

Annual Environmental Activity Report 2003



Introduction

This report is published annually in accordance with the Code of Practice on Conservation, Access and Recreation. The Code requires water companies to report on those aspects of their work which bear on the environment, with particular regard to conservation, access and recreation.

Although the Company manages no areas of "open land" such as forest, downs or lakes, it carries out works in the countryside each year and follows well established procedures to ensure environmental interests are protected. The procedures involve consultation in the planning and design of any pipeline or other works; and care taken during construction, when work is under way on site.

Developments in 2002/2003

Repair and Maintenance Contract

Focus on the distribution function of the Company's operation remains with our term contractor, Norwest Holst. Norwest Holst remains sensitive to the environment with 82% of this year's mains renewals programme being undertaken by "no-dig" techniques – notably directional drilling and pipebursting. In total 16km of mains were renewed with care taken to minimize their impact on residents, schools, commercial activity and traffic flows.

Abstraction Sites Programme

Work continues on a study in connection with three local Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs): Fowlmere Watercress Beds, Dernford Fen and Sawston Hall Meadows. Taking three or four years to complete, the purpose is to establish whether the abstraction of water from the ground for public water supply has a harmful effect on those particular environments, in their capacity as sustainable habitats for flora and fauna.

During 2002/03, test pumping was undertaken at the Company's Fowlmere and Melbourn public water supply abstraction sources, both of which are near to the Fowlmere Watercress Beds SSSI. The effects of the pumping on the Fowlmere Watercress Beds were carefully monitored by the taking of groundwater and surface water levels in and around the site. Stream flows in the nearby River Shep and the Guilden Brook (both of which are fed by locally

occurring springs) were monitored by the Environment Agency at gauging stations.

A number of important hydrological and groundwater features were identified. However, there is as yet no clear evidence from which the impacts of pumping at the Melbourn and Fowlmere abstraction sources, on spring flows and surface water levels at the Fowlmere Watercress Beds, can be assessed. The analysis was made more complicated by heavy rainfall events during the summer which affected groundwater levels and flows in the River Shep and Guilden Brook. Further long term test pumping at the two abstraction sources is planned for 2003/04.

Similar work is proposed at Dernford Fen and Sawston Hall Meadows. Test pumping has been undertaken from the Sawston public water supply abstraction source during 2003 with monitoring being undertaken on water levels at Dernford Fen. Monitoring works required at Sawston Hall Meadows has been hampered by an inability to gain access to the site due to the ongoing sale associated with Sawston Hall. It is hoped that this will be resolved during 2004.

Drought Plan

Water companies' drought plans are regarded by the Environment Agency as an important element of prudent water resources management. By planning the various actions to be taken in the event of

different drought situations there is time to consider potential impacts and mitigation measures. The Company's drought plan has been updated this year, having been first produced for the Agency in 1999. A synopsis of the plan is published on the Company's web site.

Leakage

Since their introduction in 1999/2000, the Company has met mandatory leakage targets set annually by the water industry regulator, Ofwat. In 2002/03, the challenging target of 14 MI/d was achieved despite high groundwater levels, which made leak location difficult

Metering

Almost 1,600 domestic customers opted to have a meter installed and be charged for the actual volume

of water they used. With 50% of our domestic customers are now metered, Cambridge Water has one of the highest levels of domestic metering in the United Kingdom. In common with most other UK water companies, most (89%) of our commercial customers are metered.

Water Efficiency

The Company continued to provide services aimed at helping customers use water efficiently. Tap washing, water audits, underground pipe repairs and other services proved popular. The efficient use of water plays a vital role in the Company's strategy to supply the rising population in the region for the foreseeable future.

Looking Forward To 2003/2004

Environment Day

As part of the Company's 150th anniversary celebrations, local stakeholders are invited to attend an Environment Day on 15 May 2003. Guests will be given a guided tour of Fowlmere Pumping Station followed by a visit to the Fowlmere RSPB Reserve, part of the Fowlmere Watercress Beds SSSI. Both these sites are central to the work described in *Abstraction Sites Programme* and their significance will be fully explained to the guests.

The visit will continue the long-term relationship between the RSPB and Cambridge Water. The Fowlmere Reserve includes a strip of land owned by the Company and incorporated at its cost in 1998. In addition, the Company has contributed to visitor leaflets and information boards.

Mains Renewals

The mains renewals programme for 2003/04 calls for the renewal of 8 km of old mains, with the emphasis moving from the rural to the urban environment. Although this shift to the urban environment will diminish the opportunities for no-dig techniques,

with careful planning the impact on the local area will be minimised.

Large Diameter Mains Diversion Near Addenbrooke's Hospital

A major project to divert a large diameter water main at Addenbrooke's Hospital – to accommodate further expansion of its research and patient care facilities – is being planned with a sensitive approach to the local environment. Careful consideration is being given to the planning of the works to minimise noise levels, disruption to traffic and to safeguard the general operation of the hospital.

The Water Framework Directive

This legislation, issued by the European Union, will be transposed into UK Law in 2003 and, through River Basin Plans, will require actions by water companies and others to meet new environmental objectives. The Company will continue to work closely with the Environment Agency, and other water industry regulators, in order to comply with the directive, thereby helping to ensure that water use is sustainable in the long term.

General Information

Consultation And Liaison

When planning work in an environmentally sensitive area the Company liaises with relevant bodies so that, for every scheme, the best environmental results are achieved. These bodies may include the local planning authority, The Ramblers Association, The Wildlife Trust, English Heritage, English Nature, The Environment Agency, the County Archaeologist and the owner(s) of land in which the work takes place.

Staff Training and Awareness

In view of the absence of open land under management, no formal staff training programme exists in this area. However, when a need is perceived, training is given to managers, supervisors or operatives, as appropriate.

Land Acquisitions and Disposals

There were no acquisitions or disposals of land having any conservational or recreational value during the year.

Statistical Information

The Company owns 58 sites on which are situated variously pumping stations, service reservoirs, booster stations and water towers. Together the area of land amounts to 29.5 hectares. The Company's licensed area for water supply totals 117,300 hectares. The Company manages no land having recreational value but owns one site to which access is available. That is land at Fowlmere Watercress Beds (see *Abstraction Sites Programme* above), shown as location 16 on the map overleaf, which is managed by the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds.

Circulation of this Report

This report is displayed and available to all visitors to the offices of the Company at Rustat Road, Cambridge, and can be viewed on the Company's website (www.cambridge-water.co.uk). A copy is sent to each of the following: environmental health officers for the three local authorities in the Company's licensed area; Bedfordshire & Cambridgeshire Wildlife Trust; the Office of Water Services; WaterVoice Eastern; Water UK; the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs.

Customers and others who wish to raise any issue in connection with conservation or related matters should contact the Company's Planning Engineer, Mr Bob Hardy, in the first instance.



Monitoring of river levels at Fowlmere RSPB Reserve

Sites of Special Scientific Interest within the Cambridge Water Company Area of Supply

1. Warboys & Wistow Woods; Warboys Clay Pits
2. Berry Fen Earith
3. Ouse Washes
4. Papworth Wood
5. Elsworth Wood
6. Overhall Grove
7. Gamlingay Wood
8. Hayley Wood
9. Kingston Wood & Outliers
10. Buff Wood & St Denis Churchyard
11. Eversden Wood
12. Orwell Church Pit
13. Barrington Pit
14. L-Moor Shepreth
15. Holland Hall Railway Cutting
16. Fowlmere Watercress Beds
17. Dernford Fen
18. Whittlesford Thriplow Hummocky Fields; Thriplow Meadows; Thriplow Peat Holes
19. Sawston Hall Meadows
20. Alder Carr
21. Furze Hill
22. Hildersham Wood
23. Langley Wood
24. Over & Lawn Woods
25. Balsham Wood
26. Carlton Wood
27. Roman Road
28. Gog Magog Golf Course
29. The Beechwoods
30. Fleam Dyke
31. Fulbourn Fen
32. Great Wilbraham Common
33. Wilbraham Fen
34. Cherry Hinton Pits
35. Stow-cum-Ouy Fen
36. Histon Road
37. Traveller's Rest Pit
38. Madingley Wood
39. Hardwick Wood
40. Caldecote Meadows
41. Cam Washes

