



Verflors 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 Consequently this printed version may quickly become out of date, particularly in relation to the planned work programme and on-going monitoring observations.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:	Verflors Wood
Location:	Pound Green
Grid reference:	SO753783, OS 1:50,000 Sheet No. 138
Area:	3.06 hectares (7.56 acres)
Designations:	

2.0 SITE DESCRIPTION

2.1 Summary Description

Verflors is named after the two wives of the previous owner, Veronica and Flora Sallery and was planted in 1991-92 with native broadleaf species. Access can be gained off the minor road leading to Pound Green from Button oak

2.2 Extended Description

Verflors Wood is located five kilometres northwest of Bewdley to the north of the B 4194 and between the villages of Button Oak and Pound Green. It falls within the Wyre Forest and backs directly onto Forestry Commission plantations.

The land came into the ownership of the Woodland Trusts (WT) in March 1990 and originally consisted of two pasture fields divided by a hedge with a small area of grazed cherry orchard. In accordance with the Woodland Trusts corporate objectives for increasing new native woodland and public enjoyment of woodland, it was planted in 1991-92 with native broadleaf species, predominantly Oak and opened to the public for informal pedestrian recreation. The name Verflors derives from a covenant or legacy from the previous owner that the wood be named after his two wives Veronica and Flora Sallery.

The wood is roughly 'L' shape with a thin spur heading off from its north east corner. It is flat with natural drainage to the south; and has clay-rich soils. The access points on the east and west boundaries are linked by rides allowing visitors to enjoy the site and link the site with paths on the adjoining forestry commission woodlands.

The wood is bounded to the north and west by woodland, to the south by grassland and to the east by a minor road.

The Key features which help to determine the focus of the management of the site are F1 New native woodland and F2 Informal public access.

3.0 PUBLIC ACCESS INFORMATION

3.1 Getting there

Access can be gained to the east side directly off the minor road leading to Pound Green from Button oak via a field gate; or to the west of the site via the public footpath from Pound Green that runs along the eastern boundary of the Forestry Commission (FC) plantation. Here there is an open section in the boundary between FC and WT land where people can gain entry into Verflors Wood. There is a linear path that passes through the site (approx) 250 metres long. There is also a small path leading off to the north of the site approx 100m in length) to a glade area and a seat on which visitors can sit and relax! The paths are not surfaced and but mostly flat with exception of a short section to the east of the site which has a slight incline.

There is no parking nearby. The easiest option would be to park in the village of either Button Oak or Pound Green and walk a walk of approximately ½ a mile along the road down to the site or to simply use the local Footpath network to reach the wood.

Nearest bus stop - approx 400 metres away at the bottom of the lane that runs next to the site meets the B4194.

Nearest railway station - Kidderminster Railway station 5.3 miles away.

Nearest Public Toilet - Nearest Toilet - at Dog Lane car park in Bewdley. It is a super Loo (like a little stand alone tardis) in the car park which has disabled facilities.

** Further information about public transport is available from Traveline - www.traveline.org.uk or phone 0870 608 2 608

3.2 Access / Walks

4.0 LONG TERM POLICY

To maintain an area of native mixed broadleaved woodland. Ride edge coppicing will take place along selected lengths to enhance visitor enjoyment by increasing the transparency of the woodland edge and connecting the visitor with the woodland interior. Cyclical cutting regimes of the long grass and shrub zones will be carried out to ensure the paths and grassed areas continue to remain open and inviting to visitors.

In terms of public access, rides and open glade areas will be maintained including the through route to the Wyre Forest and Land owned by the FC and a linear route which leads to a glade with a seat placed to one side of this. Public use of the site is currently low, but it does provide a very useful and convenient link to those that do use it to the minor road which forms the eastern boundary of Verflors Wood and leads to the villages of Button Oak and Pound Green.

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 New Native Woodland

Description

Small plantation of approximately 3220 native tree and shrub species planted in 1991 - 92 at 3m centres. This new woodland abuts directly onto Forestry Commission land identified in the 1986 Worcestershire inventory of ancient woodland as “ancient replanted woodland”.

Significance

The importance of this new habitat lies in the Woodland Trusts core values for “improving woodland biodiversity” and “increasing new native woodland”. As discussed in the constraints and opportunities section, Verflors wood is too small to make an impact to local ecology on its own. But as a conservation site managed for perpetuity it provides a secure woodland habitat for the migration of flora and fauna from neighbouring land recorded as “ancient replanted woodland”

Opportunities & Constraints

On its own the site is too small to make a significant impact on the areas ecology, but its creation adds value to a larger mosaic of habitats in the locality. The site will be subject to different management practices to neighbouring land from which its close proximity may allow the migration of flora and fauna associated with the neighbouring replanted ancient woodland site.

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Increased biodiversity can also be served through the retention of standing and fallen dead wood and moribund trees that provide a wide range of food sources and habitat for numerous native flora and fauna. As the canopy of the woodland blocks closes the quality of light for ground flora and fauna (Particularly invertebrates) will change. Management of the ride and ride edges will help maintain a variably structured habitat.

Factors Causing Change

Deer damage

Long term Objective (50 years+)

It is the Trusts long-term intention that the plantation be maintained as mature native woodland with a species mix and structure typical of oak/ash woodland in the local area. It will serve as a permanent broadleaf woodland habitat in a more diverse mosaic of habitats, and it is hoped will be subject to use or colonisation over time by plant and animal species from the neighbouring replanted ancient woodland site. Further value will be added to local biodiversity through the retention of standing and fallen dead wood, and ride-side management aimed at increasing habitat niches and improving woodland structure.

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

Remove all tree shelters and hardwood stakes that litter the woodland floor.

Coppice ride side shrubs and undertake a light selective thin favouring a mixture of native broadleaves in order to increase light levels to the margins of the broad ride in the eastern section of the wood. This is both a silvicultural and an amenity operation, improving the aesthetic value of the wood. This work will help to increase the transparency of the woodland edge and allow visitors visual access to the interior of the wood. The selective thin will concentrate on those stems which are severely suppressed or etiolated and will provide growing space for those other stems which exhibit good form related to the individual species.

Maintain the grassed open areas.

5.2 Informal Public Access

Description

Permissive access is granted to the whole of Verflors Wood for the pursuit of informal pedestrian activities. Access points are from the road on the eastern boundary, and from the public footpath that runs along the western boundary. A ride is maintained that links the access points and an open space in the north-west corner of the site where a bench is also located.

Significance

The use of nearly all Woodland Trust owned sites for quiet, informal public recreation forms a core to the Woodland Trusts vision for the future. Managed for perpetuity as part of a larger mosaic of habitats Verflors Wood will attract (over time) a variety of permanent and transient flora and fauna from the neighbouring woodland. This site, small though it is, will be an ideal location for observing wildlife and gradual changes in local biodiversity.

Opportunities & Constraints

The size and shape of the site mean that extending the existing ride or adding new ones would have a detrimental effect on the planting blocks. The south-western access point exists on agreement with the forestry commission who retain the right to close it. The present level of access is satisfactory, however, should a demand arise then there is the opportunity for improving the existing access through the provision of hard surfaces, more seating and information boards.

Factors Causing Change

Fly tipping, Change in level of visitor use of the site.

Long term Objective (50 years+)

The Trust will maintain the existing levels and quality of accessibility, and where opportunities or a demand arises will seek to make improvements. This will be achieved through the continued maintenance of the ride and access points and through maintaining as long as permissible the access agreement with the Forestry commission.

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

In order to maintain or increase usage the Trust will continue to advertise its properties in its own publications and through the local and national media. The paths and entrance points will be managed annually through an estate maintenance contract. The safety of the site will be addressed through on-going tree safety and site risk assessment regimes, which will generate remedial works as required.

Rides will be mown a minimum of twice annually according to the Woodland Trusts standard EMC specification number 2.1. The open glade area will be maintained an cut in full on an annual basis.

Ride edge coppicing under F1 will aid transparency of the woodland edge and reduce the constrictions in the ride. It will also enhance the aesthetic appeal of the woodland and help to reduce the perception of threat which is often associated with a "green canyon".

The gap in the fence which provides access to the adjacent woodland, will be formalised by the construction of a squeeze-gap.

6.0 WORK PROGRAMME

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

Cpt No.	Area (ha)	Main Species	Year	Management Regime	Major Management Constraints	Key Features Present	Designations
1a	3.10	Oak (sessile)	1992	Min-intervention		Informal Public Access, New Native Woodland	

Compartment 1A captures the whole site into one management area. It forms a broad 'L' shape on the west and southern side of a domestic property with a thin spur abutting the northern side of this. The compartment was planted in 1991 and 1992 and has approximately 93% tree cover with two small areas of open ground located in the north east and north west corners of the site. A ride runs in a crescent shape from the management access on the eastern boundary to the open ground in the north east corner, and has a spur cutting off to a pedestrian access point on the south west corner of the site.

The planting mix was dominated by sessile oak; birch; ash; cherry; and rowan with mixed woodland shrubs holy; hazel; hawthorn. These were planted at 3m centres with 1.2m shelters. With the exception of an area in the south western corner, establishment has been good. There is little understory except around the boundaries and old hedgelines where self-set bramble and blackthorn are becoming well established. The herb layer is dominated by plants typical of un-grazed pasture: rank grass; thistle; nettles; dock; plantain; with tussock grasses dominant in the south west corner and bluebells in sections of the western boundary hedge.

The eastern boundary is formed by an unmanaged hedgeline next to a secondary road. The hedge line continues along the southern boundary and abuts pasture land. The compartments western boundary is a mixed hedgeline alongside a public footpath and forestry commission land comprising of a narrow belt of mature broadleaf (Beech/oak) and a pine (Pinus sp.) plantation. The northern boundary is mostly wire fence alongside an over mature cherry orchard and rough pasture.

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.