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Dig ponds to stop flooding

The UK charity Pond Conservation says more use should be made of ponds to stop floods.

For World Wetlands Day on Saturday 2 February, Pond Conservation is calling for the adoption of a national Small Waterbody Strategy, to use ponds to help solve the big water management problems: urban runoff, pollution and floods.

Well-sited ponds can completely absorb water running off farmland, before it reaches rivers and streams. Having a pond in every field could make a major contribution to flood prevention: ponds hold water back at source, recharge aquifers and reduce the volume of water going into rivers, reducing flooding.

Dr Jeremy Biggs (Pond Conservation Director of Policy and Research) said 'at a site in Leicestershire², all the field drainage from a 25 hectare catchment is intercepted by half a dozen small ponds. For World Wetlands Day, we wanted to highlight how these tiny, apparently-insignificant, water bodies could make a major contribution to flood prevention.'

Current flood defence schemes are expensive and often don't tackle the problem until it is too late - once the water is in the river, flooding is often inevitable. But strategic networks of ponds stop the water reaching the river in the first place, controlling the problem at source. Ponds are also cheap and easy to construct making them a practical small-scale solution to flooding.

For the full report, photos and to arrange an interview, contact:

Dr Jeremy Biggs, Pond Conservation Director of Policy and Research.

01865 483608 or 07818 686639 jeremy.biggs@brookes.ac.uk

Ruth Welters, Pond Conservation Communications Manager.

01865 483114 or 07974 946071 rwelters@brookes.ac.uk

Notes for editors:

1. Pond Conservation is a UK-based charity. We carry out a wide range of work to create, conserve and protect ponds and other freshwaters. Ponds are a unique resource for wildlife, an important part of our history and culture and provide services such as flood prevention and pollutant trapping. Ponds are a threatened habitat - in the UK ponds declined by over a third from the 1940s to the 1980s; and the many of those remaining are damaged by pollution. Ponds have recently been made a priority habitat under the UK Biodiversity Action Plan. www.pondconservation.org.uk

2. The research on ponds and field drainage was carried out at the Game & Wildlife Conservation Trust's Allerton Project Farm, Loddington, Leicestershire.

3. World Wetlands Day is on Saturday 2 February 2008, and is held every year to raise awareness of the importance of wetlands to people and wildlife. The theme this year is 'Healthy Wetlands, Healthy People' showing, amongst other things, how wetlands can be used to control floods. Pond Conservation's aims to highlight the importance and potential of small, but highly important wetlands that are often overlooked by Governments and water management agencies. One third of global standing water is found in small waterbodies of less than ten hectares. World Wetlands Day celebrates the signing of the Ramsar convention to protect wetlands globally. World Wetlands Day website www.ramsar.org/wwd/8/wwd2008_index.htm

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