



Nut Hill

Management Plan 2010-2015

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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 Consequently this printed version may quickly become out of date, particularly in relation to the planned work programme and on-going monitoring observations.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:	Nut Hill
Location:	Upton St Leonards
Grid reference:	SO873150, OS 1:50,000 Sheet No. 162
Area:	5.64 hectares (13.94 acres)
Designations:	Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty

2.0 SITE DESCRIPTION

2.1 Summary Description

Nut Hill is a 5.64ha grassland hill with historic specimen trees; small areas of secondary woodland, and planted woodland in the village of Upton St Leonards, Gloucester. The site is 3 miles SE of the centre of Gloucester, and lies within the Cotswolds Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB), and is included within the National Character Area 107, 'Cotswolds'. The site was acquired in 1999 as part of the Woodland Trust's Woods On Your Doorstep initiative. This WT initiative created 200 community woods to mark the Millennium.

As the name suggests the site occupies a prominent hill, with great views over the Cotswold Hills, Gloucester, the Malverns, and the Forest of Dean. A topography plate is mounted on a large granite stone at the highest point of the hill.

The site consists mainly of semi-improved grassland, which is flower rich in places, with veteran specimen trees, of both native and exotic tree species, on the northern grassland hillside. These are remnants of the landscaped gardens of Bowden Hall (1800's), the neighbouring listed manor house, former school and now hotel. There is a strip of mature sycamore/ash woodland on the southern side running along Nuthill road, with two similar woodland areas of mixed broad-leaved woodland planted in 1999.

Two structures, remnants from the second world war, occupy the very top of Nut Hill: a five sided 'pill box' gun emplacement stands above-ground and is in quite good condition; and an underground bunker lies adjacent with access shaft, flue and ventilation shaft. Both are sealed from visitors for safety reasons.

Located close to Gloucester, the site is locally well used as a public amenity, notably by local dog walkers and visitors staying in Bowden Hall Hotel. The site has a good network of permissive paths providing circular and linear routes.

2.2 Extended Description

Nut Hill is a 5.64ha grassland hill with historic specimen trees; small areas of secondary woodland, and planted woodland in the village of Upton St Leonards, Gloucester. The site is 3 miles SE of the centre of Gloucester, and lies within the Cotswolds Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB), and is included within the National Character Area 107, 'Cotswolds'. The site was acquired in 1999 as part of the Woodland Trust's Woods On Your Doorstep initiative. This WT initiative created 200 community woods to mark the Millennium.

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3.0 PUBLIC ACCESS INFORMATION

3.1 Getting there

Nut Wood lies about 3 miles SE of the centre of Gloucester near the village of Upton St Leonards. It is accessible directly from the highway or via a permissive path through the grounds of Bawdon Hall Hotel.

In addition to immature / semi-mature woodlands, visitors to the 5.26ha site will find superb views from the top of Nut Hill over the Cotswold escarpment and more. A Topograph at the summit interprets the views to be had.

Additionally, visitors can enjoy veteran trees which with other impressive exotic trees form part of an ancient wood-pasture, more reminiscent of a parkland setting today. Planted trees in parkland guards can be seen, growing on as replacements. On the other side of the hill (south), various species of nut tree have been planted in groves, depicting the woodland name.

Nuthill itself is well served by internal permissive footpaths but there are no links to the external Public Right of way network in the surrounding landscape. This is despite the fact that the landscape is actually well served with pedestrian public rights of way. Nuthill is linked to the nearby village of Upton St Leonards by a permissive route through the grounds of the nearby Bowden Hall Hotel. The hotel kindly allow visitors to Nuthill to park in the grounds and walk through the Hotel's woodland property to gain access to the site. This approach route can be wet and slippery and is moderately steep. Once within the site slopes are more gradual, they are not surfaced and for the most part covered in grass rather than being bare soil. The views from the top of the site are excellent and facilitated by a topographic stone. Only pedestrian access is permitted.

The only parking facilities are kindly provided by the Bowden Hall Hotel within their grounds.

Currently (2007) Upton St Leonards is linked to Gloucester city centre via a service that stops at the village Post Office, Churchfield Rd, Upton St Leonards

It has not been possible to locate Public Convenience information for the Upton St. Leonards area.

3.2 Access / Walks

4.0 LONG TERM POLICY

The site will remain a high quality recreational resource valued by local users and visitors alike. Nut Hill will be enjoyed by people through welcoming, easily accessible entrances and a network of paths and views all maintained to a high level of quality and safety.

The mixed habitat mosaic will provide a variety of habitat for future generations to enjoy. Veteran specimen trees will have been retained, and where appropriate new ones will have been planted. The hill will remain a visually attractive area of open grassland rich in flowers, with large veteran trees complementing the adjacent self-sustaining, structurally diverse woodland, as part of the wider environment, complementary with the surrounding Cotswold AONB landscape.

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

Nut Hill is an important recreational green space for residents of Upton St Leonards, and lies 3 miles SE of Gloucester. The wood is surrounded by the suburbs of Gloucester to the west, agricultural land to the north and east, a public road to the south, and the grounds of Bowden Hall hotel to the west. The site is well used as a public amenity, notably by local dog walkers, young adults, and also visitors staying in the hotel at Bowden Hall next to the site. The site has a good network of permissive paths providing circular and linear routes. Access is either from the public highway in the southern corner of the site, or via a permissive path running from Bowden Hall Hotel to the west.

Visitors can enjoy areas of open grassland with veteran specimen trees, reminiscent of wood pasture; with younger, planted and secondary woodland. The site has spectacular views from the summit of Nut Hill, particularly over the Cotswold Hills and escarpment to the east; with views over Gloucester, the Malverns, and the Forest of Dean to the north and west. A topography plate is mounted on a Cornish granite plinth at the highest point of the hill. It was unveiled by the local Probus club on June 21st 2000 - the longest day in the Millennium year. It is the site's Millennium Feature, as the site was created in 1999 as part of the Woodland Trust's 'Woods On Your Doorstep' initiative, when 200 new woods were planted and opened to mark the Millennium across the UK.

Two structures, remnants from the second world war, occupy the very top of Nut Hill: a five sided 'pill box' gun emplacement lies above-ground and is in quite good condition; and an underground bunker lies adjacent with access shaft, flu and ventilation shaft. Both are sealed from visitors for safety reasons.

Nut Hill is accessible directly from the highway on Nuthill - a country road, or via a permissive path through the grounds of Bowden Hall Hotel. It is well served by internal permissive footpaths, but there are no links to the external Public Right of way network in the surrounding landscape. Nut Hill is linked to the nearby village of Upton St Leonards by a permissive route through the grounds of the nearby Bowden Hall Hotel. The hotel kindly allows visitors to Nut Hill to park in the grounds, and walk through the Hotel's woodland lane to gain access to the site. This approach route can be wet and slippery and is moderately steep. Once within the site slopes are more gradual, although they are not surfaced, for the main they are covered in good grass tracks. Only pedestrian access is permitted.

Significance

Public access is vital to ensure on-going support for the Trust's work. Inspiring everyone to enjoy and value trees and woodland is a fundamental aim of the Woodland Trust. Nut Hill provides an important local amenity for people living in the area, and it is well used by local walkers, dog walkers and young adults, and is an important amenity to the surrounding area.

Opportunities & Constraints

Opportunities:

There is an opportunity to work with Bowden Hall hotel to increase access to guests staying in the hotel for recreation via site information available to guests.

Constraints:

The proximity to the road and history of tree failure within the secondary woodland makes tree safety an important issue.

No official WT parking.

Littering, camp fires and vandalism.

Factors Causing Change

Erosion and deterioration of paths through walking and grazing animals in wet weather.

Mis-use and vandalism.

Loss of trees or woodland through pests/diseases E.g. Ash die-back, Sweet chestnut blight etc.

Long term Objective (50 years+)

The site will remain a high quality recreational resource valued by local users and visitors alike. Nut Hill will be enjoyed by people through a network of paths and views, maintained to a high level of quality and safety, with welcoming, easily accessible entrances.

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

The short term objective is to maintain the site as easily accessible, attractive, well maintained and safe woodland.

The path network and entrances should remain in good condition and appropriate for level and type of use and in accordance with access category B.

Entrance furniture will be maintained as required to keep them welcoming and in good condition during path cuts and allow access to walkers.

Litter will be regularly collected to maintain a welcoming feel to the site, and other anti-social activity will be monitored and rectified as appropriate.

Ensure visitor safety via ongoing tree and infrastructure monitoring regime and remedial works as necessary.

5.2 Mixed Habitat Mosaic

Description

Nut Hill is a 5.64ha grassland hill with historic specimen trees; small areas of secondary woodland, and planted woodland located near the village of Upton St Leonards, Gloucester. The site is a remnant of part of the landscaped gardens of the neighbouring Bowden Hall (1800's): a listed manor house built in 1770; a former school, and now hotel.

The site consists mainly of semi-improved grassland which is flower-rich in places, with veteran specimen trees, both native and exotic, on the northern grassland hillside. There is a strip of mature sycamore/ash woodland on the southern side running along Nuthill road, with an additional two woodland areas planted by The Woodland Trust with the community in 1999.

The grazed grassland is both calcareous and acidic in places, and is herb rich and floristically diverse in places. Bramble and grasses dominate elsewhere. Veteran and notable specimen trees consist of ash, oak and several mature exotic trees including Cedar of Lebanon and Giant sequoia. Fourteen additional future specimen trees have been planted (fir, pine, oak, lime) in parkland guards (1999 & 2007) complimenting the existing specimen trees.

Small, broadleaf woodland areas planted in c1980, c1993 with a variety of native and occasional exotic European trees and shrubs exist within the south side of the grassland hill, and additional planted 'Nut Groves' c1999, serve to all increase the core area of local tree cover and woodland habitat.

Bowden Hall grounds were landscaped in 1873, which is when many of the specimen trees would have been planted. An ornamental stone summer house was erected on the Hill's summit, but disappeared by the 1930's. Two Second World War structures are still located on the very top of the Hill: a five sided 'pill box' gun emplacement built to help protect the nearby Gloster Aircraft Company (GAC) factory from attacks by German aircraft (the factory used to be sited on the land now occupied by the near-by business park); and an underground bunker also located on top of the Hill, with an access shaft, flu and ventilation shaft. Both structures are now sealed for safety reasons.

Significance

The site is locally important for its rich historic landscape, and the hill is a prominent viewpoint for the surrounding countryside.

Veteran trees are also of particular importance to biodiversity and these, together with the rich grassland and spectacular hill top location make Nut Hill a significant part of the historic landscape.

The connectivity with the former landscaped gardens of the adjacent Bowden Hall, as well as the WWII artefacts, are a significant part of the history of the local area, and will however be considered as key conservation features within future management policies.

Nut Hill is within the Cotswolds Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB), and connects and links into the wider wooded landscape. The woodland and grassland, will provide a wider area for biodiversity to flourish.

Opportunities & Constraints

Constraints

Occasional mis-use and vandalism of structures, trees and fences

Factors Causing Change

Long term decline of specimen trees causing loss of habitat and conservation features, and health and safety hazards in and around the site.

Damage from adverse weather particularly windblown specimen trees on exposed hill top.
Ash dieback.

Long term Objective (50 years+)

The mixed habitat mosaic will provide a variety of habitat for future generations to enjoy. Veteran specimen trees will have been retained, and where appropriate new ones will have been planted. The hill will remain a visually attractive area of open grassland rich in flowers, with large veteran trees complementing the adjacent self-sustaining, structurally diverse woodland, as part of the wider environment, complementary with the surrounding Cotswold AONB landscape.

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

Ensure continued existence of the mixed habitat mosaic, allowing diverse grassland with a broad range of specimen tree species and secondary woodland to be maintained through largely natural process.

Ensure the retention and integrity of historic parkland/wood pasture through annual summer-autumn grazing, supplemented by occasional cutting of bramble and developing scrub if needed to maintain grassland. Annual grazing from late summer to late autumn. Graze with a low stocking density of 5-7 cows or 30 sheep.

Plant 2 X specimen trees with tree guards to continue existence of veteran specimen tree habitat in grassland whilst retaining views.

Ash dieback tree safety assessments and subsequent felling of dead or dangerous ash along Zone A and B areas as per WT ash dieback guidance on managing ash dieback on the estate.

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	1.00	Sycamore	1900	High forest		Informal Public Access, Mixed Habitat Mosaic	Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty
<p>Area of semi-mature woodland and planted woodland. Main roadside area largely comprising of sycamore (90%), and oak with occasional ash, and rare but occasional coppiced lime; some larch present at the western end. Holly, elm, bramble and blackthorn form a low density under-storey in parts. The southern boundary is the public highway and the northern boundary is a wire fence separating Cpt 2a grassland.</p> <p>In the south of the compartment are mixed areas of woodland: planted c1980 comprising silver birch, turkey oak and ash with blocks of Lombardy poplar, larch, and elder under-storey; broadleaf plantation planted c1993 including cherry, rowan, beech, ash, oak and hazel; and a nut grove of planted hazel with some walnut, sweet chestnut and horse chestnut c1999.</p> <p>The management entrance to Nut Hill is to the south east. The compartment has a south facing slope.</p>							
2a	4.62	NULL	1873	Non-wood habitat	Sensitive habitats/species on or adjacent to site	Informal Public Access, Mixed Habitat Mosaic	Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty

Forming the major part of the site, this Cpt comprises the main grassland area with specimen trees, and approx. 20% scrub.

The grassland is semi-natural, with calcareous and acidic characteristics. Wildflowers include birds-foot trefoil, self-heal, tormentil, lady's bedstraw, yarrow, burnet-saxifrage and harebell. On the steeper slopes, brome is evident caused by poaching from cattle. Scarce invertebrates are associated with ancient trees and some are known to occur at Nut Hill.

The specimen trees comprise of five veteran trees: two ash and three Pedunculate oaks; and notable Pedunculate oak, Cedar of Lebanon and a Wellingtonia (Giant Sequoia). There are other 'parkland' trees including ash, silver fir and black pine, and 14 trees planted in 2000 - inc. oaks grown from acorns collected on-site, as well as some non-native species such as Wellingtonia, cedar, silver fir and lime. Planted trees are protected by individual wooden parkland guards.

Approx. 20% of area is naturally regenerating scrub - bramble and young trees e.g. hawthorn, birch, ash, blackthorn.

Water troughs are present for stock in the West of the site next to pedestrian entrance leading to wooded lane owned by hotel.

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.