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WOODLAND
TRUST

Graig Wood

Management Plan 2015-2020

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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 Consequently this printed version may quickly become out of date, particularly in relation to the planned work programme and on-going monitoring observations.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:	Graig Wood
Location:	Figyn, nr Welshpool
Grid reference:	SJ174084, OS 1:50,000 Sheet No. 125
Area:	3.60 hectares (8.90 acres)
Designations:	Ancient Semi Natural Woodland

2.0 SITE DESCRIPTION

2.1 Summary Description

Graig wood comprises part of a prominent woodland block occupying a steep south-facing slope situated to the north-west of Welshpool. A narrow public footpath runs through the woodland with links to Glyndwr's Way National Trail via the Woodland Trust's entrance and a short track up the slope from the road.

2.2 Extended Description

Graig wood comprises part of a prominent woodland block occupying a steep south-facing slope situated to the north-west of Welshpool. The woodland is accessed from a minor no-through road leading to an adjacent farm. A total of 3.24 ha, Graig Wood is ancient semi-natural woodland dominated by oak, much of which is of coppice origin, partly resulting from substantial felling c. 1920.

Ash is also represented as are sycamore, birch, beech field maple and crab apple. Hazel is locally dominant as an under-storey species. Bramble is abundant in the field layer with a good range of woodland ground flora characteristic of both typical acid soils and of more base rich woodland soils on the lower slopes. The sloping ground particularly in the north-east section of the woodland is extremely steep and not easily accessible. At the top of the slope the ground levels out and there is a bracken glade in the north-east corner.

The woodland was thinned under Woodland Grant Schemes, in two phases, a larger proportion at the eastern end of the woodland (2.60 ha) from 1987-91 and the western tip (0.60 ha) from 1992-97.

A narrow public footpath runs east-west through the woodland with links to Glyndwr's Way National Trail via the Woodland Trust's entrance and a short track up the slope from the road. A gate at the east end of the woodland leads to an adjoining stand of mature oak, which has evidently been grazed. The road forms the southern boundary and is unfenced. Adjoining the north-west boundary there is a small block of conifer plantation and on the Coed Cadw boundary (not easily delineated as the fence is totally collapsed or absent), there are several mature Scots pine. The remainder of the adjoining land to the north of the woodland is Access Land, rough pasture grazed by cattle and an extensive area of bracken. The local area is reasonably well wooded and hedges or trees surround the neighbouring fields.

3.0 PUBLIC ACCESS INFORMATION

3.1 Getting there

Access is along Owain Glyndwr's Way - a long distance footpath or via the adjacent public road, however car parking is difficult outside the wood without blocking the road. The nearest public transport is a train station in Welshpool and the BMT 87 bus which goes from Welshpool to Castell Careinion (Tel 01938 556281 for details).

The nearest public toilets are in Welshpool.

A public footpath arcs across the site, with a further branch of permissive path leading to the Trust's main entrance to the site on the southern boundary. The permissive path forms a link between two stretches of Owain Glyndwr's Way.

There is a stile in the fence line at the point where the public footpath enters the wood on the eastern boundary.

3.2 Access / Walks

4.0 LONG TERM POLICY

Minimum intervention will be the management approach. The aim being to maintain a woodland dominated by a diversity of site-native trees and shrubs with a varied field layer typical of upland oak woods. There will be a broad range of age classes, including veteran trees. Canopy gaps suitable for natural regeneration will be created as a result of natural events (storm damage, senescence of old trees). Dead wood habitat will increase in quantity over time including standing dead trees, and fallen timber will remain in situ. The bracken dominated north-east corner provides another habitat type and will over time be colonised by shrub species, such as hawthorn and hazel. Informal public access will be maintained and possibly improved, depending on possible increased use resulting from the promotion of the Glyndwr Trail.

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 Ancient Semi Natural Woodland

Description

Mature woodland with oak, much of which is coppice origin, as the predominant canopy species. On steep sloping ground with a southerly aspect the soils are generally well drained brown earths over slate/rock with deeper reasonably fertile and base rich pockets notably on the lower slopes. Ash occurs, including some large old coppice stools, and sycamore, field maple, beech, crab apple, birch, rowan, elder, and holly are all represented. Hazel is the most abundant under storey species and occurs with hawthorn on the northern boundary and around glades at the top of the slope, which are bracken dominated and which adds to habitat diversity. Wych elm saplings and natural regeneration of sycamore and ash are evident but young oak is notably absent. The field layer is diverse although bramble is notably dominant in parts with honey suckle and occasional dog rose. Bluebell, greater stitchwort, primrose, wood anemone, wood avens, wood sorrel, ground ivy, wood rush, red campion, cuckoo-pint and herb Robert are all represented. Patches of dog's mercury woodruff and enchanter's nightshade are present where it is base rich. Tufted hair grass is locally dominant in the western half of the woodland and creeping soft grass is predominant in glades at the top of the slope. Fern spp. are a feature of the steep and rocky slopes. Several large old trees, including two oaks, field maple and an old ash stool are notable. Characteristics of W10 type NVC (National Vegetation Classification) communities are evident.

Significance

It is Ancient Semi Natural Woodland (ASNW). Locally native woodland species are represented (including large old trees). The woodland is a prominent component of the local landscape.

Opportunities & Constraints

Management access difficult on very steep slopes. Lack of regeneration of oak ; Links with adjacent woodland and surrounding hedgerows (important e.g. for bats). Prominence in the local landscape.

Factors Causing Change

Relative success of sycamore and other species regenerating compared to oak., Lack of grazing

Long term Objective (50 years+)

A peaceful, undisturbed area of ancient semi-natural woodland habitat with veteran trees and a wide range of woodland flowers. Oak is a major part of the canopy although other species may increase. Natural tree falls create canopy gaps suitable for natural regeneration of trees. Deadwood habitat, including standing dead trees become increasingly plentiful over time.

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

Minimum intervention apart from tree safety work and keeping the paths open and boundaries stock proof.

5.2 Informal Public Access

Description

A short length of permissive path from the entrance board from the road at the south-eastern corner of the woodland links with a public footpath that traverses east/west. A gate on the eastern boundary leads to adjoining oak woodland. The Glyndwr's Way National Trail enters the site on the eastern boundary, following the public footpath and joins the road via the permissive path. Parking is limited to the sloping verge at the entrance.

Significance

Links with public footpath and Glyndwr's Way National Trail. Ground flora notable in spring (wood anemone, primrose, bluebell).

Opportunities & Constraints

Limited parking space. Very steep terrain above the public footpath. Bluebell (and other flora) prominent from the footpath. Public footpath not easy to negotiate in parts due to sloping ground (could be improved with minor works but depends on levels of site usage).

Factors Causing Change

Possibility of increased site usage resulting from promotion of long distance path

Long term Objective (50 years+)

The permissive path and public footpath provide low key access to the woodland for local walkers as well as those on the long distance Owain Glyndwr's Way.

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

The ride and public footpath will be maintained, with possible improvements depending on site usage.

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	3.24	Oak (sessile)	1920	Min-intervention	Landscape factors, No/poor vehicular access within the site, Sensitive habitats/species on or adjacent to site, Very steep slope/cliff/quarry/mine shafts/sink holes etc	Ancient Semi Natural Woodland, Informal Public Access	Ancient Semi Natural Woodland

Graig Wood comprises a single compartment (1a) . The ground slopes up fairly gently from the roadside bank then becomes progressively steeper in parts. Oak is the dominant canopy species throughout the woodland, much of it of coppice origin. On the lower slopes, with a few exceptions, they tend to be even aged, tall and fairly straight with high crowns. A large mature beech is prominent close to the road and the occasional sycamore here has given rise to abundant regeneration locally. Hazel is the dominant under storey species with some hawthorn, holly, and young elm, rowan and field maple. Bluebell is prominent with greater stitchwort, primrose, bramble and honeysuckle and wood sage. Ash and field maple are represented with young ash locally dominant on the more base rich soils, which support patches of dog's mercury and woodruff. Small glades have been created at the western end as a result of thinning operations and storm damage. The western corner is base rich with a dense canopy of ash and oak/oak coppice with ash seedlings, hawthorn, holly, elm saplings and elder. The field layer includes patches of dog's mercury. The ground become progressively steeper above the footpath and is precipitous in places with rocky out crops. Oak is again the dominant canopy species and a very large old coppice oak sits at the edge of a rocky outcrop close to the eastern boundary fence. Fern spp. are abundant on the steep slopes with bramble and honeysuckle. At the top of the slope the ground levels out and grassy glades occur at the woodland edge and between groves of hazel and hawthorn. A substantial strip of open ground (approx. 0.9 ha) dominated by dense bracken occurs in the north-east corner.

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.