The Minister’s Announcement

On 28 June the Rural Affairs Minister Alun Michael announced that the New Forest would become a National Park.

With its diverse landscape and strong sense of history and culture the New Forest is a unique environment. It is the most intact surviving example of a medieval hunting forest and pastoral system in England. National Park status will enhance the area and ensure that it will be available for future generations to enjoy.

The New Forest will be the ninth National Park in England, including the Broads which has similar status, and the first to be designated for many years. The Minister’s decision was based on the recommendations of a Planning Inspector, made after a seven-month public inquiry, which heard 115 witnesses, undertook site visits on 23 days and produced a report of some 300 pages.

The decision letter, report and a map detailing the boundary can be found on the Defra website, www.defra.gov.uk. Maps and information will also be available at all public libraries and information centres in the Park area.

There are 3 small areas of the Park that remain subject to further consultation, but the remainder of the boundary is set (for more details on where maps of these areas can be viewed see ‘Consultation on additional areas’). It is expected that the National Park will be formally created late in 2004 or early 2005.

Ministerial visit

On 1 July Alun Michael came to the New Forest to attend a meeting of the Consultative Panel. The panel is an independent body made up of individuals from 75 New Forest based organisations, which represent a broad range of interests in the area. The Minister invited open discussion and took a range of questions relating to his decision to establish a National Park and the future authority’s role in helping to manage and protect the New Forest.

A National Park Authority

As part of his announcement in June the Minister also said that a National Park Authority (NPA) would be created under the Environment Act 1995. This will have two statutory purposes:

(1) To conserve and enhance the natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage of the National Park

(2) To promote opportunities for the understanding and enjoyment of the special qualities of the National Park by the public.

The New Forest National Park Authority will exist from April 2005 but
will not take on its full statutory powers, functions and responsibilities until April 2006.

Defra has appointed Susan Carter, currently head of its Countryside (Recreation and Landscape) Division, as the interim Chief Executive of the National Park Authority. She will lead the process of the authority’s establishment and speak on its behalf until it is established. Susan’s responsibilities for the past eight years have included both existing and proposed National Parks. She will take up this post in October and will serve until the Authority appoints its own Chief Executive some time during the summer of 2005. She will be supported by an establishment team of three Countryside Agency staff from its National Parks Designation Team - Graham Bryant, Chris Fairbrother and Nicky Blackman. They can be contacted at the Lyndhurst address below.

Until October John Kilner, head of Defra’s National Parks branch, is leading on the creation of the National Park Authority. He can be contacted at:

Defra
Countryside (Recreation and Landscape) Division
Room 1/04
Temple Quay House
2 The Square
Temple Quay
Bristol
BS1 6EB
0117 372 8877
E-mail: john.kilner@defra.gsi.gov.uk

OR:

Interim Chief Executive for the New Forest National Park Authority
Queen’s House
High Street
Lyndhurst
SO43 7BD
023 8028 6821

E-mail: newforestnpa@defra.gsi.gov.uk

A number of individuals from governmental bodies have also been brought together as the Preparations Group to advise on the establishment of the National Park Authority. This group comprises officials from the Countryside Agency, Dartmoor National Park Authority, Defra, English Nature, the Forestry Commission, the Government Office for the South East, Hampshire County Council, New Forest Committee and New Forest District Council.

The group has already met twice.

National Park Authority membership

The Government proposes that the New Forest National Park Authority will consist of 22 members, made up of:

- 12 members from county and district councils, appointed by those local authorities – 5 from Hampshire County Council, 4 from New Forest District Council, 1 from Wiltshire County Council, 1 from Salisbury District Council, 1 from Test Valley Borough Council.
- 4 parish councillors or chairmen of parish meetings, chosen by the parish councils though formally appointed by the Secretary of State.
- 6 individuals who have knowledge, expertise and experience in areas relevant to the purposes of the National Park, appointed by the Secretary of State following an open recruitment exercise.

Consultation with local authorities on this structure will begin shortly and about 12 weeks will be allowed for responses. Comments will also be welcomed from other individuals or organisations. Responses should be
addressed to Alasdair Grant at the Defra Countryside (Recreation and Landscape) Division at the address above.
E-mail: alasdair.grant@defra.gsi.gov.uk

The recruitment exercise for Secretary of State appointees will begin in late summer 2004. Anyone who wishes to register now for an application form should send their details to Malcolm Taylor at Defra's Countryside (Recreation and Landscape) Division at the address above.
E-mail: malcolm.taylor@defra.gsi.gov.uk

**Consultation on additional areas**

Consultation began on 26 July on the three additional areas that the Minister proposes to include in the National Park. This consultation runs until 23 August. A copy of the notice, schedule of additions and the revised map can be viewed at:

**The Countryside Agency**
John Dower House
Crescent Place
Cheltenham
Gloucestershire GL50 3RA
Between the hours of 0:900 and 17:00 Monday to Friday

**Hampshire County Council**
Planning Department (Reception)
Ashburton Court West
The Castle
Winchester
Hampshire SO23 8UE
Between the hours of 09:00 and 16:30 Monday to Friday

**New Forest District Council**
Public Offices
Christ Church Road
Ringwood
Hampshire BH24 1DH
Between the hours of 08:45 and 17:15 Monday to Thursday; and 08:45 and 16:45 on Friday

**New Forest District Council**
Town Hall, Avenue Road
Lymington
Hampshire SO41 9ZG
Between the hours of 08:45 and 17:15 Monday to Thursday; and 08:45 and 16:45 on Friday.

**New Forest District Council**
Stannington
Spencer Road
New Milton
Hampshire BH25 6BZ
Between the hours of 08:45 and 16:30 Monday to Friday

**New Forest District Council**
The Grove
St John's Street
Hythe
Hampshire SO25 6BZ
Between the hours of 08:45 and 16:30 Monday to Friday

**New Forest District Council**
West Wing, School House
Provost Street,
Fordingbridge
Hampshire SP6 1AY
Between the hours of 08:45 and 16:30 Monday to Friday
Comments can be sent in writing by 23 August 2004 to:
Alasdair Grant at Defra’s Countryside (Recreation and Landscape) Division at the address above.
Fax: 0117 3726241
E-mail: natparknewforest@defra.gsi.gov.uk

New Forest District Council
Civic Centre
Totton
Hampshire SO40 3AP
Between the hours of 09:00 and 17:00
Monday to Thursday; and 09:00 and
16:30 on Friday

New Forest District Council
The Square
Fawley
Hampshire SO45 1DF
Between the hours of 09:00 and 17:00
Monday to Friday

Wiltshire County Council
County Hall
Bythesea Road
Trowbridge
Wiltshire BA14 8JD
Between the hours of 09:00 and 17:00
Monday to Friday

Salisbury District Council
Planning Office
61 Wyndham Road
Salisbury SP1 3AH
Between the hours of 09:00 and 17:00
Monday to Thursday; and 09:00 and
16:00 on Friday.

Useful Links

Websites:
Defra website: www.defra.gov.uk
Countryside Agency website:
www.countryside.gov.uk

E-mail addresses:
New Forest National Park Authority
Interim Chief Executive and
Establishment Team:
newforestnpa@defra.gsi.gov.uk

This news update is produced by the
New Forest National Park
Establishment Team and will provide
approximately monthly updates on the
progress of the National Park and
National Park Authority. It will appear
on the Defra website, however if you
would like to have it sent to you directly
(either as an email or in hard copy
through the post) then please contact
Defra’s Countryside (Recreation and
Landscape) Division at the address
above, or e-mail:
newforestnpa@defra.gsi.gov.uk