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Arboriculture

Ecology

Forestry & Woodland Management

Landscape & Green Infrastructure

Minerals & Waste Restoration

Ecological Proof of Evidence for Obj/27
Summary regarding:
Land west of Furze Lane, Winslow, Bucks

Evidence provided on behalf of:

The Trustees of the H.C. Stock Will Trust

Expert Ecological Witness:

Thomas Haynes, MSc

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1. INTRODUCTION

Author Details

- 1.1. My name is Thomas Haynes and I am the Principle Consultant and Manager of the Ecological Business Unit of Lockhart Garratt Ltd, an environmental consultancy with offices in Oxfordshire and Northamptonshire.
- 1.2. I hold a Master of Science degree in Botanical Conservation from Plymouth University, a Bachelor of Science honours degree in Countryside Management from University of Wales, Aberystwyth and a National Diploma in Environmental Management from Rodbaston Agricultural College, Staffordshire. I am a Full Member of the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management.
- 1.3. I am the Principal Consultant of the Ecological Business Unit within Lockhart Garratt, which provides professional advice in the areas of ecological planning, biodiversity management and nature conservation.
- 1.4. My professional experience includes the management and development of large scale ecological and nature conservation projects including national and international projects requiring ecological field surveys, analysis of ecological data, landscape scale habitat analysis and the assessment of species and habitat and providing recommendations for ecological mitigation and compensation with over 12 years of professional experience.

Project Involvement

- 1.5. Lockhart Garratt Ltd was appointed by the Trustees of the H.C. Stock Will Trust in March 2019 to prepare and present ecological evidence in relation to an objection to the compulsory purchase of 1.1 ha of land west of Furze Lane, Winslow (“the site”) as an Ecological Compensation Site (“ECS”) (Site ECS B9) as part of the application for the proposed Network Rail (East-West Rail Bicester to Bedford Improvements) Order following the procedures laid out in The Transport and Works Act 1992.
- 1.6. I undertook an inspection of the Site on the 28th March 2019 and again on the 2nd April 2019. My site visit was conducted with full access to the Site with no limitations. This field inspection gave me a complete understanding of the Site and its ecological value within its local area and the broader landscape, while also giving me a thorough understanding of its usage and potential usage by noteworthy and protected species, which has assisted me in the preparation of this Proof.

2. SCOPE OF EVIDENCE

- 2.1. My Proof of Evidence covers matters relating to the proposed use of the 1.1 ha of the Site as an ECS and, in particular, the necessity for the use of the site as an ECS by Network Rail and alternative approaches to environmental mitigation.
- 2.2. My Proof of Evidence covers, in particular, matters relating to the movement of protected species with an emphasis on Great Crested Newts and their movement across the landscape and the alternative Ecological Compensation Sites proposed by both the Client and by Network Rail to replace my Client's Site. Using this evidence base, it will challenge the requirements for the use of the Client's land as an ECS and, subsequently, the need for its compulsory acquisition.
- 2.3. It will firstly set out a summary of my ecological findings in relation to the site, and it will then comment upon the relevant topics identified within various documents produced by Network Rail as part of the project application and the appeal process.

3. SUMMARY OF THE ECOLOGICAL PROOF OF EVIDENCE

- 3.1. It is my considered opinion that the proposal to provide the Site as Ecological Compensation under the Ecological Mitigation Scheme as ECS B9 will not provide any meaningful compensation for any habitats lost to the broader proposal. The small area of the land holding (1.1 ha) and the existing ecological value, mean that it will provide only a limited overall ecological benefit (there can be no net gain of habitat area).
- 3.2. In my professional opinion, the proposals to utilise larger areas of Moco Farm as part of the Ecological Mitigation Scheme proposed as ECS B28 provide much improved ecological benefits over the modifications proposed as part of ECS B9.
- 3.3. There are some inconsistencies relating to how Network Rail have defined the territory and spatial dynamics of Great Crested Newts in the local area. In my professional opinion, Great Crested Newts of a separate genetic population should not be translocated to the Site as it is already within the territory of a breeding population with breeding pools approximately 30m away.
- 3.4. In my professional opinion, if the metapopulations are indeed considered to be genetically related to the existing breeding population on the neighbouring The Yellow land, then it is possible to consider the creation of new ponds in close proximity to the breeding pools on The Yellow Land without compulsory purchase of the Site and also support the enhancement of the existing balancing pools. Dependent on the overall population size of the existing population in the balancing pools, it may also be possible to provide additional recruitment from the same metapopulation.
- 3.5. As such, I conclude that my client's Statement of Case is fully supported by my evidence.

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AERIAL SURVEYING

SITE SURVEYING | SITE MONITORING | 3D MODELLING | ORTHOMOSAIC | DIGITAL SURFACE MAPPING

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DIGITAL REPRESENTATION AND GIS ANALYSIS | GRAPHIC DESIGN

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STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT | ECOLOGICAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT

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NEW WOODLAND DESIGN | CARBON | WOODLAND EVALUATION

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LANDSCAPE & VISUAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT | LANDSCAPE DESIGN & SPECIFICATION
LANDSCAPE MANAGEMENT PLANS | GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE PLANNING & DESIGN | EXPERT WITNESS

MINERALS & WASTE RESTORATION

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COST ENGINEERED LANDSCAPE & HABITAT DESIGN | IMPLEMENTATION MANAGEMENT & CLERK OF WORKS
RESTORATION & AFTERCARE MANAGEMENT PLAN (RAMP) | SOIL SURVEY & ADVICE