

# FENSCAPES: Archaeology, Natural Heritage and Environmental Change

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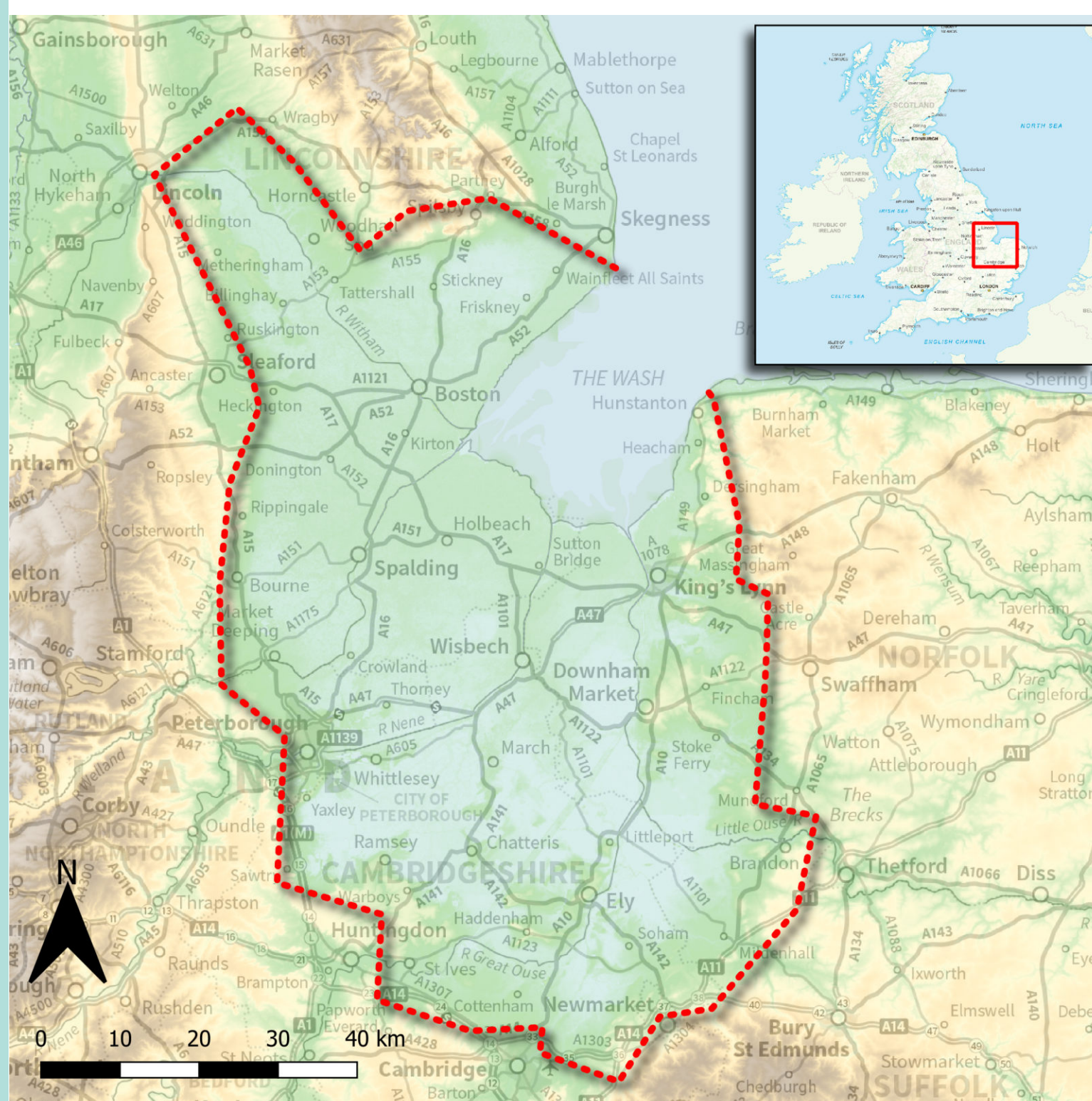
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## The Fens: Archaeology and Past Environmental Change

Fenscapes is a new archaeology-led research project focused on the East Anglian Fens, where exceptional preservation of organic artefacts and environmental evidence gives unparalleled insights into the last 5,000 years of communities, resources and habitats.

The Fens are the richest and most productive agricultural land in the UK, and amongst the most threatened by present and future environmental change. Linking present productivity and future threats, the archaeological record is the story of a dynamic environment in which people were, and are, active participants. The natural heritage of the region is inextricably bound with human lifeways.



Project study area encompassing the East Anglian Fens, including parts of Cambridgeshire, Lincolnshire, Norfolk and Suffolk. Contains public sector information licensed under the Open Government Licence v3.0.



Bronze Age log boats being excavated from the fills of a former river channel at Must Farm, Cambridgeshire



Partly excavated Bronze Age pile-dwelling structure at Must Farm

Fenscapes is hosted and funded by the McDonald Institute for Archaeological Research, University of Cambridge, as part of the Institute's wider Fenland Futures Archaeological and Heritage Research Initiative.

## Contact us

We are looking forward to generating partnerships and initiatives with a wide range of regional stakeholders. Please contact us for further information.

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**Fenscapes**  
Archaeology  
Natural Heritage &  
Environmental Change



## Aims & Research Themes

Fenscapes aims to generate innovative and engaging perspectives on the long-term trajectories of landscapes, habitats and species, including humans.

We will collate archaeological and palaeoecological data from the region to create an accessible GIS resource, consider new field and laboratory investigations and build a networking hub for the wider community. The project focuses on 5 inter-linked core themes:

### Natural Heritage

Gathering evidence for habitats and their management, in particular during the last 1,000 years, and identifying 'biocultural hotspots' capable of giving time-depth and context to current and future management practices



Chippenham Fen, near Fordham, Cambs. Ramsar site, SSSI, SAC & National Nature Reserve

### Hydrology & Landscape change



A record of change: succession of Holocene freshwater peats (dark bands) and marine clays (grey layers)

Combining palaeoenvironmental data with 3-D landscape modelling to explore and visualise the complex story of environmental change in the Fens over the last 5,000 years.

### Wetland Resources

Generating engaging narratives of past communities' changing use of freshwater, marine and terrestrial resources in the Fens.



Left: fish bone recovered from a prehistoric burial monument. Right: Bronze Age fish trap (front) & modern reconstruction (behind), Must Farm

### "Rehydrating Archaeology"

Comparing and integrating evidence from both wetland and 'dryland' contexts to gain a clearer understanding of how important wetlands were to past communities, how they were used and lived in, and how this changed through time.

### "4-Dimensional Archaeologies"

Combining detailed 3-D computer landscape models with archaeological data to understand changing patterns of human occupation through time and predict where further archaeological remains may survive.



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