will take place prior to maintenance between March to September to ensure nesting birds are not present so as to ensure that the PCWLMB's statutory responsibilities set out in the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) are fully met.

No work will take place in designated sites during the bird breeding season under normal environmental conditions. Work should not be planned during bird breeding season or between November – February. However, under unusual environmental conditions, consultations will take place on a case by case basis.

Emergent and instream weed control is essential to allow unimpeded water flow within the banks of the watercourse and improve conveyance. Weed cutting will take place cyclically as part of a regular rolling programme. In addition, drain maintenance is required to conserve the various stages of colonisation of the drains for their designated features and prevent succession taking place.

To accommodate access to growing crops and in order to satisfy conservation interests, wherever possible alternate banks will be maintained from one clearing

cycle to the next.

Some important pumped drains may require maintenance more than once in one year. Wherever possible the work will be carried out on one side of the drain in any one-year cycle.

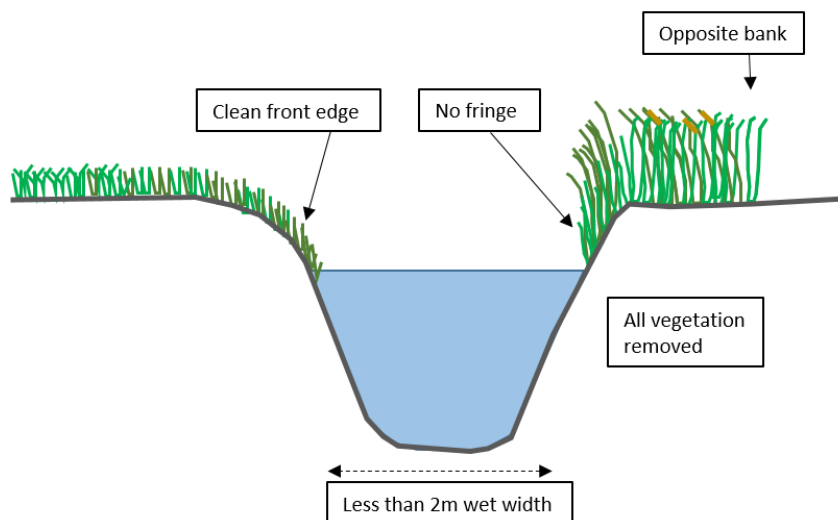
The weeding basket should always be set to ensure no deepening of the watercourse occurs during the process of weed cutting. In most instances in drains greater than 2m, a margin of emergent vegetation will be left uncut at the waters edge as wide as it is practical to do so without compromising water movement.

Instream weed control will work in conjunction with the mowing regime specified in Section 4.1.1.

Weedcutting will be carried out using one of a series of options and no WFD assessment is required prior to using this operation.

4.2.1 Management of drains less than 2m wet width

In narrow drains, all instream emergent vegetation will be removed and no fringe will be left. Cut material should be set back behind the machine as far as possible or placed on the opposite bank top. Care will be taken not to place material on floristically rich areas, wet flushes or block grips. No wet vegetation or mud should be allowed to slip down the bank face.

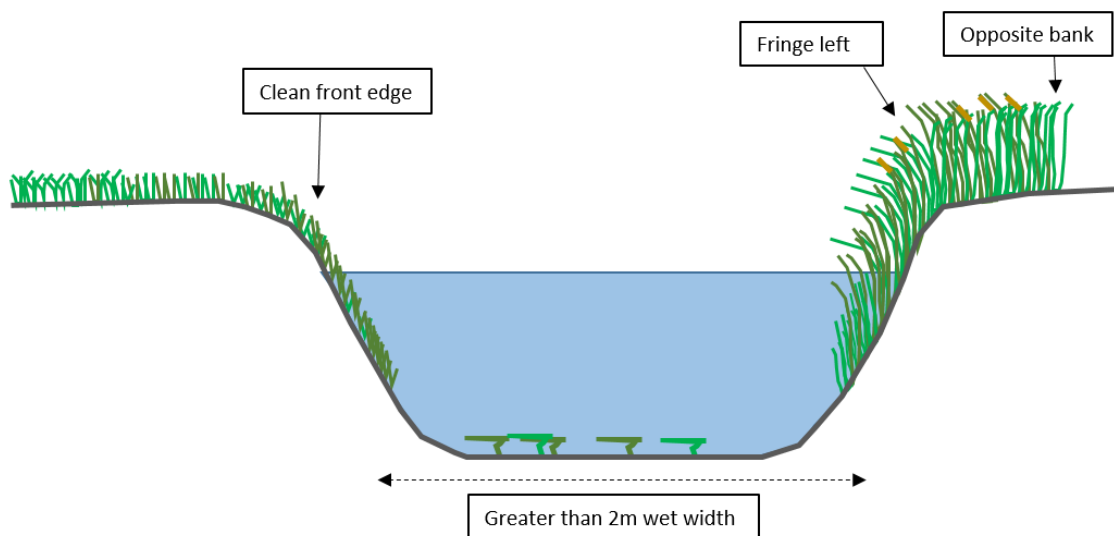


4.4.2 Management of drains greater than 2m wet width – Leave opposite margin

This practice allows for a margin to be created on the opposite bank. The margin consists of leaving as much wet width vegetation *in situ*, as far as is practicable for the size of drain (approx. 10-20% remaining.) The nearside toe will not be exposed or touched by the weedcutting basket.

Cut material should be set back behind the machine as far as possible or placed on the opposite bank top. Care will be taken not to place material on floristically rich areas, wet flushes or block grips. No wet vegetation or mud should be allowed to slip down the bank face.

The weed cutting basket should be set to ensure that no deepening of the section takes place.



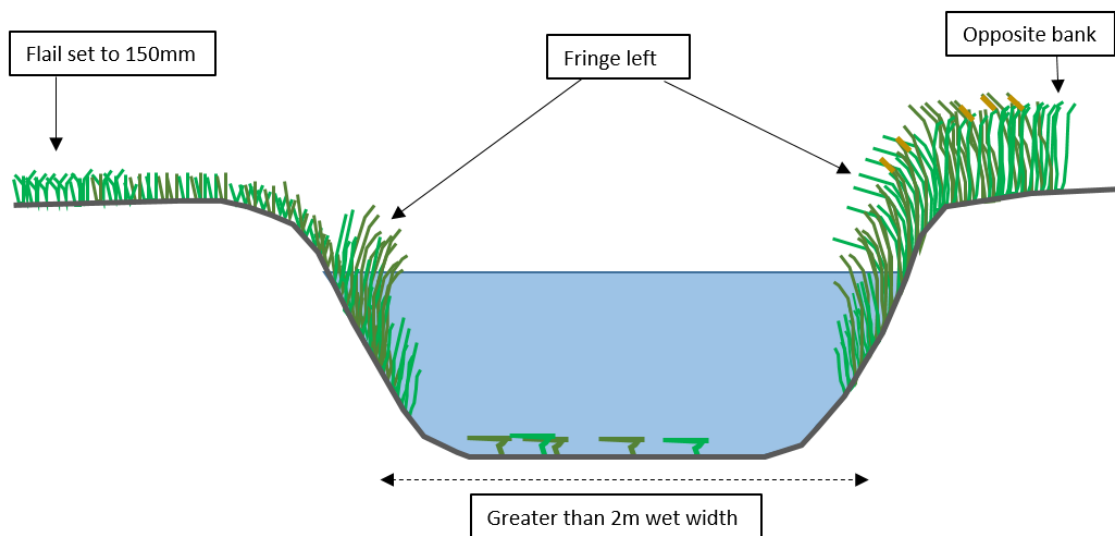
For working methodology where pennywort is present see Section 10.

4.4.3 Management of drains greater than 2m wet width – Leave opposite and nearside margin

This practice allows for a margin to be created on the opposite bank and between 60-80% of the instream vegetation to be removed centrally. This margin will comprise leaving as much wet width vegetation as far as is practicable for the size of the drain (20-40%). The nearside toe should not be exposed or touched by the weedcutting basket.

Cut material should be set back behind the machine as far as possible or placed on the opposite bank top. Care will be taken not to place material on floristically rich areas, wet flushes or block groups. No wet vegetation or mud should be allowed to slip down the bank face.

The weed cutting basket should be set to ensure that no deepening of the section takes place.



5.0 Tree and Bush Management

Bankside trees and shrubs provide shade and keep water cool. Instream branches improve the ecology of the watercourse by providing food and substrate for invertebrates and cover and food for fish. Over time, instream branches add natural diversity to the surrounding aquatic environment by altering the physical hydraulic function of the watercourse, which may result in scours and pool and shoal formation.

With the high ecological benefits attributed to the aquatic environment by trees, the first consideration, prior to any tree, bush or branch removal, should be to consider whether removal is necessary.

The aim of tree management is threefold:

- To allow unimpeded access for machinery into a site and prevent damage to the machine eg. Hydraulic pipework becoming caught up in branches.
- To prevent the sides of watercourses becoming overgrown and in some instances, overshadowed.
- To prevent instream blockages occurring in areas of high flood risk.

Due to the open landscape throughout much of the PCWLMB district tree management will be considered on a case by case basis the Environmental Team except immediately downstream of a pumping station where flow is compromised. The aim will be to strike a balance between the ecological benefits to the watercourse and conveyance.

Woody material will not be installed or left in the channel as this will impede the conveyance of water to the pumping station. However, consideration should be paid to the retaining overhanging branches as shelter and shade for fish and the opportunity to improve instream ecological diversity by other means where possible.

Tree and bush work can be undertaken between August – March. Prework checks are recommended between August to September and Mid-February to March to ensure nesting birds are not present, prior to maintenance. It is an offence under the Wildlife and Countryside Act (1981) to intentionally kill or injure a breeding bird or damage or destroy its nest and tree work outside these seasons is not recommended. Any tree work required during bird breeding season may be undertaken only following consultation with and having had appropriate checks undertaken by the Environmental Team.

Old trees may be subject to a Tree Preservation Order or may provide roosting sites for bats and birds in cavities or splits. Fallen trees or root systems may also act as couches or holts for Otter. It is essential therefore, that trees are not cleared without prior investigation by the Environmental Team so as to avoid an offence under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations (2017).

Dead trees should be left in *situ* as ecologically they can provide niches for a rich diversity of species, ranging from invertebrates to birds and bats. These should be left and not be touched without prior investigation by the Environmental Team as this may constitute an offence under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations (2017)

5.1 Disposal of Waste Timber

Where PCWLMB operators have removed or trimmed overhanging trees or shrubs, these arisings can be removed or cut up as wood piles or left on the banktop to enhance the terrestrial habitat. Material can be left only where there is no risk of material being washed back instream, where it may result in culverts becoming blocked.

Waste timber may be chipped and spread where the landowner is happy for this to occur and where no detriment will be caused to the surrounding environment. Where chipping is required in a designated site, then consultation with Natural England will be undertaken first.

Alternatively the chippings or waste timber can be removed from site. No mulching will take place on grazing marsh.

It may be necessary for some timber to be burned. As far as practicable, fires should be no larger than a conventional domestic bonfire and will be situated only in areas where spoil has been deposited during previous maintenance activities. Care will be taken when burning on peat to avoid the underground spreading of fire and this should only be undertaken following review on a case by case basis. Under the Environmental Permitting Regulations (England and Wales) 2016 a Waste Exemption licence (D7) permits the burning of 10 tonnes of untreated wood in the open during a 24 hour period. Where burning is proposed in a designated wildlife site, prior consultation with Natural England will be undertaken.

Burning and chipping is expensive and will therefore only be undertaken upon request and where no detriment to the surrounding environment will take place.

6.0 Instream Silt Removal

The environmental risk involved in silt removal in the catchments, is deemed to be high and as such, every operation will be looked at on a case by case basis. Every proposed desilting operation will have a WFD assessment carried out prior to undertaking the maintenance and mitigation measures put in place as required. However, the low energy nature of the pumped system of the Pevensey Levels will be prone to having silts accrete within its systems. The frequency of silt removal will depend upon the characteristics and locations of the watercourse and some will require attention more frequently than others. However, channels will usually be desilted, only when the depth of silt affects the hydraulic capacity and conveyance of the drain and where it affects pumping efficiency.

Where there is the need to remove silts from the beds of watercourses the minimum of channel de-silting will be undertaken in order to promote good aquatic communities.

The PCWLMB uses hydraulic excavators which can operate through 360° to desilt watercourses and has powers under Section 15 of the Land Drainage Act, 1991 to deposit material arising from the maintenance of a watercourse on the banks and within 9m of the watercourse.

De-silting is a planned activity and, as far as is practicable, should only be undertaken between October and February. However, where works are required at other times of the year, then a prior assessment of works by the Environmental Team will be made. A methodology for operators to walk the drain and undertake regular dissolved oxygen monitoring will be put in place, to ensure that silt loading and temperatures does not impact upon dissolved oxygen levels. During a period of high environmental stress caused by increased temperatures and high suspended organic matter there is the potential for a fish kill.

Where protected species of animals or plants and / or breeding birds are found prior to a planned programme of works, then effective mitigation programmes will be put in place to ensure compliance with the law. This may require a delay to the works depending on the species involved.

Desilting operations will be carried out in conjunction with the mowing regime

specified in Section 4.1.

No dredging will take place during the desilting process as this will likely result in the deepening of a watercourse. The difference between silt removal (desilting) and dredging is fully described in Section 6.4. By preferentially placing slubbings on an historic spoil bank, away from the bank top, spoil will not be washed back into the water and this will help to reduce any additional nutrient enrichment of the watercourse.

Leaving a fringe of marginal vegetation will minimise risks of environmental harm, maintain the seed bank and leave cover and food for invertebrates and other aquatic animals. However, there may be situations where the watercourses are narrow, where a drain will need to be desilted from bank to bank. All the options will be considered very carefully in relation to conveyance, prior to undertaking a desilting exercise.

There are 3 possible options for desilting operations:

6.1 In drains less than 2m wet width – Narrow drains

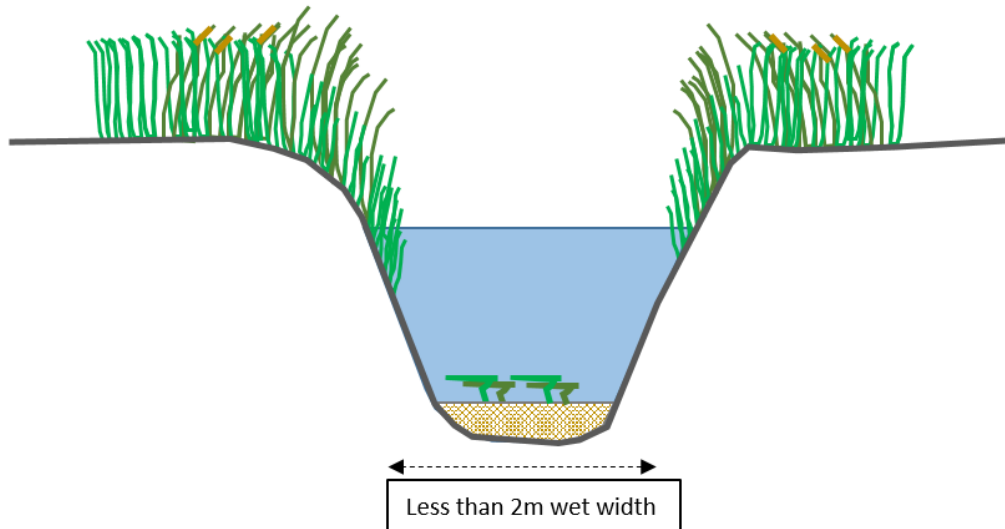
In narrow drains less than 2m wet width, all emergent vegetation and slubbings will be removed and no fringe will be left.

All slubbings will be set back behind the machine, preferably on an historic deposition pile or, where circumstances dictate, across the drain as far as possible on the opposite bank top.

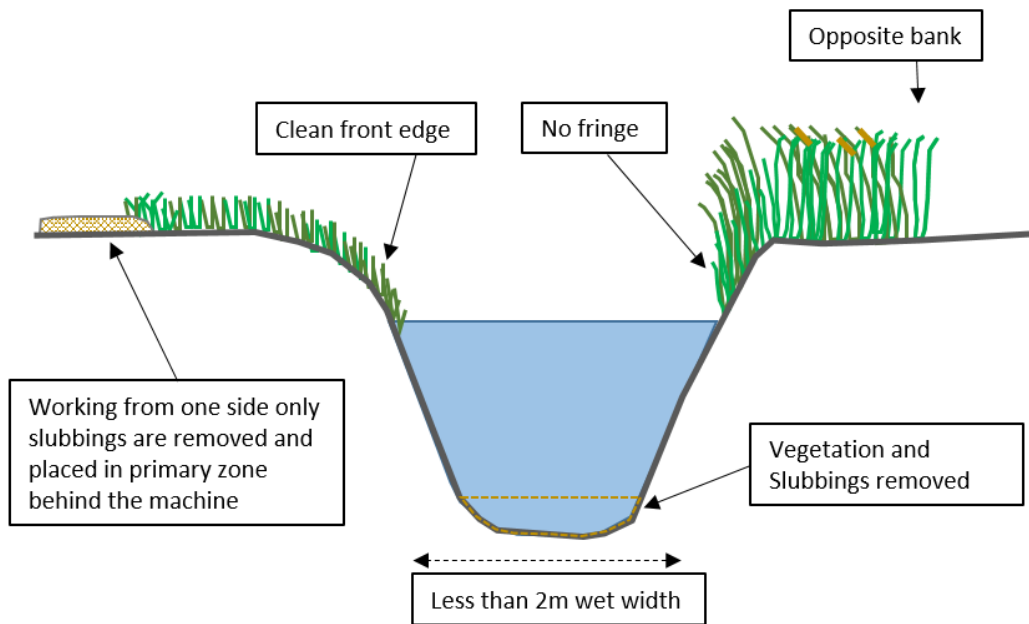
Wet material or mud should not be allowed to slip down the bank face and should not be placed on floristically diverse areas, wet flushes or fill in grips. The front face of the bank should remain clean.

Overlying silts only should be removed; no deepening of the section should take place.

Before operation



After operation



6.2 In drains greater than 2m wet width – Leave opposite margin

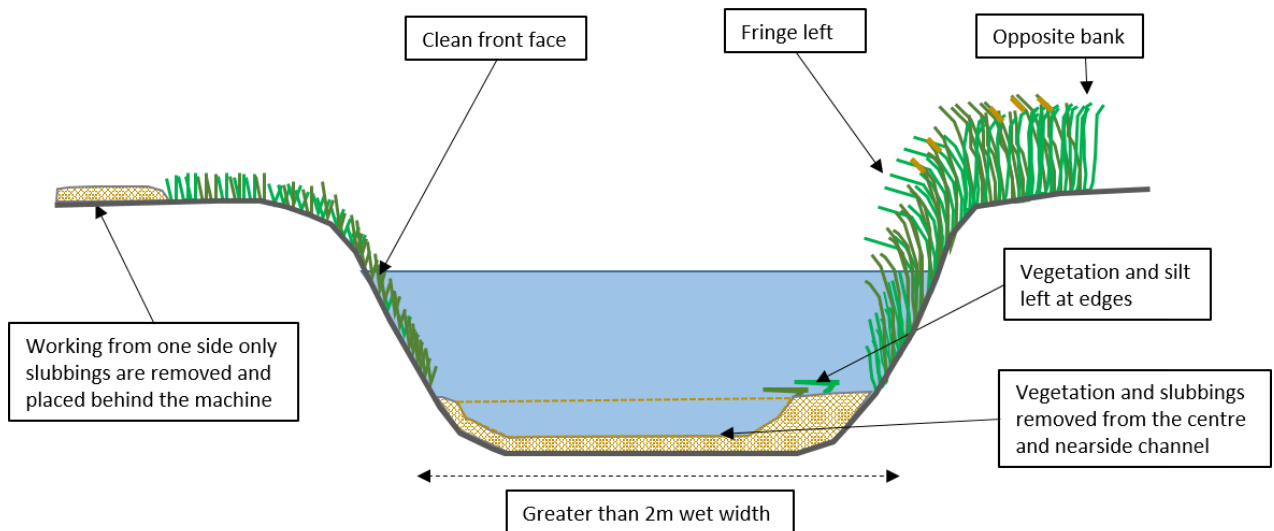
In drains greater than 2m wet width, a fringe of emergent vegetation and slubbings, will be left on the opposite emergent margin. This practice allows the drain to be desilted across the majority of the width whilst working only from one bank only, leaving a marginal fringe of silt and vegetation on the opposite side of the drain to act as a seed bank and refuge area.

An appropriate margin, for the size of the drain (10-20% approx.), of silt and vegetation should be left *in situ* as far as is practicable. The nearside toe should not be exposed or touched by the slubbing bucket.

All slubbings will be set back behind the machine, preferably on an historic deposition pile or, where circumstances dictate, across the drain as far as possible on the opposite bank top.

Wet material or mud should not be allowed to slip down the bank face and should not be placed on floristically diverse areas, wet flushes or fill in grips. The front face of the bank should remain clean.

Overlying silts only should be removed; no deepening of the section should take place.



6.3 In drains greater than 2m wet width – Leave opposite and nearside margin

In drains greater than 2m wet width, a fringe of emergent vegetation and slubbings can be left on the nearside and opposite emergent margins.

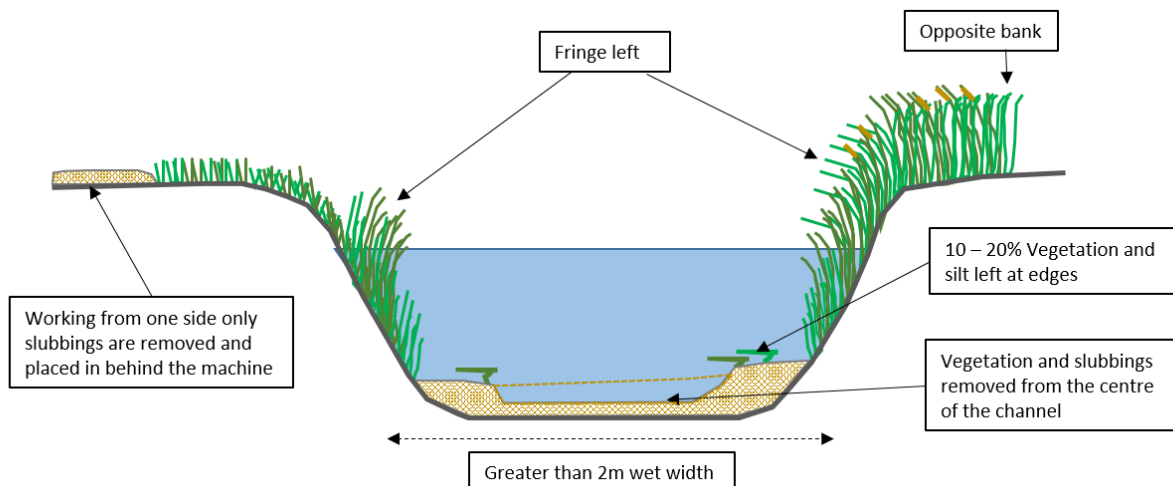
This practice allows material to be removed from the central section of the watercourse. Both opposite and nearside margins should be left untouched to act as a seed bank and encourage recolonization by plants and invertebrates etc.

An appropriate margin of silt and vegetation, for the size of the drain (10-20% approx.), should be left *in situ* as far as is practicable. The nearside toe should not be exposed or touched by the slubbing bucket.

All slubbings will be set back behind the machine, preferably on an historic deposition pile or where circumstances dictate, across the drain as far as possible on the opposite bank top.

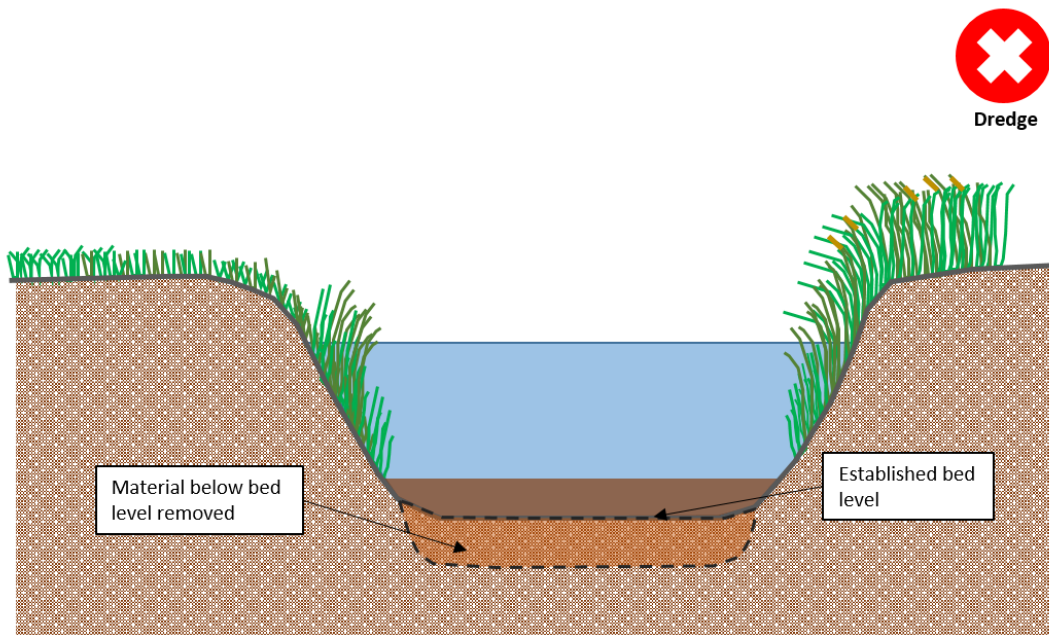
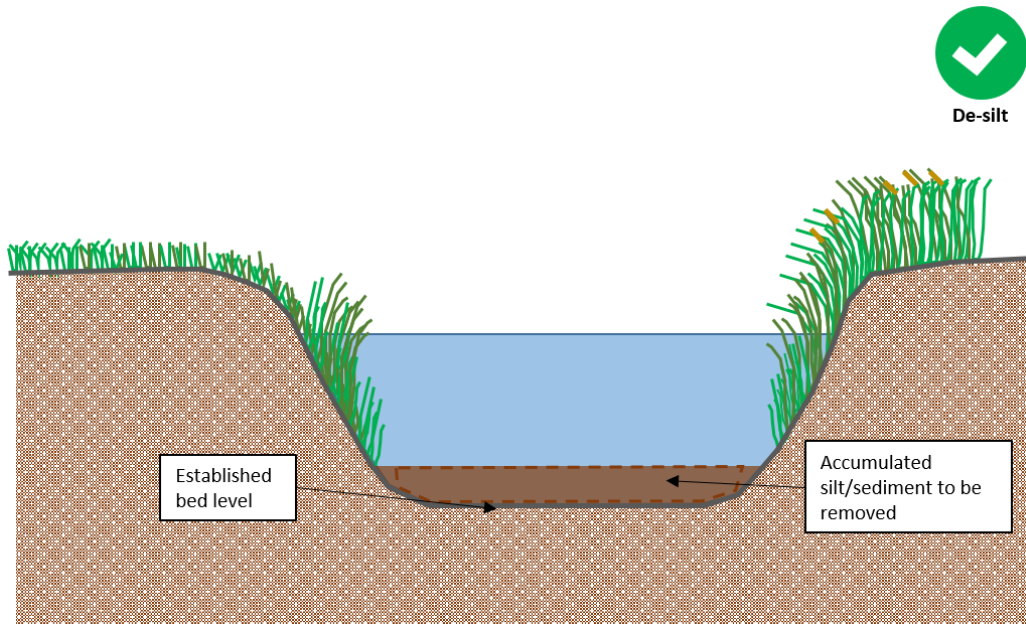
Wet material or mud should not be allowed to slip down the bank face and should not be placed on floristically diverse areas, wet flushes or fill in grips. The front face of the bank should remain clean.

Overlying silts only should be removed; no deepening of the section should take place.



6.4 The difference between desilting and dredging:

Desilting is when only silts that have accumulated in the water channel are removed. **No deepening or overwidening will occur during desilting.** Dredging is where material below bed level is removed and is likely to lead to overdeepening of the channel, the slowing of flows and a continuous need for further maintenance.



7.0 Herbicide Use for Weed Control

Chemicals are actively used to control growth in the PCWLMB District. Chemical control will be considered where weed growth cannot be effectively controlled by mechanical means, in inaccessible areas or in the case of alien invasive species, e.g. floating pennywort. No WFD assessment required prior to using this method.

Before any herbicides can be used in or near watercourses, written consent must be obtained from the Environment Agency in the way of a Herbicide Licence. Consultations with Natural England must also take place before the licence can be issued, where the chemicals may have an impact on SSSI watercourses or land parcels.

If chemicals are to be used, then only herbicides and adjuvants cleared for aquatic use will be used in or beside water ie Glyphosate (Roundup BiActive) and Topfilm. Only suitably qualified operatives with an NPTC certificate in the Safe Use of Pesticides (PA1) and the application of pesticides in or near water using a hand held applicator (PA6W) will be permitted carry out any herbicide application on behalf of the PCWLMB. .

Herbicides will only be used in accordance with the Control of Pesticide Regulations 1986 and the Food and Environment Protection Act 1985. The storage and use of these substances will also comply with the Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations 1988. It should be noted that the use of herbicides within the Board's drainage district is also affected by agri-environment scheme requirements.

8.0 Bank Reprofiling

Sometimes the bed and banks of watercourses require re-profiling to ensure their efficient use as land drainage channels and to accommodate and store flood flows. Banks may have been poached by cattle, horses, red deer or slips may have occurred and it may be a necessary to reprofile some sections of drain. However, the environmental risk involved in bank reprofiling in the PCWLMB catchments is deemed high, particularly to water vole whose habitat and welfare, falls under protected species legislation of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended).

No bank reprofiling should be undertaken without first assessing the drain for the presence of this species and receiving instruction from the Environmental Team.

Appropriate mitigation measures and timing may be required prior to any reprofiling work. The IDB Water Vole Class licence may apply.

Consideration should be given where practicable and where landowners are in agreement, to reshaping of banks to create marginal wetland habitats (berms), however, capital grant in aid may be required in this instance.

A WFD assessment will be required for large sections of reprofiling work. Minor repairs will not require a full WFD assessment but consideration must still be paid to ensuring no impact will be made on protected species.

9.0 Culvert Installation or Repair

Any culvert installation or repair will need prior assessment by the Environmental Team as a WFD assessment may be required depending on the location and the length of the culvert to be installed. The IDB Water Vole Class licence may apply.

10.0 Control of Water Levels

The control of water levels is of paramount importance within the PCWLMB area to a number of stakeholders; urban and rural communities, landowners and a large area of national and internationally designated wildlife sites. Conservation interests, flood risk and agriculture all need to be considered to ensure the water management requirements of all stakeholders are balanced appropriately. Water levels are physically controlled within district in two ways:

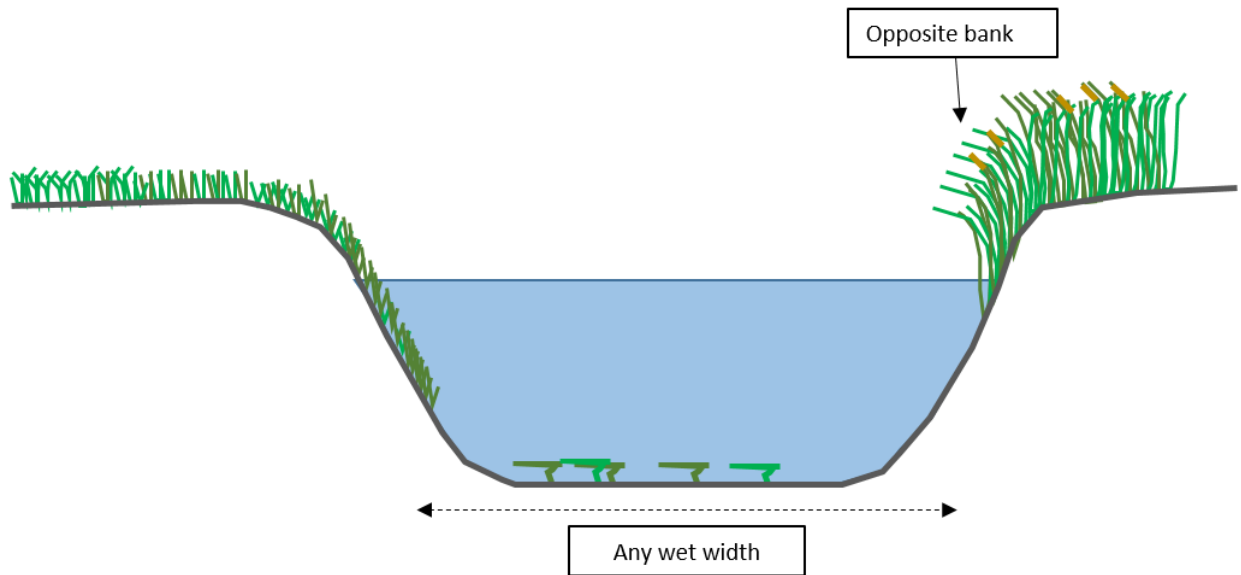
- by the maintenance and operation of pumping stations;
- by maintenance and control of water control structures (WCS).

Water levels for the Pevensey Levels are prescribed within the agreed Water Level Management Plan formulated to further nature conservation while retaining the agricultural use. Any deviation from these prescribed levels will require a Habitats Assessment to protect the conservation interests of the area.

11.0 Pevensey Specific Non-Native species

The management of floating pennywort is of great importance to the PCWLMB's ability to retain conveyance, maintain the use of pumping station and prevent deleterious changes to the native fauna and flora.

In the areas where this species is present, its control is of over riding importance. It will be pulled on a regular basis and where feasible will be followed by spraying with glyphosate, with up to monthly applications, across the full width of the channel. Cutting will not be undertaken so as to reduce the likelihood of fragments spreading



Where trees are considered to be snagging fragments, limbs will be removed so as to allow full access for its removal. Consideration will be given to control of the species on the banks where it occurs. Regular discussions with the Environmental Team will take place. This work will tie in with actions in the PCWLMP Biodiversity Action Plan.

Where *Crassula* is present, then it may be sprayed or removed on a case by case basis.

No WFD assessment is required for these actions.

References

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Environment Agency (2015). Channel Management Handbook. Report-SC110002

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