

Havant Thicket

Winter Storage Reservoir

October 2005 **ISSUE 2**

Stakeholder Group Meeting

Held on 17 June 2005.

The Havant Thicket Winter Storage Reservoir Stakeholder Group was established in December 2004, when its first meeting was held. The Group is chaired by Portsmouth Water and comprises representatives from:

- **Environment Agency**
- **WaterVoice Southern**
- **Hampshire County Council**
- **Havant Borough Council**
- **East Hampshire District Council**
- **Rowlands Castle Parish Council**
- **Sir George Staunton Country Park**
- **Forestry Commission**
- **Hampshire & Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust**
- **Hampshire Ornithological Society**

The second meeting of the Stakeholder Group took place at Sir George Staunton Country Park on Friday 17th June 2005.

Presentations were made to the Group by Portsmouth Water about:-

- The Water Resources and Engineering Study that had recently been let to Entec UK Ltd.
- The findings to date of the baseline ecological survey.

Actions agreed at the meeting were:-

- ▶ Entec will discuss recreational and ecological aspects of the Reservoir with the Hampshire & Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust and the Forestry Commission at the appropriate stage in the study.
- ▶ An approach will be made to EHDC to nominate a policy planner for the Group.
- ▶ Entec will discuss the water resources and engineering aspects of the Reservoir with the Environment Agency at the appropriate stage in their study.
- ▶ Arrangements will be made for the Stakeholder Group to visit Southern Water's Testwood Lakes site.
- ▶ An approach will be made to Hampshire County Council for Leisure and Recreation data relevant to the area.
- ▶ It was agreed that the Reservoir should be included on the Rowlands Castle Parish Plan (Local Development Framework document).
- ▶ A meeting will be arranged between Portsmouth Water and the Forestry Commission to discuss access to the Reservoir.
- ▶ A meeting will be arranged between Portsmouth Water, ECOSA (their ecologist), the Rowlands Castle Wildlife Group and the Forestry Commission's ecologist.
- ▶ A presentation will be arranged in due course for Community Groups from Leigh Park and Rowlands Castle.
- ▶ The Newsletter will be produced more frequently.

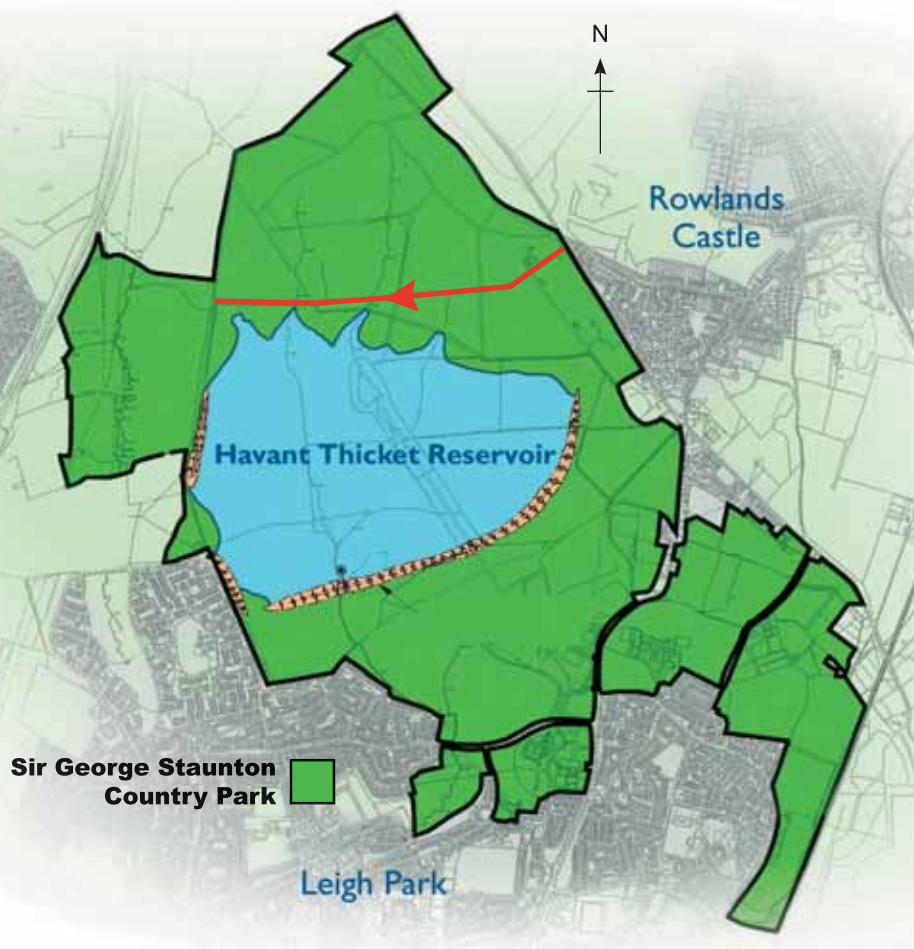


The Avenue

Future Access to the Reservoir Site

In August, Portsmouth Water and the Forestry Commission representatives met on site to talk about the alternatives for future access to the Reservoir, in response to an action raised at the Stakeholder Group meeting. The Forestry Commission's initial views (of course nothing is 'fixed in stone' at this stage) were:-

- The forest ride (highlighted red) near the junction of Manor Lodge Road and Castle Road would be suitable for construction traffic, as it is already capable of taking heavy forest plant and vehicles.
- This same forest ride would also be suitable for future public access to the visitor centre, given suitable security precautions in relation to tree harvesting operations.
- The visitor centre could be sited on Forestry Commission land just south of this access route, giving the visitor the best views across the reservoir.
- At the appropriate stage in Entec's study, they will hold discussions with the Highway Authority about access and the road junction layout that might be needed. Of course, this is just an initial proposal for the access and location of the visitor centre and other options will need to be considered as part of the study work.



Ecology Progress



The Upper Pond

Simon Colenutt of ECOSA, who is Portsmouth Water's consultant ecologist, attended two progress meetings in August to give an update on his baseline ecological survey. This survey began in April 2005 and will last for 12 months, to make sure that all seasonal species are recorded.

The first progress meeting (arranged in response to an action raised by the Stakeholder Group) was with Ian Brownlee of the Forestry Commission, Jim Berry of Rowlands Castle Wildlife Group and John Goodspeed of Hampshire Ornithological Society.

The other progress meeting was with Emma Humphrys of Sir George Staunton Country Park, David Rumble of Hampshire & Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust and Mark Lang of Entec.

In future, joint progress meetings for the two groups will be held.

Simon Colenutt's findings to date can be found on the following pages.

Dormice

- 100 boxes have been put out in woodlands.
- 100 tubes have been put out in addition; these will be kept in situ until November 2005.
- Two inspections carried out - no evidence of dormice found yet.
- Dormice are most active in the period late July - October, depending on the weather.
- Nut surveys will be carried out in winter 2005/06 to check for evidence of dormice (teeth marks).

Reptiles

- 110 'refugia' have been put out on site.
- Common lizards and slow worms are widespread (several hundred) over the site.
- Grass snakes have been found near the Upper Pond and in the field to west of The Avenue, but not many on the northern and western extremities. Probably 50 in total on site.
- Five female grass snakes were found laying eggs in one of the fields on the site. In the August survey, the eggs were just starting to hatch.
- Very few (10-15) adders - all along the northern boundary.
- The next checks on the refugia are due in September/October, when ambient temperatures become lower, and reptiles seek the warmth of the refugia.

Great Crested Newts

- Night surveys carried out (torch and bottle) at Upper Pond (The Avenue).
- Day searches carried out for eggs.
- ECOSA have also investigated the ponds immediately adjacent to the site.
- No Great Crested Newts found, but plenty of Palmate and Smooth Newts.
- No more survey work recommended until prior to construction. (!)

Birds

- Skylarks - 5 or 6 pairs
- Meadow pipits - 2 pairs bred
- Stonechat - 1 pair bred
- Lapwings - 1 pair, which doesn't appear to have bred
- Green, great and lesser spotted woodpeckers
- Tawny owls
- Bullfinches
- Song thrushes
- Hobby - 1 seen feeding on two occasions
- Whimbrel - 11 seen in the spring feeding in one of the fields - probably transient
- Curlew - 3 seen on one occasion - probably having come in from the coast
- Woodcock - 1 seen along northern edge of site
- Nightjars - seen feeding along the woodland edges. In August, a group of 6 nightjars was seen foraging together over the fields. They probably breed north of the site in Havant Thicket.
- A winter birds survey will be carried out.



Lesser Spotted Woodpecker

Bats

- Good food sources and significant bat activity recorded on the site.
- Species found to 23rd August: Natterer's Bat, Pipistrelle, Noctule, Serotine, Brandt's or Whiskered Bat (hard to distinguish), and also Daubenton's Bat.
- Noctules recorded feeding on edges of woods in south-east corner and western side of The Avenue.
- Noctule roosts in south-eastern corner of Middle Copse and in woodlands in south east corner of site.
- Some bats recorded feeding near street lights at edge of Leigh Park (attractive to moths).
- A roost for Natterer's Bats has been identified in a building to the east of the site, adjacent to the Staunton Arms twin roundabouts.
- The survey may need to be followed up next season with radio tracking and mist netting (ie very fine netting) by a licensed operator.



Grass Snake



Common Lizard

continued overleaf

Badgers

- Survey carried out - no evidence of badger sets.
- Badgers are foraging along the northern edge of site.
- Generally the wetter ground may be a deterrent against sets.

Invertebrates

- Some nationally notable species found (eg some hoverfly species).
- Woodland has ancient woodland indicator species.
- Fields are very species poor for invertebrates (owing to grazing).
- A few silver-washed fritillary and white admiral butterflies recorded.
- A purple emperor butterfly had been noted on the site in a previous year.

Vegetation

- Vegetation survey phase 1 is complete - list of species is being added to as season progresses
- Sneezewort, water betony and common spotted orchids found alongside the ditches.
- Some giant puffball noted on the south-east side of the site in a previous year.

Other

- Water voles - no sign of any.
- Mink - droppings found alongside a stream on western side of site.

Next Steps

- Main survey will continue to mid-September.
- Bats surveys are now complete, bar some checks in the woodland to the south of the site.
- Wintering birds and dormouse (nut marks) surveys due in winter 2005/06.
- Desk work will be carried out over winter, eg consultation of Hampshire Biological Record.



Water Resources & Engineering Study

As part of the Water Resources and Engineering Study, consultants Entec sent each Stakeholder a Water Resources Option Review document.

The purpose was to:-

- 1) Acquaint Stakeholders with the options that exist to make sure that sufficient water is available to meet demand in the future, while safeguarding the environment.
- 2) List those options that are initially seen as the most feasible and to demonstrate how the assessment has been made.
- 3) Obtain the views of Stakeholders on the options.
- 4) Receive suggestions from Stakeholders for any other options that have been omitted.
- 5) To confirm or otherwise that Havant Thicket Winter Storage Reservoir offers the best solution to maintain the Company's water resource balance.

A Stakeholder Workshop was held on Wednesday 28th September 2005. The Stakeholders who attended were given a presentation about the options by Rob Lawson of Entec. The options were then discussed and Stakeholders recorded their views on the 'scoring' of different options and other options that might be feasible. Entec will now analyse the results and send out a revised document. Our thanks to all those Stakeholders who were able to attend the Workshop.

Between now and December 2005, the study will be reviewing the water demand forecast for the next 25 years and continuing work on the details and costs of the options for meeting the increased demand. If the Havant Thicket Winter Storage Reservoir emerges as the recommended option, then detailed studies will begin into the design, engineering and landscaping of the reservoir and pipeline. The study will also determine the scope of the environmental impact analysis that will be needed.