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WOODLAND
TRUST

Coed Gwraig

Management Plan 2014-2019

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THE WOODLAND TRUST

INTRODUCTION

The Trust's corporate aims and management approach guide the management of all the Trust's properties, and are described on Page 4. These determine basic management policies and methods, which apply to all sites unless specifically stated otherwise. Such policies include free public access; keeping local people informed of major proposed work; the retention of old trees and dead wood; and a desire for management to be as unobtrusive as possible. The Trust also has available Policy Statements covering a variety of woodland management issues.

The Trust's management plans are based on the identification of Key Features for the site and setting objectives for their management. A monitoring programme (not included in this plan) ensures that these objectives are met and any necessary management works are carried out.

Any legally confidential or sensitive species information about this site is not included in this version of the plan.

PLAN REVIEW AND UPDATING

The information presented in this Management plan is held in a database which is continuously being amended and updated on our website. Consequently this printed version may quickly become out of date, particularly in relation to the planned work programme and on-going monitoring observations. Please either consult The Woodland Trust website www.woodlandtrust.org.uk or contact the Woodland Trust (wopsmail@woodlandtrust.org.uk) to confirm details of the current management programme.

There is a formal review of this plan every 5 years and a summary of monitoring results can be obtained on request.

WOODLAND MANAGEMENT APPROACH

The management of our woods is based on our charitable purposes, and is therefore focused on improving woodland biodiversity and increasing peoples' understanding and enjoyment of woodland. Our strategic aims are to:

- Protect native woods, trees and their wildlife for the future
- Work with others to create more native woodlands and places rich in trees
- Inspire everyone to enjoy and value woods and trees

All our sites have a management plan which is freely accessible via our website

www.woodlandtrust.org.uk. Our woods are managed to the UK Woodland Assurance Standard (UKWAS) and are certified with the Forest Stewardship Council® (FSC®) under licence FSC-C009406 and through independent audit.

In addition to the guidelines below we have specific guidance and policies on issues of woodland management which we review and update from time to time.

We recognise that all woods are different and that the management of our sites should also reflect their local landscape and where appropriate support local projects and initiatives. Guidelines like these provide a necessary overarching framework to guide the management of our sites but such management also requires decisions based on local circumstances and our Site Manager's intimate knowledge of each site.

The following guidelines help to direct our woodland management:

1. Our woods are managed to maintain their intrinsic key features of value and to reflect those of the surrounding landscape. We intervene when there is evidence that it is necessary to maintain or improve biodiversity and to further the development of more resilient woods and landscapes.
2. We establish new native woodland using both natural regeneration and tree planting, but largely the latter, particularly when there are opportunities for involving people.
3. We provide free public access to woods for quiet, informal recreation and our woods are managed to make them accessible, welcoming and safe.
4. The long term vision for our non-native plantations on ancient woodland sites is to restore them to predominantly native species composition and semi-natural structure, a vision that equally applies to our secondary woods.
5. Existing semi-natural open-ground and freshwater habitats are restored and maintained wherever their management can be sustained and new open ground habitats created where appropriate.
6. The heritage and cultural value of sites is taken into account in our management and, in particular, our ancient trees are retained for as long as possible.
7. Woods can offer the potential to generate income both from the sustainable harvesting of wood products and the delivery of other services. We will therefore consider the potential to generate income from our estate to help support our aims.
8. We work with neighbours, local people, organisations and other stakeholders in developing the management of our woods. We recognise the benefits of local community woodland ownership and management. Where appropriate we allow our woods to be used to support local woodland, conservation, education and access initiatives.
9. We use and offer the estate where appropriate, for the purpose of demonstration, evidence gathering and research associated with the conservation, recreational and sustainable management of woodlands. In particular we will develop and maintain a network of long-term monitoring sites across the estate.
10. Any activities we undertake will conform to sustainable forest management principles, be appropriate for the site and will be balanced with our primary objectives of enhancing the biodiversity and recreational value of our woods and the wider landscapes.

SUMMARY

This public management plan briefly describes the site, specifically mentions information on public access, sets out the long term policy and lists the Key Features which drive management actions. The Key Features are specific to this site - their significance is outlined together with their long (50 year+) and short (5 year) term objectives. The short term objectives are complemented by a detailed Work Programme for the period of this management plan. Detailed compartment descriptions are listed in the appendices which include any major management constraints and designations. A short glossary of technical terms is at the end. The Key Features and general woodland condition of this site are subject to a formal monitoring programme which is maintained in a central database. A summary of monitoring results is available on request.

1.0 SITE DETAILS

Site name:	Coed Gwraig
Location:	Tal-y-coed, nr Llantilo
Grid reference:	SO409155, OS 1:50,000 Sheet No. 161
Area:	3.96 hectares (9.79 acres)
Designations:	Ancient Semi Natural Woodland, NULL, Special Landscape Area

2.0 SITE DESCRIPTION

2.1 Summary Description

Coed Gwraig is ancient semi-natural woodland lying on a west-facing slope. Comprising mature broadleaf trees, deadwood habitat and a varied mix of woodland flowers, there is plenty to see here - including the many wildlife species that call Coed Gwraig home.

2.2 Extended Description

Coed Gwraig is ancient semi-natural woodland situated on a west-facing slope. The area has been heavily thinned in the past, and has a characteristic mix of mature trees with a rich under storey. The canopy is dominated by oak but also includes small-leaved lime, sycamore, cherry, ash, elm, birch, wild service and yew. Yew is particularly prevalent along the sunken tracks or ditches that cross the site.

The under storey is a mixture of formerly coppiced hazel, hawthorn, spindle, elder, holly, bramble and oak and ash coppice re-growth and regeneration. Communities of both acid and lime tolerant plants make this site particularly botanically interesting. Along the tracks and rides the rich ground flora includes primrose, arum, wild rose, strawberry, ground ivy, dog's mercury, hart's tongue and lady fern. There is significant deadwood habitat on the forest floor. A seasonal stream crosses the site from east to west and a permanent stream flows just outside and along the western boundary. The key features of this site are public access and ancient semi-natural woodland. The waterways are a conservation feature, although the main stream flows outside the wood boundary.

A minimum of silvicultural intervention is expected to be necessary during the plan period as there is abundant natural regeneration and a species-diverse, multi-aged canopy. Regeneration of yew is of particular interest as the yew stands are an attractive and distinctive element of the site.

The wood is bounded on the east by an unclassified public highway, and pasture extends to the east from the road. Pastureland borders the site on the south and west, and open, broadleaf woodland borders the site to the north. A stream forms the western boundary of the wood. The wood has some wider landscape value as it is visible both from the road on the eastern boundary and from the hillside on the opposite, western side of the valley.

There is no public right of way across the site. However numerous permissive paths and rides are maintained in good condition and provide excellent access to the site. The gate at the north-east corner from the council maintained road provides the management access to the site.

3.0 PUBLIC ACCESS INFORMATION

3.1 Getting there

General Location The wood is just to the north of the hamlet of Tal-y-Coed which itself is just over 6 miles (10km) due east of Abergavenny.

The village is on the B4233 which is almost midway between Abergavenny and Monmouth. The road to the wood is a right turn just before the public house if coming from the Monmouth direction. The woodland entrance is 600m from this turn.

General Overview of Entrance and Paths

The main entrance at the north east corner of the wood is a field gate set back from the road with sufficient space to park a car with an entrance sign. The grid ref: is 410 155 (Landranger map: 161). An un-gated entrance on the south east boundary is also marked with a Woodland Trust sign. Numerous permissive paths and rides are maintained in good condition and provide excellent access to the whole site. The main path is an undulating, slightly rutted grassy track. It is generally moderate walking but with steep sections which can be slippery after a little rain. Spring and summer flower displays in this wood are an attractive feature for visitors as are the large numbers of Yew trees.

Parking

Just after Tal-y-Coed farm there is a pull-in on the left hand side which is approximately 30m long. From the pull-in continue walking up the hill. After 10m or so there is a 5-bar gate and stile to the left, ignore this. The Woodland Trust entrance is about another 140m further along on the left.

Public Transport

The nearest bus stop is Hostry Inn in the neighbouring village of Llantilio Crossenny, which is just less than 2 miles (3km) from the wood. The service is run by Royal Mail and the route runs Abergavenny-Cross Ash-Skenfrith.

From the Hostry Inn:

- Walk north-easterly through the village.
- At Cross Farm, follow the road around to the left.
- After 600 metres from the stop, turn right into B4233
- After 1.3mile, turn left into Tal y Coed Lane immediately after the public house.
- After 300 metres arrive at TALYCOED FARM, just beyond this the road bends left. Continue another couple of hundred metres. Do not take the first gate on your left but continue another hundred metres or so to the Woodland Trust entrance which is a five barred gate with a Woodland Trust Sign.

For timetable information see the Traveline Cymru website.

Public Toilets There are no public toilets within ten miles of the wood.

3.2 Access / Walks

4.0 LONG TERM POLICY

The woodland will be allowed to develop through natural processes, with no silvicultural intervention. It is anticipated that this will result in an aging structure to the woodland with periodic windblow events to provide areas for natural regeneration. Sycamore will be accepted as a component of the woodland. Current access provision will be maintained.

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 Ancient Semi Natural Woodland

Description

This west-facing mixed lowland broadleaved woodland has been heavily thinned in the past, and has a characteristic mix of mature trees, dominated by oak, with a species rich understorey and diverse ground flora. Yew is particularly prevalent along the sunken tracks or ditches that cross the site. There is significant deadwood habitat on the forest floor. A seasonal stream crosses the site from east to west and a flowing stream forms the western boundary.

Significance

Protection and restoration of ancient woodland is one of the Woodland Trust's primary objectives. Ancient semi-natural woodland is an irreplaceable and threatened habitat type in Britain.

Opportunities & Constraints

Public access is encouraged to the site so in allowing natural process to occur through non intervention management public safety may become an issue as older trees are found near public paths.

Factors Causing Change

Long term Objective (50 years+)

The woodland will be managed through non intervention management thus allowing the woodland to develop through natural processes, with no silvicultural intervention. It is anticipated that this will result in an aging structure to the woodland with periodic windblow and tree death events to provide areas for natural regeneration. Sycamore will be accepted as a component of the woodland.

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

The site will be maintained in a stock proof condition. No interventions are planned.

5.2 Informal Public Access

Description

There are no public right of way across the site. Numerous permissive paths and rides are maintained in good condition and provide excellent access to the site. Access to the site is through the gate at the north-east corner and the un-gated entrance on the south-east boundary. There is limited parking in lay-by along the road. Spring and summer flower displays in this wood are an attractive feature for visitors. Although there is little public use of the wood, due to being in a sparsely populated area, it provides one of the few natural areas that local people can explore.

Significance

Public access to woodland is a corporate objective of the Woodland Trust.

Opportunities & Constraints

The site has well maintained, easily accessible paths. Both the gate and the un-gated entrance are marked with Woodland Trust signs. The ground flora is a mix of acid and lime tolerant species, including numerous showy species, and would be of interest to visitors.

Factors Causing Change

Long term Objective (50 years+)

Current access provision will be maintained.

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

Maintain existing access provision within the wood

6.0 WORK PROGRAMME

Year	Type of Work	Description	Due By
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APPENDIX 1: COMPARTMENT DESCRIPTIONS

Cpt No.	Area (ha)	Main Species	Year	Management Regime	Major Management Constraints	Key Features Present	Designations
1a	3.97	Oak (pedunculate)		Min-intervention	Gullies/Deep Valleys/Uneven/Rocky ground, Mostly wet ground/exposed site, Sensitive habitats/species on or adjacent to site, Very steep slope/cliff/quarry/mine shafts/sink holes etc	Ancient Semi Natural Woodland, Informal Public Access	Ancient Semi Natural Woodland

Coed Gwraig has only one compartment which comprises of ancient semi-natural woodland situated on a west-facing slope. The area has been heavily thinned in the past, and has a characteristic mix of mature trees with a rich understory. The canopy is dominated by oak but also includes small-leaved lime, sycamore, cherry, ash, elm, birch, wild service and yew. Yew is particularly prevalent along the sunken tracks or ditches that cross the site. The understory is dominated by hawthorn and formerly coppiced hazel, and also includes a mixture of spindle, elder, holly and bramble and oak and ash coppice regrowth and regeneration. Significant communities of both acid and lime tolerant plants make this site particularly botanically interesting. Along the tracks and rides the rich ground flora includes primrose, arum, wild rose, strawberry, hart's tongue and lady fern. There is significant deadwood habitat on the forest floor. A seasonal stream crosses the site from east to west and a flowing stream forms the western boundary.

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.