WOODLAND TRUST

Stanley Burn

Management Plan 2017-2022

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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 Consequently this printed version may quickly become out of date, particularly in relation to the planned work programme and on-going monitoring observations.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:	Stanley Burn
Location:	Prudhoe
Grid reference:	NZ114628, OS 1:50,000 Sheet No. 88
Area:	5.74 hectares (14.18 acres)
Designations:	Ancient Semi Natural Woodland, County Wildlife Site (includes SNCI, SINC etc), Green Belt, Tree Preservation Order

2.0 SITE DESCRIPTION

2.1 Summary Description

This wood runs alongside a steep-sided dene and is part of a landscape of woods that join on to each other. The importance of this wood can be judged from the fact that it is all covered by a Tree Preservation Order. It is not widely used by the public and, unfortunately, there is no exit at its northern end so visitors have to retrace their steps.

2.2 Extended Description

Stanley Burn Wood occupies the east bank of a steep-sided dene, approximately 0.5 km to the east Prudhoe, on the Tyne & Wear/Northumberland border around 1km south of the River Tyne (NZ 114 630). From the B6395 to the southern it extends northwards along the east side of the dene for around 1km. Stanley Burn itself forms the western boundary of the Trust's ownership though the wood also occupies the west side of the dene and continues south of the B6395 and northwards to become Cattyside Walk and Channels Wood. The property is divided into two blocks by the A695 (Prudhoe Bypass) though the Trust enjoys rights of access under the fly-over across land adopted and managed by Northumberland County Council. Agricultural land adjoins each woodland block to the east.

The wood, which covers 5.76 ha, grows on Carboniferous shales and coal measures and consists of broadleaved high forest dominated by beech but ash, oak, hazel, holly, elm, silver birch, elder and sycamore are also present, mostly on the lower slopes near the burn. Among the ground flora grow woodrush sp., Dutch rush, wood anemone, blue bell, wood sorrel, broom, honeysuckle, celandine, dog's mercury, wild garlic and cuckoo pint, along with some bramble and bracken.

Stanley Burn Wood is occupied by the Trust on a 399 year lease issued by Gateshead MBC for a peppercorn rent beginning on the 20th of February 1998. The wood is classified as Ancient Semi-Natural Woodland (ASNW) and a Site of Nature Conservation Interest (GAT 99) and lies within a local wildlife corridor running from the River Tyne at Wylam to join the Barlow/Blaydon strategic wildlife corridor to the south. Its importance is reflected in the whole wood being covered by a Tree Preservation Order (TPO) issued by Gateshead MBC on the 12th of November 1990.

No public rights of way exist within the wood and therefore, all public access is permissive. Although the wood lies next to the town of Prudhoe, it is not well used, possibly due to there being no exit from the northern end of the wood requiring walkers to return the way they came. Management access is available directly off the B6395 though vehicular access to the wood is limited to the southern end of sub-cpt 1a due to the terrain.

3.0 PUBLIC ACCESS INFORMATION

3.1 Getting there

For visitors arriving at the wood by car should seek parking in the nearby town of Prudhoe as the B6395 alongside the wood is a narrow busy road on which parking is not recommended. From the eastern side of Prudhoe, the wood can be reached within around 15 minutes by walking along the B6395 eastwards. For those wishing to reach the wood by public transport, bus stops are located on the B6395 about a minute's walk away from the wood's entrance.

No public rights of way exist in the wood; therefore all access to Stanley Burn is on a permissive basis. The public can enter the wood off the B6395 that runs along the wood's southern boundary via a wooden step stile. The path running through the wood is unsurfaced, narrow, winding and steep in places. Although the area of land under the Prudhoe Bypass is not owned by the Trust, the public can walk across this to enter the northern half of the wood. Please note that no right of egress from the northern end of the wood onto adjacent land exists, therefore visitors will have to return the way they came.

For those needing public conveniences whilst visiting the wood, public toilets can be found in Prudhoe on Tyne View Terrace behind Front Street near to the police station. Two RADAR toilets are also available in Prudhoe, one on Neale Street and the other on South Road.

3.2 Access / Walks

4.0 LONG TERM POLICY

The long-term aim for Stanley Burn is to maintain continuous, predominantly native, broadleaved high forest woodland across the site, through minimal management intervention. Small scale intervention will take place to maintain a diversity of regeneration through coppicing some previously coppiced areas.
Although heavy public use of this sensitive site would not be desirable, public access provisions will be improved, in line with current Woodland Trust standards, to increase the visitors enjoyment of the site.

5.0 KEY FEATURES

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

5.1 Informal Public Access

Description

Access to Stanley Burn is provided by the entrance off the B6395, from where a permissive path winds its way northwards for around 1km along the middle and upper slopes of the wood, passing under the Prudhoe bypass bridge. Historically, the path continued out of the northern end of the wood and onto Bradley farm, though today it ends at the wood's edge, requiring walkers to return the way they came. Access along this route is facilitated by a footbridge in sub-cpt 1a and by revetting along parts of the path in 1b. Overall, however, this route is in a poor state of repair in several places, some parts being nothing more than a well worn desire line running along the upper slope of sub-cpt 1a.

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. Stanley Burn lies within walking distance of the town of Prudhoe and therefore, has the potential to provide quite, informal recreation for more people than currently use it. Further areas of population also lie close by to the north and east of the wood offering an even greater catchment area.

Opportunities & Constraints

Constraints - Undoubtedly, the main constraint on developing public access to this wood is having nowhere to go once the northern end of the wood is reached, except back the way you came. As the wood occupies steep slopes for much of its length there is little opportunity for creating alternative routes on site, whilst alongside the burn the ground is too soft and damp and too important for wildlife to want to create new routes there.

Opportunities - Some access benefits could be gained by installing steps on some of the steeper parts of the path and draining some of the wetter/muddy areas, though such improvements should be kept low-key, so as not to spoil the natural character of the wood and in recognition of the fact that Stanley Burn is never likely to accommodate more than a low level of public use.
Keep open to the opportunities to create a link to other footpaths in the area.

Factors Causing Change

Decay of existing wooden revetments to path, Erosion on steeper parts of path, Pool/bog formation restricting access at northern end of path. Erosion of the footings of the wooden footbridge.

Long term Objective (50 years+)

To enhance public access to Stanley Burn by improving the condition of the permissive path to allow a wider range of people to enjoy the wood. If, in the future, the opportunity arises to link the northern end of the path into other paths or rights of way beyond the wood, then this will be implemented.

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

During this plan period the short term objective is to:
- Improve the current path,

This will include the following operational works:
1. Working with Groundworks North East, carry out path improvements with volunteers.
2. Install a new wooden footbridge.

5.2 Ancient Woodland Site

Description

On English Nature's Ancient Woodland Inventory Stanley Burn Wood is recorded as part of an Ancient Semi-Natural Woodland occupying the small burn valley to the north and south of the B6395. The part of this woodland owned by the Trust is perhaps more correctly identified as an Ancient Woodland Site, as the beech that dominates the wood will almost certainly have been planted, probably sometime during the early to mid nineteenth century. Its location as dene woodland and the range of ground flora recorded on site supports its claim to an ancient origin.

Significance

Being ancient woodland, Stanley Burn Wood is a nationally rare habitat type whose preservation and restoration is both a local and national target within biodiversity action plans. Such woodland in the Tyne & Wear area, accounts for only 1% of the existing woodland cover and therefore, is a particularly rare habitat locally. The fact that it links into and forms part of a larger area of Ancient Semi-Natural Woodland increases its value both for flora and fauna. Its value as habitat is further emphasised by the wood being designated a Site of Nature Conservation Interest in 1985, the fact that it lies within a local wildlife corridor and has been protected since 1990 by a TPO.

Opportunities & Constraints

Constraints - The presence of a Tree Preservation Order (TPO) covering the whole wood severely restricts what can be done with the wood.

Opportunities - However, because much of the beech on site is now well into maturity, natural decay and collapse of the existing canopy trees over the coming decades will provide an opportunity to encourage a more varied and locally native woodland cover to become established over the medium to long-term.

Factors Causing Change

Tree Diseases

Long term Objective (50 years+)

To maintain mostly continuous broadleaved high forest woodland across the site which is predominantly native in character. Given the dominance of beech on site, any future woodland arising from natural regeneration is also going to be beech dominated. However, by favouring the regeneration of other native broadleaves over beech where this occurs, greater species diversity will be encouraged over the long-term.
In areas that have had previous coppice management, the reintroduction of this method will be encouraged, to increase the age structure and promote a greater species diversity within the wood.

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

During this plan period the short term objective is to:
- Monitor the condition of the wood,
- restore a coppice structure to a small proportion of the wood,

This will include the following operational works:
1. Condition Assessment
2. Restoring traditional coppice management to the wood. Small coupes will be progressively coppiced over the 5 year plan period.
3. Control of the deer and grey squirrel populations will be undertaken if joint working with adjacent landowners can be encouraged.

6.0 WORK PROGRAMME

Year	Type of Work	Description	Due By

APPENDIX 1: COMPARTMENT DESCRIPTIONS

Cpt No.	Area (ha)	Main Species	Year	Management Regime	Major Management Constraints	Key Features Present	Designations
1a	3.81	Beech		High forest	Mostly wet ground/exposed site, No/poor vehicular access to the site, Very steep slope/cliff/quarry/ mine shafts/sink holes etc	Ancient Woodland Site, Informal Public Access	Ancient Semi Natural Woodland, County Wildlife Site (includes SNCI, SINC etc), Green Belt, Tree Preservation Order
Sub-compartment 1a lies to the south of the A695 and extends to approximately 3.81 hectares. It consists of an upper slope, where mature beech and sycamore dominate, and a lower, wetter streamside area comprised of oak, ash, willow, birch and alder, along with some large beeches alongside the burn. Many of the mature trees in the southern end of 1a appear to have been felled and extracted around the beginning of the 1990's and this area is now regenerating as a mosaic of mixed coppice and open ground consisting of herb-rich damp grassland containing crosswort, pignut and lady's smock. A well-developed understorey occurs in places on the lower slopes but is largely absent under the beech on the upper slopes. Hazel is common within the shrub layer but bird cherry, rowan, holly and elder are also present, along with areas of dense beech and birch regeneration where opening in the beech canopy have allowed light to reach the woodland floor. Woodrush spp. dominates much of the field layer but typical ancient woodland species also occur such as wood anemone, wood sorrel, blue bell, dog's mercury and wild garlic. MANAGEMENT CONSTRAINTS: Limited vehicular access within the compartment.							
1b	1.95	Beech		High forest	Mostly wet ground/exposed site, No/poor vehicular access to the site, Very steep slope/cliff/quarry/ mine shafts/sink holes etc	Ancient Woodland Site, Informal Public Access	Ancient Semi Natural Woodland, County Wildlife Site (includes SNCI, SINC etc), Green Belt, Tree Preservation Order

Sub-compartment 1b consists of approximately 1.95 hectares, situated to the northeast of the A695. The wood here mostly occupies a moderately steep slope, falling down towards the burn, which forms the property's Northwest boundary. At its northern end standing water pooling in places has created a wetland area of some ecological value that will be left to develop as a habitat in its own right. Mature beech is again the dominant tree species, especially across the southern and middle areas of 1b. Where gaps occur in the beech canopy, birch colonisation and beech regeneration has been vigorous. At the northern end of the 1b a small area of sycamore coppice with standards occupies a north-facing bank above the path. A sparse and patchy understorey of young beech and holly is found under the mature beech, whilst towards the northern end of the sub-cpt young thickets of birch, ash and beech have arisen after the felling of the mature beech, probably during the 1980s. Woodrush spp. again dominates the field layer as in sub-cpt 1a. MANAGEMENT CONSTRAINTS:No vehicular access within the compartment, much of the lower reaches of the compartment are seaonally wet.

Appendix 2: Harvesting operations (20 years)

Forecast Year	Cpt	Operation Type	Work Area (ha)	Estimated vol/ha	Estimated total vol.
2019	1a	Coppice	0.20	25	5
2019	1b	Coppice	0.20	25	5
2020	1a	Coppice	0.20	25	5
2020	1b	Coppice	0.20	25	5
2021	1a	Coppice	0.20	25	5
2021	1b	Coppice	0.20	25	5
2022	1a	Coppice	0.20	25	5
2022	1b	Coppice	0.20	25	5

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.