



Hoe Wood

Management Plan 2010-2015

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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 Consequently this printed version may quickly become out of date, particularly in relation to the planned work programme and on-going monitoring observations.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:	Hoe Wood
Location:	Aldham
Grid reference:	TL903263, OS 1:50,000 Sheet No. 168
Area:	8.75 hectares (21.62 acres)
Designations:	Ancient Semi Natural Woodland, Colne Valley Special Landscape Area, Conservation Area

2.0 SITE DESCRIPTION

2.1 Summary Description

Dating back over 400 years, Hoe Wood is ancient woodland that was once coppiced. A thriving deer population has hindered recent attempts to reintroduce this traditional practice. There is a circular path with views over the Colne Valley to the north.

2.2 Extended Description

Hoe Wood is ancient semi-natural woodland and historically was managed as coppice with standards. Apart from recent management by the WT, coppice management has lapsed for some time. Since the Trust acquired the site in 1990 there have been regular coppicing events organised at various times by the Trust, the Colne Countryside Project and local volunteers. However the increased damage caused by deer and the failure of covering coppice stools with brash has meant this coppicing work had to be cancelled.

Overall the coppice under storey is dominated by hazel with field-maple and ash with the occasional small leaved lime stool and small stands of Hornbeam, especially towards the north. Oak standards are abundant throughout the wood. Minor species found include a wild service tree, dogwood, sweet chestnut, wild cherry, aspen and holly. The ground flora is relatively diverse with typical species including bluebell, wood sedge, bugle, enchanter's nightshade, foxglove, wood avens, hairy woodrush, dog's mercury, three-nerved sandwort, primrose, red campion, wood speedwell and early and common dog violets. Common twayblade occurs in several places through the wood and early purple orchids are also present.

The wood sits in an isolated position within an arable landscape. It is wet woodland over clay soils with a network of ditches feeding into two large double ponds on the western and eastern sides of the wood and 7 other minor ponds. The ponds were surveyed in detail for invertebrates in summer 2003. Pond and wet area flora comprises a variety of typical species including cyperus and remote sedges, fine-leaved water dropwort, marsh thistle, tufted hair-grass, marsh bedstraw, soft rush, gipsywort, creeping jenny and water figwort.

Access to the woodland is via a public footpath leading from the public highway. Once inside the wood there is a circular path around it.

3.0 PUBLIC ACCESS INFORMATION

3.1 Getting there

Hoe Wood is a very remote wood located a couple of miles outside the village of Aldham. There is no parking at the wood and no maintained paths in the wood although there is a circular woodland path. The wood is accessible along a rough path off the Tey Road.

To get to the site by public transport No 88 (First/Heddingham Omnibuses Ltd) buses leave from Colchester Town Hall Street Stop no 1 at regular intervals. From Aldham one has a couple of miles walk along the Tey road to get to the site. No freely open public toilets in the area other than in pubs in the village of Aldham.

3.2 Access / Walks

4.0 LONG TERM POLICY

Silvicultural management and deer

Woodland management is severely restricted by the prevalence of deer. The small size of our landownership means that at present the only effective means of deer control is to fence the wood so as to exclude them. How best to manage the woodland canopy in the long-term is an issue that needs to be resolved but at present the information available to justify the expense of fencing and/or other measures from a conservation basis is not available. Future Silvicultural management will be a minimal intervention regime.

Pond Management

The nine ponds within the wood form together a distinctive biodiversity feature with a number of uncommon plants and invertebrates. A minimal intervention regime is proposed for the ponds and their locale.

Public Access

The wood is not planned to be a destination for visitors and will largely be a feature of more general walks. Reactive management is only planned for the site

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

A circular path has been created through Hoe Wood to enable visitors to walk around the whole wood. The woodland is set back off the public highway but the track leading up to it and beyond is a public footpath. It is situated 5 miles west of Colchester and is close to the village of Aldham. The volunteer work team report that a surprising number of local people walk the wood on the regular basis.

Significance

The wood is an attractive and valued part of the local landscape for local walkers.

Opportunities & Constraints

C1: The wood is poorly accessible for all bar the regular walker;
C2: There is only limited roadside parking

O1: To key the wood into local circular walks
O2: To develop volunteer/local community support as the main means of managing the wood.

Factors Causing Change

Long term Objective (50 years+)

A semi-natural ancient woodland which is open for the local residents and public to enjoy as part of wider countryside walk

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

Reactive management only.

5.2 Ancient Semi Natural Woodland

Description

Hoe Wood is an ancient semi-natural woodland and historically was managed as coppice with standards. Apart from recent management by the WT, coppice management has lapsed for some time. Since the Trust acquired the site in 1990 there have been regular coppicing events organised at various times by the Trust, the Colne Countryside Project and local volunteers. However the increased damage caused by deer and the failure of covering coppice stools with brash has meant this coppicing work has had to be cancelled.

There are two broad stand types - oak with ash/field maple/hazel and oak with hornbeam towards the northern end of the wood. It is a wet woodland on clay soils.

Significance

It is an important feature in the landscape, a valuable resource for wildlife and a place people can enjoy.

Opportunities & Constraints

C1: Deer Browsing poses a significant problem and coppice management is not viable for the foreseeable future.

C2: The small size of the wood means and the need for specialist equipment to reduce damage to the wet ground means that silvicultural work is likely to be a substantial cost.

O1: To develop the pond habitats with the wood;

O2: To develop the ride and open ground management with the wood

O3: To develop volunteer/local community support as the main means of managing the wood.

Factors Causing Change

Deer Damage

Long term Objective (50 years+)

Ancient semi-natural woodland allowed to develop naturally through a minimal intervention approach.

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

Minimal intervention. No proactive management action taken

5.3 Pond

Description

Overall there are nine ponds within Hoe Wood, some of which dry up in the summer months. There are however two substantial double ponds - one on the eastern side of the wood and the other on the western side. In 1992 they were excavated by the National Rivers Authority. Until 2007 they were kept open by coppicing the hazel surrounding them. There is a network of ditches which feed into the ponds. Detailed survey of the aquatic invertebrates in 2003 emphasised that while individually the ponds were not of significant interest the cluster of nine ponds was in total of significant interest, at least locally with a number of uncommon species. Great Crested Newts were found in at least one pond

Significance

The ponds are important to the biodiversity of the woodland as a whole. They add interest for wildlife and visitors.

Opportunities & Constraints

C1: An EIA needs to be undertaken concerning all management work on the ponds as a consequence of the presence of Great Crested Newts;

C2: A paucity of detailed survey information means that management in the first instance needs to be cautiously conservative;

O1: To enhance and possibly extend a locally significant aquatic habitat;

Factors Causing Change

Deer Damage

Long term Objective (50 years+)

A complex of ponds linked by ditches and management of adjacent woodland to favour the development of aquatic and wetland plants and animals.

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

Minimal intervention.

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	8.70	Oak (pedunculate)	1600	null		Ancient Semi Natural Woodland, Informal Public Access	Ancient Semi Natural Woodland

High forest woodland derived from stored coppice. The main species of standards are oak, ash and field maple. The main understorey species are hazel with Ash and Field maple and discrete stands of Hornbeam. Small clonal clumps of Aspen and Wild Cherry also occur through the compartment. Close to the entrance on the western side of the ride there is a particularly noteworthy small-leaved lime, which has been coppiced in the past and Wild Service Tree. Since 1990 approximately 3 ha of the woodland has been coppiced but this has been heavily browsed by deer and coppicing has stopped with little prospect of it recommencing unless protection from deer browsing can be adequately secured.

Nine ponds across the site form a distinctive feature and management by local volunteers in recent years has focused on opening them up to dappled sunlight and other pond margin works. Detailed survey in 2003 into the invertebrates of the ponds found that while individually they were unexceptional in terms of invertebrate number, collectively they formed an interesting group, with a number of species worthy of special note: Button Ram's Snail (*Anisus leucostoma*), Southern Hawker Dragonfly (*Aeshna Cyanea*), The beetles *Hydraeana testacea*, *Anacaena bipustalata*, and *Hydroporus memnonius*. Great crested Newts have also been found in at least one pond.

A circular path runs around the wood and is cut twice year with path edge woody vegetation cut on an adhoc cycle by local volunteers.

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.