

SCHEDULE OF QUALIFYING LAND FOR MAPPING OPEN COUNTRY

Ramblers' Association East Yorkshire and Derwent Area	North East Region 5	Sheet 2 of 2
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RA Map	Site references	Name on Map	OS Grid Ref	Area (ha)	Parcels
18	A, B, C, D, H	Water Dale : West	SE 820 618	63	5
Qualifying type	Vegetation Type	Justification for inclusion			
Mountain	Heather Moor	Predominance of qualifying type (M, M, H, D)			
Moor	Rough acid grassland	Contiguous to large parcel of open country			
Heath	Calcareous grassland	Contiguous to existing access land or common land			
Down	Scattered trees or scrub	Provides clearer physical boundary to larger area			
	Bracken	Local value of small parcel (view, feature, accessible, PRoW etc)			
	Rock outcrops	Provides means of access to other access land			
		Steep sided			

This submission supports the inclusion of the area show as open country on the Draft Map and seeks extend the boundaries of open country as shown.

Comments supporting vegetation type and justification for inclusion:

Water Dale is a long valley west of Thixendale village. It consists of an east-west main dale and parts of two side dales to the S. A road runs along the main valley bottom. These sites form the central section of the dale. The NLT attributes for the dale are RLE. The dale is listed in the Grassland Inventory as Water Dale A-C NY/SE86/R02.

The **Phase I Habitat** Survey maps show the vegetation as unimproved calcareous grassland. The whole area was first notified as an SSSI (1000006 Waterdale) in 1954, amended in 1981 and revised in 1983. The citation describes the site as follows: "Waterdale is one of the most important chalk grassland sites known in the Yorkshire Wolds, consisting of an east-west main dale and parts of two side dales. It is particularly important as a species-rich site containing a variety of north and south-facing aspects. The grassland types are very varied and include the following types of grassland:

- A tor-grass *Brachypodium pinnatum*/red fescue *Festuca rubra* grassland on south facing slopes, rich in herbs including rock-rose *Helianthemum nummularium*, small scabious *Scabiosa columbaria*, greater knapweed *Centaurea scabiosa* and field scabious *Knautia arvensis*. On deeper soils this community becomes dominated by false oat-grass *Arrhenatherum elatius*.
- A red fescue grassland, also with a southerly aspect, which includes the herbs dropwort *Filipendula vulgaris*, rock-rose and wild thyme *Thymus praecox*.
- A red-fescue grassland with north and north-west aspects, which includes pignut *Conopodium majus* and common milkwort *Polygala vulgaris*, yellow rattle *Rhinanthus minor* and devil's-bit scabious *Succisa pratensis*, but little rock-rose. Pignut is characteristic of chalk grassland in the Yorkshire Wolds but extremely rare on other chalk sites.
- A tor-grass sward with a south-eastern aspect and the herbs clustered bellflower *Campanula glomerata* and pepper saxifrage *Silaum silaus*. This latter species is unknown on chalk grassland sites in southern England.
- A mixed grassland on north-facing slopes. Grasses included tufted hair-grass *Deschampsia cespitosa*, sweet vernal-grass *Anthoxanthum odoratum*, red fescue and crested dog's-tail *Cynosurus cristatus* with the herbs lady's bedstraw *Galium verum* and devil's-bit scabious.

Scrub is developing on some parts of the site and this is usually hawthorn *Crataegus monogyna*, but there is also gorse *Ulex europaeus*, especially on parts of the south-facing slope."

The **Phase II Habitat** in August 1982 survey areas **A, B, C** and **D** recorded 14 grasses and 65 other herbs, of which 17 were calcicolous indicator species. Analysis of the data (see Table) showed that the areas A-D were assigned an NVC classification as follows: A and D: GC2d; B and C: CG2c; B: CG0.

A recent survey, including **visiting the site** in August 2002 and inspecting **aerial photographs** taken in 2000, shows that the site appears as described in 1980s, and has not received any recent agricultural improvements and indicates that a small additional area, **H**, should be included.

The evidence presented here suggests that the area mapped is predominantly unimproved calcareous grassland and is, apart from the minor addition mentioned above, correctly mapped on the Draft Map as open country.

Prepared by:	JJS, MB, TKH	Date:	June 2003
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