



Spoooner Vale

Management Plan 2019-2024

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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 Consequently this printed version may quickly become out of date, particularly in relation to the planned work programme and on-going monitoring observations.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:	Spooner Vale
Location:	Windermere
Grid reference:	SD406989, OS 1:50,000 Sheet No. 97
Area:	0.36 hectares (0.89 acres)
Designations:	Environmentally Sensitive Area, National Park

2.0 SITE DESCRIPTION

2.1 Summary Description

This a small urban wood located in a residential area on the outskirts of Windermere with some views to the west and south. There are some fine older trees and a significant number of trees that were planted in the 1950s. It is used mainly by local residents as it has no natural connections to other areas of woodland.

2.2 Extended Description

Spooner Vale, gifted to the Woodland Trust in 1992, is small L shaped woodland extending to 0.36ha located in a residential area on the northern outskirts of Windermere. Houses, gardens and Spooner Vale Road bound the woodland to the south, west and north. To the east a small area of similar woodland separates it from the houses beyond. In general the gardens have a high proportion of semi mature trees and combine to give the impression of larger woodland. There are no public rights of way though a permissive path winds its way to the highest point in the wood terminating at a large beech tree. The woodland is used mainly by local residents and neighbours including children.

The woodland was previously in two ownerships and treated as an extension to the gardens hence the species present are extremely varied. The oldest trees on the site are 5 mature beech thought to have been planted circa 1890. The remaining trees are much younger planted circa 1955 and consist mainly of oak, birch and beech with holly also present. In addition (and particularly along the garden boundaries) there are a number of other species including yew, western hemlock, Lawson Cypress, dawn redwood, Norway maple and laurel, plus others. Hazel, holly and beech are the main under storey species with some oak and ash also present.

The woodland is on a gently sloping knoll facing mainly west and south.

3.0 PUBLIC ACCESS INFORMATION

3.1 Getting there

The only entrance is from Spooner Vale Road on the western boundary of the wood, where there is a twelve foot metal gate with Woodland Trust welcome sign provides both management and public access to the wood. A 90m permissive path leads north east and then south through the woodland terminating at a large beech tree and roughly the highest point in the woodland. There are no public rights of way within or adjacent to the wood. It is possible to park on Spooner Vale Road as long as care is taken to avoid affecting access to the adjacent houses. With such a small site, visitor access beyond the local area is limited.

3.2 Access / Walks

4.0 LONG TERM POLICY

The Trust's long term vision is to protect and conserve this small, semi-urban ancient woodland for its unique habitat and landscape value. This will be achieved by managing it as high forest and with limited intervention to maintain a continuous cover of predominantly native trees and shrubs. Where safe to do so, mature trees, old growth and standing deadwood communities will be retained however proximity to the surrounding houses will be managed through regular tree safety inspections. The wood is predominantly broadleaf with some non-native species, mainly conifers. The woodland is unlikely to change character in the immediate future though natural progression may result in a reduction in the number of birch as these are overshadowed and replaced by secondary species. As the woodland develops it is expected that beech and oak will become the dominant species interspersed with the existing conifers and some ash (which was noted to be naturally regenerating but is now likely to suffer from ash dieback) with holly, rowan and hazel in the understorey. This small urban woodland provides cover and habitat for a variety of wildlife, particularly birds, but also red squirrel and deer.

The Trust will maintain the informal access to the woodland with the provision of one entrance and welcome sign. Open access will be sustained to ensure that local users and visitors can enjoy the woodland. Public information and local consultation will be provided to inform and involve visitors about the woodland and to enable them to gain a better understanding of the importance of woodland within the environment.

It is anticipated that this approach will conserve the woodland for the future and maintain the existing level of 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

Public access to Spooner Vale is from Spooner Vale Road via a 12ft metal gate on the western boundary, a Woodland Trust welcome sign is located at this point. An informal permissive path runs to the top of the woodland, however the open nature of the woodland allows informal access throughout and evidence exists of reasonable use particularly from the neighbouring houses. It is possible to park adjacent to the woodland on Spooner Vale Road.

Significance

Whilst the woodland has greater importance in terms of landscape and conservation neighbours who gifted the wood to the Woodland Trust thought it extremely important that Spooner Vale (which had planning permission for further development) be secured in perpetuity for peaceful recreation as well as to enhance the quality of the surrounding neighbourhood. Although the wood is small, it still provides opportunities for engaging local people, and a space for recreation and play especially for children, which is one of the Trusts key outcomes.

Opportunities & Constraints

No public rights of way exist within or around the woodland and there are no external links to more extensive routes. There may be a possibility to exit and enter in the most south east tip of the wood but given the number of users this is not felt to be required. Though very small the woodland is well used by local residents and it is extremely peaceful and has an interesting array of wildlife. Extending the path network would be difficult without altering the nature of the site. Whilst no formal parking exists it is possible to park quite safely on Spooner Vale road adjacent to the woodland, as most visitors are likely to be local or people walking there is no need to make further provision for parking. Opportunities exist to inform the public of the Trust's objectives, the role of woods in the environment and woodland management relevant to Spooner Vale through web based information and consultation.

Factors Causing Change

Tipping of garden waste.

Long term Objective (50 years+)

The Trust will maintain informal access to the woodland through the provision and maintenance of open access and a public entrance with welcome sign. Tree safety inspections will be regularly undertaken to ensure that visitors and neighbours can enjoy the freedom of the woodland for walking and peaceful recreation. The wood will be promoted to visitors primarily through the Woodland Trust web site which will provide information for visitors and ensure a greater understanding of the importance of woodland here and in the wider environment.

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

Maintain and repair pedestrian access as necessary by strimming and cutting encroaching vegetation from the entrance and the external public footpath along the north west and southern boundaries. Inspect boundaries every 5 years and undertake repairs, working with neighbouring owners as appropriate to secure the wood. Litter pick site and remove material as necessary. Undertake regular inspection of mature trees as per safety observations to ensure safety of visitors, surrounding properties and road frontage. Continue to involve local people by consultation where appropriate. All work will be carried out to Woodland Trust specifications.

5.2 Natural Secondary Woodland

Description

The wood is on a gentle slope, rising from the only entrance in the south west corner so that the site faces west. The woods current composition is approximately 30% oak, 30% birch, 25% beech, 10% holly, hazel and rowan and 5% mixed conifers, many of which are non-native and were planted as garden specimens. It also contains a number of other non-native shrubs, some of which could be invasive, such as snowberry. *Rhododendron ponticum* was present, but has been virtually all been removed. The ground flora is very varied and typical of an oak-birch woodland of the area, on a rocky, sloping site. It mainly consists of native, ancient woodland plants such as bluebell, lesser celandine, primrose, wood sorrel, wood anemone, wood rush and male fern. It also contains snowdrops and Solomon's seal which are likely to have been planted, along with the cultivated daffodils which certainly were. Wildlife includes roe deer which pass through the area and red squirrels are returning to the Windermere area.

Significance

Spooner Vale is an important local landscape feature located in an area of Windermere where housing development has recently expanded. The wood is part of a mosaic of large gardens, woodlands and open space that links the urban setting to the countryside within the Lake District National Park and the Environmentally Sensitive Area.

Woodlands in urban settings, such as Spooner Vale, help to break up the visual impact of houses and bring the countryside to the local community. Trees and woods offer a wide range of benefits to residential and urban areas, such as access to green space, air and noise filtering, shade, improving aesthetic appearance of an area, and improving biodiversity. The woodland provides cover, food and nesting sites for a variety of bird species, small mammals, and the odd roe deer, as the woodland grows, the diversity of the habitats will increase for both flora and fauna.

Opportunities & Constraints

The woodland was previously fragmented and threatened with development. Uniting it under Woodland Trust ownership has removed this threat and unified the management approach, both of which will ensure that it remains a natural, predominantly native ancient woodland. It will be managed as high forest with continuous canopy of trees, ensuring succession through natural regeneration. Retention of the mature canopy and standing deadwood may be constrained by the risk of safety due to the proximity of neighbouring houses, gardens and road frontage. With the proximity to urban properties it is possible that further exotic species from gardens may colonise the woodland. Where colonisation poses a threat to the current overall mix of species removal or control may be considered following WT policies. Where there is no threat the species can be accepted as part of the succession characteristics of the woodland.

Factors Causing Change

Invasive exotics, tipping of garden waste, removal of trees for safety reasons. Ash dieback (which appeared in the area in 2017) will affect the amount of regeneration as it has been prominent.

Long term Objective (50 years+)

To manage the wood as high forest with a continuous canopy, and secure the future of this predominantly broadleaved mixed species woodland by natural regeneration. The existing mature canopy will be retained where safe to do so, and some non-native species retained as long as they are not impacting negatively on the ancient woodland. The wood will be monitored at regular intervals to ensure it is protected and conserved with no other major impacts or invasive colonisation which might threaten it.

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

Monitor the effects of the non-native species and carry out work if necessary to control them. Monitor for influx of further invasive species once each plan period and if necessary take appropriate action to prevent future habitat change or loss of species. Remove litter and garden waste as necessary.

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	0.36	Birch (downy/silver)	1955	High forest	Sensitive habitats/species on or adjacent to site	Informal Public Access, Natural Secondary Woodland	Environmentally Sensitive Area, National Park

Spooner Vale Wood is now a small site that originally was part of a larger woodland. This was cleared to make way for the housing development that now surrounds it. Most of the boundaries are with gardens, but the western boundary and a very small part of the southern is with the road. Prior to acquisition the small wood was subdivided into different ownerships, but it is now managed as one compartment. Management access is from Spooner Vale Road via a 12ft metal gate on the western boundary.

The wood probably has ancient origins, but has been heavily influenced by recent past management when it was partly gardened. It now consists of a few, scattered large beech dating from around 1890, surrounded by frequent mature oak, birch and beech planted around 1955 and a frequent understory of holly, with occasional some hazel, and a small number of rowan. Due to previous gardening activity, there are also a large number of ornamental non-natives, mainly along the western boundary including non-native conifers such as Lawson cypress, western hemlock, and shrubs such as laurel and snowberry. There are no mature ash in the wood at all (ash dieback appeared in the area in 2016). Natural regeneration is generally of species tolerant of shade, and therefore beech and holly are most common, with some oak, ash, sycamore and yew where light allows. Although deer come through, the area is too urban for them to have a detrimental impact. Overall, the wood has oak-birch woodland characteristics (a detailed species list is available in the reference section).

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.