

[News story: New accord launches to enhance National Parks and woodland](#)

A new Accord that aims to expand and enhance woodland in National Parks to protect wildlife and connect people with nature has been launched today at the New Forest Show.

The Accord, a statement of a shared ambition between the Forestry Commission and National Parks England, will bring together decision makers to ensure woodland is managed sustainably and in line with a natural capital approach. This will take into account the environmental, social and economic impact of trees and forests and the statutory purposes of our National Parks.

National Parks are already home to a third of the Public Forest Estate in England, and the Accord will also consider how woodland creation grants can be used to sensitively expand wooded areas across these landscapes. The partnership ensures all woodland will be managed to the highest standards so they are rich in wildlife and protected for future generations to enjoy.

The Accord was launched at the New Forest National Park today, where National Parks Minister Lord Gardiner joined Margaret Paren, Chair of National Parks England and Ian Gambles, Director of Forestry Commission England to plant a tree and demonstrate the benefits woodland can bring.

Its launch comes during [‘Discover National Parks Week 2018’](#), which celebrates the UK’s 15 National Parks. With over half of people living within an hour of a National Park, the week encourages people to get outside and discover them for themselves.

Margaret Paren, Chair of National Parks England, said:

Our National Parks are cultural landscapes cherished for their nature and beauty. This Accord provides the basis for strong partnership working between the Forestry Commission and National Parks. By working closely together we can ensure public forests in our National Parks are at the forefront of sustainable forest management.

And through adopting high-quality decision-making on woodland creation, design, management, protection and removal we can also ensure trees and woods contribute to the beauty of our National Parks for years to come.

There is a strong synergy between the aims in the Accord and the goals in the [Government’s 25 Year Environment Plan](#), which sets ambitious plans for enhancing beauty and landscapes and more and better managed woodland as a key way to improve the environment for the next generation.

Lord Gardiner, Minister for National Parks and Forests, said:

Woods and forests make an immense contribution to our enjoyment of our National Parks, as well as providing important habitats for wildlife.

Our 25 Year Environment Plan sets out ambitious targets for tree planting and connecting people with nature. This Accord will help realise the full potential of woodland in our National Parks.

Sir Harry Studholme, Chair of the Forestry Commission, said:

Forestry is a leading player in the story of the National Parks and of their landscapes. The Forestry Commission may be the largest single holder of land across the network of National Parks. Nowhere is the relationship more apparent than here in the New Forest where the Forestry Commission and National Park Authority's roles are deeply intertwined.

At this time of change in agriculture and land management, forestry and afforestation are important components of the discussion. The Forestry Commission and National Parks must work together not only to create new resilient and multi-purpose woodlands but also to enable existing ones adapt to a changing environment.

This will benefit National Park landscapes, provide rural employment and support local communities and allow the delivery of Natural Capital benefits like carbon absorption, water management and public access.

The Accord agrees a pragmatic and deliverable national framework for the Forestry Commission and National Parks' shared ambitions for woods and forests, with local priorities for individual National Parks to be determined according to their specific needs.

It sets out five shared priorities for delivering a range of benefits that protect and enhance natural and cultural heritage:

1. Decision-making that enhances National Park landscapes and their woodlands;
2. Woodland creation and expansion in National Parks;
3. Highest standards of forest management in line with natural capital approach;
4. Woodland grant schemes that contribute to the delivery of the shared ambition;
5. Engage and connect people with woodlands and forests.