



Den Wood

Management Plan 2016-2021

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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 Consequently this printed version may quickly become out of date, particularly in relation to the planned work programme and on-going monitoring observations.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:	Den Wood
Location:	Oldmeldrum
Grid reference:	NJ806302, OS 1:50,000 Sheet No. 30
Area:	18.83 hectares (46.53 acres)
Designations:	Long Established Woodland of Plantation Origin

2.0 SITE DESCRIPTION

2.1 Summary Description

Lying 2 miles north of Oldmeldrum, Den offers mixed, mostly native woodland with good views of the surrounding agricultural landscape. Buzzard and roe deer are common and there are 4 circular walks from 5 to 50 mins in length.

2.2 Extended Description

Aspect, Altitude and Aspect

Den Wood is situated two miles north of Oldmeldrum in Aberdeenshire. The woodland is on a gentle north facing slope down to Tulloch Burn on the northern boundary, with a long narrow ridge rising on a north-south axis, providing for good views over the surrounding agricultural landscape at its southernmost point.

Physical Description

The site forms part of an undulating agricultural landscape of low rolling hills and ridges with occasional rocky outcrops. The underlying bedrock is of Dalradian metamorphic rock giving rise to stony forest brown earths on the well drained areas of the site and peaty gleys in areas of impeded drainage.

The MLURI describes the area as being fairly warm moist lowland, moderately exposed with moderate winters. There is a small permanent stream known as Tulloch Burn on the northern boundary and a smaller tributary of this stream forms a small gully which bisects the site.

Woodland Description

Den wood comprises of 18.5 ha of mixed, mostly native woodland of varying ages and density containing a variety of woodland types and habitats. These include a beech shelterbelt, extensive areas of even-aged birch with small groups of other mixed broadleaves on moderate slopes and areas of even-aged alder on flat wet ground. The beech shelterbelt has been heavily browsed by deer and rabbit in the past and there is no significant natural regeneration of trees. However, the shelterbelt has been recently under planted with mixed broadleaves.

Other Habitats Description

There are small areas of dense gorse heath and dry heath clearings containing occasional rowan and birch regeneration and scattered individual mature rowan and birch throughout. There is one small and one larger open marshy grassland areas supporting dense growth of *Juncus effusus* and *Holcus mollis* and associated vegetation. The larger marshland is surrounded by acid grassland supporting *Calluna vulgaris* and *Vaccinium myrtillus* and associated vegetation. The small streams provide for an area of riparian woodland alder / willow habitat (this supports the North East Scotland Local Biodiversity Action Plan operational objective 3 - To maintain and protect wet woodland, rivers and burns). Buzzard and roe deer are commonly seen in the woodland and evidence of the presence of badger.

Site History

Den Wood was purchased in 1992 with grant from Scottish Natural Heritage, Gordon District Council and Grampian Regional Council. The wood is classified as being ancient woodland of long established plantation origin but nothing is known of the planting history. Much of the present character of the woodland is the result of regeneration following almost total destruction and presumed clearance of the woodland during the great gales of 1953. It is thought that pigs have had access to the woodland in the past.

Until recently, no clearly defined footpaths existed and consequently the woodland has no history of heavy public use.

An extension to the south of the main block of woodland was purchased in 1996.

3.0 PUBLIC ACCESS INFORMATION

3.1 Getting there

General location

Den Wood is situated approximately 4km north of Oldmeldrum in Aberdeenshire. At the roundabout on the A947 and B9170 north of Oldmeldrum, take the A947 heading north to Banff. After c. 1km, take the first right at the Mosshead crossroad, signpost Balgove. Follow this minor narrow road for c. 2km, and the small car park is on the left just after North Chapelhouses Farm.

Paths & entrances

The path network is accessed through a kissing gate at the main entrance. There is a series of 4 looped walks of varying length - the longest is about 3km leading to a viewpoint. The path is uneven in places, and can be muddy in wet weather. Gradients are gentle to moderate, with a few steps on steeper sections, some boardwalks and stone steps across a marshy area.

Parking

There is a small informal car park for approximately 5 cars adjacent to the wood.

Public Transport

The nearest bus stop is Oldmeldrum, approximately 4km from the wood. Oldmeldrum has regular bus connections with Inverurie, Turrif, Fyvie and Aberdeen.

If walking to the wood from Oldmeldrum, please be aware that the first two km are along a reasonably busy 'A' road, with no footway for most of the way. The remaining 2km are on a quiet minor road, again with no footway.

The nearest train station is at Inverurie, 7.5 km from Oldmeldrum on the main Aberdeen to Inverness railway line.

For further information contact Traveline tel. 0871 200 22 33 www.travelinescotland.com

Public Toilets

The nearest public toilets are on Urquhart Road in Oldmeldrum. Disabled access facilities are available - a RADAR key is required.

3.2 Access / Walks

The wood is one of few accessible woods near to Oldmeldrum. There is a small informal parking area on a wide verge near the access gate and a network of nearly 3km of footpaths which gives good access to all parts of the woodland, and you can choose loops of various lengths. Many of the paths are part of the core path network. Some paths have been upgraded, but other sections can be muddy.

4.0 LONG TERM POLICY

Woodland

The long term intention is for Den Wood to continue to develop naturally into a diverse woodland, primarily dominated by native species.

Any standing or fallen deadwood will be left where it is safe to do so for the benefit of wildlife.

Public Access

Existing access facilities will be maintained suitable for Access Category B -medium usage, responding reactively with appropriate changes to demand and levels of use. The wood will be promoted through the Trust's website.

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 Long Established Woodland of Plantation Origin

Description

Den Wood is a diverse and predominately native woodland comprising of birch, alder, beech, hazel and rowan. There are also gorse thickets, open heath, dry and marshy grassland areas.

Significance

Most of the woodland is classified as ancient woodland of long established plantation origin and has many semi-natural characteristics.

The wood is in an agricultural setting, with few ancient woods in the area.

Opportunities & Constraints

Constraints: Rabbit and deer browsing may limit natural regeneration and diversity of vegetation. Management access (vehicular) to some of the woodland is limited by boggy areas.

Factors Causing Change

Long term Objective (50 years+)

Den Wood will be a diverse woodland managed as high forest, primarily dominated by native species, and a vegetation characteristic of semi natural ancient woodland and wet woodland.

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

Allow the woodland to develop naturally with minimum intervention, leaving any standing and fallen deadwood where it is safe to do so for the benefit of wildlife, with the exception of:

- remove tubes from planted trees once no longer needed for protection - all tubes removed by end 2020

- carry out rabbit control if required to protect trees (if damage is more than rare on DAFOR scale)- inspection for rabbit damage included in woodland condition monitoring

5.2 Informal Public Access

Description

The wood is well used by locals as there are not many accessible woods in the area. There is a small informal surfaced car park area on a wide verge near the single access gate and a network of 3km of footpaths with a choice of 4 loops. The path is uneven in places, and can be muddy in wet weather. Gradients are gentle to moderate, with a few steps on steeper sections, and bridges over the ditches.

Many of the paths through the wood are listed as part of the core path network.

Significance

There are not many areas of accessible woodland in the area. High ground at the south of the wood provides good views to east, west and south.

Opportunities & Constraints

Constraints: The car parking area is small. Paths are muddy in places and will deteriorate with higher visitor numbers.

Factors Causing Change

Path condition deteriorating

Long term Objective (50 years+)

Access provision will be in keeping with WT access guidelines and site access category B (medium usage).

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

Managed paths will be kept free from vegetation and over-hanging branches, and in a safe condition.

Remove the old waymarker posts and old information board, and either remove or bury old concrete water trough (depending on access) by end 2017.

Surface the 2 main path loops with type 1 and whin dust as now excessively muddy, including replacing boardwalks and steps, if successful at securing funding. Planned for 2017, but may be delayed subject to funds.

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	1.85	Mixed broadleaves	1995	High forest		Informal Public Access, Long Established Woodland of Plantation Origin	Long Established Woodland of Plantation Origin
<p>Hilltop ring of large, mature, open and increasingly senescent beech and sycamore. There is little or no regeneration and the ground flora is dominated by rank grasses, nettle and willow herb. The open centre is planted with approximately 600 mixed broadleaves in tubes (P1998-2000). Dead wood represented by large limbs, branch wood and occasional blown trees. There are views to surrounding agricultural landscape from the southern end.</p>							
1b	1.43	Mixed broadleaves	1995	High forest	Services & wayleaves	Informal Public Access, Long Established Woodland of Plantation Origin	Long Established Woodland of Plantation Origin
<p>Strip of open policy woodland of medium mature beech, sycamore and occasional rowan. There is no regeneration and the ground flora is dominated by rank grasses, nettle and willow herb. Open has areas have been replanted with approximately 500 mixed broadleaves in 0.6m tubes (P1998-2000). Some small scattered gorse thickets present. Little deadwood present. Overhead powerline crosses site (with 2 poles).</p>							
2a	3.06	Mixed native broadleaves		High forest	Services & wayleaves	Informal Public Access, Long Established Woodland of Plantation Origin	Long Established Woodland of Plantation Origin
<p>Mix of woodland and open, rough acid grassland on level ground. Trees species are silver birch, willow and rowan. Dense gorse covers the entire NW corner as well as patches scattered throughout. A few alder trees were planted in tubes along the western edge (P1998). Underground gas pipeline crosses NW corner.</p>							

2b	1.61	Open ground		Non-wood habitat	Mostly wet ground/exposed site	Informal Public Access, Long Established Woodland of Plantation Origin	Long Established Woodland of Plantation Origin
Very wet area of open marshy grassland with drier areas of heather and grass with scattered birch, goat willow and alder. Rabbits are present.							
3a	4.36	Birch (downy/silver)	1955	High forest		Informal Public Access, Long Established Woodland of Plantation Origin	Long Established Woodland of Plantation Origin
Fairly flat area with mainly even-aged semi-mature broadleaves - silver birch in drier areas and alder in the very wet areas especially towards the southern boundary. Also some sycamore and occasional beech and willow. Deadwood is well represented in some areas with both standing and fallen trees.							
4a	1.99	Birch (downy/silver)	1955	High forest		Informal Public Access, Long Established Woodland of Plantation Origin	Long Established Woodland of Plantation Origin
Silver birch woodland on gentle to moderate north facing slope. The woodland gradually grades from a relatively open canopy with a scrubby birch and patchy gorse shrub layer on the western boundary to dense mature silver birch woodland in the centre of the wood. Deadwood is well represented in some areas with both standing and fallen trees.							
4b	0.94	Alder species	1955	High forest	Mostly wet ground/exposed site	Informal Public Access, Long Established Woodland of Plantation Origin	Long Established Woodland of Plantation Origin
A flat, wet area of ground supporting very dense even-aged mature alder woodland with no other tree species present. There is one large area of open ground at the drier eastern end that supports large dense patches of gorse.							

4c	3.15	Beech	1940	High forest		Informal Public Access, Long Established Woodland of Plantation Origin	Long Established Woodland of Plantation Origin
<p>Gentle to moderate north facing slope supporting a mature, even-aged, regenerated and coppiced beech woodland with groups of coppiced birch and rowan in gaps. There area couple of individual larch and spruce trees. Understorey of dead and senescent coppiced rowan. Plus a small level area on southern boundary near the road comprising of mature hazel with scattered semi-mature silver birch, beech, rowan and elder.</p>							

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.