



Corcrain Community Woodland

Management Plan

2018-2023

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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 Consequently this printed version may quickly become out of date, particularly in relation to the planned work programme and on-going monitoring observations.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:	Corcrain Community Woodland
Location:	Portadown
Grid reference:	H997543, OS 1:50,000 Sheet No. 19
Area:	4.33 hectares (10.70 acres)
Designations:	

2.0 SITE DESCRIPTION

2.1 Summary Description

This is one of The Woodland Trust's 'Woods On Your Doorstep' woodlands, created to commemorate the Millennium. It lies on the north western edge of Portadown town, between the Corcrain estate and the River Ballybay. It comprises wetland and young broadleaf woodland, which together make an important mosaic of habitats for wildlife.

2.2 Extended Description

The land at Portadown was purchased as one of the Woodland Trust's, Woods on Your Doorstep projects to create a new community woodland. Covering 4.31 hectares, it lies on the north western edge of Portadown town. It was planted using native species, to provide a valuable area for public recreation and local wildlife. The land was formerly owned by the Northern Ireland Housing Executive and was gifted in February 2001. The development and first 5 years maintenance of the site was 50% funded by the Millennium Commission. Forest Service granted Woodland Grant Scheme funding.

The site is located between the Corcrain estate and the River Ballybay. It is a flat area consisting of unimproved grassland, with some scrub in places, and wetland. The wetland area will be kept and managed as wetland, planting only occurred on the drier ground. Elevation is 20m and exposure is low to medium. The entire site is 4.31ha in size with only 1.75 ha new native woodland planting. Natural regeneration is very evident with willow spp. encroaching into formerly wet open areas. It will be important to retain at least 50% or 1.5 - 2 hectares of this semi-natural open space due to its high conservation value and importance for birds and insects.

Following consultation with the local community, Corcrain & Redmanville Community Association, local people were involved in the design of the site and along with children from Hart Memorial Primary School and representatives from Craigavon Borough Council, local residents planted the first trees to mark the beginning of the project on 2 February 2001.

Free public access is provided across the whole site at all times. Two kissing gates and two squeeze posts to the site exist in the southern boundary. One management gate has been installed at the most westerly entrance. Three seats have been provided for walkers' convenience and enjoyment. An Information Board is located at the most easterly entrance. Welcome signs are attached at both kissing gate entrances. A path loops between the two kissing gate entrances taking the walker through the existing and newly created woodland area. The path is a mown grass path. Two linear paths link with the main path intersecting other areas of woodland and are facilitated through the squeeze posts.

There is no official Woodland Trust car park here but cars can park on the roadside next to the Corcrain Estate, or in the cul-de-sacs e.g. at Charles Park etc. There has been some vandalism with fires being lit, signage has been destroyed and litter can be an issue but it must be stressed it is not a significant problem.

3.0 PUBLIC ACCESS INFORMATION

3.1 Getting there

The public currently have informal access to the whole site, no public rights of way are acknowledged. Playing fields are sandwiched between the housing estate and this wood.

3.2 Access / Walks

4.0 LONG TERM POLICY

In the long term, whilst maintaining the site for public access, it would be intended to encourage the site to become a self-sustaining high forest of mixed deciduous woodland. This will be achieved through initially, the establishment of the planted trees, through regular weeding and replacement of failures. Noxious weeds will be spot sprayed to prevent these spreading throughout the site and to other adjacent lands.

It will be important to retain at least 50% of the semi-natural open space. This habitat is very important for bird and insect life and greatly increases the areas' conservation value. The stands of existing willow will be managed initially under a minimum intervention regime allowing them to mature and regenerate naturally but medium term it may be necessary to remove some of them ensuring the retention of at least 50% of the semi-natural open space.

It is unlikely that it will ever produce quality timber as it is small and prone to levels of vandalism. In the short term, this may require thinning and restructuring as approximately half the trees have been planted at one time. The need for thinning should be assessed in year 15 to enable any of the work to be written into the budget for the following years. The density should be great enough to deter the public choosing additional routes through the woodland but it should also allow woodland ground flora to develop.

Public access will remain over the whole site and levels of public usage will determine the level of facilities and future work plans. The path will be monitored annually and mown when necessary.

Once the canopy closes in the next few years it should not be necessary to cut the paths.

Public safety will be assessed regularly and tree inspections to mature trees carried out.

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

As part of the Woods on Your Doorstep project, Corcrain is a community woodland. Free public access is provided across the whole site at all times. Two kissing gates and two squeeze posts are located in the southern boundary of the wood. One management gate is provided in the south west of the wood, adjacent to Selshion Parade and three seats have been installed for walkers convenience. An information board is located next to the management gate and Welcome signs are located on the two kissing gate posts. A path loops between the two kissing gates running down to the Ballybay River with two additional tracks intersecting the wood running between the two squeeze posts and the river. The paths have been mown regularly, maintaining them for walkers.

Significance

The access facilities provide the opportunity to "increase people's awareness and enjoyment of woodland", one of the Woodland Trust's key objectives.

Corcrain received a large amount of support from the local residents. It provides an important resource for the people of the housing estate and indeed the whole town of Portadown and it will be important to retain this informal public access.

Opportunities & Constraints

Constraints:

Corcrain Wood is located on the NW edge of Portadown. It is situated between the housing estate and the Ballybay River and is readily accessible to the residents there. There is no official car park there but cars can park in the housing estate. The wood has been fenced off from the neighbouring playing fields ensuring that youths playing sport do not disturb the woodland. Slight evidence of vandalism with youths destroying some signage at the westerly entrance.

Opportunities:

As a Woods on Your Doorstep site this wood provides an opportunity for many local people to enjoy the woodland. Many local people walk their dogs through the site daily.

Factors Causing Change

canopy closure, level of public usage, vandalism.

Long term Objective (50 years+)

To maintain informal public access through the site by providing facilities appropriate for the level of use. This will include the maintenance of the path to an acceptable standard where it can be used all year round and maintaining the provision of site information.

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

The mown grass paths should be continued to be cut once a year. Entrances, boundary inspection and formal litter clearance need only occur once a year in June as there is only a little vandalism and no real problems with litter or fly-tipping. The need for further path maintenance should be assessed in year 2011 when the trees close canopy.

5.2 Secondary Woodland

Description

Approximately half the site has been planted, 1.75 ha., with native trees and shrubs. 3,600 trees and 400 shrubs were planted in 2001.

Significance

The aim of the Woods on Your Doorstep project was to create community woodland. This also fulfills one of the Woodland Trust's key aims to "increase new native woodland". In addition, woodland creation will add a variety of habitats to the site and improve its biodiversity value.

Opportunities & Constraints

Constraints:

The area is very wet and hence precludes many areas from planting new native woodland. There is also a very slight evidence of vandalism which needs to be monitored regularly.

Opportunities:

There is an opportunity to manage Corcrain Community wood as a broadleaved woodland for people to enjoy, and to create a significant area of broadleaved woodland in the area. The area is very wet and this has determined the area that was planted and the species chosen - oak, ash, rowan and silver birch planted in drier ground and willow, alder and downy birch planted in the wetter areas. The wood is naturally regenerating itself and as such minimum intervention is required in the short to medium term but felling will likely need to happen to retain at least 50% of the semi-natural open space.

Factors Causing Change

retention of semi-natural open space, invasive noxious weeds, vandalism

Long term Objective (50 years+)

To establish a mixed broadleaved woodland, managed as high forest. Canopy composition will be of mixed deciduous species. The area will also retain at least 50% of the semi-natural open habitat comprising 1-1.5 hectares. This will be transient in nature and is important to retain for its conservation value.

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

Establishment of the planted area is of prime importance and correct management of existing stands of wet woodland. There are no guards on the trees because there are no signs of rabbits. The trees have now become well established and spraying around the base of the trees has ceased. Noxious weeds will be assessed across the whole site and spot sprayed when required to ensure it does not spread across all of the site or encroach into neighbouring lands. The existing stands of wet woodland require no short term maintenance but in the longer term will require thinning to retain the semi-natural open space area.

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	4.31	Alder species	2001	High forest		Informal Public Access, Secondary Woodland	

The site lies between Corcrain estate and the Ballybay river on the NW edge of Portadown. It is a flat area consisting of unimproved grassland, with some existing scrub and semi-natural wetland. Although the site is 4.31 Ha, only 1.75 Ha have been planted due to the wet nature of the site and the importance of retaining this semi-natural open space for its wildlife value. Elevation is 20m and exposure is low-medium. Vegetation on the drier areas consist of unimproved grasses with some scrub in places. The remaining area consists of rushes and reeds. The soil is gley and the drainage is moderate on the planting area.

Appendix 2: Harvesting operations (20 years)

Forecast Year	Cpt	Operation Type	Work Area (ha)	Estimated vol/ha	Estimated total vol.
2021	1a	Thin	4.31	0	0

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.