



Soken Wood

Management Plan 2018-2023

MANAGEMENT PLAN - CONTENTS PAGE

ITEM Page No.

Introduction

Plan review and updating

Woodland Management Approach

Summary

1.0 Site details

2.0 Site description

2.1 Summary Description

2.2 Extended Description

3.0 Public access information

3.1 Getting there

3.2 Access / Walks

4.0 Long term policy

5.0 Key Features

5.1 Informal Public Access

5.2 Secondary Woodland

6.0 Work Programme

Appendix 1: Compartment descriptions

Appendix 2: Harvesting operations (20 years)

Glossary

MAPS

Access

Conservation Features

Management

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 Consequently this printed version may quickly become out of date, particularly in relation to the planned work programme and on-going monitoring observations.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:	Soken Wood
Location:	Kirby le Soken
Grid reference:	TM220223, OS 1:50,000 Sheet No. 169
Area:	4.22 hectares (10.43 acres)
Designations:	

2.0 SITE DESCRIPTION

2.1 Summary Description

Soken Wood is a healthy attractive young wood featuring an area of exotic tree species of prehistoric origin! A network of wide grassy paths has been created around the site which can be quite wet. Access is off Malting Lane.

2.2 Extended Description

Soken Wood is a small site (4 hectares) located on the east coast of Essex, just to the west of Walton-on-the-Naze. It sits next to, and just to the north of, the village of Kirby-le-Soken. Soken is a young woodland, which was planted in November 2000 with the help of the local community. It was one of 200 woods planted as part of the 'Woods on your doorstep' initiative, which sought to create more woodland close to communities in celebration of the new millennium. The wood/land was acquired through a private sale and prior to the Trust's ownership the land was in arable production.

The woodland was designed in consultation with the District Council and the local community. An unusual feature is a grove of exotic tree species of prehistoric origin, which were planted as a result of fossil records in the area. These exotic trees consist of monkey puzzle and ginkgo and dawn redwood.

The majority of the wood however has been planted with native tree species, the most common of which are ash, oak, alder, field maple and hazel. There are also minor components of wild cherry, birch, willow species and other shrubs.

There is a good network of pedestrian paths around the site. Although the site is small it does offer the visitor attractive views over the surrounding coastline and neighbouring wetland habitats. A managed glade is located in the northwest corner for visitors to enjoy this local landscape.

The key features which have been designated for this site are: Secondary woodland and public access. The management of the site will therefore be focussed on managing for these main aspects.

3.0 PUBLIC ACCESS INFORMATION

3.1 Getting there

There are 2 entrances to the wood (off Malting Lane), which both have kissing gate entrances. Public access within the wood is for pedestrians only and the path network is along un-surfaced grassy rides. The site is gently sloping and is seasonally wet and muddy in places.

Nearest car park: A small parking area is located opposite the main entrance to the wood on Malting Lane, in the northeast corner of the site. This car park is on the other side of the road and not owned by the Woodland Trust.

Nearest toilet: There are no known public toilets within 5 miles.

Nearest railway station: Kirby Cross - 1.5 miles away along quiet country roads with no pavement.

Nearest bus stop: At the end of Malting Lane on The Street in the centre of Kirby-le-Soken, 400m away along quiet country lane with no pavement.

For further information about public transport please visit the Traveline website www.traveline.info

3.2 Access / Walks

4.0 LONG TERM POLICY

The wood will be allowed to reach maturity and will develop the characteristics of more naturally occurring broadleaved woodland. Hence it will be diverse in tree species and structure with a good mixture of both young and mature trees being present, as well as understory species. This will enable the wood to be more resilient to change in the future, and will ensure it supports the greatest range of wildlife. Silvicultural management will take place when necessary to ensure these woodland conditions are present and to encourage natural regeneration to occur. A network of managed wide rides and small glades will be present within the wood. These areas will benefit wildlife requiring open habitat conditions, and they will also create variety and interest for visitors to enjoy the wood and the views across the local landscape. A small grove of non-native specimen trees (including Monkey Puzzle and Dawn Cypress) will be established to the north of the site, and retained as a feature of the woodland.

A good standard of access provision will be maintained at Soken Wood, although facilities will be low key. The path network will be kept open for use and the entrances will be welcoming, accessible and clearly signed. The wood will be made as safe as practical for visitors through regular tree safety inspections in high risk zones, such as the roadside.

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

Soken Wood is a small site, but does have at least 1km of permissive paths for visitors to enjoy, mostly along wide grassy rides. There are 2 main entrances, both off Malting Lane on the eastern side. There is a car parking area opposite the road from the northernmost entrance (not owned by The Woodland Trust), which holds approximately 5 cars. Both entrances are served by kissing gates and welcome signage.

The wood is within easy walking distance of the nearby village of Kirby-le-Soken. The rising ground in the site provides some good views across the surrounding landscape, including the coastline and adjacent important wetland areas.

The Trust has given this wood a Category B for access provision, which equates to: a site with regular usage, with 5 - 15 people using one entrance per day.

Significance

The wood provides a quiet area for informal recreation, especially suitable for local people living close to the nearby village.

Opportunities & Constraints

The wood is likely to remain of interest for local visitors only, owing to its relatively small size. However there is the opportunity for local people to take a greater role in the management of the wood in the future, should there be sufficient interest in developing more of a community woodland site.

Factors Causing Change

Long term Objective (50 years+)

Access facilities will, on the whole, be low key and appropriate for this small locally visited site. However a good standard of access provision will be maintained at Soken Wood: the path network will be kept open for use and the entrances will be accessible and clearly signed. Prominent welcome signage will be maintained at the 2 main entrances off Malting Lane. Wide sunny rides will also be maintained along a large proportion of the path network.

The wood will be made as safe as practical for visitors and neighbours through more regular tree safety inspections in high risk zones, as the woodland reaches maturity.

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

During this plan period the short term objective is to provide public access which is safe and enjoyable. This will be achieved by:

- Annual management of the main paths, totalling approximately 1km
- Annual management of the all entrances and access furniture, including welcome signage, gates and seats.
- Coppicing/thinning works to open up approx 150m of ride. This work will be carried out progressively and completed in 2020

5.2 Secondary Woodland

Description

A former arable field planted in November 2000 with largely native broadleaved trees. The majority of the plantation replicates a NVC (National vegetation classification) W8 mix, consisting of ash, pedunculate oak, field maple, silver birch, grey willow and wild cherry and hazel. Other minor species include hawthorn, guelder rose, blackthorn, dogwood and goat willow. The planting mix on the west side of the site varies from this and approximates to a W6 NVC classification; here the main species are common alder, crack willow and birch, with minor proportions of ash, pedunculate oak, hawthorn, guelder rose, blackthorn, alder buckthorn, osier and almond willow. Ground flora in the plantation overall is fairly limited given the age of the wood and past agricultural use. The ground layer consists mainly of grass species, nettle and bramble, with occasional garden plants such as daffodil. Several small open glades have been built into the planting design, most notably in the Northwest corner. A grove of exotic tree species of prehistoric origin is planted to the north of the site. The grove consists of monkey puzzle, ginkgo and dawn redwood. Some of these trees, especially the monkey puzzle have struggled to establish.

Significance

An important woodland habitat in a landscape with very low woodland cover.

Opportunities & Constraints

Constraints: The use of large forest machinery on site is limited by wet ground conditions during large parts of the year and a lack of stoned surfacing.

Opportunities: Silvicultural management to parts of the plantation will help to introduce a greater degree of natural regeneration and structural diversity to the woodland, with a positive impact on the ecological value of the site.

Factors Causing Change

Ash dieback disease

Long term Objective (50 years+)

The wood will be allowed to reach maturity and will develop the characteristics of more naturally occurring broadleaved woodland. Hence it will be diverse in tree species and structure with a good mixture of both young and mature trees being present, as well as understorey species. Silvicultural management (such as thinning & coppicing) will take place when necessary to ensure these woodland conditions are present and to encourage natural regeneration to occur. A network of managed wide rides and small glades will be present within the wood to add further wildlife diversity to the site. A small grove of non-native specimen trees (including Monkey Puzzle and Dawn Cypress) will be established to the north of the site, and retained as a feature of the woodland.

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

During this plan period the short term objective is to start to add some diversity to the structure of the plantation. This will be achieved by:

- Thinning by 20% of approximately 0.75ha of the plantation on the western side of the site, which is dominated by alder and willow and starting to suffer windblow. This will be completed in 2020 and includes all of compartment 1a and the western edge of 2a
- Carrying out approximately 150m of ride edge coppicing on the North-South rides in targeted areas. This work will also be completed in 2020.
- Annual management of 2 main glades in the north and south of the site, totalling approximately 0.25ha.
- Annual weed control (by hand) around the exotic specimen trees (mainly Monkey puzzle) planted in the north of the site to complete their establishment.

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	0.50	Common alder	2000	High forest		Informal Public Access, Secondary Woodland	
Woodland planted in November 2000, with the main species being common alder and crack willow. Other species include silver birch, ash, pedunculate oak. Woody shrubs also planted with the mix including hawthorn, guelder rose, blackthorn, alder buckthorn, osier and almond willow.							
2a	3.50	Oak (pedunculate)	2000	High forest		Informal Public Access, Secondary Woodland	
Woodland planted in November 2000, with the main species being ash and pedunculate oak, but also containing field maple, silver birch, grey willow, wild cherry and woody shrubs of hazel, hawthorn, guelder rose, blackthorn, dogwood and goat willow. A small area of specimen trees exists to the north, which includes gingko, monkey puzzle and dawn redwood.							

Appendix 2: Harvesting operations (20 years)

Forecast Year	Cpt	Operation Type	Work Area (ha)	Estimated vol/ha	Estimated total vol.
2020	1a	Thin	0.50	60	30

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.