New Forest National Park

On 28 June it was announced that the New Forest would become the ninth National Park in England (including the Broads which has similar status). The designation will ensure that this unique area is enhanced and conserved for future generations. Further information, including a map detailing the boundary, can be found on the Defra website: www.defra.gov.uk

A National Park Authority

In the June announcement it was also stated that a National Park Authority (NPA) for the New Forest would be created. It will exist from April 2005, but only take on its full statutory powers, functions and responsibilities from April 2006.

The NPA’s statutory purposes are:

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.

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 (see below).

Members needed for the National Park Authority

Margaret Beckett, Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs is seeking to appoint members for the National Park Authority.
With appointments initially for three years, beginning 1 April 2005, there will be the option of re-appointment for up to ten years.

Applications from women, members of ethnic minorities, young people and disabled people are particularly welcome, as these groups are still under-represented among the membership of National Park Authorities.

The appointments are unsalaried although expenses and travel are paid.

An application form and further details can be obtained from:

Carol Foster  
The Countryside Agency  
John Dower House  
Crescent Place  
Cheltenham  
Gloucestershire  
GL50 3RA  
Tel: 01242 533 284  
Fax: 01242 584 270  
E-mail: carol.foster@countryside.gov.uk

Application forms are also available on the Defra website at:  

Completed application forms must be returned to the Countryside Agency by no later than Monday, 18 October 2004.

New Forest National Park Establishment Team

This news update is produced by the Establishment Team, who have been brought together to deal with the process of establishing a National Park Authority for the New Forest National Park.

The team is currently led by John Kilner, head of Defra's National Parks Branch, supported by three Countryside Agency staff from its National Parks Designation Team – Graham Bryant, Chris Fairbrother and Nicky Blackman.

John Kilner can be contacted at:

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

From October Susan Carter, head of Defra’s Countryside (Recreation and Landscape) Division, will take up the role of interim Chief Executive of the National Park Authority and lead the Establishment Team.

Interim Chief Executive

Susan Carter brings extensive knowledge of National Park Authorities and of central and local government, combined with an understanding of environmental issues. With degrees in geography and
Susan has headed the Countryside (Recreation and Landscape) Division of Defra since 1996. Her responsibilities have included the protection of National Parks, Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, common land and the wider countryside. The division also aims to improve people’s enjoyment of the countryside: promoting outdoor recreation as part of the Government’s health agenda; introducing the new right of access to open countryside; improving the rights of way network; and increasing opportunities for canoeists. Susan is familiar with the work involved in setting up new organisations from establishing the Countryside Agency, English Nature and the Joint Nature Conservation Committee.

Commenting on her new post, Susan said: “I have loved visiting the New Forest ever since I was a child. I know from experience elsewhere that a National Park Authority will offer exciting opportunities to conserve and enhance the beauty of this magical place, and to increase people’s understanding and enjoyment of its special qualities. It will bring social and economic benefits for local communities too.

I am looking forward enormously to getting to know the Forest better and to playing a part in securing its future”.

The New Forest Association is now a member of the Council for National Parks

The New Forest Association (NFA) gained full membership of the Council for National Parks (CNP) in July. This will enable the NFA to feed the needs and issues of England’s newest National Park to decision makers at a national level through CNP. It will also allow CNP to gain a better understanding of issues ‘on the ground’ in the New Forest. The NFA will also benefit from the experience of other National Park Societies, who work alongside the National Park Authorities.

Established in 1936, the CNP is a national charity and the umbrella body which brings together interests in National Parks. It works on a range of National Park issues across England and Wales, and its members include household names such as the National Trust and Ramblers Association, as well as individual supporters. Activities include lobbying decision makers, monitoring changes to planning guidance and providing information and educational materials.

For more information on CNP go to their website: www.cnp.org.uk

The NFA is one of the oldest conservation groups in the country, established in 1867, which brings together a wide range of interests and expertise within and around the New Forest. It actively campaigns to protect the natural beauty of the Forest, to ensure that succeeding generations will be able to enjoy it. Following the Minister’s National Park announcement, the NFA is working with the Council for National Parks in pursuit of ways in
which the areas excluded by the new boundary can be afforded an increased level of protection from developmental pressures. For more information on the NFA go to their website: www.newforestassociation.co.uk

Useful contacts

Websites:

Defra:
www.defra.gov.uk

Countryside Agency:
www.countryside.gov.uk

New Forest Committee:
www.newforestcommittee.org.uk

Council for National Parks:
www.cnp.org.uk

New Forest Association:
www.newforestassociation.co.uk

E-mail addresses:

New Forest National Park Establishment Team:
newforestnpa@defra.gsi.gov.uk