



Coney Wood

Management Plan 2012-2017

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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 Consequently this printed version may quickly become out of date, particularly in relation to the planned work programme and on-going monitoring observations.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:	Coney Wood
Location:	Batcombe, Bruton
Grid reference:	ST691389, OS 1:50,000 Sheet No. 183
Area:	1.35 hectares (3.34 acres)
Designations:	

2.0 SITE DESCRIPTION

2.1 Summary Description

Work has been going on within this small wood to restore ponds created by a previous owner for the benefit of wildlife. There is a steep climb up from the road from one entrance and visitors will find a circular path within the wood.

2.2 Extended Description

Coney Wood lies just south of Batcombe village, in a small steep-sided valley which runs in a north-south direction. The underlying soil is clay and limestone. A small tributary of the River Alham flows along this valley. The surrounding land use is characterised by semi-improved grassland, and a country road follows the western edge of the wood. To the west of this road lies a tiny additional area of the wood. There are two entrances into the wood linked together by an informal, un-surfaced path. This is the only access within the wood.

The wood has an interesting history. The Coney family altered the stream in the early 1900's so that it supplied a small boating lake, hand-dug for the family's private use. The site of a former paddock, the field was also planted with trees. A second lake was constructed by using a dam near a spring to the north of the wood. Its intention was to increase the water supply to the main lake - however the lake gradually silted up and fell into disuse within a decade. The Coney family gifted the wood to the Trust in 1980.

The former lake has been partially dug out to create a shallow depth of water for the benefit of wildlife. The mainly broad-leaved native trees have developed into mature high forest, with Alder carr by the stream. The ground flora is mixed; as well as typical woodland species there are many plants associated with a wetland habitat. This creates a varied and interesting feel to the wood. The stream is fed by nearby tufa springs, which form mounds of calcium carbonate deposits. It is a County Wildlife Site.

3.0 PUBLIC ACCESS INFORMATION

3.1 Getting there

There are 2 entrances into the wood from the quiet, narrow country lane just on the southern edge of Batcombe on a road to Bruton (approx 3 miles) . The southernmost entrance climbs up a run of steps up a steep bank and then follows a natural, short circular paths through the wood. The path is steep in places with a few wet patches due to localised springs. The second entrance is through a gap approx 2' wide and along a bank between a stream and a pond area. The site links with other footpaths.

Access by Train: The nearest railway station is 4 miles away at Bruton, with links to London, Taunton, Plymouth and Bristol. There are bus services to nearby towns, but none are known to stop within 2 miles of the wood and as these vary quite frequently, it is not feasible to maintain details on this website. However, they should be available by clicking on the following hyperlink <http://www.somerset.gov.uk/somerset/ete/passengertransport/public/>

No parking exists near the site, but can be found in the village of Batcombe a short walk away.

Public toilet: The nearest public toilets are:
Frome - Market Car Park, Justice Lane
Shepton Mallet - Commercial Road Car Park, Petticoat Lane

3.2 Access / Walks

4.0 LONG TERM POLICY

The woodland will be managed as woodland of mainly native broad-leaved trees, including the area of spring fed wetland habitat which is noted as being valuable for its diversity. This meets the Trust's aim of supporting woodland biodiversity.

The wood is visited and valued by local people. This will be encouraged by ensuring access remains within the site.

It is not envisaged that any silvicultural work will be required as the woodland will develop naturally over time.

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 Watercourses

Description

Tufa springs bubble up to the east of the site feeding the stream. These create mounds of calcium carbonate which provide a unique habitat for certain plants and associated fauna.

Significance

Both the stream and springs are recognised as being of importance under the EC Habitats Directive and are included in the Mendip District Council Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP). There are more tufa springs in the surrounding landscape.

Opportunities & Constraints

Constraint

Management works are restricted by the presence of the tufa springs and mounds which are easily damaged.

Factors Causing Change

Poaching of stream-head by stock in nearby field
 Invasive non-native plants (such as Himalayan Balsam)

Long term Objective (50 years+)

The long term objective is to ensure that the springs, mounds and the stream remain undisturbed and continue to develop naturally.

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

The short term objective will be achieved by:
 Checking annually to look for threats and take action to protect the site as necessary.
 Otherwise the main benefit will be the avoidance of damaging action which includes dramatic changes to light or humidity levels.

5.2 Wet Woodland

Description

A wet woodland habitat with alder carr in the wet valley bottom and c 100 year old ash, oak and beech on the slopes above. There is a pond at the southern end, the remains of the redundant and silting up boating lake, which has a small area of open water; the remainder consisting of water margin vegetation of varied height over deep mud. Flora includes water mint, fool's watercress, yellow iris, water forget-me-not and marsh marigold. Many invertebrates are associated with the area including the Somerset notable species: Golden Ringed Dragonfly.

Significance

The site supports a wide variety of wetland flora and is good for invertebrates, with potential for amphibians. Locally the site is important for its range of habitats and linkages with other riverine and semi-natural habitats. The associated fauna is part of the reason for designation as a CWS.

Opportunities & Constraints

Factors Causing Change

Natural processes will result in further silting up of the lake with the corresponding loss of open water reducing variety of habitat options.

Invasive non-native plants (Himalayan Balsam) have been found on site

Long term Objective (50 years+)

The long term objective is to ensure the continuation of the variety of habitats. This will be done by conserving the pond/wetland area by ensuring it does not silt up entirely. Maintain high forest of predominantly native broadleaf over the remainder of the site.

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

The short term objective is to maintain a healthy woodland and to arrest the silting up of the lake. This will be done by:

The pond will be monitored to ensure it is deeper than one metre. If significantly below this then the pond should be dredged

Check annually for Balsam and pull/cut if found.

5.3 Informal Public Access

Description

There is a circular path through the wood with two entrance points, one of which has some steps. This unsurfaced path is steep and muddy in places. It links with a network of other footpaths.

Significance

The Woodland Trust believes that everyone should recognise that trees and woods are an essential part of a healthy environment and that there should be a wood with open access close to everyone's home. We aim to achieve this through our ownership of Coney Wood.

The wood is used by local people from the nearby village of Batcombe. It provides a unique environment for recreation within the surrounding area offering a tranquil atmosphere but one filled with visual interest and some specimen trees.

Opportunities & Constraints

Constraints

Risk of damage to the tufa springs, stream and wetland area means access needs to be restricted. The wood is wet and steep in places making access generally difficult for all but the most able.

Factors Causing Change

Erosion of the paths by the stream

Long term Objective (50 years+)

The wood will be accessible for low level use by visitors and that recreational use does not damage the sensitive wetland habitats and tufa springs and mounds. This level of access will ensure people enjoy and value the woodland.

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

The short term objective is to provide accessible, attractive, well-maintained and safe woodland that people can enjoy. This will be done by:

Checking the entrances and path network and ensuring they are maintained appropriately for the level of use and in line with access category C. This will be achieved by cutting rides and paths as required and maintaining entrances and access furniture.

Ensure visitor use is not causing any damage to springs, stream and wetland area by assessing impact every 2 years.

6.0 WORK PROGRAMME

Year	Type of Work	Description	Due By
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APPENDIX 1: COMPARTMENT DESCRIPTIONS

Cpt No.	Area (ha)	Main Species	Year	Management Regime	Major Management Constraints	Key Features Present	Designations
1a	1.20	Ash	1870	High forest	Mostly wet ground/exposed site, No/poor vehicular access within the site, Sensitive habitats/species on or adjacent to site	Informal Public Access, Wet Woodland	

A mature woodland containing predominantly mixed broadleaf including alder, ash, beech, lime, Norway maple, oak, poplar, sycamore and willow with some Scots Pine and Sitka Spruce. The understorey consists of hazel, elder, holly and hawthorn with some natural regeneration. The ground flora is varied with typical woodland plant species of wood avens, nettles, dogs mercury, ransoms and yellow archangel, along with many wetland plants, the most abundant of which are great willowherb, fool's water-cress and water forget-me-not. A survey carried out in 1999 highlighted the richness of the wetland flora, and the value of the site to invertebrates. The site is either on a steep slopes or wet valley bottom making access difficult. The site is prone to flooding after heavy rains but has a large holding capacity for water and may help to reduce problems downstream as a result. There is a large badger sett on the eastern slope.

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.