



Snakeshill Wood

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 Consequently this printed version may quickly become out of date, particularly in relation to the planned work programme and on-going monitoring observations.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:	Snakeshill Wood
Location:	Old Costessy
Grid reference:	TG159119, OS 1:50,000 Sheet No. 133
Area:	6.33 hectares (15.64 acres)
Designations:	

2.0 SITE DESCRIPTION

2.1 Summary Description

Overlooking Old Costessey, Snakeshill is a prominent feature of the local landscape and enjoyed for its variety of oak, hornbeam, wild cherry, chestnut, beech and sycamore. The path network has been extended by the Trust to create a circular route.

2.2 Extended Description

Snakeshill Wood is 6.34ha mature mixed broadleaf secondary woodland. The wood is situated on a steep ridge on the edge of semi-urban Old Costessey and is consequently a prominent feature in the local landscape, and well used by the local public. The wood is on an unexcavated gravel pit - a thin layer of light soil overlays the gravel. Consequently the wood is well drained and the paths remain relatively dry throughout the year. Since the Trust acquired the site in 1995, the path network has been extended to allow visitors to take a circular route around the wood.

The main entrance is at the eastern end of the wood where 30 steps have been constructed to prevent erosion and allow safe access up a 20m steep slope. The 2 - 3m wide path then follows the top of the ridge where some ride edge coppicing has taken place, crosses over the sunken track, goes round the lower part of the wood, across the open grassy area (Cpt 2), up 6 steps through a dense section of rhododendron and back up onto the ridge. A vehicle barrier has been installed at the western entrance to the wood to prevent unauthorised access on the management track.

3.0 PUBLIC ACCESS INFORMATION

3.1 Getting there

At eastern entrance direct from Tower Hill (public highway) and part way along north west boundary (private road).

3.2 Access / Walks

4.0 LONG TERM POLICY

Due to past management and environmental factors, Snakeshill wood has a good diverse age structure and deadwood structure. The desired condition of the woodland in the long term will be to maintain the diverse woodland structure, through minimal intervention.

In accordance with the Trust's objective of increasing public enjoyment of woodland, Snakeshill wood will be managed primarily for its amenity value. It is currently well used by the public and this will be encouraged by ensuring the paths are kept open, carrying out regular tree safety inspections and maintaining welcoming entrances.

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

Since the Trust acquired the site in 1995, the path network has been extended to allow visitors to take a circular route around the wood. The main entrance is at the eastern end of the wood where 30 steps have been constructed to prevent erosion and allow safe access up a 20m steep slope. The 2 - 3m wide path then follows the top of the ridge where some ride edge coppicing has taken place, crosses over the sunken track, goes round the lower part of the wood, across the open grassy area up 6 steps through a dense section of rhododendron and back up onto the ridge. A vehicle barrier has been installed at the western entrance to the wood to prevent unauthorised access on the management track.

Significance

Being situated on the edge of the village, it is an important local amenity with public access, especially for dog walkers.

Opportunities & Constraints

Minor levels of vandalism has occurred within the site.
A good area of open space for the local community.
The steep slopes constrains potential less able users to the site.

Factors Causing Change

Long term Objective (50 years+)

Enhance public access so that visitors to the site enjoy the experience.

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

Maintain site as an area of public open access, with all main internal paths being minimum of 1.5m width, unhindered by ride edge woody scrub and fallen trees. Internal structures will be maintained in a safe usable condition.

5.2 Natural Secondary Woodland

Description

The broadleaved woodland is made up of oak, hornbeam, wild cherry, chestnut, beech and sycamore with a hazel understorey. Across the north-facing slopes, the trees form an almost continuous unbroken canopy and the understorey is made up of regenerating trees (oak, hornbeam, wild cherry, sycamore), occasional hazel and bramble. Around the northerly entrance point there is a block of sycamore (approx 30 years old) and to the west of the sunken track which runs north - south across the site, the woodland is made up of mature and semi-mature trees (oak, chestnut, beech, silver birch) with little regeneration. On the slope adjacent to the grassland there is an area of approx 0.35ha of rhododendron.

The small area of rough grassland is surrounded on three sides by the woodland and is a seasonally wet and marshy area. Pigs are thought to have been kept on it prior to The Trust owning the land and is of little ecological importance.

Significance

This is a prominent secondary woodland of importance in the local context.

Opportunities & Constraints

There is an opportunity to maintain 6.34 Ha of mixed broadleaved woodland that is open to the public.

Factors Causing Change

Wind damage on western slope.

Long term Objective (50 years+)

To maintain the existing structural diversity of Snakeshill wood as High forest with an abundant woodland canopy structure and deadwood structure.

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

Maintain a diverse structure and deadwood habitat within the mature secondary woodland. These areas will be left to undertake a Natural process where intervention will be left to a minimum, apart from any health and safety issues that could arise pose a threat to public safety.

6.0 WORK PROGRAMME

Year	Type of Work	Description	Due By
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APPENDIX 1: COMPARTMENT DESCRIPTIONS

Cpt No.	Area (ha)	Main Species	Year	Management Regime	Major Management Constraints	Key Features Present	Designations
1a	6.34	Oak (pedunculate)	1850	High forest	Very steep slope/cliff/quarry/mine shafts/sink holes etc	Informal Public Access, Natural Secondary Woodland	

This mixed broadleaf woodland is made up of oak, hornbeam, wild cherry, chestnut, beech and sycamore with a sparse hazel understorey. Across the north-facing slopes, the trees form an almost continuous unbroken canopy and the understorey is made up of regenerating trees (oak, hornbeam, wild cherry, sycamore), occasional hazel and bramble. There is also a rough area of grassland surrounded by shrubs with a seasonally wet marshy area in the middle of it. Adjacent to the area of grassland there is approx 0.35ha of rhododendron.

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.