



Gortgonis Wood

Management Plan 2015-2020

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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 Consequently this printed version may quickly become out of date, particularly in relation to the planned work programme and on-going monitoring observations.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:	Gortgonis Wood
Location:	Coalisland
Grid reference:	H847661, OS 1:50,000 Sheet No. 19
Area:	2.22 hectares (5.49 acres)
Designations:	

2.0 SITE DESCRIPTION

2.1 Summary Description

This is one of The Woodland Trust's 'Woods on Your Doorstep' woodlands, created to commemorate the Millennium. It lies on the eastern edge of Coalisland town, within the peatlands which lead down to Lough Neagh, and has been planted with nearly 5,000 native broadleaf trees.

2.2 Extended Description

This field is a Woyd on the eastern edge of Coalisland town and is within the peatlands which lead down to Lough Neagh. The soil is a mix of alluvial silt and peat and it slopes gradually down to the canal in the north. It lies in a shallow valley which holds the old canal that would have shipped the coal and goods down to Lough Neagh. The land was leased for 99 years from Dungannon District Council in October 2000. The development and first five years maintenance of the site was 50% funded by the Millennium Commission. Forest Service granted Woodland Grant Scheme funding.

Most of the open land on the edge of this town has now been built on with housing and light industrial units, and this site has now been surrounded by built up land. The entire site is 2.45 Ha in area. 4,480 trees were planted in 2001. Predominately oak, ash and rowan species. No weeding was undertaken as there had been problems with vandalism prior to ownership of the land and the weeding could have encouraged damage. Beat up continues until 2006. There has been very little damage to the site through vandalism.

The boundaries all consist of livestock fences and thick hedges, especially to the canal side and yet few mature trees exist in the hedge line. There were horses grazing this land before the Trust acquired it. The playing fields to the south and the canal towpath are owned by the council and access is via their pathways and from a car park at Gortgonis playing fields. The mown grass paths cut through from the south and run to the NW to the towpath gateway. Another mown grass path loops round to the eastern half of the site. Free public access is provided across the site at all times. Two kissing gates allow access in the southern and NW boundaries. One management gate allows access for machinery in the southern boundary. An information board is located at the management gate entrance. Welcome signs have been attached to inform visitors it is a Woodland Trust site.

A powerline dissects the site at the NW edge which restricts planting to 10m either side of it.

3.0 PUBLIC ACCESS INFORMATION

3.1 Getting there

Access for pedestrians is available from the existing surfaced paths around the council site and from the canal towpath. The Council own a car park next to the wood and running track enabling visitors to park directly in front of the wood's entrance.

The lease to the Trust does not expressly grant rights of access for the public at large but access is readily available from the adjoining land and paths which are already in the public domain.

3.2 Access / Walks

4.0 LONG TERM POLICY

In the long term, whilst maintaining the site for public access, it would be intended to encourage the site to become a self-sustaining high forest of mixed deciduous woodland. This will be achieved through initially the establishment of the new planting, through replacement of all failures until the winter of 2006. No weeding will take place as this could encourage vandals to destroy the young whips. The trees are establishing well without the need for weeding. It is unlikely that it will ever produce quality timber due to its small size and the constant threat of vandalism.

In the short term this may require thinning and restructuring as all the trees have been planted at the one time. The need for thinning should be assessed in year 15 or 2016 to enable any of the work to be written into the budget for the following years. The density should be great enough to deter the public choosing additional routes through the woodland but it should also allow woodland ground flora to develop.

Public access will remain over the whole site at all times. The level of public use will determine the level of access facilities to be retained/installed. The path will be mown four times a year until the canopy closes in around 2011. An assessment will then be made for continued path maintenance. On-site information will also be provided dependent on the level of public use.

Public safety will be assessed regularly and tree inspections to mature trees carried out. No trees qualify for inspection in this plan period.

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

As part of the Woods on Your Doorstep project, Gortgonis is community woodland. Free public access is provided across the whole site at all times. This field was grass / herbs left over from the council playing fields above the canal. It was fenced off, paths were cut and two kissing gates were placed in 2001 to allow the public to enjoy this new planting. One kissing gate installed in the southerly boundary next to the council car park for the running track. The other kissing gate has been vandalised but it was allowed access to the canal in the NW boundary. The path is a mown grass path and allows the visitor to access all of this wood. An Information Board has been installed in the southerly boundary adjacent to the kissing gate and the one management gate. Welcome signs also inform visitors it is a Woodland Trust site.

Significance

This access and planting is unique on the edge of this town because most areas are being built on locally and there are so few parks left. The access facilities provide the opportunity to "increase people's awareness and enjoyment of woodland", one of the Woodland Trust's key objectives. It will be important to retain this informal public access.

Opportunities & Constraints

Constraints:

No opportunity for any extensions to this wood as it is sandwiched between a car park, running track, housing and the canal.

Opportunities:

The path is well used by local residents when wanting to gain access to the canal walkway. Maybe opportunities in the future if the council develop the canal walkway to give the wood a higher profile.

Factors Causing Change

Tree canopy closure, Level of public use

Long term Objective (50 years+)

To maintain informal public access through the site by providing facilities appropriate for the level of use. This will include the maintenance of the path to an acceptable standard and maintaining the provision of on-site information.

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

Paths to be mown four times per yr, May, June, July and August until 2006. Checks on the fence and hedge condition annually, and repairs done if needed. The need for further path maintenance should be assessed in year 2011 when the tree canopies close in.

5.2 Secondary Woodland

Description

A total of 4,480 trees were planted in 2001. The predominant species were oak, ash and rowan.

Significance

The aim of the Woods on Your Doorstep project was to create community woodland. This also fulfills one of the Woodland Trust's key aims: "to increase new native woodland". In addition, woodland creation will add a variety of habitats to the site and improve its biodiversity value.

Opportunities & Constraints

Constraints:

No further opportunity for planting as there is no available surrounding land. A powerline also dissects the NW edge of the wood restricting planting to 10m either side of it.

Opportunities:

There is an opportunity to manage Gortgoins as a broadleaved woodland for people to enjoy and to create a significant area of broadleaved woodland in this area.

Factors Causing Change

Vandalism (not significant to date however)

Long term Objective (50 years+)

To establish a mixed broadleaved woodland managed as high forest.

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

Establishment of the planted area is of prime importance. The trees will be beat up until late 2006. No weeding will be done to prevent an anti-social element being attracted to the newly planted trees. The trees are establishing well without the need for weeding. No thinning will be required in this plan period.

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	2.22	Mixed broadleaves	2001	High forest		Informal Public Access, Secondary Woodland	

A Woyd site of a north facing grass field adjoining a council playing field and above the canal path on the SE edge of Coalisland town. All boundaries consist of fences or hedges, with an internal hedge dividing the site. Grass and herb layers are prominent and with no mature trees inside the site. The site totals an area of 2.45 Ha and has an elevation of 30m and a NE aspect. A powerline dissects the NW edge of the wood. A total of 4,480 trees were planted in 2001.

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.