



WOODLAND
TRUST

White Ponds

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 Consequently this printed version may quickly become out of date, particularly in relation to the planned work programme and on-going monitoring observations.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:	White Ponds
Location:	Steeple Morden
Grid reference:	TL282429, OS 1:50,000 Sheet No. 153
Area:	1.45 hectares (3.58 acres)
Designations:	Cambridgeshire Woodland Fund

2.0 SITE DESCRIPTION

2.1 Summary Description

Enjoy a woodland walk at White Ponds Wood, which is set on the deep, rich soils in the bottom of a chalk valley, on the west bank of the Guilden Morden Brook.

2.2 Extended Description

White ponds wood exists on a previously arable field, which was planted up entirely by the local community in March of 1993. The name is derived from the appearance of many small ponds in the field during the winter months. After planting the rides were sown with a species rich wildflower meadow mixture. The wood lies on the west bank of the Guilden Morden Brook, this stream was bridged when the wood was planted, and management access is over a concrete culvert in the north-eastern corner of the wood.

The wood contains mainly ash but also includes field maple, wild cherry, birch, willow, alder, beech, oak and broadleaved shrubs such as hazel and blackthorn. Although a small woodland, there are well managed rides and a stream side meadow included with in the original design which have developed nicely. Because of the way the rides and paths have been managed since planting they are quite species rich with plants such as meadow sweet, ragged robin, white clover and red campion as well as the occasional Twayblade.

All of the trees which were planted at a density of 1100 trees per hectare they have done very well. Within the planting rows there is also much evidence of ash colonisation particularly in the central northern part of the wood. However the site is typical of a radically undermanaged wood in that most of the stems of all planted species are seriously etiolated and over-crowded. Few trees exhibit their true form being excessively tall and narrow with small crowns. Many of the ash standards and regeneration are affected by ash dieback.

The wood is surrounded on three sides by well-established mixed hedges, which include species such as hawthorn, blackthorn, willow and elm as well as lots of ash, there is some dead wood in the hedges and also small headlands strips of tall herbs and bramble between the wood and the hedgerows. In addition to the main brook running along the eastern side of the wood there is a smaller feeder ditch, which runs along the west, south and northern boundaries. Water voles are known to inhabit the stream bank sides. A few hundred metres away down the brook there is a well-established badger sett.

The wood is set on the deep rich soils in the bottom of a chalk valley and is bounded by a mixture of other land use types, arable to the west and north, horse pasture to the west, set aside to the south and a flourishing species rich meadow created and owned by the parish council to the SW.

Most of the effort involved in the establishment and maintenance of the wood is entirely due to local involvement

Most of the effort involved in the establishment and maintenance of the wood is entirely due to local involvement.

3.0 PUBLIC ACCESS INFORMATION

3.1 Getting there

Public access is by way of a footpath from the car park adjoining the local recreation area in the main street of Steeple Mordan, across the parish council meadow/playing fields and over a small footbridge (not wheelchair accessible) to the site. The route from the car park to the wood and the paths inside the wood although generally level are not surfaced and can become muddy in wet weather. No public toilets in locality. Bus stop next to recreation ground, for routes and travel times contact www.travelline.org.uk or ring Traveline on 0871 2002233

3.2 Access / Walks

4.0 LONG TERM POLICY

The woodland will be open to the public in perpetuity. The paths, signs, bridges and other furniture that allow safe access are to be maintained in good order. The wood is primarily for the use and enjoyment of the people of Steeple Morden parish and the other immediately neighbouring parishes. Community involvement has been important in the woods establishment and development and hopefully will be continued in the future. In the long term the wood is to be managed as continuous cover high forest consisting of primarily native broadleaved tree and shrub species. However it is important to maintain the network of paths and open areas as well as the variety of biological niches that they provide for wildlife, this includes dead wood, standing, lying and fallen (in a safe condition) hedge/scrub and tall herb communities on the outer edges of the wood near the stream and old hedges. Natural regeneration of trees and shrubs is to be positively encouraged to gain a wide range of age classes of trees. In order to counter the consequence of severe etiolation, poor age diversity and the effects of ash-dieback it may be necessary to fell diseased stems, suppress ash regeneration, encourage the regeneration of other species and consider supplementary planting.

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

White ponds wood was planted up as part of the Trust's Cambridgeshire Woodland Fund project. Local people were involved in the fundraising, design, planting and maintenance. Within easy walking distance of the village of Steeple Morden it is accessible from the recreation ground where there is a car park following a permissive path over the parish meadow and crossing the Brook. There are 550m of paths throughout the site and an area of open grassland near the brook. The wood is well used for quite enjoyment being far enough away from the village to provide protection from vandalism yet close enough to be accessible to most people

Significance

The wood was very much a product of the local communities interest in creating a local woodland and has proved a great success. There is very little woodland of any kind in the locality, the nearest being approximately 1/2 mile away in Guilden morden. The nearest semi natural woodland is 5km away to the north. There is no woodland open for public access within 10km's.

Opportunities & Constraints

Constraints

Management access for vehicles is difficult.
Parts of the wood flood in wet weather

Opportunities

The wood paths link in with parish public and permissive rights of way system
Within easy access for the local population

Factors Causing Change

Scrub encroachment

Long term Objective (50 years+)

Open safe access that links into the public rights of way network

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

That the 500m of paths and rides are to be assessed annually ensuring works are carried out as necessary to keep path network open and easy to use for informal public access as detailed in EMC Spec 2.01. Associated signage (site name/ welcome signs) to be kept in good condition at all times. Relocate Welcome sign close to southern entrance..

5.2 New Native Woodland

Description

A new native woodland planted in 1993 which has already attained canopy closure over 90% of its planted areas with a top height of 8m+. The use of a range of tree and shrub species including fast growing alder, birch and willow as well as longer lived ash, oak and field maple has created an already interesting young woodland habitat for wildlife to exploit. The design also compliments the existing hedge, headland and stream side habitats by providing a range of ancillary habitats for many common species of plants and animals, scrub/ tall herb, open grassland, shaded rides and stream banks

Significance

In a locality with little semi natural habitat the wood helped protect the species that had hung on in the ditch/stream habitat and old hedgerow. Cambridgeshire is one of the least wooded counties in England and this part of Cambridgeshire is one of the least wooded districts in the county

Opportunities & Constraints

Constraints

It's a very small area which still has intensive arable management on two sides

Opportunities

The brook, ditches and hedgerows which form boundaries already contained small populations of notable plants and animals which could move into the new woodland.

The rich damp soils and protected position are very good for tree growth and propagation

Factors Causing Change

Ash dieback, low light levels, severe etiolation.

Long term Objective (50 years+)

Broadleaved high forest with a variety of species and ages of trees including standing and lying dead wood.

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

In order to counter the severe etiolation of all tree species and to increase the structural diversity, where and when opportunities arise, fell to waste small areas of diseased Ash. Discourage ash regen and encourage other species of both trees and shrubs and if necessary supplementary plant both trees and shrubs. Continue to ride-side coppice and specifically open-up the area between the path and the stream on the eastern side of the wood so as to create a viewpoint across the adjacent meadow between the wood and the village.

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	1.12	Ash	1993	High forest	No/poor vehicular access to the site	Informal Public Access, New Native Woodland	Cambridgeshire Woodland Fund

This compartment consists of the entire site. A new native woodland roughly rectangular in shape planted on a previously arable field in march of 1993. It has approximately 550m of paths and rides sown with a species rich grass mixture after planting. The wood lies adjacent to the guilden morden Brook this stream does flood. Management access is over a concrete culvert in the northeastern corner of the wood. The wood comprises a mix of native broadleaves including ash, field maple, wild cherry, birch, willow alder and broadleaved shrubs such as hazel and blackthorn. The rides and paths have been well managed since planting and are quite species rich. Within the 1100 plants per ha planting there is also much evidence of ash colonisation particularly in the central northern part of the wood. The wood is surrounded on three sides by well established mixed hedges which includes species such as hawthorn, blackthorn, willow and elm as well as lots of ash, there is some dead wood in the hedges and also strips of tall herbs and bramble between the wood and the hedgerows. In addition to the main brook running along the eastern side of the wood there is a smaller feeder ditch, which runs along the west and northern boundaries.

Appendix 2: Harvesting operations (20 years)

Forecast Year	Cpt	Operation Type	Work Area (ha)	Estimated vol/ha	Estimated total vol.
2019	1a	Ride edge Coppice	0.25	4	1
2019	1a	Selective Fell	1.00	4	4
2020	1a	Ride edge Coppice	0.25	4	1
2020	1a	Selective Fell	1.00	4	4
2021	1a	Ride edge Coppice	0.25	4	1
2022	1a	Selective Fell	1.00	4	4

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.