

NEW FOREST
NATIONAL PARK

LEARNING ABOUT THE NEW FOREST NATIONAL PARK

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Designation and Role of the National Park Authority

Autumn colour near the Rufus Stone

What are national parks?

National parks are areas of exceptional natural beauty with great opportunities for outdoor recreation that need special protection and management. By becoming a national park the New Forest has the highest level of protection for the future.



Buckler's Hard

Introduction

There are over 1,000 national parks worldwide, over 100 in Europe and 14 in the UK. The first national park was created in USA over 100 years ago to protect wilderness areas.

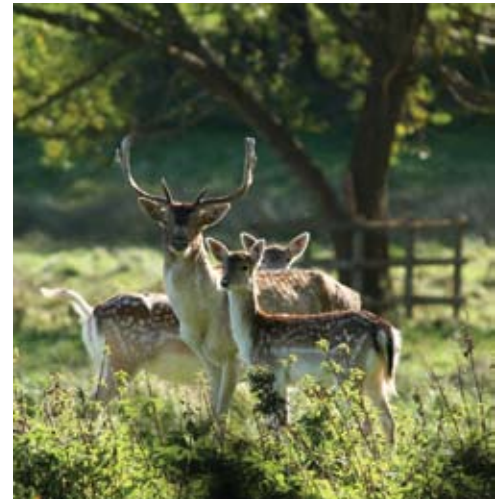
This factsheet looks at the development of national parks in the UK and the role of the national park authorities in looking after these unique landscapes.

National Park Purposes

The New Forest National Park has two purposes. These are:

- to conserve and enhance the unique environment of the National Park, and in particular the special qualities of its landscape, wildlife and cultural heritage;
- to encourage everyone to understand and enjoy the National Park's special qualities, while ensuring that its character is not harmed; and

in addition the National Park has a duty to support the social and economic well being of local communities in ways that sustain the National Park's special character.



Fallow Deer and Stag

Key dates in national park history

In the early 20th century there was a growing appreciation of the outdoors as a place for relaxation, inspiration and beauty. Prior to this time it had an image as a savage place that was outside the imagination of most people. The rise of industrialisation and the mainstreaming of the 'untamed' countryside by contemporary writers and poets raised the profile of the outdoors and increased its desirability. Public interest groups began to demand a greater amount of access to this countryside and this inevitably led to conflicts with landowners.

Key Dates

1931 Government enquiry recommended the creation of a National Park Authority. This Authority was to be charged with identifying areas to be designated as national parks. No action was taken. This increased the tensions between the public and landowners.

1932 Increasing public discontent led to the famous mass trespass on Kinder Scout, in the Peak District.

1936 A group of leisure enthusiasts including organisations such as the Rambler's Association, the Youth Hostel Association and others formed a Standing Committee on National Parks (SCNP). This argued the case for creating National Parks and lobbied Government.

1945 Government produces a White Paper on National Parks

1949 Act of Parliament is passed to establish National Parks

1951 First National Park is designated – the Peak District. This is followed by the Lake District, Snowdonia and Dartmoor

1952 Pembrokeshire coast and North York Moors are designated

1954 Exmoor and Yorkshire Dales are designated

1956 Northumberland is designated

1957 Brecon Beacons is designated

1977 The SCNP became the Council for National Parks. This continues to campaign for the protection and enhancement of National Parks.

1989 Broads Authority gains National Park status

1995 Environment Act passed. This gives the National Park Authorities the duty to foster the economic and social wellbeing of local communities alongside the two existing purposes.

2002 Loch Lomond and the Trossachs National Park is designated – the first Scottish National Park following the 2000 Scottish National Park Act.

2003 Cairngorms National Park is designated

2005 The New Forest National Park becomes the newest National Park and the 9th to be created in England



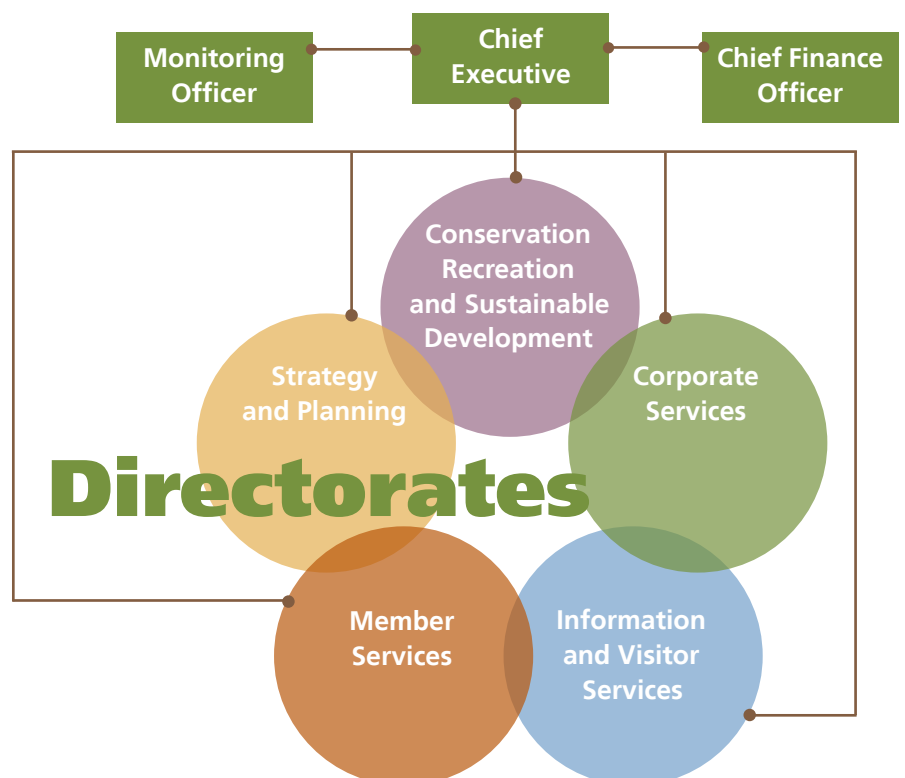
Members of the Authority

There are 22 members of the New Forest National Park Authority. Twelve are appointed by local county and district councils. The Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs appoints ten. Of these, six are appointed as representatives of the 'national' interest and four as representatives of parishes in the National Park. Members are responsible for setting policies and priorities, ensuring efficient and effective use of resources, and that money is well spent. It is their job to represent the interests of the National Park and to balance out any conflicting pressures.

Staff

The New Forest National Park Authority is a relatively small Authority currently employing about 65 people in a range of disciplines ranging from planning officers to ecologist and archaeologists as well as education and recreation staff.

Structure of the National Park Authority



Profile of the New Forest National Park

General figures	Statistic	Source
Total National Park area	57,086 ha (571km ²)	New Forest District Council, 2004
Perambulation	38,000 ha (380 km ²)	Countryside Agency, 2000
Crown lands (managed by the Forestry Commission)	25,825 ha (258 km ²)	Forest Enterprise, 2006
No of parishes & towns within the Park	37	New Forest National Park Authority
Total population	34,380	New Forest District Council, 2004
Population density	60 people/ km ²	New Forest National Park Authority
No of practicing commoners	501	Verderers of the New Forest, 2005
No of stock de-pastured on the Open Forest	7,352	Verderers of the New Forest, 2005
Land-use	Statistic	Source
Woodland	22,379 ha	Forestry Commission, 2004
- of which ancient semi-natural woodland	9,830 ha	Forestry Commission, 2004
Open Forest habitats (woodland, heathland, mire and grassland open to common grazing)	19,692 ha	Forest Enterprise, 2003
Length of hedgerows	2,402 km	Hampshire Biodiversity Information Centre
Length of watercourses	5,866 km	Environment Agency
Length of coastline	26 km	Hampshire County Council, 2006
Coastal cliff and foreshore (above mean low water)	891 ha	New Forest District Council, 2006
Nature conservation	Statistic	Source
Sites of special scientific interest (SSSIs)	32,103 ha (56% of National Park)	English Nature, 2005
Natura 2000 sites	31,887 ha (56% of National Park)	English Nature, 2005
National Nature Reserves	1,093 ha	English Nature
Local Nature Reserves	413 ha	New Forest District Council, 2004
Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINCs)	2,898 ha	New Forest District Council, Test Valley Borough Council, Swindon and Wiltshire Biological Records Centre, 2004
Countryside Stewardship Scheme	18,395 ha	DEFRA, 2004
Heritage	Statistic	Source
Scheduled Ancient Monuments	61	New Forest and Salisbury District Councils, Test Valley Borough Council
Conservation Areas	18	New Forest and Salisbury District Councils, Test Valley Borough Council
Listed Buildings	634	New Forest and Salisbury District Councils, Test Valley Borough Council
Parks and Gardens of Historic Interest included on the English Heritage Register	7	English Heritage
Recreation	Statistic	Source
Public Footpaths	235 km	Wiltshire and Hampshire County Councils
Public Bridleways	57 km	Wiltshire and Hampshire County Councils
Other Public Rights of Way	18 km	Wiltshire and Hampshire County Councils
Land with open public access	27,000 ha	National Park Authority, 2006

What does the National Park Authority do?

The New Forest National Park Authority champions the New Forest National Park, working in partnership through co-ordinated and innovative policies and actions which meet the two purposes and duty of the National Park.

Examples of work includes:

- Producing a New Forest National Park Management Plan
- Being the local planning authority with responsibility for planning policy, planning applications and tree preservation orders
- Running a sustainable development fund to encourage innovative projects
- Working with partners on conservation, recreation and information and leading on major projects
- Listening to the diverse views in the New Forest and providing a unified voice to champion the whole of the National Park
- Administering the New Forest Access Forum

What does it not do?

- Day to day management of the New Forest: that is the responsibility of landowners
- Look after roads, public rights of way or grass verges: these are the responsibility of the county councils and Highways Agency
- Collect or dispose of litter: these are the responsibility of the district and county councils
- Provide housing: that is the responsibility of the district councils



Volunteer at Forest Force event

Further reading and useful information

Other New Forest National Park Authority factsheets
Association of National Park Authorities: www.nationalparks.gov.uk
Council for National Parks: www.cnp.org.uk

www.newforestnpa.gov.uk Factsheet available on CD, in large-print, or Braille on request

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