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Boundaries and bordering: the city and national parks

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ABSTRACT

This article explores the interrelationship between urban and rural spaces using the New Forest as a case study. The New Forest exists cheek by jowl with surrounding major cities and inevitably each is influenced by the other. We argue that that national parks and protected landscapes are becoming overwhelmed and overburdened because of their proximity to large cities. They have become a space of service, called upon to play multiple policy and environmental roles at local and national levels as well as providing a significant part of the population with access to green space. We explore how the New Forest has become an environmental dumping ground, carrying the weight of a profusion of ambitions and demands that are, inevitably, in tension. In holding all these ambitions, the New Forest has become a site of permission allowing urban areas that surround it to develop and grow in ways that lack concern with sustainability, recreation or social health. We argue that this can be addressed by utilising a theoretical contrast between the ideas of 'boundaries' and 'bordering' – which, we argue, demands a regulatory approach that is relational, recognising the mutually constitutive relationship between the rural and the urban.

KEYWORDS

Cities; protected landscapes;
national parks; boundaries;
bordering

Introduction

Central southern England hosts the densest urban areas of southern England. On the borders of Hampshire and Dorset there is an almost continuous necklace of urbanisation hugging the coast. There is Portsmouth and Southampton to the east, Bournemouth and Poole in the west and Salisbury to the north. This necklace of urbanisation is interrupted by one of the United Kingdom's smallest national parks, the New Forest (the Forest).¹ It provides a green lung to these cities – a place to escape and to breathe. Approximately 15 million people live within 90 minutes of the Forest with direct trains from London and it hosts around 15 million day visits a year with 60% of visits from those living in or close by.²

Although the Forest is a small national park, it is one of the largest areas of lowland heathland in Europe and, at over 56%, has the greatest density of protected landscapes. Its ecological strengths spring from the diversity of its habitats made up of rare pasture woodland, historic wooded enclosures, open heaths, grass lawns, bogs

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and coastal marshes which provide a home for endangered plants, birds and other wildlife. This diversity springs from its unique history. It is one of England's few areas of land that resisted enclosure in the 19th century. Much of the Forest remains open common land subject to ancient commoners' grazing rights exercised by the owners of properties within and bordering the Forest. Ponies, donkeys, cattle, and in autumn, pigs run free across much of the Forest. Yet the Forest is far from an untouched natural environment. It has been shaped by many centuries of commoning as well as human settlement now found in its network of villages, farms and smallholdings. It fits most neatly into Category V of the International Union for the Conservation of Nature's international typology as a landscape '... where the interaction of people and nature over time has produced an area of distinct character with significant aesthetic, ecological and/or cultural value, and ... with high biological diversity' (Willmore 2002).

This paper explores the interrelationship between urban and rural spaces using the Forest as a case study. It exists cheek by jowl with major cities that surround it and inevitably each is shaped and influenced by the other. This inter-relationship is shared by other national parks. For instance, the Lake District and Dales National Parks are easily accessible from Greater Manchester and Liverpool and the Peak District is ringed by the large urbanisations of Greater Manchester, Sheffield, Leeds and Stoke on Trent. Indeed, one of the criteria for the designation of a national park is its 'position in relation to centres of population'.³ We argue that there is a growing danger that the Forest and other national parks and protected landscapes are becoming overwhelmed and overburdened. They have become a space of service, called upon to play multiple policy and environmental roles at local and national levels. It feeds into national policies and goals on green infrastructure and ecosystem services, enhancing local landscape character, increasing 'Outdoor Recreation Value', mitigating climate change, meeting statutory obligations to conserve biodiversity, and providing a significant part of the population with access to green space for roaming, in line with calls for a 'dose of nature' for human health.⁴ We explore how the Forest has become this multi-functional zone, a kind of convenient environmental dumping ground, carrying the weight of a profusion of ambitions and demands that are, inevitably, in tension with one another. In holding all these ambitions, the Forest has become a site of permission; it permits the densely urban areas that surround it to develop and grow in ways that lack concern with sustainability, recreation or ensuring a 'dose of nature'.

We undertake this exploration, and seek to understand how this might be addressed, by utilising a theoretical contrast between the ideas of 'boundaries' – which have traditionally informed the establishment and regulation of national parks – and 'bordering' – which, we argue, demands a regulatory approach that is relational, recognising the mutually constitutive relationship between the rural Forest and the urban cities that squeeze along its edges. We advocate for the use of the concept of bordering to redraw this city and protected areas dynamic. To understand the city, we need to understand and appreciate what surrounds it and to take shared responsibility for the impact of the city on those areas as well as the multiple roles that protected areas play. We finally consider the embryonic initiatives that are emerging to build a bordering relationship between the city and surrounding protected spaces but we argue that presently these measures are underdeveloped and

untested. They require nurturing and supporting if they are to constitute a meaningful relational connection and move beyond policy-speak.

In making these arguments, this paper firstly explores our theoretical frame provided by the concepts of borders and bordering before considering the relational dynamics of our test case of the interaction between the city of Southampton and the Forest focussing also on the geographical space at their border. We then look at the emerging bordering initiatives that seek to build a more relational connection and the challenges they face. We finally present our concluding thoughts.

Boundaries and bordering: understanding the dynamics of city and protected landscape relationship

The animating idea of this volume – cheek by jowl – presupposes, or at least suggests, some knowable and identifiable line, division or distinction between one thing and another such that these things can be very close together (overlapping even). It is by virtue of their distinctiveness from each other that things can be close or far away from each other. In thinking through their closeness to each other, we have to think through their differentness and understand the line between them. But while proximity is not necessarily in itself revealing – the fact of closeness need not tell us much about either cheek or jowl – distinguishing one thing from another often plays a big part in our making sense of one or the other of those things. And, as so much decolonial and critical theory has shown us, this defining often takes the form of treating one as the standard or universal while the other is rendered ‘other’ (Spivak Chakravorty 1988).

National parks, as protected areas, are no exception. The territory of states is generally seen as exploitable, open to development and transformation, and available for private and state ownership.⁵ Protected areas, on the other hand, are identified as areas of particular and unusual environmental or historical or scientific interest or worth as a result of which they are subject to significant limits or controls on use, exploitation and ownership (Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity 2004, Starnes *et al.* 2021, Rodríguez-Darias and Díaz-Rodríguez 2023). Protected areas are, as a result, the exception. They are limited and discrete areas, regulated in isolation from their surroundings Rodríguez-Darias and Díaz-Rodríguez (2023). Justifications for the establishment or maintenance of these discrete and relatively tiny areas are often concerned with their unique features, as areas of special interest, or as having the capacity to ‘provide a range of goods and ecological services while preserving natural and cultural heritage’ (Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity 2004, para. 1.).

This idea of national parks as a distinct, discrete and defined area is found in both international and domestic law. The Convention on Biological Diversity,⁶ for example, describes a protected area as a ‘geographically defined area which is designated or regulated and managed to achieve specific conservation objectives’ (n.d., art. 2). The U.K. government understands protected areas in the following terms ‘Nature sites and areas of countryside can be “designated”, which means they have special status as protected areas because of their natural and cultural importance. Protection means that these places . . . have clear boundaries’ (*Find protected areas of countryside* n.d.).

While various social and environmental objections to the idea of protected areas have been canvassed in scholarship,⁷ our goal here is not to critique the idea of a protected area per se, but rather to worry about the distinction between protected areas and ‘normal’ territory and, more specifically, to interrogate the idea that protected areas should be defined by their geographic limits or as boundaried. To be boundaried, we argue, is to conceive of protected areas as existing and as regulated from edge to edge, rather than part of a continuous environment that includes cities, agricultural areas, protected areas and so on, all of which are constitute and co-create each other.

Boundaried spaces

Because protected areas are understood as different, discrete areas of preservation and regulation, they are often understood as boundaried (Find protected areas of countryside [n.d.](#)). The boundaries around protected areas are taken to create a contained and defined zone or space and it is what is *inside* the boundary that is of concern and interest in law, policy and use (Grichting and Zebich-Knos 2017). In this sense, protected areas are similar to a cricket field – a classically boundaried space. It is what happens inside of the boundaries of the cricket field that is governed by the rules of cricket (with a little extension to balls being hit over the boundary and to some activities in the audience pavilions). Cricket happens on the boundaried field – what takes place in the streets or neighbourhoods that fall outside of the boundaries of the field are of little concern or consideration in the rules and management of cricket or in decisions maintaining the field itself.⁸

In a similar vein, the idea of protected areas as boundaried expresses the position that it is what happens inside those boundaries that matters from an environmental or cultural protection point of view. It is the space inside the boundaries to which ‘protected’ is applied and it is the features of this space that are the focus of much of the political, legal and social engagements with protected areas. The regulations that govern the Forest do not govern the roads or buildings or parks in downtown Southampton or neighbouring Portsmouth – they govern from the boundaries inwards.

Protected areas, then, are boundaried spaces containing nature, history or culture. While the boundaries create a space of protection and conservation, they also set a limit on that care and protection – it extends no further than the boundary line. But the boundaries do not merely enclose a space of protection – while conservation of uniquely interesting environments is part of the goal of protected area status, in England recreation and public access to nature, history and culture is a central point of protection.⁹ As a result, the boundaries around the protected areas are demarcations but not barriers – they do not exclude but rather invite the public in (or anyway, a segment of the public with the time and means to visit protected areas (Edwards and Larson 2022, Mota 2023)) to enter a different, unique and defined space. Boundaries demarcate an area of unique interest and protection while at the same time creating an accessible zoo-like environment for visitors. To be in nature and to witness nature is something one can do by travelling to the contained space of a protected area; by crossing the boundary and entering the park.

This understanding of protected areas as delineated space treats the boundaries around the area as a point from which to *look in*.¹⁰ The question of what levels and

measures of regulation or management are needed to achieve a standard of protection is confined to the space within those boundaries – the features, creatures and desired human uses of that defined area. Not only are national parks contained spaces, but the surrounding areas are effectively excluded from consideration or concern when it comes to defining what constitutes a protected area and to addressing the question of how to understand, manage and regulate the space on both sides of boundary. Authorities with regulatory power over protected areas are almost never authorities with regulatory powers over the cities that surround the protected area.

There has been some important policy and regulatory evolution in this regard. While protected areas were traditionally conceptualised as wholly discrete, bounded spaces – ‘a portfolio of individual sites’ (Moseldale *et al.* 2022) – law and policy in recent years has taken a more contextually emplaced and joined-up approach (as advocated for in the Lawton report) (Lawton 2010). A critical part of this has been the establishment of institutions with oversight over multiple protected areas to better regulate and foster the parks as a network, and to better understand the threats to protected areas that emanate from outside those areas (upstream users, for example). However, in practice protected areas remain largely disconnected,¹¹ and terrestrial protected areas have not been expanded in recent years (Joint Nature Conservation Committee 2024). Most significantly for the purposes of this paper, while there is greater regulatory continuity across protected areas, as stated above bodies and institutions tasked with managing protected areas rarely have any regulatory or political authority over neighbouring cities or industrial zones.

Bordering spaces

We have argued that the idea of protected areas as spaces that are bounded focusses attention on the space within those boundaries. In understanding protected areas in this way, however, these areas are defined with limited regard to the areas that surround the national park – the *unprotected areas* – and the significant degree to which these spaces shape and frame the park.

While protected areas are chosen for protection based on particular environmental or historical features, these are rarely the only determinants of the scope or scale of the national park. Finding and making the space for protected areas is no small problem. Boundary lines are often drawn paying attention to socio-political needs (Hofmann *et al.* 2021), private landowner interests, and existing or hard-to-move features (roads, mines, factories, houses and so on). Historically, protected areas have often been established with limited concern for the interconnected dependencies, pathways or relationships between ecosystems.¹² The unprotected spaces, surrounding the protected area, are often the physical determinants of the protected areas.

What is more, the boundary lines around protected areas do not only follow the external fixed and geographical features of the unprotected areas. The place, significance and regulatory effect of boundary lines are often determined by factors such as the agricultural value of the land, external interests, policies and goals as well the willingness of private owners to give up land.¹³ It is precisely the relationship and proximity between protected and unprotected areas (and, often, densely occupied and ‘green’ areas) that

determines not only the shape and geographical extent of a protected area, but also the extent and ways in which it is protected.

National parks have a short history in the United Kingdom – the first was designated in 1951 and today there are only 15 (the Forest is one of the most recently designated in 2005). These areas are recreated spaces, whose historical purpose and borders were often set by the needs or reach of nearby cities, or the priorities of landowners. Hunting, tourism, forestry, farming, the grand visions of wealthy owners, commoning, among other activities meant that certain tracts of land were not developed or were developed in ways we find culturally and historically interesting today. Protected areas are created in the remaining spaces – the spaces which, for one reason or another, were excluded from development or industrialisation or urbanisation. They are, in this sense, *recreated spaces*, left-over spaces, lying in the liminal geographies of the state's territories.

Today, these borders are set and reset by new priorities – the first national park in the UK was established in response to the demands and activism of walkers who wanted the right and freedom to walk on open moorland, opposed by local landowners and their gamekeepers. Recreation and access to nature has been and remains a key goal of national park creation.¹⁴ In addition a range of other interests – national economics, housing priorities, climate and biodiversity targets – shape and change the meaning and purpose of these parks.¹⁵

The animating idea of a boundaried space – contained, regulated and protected from its boundaries inwards – fails to take cognisance of the ways in which protected areas are both constituted by the spaces that surround them and, equally, constitute and enable those surrounding unprotected areas. For this reason, we suggest that rather than thinking of protected areas as boundaried, we need to recognise these spaces as *bordering* – in an ongoing, mutually enabling and constitutive relationship with each other. The notion of bordering allows one to take cognisance of something that boundaries obscure – namely, the spaces on both sides of the line and the ways in which protected areas (the boundaried space) are determined, created and shaped in response to and in between other spaces and priorities.

A rich body of literature emerged in the 1990s and 2000s that explored the idea of borders, moving the concept from a static understanding of borders as physical demarcation and delineation to an understanding of borders as a process or *bordering*.¹⁶ While borders in protected areas represent the inward focussed demarcation of control of their use and management, the idea of bordering we are using here is relational, concerned with the spaces on both sides of the border and the relational ways in which spaces constitute each other,¹⁷ not just in borderlands and transition zones, but in their entirety (encompassing, for example, the whole of the neighbouring city and not just the places where city and national park touch).

The move from boundaries to bordering is a move from seeing protected areas as constituted and defined by their boundaries, in contrast to the surrounding territory, to one that sees protected areas and the areas that surround them as relational – the process of becoming and being a protected area is something that happens in mutually constitutive ways with the wider spaces on all sides of the border.¹⁸

This relational concept of bordering helps us better understand the Forest which lies between growing cities. Although the Forest is ancient, long pre-dating the growth of these cities in their modern guises, it is today a space that is constituted in large part in its

location and relationship to these cities. A bordering approach allows us to analyse and understand the threats to the Forest not as an enclosed and defined space, subject to its own laws, regulations and social and environmental pressures, but rather as a place that exists and that is defined and is knowable only in relation to the broader environment in which it exists. It is also an approach that opens up new, ameliorative and more equitable solutions to those threats. This is an approach that is appropriate to the position, history and context of the Forest and other protected landscapes.

In the next section we set out the relational context of the Forest and its surrounding urban area concentrating on its largest neighbour, Southampton.

The Southampton Forest dynamic

In this section, we look at some of the ways in which the Forest is shaped and constituted at-and-beyond its boundaries. Looking first at how its boundaries have been shaped and then at four examples, we explore and uncover the bordering relationships between the protected area and those spaces beyond its roads, fences and wooden markers. Our first two examples – the housing crisis in Southampton and the development of the Waterside – reveal a growing, unfolding city, spreading in inches and in miles up to, along and over the contested edges of the Forest. The pressures to create housing and enable growth contribute to a fluctuating understanding of what and where the Forest is. Our next two examples look at the Forest from a governance and policy point of view. A multitude of institutions and bodies are charged with rule, policy and agenda-setting for the Forest and while some of these institutions have the capacity to ensure wide governance across park lines, instead their regulation is boundaried, both in its spatiality and ambition. Despite this limited governance approach, the Forest is called on to meet an ever-growing list of national and international policy goals and objectives. In our last example, we look at how the Forest has become a multi-functional space, called on to meet needs and demands that originate far beyond its boundary lines while neighbouring cities do not face similar burdens.

The Forest boundaries

The Forest was a royal hunting preserve subject to restrictive forest law that constrained the activities of inhabitants to subsistence farming through commoners' rights.¹⁹ Subsequently, the Forest became a rich source of timber for the building initially of ships and then for other industrial uses which led to the fencing of areas for silviculture to exclude commoners' rights.²⁰ A fierce conflict ensued in the 18th and 19th centuries between the Crown, as landowner, and the commoners to limit enclosure which was eventually won by the commoners so preserving much of the Forest as open common land free from full scale enclosure.²¹ The extent of this common land has changed over time. At one time it extended well beyond the current national park but now falls well within it (Glover 2019). The present common land boundaries (or perambulation as it is known) is fixed by the New Forest Act 1964. Growing stock deaths on the forest roads and the disruption caused by stock wandering into the surrounding towns led to the fencing of the main roads and the perambulation. It is now physically marked by those fences and cattle grids. The setting of the national park boundaries was contentious.

Ultimately it required a public inquiry at which there was a call for a wider area to be included than originally proposed. In the years immediately preceding the designation of the national park, a New Forest Heritage Area was drawn as another protected zone in which restricted planning policies applied. It extended beyond the immediate perambulation to include those areas with an intimate connection to it. Ultimately the designated national park area was smaller than this Heritage Area and even smaller than originally suggested excluding both the Avon Valley to the west and parts of the Waterside to the east.²² Even then the recommended boundary was subject to legal challenges by local landowners anxious to be free of national park planning constraints.²³ Just over half the Forest has been designated as deserving of special protection²⁴ and its management subject to scrutiny by Natural England (NE), our key environmental government body. It comprises Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981. These areas overlap with other protected areas designated under the Conservation of Habitat and Species Regulations 2017 (Habitat Regulations) as Special Areas of Conservation (SAC), largely for the Forest's unique mosaic of habitats, and a Special Protection Area (SPA) to nurture its rare resident and migratory birds. The Forest bogs and wetland systems are also recognised as Ramsar sites under the international Ramsar Convention on Wetlands. These designations are shown on maps but are only physically evident from their environmental features. There are also the usual boundaries reflecting private ownership both large, with sizeable country estates,²⁵ and small. It is the most densely populated national park with around 34,000 residents whilst just outside the National Park are the larger towns of Lymington and Ringwood both of which have long and close associations with the Forest and formally fell within the Heritage Area.

The Forest is thus better understood when we see its edges as unfixed – its boundaries do not distinguish clear and distinct legal and sociospatial zones or areas. As Anssi Paasi puts it, these edges are 'historically contingent institutions that are constituted in and constitutive of the perpetual production and reproduction of territories' (Paasi 2012, p. 2304). The complex and flexible nature of boundaries is apparent in the number and geographical physicality of the borders around and within the Forest. Roads, fences, cattle grids and easily missed wooden markers indicate some of the different legal boundaries of the national park and commons but not the protected landscapes within the Forest. As a space made up of villages, businesses, train lines, campsites, streams, roads and so on, the Forest's woods, enclosures and heathlands are riddled with border lines. Boundaries do not only exist at its edges. Visible on maps but not always on the ground, the Forest's boundaries are often legal rather than physical and thus are not always evident to a visitor. And, there are many boundaries that are visible and physical, shaping and carving areas of action and inaction, without any regulatory or managerial intent. In addition to their geographical and physical ambiguity, multiple functions, interests and institutions impact on and shift the Forest's boundaries.

Southampton: a denser city

Southampton lies to the east of the Forest. It has a population close to a quarter of a million, an increase of 5% in the last 10 years or so.²⁶ It is also the second most densely populated city in the southeast region at 49.9 people per hectare just after Portsmouth –

its close neighbour to the east with a population density of 51.5 people per hectare although its population is lower at of just over 200,000. Both cities lie within easy reach of the Forest with the M27 motorway providing easy access to the Forest by vehicle, and the railway line from both cities runs west through the Forest to Bournemouth and Poole to the west of the Forest and beyond. Southampton is a historic port city.²⁷ It lies on the south coast with protected anchorages and its container port and cruise terminal provide convenient access to the continent and to global shipping lanes. The newly formed Solent Freeport is intended to attract investment and employment to the area as part of the government's economic recovery plans. They hope to do so by offering attractive tax advantages. So, with a healthy and growing economy Southampton offers attractive employment opportunities with employment growth rates higher than the average across the southeast region. With these economic opportunities comes a demand for housing within and around the city. The draft city plan for the period 2022–2040 identifies a need for 26,500 new homes, although the plan admits to challenges in meeting these targets given its geographical constraints as a waterfront city neighbouring a protected landscape (City of Southampton, 2023). This demand goes alongside central government targets for new housing building to address the national acute housing needs, which places the interrelationship between the urban and the rural at a critical juncture.

At the border/water line

As we argued above, to recognise the park as bordering with the spaces around it is to see the inevitable relationship between these spaces and the impacts they have on each other and to encourage holistic protection and governance. This interrelationship is clearly seen in the border between Southampton and the Forest, in the area known as The Waterside.

The Waterside comprises the old villages of Eling, Marchwood, Hythe, Dibden Purlieu, Holbury, Blackfield and Fawley with the town of Totton to the north. It is squeezed in between Southampton Water and the Forest and throughout its long history it has looked both east to Southampton and west to the Forest. There is a record of a crossing point from Hythe to Southampton across Southampton Water for centuries and a ferry still runs today. Given its border with the sea, various ports have drawn the area to look east. Hythe and Marchwood both served as important military ports during World War Two and now serve civilian functions. The fate of the Waterside was sealed in the 1950s when Fawley was chosen as the site of the United Kingdom's largest oil refinery and associated oil terminal. Further industrialisation followed with chemical plants also at Fawley and power stations at Marchwood and Fawley. New homes were built for the employees of these industries, and the area has become a popular dormitory for Southampton. Given its industrial and residential density, it now largely falls outside the National Park border although the original boundary proposed that certain areas, including Dibden Bay – of which more shortly – should be included. Despite increasing urbanisation, the Waterside is still geographically linked to the Forest. At one time its villages were influenced by the governance of the Forest²⁸ and many properties still enjoy commoners' rights with its fields providing vital back-up grazing for commoners' stock (Ivey, 2025). Its importance to the Forest was recognised by its inclusion within the Heritage Area. Its residents still naturally look to the Forest's open spaces on their

doorstep for their recreation and enjoyment. It thus forms a porous border and exerts a strong influence upon the Forest environment. That influence is clear, given current plans for the area. These are detailed in the local authority's 'Vision for the Waterside' (*A vision for the waterside* n.d.). This vision contemplates economic growth building on the area's port facilities, and plans for 5000 new homes in three new communities over the next 10–15 years. One of these new communities promises 1500 homes and a commercial zone on the old Fawley Power Station, although this development is currently paused through lack of funding. This development also is seen as a key site for the Solent Freeport comprising other sites in Southampton and Portsmouth as well as the Waterside areas of Marchwood Port and adjoining Dibden Bay. These latter sites are controlled by Associated British Ports who manage the Port of Southampton on the other side of Southampton Water but have long held ambitions to expand to the Waterside. The Solent Freeport thus draws the Waterside ever closer to Southampton but its full impact on the Forest is yet to be felt. The Forest lies within the outer Freeport Zone within which economic investment is expected from funds generated from the Freeport. There are concerns that these developments can only be environmentally adverse. For example, land at Dibden Bay is a SSSI adjacent to the Forest. The area was the subject of a long planning inquiry in 2001–2002 when Associated British Ports unsuccessfully applied for planning permission to expand its container port. Inclusion of part of this area within the Solent Freeport spells fears that Dibden Bay is at risk again. These developments of the Waterside also bring infrastructure upgrades – most notably the improvement of the main access road, the A326. This road forms a clear physical boundary between the Forest and the Waterside. Yet present improvement proposals look only at the environmental impact on the area subject to road widening. They ignore the impact upon the Forest itself. Such a blinkered perspective illustrates the disconnect in looking just one way – east towards Southampton – whilst ignoring the fragile landscapes of the Forest to the west. The Vision for the Waterside too gives limited recognition to its environmental impact. It advocates neighbourhood green infrastructure but not significant new recreational space. The connection to the Forest is acknowledged with embryonic ideas of ecological networks to link the Forest with the coast and sustainable transport links ('Waterside Green Links' n.d.).

Boundaried governance

As argued in part 2, delineation, enclosure and boundaries are seen as essential to the definition and regulation of protected areas. The boundary is an edge of power, a limit of jurisdictional competence and concern. While boundaried zones are a focus of governance, management and development, they pay little attention to what lies beyond. The disconnect between the urban and the rural is reinforced by decision making processes that largely look inward rather than outward. This is clearly demonstrated in the split of governance and management powers and responsibilities within the Forest. This is concentrated between New Forest District Council (NFDC), Forestry England (FE), the Verderers and the New Forest National Park Authority (NFNPA).

FE manage the land on behalf of the State with conservation oversight of the protected areas by NE. As nationwide government bodies, and one would expect them to have their statutory responsibilities and national policies firmly in mind so far as their masters, the

Government, provide them with guidance on how their operational priorities should be set. The Habitat Regulations, for instance, call for the maintenance and improvement of the Forest's protected sites assisted by detailed management plans (Natural England 2025). These regulations also require the environmental assessment of any projects that may adversely affect a site even if the project lies beyond the site's borders. The regulations thus take a bordering approach. A hierarchy of measures seek to avoid and then mitigate any potential harm with compensatory action required if the project is of public necessity.

The Verderers are intimately tied to commoning. They are a unique judicial body which regulates commoners' rights and protects the grazing land upon which commoning depends. They sit every month to hear public complaints, called presentments, that bring to their attention any issues which affect the forest or commoning. They have played a vital role for centuries in ensuring the forest landscape is preserved. Any development which might reduce or affect the grazing available on the forest requires their consent. They have thus operated as a break on FE's more commercial ambitions (Pasmore 1977, Nield 2005). The Verderers' responsibility is firmly Forest focussed, although their composition reflects some wider interests with members appointed by Department of the Environment and Rural Affairs, FE, the NFNPA and NE.²⁹

The NFNPA's jurisdiction is essentially confined to planning matters within the national park boundaries – a stark demonstration of a bordered inward-looking approach. The majority of its governing board represent local councils within and bordering the national park and as such provide an insight from the wider community. Its Partnership Plan is drawn up in collaboration with the leading national and local public bodies. It sets out key conservation, climate, recreational and economic objectives largely within the park itself but with aspirations to build relationships that look beyond the park borders (n.d.). Much of the NFNPA's other work is focussed around promoting the Forest as a destination for visitors with glossy brochures, educational information and ideas of places to visit. It is a voice in the Forest but a voice with limited direct power. In conservation terms, it is more of an influencer than a decision-maker.

NFDC is the local authority for the Forest and provides the usual local services except for planning. It offers an example of bordering governance. its jurisdiction extends beyond the national park boundary in a semi-circle to the east covering the Waterside and to the south and west. But the Government plans for devolution and local government re-organisation will lead to the abolition of NFDC and the incorporation of the Forest into a much larger local government area. This is proving highly controversial with the divide between the rural and cities prominent. It is feared that Southampton's envious eyes are cast both upon the housing and economic opportunities of the Waterside and the comparative wealth of the Forest. Three options are mooted. First is to align with Hampshire's largely rural areas to the northeast, secondly to incorporate the Forest into urban Southampton & Eastleigh or lastly to split the Waterside from the Forest with the Waterside joining Southampton and Eastleigh and the rest of the NFDC area linking up with the rural areas to the northeast. None of these options are welcome in the Forest; the fear is that the area will lose its local representation within larger bodies that neither understand nor care about this corner of Hampshire.

The Forest: a multi-functional space?

We have explored the Forest's protected status. Protected areas are 'the cornerstone of international site-based conservation' (Starnes *et al.* 2021, p. 1) and thus are largely expected to be free of any adverse development. As such they are at the forefront of the nation's biodiversity commitments and provide a key component to tackle climate change. However, like many protected areas around the world, conservation is not the only, or indeed the most highly prioritised goal of the Forest's designation as protected. The Forest, like other protected areas, is called on to fulfil a wide range of social, economic, political and environmental policy agendas and goals. The Forest not only serves national goals and ambitions in meeting with this multitude of goals but also serves and enables the surrounding cities who do not bear identical burdens and whose populations can look outside the city for recreation and green space. Key to Forest's designation as a national park was '*the opportunities it affords for open-air recreation having regard to [its] character and to ... [its] position in relation to centres of population.*'³⁰

These twin objectives are reflected in the NFNPA's duties which are '*conserving and enhancing the natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage*' of the Forest and '*promoting opportunities for the understanding and enjoyment of [its] special qualities ... by the public.*'³¹ Thus, at the heart of national parks is a functional tension between the conservation of its protected landscape and public recreation. A tension that exemplifies a bordering relationship that simultaneously looks inward to protect the space within the national park borders whilst looking outward to promote and facilitate public access, most obviously from surrounding urban centres.

The public enjoy a statutory right to roam on foot and on horseback over much of the Forest³² and its location makes it accessible to many, both from its surrounding cities and beyond. Visitors come for all sorts of reasons (Liley, Panter, Caals and Saunders, 2020 and Lily and Panter, 2020 Panter and Saunders, 2020). It is popular with hikers, horse riders, dog walkers, cyclists or those just out for a pleasant drive and a stop for refreshments. At 15 million day visits a year, the visitor figures are quite staggering and are expected only to increase. Research published in 2019 projected an increase of 11.4% in visitor numbers between 2018 and 2036 (Liley *et al.* 2019), coming, at least in part, from a 16.4% increase in new dwellings that were expected to be built within 25 kilometres of the Forest over the period. These estimates will fall well short in the light of the Government's revised National Planning Policy Framework that increases local authorities' targets substantially, in a push to fulfil its manifesto commitment to build 1.5 million homes by the end of the decade. For instance, NFDC's annual target will almost triple from 521 to 1,501 dwellings which will need largely to be accommodated on the borders of the National Park. Neighbouring Test Valley and Eastleigh Borough Councils see increases of 78% and 40% respectively. Meanwhile Southampton City Council's targets have slightly fallen. These targets are set by an algorithm that rather bizarrely takes little account of available building land, or geographical constraints presented by protected areas, the coastline or other physical features. Instead, the Planning and Infrastructure Bill threatens the Habitat Regulations framework of environmental protection to facilitate this housing growth.

The Sandford principle Sandford (1974) attempts to address this conservation/recreation tension by stating that where the two purposes ‘are irreconcilable . . . priority must be given to the conservation of natural beauty’.³³ As recreational pressure has grown the Sandford principle is easily overlooked. It does not help that the courts have taken a narrow approach to when the two duties are considered ‘irreconcilable’. Only if recreation cannot be adequately managed, will the duties be irreconcilable.³⁴ The key issue is whether these growing visitor numbers are sustainable. There is a further element to this conservation/recreation dynamic. Not only has commoning played a vital role in the shaping the Forest’s ecology and its survival as open space but free grazing stock remain an essential conservation tool with the Forest providing a centuries old example of wilding.³⁵ The preservation of the commoners’ way of life centred around their grazing stock is thus vital to and embedded in the cultural heritage and conservation of the Forest. But sadly commoning and recreation can clash. Visitors feed and pet the ponies despite numerous warnings not to do so. The ponies then can compete for food, become aggressive and need to be removed from the Forest. They are also attracted to the roadside by this attention and risk being killed by speeding cars. With high housing and land prices within the New Forest, commoners also find it difficult to find homes or back-up land to provide grazing for their stock when stock need to be removed from the Forest. As a result, they are bound into the pressure for more houses within and beyond the Forest boundary.

At the same time, the Forest is uniquely vulnerable to the impacts of climate change. While National Parks are seen as playing a critical role in ‘mitigating the worst impacts of climate change and driving adaptation the changes we’re already facing’ (National Parks England, 2019), climate modelling indicates that southern National Parks (the Forest and Dartmoor) face increased risks of 50% in the significant rise in fires due to drier summers and soil moisture deficits (Adaptation Sub-Committee for the Committee on Climate Change 2016).

All these competing demands leaves a Forest that is overburdened and under threat and ill at ease with its bordering cities. Reconciling competing and often incompatible demands is stretching the Forest’s special qualities. Many of these demands, whether for recreation and tourism or housing, emanate from beyond the Forest’s borders in the urban centres that surround it. Neither the Forest nor these neighbouring towns and cities are islands. They are interdependent.

Addressing the problem (and problematising the solution) – towards bordering as governance approach

A problem of boundaries

Boundaries, as discussed in part 1, have long been seen as a crucial component of protected area creation, constitution and management. They delineate and designate and are crucial tools of exclusion of certain kinds of activities and enabling of others. Although sometimes artificial in their compartmentalisation of complex ecological and social systems, they create zones of control and protection that protect a piece and a moment of a socio-ecological space, if not a system and a history. Relying on boundaries allows for a false notion of enclosure – the idea that a space can be separated, in key

respects, from its surroundings and governed accordingly. The Forest is intimately joined at its internal and external edges. The pressure and dynamics that made those spaces, make the Forest. For this reason, we argue, we need a shift in governance approaches to the Forest that sees it not as boundaried – governed from its edges inwards – but as bordering – governed holistically and in continuity with the wider landscape.

Bordering, as we argued in [section 2](#), is the idea that each place defines and enables the places around it. While the boundary remains an edge of power, this relational understanding of bordering allows us to look in multiple directions in understanding the nature and scope of that power. In the case of the Forest, a bordering approach suggests that protecting the protected area is not a matter of setting goals or controls from the boundaries inwards, but rather also demands ensuring that the greater area (city and park together) are governed to achieve the goals that the ‘National Park’ encompasses. To safeguard the protected landscapes, the surrounding areas must also be considered and transformed. Making green space accessible, enabling recreation, facilitating climate mitigation are all goals that do not need to be borne by the Forest alone. This means that in addition to policies that have sought to create networks of protected areas or that have sought to understand beyond-the-boundaries threats to these areas (Moseldale *et al.* 2022), we also need to extend the priorities, principles and demands placed on protected areas to the neighbouring, non-protected areas.

Solutions until now have been too inward looking (the Forest has to meet all needs and demands)³⁶ – this problem is not an internal one (alone) but a problem that concerns the spaces *around* the Forest. There is some evidence that policy is moving in a bordering direction, but these initiatives are embryonic, untested and at times uncoordinated. In this section, we consider some initiatives, projects and policies that we see as examples of possible bordering approaches – approaches to governing the Forest as part of a wider environment and as shaping the governance of the areas and cities beyond its boundaries.

Bordering initiatives

Extending the goals of ‘national park’ beyond the national park

As we argued in part 2, one of the key features of much of law’s approach to governing space is the creation of discrete and purpose-driven zones or spaces within a state’s territories. The city is primarily a space governed to serve residential and commercial needs, while national parks serve recreational and environmental goals. Our examples discussed in part 3 point to the growing pressure on the New Forest to also serve a wide variety of goals beneficial to the needs of the city, including making more space for housing and serving the wellbeing needs of city residents. In contrast, the Southampton National Park City initiative takes a novel approach that we suggest embraces bordering rather than boundaries – it is an approach that brings national park principles and goals into the city of Southampton.

Southampton National Park City describes itself as a grassroots project (*Southampton National Park City* n.d.). The idea for National Park Cities started in London, ‘from London’s grassroots communities reflecting the considerable and growing interest of people and organisations from all walks of life in helping to improve life in London through more and better everyday contact with nature and the great outdoors because of better planning, design, access and opportunities’ (*Welcome to London National Park*

City n.d.). The National Park Cities Charter describes itself as ‘a shared vision and journey for better life’. The project aims to ‘protect and enhance [Southampton’s] natural, living landscape’ and make access to nature a part of everyday life for Southampton’s residents, within their city and neighbourhoods.

The project, which has received the enthusiastic support of the Southampton City Council, expresses the idea of bordering in an important sense: the national park is not an enclosed, bounded area that serves a set of goals and ambitions, but rather a set of goals and responsibilities that do not end at the edges of designated areas. National parks are part of larger landscape that includes forest and city, areas of scientific interest and roads, areas of leisure and work, animal habitats and houses. Creating places of environmental care, places for walking, for growing food, for conservation and so on are goals that can and should be realised in the city as well as in the protected areas.

The idea of Southampton National Park City is one aimed at serving the city and its residents. As the project coordinator, Christelle Blunden, has put it ‘We want the residents of our city to be as close to nature as they can be without driving to access it. Our wish is to demonstrate that our green spaces are lush in biodiversity and that each person shares a responsibility in the largest and greenest city of the south coast’ (*Southampton National Parks City project* 2022). We would argue, however, that projects such as these also serve the designated National Parks, and – in the case of the Southampton City – should be seen as a possible governance approach to the New Forest. Creating accessible, lush and biodiverse spaces within the city not only takes the pressure off the Forest to meet all of the green needs of the city but also challenges the idea of national parks as enclosed spaces of wildness where one goes to look at and be in nature. Nature gets to be everywhere again, breaking down law’s discrete and purpose-driven zones and enabling a relational and co-constitutive dynamic between city and national park.

Mitigation measures

The designation of areas of the Forest as protected SAC and SPA sites brings the need for the mitigation measures required by Habitats Regulations.³⁷ In recognition that residential developments close to protected sites may have a negative impact, measures are needed to reduce and manage consequential recreational pressures. It is for bordering local planning authorities to formulate their own mitigation policies.³⁸

The Zone of Influence for the Forest sets the bordering zone at 13.8 kilometres of the protected areas boundary for smaller developments and 15 kilometres for larger developments of over 200 homes.³⁹ Common mitigation measures include requiring new housing developments either to include new areas of Suitable Alternative Natural Green Space (SANGs)⁴⁰ or payments to fund the creation of new strategic SANGs or the improvement of existing greenspace. SANGs are intended to provide areas of a quality and type which are suitable to offset the impact of new residential development by providing an alternative greenspace to attract residents away from the protected area. They must be managed and funded in perpetuity by appropriate bodies, for example local authorities or environmental charities, and designed and delivered in accordance with NE guidelines (Natural England, 2021). Development, on or within the immediate area of a SANG, is constrained to preserve its ecological and recreational value. Mitigation measures

also require developers to make contributions to fund visitor and access management (known as Strategic Access Management and Monitoring or SAMM). SAMMs often provide funding for wardens to guide and educate visitors and to monitor their impact.⁴¹

These mitigation measures are encouraging and point to a bordering approach, but in the Forest they are still uncoordinated. Other protected areas have taken a partnership approach with the affected local authorities, landowners and key environmental bodies pooling their contributions so that SAMM measures can be delivered in a targeted manner by a dedicated body upon which they are all represented.⁴² The NFNPA are calling for a similar co-operative approach from the Forest but progress is slow. Similar bordering mitigation policies are evident in the nutrient neutrality policies to improve the water quality of ecologically sensitive watercourses, including those feeding into the Solent (Partnership for South Hampshire 2025). The newly introduced requirement for future developments to show a 10% biodiversity net gain, whether on site or off site, is yet another policy that has the potential to support the protected areas of the Forest through providing alternative sites of conservation.⁴³

Local collaboration

The need for collaborative working underpins any bordering approach. The NFNPA has tried to extend their influence looking to bordering principles. For example, they are partners in 'Green and Blue Horizons Scheme from City to New Forest Scheme' to '*extend nature networks and create wildlife-rich corridors that link National Park habitats to neighbouring towns and cities*' (New Forest National Park Authority n.d.). This scheme is part funded by Government through the national Green Recovery Challenge Fund which is intended '*to kick-start nature recovery and tackle climate change*.'⁴⁴ The NFNPA have also launched the Green Halo Partnership which seeks to '*bring together businesses, universities, charities and communities to ensure . . . [the] environment in and around the New Forest National Park flourishes as an integral part of our wider area's thriving economy and society*'. The ambition is stated to be '*not constrained by administrative boundaries*'. There is also a South Hampshire Partnership of local planning authorities and a Steering Committee to oversee a more co-ordinated approach to the mitigation policies outlined above. But the bottom line is that these are soft measures that cajole rather than dictate.

A real incentive to co-ordinate and collaborate comes with the long called for legal obligation for all public authorities, including for example FE, local planning authorities and even service providers, 'to seek to further' the national park statutory objectives rather than just merely 'to have regard' to them.⁴⁵ The change in language may be small but the impact could be far-reaching.⁴⁶

Revisiting recreation

Visitors to protected landscapes come from within and beyond their borders. They provide a link and conduit between urban and rural spaces. Their activities, expectations and attitudes shape human interaction with the natural environment. A bordering approach thus calls for an understanding of visitor behaviour and where necessary its regulation whether that be through soft approaches with information and education or more hard-edge controls with physical or legal constraints.

Steps to limit the impact of recreation in the Forest began to emerge in the 1960's and 70's when the major forest roads were fenced to limit the deaths of commoners' stock and car parking was restricted to dedicated car parks.⁴⁷ Formal campsites were also established to limit wild camping and subsequently cycling has been permitted but only on certain tracks. Forestry Commission Byelaws were made in 1982 to regulate reasonable recreation.⁴⁸

More recently the NFNPA have formulated a Recreation Management Strategy overseen by a Steering Group with representatives including the local authorities bordering the national park. Following consultation ('Public consultations on recreation management' n.d.) and based upon commissioned research,⁴⁹ strategic actions have been formulated to guide recreation management (New Forest National Park Authority, 2019). One outcome is a New Forest Code to set out the basic behavioural norms expected of visitors that is significantly more accessible than the Forestry Commission Byelaws. Public Space Protection Orders, allowing for on-the-spot fines, have been introduced for the more serious conduct of lighting fires and feeding and petting stock.

More far-reaching recreation management proposals would see spatial measures to relocate the car parks to funnel visitors away from particularly sensitive sites. Yet a bordering approach needs to include policies focussed on significantly increasing opportunities and spaces for recreation within the surrounding cities.

Education to inform and, where necessary, change visitor attitudes underpins all these initiatives for bordering. It requires a dialogue and understanding across the border to engender a richer relationship and reconcile competing expectations and demands.

Conclusion

The phrase, 'cheek by jowl', directs us to think about proximity – things that are side by side, so close that where one ends, the other begins. However, as we suggested in our introduction, proximity alone need not be very revealing but rather it is often the distinction – and the boundary – between them that reveals something. It is not merely through examining the Forest that we can understand its nature, functions and threats. It is only when we see the Forest as existing, cheek by jowl, with dense urban cities that we can come to understand the functions that it is meant to serve and the threats that it faces. The Forest, we have argued, has become a site of service and permission, enabling the often unsustainable growth and densification of its neighbouring cities.

Although the Forest is a small national park, its impact and importance stretches far beyond its boundaries. It is a green lung on a densely urban coastline and the demands of the surrounding cities strain the resilience and integrity of the Forest's social, historical and natural environment. In this paper, we have argued that traditional regulatory approaches have failed to address these pressures and that this is, at least in part, due to the fact that the national park is seen as a boundaried space, isolated and exceptional. It is governed from its boundaries inwards.

Addressing the threats to the park from within the boundaries of the park, we have argued, is not only unhelpful but also fails to see the park as part of a far larger continuous environment – one in which the city is in a relationship with the Forest, each enabling and constituting the other. We have argued for an approach to protected area governance that recognises the limits of boundaries as regulatory edge, suggesting

instead that the goals of the Forest should be extended over its boundaries, to the city and beyond.

In this paper, we have argued for a bordering approach which we understand as a significant alternative to traditional and ongoing political and legal approaches that look at protected areas from the boundary inwards (even when they are concerned with networked and contextualised protected areas). We have outlined a number of examples of what we see as initiatives that adopt something like a bordering approach. However, addressing the pressures on the Forest requires greater collaboration and cross-boundary regulation, extending the Forest's sphere of influence much further into the surrounding areas. Bordering advocates for regulatory approaches concerned with the spaces on both sides of the border, looking at both the protected area and its neighbouring cities, and the relational ways in which these spaces constitute each other. This is not just a matter of protecting the Forest from external threats, but also sharing the objectives and goals of national parks to the cities, making them biodiverse, climate mitigating, spaces for recreation.

Notes

1. Comprising 570 square kilometres. Only the Norfolk Broads is smaller at 303 square kilometres.
2. See the New Forest National Park Authority, Partnership Plan 2022–27 Part 2.
3. National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949, s5(2)(b).
4. See, for example, Cox *et al.* (2017). For a critical take on this, with a focus on disability rights, see (Bell 2023).
5. The right of states to exploit their natural resources is a key tenet of international law's conception of statehood. In 1962 the United Nations General Assembly declared that 'the right of peoples and nations to permanent sovereignty over their natural wealth and resources must be exercised in the interest of their national development and of the well-being of the people of the State concerned'. UNGA Resolution 1803, para. 1, UN Doc. A/ 5217 (1962).
6. The CBD has 196 countries signatories, including the UK.
7. For an interesting discussion of some the debates in protected area scholarship, see Brockington *et al.* (2012).
8. (MCC *n.d.*) Rule 19.1 of the Laws of Cricket requires the umpires to 'determine the boundary of the field of play, which shall be fixed for the duration of the match'.
9. See National Park and Access to the Countryside Act 1949 s5(2)(b) which provides that one criterion for the designation of a national park is 'the opportunities they afford for open-air recreation'.
10. The enormous body of literature on borders, especially that written in the period post the 9/11 terrorist attack in the USA, has often focussed on the fixed enclosure and exclusion functions of borders (particularly in light of hardening state and supranational borders). While we draw on some of that work in our concept of the bordered approach, we see something a little different happening here. First, the border is much more porous – we return to this below – and second, the concern is much more (although not exclusively) with what is within the borders rather than the exclusion of what is outside. Indeed, accessible green space is one of the goals of protected areas in the UK. In the context of protected areas, bordering to facilitate access (while excluding some use) is a key goal, complicating the idea of border we might find in security studies and related areas of research. For more on complicating understandings of 'border', see (Paasi 2012)

11. The policy emphasis on networks and corridors has also been found to be of limited value in protecting and enhancing wildlife and biodiversity (Moseldale *et al.* 2022).
12. Measures have been developed to try to address this and, as discussed above, creating networks has been a priority since the Lawton report in 2010, for example through the creation of wildlife corridors. See (Lawton 2010, Pullinger and Johnson 2010).
13. (Clancy *et al.* 2020). Research has found that ‘both old and new protected areas did not target places with high concentrations of threatened vertebrate species. Instead, they appeared to be established in locations that minimize conflict with agriculturally suitable lands’ (Venter *et al.* 2018, p. 127).
14. National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949, s5.
15. See, for example (Environment and Climate Change Committee 2023). The Committee reported that ‘parks and green spaces in England deliver £6.6 billion annually of health, climate change and environmental benefits’. See also National Parks England, ‘Climate Change Position Statement’ (2019).
16. See, for example, (Paasi 1998, Newman 2006, Megoran 2012, Nail 2016). For an overview of some of the organising concerns and issues that one finds in the scholarship on boundaries and beyond, see Mol and Law, (2005). For some scholars, the idea of borders and even bordering have been insufficient to capture the complex plural and political dimensions involved, suggesting instead the idea of borderscapes (–see Brambilla, Laine and Bocchi, 2016). Brambilla provides both a clear account of borderscape as a concept and an overview of the evolution of research on border, especially in an international contexts in Brambilla, 2015.
17. This makes our understanding different from, for example, Nail’s theory of the border as the thing between the two sides (Nail 2016).
18. Traditionally, theoretical approaches that see space as relational tend to treat borders as inconsequential. In our approach, following Löw and Weidenhaus, we recognise the importance of borders in understanding relational space and see borders not as the outlines or containers of protected areas, but rather as a relationship between two spaces – in this case, the protected area and the unprotected area, or the New Forest and its surrounding cities (Löw and Weidenhaus 2017) (See also Massey 1992).
19. For example, of grazing (of commonable animals), pannage (of pigs in the autumn), estovers and turbary (to collect wood and turf for household fires) and marl (for fertiliser),
20. For a fuller account of this history see Tubbs (2001).
21. See New Forest Act 1877.
22. The New Forest National Park Authority (Establishment) Order 2005, SI 2005/421.
23. *Meyrick Estate Management & Others v The Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs* [2007] EWCA Civ 53.
24. It is listed in the World Database on Protected Areas.
25. For example, Beaulieu and Exbury which attract many visitors.
26. According to the Office of National Statistics Census 2021.
27. As is Portsmouth whose harbour has long hosted the national navy.
28. For example, ‘purlieu’ in the name Dibden Purlieu refers to land at the edge of the forest which was freed from the confines of mediaeval forest law.
29. The remaining Verderers are the Official Verderer appointed by the Crown and the Verderers elected by the commoners.
30. S5(2) National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949.
31. See s5(1) National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949.
32. See Law of Property Act 1925, s193 and Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000, s2.
33. See s62 Environment Act 1995.
34. *Stubbs (Green Lanes Environmental Action Movement) v Lake District NPA* [2020] EWHC 2293 (Admin).
35. See the more recent example of wilding at the Knepp estate and the role of large grazing herbivores in Isebella Tree’s well known book, *Wilding* (Tree 2018).

36. Policies that seek to create networks and corridors between protected areas are *still* inward-looking, they just look in from the boundaries of each park together, rather than looking out from the parks to the rest of the country.
37. 92/43/EEC incorporated into English law by Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended) SI 2010/490.
38. See for example NFDC at (*Recreational Mitigation Programme* n.d.). Other planning authorities which have formulated some mitigation measures are NFNPA, Test Valley Borough Council, Eastleigh Borough Council, Southampton City Council, Fareham Borough Council and Wiltshire Council. Bournemouth Christchurch and Poole as well as Dorset Council have limited measures.
39. It excludes the Isle of Wight and Gosport.
40. Sometimes referred to as Alternative Natural Recreational Greenspace (ANGS).
41. NFDC mitigation policy provided funding for a park ranger see (New Forest NPA, 2020).
42. See for example the Thames Heath Basin Partnership (Thames Basin Trust n.d.) and the Dorset Heath Partnership (*Dorset Heaths Partnership* n.d.).
43. See Schedule 7A of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as inserted by Schedule 14 of the Environment Act 2021).
44. Ibid
45. Levelling Up and Regeneration Act 2023, s245 amending National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949 s11A(1A).
46. See Government guidance at (DEFRA 2024) and growing caselaw R (on the application of Dedham Vale Society v SS for Housing, Communities and Local Government (February 2025); New Forest National Park Authority v SS for Housing, Communities and Local Government [2025] EWHC 726,
47. New Forest Acts 1964 & 1970.
48. See s46(2) Forestry Act 1967 and SI 648/82.
49. Conducted by Footprint Ecology accessible at 'Research into recreational use of the New Forest's protected habitats' (n.d.).

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