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**ENVIRONMENT
AND HERITAGE
SERVICE**

DEPARTMENT OF THE ENVIRONMENT

DECLARATION OF AREA OF SPECIAL SCIENTIFIC INTEREST AT CAM LOUGH, COUNTY ARMAGH. ARTICLE 28 OF THE ENVIRONMENT (NORTHERN IRELAND) ORDER 2002.

The Department of the Environment (the Department), having consulted the Council for Nature Conservation and the Countryside and being satisfied that the area described and delineated on the attached map (the area) is of special scientific interest by reason of the flora and fauna and accordingly needs to be specially protected, hereby declares the area to be an area of special scientific interest to be known as the 'Cam Lough Area of Special Scientific Interest'.

The area is of special scientific interest for its aquatic flora and fauna. Cam Lough is a mid-altitude lake lying in a steep-sided valley between Slieve Gullion and Sturgan Mountain to the west and Camlough Mountain to the east. The bed of the lake varies between boulder and rock to sand and gravel, with sandy substrates predominating in deeper waters. The diverse aquatic plant community is characteristic of unpolluted water bodies with low levels of plant nutrients and is among the best examples of its type in Northern Ireland. Shoreweed *Littorella uniflora* is abundant along the shore and in the shallows, with occasional Quillwort *Isoetes lacustris* in deeper water. Floating Club-rush *Eleogiton fluitans*, the Stoneworts *Chara* spp. and the moss *Fontinalis antipyretica* also occur in these submerged lawns. Other aquatic plants such as Canadian Waterweed *Elodea canadensis*, Perfoliate Pondweed *Potamogeton perfoliatus*, Various-leaved Pondweed *P. gramineus*, Lesser Marshwort *Apium inundatum* and Alternate Water-milfoil *Myriophyllum alterniflorum* occur in submerged beds, while Amphibious Bistort *Persicaria amphibia*, Broad-leaved Pondweed *P. natans* and occasional Unbranched Bur-reed *Sparganium emersum* form floating rafts on the surface. Scarce species include Eight-stamened Waterwort *Elatine hydropiper*, Six-stamened Waterwort *E. hexandra*, Red Pondweed *Potamogeton alpinus* and Lesser Pondweed *P. pusillus*.

The emergent vegetation along most of the exposed shoreline consists of swamp dominated by Common Spike-rush *Eleocharis palustris*, with stands of Reed Canary-grass *Phalaris arundinacea* behind. Where the shore is sheltered, as in the embayment at the northern end of the lough, significant areas of fen have developed.

Other wetland habitats include wet woodland and marshy grassland. At the northern end of the lough, mixed Willow *Salix* spp. scrub grows over rich fen vegetation. At the southern end, the woodland consists of mixed Willow *Salix* spp. and Downy Birch *Betula pubescens* scrub over acid fen vegetation. Marshy grassland is also more acidic in character at the southern end of the lough than to the north.

Cam Lough also provides valuable habitat for a range of wetland animals, including birds and invertebrates.

SCHEDULE

The following operations and activities appear to the Department to be likely to damage the flora and fauna of the area:

1. Any activity or operation which involves the damage or disturbance by any means of the surface and subsurface of the land, including ploughing, rotovating, harrowing, reclamation and extraction of minerals, including sand, gravel and peat.
2. Any change in the present annual pattern and intensity of grazing, including any change in the type of livestock used or in supplementary feeding practice.
3. Any change in the established method or frequency of rolling, mowing or cutting.
4. The application of manure, slurry or artificial fertiliser.
5. The application of herbicides, fungicides or other chemicals deployed to kill any form of wild plant, other than plants listed as being noxious in the Noxious Weeds (Northern Ireland) Order 1977.
6. The storage or dumping, spreading or discharge of any material not specified under paragraph 5 above.
7. The destruction, displacement, removal or cutting of any plant, seed or plant remains, other than for:
 - (i) plants listed as noxious in the Noxious Weeds (Northern Ireland) Order 1977;
 - (ii) normal cutting or mowing regimes for which a consent is not required under paragraph 3 above.
8. The release into the area of any animal (other than in connection with normal grazing practice) or plant. 'Animal' includes birds, mammals, fish, reptiles, amphibians and invertebrates. 'Plant' includes seed, fruit or spore.
9. Burning.
10. Changes in tree or woodland management, including afforestation, planting, clearing, selective felling and coppicing.
11. Construction, removal or disturbance of any permanent or temporary structure including building, engineering or other operations.
12. Alteration of natural or man-made features, the clearance of boulders or large stones and grading of rock faces.

13. Operations or activities which would affect wetlands (including marsh, fen, streams and open water), e.g.
 - (i) change in the methods or frequency of routine drainage maintenance;
 - (ii) modification of the structure of any watercourse;
 - (iii) lowering of the water-table, permanently or temporarily;
 - (iv) change in the management of bank-side vegetation.
14. The killing or taking of any wild animal except where such killing or taking is treated as an exception in Articles 5, 6, 11, 17, 20, 21 and 22 of the Wildlife (Northern Ireland) Order 1985.
15. The following activities undertaken in a manner likely to damage or disturb the wildlife of the area:
 - (i) Educational activities;
 - (ii) Research activities;
 - (iii) Recreational activities;
 - (iv) Exercising of animals.
16. Changes in game, waterfowl or fisheries management or fishing or hunting practices.
17. Use of vehicles or craft likely to damage or disturb the wildlife of the area.

FOOTNOTES

- (a) Please note that consent by the Department to any of the operations or activities listed in the Schedule does not constitute planning permission. Where required, planning permission must be applied for in the usual manner to the Department under Part IV of the Planning (Northern Ireland) Order 1991.
- (b) Also note that many of the operations and activities listed in the Schedule are capable of being carried out either on a large scale or in a very small way. While it is impossible to define exactly what is large and what is small, the Department would intend to approach each case in a common sense and practical way. It is very unlikely that small scale operations would give rise for concern and if this was the case, the Department would normally give consent, particularly if there is a long history of the operation being undertaken in that precise location.