

COUNTY: NORTHAMPTONSHIRE **SITE NAME:** WOLLASTON MEADOWS

District: Wellingborough

Status: Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) notified under Section 28 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981

Local Planning Authority: Wellingborough District Council

National Grid Reference: SP 898650

Ordnance Survey Sheet 1:50,000: 152 **1:10,000:** SP 86 NE, SP 86 SE,
SP 96 NW

Date Notified (Under 1949 Act): **Date of Last Revision:**

Date Notified (Under 1981 Act): 1985 **Date of Last Revision:**

Area: 14.6 ha 36.0 ac

Other Information: This is a new site.

Description and Reasons for Notification

Wollaston Meadows consists of two adjacent hay fields situated on a flat low-lying site in the alluvial flood plain of the River Nene. The grassland is diverse and species-rich and forms the largest known example in the county of the *Alopecurus pratensis*-*Sanguisorba officinalis* flood meadow community. Although once widespread in southern river valleys, this neutral grassland type is declining rapidly as a result of agricultural changes and is now very rare in Northamptonshire and generally rare in Great Britain.

The sward in both fields is composed of numerous species of grasses and herbs and is particularly rich in the larger western field which has been less intensively managed than the eastern meadow. The most common species include meadow foxtail *Alopecurus pratensis*, crested dog's-tail *Cynosurus cristatus*, red fescue *Festuca rubra*, Yorkshire fog *Holcus lanatus*, tufted hair-grass *Deschampsia cespitosa*, great burnet *Sanguisorba officinalis*, meadowsweet *Filipendula ulmaria*, meadow vetchling *Lathyrus pratensis* and common knapweed *Centaurea nigra*. Other notable species occurring are yellow oat-grass *Trisetum flavescens*, quaking-grass *Briza media*, salad burnet *Sanguisorba minor*, lady's bedstraw *Galium verum* and cowslip *Primula veris*.

The county rarity dropwort *Filipendula vulgaris* is also found throughout the site.

Overgrown hedges, scrub and the surrounding ditches and dykes with their associated aquatic vegetation add interest to the area providing habitat for invertebrates, birds and small mammals.

Re-presentation of details approved by Council. Re-typed October 1999.