



**Sluffers Inclosure, New Forest  
Inclosure bank & ditch removal for HLS stream restoration**

**Archaeological Watching Brief Statement**



Prepared by the New Forest National Park Authority on behalf of the Verderers of  
the New Forest Higher Level Stewardship Scheme

September 2025

## Summary:

Between 8 and 17 September 2025, the New Forest National Park Authority's Archaeology Team undertook archaeological monitoring of the removal and levelling of two sections of the Sluffers Inclosure earthwork boundary in the New Forest, located at NGR 422972, 111191 (Fig. 1 and 2). These groundworks were carried out as part of wetland restoration works for the New Forest Higher Level Stewardship scheme. No artefacts of archaeological significance were encountered during the works.

## The site:

Sluffers Inclosure, enclosed c.1862, is located 7.5km northeast of Lyndhurst on the northern side of the A31 and once enclosed approx. 145 hectares. The areas of work were focused on the northern and eastern boundary earthworks of the Northern part of Sluffers Inclosure, Fig. 1, 2 and 3. The Inclosure is formed via an earthen bank and outer ditch. The bank is, on average, 1.3m high by 1.7m wide with the ditch 1.2m wide and up to 0.7m deep (in places).

## Proposed works:

The groundworks were undertaken as part of wetland restoration works for the New Forest Higher Level Stewardship scheme. The works involved the removal (levelling) of two sections of the Inclosure boundary earthworks (bank and ditch), ca. 400m length from the eastern boundary and ca. 80m from the northern boundary. Our current understanding of this boundary earthwork is that the spoil from the ditch was used to form the bank as a single event, and during the HLS groundworks it was this material that was returned into the ditch prior to ground levelling. All groundworks were carried out using a tracked 360 excavator with a toothless bucket.

## Pre-ground works:

Prior to work commencing a bespoke Heritage Impact Assessment was undertaken (NFNPA July 2025). The proposed works would result in the total loss of two sections of Inclosure boundary (Fig. 2), so the following recommendations were made:

- Ground works to and/or removal of Inclosure Boundary earthwork material to require Archaeological Monitoring (Watching Brief);
- A photographic survey conducted pre and post works.

## Results:

The groundworks commenced on 8 September and concluded on 17 September. A photographic record was taken of the eastern boundary on 8 September (Photos 1, 2, 5-9) and of the northern section on 16 September (Photos 13 – 15) prior to ground works commencing. Working shots were taken as work progressed (Photo 4) and once works had concluded (Photos 3 and 12).

The photographic records of the eastern earthwork section were made along its length at approx. 20m intervals, some of which are included in this statement.

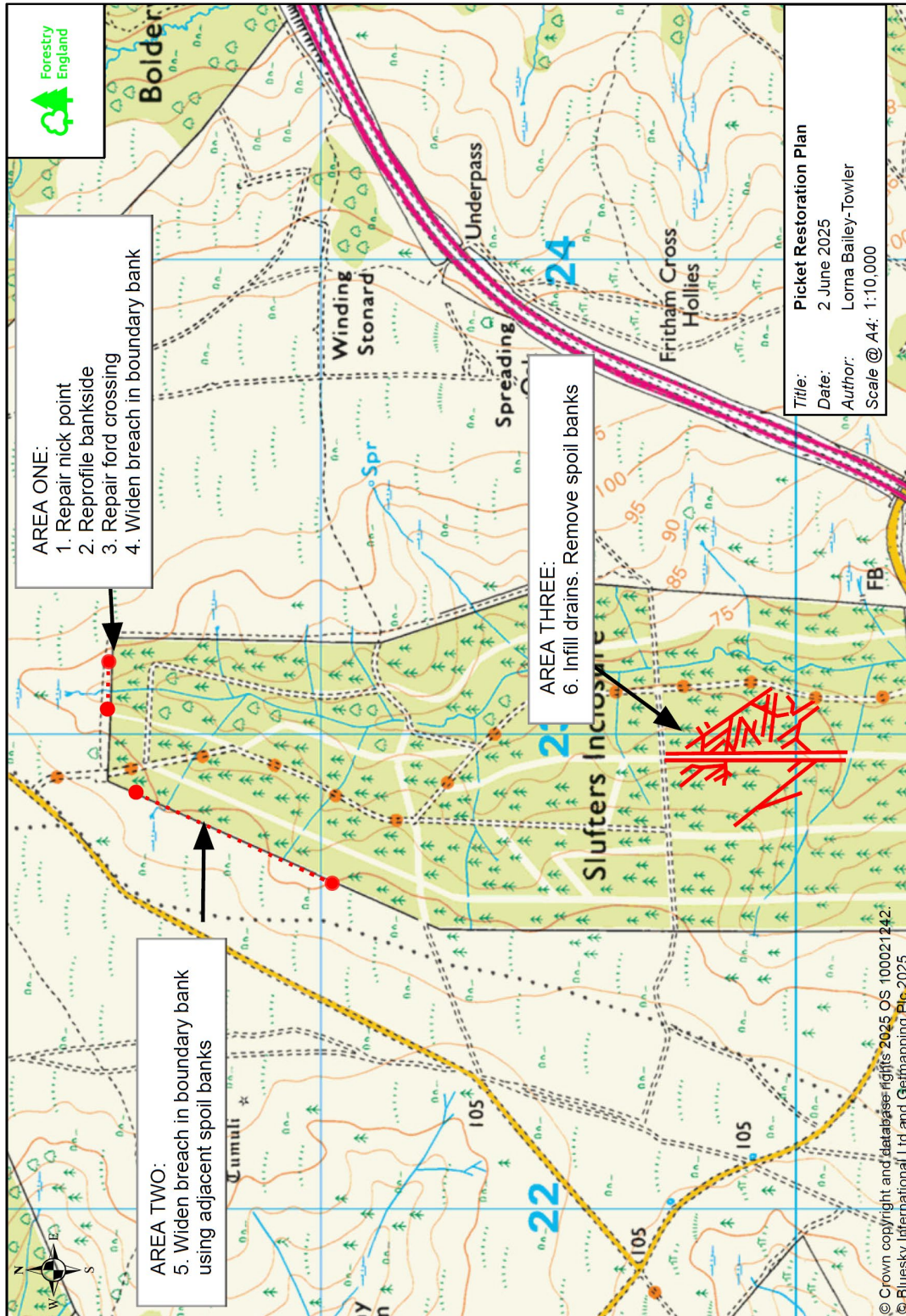
In total 470m of the eastern earthwork was levelled and 100m of the northern earthwork. Removal of the first 100m of the eastern earthwork was monitored by the NFNPA Archaeology Team.

Continuous monitoring and examination of two cross sections through the eastern boundary confirmed that the ditch and bank were contemporaneous with the ditch fill forming the bank, (Photos 10 and 11).

No artefacts or archaeological features were encountered during the works.

With the bank and ditch being confirmed as a singular event and no other artefacts or features being present it was deemed appropriate to reduce the Watching Brief to monitoring. Two subsequent monitoring visits were made during ground works. Both the bank and ditch continued as seen previously with no other features or artefacts encountered.

Figures:



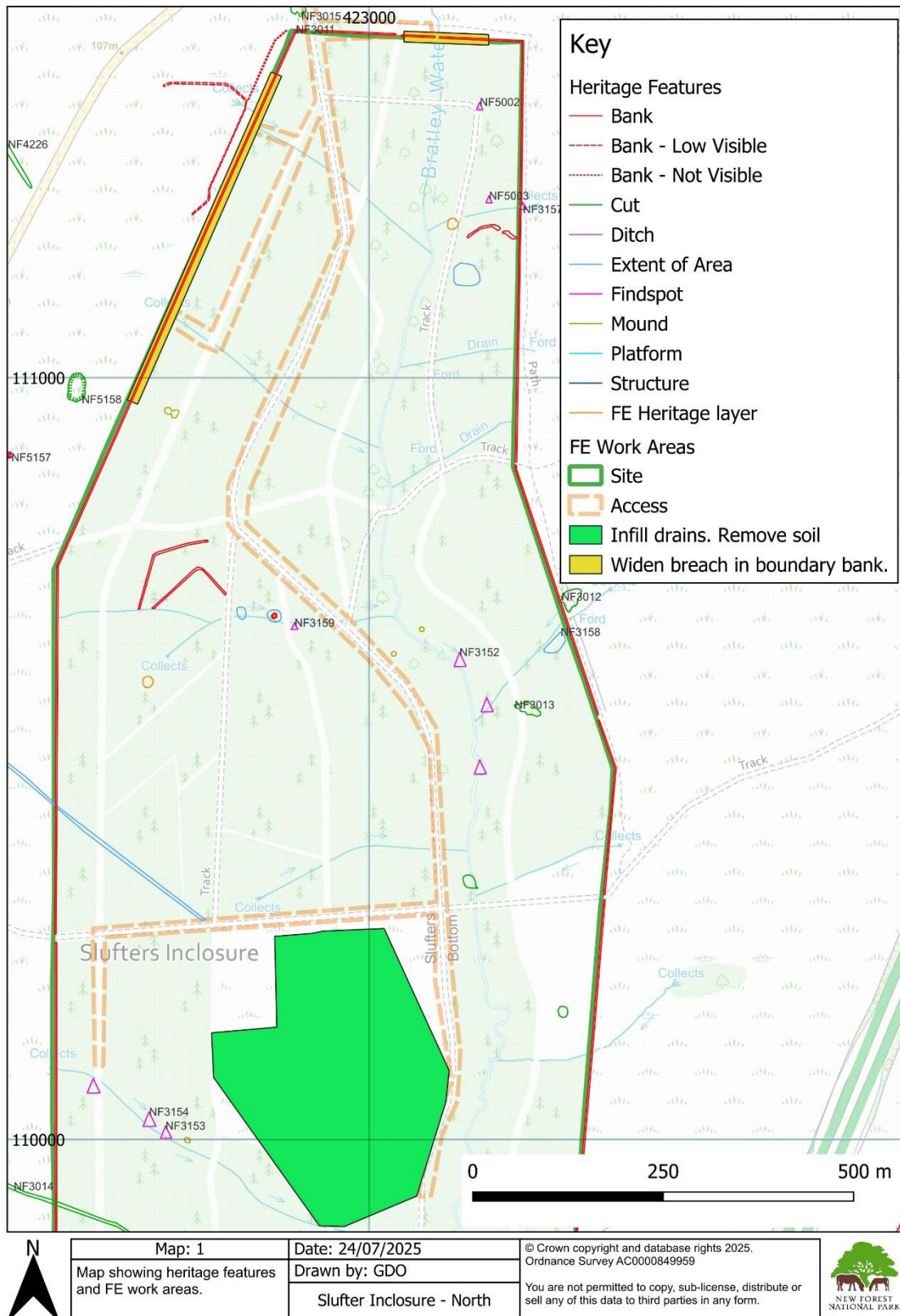


Figure 2: Map showing heritage features and HLS work areas.

Slufter's Inclosure - North. September 2025  
Monitoring Statement for Archaeological Watching Brief

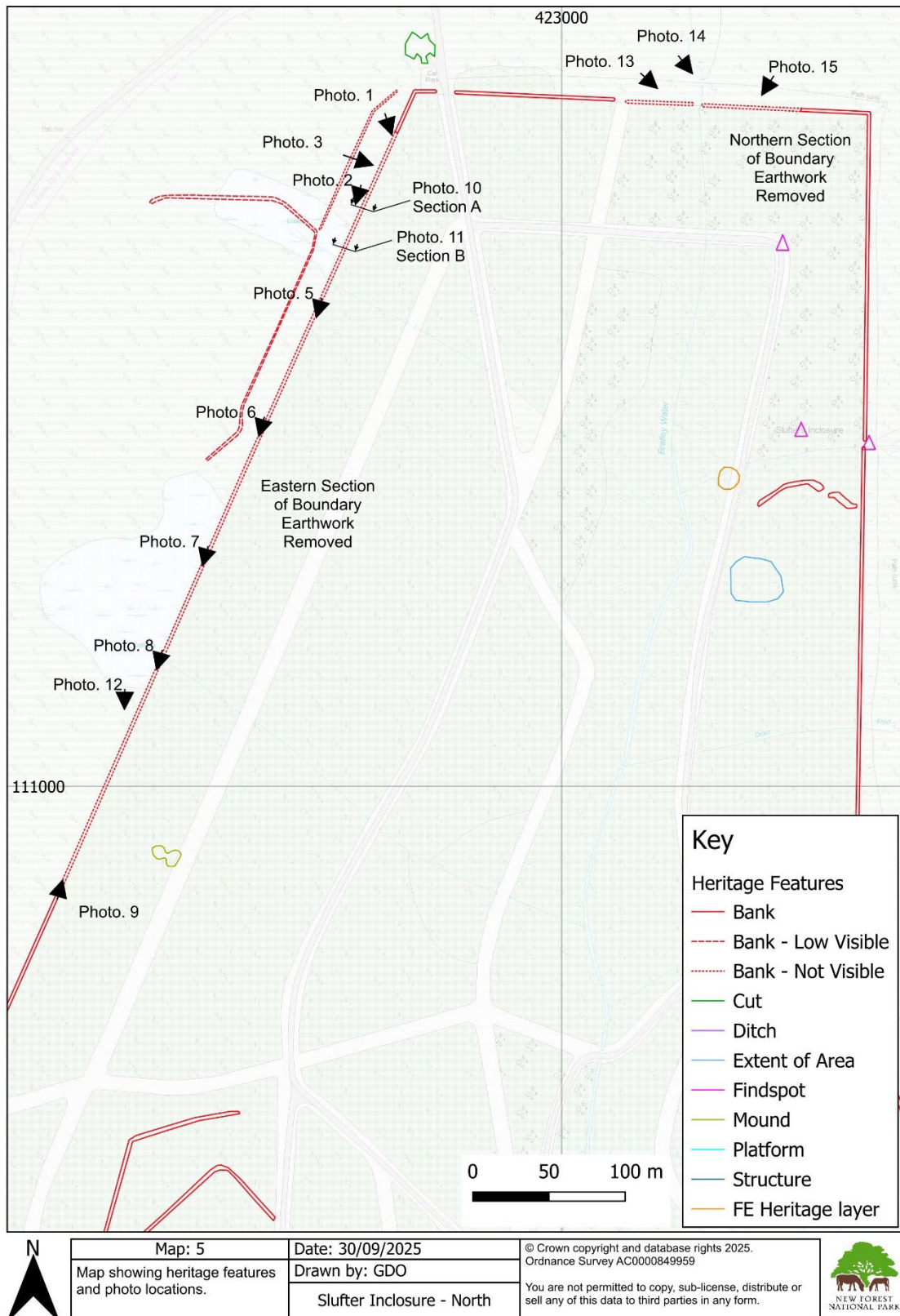


Figure 3: Map showing heritage features and Photo locations.

Photographs:



Photo 1: North end of eastern Inclosure earthwork boundary, looking SE.



Photo 2: View along northern end of eastern boundary earthwork. Looking S.



Photo 3: Northern end of eastern boundary earthwork, post levelling. Looking E.



Photo 4: Working shot. Northern end of eastern boundary earthwork.



Photo 5: Northern end of eastern boundary earthwork, looking SW.



Photo 6: Continuation SW of eastern boundary earthwork, looking SW.



Photo 7: Continuation SW of eastern boundary earthwork, looking SW.



Photo 8: Continuation SW of eastern boundary earthwork, looking SW.



Photo 9: Southern end of eastern boundary earthwork, looking NE.



Photo 10: Cross Section (Section A) through eastern boundary bank, looking SSW. (1m scale). The same bank material was noted in the ditch as work progressed.



Photo 11: Cross Section (Section B) through eastern boundary bank, looking SSW. (1m scale). The same bank material was noted in the ditch as work progressed.



Photo 12: Southern end of eastern boundary earthwork, post levelling, looking S.



Photo 13: Northern boundary earthwork. Looking ESE.



Photo 14: Northern boundary earthwork. Looking SE.



Photo 15: Northern boundary earthwork. Looking SW.

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