



the River Restoration Centre

Working to restore and enhance our rivers

Delivering River Restoration: Recipes for Success

13TH ANNUAL NETWORK CONFERENCE



Restoring Europe's Rivers



ARUP



Penny Anderson Associates Ltd
CONSULTANT ECOLOGISTS



WILLOWBANK
Erosion & Conservation Services



WETLAND RESTORATION IN THE NEW FOREST: Keeping Most Of The People Happy?



Sarah Oakley

Ecologist

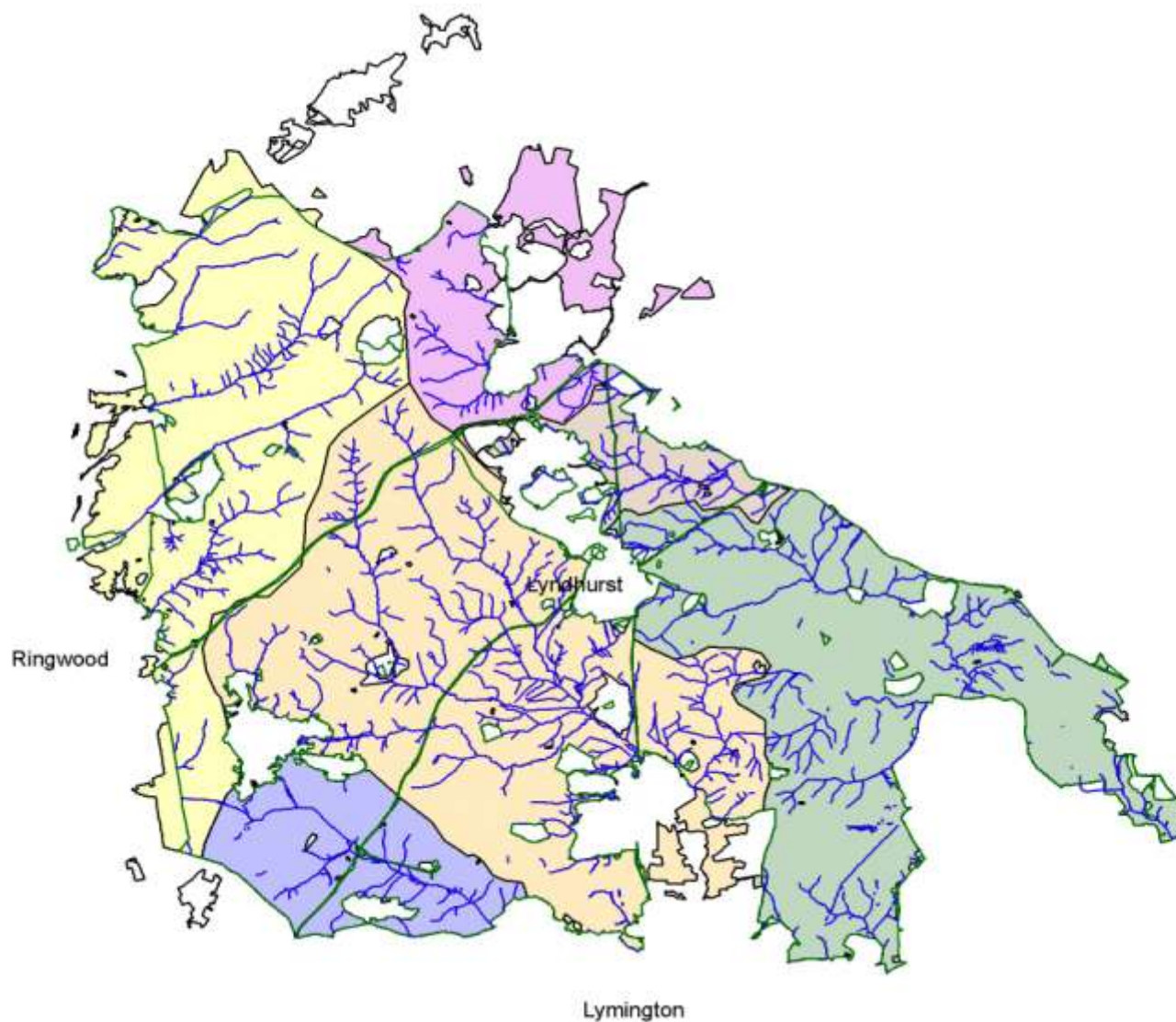
Forestry Commission England

BACKGROUND

Land ownership context (political)



River catchment context (physical)



LIFE 3
 Sustainable Wetland Restoration
 in the New Forest

 New Forest Streams
 New Forest Cowlind

Water catchments where action will take place under LIFE 3

 Avon Water
 Hampshire Avon
 Lymington River

Other catchments

 Bartley
 Beaulieu
 Cadnam River

Date: 6 March 2003

Scale: 1:100000

Reproduced from the previous version map with the
 permission of the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and
 Food. Copyright Reserved

Mosaic of habitats

- Ancient woodlands
- Lowland heaths
- Valley mires
- Grasslands (lawns)
- Scrub



Commoners Stock – The 'Natural Managers'



4,500 Ponies

2,500 Cattle

200 Donkeys

100 Pigs



700 Commoners

Wetland Resource

> 70km watercourses

>2000 ha valley mires



And...

>1000 ha streamside lawns
(wet grassland)

History of habitat restoration

1997-2001 – LIFE 2 Project - rhododendron, path erosion, mire and heathland restoration, education & awareness

2002-2006 – LIFE 3 Project - functional catchments of mires, wet grasslands and rivers

2005-2008 – PROGRESS Project

2006-2008 – Pathfinder Project

2008-2010 – Final 4,000 Project

2010-2020 – Higher Level Stewardship Scheme

THE PROCESS

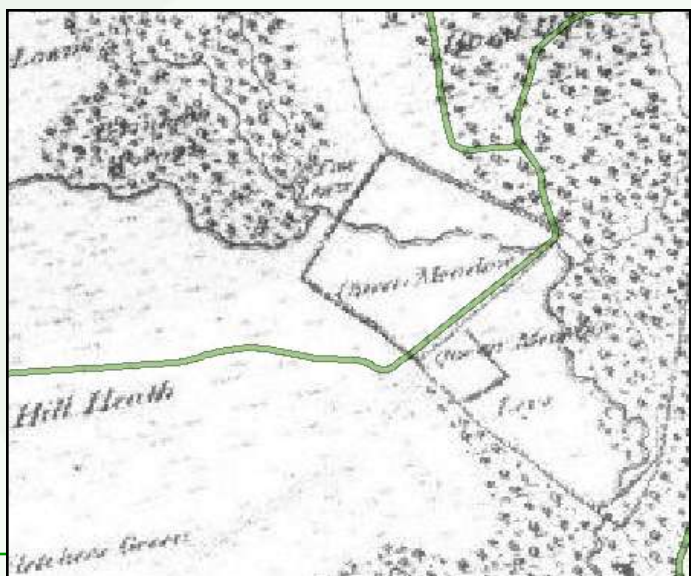
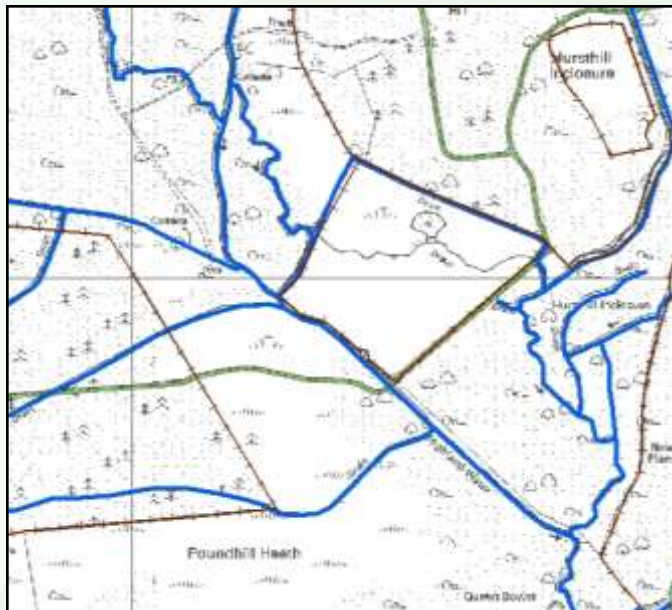
Natural England

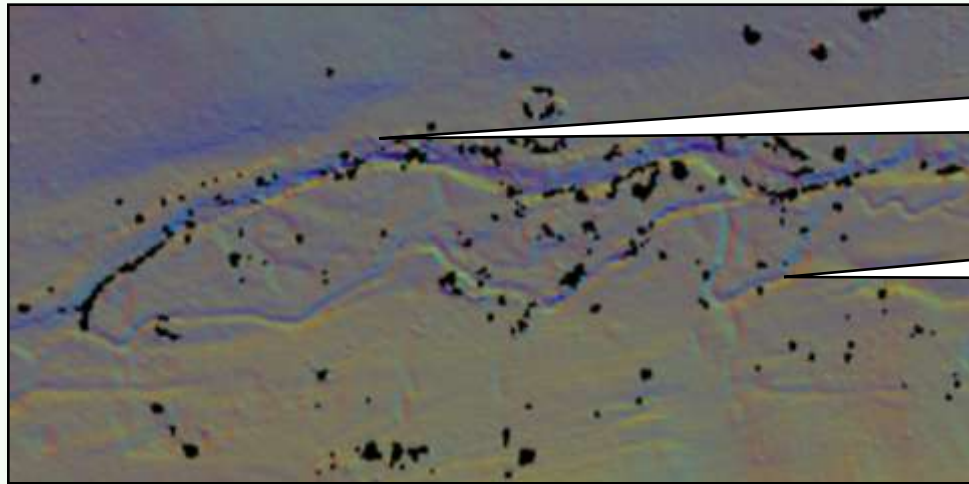
- Identifies SSSI units that need restoring
- Key issues that need to be addressed

Forestry Commission works with the HLS partners (the Verderers and the National Park Authority) and the Commoners to

- Prioritise SSSI restoration sites work programme over the course of the 10-year scheme

- Historic maps
- Aerial photos
- Fieldwork

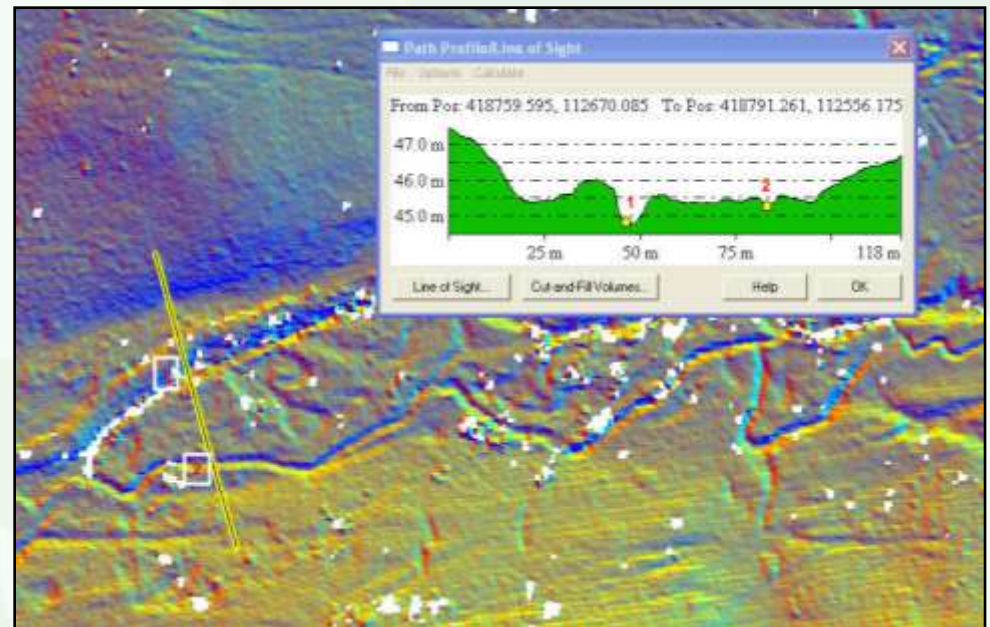




Drain showing
spoil bank

Meander route

Cross-sectional depths:
1=Artificial drain
2=Meander route



Site-Specific Sensitivities

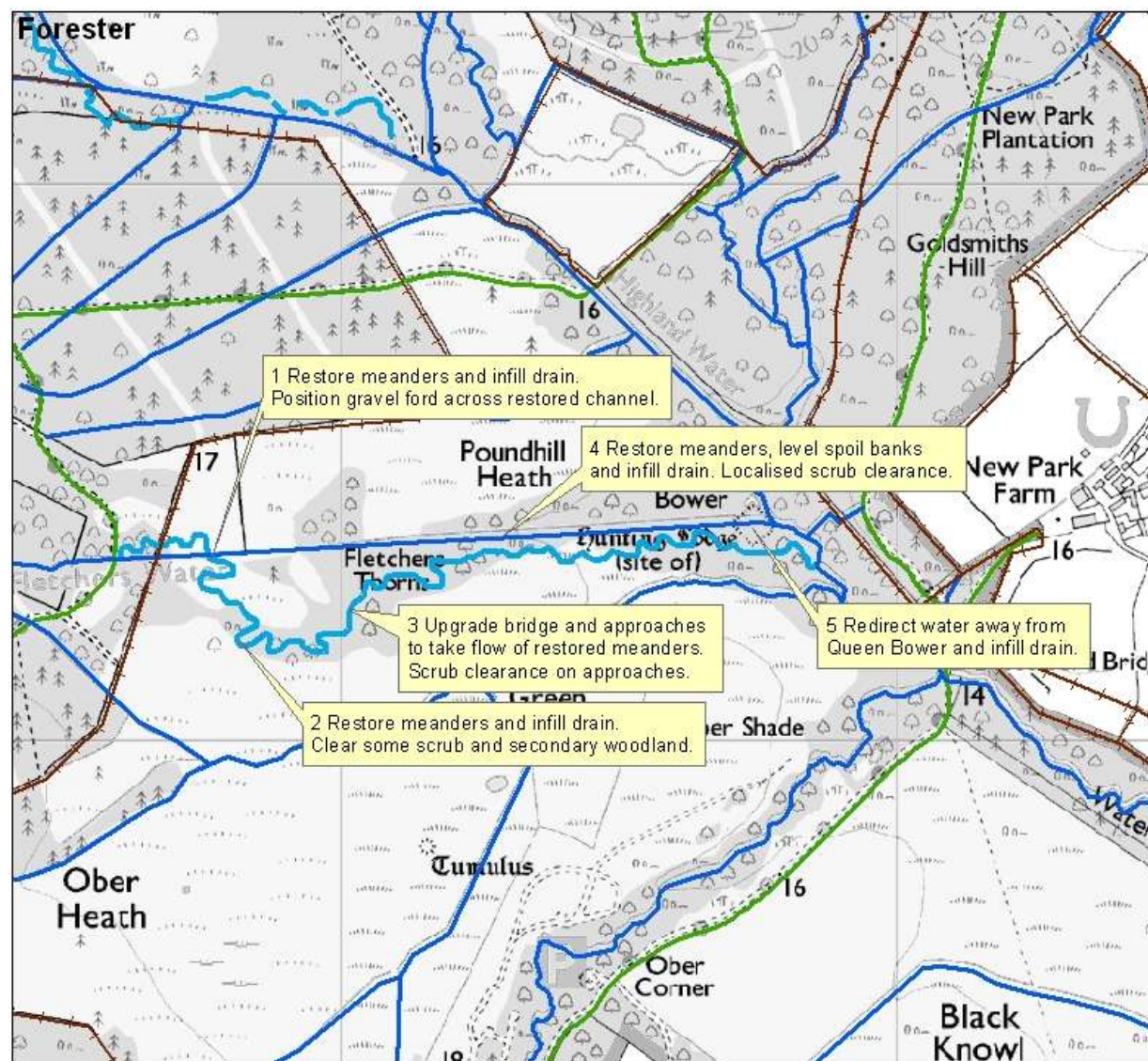


Restoration plan proposal







Forestry Commission
England

FLETCHERS WATER
Proposal Map
February 2010



Legend

-  Fenceline
-  Existing watercourse
-  Proposed watercourse route
-  Forest roads

0 100 200 400 Meters

© Crown Copyright. All Rights Reserved.
Forestry Commission. 100026498 2010

On-Site Consultation

- FC – Ecologist, Keeper, Recreation Ranger
- NPA – Ecologist, Archaeologist, Access Officer
- Commoners Defence Association
- New Forest Association
- Natural England
- Verderers
- Agister



Felling Licence

- Application to Forestry Commission
- Comments invited from Natural England, National Park Authority, Parish Councils

Flood Defence Consent

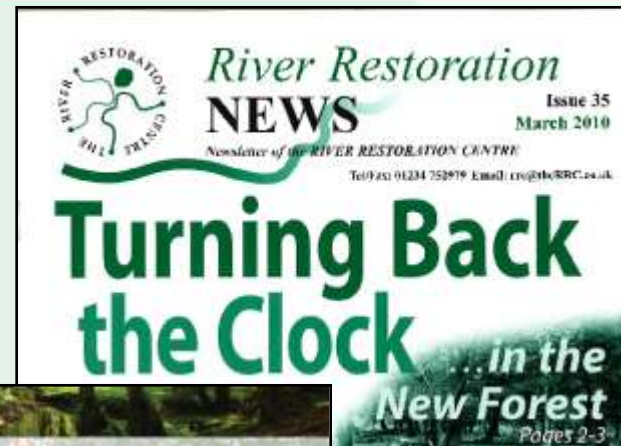
- Application to Environment Agency
- Detailed restoration plan with mitigation for sensitivities

Inform and Engage

- Restoration plans available on FC/HLS website
 - Raise awareness with local communities
-

ISSUES

Who are you anyway?



Where's your evidence?



Eroding drain...



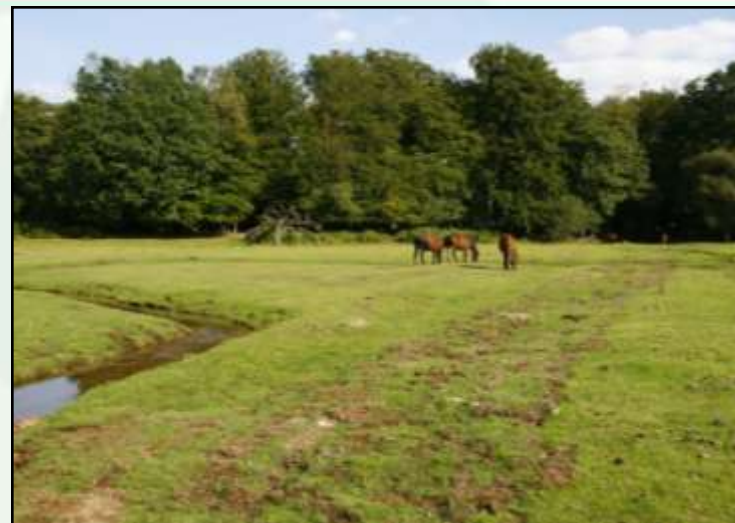
Where's your evidence now?



... or much-loved landscape?



Impacts on commoning



- Grazing
- Boggy ground
- Debris dams
- Reinstatement



Why is it in 'unfavourable condition'?

Why have we picked these areas for habitat restoration?

"I can't see anything wrong with it"

"It's always been like this and I've lived here all my life"

"You will do more harm by interfering"

"It will recover naturally"

"Cutting down trees and scrub is destroying important habitat, especially for birds"

"Why interfere with nature?"

Visual impact of sites in the landscape



Open habitats
vs Woodland setting



Fear of the unknown...



SUCSESSES & SOLUTIONS

Lawn restoration

Access – fords, passageways

Stock safety

Unstable areas



Stakeholders ...

- Now giving approval to tackle sites previously rejected at the consultation stage
- Uniting to support FC proposals on contentious sites

Other audiences...

- Recognition by statutory agencies and NGOs
 - The trust of Parish Councils
 - Local people standing up in support of the work
-

Ongoing communications

- Level of engagement
- Methods of engagement
- Presence on the ground
- Monitoring and feedback


Higher Level Stewardship Scheme

Home | Contact us

Search GO

HLS

- Background
- Minutes and Meetings
- News
- Projects
 - Wetland Restoration
 - Altercombe Bottom
 - Claypits Bottom
 - Ditchend Bottom
 - Fletcher's Thorns
 - Letchmore
 - Longwater Lawn
 - Penny Moor
 - Queens Meadow



Projects | Wetland Restoration

Wetland restoration

New Forest Wetland Management Plan 2006 - 2016

The New Forest is divided into 554 SSSI units. Each one has been individually identified and assessed by Natural England, based on its habitat type, unique features, management regime and geographical location.

A number of these SSSI units are currently classed as being in 'unfavourable' condition. It is the responsibility of the Forestry Commission, who manage the Crown Lands in the New Forest, to work towards restoring these SSSI units to 'favourable' condition. In the New Forest, SSSI units are usually in unfavourable condition as a result of

- artificial drainage
- tree and scrub encroachment
- presence of non-native species

SSSI habitat restoration work has been undertaken in the New Forest for over 15 years with funding from various sources, including the EU-funded LIFE projects. One of the key objectives of the New Forest HLS Scheme is wetland restoration to change the remaining unfavourable SSSI units to favourable condition, thus safeguarding an area that is recognised as being of outstanding importance for nature conservation in both the UK and Europe due to the size, quality and complex mosaic of habitats. In terms of wetland habitats, the New Forest supports one of only four significant sites of bog woodland in the UK, as well as one of the six best sites of riverine woodland. Together with other scarce wetland habitats, the Forest also contains the most extensive lowland valley mire systems in western Europe.

Each year the Forestry Commission researches and develops restoration proposals for 3-10 sites. Some of these only require minor works to restore favourable condition, but larger, more complex sites are presented at on-site consultation meetings attended by representatives from Natural England, New Forest National Park Authority, the Verderers, the Commoners Defence Association and the New Forest Association.

Once restoration proposals have been approved by the consultees, a detailed restoration plan is produced, taking into account site-specific sensitivities and constraints, such as archaeology, rare plants and ground conditions.

The Forestry Commission applies for Felling Licences (permission to cut trees on the Open Forest) in late summer, and comments are invited from Natural England, the New Forest National Park Authority and the relevant Parish Councils. Land Drainage Consent is sought from the Environment Agency, following provision of a detailed restoration plan with mitigation proposals for sensitivities and constraints.

The Forestry Commission is currently developing its level of community engagement by making details of planned restoration sites available on this website, and by liaising with the relevant Parish Councils. In partnership with the New Forest National Park Authority, New Forest Rangers will be briefed on planned restoration sites to enable them to respond to enquiries from the public while on patrol.

Once Felling Licences have been granted, any tree felling and scrub clearance work on the Open Forest must be undertaken outside the bird breeding season (from August up until the end of March), with restoration work taking place on the ground during the summer months, when low flows and drier ground conditions mean that the impacts on the watercourse, the floodplain habitats and associated wildlife is minimised.

Each site that has been restored under the New Forest HLS Scheme is listed by name and year under the Completed Sites tab. As soon as they are confirmed, the sites that are due to be restored the following summer will be added, listed under the Planned Sites tab.

All sites have a brief summary describing why restoration work is required, and how that translates into what work will be done on the ground. The larger sites are accompanied by an annotated map, attached as a PDF.

© 2011 Higher Level Stewardship Scheme

Local Champions

- New Forest Keepers
- Recreation Rangers
- Local experts



Quality of contractors



- Over 30 years of experience in habitat restoration and creation
- All the staff understand the objectives of the project - from managers to machine operators
- Innovative ideas for ecologically sensitive locations



THANK YOU



Letter to a Forester...

This letter was received by way of explanation of the remarkable cartoon drawing left on a harvesting machine.

'I must admit that I shed a few tears when I first caught the monster in the act. A brontosaurus of a thing munching its way rapidly through enormous trees - unbelievable power... and the speed of it. How long it takes for a tree to grow, how quickly it can fall!

Last Friday, I dared to go back and see what had happened. Face my demons, keep up with the changes. Found the monster gorged and asleep under some trees and dared to touch its head. Then I had the bright idea of leaving it a pleading message - I snuck back and stuck it to the cab of the machine. A couple of days ago I bumped into Little John (the contractor), dared to own up and he had thoroughly enjoyed it. He told me about your woodland strategy, how he goes about choosing which trees to fell, how the monster calculates, computes (amazing) and it felt like a nice completion to have chatted with him.

I'm sure that when the autumn comes and the light is not so harsh, the wood will start to soften. With all the debris and tyre tracks, it looks a bit like the woodland equivalent of the Blitz at the moment, but it's still beautiful and those trees that are left will benefit from the increase in light and space. I think that once the timber stacks and debris have disappeared, I'll quickly grow used to the new shape! And I realise that some of the debris will stay behind to rot down and renew the soil.

So well done - I can see how meticulous the planning and execution has been (and continues to be). Be nice to meet you some day.'



Presentation – Sarah Oakley



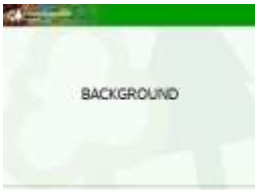
Outline content:

Background to the New Forest and the wetland restoration programme

Processes to engage with consultees and stakeholders

Identify issues

Share successes and solutions



Surrounded by major conurbations.

It is the extent of the habitats as well as their uniqueness that makes this area internationally important for conservation.

Crown lands managed by the FC total 29 000 ha

Owned by the State, managed by the FC



6 river catchments in the forest:

Cadnam River

Bartley River

Beaulieu River

Hampshire Avon

Lymington River

Avon Water

All need restoration work to some extent.



Their extent, unique management and relative lack of disturbance - means that they are home to many rare species unable to survive elsewhere.

These fragile habitats are easily damaged by man.



Unique management systems in New Forest

- Verderers
- Agisters
- Commoners



No solid geology - underlain with gravels, sands and clays

Streamside lawns very valuable for Commoners stock

Very fragile habitats!



LIFE Projects - European funding

PROGRESS Project - Partnership with Fontainbleau

Peoples interaction with wildlife; conservation in an area with high visitor pressure. How people use the forest, **encouraging more responsible use**

F4K Project - NPA, NE and FC, with EA joining later

Govt's **PSA target** - 95% fav/recov cond by 2010

HLS - Verderers, NPA and FC, with NE administrating money on behalf of DEFRA



SSSI units are usually in unfavourable condition due to:

Artificial drainage

Tree and scrub encroachment

Non-native species



For each site where restoration works are proposed:

FC undertakes fieldwork and research to prepare a restoration proposal for consultation.



At this stage, initial assessment of sensitivities – site specific constraints, and options for mitigation strategies.

(eg archaeology, rare species, ordnance, community feeling, access routes)

Dartford warbler - gorse 34% GB breeding population 538 prs

Lapwing – ground nesting birds, disturbance, corvid/predator perches

Odonata - Southern damselfly and SBT

Fish - 20spp recorded, incl sea trout, stone loach, bullhead and brook lamprey

Ordnance – Ashley Walk bombing range

Archaeology - Lots of WWII stuff; also much older, eg calcined flints of boiling mounds, medieval bee gardens



Restoration proposal circulated to consultees 2 weeks before the site visit.



Consultation site visit with representatives of the organisations listed above.

Talk about issues these groups have

FC writes up and circulates the record of discussions and decisions from the site visit, with an accompanying revised restoration proposal for consideration and approval.

Consultees to respond to FC with any comments or conditions within 4 weeks.

Review of feedback:

i Restoration proposal approved

ii Restoration proposal approved with conditions – acceptable to all

iii Restoration proposal approved with conditions – not acceptable to all

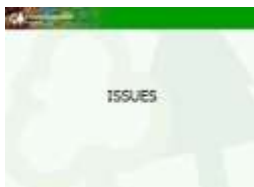
iv Restoration proposal not approved in its current form

Circulate final proposal to all consultees.



FC to obtain licences and consents as required.

FC to review level of community engagement required and implement (eg signage, parish councils, local newsletters, information events)



FC's changing role as an organisation

Public perception...recognition as not just forestry but conservation, habitat management and restoration



STAKEHOLDERS: Verderers, CDA – need clear evidence

At some sites, erosive damage is very clear...

Straight, deep drains

Continued erosion of stream bed

No interaction with floodplain

Any attempt at meandering is several feet below floodplain – will never make it out of channel.

Often dug to side of original meanders, where drier and easier – so not at lowest point in floodplain.

IF overbank flooding occurs, can't get back into drain channel – up hill, plus spoil banks to get over!



Sometimes harder to see...

Aerial photos can help

Or other 'proof' found during research – historic maps, wartime photos



Grazing – quantity, quality & condition

Perceived issue of stock being disturbed

Need to monitor – vegetation surveys: biomass, species composition, resilience of floodplain to drought

Commoners HATE water ‘out of channel’ – they strongly oppose debris dams!

Water needs to be under control!



Springwatch Brigade – look at the lovely wildlife

Power of the people! Let's demonstrate!

Reference to Latchmore;

Compare Latchmore and Blackwater here?



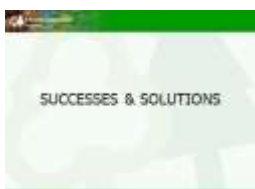
Flooding impacts

Effect on grazing

Out of control...

Fear of change and disturbance

Adjusting to access restrictions during high flows



Felling colonising secondary woodland and scrub – extra grazing.

Suppression of scrub and bracken due to raised water table

Associated access works – removal of concrete culverts and less need for structures with a shallower watercourse to cross

Stock getting stuck in deep drains

Gravel deposition on lawn – due to upstream erosion. Remove erosive force and system becomes stable.





ENGAGEMENT:

Inform or consult? Be clear about what you are doing!

If inform, how? Newsletters, websites, one-off mtgs, guided walks, attendance at PC meetings

If consult, who with? Locally – Parish Council

Eg Latchmore talk 'info mtg' showed most people were afraid of the unknown; knowledge = reassured

Presence on the ground – changing situations.

Informal one-to-one engagement and reassurance

Be a human! Recognise locals care, and that they need to see that YOU do too.

MONITORING AND FEEDBACK:

What if it goes wrong? Funding to fix it?

Keep in touch!

Fixed point photos to Parish Council mtgs

FC to oversee delivery of restoration work on the ground. Presence on the ground

FC to monitor works and undertake snagging as required.



New Forest Keepers:

Presence on the ground

Link to local communities

Recreation Rangers:

Support public enjoyment and understanding

Local experts/allies:

Especially in response to community issues! Ie Latchmore

All need to be kept informed – updates, progress reports, information provision and training events



A great example of genuine public interest.

Both contractor and FC staff took the time to listen to concerns and the opportunity to explain about forest management.