



Great Plantation

Management Plan
2006-2011

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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 Consequently this printed version may quickly become out of date, particularly in relation to the planned work programme and on-going monitoring observations.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:	Great Plantation
Location:	Dunsford
Grid reference:	SX823902, OS 1:50,000 Sheet No. 191
Area:	6.97 hectares (17.22 acres)
Designations:	Area of Landscape Value

2.0 SITE DESCRIPTION

2.1 Summary Description

A quiet, isolated wood located on a sloping site on the edge of Dartmoor. The options for visiting it by car or public transport are limited but the wood is well used by local people. There is access from the road running up the east side of the wood but no other public rights of way cross it. However, there are paths within it to allow the visitor to explore.

2.2 Extended Description

Great Plantation is a quiet, isolated rural wood located approximately 1.5km north-east of the village of Dunsford (population approximately 669) on the edge of the Dartmoor National Park. It is situated near the southern edge of the Culm Natural Area on Carboniferous shale and sandstones, but still forms part of the typical landscape of rolling hills, open pasture and fragmented valley woodland found in this area which is often connected to other woodland by characteristic hedge banks alongside winding sunken lanes. Whilst options for visiting by car or public transport are extremely limited, it is well used by local people.

Two thirds of the site is established woodland whilst the remainder was planted in 1988 prior to acquisition in 1990. The new planting is mainly native broadleaved trees with some conifers. This planted field has past records of interesting grassland groundflora and butterfly populations. The established wood appears to be an old estate plantation of the 1800s and comprises semi-mature predominately oak high forest trees with other mixed broadleaf's. Surrounding land is used as pasture but on the south western boundary woodland adjoins the site. Old boundary banks contain remnant ancient wood flora and support a number of more mature trees. These can be found on the edge of the new planting area and the mature area of woodland. There are also more bank structures to be found within the mature trees.

3.0 PUBLIC ACCESS INFORMATION

3.1 Getting there

There is one access point into Great Plantation and this is via a track which starts at a small, sloping pull-in and management gate and squeeze gap directly off the public highway. At the top of the slope there is a management gate and squeeze gap which is of limited width and allows only pedestrian access. This offers very limited parking with room enough for one vehicle and no other safe parking within a comfortable walking distance along the road. The pull-in also offers very poor visibility on exit back onto road.

While there are no public footpaths leading directly into or past the wood there are several in the area the closest being from Reedy to Shepard's Ford which crosses the road within 100 metres of the entrance. Paths within the wood are mainly gently sloping over the majority of the site but of a natural, unmodified surface which can be uneven. Further into the site gradients get slightly steeper and the path surface more slippery and uneven but the path follows regularly mown management tracks. No steps or seats exist on the site.

Nearest public toilet - Moretonhampstead is the nearest town (approximately 6km) with facilities for visitors. Toilets can be found in the Court Street Car Park in Moretonhampstead.

Nearest bus stop - The local bus stop is in Dunsford outside the Royal Oak pub approximately 1.5km from the site. The timetable for this service can be found on the Stagecoach website.

3.2 Access / Walks

4.0 LONG TERM POLICY

The long term vision at Great Plantation is to develop and diversify both the existing woodland and the more recent planting to mature native high forest, whilst diversifying age class and species mixture to represent typical lowland mixed broadleaved woodland and preserve the woodlands important position in the landscape. Whilst no major thinning is planned in the mature woodland in the next five years, single trees will be felled and some ridesides coppiced to achieve these objectives. Thinning will however take place in the younger stand to promote the continued good growth rates of trees within this area. This operation will also open the canopy to allow more light to the floor and allow the development of a healthy, more diverse ground flora within the stand over the long term.

Rides and paths within the site will be managed to enhance the biodiversity. Maintenance of gates, signs and paths will continue to welcome visitors to the site and enhance their enjoyment of the wood fulfilling the Trust's corporate objective of increasing people's awareness and enjoyment of woodland.

Whilst more and more information is being gathered over time for the wood this shall continue so that future management planning is aided by this background knowledge and data.

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

Great Plantation is located away from a quiet road in a secluded rural area. There is nowhere to park nearby, and the entrance is not immediately obvious from the road being set back into the hedgeline. It is thought that public use other than by locals is low although the site is well walked and numerous paths are well trodden around both sub compartments.

Significance

Providing access to Great Plantation helps to fulfil the Woodland Trust's objective to promote understanding and enjoyment of woodland and contributes to giving users a variety of walking experiences in the local area.

Opportunities & Constraints

Opportunity: to provide low key public access at the wood, at a level suitable to the low numbers of visitors thought to access the wood, by maintaining the tracks and entrance in a welcoming state.

Constraint: development of public access any further than this informal level is constrained by physical access to the site. Because of this however the site does provide an opportunity for an unusually peaceful and varied woodland experience.

Factors Causing Change

Natural succession To Woodland

Long term Objective (50 years+)

A woodland that contains well maintained and attractive paths and entrances. The wood will remain open to the public for quiet informal recreation predominantly by locals from surrounding villages.

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

Operational objective:

Accessible, attractive, well maintained and safe woodland that the public frequently enjoy. Entrances and path network are appropriate to the level of use and type of demand from the local population.

Work programme:

- 1) Provide a stone surface at the roadside pull-in and entrance gates before Winter 06/07 to make it more accessible to users of the site in all weathers.
- 2) Hedges at roadside cut annually and down access track cut as required to maintain good access and appearance.
- 3) Mow paths 2 times a year to maintain at least 3m width. Cut whole width of rides and wayleaves in the p1988 planting at least once a year to enhance diversity of ground flora. Cut adjacent vegetation to rides to prevent excessive shading where necessary.

5.2 Secondary Woodland

Description

Two areas of secondary woodland exist on the site. The mature woodland was planted in 1870 and has developed some semi-natural characteristics. The younger planting (p1988) includes some conifers visually complementing the older planting. Wide rides have been incorporated in the newer design creating a variety of habitats in this part of the site. The proximity of the new planting to the more mature stand and the hedge banks that surround it provide a potential source/route for woodland species to cross into the newly planted woodland for example Bluebells, Wood sorrel and Tutsan. Great Plantation has become an important feature in the local landscape. It also increases area of woodland and is interconnected with other woodlands by hedges and field banks forming wildlife “corridors”.

Significance

The mature wood forms an important part of the landscape and the younger area of planting is important as it will buffer and extend the more mature planted woodland complementing the Woodland Trust's core objective of increasing new native woodland cover and as a result allow the further development of the whole site to show semi-natural characteristics and to increase its biodiversity. The woodland contributes to the habitat action plans at local, regional and national level, but there are no species on the BAPs known to be on the site.

Opportunities & Constraints

Opportunity: to establish attractive predominantly native broadleaved woodland, buffering and extending a more mature woodland. An opportunity to further develop the younger planting by thinning also exists. This would encourage natural regeneration, age diversity and further development of woodland ground flora and biodiversity. Management of the rides would encourage diversity in open ground species.

Factors Causing Change

Long term Objective (50 years+)

Healthy, mature and attractive broadleaf woodland of varying structure and habitats containing predominantly native species although sycamore will be accepted as part of the species mix. A mixture of trees, shrubs, open space in the form of rides and developing ground flora.

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

Operational objective:

Ensure woodland is healthy and developing further as a woodland habitat, with further development of natural regeneration of trees/shrubs in gaps caused by recent thinning in the mature wood and carry work out to allow the development of a woodland ground flora in the younger planting over this and the next plan period. All tree shelters and mulch mats to be removed by end of the plan period. Recruit any natural spread of ground flora in the woodland blocks and adjacent paths, adjusting management regimes such as mowing on woodland edges to encourage establishment

Work Programme:

Ongoing shelter removal from the new planting area annually as required to be completed by the end of the plan period. Also mulch mat removal over the same period.

Thinning of new planting which at present has a closed canopy favouring trees of good form by removal of 30% of the canopy over the whole of compartment 1a (2.27ha) by the end of the plan period will allow light to penetrate to the floor and improve ground flora characteristics.

Complete a Site Monitoring Survey of Ancient Woodland Species using the DAFOR method on a random walk through Compartment 1b in the spring/summer to include the boundary bank between Compartments 1a and 1b to establish which species are present and to guide future management decisions.

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	2.43	Mixed conifers	1988	High forest	Mostly wet ground/exposed site, No/poor vehicular access to the site	Informal Public Access, Secondary Woodland	Area of Landscape Value
<p>A rapidly maturing stand of mixed new planting created prior to acquisition (p1988) dissected by a wide grassy ride for access to subcompartment 1b, and also a power line wayleave. Ground flora in both of these rides is rich and diverse. Planting comprises of an intimate mixture of native (oak, cherry and ash) and locally non-native species (beech and Scots pine) which were planted in 1988. The subcompartment is bounded by banks and mature hedges of native species such as blackthorn, willow and hazel. The stand has varying aspects but is mainly northwest.</p>							
1b	4.55	Mixed broadleaves	1870	High forest	Mostly wet ground/exposed site, No/poor vehicular access to the site	Informal Public Access, Secondary Woodland	Area of Landscape Value
<p>This stand comprises of largely maturing oak standards (p1870) with some ash, sycamore and beech standards over hazel coppice. A recent survey has shown that the mature wood shows an affinity to NVC W8 and W10 - Lowland Mixed Broadleaved Woodland. The subcompartment has occasional pockets of downy birch regeneration (p1950) and abundant bramble. Regeneration of ash & oak with some sycamore and beech has occurred following thinning operations in the winter of 1997/8 adding to the structural diversity. Groundflora diversity is limited but bryophytes and bluebells can be found here along with ancient woodland features occurring along the boundary bank with subcompartment 1a. This stand also has a mainly northwest aspect.</p>							

Appendix 2: Harvesting operations (20 years)

Forecast Year	Cpt	Operation Type	Work Area (ha)	Estimated vol/ha	Estimated total vol.
2007	1a	Thin	2.27	0	0

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.