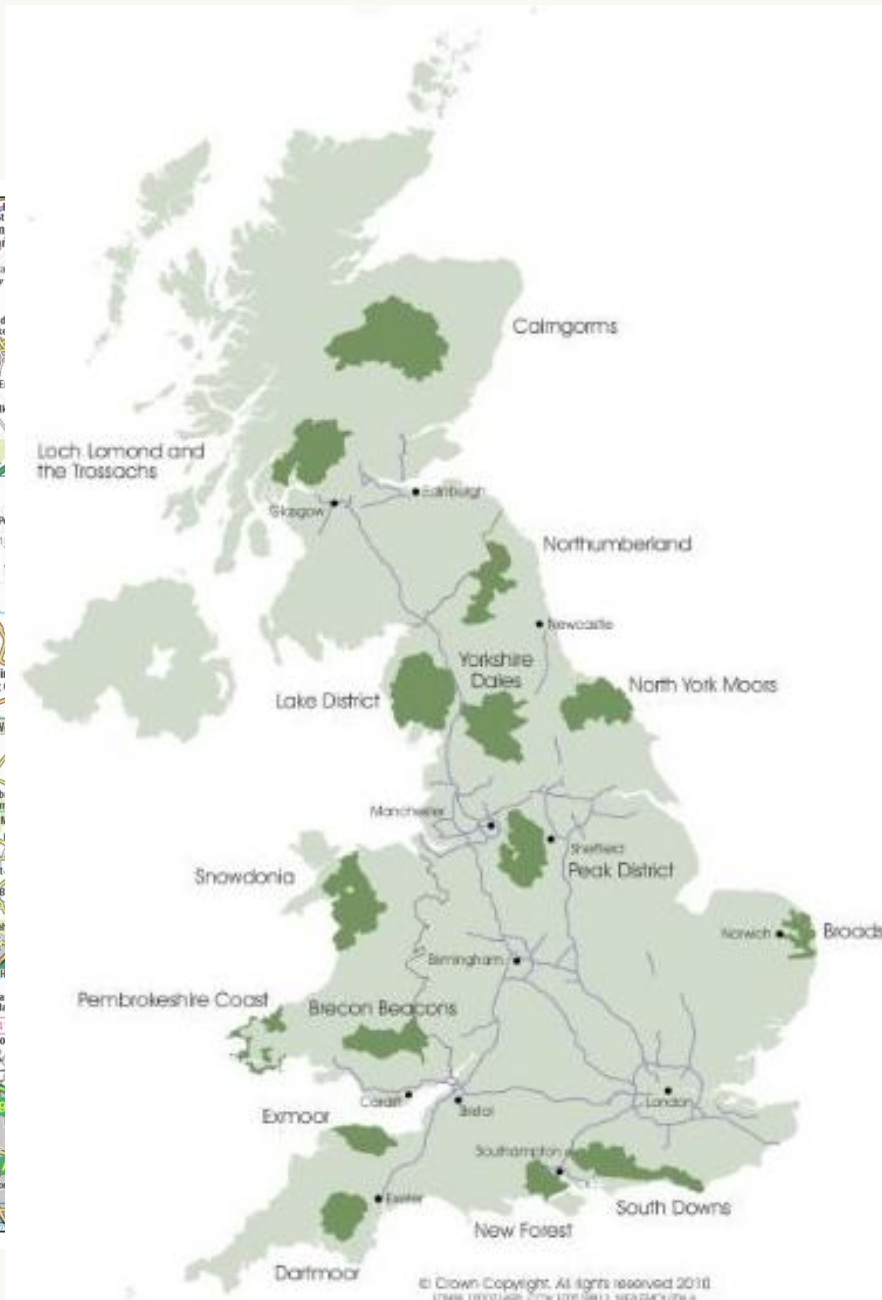
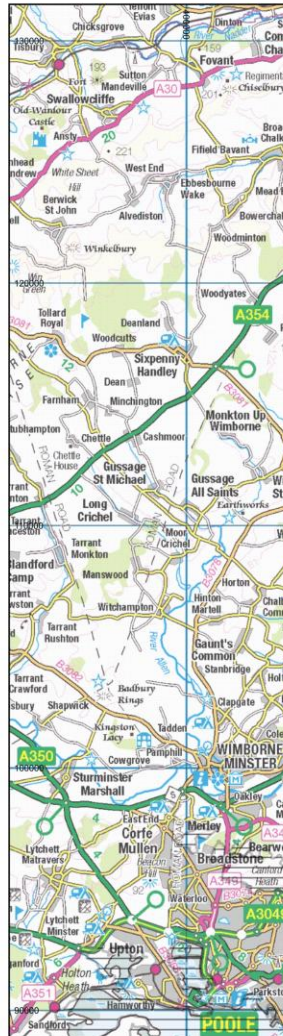


# Lab 6 – Sensitive Sites and Nature Recovery

## Recreation Management in the New Forest – Protecting Nature Whilst Maintaining Access?

*Gillie Molland, Ranger Services Manager, New Forest National Park Authority*  
*Richard Burke, Head of Land Management, Forestry England*

# The Place



# Current and Future Pressures



# Recreation Management Strategy

## *A partnership approach*

- Benefit of clear NP purposes
- Key partner obligations under Env Act 1995
- Landscape scale approach
- Stakeholder consensus
- Agreed outcomes
- Wide agreement on key principles and “Criteria for Recreation Mgt”

### 1.3 Which activities are included?

The Strategy focuses on outdoor recreation. The term ‘outdoor recreation’ describes a wide variety of mainly active leisure pursuits that take place in the countryside of the New Forest. The most popular activities include:

- Walking
- Horse riding
- On and off road cycling
- Camping and caravanning
- Coastal activities including watersports, sailing, windsurfing, kite surfing, canoeing / kayaking, swimming
- Cricket
- Golf
- Running
- Orienteering
- Paddling and playing in water
- Enjoying the countryside – painting, writing, photography, field studies (including natural history, cultural heritage and landscape)
- Picnicking
- Kite flying
- Model aircraft and model boat sailing
- Carriage driving
- Angling
- Conservation volunteering
- Visiting villages, historical sites and other attractions

 New Forest National Park  
Recreation Management Strategy  
2010 - 2030



## Introduction

### 1.1 Purpose of the Strategy

This Strategy sets out a framework for the management of outdoor recreation in the New Forest National Park over the coming 20 years. Its key purpose is to ensure that, at a strategic level, outdoor recreation operates in as sustainable a way as possible; ensuring that it functions within environmental limits whilst optimising the social and economic benefits it can bring. It also proposes a process through which some of the current conflicts and polarised opinions about recreation might be resolved. If recreation is to be managed successfully, it is essential for the public, users and land managers to be involved and supportive of the process.

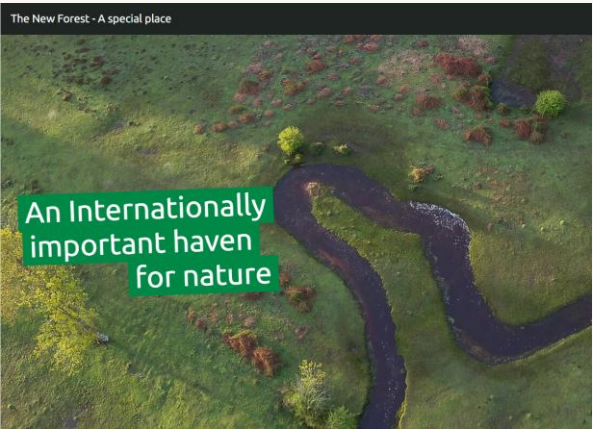


# Recreation Management Strategy

## Strategic objectives

2 Rounds of Public Consultations - agreement on the problems/ mandate for agreed actions

- Expand understanding, widen audience
- Reduce impact and improve experience
- Address funding, data & evidence and review



### Overview

The objectives and draft actions fall into three different categories which are colour-coded below.

|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |                   |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------|
| Actions that continue and expand on existing work to help people understand how special the New Forest is, avoid negative impacts and benefit from spending time outside.                                                                               |                   |
| Objective 1: Convey the things that make the New Forest National Park special to both visitors and local people in more consistent and effective ways, so that they enjoy it, come to value it, want to care for it and do not inadvertently damage it. | Actions 1.1 – 1.5 |
| Objective 2: Address significant and/or widespread negative impacts caused by recreation in the most appropriate, proportionate and effective ways.                                                                                                     | Actions 2.1 – 2.4 |
| Objective 3: Reduce the barriers that limit participation in beneficial outdoor recreation among those who need it most                                                                                                                                 | Actions 3.1 – 3.3 |
| Actions relating to specific sites and routes that will help reduce impacts and improve the recreational experience.                                                                                                                                    |                   |
| Objective 4: Protect and enhance the New Forest's working and natural landscape, and improve the recreational experience, by influencing where recreation takes place.                                                                                  | Actions 4.1 – 4.2 |
| Actions aimed at increasing the level of funding available for recreation management, developing an evidence-based approach and keeping the strategy 'live'.                                                                                            |                   |
| Objective 5: Increase the level of funding available for recreation management so that it is sufficient to address both existing and upcoming needs.                                                                                                    | Actions 5.1 – 5.3 |
| Objective 6: Collate data and evidence to help inform the ongoing management of recreation                                                                                                                                                              | Actions 6.1 – 6.2 |
| Objective 7: Regularly review progress against agreed recreation management actions and adapt forward plans to protect the special qualities of the National Park and enable people to enjoy and benefit from them                                      | Actions 7.1 – 7.3 |

# Managing Access – Spatial Planning

## *The current situation*

- 95% of visitors come by car
- 130 car parks designed in the 1970's
- Car parks distributed across the landscape to disperse pressure
- Long access tracks, odd layouts
- Access to sensitive sites – all are in the SAC/SPA/SSSI/ Ramsar site
- 4000 formal spaces – on the busiest day only 3000 in use (pre covid)
- Costly to maintain and limited income
- Generally in poor condition and lead to poor visitor experience
- Correlation between visitor experience and behaviour?
- Poorly waymarked paths and tracks
- Many access points lead into sensitive locations

# Car Park Charging Project

## *Why?*

- Less than 20% of Forestry England's funding comes from govt.
- Infrastructure is ageing and costly to maintain
- Costs are increasing
- Modelling shows us future use will increase (RJS Associates)
- Significant benefits from connecting people with nature

## *What?*

- Implement a car park charging scheme from scratch across 130 rural car parks.

# Car Park Charging Project

## *The challenges:*

- Scale
- Landscape
- Grazing
- Power/ signal
- SAC/SSSI



# Car Park Charging Project

## *The benefits:*

- Long term sustainable income stream
- Additional 10 FTE Rangers engaging with visitors
- Long term viability/ improvement of facilities/ improved visitor experience
- Access Mgt – effectiveness of SANG/ reduction in fly parking/ focused engagement
- Forestry England membership – communication channel
- Placemaking – a value on the place



# Spatial Plan – Access Points

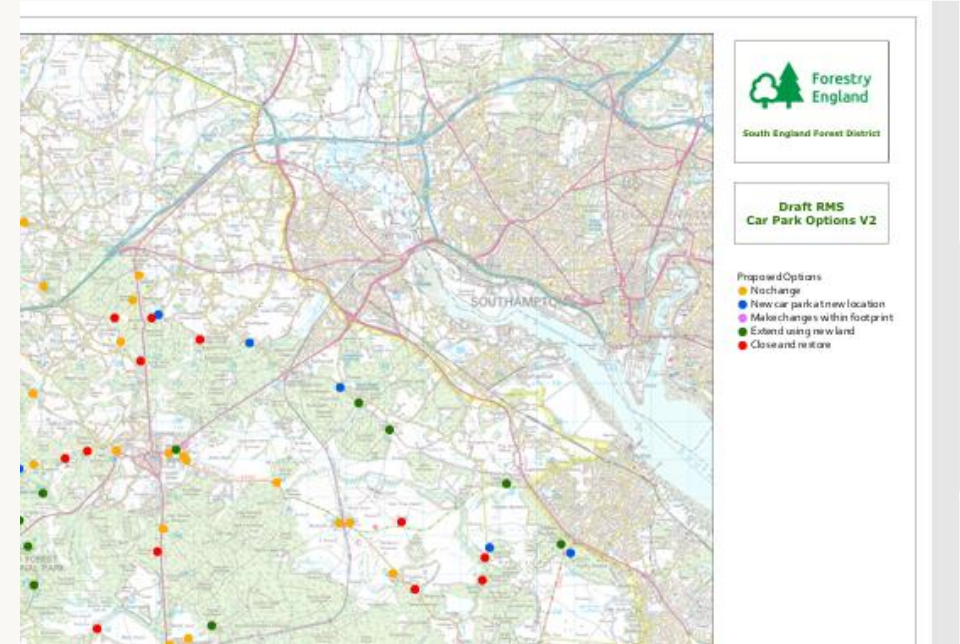
*People in the right place*

## Why?

- 95% of visitors come by car
- Reduce impact by aligning with hard track networks
- Gain restored habitat for grazing/ nature
- Improved visitor experience

## How?

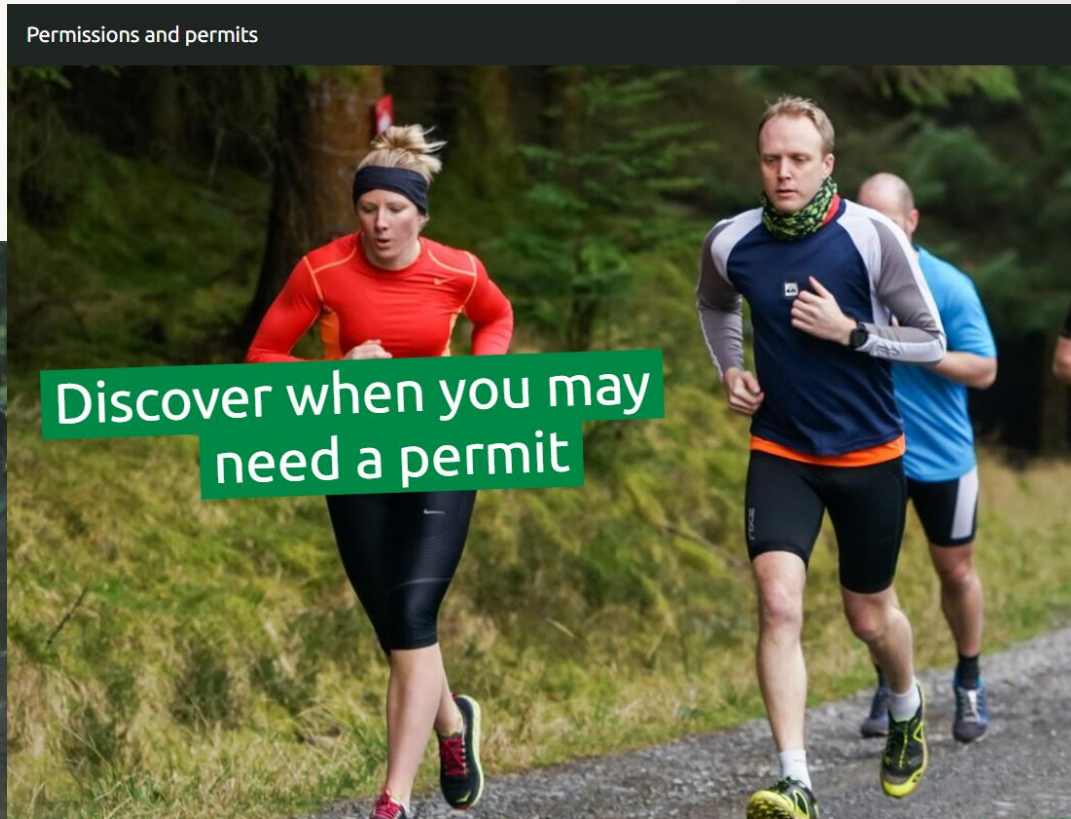
- Changing access points by using the RMS MoU agreed principles
- Close some car parks, extend some car parks, some new car parks
- Tie into development mitigation SAMM project



# Permitted Events and Activity

*Working with stakeholders to change behaviour*

- 2000 applications a year – wide range of activities
- Long standing agreements or continued use
- Larger, more commercial events
- Habitats Regulations Assessment
- Encourage healthy activity



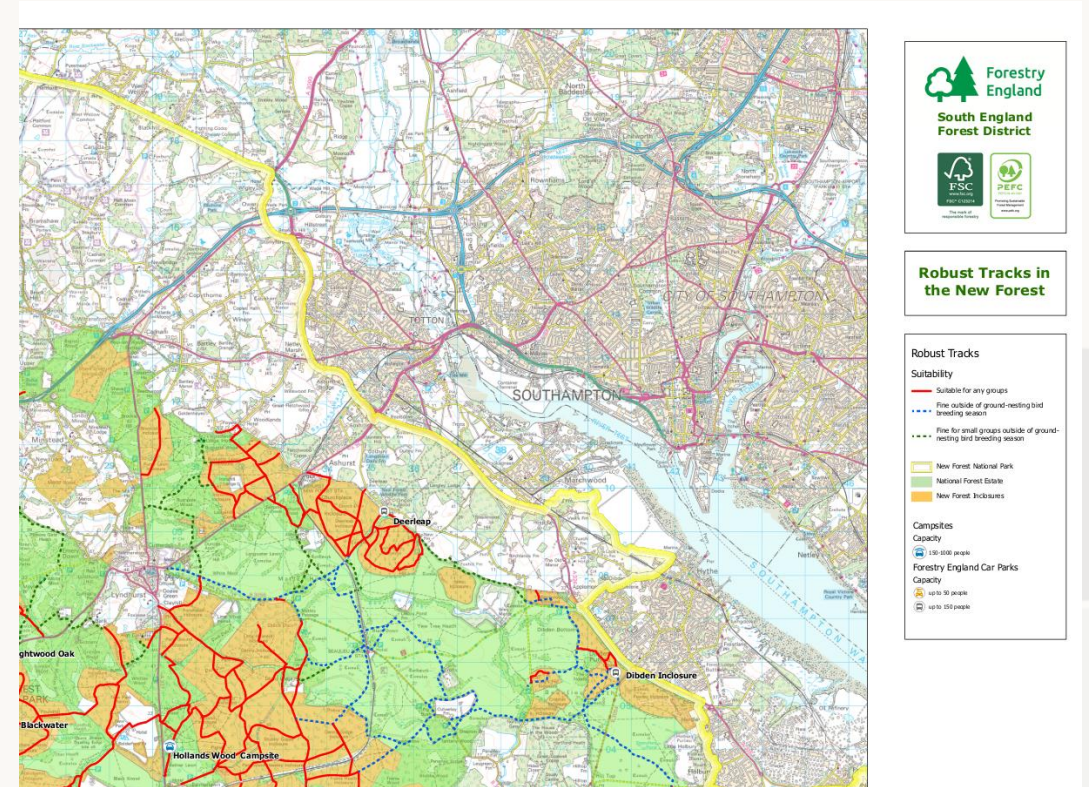
# Permitted Events and Activity

*Working with stakeholders to change behaviour*

- Meetings with stakeholder groups
- 2 way understanding
- Shared journey
- Supporting access & benefits
- HRA process

## Outcomes

- Robust track network
- Timing of events
- Relocation of events
- Monitoring of events and impact
- Generally successful as a result of shared understanding



# Management of Cycling

*Longstanding friction – perception vs reality*

Key tasks:

1. Extend multi user network - increased connectivity
2. Improve wayfinding – confidence to use it/ keep people on track
3. Management of open street map data
4. Cycling ambassadors – peer networks
5. Cycle map/ website improvements
6. Update to the NF cycle code

