WOODLAND TRUST

Stratfield Brake

Management Plan 2014-2019

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MAPS

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 Consequently this printed version may quickly become out of date, particularly in relation to the planned work programme and on-going monitoring observations.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:	Stratfield Brake
Location:	Kidlington
Grid reference:	SP494119, OS 1:50,000 Sheet No. 164
Area:	18.32 hectares (45.27 acres)
Designations:	Green Belt

2.0 SITE DESCRIPTION

2.1 Summary Description

Just a few miles from the centre of Oxford, Stratfield Brake is an oasis of peace that allows visitors to get close to nature throughout the seasons. In a landscape with little accessible woodland, its mature woods are a joy to walk through and its wetland is perfect for birdwatching.

2.2 Extended Description

Stratfield Brake wood is located a mile to the south of Kidlington village and 3 miles to the north of Oxford. It is immediately adjacent to Stratfield Brake Sports Ground, off the A4260, which is very well sign posted. The Woodland Trust lease the site from Oxfordshire County Council on a 250-year term, which began in 1997. The Oxford Canal runs along the western boundary of the site, and there is a footbridge over the canal which provides access between the canal towpath and the wood.

The wood has a mixture of habitats including mature and young woodland, scrub, open water, reedbed and wet grassland. Overall it is roughly 10% mature woodland, 50% young woodland and 40% wetland habitats. The wetland habitats were created in 2001 and are managed in part by grazing cattle. The wetlands are also quite rich in wildlife, with a good diversity of plant and bird life.

The wood was acquired by The Woodland Trust in 1997 during the "Woods on your Doorstep" (WOYD) millennium campaign, and this coincided with the first wave of tree planting carried out by The Trust (approximately 6 hectares). A further 1.5 hectares of the site was planted in 2012 during the Trust's Jubilee Woods campaign, which celebrated the Queen's 60th year on the throne. All the planting is composed of native broadleaves including oak, ash, birch and hazel.

The 2.5 hectare block of mature woodland is dominated by oak but also contains ash, field maple and elm. Here the oak is suffering from a condition called 'Acute oak decline' (AOD) and access for the public is excluded, under advice from Forest Research. This exclusion limits possible spread of the condition via people, but it also allows the mature oaks to be used as a study area by scientists carrying out research into AOD.

The site has a good network of footpaths, some of which are surfaced and allow all-weather access for the less-abled and buggies. There is also a small over-flow car-park next the wood, which is owned by Kidlington Parish Council and is part of the Sports Ground facilities. Visitors to the wood are welcome to use the smaller car-park.

3.0 PUBLIC ACCESS INFORMATION

3.1 Getting there

Stratfield Brake is south of Kidlington, near to the Stratfield Brake sports ground. It is about a mile (1.6km) from the centre of the village.

By public transport:

The nearest train station is the new Oxford Parkway, approximately three miles (4.8km) away, which is due to open in October 2015. For further information on public transport, contact Traveline on 0871 200 2233 or visit traveline.org.uk The Oxford Bus Company's service 2A runs each day from Oxford to Kidlington. For further information contact the Oxford Bus Company 01865 785400 or visit www.oxfordbus.co.uk

By bike:

The Oxford Canal forms Stratfield Brake's western boundary. There is a footbridge over the canal that links with the canal towpath, which is a popular cycling route linking Kidlington and Oxford.

By car:

The entrance to Stratfield Brake Sports Ground is off the north-bound carriageway of the A4260 and is signposted 'Stratfield Brake Sports Ground'. Look for a small car park (grid ref. SP 497 121) to the left, which has a height barrier. It can accommodate 15 cars (the larger car park near the pavilion is for sports centre users only).

Ordnance Survey Explorer 180; Landranger 164

3.2 Access / Walks

The main entrance is from the car park at Stratfield Brake Sports Ground where a surfaced path leads into the wood. There is a network of 1.5 miles (2.5km) surfaced and unsurfaced paths around Stratfield Brake, which are level and have no width restrictions.

Parts of Stratfield Brake can be wet in the winter, but there are 0.9 miles (1.4km) of hard surfaced paths which provide all-weather access for the less-abled and buggies throughout the year.

One short loop of surfaced path leads to a bird-watching area overlooking the wetland. There is also access to Stratfield Brake from the Oxford Canal's towpath by a footbridge at the western end of the site near the wetland area.

A 4.7-mile (7.6km) circular walk using the footbridge and towpath from Stratfield Brake to Yarnton has been developed by local Ramblers for the Canals & Rivers Trust. For full details visit canalrivertrust.org.uk

Currently, access is restricted to the mature woodland area in response to the presence of a disease called Acute Oak Decline (AOD), which affects native oak trees, leading in some cases to their death.

AOD poses no threat to either humans or animals, but it may be spread on visitors' shoes or clothing. Therefore, on the advice of Forest Research, the Woodland Trust has closed Stratfield Brake's mature woodland area.
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We apologise for any inconvenience the closure causes. If you have any queries contact the Trust on 01476 581135.

4.0 LONG TERM POLICY

The young woodland at the site will be allowed to mature naturally and oak is likely to become the dominant species. Much of the ash component is likely to die from ash dieback disease and this will create canopy gaps enhancing the structural diversity of the wood. The individual woodland blocks will be broken up with open managed rides and small glades, and these will link to the larger area of open ground (wetland habitat) on the site.

The older secondary woodland on the site will be allowed to develop with the minimum of silvicultural intervention. The main reason for this is the presence of 'Acute Oak Decline' (AOD) affecting the dominant component of oaks, and the use of this stand of oaks as a 'control area' for research into the disease. Some, but not all, of the oaks in this area will die from the disease which will enhance the woodland structure and develop the deadwood habitat. This management approach will continue until more is known about AOD and there is further guidance in managing affected woodlands. Public access to this block of mature woodland will also be excluded until there is further guidance on AOD.

The wetland area, on the west side of the site, is closely positioned (within 2km) to other wetlands and areas of open water in the landscape. To fit into this habitat network it will continue to be managed so that it provides a mixture of open water, grassland, scrub and reedbed. Open water will occupy approximately 30% of the wetland area. The rest of the area will be mainly grassland but with a scrub component (no more than 25%). Reedbed habitat will be present on the margins of the open water, especially towards the western boundary of the site. The 2 lakes will contain small islands providing nesting opportunities for wading birds and the islands will be largely free of scrub and woody growth.

Open access will be retained at the wood in perpetuity and there will be a well managed network of paths, including a surfaced path loop of 1400m from the car park. Well used paths will be made open and sunny in parts, and management will ensure visitors can enjoy good views over the wetland area. The wood will be made as safe as practicable through regular safety inspections, especially along the roadside. Good information will be made available on and off the site to enable visitors to explore and navigate around the wood and to appreciate its inherent qualities. High quality and prominent signage will greet visitors on their arrival to the wood.

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 Secondary Woodland

Description

The woodland present on the site is a mixture of ages and species. There is total of approximately 10ha of woodland at Stratfield Brake, broken up and interspersed with grassy rides and glades. There is 2.5ha of mature woodland (compartment 1a) and this block is dominated by oak with smaller components of ash and silver birch. The understorey is composed of hazel, elm and field maple. The mature oak is suffering from a condition called 'acute oak decline' (AOD) which has resulted in some of the trees dying. The ground flora in this area of woodland contains some specialist woodland plants including bluebell and dog's mercury.
The remaining 7.5ha of woodland is more recent in origin. The majority of it (6ha) was planted in 1997 as a millennium wood, and as part of The Woodland Trust's 'woods on your doorstep' campaign. Approximately 1.5ha was planted as a Jubilee wood in 2012 to celebrate the Queen's 60 year reign. The 1997 planting contains a high proportion of oak with minor components of ash, hazel and field maple. The 2012 planting is mostly oak and birch with minor components of hazel, field maple and guelder rose. Wide sunny rides are present, with the 2 most significant ones being between 1b & 1c and through the middle of 1b (both being of an east-west orientation).

Significance

The woodland habitat at Stratfield Brake adds diversity to a landscape which contains very low woodland cover. The mature area of secondary woodland is starting to develop some of the characteristics of ancient woodland, for example specialist woodland plants.

Opportunities & Constraints

The ash component in compartment 1b is likely to succumb to ash dieback disease in the near future, but this will be an opportunity to introduce more structural diversity into the 1997 planting.

Factors Causing Change

Browsing by deer, especially muntjac. Loss of ash through 'ash dieback'. Some loss of oak through 'acute oak decline' (AOD)

Long term Objective (50 years+)

The main objective will be to ensure the woodland at the site contains a diverse mixture of species and tree age so it is resilient to any future changes and threats imposed on it (for example tree diseases). It is likely that oak will continue to be the major tree species present, even though there will some loss through acute oak decline (AOD). Loss of oak through AOD is also likely to reduce the potential for oaks to grow into veteran trees. The majority of ash present at the site is likely to die from ash dieback disease in the next 15-20 years. The effect of both these diseases (AOD & ash dieback) means that gaps in the tree canopy will be naturally created and this will add some structural diversity to the woodland and supplement the deadwood habitat. It is unlikely that restocking via planting will be needed following any tree disease loss, because the woodland is already composed of a good mixture of species and natural regeneration is taking place. However woodland condition monitoring, using Woodland Trust methodology, will take place every 5 years to ensure that the composition of the woodland and any possible threats to tree survival (eg. deer) are monitored and any resulting action taken.
The mature oak woodland will continue to be made available for the purposes of research into AOD for as long as is required. A management approach of minimum intervention will continued to be applied to the mature woodland (1a) for the purposes of this research and public access will be excluded to reduce disease transfer. This approach will remain in place until there is further guidance about AOD or an alteration to research needs.
The more recent secondary woodland (1b & 1c) will be allowed to mature into high forest, accepting the loss of ash. The establishment phase for the planting in 1c will be completed in 2016. Wide grassy rides will be present and managed through the more recent secondary woodland (1b & 1c). The two most significant rides will be between 1b and 1c and through the middle of 1b, and these rides will have a structured lower-growing woodland edge to them. Small glades will be present where the woodland meets the wetland area and towards the entry point into the site, on the east side. These will preserve views into the site and across the wetland area.

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

During this plan period the short term objective is to enhance the woodland edge habitat, monitor changes and threats to the woodland and ensure all young trees are established. This will be achieved by the following specific actions:
- The mature oak woodland 1a will receive no silvicultural intervention during this plan period but will be made available for research into AOD. The public will be excluded from this area. Some tree felling for safety reasons is likely to be required alongside the main road, following annual surveys.
- The establishment of the young trees in compartment 1c will be completed in 2016 by carrying out weed control operations up until this time (this is likely to be twice per year but will be reduced as necessary). Beating up (tree replacement) will also be carried out in 2014 to ensure any dead trees are replaced and the required stocking level of 1600 trees per hectare is reached.
- Wide grassy rides will be maintained within the woodland: through 1b, and between 1b and 1c. The total length of these will be approximately 1000m and their width will vary between 5-10m. Annual mowing of the rides will take place to ensure they remain grassy and herb-rich. Three small glades totalling 0.5ha will be maintained by annual mowing and these will be located at the entry point into the site and close to the wetland area.
- Monitoring will take place in 2016 to check for any threats to the woodland, and a woodland condition assessment will be carried out at the end of this plan period (2019) to inform the next management plan review. The impact of AOD on the mature oaks will also be monitored closely by The Woodland Trust; several infected trees will be studied and photographed each year as part of this.

5.2 Informal Public Access

Description

There is network of approximately 2.5km of pedestrian paths through Stratfield Brake, and many of these are wide and sunny. The site can lie very wet in the winter but there is 1.4km of hard surfaced path providing all weather access for the less-abled and buggies/prams for most of the year round. There is a car park immediately next to the wood and at the northeast end which can accommodate approximately 15 cars. This is the over-flow car park to Stratfield Brake sports ground and is owned by Kidlington parish council. Visitors to the wood have permission to use it.
The site has much to interest the visitor including views over a wetland area which has significant bird interest. Stratfield Brake links to other areas of publically accessible land, including Stratfield sports ground and pitches, and the Oxford canal which is on the western boundary of the site. A wooden canal bridge joins the canal tow-path to the footpath on the western boundary of the site.

Significance

There is known to be a lack of open access countryside sites within the Cherwell district of Oxfordshire, and Stratfield Brake is one of the largest sites available in this area. The lack of surrounding woodland in the area also means this is one of only a few accessible woodland sites that people can enjoy in the district. The close proximity of the site to the Oxford canal means that it forms part of a connected network of accessible land.

Opportunities & Constraints

Opportunities: With a 1400m surfaced path loop and car park, the site could be more widely publicised to a greater range of visitors, especially less-abled groups wishing to access the countryside. As the site is only 3 miles from Oxford and adjacent to the Oxford canal it has further potential to attract visitors from the city.
Constraint: Public access is currently excluded in parts of the site (wetland area and mature woodland).

Factors Causing Change

Anti-social activities such as fly-tipping and fires could increase with more visitors, as the site becomes more widely known about.

Long term Objective (50 years+)

Stratfield Brake should offer a high quality visitor experience in line with a category A Access designation (high usage with more than 20 people using one entrance per day).
Pedestrian only access will be retained at the wood in perpetuity, but this will be zoned and restricted at times. This will be necessary to protect sensitive wildlife using the wetland area (2a) and to reduce contact and transfer with diseased oak trees in the mature woodland area (1a).
There will be a well-managed network of paths including provision for less-abled users and families with buggies or prams. There will be special viewing facilities at the site so visitors can enjoy the significant diversity of birdlife at Stratfield Brake, without disturbing the habitat.
Well used paths will be made open and sunny in parts to add variety and interest for the visitor, as well benefitting woodland edge wildlife. The wood will be made as safe as practicable through regular safety inspections of trees in high risk zones and inspections of access furniture.
Good information will be made available on and off the site to enable visitors to explore the site and to appreciate its inherent qualities and wildlife; the objective is that visitors should leave with some understanding of the value of native woodlands and other wildlife habitats, and a clear knowledge of The Woodland Trust. High quality and prominent signage will greet visitors on their arrival to the car park.

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

During this plan period the short term objective is to provide a high quality experience for a range of pedestrian visitors which is safe and enjoyable. This will be achieved by:
- A renewal of the signage and interpretation at the site. This will include the installation in 2015 of a prominent roadside sign off the A4260 to welcome visitors to the car park. An updated interpretation panel will be installed in 2017 to interpret the important features of the site.
- The installation of a bird viewing hide will be explored in 2017. This will only be taken forward after consultation and agreement with Oxfordshire County Council, as the Freehold owners, and successful negotiations with the local planning authority.
- Annual management of approximately 2.5km of paths and all entrances (including the car park) to ensure they are kept open for use. Annual management of 1000m of wide grassy rides will also take place (as described under the secondary woodland key feature) and this will have the effect of creating open sunny paths for people to enjoy.
- Annual safety inspections of trees in high risk zones (eg. the roadside), to ensure the wood is as safe as possible for visitors, neighbours and road users.
- Monitoring will take place during this plan period to assess any threats occurring as a result of public access, eg antisocial activities. Monitoring will also assess the need for any improvements or maintenance to access infrastructure at the site, eg any deterioration in condition of the surfaced path.
- Consultation in 2016 with local partners including Oxford City Council, Cherwell District Council and The Canal & River Trust, to explore digitally promoting use of the site to a greater range of user groups.

5.3 Semi Natural Open Ground Habitat

Description

A mixed open and wet habitat covering over 8.5ha on the west side of the site (compartment 2a). It is made up of approximately 30% open water, 25% scrub, 5% reedbed and 40% grassland. The open water is mainly in the form of 2 small lakes with associated ditches and lagoons, and there are several islands on the lakes. The lakes were dug and created in 2001 and since this time the habitat has acquired substantial wildlife interest. The grassland contains traditional meadow plants like ragged robin and yellow rattle and uncommon plants such as early marsh orchid. The birdlife using the open wet habitat is especially diverse and includes cuckoo, sedge warbler, willow warbler, linnet and reed bunting. A variety of duck species use the open water and there is a heronry in the trees behind the largest lake. The grassland has been maintained in recent years by cattle grazing. Water levels in the lakes can be controlled by a sluice which connects to the ditch on the western boundary. The public are excluded (by a fence) from this area of the site.

Significance

The wetland at Stratfield Brake fits within a local network of wetland sites, and the nearest of these is less than 2km away to the south. The wetlands across the landscape are joined by the Oxford canal and The river Thames, and this allows species to move between sites.

Opportunities & Constraints

Continued management of the wetland area to achieve a mixed mosaic of open water, grassland, scrub and reedbed is likely to attract more wildlife species as time goes on, and there is the possibility of water vole using the site in the future.
Manipulation of water levels in the lakes and control of scrub on the islands could increase the diversity of wildlife, by creating nesting opportunities for bird species such as the ringed plover.
An infestation of ragwort in the wet grassland has occurred during some years, and this has required extra resources to combat its spread.

Factors Causing Change

The pond in the southwest corner of the site is choked with an invasive species called Australian stonecrop (Crassula helmsii). Advice about the plant at this site has been taken from Pond Conservation, and they have recommended allowing this pond to gradually scrub over and dry out as it is no longer practical to control the stonecrop in water when it so well established.
Scrub is increasing over some of the grassland areas, and intervention may be periodically required in the future to maintain the balance of habitats.

Long term Objective (50 years+)

The open wetland area will continue to contain a balance of habitats in the following approximate proportions: 40% grassland, 30% open water, 25% scrub and 5% reedbed. Ideally cattle grazing will be used as a management tool to help achieve this balance. Invasive species such as ragwort and creeping thistle will be kept at a very low level in the grassland (no more than 5%).
The open water will be present mainly in the shape of 2 lakes, and water levels in the lakes will be manipulated so that there are at least 4 dry islands present on them. The islands, and the reedbed in the southwest corner of 2a, will also be free of scrub and woody growth.

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

During this plan period the short term objective for the wetland area is to implement management which achieves the correct balance of habitats: 40% grassland, 30% open water, 25% scrub and 5% reedbed. This will be achieved by:
- Low intensity all-year-round cattle grazing to manage the grassland and help combat scrub encroachment. The grazing area will be sub-divided in 2014 to allow concentrated grazing in the northern half which is less favoured by the cattle.
- Mechanical removal of all woody growth from the lake islands in 2014. An area of approximately 0.25ha.
- Mechanical removal of approximately 50% of the scrub in the northern half of the compartment 2a during 2014. An area of approximately 1.0ha.
- Coppicing/removal of the willow scrub in the reedbed in 2 operations during 2014 and 2016. A total length of 200m will be coppiced in 2 halves along the southwest boundary.
- New reedbed habitat will be established on the islands in the lake, after first removing the willow scrub. This will be done in 2017.
- Ragwort will be removed annually as necessary from the grassland to prevent it spreading. Monitoring will take place to determine if there is a need to control other invasive species such as creeping thistle.

6.0 WORK PROGRAMME

Year	Type of Work	Description	Due By

APPENDIX 1: COMPARTMENT DESCRIPTIONS

Cpt No.	Area (ha)	Main Species	Year	Management Regime	Major Management Constraints	Key Features Present	Designations
1a	2.53	Oak (pedunculate)	1900	Min-intervention	No/poor vehicular access within the site		
Mature secondary woodland dominated by oak. Minor proportions of ash, field maple, hazel, hawthorn and elm. Ground flora contains patches of bluebell. Some of the oak trees are suffering from 'acute oak decline' (AOD) and this part of the site is closed to the public at present.							
1b	4.79	Oak (pedunculate)	1998	Min-intervention	No/poor vehicular access within the site		
A plantation of oak, ash, birch, field maple and hazel. Oak is the dominant tree (approximately 60%). The east-west ride through the centre has been heavily planted with hazel on the woodland edges.							
1c	2.91	Oak (pedunculate)	2012	Wood establishment	No/poor vehicular access within the site		Green Belt
Plantation of oak, birch, field maple, hazel and other woody shrubs. Oak is the main species (approximately 40%). Small glades have been left unplanted at the east and west ends and there is a scalloped ride to the south.							
2a	8.63	Hawthorn species	2002	Non-wood habitat	Sensitive habitats/species on or adjacent to site		
A mainly open mixed habitat containing wet grassland, open water and reedbed. Scrub is a component within the grassland and hawthorn is the most common tree. Public access within the body of this area is excluded to protect sensitive wildlife.							

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.