



Burrs Wood

Management Plan 2015-2020

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THE WOODLAND TRUST

INTRODUCTION

The Trust's corporate aims and management approach guide the management of all the Trust's properties, and are described on Page 4. These determine basic management policies and methods, which apply to all sites unless specifically stated otherwise. Such policies include free public access; keeping local people informed of major proposed work; the retention of old trees and dead wood; and a desire for management to be as unobtrusive as possible. The Trust also has available Policy Statements covering a variety of woodland management issues.

The Trust's management plans are based on the identification of Key Features for the site and setting objectives for their management. A monitoring programme (not included in this plan) ensures that these objectives are met and any necessary management works are carried out.

Any legally confidential or sensitive species information about this site is not included in this version of the plan.

PLAN REVIEW AND UPDATING

The information presented in this Management plan is held in a database which is continuously being amended and updated on our website. Consequently this printed version may quickly become out of date, particularly in relation to the planned work programme and on-going monitoring observations. Please either consult The Woodland Trust website www.woodlandtrust.org.uk 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:	Burrs Wood
Location:	Unthank, Holmesfield
Grid reference:	SK301755, OS 1:50,000 Sheet No. 119
Area:	11.82 hectares (29.21 acres)
Designations:	Ancient Semi Natural Woodland, Ancient Woodland Site, National Park

2.0 SITE DESCRIPTION

2.1 Summary Description

On the edge of the Peak District National Park, this ancient woodland is scenic and largely unspoilt, providing a peaceful place to explore. oak dominates with some specimens probably well over 200 years old. An abundance of well-loved wild flowers.

2.2 Extended Description

Burrs Wood Ancient Semi natural Woodland) is a secluded and largely unspoilt wood of some 13.15 hectares, lying just within the boundary of the Peak District National Park, near the hamlet of Holmesfield. It is within 12 miles of the large population centres of Sheffield, Chesterfield and Dronfield. The wood covers both sides of a moderate to steep valley which contains a varied topography of rocky outcrops, eroding river banks, gentler slopes and pockets of flat marshy areas. The wood is part of a wide scatter of small broadleaved woods each isolated in a matrix of grazing and unimproved ground on the east edge of the Peak District.

The site has good views to the north and is itself very scenic, containing winding paths, a fast flowing stream and attractive mature broadleaved woodland. The dominant tree species is sessile oak (*Quercus petraea*) with frequent birch (*Betula* spp.), ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*), rowan (*Sorbus aucuparia*), sycamore (*Acer pseudoplatanus*) and a scattering of numerous other native broadleaved species.

Both management and public access are directly off the public road (Unthank Lane) running along the eastern boundary. A narrow stoned track (permissive path), leads from the access gate and stile as far as the stone culvert crossing the main stream. To the west of the stream a permissive path loops around the western part of the wood. The track on this side of the stream is not stoned and vehicular access is not possible past this point. Although quite close to Sheffield the location off a minor and difficult to find country road and the lack of parking facilities ensures the wood has a low level of visitors enjoying quiet informal recreation. It is isolated from nearby open access land.

The central stream drains the entire site, collecting surface run-off and through-flow from the slopes to the east and west. There are 'issues' (particularly on Unthank Bank) on the slopes, which have created a number of botanically rich wet flushes. The unnamed stream flowing through the site has its origin in the flat peatlands 100m above Burrs Wood. Approximately 800m downstream from Burrs, the stream joins Barlow Brook which itself flows into the River Rother at Chesterfield. The underlying bedrock, exposed in many places, is Millstone Grit with shale's. Soils are mostly thin with poorly developed horizons.

Site History:

The structure, vegetation and undisturbed soils of Burrs all suggest it is ancient woodland, with tree cover dating back many centuries. The 1898 25inch: 1 mile Ordnance Survey map shows Burrs as a mixed conifer/deciduous wood. There is little evidence of extensive coniferisation remaining today apart from a few scattered and small larches on the ravine slopes and it is possible that the symbols on this map were largely inaccurate. For most of the 20th century, and probably for many centuries before, the site was grazed by sheep, and possibly cattle. This all but ceased in 1970, since when the ground flora appears to have recovered with some tree regeneration taking place, mainly out-with the large canopy gaps which have become choked with bracken.

There is evidence of a small gravel pit at the southern edge of the site and it seems likely that small scale 'stone-getting' was a common practice until the 20th century.

Flora and fauna:

Due in part to the complex community structure at the ground layer (see key feature f1), Burrs has an abundance of attractive wild flowers. There appear to be no great botanical rarities, but many typical, well-loved plants grow here including bluebell (*Hyacinthoides non-scripta*), wood sorrel (*Oxalis acetosella*), creeping jenny (*Lysimachia nemorum*), ramsons (*Allium ursinum*) and in the flushed areas sanicle (*Sancula europaea*), meadowsweet (*Filipendula ulmaria*) and opposite leaved golden saxifrage (*Chrysosplenium oppositifolium*).

The stream-sides are rich in bryophytes which form important microhabitats for smaller invertebrate fauna and are a striking visual feature of the woodland, carpeting the rocky outcrops and stream boulders all along its length. An incomplete total of 35 species were recorded in 2000.

A survey of beetles in April, 2000 turned up 50 species including the notable Nb species *Aleochara ruficornis*, and a further 6 'local' species. This survey is a good indicator of the high level of invertebrate diversity which would probably be found if other groups were properly surveyed.

3.0 PUBLIC ACCESS INFORMATION

3.1 Getting there

The woods lies along Unthank Lane on the edge of the Peak District National Park nearby Holmesfield.

The hamlet of Millthorpe a mile and a half distant is served by a limited bus service : details can be found on the Traveline website www.traveline.org.uk or alternatively ring Traveline on 0871 200 2233. From Millthorpe to the wood is along steep narrow country lanes.

At the wood there is very limited parking available in the gateway ..one possibly two cars depending on size. Access into the property is via a squeeze gap by the gate. There is a permissive path that runs from the public access point on the eastern boundary adjoining Unthank Lane (public highway), in a south westerly direction and then turns north and curls back onto itself to form an oval shape in the heart of the wood. The path route is attractive but steep and muddy in some places. It includes several stepped sections. Given the steep and often complicated terrain, forming any new path route is not practical. Enjoyment of the rest of the wood is left to the more adventurous visitor.

3.2 Access / Walks

4.0 LONG TERM POLICY

The long term management intention for Burrs Wood is to encourage the continued development of a broadleaved high forest of diverse character and to maintain a healthy and diverse stream-side with varying levels of canopy and light penetration of the streambed. Encouragement of public access for quiet, informal recreation is also a key long term intention, although it is accepted that due to the rural location of the wood and the steepness of the terrain, only relatively small numbers of people are likely to visit.

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

Burrs is an interesting woodland structurally and floristically, possibly as a result of it being an intermediate upland/lowland site. It forms part of a network/matrix of small semi natural woods and planted ancient woodland sites within grazed and unimproved land on the eastern edge of the Peak District hills. Its interest is raised by the deep stream/gully system with its associated micro habitats that runs the length of the site. The NVC communities are complex and any detailed survey would probably reveal at least 4 communities forming intimate mosaics related to topography, soils and water movements. The dominant community on the east side of the ravine is W16b *Quercus* spp.-*Betula* spp.-*Deschampsia flexuosa* woodland *Vaccinium myrtillus*-*Dryopteris dilatata* sub-community. In flatter areas to the west containing mull soils, this community shifts towards W10e *Quercus robur*-*Pteridium aquilinum*-*Rubus fruticosus* woodland *Acer pseudoplatanus*-*Oxalis acetosella* sub-community.

There also appear to be elements of both W11a *Quercus petraea*-*Betula pubescens*-*Oxalis acetosella* woodland sub community *Dryopteris dilatata* & W9 *Fraxinus excelsior*-*Sorbus aucuparia*-*Mercurialis perennis* woodland. Again, these tend to be confined to flushed areas and pockets of flat ground with richer soils. The W11 community is right on the south-eastern edge of its range here and is untypical of the communities found farther north and west.

The other major community is U20c *Pteridium aquilinum*-*Galium saxatile* species poor sub-community. This is confined to two large glades in the centre of the woodland.

This key feature contains three important conservation features:

C1 Stream, streamsides and associated vegetation

C2 Wet flushes

Significance

The complexity of the topography makes Burrs a floristically diverse woodland. We also have some clues from the limited survey work carried out to date that the wood is also rich in woodland fauna. Burrs is therefore important both for its biodiversity value its overall landscape value and fits into a complex network of old fields and ancient woodlands. The site plays host to a number of specialist woodland species. The wood lies within a major concentration of ASNW and close to a large upland SSSI further west - see context map.

Opportunities & Constraints

Opportunities:

There are opportunities for improving the boundaries of the wood (for which the Trust has responsibility apart from the short south-east boundary) to prevent stock and horses from occasionally gaining access to the wood.

Constraints:

The spread of sycamore will always be a concern and a constraint on allowing the development of a semi-natural community dominated by native species, however the sycamore is limited to the areas disturbed by mineral extraction and given the risks associated with ash dieback, no tree management is likely on the site.

Factors Causing Change

tree regeneration, tree senescence

Long term Objective (50 years+)

To encourage the continued development of a broadleaved high forest of diverse character through minimum intervention.

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

Woodland management will be limited to tree safety where required, otherwise a minimum intervention approach will be adopted.

5.2 Informal Public Access

Description

Burrs is a secluded, rural woodland . A permissive footpath runs as far as the central stream from the road and from there a circular path takes in the western side of the wood. The internal landscape and external views are both impressive, making this one of the most attractive Trust properties in the East Midlands.

Significance

Increasing enjoyment of woodland is one of the Trust key outcomes. Public appreciation of ancient woodlands is good for the well being of those visiting the wood and ultimately, good for the wood itself through increased public understanding of the plight of ancient woodlands. There are few opportunities to visit attractive areas of ancient woodland in the surrounding area.

Opportunities & Constraints

Opportunities:

There are few extra opportunities to make the site more accessible or more attractive to visitors, given the complicated and often difficult terrain.

Constraints:

Bracken spreads vigorously onto permissive paths in the wood if these are not kept mown and trimmed back.

Factors Causing Change

Long term Objective (50 years+)

To encourage public access for quiet, informal recreation, maintaining the current level of access provision.

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

Cut the paths through the site and maintain the welcome signs on at least one occasion per year throughout the current plan period.

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	13.15	Oak (sessile)	1850	High forest	Gullies/Deep Valleys/Uneven/Rocky ground, No/poor vehicular access within the site, People issues (+tve & -tve), Sensitive habitats/species on or adjacent to site, Very steep slope/cliff/quarry/mine shafts/sink holes etc	Ancient Semi Natural Woodland, Informal Public Access	Ancient Semi Natural Woodland, Ancient Woodland Site, National Park

For the purposes of management the wood is best considered as one compartment. This is not to say the compartment is uniform in character, containing as it does open glades dominated by bracken, species rich stream-sides and a varied high forest. The dominant tree species is sessile oak (*Quercus petraea*) with frequent ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*) sycamore (*Acer pseudoplatanus*), grey willow (*Salix caprea*), rowan (*Sorbus aucuparia*) birch (*Betula pubescens* and *pendula*) and some yew (*Taxus baccata*). Many trees were established between 1850-1900 from scattered woodland and coppice and there are numerous examples of lapsed coppice stools of sessile oak, hazel and ash (See Summary Description and Key Features for more information). The western section of the wood shows a large degree of disturbance due to early industrial activity -18/19th century mineral/rock extraction.

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.