



FOREST OF BOWLAND

Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty

Report written by Rural Futures and Rural Solutions
July 2013

Introduction

This short paper follows from the meeting held at the Forest of Bowland AONB offices on 4th March where it was agreed that:

- The shared principles should focus on that part of the AONB Partnership's aims that require it to "safeguard agriculture, forestry, other rural industries and (to take account of) the economic and social needs of local communities", whilst recognising that the statutory purpose of the AONB designation is "to conserve and enhance the natural beauty of the landscape".
- The shared principles would include a statement about the purposes of land management in Bowland from the owners and manager's perspective.
- The shared principles would also include a commitment to work with the AONB Partnership, relevant agencies (e.g. Natural England, English Heritage, Environment Agency), organisations and interest groups to conserve and enhance the AONB's natural beauty where it is possible for land managers to make a contribution.
- The shared principles would include a request of the AONB Partnership, relevant agencies and organisations to consult with and respect the land manager's rights to, interest in and approach to management of the land under their stewardship.
- It is anticipated that when complete and ratified by the group the shared principles will form part of the guiding principles that will contribute to and influence the next iteration of the five-year AONB Management Plan. The principles will be promoted via the AONB website, made available to and promoted with key agencies, statutory bodies, organisations with an interest in the AONB and the communities within and related to it.

Draft Principles for Review and Discussion

Opening Statement

The landscape of the Forest of Bowland AONB is owned and managed by a mixture of individuals, estates, farms, and other private and publicly owned organisations including bodies like United Utilities and the Forestry Commission.

Every individual and organisation that owns or occupies land has the right to manage it in a way that best meets its objectives. These land owners and managers also have a statutory responsibility to manage land in a way that complies with UK and European regulations and legislation. Those land owners and managers that form part of the Bowland Land Managers Forum seek to discharge these rights and responsibilities in accordance with the following set of principles. It is hoped that these principles can be adopted by the AONB Partnership, the local authorities, the statutory agencies and other organisations that have an interest in the AONB.

Land Management Principles

The approach to the management and stewardship of land within the Forest of Bowland AONB and the decision-making that affects the management and stewardship of this land will be guided by the following principles:

1. The production of food, timber, energy and the harnessing and processing of natural resources is recognised as an appropriate and valuable activity within the AONB. It will be carried out in a manner that is viable, competitive, seeks to impact positively on the environment and accords with the economic and social needs of local communities.
2. The management of land and buildings for field sports and to provide access and opportunities for leisure and outdoor recreation is recognised and supported as appropriate and valuable. Land management for these purposes will be carried out in a way that seeks to promote quiet enjoyment and which impacts positively on the environment.

3. Achieving multiple benefits through partnership between farmers and landowners, the AONB and other statutory bodies - balancing regulation with guidance and incentives to encourage innovation using local knowledge.
4. Sharing best practice and working together to secure recognition for the economic, social and environmental value of public goods provided in the AONB.
5. Promoting understanding of different types of land management in the AONB and the diverse benefits it can provide, including food, water safeguards (quality, storage, supply, flood prevention), carbon management and storage, biodiversity, heritage, forestry, renewable energy, recreational health and well-being.
6. Ensuring farmers and land managers can access support through agri environment and business funds, developing their skills base and co-operation/network building, using the special qualities of the AONB.
7. Land managers will seek to engage and consult with the AONB Partnership, with agencies and organisations with a statutory interest in the AONB *prior to taking and implementing* land management decisions that may affect the stated interests and objectives of these parties.
8. Agencies and organisations with a statutory or professional interest in the AONB should ensure that they engage, consult and respond to the reasonable concerns of land managers *prior to* making decisions which affect the interests, rights and responsibilities of land owners and managers.
9. When making decisions that affect the interests, rights and responsibilities of land owners and managers in the AONB agencies and organisations should place at the heart of their decision making, the need to safeguard agriculture, forestry, other rural industries and (to take account of) the economic and social needs of local communities.
10. Any and all decisions which may create conflict with the need to safeguard agriculture, forestry and other rural industries should be based on sound evidence and should be subject to appropriate and timely consultation.

Ends