



Centenary Wood & Royal Tigers

Management Plan

2016-2021

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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 Consequently this printed version may quickly become out of date, particularly in relation to the planned work programme and on-going monitoring observations.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:	Centenary Wood & Royal Tigers
Location:	Bagworth, nr Hinckley
Grid reference:	SK453070, OS 1:50,000 Sheet No. 140
Area:	33.48 hectares (82.73 acres)
Designations:	National Forest

2.0 SITE DESCRIPTION

2.1 Summary Description

A large site named partly in commemoration of the Royal Leicestershire Regiment; a living memorial to them can be found within the woodland. Hedgerows, a stream, mature trees and open grassland add to the biodiversity of the site.

2.2 Extended Description

Centenary and Royal Tigers' Wood, purchased by the Woodland Trust in 1993, with considerable financial support from The Royal Leicestershire Regiment, covers 33.5ha and occupies a prominent hillside position south of the village of Bagworth. Hedgerows, a stream and several mature trees added to the diversity of the site, which was in arable crop production prior to acquisition. The surrounding countryside has a history of mining and the nearby Desford Colliery, which has now been largely restored, can be seen to the east. Centenary and Royal Tigers Wood has been designed to complement this restoration work forming an extensive area of community woodland. Open areas of grassland have been retained and are mown for hay to encourage a rich mixture of wild grasses and flowers.

The woodland is made up of two sections which for management efficiency have been combined. Centenary Wood to the north was planted to commemorate 100 years of Bagworth Parish Council, hence Centenary, whilst the section to the south, Royal Tiger's Wood, is living memorial to The Royal Leicestershire Regiment. Their history as a fighting unit goes back as far as 1688 when it fought the French in Flanders. In recognition of the Royal Leicestershire Regiment a memorial stone and an arboretum have been incorporated into the woodland.

Between 1994 and 1996, 28,000 trees were planted, all being native species such as oak, ash and field maple with a variety of shrubs including hazel and hawthorn. In the last, almost 20 years, the trees have thrived and the wood achieved canopy closure so that it is now possible to walk beneath the trees should you wish to stray off the managed rides and footpaths.

3.0 PUBLIC ACCESS INFORMATION

3.1 Getting there

The site lies immediately to the SW of the village of Bagworth on Heath Road. There is an arrangement between the Woodland Trust and Leicestershire County Council for visitors to park their cars in the Bagworth Woods Car park (SK456067). Alternatively it would be possible to park a car in the village of Bagworth and walk to 200 metres to the northern end of the site. All the paths within the site are mown grass and not excessively steep. However they are not suitable for wheelchairs.

The site incorporates a number of grass meadows with strategically placed seats which provide excellent views over the surrounding countryside and wonderful locations for a picnic.

It is possible to take a bus from Leicester, St Margaret's to Bagworth and Coalville. See Traveline.org.uk for details.

There are public toilets at Back Lane, Market Bosworth 6 kms to the east of the site.

3.2 Access / Walks

4.0 LONG TERM POLICY

The long-term intention at Centenary and Royal Tigers' Woods will be to manage the site with largely minimal intervention. Active management will be limited to brashing-back shrubs (particularly blackthorn and hazel) and crown-lifting trees where they make passage difficult along the rides.

The present hard lines between the planting and open ground will be softened by natural colonisation.

Attempts will be made to enhance the floristic biodiversity of the open ground habitats by appropriate management.

5.0 KEY FEATURES

The Key Features of the site are identified and described below. They encapsulate what is important about the site. The short and long-term objectives are stated and any management necessary to maintain and improve the Key Feature.

5.1 New Native Woodland

Description

A total of 26.5 ha of former agricultural land was planted in three annual phases from 1994-1996. The species of the initial planting was a mixture of native broadleaves. Major tree species include predominantly oak and ash with smaller amount of field maple and cherry. Minor tree species include hazel, hawthorn, blackthorn, guelder rose, dog rose and purging buckthorn. Minor species making up approximately 10% of the trees planted. .In addition Willow has been planted in the wetter area of compartment 2.

Significance

This predominately planted woodland, together with the Trust's other holdings nearby and other National Forest initiatives in the area will help to increase the proportion of woodland habitats in an area where the habitat type was considerably under-represented. Thus the site will contribute significantly to the regional biodiversity.

Opportunities & Constraints

Factors Causing Change

Impact of disease.

Long term Objective (50 years+)

Broadleaved high forest with a diversity of natural habitats.

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

Monitor the growth and canopy closure of the planted woodland particularly those species which may be vulnerable to disease. e.g. Ash. Silvicultural operations will be limited to the ride sides where brashing-back of encroaching shrubs and the crown-lifting of trees is necessary in order to ensure safe passage of visitors and contractor's vehicles.

Maintain the core of the open areas by the cutting and removal of hay where appropriate.

Ensure that there is easy access to all the specimen trees in the Royal Tiger's Arboretum.

5.2 Informal Public Access

Description

Prior to acquisition there was already established two public footpaths, which traversed the site, one running north-south and one east-west situated towards the northern end of compartment 1a. Since acquisition further transverse and circular permissive footpaths have been established throughout the whole of the woodland. In order to enhance the public enjoyment of the site the initial planting design incorporated a number of vistas where the views across to the recently restored Desford Colliery site will be maintained.

Significance

In line with corporate objectives to increase visitor access and enjoyment.

Opportunities & Constraints

Centenary and Royal Tigers has a generally flat aspect making walking easy and enjoyable throughout the whole area.

Factors Causing Change

Maturation of the plantation.

Long term Objective (50 years+)

Continue to maintain the pattern of transverse and circular paths. As the woodland matures any informal paths that are created by desire lines will be monitored. If these are felt to be in the best interest of the management of the site and also have the potential to increase public enjoyment then they will become formalised. The formalisation process implies the construction of bridges over ditches, the mowing of paths, the clearance of encroaching regeneration and all aspects of tree safety.

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

Cut all rides three times per year, as well as checking and maintaining information boards and welcome signs at entrance points. Such operations will be maintained through the Woodland Trust 'Estate Maintenance Contract'.

The mowing of the hay meadows will be done under licence with a local farmer.

Examine the potential improvement of the path between the two parts of the site where localised flooding has made the path impassable at times.

Replace/update the interpretation board at the entrance to Royal Tigers' Wood after liaising thoroughly with the Royal Tigers' Association.

Seek to improve the directional signage between the Bagworth Heath car park and the entrance to Royal Tigers' Wood.

5.3 Open Ground Habitat

Description

There are three significant areas of grassland which were left unplanted in Royal Tigers' Wood. The first is on the north-facing slope against the western boundary, the second adjacent to it but containing the Royal Tigers memorial and the third in the broad open valley in the south-eastern sector of the site.

Significance

The inclusion of the meadows in the initial design plan sought to achieve both cohesion on a landscape scale and to increase the biodiversity of the site by the incorporation of a significant open ground habitat.

Opportunities & Constraints

The first contains coarse grasses and weeds but has a large number of regenerating trees along its western boundary. The second, central meadow is floristically more diverse and is suitable for the cutting of hay. The third is poor quality grassland with little floristic diversity. A trial project was carried out in 2005 as part of the "Forest of Flowers" initiative. This involved enhancement planting of wildflowers in the memorial meadow area and the sowing of both annual and perennial wildflower seeds in deep-ploughed subsoil in the southern half of the broad valley.

Factors Causing Change

Occasional illegal grazing by traveller's horses.

Long term Objective (50 years+)

The creation and maintenance of a variety of open-ground habitats from tree/scrub colonised coarse grassland to traditionally managed floristically diverse hay meadows and areas of intermediate characteristics.

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

As part of the Forest of Flowers project apply appropriate prescriptions to the three differing grassland areas appropriate to their present characteristics and desired future outcomes in terms of floristic diversity.

Those areas deemed suitable will be cut for hay under licence.

The Forest of Flowers area should be topped in late Summer.

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	18.78	Mixed native broadleaves	1994	High forest		Informal Public Access, New Native Woodland	National Forest
<p>Centenary Wood, this is a long elongated area of land running north south with a gentle southerly aspect. The area was planted in 1995/96 with a mixture of native broadleaves. Major tree species include predominantly oak and ash with smaller amount of field maple and cherry. Minor tree species include hazel, hawthorn, blackthorn, guelder rose, etc. Minor species making up approximately 10% of the trees planted. Trees were planted at 3 x 3 metre spacing and this has resulted in slow growth and poor form in some areas. Canopy closure has been achieved in almost all locations by 2013.</p>							
2a	14.75	Mixed native broadleaves	1996	High forest		Informal Public Access, New Native Woodland	National Forest
<p>Royal Tigers' Wood, this is situated at the southern end of Centenary wood. The two areas are adjoined by a narrow piece of land where a footpath and small stream connect the two woodlands together. There is a higher proportion of open ground in this compartment (approx. 1.1ha) which is surrounded by trees planted in 1994 and 1996. Species mix is the same as compartment 1a with the exception of crack willow planted at the northern end of the compartment. Tree growth is more even within this compartment with some of the oaks showing good form and growth rates. A small seasonal pond has been created and is slowly being colonised by wetland species.</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.