WOODLAND TRUST

The Mores

Management Plan 2015-2020

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MAPS

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 Consequently this printed version may quickly become out of date, particularly in relation to the planned work programme and on-going monitoring observations.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:	The Mores
Location:	Bentley
Grid reference:	TQ561965, OS 1:50,000 Sheet No. 177
Area:	15.74 hectares (38.89 acres)
Designations:	Ancient Semi Natural Woodland, Green Belt, Tree Preservation Order

2.0 SITE DESCRIPTION

2.1 Summary Description

This splendid mature woodland is an important wildlife refuge, particularly for birds, and boasts all three species of woodpecker. A good show of spring flowers and a variety of autumn fungi. Good access around the wood thanks to boardwalks provided.

2.2 Extended Description

The Mores is 16 hectares of splendid mature woodland located in the small village of Bentley, a few miles northwest of Brentwood, just outside the M25. Although not registered as ancient woodland compartment 1a contains ancient woodland indicator species such as bluebells, butcher's broom and dogs mercury. In addition, the woodland contains mature oak and ancient hornbeam coppice stools as well as dense areas of birch and extensive patches of alder wet woodland. The site lies in the Green Belt and is covered by a Tree Preservation Order.

The secondary woodland area, concentrated in the east, is said to have developed from common land and pasture woodland when grazing pressures declined in the eighteenth century and rabbit numbers were reduced as a result of myxomatosis. Records show that much of the woodland did not exist before 1777 when it was part of The Weald Common. Many of the oak, particularly those in the western end of the wood, were felled at the end of the Second World War.

The Mores lies nestled in the transitional rural zone between a patchwork of woodland and arable expanse to the north and the London suburbs commonly despoiled by urban activity. The wood is typical of the area with oak standards and hornbeam coppice, a reminder that its timber was used to fuel much of London in past years. Away from the London Clay, the site contains a wide variety of soil types ranging from boulder clay in the west to Bagshot sands in the east.

A public footpath runs east to west through the site and the wood is regularly frequented by visitors enjoying quiet recreation. Management access is via a 12ft gate directly off the highway in the western corner.

The Key Features of the site are:

Informal Public Access
Natural Secondary Woodland

3.0 PUBLIC ACCESS INFORMATION

3.1 Getting there

The Mores lies a few miles north west of Brentwood, just outside the M25 in a semi rural location. There are two access points off the highway in the east and one to the west with squeeze gaps at the entrances (to inhibit illegal motorbike use). A public footpath runs east to west through the site complemented by several other woodland paths. The site is fairly flat and ground conditions are normally good but can be seasonally wet and muddy in places.

Nearest car park: No public car parks within 3 miles but limited parking is available adjacent to the site or nearby.

Nearest toilet: Approximately 3 miles away at Sainsbury's supermarket - William Hunter Way, Brentwood. Baby changing facilities and disabled toilet are available in the main block. Open Mon-Sat 8.00am - 9.00pm, Sun 10am - 4pm, as checked Sept 2014.

Nearest railway station: Brentwood - 3 miles away along busy country / town roads.

Nearest bus stop: On Snakes Hill adjacent to eastern boundary of wood.

Information from National Rail and Traveline websites as at Sept 2014.

Further information about public transport is available from www.nationalrail.co.uk or www.traveline.org.uk or phone 0870 608 2 608.

3.2 Access / Walks

4.0 LONG TERM POLICY

The long-term intentions are to maintain and enhance this attractive structurally diverse woodland for the benefit of wildlife and visitors. The Mores should remain as native broadleaf uneven-aged woodland with a varied stand structure and a diverse range of habitats (a scattering of ancient trees, ancient hornbeam coppice, wet woodland, maturing secondary woodland and small patches of both scrub and thick holly understory). The natural decay and collapse of old trees in the wood will create holes in the canopy, thereby increasing light levels and providing the opportunity for natural regeneration and coppice regrowth - a totally sustainable and continuous management system. Oak, hornbeam and rowan natural regeneration should be encouraged where possible and is currently limited due to dense canopy cover across the site and some deer grazing; sycamore regeneration will not be allowed to dominate the understorey.

Most of the ancient hornbeam coppice will be allowed to collapse and naturally re-coppice/regenerate. Some coppicing will be undertaken to maintain and encourage structural diversity and promote conditions to favour species-diverse natural regeneration and both shrub/ground flora layer development. The aging oak and beech scattered throughout the wood will be left to senescence and where safe to do so, retained to increase the number of ancient trees on site. The newly established trees in compartment 2 will merge discretely into the surrounding woodland as they mature, and complement the existing woodland structure.

The Trust's key objective of increasing people's awareness and enjoyment of woodland will be achieved by continuing to provide and maintain appropriate access paths and facilities throughout the wood.

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

Frequently used by locals from the village, The Mores is an attractive and peaceful place to take a walk. A public footpath runs east to west, connecting with other paths that reach every corner of the wood. The well kept entrances and paths are complemented by bridges and boardwalks over the stream and wet areas. Woodland Trust welcome signs and an information board are also at entrances.

Significance

In such a well-populated county it is important to have sites such as The Mores where open access means that the public can enjoy the natural woodland environment This raises people's awareness and enjoyment of woodland, fulfilling one of the Trust's corporate objectives.

It provides a place for quiet informal recreation and is an excellent educational resource for school/church groups. It also contributes to the local rights of way network and adds interest to the village of Bentley.

Opportunities & Constraints

Opportunity to retain the involvement and interest of the local community by making the site interesting, attractive and easy to visit for a wide range of people.

Off road motor bikes and quad bikes occasionally enter the site and cause ground disturbance and annoyance to locals. The wooden access gates have frequently been stolen and will require additional measures to keep it safe.

The network of boardwalks across the site have provided significant access benefit to visitors, however, because they funnel people through key sections of the wood the soils at the ends of the boardwalks are becoming very muddy. Those that are in the worst condition have been extended onto firmer ground.

Factors Causing Change

Regularly stolen access gate will require measures to prevent this in future. Existing and increased use of the site will result in the ends of boardwalks becoming very muddy. These will require monitoring for both safety and ease of access. Planks on the boardwalks regularly require replacement due to rot and general wear.

Long term Objective (50 years+)

A welcoming woodland that contains a network of well-maintained entrances and attractive paths that connect to a wider network of rights of way. Easily accessible, well used and respected by locals from the surrounding area. The wood will remain open for the public to visit and enjoy its natural beauty and conservation interest.

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

Operational Objective:
Easily accessible, attractive, well maintained and safe woodland regularly used by the public. Path network, entrances, bridges and boardwalks remain in good condition and are appropriate for level and type of use and in accordance with access category B.

Work Programme:
Design & install new road side entrance signage and replace the broken interpretation board
Cut main paths to a minimum width of 3m and remove vegetation around entrances twice a year
Annual inspection of bridges and boardwalks.
Annual tree safety inspection of Zone A
Biennial tree safety inspection of Zone B

5.2 Natural Secondary Woodland

Description

Although not officially an ancient woodland site, much of it has ancient semi natural characteristics. The huge oak, ancient hornbeam and rich ground flora provide good indicators. Native broadleaves of birch, rowan, ash and alder cover the remainder of the site, with sycamore being the only invasive. Natural regeneration of hornbeam is limited in the hornbeam coppice area although limited oak, ash, sycamore and rowan regeneration are contributing to a healthy structure elsewhere.

Streams, ponds and hedgerow ditches add interest and character to this mature woodland. The limited open areas in the east are a reminder of the storms of 1987.

Significance

Mature secondary woodland, especially one as diverse as The Mores with ancient woodland characteristics, is hugely important as it is a declining and threatened resource. One of the Trust's core objectives is to ensure no further loss of ancient woodland as well as to preserve and enhance biodiversity.

The more recent secondary woodland is important on this site given its successional nature in the historical context.

Opportunities & Constraints

Opportunity to maintain and enhance this mature woodland and its associated habitats by seeking to buffer the ancient woodland components from the intensive arable farmland beyond.

Sycamore regenerates freely and adds little to the composition of ancient woodland, some reduction is desirable over the next few years.

Deer are known to frequent the site but no noticeable browsing or excessive use has been noted, although natural regeneration levels are low in some areas.

Factors Causing Change

Ash Die Back is known to be present locally although no signs have been recorded on site.

The dense canopy cover across the majority of the site limits the quantity of natural regeneration.

Long term Objective (50 years+)

Maintain site as a mixed broadleaf uneven-aged woodland of varying stand structure, including the limited areas of both open and more extensive dense high forest. Maintaining the mixed, multi-aged understorey is also highly valuable. Attractive maturing woodland continuing to develop its ancient woodland characteristics and components.

Leaf litter, rotting wood and natural clearings will influence natural regeneration. Thriving communities of specialist woodland flora will occur throughout the wood, much of it concentrated along the stream edge and within the wet woodland habitat.

The majority of the ancient coppice hornbeam will be allowed to collapse and naturally regenerate/re-coppice with some coppicing along the rides undertaken to encourage greater natural regeneration and structural diversity. Many of the large oak and beech will reach senescence and beyond providing numerous ancient trees and valuable dead wood habitats.

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

Operational Objective:
Conserve and enhance the ancient woodland characteristics of The Mores.

Work Programme:
Re-introduction of a five year hornbeam coppicing project (five stools per year) along the rides to encourage greater natural regeneration and structural diversity. Monitoring of regrowth and any additional natural regeneration will be an essential part of this work programme.

50% thin of the small but growing stands of sycamore in compartment 2a to allow greater natural regeneration of a mix of species and structural layers

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	14.40	Hornbeam		High forest		Informal Public Access, Natural Secondary Woodland	Ancient Semi Natural Woodland, Green Belt, Tree Preservation Order
Compartment 1a accounts for the mature part of the woodland. Mature oak standards and ancient hornbeam coppice dominate the western and southern sections, much of it naturally decaying, allowing seedling regeneration and coppice regrowth to thrive. Elder, guelder rose, hazel and patches of sycamore regen are common in the understorey. Ground flora is often sparse but bracken and bramble are noticeable, as are ancient woodland indicators such as bluebells, butcher's broom and dogs mercury. The majority of the sandier eastern section is primarily covered with birch. A touch of rowan and a scattering of huge oak and beech are also present around the frequent open spaces resulting from windblow during the 1987 storms. Sycamore regen and holly are dotted in the understorey and bracken covers the woodland floor. A bubbling stream cuts east to west through the site creating fantastic damp conditions for juncus, ferns and associated species. Towering above grow superb alder, completing the wet woodland habitat. A year-round pond is located on the northern boundary, which is made up of a sparse hedge separating the woodland from arable farmland.							
2a	1.30	Mixed native broadleaves	1999	High forest		Informal Public Access, Natural Secondary Woodland	Green Belt
2a is a small compartment planted with native broadleaves in 1998 following the clearfelling of a sycamore crop. The main species planted were oak, ash, hornbeam and hazel at 3m spacing in 1.2m shelters, all now well established. Sycamore and birch regeneration have also come through, with bracken and bramble fairly rampant.							

Appendix 2: Harvesting operations (20 years)

Forecast Year	Cpt	Operation Type	Work Area (ha)	Estimated vol/ha	Estimated total vol.
2015	2a	Thin	0.50	10	5

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.