



Lower Lee Wood

Management Plan 2014-2019

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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 Consequently this printed version may quickly become out of date, particularly in relation to the planned work programme and on-going monitoring observations.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:	Lower Lee Wood
Location:	Thurgoland, South Yorkshire
Grid reference:	SE297023, OS 1:50,000 Sheet No. 110
Area:	5.16 hectares (12.75 acres)
Designations:	Ancient Semi Natural Woodland, Community Forest, Green Belt, Local Nature Site

2.0 SITE DESCRIPTION

2.1 Summary Description

An ancient woodland that forms part of an attractive area of countryside within the South Yorkshire Community Forest area. The larger Bagger Wood is situated one field away to the east and a footpath joins the two. A public footpath crosses the wood and there is a circular path within it. It does not currently draw a large number of visitors so it is an ideal place to go for some peace and quiet.

2.2 Extended Description

The site, which extends to 5.12 ha (12.65 acres), was acquired on the 31st January 1992. The woodland is located approximately 1 mile to the west of the village of Hood Green with the villages of Thurgoland and Silkstone Common within the 2-3 miles. The town of Barnsley is approximately 8 miles away. Bagger Wood (Woodland Trust) is situated only one field to the east and a permissive path was formed in 2000 to link the woodlands.

The wood has a low level of use. A public footpath crosses the site and a permissive circular path has been created by the Trust.

The wood is situated in an attractive area of countryside comprising of gently sloping grass fields and a mosaic of small and medium sized woodlands. Lower Lee contributes to this landscape pattern. A narrow strip of woodland visually links Lower Lee and Bagger Wood, which give the impression of a much larger woodland area when viewed from the public highways to the north and south.

The wood is within the South Yorkshire Community Forest area, listed by Barnsley MBC as being of Borough Landscape Value, and is within the Barnsley's Green Belt.

This ancient woodland site has a canopy of mature oak and sycamore with a sweet chestnut, rowan, birch, ash, beech, larch and holly. The ground layer is dominated by bramble and creeping soft grass with some areas of rhododendron. Wood sorrel, bluebell, wood millet and ivy are also abundant. Barnsley MBC undertook a limited ecological survey and a species list is available.

A capped mine shaft (responsibility of British Coal) is situated at the north west corner of the wood. This was probably mainly used as an air vent for miners working the seams of the nearby Wentworth Pit.

The wood may well have been coppiced in the late 1800's and was used for shooting game in the 1930's when a gamekeeper's shed was erected in wood. Prior to acquisition by the Trust little management work had been undertaken. Work by the Trust has included clearing rhododendron and the creation of a circular path.

3.0 PUBLIC ACCESS INFORMATION

3.1 Getting there

ACCESS TO THE SITE

The wood is located approximately 5 miles to the west of Barnsley, close to the village of Hood Green and within easy access of the M1 motorway. Access from the M1 is from junction 37, following the A626 towards Penistone. Follow the A626 for about 3 miles to the hamlet of Noblethorpe. Turn left on a minor road sign posted Silkstone Common. After a mile the road meets the B6449 at a crossroads in the centre of the village. Pass straight forward and follow this minor road for 2 miles until the village of Hood Green. Turn right on entering the village and follow the road (Bagger Wood Road, which links the villages of Hood Green and Thurgoland) for another mile, alongside Bagger Wood, to the car park which signed posted from the road.

From Bagger Wood car park, continue along Bagger Wood Road for approximately 200m until you come to a public footpath on the right-hand side of the road, just before you come to Eastfield Inn. Follow this footpath across a field to Lower Lee Wood which can be accessed via a squeeze stile.

ENTRANCE AND FOOTPATHS

The site contains a circular grass path of approximately 400m which is uneven in places. The site entrance is a squeeze stile. A public footpath runs through the wood in a north south direction from Bagger Wood Road to the hamlet of Eastfield.

PARKING

Parking is only available at the car park on Bagger Wood Road.

PUBLIC TOILETS

No public toilets known within 5 miles

BUS STOPS

Hood Green - Nearest bus stop to be confirmed.

TRAVEL INFORMATION

Further information about public transport contact Traveline on www.traveline.org.uk or phone 0870 608 2 608

3.2 Access / Walks

4.0 LONG TERM POLICY

The long-term intentions are to manage the wood through minimum intervention as a broadleaved high forest with a diversity of species and age structure. The footpath network within the wood will be maintained to provide easily accessible tracks for public access.

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 public footpath which is reasonably well used runs across the site from north to south, linking the hamlets of Eastfield and Crane Moor. A semi circular permissive path of approximately 360m has been created through the wood which has a lower level of use. In 2000 an additional permissive path has been created, with funding from the Countryside Agency from the northeast corner to Bagger Wood. This new path appears reasonably well used., especially combined with the availability of car parking at Bagger Wood.

Significance

The footpath network in this area is very extensive with a multitude of paths. The public footpath through the wood, together with the new permissive path form important links to maintain this network of paths.

Opportunities & Constraints

Given the current level of use of the permissive path there would be little benefit in extended the footpath within the wood. The surface of the path is reasonably good, and therefore no further work is currently required to the footpaths.

Factors Causing Change

Increased public access.

Long term Objective (50 years+)

To maintain the current public and permissive footpaths within the wood.

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

Paths will be cut on at least one occasion annually along with maintenance of the welcome signs and litter clearance.

5.2 Ancient Semi Natural Woodland

Description

Ancient woodland site with a high percentage of native tree species, including oak, ash, elm, birch and holly. Exotic species include sycamore, sweet chestnut, beech and larch. Sycamore dominates the western third of the woodland. Ground flora is dominated by bramble and creeping soft grass but other species such as wood sorrel, bluebell and wood millet are also present. Rhododendron also present in small patches.

Significance

Lower Lees Wood lies within an attractive landscape area with predominately grazing land interspersed by small and medium sized woodlands, many of which are ancient woodland sites. The Woodland Trust woodlands of Bagger Wood is linked to the wood by a narrow streamside woodland and Nabs Wood is situated within 2 miles to the north. Lower Lees Wood contributes to the character of the local landscape, links into the adjacent woodland.

Opportunities & Constraints

Returning the woodland to native species would be a long process and impractical given the age and distribution of trees, including species such as sycamore beech and sweet chestnut, as well as the considerable populations in nearby woodlands. Rhododendron should be cleared from site during each 5 year plan period, to prevent large scale establishment within the understorey.

Factors Causing Change

Beech & Sycamore regeneration levels.
Squirrel & Deer Damage.

Long term Objective (50 years+)

To maintain the wood as broadleaved high forest with a varied age and species structure.

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

To allow natural regeneration of broadleaved species within the woodland and on at least one occasion within each 5 year plan period to undertake control of rhododendron throughout the entire site. Sycamore, beech and other non-native species will be tolerated within the woodland mix. Damage from rabbits and deer will be monitored at least once per plan period and management undertaken following an impact assessment.

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	3.97	other oak spp	1910	High forest	No/poor vehicular access to the site, Sensitive habitats/species on or adjacent to site	Ancient Semi Natural Woodland, Informal Public Access	Ancient Semi Natural Woodland, Community Forest, Green Belt, Local Nature Site
<p>Broadleaved high forest consisting of a mixture of predominantly oak 60% sweet chestnut 20% with ash, beech, sycamore, larch and rowan accounting for approximately 20%. Approximate planting year P1910. Situated on a gentle north facing slope down to Bagger Wood Dike. A single public footpath runs through the wood, with a permissive loop providing additional access.</p>							
1b	1.15	Sycamore	1945	High forest	No/poor vehicular access to the site, Sensitive habitats/species on or adjacent to site	Ancient Semi Natural Woodland, Informal Public Access	Ancient Semi Natural Woodland, Community Forest, Green Belt
<p>Broadleaved high forest consisting of predominately sycamore 90% (P1945) with ash and oak (P1910) accounting for only 10%. This sub compartment forms the western block of the woodland. Situated on a gentle north facing slope down to Bagger Wood Dike. A short section of permissive path gives access to the southern portion of this part of the wood.</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.