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WOODLAND
TRUST

Coed Allt Goch

Management Plan 2014-2019

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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 Consequently this printed version may quickly become out of date, particularly in relation to the planned work programme and on-going monitoring observations.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:	Coed Allt Goch
Location:	Pisgah
Grid reference:	SN673772, OS 1:50,000 Sheet No. 135
Area:	3.81 hectares (9.41 acres)
Designations:	Ancient Semi Natural Woodland

2.0 SITE DESCRIPTION

2.1 Summary Description

This upland oakwood in the Rheidol valley occupies hillside which is surrounded by farmland. It is on a steeply sloping hillside, has no path network and is not connected to any public footpaths.

2.2 Extended Description

Sitting at around 200m above sea level, Coed Allt Goch is part of a larger stand of steeply sloping ancient semi-natural woodland dominated by sessile oak. Adjoining woodland extends to the north and south. Unlike the Woodland Trust site, some of the remaining privately owned woodland is sheep grazed. Open fields lie to the east and west of this hillside woodland. Although semi-natural woodland is very extensive along the Rheidol Valley, especially to the east, the area around Coed Allt Goch is mainly farmland.

The key feature of the site is Ancient Semi Natural Woodland (Upland Oakwood). Much of the stand is dominated by mature maidens, with a small stand of coppice origin occurring along the lower slope bordering the stream. Occasional mature conifers are scattered along the upper boundary and along the lower part of the slope. The stand is even-aged with virtually no canopy gap other than that created by a small amount of thinning in the area of stored coppice. There are no signs of wind throw at this sheltered site. The shrub layer is very poor with only occasional hazel and holly. Rowan, however, is regenerating freely. There appears to be very little regeneration of oak.

The woodland was sheep-grazed prior to Woodland Trust ownership. Subsequent ex-closure to grazing has resulted in a dramatic growth of the field layer. Bilberry and heather are extensive with scattered heath grass, wavy hair grass and bracken. The bryophyte component is luxuriant although not very diverse. *Rhytidiadelphus loreus*, *Thuidium tamariscinum* and *Leucobryum glaucum* are widespread. Red kite nest in the area but have not been recorded nesting on the site.

The site has few visitors, partly because there is no public footpath to the site and also because the site is very steep with no path network.

3.0 PUBLIC ACCESS INFORMATION

3.1 Getting there

The site is about half a mile from the village of Pysgah on the A4120 near Aberystwyth. Access is via a farm track / bridleway which leaves the road to the west of Pysgah or via a public footpath from the village itself. However neither go quite to the woodland. Access on foot from the bridleway has been negotiated to the south west corner of the site where there is a stile. The wood is very steep and apart from an old extraction track running along the contour two thirds of the way down there are no paths in the wood.

3.2 Access / Walks

4.0 LONG TERM POLICY

Allow the natural development of the oak canopy and the native shrub and field layers. Mature conifers will be retained but not replaced. Occasional grazing by trespassing sheep will not be allowed to threaten the ground flora and natural regeneration. No internal paths will be provided as the site is very steep, isolated and little visited but an access stile in the southwest corner will be maintained.

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

Steeply sloping even-aged upland sessile oak woodland dominated by mature maidens and some oak coppice bordering the stream. Mature conifers are scattered along the upper boundary and along the lower part of the slope. The shrub layer is very poor with only occasional hazel and holly. Rowan is however regenerating freely. There appears to be very little regeneration of oak under the closed canopy. Bilberry and heather have responded well to the removal of grazing and now dominate the field layer.

Significance

The adjacent woodland is sheep grazed - removal of grazing from the Trust site has enhanced the field layer diversity and therefore the biodiversity interest of Coed Allt Goch.

Opportunities & Constraints

Constraints: 1. Steep slope and long difficult access to site from roadside. It is not feasible to remove timber and so felling to waste is the only option. 2 Thinning would be costly and difficult on a steep slope. 3 Presence of badgers. 4. Occasional conifer and rhododendron regeneration.

Factors Causing Change

Natural gap creation - structural diversity. The exclusion of grazing has improved the ground flora. Some self-seeding of Norway spruce, western hemlock and douglas fir. One rhododendron is present near the north-eastern end.

Long term Objective (50 years+)

A predominantly sessile oak woodland will be maintained. A more developed shrub layer will be present, comprising of rowan, hazel and holly. Some scattered mature conifers will remain but further recruitment of conifers will be prevented through the removal of self-seeded trees. Natural development of the shrub and field layers in the absence of grazing will be encouraged.

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

Remove any conifer regeneration under 6" in diameter. Remove any invading rhododendron. Whilst a thin of the whole compartment will be prohibitively expensive due to access constraints, the recruitment of the next generation of oak trees will be encouraged through the creation of a number of canopy gaps, achieved by felling to waste small groups of oak trees across the site.

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	3.81	Oak (sessile)	1930	Min-intervention	No/poor vehicular access to the site, Very steep slope/cliff/quarry/mine shafts/sink holes etc	Ancient Semi Natural Woodland	Ancient Semi Natural Woodland

Rectangular block of mature sessile oak woodland with scattered mature conifers along the upper and lower boundaries. Occurs on a steep east facing slope. Stand is dominated by oak maidens with patchy coppice on the lower slope. Occasional conifers are regenerating and there was one flowering rhododendron which was cut in 2008. The shrub layer is almost absent, although rowan saplings are frequent. The field layer is dominated by bilberry and heather. Mosses are very abundant, mainly *Rhytidiadelphus loreus*, *Thuidium tamariscinum* and *Leucobryum glaucum*. Boundaries: NW boundary open pasture/bracken. SE boundary open fields. N and S boundaries mature oak woodland (grazed to the east but ungrazed to west.)

Appendix 2: Harvesting operations (20 years)

Forecast Year	Cpt	Operation Type	Work Area (ha)	Estimated vol/ha	Estimated total vol.
2021	1a	Selective Fell	3.81	20	75
2031	1a	Selective Fell	3.81	20	75

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.