The Forest of Bowland AONB is protected by law to ensure the conservation and enhancement of its natural beauty not just for the present but also for future generations. AONBs have been regarded for generations as treasured areas with special character and are designated for this quality of their landscapes. The Forest of Bowland was designated as an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) in 1974 under the Wildlife and Countryside Act (1981) and was recognised by the government as being of equal status as National Parks by the Countryside and Rights of Way Act (2000). Protective designation not only helps to conserve and enhance the AONB’s natural beauty but also seeks, as far as possible, to promote the social and economic well-being of people that live and work within it.

Land use and farming will continue to change the way the landscape is shaped as the area is still predominantly agricultural with the majority of the land used for farming. The conservation and management of the area is a partnership of farmers, landowners, the European Union, government agencies and non-governmental organisations. Diversified farming is one of the options available to farmers who wish to change their farming methods. Today sheep and beef farming predominates in the uplands with dairying being the major land use in the valleys. The extensive heather moorland has largely been conserved because of management for grouse shooting.

The Forest of Bowland AONB offers wonderful opportunities for quiet enjoyment such as walking, cycling and horse riding. The Forest of Bowland AONB open access land offers some of the roughest and most remote walking in the North West, and linked with the network of public rights of way gives plenty of scope for enjoyable and challenging walks.

The Forest of Bowland AONB is their most exceptional heather moorland, blanket bog, and rare birds. The deeply incised cloughs and wooded valleys are particularly wonderful opportunities for quiet enjoyment. The Forest offers some of the roughest and most remote walking in the North West, and linked with the network of public rights of way gives plenty of scope for enjoyable and challenging walks.

As the first protected area in England to achieve the European Charter for Sustainable Tourism in Protected Areas, the Forest of Bowland AONB is part of a wider group of other protected areas across Europe. The Charter is awarded to protected areas that are following a best practice approach in delivering tourism that takes account of the needs of the environment, local communities and the local economy. The Charter approach ensures that organisations, local people and businesses are working together to protect the area whilst at the same time increasing opportunities for visitors to discover and enjoy it.

For accommodation and places to go visit our official website at www.forestofbowland.com where you can find out visitor guide, search for accommodation and events in the area, browse our local products directory and also for future information about access land visit www.countryaccess.gov.uk.
Birding locations to visit...

1. Birkhouse Moor in the north of Bowland offers good opportunities for seeing herons, woodcock and raptors.
2. The circular walk around Stock Reservoir in the northeast offers a range of woodland and upland habitats. The Herdwick sheep and red deer are a common sight.
3. In the west, the Washfold Reservoir is a great place for seeing Darter and Kingfisher along the river Derwent.
4. Pendle Hill is a peak in the Pennine Hills and offers excellent views over the surrounding countryside.
5. In the southwest, Bowland Forest offers an area rich in wildlife, including red squirrels, badgers, and deer.

Visit the Forest of Bowland website for more resources and activities.