



# Tramlines 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 Consequently this printed version may quickly become out of date, particularly in relation to the planned work programme and on-going monitoring observations.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](http://www.woodlandtrust.org.uk) or contact the Woodland Trust ([wopsmail@woodlandtrust.org.uk](mailto: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.

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## 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](http://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.

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## 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

<b>Site name:</b>	Tramlines Wood
<b>Location:</b>	Okehampton
<b>Grid reference:</b>	SX596945, OS 1:50,000 Sheet No. 191
<b>Area:</b>	5.69 hectares (14.06 acres)
<b>Designations:</b>	Ancient Semi Natural Woodland, Tree Preservation Order

## 2.0 SITE DESCRIPTION

## 2.1 Summary Description

Tramlines is a long, linear shaped ancient woodland very close to the town of Okehampton. The site lies on a steep slope and is dissected by many streams and wet flushes which feed into the East Okement River which flows along the northern boundary of the site. To the Western end the river and woodland are abutted by an open field which was planted with trees as part of the Trust's 'Woods On Your Doorstep'(WOYD). Millennium project The wood is likely to have had its origins in the 12th Century Okehampton Deer Park and the ancient woodland component is a good example of Western, Upland Oak woodland. It has been identified as being important for lichens and pied flycatchers. It is of local importance as ancient woodland and its identification as a Local Wildlife Site (LWS) reflects . In recent decades the woodland has received little management input and is composed primarily of a high forest structure with a shrub layer composed of frequent Hazel and Holly regeneration. Cattle historically had access to the wood as part of a much bigger grazing unit which may have helped to control species like holly. There are a number of significant older trees that could be deemed to be of veteran interest. Additionally the riverside strip is very varied in structure and this, along with the boggy wet flushes, dramatically increases the biodiversity of the site. The 'WOYD' field is limited in conservation value, but provides an area of open ground in an otherwise mature woodland complex. Minor planting of willow shrubs took place in December 2000 to enhance the 'woodland' experience but the majority of the area is predominately open, species poor grassland with encroaching bracken. The 'WOYD' Millennium Feature is a wooden bridge spanning the Okement River as this allows local public access to the site by connecting to a new path which leads from Simmons Park.

## 2.2 Extended Description

Tramlines is a long, linear shaped ancient woodland very close to the town of Okehampton. The site lies on a steep slope and is dissected by many streams and wet flushes which feed into the East Okement River which flows along the northern boundary of the site. To the Western end the river and woodland are abutted by an open field which was planted with trees as part of the Trust's 'Woods On Your Doorstep'(WOYD). Millennium project

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The 'WOYD' Millennium Feature is a wooden bridge spanning the Okement River as this allows local public access to the site by connecting to a new path which leads from Simmons Park.

## 3.0 PUBLIC ACCESS INFORMATION

### 3.1 Getting there

Public access is via a public bridleway running along the old tramway through the site from Station Road immediately to the south of the woodland area.

A link from this bridleway down to the Town through Simmons Park allows access to the riverside woodland. The local college and town sports pitches are also accessible from the wood via the same path. The nearest bus stop is in the station car park and the wood is clearly signposted from the car park. The Okehampton Youth Hostel opposite the old train station has recently been upgraded.

Tramlines Wood is located next to the A30 just south of the town of Okehampton. It is accessible from both ends and there is a car park for about six cars at the eastern end. From the car park walk past the house and through the push open gate. The stream in front of you can be crossed climbing a few steps up to a narrow wooden bridge. From the other side of the stream turn right and follow the path, through another push open large gate, into the wood. The main path through the wood is wide, level and a good all weather surface with no obstacles. At the far end there is another push open gate and this leads onto a council road next to the train station. Both entrances into the wood are clearly signposted. The linking path from the top bridleway to the entrance to Simmons Park is steep, has steps, and may be uneven underfoot.

The nearest toilets are in Okehampton and the toilets at Fairplace, Market Street and at the Station have RADAR accessible toilets. ([www.directenquiries.com](http://www.directenquiries.com))

This information was correct as of January 2015. For up to date local travel information see the travel line website [www.travelline.org.uk](http://www.travelline.org.uk)

### 3.2 Access / Walks

## 4.0 LONG TERM POLICY

**Ancient Woodland:** To be maintained and developed as a mixed age structure, mainly through natural processes, such as storm damage, and natural regeneration, this fits with the Woodland Trust's aims of protecting ancient woodland. Active management will only take place if light levels are thought to be inappropriate to maintain the habitat's suitability for the lichen communities and pied flycatchers and to help maintain its LWS status. The river edge will be managed as necessary to provide dappled shade, sunlight being able to reach the shallow riffle areas.

The WOYD project from 2000 will be maintained as an open glade with an element of willow as planted by the local community. Scrub will be accepted along the river bank and lower woodland edge as long as it forms no more than 25% of the total area.

**Public Access -** Visitor levels are regarded as being relatively high, consisting mainly of horse riders, dog walkers and people using the pathways as a link into Okehampton or the nearby school, via Simmons Park. Tree safety will be paramount around the paths and trees will be assessed and managed accordingly. Removal of trees for safety reasons will also provide opportunities to create gaps in the forest canopy and encourage natural regeneration. A further path will be made to create a circular walk within the wood and interpretation provided on the history of the site. This will help towards the Trust's objectives of inspiring everyone to value woods and trees.



## 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 Ancient Semi Natural Woodland

#### Description

Mature ancient woodland on steep ground, typical of the Dartmoor Area, comprising predominately Sessile Oak high forest, likely to be NVC type W11. Biodiversity is enhanced by a wet woodland riparian zone along the East Okement River and also wet flushes throughout the wood. Many tree species within the wood are currently of a similar mature age class, but natural regeneration is occurring. In 2000 a small area of willow was planted on the northern edge of the woodland adjacent to the Simmons Park entrance as part of the Trust's WOYD project. Historically the wood was occasionally grazed at a low level as the wood was part of a much larger grazing unit. Since that time holly and sycamore have become more dominant and require management to control them. The river is recognised as being of importance to a variety of wildlife communities, namely insects, birds, bats lower plants and fish.

#### Significance

Whilst an internationally important type of woodland concentrated in SW England, the conservation of ancient woodland and increasing biodiversity are also fundamental objectives of the Woodland Trust. The woodland has also recently been identified as a Local Wildlife Site. A Lichen survey was carried out in 2003 and several notable, rare and threatened species were found - emphasising the importance of this element of the wood. It is also locally important for its population of pied flycatchers.

#### Opportunities & Constraints

The environmental effects of the A30 Bypass may limit the potential biodiversity of the woodland with particular emphasis on the lichen assemblages for which the Dartmoor area is noted. The mature age class of most trees on the site offers opportunities for regeneration by natural processes. The riparian zone is valuable in terms of flora and fauna diversity and enhances the overall diversity of the site. While it may be of value to re-introduce grazing to the site to maintain the 'open' nature of the wood for lichens and control sycamore and holly, the size of the wood and lack of other higher quality grazing adjacent means this is unlikely.

#### Factors Causing Change

The cessation of grazing and the development of holly, sycamore and beech have changed the structure of the wood and are now threatening part of the woods interest.

#### Long term Objective (50 years+)

A multi-aged, regenerating Oak woodland with an open structure suitable for lichens and pied flycatchers. The river corridor will be varied structure of light and shade improving conditions for wildlife.

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

The wood has an open airy feel to it allowing for suitable habitat conditions for the lichen community and pied flycatchers.

Work programme:

1. To create a scallop 20m x 10m on the ride edges to increase light levels.
2. To cut and stump treat approximately 0.25 ha of sycamore and holly around important lichen trees over the course of the plan so that the visual change is lessened. Approximately 0.05 ha will be cut each year around key trees.
3. To mow the open glade in August each year.
4. To lay approximately  $\frac{1}{4}$  (100m) of the hedge on the south side of the bridleway during this plan period.
5. To open up the river bank around 2 shallow riffle areas of the river.

## 5.2 Informal Public Access

### Description

The site is located on the edge of the town and adjacent to housing and a local park. There is a public bridleway through the site and a new path has been created by the WT, linking the woodland to Simmons Park. The bridge across the river (from sub comp 1b) has improved the recreational potential of the site and helps to link the park to the woodland. The woodland has a 'rural' feel, which is in contrast to the more formal park adjacent and adds to the visitor experience. An open glade partly planted as part of the 'Woods On Your Doorstep' project helps to provide a welcoming feel to the woodland.

### Significance

Access to woodland areas off the edge of Dartmoor has been identified in a number of Biodiversity action plans as an option to reduce pressure on more fragile ecosystems. Enjoyment of woodland is also principal objective of the Woodland Trust.

### Opportunities & Constraints

The steep, wet ground precludes many access improvements over and above those in this plan. The shape of the wood also means that further paths would cause too much disturbance.

### Factors Causing Change

Increasing public use causing erosion of paths, which could cause the loss of path edge flora if people 'step' round difficult bits.

### Long term Objective (50 years+)

A well-used and attractive informal link out of the town on to the public rights of way network, providing an enjoyable woodland experience within walkable distance of an urban area. The main users are local residents, the local school, walkers, horse riders, cyclists and to a lesser degree tourists, especially ones using the steam railway.

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

To ensure that the wood remains accessible to the public and that the site is welcoming. A circular walk can be created so that the visitor can go for a walk 'in' the wood rather than 'through' the wood.

#### Work Programme:

1. To carry out annual tree safety inspections on both zones A and B due to the high levels of use and manage as necessary.
2. To carry out a path cut for the link path from the bridleway to the footbridge maintaining steps and access gates.
3. To create a circular walk around the wood and upgrade part of the 'link' path.
4. To create an interpretation panel explaining the history of the site as well as its wildlife.

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## 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	5.30	Oak (sessile)	1850	High forest	Very steep slope/cliff/quarry/mine shafts/sink holes etc	Informal Public Access	Ancient Semi Natural Woodland, Tree Preservation Order
<p>Mature Sessile Oak (P1850) woodland with Birch (P1930), over a Hazel and Holly understorey (showing an affinity with NVC class W11), areas of wet flushes and riparian zone along River contain more Ash, Alder and Willow (W7). Some very large open grown Oak, Beech and Sycamore are present although rare. Bramble, Bracken and Bluebell are common on the higher ground whilst mosses and rushes dominate the wet flushes.</p>							
1b	0.40	Other	2000	Wood pasture	No/poor vehicular access within the site	Informal Public Access	
<p>A 'Woods On Your Doorstep' site comprising of a small number of trees planted in 2000, scrub and a level field of species poor semi-improved grassland adjacent to the East Okement River.</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.