

A CONCORDAT

Between the Forestry Commission and the National Forest Company



A CONCORDAT BETWEEN THE FORESTRY COMMISSION AND THE NATIONAL FOREST COMPANY

Purpose

The purpose of this Concordat is to describe how the Forestry Commission (FC) and the National Forest Company (NFC) will work together to deliver the shared objectives of the England Forestry Strategy and the National Forest Strategy.

The Forestry Commission is the Government Department responsible for forestry policy in Great Britain. It is working to ensure the sustainable management of our existing woods and forests, and to deliver a continued steady expansion of our woodland area to provide additional benefits for our society and environment. The Forestry Commission is the largest single woodland owner in England, and also gives grant aid and advice to private owners to promote woodland creation and positive woodland management.



Our work is focused on the delivery of public benefits which include: woodlands for access and recreation; woodlands for economic regeneration to ameliorate industrial dereliction; woodlands for timber production to strengthen local economies; and woodlands for biodiversity to enhance our environment.

Forest Enterprise, as an Agency of the Forestry Commission, manages the nation's forest estate, helping to deliver the above multiple benefits. Forest Enterprise is a key vehicle for implementing the England Forestry Strategy and has a leading role in championing sustainable forestry.

This is being achieved through better targeting of resources to focus on areas of greatest opportunity and need, working in partnerships to create a framework for positive action and by the involvement of local businesses and communities to create public support.

The National Forest Company was established by the Government in 1995. The Company is limited by guarantee and its founder members were the then Secretary of State for the Environment and the Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Food.

The Company's mission statement is 'To create, through working partnerships and with community participation, a new 200 square mile multi-purpose forest for the nation in the heart of England.' This new working forest will form a mosaic of land uses, transforming and enhancing the environment, economy and social well being of the area for its benefit and that of the nation as a whole.

In creating The National Forest, the Company promotes nature conservation and cultural heritage; assists provision of and opportunities for sport, recreation and tourism; encourages agricultural and rural enterprise; stimulates economic regeneration; and ensures community and business participation.



KEY THEMES FOR THE CONCORDAT

By working together, our two organisations will achieve more. This Concordat identifies a range of areas for co-operation and joint action, and sets the agenda for further key actions which each partner may take forward individually, furthering our shared objectives for the Forest area. This joint approach will be taken forward through an annual Action Plan developed under the following key themes:

Grants and Incentives

We will continue to work together on the running of the National Forest Tender Scheme, and review its performance annually. We will undertake an annual review of the full range of grants and incentives available within the Forest area, and work together to consider the development of new ones.

Land Acquisition

We will work together to create the Forest by optimising acquisition opportunities available to the NFC and the FC. Joint acquisitions between FC and NFC have already been carried out, and this will be continued. The NFC will facilitate the involvement of private sector sponsors and other funding organisations in this process to increase the resources available. The FC and NFC have agreed a land acquisition target for Forest Enterprise of 500ha of new woodland by 2005.

Best Practice and Advice

We will work together to promote best practice in all aspects of woodland creation and management over the full range of conditions found in the Forest area, including brownfield and restoration sites. We will ensure that best practice is promoted through leaflets, publications, workshops and demonstrations.

Training and Support

We will work together to provide training, advice and support for woodland owners and managers in the Forest area.

Joined-up Working

We will work together to promote a more 'joined-up' approach to the National Forest amongst other departments, agencies and organisations. FC will explore opportunities to rationalise management with other woodland managers in the NF area. This approach will be supported by the creation of a new FC Forester post, jointly funded by FC and NFC, to manage Forest Enterprise land in the Forest and support the development of new acquisitions.

Woodland-based Economy

We will work together to support the development of a sustainable local wood-based economy, based on wood products, wood energy and the contribution woodland can make to leisure enterprises.

Public Awareness

We will work together to raise public awareness of the Forest and increase public involvement in its creation and use, taking advantage of new developments in information technology such as the Internet.

Recreation, Access and Tourism

We will work together to secure good-quality public access and recreational opportunities in the Forest, both as a means of improving quality of life and healthy living for local residents and to underpin the development of increased tourism and visitor usage.

Additional Funding and Resources

We will work together to identify and pursue additional sources of funding to support the development of the Forest; including regional, national, government and private sector funds, as well as European funding.

Monitoring Progress and Keeping in Touch

This Concordat will run for a period of three years. The Chief Executive of the NFC will meet annually with the FC Chief Conservator, and the Forest Enterprise Director for England to review progress. Monitoring meetings will also take place between the FC Conservator, Forest Enterprise Forest District Manager and the NFC.

ENGLAND FORESTRY STRATEGY

The government's policy for forestry in England is described in the England Forestry Strategy document 'A New Focus for England's Woodlands'. The Strategy identifies four key programmes where forestry delivers benefits for people, communities and society:

Forestry for Rural Development
Forestry for Economic Regeneration
Forestry for Recreation, Access and Tourism
Forestry for the Environment and Conservation

The Strategy document recognises the National Forest as an exemplar of the environmental, economic and social benefits that lowland multi-purpose forestry brings, and sees partnership and participation at the heart of the approach being promoted by the National Forest Company.



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