



Moss Meadow Wood

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 Consequently this printed version may quickly become out of date, particularly in relation to the planned work programme and on-going monitoring observations.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:	Moss Meadow Wood
Location:	Stacksteads
Grid reference:	SD854215, OS 1:50,000 Sheet No. 103
Area:	1.16 hectares (2.87 acres)
Designations:	

2.0 SITE DESCRIPTION

2.1 Summary Description

This is one of The Woodland Trust's 'Woods on Your Doorstep' woodlands, planted to commemorate the Millennium. This young woodland lies on the urban fringe in the village of Stacksteads in the Rossendale Valley, and comprises newly planted trees, a stream and ponds, and grassland.

2.2 Extended Description

The site is 1.16 hectares (2.87 acres) in size and consists of a square shaped piece of planted mixed broadleaved woodland on a north facing slope. Before planting it was a rough, wet, pasture field. It is on the urban fringe in the village of Stacksteads, in the Rossendale Valley. Immediately to the north is a small area of public amenity grassland, followed by the River Irwell, which separates the wood from the village itself. To the west is a young plantation of native trees, to the south more pasture fields, rising steadily up to the Pennine moors. To the east is a mixed area, with a stream and ponds, some housing, but also a derelict mill area. Adjacent to the site, in the south-eastern corner of the field, is a maze sculpture, built from drystone creating walls in concentric circles. This forms part of a series of works of art along the River Irwell sculpture trail, and is maintained by the Stacksteads Riverside Park Group.

The site was acquired in 2000 by Woodland Trust as a gift from Rossendale Borough Council. In December 2000 the site was planted with ash, alder, silver birch, English oak, wild cherry, crack willow, rowan and 10% mixed shrubs of goat willow, bird cherry and guelder rose. The wood was created as part of the Trust's 'Woods On Your Doorstep' project, funded partly by the Millennium Commission to create 200 new woods throughout England & Wales to celebrate the millennium and provide new accessible woods for communities, with further funding from the Forestry Commission to aid the planting and maintenance. New native woodland is a Key Feature of the site. Local people were very interested and enthusiastic to create the Wood On Your Doorstep, and were very involved supporting, designing, naming and planting the wood in December 2000.

The site can be accessed from many directions, either along public footpaths which come from Stacksteads over the river, from Blackwood Street, or from the moors and run alongside the western boundary, and also paths from Springhill Villas and the moors passing along the eastern boundary. In addition there are a number of permissive paths across and around the area. Most of the paths serve to connect the village with the fields and moors, and also to go along the riverside. Many paths existed when the site was acquired. Because of this, and the fact that the site is relatively small, the access points and network of paths were deliberately connected to all those outside to continue to produce a number of through routes as well as a viewing spot at the highest point, which has views up and down the valley. The site is well used by local people and Informal Public Access is one of its Key Features.

Very little is known about the field's history prior to acquisition, but it was already fenced off as a separate area and probably grazed, although not recently.

The boundary to the north is unmarked, but is the edge of the tree planting. The boundary to the west, south and east is a post and rail fence.

3.0 PUBLIC ACCESS INFORMATION

3.1 Getting there

Moss Meadow is located in the village of Stacksteads about 1 mile from the town of Bacup. The site is most easily found from Stacksteads by following the A681 Newchurch Road, and turning south down Blackwood Road in the middle of the village. After 100m, cross the River Irwell and there is a large pull-in on the left-hand side of the road where it is possible to park. From this, follow the track to the left (eastwards) between the river and a young plantation and after about 100 m enter a large grassy area. The wood is up on the slope to the right (south). There is around 200 metres of unsurfaced paths; the paths can become slippery and muddy when wet. Much of the path network is on a steep slope.

Parking is available in a lay-by located off Blackwood Road but may be limited.

Nearest public toilet: At Asda Superstore which is around 2 miles away from the wood located on St Mary's Way, Rawtenstall.

Nearest bus stop: Located at Stacksteads Station on Newchurch Road which is approximately 200 metres away from the wood. Newchurch Road is a suburban road with a pavement. Information from Traveline website.

Further information about public transport is available from Traveline- www.traveline.org.uk or phone 0870 608 2 608

3.2 Access / Walks

4.0 LONG TERM POLICY

The Woodland Trusts long-term intention is to create and maintain a diversely structured (in terms of age and size classification) native broadleaved high forest woodland. This will be interspersed with areas of transitional and permanent open ground providing a mosaic of habitats and environments that will be a benefit to native flora and fauna. The development of natural secondary woodland will be promoted through the encouragement of any further areas of natural regeneration, on areas not designated as long-term open spaces, and through the management of existing areas through minimum intervention. Regeneration of both natives and non-native species will be accepted. Public access will be maintained at its current high level with 5 entrances and approximately 800m of maintained paths. Consultation and involvement of local people will continue to be important.

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

New native woodland planted in December 2000 consisting of ash, alder, silver birch, English oak, wild cherry, crack willow, rowan and 10% mixed shrubs of goat willow, bird cherry and guelder rose. The trees were 30-40cm whips, protected with 0.6m Tubex sleeves, at a density of 1,100 per hectare. Ground conditions on the slope were rather stony and the trees and shelters harder to plant. The site has continually suffered from minor vandalism.

Significance

Moss Meadow is a small wood, but does link to further areas of woodland to the west (a young plantation of native trees, planted approximately 1985) and mixed mature broadleaved woodland to the east so it serves to link and buffer nearby woodlands.

Opportunities & Constraints

The planting site was a wet, acidic field, and not far to the north is the badly polluted River Irwell and the densely populated and industrialised Rossendale Valley, all of which limit the conservation value. In addition, the wood is very well used, with public recreation is a major priority and so will only support fairly robust wildlife.

Factors Causing Change

Ash dieback.

Long term Objective (50 years+)

The aim is to create a high forest of mixed predominantly native broadleaves. The wood will be managed predominantly as a recreational and landscape feature. This will involve maintaining the diverse mix of species, regeneration of both natives and non-native species will be accepted.

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

Thinning work will be carried out in 2019 to promote age & species diversity on site.

A Woodland Condition Assessment will be carried out in the final year of the current plan period. This will make recommendations as to the management of the site.

5.2 Informal Public Access

Description

The site can be accessed from several directions, either along public footpaths which come: from Stacksteads over the river, from Blackwood Street, or from the moors and run alongside the western boundary, and also paths from: Springhill Villas and the moors passing along the eastern boundary. A total of five entrances lead to approximately 800 metres of mowed grass paths, the site is well used by local people. Adjacent to the site, in the south-eastern corner of the field, is a maze sculpture, built from drystone creating walls in concentric circles. This forms part of a series of works of art along the River Irwell sculpture trail, and is maintained by the Stacksteads Riverside Park Group.

Significance

Moss Meadow Wood is very close to Stacksteads village which is a very urban area. It is within a larger area with many good footpath links that provide free informal public access for the local community. People pass through the wood on long walks, but the seat on site, the views and the adjacent sculpture also attract visitors for a short walk.

Opportunities & Constraints

The path network is already very extensive and well-connected, however unfortunately vandalism limits the provision of facilities on site.

Factors Causing Change

Vandalism

Long term Objective (50 years+)

Public access will be maintained at its current high level with 5 entrances and approximately 800m of maintained paths. Consultation and involvement of local people will continue to be important.

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

The five entrance points, 800 metres of path , boundaries and litter will be managed on at least once annually through an estates management contract.

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	1.16	Ash	2000	High forest	Very steep slope/cliff/quarry/mine shafts/sink holes etc	Informal Public Access, New Native Woodland	
<p>1.16 hectares (2.87 acres) planted with a mixture of native broadleaves (ash, alder, silver birch, English oak, wild cherry, crack willow, rowan and 10% mixed shrubs of goat willow, bird cherry and guelder rose) in 2000 on former agricultural land located in the village of Stacksteads, in the Rossendale Valley. Immediately to the north is a small area of public amenity grassland, followed by the River Irwell, which separates the wood from the village itself. To the west is a young plantation of native trees, to the south more pasture fields, rising steadily up to the Pennine moors. To the east is a mixed area, with a stream and ponds, some housing, but also a derelict mill area.</p>							

Appendix 2: Harvesting operations (20 years)

Forecast Year	Cpt	Operation Type	Work Area (ha)	Estimated vol/ha	Estimated total vol.
2019	1a	Thin	1.16	22	25

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.