



West Sedgemoor Favourable Condition Project

Winter 2009/10

Issue 1

INTRODUCTION

This newsletter has been produced by the Parrett Drainage Board to keep you up to date on the progress of the West Sedgemoor water level management improvements project for the coming year.

The scheme is an important part of the Board's work to prepare and implement a new Water Level Management Plan (WLMP) for West Sedgemoor, which aims to improve water level control and circulation on the moor and to help achieve favourable condition for West Sedgemoor SSSI.

The new WLMP for West Sedgemoor was approved by the Drainage Board in November 2009 and funding for the scheme was secured in August 2009. The next stage of the project is to complete the design works for the control structures and culverts, so construction works can start this summer. The Board plan to complete the work over the next 3 years, 2010-2013.

The proposed works will improve the distribution of water across the moor and allow water in different blocks of land to be held at appropriate levels to meet the water level requirements for agriculture and wetland wildlife.



West Sedgemoor Middle Drain

DEVELOPMENT OF THE PROJECT

A land level survey was carried out during October 2009 to obtain up to date details of the rhynes, silt levels and condition of water control structures and culverts. This survey supplemented work carried out in March and April 2009 for the hydraulic model that has been developed by the Board to investigate water flows and flood levels on the moor.

In September 2009, trial probe holes were undertaken by the Board to determine the depth of peat and soft deposits over the moor. As expected, the depth of soft material exceeds 10m in several locations, and a more extensive investigation into ground conditions will be necessary before any major structures can be built.

An aerial survey of the moor during the flood event of

November/December 2009 provided useful information about the distribution and extent of flooding across the moor. This information will be compared with existing land level data and outputs from the hydraulic model of the water management system for West Sedgemoor.

ENQUIRIES

For enquiries relating to the West Sedgemoor Favourable Condition Project please call 01278 789906 and ask for:-

Project Engineers: Nick Harrison
Giles Oliver

Project Ecologist: Philip Brewin

The new WLMP is available for download from the IDB webpage or by contacting the IDB office in Highbridge.

www.somersetdrainageboards.gov.uk

PROPOSED WORKS IN 2010

Spring

The Board is planning to replace the existing, partially blocked, culvert under the road at Helland during March 2010. The road will be closed for up to one month while these works take place. This work will improve the flow of water to the top end of the moor and away from houses and businesses in Helland.



Blocked road culvert at Helland

In early 2010, the Board plan to undertake a load test on a driven timber pile before the design of the culverts and other structures are finalised. Following the pile test, three trial culverts will be constructed at the upper end of North Drove Rhyne to prove the design.

Summer

Early summer 2010 will see the commencement of a comprehensive ground investigation study comprising of boreholes and in situ tests to determine the depth of the soft peat and clay, and to test the strength of the materials found.

Later in the summer the Board plans to replace blocked or unserviceable culverts on North Drove Rhyne and Southside Rhyne.

Agreement from landowners and occupiers will be sought for these works and the Drainage Board will try to minimise disruption to both farming activities and the Board's improvement works. The timing of the works will be scheduled to avoid unnecessary damage to

fields during wet conditions and to minimise disturbance to wildlife.

The Board also hopes to construct and operate the first of the new penning structures. These structures will be vital in the management of water levels across the moor in both winter and summer.

Some improvement works will be undertaken on North Drove to restore and maintain satisfactory access. This is essential for future land management and ditch



High silt levels and low winter water levels in the North Drove area

maintenance; however, it will be important not to improve the droves to the extent that the moor is accessible to non-essential vehicles.

Autumn & Winter

The design of the principle penning structures at Black Smock and Owl Street will be finalised, and contracts prepared for construction in 2011.

WORKS IN 2011

Contracts for silt removal and replacement of culverts on Sedgemoor Old Rhyne, Middle Drain and the connecting rhynes will be undertaken in 2011.

The work programme for 2011 will include the construction of smaller penning structures around the moor and the improvement of the summer feed water through Wick Moor.

Contact Details:

1 Church Street, Highbridge, Somerset, TA9 3AE. Tel: 01278 789906 Fax: 01278 793443
Email: drainage.boards@btconnect.com Website: www.somersetdrainageboards.gov.uk