



Lands Wood

Management Plan 2015-2020

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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 Consequently this printed version may quickly become out of date, particularly in relation to the planned work programme and on-going monitoring observations.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:	Lands Wood
Location:	Winlaton Mill
Grid reference:	NZ183612, OS 1:50,000 Sheet No. 88
Area:	5.86 hectares (14.48 acres)
Designations:	Ancient Semi Natural Woodland, Green Belt, Planted Ancient Woodland Site, Site of Local Nature Conservation Importance, Tree Preservation Order

2.0 SITE DESCRIPTION

2.1 Summary Description

Lands Wood is an ancient woodland site consisting mainly of oak and birch alongside birch, beech, alder and rowan. An extensive path network allows good access and ground flora such as bluebell and dog violet provide colour in season.

2.2 Extended Description

Lands Wood consists of planted oak woodland on an Ancient Woodland Site (AWS) located next to Winlaton Mill in Gateshead, Tyne & Wear (NZ 1835 6120). In 1993 the Woodland Trust purchased 5.87 hectares that make up the southern half of the wood. The wood consists of mostly even-aged oak-birch high forest woodland dominated by hybrid oaks, estimated to have been planted around a century ago, with lesser amounts of birch, probably arising from natural regeneration and a scattering of beech, alder and rowan.

Among the understorey, both oak and beech regeneration is occurring, along with hawthorn, holly, hazel and rowan. A varied field layer exists that includes wood sorrel, dog violets, bluebells, wood anemone, and dog's mercury, among others. The whole wood is covered by a Tree Preservation Order (TPO) and is also designated a Site of Nature Conservation Importance (SNCI) by Gateshead MBC.

The wood occupies a gentle southeast-facing slope with three small watercourses flowing through it. Its south and southwest boundaries lie adjacent to residential housing whilst the northern half of Lands Wood lies to the northwest, along with pastureland that continues round the northeast side of the wood. Five pedestrian entrances provide access to this heavily used wood and a public footpath also runs through it, whilst an extensive network of permissive paths provide access to all parts of the wood. Management access is taken from the top of Manor Terrace, across land owned by Gateshead MBC.

The route followed by the public footpath is also the old Lands Wagonway that was used to transport coal in the eighteenth century. Extensive evidence of coalmining also exists in the wood in the form of numerous bell pit earthworks that may be of late medieval/early post-medieval date, though are thought more likely to be of eighteen-century origin. Other remains of industrial activity on site include an old sand pit in the southeast part of the wood, which also appears to have had a building on it at one time, though only the concrete foundations of this structure now survive among the gorse and broom.

3.0 PUBLIC ACCESS INFORMATION

3.1 Getting there

Lands Wood can be entered from Winlaton Mill village via pedestrian entrances off Noel Terrace (no entrance furniture), Manor Terrace (wooden kissing gate) and also from May Avenue (squeeze stile) by passing through the garages at the top of the avenue. An entrance in the northwest-facing boundary allows access onto site from adjacent woodland and is also where the public footpath (Blaydon No 58) enters Trust property, exiting at the top of Noel Terrace. The wood gently slopes southeast and contains an extensive network of unsurfaced earth paths that are narrow and wind throughout the wood.

For visitors wishing to reach the wood by public transport, a bus stop exists on Noel Avenue at the bottom of Manor Terrace next to the fish and chip shop. From the bus stop, the main entrance to the wood at the top of Manor Terrace can be reached within two minutes walk. Parking around the wood is difficult and confined to on street parking within Winlaton Mill.

3.2 Access / Walks

4.0 LONG TERM POLICY

The long-term intention for Lands Wood is to maintain oak dominated native high forest broadleaved woodland across the site. Management will follow a minimal intervention approach, allowing the natural regeneration already occurring on site to diversify the age structure of the canopy over future decades. Silvicultural works will be confined to tackling tree safety issues. A minimal intervention approach will also help to ensure the archaeological remains in the wood suffer minimal disturbance, preserving them in-situ for future generations to study and enjoy. Facilities for public access will continue to be maintained on an annual basis to ensure at least the current level of provision is maintained into the future. Ensuring public access at Lands Wood continues into the future will also help realise the Trust's corporate objective of increasing enjoyment and understanding of woodland.

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

Lands Wood is an urban fringe wood directly adjoining houses in Winlton Mill and can be entered on foot via five entrances off Noel Terrace, Manor Terrace, May Avenue and from that part of Lands Wood outside Trust ownership to the northwest. A public footpath (Blaydon No 58) enters the wood from the northwest, crosses the wood and exits at the top of Noel Terrace. Besides this path, Lands Wood contains many permissive paths giving access to all parts of the wood.

Significance

Providing public access to woods is a cornerstone of the Trust's management approach to its properties and is encapsulated in its corporate objective of increasing enjoyment of woodland. Lands Wood is on the doorstep of many of the residents of Winlton Mill and consequently, is heavily used for informal recreation by them. Its five entrances provide easy access from various directions, including from the houses that directly adjoin the wood.

Opportunities & Constraints

Informal public access at Lands Wood is well established and few constraints or opportunities can be identified that affect this. Fly tipping occasionally occurs and trespass by cyclists has caused some surface damage to paths but up generally this has not been a significant problem at the wood. The presence of old mine workings are a potential hazard to woodland users whilst, being valuable archaeological remains in their own right, their preservation also conflicts with heavy public access.

Factors Causing Change

None identified at this time.

Long term Objective (50 years+)

To maintain the current level of access provision into the future with the five entrances and the network of permissive paths being maintained on an annual basis to ensure unobstructed access on foot is available to members of the public at all times.

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

The five entrances currently servicing the wood will be maintained in perpetuity to ensure the public enjoy the same level of access to the wood in the future as they do today. All formal paths in the wood will also be maintained for future public access. The main entrance to the wood will be upgraded in 2017 and other entrances needing improvements to access furniture and signage will also be carried out by the end of 2017.

5.2 Planted Ancient Woodland Site

Description

Lands Wood is believed to be an ancient woodland site that was replanted with broadleaves (mostly oak) in the early 20th century. The variety of ground flora found on site, that includes ancient woodland indicator species such as bluebell, wood sorrel, wood anemone, dog's mercury and wood speedwell offer support to this conclusion. Although replanted, the wood is broadleaf and has a developing understory dominated by holly, though also including oak regeneration, as well as regeneration of non-planted species such as birch.

Significance

Because Lands Wood was replanted with oaks, this has helped save valuable elements of the former ancient woodland ground flora that restoration with conifers would have shaded out. Consequently, although the wood has been replanted, some ancient woodland characteristics continue to survive in the present woodland ecosystem. The fact that our property forms only part of Lands Wood, which covers several more hectares to the northwest, as well as linking into Haghill Wood to the east, also adds to its potential ecological importance.

Opportunities & Constraints

Not only is Lands Wood broadleaved woodland but also it is predominantly native in character, with very few non-natives species present. Consequently, little work should need doing to the wood canopy, which will be left to develop naturally. The increasing dominance of holly within the understory could have an impact on oak regeneration and ground flora and may need some intervention in the future. The presence houses adjacent to the wood does result in occasional problems with encroachments and fly tipping, including the danger of tipped garden waste introducing non-native plants into the wood's ecology. Heavy public usage of the wood also leads to ground compaction and erosion as well as the damage caused by children playing in the wood (e.g. breaking branches, cutting down small trees, digging dens and starting fires, etc.). The fact that a Tree Preservation Order (TPO) covers the whole wood does provide some protection but also constraints what work can be done in the wood.

Factors Causing Change

Unauthorised tree felling.

Introduction of garden species.

Spread of holly within the understory.

Long term Objective (50 years+)

To allow Lands Wood to continue to develop naturally as oak dominated native broadleaved high forest woodland so that in future decades the wood becomes more structurally and biologically diverse as a broader range of age classes and species evolve through natural regeneration and colonisation.

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

As this wood is covered by a TPO, the trees can only be felled or pruned if public safety is at risk. However, to realise the longer term objective of a biologically diverse wood with a range of age classes and species, some intervention may be necessary within the understory to control the spread of holly. During this plan period, the impact holly is having on natural regeneration and ground flora will be assessed and if necessary control will be carried out.

5.3 Archaeological Feature

Description

The remains of 13 bell pits exist within the property owned by the Trust that may date from 1551 to 1581, though are more likely to have been workings owned by the Silvertop family and date to c. 1728. These workings can be identified on the ground by the collars of spoil that surround the shaft depressions. The public footpath also follows the route of the horse-drawn wagon-way known as Lands Wagonway, believed to have been constructed between 1728 and 1797 to transport coal and of which some earthworks still exist in the wood. A few bell pits also occur on adjacent land but the bulk of these remains exist on Trust land.

Significance

The bell pits in Lands Wood form the best surviving examples of this type of monument within the core area of the Tyneside coal industry. The surviving earthworks provide important evidence of pit-top arrangements whilst the underground workings are important for their evidence of early mining methods. Consequently, the assessment of these remains carried out under English Heritage's Monument Protection Programme in 1997 recommended that they be protected by scheduling or by other means.

Opportunities & Constraints

Besides complying with the Trust's key objective, preserving the wood in perpetuity will also fulfil the recommendation made in the Monument Protection Programme assessment to protect these features by maintaining the existing land use regime. However, the heavy usage the wood receives from local people is likely to have a negative impact over the long-term on these features due to erosion and other damage. The fact that these features are also potentially hazardous could require work to be carried out on some of them in the future to protect public safety. Should this need arise, this could conflict with the objective of preserving them in-situ.

Factors Causing Change

Erosion of earthworks caused by people using wood.

Direct damage due to digging.

Long term Objective (50 years+)

To ensure the preservation in-situ of these features by maintaining the existing land use regime.

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

No work is planned on these features in the foreseeable future beyond monitoring them every 5 years for cap movement or other signs of impending collapse of the shaft fill in the interests of public safety. At the same time as inspecting the bell pits for safety, they will also be inspected for signs of damage and disturbance (e.g. erosion, digging, rabbit damage, tree root damage, etc.). If significant damage is discovered, this will be reported to the appropriate authorities.

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	5.87	other oak spp	1900	High forest	Housing/infrastructure, structures & water features on or adjacent to site, Legal issues, People issues (+tve & -tve)	Archaeological Feature, Informal Public Access, Planted Ancient Woodland Site	Green Belt, Planted Ancient Woodland Site, Site of Local Nature Conservation Importance, Tree Preservation Order

This compartment extends to 5.87 ha and covers the whole of Lands Wood owned by the Trust. This part of the wood occupies a gentle southeast-facing slope and has three small watercourses flowing through it. Ground conditions are generally firm and consist of well-drained clayey brown earth over sandstone on the middle coal measures. Being in the core area of the Tyneside Coalfield, the wood contains evidence of coalmining in the form of numerous bell pit earthworks, though the site itself is believed to be an ancient woodland site. The present tree cover consists of high forest broadleaved woodland dominated by hybrid oak estimated to have been planted around 1900, though no records exist. Birches are the second most abundant tree species on site with only a few other broadleaves, such as ash, rowan, alder and beech occurring here and there. Holly is the dominant species in the understorey but hawthorn, hazel and dog rose are also present, along with oak, birch and beech regeneration. Being an ancient woodland site, the field layer is reasonably well developed and contains among numerous other herbs and grasses, wood sorrel, dog violet, bluebell, wood anemone, tormentil, wood crane's-bill and dog's mercury. A small glade exists north of the main entrance to the wood at the top of Manor Terrace and contains a simple bench dedicated to the memory of Irene Kathleen Miles. To the southeast of this glade exists the old sand pit that also provides some open space in the wood but is slowly scrubbing over with gorse, broom and birch.

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.