

Learning in North Devon's UNESCO Biosphere Reserve

A Special Place for People and Nature



Yellowstone National Park

Ayer's Rock

north Devon

the Danube Delta

Mount Kenya

“Yes, north Devon. Just like these other iconic places and fewer than 550 others worldwide, north Devon is a UNESCO Biosphere Reserve. This status recognises north Devon’s unique and exceptional blend of special landscapes and wildlife areas, its rich cultural heritage and its communities’ willingness to embrace the benefits gained from a high quality environment and continuing work to sustain that environment into the future. Biosphere Reserves are valued world wide as *Special Places for People and Nature*, with core values of *Conservation, Sustainable Development and Learning*.”



Mount Kenya, East Africa



Ayers Rock, Australia



North Devon, South West England

The Biosphere Reserve Partnership wants to help educators and the learners they support get the maximum benefit from the special learning opportunities that the UNESCO Biosphere Reserve accolade for north Devon affords. This guide sets out our vision for learning, defines the approach and outcomes that the Partnership is seeking and the ways that we will encourage and support them.

The Biosphere Reserve Partnership will support and encourage learning activities that take forward the vision and approach summarised here”.

Mike Moser, Biosphere Reserve Partnership Chair, April 2010.

Learning in the 21st century

Learning is one of the three core functions of North Devon's Biosphere Reserve but what do we mean by learning? The Heritage Lottery Fund sum it up well;

“learning is not just about schools, or children; it is about offering opportunities for everyone to develop their understanding in a way appropriate to their needs, interests and background”.

The North Devon Biosphere Partnership understands that whatever form learning takes it is a lifelong transformative and socially critical process. Formal and informal education enables children, young people and adults to be successful learners; confident individuals who enjoy learning and gain fulfilment through achievement, and responsible citizens.

We recognise that the world faces increasingly pressing social, developmental and environmental challenges such as climate change. It is therefore critical for people to know and understand their local environments, to appreciate how they have changed historically, how they are changing today and what changes are likely in the future.

Our role as educators is to help learners consider alternative futures; futures that sustain and improve the environment and benefit present and future generations, together with their role in shaping them.



Learn about • Learn in • Learning for

North Devon's Biosphere Reserve provides real and relevant opportunities for formal and informal education activities that encourage people to see the importance of learning to their lives now and in the future.

By bringing people, place and culture together, the Biosphere Reserve concept supports not just geography and environmental studies, but also other areas of learning such as the arts, communication and languages, historical and social understanding, maths, health and wellbeing and science and technology.



The Biosphere Reserve is uniquely placed to help children, young people and adults to **learn about**, and **learn in**, a very special place with a distinctive natural landscape and associated wildlife, strong cultural traditions and community cohesion, an extensive historical heritage and lineage and many economic activities linked closely to the environment.

Where else is better placed to provide such an invaluable context for people to understand the processes of social, economic and environmental change? Where better to consider the most sustainable way for things to change in the future and how they can become actively involved in making those changes? This is **Learning for** the Biosphere Reserve.

What outcomes do we want?

At a high level, learning **about, in,** and **for** the Biosphere involves the acquisition of crucial knowledge and understanding, and the mastery of key skills. These practical elements combine with the evolution of attitudes and values and the inspiration and impetus to participate in positive change.

At a more specific level, we can identify outcomes such as:





Learning about north Devon's Biosphere Reserve...

...will enable children, young people and adults to:



- Understand what Biosphere Reserves are, what they stand for and why they are important.
- Understand why there is a Biosphere Reserve in North Devon.
- Understand the issues that affect North Devon's Biosphere Reserve.
- Place north Devon in an international context using the UNESCO network of Biosphere Reserves
- Understand the concept of change and how people can play a part in shaping it to provide a sustainable, high quality environment into the future.
- Develop their abilities to analyse problems and make links between different issues
- Enjoy learning and be motivated to achieve the best they can now and in the future

2 Learning in north Devon's Biosphere Reserve...

...will enable children, young people and adults to:



- Observe real life examples of human and physical processes of change and how they are interrelated
- Explore key sustainability concepts and undertake meaningful enquiries
- Embrace the excitement, benefits and inspiration offered by the natural environment and human achievements of the Biosphere
- Gain the confidence to work autonomously and in teams in an outside environment.

3 Learning for north Devon's Biosphere Reserve...

...will enable children, young people and adults to:



- Play a part in contributing to a sustainable future for North Devon and reflect upon why this is important
- Reflect on what other individuals, organisations and communities are currently doing to sustain the Biosphere and what can be achieved through collaboration
- Be enterprising and take the initiative in terms of undertaking activities that contribute to increased sustainability for the Biosphere

How do we achieve these outcomes?

Children, young people and adults learn best when they are inspired and motivated to engage with an interesting, real and relevant issue or topic. We will therefore promote learning experiences **about, in, and for** the Biosphere that are compelling and in particular:



- Draw upon a range of learning and teaching approaches to accommodate the full range of preferred learning styles
- Give learners a sense of autonomy, including the chance to think critically, make decisions, take responsibility and manage risks
- Offer schools, communities and other organisations opportunities for co-operation and collaboration
- Provide opportunities that draw together several aspects of learning: connecting different subject disciplines, focusing on a specific subject or the development of personal, learning and thinking skills

How will we know if and when we are achieving our educational objectives?

To evaluate the impact of learning **about, in, and for** the Biosphere on children, young people and adults, we will encourage the collection and analysis of evidence of changes in knowledge and understanding, skills, attitudes and values and behaviour change amongst those involved using a range of qualitative and quantitative indicators.

For example pre and post development work questionnaires and surveys can be used with learners as well as interviews, the observation and post-coding of activities learners undertake and more traditional mechanisms such as mind and concept mapping.



How will we co-ordinate and facilitate progress?

An Education and Interpretation Sub Group (EISG^{*}) including education providers and the Devon County Council Learning and Development Partnership will steer the direction of the Biosphere Reserve education support programme.

Its principal purpose will be to co-ordinate the delivery of effective education provision across the Biosphere. It may in time be supported by a designated Education Co-ordinator for the Biosphere Reserve.

The sub group can:

- Identify priorities and commission new learning materials and related training programmes as appropriate
- Offer fundraising advice and support
- Provide signposting to potential partners
- Provide access to in depth knowledge and advice
- Assist with promotion and publicity of initiatives and programmes

There is much more information at <http://www.northdevonbiosphere.org.uk/learning>, including an annual summary of the EISG's learning priorities and an associated delivery programme.

^{*} EISG is a subgroup of the Biosphere Reserve Outreach Group and will be chaired by a member of that group

North Devon Coast Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty and Biosphere Reserve

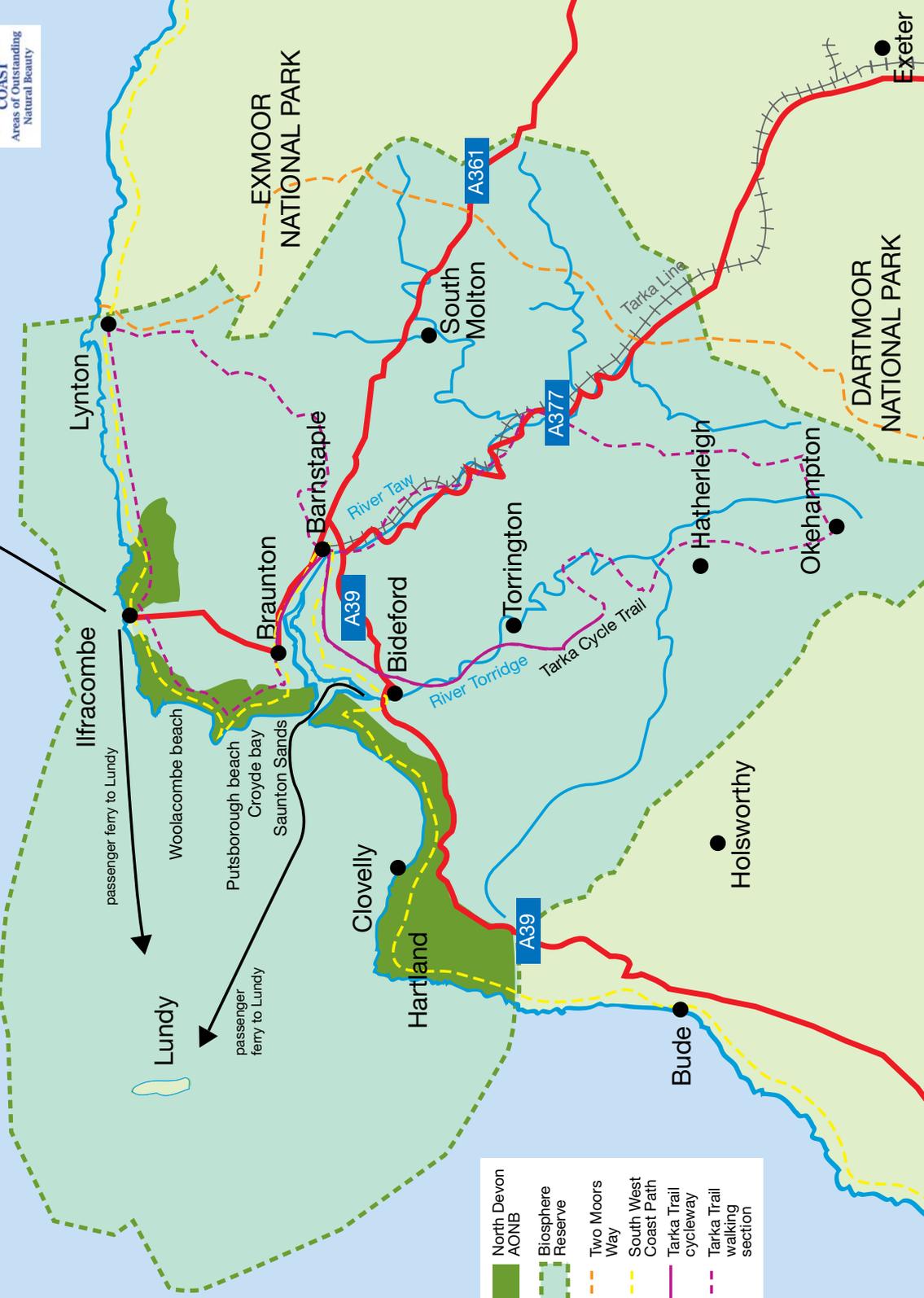
North Devon's Biosphere Reserve
world class by nature



High speed passenger ferry to Swansea and Cardiff

passenger ferry to Lundy

passenger ferry to Lundy



	North Devon AONB
	Biosphere Reserve
	Two Moors Way
	South West Coast Path
	Tarka Trail cycleway
	Tarka Trail walking section

North Devon is an amazing place that boasts the only UNESCO Biosphere Reserve in England and a large area of coastline designated as an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. Biosphere Reserves are so much more than lines on maps - they are places recognised for their exceptional natural environment, vibrant cultural heritage and willingness to work towards a more sustainable future.

Did you know:

- The area of North Devon's Biosphere Reserve is some 3300 square kilometres
- It is home to about 150,000 people
- The AONB covers 171 km sq of the coastal landscape from Marsland Mouth on the Cornish border to Combe Martin on the boundary of Exmoor National park



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