

## Section 6 Landscape Conservation

### Guiding Principle

To protect and where possible enhance the unique natural beauty and distinctive landscape quality of the Fowey Estuary for future generations, and to promote the conservation of the area's natural assets by raising awareness of all estuary users of the value of those assets

### 6.1 Promote wider understanding and recognition of landscape character and quality

The Fowey ria or valley system, cut into slate, siltstone and sandstone, was drowned after the last glaciation c10,000 BC by melt water which rose to shape its coast and creeks. The River Fowey rises on Bodmin Moor and flows for 36km in a southerly direction before reaching the tidal limits just above Lostwithiel. It then enters the estuary, and finally the English Channel. The estuary is approximately 11km in length, being 0.5km wide at the mouth and about 0.25km wide along the rest of its length. The River Lerryn is the main tributary and the main creeks are Pont Pill, Penpol and Mixtow.

Its early deciduous woodland was probably cleared from the upper valley slopes and rounded hills as permanent settlements were established, from around 4000 BC. The resulting combination of semi-natural and managed land has created a landscape of variety and quality, much of which is covered by landscape designations. The Fowey ria is identified in the 1996 Cornwall Landscape Assessment as one of 45 areas of visual character in Cornwall.

The Fowey Estuary is within an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB), a statutory designation. The primary purpose of an AONB is to conserve natural beauty, but the need to safeguard agriculture, forestry and rural industries and the economic and social needs of the local communities is recognised. (*AONB's were designated by the Countryside Commission (now the Countryside Agency) under the National Parks & Access to countryside Act 1949. Legislation relating to AONB's was updated within CROW Act 2000.*). An AONB partnership between Cornwall County Council and the relevant District Councils is in place and has a statutory obligation to produce a management plan by April 2004.

The local Gribbin Head to Polperro coast is designated as Heritage Coast (HC). HC is non-statutory and applies to coast of exceptionally fine scenic quality exceeding 1 mile in length. (*Most HC's were defined in the 1980's to early 1990's by the Countryside Commission (now the Countryside Agency)*). There is currently no HC management plan but policy protection is given in

the County Council Structure Plan, District Local Plans and Service Management Plans.

Cornwall County Council has designated the upper reaches of the Fowey Estuary as an Area of Great Landscape Value (AGLV). This non-statutory designation denotes countywide significance. These areas are afforded some protection through policies in the local development plans restricting future development that affects the appearance or character of these areas.

Procedures for the protection of the geological landscape are less widespread than those for the protection of wildlife. However, the whole of the Fowey Estuary, along with Lantic Bay, has been classified as a County Geology Site (previously known as RIGS). CGS are sites of value for geological, mineralogical and geomorphological interest. Their conservation is of concern for scientific research, education, historic and aesthetic importance. CGS are a regional level, non-statutory designation and are generally afforded protection through policies in local plans.



*Lostwithiel salt marshes*

The overall quality and variety of the landscape of the Fowey Estuary is valued highly both by residents of the area and within Cornwall generally. Consequently, issues relating to landscape frequently generate debate. The visual landscape is an important factor in encouraging visitors and tourism activities, thereby contributing to the areas economy. The management of the estuary's landscape is therefore fundamental to the social and economical success of the area.

## Section 7 Nature Conservation

### Guiding Principle

**To protect, conserve and enhance the biodiversity of estuarine habitats, including the estuarine fringe, and the wildlife they support through co-operation with relevant bodies and increased awareness of estuary users**

The Fowey Estuary is biologically rich, in terms of both biodiversity and habitat. The Manual of Estuary Data (1997) is a compilation of all known surveys and species information for the Fowey Estuary. The National Trust has completed biological surveys of the land and foreshore under its jurisdiction, and the Environmental Records Centre for Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly (ERCCIS) contains some additional data. A survey of the benthic macroinvertebrate infauna of the Fowey Estuary was carried out on behalf of The National Rivers Authority in 1993. Several areas within the Fowey catchment are designated areas (section 6), with Lantic Bay being an SAC for shore dock. Within the Fowey River catchment, there are several Special Sites of Scientific Interest (SSSI) including the Upper Fowey Valley, North Fowey Valley and Boconnoc Park and Woods in the Lerryn Valley. Golitha Falls, part of Draynes Wood SSSI, is a designated National Nature Reserve.

### **7.1 Identify and pursue opportunities for habitat creation and enhancement, in line with Biodiversity Action Plan targets**

Estuaries such as the Fowey are a vital part of our natural heritage and are of great national and international importance for their wildlife. The UK Government signed up to the Biodiversity Convention in 1992 with the aim of conserving key habitats and species. Opportunities need to be sought within the Fowey Estuary to maximise the potential of the estuary's wildlife resource.

Key features, habitats and species listed in the Cornwall Biodiversity Action Plans (BAP) have been identified on the Fowey Estuary and a work program was developed with organisations to achieve the targets. Key habitats in the Fowey Estuary include salt marsh, *Zostera* beds and ancient woodland.

### **7.2 Education and public awareness to nature conservation**

Public awareness of the value of wildlife is necessary to facilitate co-operation in its protection and conservation. This will help to ensure proper balance between wildlife and people using and working on the estuary. Education is a major component of awareness and information dissemination, and resources

aimed at local schools and interest groups would help to achieve this. All age groups can be achieved by the production of leaflets, guided walks, websites and topical talks. Part of this is achieved by the Friends of the Fowey Estuary, a membership group aimed at people interested in the natural history and conservation of the Fowey Estuary Environment. The website of the Fowey Estuary Partnership is in production and will be available in 2003 at [www.foweyestuary.co.uk](http://www.foweyestuary.co.uk) and [www.foweyestuary.org.uk](http://www.foweyestuary.org.uk).

### **7.3 Increase understanding of the dynamics and distribution of species and habitats throughout the estuary and monitor their status**

#### Intertidal and Subtidal Areas

Information has been gathered on parts of the estuary through surveys carried out by the National Trust, Environment Agency and others. This provides information on which to build a more complete picture of the flora and fauna of the estuary as a whole. It would be of benefit to collate and interpret this data to identify any gaps in the existing knowledge and to identify areas for further research. Up to date information about habitats and species in and around the estuary is necessary to determine the relative importance of different areas that may require protection and conservation. The establishment of a comprehensive and up to date record of existing wildlife will also provide a baseline for assessing the existing and future health of the estuary environment. Areas specifically in need of survey include the salt marshes of Madderly and Shire Hall Moors. Salt marsh is relatively scarce in the south west and these marshes are therefore of biological importance to the area.

The community ecology of previous subtidal macrofaunal surveys has demonstrated the Fowey Estuary to contain a relatively rich and diverse community. Some intertidal areas were reported to indicate disturbance, which were tentatively attributed to copper contamination or organic enrichment. Further monitoring of the communities involved is required to establish this. A small area of the scarce biotope *Ascophyllum nodosum* and *Fucus vesiculosus* on variable salinity mid eulittoral rock (SLR.Asc.VS) is present, however no rare or scarce species were found.

#### Woodland bordering the Estuary

Insect, lichen and plant surveys have been carried out by the National Trust in areas under their jurisdiction. This provides data on areas along the Estuary's length, and some benefit could be gained by collating and interpreting the data to give a broader overview of the Estuary wildlife. This would also help to identify areas requiring further research and would provide a baseline for assessing the existing and future health of the estuary environment.

Ancient Woodland also occurs around the estuary, with rich ground flora and invertebrate species characteristic of ancient woodland present. Ancient oak

trees, beech trees and wild service trees harbour a wealth of species, including the nationally rare click-beetle (*Dirhagus pygmaeus*) as well as other uncommon beetle species. Species associated with ancient woodland are found in these woods, and include the hay-scented buckler-fern (*Dryopteris aemula*) and the ancient woodland brown snail (*Zenobiella subrufescens*).

Evidence of dormice presence in an area of hazel coppice led to the installation of dormice boxes, and the hazel coppice is being managed with this in mind. Kingfishers are present along most of the middle to upper estuary and use the shelter of the shoreline trees from which to fish.

### Other land bordering the estuary

Habitats of importance identified in some National Trust surveys include damp herb-rich meadows, wet heath, hazel coppice and oak coppice, possibly of primary origin. Salt marsh in creeks such as Lerryn and Pont Pill has also been identified. The herb-rich meadows, wet heath and ancient woodland represent habitats scarce in Cornwall. These habitats contain nationally rare species such as heath lobelia (*Lobelia urens*) and woodlark (*Lullula arborea*). Several sites contain good populations of south western species such as yellow bartsia (*Parentucellia viscosa*) and bog pimpernel (*Anagallis tenella*).

Habitats such as grassland and scrub around the estuary are of varied importance ecologically; some areas are used agriculturally while others are impenetrable and undisturbed. Some inaccessible and well-developed scrub habitats around the Fowey area are locally important for fauna, in particular for small birds. Small tall herb communities around tidal creeks form important habitat for certain bird species such as the dipper. Other bird life around the estuary include curlew, rock pipit, heron, little egret and herring gull.

Fresh water streams feeding into the estuary add to the rich diversity of habitats around the estuary. Fauna present in some of these fresh water streams include the local leaf-beetle *Galerucella lineola* and the nationally scarce craneflies (*Limonia inusta*) and (*Tipula yerburyi*).

### Cliff communities and foreshore

The lower estuary mainly contains deep silts with shingle beaches, covered by green algae and bladder wrack (*Fucus vesiculosus*). The strand line contains remains of seaweeds, cockle shells (*Cerastoderma edule*) and shore crabs (*Carcinus maenus*). The cliff edges support good populations of the maritime lichen, sea ivory (*Ramalina silquosa*) as well as a varied flora. Maritime *Festuca-Armeria* grassland on ledges and exposed areas contains species such as *Plantago maritima* and *Crithum maritimum*.

Shore dock (*Rumex rupestris*) is categorised as Annex 2 species on the Habitats Directive, is Endangered in Britain and is a Red List species. It has been recorded on cliffs in Lantivet Bay and Lantic Bay, both adjacent to Fowey, and is being monitored as part of the Back from the Brink recovery programme commissioned by Plantlife.

## **7.4 Support the Fowey Estuary Voluntary Marine Conservation Area (VMCA)**

In 1999, one of the aims of the Fowey Estuary Partnership was to set up a Voluntary Marine Conservation Area (VMCA) within the Fowey Estuary. Fowey Harbour Commissioners designated the areas to be included within their jurisdiction in 1999, with the designation of the surrounding land following in June 2003. The launch and formal designation will allow the areas of the estuary included to be highlighted and promoted in conservation terms, particularly those areas of the upper estuary which are undeveloped and unspoilt. The majority of the estuary is included, with the aspiration that the estuary as a whole be designated in the future. The commercial areas in the lower harbour are presently not included as a precautionary measure by the commercial sector, the main reservation being statutory ruling in the future.

The purpose of the VMCA is to achieve success in the following aims and objectives by working together with those with a direct interest in the estuary and its surroundings, such as fishermen, leisure and commercial users, landowners, students and statutory and non-statutory organisations.

### Key aims and objectives

- To encourage community involvement with the marine environment and to raise awareness of the value of marine and coastal life around the Fowey Estuary.
- To conserve, protect and investigate the biodiversity of the marine and coastal areas of the Fowey Estuary within its many varied habitats.
- To ensure the estuary and surrounding environs are managed in such a manner as to conserve and protect the general environment.

### Targets

- Engage the local community in VMCA work and events, through the Friends of the Fowey Estuary, the Estuary Project Officer and published or online documentation.
- Initialise a literature search on the Fowey Estuary regarding its various habitats and associated flora and fauna.
- Use the designation as a vehicle to secure funds to carry out high quality scientific studies relating to the physical and biological nature of the estuary.
- Compile new and existing knowledge and data in an accessible format, readily available to those who wish to use it.
- Use the knowledge and data to indicate the interrelationship between all aspects of the estuary, both physical and biological and to indicate the importance of a whole estuary, whole system approach.

To date, an informative leaflet designed to encourage visitors to explore the estuary has been produced, outlining the habitats around the estuary and giving some background information to the environment.

## Section 8 Historic Assets

### Guiding Principle

**To ensure the protection, promotion and understanding of the historic and cultural resource of the Fowey Estuary and to promote careful evaluation of any proposals for development that may affect them**

The Fowey Estuary is rich in archaeological remains representing its exploitation by people from prehistory to the present day. Information on these sites is contained within the Fowey Estuary Historic Audit, January 2000, published by Cornwall County Council, which includes a gazetteer of all recorded sites. The National Trust has completed a more detailed archaeological assessment for all their property between Gribben Head and Lansallos, including the Fowey Estuary. Additional information on many sites is available in the Historic Environment Record, a computerised database maintained by Cornwall County Council's Historic Environment Service. The National Inventory of Maritime Sites compiled by English Heritage is a database of wreck sites, and the records for the Fowey area are in Appendix 4 of the Fowey Historic Audit.

### 8.1 Designations

Statutory protection is afforded in some cases by Scheduled Monument, Listed Building or Conservation Area status. However, most archaeological sites and historic structures have no such protection and there are no designated wreck sites in the area. Both Fowey and Lostwithiel are designated Historic Settlements, which is a non-statutory planning designation to highlight the Medieval origin of these settlements.

### 8.2 Promote knowledge & public awareness of local heritage

The rich local heritage of the Fowey Estuary offers opportunities for locals and visitors to understand more about the past use of the estuary. The provision of information and sensitively planned access arrangements can aid greater awareness and understanding of the local heritage.

**Interpretative Literature** – The extensive literature relating to the Fowey Estuary includes books on different aspects or periods of its development, which do not set out to provide either histories of the estuary as a whole or

interpretation of specific archaeological sites. The Visitors' Guide to the Fowey Estuary provides an interpretative guide to the estuary.

**Interpretation centres** – Aspects of the history of the estuary are presented in the two small museums at Fowey & Lostwithiel, run by the respective town councils. They do not provide interpretative material for the history and archaeology of the estuary as a whole, but exhibit a variety of archaeological finds and traditional artefacts, collections of old photographs & documents. There are also private collections open to the public at the Farm Museum at St. Winnow, and the Daphne Du Maurier Visitor Centre in Fowey that focuses on the writers' life and work. A new heritage centre using the old station buildings at Caffamill Pill has been proposed.

**On site Interpretation** – There are panels providing historical information at Readymoney Cove; at the end of the Saints Way footpath; Coulson's Park, Lostwithiel; Restormel Castle; Hall Walk, Polruan; and in the car parks in Fowey, Readymoney and Lerryn. The sequence of panels at Restormel Castle includes interpretative plans and reconstruction drawings. Further on-site interpretation is not felt to be necessary at the present time, but if it is developed, it must be in keeping with the area and follow the Fowey Estuary interpretative strategy.

**Guided walks, talks and boat trips** – The Caradon Countryside Service, The National Trust, English Heritage and in recent years Restormel Borough Council's Daphne Du Maurier Festival organise events which explore the history and environment of the estuary. Some walks in the Countryside Services Programmes are led by Blue Badge Guides, who provide further walks and a limited number of specialist boat trips. Walks and talks are also organised occasionally by the County Council's Historic Environment Service, Cornwall Archaeological Society, Old Cornwall and other societies. Assistance should be given where appropriate by local authorities to support and promote such events to wider audiences.

### **8.3 Protect and conserve the historic environment**

Local archaeological heritage is managed according to ownership and status on statutory lists. English Heritage maintain and manage St. Catherine's Castle, Fowey Castle, Restormel Castle and St. Saviour's Chapel ruins as guardianship, archaeological and historic monuments. The National Trust manages its extensive properties on the estuary as historic landscapes, and has consolidated many historic structures within them. Caradon District Council has repaired and made safe a limekiln at Lerryn, and Polruan Town Trust restored the Old Coal Wharf and 15th century blockhouse at Polruan. Hall Chapel has been consolidated as a building of archaeological and historical interest with funding from English Heritage.

Information about surviving sites is contained in the Fowey Estuary Historic Audit. More detailed site-specific surveys are required to identify the history, degree of survival and condition of many key sites. Following the completion of the Historic Audit, broad management recommendations for the historic environment of the Fowey Estuary have been prepared and approved by the Fowey Estuary Partnership.

Statutory protection is afforded to some archaeological sites and historic structures by scheduled monument, listed building, or conservation area status. These apply to only 5% of the sites recorded during the 1999 Fowey Estuary Historic Audit. Over 90% of sites identified by the audit that are known or suspected to have surviving remains are not protected. The County Council's Historic Environment Service will continue to incorporate these sites into the Historic Environment Record where appropriate, although statutory protection for many of these sites is unlikely. These sites will be best protected through the policies of local organisations and voluntary site-specific management agreements.

The Fowey Estuary Historic Audit identified many new sites that have not been recorded before. Previous archaeological recording has only taken place at the following sites:

St. Catherine's Castle; Quay Street, Lostwithiel; Restormel Hillfort; Restormel Castle; Madderley Moor, South East of Lostwithiel; Ethy Estate; Hall Chapel, Bodinnick.

These projects were undertaken to enhance the record of scheduled or listed sites, mostly in advance of repair work, or to record newly discovered sites in response to development. It is hoped that where sites have now been identified, local authorities will encourage the landowners to commission archaeological recording and research work. The local planning authorities should also require archaeological recording as a condition of planning permission.



*St. Catherine's Castle, Fowey*