

An information paper on the application of Rangers, Estate Services and Volunteers within existing English National Parks and the proposed New Forest National Park area. – G.Bryant. 2005

Results of questionnaire

Methodology:

- a) **The activities of rangers were clustered into groups relating to key functions as follows:**

Key Functions:
Land management
Awareness raising - of NP Qualities, wildlife and conservation, rural way of life, land management and sustainability.
Liaison and Encouraging involvement.
Access provision and management.

- b) **A questionnaire (see appendix 1) was prepared and sent to all English National Parks to ascertain the following:**

- Whether National Park employs rangers or makes alternative arrangements
- What activities the rangers undertake
- The % resource commitment in terms of ranger time relative to each function.
- The numbers of rangers employed
- Liaison and working arrangements with other NP officers / other agencies or organisations
- Whether they support a volunteer ranger service
- Accommodation requirements
- Key challenge for ranger service in future.

The questionnaire, suitably adapted, was also completed by Helen Wood of the Forestry Commission, Philip Marshall of the National Trust and John Davison of Hampshire County Council. Meetings with Forestry Commission officers Helen Wood and Vick Myers and telephone conversations with Philip Marshall and John Davison provided further information on ranger services currently operating in the proposed New Forest National Park area.

c) A follow up series of questions prompted by the response to the first questionnaire was sent asking the following:

Rights of Way (RoW):

- Do NP rangers have delegated responsibility from the Highway Authority for RoW?
- Do rangers manage RoW alone or with RoW officers?
- Do rangers only deal with priority RoW?
- Are rangers responsible for RoW Improvement Plans?

Estate services:

- Does the NPA have team of estate management people aside from rangers?
- Do they work only on NPA owned land
- Do they operate a land management service with partners?
- How many are there?

The analysis of the response to the questionnaire and follow up questions is given in Appendix 2.

3. Interpretation of response to questionnaire:

Land Management:

Provision in National Parks surveyed:

The National Park Authorities operate land management / estate service to manage land in their ownership. They do not generally operate land management services for land within private ownership although management agreements, whereupon land management by NP staff is carried out, do exist. The other main area of land management activity entails the provision and maintenance of Public Rights of Way (PRoW). Whilst National Parks are not the local highway authority with direct statutory duties, 6 of the 8 National parks in the survey have delegated responsibility for the PRoW in their area, either totally or in partnership with RoW officers.

Rangers play some part in land management for both conservation and access provision. However in several instances the National Park Authority employs specific estate management staff to undertake land management tasks in conjunction with rangers. The apparently lower commitment of ranger resource relative to other functions does not therefore reflect the total resource commitment.

Provision in the New Forest:

A number of agencies have land within the proposed National Park, which is managed for purposes broadly commensurate with the primary purpose of National Parks. The largest of these is the Forestry Commission which is a Government agency managing crown lands equalling approximately 50% of the National Park. The Commission is guided by a Ministerial mandate allowing considerable diversion of effort and resources to conservation of biodiversity, land management practice and cultural heritage and the provision of access and recreational facilities. The Forestry Commission rangers and a very well motivated and enthusiastic volunteer ranger service, work with Forestry Commission foresters, keepers and other staff on a number of land management tasks. The ranger services include a dedicated ranger to co-ordinate and manage the development of the 156 strong volunteer rangers team.

Other agencies within which conservation and / or quiet recreation is a key driver of land management policy and practice on their land include: Hampshire County Council, National Trust, English Nature and the Hampshire and Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust.

The ranger services of these organisations do not provide land management services for land other than that which they own or for which they have a responsibility. Managing land for access and quiet recreation provision is a key and core part of the ranger role and function in land management both in National Parks and within the organisations operating ranger services in the New Forest area.

Awareness raising:

Provision in the National Parks surveyed:

Some NP rangers had commented that this is a core part of the ranger role and enmeshed within all aspects of ranger work and therefore difficult to separate out as a distinct task in itself. All NPs are involved in awareness raising and specifically information and interpretation. One NP ranger service did not consider it was involved in education and one was not involved in walks, talks and dramatisation of themes. From the results of the survey, it is apparent that there is some variance in the amount of ranger time allocated to this function.

Provision in the New Forest:

All of the three organisation providing ranger services in the New Forest currently, affirmed that they were involved in all aspects of awareness raising in relation to their sites and with regard to the conservation of the area as a whole.

Liaison and encouragement:

Provision in the National Parks surveyed:

The ranger services demonstrated consistency in that they all considered this to be a priority. The majority of ranger services are involved in each aspect of

the liaison role. However, one of the NP's is not involved in grant and funding advice and one is not involved in training of countryside management skills. Explanatory comments received in answer to the questionnaire indicated that the role of being the face of the National Park Authority is key and core to the ranger role and function. In response to the question of what they considered to be the biggest challenges for the ranger service in the future, 3 replied that the area of work involving greater liaison with communities and / or increasing social inclusion was a major challenge. The commitment to volunteers and voluntary rangers is an aspect of this community liaison.

Provision in the New Forest:

Provision in the New Forest mirrors that of the NP almost exactly with each ranger service being involved in each aspect of the liaison with the exception of grant provision and training of countryside management skills. The obvious and significant difference is that whereas NP rangers engage with resident and visitor throughout the National Park, the 3 New Forest ranger services are predominantly concerned with the visitors to their estates, (albeit very large estate in the case of the Forestry Commission managed crown lands). This is not completely true of Hampshire County Council, which as a Highway Authority employs a RoW officer who works throughout the County. The Forestry Commission have dedicated 1 ranger post to the co-ordination, management and development of the voluntary ranger group, which is a highly effective liaison mechanism as well as being highly valued by the group members.

Access:

Provision in the National Parks surveyed:

The provision and management of access and visitor enjoyment is the function to which the NP ranger services allocate the most ranger resource. This is partially because the NP's are involved in PRoW management. NP's are also access authorities for land to which the new statutory right of access under the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 applies. Access provision including management of RoW and access land, is to some extent pivotal to other ranger functions and relationship with the public and requires the application of land management, awareness raising and liaison functions in its support.

Provision in the New Forest:

Whilst the ranger organisations within the New Forest also have access and management of visitor enjoyment as a central function, the Forestry Commission rangers allocate less time to this function than the supportive functions of awareness raising or liaison. Again in managing the access to the Crown land and provision of trails the rangers are part of a wider organisational input, including estate services in the integrated management of the land holding. The Crown lands also do not contain RoW and therefore do not have the requirement for additional RoW resource.

Partnership Working:

Provision in the National Parks surveyed:

All ranger services replied that they liaise with other NP officers and other organisations and several felt this was a key aspect of their role. Most NP rangers have a particular partnership with Highway Authority RoW staff in the management of RoW. However, aside from this function the response indicated that partnership delivery arrangements were not common and occurred in instances such as where specific interest organisations, for example water companies, help fund a ranger. Otherwise partnerships consisted of informal arrangements and general liaison.

Provision in the New Forest:

Similarly the organisations active in the New Forest were well linked via a number of different mechanisms and were now working within the framework of the New Forest Strategy. Liaison is good but again no particular mention was made of specific, or formal partnership arrangements in the response.

Summary conclusions drawn from questionnaire response and source documents:

Land management:

There is already considerable provision of conservation and recreation orientated land management within the New Forest. The FC role in relation to the Crown lands is very close in most important respects to that to which a new National Park Authority would probably aspire. Outside of the Crown lands, with the exception of management linked to the new statutory right of access, it is difficult to see where the National Park Authority should lead or become extensively involved in practical land management. There appears, however, a considerable need to ensure joint objectives and policy for management of the Crown and other lands. ***Does the Preparations Group agree that there is no need for an NPA Authority or its ranger service to become extensively involved in direct, practical land management? Are there options for joint delivery that we should be examining further?***

Awareness raising:

This is a key means by which the National Park achieves its primary purposes in that increasing awareness is crucial for both conservation and promoting the understanding and enjoyment of the special qualities of the National Park. An aspect of the ranger role in other National Parks is very much as a first point of contact and the day-to-day presence of the National Park Authority. In this respect, activity such as provision of information and interpretation or promotion is central to the process of awareness raising for the park and of building a recognisable identity for the National Park Authority. ***How far does the Group see a National Park ranger service as essential to the process of awareness raising for the Park and of building a recognisable identity for the New Forest National Park Authority? What are the options for delivery that we should be examining further?***

Liaison and encouragement:

The response from other NP's indicates that this is a priority role for their ranger services as measured by the ranger time allocated to it. There is currently no countryside ranger service operating across the entire area of the proposed New Forest National Park to undertake this liaison and encouragement, with both residents and visitors. The response from NP's indicates that they see the building of rapport with its communities as being crucial. ***How far does the Group see a New Forest wide ranger service as essential for achieving this liaison and encouragement? What are the options for delivery that we should be examining further?***

Access

The nature of access provision and management of visitor enjoyment is at the centre of much of the ranger function. Access management requires good integration with a land management / estate service facility and connectivity to other elements of planning, policy and strategy such as: public transport, car parking provision, sites of interest and settlements, gate way sites, links with PRoW outside the NP, cycle way and bridleway provision, tourism and less - abled access. The PRoW network is less extensive within the proposed New Forest NP than in other National Parks. However, its importance in linking the NP with other settlements and countryside beyond its boundary needs to be strongly emphasised. Similarly, there will be smaller areas of 'access land' with a new statutory right of access on foot than in other National Parks as large areas already accessible.

It is likely that access provision will be a priority interest for a New Forest National Park Authority. The opportunity to provide continuity and integration will be a strategic consideration in how the provision is achieved. The need to link with wider estate service provision and continue the benefits of the integrated approach, which currently exists on the Crown land, has to be thought through in the context of also establishing good integration with other areas of planning, policy and strategy.

Access provision and management and associated support functions of awareness raising and liaison are a pivotal aspect of the relationship between NPA and the resident and visiting public and central to the development of good communicative relationship with communities. ***Are there aspects of access provision and management where National Park Authority rangers might contribute to better integration and co-ordination? How far does the group think that in managing access and visitor enjoyment a ranger service will need to be a recognisable part of the NPA?***

Appendix 1:

Questionnaire of ranger service provision in National Parks to inform consideration of ranger service provision in the New Forest National Park.

1. Is there a National Park ranger service?
2. Is this service provided by the NPA directly or by service agreement / formal partnership arrangement, with, for example L.A's, the National Trust, the Forestry Commission)?
3. How many rangers are employed by:
 - a) The NP
 - b) Work within the service active in the NP in total
4. If a formal partnership exists, do the respective rangers work to a single Business Plan for activity in NP area?
5. If a formal partnership exists, are ranger duties shared on a geographic area basis or by function / area of work?
6. Outside of any service agreement/formal partnership arrangement, are other ranger services active in the NP area?
7. If there is an informal partnership relationship, how is work co-ordinated between ranger services?
8. What areas of NP work are these rangers (i.e. those directly employed by the NPA or by service/partnership agreement) involved in? – see below:

If possible, please indicate what % of overall Ranger resource is applied to each general area of work. Please also tick Y/ N to indicate the Ranger involvement with each subsidiary area of work listed.

Land management. % =	Y	N
Habitat mgt		
Landscape improvement		
Management of publicly owned sites		
Management of sites in others ownership by management agreement		
Production or co-ordination of site management plans.		
Leading, directing and managing specific estate management tasks and infrastructure upkeep.		

Awareness raising - of NP Qualities, wildlife and conservation, rural way of life, land management and sustainability % =	Y	N
Information & interpretation provision		
Education and liaison with educationalists		
Walks, talks, events, dramatisation of themes		
Promotion and publicity		

Liaison and encouraging involvement % =	Y	N
Visitor liaison.		
Liaison with farmers, foresters and other land managers.		
Grant and funding advice		
Liaison with communities and wider public		
Community involvement and voluntary services		
Training of countryside management skills		
Encouraging appropriate behaviour		

Access provision and management % =	Y	N
ROW maintenance and management		
Permissive path maintenance and management		
Open access management		
Trail provision.		
Access planning		
Servicing advisory groups inc LAF		
Wider recreation provision		
Safety and security services		

9. Please name any additional function not already listed, if any

10. What other NP officers have roles linked to the rangers' functions and duties. E.g. ecologist, archaeologist, recreation officers, etc? Please could you describe these links?
11. What functions or duties, if any, are shared between the rangers and other organisations?

12. Do the National Park Authority support voluntary rangers?

13. If so, how many are there and are their activities led by the ranger service?

14. Does the ranger service operate at active at weekends and / or evenings?

15. Does the ranger service take on seasonal staff in the summer period?

16. Do the Ranger service require the following accommodation and work base requirements:

Type of accommodation	Y/N
Office space within National Park offices	
Outpost offices	
Equipment storage and workshop facility	
Public, community, educational mtg. facility	
Drying room	
Vehicle garage facility – if so how many?	
Other (please describe)	

17. What is the biggest challenge facing the ranger service in the future?

Appendix 2:

Analysis of response to questionnaire:

a) Analysis of employment and number of rangers employed:

Note: The respondents were asked to respond with a positive 3 or negative 7

	Nd	Pk	Lks	Ex'r	Dt'r	Y'ds	Yk'rs	Bd's	Ave %	FC	HCC	NT	Ave %
Number of directly employed rangers	11fte	23fte	14fte	7fte	13fte	18fte	9fte	12fte	13fte	5fte	4.5fte	3fte	4fte
Non ranger – access emp' by NPA or =	3		3	3			3	38fte		3	31fte		
Non ranger - R.o.W emp' by NPA or =		3	3								3		
Non ranger - visitor mgt emp' by NPA	3			314fte								3 2fte	
Non ranger land mgt / estate services emp' by NPA or =	3	312fte	3	3	35fte		38fte	3		3	3		
Non ranger – community liaison emp' by NPA or=			3			3							
Non ranger info emp' by NPA								3			3		
Volunteers	175	280	350	50	32	160	200	80		156	At CP's	?	
W/E working	3	3				3				3			
Seasonal ranger	3									3			

b) Analysis relating to activities and functions of the ranger services of the English National

Parks.

Function: Land Management

Activity.	Nd	Pk	Lks	Ex'r	Dt'r	Y'ds	Yk'rs	Bd's	Ave %	FC	HCC	NT	Ave %
Habitat mgt	3	3	5%*	3	3	3	3	3	100	3	3	3	100
Landscape improvement	3	7	5%*	3	3	3	3	3	87.5	3	3	3	100
Management of publicly owned sites	3	3	10%*	3	3	3	3	3	100	3	3	7	66
Management of sites in others ownership by management agreement	3	3	5%*	3	3	3	3	3	100	7	3	7	33
Production or co-ordination of site management plans.	3	3	5%*	3	3	3	3	3	100	3	3	3	100
Leading, directing and managing specific estate management tasks and infrastructure upkeep.	3	3	70%*	3	3	7	3	3	87.5	3	3	3	100

Key: * = % given as response so shown for additional information but should be read as simply a positive = 3

Function: Awareness raising - of NP Qualities, wildlife and conservation, rural way of life, land management and sustainability

Activity:	Nd	Pk	Lks	Ex'r	Dt'r	Y'ds	Yk'rs	Bd's	Ave %	FC	HCC	NT	Ave %
Information & interpretation provision	3	3	10%*	3	3	3	3	3	100	3	3	3	100
Education and liaison with educationalists	3	3	7	3	3	3	3	3	87.5	3	3	3	100
Walks, talks, events, dramatisation of themes	3	3	5%*	3	3	7	3	3	87.5	3	3	3	100
Promotion and publicity	3	3	5%*	3	3	3	3	3	100	3	3	3	100

Function: Liaison and encouraging involvement

Activity:	Nd	Pk	Lks	Ex'r	Dt'r	Y'ds	Yk'rs	Bd's	Ave %	FC	HCC	NT	Ave %
Visitor liaison.	3	3	5%*	3	3	3	3	3	100	3	3	3	100
Liaison with farmers, foresters and other land managers.	3	3	50%*	3	3	3	3	3	100	3	3	3	100
Grant and funding advice	7	3	10%*	3	3	3	3	3	87.5	7	7	3	33
Liaison with communities and wider public	3	3	30%*	3	3	3	3	3	100	3	3	3	100
Community involvement and voluntary services	3	3	3?	3	3	3	3	3	100	3	3	3	100
Training of countryside management skills	3	3	7	3	3	3	3	3	87.5	3	7	3	66
Encouraging appropriate behaviour	3	3	5%*	3	3	3	3	3	100	3	3	3	100

Function: Access provision and management

Activity:	Nd	Pk	Lks	Ex'r	Dt'r	Y'ds	Yk'rs	Bd's	Ave %	FC	HCC	NT	Ave %
ROW maintenance and management	3	3	60%*	3	3	3	3	3	100	7	3	3	66
Permissive path maintenance and management	3	3	10%*	3	3	3	3	3	100	7	3	3	66
Open access management	3	3	10%*	3	3	3	3	3	100	3	3	3	100
Trail provision.	3	3	7	3	3	3	3	3	87.5	3	3	7	66
Access planning	7	3	5%*	3	3	3	3	3	87.5	3	3	3	100
Servicing advisory groups inc LAF	7	3	5%*	3	3	3	3	3	87.5	3	7	7	33
Wider recreation provision	3	3	5%*	3	3	3	3	3	100	3	3	3	100
Safety and security services	7	3	5%*	3	3	7	3	3	75.0	7	7	3	33

c) Analysis of resource required for each function
Resources delegated to each function as a % of overall ranger time, with an average calculated.

Theme areas	Nd	Pk	Lks	Ex'r	Dt'r	Y'ds	Yk'rs	Bd's	Ave' %	FC	HCC	NT	Ave' %
Land mgt.	11	10	nr	14	15	15*	20	25	(15.83%)	15	43	nr	nm
Awareness raising.	10	30	nr	18	15	13*	30	15	(19.66%)	40	4	nr	nm
Liaison and Encouraging Involvement.	26	30	nr	23	30	12*	40	25	(29.00%)	30	15	nr	nm
Access provision and management.	53	30	nr	45	50	60*	50	35	(43.83%)	15	38	nr	nm

Key: nr = not received in that format. * The response is my interpretation of original data and have therefore excluded from calculation of average %. nm = not meaningful

d) Analysis of ranger role in R.o.W. management:

	Nd	Pk	Lks	Ex'r	Dt'r	Y'ds	Yk'rs	Bd's	Ave %	FC	HCC	NT	Ave %
Do rangers have delegated responsibility from HA for RoW?	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	75	7 (No RoW)	7	7	0
Is the activity shared with ROW officers?	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	Yes	No	50	N/a	3	N/a	33
Do rangers deal with only priority RoW?	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	0	N/a	7	N/a	0
Are rangers responsible for RoW imp plans?	Yes	No	No	No	No	Yes	No	No	25	N/a	7	N/a	0

e) Analysis of ranger role in relation to estate service provision:

	Nd	Pk	Lks	Ex'r	Dt'r	Y'd s	Yk'rs	Bd's	Ave %	FC	HC C	NT	Ave %
Are there estate mgt people aside from Rangers and if so how many?	Yes (for rec sites)	Yes 12	Yes 21	Yes 14	Yes 5	nr	Yes 8 (mostly access)	8 (on access prov)	100	3	3	3	100
Do they work only on own land?	Not given	Yes + RoW	Yes + RoW	Yes + access	No	nr	Yes + access	Yes + access	83	3	7	3	66
Do they operate a land mgt service with partners?	No	No	No	No	Yes	nr	No	Yes for access on other land	28	7	7	7	0

f) Analysis of accommodation requirements:

Accommodation requirement type:	Nd	Pk	Lks	Ex'r	Dt'r	Y'ds	Yk'rs	Bd's	Ave %	FC	HCC	NT	Ave %
Office space within National Park offices or equiv	7	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	87.5	3	7	nr	nm
Outpost offices	3	3	3	7	3	3	3	3	87.5	7	3	nr	nm
Equipment storage and workshop facility	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	100	3	3	nr	nm
Public, community, educational mtg. facility	7	7	7	3	7	7	3	7	25	7	7	nr	nm
Drying room	3	3	7	7	7	7	3	7	37.5	7	7	nr	nm
Vehicle garage facility – if so how many?	7	7	7	7	7	7	38	3	25	some	3	nr	nm
Other (please describe)						Wk shops, storage		Field base HQ for staff			Country Park bases		nm

Appendix 4:

Summary of recommendations made in the Countryside Agency publication “A New Forest National Park Authority: proposed special arrangements”.

Rights of Way and Access (ref page 28, 29):

The publication highlights that as NPA's are not Highway Authorities they are not responsible for managing the rights of way network, although most have some delegated responsibility. Government guidance encourages this in DoE 12/96 (appendix iv).

The Countryside Agency view is that:

As there are no RoW on Crown land, a priority for other parts of the Forest is to ensure good links with surrounding areas and their towns and villages: this will require a joint approach across the national park boundary. In addition, the specialist expertise in managing rights of way and the complex legal issues associated with this, which the existing local authorities possess, might be most efficiently employed by, rather than duplicated within, a New Forest National Park Authority.

The Countryside Agency believes that a New Forest National Park Authority could, however, set the standards by which rights of way are managed by the highway authorities by:

- i. Acting as the strategic authority for access, rights of way and recreation within the national park boundary.
- ii. Setting standards (e.g. design of way markers, styles and gates) across the proposed national park to give walkers, cyclists, and riders the same high standards throughout.
- iii. Monitoring use and visitor impact on the rights of way network and ensuring that improvements and sustainable management measures are put in place.

A New Forest National Park would be responsible for managing access to open country under the provisions of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 and for example setting up a Local Access Forum. It should work closely with other authorities in carrying out its duties.

Countryside Management and Rangers:

The Countryside Agency does not believe that a New Forest National Park Authority should take over or duplicate the work of others. The Forestry Commission will remain responsible for managing visitors on the Crown Lands, as should other bodies which have site based rangers and wardens.

This will ensure that access management is properly integrated with other aspects of land management.

The Countryside Agency believes that a New Forest National Park Authority could, however:

- i. Provide leadership and strategic direction and set standards for countryside management within the national park boundary through the national park management plan.
- ii. Ensure that there is a unified service across a national park, coordinating existing services through a forum, providing leadership, strategic direction and training and setting common standards, designs and messages.
- iii. Develop a new set of byelaws, which bring together the best parts of the byelaws that currently exist in the Forest to create a New Forest Code.
- iv. Employ (and encourage voluntary) rangers and education officers to deliver visitor liaison, interpretation and education.
- v. Establish a countryside management service where others do not provide this, in particular to work with private landowners on a wide range of conservation and management tasks.