

Landscape Character Type 4: Valley floors

LCT 4C ESTUARIES

Constituent Land Description Units 415

Location

On the eastern side of the Exe estuary between Topsham and Exeter [small parts of Land Description Unit 415 lie outside East Devon District]

Description

This type consists of the estuaries of major rivers along the south coast of the county, which range from wide sandy bays to extensive mudflats and reedbeds. Here the type consists of the flat river valley floor (excluding the river) of the river Exe, which is found west of Exmouth and extends northwards to Topsham. It is a very extensive open expanse of intertidal mudflat with limited areas of sand and saltmarsh. When covered with water it reflects the colour of the huge skies above contrasts with the rising landform to either side, which frames it and provides low level enclosure and shelter. This is wildland, unenclosed and covered with a shallow layer of salt water at each high tide, therefore without settlement, roads or footpaths. It is by its tidal nature unmanageable, and is used largely for water-related recreation. It differs from the river valleys along the south coast through its larger scale and the dominance of water.



Key Characteristics

- Extensive estuary opening onto south coast
- Wide, shallow area of damp mudflats, covered with shallow salt water at high tide; area defined by permanently dry land to east and west
- Some sand and saltmarsh away from mouth
- Enclosed and sheltered
- Low accessibility but well used for water-related recreation
- Unsettled and without highway network
- Peaceful despite settlement in adjoining Land Description Units
- Focus for adjoining landscape units: highly valued and visually attractive landscape

Management Guidelines

Farming and land use: conserve by

1. Ensuring that upstream abstraction for agricultural or industrial uses does not reduce freshwater flows.

Semi-natural habitats: conserve by

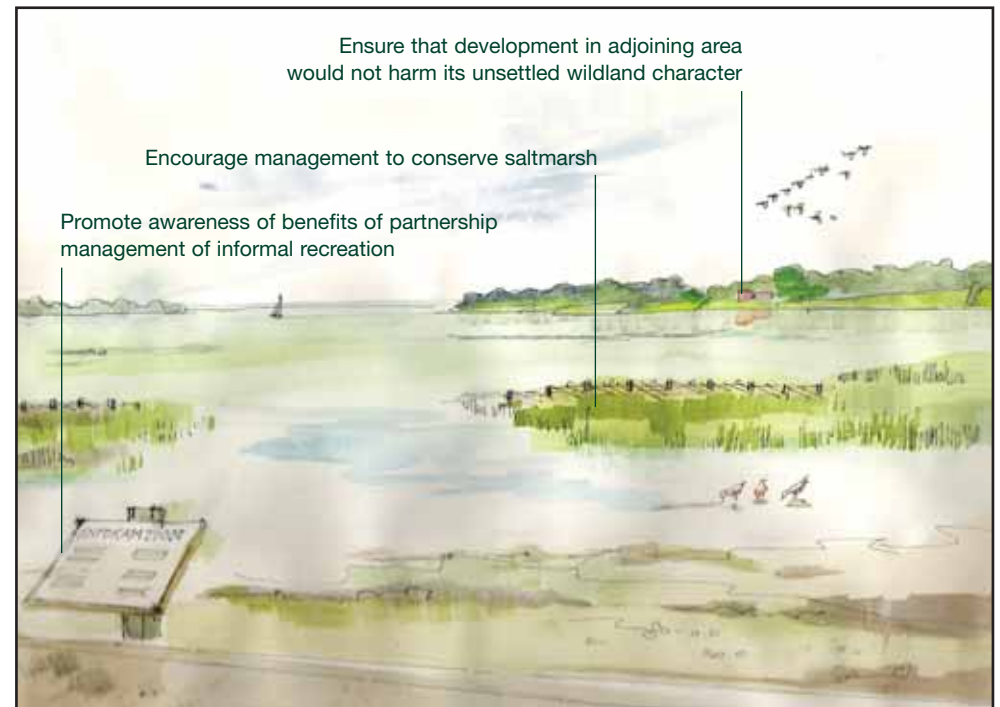
1. Encouraging management, where possible, to conserve saltmarsh.

Settlement and development: conserve by

1. Ensuring that development proposals adjoining this type would not harm its unsettled wildland character.
2. Permitting development in this type only where there will be no negative impacts on its biodiversity value and wildland character.
3. Encouraging screening of and an appropriate scale of development in adjoining areas to reduce impact.
4. Ensure consideration of sensitivity and appropriateness of applications for recreation or leisure-related infrastructure.

Informal recreation: conserve by

1. Controlling moorings and water-based activities to maintain tranquillity.
2. Regulating timing and zoning of non-peaceful water-based activities to minimise impact; promoting education in and awareness of benefits of partnership management.



Management Guidelines Illustration