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Looking after  
woodland

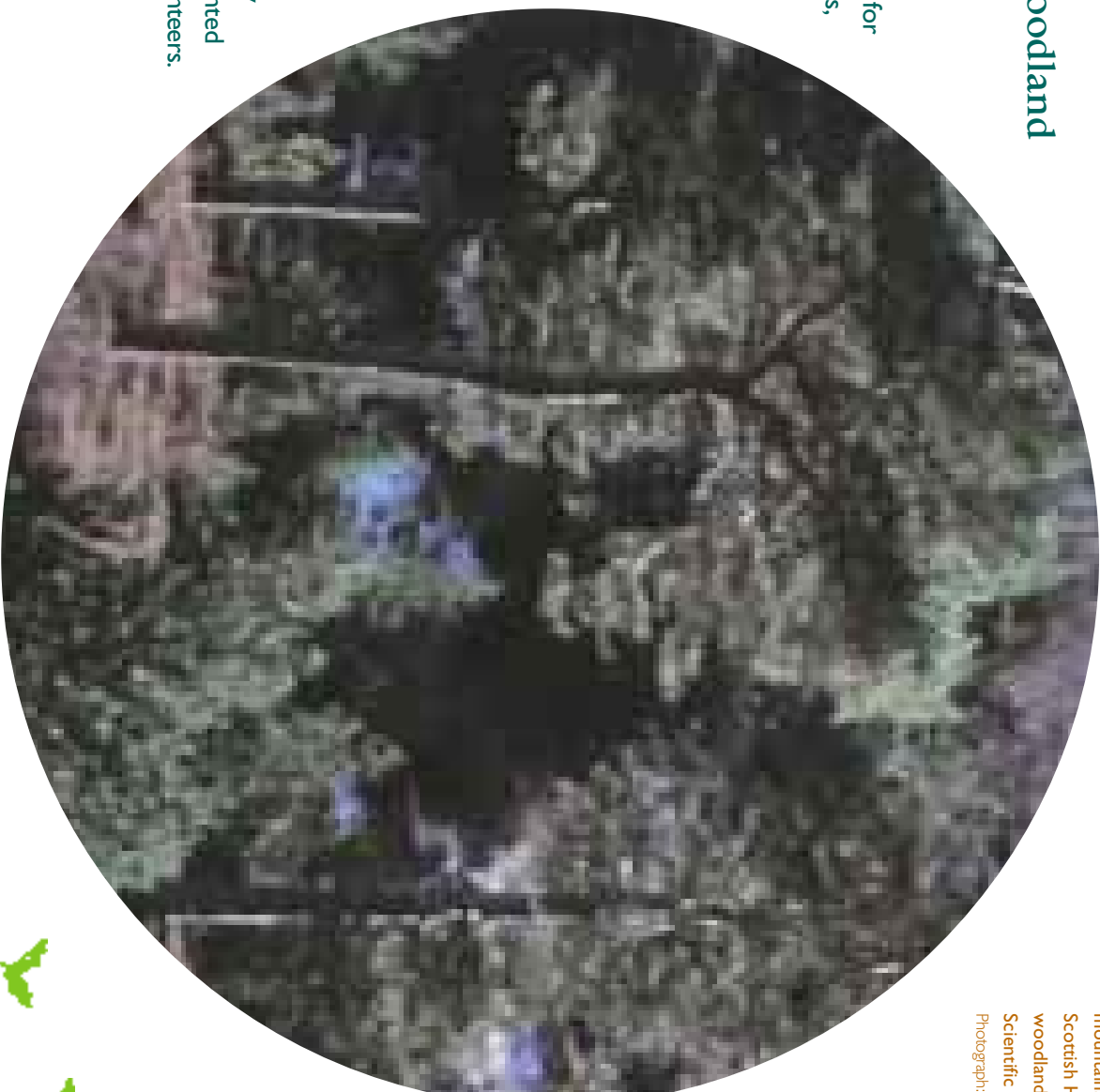
# The Woodland Trust exists solely to protect woods.

## It's the UK's leading woodland conservation charity.

The Woodland Trust owns and cares for more than 19,000 hectares of woods, heath and grassland on over 1,100 sites ranging from small urban woods like Bracher's Wood in Northamptonshire to a 4,000-hectare estate at Glen Finglas, in the Loch Lomond and the Trossachs National Park.

And in between are

- Over 6,000 hectares of ancient woods
- Over 100 Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) – some of the UK's finest wildlife areas
- Over 250 brand new community woods of all shapes and sizes, planted with the help of thousands of volunteers.



A wonderful wildlife habitat: Ledmore and Migdale Woods, set among the mountains, moors and glens of the Scottish Highlands. It's both ancient woodland and a Site of Special

Scientific Interest

Photograph: Roger Vahurst

**This leaflet tells you why and how the Woodland Trust looks after them all...**



## Why look after woods?

### Don't they look after themselves?

Some do. Others need only a very light touch.

But most of our finest ancient woods – those with the richest variety of plants and wildlife – are that way because they have been valued and managed.

Valued for coppicing, for instance - a centuries-old woodland management system by which selected trees were cut off just above ground level. The stumps sprouted a valuable crop of straight new stems that could be harvested regularly for building, fuel and animal fodder.

Coppicing also created a perfect environment for spring flowers, dormice, nightingales and butterflies.

**Caring about woods usually means caring for them.**

## How does the Woodland Trust look after a wood?

It depends on the wood, and on the landscape it stands in.

Woodland officers are guided by seven key principles when deciding how to care for a site.

The Trust believes these principles will help turn its vision for the future of UK woodland into a reality.

All three species of British woodpeckers – green, great and lesser spotted – thrive in Wormley Wood, Hertfordshire. A Site of Special Scientific Interest and a National Nature Reserve, its ancient trees and standing and fallen deadwood host a wonderful variety of fungi.  
Photograph: Andrew Butler



Coppicing hazel in Hammond's Copse, Surrey. This woodsman is producing bindings for traditionally laid hedges. In the process he's also letting light reach the woodland floor, benefiting wildlife and flowers.  
Photograph: Brian Aldrich

## The Vision

- **No more ancient woodland should be lost.** Ancient woods take centuries to evolve. They are irreplaceable.
- **The variety of woodland wildlife should be restored and improved.** Woods are home to 78 globally threatened species. Many need our active help to survive.
- **More native woodland should be created.** The UK is one of the least wooded areas in Europe. More trees mean a healthier, cleaner, more beautiful environment for people and wildlife.
- **People's awareness and enjoyment of woodland should be increased.** Woods are a perfect antidote to hectic urban lifestyles. People and trees are good for each other.

The Trust's main focus is the protection and conservation of ancient woodland. It also cares for other important habitats.

#### What is ancient woodland?

It's land that's been continuously wooded for at least 400 years. It's our richest habitat for plants and wildlife, and some of it is a link to the original wildwood that covered nine tenths of the UK after the last Ice Age.

Some ancient woods will flourish with only a very little help. Others need more.

The Trust assesses each one carefully before deciding whether it needs to intervene.

Is it ancient woodland that's been replanted with conifers?

Can the natural regeneration of broadleaved trees like oak and ash be encouraged?

In very special circumstances we might need to concentrate on the survival of a particular species. We might create sunny glades for rare butterflies, for instance.

#### What other important habitats?

*Semi-natural* ones. Places that have kept strong links to their natural past in spite of – even because of – the impact of people. Caring for these might, for example, mean ensuring an ancient grassland is regularly grazed to encourage the wild flowers and butterflies that have always lived there.



Gradually removing conifers has allowed native oaks to regenerate naturally in Duncton Wood, Dorset – a good example of ancient woodland restoration.  
Photograph: Edward Parker

Native broadleaved trees struggle in the shade of a conifer plantation in Martinshaw Wood, Leicestershire. The Trust is gradually restoring this ancient wood by removing conifers.  
Photograph: Woodland Trust Picture Library/David Bradbury



The Trust aims to fulfil its responsibilities and its legal obligations to its neighbours.

The Trust will take special note of areas like common boundaries.

Who is responsible for maintaining a common hedge or fence?

Are our activities affecting our neighbours?

The Woodland Trust is a responsible neighbour.

A woodland manager talks to a representative from the neighbouring landowner the local Wildlife Trust.  
Photograph: Alan Fletcher



The Trust will take the views of local people and other stakeholders into account before making any decisions about a site.

The Trust wants to strengthen the connection between people and woodland. So it will always consider what local people, other landowners, local authorities or conservation organisations have to say about a site.

Local people study the design of Oaks Wood, Co. Londonderry, in Northern Ireland. Their views are important to the Trust.  
Photograph: Danny O'Kane



Deadwood – standing or fallen – is often home to more than a thousand species of beetles, flies, slugs and snails, as well as hundreds of different fungi. The Trust doesn't "tidy up" unless the deadwood poses a safety threat.  
Photograph: Woodland Trust Picture Library/Richard Smithers

The Trust wants people to enjoy its sites. It will provide free, quiet, informal public access, primarily for walkers.

We look at how people use the site.

Are the paths suitable for the number of people who visit the wood?

The Trust will create paths and other low-key facilities that don't clash with the ambience of the site or with its conservation objectives.

What was that? Something in Glover's Wood, Surrey captures this young walker's attention while Dad strides on.  
Photograph: Woodland Trust Picture Library/Brian Aldrich



The Trust will identify and conserve the most important features of every site it owns, whether historical, cultural or ecological.

Woods often have historic features or links to past use stretching back centuries.

Does it hide an Iron Age hill fort?

A medieval boundary bank?

Or its most important feature may be that it's the only place where local people can walk. Or it may be the most dominant aspect of the local landscape.

This wonderful old wall curves through Little Doward Woods, at the head of the Wye Gorge, in the Wye Valley Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. For centuries the wood was used as a deer park and grazed as common wood pasture. Deer and sheep still play an important part in the conservation of the area by grazing the limestone grassland.  
Photograph: Woodland Trust Picture Library



The Trust will create new woods in sympathy with their surroundings

We want to see more trees – lots of them. But new planting has to be carefully thought out.

Can we extend an existing wood, creating a better habitat for wildlife?

Do local people want a wood here?

Trees and woods exist as a *part* of the environment, not in isolation from it. The Trust tailors the way it cares for an existing site or creates a new one by studying the *whole* landscape around it.

These young trees will grow to make Home Farm, Hampshire, a bigger, better wood. Extending and linking remaining fragments of woodland is an important part of the Trust's work.  
Photograph: Woodland Trust Picture Library/David Bradbury



The Trust recognises that woodland is a renewable and sustainable resource.

We don't manage our woods as commercial forests.

But we try to recoup some of the cost of caring for them by selling wood we have coppiced, thinned or felled.

A sustainable resource. These poles, thinned from Denge Wood in Kent, are on their way to the local wood mill.  
Photograph: Woodland Trust Picture Library



The Woodland Trust is the first major landowner in the UK to have all its woods certified by the Forest Stewardship Council, an independent, international body set up to promote better management of the world's forests.

Certification by the FSC guarantees that wood and wood products have come from responsibly managed, sustainable sources that meet strict environmental, social and economic standards.

We will continue to look after our woods in the responsible, sustainable way that won us that certification.



This load of FSC-certified oak is being hauled away to be made into seats for Woodland Trust woods.  
Photograph: Woodland Trust Picture Library