

14 February 2007

FARMING FLOODPLAINS FOR THE FUTURE

ONE OF SIX NEW PILOTS TO PUSH POLICY ON FLOODING AND COASTAL

EROSION

The role that farm land can play in cutting the risk of flooding is to be investigated in a new Defra funded study aimed at pushing the boundaries of policy on flooding and coastal erosion.

The Sow and Penk Drainage Board as a key member of the Staffordshire Washland Partnership welcomed the £294,500 grant from Defra's Flood & Coastal Erosion Risk Management Innovation Fund for the "Farming Floodplains for the Future" project. This will encourage farm diversification, ecotourism and other economically and environmentally sustainable land use in flood plains around the Rivers Trent, Sow & Penk.

The potentially most exciting facet of this project is the opportunity to take a broad look at flood risk management, in line with the Drainage Board's normal functions, and combine these two operations to produce an integrated system.

Welcoming the Drainage Board's financial commitment for the three year project, David Patrick of JBA Consulting, the Boards Environmental Advisor, said

"This is one of six pilot projects funded by Defra which are testing out new and innovative approaches to deal with flooding and coastal erosion. These pilots will test the potential of whether these innovative ideas can form part of our mainstream policy and delivery.

The aim of the Project is to enhance land management practices in the lowland catchments of the Rivers Trent, Sow & Penk. It will provide a positive model of holistic flood risk management – with added socio-economic and environmental benefits."

The project will largely be delivered through the Sow and Penk Drainage Board and this is an excellent opportunity to show how Boards can assist in implementing more sustainable land management whilst managing flood risks.

Further details can be found at:

<http://www.defra.gov.uk/enviro/fcd/policy/strategy/innovfnd.htm>

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