WOODLAND TRUST

Ruffian Wood

Management Plan 2017-2022

MANAGEMENT PLAN - CONTENTS PAGE

ITEM **Page No.**

MAPS

THE WOODLAND TRUST

INTRODUCTION

The Trust's corporate aims and management approach guide the management of all the Trust's properties, and are described on Page 4. These determine basic management policies and methods, which apply to all sites unless specifically stated otherwise. Such policies include free public access; keeping local people informed of major proposed work; the retention of old trees and dead wood; and a desire for management to be as unobtrusive as possible. The Trust also has available Policy Statements covering a variety of woodland management issues.

The Trust's management plans are based on the identification of Key Features for the site and setting objectives for their management. A monitoring programme (not included in this plan) ensures that these objectives are met and any necessary management works are carried out.

Any legally confidential or sensitive species information about this site is not included in this version of the plan.

PLAN REVIEW AND UPDATING

The information presented in this Management plan is held in a database which is continuously being amended and updated on our website. Consequently this printed version may quickly become out of date, particularly in relation to the planned work programme and on-going monitoring observations.
Please either consult The Woodland Trust website www.woodlandtrust.org.uk or contact the Woodland Trust (wopsmail@woodlandtrust.org.uk) to confirm details of the current management programme.

There is a formal review of this plan every 5 years and a summary of monitoring results can be obtained on request.

WOODLAND MANAGEMENT APPROACH

The management of our woods is based on our charitable purposes, and is therefore focused on improving woodland biodiversity and increasing peoples' understanding and enjoyment of woodland.

Our strategic aims are to:

- Protect native woods, trees and their wildlife for the future
- Work with others to create more native woodlands and places rich in trees
- Inspire everyone to enjoy and value woods and trees

All our sites have a management plan which is freely accessible via our website www.woodlandtrust.org.uk. Our woods are managed to the UK Woodland Assurance Standard (UKWAS) and are certified with the Forest Stewardship Council® (FSC®) under licence FSC-C009406 and through independent audit.

In addition to the guidelines below we have specific guidance and policies on issues of woodland management which we review and update from time to time.

We recognise that all woods are different and that the management of our sites should also reflect their local landscape and where appropriate support local projects and initiatives. Guidelines like these provide a necessary overarching framework to guide the management of our sites but such management also requires decisions based on local circumstances and our Site Manager's intimate knowledge of each site.

The following guidelines help to direct our woodland management:

1. Our woods are managed to maintain their intrinsic key features of value and to reflect those of the surrounding landscape. We intervene when there is evidence that it is necessary to maintain or improve biodiversity and to further the development of more resilient woods and landscapes.
2. We establish new native woodland using both natural regeneration and tree planting, but largely the latter, particularly when there are opportunities for involving people.
3. We provide free public access to woods for quiet, informal recreation and our woods are managed to make them accessible, welcoming and safe.
4. The long term vision for our non-native plantations on ancient woodland sites is to restore them to predominantly native species composition and semi-natural structure, a vision that equally applies to our secondary woods.
5. Existing semi-natural open-ground and freshwater habitats are restored and maintained wherever their management can be sustained and new open ground habitats created where appropriate.
6. The heritage and cultural value of sites is taken into account in our management and, in particular, our ancient trees are retained for as long as possible.
7. Woods can offer the potential to generate income both from the sustainable harvesting of wood products and the delivery of other services. We will therefore consider the potential to generate income from our estate to help support our aims.
8. We work with neighbours, local people, organisations and other stakeholders in developing the management of our woods. We recognise the benefits of local community woodland ownership and management. Where appropriate we allow our woods to be used to support local woodland, conservation, education and access initiatives.
9. We use and offer the estate where appropriate, for the purpose of demonstration, evidence gathering and research associated with the conservation, recreational and sustainable management of woodlands. In particular we will develop and maintain a network of long-term monitoring sites across the estate.
10. Any activities we undertake will conform to sustainable forest management principles, be appropriate for the site and will be balanced with our primary objectives of enhancing the biodiversity and recreational value of our woods and the wider landscapes.

SUMMARY

This public management plan briefly describes the site, specifically mentions information on public access, sets out the long term policy and lists the Key Features which drive management actions. The Key Features are specific to this site – their significance is outlined together with their long (50 year+) and short (5 year) term objectives. The short term objectives are complemented by a detailed Work Programme for the period of this management plan. Detailed compartment descriptions are listed in the appendices which include any major management constraints and designations. A short glossary of technical terms is at the end. The Key Features and general woodland condition of this site are subject to a formal monitoring programme which is maintained in a central database. A summary of monitoring results is available on request.

1.0 SITE DETAILS

Site name:	Ruffian Wood
Location:	Kelvedon
Grid reference:	TL833191, OS 1:50,000 Sheet No. 168
Area:	13.27 hectares (32.79 acres)
Designations:	

2.0 SITE DESCRIPTION

2.1 Summary Description

Enjoy a dose of history at the new Ruffian Wood, created as part of The Woodland Trust's Trafalgar Woods project. Comprising native broadleaf woodland, some of the trees were planted by local school children.

2.2 Extended Description

Ruffian Wood is a 13 ha new native broadleaf woodland situated a few miles west of Kelvedon, Essex. The ex-arable site was planted in 2005 as part of the Trust's Trafalgar Woods project, celebrating the bicentenary of the Battle of Trafalgar. In a project that highlighted the crucial part that trees and timber played in our maritime past, the Trust, together with its partners planted a new wood for each of the 27 ships of the line in the fleet at the Battle of Trafalgar. Ruffian Wood is dedicated to HMS Bellerophon, one of the most famous British ships of the Napoleonic Wars. Her crew, unable to pronounce the word 'Bellerophon', affectionately called her "Billy Ruffian".

It also formed part of the Trust's wider Tree for All campaign, which helped connect young people with the natural environment. Over 350 school children took part in a series of informative, educational events which helped forge links with our history and culminated in the planting of trees. A well-attended community planting day saw some of the first trees planted at the site.

There is no public access to the site, which is leased to the Trust for 20 years. The enthusiastic and supportive Starling family were the original owners and lived in the adjacent Porters Farm. The Starling family have now sold the farm, and half of the woodland creation site, to the Roberts family. Although the site is one contiguous area, freehold ownership is now divide into Ruffian Wood East (Starling) and Ruffian Wood West (Roberts). The dividing line follows the wide ride established immediately below the overhead power line that crosses the site in a N-NE to S-SW transect. Native broadleaves such as oak, ash, field maple and rowan are the principle species and a newly created pond adds extra interest and wildlife potential.

The surrounding landscape is characterised by a patchwork of gently undulating arable fields, stitched together with tree-lined hedges and small pockets of mixed woodland. Situated where the northern extent of London Clay meets the lighter soils of the Essex coastal heathlands, Ruffian Wood lies on a predominantly heavy clay underlain by clay and chalk, and as such is prone to waterlogging in winter and shrinking and cracking in summer.

Management access is off Hollow Road via a 12ft deer gate leading directly into the site.

There is currently no public access.

3.0 PUBLIC ACCESS INFORMATION

3.1 Getting there

3.2 Access / Walks

4.0 LONG TERM POLICY

The long term vision for Ruffian Wood is to create an attractive and mature native broadleaf woodland. It will have a well stocked canopy of trees with an understorey of woody shrubs closely integrating with the pond and early successional habitats of open ground and scrubby regeneration from surrounding trees.

The rides and paths will be kept open and mowed as necessary to provide appropriate management access and valuable rideside habitats. There will be many wood edge habitats, important for nesting birds, invertebrates and woodland / grassland flora. As the developing canopy closes, rough grasses in the planted areas will gradually diminish as shade loving plants more typical of recent secondary woodland take over. Concentrated in the open areas should also be wild flowers such as Birdsfoot trefoil, St John's wort and Wild carrot established through planting.

The pond should remain in a healthy condition and become increasingly attractive and beneficial to wildlife as it blends into the surroundings and fills with pond-loving flora and fauna.

5.0 KEY FEATURES

The Key Features of the site are identified and described below. They encapsulate what is important about the site. The short and long-term objectives are stated and any management necessary to maintain and improve the Key Feature.

5.1 New Native Woodland

Description

Native broadleaf trees and shrubs covering approximately 75% of the site. The mature boundary hedges, pond and open areas provide a tremendous variety of existing and potential woodland habitats.

Significance

One of the Trust's corporate objectives is to see an increase in the area of new native woodland - this objective is adequately fulfilled in the establishment of Ruffian Wood. It is also meets important Tree for All and Trafalgar objectives. Early successional woodland, especially when it has a diverse structure and in combination with open ground has high biodiversity benefits.

Opportunities & Constraints

Opportunity to create and sustain attractive and developing native broadleaved woodland in an area where such habitats have not been common in recent times.

Ash die back is present on site. In 2014 500 trees were replaced (300 Cherry & 200 Hornbeam) and in 2015 another 800 trees were replaced (400 Oak and 400 Hornbeam). In addition, a three year maintenance plan for the new trees has been programmed.

Factors Causing Change

Ash die back has, over the last couple of years, had a major impact on the site. During his tenure, Mr Starling, undertook specific care to remove and incinerate infected braches. In addition he utilised the services of Bartlett Tree Research Laboratory to assess the extent of the infection and possible remedial actions. Dr Glynn Percival, Plant Physiologist/Technical Support Specialist of Bartlett Tree Research Laboratory and linked to Reading University suggested using Biochar as a mulching agent to help the ash trees as much as possible. Over the following couple of years Mr Starling noticed that where trees were mulched with Biochar there was a much lower indication/outbreak of ash die back. A full trial using Biochar has now been introduced on this site and Bartlett's are also looking to for another comparable site to extend their research.

Change of freehold ownership should not have any noticeable impact on the site.

Long term Objective (50 years+)

The aim is to ensure the establishment of mature native woodland, which is resilient to change. This will be done by ensuring a diverse range of native tree species as possible. The woodland will also contain patches of scrub and thicket as well as tall broadleaf trees, open space and ground flora aided by the planting of wild flowers. A wildlife pond with abundant wetland flora will also be managed and retained within the woodland complex.

Short term management Objectives for the plan period (5 years)

The aim during this plan period is to the establishment of the plantation to the desired stocking of 2250 trees / ha by the end of the plan period. Further beating up and restocking of the woodland will continue in 2018 and 2019 (total of 1200 trees) to ensure adequate stocking, and species chosen will include oak, wild cherry, hornbeam and birch. Follow up maintenance and weed control of these trees and any other trees still in the establishment phase will continue throughout the plan period.
Open ground habitats such as the pond and rides will also be managed and retained as features within the wood (work will be undertaken by the owners of the wood).
The exclusion of deer will continue, and the deer fence retained, until establishment of the wood is complete and the trees are of sufficient size not to be threatened by browsing (approx 2022 but this will be monitored). Maintenance of the deer fence will continue during this plan period including the annual management of the vegetation along it and the undertaking of any necessary repair work, as required.

6.0 WORK PROGRAMME

Year	Type of Work	Description	Due By

APPENDIX 1: COMPARTMENT DESCRIPTIONS

Cpt No.	Area (ha)	Main Species	Year	Management Regime	Major Management Constraints	Key Features Present	Designations
1a	13.22	Mixed native broadleaves	2005	High forest		New Native Woodland	

Compartment 1a covers the whole site, of which approximately 75% was planted in Nov 2005 with mixed native broadleaves. Principle species include oak, ash, field maple, hornbeam, rowan, lime, birch and willow along with woody shrubs such as hazel, holly and guelder rose. Planting was in sinuous lines at an average spacing of 2.1m x 2.1m to give a stocking density of 2250 trees / ha. Around the perimeter of the site is a rabbit and deer proof fence, eliminating the need for tree shelters.

12 black poplar were planted throughout the site in 2006. Most died but a handful are now thriving and becoming the tallest trees in the wood.

Large open grassy areas, mainly in front of Porters Farm and underneath the overhead powerline cutting across the site, make excellent habitats for ground nesting birds such as skylarks.

A large pond with a small island (C1) was created in Oct 2005. Over 20m wide and dug to a depth of 4m it rapidly filled with water and is developing into a splendid wetland habitat.

Hollow Road lines the northern boundary and arable farmland surrounds all but the southeast corner where the mixed woodland Landerfield Spring touches the boundary. A public bridleway runs down Snivellers Lane past the eastern tip of the site.

The typically flat, exposed site gradually slopes away to give a northwesterly aspect.

GLOSSARY

Ancient Woodland

Ancient woods are defined as those where there has been continuous woodland cover since at least 1600 AD. In Scotland ancient woods are defined strictly as sites shown as semi-natural woodland on the 'Roy' maps (a military survey carried out in 1750 AD, which is the best source of historical map evidence) and as woodland all subsequent maps. However, they have been combined with long-established woods of semi-natural origin (originating from between 1750 and 1860) into a single category of Ancient Semi-Natural Woodland to take account of uncertainties in their identification. Ancient woods include Ancient Semi-Natural Woodland and plantations on Ancient Woodland Sites (see below). May support many species that are only found in ancient woodland.

Ancient Semi - Natural Woodland

Stands in ancient woods defined as those consisting predominantly of native trees and shrubs that have not obviously been planted, which have arisen from natural regeneration or coppice regrowth.

Ancient Woodland Site

Stands in ancient woods that have been converted to plantations, of coniferous, broadleaved or mixed species, usually for timber production, including plantations of native species planted so closely together that any semi-natural elements of the understorey have been suppressed.

Beating Up

Replacing any newly planted trees that have died in the first few years after planting.

Broadleaf

A tree having broad leaves (such as oak) rather than needles found on conifers (such as Scots pine).

Canopy

The uppermost layer of vegetation in a woodland, or the upper foliage and branches of an individual tree.

Clearfell

Felling of all trees within a defined area.

Compartment

Permanent management division of a woodland, usually defined on site by permanent features such as roads. See Sub-compartments.

Conifer

A tree having needles, rather than broadleaves, and typically bearing cones.

Continuous Cover forestry

A term used for managing woods to ensure that there are groups or individual trees of different ages scattered over the whole wood and that some mature tree cover is always maintained. Management is by repeated thinning and no large areas are ever completely felled all at once.

Coppice

Trees which are cut back to ground levels at regular intervals (3-25 years).

Exotic (non-native) Species

Species originating from other countries (or other parts of the UK) that have been introduced by humans, deliberately or accidentally.

Field Layer

Layer of small, non-woody herbaceous plants such as bluebells.

Group Fell

The felling of a small group of trees, often to promote natural regeneration or allow planting.

Long Term Retention

Discrete groups of trees (or in some cases single trees) that are retained significantly past their economic felling age. Operations may still be carried out within them and thinning is often necessary to maintain stability.

Minimum Intervention

Areas where no operations (such as thinning) will take place other than to protect public safety or possibly to control invasive exotic species.

Mixed Woodland

Woodland made up of broadleaved and coniferous trees.

National vegetation classification (NVC)

A classification scheme that allows an area of vegetation to be assigned to the standardised type that best matches the combination of plant species that it contains. All woodlands in the UK can be described as being one of 18 main woodland types (W1 - W18), which principally reflect soil and climatic conditions. For example, Upland Oakwoods are type W11, and normally occur on well drained infertile soils in the cooler and wetter north and west of Britain. Each main type can be subdivided into numerous subtypes. Most real woods contain more than one type or sub-type and inevitably some woods are intermediate in character and can't be properly described by any sub type.

Native Species

Species that arrived in Britain without human assistance.

Natural Regeneration

Naturally grown trees from seeds falling from mature trees. Also regeneration from coppicing and suckering.

Origin & Provenance

The provenance of a tree or seed is the place where seed was collected to grow the tree or plant. The origin is the geographical location within the natural range of a species from where seeds/tree originally derives. Thus an acorn collected from a Turkey oak in Edinburgh would have an Edinburgh provenance and a southern European origin.

Re-Stocking

Re-planting an area of woodland, after it has been felled.

Shrub Layer

Formed by woody plants 1-10m tall.

Silviculture

The growing and care of trees in woodlands.

Stand

Trees of one type or species, grouped together within a woodland.

Sub-Compartment

Temporary management division of a compartment, which may change between management plan periods.

Thinning

The felling of a proportion of individual trees within a given area. The remaining trees grow to fill in the space created.

Tubex or Grow or Tuley Tubes

Tubes placed over newly planted trees or natural regeneration that promote growth and provide protection from animals such as rabbits and deer.

Weeding

The control of vegetation immediately around newly planted trees or natural regeneration to promote tree growth until they become established. Either by hand cutting or with carefully selected weed killers such as glyphosate.

Windblow/Windthrow

Trees or groups of trees blown over (usually uprooted) by strong winds and gales.