

A JOINT ACCORD

*Between the National Association for Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty
and the Forestry Commission*





The National Association for Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty and the Forestry Commission will work together to enhance the contribution that trees, woods and forests can make within our finest landscapes.



OUR SHARED OBJECTIVES:

For many years the Forestry Commission and the Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty have worked together at local level to take forward their shared objectives.

The Countryside and Rights of Way Act (2000) and the Forestry Strategies for England (1998) and for Wales (2001) now provide a new opportunity to further develop our co-operation to ensure that our finest countryside is managed in a more integrated way.



A JOINT ACCORD BETWEEN THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR AREAS OF OUTSTANDING NATURAL BEAUTY AND THE FORESTRY COMMISSION

Purpose

The purpose of this Joint Accord is to describe how the National Association for Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty and the Forestry Commission will work together to meet our shared objectives.

The National Association for Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty

The National Association for Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty acts as the national voice for Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty to promote their interests.

Parliament has taken a major step towards raising the status of AONBs through The Countryside and Rights of Way Act (2000).

Building on the 1949 Act which designated AONBs in order to conserve and enhance their natural beauty, the new Act will:

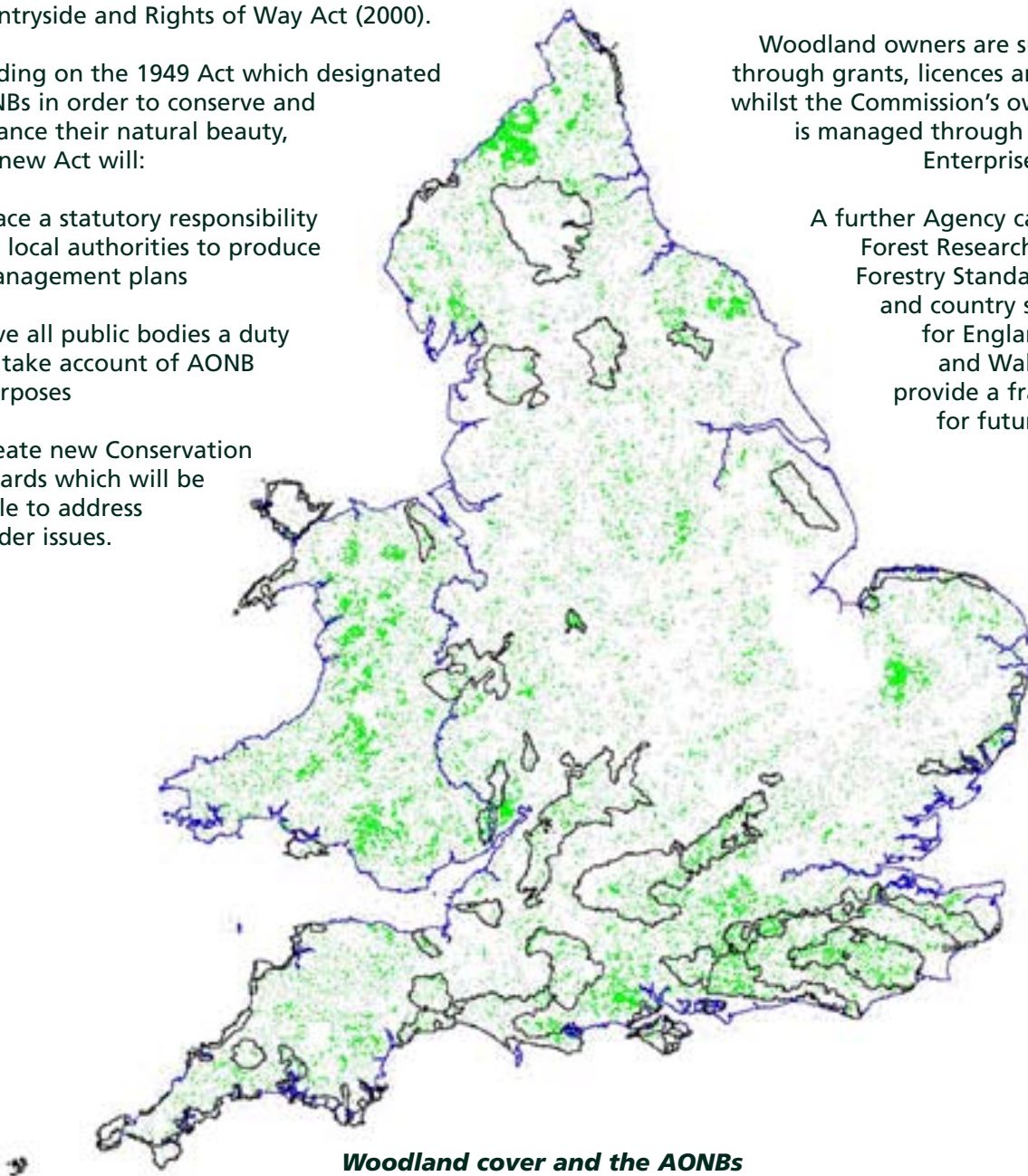
- place a statutory responsibility on local authorities to produce management plans
- give all public bodies a duty to take account of AONB purposes
- create new Conservation Boards which will be able to address wider issues.

The Forestry Commission

The Forestry Commission was established in 1919 and is the Government Department responsible for Forestry in Great Britain. It works to ensure the protection and sustainable management of our woodlands whilst seeking additional benefits for society and the environment.

Woodland owners are supported through grants, licences and advice whilst the Commission's own estate is managed through its Forest Enterprise Agency.

A further Agency carries out Forest Research. The UK Forestry Standard (1998) and country strategies for England (1998) and Wales (2001) provide a framework for future action.



Woodland cover and the AONBs

OUR SHARED PRIORITIES:

Securing an attractive and sustainable landscape

Woodlands help to define the character of many of our finest landscapes. Trees are long lived and the consequences of management decisions will often be seen for decades. We both wish to encourage planning that will secure attractive woodlands, enhance the distinctive character of each AONB and provide sustainable benefits for future generations.

Protection of existing woodlands

Through the licensing of tree felling and the adoption of management schemes the Forestry Commission has a statutory duty to protect woodland. There is a general presumption against the conversion of woodland to other land uses except where there are overriding public benefits – for example, to restore important semi-natural habitats.

Reversing the fragmentation of Ancient and Semi-Natural Woodlands

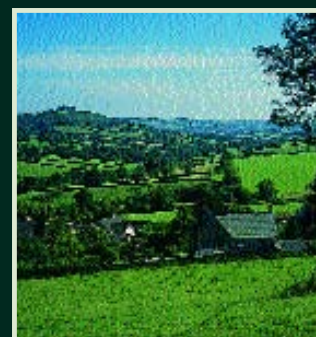
The creation of new woodlands in appropriate locations can enhance landscapes and improve the wildlife value of our countryside. The achievement of certain shared bio-diversity targets can also be realised through appropriate planting of trees.

Promoting appropriate management practices

Many woodland activities, including the production of timber, have helped to shape and maintain the landscape. Enhancing the economic future of our woodlands is a shared concern and will call for efforts to secure new and diverse markets and for the restoration of certain historic practices.

Gaining public confidence and support

It is vital that people understand and appreciate the environmental, social and economic value of forests and woodlands. The provision of information and appropriate public access are important components of this shared priority. A better understanding of the needs and attitudes of woodland owners is also sought, especially for those outside existing management schemes.



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Countryside Agency/Mike Williams/Peter Hamilton, Flycatcher Photographic, Forestry Commission

THE JOINT ACCORD – A STATEMENT OF SHARED AIMS BETWEEN THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR AREAS OF OUTSTANDING NATURAL BEAUTY AND THE FORESTRY COMMISSION

The National Association for Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty and the Forestry Commission will work together in partnership to deliver our shared objectives.

We will do this jointly by:

Ensuring effective liaison through:

- an annual meeting at senior level to review liaison and progress
- an annual meeting between those individual AONBs and local Forestry Commission staff where both parties agree that woodland issues are of importance
- the development of local accords where both parties agree that woodland issues are highly significant within the AONB. These accords will seek to reflect the distinctive nature of each area, highlighting new opportunities for working together and involvement in local management groups.

Assisting in the preparation of AONB management plans.

- The Forestry Commission will provide guidance and help for those sections of the plan dealing with the management of woodland and its wider benefits. We will seek to ensure the preparation and presentation of positive forestry and woodland policies at all levels, ensuring that proposals are consistent with the Country Forestry Strategies and the particular circumstances of each AONB.

Maximising the awareness and uptake of existing woodland incentives and identifying and securing new resources and mechanisms.

- Through the Forestry Commission's Public Register (which provides details of grant scheme and felling licence applications) we will continue to welcome comments from AONBs. The Forestry Commission will help to deliver priorities identified in the AONB management plans.

Ensuring that the Forestry Commission, through its Forest Enterprise Agency, will fully consult on the management of its own estate during the preparation of long-term Forest Design Plans.

The identification of joint priorities for research and development.

Forestry Commission membership of the National Association for AONBs.

- An identified officer will promote active involvement in the work of the Association.

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