



Midge Hole

Management Plan 2018-2023

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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 Consequently this printed version may quickly become out of date, particularly in relation to the planned work programme and on-going monitoring observations.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:	Midge Hole
Location:	Crackpot, nr Low Row
Grid reference:	SD973962, OS 1:50,000 Sheet No. 98
Area:	2.05 hectares (5.07 acres)
Designations:	Ancient Woodland Site, National Park

2.0 SITE DESCRIPTION

2.1 Summary Description

This site lies on a sloping, rectangular piece of land, bounded by dry stone walls within a steep-sided valley. There is currently no public access.

2.2 Extended Description

The site is a north facing, steeply sloping, rectangular former unimproved meadow, bounded by drystone walls, which runs down to the stream known as Summer Lodge Beck. Situated within an open but steep sided valley and surrounded by a mixture of improved and unimproved pasture for the most part but does abut planted ancient woodland (containing larch, beech and sycamore).

No public access exists on site, the closest footpath runs about 150m to the east, through a SSSI meadow covered in butterfly, marsh and purple orchids with red clover, yellow rattle and betony. The site is very visible from the opposite side of the valley, and from the hamlet of Crackpot. It has been planted between 1984 and 2002 with a mixture of tree species. Many of the older trees are native species, oak, ash etc as the site was originally intended to be planted using wholly native species, creating an arboretum of all the British natives. It has since become a 'friendship wood' where gifts of trees from friends and family of the previous owners have also been planted, hence the wide range of exotic species, including Western Red cedar and wellingtonia. Many of the trees are in poor condition, due to the combined factors of soil type, altitude and exposure. As unimproved pasture (as can be seen on adjacent meadows) the ground flora is relatively species rich, and as such herbicides have not been used on site, and all weeding has been done by hand, along with a wide variety of tree protection - tubes, spirals and rabbit netting. There are a small number of ash and rowan establishing on site despite the attention of deer, rabbits and occasionally by sheep.

Within the site are a number of ruined drystone walls, water trough and a small two storey stone barn, which does have significant cracks in the north facing wall and is supported by a metal prop.

To the south and west of the site are two disused lead mine levels, the southern level appears only to be for ventilation/ drainage, being a very small stone lined opening, the level to the west is much larger with a fine stone faced entrance and tunnel and with a large spoil heap.

Management access is available from the south and east, across gently sloping grazing meadows to a field gate in the southern boundary. Another route also exists from the west across grazing land again, but which has not been used since 1984 - there is no vehicle access within the site due to the slope.

3.0 PUBLIC ACCESS INFORMATION

3.1 Getting there

The site has no public access, however it can be seen from a large number of footpaths and bridleways to the north, on the opposite side of the valley.

3.2 Access / Walks

4.0 LONG TERM POLICY

The long term intention, is through minimum intervention, to allow the development of a mature mixed woodland, containing a variety of native and non-native broadleaves and conifers, the composition of which will depend on the survival of planted stock in this exposed position, and the establishment of natural regeneration from nearby woodlands.

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 Secondary Woodland

Description

Steeply sloping former unimproved meadow planted with a mixture of broadleaves and conifers (planted between 1984 and 2002) and a small area (0.2 ha) of mature oak, ash, sycamore woodland designated as ancient woodland site.

Significance

Whilst only part of the site is planted ancient woodland, the new planting does provide a small but useful area of additional woodland habitat and woodland landscape within an area with very little woodland cover. Linking in to a much larger area of planted ancient woodland and ancient semi-natural woodland and unimproved pasture following the course of Summer Lodge Beck.

Opportunities & Constraints

Currently a wide variety of native and exotic species planted between 1984 and 2002. Due to the altitude and exposure on the north facing slope many of the exotics are in poor condition, and although minimum intervention will provide a mature mixed woodland given enough time, selective felling of the non-natives could be undertaken, bringing the woodland more towards native woodland or at least broadleaved woodland, however the site was planted as a 'friendship wood', hence many of the trees have a commemorative relevance, and should be retained on site. The adjacent ancient woodland site to the north is also mixed woodland, containing a large percentage of non-natives broadleaves and conifers.

Factors Causing Change

Deer Damage, Rabbit Damage, Occasional sheep damage, Natural Regeneration of ash and rowan

Long term Objective (50 years+)

Maintain mixed woodland on this site through minimum intervention, once the trees on site are established.

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

Maintain the boundaries annually in good condition, with wall top netting as protection of the site vital to the survival of the trees on site from surrounding sheep grazing. The site will be left to minimum intervention in the short term to assess the impacts of ash disease and regeneration through the woodland condition assessment. Deer and rabbit management is likely to continue but of little impact given the volumes of animals on adjacent land.

5.2 Ancient Woodland Site

Description

0.2 hectares of what appears to be remnant Ancient Woodland along the steepest slopes down to the stream, dominated by ash with sycamore, alder, oak, rowan and a sparse understorey of hazel. Ground flora has indicators of the ancient origins with Dogs mercury, bluebell, primrose, wood sorrel and violets scattered throughout. This woodland is not currently recorded as ancient or planted on current Woodland Inventory maps, but woodland (Gill Plantation) adjacent has been cleared and replanted in the past with sycamore and larch.

Significance

This site (though undesignated) forms part of a larger area of Planted Ancient Woodland and unimproved grassland, which then links in with SSSI meadows to the west. The wood is now forming an important part of the landscape where most of the small, isolated remnant ancient woodlands are scattered along the tributaries of the River Swale.

Opportunities & Constraints

Due to the inaccessible location, small size and lying adjacent (separated by stream) by Planted Ancient Woodland of a similar composition, there is little opportunity or benefit for management towards native woodland, instead a minimum intervention approach, after securing the boundaries, will maintain woodland on this site, which is naturally developing towards a more native composition with the dominance of ash/ rowan regeneration.

Factors Causing Change

Deer Damage, Rabbit Damage, Natural Regeneration Of ash and rowan, Occasional sheep damage
Ash dieback disease causing the loss of ash trees.

Long term Objective (50 years+)

Maintain mixed woodland cover on this probable Planted Ancient Woodland Site through a minimum intervention approach.

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

Maintain the boundaries annually in good condition, with wall top netting as protection of the site vital to the survival of the trees on site from surrounding sheep grazing. The site will be left to minimum intervention in the short term to assess the impacts of ash disease and regeneration through the woodland condition assessment. Deer and rabbit management is likely to continue but of little impact given the volumes of animals on adjacent land.

5.3 Historic Features

Description

Old stone barn situated in the upper section of the site
 Dry stone walls which form the eastern, western and southern boundaries of the site extending to 450m
 Old mine levels (two) and associated stone work.

Significance

All features form part of the historical use of the site and are traditional features in the Yorkshire dales

Opportunities & Constraints

No real opportunities or constraints given the site location and access issues.

Factors Causing Change

General degrading due to weather and animal damage, sheep, rabbits etc

Long term Objective (50 years+)

To maintain the historical features in a safe condition with the walls remaining functional to keep livestock out of the wood.

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

Check and repair the boundary walls in 2018
 Replace the lintel within the old barn in 2018

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	2.06	Mixed broadleaves	1984	Min-intervention	Housing/infrastructure, structures & water features on or adjacent to site, No/poor vehicular access to the site, Very steep slope/cliff/quarry/mine shafts/sink holes etc		Ancient Woodland Site, National Park
<p>1.86 Ha of establishing broadleaves and conifers, planted between 1984 and 2002, with a further 0.2 ha of mature woodland (designated Ancient Woodland Site) dating to approximately 1900. Planted on former unimproved grassland, enclosed by drystone walls to the south, east and west and by Summer Lodge Beck to the North. The site is a steeply sloping, north facing slope, bounded to the north-east, north-west and south by unimproved rough pasture, with a scattering of broadleaved trees and to the south-east and south-west by improved pasture. To the north across Summer Lodge Beck, there is ancient replanted woodland, composed predominantly of mature larch, beech and sycamore. The site contains a small 2 storey stone barn and 2 disused lead mine levels with their associated spoil heaps. To the north across Summer Lodge Beck, there is ancient replanted woodland, composed predominantly of mature larch beech and sycamore. Compartment ground flora is a relatively rich mixture of unimproved but rank grassland, with a small number of ancient woodland indicator species under and around the areas of mature woodland.</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.