



Ridgewood

Management Plan 2016-2021

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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 Consequently this printed version may quickly become out of date, particularly in relation to the planned work programme and on-going monitoring observations.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: | Ridgewood |
| Location: | Brampton |
| Grid reference: | NY539618, OS 1:50,000 Sheet No. 86 |
| Area: | 9.81 hectares (24.24 acres) |
| Designations: | |

2.0 SITE DESCRIPTION

2.1 Summary Description

This is a small but wildlife-rich wood, with sightings of roe deer, red squirrel and foxes occurring. A large ancient beech with a girth of 4.2m can be found to the east, while other species include sycamore and lime.

2.2 Extended Description

This small wood of 9.83 ha was brought by the Trust in February 1985 with help of grant aid from the Countryside Commission, City of Carlisle and Cumbria County Council. The wood lies to the north east of the large village of Brampton in the River Irthing valley and occupies a prominent sandstone ridge overlooking the surrounding area. It was originally planted in the early 19th century, possibly as part of the landscaping of Naworth Estate, which lies immediately to the east.

Surviving mature beech, sycamore and lime ring the existing mixed plantings, forming an important local landscape feature. Over the intervening years, various areas have been felled and replanted so that today there exists varied and mixed species amenity woodland typical of the many small estate woodlands that lie scattered in the surrounding countryside. The mature beech along the ridge top is especially prominent in the landscape and the views from the public footpath on the north side are rewarding. From this public footpath, the wood is well served by a series of circular internal walks, used predominantly by local people from Brampton. The largest tree in the wood is a beech with a girth of 4.2m and this is situated at the eastern corner and can be found on the Ancient Tree Hunt website www.ancientreehunt.org.uk

Since acquisition, the Trust has carried out tree safety work and small areas of felling and replanting (1989/90) and selective thinning (1995 & 2002) to reduce conifer dominance and achieve a more mixed character and diverse woodland. There are very few ash trees in the wood, and most of these were planted from 1980s, therefore it will be little affected by ash dieback. The woodland plays host to a number of woodland birds and animals including roe deer, red squirrels and foxes.

3.0 PUBLIC ACCESS INFORMATION

3.1 Getting there

The wood can be found to the north east of Brampton, nine miles east of Carlisle, near Carlisle airport; from the M6 exit 44 following A69 signposted Brampton and Hexham. At the roundabout leave the A69 and go straight on into the town of Brampton. At the T-junction turn right onto Carlisle Road and straight on into the town. There are free parking places in the centre of town (a parking disc must be displayed).

From the A6071 in Brampton called Moat Side the wood can be accessed by a public footpath which goes round the east side of the Motte and up the hill onto the ridge, then heads north east to the wood. Within Ridgewood the public footpath links with over a kilometre of internal permissive paths that create circular routes through the wood; the route is quite steep and the paths uneven in places. There are squeeze gaps and kissing gates to pass through.

For free local walk leaflets including Brampton to Lanercost (2.5miles) through Ridgewood contact East Cumbria Countryside Projects www.eccp.org.uk Cycleway number 72 Hadrian's Cycleway runs along The Swartle to the south east of the wood. For more information on cycle routes contact www.cycleroutes.org/hadrianscycleway or contact Sustrans 0845 113 00 65.

For visitors wishing to use public transport to get to Ridgewood there are regular bus services from Carlisle to Brampton; including the 95 via Heads Nook; for the latest timetables contact Travel Line on 0870 608 2608. The bus stop is in the market place in the centre of Brampton. From there the public footpath up The Motte can be followed into Ridgewood.

Brampton railway station is on the Newcastle-Carlisle Tyne Valley Line, serving the town of Brampton. The station is located about a mile southeast of the town, near the village of Milton. There is a public footpath along the old connecting railway line into Brampton. This emerges on Station Road; turn left here and bear left at the next junction onto Moat Side as above. For details on services contact National Rail Enquiries on 08457 48 49 50 or National Rail Website www.nationalrail.co.uk or Travel Line on 0870 608 2608.

There are public toilets in the car park between main Street and Front Street in the centre of Brampton. For other local information try www.hadrians-wall.org www.nationaltrail.co.uk/hadrianswall or Brampton Tourist Information Centre on 01697 73433.

3.2 Access / Walks

4.0 LONG TERM POLICY

The long-term management intention for this wood is to create a continuity of varied mixed-age and mixed-species (including conifers) to preserve and enhance the existing habitat, landscape and amenity value of the woodland. The conifers presently form approximately 10% of the canopy but are unlikely to naturally regenerate. Broadleaved species are likely, in the long-term, to re-colonise the wood. Regeneration will be monitored and it is anticipated over the long term (50+years) that there will be sufficient natural regeneration arising to ensure the future succession of the wood. Where safe to do so, mature trees, old growth (particularly the mature beech, lime and sycamore along the woodland boundaries) and standing and fallen deadwood communities will be retained.

The Woodland Trust will maintain the informal access to the woodland to ensure that local users and visitors can enjoy the woodland for walking and peaceful recreation. Public information through posters and local consultation will be provided to inform and involve visitors about the woodland and to enable them to gain a better understanding of the importance of woodland within the environment.

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 Informal Public Access

Description

Ridgewood forms an attractive part of the landscape around Brampton and a well-used public footpath passes through the wood giving good views of the surrounding countryside. This path links with several permissive routes through the wood (approx 1km) and links to public footpaths to create longer walks. There is a wooden sculptured bench within the wood around a large beech tree on the Ridge to the north west of the wood.

Significance

The wood provides a good local amenity resource for the people of Brampton and offers fine views of the surrounding countryside. Ridgewood offers a small area of woodland for informal and peaceful recreation for locals and visitors to the area; this is one of the Trusts key outcomes. Both activities promote the Woodland Trusts aims and objectives and also make people aware of woodlands managed by the Trust thus encouraging use of even small woodlands. The Cumbria Biodiversity Action Plan incorporates the action for landowners to give the public the opportunity to experience and appreciate wildlife.

Opportunities & Constraints

The provision for informal recreation and the path network is currently in keeping with the small size of the wood: which is the main constraint on any further development. The path is steep in places. Opportunities exist to inform the public and local schools of the Trusts objectives, the role of woodlands in the environment and management practices pertaining to Ridgewood through posters and consultation. There is an opportunity to promote the ATH with some very accessible large old trees.

Factors Causing Change

None

Long term Objective (50 years+)

The Woodland Trust will maintain the informal access to the woodland. Public information through posters and local consultation will be provided to inform and involve visitors about the woodland.

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

Maintain and repair two pedestrian entrances with welcome signs and 4 internal gates on nearly 2km of permissive and public footpath to Woodland Trust specification strimming and cutting encroaching vegetation from the entrances, path and the seat annually.

Work with the County Council as necessary to ensure continued maintenance of the public right of way section. Litter pick site annually and remove material as necessary. Continue to involve local people by consultation and direct practical action where appropriate.

5.2 Secondary Woodland

Description

The wood is attractive amenity woodland in a dominant location to the east of Brampton. Probably planted in the early 19th century it provides haven for common woodland species and is long established enough in parts to have a fairly natural type of ground flora developing. Being managed as part of estate woodlands, various areas have had subsequent felling and replanting with mixed species, including conifers, to produce what is now, attractive amenity woodland. Landscape feature: the ridgeline of mature beech is important in the landscape as a feature and the wood as a whole forms part of an attractive local patchwork of farmland and woodland. Some of the trees are now listed on the Trust's Ancient Tree Hunt with the largest beech having a girth of 4.2m.

Significance

The wood is a feature of the local landscape and provides a useful source of cover, food and nesting sites for a variety of bird species and mammals including red squirrels, roe deer and owls. It hosts several veteran beech trees that appear on the Ancient Tree Hunt; the largest has a girth of 4.2m. The wood connects to other woodland providing a significant core area of woodland for biodiversity.

Opportunities & Constraints

The wood has no designations and there are no effective constraints on the management of the wood. The opportunity exists to implement the Trusts long term vision set out in 'Keeping Woodlands Alive' to ensure retention and perpetuation of the woodland through management of a continuous canopy of trees and securing succession, through natural regeneration. There is the opportunity to develop attractive mixed woodland encompassing both conifers and broadleaves that will be a useful local recreational resource for years to come. There is an opportunity to retain the mature ridge and feature trees although this may be constrained by safety along the ridge due to the public right of way. There is an opportunity to promote the ATH with some very accessible large old trees.

Factors Causing Change

Canopy senescence, Shading, Tree Pest & Diseases, regeneration of Rhododendron.

Long term Objective (50 years+)

The long-term management intention for this wood is to create a continuity of varied mixed age and mixed species (including conifers) to preserve and enhance the existing habitat, landscape and amenity value of the woodland for all species. It is the intention to allow natural processes to shape the woodland with intervention only used where safety is an issue. No more planting will be carried out and it is felt that there is sufficient natural regeneration arising to ensure the future succession of the wood. Where safe to do so, mature trees, old growth (particularly the mature beech, lime and sycamore along the woodland boundaries) and standing and fallen deadwood communities will be retained.

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

Regularly inspect boundaries annually as part of EMC and undertake repairs if required; review long term condition once every 5yrs, working with neighbouring owners as appropriate.

Monitor the rhododendron area to the north east which appears dead after a number of years control work; if regeneration occur continue to control.

Squirrels: Work to be undertaken annually on our behalf by the Northern England Red Squirrel Project to encourage and retain red squirrels through the control of greys..

There are 8 recorded ancient trees on the ATH website - monitor their condition once every 10yrs (last surveyed 2005).

Thin the larch and shade casting broadleaves trees to open up around the Scots pine, for long term retention to benefit the red squirrel population. The work will also increase light levels to encourage natural regeneration and will eventually improve the structural diversity of the wood.

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 | 2.08 | Oak (sessile) | 1900 | High forest | | Informal Public Access, Secondary Woodland | |
| <p>This sub-compartment occupies the north-eastern end of the wood and is multi-layered high forest. The upper canopy (P1900) comprises large, mature beech and oak whilst the sub-canopy is of beech, rowan, lime, cherry, ash, oak, whitebeam, yew, hawthorn and holly. The field layer comprises grasses, bracken and honeysuckle whilst the younger regeneration is principally of beech and tends to occur in scattered dense thickets plus some downy and silver birch, sycamore and elm. A perimeter permissive path follows the eastern boundary, which is post and wire and a permissive footpath winds up through the compartment forming its western boundary to meet the public right of way along the north west boundary. This route has third party right of access along it. There is an entrance to the most northern point of the compartments.</p> | | | | | | | |
| 2a | 3.22 | Sycamore | 1974 | High forest | Site structure, location, natural features & vegetation | Informal Public Access, Secondary Woodland | |
| <p>This sub-compartment lies to the east of the main access track through the middle of the wood. The closed canopy is principally planted and regenerated broadleaves (P1974) of sycamore, beech, lime, birch spp. and oak. Additionally there are a small number of conifers along the southern margin. As a consequence of low light levels both the sub-canopy and the field layer are sparse. Hawthorn, hazel, elder and lime coppice form the sub-canopy whilst grasses, bracken, bramble, ivy, wild strawberry and mosses form the field layer where it occurs. The regeneration is of oak, beech and sycamore and there is a small coupe of recently planted oaks in the south-western corner. A public right of way runs along the upper boundary and a permissive footpath along the lower boundary, which is fringed by mature beech. The southern boundary is post and wire (2001) and internal stock fencing (post and single barb) marks the western boundary along the track. There is a kissing gate from the track into the compartment in the south-west corner. In the western corner there is a field gate and squeeze style along the public right of way leading from the compartment onto the track.</p> | | | | | | | |
| 3a | 3.64 | Scots pine | 1960 | High forest | Legal issues | Informal Public Access, Secondary Woodland | |

This sub-compartment contains the major conifer density of the wood. The species tend to be concentrated in large drifts and are readily discernable from the aerial photograph. There is a band of Scots pine in the upper northern section, a J shaped band of Larch lower down the slope, a further band of Scots pine with Western hemlock and a block of larch in the south-west. Although the conifer is dominant there are comparatively evenly distributed broadleaves principally oak, beech, birch spp., sycamore and lime. The sub-canopy is sparse and is limited to holly and elder. The field layer, which is not vigorous, is of bramble, bracken, bluebell, broad buckler fern and wild raspberry and is non-existent beneath the Western hemlock. Natural regeneration is largely of beech, sycamore and holly. The conifer element has been reduced in the past by selective felling in favour of broadleaves. There is internal stock fencing to the east and south of the compartment to the access track. The rest of the compartment is surrounded by compartment 4a.

| | | | | | | | |
|----|------|-------|------|-------------|--|--|--|
| 4a | 0.90 | Beech | 1870 | High forest | | Informal Public Access, Secondary Woodland | |
|----|------|-------|------|-------------|--|--|--|

This sub-compartment virtually surrounds the conifer element of sub-compartment 3a and is made up of some of the largest and most mature trees within the wood (P1870). The broad lower section along the boundary is of beech, sycamore and common lime with a sparse sub-canopy of beech regeneration and sycamore. The sparse field layer is composed of grasses, bluebell, mosses, bramble and some bracken. Common lime forms the south-western boundary and a 400 m line of mature beeches dominates the summit ridge boundary. These trees together with those along the southern boundary have been regularly monitored because of their significant size and maturity and remedial tree surgery undertaken in order to ensure retention and public safety as far as is possible. Along the summit boundary runs a broad grassy strip and a path, which is a public right of way and is well used by visitors as it provides spectacular views across the surrounding countryside. Beneath one of the large beeches on the ridge is a wooden bench shaped around the tree. A permissive path leaves the public right of way on entering the wood at the south west and travels through compartment 3a to meet compartment 4a and travel along the boundary to the access track. There are two squeeze styles facilitating access to and from the compartment onto the wide access track that splits the wood. In the top north east corner is a water trough within the boundary -fence - in use by the neighbouring farmer.

Appendix 2: Harvesting operations (20 years)

| Forecast Year | Cpt | Operation Type | Work Area (ha) | Estimated vol/ha | Estimated total vol. |
|---------------|-----|----------------|----------------|------------------|----------------------|
| 2020 | 3a | Thin | 3.64 | 30 | 110 |

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.