

Pattles Fen

(Plan period – 2023 to 2028)



WOODLAND
TRUST

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Introduction to the Woodland Trust Estate

The Woodland Trust owns and cares for well over 1,250 sites covering almost 30,000 hectares (ha) across the UK. This includes more than 4,000ha of ancient semi-natural woodland and almost 4,000ha of non-native plantations on ancient woodland sites and we have created over 5,000ha of new native woodland. We also manage other valuable habitats such as flower-rich grasslands, heaths, ponds/lakes and moorland.

Our Vision is:

“A UK rich in native woods and trees for people and wildlife.”

To realise all the environmental, social and economic benefits woods and trees bring to society, we:

- **Create Woodland** – championing the need to hugely increase the UK’s native woodland and trees.
- **Protect Woodland** – fighting to defend native woodland, especially irreplaceable ancient woodland and veteran trees; there should be no loss of ancient woodland
- **Restore Woodland** – ensuring the sensitive restoration of all damaged ancient woodland and the re-creation of native wooded landscapes.

Management of the Woodland Trust Estate

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.

The following principles provide an overarching framework to guide the management of all our sites but we recognise that all woods are different and that their management also needs to reflect their local landscape, history and where appropriate support local projects and initiatives.

1. Our woods are managed to maintain their intrinsic key features of value and to reflect those of the surrounding landscape. We intervene in our woods when there is evidence that it is necessary to maintain or improve biodiversity, safety and to further the development of more resilient woods and landscapes.
2. We establish new native woodland for all the positive reasons set out in our Conservation Principles, preferably using natural regeneration but often by planting trees, 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. Where possible, we pro-actively engage with people to help them appreciate the value of woods and trees.
4. The long term vision for all our 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 natural and cultural heritage value of sites is taken into account in our management and in particular, our ancient trees are retained for as long as possible.
7. Land and woods can generate income both from the sustainable harvesting of wood products and the delivery of other services. We therefore consider the appropriateness of opportunities 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 encourage our woods to be used for 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. We maintain a network of sites for long-term monitoring and trials leading to reductions in plastics and pesticides.
10. Any activities we undertake are in line with our wider Conservation Principles, conform to sustainable forest management practices, are appropriate for the site and balanced with our primary objectives of enhancing the biodiversity and recreational value of our woods and the wider landscapes.

The Public Management Plan

This public management plan describes the site and sets out the long term aims for our management and lists the Key Features which drive our management actions. The Key Features are specific to this site – their significance is outlined together with our long, 50 years and beyond, and our short, the next 5 years, term objectives for the management and enhancement of these features. The short term objectives are complemented by an outline Work Programme for the period of this management plan aimed at delivering our management aims.

Detailed compartment descriptions are listed in the appendices which include any major management constraints and designations. Any legally confidential or sensitive species information about this site is not included in this version of the plan.

There is a formal review of this plan every 5 years and we continually monitor our sites to assess the success of our management, therefore this printed version may quickly become out of date, particularly in relation to the planned work programme.

Please either consult The Woodland Trust website

www.woodlandtrust.org.uk

or contact the Woodland Trust

operations@woodlandtrust.org.uk

to confirm details of the current management programme.

A short glossary of technical terms can be found at the end of the plan.

Location and Access

Location maps and directions for how to find and access our woods, including this site, can be found by using the following link to the Woodland Trust web-site which contains information on accessible woodlands across the UK

<https://www.woodlandtrust.org.uk/visiting-woods/find-woods/>

In Scotland access to our sites is in accordance with the Land Reform Act (of Scotland) 2003 and the Scottish Outdoor Access Code.

In England, Wales and NI, with the exception of designated Public Rights of Ways, all routes across our sites are permissive in nature and where we have specific access provision for horse riders and/or cyclists this will be noted in the management plan.

The Management Plan

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GLOSSARY

1. SITE DETAILS

Pattles Fen

Location:

Brantham Grid reference: TM106342 OS 1:50,000 Sheet No. 169

Area:

3.60 hectares (8.90 acres)

External Designations:

Great Landscape Value, Local Nature Reserve, Tree Preservation Order

Internal Designations:

Woods on Your Doorstep

2. SITE DESCRIPTION

Pattles Fen is a mosaic of habitats on varying soils and topography. It consists of a dry sandy ridge, which slopes down steeply to wet marshy areas at the bottom of two small river valleys which meet in the centre of the site. On the higher sandy parts of Pattles fen there are areas of short cropped acid grassland of County importance. The Site is surrounded by housing within the village of Brantham. Potentially, this allows the transfer of non-native flora and fauna onto the fen.

In 1997 those areas of Pattles fen that were neither acid grassland or wetland were planted with a selection of native woodland species consisting mainly of oak, birch, with woodland edge and understorey shrubs such as hazel and hawthorn. Additional trees were planted in areas that were dominated by scrub, brambles and bracken amongst the few mature trees that were already present. Good hedges surround the majority of the site. The marsh is more open and has a good range of wetland plants with rosebay willow herb dominating. Latterly, this important area has become drier and colonised.

Pattles fen is open to the public and enjoyed by the local community as recreational woodland. It also provides an educational resource in that the local primary school have a forest school area within the site.

The key features for this site are:-

Informal public access – the public are welcome to walk within the site.

Open Ground Habitat – acid grassland.

Watercourses – wet marshland and wet woodland scrub

Secondary Woodland – young planted native woodland.

3. LONG TERM POLICY

The long term intention will be to allow the majority of Pattles Fen to develop naturally and continue to maintain a mosaic of woodland, acid grassland and wetland habitat through minimal intervention. The woodland areas will have a high canopy dominated by oak, cherry and lime, with a understorey of shrubby species such as field maple and hazel. To prevent the continued drying out of the marshy areas some phased clearance will be required and excavation to provide small areas of open water and limited access. In these wetter areas encroaching willow will be feathered back to maintain the open area in the middle of the site.

The acid grassland will be maintained as open ground through annual grassland management, adding further diversity and public open space to the site.

Ash dieback will require monitoring through tree safety inspections with some intervention where trees become unsafe. Any cleared areas to be allowed to regenerate naturally.

A sustainable level of public access to be maintained through the management of the access features and internal structures, such as entrances, benches, paths and and boardwalks all maintained to a safe standard.

Small scale coppicing of species such as hazel and willow will increase both the wildlife and educational value of the fen.

4. KEY FEATURES

4.1 f1 Informal Public Access

Description
Public access is available with rides crossing the site. With the site being dominated by the wetland in the centre a raised boardwalk was built to provide a link between the two dry areas of the site. Formal entrances have been created from the highway and school lane.
Significance
To increase public enjoyment of woodland, wet woodland and acid heath; Pattles Fen provides a valuable source of open space for both recreation and education.
Opportunities & Constraints
Constraints – nature and topography of site restricts access to some areas of the site. Opportunities – Pattles fen offers an area of public open space and a recreational resource for the local school within the village.
Factors Causing Change
Vandalism and anti-social behaviour.
Long term Objective (50 years+)
To maintain Pattles fen as an area of public access for the local community.
Short term management Objectives for the plan period (5 years)
To maintain site as an area of public open access, with the path system managed to allow directed access. Maintain all public access structures such as entrances, information boards, benches, boardwalk and forest school in a safe usable condition

4.2 f2 Open Ground Habitat

Description
Small area of acid grassland within open ground habitat area. Heathland species also present include sand spurrey, prickly sedge, mouse-ear hawkweed, gorse and broom.
Significance

The acid grassland habitat is recorded as being of County importance on the County Wildlife Sites register. This habitat is one of the reasons why the site was designated as a Local Nature Reserve. Locally important species have been recorded.
Opportunities & Constraints
Constraints – the acid grassland habitat is dependent upon preventing the encroachment of woody scrub habitat which will need to be monitored and managed.
Factors Causing Change
Invasive woody scrub habitat
Long term Objective (50 years+)
To continue to maintain the patchwork of open acid grassland within the site through management of encroaching woody scrub.
Short term management Objectives for the plan period (5 years)
Maintain the existing acre of acid grassland as a component of the diverse habitat structure of the site. Monitor condition of grassland every two years. When required , manage woody invasive species to ensure areas of acid grassland do not revert to scrub.

4.3 f3 Watercourses

Description
The land slopes steeply down to wet marshy areas in Compartment 2 where two river valleys meet. The higher end of the western stream is overgrown with sallow and willows. Elsewhere the marsh is more open and has been colonised by a good range of wetland plants including marsh-marigold, ragged-robin, lesser spearwort. Golden-scaled male fern, a rare Suffolk species.
Significance
It is recorded as a County Wildlife Site and a Local Nature Reserve because of the variety of habitats, including wetland.
Opportunities & Constraints
Constraints –Any potential management is constrained by the wet boggy nature of the area making access difficult.
Factors Causing Change
Natural drying out of the wet woodland habitat.
Long term Objective (50 years+)

Allow the wetland area to undertake a natural process where possible so that there will be a patchwork of wet woodland/scrub, open wetland areas and abundant dead wood habitat. Some phased small scale intervention may be required to maintain a wet woodland habitat.

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

Undertake a minimal intervention approach to allow natural processes to develop a patchwork of wetland marsh and wet woodland to develop. To monitor the area for changes.

4.4 f4 Secondary Woodland

Description

Native broadleaved woodland planted as part of the millennium woodlands at your doorstep project, adding to existing patches of woody scrub and wet woodland areas.

Significance

The Establishment of New native woodland to further diversifying the range of habitats with Pattles fen.

Opportunities & Constraints

Opportunities – Tree planting provides the opportunity further diversify the habitats on the site.
Constraints – Closure of tree canopy which prevents natural tree regeneration and ground flora from becoming established. The possible presence of grazing mammals such as muntjac deer.

Factors Causing Change

Ash Dieback – one of the species planted was common ash, and there are signs of dieback on the fen.

Long term Objective (50 years+)

A healthy and varied woodland containing trees of mixed age with sustainable natural regeneration and some deadwood habitat.

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

To open up the canopy allowing a more diverse woodland with dead wood habitat to develop.

5. WORK PROGRAMME

Year	Type Of Work	Description	Due Date
2023	WMM - Coppice Management	Works associated with the management of coppice areas – such as coppicing, maintenance of protective fencing, etc	November

APPENDIX 1 : COMPARTMENT DESCRIPTIONS

Cpt No.	Area (ha)	Main Species	Year	Management Regime	Major Management Constraints	Designations
1a	1.74	Birch (downy/silver)		Min-intervention	No/poor vehicular access within the site	Great Landscape Value, Local Nature Reserve, Tree Preservation Order
<p>This compartment was planted in November 1997 with oak, birch, whitebeam, rowan, hazel and hawthorn. Gorse and regenerating hawthorn have been retained as scrub habitat. The land slopes down from the drier sandier slopes to the open wetter marshy areas in the centre of the site which contain willow species. The compartments ground flora is dominated by bracken</p>						
2a	1.85	Birch (downy/silver)		Min-intervention	No/poor vehicular access within the site	Great Landscape Value, Local Nature Reserve, Tree Preservation Order
<p>Mosaic of habitats including areas of willow scrub, mature trees, wetland and acidic grassland. The compartment runs east-west across the site with gorse, grassland species, bracken and scrub dominating the upper valley sides. Rosebay willow herb and willow species are abundant in the wetter valley bottoms.</p>						

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.

Windblow/Windthrow

Trees or groups of trees blown over (usually uprooted) by strong winds and gales.

Registered Office:

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