



Slopes Farm

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 Consequently this printed version may quickly become out of date, particularly in relation to the planned work programme and on-going monitoring observations.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:	Slopes Farm
Location:	Lyme Regis
Grid reference:	SY337925, OS 1:50,000 Sheet No. 193
Area:	4.06 hectares (10.03 acres)
Designations:	Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, Heritage Coast, Tree Preservation Order

2.0 SITE DESCRIPTION

2.1 Summary Description

A lovely, compact little wood. It takes just 10-15 minutes to walk from one side to the other. There is a loop path and a couple of other paths to take. Perfect for local walks or to let the kids run around and let off steam

2.2 Extended Description

Slopes Farm was given to the Woodland Trust in 1988 and was previously part of grazed farmland around Slopes Farmhouse which is now privately owned. The woodland was planted by the Woodland Trust between 1989 and 2001 on this former semi-improved grassland. The main planted were Oak, Ash, Alder along with woody shrubs. Some mature trees in the existing hedges include Oak Ash and a London Plane. Together these form a developing woodland habitat, with complementary habitats provided by wide rides, the River Lim and a small stream on the boundaries.

Slopes Farm sits on clay soil and is on the eastern edge of the Blackdowns Natural Area & Countryside Character area, which is important amongst other things for geological interest and lowland mixed deciduous woodland.

The wood is set in the suburbs of Lyme Regis and is surrounded by housing and roads. However, housing is sparse to the north and so the site is almost connected to a wider green network. Thus Slopes Farm forms a spur of 'countryside' within the town.

The Wessex Ridgeway is a popular long distance footpath which starts in Lyme Regis, passes alongside the site and soon leads out into open countryside. A public footpath crossing the site joins Roman Road and Woodmead Road, providing easy access for local walkers, and the site is well used both as a pleasant through route as well as a site to visit in its own right.

3.0 PUBLIC ACCESS INFORMATION

3.1 Getting there

Slopes Farm is set in the suburbs of Lyme Regis (population approx 3700) next to the river Lim. A public footpath crosses the wood, running roughly north-south between Roman Road and Woodmead Road, with a further permissive path forming a circular walk within the wood. The wood is set on a slope and so the public footpath and paths leading off it do have some moderate slopes. The paths generally have a grass surface but due to the presence of springs and the clay soil in the area can get muddy & boggy particularly in winter. At the Woodmead entrance there is a pedestrian kissing gate, and at Roman Road a squeeze stile. It is possible to park with care in the surrounding residential roads.

Nearest bus stop: Kent House, Silver Street, Lyme Regis - approximately 50m from Woodmead Road entrance. Information from Traveline website May 2007

Nearest train station: Axminster, with bus services to Lyme Regis

Nearest toilet: Broad Street approximately 800m, or Holmbush car park approximately 500m from Woodmead entrance; both of which have facilities for disabled people (RADAR key required), but Broad Street is not open 24 hours. Information taken from joint council website www.dorsetforyou.com May 2007

Further information on travel can be found on the Traveline website www.traveline.com or phone 0871 200 22 33

3.2 Access / Walks

4.0 LONG TERM POLICY

The long-term vision for Slopes Farm is for it to develop into attractive and mature native broadleaf woodland containing a healthy mix of trees, shrubs and a thriving understorey. This will help fulfil the Trust aim of increasing native woodland cover.

The network of habitat opportunities will develop into a well integrated mosaic within the woodland. These include the waterways (River Lim and an unnamed stream on the northern boundary), wide rides and ephemeral wet flushes. This will help fulfil the Trust aim of protecting and enhancing the wildlife on its sites.

As a well used site in the town of Lyme Regis there is an opportunity to provide a cherished open access green space within the town. The site will remain welcoming with facilities appropriate to the level of use, thus fulfilling the Trust's aim of increasing people's awareness and enjoyment of woodland.

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

Slopes Farm is on the outskirts of Lyme Regis and is surrounded by housing. A public footpath crossing the wood links Roman Road to the north and Woodmead Road to the south, and also leads onto the Wessex Ridgeway long distance route. The wood is very well used by residents, and more occasionally by visitors from further afield as Lyme Regis is a popular holiday destination.

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 that through our ownership of Slopes Farm.

The wood's position immediately adjacent to housing & roads make it readily accessible to visitors, and it links in with the Wessex Ridgeway which runs along the River Lim nearby.

Opportunities & Constraints

Constraints - slope of site on clay soils make areas very slippery combined with boggy ground make the site difficult to access during wet weather. High levels of dog fouling may deter some visitors to the wood

Opportunities - With the position of Slope's Farm adjacent to a well used road on two sides, both of which have good views into the site, it forms a good 'shop window' which can be used to encourage people to either explore the site or appreciate the wood if the site is visually appealing.

Factors Causing Change

Deterioration and erosion of the clay soils along pathways

Long term Objective (50 years+)

A woodland that is well-used and highly valued by local residents and visitors to the town alike

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

The short term objectives are to achieve welcoming, attractive and safe woodland that the public frequently enjoy. The path network needs to be appropriate to the level of demand. This will be done by:

- Cutting 3m paths through the site regularly each year to keep the vigorous vegetation in check.
- Cut the entire open area every second year to reduce scrubbing up and to keep internal views open.
- Undertake tree safety inspections regularly.
- Ensure the external boundaries are well maintained to create a pleasant first impression by cutting vegetation at the same time as the path cut
- Once coppicing has taken place ensure the drainage ditch is cleared to help alleviate boggy areas in paths.
- If the ditch does not improve the paths then install a boardwalk/sleeper bridge across the wet flush on the eastern loop before the end of the plan period
- Coppice shrubs immediately adjacent to the path where it is denuded of grass to aid drying out after rain. If this does not improve the access then install a stoned pathway to the southern end of the footpath where it is most slippery before the end of the plan period
- Install a flight of steps where the eastern loop joins the footpath at its southern end before the end of the plan period

5.2 New Native Woodland

Description

This is a well established new native woodland crossed and bounded by mature hedges with occasional established trees. It borders the Lim river which has a fringe of mature trees. The river corridor links the wood with the wider countryside to the north.

An area adjacent to housing on the western boundary was coppiced in 2000, this benefited habitat by creating a sunny glade and reduced tree safety liability by keeping the trees low.

The ground flora in the wood appears relatively limited in diversity (with dominance of horsetail in some of the open areas) and has some introduced varieties such as domestic daffodils & Japanese Knotweed. The mature hedges and woodland offers opportunities for spread of native ground flora once the grass competition is reduced by canopy closure.

Significance

The Woodland Trust believe that native woodland cover should be increased across the country and this is fulfilled in establishment of woodland at Slopes Farm.

The woodland generally provides a 'green lung' and wildlife refuge in an area that has been under development pressure

Opportunities & Constraints

Opportunity: to link the new native woodland in with other mature habitats such as the stream & open ground to form a mosaic of habitats

Factors Causing Change

- Deer Damage.
- Invasive Knotweed and other escapee garden plants
- Encroachments by neighbours.

Long term Objective (50 years+)

For Slopes Farm to develop into healthy and attractive native broadleaf woodland of varying structure and habitats with a mosaic of trees, shrubs, open space, streamside habitats and developing ground flora.

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

The short term objectives are to achieve healthy woodland that is developing well. Target for eradication of Japanese Knotweed by the end of the plan period. This will be done by:

- Undertake annual inspections for invasive non-natives and garden escapees annually in the spring. Create a control programme to tackle anything found where control is deemed to be possible
- Coppice the area on the north-western boundary once during the plan period, but leaving the area immediately adjacent to the farmhouse to create blended woodland edge with mature trees.

5.3 Connecting People with woods & trees

Description

Significance

Opportunities & Constraints

Factors Causing Change

Long term Objective (50 years+)

Short term management Objectives for the plan period (5 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	4.01	Oak (pedunculate)	1991	High forest		Informal Public Access	Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, Heritage Coast, Tree Preservation Order
<p>Mixed native broadleaves mainly planted by the Woodland Trust between 1989 and 1993 on 3ha of former semi-improved grassland. Planting density was at 1100 trees per ha. A further block of 0.4ha was planted in front of the farmhouse in 2001. Main species used were Oak, Ash, Alder, Field Maple, Hazel, Hawthorn & Guelder Rose. The trees have established well, and the canopy has closed so the site feels now like woodland. There is good evidence of natural regeneration of a number of native species with very limited signs of grazing damage. Some laurel seedlings are also present. Strips of hedgerow and some established trees along the River Lim give structural diversity to the woodland. A small area on the north-western boundary was coppiced in 2001 to provide some diversity of habitat. The coppiced area suffered from heavy grazing pressure and needed protection to allow it to re-grow. The temporary fence was not removed and is currently entangled in bramble (2012). A number of wide rides run through the planting linking areas of open ground which now have the feel of woodland glades. The soil is clay and the slopes makes visitor access difficult after rain.</p>							
2a	0.04	Other	1991	Non-wood habitat		Informal Public Access	
Allotment area to rear of 'The Moorings' - approx 0.04ha - privately tenanted under licence							

Appendix 2: Harvesting operations (20 years)

Forecast Year	Cpt	Operation Type	Work Area (ha)	Estimated vol/ha	Estimated total vol.
2013	1a	Coppice	0.50	10	5

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.