Document B

An Agency within the Department of the Environment for Northern Ireland

ENVIRONMENT AND HERITAGE SERVICE

DEPARTMENT OF THE ENVIRONMENT FOR NORTHERN IRELAND

DECLARATION OF AREA OF SPECIAL SCIENTIFIC INTEREST AT GREENAN LOUGH, COUNTY DOWN. ARTICLE 24 OF THE NATURE CONSERVATION AND AMENITY LANDS (NORTHERN IRELAND) ORDER 1985.

The Department of the Environment for Northern Ireland (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 'Greenan Lough Area of Special Scientific Interest'.

The area is of special scientific interest because of its wetland flora and fauna. Greenan Lough includes the open waters of the lough, in addition to a range of other associated wetland vegetation types. Reedbeds and carr woodland occur around the lough; other communities present include species-rich fen meadow and an unusual fen community with a high cover of grasses. Adjoining areas of grassland and scrub woodland provide additional habitat diversity.

The open waters of the lough contain a variety of aquatic plant species, including White Water-lily *Nymphaea alba* and Various-leaved Pondweed *Potamogeton gramineus*, often growing with Canadian Waterweed *Elodea canadensis*. Shoreweed *Littorella uniflora*, Water Lobelia *Lobelia dortmanna* and Alternate Water-milfoil *Myriophyllum alterniflorum* are typically found along the shoreline. The emergent vegetation consists of stands of Bottle Sedge *Carex rostrata*, Bogbean *Menyanthes trifoliata*, Water Mint *Mentha aquatica*, Common Marsh-bedstraw *Galium palustre*, Gypsywort *Lycopus europaeus*, Unbranched Bur-reed *Sparganium emersum* and Water-plantain *Alisma plantago-aquatica*. Locally, stands of Common Club-rush *Schoenoplectus lacustris* and Common Reed *Phragmites australis* have developed along the shore.

In places, the swamp merges into a sparse carr woodland of Alder *Alnus glutinosa* and Grey Willow *Salix cinerea*. This is often backed by species-poor fen, in which Sharp-flowered Rush *Juncus acutiflorus*, Creeping Bent *Agrostis stolonifera*, Lesser Spearwort *Ranunculus flammula*, Meadowsweet *Filipendula ulmaria* and Water Mint *Mentha aquatica* are prominent.

To the east of the site, there are small pockets of fen meadow, characterised by Blunt-flowered Rush *Juncus subnodulosus* and Marsh Thistle *Cirsium palustre*, with natural transitions to sedge-rich grasslands. To the south, the ground is gently sloping but uneven, giving rise to variations in water levels which, together with different grazing regimes, results in considerable variation in the vegetation cover. This includes an unusual fen community in which grasses make up much of the cover with abundant sedges, rushes and associated herbs. Species present include Star Sedge *Carex echinata*, which is often prominent, in addition to Glaucous Sedge *C. flacca*, Carnation Sedge *C. panicea*, Soft-rush *Juncus effusus*, Sharp-flowered Rush *J. acutiflorus*, Sweet Vernal Grass *Anthoxanthum odoratum*, Yorkshire-fog *Holcus lanatus* and Red Fescue *Festuca rubra*.

On the western side of the lough, scrub woodland has developed. Hazel *Corylus avellana* is the dominant species, with occasional Holly *Ilex aquifolium* and Hawthorn *Crataegus monogyna*, and a few mature Sycamore *Acer pseudoplatanus*, Downy Birch *Betula pubescens* and Ash *Fraxinus excelsior*. The field layer is dominated by dense Bramble *Rubus fruticosus*, with Ivy *Hedera helix* and Honeysuckle *Lonicera periclymenum* both widespread. The ground cover is sparse but quite variable, with pockets of Wood-sorrel *Oxalis acetosella*, scattered carpets of Bluebell *Hyacinthoides non-scripta*, and areas dominated by grasses. Some of the fields to the west and north are covered by a mosaic of mesotrophic grassland, stands of Bracken *Pteridium aquilinum*, thickets of Bramble *Rubus fruticosus* and scattered Blackthorn *Prunus spinosa* scrub.

Greenan Lough contains a number of vascular plants with a restricted distribution in the British Isles, including Many-stalked Spike-rush *Eleocharis multicaulis*, Blunt-flowered Rush *Juncus subnodulosus*, Floating Club-rush *Eleogiton fluitans*, Fen Bedstraw *Galium uliginosum* and Marsh St John's-wort *Hypericum elodes*.

Greenan 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. Introduction of mowing or other methods of cutting vegetation.

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 paragraphs 4 or 5 above.

7. The destruction, displacement, removal or cutting of any plant, seed or plant remains, other than for plants listed as noxious in the Noxious Weeds (Northern Ireland) Order 1977.

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, bog, rivers, streams and open water), eg

    (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, 12, 16, 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.

Sealed with the Official Seal of the
Department of the Environment for
Northern Ireland on 11 February 1998

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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. Operations or activities covered by planning permission are not normally covered in the list of Notifiable Operations.

(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.