



Spoilbank 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 Consequently this printed version may quickly become out of date, particularly in relation to the planned work programme and on-going monitoring observations.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:	Spoilbank Wood
Location:	Dalton on Tees
Grid reference:	NZ291087, OS 1:50,000 Sheet No. 88
Area:	6.57 hectares (16.23 acres)
Designations:	

2.0 SITE DESCRIPTION

2.1 Summary Description

Sited in an attractive position on the western bank of the River Tees, Spoilbank wood comprises of a mixture of mature broadleaf trees including; oak, ash and sycamore with a well developed woody understory of hawthorn and hazel. Elm is still present in the northern half of the wood. A variety of paths snake through the wood and into the wider footpath network. The Archaeological remains of an early 19th century footbridge are still evident on site.

2.2 Extended Description

Situated just to the south east of the village of Croft-on-Tees and north west of the village of Dalton-on-Tees, Spoilbank Wood consists of 6.80 hectares of mature mixed broadleaved woodland. The woodland sits on a moderate north-east facing slope down to the west bank of the River Tees, very prominent in the local landscape and forming an important part of a much larger woodland, which continues for approximately 2km to the south and east following the west bank of the river.

The woodland is predominantly oak and ash, with a significant proportion of planted sycamore, especially to the south of the woodland and along the riverbank along with numerous alder. There is a very dense (almost impenetrable in places) under storey of hawthorn, blackthorn, elder and hazel, especially to the central and northern sections of the wood. Large amounts of standing and fallen deadwood throughout- predominantly elm, due to Dutch Elm Disease are still present. The woodland has no formal designations but much of the ground flora is indicative of some ancient origins, and its position in the landscape, following the river on moderately steep sloping and wet ground would suggest it has always been wooded to some extent - probably scrub/ grazing land, as First edition OS maps (www.old-maps.co.uk) for 1857, show no part of the area as wooded, and a field system/ hedgerows as the only visible vegetation type. Currently the ground vegetation within the woodland and along the river bank is under threat from the extent of Himalayan Balsam, which has entered the woodland through flood water and the seed spread by the high levels of use made of the path network. In addition Giant Hogweed is brought down-river occasionally and establishes itself in limited locations. Within the woodland to the south east there is a large brick foundation which is the remains of a footbridge, which provided a river crossing up until the early part of the 1900s.

Public access is via a public footpath and a network of permissive routes. The footpath enters from the south east follows the River Tees for a short distance and then cuts west to leave the wood onto the side of the A167. The public footpath is linked with permissive routes which follow the entire boundary of the wood, with two short sections of path (via steps) linking through to the riverside. These routes are well used, mostly by a small number of local people. The woodland is bounded to the east by the River Tees, to the north by a railway line, to the west by the A167 and to the south by a continuation of mature broadleaved woodland.

3.0 PUBLIC ACCESS INFORMATION

3.1 Getting there

Public access is via a public footpath and a network of permissive routes. The public footpath enters the wood via squeeze stiles from the south east and follows the River Tees for a short distance and then cuts west to leave the wood onto the side of the A167. The public footpath is linked with permissive routes which follow the entire boundary of the wood, with two short sections of path (via steps) linking through to the riverside. None of the routes within the woodland are surfaced and can be uneven in places with tree roots and overhanging branches, and in wet weather can be very muddy and slippery. Riverside footpath has a tendency to flooding by the River Tees during extreme rainfall.

Local parking is very difficult and is easiest in either of the nearby villages - Croft on Tees to the north (1km) and Dalton on Tees to the south (0.5km) and then access to the woodland is on foot following a roadside pavement. The nearest bus stops are in either of the aforementioned village centres. Information from the traveline website as of March 2011, Further information about public transport is available from Traveline- www.traveline.org.uk or phone 0870 608 2608

The nearest public toilets are in Hurworth on Tees, some 2km to the northeast.

3.2 Access / Walks

4.0 LONG TERM POLICY

As a relatively small woodland with no formal designations but indications of ancient origins, forming an important feature in the local landscape and in a part of the country with little fully accessible broadleaved woodland, the intention is to maintain lowland broadleaved high forest on this site. This will be achieved through minimum intervention, whilst retaining the original planted species. It is anticipated that the current woodland structure of mature canopy with a mixed understory and the ground flora, will continue to develop, through senescence of the canopy trees and natural regeneration which is good where the conditions allow. Access and signage will be maintained along the main footpath.

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 Informal Public Access

Description

A single public footpath enters the woodland from the south east corner of the wood, following the river and then exiting the wood to the west. This links with 3 further entrances via an extensive permissive path network of approximately 1540m which follows (just inside) the entire wood boundary and crosses the site east-west, via steps, in two places providing access to much of the wooded area. Surfaced throughout, the woodland is very well used by local people, and the entire river boundary has a right of access for the Thornaby Fishing Club.

Significance

The woodland forms an important feature in the local landscape along the River Tees as part of a longer chain of mature broadleaved woodland, providing informal access to woodland for the nearby villages of Croft and Dalton- on -Tees.

Opportunities & Constraints

Constraints include steep slopes and wet ground that make up the majority of the woodland. Little opportunity to develop access in the woodland further, as there is already extensive provision through the public footpath and the permissive routes which are very well used, however there is some scope for improvement of the permissive route through surfacing of the route if it were deemed essential, due to erosion or significantly increased usage.

Factors Causing Change

High levels of public use.

Long term Objective (50 years+)

Maintain the existing quality of path network - both public footpath and permissive route. No future path creation to be undertaken due to the disturbance involved and the already high levels of access provision.

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

Maintain the current routes ensuring the Woodland Trust areas of ownership are marked with welcoming signs, paths and routes maintained through at least annual inspection for tree safety, vegetation clearance and litter.

5.2 Natural Secondary Woodland

Description

Broadleaved high forest, predominantly oak with ash, sycamore and alder, with a dense understory of hawthorn, blackthorn, elder and hazel. Large amounts of standing and fallen deadwood - predominantly elm, rich ground flora with indications of ancient woodland origins

Significance

Important as mature woodland forming part of a longer chain along the west bank of the River Tees, probable ancient origins, but more valuable in its maintenance as a landscape feature and accessible woodland for the local communities.

Opportunities & Constraints

Opportunity to continue the removal of non-native species (sycamore) and to try and revert the woodland back to native species, however the developing ground flora, wet ground conditions and steep slope would preclude the extraction of timber, combined with significant numbers of sycamore on site and in the surrounding woodlands making such a strategy impractical. The woodland is recovering well from the previous selective felling prior to Woodland Trust ownership and the loss of elm through disease, and with no formal designations the woodland should be left to minimum intervention to maintain broadleaved woodland cover on the site.

Factors Causing Change

Invasive Sycamore, Invasive Himalayan Balsam, Squirrel Damage, Dutch elm disease, Ash dieback disease.

Long term Objective (50 years+)

Maintain broadleaved woodland on this site. The woodland will be managed through minimum intervention maintaining a mixed broadleaved high forest.

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

Monitoring of the development and health of the woodland and the amount of regeneration and the effects that the invasive ground flora is having on this site to be undertaken annually.

Monitor the ash for signs of infection from Ash dieback disease and monitor its development during the plan period.

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	6.80	Ash	1930	High forest	Mostly wet ground/exposed site, No/poor vehicular access to the site, Very steep slope/cliff/quarry/mine shafts/sink holes etc	Informal Public Access, Natural Secondary Woodland	

Broadleaved high forest, predominantly oak with ash, sycamore and alder , with a dense understorey of hawthorn, blackthorn, elder and hazel. Large amounts of standing and fallen deadwood - predominantly elm. No formal designations but much of the ground flora is indicative of some ancient origins. Public access is via a public footpath and a network of permissive routes. Bounded to the east by the River Tees , to the north by a railway line, to the west by the A167 and to the south by a continuation of mature broadleaved woodland. The sites rises from 35m above sea level adjacent to the river over 140m to 46m above sea level next to the A167.

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.