



Dishcombe Wood

Management Plan 2013-2018

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 Summary Description

2.2 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 Secondary Woodland

5.2 Informal Public Access

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 Consequently this printed version may quickly become out of date, particularly in relation to the planned work programme and on-going monitoring observations.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:	Dishcombe Wood
Location:	South Tawton
Grid reference:	SX661931, OS 1:50,000 Sheet No. 191
Area:	1.82 hectares (4.50 acres)
Designations:	National Park

2.0 SITE DESCRIPTION

2.1 Summary Description

This is a small wood on the northern fringe of Dartmoor National Park. There is a circular path through the wood and some springs forming a stream. The wood is situated just outside the village of South Zeal along the road towards Whiddon Down

2.2 Extended Description

Dishcombe Wood was acquired in 1973 to protect a line of over mature beech trees and became the earliest creation project undertaken by the Woodland Trust in 1974. The site lies within the Dartmoor National Park Boundary, bordering the "former A30" near South Zeal amongst enclosed farmland on the fringe of open moor at a height of 271 metres. The woodland forms a narrow roadside strip and has a mainly northerly aspect, the wood contains an old field drainage feature along much of the eastern edge of the wood and this is the source of a private water supply to which a number of third party rights apply. Where wet the success or failure of the initial planting species is self-determining and along with early thinning the semblance of a semi-natural structure including ground flora is beginning to emerge. Access is via a field gate in the north western corner and follows a short section of mowed track after which an informal circular route runs around the site.

3.0 PUBLIC ACCESS INFORMATION

3.1 Getting there

Dishcombe Wood is situated just outside the village of South Zeal along the road heading for Whiddon Down. This road can be quite busy and there is no pavement. 200m out of the village take the left turn for Dishcombe. There is a pull in on the corner of the first right hand turn you come to. This is also the entrance to the wood. The gate is overgrown and hard to open so the only way to get in is to climb over it. The path is a grassy ride that soon turns into a small circular path running up through the plantation. It can get muddy and begins to climb half way along.

The nearest bus stop is in South Zeal, approx. two kilometres from the wood in the centre of the village and the nearest toilets are in Okehampton at Fairplace, Market Street and Okehampton Station all of which are RADAR accessible. (www.directenquiries.com)

This information was correct on 19/06/2007. For up to date local travel information see the travel line website www.travelline.org.uk

3.2 Access / Walks

4.0 LONG TERM POLICY

The vision is that Dishcombe will form secondary woodland with native high forest canopy, utilised and valued by the local community. The Trust's objective of increasing new native woodland cover in the UK complements the objectives of the Dartmoor National Park Management Plan. The long term presumption is to allow natural processes of decline and regeneration to determine the woodland structure. Maintenance of the eastern boundary will necessitate some thinning and felling operations in the plan period. Safety considerations require the hedge adjoining the road to be surveyed and work actioned at regular intervals, however, where practical the over mature beech will be allowed to decline naturally.

Corporate objective: Aim 2 - Protecting native woods, trees and their wildlife for the future.

Corporate objective: Aim 3 - Inspiring everyone to enjoy and values 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 Secondary Woodland

Description

Mainly broadleaf woodland established in 1974. Natural losses and early thinning have improved structure and semi-natural features are emerging including naturally regenerating willow along the line of the former field drain.

Significance

Corporate objectives: Aim 1 - New Woodland has been created Aim 2 - Protecting native woods, trees and their wildlife for the future)

The woodland contributes to the habitat action plans at local, regional and national level, no BAPs species are known to be on the site, however, dormice are likely to be present.

The site forms part of a mosaic of small woodlands and mature hedges set in a rural landscape, providing a local network of habitats on the moorland fringe. Mixed deciduous woodland is listed as of local significance on the moorland edge Dartmoor National Park - A WOODLAND STRATEGY FOR DARTMOOR NATIONAL PARK 2005 - 2010 (revision in consultation 12.04.13)

Opportunities & Constraints

Constraints: Site is small and with over ground water pipes (NOTE no longer believed to be in use - DJR Dec 2012) management access is not easy.

Opportunities: 1) To use the site as a demonstration example of an early woodland conservation creation project. 2). The necessity to re-establish the eastern boundary fence provides an opportunity to create a permissive management access point via the field directly to the east. This would in effect have been how the site would have been accessed in the past before planting when it was grazed. 3). Project with local community and volunteers to manage roadside hedges and as a source of community woodfuel.

Factors Causing Change

Natural loss of overmature beech along former field/road margin

Long term Objective (50 years+)

A diverse semi natural structure of native species, bounded by a boundary bank to the south and west with occasional standard trees

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

The presumption is to allow natural processes of decline and regeneration to determine the woodland structure, however, maintenance of the eastern boundary will necessitate some thinning and felling operations in the plan period. Safety considerations require the hedge adjoining the road to be surveyed and work actioned at regular intervals. Where practical the over mature beech will be allowed to decline naturally.

5.2 Informal Public Access

Description

Informal public access is via a maintained circular path around the site providing an opportunity to access woodland in an area dominated by moor and farmland.

Significance

Whilst access is a fundamental Woodland Trust objective it is also important in this area of the National Park helping to reconnect people with trees and woodlands. Public access to the site was a principal objective of acquisition in 1973.

Opportunities & Constraints

Constraint: Small size limits choice of route around the edges of the wood. Opportunity: 1. Visitor enjoyment of tranquil and increasingly attractive young woodland. 2. Well used by local dog walkers.

Factors Causing Change

Natural loss of overmature beech along former field/road margin

Long term Objective (50 years+)

A site that is pleasant, easy and safe to visit with features and facilities providing an informal experience for local visitors, and the general public

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

Ensure that access provision for the woodland is safe and the condition of the path is clear and suitable for pedestrian access.

6.0 WORK PROGRAMME

Year	Type of Work	Description	Due By
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APPENDIX 1: COMPARTMENT DESCRIPTIONS

Cpt No.	Area (ha)	Main Species	Year	Management Regime	Major Management Constraints	Key Features Present	Designations
1a	1.79	Mixed broadleaves	1974	High forest	No/poor vehicular access to the site	Informal Public Access, Secondary Woodland	National Park
<p>Initial planting of oak (p1974) with a Scots pine nurse crop, losses and replacement planting have modified initial planting now including ash, alder, lime, sweet chestnut, hornbeam, birch, sycamore. A small stand of naturally regenerating willow and alder exists around a spring issue at the southern end of the compartment. On the west boundary with a lane there is a row of beech (p1830) in a state of advanced maturity. Hazel coppice, a by-product of thinning operations, is rare in the understory throughout. Ground flora is increasingly diverse as bramble, bracken and nettles become less dominant. Small patches of primrose, dogs' mercury and bluebells do extend from the old hedge bank in places. The compartment has a north/east facing aspect.</p>							

Appendix 2: Harvesting operations (20 years)

Forecast Year	Cpt	Operation Type	Work Area (ha)	Estimated vol/ha	Estimated total vol.
2014	1a	Thin	1.79	51	91.44

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.