



Sodylt Wood

Management Plan 2016-2021

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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 Consequently this printed version may quickly become out of date, particularly in relation to the planned work programme and on-going monitoring observations.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:	Sodylt Wood
Location:	Ellesmere
Grid reference:	SJ343410, OS 1:50,000 Sheet No. 117
Area:	5.83 hectares (14.41 acres)
Designations:	Ancient Woodland Site, Shropshire Wildlife Trust prime site (part), Site of Special Scientific Interest

2.0 SITE DESCRIPTION

2.1 Summary Description

Sodylt Wood is a small wood lying alongside the river Dee with some mature alder, ash and sycamore along the river edge. There is a well-maintained circular path through the wood.

2.2 Extended Description

Sodylt Wood is a small Planted Ancient Woodland Site lying alongside the river Dee forming an important part of this well-wooded valley. Approximately 20% of the woodland boundary lies adjacent to the river with the rest of the site adjacent to pasture land. Ground flora is diverse throughout the woodland, particularly along the rides and riparian zone (riverside). The River Dee is designated as a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and includes both the river channel, the bank and bankside trees. The site was acquired by the Woodland Trust in 1987 as a clear-fell site with some mature alder, ash and sycamore retained along the river edge. Woodland cover is in the form of natural regeneration, coppice regrowth and a small amount of supplementary planting of native broadleaf species in 1989/90. Prior to the 1985 clear fell the main species on site were elm, ash, beech and sycamore. Today the stand predominately consists of cherry, sycamore, elm and ash, with species such as maple, oak, alder and silver birch also to be found across the site. An understory of hazel coppice, hawthorn and elder can be found within the woodland, along with significant tree regeneration consisting of sycamore, ash, elm and cherry.

The wood was identified as ancient semi-natural woodland (ASNW) in the 1988 ancient woodland survey completed by the Nature Conservancy Council (Natural England) who at the time of the survey identified one hundred and eight vascular plants on the site. The Shropshire Wildlife Trust has also acknowledged the valleys importance and the site is incorporated in one of the Trusts Prime Sites for Conservation (Ref. No SJ 3402).

The site is located on a steep to moderate westward facing bank. Soils are variable and consist of the mixed derivatives from the sandstone substrate and glacial deposits with high clay content. This leads to poor drainage on much of the site and the occurrence of numerous springs and wet flushes. The variety of soils and moisture regimes is undoubtedly an important factor in the diverse ground flora. The clear felling caused much of the ground flora across the site to become suppressed by a dense covering of bramble. However, the condition of the ground flora is now much improved, dominating many areas with swathes of wood anemone, celandine, bluebell and ransoms creating a wonderful spring display.

A fishing consortium retain control and management of the fishing rights along the woodland river edge by way of a covenant which formed part of transfer conditions at time of purchase by the Woodland Trust.

There is well-maintained circular path around the site, however this can become quite boggy in places during wetter months. The location of the woodland is isolated with poor parking facilities. Consequently, the site has a lower frequency of visits from the general public. There is one main access point at the northern tip of the wood where a 10 foot management gate and a pedestrian squeeze post are located. The wood is not suitable for wheelchair/pushchair access.

The Key Features at this site are Restored Ancient Woodland and Informal Public Access.

3.0 PUBLIC ACCESS INFORMATION

3.1 Getting there

Nearest village Overton-on-Dee. Located down a dead end small road leading about 1 mile away from the centre of the village. At almost the end of the road there is a narrow track which leads off to the left. The wood's entrance point is located at the bottom of this track through a squeeze post on the left hand side. There is a short circular walk around the wood. The site can get quite wet which means that sections of the paths can become a little harder to negotiate in the winter months. There are also some steeper sections of path in the wood. The site is quite remote and there is no parking available nearby.

Nearest bus stop - None within 5 miles

Nearest railway station - none within 5 miles

Nearest Public toilet - none within 5 miles.

You can also try www.transportdirect.info or www.traveline.org.uk on the internet for the most up to date details for public transport in the area.

3.2 Access / Walks

4.0 LONG TERM POLICY

The Woodland Trusts objectives and long term intentions for Sodylt Wood are determined after balanced consideration of a number of points relating to our Woodland Management Approach (WMA) and seek to conserve key features in relation to our outcomes. Where there is conflict, the interests of biodiversity take precedence over people. We do not intervene at our sites unless there is evidence that it will improve woodland biodiversity and/or public understanding and enjoyment.

In 50 years time, Sodylt Wood will be a structurally and species diverse native broadleaved woodland. Free public access will be provided for quiet, informal recreation and the woodland managed to make it accessible, welcoming and safe. Paths will be kept open and ride edge work in the form of coppiced and scalloped bays may be undertaken where this will add to visitor interest and enjoyment.

Tree inspections will be undertaken by competent people and safety works implemented in accordance with recommendations from inspection reports and in line with current best practice.

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 Woodland Site

Description

Sodylt Wood is the northern tip of a much larger interconnected network of riverside and clough SNAWs that extends along the Dee Valley and tributaries. The site was purchased in accordance with the Trusts aim for no further loss of ancient woodland, at the time it had been recently clear-felled but much of the ground flora had survived the felling operation, and natural regeneration was occurring. Flora surveys taken in 1988 and 1996 recorded 108 different vascular plants at the site

Significance

Sodylt wood was acquired in accordance with the Woodland Trusts general aims for no further loss of ancient woodland, and for the conservation and enhancement of biodiversity. The site has a legacy of rich ground flora with many indicators of its SNAW status. It is an integral part in a mosaic of different and inter-related habitats that include a regionally large network of semi-natural ancient woodland, and the River Dee and its banks, the length of which have been designated a SSSI by English Nature and the Countryside Council for Wales.

Opportunities & Constraints

The opportunity exists to maintain and improve the biodiversity of Sodylt Wood. Maintaining the continuity of this ancient semi-natural habitat will enable the widest range of species to survive and evolve within it. Crucial to this is the implementation of a management regime to ensuring continuous cover across the site. This can be achieved by allowing regeneration to develop naturally into different stand types. In the long term, the opportunity exists to allow the wood to develop a natural varied woodland structure through letting the varied stand types develop and through allowing trees to mature to senescence and die naturally. The Trust can further add value to local biodiversity through the retention of deadwood habitat in the form of moribund and dead standing trees where safe to do so. Veteran trees will provide important micro-climates for specialist plants, animals and fungi.

Possibly the main constraint on improving biodiversity is the sites small core area and wet ground for much of the year.

Factors Causing Change

Natural succession of broadleaf woodland, incidence of pests and diseases.

Long term Objective (50 years+)

Maintain a structurally and species diverse predominantly native broadleaved woodland through an approach of minimum intervention and natural processes.

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

The key short term objective is to maintain this as an area of Semi-Natural Ancient Woodland. There are no silvicultural activities planned for this plan period. The wood will be monitored for change through a Key Feature observation visit in 2020.

5.2 Informal Public Access

Description

In accordance with the Woodland Trusts general aims the site is open to the public for quiet informal pedestrian activities. Access is gained from the northern tip of the wood (Grid SJ 345 414) and a wide permissive footpath runs the length of the northern spur then forms a loop in the wider southern half of the wood. No public rights of way cross the wood.

Significance

The use of nearly all Woodland Trust owned sites for quiet, informal public recreation forms a core to the Woodland Trusts vision for the future. For the general public access to this strip of woodland did not exist prior to Woodland Trust ownership.

Opportunities & Constraints

Constraints

Sodylt Wood is remote and lacks parking nearby. Its shape and size provides limited walking opportunities for those who visit, these factors contribute to a low frequency of usage by the general public.

Opportunities

conservation groups are likely to find the mixture of riparian and woodland habitats and the legacy of a rich ground flora allow very interesting and would enjoy natural history observation and survey activities.

Factors Causing Change

None at this time.

Long term Objective (50 years+)

The existing level and quality of accessibility will be maintained and monitored, with improvements made where new opportunities are identified.

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

The Woodland Trust will continue to advertise its properties through its own publications and the local media. The paths and entrance point will be managed annually through an estates maintenance contract with paths cut a minimum of once a year to a width of 2 metres and Woodland Trust specifications 1.1 and 2.1.

Regular tree inspections will be undertaken by competent people. Tree safety works will be implemented in accordance with recommendations from inspection reports and in line with current best practice

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	5.90	Ash	1988	Min-intervention	Mostly wet ground/exposed site	Ancient Woodland Site, Informal Public Access	Ancient Woodland Site, Other, Site of Special Scientific Interest

Three quarters of the site is on a moderate to steep bank with a western aspect. The northern third forms a long spur of woodland sandwiched between agricultural land with the main management and public access points at its extreme northern tip. The southern section of the wood abuts agricultural land to the east and south-west, its western boundary is formed by the banks of the river Dee. The land along the river's edge stays flat for about 40m into the site. With the exception of a few mature trees along the riverbank (sycamore, alder & ash) the wood comprises of semi-mature and young plantings interspersed with natural regeneration. The species mix used during the main block of post clear-fell re-stocking was - ash 40% - sessile oak 35% - wild cherry 10% - alder 5% - field maple 5% - and minor broadleaves (small leaf lime, alder, goat willow etc) 5%. Subsequent beat-ups concentrated on oak and ash with some elm. There is a high incidence of coppice and natural regeneration of ash, wych elm, birch, willow and sycamore. The shrub layer consists mainly of regenerating tree species with alder, hazel, and thorn trees along the eastern boundary. Brambles forming a dense layer across the whole site and suppress much of the ground flora.

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.