



# Creason Wood

## Management Plan 2008-2013

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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 Consequently this printed version may quickly become out of date, particularly in relation to the planned work programme and on-going monitoring observations.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](http://www.woodlandtrust.org.uk) or contact the Woodland Trust ([wopsmail@woodlandtrust.org.uk](mailto: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.

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## 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](http://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.

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## 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

<b>Site name:</b>	Creason Wood
<b>Location:</b>	Horndon
<b>Grid reference:</b>	SX529800, OS 1:50,000 Sheet No. 191
<b>Area:</b>	6.37 hectares (15.74 acres)
<b>Designations:</b>	National Park

## 2.0 SITE DESCRIPTION

### 2.1 Summary Description

This wood lies on a steep slope of the banks of the River Tavy. Getting into the wood is not easy but once access has been achieved (via a ladder) it will repay a visit particularly for people with a nature conservation interest. The limited access to manage the wood means that it is regenerating itself naturally and offers a 'wild' experience compared with walking on the nearby open moor.

## 2.2 Extended Description

Creason Wood is small secondary Western Oak woodland which lies on a steep slope, in the lightly wooded Tavy Valley on the West side of Dartmoor. It is surrounded by grazed farmland, with stonewalls and Devon Hedge banks with other small pockets of woodland along the river valley. The wood lies 1 km East of the Hamlet of Horndon. Above the river valley the open moorland dominates the landscape.

The Wood itself is predominately middle-aged, principally of Sessile Oak standards with a few small pockets of planted conifer. There is evidence of plantation origin, but little management has been undertaken which is likely down to the poor access situation.

The wood is quite diverse, being noted by Dartmoor National Park as of considerable nature conservation interest. Much of the wood is now self-thinning and there are many dead and dying trees with numerous cavities and crevices. Elsewhere natural regeneration is occurring. Lower plants are frequent throughout the wood and are found particularly on the older trees and also near the river. A notable plant in the woodland flora is Royal Fern, which in places is abundant. It is also notable that Sycamore is almost absent in the wood. Other areas of the wood were previously open with good quality Rhos Pasture in the 1970s, but these have now almost entirely succeeded to young wet woodland.

Directly adjacent to the wood are areas of good quality Rhos Pasture on common land that are still being grazed. There is no discernable boundary between the area to the South West and the wood.

A leat dissects the wood and is the responsibility of SW Water Hydro Group- National Power. This feature dominates part of the wood and is of significant stone construction.

The Wood is reached via a public footpath from a very minor country lane via a steep metal ladder. Most of the surrounding moorland in the area is limited access due to military training areas, so the valley system is important for alternative local access. The public footpath follows the leat through the wood and an additional permissive route, which can be difficult to traverse due to rocks, follows the shore of the River Tavy. Both routes have to be reached by following paths on adjacent land. It is almost impossible to get between both routes within the site itself. Despite all these difficulties the paths appear to be well walked.

Official management access to the wood is across farmland to the north through Creason Farm, however this only leads to the area northwest of the leat, and has not been knowingly exercised in sometime. Access to the area adjacent to the river is only available on foot.

## 3.0 PUBLIC ACCESS INFORMATION

### 3.1 Getting there

The wood is reached from Peter Tavy. Although Mary Tavy is nearer, the road between Horndon and Cudlipptown is not suitable for vehicles. The road from Peter Tavy is a minor country road with little traffic, although, like most Devon Roads it is rather narrow and without pavements. At the Willsworthy/Waspworthy junction bear left and follow it down to the river. The road descends approx. 50m in height. There is an unofficial pull in on the left hand side for two cars just before the bridge. Park here and walk over the bridge.

You will see a metal step ladder to take you down or a little further or there are some wooden steps (easier to use). At the bottom, walk along the concrete edge to the start of the footpath into the wood. The main path through the wood that runs alongside the leet is level with few obstructions although walking boots will be required and it can get sodden after heavy rain. The lower path has a one step stile and this path can become boggy so wellies would be more appropriate after rain.

The bus stop in Peter Tavy is opposite the village hall, although buses only run on a Friday and this is approx. three kilometres from the wood.

The nearest toilets are in Tavistock. Bedford Car Park and Guildhall Car Park both have RADAR Key Access (Direct Enquiries Website [www.directenquiries.com](http://www.directenquiries.com))

This information was correct on 19/06/2008.

## 3.2 Access / Walks

## 4.0 LONG TERM POLICY

Nature Conservation Interest - The long-term intention is to allow the development of the canopy structure by natural processes. Limited intervention is the most desirable management option to achieve this and is enforced by the limited management access.

This will assist in conserving and protecting associated flora and fauna, such as lower plants which enjoy the high humidity gained from canopy cover adjacent to the river. The remaining old areas of rhos pasture are too small and have in the majority succeeded to woodland, and therefore are considered to be beyond the point of rationale restoration. However, given the presence of grazing animals to the South West and the lack of physical boundary, occasional grazing strays from this area will be tolerated. Given the low incidence of grazing stock entering the wood and high biodiversity gains of occasional browsing, erection of a stock proof boundary is not considered to be necessary or cost viable. Additionally it would also degrade the informal and 'natural' visitor experience.

However, it should be noted that grazing of compartment 1a is having an undesirable effect with the loss of ground flora in the spring, and exclusion here is desirable. In the long term a very low intensity grazing regime throughout the site complex would be complimentary to maintain and enhance all associated habitats that are factors of past management practice. Co-operation with adjacent land managers will be required to achieve this and future management decisions will always be taken, with this potential in mind for the future.

Informal Public Access - To ensure the woodland is an enjoyable and safe place to visit by maintaining the paths and entrances for public access. In the medium term tree safety will become an issue adjacent to managed paths. Whilst the public footpath will have to be kept open, it may be necessary to alter the route of the riverside path or cease management altogether given the potential conservation value of dead and dying trees.

## 5.0 KEY FEATURES

The Key Features of the site are identified and described below. They encapsulate what is important about the site. The short and long-term objectives are stated and any management necessary to maintain and improve the Key Feature.

### 5.1 Mixed Habitat Mosaic

#### Description

Mixed species, predominately native broadleaf woodland, established in 1920s. Now developing a varied age structure and species composition. The woodland, whilst secondary has a high nature conservation value due to its proximity to neighbouring semi-natural non-woodland habitats, and is rich in lower plant growth.

#### Significance

The site lies within a complex of habitats and is considered to be of considerable nature conservation interest: its developing structural variety by natural processes is complementing WT aim of increasing woodland biodiversity.

#### Opportunities & Constraints

Constraints: Ground is generally steep and damp and with very difficult access. Opportunities: Woodland is self-thinning and developing uneven age structure. Grazing stock presence on adjacent land.

#### Factors Causing Change

Squirrel damage, Uncontrolled Grazing

#### Long term Objective (50 years+)

A diverse structured, mixed species High Forest woodland, comprised of predominately native species, and rich in lower plants.

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

Continue monitoring of grazing damage by squirrels and stock which may affect the health and natural regeneration of the woodland. Control of squirrels to be carried out as per WT guidelines once damage exceeds moderate levels.

Ensure that the woodland remains healthy and develops into a habitat that encourages natural regeneration of both shrub and tree species and maintains a species rich ground flora

## 5.2 Informal Public Access

### Description

Informal public access via public footpath and permissive riverside paths that lead through the site. There is no local parking and access to the area is difficult but the site is well used by the local public.

### Significance

Whilst informal public access is a fundamental Woodland Trust Objective, access to wooded valley sites is also identified within the Dartmoor National Park management plan as an alternative to open moorland access. One of the paths is a public right of way which is well used.

### Opportunities & Constraints

Constraint: Access to the wood is quite challenging ; via a ladder. The wood is on steep ground and along the riverside path there are a number of natural obstacles limiting access to some. The number of dead and dying trees is high as the wood is self thinning, providing potential tree safety / access conflict. Opportunity: The site provides a pleasant alternative to walking on the open moor, and provides quite a 'wild and natural' experience.

### Factors Causing Change

tree mortality

### Long term Objective (50 years+)

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

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

Ensure that the woodland continues to provide a safe, well maintained environment with good accessibility that the public can enjoy.  
Access points and public footpaths to be maintained appropriated to use and demand from the local population.

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## 6.0 WORK PROGRAMME

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

Cpt No.	Area (ha)	Main Species	Year	Management Regime	Major Management Constraints	Key Features Present	Designations
1a	1.13	Oak (sessile)	1920	null	No/poor vehicular access within the site, Very steep slope/cliff/quarry/mine shafts/sink holes etc	Mixed Habitat Mosaic	National Park
<p>Small area of mixed deciduous woodland, northwest of the leat. Principally Oak (P1920), over Ash (P1950), Rowan, Hazel and Holly. Great Wood Rush dominates the ground flora. Occasional intensive grazing by escaped stock is evident. A small block of Larch (P1950) occurs in the southern end.</p>							
2a	5.23	Oak (sessile)	1920	null	No/poor vehicular access to the site	Mixed Habitat Mosaic	National Park
<p>Main block of the wood, South East of the leat. Principally Oak (P1920), over Rowan, Hazel and Holly. Bilberry and Cow-wheat dominate ground flora in the flatter areas. Royal Fern is abundant in places. Remnants of Rhos pasture are present but are succeeding to wet woodland dominated by willows and alder (P1980). Small pockets of Beech (P1900) occurs along the river edge. Low intensity grazing occurs occasionally, from stock on common land.</p>							

## 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.