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# Potential Geographies for a Biosphere Reserve around the Forest of Dean

# UNESCO Biosphere Network



The World Network of Biosphere Reserves | 2023-2024

**748**  
**Biosphere Reserves**

**277 million people call Biosphere Reserves their home**

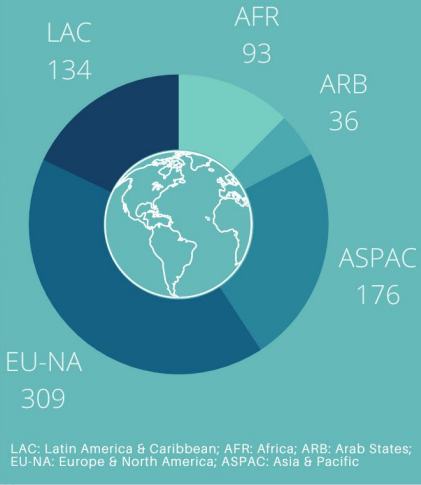
Present in 134 countries

**23 Transboundary Biosphere Reserves**  
4 in Africa, 12 in Europe & North America, 3 in Latin America & the Caribbean

**1 Transcontinental Biosphere Reserves**  
Intercontinental del Mediterraneo (Europe/Arab States)

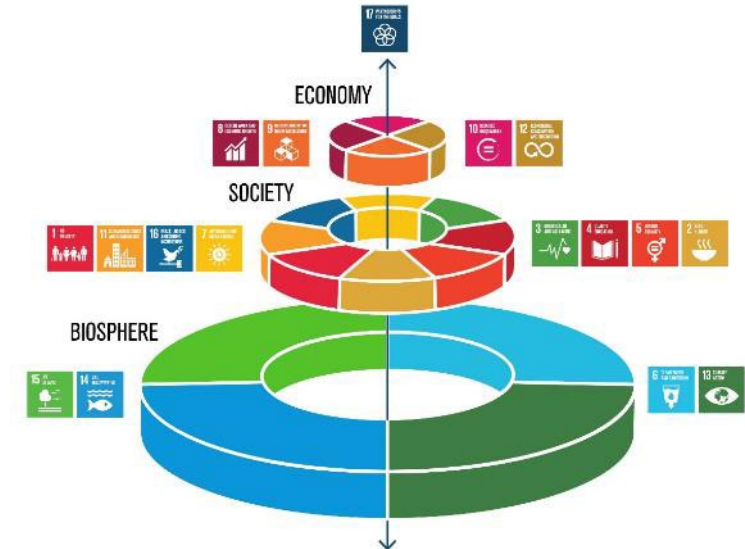
**5%**  
of the world's land surface

## Regional distribution



## UNESCO Biosphere Mission:

*“Promoting innovative approaches to economic development that are socially and culturally appropriate and environmentally sustainable.”*



# What is a UNESCO Biosphere Reserve

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- A Biosphere Reserve is designated by UNESCO at the request of member states to be part of the worldwide network of sites under the Man and Biosphere intergovernmental science programme.
- They are an international accolade for an area that seeks “provide a better future by linking people and nature now”.
- Seeking and demonstrating solutions as a beacon to the wider world

# What it is not

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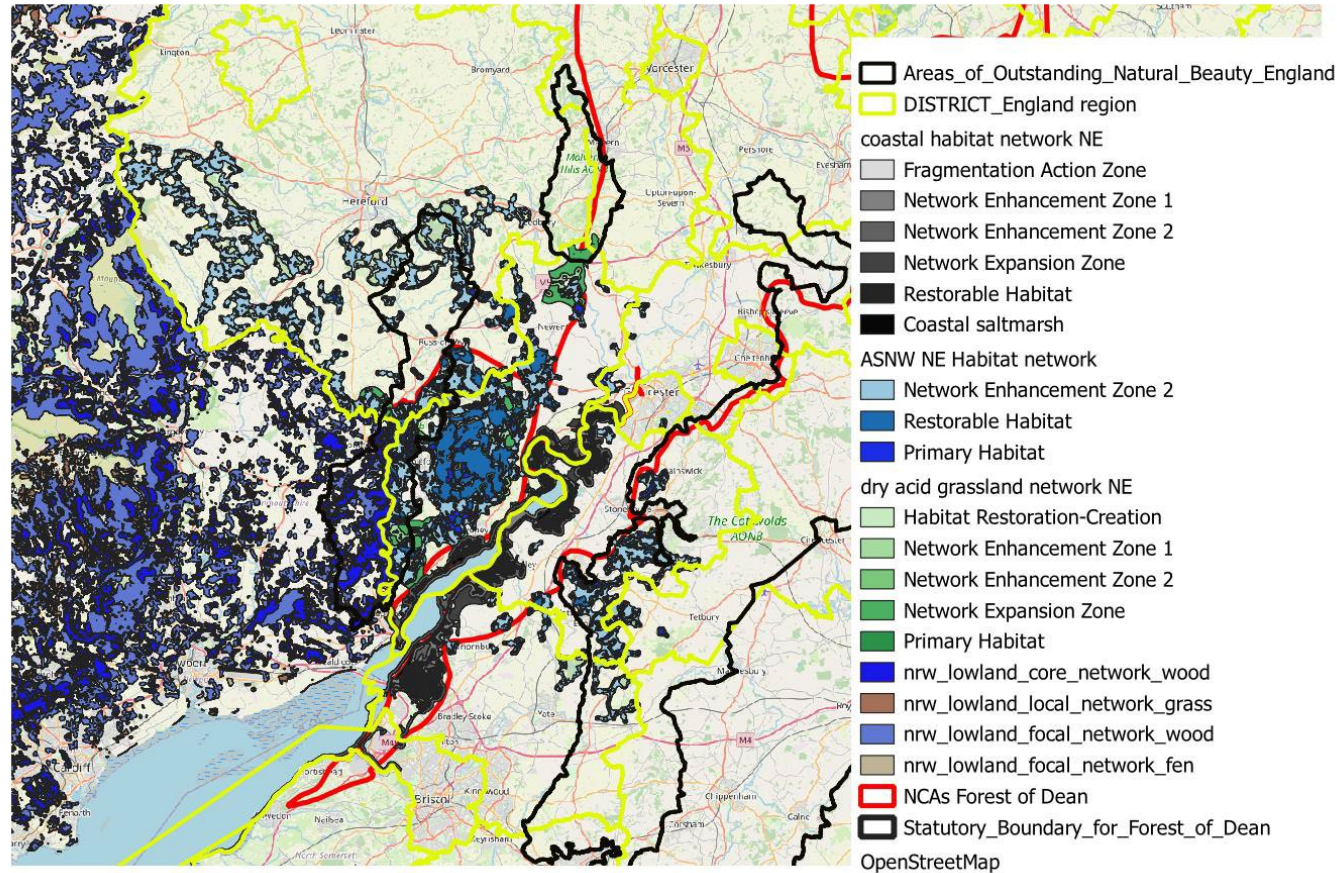
- Not a restriction imposed from the UN or from UK Government
- Not a statutory protection measure

# Why a Biosphere Reserve For the Forest of Dean

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- There are benefits that the area can use to further its efforts in sustainable development including sustainable economies
  - ONS report suggested a cost benefit ratio of 1:3.9 based on woodlands alone
  - Other economic reports for other Biosphere Reserves indicate a 1:7 ratio
- Celebrate and enhance the environmental assets you have
- Provides a strong framework and partnership to address climate and biodiversity crises
- Use the opportunity to be an internationally significant area to draw down funding from a range of programmes
- There is broad community support for the designation
- The area deserves the recognition

# A big natural capital opportunity in the district



# Functions of a Biosphere Reserve

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- Conservation (of ecosystems, habitats, species and genes)
- Development (i.e. sustainable development or use of the area)
- Logistics (research, training and knowledge sharing)

# Black Forest, Germany

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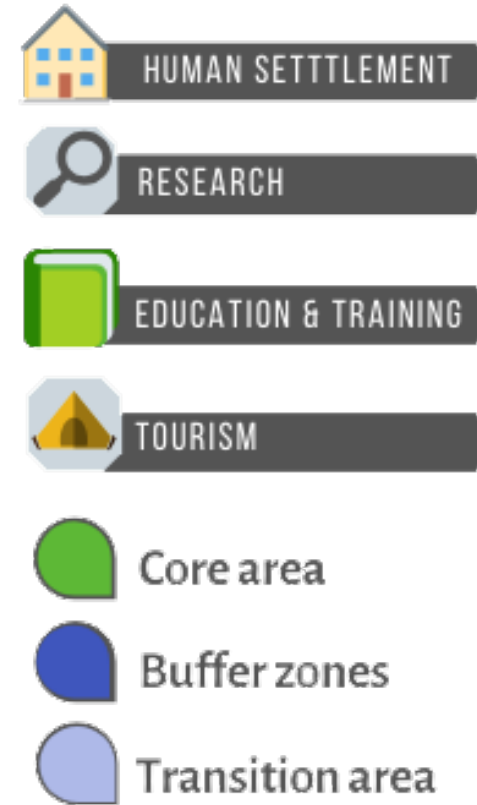
# Black Forest Objectives

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# Biosphere Reserve Zonation

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# What existing designations make the zones?

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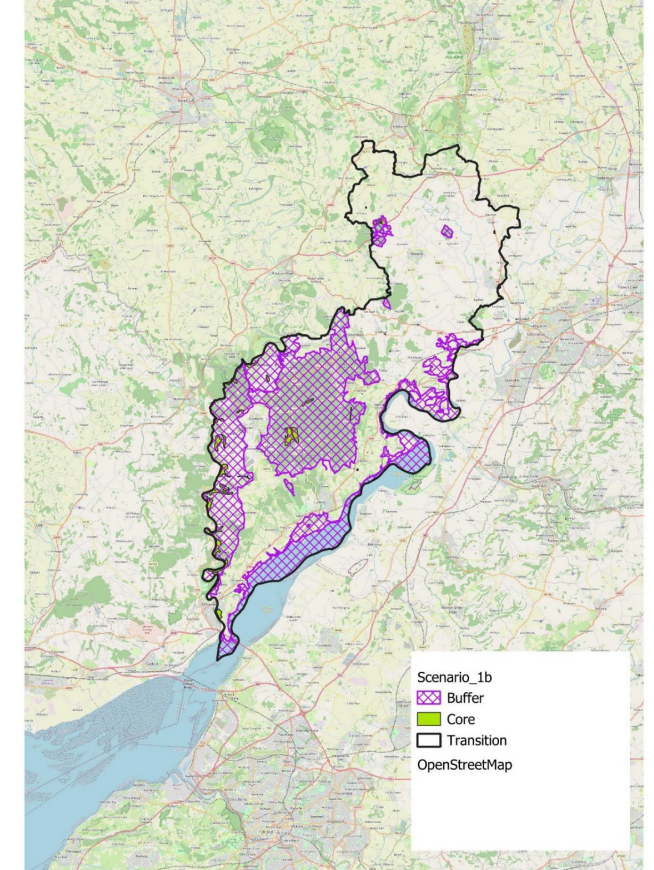
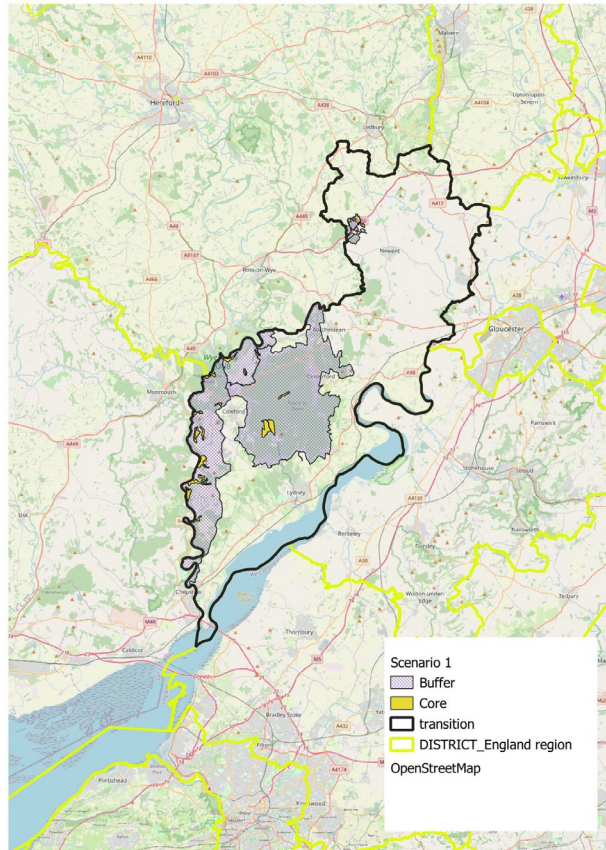
- Core area
  - SAC, SSSI
- Buffer
  - Statutory Forest of Dean
  - National Landscape
  - SSSI/SAC
  - Flood risk zones
  - SSSI buffer/consultation zones
- Transition Area
  - Based on what is recognisable and relevant to the communities in the area around the environmental assets

# Scenarios tested for various boundary options

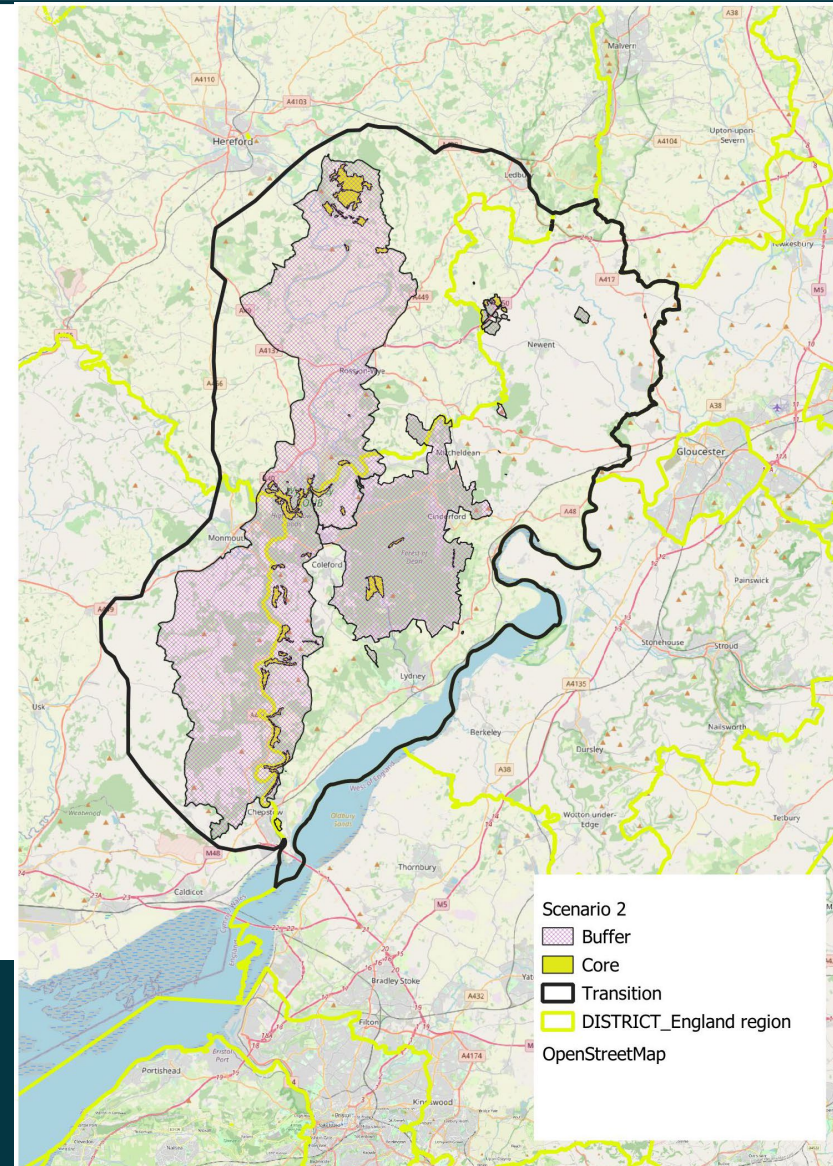
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- Forest of Dean District Boundary (deemed as minimum desirable through consultation with FODD) (Scenario 1)
- Forest of Dean District, plus the Wye Valley AONB (including or excluding the areas within Wales) (Scenario 2)
- Expanded area including upper Severn Estuary and floodplain (Scenario 3)

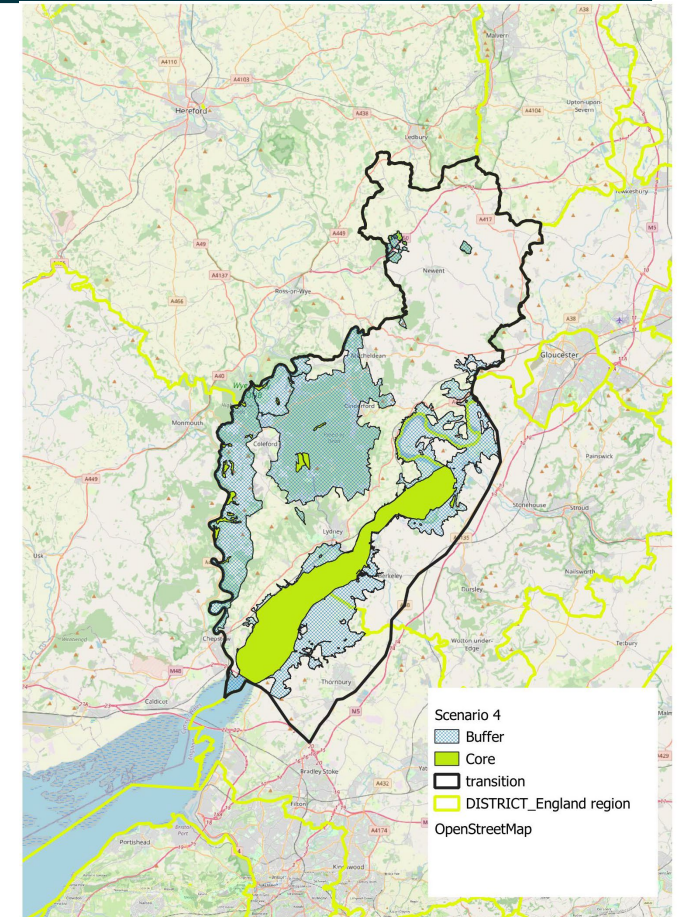
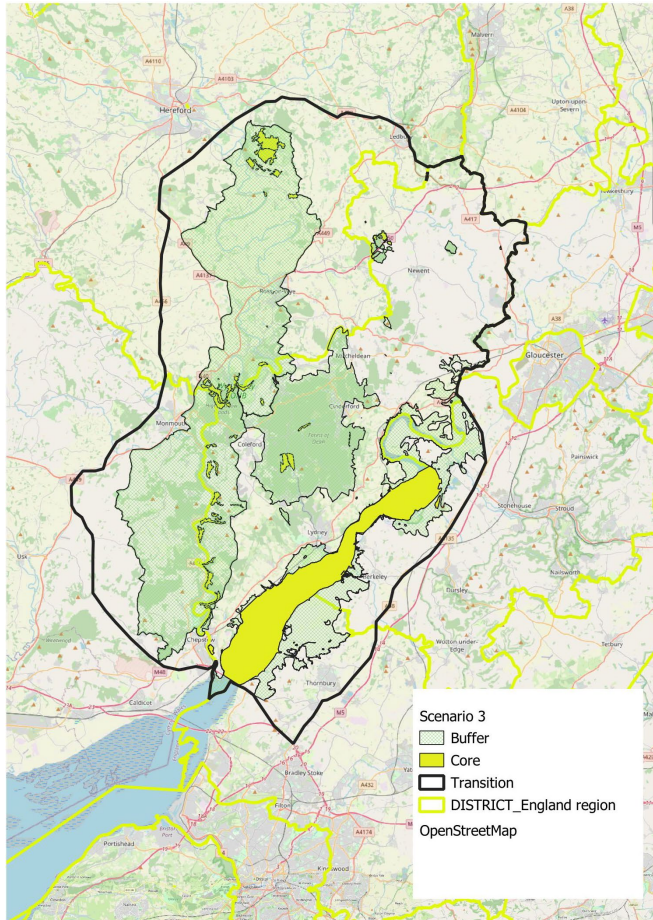
# Forest of Dean District Only



# Forest of Dean with Wye Valley National Landscape extending into Wales

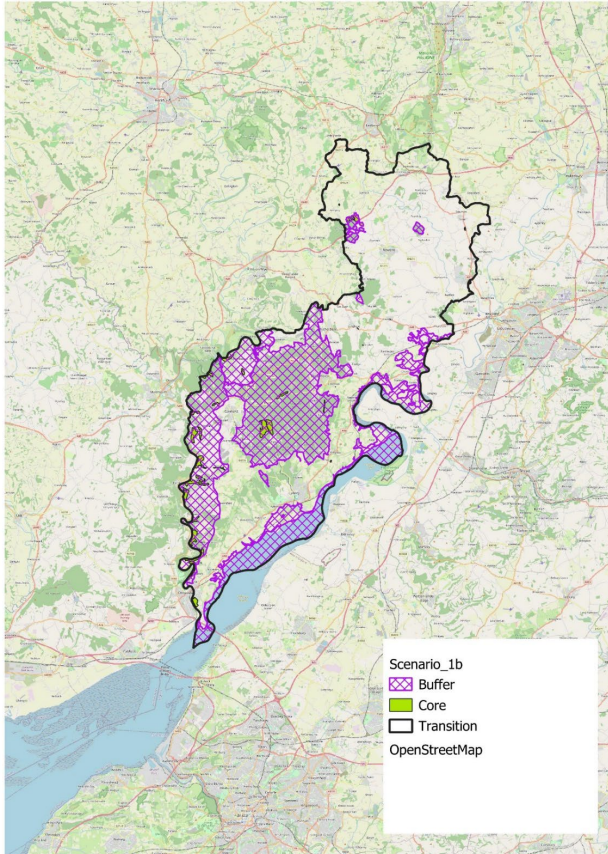


# Forest of Dean, Wye valley and Upper Severn Estuary



# Recommendation: District-wide Biosphere Reserve

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- Relatively simple to administer.
- Embraces all the assets in the district
- Relates well to the local identity across the district
- Follows the Foresters' Forest Project
- Supports the local plan and growth initiatives



# Next steps

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- Start to engage the community in the design of the biosphere reserve.
- Co-creation and design are important
  - Communication strategy using terminology that is understood and unambiguous
  - Review the core areas and opportunities for communities to feel connected
  - Develop some case studies of how the designation can support the local plan and improve the economy, and some key sites.
  - Engage with neighbouring authorities and the Wye Valley NL.
- Employ a person(s) within the authority to lead to retain ownership of the process
- Register intentions with the National UNESCO MaB committee to operate under the status of a Candidate Biosphere Reserve.
- Establish a proto-steering committee

# Thank you

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