

National Park Management Plan
Area Advisory Forum Update
24 January 2008

Purpose of the Plan

The National Park Management Plan is the single most important document for the National Park. The Plan coordinates and integrates other plans, strategies, and actions in the National Park that affect the two Park purposes and its duty. No major decisions should be taken affecting the future of the Park without reference to the Management Plan.

The Plan sets a vision for the future of the Park (20 years hence) and specifies actions and outcomes to pursue in the next five years to bring the Park closer to this shared vision. The Plan promotes coordinated implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of these activities collectively across a wide range of partners and stakeholders. In essence, it creates a framework for Park management, guiding decision-making and developing priorities.

The Management Plan is subject to Sustainability Appraisal and Environmental Assessment (SA/SEA). The Plan is also assessed for the likelihood of significant impacts on European designated conservation sites (HRA).

Statutory Purposes

National Parks were designated under the 1949 National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act, but their current framework is the Environment Act 1995. Section 61 of this act sets out the Parks' **two purposes**:

- **Conservation and enhancement** - “to conserve and enhance the natural beauty, wildlife, and cultural heritage of the National Parks.”
- **Understanding and enjoyment** - “to promote opportunities for the understanding and enjoyment of the special qualities [of the Parks] by the public.”

The National Park Authority (NPA), in pursuit of the two statutory purposes, also has a duty to:

- “...seek to foster the economic and social well-being of local communities (within the National Park by working closely with the agencies and local authorities responsible for these matters).”

The Park's statutory duty should be carried out with the Park's purposes in mind; policies and actions designed to promote social and economic well-being should also aim to conserve and enhance the natural and cultural heritage of the Park.

Who is the Plan for?

Although the National Park Authority (NPA) has been given the statutory responsibility to prepare the Management Plan, it is a plan for the Park as a whole and not just for the NPA. The success of the Management Plan relies upon the cooperative interaction of all those who care for the Park and its future.

More explicitly, Section 62(2) of the Environment Act 1995 imposes a duty on all public bodies to have regard to the two National Park purposes when making their decisions or carrying out activities in relation to or so as to affect land within a national park. The NPA leads the actions and facilitates the partnerships required to fulfil the Park purposes and duty, with the aim to foster a collective sense of purpose.

Current Status

We are currently developing the draft Management Plan. The initial draft will include introductory materials, context, the Park's special qualities, 20-year vision statements, and long-term aims (often called strategic objectives). The aims are organized by topic, for example landscape, interpretation, biodiversity, and tourism.

A consultation draft will be made available to the public the first week of April. This draft will lack photos and diagrams and finished formatting so that we can focus comments on the content of the plan. The primary mode of publication will be electronic and via CD to reduce our environmental impact. Paper copies will be sent where they are most needed, particularly to communities. The statutory review period is four weeks, but we intend to extend this period to give everyone time to review the draft thoroughly.

During the consultation period, we will have a series of discussions to formulate our (including key stakeholders) priorities for action for the next five years. These will include a series of outcomes and related actions that will be accomplished in the next five years that ultimately put us on track with achieving the twenty-year aims and the vision. The Priorities for Action document will also be sent out for public consultation.

Draft Sustainability and Environmental Reports will be made available for public consultation in July 2008 at the earliest.

How You Can Help

Consultation is an on-going process; NPA staff members continue to engage interested stakeholders to improve the quality of the Management Plan and, ultimately, improve the management of the Brecon Beacons National Park.

The consultation period for this draft Plan begins on 31 March 2008. There will also be opportunities to comment on the draft sustainability and environmental report as well as the forthcoming Local Development Plan.

Please share your comments with us so that we can continue to successfully manage this ever-changing landscape TOGETHER!