

PARK MANAGEMENT

Providing for public access and recreation is at the very heart of our National Parks and this is the primary focus of the Park Management department, delivering initiatives which promote opportunities for enjoyment of the area. These include open access, recreation, rights of way, transport, volunteering and management of a range of visitor facilities, including car parks and toilets. Issues such as an increase in leisure time, the arrival of the majority of visitors by private car, growth of new recreational activities and the introduction of 'open access' – enabling access to over 62% of the National Park - bring many management challenges.

• THE RANGER SERVICE

The Ranger Service provides a first point of contact with the YDNPA for local communities, land managers and visitors. Rangers work closely with colleagues, Dales Volunteers and other agencies in the delivery of a broad range of services. These include managing the extensive network of public paths and open access land across the National Park, conservation and educational projects and providing opportunities for volunteering. Whether helping a local group access a grant to improve their local environment, or promoting the special qualities of the Yorkshire Dales to everyone, Rangers are on hand to provide practical help and advice. Opportunities for Dales Volunteers include, assisting Rangers in recreation management, organising conservation work groups and offering specialist skills.

• ACCESS AND RECREATION MANAGEMENT

The YDNPA ensures that the countryside is available for residents and visitors alike, through a range of access and recreation initiatives. These include:

- providing management and information on rights of way and open access.
- establishing new routes for cyclists, horseriders and walkers, eg the Pennine Bridleway;
- providing information through the Sustainable Travel Partnership, on travel to the Park other than by private car.

The NPA acts as agent for the two highway authorities (Cumbria and North Yorkshire) for footpaths, bridleways and byways in the Park, and maintains the definitive map of public rights of way, as well as carrying out repairs and improvements on the ground.

• INTEGRATED ACCESS STRATEGY

The strategy integrates access and accessibility issues in the YDNP, recognising the need to safeguard the environment and land management interests at the same time, through positive visitor management. It brings together and promotes:

- understanding and enjoyment of the special qualities of the area, opportunities for outdoor recreation in particular;
- 'Healthy Living,' through increasing participation;
- inclusion and 'Access for All,' ensuring that everyone has the opportunity to experience the National Park whatever their background or ability;
- sustainable tourism and sustainable transport, both dependent on accessibility and the access resource of the National Park.

EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

The Park has a resident population of about 20,000 people, and attracts around 8.3 million visitor days annually (1994). Improving understanding will develop appreciation and respect for the countryside and those who live and work in it, as well as support for its conservation and enhancement. The External Affairs department works closely with all NPA departments to promote understanding of the National Park and the aims and work of the Authority:

- Information for visitors is provided by five National Park and Tourist Information Centres, with Village Information Points in key shops and services.
- An annual newspaper (The Visitor) provides free information for visitors and local newspapers are distributed free to every household in the Park twice annually.
- The education service provides resources for students of all ages, locally and nationally and for those visiting the area.
- The outreach programme seeks to diversify the visitor profile by focusing on people from urban areas, black and minority ethnic groups, youth and people with disabilities.
- The events programme includes a wide range of events for the general public.
- The interpretation programme provides materials for specific sites and groups.
- A wide range of publications provide information on sites and special features.
- The Dales Countryside Museum provides information on the cultural development of the area, to growing numbers of holiday makers and school groups.

Education File: YDNPA

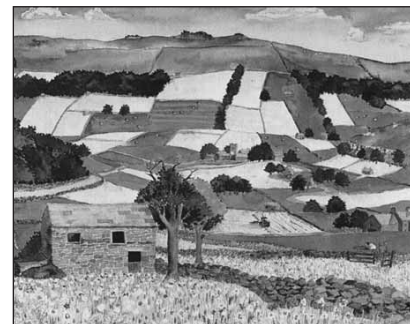
LOCAL COMMUNITY

While the Authority does not directly provide essential local services, it seeks to foster social well-being and a healthy local economy. Farmers and land owners can approach the Authority for specialist advice and assistance with the costs of conservation management.

Environmental enhancement projects improve the surroundings for local people, and provide an indirect boost to the local economy through encouraging tourism. Intense competition for property to use as retirement or second and holiday homes has pushed property prices beyond the reach of many who earn a living in the area. The NPA fully recognises the needs of local people for housing at affordable prices and works to promote policies for planning consents for new buildings, which relate to proven local needs

FUTURE VISION

Management of the countryside is essentially about influencing change. Developed landscapes are the products of thousands of years of human use and landscapes are always evolving. Successful management depends on partnerships, between countryside managers, land owners and tenants along with residents and visitors, at national and local levels. There is a very real sense in which everyone has a part to play in shaping the National Park landscape of tomorrow.



A simulated possible landscape of tomorrow? (YDNPA)

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Education File

Information for students and group leaders

Conserving

a changing landscape

A DUTY TO CONSERVE

The Yorkshire Dales National Park (YDNP) covers 1762 km² of the central Pennine uplands. It is renowned for its outstanding scenery, diversity of wildlife and habitats, rich cultural heritage and many peaceful areas. It was designated a National Park in 1954 in recognition of these important features. Many visitors (8.3 million visitor days spent in the National Park in 1994) enjoy their leisure time in this environment. The 1995 Environment Act defines the purposes of the Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority (YDNPA) as:

- conserving and enhancing the natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage of the area
- promoting opportunities for the understanding and enjoyment of the special qualities of the area by the public.

In pursuing these purposes

"..... the Authority shall seek to foster the economic and social well-being of local communities within the National Park, but without incurring significant expenditure in doing so" and in co-operation with "local authorities and public bodies whose functions include the promotion of economic and social development within the area of the National Park."

AIMS INTO PRACTICE

The National Park is subject to strong pressures and continually faces new challenges, many of them unforeseen when it was first created, for example:

- climate change
- changes in upland farming
- economic changes
- recreational demands
- demand for housing
- new technologies

The needs and interests of all must be taken into account when dealing with these pressures. The Authority owns little land itself and so must work with everyone with an interest - farmers and land owners, statutory and voluntary conservation organisations, visitors and the local community - to achieve its objectives. Plans have been drawn up to guide all aspects of National Park management.

THE NATIONAL PARK MANAGEMENT PLAN (NPMP)

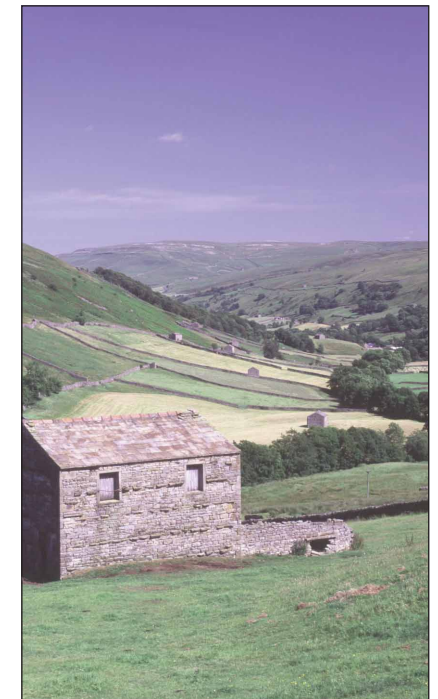
Each NPA is legally required to produce a National Park Management Plan. The plan sets out aims and objectives for managing the National Park over a 5 year period. This is a plan for the Park and not only the Authority, so it is written by drawing together all who have an interest in the area. The NPMP ensures that all groups make best use of scarce resources while working to achieve common objectives. The Plan includes sections on:

- Landscape
- Community & Culture
- Access & Recreation
- Understanding & Enjoyment
- Nature Conservation
- Historic Environment
- Economy & Employment

These sections cross the departmental boundaries within the Authority. Departmental functions along with the main issues involved are outlined below.



YORKSHIRE DALES
National Park Authority



Classic Dales landscape: Walls and field barns in upper Swaledale. (YDNPA)

FINANCE AND RESOURCES

The Finance and Resources department is central to all operations across the organisation. Its many functions include:

- personnel matters
- finance accounts
- purchasing
- maintenance of NPA properties
- word processing support
- reception and switchboard

SECRETARIAT

The Secretariat is headed by the Chief Executive, and is responsible for the administration of Authority and Committee meetings. It contains a legal team which produces legal documents such as planning agreements, enforcement notices and tree preservation orders, as well as advising on all the legal requirements that apply to the NPA.

PLANNING

• DEVELOPMENT CONTROL

Within the National Park, the YDNPA is the planning authority. This means that the Authority must approve almost all proposed changes in building and land use. Controlling development is probably the most difficult and contentious job of the Authority. Meeting the needs of local people without detracting from the character of the Dales landscape and built environment is not always easy. New developments must, for example: respect their surroundings, be of an appropriate form and scale; be produced to a high standard of design; use suitable materials. Area Planning Officers offer advice to would be applicants and make recommendations to the Authority on approving or rejecting applications

• THE LOCAL PLAN

To guide the work of the planning department, the National Park Authority is legally required (under the Town and Country Planning Acts) to produce a Development Plan. Policy areas covered within the plan include:

- **Development and the Community** (Housing. Farming. Employment. Community Facilities. Utilities.)
- **Conservation** (Natural Environment. Built Heritage and the Historic Environment. Environmental Protection.)
- **Leisure** (Sport and Recreation. Visitor Facilities.)
- **Transport and Access**

Mineral working is covered separately in a Minerals and Waste Local Plan.

• MINERALS PLANNING

The National Park contains extensive mineral reserves and the quarrying of its hard rock resources is important regionally and nationally. Quarrying provides local employment and benefits to the local economy, but as it is essentially destructive, it is difficult to reconcile with National Park purposes. Most quarries in the National Park are operating under long standing consents with large consented reserves. Under the Environment Act (1995) these consents must be reviewed every 15 years. The quarry companies work with the Authority to seek ways to limit the problem effects of working stone and haulage of quarry products.



New buildings designed to reflect traditional styles, Garrs End Lane, Grassington (YDNPA)

CONSERVATION AND POLICY

• ARCHAEOLOGY

The landscape of the National Park has been modified by people for over 12,000 years. In many respects the National Park itself is one huge and complex archaeological site.

Archaeology provides a direct link with our ancestors and the historic environment is an integral aspect of the cultural heritage of the area. The NPA has a programme of conservation involving site surveying, consolidation, interpretation and grant aiding investigation projects. It works in partnership with a variety of organisations. Some sites are legally protected as scheduled monuments. An easily accessible introduction to the historic environment of the Yorkshire Dales and to the Historic Environment Record which contains over 25,000 entries can be found at www.outofoblivion.org.uk

• BUILDING CONSERVATION

Buildings are listed by English Heritage within the Department for Culture, Media and Sport scheme for their historical and architectural importance. The National Park Authority offers advice about restoration and enhancement and appropriate repairs. The NPA has a legal duty to identify areas of special architectural or historic interest, the character of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance, and to designate these as Conservation Areas. Thirty seven areas, mostly villages have been designated within this scheme and others are being considered.

• BARN AND WALLS

Dry-stone walls and scattered field barns are key elements in what is one of the most valued and distinctive farmed landscapes in Western Europe. Developments in farming practice have left many barns vulnerable to loss and decay and there are now cheaper alternatives to dry stone walls. Without financial support they can become derelict and detract from the quality of the landscape. The National Park Authority previously administered a scheme to provide funds for repair of walls and barns in specific areas of the Park and now provides advice to defra on their agri-environment grants for barns and walls repairs.

• FARMING

Agriculture has done much to shape the Dales landscape and remains the dominant land use. Modern intensive farming practices, designed to increase food production have led to the loss of hay meadows, dry stone walls and field barns, all highly valued Dales landscape features. Traditional farming practices, which help maintain the beauty of the area and its wildlife, need to be encouraged, but farming has to be profitable to survive.

• FARM AND COUNTRYSIDE SERVICE

The Authority provides a Farm and Countryside Service which aims to give comprehensive conservation advice to all farmers and landowners in the Park. It aims to look after the whole landscape and not just the best features of the countryside, by considering conservation on a whole farm basis. The service coordinates the sources of advice available, to ensure maximum conservation value is gained. The Farm and Countryside Service can give advice on Environmental Stewardship and other schemes offered within the Rural Development Programme for England.

• CONSERVING WILDLIFE

A Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) for the Yorkshire Dales, 'Nature in the Dales', sets out targets and identifies priority habitats for conservation. These include: species rich hay meadows; limestone pavement; limestone grassland; blanket bog; dwarf shrub heath; ancient hedgerows; upland ash and oak woodland. Within these habitats there are many species of local and international significance eg, yellow marsh saxifrage and lady's slipper orchid, with birds such as merlin, black grouse and golden plover and mammals like the red squirrel.

Rivers are home to fragile populations of dipper, goosander and native crayfish and it is hoped that populations of otters and water voles can recover. River management is a growing priority. Plans to manage rivers involve whole catchments and an increasingly complex web of issues, including moorland gripping and river bank erosion.

• LIMESTONE PAVEMENT

The Park contains almost half of the limestone pavement in the UK. This is a unique natural feature. In the past, pavement has been removed to provide stone for garden rockeries and landscaping schemes. Natural England notifies the NPA of all pavements of merit, which would be damaged by the removal or disturbance of limestone. The majority have now been made the subject of Limestone Pavement Orders, in an attempt to protect all those of high quality. The current challenge is to ensure management practices which can restore the diversity of flowering plants.

• TREES AND WOODLAND

Broadleaved woods cover about 1% of the area of the Park although they were once the dominant habitat covering 90%. They continue to be a valuable feature of the Dales and an important wildlife habitat. Neglect, grazing pressure and the lack of positive management has reduced natural regeneration to such an extent, that the future survival of many woods is now in doubt. The Authority has in recent years been successful in increasing the amount of native woodlands in the Park and will continue to do so along with the wide variety of organisations who are involved in helping to achieve this.



Farming remains the principal land-use. Belted Galloways (YDNPA)

FARM AND CONSERVATION SCHEMES

• ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIP

Launched in England in 2005, ES will eventually replace the Environmentally Sensitive Areas, Countryside Stewardship and stock subsidy schemes. ES aims to secure environmental benefits above those of good farming practice. The scheme operates on 3 levels. Entry Level Stewardship is open to all and encourages farmers to deliver simple, effective environmental management, combating damage to the historic environment, biodiversity and landscape character. It's hoped that most Dales farms will enter Higher Level or Organic Stewardship, which deliver added environmental benefits.

• WOODLAND CONSERVATION SCHEMES

The Dales Woodland Service (YDNPA) provides advice on best conservation practice and grant schemes and some funding for new woodland. Funding for new planting and woodland maintenance is primarily available through the Forestry Commission (England Woodland Grant Scheme, 2005) and Environmental Stewardship (2005). Other grant sources include the Yorkshire Dales Millennium Trust and Natural England.

• SITES OF SPECIAL SCIENTIFIC INTEREST (SSSI)

Natural England designate the most important sites for wildlife or geological interest as SSSIs. Land owners can receive advice and some grant aid to help manage these sites in ways which don't damage them.

• SPECIAL PROTECTION AREA (SPA) / SPECIAL AREA FOR CONSERVATION (SAC)

Some of the most important SSSIs are home to species or habitats listed in the EU Birds and Species and Habitat Directives and are designated SPAs / SACs. These include most moorland, limestone areas and hay meadows.