

Countryside Stewardships – Briefing for FLOs

Background

On 1 January 2016 'Environmental Stewardship' (ES) was replaced by 'Countryside Stewardship' (CS). DEFRA (through HE) consulted the Portable Antiquities Advisory Group about this and found it broadly **content with the new proposals**; this included the NCMD and FID. Although ES has now closed, current agreements will continue until they expire (final agreements ending in 2024); regulations relating to metal-detecting under ES will therefore continue until the agreements expire.

Countryside Stewardships

In 2015, ES agreements cover about 70% of England. By 2020, the amount of land under an agri-environment scheme **will have reduced** to 35%: so more land will be unrestricted.

When land managers enter a legal agreement with Natural England for CS they sign up to a range of conditions, some of which relate to metal-detecting. These are:

- Metal detecting **is not allowed** on Scheduled Monuments (SMs), Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs), or 'known archaeological sites'. These are identified on the land holders Farm Environment Record (FER). These are 'historic or archaeological features', **not finds scatters alone**. But if detecting finds were associated with earthworks or other archaeological features, they probably would be. Detectorists should therefore **not be worried** that finds recorded by the PAS will eventually end up on the HER as 'known archaeological sites'. The only way this might happen is if it turns out they were detecting on a previously un-recorded archaeological site, and their finds turn out to be associated with earthworks or other archaeological features.
- Agreement Land does not cover the whole farm (unlike on land under ES), the regulations only apply to the land which is actually under a CS Agreement.
- On any other Agreement Land, metal detecting **is allowed** as long as it does not conflict with the requirements of the Agreement; for example, disturbing ground-nesting birds could be a conflict. The Agreement Holders are responsible for ensuring any metal-detecting will not conflict with their Agreements.
- All metal-detecting allowed by Agreement Holders **must** be undertaken in accordance with the *Code of Practice for Responsible Metal Detecting in England and Wales* and all finds must be reported to the PAS as set out in that Code.
- Metal detecting rallies **are allowed** as long as they do not conflict with the requirements set out above, and they do not conflict with the requirements of the Agreement. All metal-detecting (including that on rallies) must be undertaken in accordance with the *Code of Practice for Responsible Metal Detecting in England and Wales*.

Further information and the detailed regulations about metal-detecting on Countryside Stewardship land can be found in the manual: see

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/480441/cs-manual-1-january-2016-version.pdf

Environmental Stewardships (the old schemes)

As noted above the existing regulations still apply on land under ES. There are different conditions for 'Entry Level' and 'Higher Level' schemes, and the rules cover the whole farm:

- **Higher Level:** Metal-detecting is **not permitted** on archaeological sites on holdings with HLS agreements or SSSIs without the permission of Natural England: such sites will be identified in the landowner/farmer occupier's Farm Environment Plan (FEP).
- **Entry Level:** Metal detecting is **not allowed** on SMs, SSSIs or 'known archaeological sites' on grassland. Other than that, there are no restrictions on metal-detecting on ELS land providing searchers follow the *Code of Practice for Responsible Metal Detecting in England and Wales*, and that they follow the rules on rallies below.
- **Rallies:** Natural England requires up to 12 weeks notice of any large scale metal-detecting events (known as rallies) on ES land. Metal-detecting rally organisers should follow the *Guidance on Metal-Detecting Rallies in England and Wales*.