



WOODLAND
TRUST

Yeo Copse

Management Plan 2007-2012

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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 Consequently this printed version may quickly become out of date, particularly in relation to the planned work programme and on-going monitoring observations.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:	Yeo Copse
Location:	Witheridge
Grid reference:	SS805152, OS 1:50,000 Sheet No. 181
Area:	3.48 hectares (8.60 acres)
Designations:	Ancient Semi Natural Woodland

2.0 SITE DESCRIPTION

2.1 Summary Description

On the north facing side of a small valley containing the Little Dart River and extending down to the water's edge. The oak has been coppiced to encourage it to develop into high forest. Lots of Bluebells during the spring. There is interesting lichen and moss flora due to the canopy cover and being next to the river. An old mill leat runs across the site and there is a public footpath running east-west. Generally well served by public rights of way, a number of routes converge at Yeo Copse.

2.2 Extended Description

This is "western oak" woodland growing on the north facing side of a small valley containing the whine ding, Little Dart River and surrounded by improved pasture, barring a small block of PAWS (Norway Spruce and Douglas Fir) to the west. The wood extends down to the waters edge and is mainly on sloping ground. The oak has been coppiced (1960) and was thinned by ring barking upon WT acquisition, to encourage it to develop into high forest. The oak is therefore now generally of a single age with a Hazel under storey. Regeneration of Rowan and Beech is beginning to occur and benefits the current structure. Bluebells dominate the ground flora during the spring, otherwise great wood rush is very common under a sparse hazel under storey. There is a reasonable lichen and moss flora due to the canopy cover, and valley situation next to the river.

The wood is isolated from another ASNW for about 1km but the area is well connected with Devon Hedge banks, which are common in the area. An old mill leat dissects the site and is followed by a public footpath running east-west. The area is generally well served by public rights of way with a number of routes converging at Yeo Copse.

Management access is a convoluted route from the east through a farm, across adjacent farmland and requiring the crossing of the river (currently without adequate bridge). Access on foot is however available from the west along a public footpath and is the easiest route to the wood.

3.0 PUBLIC ACCESS INFORMATION

3.1 Getting there

A public footpath runs through woodland leading to other rights of way and a variety of permissive paths on other private land.

The wood is accessed by a public footpath that leads from the Witheridge - Newhouse road through the neighbouring woodland. The footpath starts from a track on the left hand side of the road just before the bridge. On the right hand side approx 100m on from the footpath is a pull in area with space to stop for two cars. The road does not have a pavement. The footpath through the neighbouring property is wide, flat and level. The entrance to the Woodland Trust wood is a clear walkway and the path continues to be wide although there are a few sections with obstacles (trees roots) and it gets muddy in places. There is a secondary path that runs along by the river. This path crosses back and forth over the river and there are a number of steep sections. The gate at the other end of the wood is a wide push through although there is a stone step up into the wood.

The nearest bus stop is in Witheridge, at the cross roads opposite the shop, approx. two kilometres from the wood. The nearest toilets are in Tiverton and Market car-park and Peoples Park have RADAR Access toilets (Direct enquiries website 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

Management of Ancient Semi Natural Woodland (ASNW)

The woodlands will be managed as mixed broadleaf high forest. This will maintain their importance as a feature in the landscape. The limited public access will be maintained according to local demand, but it is not intended to improve this further, given their low amenity values and it will not form a key feature for the site. These actions will however, help concentrate what access there is in specific areas and reduce compaction and erosion pressures over the rest of the woodland and encourage the development of richer ground flora and regeneration of tree and shrub species. Existing natural regeneration and any that develops in the future will be encouraged to form a varied age and structured woodland and provide a basis for the long-term retention of the woodland as the existing trees reach senescence or blow over in gales. Tree safety surveys and resultant works and access maintenance will be undertaken to maintain safety and access to appropriate levels.

Informal Public Access -

To ensure the woodland is an enjoyable and safe place to visit by maintaining the paths and 3 entrances for public access.

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

Ancient Semi-Natural Woodland, predominately W10 western Oak wood, with small areas of W7 adjacent to river: Predominately even aged, singled Oak sp. of coppice origin. Ground flora is representative of the area. A small strip of wood between the path and the river is not on the AWI and includes a small group of mixed conifer, however, it shares similar characteristics to ASNW and is aspirationally identical. A conservation feature is the the river edge and bankside trees, the area being important for spawning Salomnids.

Significance

Western Oak Woods are internationally important and included in the Devon County BAP. Salmon Spawing grounds are identified in the Devon BAP. Management of this area of ASNW and conservation feature helps assist the Trust in meeting its core aims of no further loss of Ancient Woodland and to maintain and enhance biodiversity.

Opportunities & Constraints

Constraints: management access is a protracted route over wet farmland, including a river crossing. Little wildlife information is known for the wood to assist in long term management decisions. A number of presumed charcoal hearths occur throughout and need to be avoided during any harvesting. Opportunities: spring show of bluebells under current stand structure, attracts visitors.

Factors Causing Change

Canopy gap creation

Long term Objective (50 years+)

Maintain those semi-natural broadleaf components of the wood associated with western oak woodland habitat in a favourable condition and maintain and enhance associated flora and fauna.

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

There will be no intervention in the plan period. The wood will be allowed to develop through natural processes forming gaps in the canopy and allowing the establishment of regeneration. The success of regeneration will be observed at the end of each plan period to determine whether there is a need for intervention. Ideally at least three trees to survive above grazing height (2m) within each open area.

5.2 Informal Public Access

Description

Informal public access is via a well used public footpath that leads to and through the site. Areas away from the path appear to be used to access the river.

Significance

Whilst access is a fundamental Woodland Trust Objective it is also important in this area of Devon which has limited access to Ancient Woodland.

Opportunities & Constraints

Constraint: The wood has a low carrying capacity as it is isolated and small and has no official parking. Opportunity: Visitor enjoyment of a very quiet and pretty wood.

Factors Causing Change

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 surface 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	3.49	other oak spp	1960	High forest	No/poor vehicular access to the site	Ancient Semi Natural Woodland, Informal Public Access	Ancient Semi Natural Woodland
<p>Predominately singled (1985) Oak (p1800) of coppice origin (cut 1960) with occasional Ash and Birch coppice (P1950) all with occasional Hazel understorey. Standing dead stems are frequent throughout from a past and more recent ring barking operation, in some places these have fallen. Ash, Beech and Rowan are regenerating in the understorey, with Ash being more dominant. Small stands of naturally regenerating and also coppiced Willow sp. and Alder occur along the bank of the river and a small, intimate area of mixed conifer (p1960) exists on one of the river terraces. Ground flora is dominated by bluebell and great woodrush, with bramble and bracken in scattered groups.</p>							

Appendix 2: Harvesting operations (20 years)

Forecast Year	Cpt	Operation Type	Work Area (ha)	Estimated vol/ha	Estimated total vol.
2007	1a	Thin	1.00	0	0

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.