WOODLAND TRUST

Hazels Lodge Wood

Management Plan 2018-2023

MANAGEMENT PLAN - CONTENTS PAGE

ITEM **Page No.**

Introduction
Plan review and updating
Woodland Management Approach
Summary
1.0 Site details
2.0 Site description
2.1 Extended Description
3.0 Public access information
3.1 Getting there
3.2 Access / Walks
4.0 Long term policy
5.0 Key Features
5.1 Ancient Woodland Site
6.0 Work Programme

Appendix 1: Compartment descriptions
Appendix 2: Harvesting operations (20 years)
Glossary

MAPS

Access
Conservation Features
Management

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 Consequently this printed version may quickly become out of date, particularly in relation to the planned work programme and on-going monitoring observations.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:	Hazels Lodge Wood
Location:	Tiverton
Grid reference:	SS937198, OS 1:50,000 Sheet No. N/A
Area:	29.27 hectares (72.33 acres)
Designations:	Planted Ancient Woodland Site

2.0 SITE DESCRIPTION

2.1 Extended Description

An attractive woodland straddling a side valley running off the main River Exe valley with large stands of bluebells in the lighter areas. Five miles outside the southern edge of Exmoor National Park the wood lies within the NCA no. 148 Devon Redlands. On the Ancient Woodland Inventory it is recorded mainly as Ancient semi natural woodland but in reality it has been found to be mostly a Plantation on an ancient woodland site (PAWS). This part of the Exe valley has a lot of ancient woodland on its valley sides. Large amounts of it have been planted with conifers in the past. In this respect Hazel Lodge Wood is typical of the area It is also a Devon Local Wildlife Site. It has been purchased as a 'Purchase, Restore and Pass on' site (PRP). This is a new initiative to deliver ancient woodland restoration, securing the ancient woodland features of the site while not incurring the long term management costs associated with permanent ownership. As such there is no public access within the wood.

The broadleaf component of the wood is Atlantic sessile oak woodland on the slopes with wet alder woodland in the valley bottom. Conifers have been planted on much of in it around 1960, the majority being Douglas fir, but also larch, western hemlock and western red cedar. Some has been managed in the past on a commercial basis, but some areas are of a poor unthinned quality. There are also a number of ponds fed by a stream that runs the length of the wood. The valley sides are freely draining acidic loams over rock, but the valley bottom is very wet with surface pooling in many places.

A number of trial plots were established in compt 1e by Aberdeen University in the 1980s in order to investigate single tree short rotation crops and consist of both conifers and exotic broadleaves including Nothofagus; the trials have now been abandoned.

There is a large population of Red deer in the locality, with evidence of extensive heavy browsing throughout the wood. Roe deer are also present.

The site supports a wealth of wildlife, including pied flycatchers, wood warbler and silver washed fritillary butterflies. There are at least 3 badger setts in the wood.

3.0 PUBLIC ACCESS INFORMATION

3.1 Getting there

3.2 Access / Walks

4.0 LONG TERM POLICY

Restoration will be undertaken by the gradual removal of conifers through successive selective thinnings to be replaced by emerging broadleaved natural regeneration; other invasive species such as rhododendron, laurel and holly will be controlled/removed until they no longer pose a threat to the ancient woodland features. The site will then be sold on to a sympathetic owner for long-term management. It is anticipated that this restoration period will be approximately 20 years in duration.

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 Woodland Site

Description

The wood sits in a part of the Exe Valley where there is a good concentration of ancient woodland and plantations on ancient woodland. Obvious species of interest outside of the ancient woodland flora itself are Pied Flycatchers and silver washed fritillary butterflies. The ground is mostly sloping valley sides, which are steep in places. There are also a number of ponds fed by a stream that runs the length of the wood. The valley sides are freely draining acidic loams over rock, but the valley bottom is very wet with surface pooling in many places.

Evidence on the ground conflicts with that of the ancient woodland inventory with much more of the site being PAWS than shows on the inventory.

The wood can effectively be split into five main types.

1. Ancient sessile oak woodland with a good ground flora but the shrub layer dominated by holly (compt 1b and 1f)
2. An area marked as ancient woodland on the inventory which are on the valley floor and dominated by species such as alder, hazel and birch (compt 1c)
3. Stands that are marked as ancient woodland on the Inventory but are obviously PAWS of various stand types, mainly dominated by Douglas fir, western hemlock, sitka spruce and western red cedar. These include compt 1a, 1d, and 2a. Compt 1a has an area of rhododendron within it. The degree of historical management varies considerably.
4. Stands that are PAWS on the inventory and on the ground. These are compt 1e which is a very mixed stand due to the experiments set up by Aberdeen University, Compt 2b which is a mix of douglas fir and western hemlock and compt 2c which is a well thinned larch plantation.
5. Two areas that are not ancient woodland these are compts 3a (larch) and 3b (mainly douglas).

The amount of ancient wood flora varies throughout depending on light conditions, both between compartments and within compartments. There are a number of mature oak, beech and ash within the stands. Fallen deadwood is common throughout as is broadleaf standing deadwood.

The woodland as a whole is severely impacted by deer. It is heavily used by red deer and also roe deer.

There is a network of management tracks throughout the wood, many of which seem to have been stoned in the past, however some are very steep and the quality of the culverts crossing the stream in a number of places is uncertain. There are also many spring lines that cross the tracks.

Significance

The restoration of plantations on ancient woodland is a key priority for the Woodland Trust. As the first PRP for The Woodland Trust it has some significance in trailing different ways of delivering the Trusts objectives. The woodland is also a Devon Local Wildlife Site and as such restoring it to predominantly native broadleaf woodland would secure its status as such.

Opportunities & Constraints

Opportunities:
1. To secure and restore the ancient woodland features in Hazel Lodge.
2. To test whether the PRP method is a good way of delivering the Trusts objectives.

Constraints:
1. Some of the access around the site is very difficult for extraction which may limit how some of the site can be managed – particularly the critical PAWS section in Compt. 2a
2. The number of spring lines along the tracks may affect when the wood can be worked to avoid polluting the stream and in turn the River Exe.

Factors Causing Change

1. Light levels from conifers, rhododendron and holly will all have a negative effect on natural regeneration and the ancient woodland features on site.
2. The high red deer (and roe) population is having a dramatic effect on the structure and ecological functioning of the woodland.
3. Tree diseases, particularly phytophthora ramorum, and its impact of larch could have an effect on how the woodland is restored

Long term Objective (50 years+)

Restoration will be undertaken by the gradual removal of conifers through successive selective thinnings to be replaced by emerging broadleaved natural regeneration; other invasive species such as rhododendron, laurel and holly will be controlled/removed until they no longer pose a threat to the ancient woodland features. The site will then be sold on to a sympathetic owner for long-term management. It is anticipated that this restoration period will be approximately 20 years in duration.

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

The restoration of the wood will begin based on the priorities in the PAWS assessment.

1. Implement programme of deer management using the Deer Initiative contract to slowly reduce deer populations to the point where there aren't having an adverse impact on natural regeneration opportunities.
2. Eradicate rhododendron and laurel from compts 1a & 1b by cutting and stump treating. Spraying of regrowth may be required.
3. Assess tracks and structures for suitability of extraction and pollution control making track improvements as necessary to enable forestry operations.
4. Thin compartments 1a, 1d, 1e 2a, 2b & 3b. Thinning will focus initially on releasing remnant ancient woodland features, then on manipulating light levels to encourage native broadleaved natural regeneration. The intensity of thinning will vary between and within compartments but will be removal of broadly 20% of the basal area spread over the compartment.
5.Halo thinning native veteran or future veteran trees to better protect from neighbouring trees and shade in all compartments other than 1a and 1f
6. Retain and increase fallen and deadwood where safe to do so within harvested compartments, particularly compts 2a, 2b

6.0 WORK PROGRAMME

Year	Type of Work	Description	Due By

APPENDIX 1: COMPARTMENT DESCRIPTIONS

Cpt No.	Area (ha)	Main Species	Year	Management Regime	Major Management Constraints	Key Features Present	Designations
1a	2.83	Douglas fir	1960	PAWS restoration			
Planted with Douglas, Norway and Sitka. Broadleaf species are rare with the occasional ash and silver birch. Ferns are much more abundant. Soft rush and grasses as well. Ancient woodland flora rare. Some fallen deadwood. 1 badger hole. Some greater wood rush. Some large ash coppiced stools need releasing. Rhododendron at the western end needs clearing. Some standing deadwood. It is recorded as Ancient woodland on the Ancient Woodland Inventory							
1b	5.04	Oak (sessile)		High forest			
Predominantly oak birch hazel woodland. . Other species young beech. Holly dominates the shrub layer with a very clear browse line at 4ft. Old bank close to eastern end. . Ground flora is varied with large patches of bluebells, wood sorrel and wood sage. Honeysuckle is also present . Some greater wood rush, primroses, ferns and some grasses in more open areas. Bracken and bramble come through where the canopy is open. Small badger sett in towards the east. An area of Laurel is present in the corner of the wood by the road junction. A some oaks have been coppiced in the past. Fallen deadwood is common. Recorded as ancient woodland on the Ancient Woodland Inventory. Signs of large patches of bluebells, wood sorrel and wood sage. Honeysuckle is also present . Some greater wood rush. Good wood bank runs along the road side.							
1c	1.13	Hazel		Min-intervention			

More gently sloping down to the stream. Mainly hazel with some ash and birch ground flora include heavily browsed bramble , primroses and honeysuckle, also some ferns but generally sparse and bare mud due to high deer use age. The western end is open with bracken and bramble on the drier areas and tall grasses and rushes in wetter areas. The eastern half of the compartment is recorded as ancient woodland on the Ancient Woodland Inventory.							
1d	4.99	Douglas fir	1960	PAWS restoration			
This is a varied compt reflecting the historical management of the site but also the changing topography from steep valley sides to flat valley bottom with the braided stream, ponds and spring lines included. Much of valley sides have been stocked with douglas fir, larch, western hemlock and spruces . The wet flushes and wet valley bottom have Alder and birch. There is one glade like area with mature sessile oak with some hazel and holly and birch understorey. The ground flora throughout is varied depending on light conditions and use by deer. Where conditions are right bluebell and ransoms are present, other areas have no vegetation due to light conditions while the valley floor is bare mud due to the intense use by red deer.							
1e	2.14	Mixed conifers	1960	PAWS restoration			
The compartment follows the PAWS boundary on the Ancient Woodland Inventory. The boundaries are not all visible on the ground. Some of this compartment was used for a number of trial plots by Aberdeen University in the 1980s in order to investigate single tree short rotation crops, and consist of both conifers and exotic broadleaves including Nothofagus The trials are now abandoned. The compartment in general is steep with mainly larch and douglas fir. There are some western hemlock and Norway spruce as well. Little remains of any ancient woodland flora although where conditions are right there are patches of bluebells. There is a man made pond along the upper side of the western track.							
1f	2.51	Oak (sessile)		High forest			
Steeply sloping mainly sessile oak with some beech. Shrub layer mainly holly but with some hazel and birch. Laurel also at bottom at the road junction. There are ancient woodland plants including bluebell. Bracken and bramble are present in more open areas. 1 small badger set.							
2a	3.97	Douglas fir	1960	PAWS restoration			
Steep north facing slope down to the stream. The stand is varied with dense areas of Douglas firs, Sitka spruce and western hemlock and western red cedar. There are some old oaks, beeches and holly within the conifer stands but also some in wholly broadleaf areas. Large areas have little in the way of ground flora but there are areas of bluebells where conditions are more suitable. The western end is more difficult to access.							

2b	2.96	Douglas fir	1960	PAWS restoration			
The north facing compartment slopes steeply down the slope. The boundary is indistinct on the ground but follows the PAWS boundary on the ancient woodland inventory. Predominantly douglas fir with some western hemlock and western red cedar. Ancient woodland indicators are very sparse with only bramble and foxglove being present in any amount. There are occasional mature holly and some beech at the western end.							
2c	1.62	Hybrid larch	1960	PAWS restoration			
Thinned larch, holly oak and beech on top edge. Possible saw pit in top left corner. Large badger sett at the top of the slope and a secondary one in hedge bank at right hand end. Good patches of bluebell. Bracken is common. This compartment is recorded as PAWS on the Ancient Woodland Inventory.							
3a	1.06	Hybrid larch	1960	High forest			
Compt is not ancient woodland according to the ancient woodland inventory. It is thinned larch . Other species include occasional holly and hazel . Large ash stools on field edge. The ground flora is dominated by bracken with some patches of grasses and areas of bluebell. The boundary with compt 2a is a broken bank with coppiced beech on it.							
3b	1.01	Douglas fir	1960	High forest			
Compt is not ancient woodland according to the ancient woodland inventory. Steep north facing slope down to stream. Douglas fir and western hemlock . Some beech within the plantations. Ground flora spare some male fern, bracken and bramble.							

Appendix 2: Harvesting operations (20 years)

Forecast Year	Cpt	Operation Type	Work Area (ha)	Estimated vol/ha	Estimated total vol.
2020	1a	Thin	2.83	25	70.75
2020	1b	Thin	4.99	25	124.75
2020	1e	Thin	2.14	25	53.5
2020	2a	Thin	3.97	25	99.25
2020	2b	Thin	2.96	25	74
2020	3b	Thin	1.01	25	25.25
2023	1a	Thin	2.83	25	70
2023	1b	Thin	4.99	25	124
2023	1e	Thin	2.14	25	53
2023	2a	Thin	3.97	25	99
2023	2b	Thin	2.96	25	74
2023	3b	Thin	1.01	25	25
2028	1a	Thin	2.83	25	70
2028	1a	Thin	2.83	25	70
2028	1b	Thin	4.99	25	124
2028	1b	Thin	4.99	25	124
2028	1e	Thin	2.14	25	53
2028	1e	Thin	2.14	25	53
2028	2a	Thin	3.97	25	99
2028	2a	Thin	3.97	25	99
2028	2b	Thin	2.96	25	74
2028	2b	Thin	2.96	25	74
2028	3b	Thin	1.01	25	25
2028	3b	Thin	1.01	25	25
2033	1a	Thin	2.83	25	70
2033	1b	Thin	4.99	25	124
2033	1e	Thin	2.14	25	53
2033	2a	Thin	3.97	25	99
2033	2b	Thin	2.96	25	74
2033	3b	Thin	1.01	25	25

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.