

NEW FOREST NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY EDUCATION AND INTERPRETATION STRATEGY UPDATE

This update lists progress on the delivering the Education and Interpretation Strategy as at March 2008. The left hand column shows what was planned; the right hand column outlines achievements.

1 Education

Projects to be developed in the short term (2007-08)	
<p>6.5.1 Provision of a free National Park specific day-visit Education Service focusing on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ National Park policies and management; ▪ a whole park consideration of key issues (including climate change and Education for Sustainable Development) and the delivery of National Park messages; ▪ unoccupied niches in the market such as sustainable tourism, sustainable transport, specific historical education and landscape interpretation (including archaeology). 	<p>We taught 1,324 students from 21 groups in 2007-2008, ranging from Key Stage 2 to University groups. Subjects were closely linked to the National Park including Leisure and Tourism, Geography, Science, Countryside Management and Coastal Management. Sessions were either field-based or in the school. Feedback has been excellent (100% satisfaction on all sessions).</p> <p>We worked with head teachers of two local primary schools to develop a scheme of work based around the New Forest and a seven-year rolling programme of experiences in and about the National Park. It is hoped to roll this out to other local primary and junior schools should this prove successful.</p> <p>We are working on a New Forest Outdoor Science Project which is a partnership between the Authority, the Hampshire Science Inspection and Advisory Service, the British Ecological Society, Texas Instruments and five local secondary schools (including one pupil referral unit). This exciting project aims to embed learning science in the outdoor environment of the National Park into the school curriculum. It targets 13-16 year olds (Key Stage 3 and 4), a group that is not as well represented across other areas of outdoor education in the local area.</p> <p>We signposted groups to the range of other educational opportunities available within the Park when these groups did not want the niche sessions we had identified in the Strategy.</p>

<p>6.5.2 Development of written resources including factsheets.</p>	<p>14 factsheets were published under the following topic themes: Learning about the National Park, Tourism and Recreation, Conservation, Wildlife, History and Cultural Heritage. The first four factsheets, Learning About the National Park 1 and 2 and Tourism and Recreation 1 and 2 have proved very popular with students and teachers alike. We have distributed over 500 of each of these to a range of schools, colleges, universities and individuals. In addition the pdf downloadable versions available on the web-site have proved a useful mechanism for wider distribution (583 downloads per month on average). Two further factsheets are planned on Sustainable Transport and The Landscape of the National Park.</p>
<p>6.5.3 Development of web based resources and the Fun Zone.</p>	<p>The Learning About area of the web-site now has information for students, teachers and other interested groups or individuals. It has received an average of 949 hits per month since April 2007. The most popular pages are the student area (frequently asked questions), the film show, the find-out more section and the education links page.</p> <p>The Fun Zone was completed in September 2007 and has received an average of 7,337 page views/month since its launch. Most popular pages are the wildlife quiz, virtual pony game, wildlife guide, the gallery, and fun-links page. Feedback from local schools has been very positive. We hope to add a new learning game in 2009-2010 probably based around a cultural heritage aspect of the Park, such as smuggling.</p>
<p>6.5.4 Working with and alongside existing providers, individually and through the New Forest National Park Educators' Forum.</p>	<p>Collaborative work included the production of the Guide to Learning Outside the Classroom in the New Forest National Park. This resource not only highlights the learning opportunities across the Park but also strengthens the identity of the Educators' Forum as a cohesive group. Over 200 guides have been distributed, with all schools in and adjacent to the National Park receiving a reference copy. The guide is also available as a pdf download on the web-site. Downloads from the website have averaged 130 per month since its publication in September. We organised two Forum meetings in 2007-</p>

	<p>2008 and have a further two planned for this year. Training for Forum members last year included a session on the cultural heritage of the Park focusing on commoning and the role of the Verderers. Further training is planned for April in the form of taster sessions to introduce the Forum to the ethos of Forest Schools. Informal feedback suggests Forum members value the Forum's ability to provide co-ordination and training. An annual satisfaction survey will be conducted at the Forum meeting on 13 March 2008.</p>
<p>6.5.5 Supporting the education team at The New Forest Centre (under the Association)</p>	<p>We led workshop sessions at two New Forest Centre teachers' days aimed at local school staff. These days were focused on the New Forest environment and Sustainability in the National Park.</p> <p>Other support included the facilitation of the Travel Grant Scheme and individual e-mail support with the Education Officer at the Centre, including information sharing.</p>
<p>6.5.6 Responding to individual enquiries– telephone, letter and e-mail including web site e-mail at education@newforestnpa.gov.uk</p>	<p>We responded to over 115 individual educational enquiries from April 2007 to March 2008 on a wide variety of educational topics relating to the work of the Authority.</p>
<p>6.5.7 Provision of educational expertise and information to support a range of Authority projects and campaigns with an educational focus, such as school involvement with the Forest Force litter campaign, and School Travel Plans as a means of addressing local transport issues 'caused' by schools</p>	<p>We led Forest Force assemblies during the Litter Awareness week in 2007 and have further sessions planned for this year including providing teacher support on this campaign.</p> <p>We provided educational advice and support in developing the brief for the Rapid Coastal Zone Archaeological Assessment project.</p> <p>We engaged local schools to feed into the Special Qualities and Management Plan consultations.</p>
<p>6.5.8 Involvement in projects with Brockenhurst College. As a major provider of 14-19 education within the National Park boundary, Brockenhurst College is uniquely placed to deliver key messages to a large number of young people.</p> <p>Potential projects include</p>	<p>We supported the college by attending the Careers Fair in 2007 and are intending to exhibit a stand at the newly developed VocFest later this term. This raises the profile of the Park with students from the college and adult learners.</p> <p>We worked with the college's Leisure and Tourism department in developing fieldwork and resources to support their topic on the New Forest and have forged an on-going</p>

<p>utilising students as a research tool and working with the Leisure and Tourism department to develop this key curriculum area</p>	<p>relationship with this curriculum area. We are discussing how we can contribute to meetings/work of the college Green Group.</p>
<p>6.5.9 Promotion of education within the National Park through a series of mechanisms including the Educators' Forum, Hampshire Environmental Education Group (HEEG) and County Education Department newsletters</p>	<p>We posted articles in both the science and geography education department newsletters which go out to all Hampshire schools to highlight our educational developments this year and the educational opportunities which are on offer in the Park. We are active in the HEEG network as a mechanism for distributing information and continue to raise awareness of the National Park through professional groups such as the National Association of Field Studies Officers and the Institute of Outdoor Learning.</p>
<p>Projects to be developed over the medium term (2007-10)</p>	
<p>6.5.10 Working in conjunction with the Educators' Forum to enable all schools within and adjacent to the National Park to get out into the National Park at least once a year</p>	<p>A base-line survey of current use is planned for summer 2008. The 16 organisations providing environmental education about and within the National Park cover a wide range of local groups. By sharing information about which groups are not making use of the existing resources we can work together to target these groups and raise their level of use. The Authority currently works directly with 17 out of the 71 schools (24%).</p>
<p>6.5.11 Building positive relationships with and establishing a pro-active, ongoing outreach programme for under-represented groups.</p>	<p>We piloted a Travel Grant Scheme during 2007-2008. The Authority allocated £11,400 of the education budget to this scheme and subsequently split this between six different Educators' Forum members who successfully bid for the grant.</p> <p>These were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Testwood Lakes Centre ▪ Blashford Lakes Centre ▪ New Forest Centre ▪ Minstead Study Centre ▪ Countryside Education Trust ▪ Foxlease <p>These in turn offered grants of up to £250 to subsidise travel costs of school/community groups from specific inner city parts of Southampton and Bournemouth to visit their educational venues in the New Forest. This</p>

	<p>scheme enabled 1289 students from the target areas to access high quality outdoor environmental education about and within the National Park. In total, £6,085 was allocated by the six outdoor education providers, an average £4.58 per pupil. Of the 37 eligible groups in Southampton, 17 took up the grant (46%) and of the 16 eligible groups in Bournemouth four took up the grant (25%). We are planning to extend the scheme in 2008-2009 to include areas of deprivation within the surrounding urban communities (including parts of the Waterside).</p> <p>We have had initial meetings with the Southampton Chinese Association to develop ways of facilitating learning opportunities in the Park for people from the Chinese community of Southampton. We also plan to develop links with other community groups within the City and with urban local green spaces such as the Hawthorn Centre on Southampton Common.</p> <p>Our work with disabled groups has included the Locks Heath Blind Association and we have planned a session later this year with the National Deaf Grammar School.</p> <p>The 'Our Shout' project was developed, engaging with young people for input into the Management Plan and to perform a short scene-setting theatre piece at the Management Plan concluding event in March. A short film is also being made of the project.</p>
<p>6.5.12 Investigating the potential for producing multi-media tutorials and virtual field trips about the National Park</p>	<p>A project proposal was developed as part of the Life in Common bid. This will now be investigated using core funds.</p>
<p>6.5.13 Researching the potential of establishing a National Park youth parliament</p>	<p>Initial work has been done to identify how this would sit in relation to the Educators' Forum. A pilot project has been established using young people to direct learning opportunities as part of the New Forest Outdoor Science Project. We have also established links with the Hampshire Citizenship and Geography Advisors who are supportive of the idea and will work with the Authority to develop this scheme over the next year or two.</p>

<p>6.5.14 Work with Education Business Partnerships such as Solent Skills Quest to utilise their existing contacts with schools in under-represented areas, such as inner cities</p>	<p>We are drafting a work placement policy in conjunction with Solent Skills Quest.</p> <p>We are contributing to Enterprise Weeks with local schools to raise the profile of the Park and its purposes in cross-curricular work for secondary age students and using their existing contacts to establish a presence in whole school curriculum development opportunities using the National Park as an example.</p>
--	---

2 Interpretation and information

Projects to be developed in the short term (2007-08)	
<p>7.4.1 Installing awareness panels at 30+ sites around the National Park to convey core messages about the National Park</p>	<p>Four panel designs were developed covering: general introduction, wildlife, history and commoning. 45 panels were printed for installation at 20 locations. Feedback has been very positive especially from commercial attractions like Sandy Balls and the Owl and Otter Sanctuary.</p>
<p>7.4.2 Installing National Park boundary markers to mark the boundary and provide a sense of place and welcome</p>	<p>Designs were agreed for oak and Douglas fir boundary markers and the Forestry Commission was contracted to produce and install them at 46 roadside and long-distance footpath locations. Four Highways Agency-managed trunk road locations will have boundary signs later in 2008. Zinc way-marker discs were produced for some 50 minor footpath locations.</p> <p>These additional signs were developed in accordance with the signage strategy which commits organisations that adopt it to removing unnecessary signs and planning new signage with the National Park's open and natural landscape in mind. New animal accident warning signs are being recommended to the Highway Authority to replace the large shield-shaped signs currently located at the start of high-risk routes and these will be trialed the B3054 Lymington to Dibden Purlieu road, as part of the wider sign rationalisation programme on this pilot route.</p>
<p>7.4.3 Working in partnership with the RSPB and the Forestry Commission to establish the webcam and visitor education</p>	<p>The ABB! project used live footage of nesting goshawks and hobbies to attract people both to talk about these birds of prey and to learn about rare and sensitive ground nesting birds. This was a very successful partnership project</p>

<p>project called 'Aren't Birds Brilliant in the New Forest' as an annual project.</p>	<p>with 17,000 people visiting the project in the Reptile Centre in 2007. Vary many more logged on to the web-based bird cam.</p> <p>Additional funding from the Sustainable Development Fund is enabling improved facilities in 2008 which will attract more visitors and enable encourage educational groups to use the site.</p>
<p>Projects to be developed over the medium term (2007-10)</p>	
<p>7.4.4 Interpretation and information on the Authority's website, including factsheets, downloadable material and photographs</p>	<p>Web pages added to the website include information relating to visiting the Park, events, The New Forest Centre, the Aren't Birds Brilliant project, ground-nesting birds and the awareness panels.</p>
<p>7.4.5 Production of high quality printed leaflets and guides related to special qualities of the Park and key messages</p>	<p>To support the ABB! project and ensure issues about disturbance to ground-nesting birds were discussed, a leaflet on these special birds was printed and distributed.</p> <p>A set of four postcards was produced to both highlight interesting facts about the National Park, and raise awareness of litter, wildfires, animal accidents and disturbance to ground-nesting birds.</p> <p>A leaflet, poster and postcard are being produced specifically to promote the special qualities.</p>
<p>7.4.6 Growing a tailored events programme based on strong partnership events and specialist staff expertise, to complement other delivery of other providers.</p>	<p>Nine interpretive events were held during 2007 with a total attendance of 1414 people. 93% of feedback was in the top (excellent) category. Partnership events were particularly successful. A larger programme of 15 events has been scheduled for 2008.</p> <p>An events leaflet has been printed for 2008 which details Authority events and those of the New Forest Centre – and promotes other partners' programmes.</p>
<p>7.4.7 Contributing interpretative expertise and materials to help The New Forest Centre become a centre of excellence for interpretation about the New Forest</p>	<p>An association between the Authority and the Ninth Centenary Trust was signed enabling a range of initiatives to commence. A new Centre Manager was appointed, different groups were set up to oversee the association and the implementation of plans to strengthen the National Park focus of the centre.</p> <p>The New Forest Museum is now known as the New Forest Centre and it will carry the strap</p>

	<p>line 'Discover the National Park'. It has a new logo which incorporates the image from the National Park logo and a corporate identity that works well alongside the National Park's.</p> <p>New or updated displays will soon (or already) include items on birds of prey and ground-nesting birds, caring for the forest, recreation and the National Park itself.</p> <p>The exhibition was made free to children, both those visiting with their parents and those in educational groups.</p>
<p>7.4.8 Contributing to a Stage 2 Heritage Lottery Fund interpretation project bid in partnership with several organisations around the coast entitled 'Around the Solent'.</p>	<p>The Around the Solent project has been broken up into smaller bids following advice from the Heritage Lottery Fund. The Authority worked with partners from the Solent Forum to co-ordinate interpretation of the New Forest coast with the wider Solent.</p>
<p>7.4.9 Developing the New Forest Tour as an interpretive experience.</p>	<p>A printed guide was written for the 2007 season and an audio commentary is being developed for the 2008 season.</p>
<p>7.4.10 Providing sponsorship to partner organisations involved in interpretation to embed National Park messages and why it is special.</p>	<p>Sponsorship contributions supported a leaflet about Lepe Country Park and a series of artist led events about the landscape of the Park at St. Barbe Museum in Lymington.</p>
<p>7.4.11 Helping the range of existing visitor centres in and around the New Forest, to provide accurate and high quality information and interpretation about the National Park.</p>	<p>Aside from the work with the New Forest Centre, we have achieved a presence in visitor information centres with a National Park map table, information panel and leaflet dispenser. Information is also available at Lepe Country Park, Hurst Castle, Blashford Lakes and Testwood Lakes.</p>
<p>7.4.12 Developing the use of new media interpretation, such as downloadable audio tours and mobile phone interpretation to provide an unobtrusive way of providing on-site interpretation even in natural areas.</p>	<p>Downloadable content on the website includes walks, audio files and the National Park Film. Audio tours featured in grant applications for a Solent interpretation project with the Solent Forum and also the Life in Common bid.</p>

<p>7.4.13 Investigating the potential for a mobile information unit. These are used by a number of National Park Authorities to provide information and interpretation at key sites and at key times. In the New Forest, where new permanent structures are often undesirable, such a unit could work well.</p>	<p>A proposal for a mobile information and interpretation unit has been developed and is attached as Annex 2. A seasonal member of staff is proposed for summer 2008. Haley Sharpe Design have been contracted to help us with the production of the unit and key partners such as the Forestry Commission and the National Trust are fully involved and will help with the staffing. This project has the potential to radically increase awareness of the National Park and its special qualities amongst thousands of people who do not currently access other sources of information.</p>
<p>7.4.14 Investigating, with New Forest District Council, the use of local businesses such as shops and cafes as local information providers, identified by a National Park logo and an information symbol.</p>	<p>Plans are advanced for Local Information Points in Burley, Brockenhurst and Beaulieu in 2008. Applications will be invited and one venue per location will be selected. They will be provided with a sign, leaflet dispenser, awareness panel, local map and a folder of information about the National Park and local attractions.</p>
<p>7.4.15 Investigating options for a National Park wide 'interpretation partnership'. This could guide and influence information and interpretation provision across the New Forest, to ensure effective visitor services across the area. It could develop from collaborative work to promote specific themes and campaigns.</p>	<p>Partnership working has become the norm in various aspects of our work, guiding our events programme, educational campaigns and work with visitor centres. The Management Plan has identified the need for agreed messages and continuing joint working to improve visitor management and experience. A formal interpretation partnership remains an option for the future; currently a more informal network of practitioners and sites has been achieved.</p>

<p>7.5 There are also a number of projects, covered by the Communications Strategy, which have strong interpretive elements. These include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ an introductory film about the New Forest National Park;▪ the annual stand the New Forest Show;▪ working with New Forest District Council to produce New Forest Today;▪ contributing to litter awareness and animal accident campaigns in partnership with Forestry Commission and New Forest District Council;▪ working with the Forestry Commission to develop 'Forest Focus', which in 2007 was as a partnership publication covering the whole National Park.	<p>The film was first shown at the New Forest Show in 2007 and proved an excellent way to highlight the Authority's role in caring for the National Park. The show stand attracted 2,840 people to explore the many special qualities and features of the Park.</p> <p>Each edition of New Forest Today was produced jointly with New Forest District Council.</p> <p>The spring 2008 Forest Force litter pick included, public events, local community volunteer effort and a joint staff litter pick with New Forest District Council and the Forestry Commission.</p> <p>To raise awareness of the danger of animal accidents, 90,000 animal emergency hotline cards were distributed to local residents with Park Life. 200,000 more have been printed, together with 500 desktop dispensers; these are being distributed to a wide range of outlets in and around the National Park.</p> <p>Agisters were provided with temporary signs to raise awareness among drivers of where accidents had happened.</p> <p>The 2008 Forest Focus visitor/resident newspaper, produced jointly with the Forestry Commission, was published at the end of February.</p> <p>An abridged version of the National Park <i>Pocket Guide</i> was prepared for inclusion in hotel room-folders.</p> <p>A leaflet, poster and postcard were prepared specifically to promote the Park's special qualities.</p>
---	--