

METHOD OF MAKING A MAGNETIC HEAD

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BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTIONField of the Invention

The present invention relates generally to the fabrication of magnetic heads for hard disk drives.

Description of the Prior Art

Efforts to increase the performance characteristics of hard disk drives have focused on increasing the areal data storage density of the magnetic hard disks and increasing the data writing rate of magnetic heads in writing data to the hard disks.

One way to increase the areal data storage density is to decrease the width of the data tracks upon the hard disk media. Narrower data tracks allow for more tracks per inch (TPI) to be written on a disk, thereby increasing the areal data storage density of the disk. The well recognized method for decreasing the width of the data tracks is to decrease the width of the P2 pole tip of the magnetic head, because the width of the P2 pole tip generally determines the width of the data track that is written by the magnetic head. Prior art photolithographic techniques for fabricating P2 pole tips are currently reaching the limits of process accuracy, in that it is difficult to accurately and reliably fabricate high aspect ratio P2 pole tip trenches utilizing photolithographic techniques. Recently, high aspect ratio P2 pole tip trenches have been fabricated utilizing reactive ion etch (RIE) techniques, which have produced good results where the P2 pole tip is subsequently electroplated into the RIE created trench.

To improve the magnetic head data writing rate, prior art magnetic heads have been fabricated with higher aspect ratio induction coils. Such high aspect ratio induction coils allow for the individual induction coil turns to be spaced closer together, creating a fine pitch induction coil. Where a fine pitch induction coil is fabricated, the P2 pole yoke can be shortened, thus creating a similarly shortened magnetic flux circuit through the P1 and P2 poles, such that the data writing rate of the magnetic head is increased.

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SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

According to a first aspect of the invention there is provided a method for fabricating a magnetic head comprising the steps of:

- fabricating a read head upon a substrate;
- fabricating a P1 pole upon said read head;
- fabricating an insulation layer upon said P1 pole;
- fabricating an RIE etchable dielectric material layer upon said insulation layer;
- simultaneously fabricating trenches within said dielectric material layer, including a P2 pole tip trench, an induction coil trench and a back gap piece trench;
- simultaneously fabricating a P2 pole tip within said P2 pole tip trench and a back gap piece within said back gap piece trench, such that said back gap piece is magnetically interconnected with said P1 pole;
- fabricating an induction coil within said induction coil trench;
- fabricating a second insulation layer upon said induction coil;
- fabricating a P2 pole yoke above said second insulation layer in magnetic interconnection with said P2 pole tip and said back gap piece;
- fabricating an encapsulation layer above said P2 pole yoke.

Overview:

Described herein is a magnetic head, comprising: a substrate; a read head being fabricated upon said substrate; a P1 pole being fabricated upon said read head; an insulation layer being fabricated upon said P1 pole; a P2 pole tip seed layer being fabricated upon portions of said insulation layer; a dielectric layer being fabricated upon said P2 pole tip seed layer and upon said insulation layer; a P2 pole tip being fabricated upon said P2 pole tip seed layer and within said dielectric material layer; a back gap piece being fabricated within said dielectric material layer and in magnetic interconnection with said P1 pole; an induction coil seed layer being fabricated in part upon said insulation layer and in part upon portions of said dielectric material layer; an induction coil being fabricated upon said induction coil seed layer and within said dielectric material layer; a second insulation layer being fabricated upon said induction coil; a P2 pole yoke being fabricated upon said second insulation layer in magnetic interconnection with said P2 pole

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tip and with said back gap piece; an encapsulation layer being fabricated above said P2 pole yoke.

An improvement in the RIE P2 pole tip fabrication process for the fabrication of magnetic heads is disclosed.

Described is the fabrication of a narrow P2 pole tip and a fine pitch induction coil using a single image transfer step.

Preferably the dielectric material layer includes a P2 pole tip trench, an induction coil trench and a back gap piece trench.

Preferably the P1 pole tip trench, the induction coil trench and the back gap piece trench are formed in a single reactive ion etch fabrication step.

Preferably a P1 pole notch is formed in the P1 pole proximate the P2 pole tip.

Preferably a P1 pole notching trench is fabricated in the dielectric material layer in a second reactive ion etch fabrication step.

The described arrangement preferably utilizes one dielectric layer, one RIE mask and image transfer step, and one RIE step to create both a narrow, high aspect ratio P2 pole tip and a high aspect ratio, fine pitch induction coil. In so doing, fabrication problems associated with separate RIE processes for creating a P2 pole tip and for creating a fine pitch induction coil are preferably avoided, and the fabrication of an improved magnetic head is preferably simplified.

The magnetic head of one arrangement includes a narrow, high aspect ratio P2 pole tip and a high aspect ratio, fine pitch induction coil. Electroplating trenches for the P2 pole tip and the induction coil are preferably fabricated in a single RIE process step, and the P2 pole tip and the induction coil are thereafter preferably separately plated up into their respective trenches to complete the fabrication of these structures.

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Briefly, following the fabrication of a P1 pole and the deposition of an insulation layer thereon, a patterned P2 pole tip seed layer is deposited. Significantly, the pole tip seed layer is preferably not deposited beneath the induction coil area of the magnetic head. A dielectric layer is preferably next deposited and a patterned RIE etching mask is fabricated upon the dielectric layer. The etching mask pattern preferably includes both a P2 pole tip trench opening and an induction coil trench opening. Thereafter, in a single RIE etching step, the P2 pole tip trench is preferably etched through the dielectric material down to the seed layer, and the induction coil trench is etched through the dielectric material down to the insulation layer. In a preferred embodiment, the P2 pole tip is then electroplated up into its trench, and no electroplating occurs within the induction coil trench because no seed layer has been yet deposited therein. In a preferred embodiment, following the electroplating of the P2 pole tip, an induction coil seed layer is deposited upon the wafer surface and specifically down into the induction coil trench. Preferably thereafter, the induction coil is electroplated up into the induction coil trench. A chemical mechanical polishing (CMP) step is next preferably conducted to remove the excess induction coil material and the RIE etching mask. Thereafter, a patterned insulation layer is preferably deposited upon the induction coil, which is preferably followed by the fabrication of a P2 pole yoke thereupon. Further fabrication steps as are known to those skilled in the art are thereafter accomplished to complete the magnetic head.

The magnetic head may include a narrow, high aspect ratio P2 pole tip and a high aspect ratio, fine pitch induction coil.

The P2 pole tip and the induction coil of the preferred embodiment are fabricated utilizing a single RIE etching mask.

The magnetic head may include a narrow, high aspect ratio P2 pole tip and a high aspect ratio, fine pitch induction coil that are fabricated in a single dielectric layer.

Described arrangements further provide a hard disk drive comprising: at least one hard disk being fabricated for rotary motion upon a disk drive; at least one magnetic head adapted to fly over said hard disk for writing data on said hard disk, said magnetic head

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including: a substrate; a read head being fabricated upon said substrate; a P1 pole being fabricated upon said read head; an insulation layer being fabricated upon said P1 pole; a P2 pole tip seed layer being fabricated upon portions of said insulation layer; a dielectric layer being fabricated upon said P2 pole tip seed layer and upon said insulation layer; a P2 pole tip being fabricated upon said P2 pole tip seed layer and within said dielectric material layer; a back gap piece being fabricated within said dielectric material layer and in magnetic interconnection with said P1 pole; an induction coil seed layer being fabricated in part upon said insulation layer and in part upon portions of said dielectric material layer; an induction coil being fabricated upon said induction coil seed layer and within said dielectric material layer; a second insulation layer being fabricated upon said induction coil; a P2 pole yoke being fabricated upon said second insulation layer in magnetic interconnection with said P2 pole tip and with said back gap piece; an encapsulation layer being fabricated above said P2 pole yoke.

The hard disk drive may have an increased areal data storage density and an increased data writing rate.

The hard disk drive preferably includes a magnetic head having a narrow, high aspect ratio P2 pole tip and a high aspect ratio, fine pitch induction coil.

The hard disk drive may include a magnetic head where the P2 pole tip and the induction coil are fabricated utilizing a single RIE etching mask.

Preferably the magnetic head includes a narrow, high aspect ratio P2 pole tip and a high aspect ratio, fine pitch induction coil that are fabricated in a single dielectric layer.

Also described is a method for fabricating a magnetic head comprising the steps of: fabricating a read head upon a substrate; fabricating a P1 pole upon said read head; fabricating an insulation layer upon said P1 pole; fabricating an RIE etchable dielectric material layer upon said insulation layer; fabricating trenches within said dielectric material layer, including a P2 pole tip trench, an induction coil trench and a back gap piece trench; simultaneously fabricating a P2 pole tip within said P2 pole tip trench and a back

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gap piece within said back gap piece trench, such that said back gap piece is magnetically interconnected with said P1 pole; fabricating an induction coil within said induction coil trench, fabricating a second insulation layer upon said induction coil; fabricating a P2 pole yoke above said second insulation layer in magnetic interconnection with said P2 pole tip and said back gap piece; fabricating an encapsulation layer above said P2 pole yoke.

Preferably the method further includes the steps of fabricating a patterned P2 pole tip seed layer upon said insulation layer prior to fabricating said dielectric material layer.

Preferably the P2 pole tip seed layer is not deposited in a location of the induction coil trench.

Preferably an induction coil seed layer is deposited within said induction coil trench, subsequent to fabricating said P2 pole tip and back gap piece.

Preferably the step of fabricating trenches within the dielectric material layer is performed in a reactive ion etch process.

The dielectric material layer may be comprised of SiO_2 and said reactive ion etch process is conducted utilizing fluorine ion species.

The dielectric material layer may be comprised of an organic polymer material and the RIE etching process is conducted utilizing an oxygen ion species.

A P1 pole notching process may be conducted following the fabrication of the P2 pole yoke.

The P1 pole notching process includes the steps of RIE etching the dielectric material proximate the P2 pole tip, and ion beam etching said P2 pole tip seed layer, the insulation layer and portions of the P1 pole.

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Preferably the said P2 pole tip seed layer is comprised of NiFe, and said induction coil seed layer is composed of copper.

Preferably a narrow, high aspect ratio P2 pole tip and a high aspect ratio, fine pitch induction coil are fabricated within a single dielectric material layer.

Preferably the P2 pole tip trench and the induction coil trench are fabricated in a single RIE etching step.

IN THE DRAWINGS

A preferred embodiment of the present invention will now be described, by way of example only, with reference to the following drawings:

Fig. 1 is a top plan view of a hard disk drive including a magnetic head of a preferred embodiment of the present invention;

Fig. 2 is a top plan view generally depicting a magnetic head fabricated on a wafer in accordance with a preferred embodiment of the present invention;

Figs. 3 – 7 are side cross-sectional views taken along lines 3 – 3 of Fig. 2 that depicts further fabrication steps of the magnetic head in accordance with a preferred embodiment of the present invention;

Fig. 8 is a top plan view depicting the P2 pole tip and induction coil trenches created in a fabrication step of the magnetic head in accordance with a preferred embodiment of the present invention;

Figs. 9 – 16 depict further fabrication steps of the magnetic head in accordance with a preferred embodiment of the present invention.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENTS

Note, P1, P2 and P3 as used herein refer to magnetic pole pieces. The numbering follow the sequence of fabrication; P1 is fabricated first, followed by P2, and finally P3. These form, according to a preferred embodiment, the magnetic circuitry for writing operations.

Fig. 1 is a top plan view that depicts components of a hard disk drive which includes the magnetic head of the preferred embodiment. The hard disk drive 10 includes a magnetic media hard disk 12 that is rotatably mounted upon a motorized spindle 14. An actuator arm 16 is pivotally mounted within the hard disk drive 10 with a magnetic head 20 disposed upon a distal end 22 of the actuator arm 16. A typical hard disk drive 10 may include a plurality of disks 12 that are rotatably mounted upon the spindle 14 and a plurality of actuator arms 16 having a magnetic head 20 mounted upon the distal end 22 of the actuator arms. As is well known to those skilled in the art, when the hard disk drive 10 is operated, the hard disk 12 rotates upon the spindle 14 and the magnetic head 20 acts as an air bearing slider that is adapted for flying above the surface of the rotating disk. The slider includes a substrate base upon which the various structures that form the magnetic head are fabricated. Such heads are fabricated in large quantities upon a wafer substrate and subsequently sliced into discrete magnetic heads 20.

As is well known to those skilled in the art typical magnetic head fabrication steps generally include the deposition and patterning of various thin film layers to fabricate a read head, followed by the further deposition and patterning of various thin film layers upon the read head to fabricate a write head. The present invention relates to the fabrication of a write head, and therefore a magnetic head of the preferred embodiment may include most, if not all, of the various read head configurations as are generally known to those skilled in the art. Therefore, the description commences with write head fabrication steps upon a wafer after the fabrication of the read head component layers.

Fig. 2 is a generalized top plan view of a typical magnetic head 40 that serves as an orientation figure for this detailed description. As depicted in Fig. 2, a typical write head portion 44 of a magnetic head generally includes a P1 pole layer 48 that is composed of a ferromagnetic material such as NiFe, a flat, spiral induction coil 50 that is formed in a generally oval area 52 above the P1 pole and includes electrical leads 54 and 56, a narrow P2 pole tip 60 that is formed above portions of the P1

pole, and a P2 pole yoke 66 that is joined to the P2 pole tip 60 and is generally formed above the induction coil. The top of the P2 yoke 66 and the P1 pole 48 are joined together in a back gap area 70 that is generally centrally located within the induction coil area 52, and the P2 pole tip 60 is separated from the P1 pole 48 by a write gap layer (not shown in Fig. 2). These general features of a typical write head portion of a magnetic head 40 are more fully described in the following detailed description which focuses on the fabrication of the P2 pole tip 60 and the induction coil 50.

Fig. 3 is a side cross-sectional view of a fabrication step of a magnetic head 20 of the preferred embodiment which serves as a starting point for the detailed description, and Fig. 3 is taken along lines 3-3 of Fig. 2. In this initial fabrication step depicted in Fig. 3, the P1 pole 48 has been fabricated and a write gap layer 84 has been deposited upon the P1 pole. A typical write gap layer 84 is composed of an electrically and magnetically nonconductive material, such as alumina. Thereafter, a P2 pole tip magnetic seed layer 88 of the preferred embodiment is deposited upon the write gap layer 84. Typically, the P2 pole tip seed layer is comprised of NiFe and serves as an initial electrical plating surface in a subsequent P2 pole tip electroplating process described herebelow. Thereafter, as depicted in Fig. 4 portions of the NiFe seed layer are removed in a patterning step from the area 52 in which the induction coils will subsequently be fabricated. As depicted in Fig. 4 portions 92 of the NiFe seed layer 88 may remain in the field away from the induction coil region. As a result of the seed layer patterning step, the alumina surface is exposed in the coil region 52, whereas a portion of the seed layer 96 remains in the P2 pole tip region. Thereafter, as depicted in Fig. 4, a further patterning and etching step is conducted to create a back gap hole 100 in the exposed write gap layer 84 within the induction coil area 52 to expose the surface of the P1 pole 48, such that a later fabricated back gap element will make magnetic connection with the P1 pole 48, as described in detail herebelow. Thereafter, as depicted in Fig. 5, a layer of dielectric material 108 is deposited across the surface of the wafer and down into the back gap hole 100. The material comprising the dielectric layer should be susceptible to a reactive ion etch process (as described below) and suitable dielectric materials include SiO_2 where a fluorine RIE process is conducted, or an organic polymer may be used where an oxygen RIE process is conducted.

Thereafter, as depicted in Fig. 6, a patterned RIE etch mask 112 of the preferred embodiment is fabricated upon the dielectric layer 108. The

RIE mask is preferably patterned to include openings 114, 116 and 118 for the P2 pole tip trench configuration and the induction coil trench configuration, as well as the back gap piece, as is next described. For a fluorine RIE process a suitable etching mask 112 may be composed of a thin layer of NiFe or alumina, whereas for an oxygen RIE process the mask may be composed of SiO₂, Ta₂O₅, titanium, NiFe, alumina or other materials as are known to those skilled in the art.

Following the fabrication of the patterned RIE mask 112, an RIE process step is conducted, in which trenches are etched through the mask openings into the dielectric material. Fig. 7 is a cross-sectional view of the trench pattern of the preferred embodiment, and Fig. 8 is a top plan view of the trench pattern depicted in Fig. 7. Therefore, as is depicted in Figs. 7 and 8, the RIE trenches include the P2 pole tip trench 120 that is etched through opening 114 down to the patterned NiFe seed layer 96, the spiral induction coil trench 128 that is etched through opening 116 down to the write gap layer 84, and the back gap trench 134 that is etched through opening 118 down through the back gap hole 100 to the P1 pole surface 48. It is noteworthy that the RIE trenches 120, 128 and 134 all preferably have essentially the same depth, that being the thickness of the dielectric layer 108.

An electroplating process for the P2 pole tip and back gap piece is next conducted. Specifically, as depicted in Fig. 9, an electrical potential is set up through the exposed seed layer 96 of the P2 pole tip, as well as the exposed P1 pole surface 48. The P2 pole tip 140 plates up into the P2 pole tip trench 120 and the back gap piece 148 simultaneously plates up into the back gap trench 134. Plating does not occur within the induction coil trenches 128 because there is no seed layer within the induction coil trenches to cause electroplating therewithin. The electroplating step of the P2 pole tip and back gap piece is conducted until the trenches are fully plated up.

The fabrication of the copper induction coil is next commenced by the sputter deposition of a copper seed layer across the surface of the wafer. As depicted in Fig. 10, the copper seed layer 160 is deposited through the openings 116 into the induction coil trenches 128 as well as across the surface of the wafer, including the plated up P2 pole tip 140 and back gap piece 148. Thereafter, as depicted in Fig. 11, a copper electroplating process is conducted. A copper deposition 168 is formed upon the upper seed layer 160, and the copper seed layer 160 within the induction coil trenches 128 facilitates the electroplating of copper

through the openings 116 into the trenches 128 to plate up the trenches and create the copper induction coil 170. Where sufficient electroplating power or other factors are of concern, the copper seed layer may be patterned such that the copper seed layer is only deposited in the necessary induction coil related areas. Thereafter, as depicted in Fig. 12, a chemical mechanical polishing (CMP) step is conducted to remove the excess copper 168 as well as the upper portions of the copper seed layer 160 and the RIE mask layer 112 to create a planar surface 180. As is further depicted in Fig. 12, a patterned electrical insulation layer 188 is thereafter deposited on top of the induction coil 170 to prevent coil shorting, and as is also depicted in Fig. 12, a patterned P2 yoke element 192 (sometimes referred to as a P3 pole) is fabricated on top of the insulation layer 188. The P2 yoke 192 is fabricated to make contact with both the P2 pole tip 140 and the back gap piece 148, such that magnetic flux will flow from the P2 yoke 192, through the back gap piece 148, through the P1 pole 48 and across the write gap layer 84 to the P2 pole tip 140 and to the P2 yoke 192. Thereafter, following further magnetic pole fabrication steps, including the fabrication of the induction coil electrical lead 56, as are known to those skilled in the art, an encapsulation layer 200 is deposited to complete the wafer level fabrication of the magnetic head 20 which is suitable for use in the disk drive 10.

In the preferred embodiment of the present invention, a P1 pole notching step is conducted preferably following the fabrication of the P2 yoke and before encapsulation depicted in Fig. 12. Specifically, Fig. 13 depicts another patterned RIE etching mask 210 that is fabricated to include an opening 214 to expose the area around the P2 pole tip 140, and Fig. 14 is an end cross-sectional view of the head taken along lines 14-14 of Fig. 13. Another RIE etching process is then conducted, as depicted in Fig. 15, to create a trench 218 within the etchable dielectric material proximate the P2 pole tip 140. As is next depicted in Fig. 16, an ion milling process utilizing argon, or other ion milling species as are known to those skilled in the art, is conducted to remove portions of the NiFe seed layer 96, write gap layer 84 and a portion of the P1 pole 48 proximate the P2 pole tip 140, such that P1 pole notches 220 are achieved. Encapsulation of the notched head then follows, as is known to those skilled in the art.

It is therefore to be understood that a significant feature of the preferred embodiment is the utilization of a single RIE etching step to simultaneously create the P2 pole tip trench, the induction coil trench

and the back gap trench. The prior deposition of the patterned P2 pole tip seed layer 96 allows for the separate electroplating of the P2 pole tip from the induction coil 170. Thereafter, a subsequent deposition of the copper seed layer into the preexisting induction coil trench facilitates the electroplating of the induction coil into the trench. The use of the single RIE process to simultaneously create both the P2 pole tip trench, the back gap trench and the induction coil trench saves time and expense in the magnetic head fabrication process. Additionally, fabrication difficulties which would result from depositing two or more separate RIE etchable dielectric layers for separate P2 pole tip and induction coil fabrication steps, as well as the difficulties of the alignment of the induction coils with the P2 magnetic pole tip and the back gap piece is avoided. The use of RIE process techniques facilitates the fabrication of fine pitched induction coils as well as narrower P2 pole tips than are typically accomplished utilizing photolithographic techniques in which high aspect ratio trenches for the P2 pole tip and the induction coil are difficult to reliably fabricate. A hard disk drive having a magnetic head of the preferred embodiment can be fabricated with increased areal data storage density due to the disclosed simplified fabrication of a narrower P2 pole tip, which creates narrower data tracks and leads to more tracks per inch written on the magnetic disk media of the hard disk drive. The high aspect ratio, fine pitch induction coil leads to increased data writing rates for the hard disk drive, as will be understood by those skilled in the art.

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What we claim is:

1. A method for fabricating a magnetic head comprising the steps of:
fabricating a read head upon a substrate;
fabricating a P1 pole upon said read head;
fabricating an insulation layer upon said P1 pole;
fabricating an RIE etchable dielectric material layer upon said insulation layer;
simultaneously fabricating trenches within said dielectric material layer, including a P2 pole tip trench, an induction coil trench and a back gap piece trench;
simultaneously fabricating a P2 pole tip within said P2 pole tip trench and a back gap piece within said back gap piece trench, such that said back gap piece is magnetically interconnected with said P1 pole;
fabricating an induction coil within said induction coil trench;
fabricating a second insulation layer upon said induction coil;
fabricating a P2 pole yoke above said second insulation layer in magnetic interconnection with said P2 pole tip and said back gap piece;
fabricating an encapsulation layer above said P2 pole yoke.
2. A method for fabricating a magnetic head as described in claim 1, further including the steps of fabricating a patterned P2 pole tip seed layer upon said insulation layer prior to fabricating said dielectric material layer.
3. A method for fabricating a magnetic head as described in claim 2 wherein said P2 pole tip seed layer is not deposited in a location of said induction coil trench.
4. A method for fabricating a magnetic head as described in claim 2 including the further step of depositing an induction coil seed layer within said induction coil trench, subsequent to fabricating said P2 pole tip and back gap piece.
5. A method for fabricating a magnetic head as described in claim 4 wherein said P2 pole tip seed layer is comprised of NiFe, and said induction coil seed layer is composed of copper.

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6. A method for fabricating a magnetic head as described in claim 2 wherein a P1 pole notching process is conducted following the fabrication of said P2 pole yoke.
7. A method for fabricating a magnetic head as described in claim 6 wherein said P1 pole notching step includes the steps of RIE etching said dielectric material layer proximate said P2 pole tip, and ion beam etching said P2 pole tip seed layer, said insulation layer and portions of said P1 pole.
8. A method for fabricating a magnetic head as described in claim 1, wherein said step of fabricating trenches within said dielectric material layer is performed in a reactive ion etch process.
9. A method for fabricating a magnetic head as described in claim 8 wherein said dielectric material layer is comprised of SiO_2 and said reactive ion etch process is conducted utilizing fluorine ion species.
10. A method for fabricating a magnetic head as described in claim 8 wherein said dielectric material layer is comprised of an organic polymer material and said RIE etching process is conducted utilizing an oxygen ion species.