

Plora Wood (2024 to 2029)



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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Appendix 1 : Compartment Descriptions

GLOSSARY

1. SITE DETAILS

Plora Wood

Location:	Innerleithen Grid reference: NT344365 OS 1:50,000 Sheet No. 73
Area:	19.71 hectares (48.70 acres)
External Designations:	Ancient Semi Natural Woodland, Planted Ancient Woodland Site, Restored Ancient Woodland Site, Site of Special Scientific Interest
Internal Designations:	Ancient Woodland Restoration Project

2. SITE DESCRIPTION

LOCATION AND LANDSCAPE

Plora Wood is situated on the steep southern slopes of the Tweed valley, overlooking the A72 and runs alongside the Walkerburn – Traquair road, 2km east of Innerleithen.

The wood lies in a prominent position on a steep north-facing slope overlooking the A72 at Walkerburn and provides contrast to the largely coniferous woodland that surrounds it. The woodland is bounded on its upper (southern) edge by the larger forests of Elibank and Traquair – owned and managed by Forestry and Land Scotland (FLS). While much of this area is under conifer plantation, FLS have restructured some areas and are re-establishing native woodland. Plora Wood is bounded on its lower (northern) side by a minor road, and grazing pasture running down to the River Tweed.

WOODLAND DESCRIPTION

Plora Wood is listed in the SNH Ancient Woodland Inventory as 1a - Ancient woodland of semi natural origin (ASNW) with a large area to the south, listed as 3 - Other woodland on Roy's map. Approximately half the site is classed as an Ancient Woodland Restoration Site (AWR) and is managed as such due to the previous planting of non-native conifers and heavy management intervention. Plora Wood forms the core area of the slightly larger Plora Wood Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), which also includes a small area of land owned by FLS. It is the largest area of semi-natural oak woodland in the Tweed valley area and is one of only five oak woods over 12 hectares to be found in the Scottish Borders. It represents over 50% of the total area of ancient native woodlands in the Tweed valley area.

Plora Wood has a significant sessile oak wood component and has a continuous recorded history back to the 15th century. The current woodland structure shows evidence of this long history of management although now contains a number of distinct woodland types.

The western part of the woodland on the upper slopes (cpt 5a) is dominated by open woodland primarily of birch and mature sessile oak (planted mid-18th century) together with occasional beech. Along the roadside at the bottom of the slope (cpt 5b) the planted species become more varied, including beech, horse chestnut, lime, turkey oak, and sycamore of similar age to the oak above. In the far south-west, at the top of the site (cpt 6a), there are some very distinctive gnarled mature oaks, surrounded by birch woodland. The central section of the woodland (cpt 4a) contains an area felled in 1968 that has regenerated to form a semi-natural semi-mature birch canopy. Overall the canopy in these areas is predominantly native (>80%). To the east of this is a block of pure conifer (cpt 3a), planted in 1972, that was unthinned until 2002. The compartment was last thinned in 2009 and has pockets of windblow.

In the eastern half of the woodland, the lower slopes (cpt 2a) support a canopy mainly of mature sessile oak, sycamore, and beech, but with occasional larch, spruce, Douglas fir, and birch. The upper slopes (cpt 2b) mainly consist of mature beech woodland (planted 1827) towards the centre of the wood, which casts a deep shade. Situated east of this (cpt 2c) is an area (previously beech) that was felled and restocked with native broadleaves in 1991 and is now considered to be Restored Ancient Woodland (RAWS) with on-going management. Against the eastern boundary (cpt 1a) is a compartment planted with conifers in 1958 which, following thinning in 2002 is more open with Norway spruce, sycamore, ash, birch, and beech in mixture.

Throughout most of the wood there is a healthy woodland specialist ground flora, typified by dog's mercury and wood sorrel on lower slopes (NVC W9 upland ash) in mosaic with ferns and brambles (NVC W11 upland grassy birch/oak). This becomes more heathy in the upper south-western slopes with blaeberry and heather (NVC 17 - heathy birch/oak). A nationally rare fungus, *Rimbachia arachnoidea*, has been identified in the eastern part of the wood. Locally rare woodland specialist species include wood anemone, wood brome, toothwort, hairy woodrush and dog's mercury.

There is abundant regeneration of ash, beech, and sycamore. During 2023/24 quite extensive evidence of deer browsing damage was noted. It can be seen that in the past, herbivore damage has been a limiting factor on the regeneration and establishment of native species.

PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION

The underlying rock is predominantly acid Silurian Greywacke which, outcropping on the steep slopes, has weathered to produce loose scree and thin soil on the upper slopes. Flood plain alluvium present on the lower slopes has contributed to the evolution of deeper soils. The soils are mostly acid, typically stony and generally free draining sandy clay loams. Wet flushes especially in the eastern section have given rise to richer, more basic conditions.

The MLURI Assessment of Climatic Conditions in Scotland classifies the area as cool wet foothill and upland subject to moderate exposure on the upper slopes and moderate winters.

OTHER HABITATS

The slopes are generally free draining, but a number of wet flushes occur, which seasonally flow as small burns. A more substantial watercourse, the Armour burn bounds the upper western boundary of the wood, and is in good condition, with dappled shade from the surrounding woodland.

There are several dry stone dykes on the eastern and southern boundaries and a dry stone retaining dyke along the entire length of the road boundary to the north. These have value as refugia for woodland specialist flora.

MANAGEMENT HISTORY

The site's recorded history dates back to at least 1143 when it formed part of a Royal grant of pasturage and pannage to the Abbey of Montrose. It is listed as part of Ettrick Forest in the exchequer rolls of Scotland from 1456, 1501 and 1589 and is depicted on Blaeu's Atlas of 1654 and Roy's map of 1750, as well as those of Armstrong in 1775 and Thomson in 1832. It also appears on the earliest editions of the Ordnance Survey from 1887 onwards.

Evidence strongly indicates continuity of woodland cover for over 800 years and it is probable that management of the woodland has changed its character and structure at various times from high forest to coppiced woodland and possibly to scrub. The steep and unstable scree slopes may have discouraged conversion of the woodland to agricultural use, such as sheep grazing.

There are no known archaeological features within the wood, although there are the remains of an old settlement, about 500m to the east. It is thought that the dry stone dykes date to about 1765.

Detailed evidence of past management is scarce. However, the Traquair Estate records of 1765 include a list of trees planted including "2,360 oaks, 800 elms, 100 ashes, 200 spruce fir and 10600 Scots fir". Planting of beech, non-native in Scotland, is mentioned in 1827.

During the First World War, much of the wood was felled, apparently to supply local communities with firewood. After the last oak coppice regrowth was singled, converting the wood to high forest.

The site was first notified as a Site of Special Scientific Interest in 1952, for its habitat value as an ancient woodland site with semi-natural characteristics, including the presence of several locally rare woodland specialist ground flora species. Since then NatureScot has engaged in regular discussions with the owners and FLS in an effort to influence management of the woodland. The SSSI boundary was expanded to include some additional areas within the neighbouring FLS land in 1986. Borders Forest Trust (BFT) had a period of management with FLS covering the land above Plora Wood including part of the SSSI, but this area is now in sole responsibility of FLS. Active liaison between FLS and Woodland Trust Scotland is on-going.

Three separate sections of the wood, each approximately 3.3 hectares, were clearfelled under the Forestry Commission Dedication Scheme in 1958 (cpt 1a), 1968 (cpt 3a) and 1972 (cpt 4a). The first two areas were replanted with mixtures of Norway and Sitka spruce, Douglas fir, European larch, and Scots pine. The area felled in 1972 was replanted the following year with 1,000 oak, beech and Douglas fir. Establishment was delayed due to severe browsing by deer. Nature Conservancy Council funded a proportion of the planting in 1972 as part of an effort to retain a high proportion of broadleaved species in the wood.

The Woodland Trust purchased the property from Traquair Estate in January 1986. A small area was felled in 1988 (cpt 5c), and approximately 0.25ha of beech and sycamore was clearfelled in 1990 (cpt 2c), both being replanted with mixed broadleaves in tree shelters. The path through the wood was established in 1993 in conjunction with the formation of the roadside lay-by to allow car parking.

Since 2002 some light selective thinning and occasional ring barking, was carried out through the mature beech and conifer dominated stands. This work also included the control of patches of regenerating beech and the selected ring barking of occasional mature beech carried out in 2008; 18 mature and semi-mature beech trees were ring barked in cpt 2c, along with 4 mature beech trees at west end of cpt 2b to leave as standing deadwood. Results have been varied with some trees showing slow signs of dieback. The canopy of the surrounding beech trees have also closed into the space available. In 2009, two small exclosures (Genguards) were installed to protect native regeneration from the impacts of browsing and monitor natural regeneration.

ACCESS

The path is used daily by a small number of mainly local users. The site is classified as WT Access Category C - Low Usage (5-15 people using one entrance per day). The wood is easily accessible from Innerleithen and Walkerburn, and links into forest trails in the FLS land to the south. Plora Wood lies approximately 2 miles from the Southern Upland Way, accessible via forest tracks to the south or the minor road to Traquair.

There are access points from the road at the east end and at the centre of the woodland. There is approximately 800m of managed path connecting these entrances and linking into the FLS land above from the middle section of the wood. The path takes the walker through attractive broadleaved and mixed woodlands, contouring along moderately steep ground with occasional views out across the Tweed Valley.

A circular route is possible following the creation of a route to the east which joins the forest track network to the south. Some sections of the path are narrow and winding, and moderately steep in places. A reasonable degree of mobility is needed to access all areas. Paths are generally unsurfaced and may be seasonally muddy, making them suited only for pedestrian access in most areas.

There are no paths in the western half of the site but the woodland is quite open in character and relatively accessible to walkers.

Over the last few years the woodland surrounding the site has become increasingly popular for mountain biking.

There is parking space for 3 or 4 cars in a lay-by at the east entrance.

3. LONG TERM POLICY

WOODLAND RESTORATION

The long term aim is to restore this Ancient Woodland site by securing and enhancing the ancient woodland remnant features. The threat of non-native conifers will be removed, bringing more light to the woodland floor, preserving the specialist ground flora. Where light and gradual thinning is not possible, clear felling will be an option, especially in the case of the spruce block in cpt3a. The threat of beech will be managed by continually removing young beech regenerating saplings and opening up larger areas within previously mature beech dominated stands through felling and ringbarking. Natural regeneration combined with enrichment planting within gaps of sufficient size will bring a more diverse palate of native species to the woodland.

The mature sessile oak component of Flora will be protected as part of the SSSI. Targeted selective felling alongside halo thinning around mature and semi-mature oak will help develop their crowns and encourage some to be future veteran trees. Light levels are to be continually monitored and intervention with beech and non-native conifers will be sensitive to the surrounding native plant communities and suppressed native trees.

In due course the tree canopy will gradually move towards predominately broadleaved, with a high proportion of native species. There will be considerable structural and age class diversity as regeneration occurs in gaps left by the loss of older trees. The canopy will be punctuated with frequent mature and semi-mature trees and there will be frequent standing and fallen deadwood.

Natural regeneration of native tree species will be encouraged in any gaps that occur naturally as a result of tree disease (i.e. Ash Die Back) or windblow. Regeneration by non-native tree species e.g. Sitka spruce, etc. will be periodically controlled, as required. Deer browsing will be monitored. This will continue to be carried out in cooperation with FLS.

The Woodland Trust will liaise with FLS to ensure joint management across mutual boundaries.

ACCESS

Existing site access facilities will be maintained to suit local demand. Existing managed paths will continue to be maintained. It is not intended to increase or develop any further access within Flora Wood. The site will continue to be managed for the benefit of informal and peaceful recreation and biodiversity. Communication with FLS will be on-going.

4. KEY FEATURES

4.1 f1 Ancient Woodland Site

Description

Evidence strongly indicates continuity of woodland cover for over 800 years at Plora. The current diverse woodland structure shows evidence of a long history of woodland management, and so the trees present today are likely from a planted ancient woodland site. The description below has been split into the AWR zones as per the WT AWR approach, and cross-referenced with the sub-compartment numbers.

Zone 1 (cpts 2a, 2b, 2c).

Part of this area is dominated by open mature sessile oak woodland (cpt 2a). South of (above) the path this gives way to single species stands of mature beech (cpt 2b) with scattered conifers amongst mixed broadleaves of varying age and dense blocks of young self-seeded beech. Cpt 2c is early mature mixed broadleaves planted 1991, and contains occasional spruce regeneration. (AWR Category: Threatened.)

Zone 2: (cpt 1a) The eastern end of the wood is dominated by diverse woodland of mature birch, sycamore, ash and approx 10% conifers (Sitka spruce, Douglas fir, Japanese larch, Scots pine) and a fairly wide range of minor broadleaved species. This compartment is in the final stages of AWR restoration following previous conifer thinning. However, the main current agent of change is ash dieback, which is resulting in an increase in light in many areas. (AWR Category: Threatened.)

Zone 3: (cpt 3a). A block of mature non-native conifers (P1968) primarily Sitka spruce with some Japanese larch. The central part (approx. 15%) has suffered windblow. The conifers cast a heavy shade, threatening the ground flora, and the windblow is likely to gradually spread. (AWR Category: Critical).

Zone 4: (cpts 5a, 5b) The western part of the wood is dominated by mixed broadleaved species, consisting mainly of mature oak, birch & beech with a line of beech, horse chestnut, lime, turkey oak, and sycamore along the roadside. All of these provide a valuable veteran tree resource. There is little regeneration except for beech which is regenerating prolifically, forming an understory thicket in some areas. In addition to the heavy shade that the beech cast on this north-facing slope this regeneration is a threat to the woodland ground flora. (AWR category: Threatened)

Zone 5: (cpt 4a, 5c, 6a): These are all areas where there is little threat from conifers or beech. Cpt 4a consists mainly of mature downy birch following SPHN felling of Japanese larch in 2019. Cpt 5c was felled and restocked with native broadleaves in 1988. Cpt 6a has a different character to the rest of the wood, with some particularly gnarled veteran oak of high conservation value in a matrix of birch. While there is some beech regeneration, the ground flora is generally secure. (AWR category: Threatened).

All the zones include part of the drystone boundary wall (c.1795) which is a valuable ancient woodland feature as a refugia for plants and animals.

Throughout most of the wood there is a healthy woodland specialist ground flora where light permits, typified by dog's mercury and wood sorrel on lower slopes (NVC W9 – upland ash) in mosaic with ferns and brambles (NVC W11 upland grassy birch/oak). This becomes heathier in the upper south-western slopes with blaeberry & heather (NVC 17 - heathy birch/oak). Locally rare woodland specialist species (defined as notable species in the SSSI Management Statement) include wood anemone, wood brome, toothwort, hairy woodrush, dog's mercury and the fungus *Rimbachia arachnoidea*.

In general there is abundant regeneration of beech, ash, and sycamore (particularly beech). At present (2024) deer browsing is evident and a Herbivore Impact Assessment will need to be carried out to determine the state of browsing pressure and whether this is a barrier to regeneration and establishment. Ash dieback continues to have a serious and progressive impact throughout the site and ash trees of all ages continue to decline and die.

Significance

Plora Wood is listed on the NatureScot Ancient Woodland Inventory as Ancient Semi-natural Woodland (class 1a), being shown on maps since 1750. Although much of the oak woodland has a semi-natural character, other parts of the site have a mix of non-native species. These have occurred as a result of planting and natural regeneration and the site was classified as Plantation on Ancient Woodland Site (PAWS). Plora Wood lies in a landscape dominated by open hill or commercial conifer woodland. It is the largest area of semi-natural oak woodland in the former county of Peebles and is one of only five oak woods over 30 acres in the Scottish Borders. It represents over 50% of the total area of ancient native woodlands in the district of Tweeddale.

The woodland is bounded on its upper southern edges by FLS land. While much of this area is under conifer plantation, FCS have restructured adjacent areas and are re-establishing native woodland.

The wood was notified as a Site of Special Scientific Interest in 1952, for its value as an ancient woodland site with semi-natural characteristics, including the presence of several locally rare woodland specialist ground flora species.

The nationally rare fungus *Rimbachia arachnoidea* has been recorded in the eastern part of the wood.

Opportunities & Constraints

Opportunities:

To restore and enhance remnant ancient woodland features. To gradually remove conifers to reduce the threat of over shading. Manipulation of the broadleaves species content will be difficult due to the high proportion of sycamore and beech, but there is scope to selectively favour more native species where regeneration occurs as well as in any restocking.

To cooperate with the FLS regarding the management of their adjacent landholding (also contains part of the SSSI) including deer management.

Constraints:

Access for timber extraction is greatly restricted throughout much of the wood by ground conditions, a steep gradient

and restricted access for forest machinery.
Deer numbers depend strongly on the deer control policy in the adjoining FLS land.
SSSI legislation requires permission from SNH for potentially damaging operations - "Operations Requiring Consent (ORC)".

Factors Causing Change

Ash dieback is now widespread throughout much of the woodland (2024).
Natural regeneration of non-native tree species, any significant increase in deer browsing, occasional wind damage.
Beech regeneration is significantly dense in clusters throughout the woodland, but especially in cpt 2a, 2b, and cpt 5a, 5b. Little light can reach the woodland floor within these sections and flora diversity is low.
Other Pathogens:
Phytophthora ramorum has not been found on the site, although some felling of larch was required in cpt 4b in 2018 due to an infection in the adjacent FLS plantation. Scattered larch still remain in cpts 1 & 2 so P. ramorum remains a risk.
Honey Fungus (Armillaria mellea) – Forest Research have made note of the presence of honey fungus on the site and are looking into its relationship with some declining sessile oak.

Long term Objective (50 years+)

The tree canopy will be almost entirely broadleaved, with a high proportion of native species. There will be considerable structural and age class diversity as regeneration occurs in gaps left by the loss of older trees. Throughout most of the woodland there will be a secure, healthy & diverse ground flora characteristic of broadleaved native woodland (mainly NVC W9 & W11). The canopy will be punctuated with frequent mature and over-mature native trees and there will be frequent standing and fallen deadwood.

This will be achieved by restoring and securing the ancient woodland habitat and enhancing existing AW plant communities by removing threats of shading and non-native regeneration. To this end remaining conifer will be gradually removed. The mature beech are a source of prolific regeneration well as being densely shading, but their ongoing management needs to be balanced against their value as veteran trees, and it is expected that there will be some beech component in the long term.

Felled trees (or those killed in situ) will be left as a deadwood habitat.

All historical linear features (drystone dykes within the wood and along the roadside) will be retained and protected. The drystone wall along the roadside will be regularly inspected and maintained as required.

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

Carry out works to move 'Critical' & 'Threatened' AWR areas in Zone 1(cpt 2a & 2b), Zone 2 (cpt 1a & 2c), Zone 3 (cpt 3a) Zone 4 (cpt 5a) & Zone 5 (cpt 4a, 5b, 5c, & 6a) towards 'Secure' during the period of the plan (2024-2029). This will be achieved in the main by reducing competition (and seeding) from non-native species across the site, in line with the AWR survey and assessment.

These objectives will be achieved by a variety of AWR restructuring work in Zones 1-5 during the period of the plan,

including:

- (i) Clear felling of non-native conifers in Zone 3 (cpt 3a). Access is suitable for forest harvesting machines. Circa 1 ha of Sitka spruce to be clear felled and timber extracted (~350 tonnes).
- (ii) Zone 3 (cpt 3a) — Establish native woodland in the felled area. Achieved by non plastic shelters following operations and planted with mixed native broadleaves (hazel, hawthorn, rowan, birch, cherry, oak). Some natural regeneration is expected to occur alongside the planting.
- (iii) Selective thinning of dying ash along roadside in Zone 1 (cpt 2a) (2024 and future years resulting from annual ash surveys).
- (iv) Removal of densely growing beech regeneration in Zones 1 (cpt 2a & 2b), Zone 4 (cpt 5a) & Zone 5 (cpt 4a, 5b, 5c, & 6a). Cut beech regen, up to 10cm dbh, and over 1m height, reducing beech saplings from abundant to frequent across whole site. Trial methods of cut back and note success. Targeted approach during plan period 2024-2029 is to concentrate along edges of regeneration and underneath specified mature trees (oak/elm).
- (v) Where there are densely shading pure mature beech stands (Zone 1: cpt 2b, Zone 5 cpt 5b); increase light levels to ground flora, by ring barking or chemically killing 30 mature beech on the edges of the stand (and away from the path), creating large enough gaps to allow native regen. Leave as standing deadwood resource.
- (vi) Remove all previously used 1.2m plastic tree shelters (cpt 5c – circa 50 tubes) that remain on the site in line with Woodland Trust commitment to go plastic free in terms of the use of tree shelters.
- (vii) Remove regen growing on northern stone dyke by minor road.
- (viii) Map and select mature, veteran or future veteran trees to be halo thinned beyond beech regen thinning as stated in objective (iv). To identify (in the years 2025/2026) up to 50 specific individual oak, elm and other native trees that would benefit from more canopy space/light levels (halo thinning) – throughout site Zones 1-5 (cpts 1, 2, 3, 4, 5) but especially within cpt 4c, 5c & 2a.

4.2 f2 Connecting People with woods & trees

Description

Plora Wood is situated on the lower slope of Plora Hill facing north, overlooking the River Tweed and the A72. The wood runs alongside the Walkerburn to Traquair Road. The site is relatively small covering an area of 19.71 hectares (48.70 acres) but has significant conservation value. The site is designated as Ancient Woodland and is a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and has a long history of management going back to the 15th century.

The wood sits within Peeblesshire 52km south of Edinburgh. The site is easily accessed from the bustling town of Peebles 12km away and many of the small towns and villages in the central area of the Scottish Borders. The nearest town is Innerleithen 2 km away, which has an estimated population of 3100.

The woodland has a quiet and peaceful feel and receives few visitors. It features a mixture of tree species, predominately broadleaved, notably mature sessile oak along with broadleaves and conifers. Plora Wood forms the core area of the slightly larger Plora Wood Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and is important for a wide range of woodland associated flora and fauna.

The site provides a contrast to the substantial productive large scale conifer plantations present throughout the Tweed Valley. These include; Glentress, Cardrona, Caberston, Elibank & Traquair forests and the plantations on the Leithen Water Estate. There are only a few areas of mixed broadleaved woodland and even less Ancient Woodland or Ancient Semi Natural Woodland in the area and Plora Wood is of local and national importance (Plora Wood is the largest area of semi-natural oak woodland in the Tweed valley area and is one of only five oak woods over 12 hectares to be found in the Scottish Borders). Plora Wood alone represents over 50% of the total area of ancient native woodlands in the Tweed Valley area.

Within the site there is 800m of unsurfaced connecting paths and a short track, all in the eastern half of the wood. The main path follows the contours of the slope about midway through the woodland. The path becomes narrow and moderately steep in places. It can be slippery at times and muddy in winter making it suited for pedestrian access only in most areas. A circular route is possible by taking the route to the east which joins the FLS Elibank & Traquair forest track network and following the track west. Due to the steepness of the site and difficult ground conditions good mobility is needed to access all areas. There are no paths in the western half of the site but the woodland is open in character in places and relatively accessible to walkers.

The main access point (denoted by a Woodland Trust ladderboard) is located at the eastern end of the wood, where there is parking for 3-4 cars. There are also 3 other small access points onto the site.

To access the site by car - from Innerleithen take the Traquair Road B709 south from the junction in the town, crossing the Tweed bridge and turning left along the minor road until reaching the layby (3.0km, 2 miles).

From Walkerburn (by foot or car) take the minor road that leads south across the Tweed bridge, and turn left at the junction (500m). The main entrance is a further 500m on at the small layby.

The wood can also be accessed by public transport. The nearest bus stop to Plora Wood is at Walkerburn (1km) – the regular service is the X62 Edinburgh-Peebles-Galashiels-Melrose. The X62 bus route stops outside Innerleithen post office (2km away). On foot from Innerleithen, follow the path along the disused railway line to the south of the town (access is from Traquair Rd or Princes St or Montgomery St). Cut up to the minor road just after crossing the bridge

(1km, 0.6 miles from town centre) and there turn left. Follow the road for a further 800m to reach the western entrance to the wood on your right.

The nearest rail link is at Galashiels - 20km (12.4 miles) away on the Tweedbank to Edinburgh Borders Railway.

The nearest public toilets are in Innerleithen, (the one in Hall Street next to Victoria Park has disabled facilities accessed by RADAR key) there are also numerous cafes a couple of hotels & pubs and a medium sized Co-op.

The nearest school is St. Ronan's Primary school (3 miles/10 minutes away by car). However, due to the limited parking at the wood it has not previously been used for school events.

The nearest other Woodland Trust wood in the area is at Innerleithen (St. Ronan's Wood & Caerlee Hill) which sits on the slope of Caerlee Hill, overlooking the town of Innerleithen and the Tweed Valley.

The population within a 20 minute drive is estimated to be over 38,000 and within a 40 minute drive over 353,000. This is a large number of potential visitors to the area. Innerleithen is now a well-known trail centre for mountain biking known as; Glentress and Innerleithen Bike Park, which attracts over 350,000 mountain bikers to the region per year and has some extreme and renowned downhill trails. It is one of the trail centres that make up the 7stanes mountain bike destinations situated throughout South Scotland. The Innerleithen Trails mountain bike car park is situated close by and provides access to the challenging Plora Rig mountain bike circuit situated in Elibank & Traquair Forest above Plora Wood.

The site is managed for peaceful recreation and for the protection of the Ancient Woodland flora and fauna in one of the few Ancient Woodland sites in the Tweed Valley. The wood is mainly used by local people for peaceful informal relaxation and by relevant organisations for conservation monitoring. There is minimal use by mountain bikers.

In addition, there are numerous forests and sites of interest in the area offering a wide range of interests including; Tweed Valley Forest Park and the Glentress Visitor Centre, and nearby Traquair House and Gardens Dawyck Botanic Gardens and Arboretum - which houses one of Scotland's finest tree collections. And Kailzie Gardens at Peebles.

Significance

Plora Wood is one of the few designated Ancient Woodlands within the Tweed Valley and is important for its associated flora & fauna and area of sessile oak woodland. This is recognised by its designation as a SSSI.

The paths through the woodland interconnect with other local paths and Core Path 163 through Elibank & Traquair Forest & 181 through Walkerburn, along the River Tweed and back to Innerleithen and the countryside beyond. Users are mostly pedestrian.

The site is classified as WT Access Category C - Low Usage (5-15 people using the main entrance per day). The wood is easily accessible from Innerleithen and Walkerburn, and links into forest trails in the FLS land to the south. Plora Wood lies approximately 2 miles from the Southern Upland Way, accessible via forest tracks to the south or the minor road to Traquair.

There are access points from the road at the east end and at the centre of the woodland. There is approximately 800m of managed path connecting these entrances and linking into the FLS land above from the middle section of the wood and FLS land to the east. The path takes the walker through attractive broadleaved and mixed woodlands, contouring along moderately steep ground with occasional views out across the Tweed Valley. The site is a good place to spot a

wide variety of woodland birds and red squirrel.

Opportunities & Constraints

Opportunities:

The path would benefit from improvements as some of the revetment has been lost over the years and drainage is poor in places.

Consideration of a looped unsurfaced path to extend visitor access to other parts of the woodland.

Constraints:

Terrain limits access for many disabled visitors and the narrow and often slippery, muddy paths crosses steep ground within the woodland which makes most of the woodland unsuitable for horse riding. Disturbance to the AW habitat (and SSSI constraints) may limit opportunity to extend the path network within the site.

Due to the parking and site limitations there is limited possibility to carry out events and other public engagement events. Car park extension is also not possible due to the Woodland Trust policy to retain and protect ancient woodland and the limited available roadside space.

Factors Causing Change

Deterioration and undermining of the main path through the wood due to poor structural soil conditions and wear and tear.

Climate change may result in far wetter conditions which, due to the shallow and potentially unstable scree-based soil, steep ground and northerly facing slope may impact on access routes through the woodland.

Long term Objective (50 years+)

The site will provide quiet informal access, mainly to local users and visitors to the area. The managed path network will continue to be maintained and kept clear of obstacles and overhanging branches. The site will continue to be a maintained as a place for quiet reflection and enjoyment and for the protection of the natural beauty and wildlife within this Ancient Woodland. The path network will continue to link into the wider path network. Co-operation and opportunities to work together with other access groups e.g. Scottish Borders Council Countryside Rangers, Scotways, Borders Forest Trust, Scottish Forestry, etc will continue.

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

The site will continue to provide quiet informal access through an Ancient Woodland site. Access management will be in line with WT access guidelines and site access and in accordance with the Scottish Outdoor Access Code. In this plan period objectives are to:

- (i) Improve entrance and welcome signage. Access points and welcome signage will be renewed and updated in line with latest Woodland Trust brand signage.
- (ii) Strengthen and repair 400m of the main path through the wood by replacing timber revetment, minor benching and drainage where needed. Redundant revetment will be removed.
- (iii) Annually cut back and kept clear of obstacles and overhanging branches all managed paths (800m).
- (iv) Periodic tree safety inspections (ash & autumn) will be conducted along paths and roadside, as per the site risk

assessment.

(v) Carry out repairs to short sections of the roadside dry stone dyke as required (2025-27).

(vi) Removal of flytipping behind dyke wall – following regular inspection.

APPENDIX 1 : COMPARTMENT DESCRIPTIONS

Cpt No.	Area (ha)	Main Species	Year	Management Regime	Major Management Constraints	Designations
1a	2.12	Sycamore	1960	PAWS restoration	Legal issues, Very steep slope/cliff/quarry/mine shafts/sink holes etc	Planted Ancient Woodland Site, Site of Special Scientific Interest
<p>This compartment was felled and replanted in 1958 and is now dominated by a predominantly even-aged, semi-mature canopy covering 95% of the area, with the denser canopy on the upper slopes. This includes abundant ash, birch, and sycamore, occasional larch, Douglas fir, beech, and Norway spruce, with rare sessile oak, willow, elm, Scots pine and Norway maple. Conifers make up approximately 10 % of the canopy. A light ring barking of heavy shading species was undertaken in 2008 with limited effect. The understorey (15% cover) consists of juvenile trees including frequent ash and occasional sycamore. There is frequent regeneration of ash throughout, birch near the entrance, and rare Scots pine and holly. A small open glade exists near the entrance, with much regeneration, brambles, rushes, and rosebay willowherb. Ground flora (50% cover) is dominated by mosses on the stones, and grasses, with abundant dogs mercury, wood sorrel and ferns with frequent herb Robert and violet and occasional bramble, wood avens, broad buckler fern and rare foxgloves and speedwells. This corresponds to NVC type W11 in mosaic with W9. Ground flora is poorer under dense sycamore and beech on the upper slopes. The compartment is home to the nationally rare fungus <i>Rimbachia arachnoidea</i> which is growing on ground moss next to the track. There is abundant deadwood. Sporadic occasional browsing by roe deer occurs.</p> <p>AWR Assessment – Zone 2 – Threatened – stand has frequent ash with ash die back creating an increase in light levels in places. Potential invasion of coarse vegetation of brambles could present a risk to the remnant AW features.</p>						
2a	4.37	Oak (pedunculate)	1850	PAWS restoration	Legal issues, Very steep slope/cliff/quarry/mine shafts/sink holes etc	Planted Ancient Woodland Site, Site of Special Scientific Interest
<p>Broadleaved Ancient Woodland - This area contains a mixture of mature broadleaves forming a canopy of approximately 90% cover, with a few small breaks created by windblow. The canopy is dominated in places by sessile oak. There is abundant ash, frequent sycamore and beech and occasional birch and horse chestnut. The strip on the lower slope adjacent to the public road is a diverse mix of predominately mature non-native and native species, mainly beech, lime, elm, Norway maple, Turkey oak and occasional ash and horse chestnut. The understorey (20% cover) is composed of abundant juvenile ash and sycamore and beech, frequent hawthorn, willow and blackthorn with occasional beech and rare oak. The understorey was thinned of pole stage beech in 2005 and included halo thinning around some of the native trees. The work increased light levels for a short time.</p>						

Cpt No.	Area (ha)	Main Species	Year	Management Regime	Major Management Constraints	Designations
<p>Regeneration is varied, consisting of abundant ash, abundant young beech (in a dense single species block), holly and occasional sycamore. Ground flora coverage is around 80%. It mainly corresponds to NVC W9 with patches of W11, consisting of dogs mercury and ferns, abundant mosses, frequent wood sorrel and herb Robert, occasional broad buckler, male and lady ferns, bramble in more open areas, wood avens, and ground elder as well as rare barren strawberry, violet, speedwell, bluebells and foxgloves. There is occasional bare ground under dense beech canopy. There is abundant dead wood in the form of windblow, large branches and the 2005 thinning residue. There is evidence of roe deer, mainly trails, slots, occasional droppings, and sporadic browsing is evident.</p> <p>AWR Assessment – Zone 1 – Threatened in some areas (by areas of dense naturally regenerated young beech – 0.5ha) and scattered non-natives that pose a risk to remnant features.</p>						
2b	2.33	Beech	1800	PAWS restoration	Legal issues, No/poor vehicular access within the site, Very steep slope/cliff/quarry/mine shafts/sink holes etc	Planted Ancient Woodland Site, Site of Special Scientific Interest
<p>Broadleaved Ancient Woodland. The canopy (95% cover) of this sub-compartment is dominated by mature beech (planted 1827) with occasional sycamore and lime, the latter along the southern boundary, and occasional oak. A light ring barking of heavy shading mature beech (<1 in 8) was undertaken in 2008 with mixed effect. Understorey beneath the mature beech is sparse, what there is consists of occasional sycamore, holly, and rare hazel. Where light levels allow, natural regeneration includes abundant young beech (in a dense single species block) and ash with rare oak, holly, and Norway spruce. Ground flora is generally very sparse (5% cover) due to the dense beech canopy and leaf litter, and is dominated by bare ground and mosses, with occasional grasses, dogs mercury, wood sorrel and rare broad buckler fern (more frequent towards centre of sub compartment where the canopy is more open and the proportion of oak is higher). The NVC type is W9 with areas of W11. Given the age of the beech overstorey the degree of shading is likely to gradually decrease as mature trees start to senesce, although most appear to be in good health at present. There is evidence of deer browsing, on hazel coppice and lower oak shoots. There is occasional dead wood in the form of windblow and branches.</p> <p>AWR Assessment – Zone 1 – Threatened in areas (by areas of mature beech and dense naturally regenerated young beech - 1.0ha) and occasional non-native conifers.</p>						
2c	0.28	other oak spp	1990	PAWS restoration	Legal issues, No/poor vehicular access within the site, Very steep slope/cliff/quarry/mine shafts/sink holes etc	Planted Ancient Woodland Site, Site of Special Scientific Interest
<p>Previously PAWS – Replanted in 1991 – this area is well established and consists of oak, gean, birch, ash, wych elm, and alder, as well as juvenile birch and elder that has grown naturally. There is an open upper canopy of mature lime</p>						

Cpt No.	Area (ha)	Main Species	Year	Management Regime	Major Management Constraints	Designations
<p>ash and oak and frequent regeneration of; birch (abundant), beech (frequent), Sitka spruce (occasional, towards southern boundary) along with ash, Norway spruce, and sycamore (all rare). Sporadic occasional browsing by roe deer occurs. Ground flora is prolific (95% cover), with abundant grasses, frequent raspberry and occasional wood sorrel and broad-buckler fern. The dead wood habitat is limited to occasional stumps of mature trees and fallen branches.</p> <p>AWR Assessment – Zone 1 – Threatened by nearby mature densely seeding beech and non-native conifers.</p>						
3a	1.09	Sitka spruce	1970	PAWS restoration	Legal issues, Management factors (eg grazing etc), Sensitive habitats/species on or adjacent to site	Planted Ancient Woodland Site, Site of Special Scientific Interest
<p>AWR. Replanted in 1968 with a block of Sitka spruce along the roadside with alternating rows of Japanese larch, with rare birch, sycamore, oak, and beech higher up the slope. The compartment was thinned in 2002, with a greater proportion of larch than spruce removed and in 2007/8 further ring barking was carried out. A pocket of windblow occurred in the lower section (approx. 0.2ha) . The windblown pocket is slowly recolonizing with natural regenerated trees (mainly birch). There is no tree understory in the block of Sitka spruce.</p> <p>Within the larch there is a minimal understory such as; occasional birch and sycamore along with hawthorn and beech (all rare). The compartment has in the past been used as a heronry. Natural regeneration is rare, with beech and sycamore already a few years of age, but few native trees. Ground flora is occasional (15% cover) and occurs most where the pocket of windblow has occurred and where the Japanese larch has been thinned. Within this patch there is abundant woodland grasses, wood sorrel, occasional broad-buckler fern, violets, foxgloves, mosses, brambles, dogs mercury, and male and lady ferns along with a few nettles (rare). There is abundant softwood dead wood habitat due to the brash and windblown trees and logs. Occasional browsing by roe deer occurs.</p> <p>AWR Assessment – Zone 3 (block of Sitka & Norway spruce) area - Critical.</p>						
4a	1.66	Downy birch	1900	PAWS restoration	Legal issues, No/poor vehicular access within the site	Planted Ancient Woodland Site, Site of Special Scientific Interest
<p>Ancient Woodland. Juvenile and semi-mature birch dominates the canopy (95% cover) with abundant sycamore and coppiced oak, and a small area of Douglas fir (thinned in 2002). There is frequent beech, occasional rowan and rare holly regeneration. The area was previously PAWS, originally felled and replanted in 1972, but an uneven structure has developed due to grazing pressure and differential growth rates and the compartment can now be considered</p>						

Cpt No.	Area (ha)	Main Species	Year	Management Regime	Major Management Constraints	Designations
<p>part of ongoing Ancient Woodland Restoration management. A healthy ground flora (90% cover) is dominated by grasses and mosses, with abundant wood sorrel and stitchwort, occasional foxgloves, male and lady ferns, herb Robert, and violets and rare bramble, speedwell, and barren strawberry. The NVC class is primarily W9. Although browsing appears occasional in places there are frequent deer paths and occasional dung in this compartment. Occasional limbs and branches form a dead wood habitat.</p> <p>In 2008 (under a SFGS) some selective thinning was carried out. Followed in 2009 by enrichment planting of 50 mixed native broadleaves in 1.2m tree shelters.</p> <p>In August 2018 a Statutory Plant Health Notice (SPHN) was issued by the local Scottish Forestry Conservancy Office to the Woodland Trust as the Japanese larch within compartment 4a sat within a containment zone for the nearby Haugh Head and Elibank Forest (FLS) area, where an outbreak of P.ramorum amongst the larch had been detected. It was decided that all the Japanese larch trees within cpt 4a would be felled (50 trees in total) either singly or in small groups of up to 12 trees. The felled trees remained on site as fallen deadwood habitat. The work was completed in November 2018 and SF notified.</p> <p>AWR Assessment – Zone 5 – Threatened - Beech regen</p>						
5a	1.17	Beech	1850	PAWS restoration	Legal issues, Very steep slope/cliff/quarry/mine shafts/sink holes etc	Planted Ancient Woodland Site, Site of Special Scientific Interest
<p>AWR – This sub-compartment consists of a strip of wood bordering the drystone dyke to the north and west, and consists of a canopy (95% cover) dominated by mature beech, with occasional sycamore and rare birch, oak, ash, horse chestnut and lime. The minimal understorey consists of occasional juvenile beech, birch and hawthorn and rare oak. There is frequent beech and occasional holly and ash regeneration. Occasional debarking of juvenile trees and browsing on regeneration are evidence of deer activity. Ground flora is variable due to the beech canopy and dense leaf litter, and is dominated by grasses, with frequent bramble and occasional wood sorrel, broad buckler fern, violets, ground elder, wood avens, and blaeberry to the west. Light levels will probably gradually increase as mature trees senesce. Hardwood dead wood is occasional in the form of standing and fallen trees.</p> <p>AWR Assessment – Zone 4 – Threatened – Mature beech and young beech regeneration</p>						
5b	4.75	Oak (sessile)	1850	PAWS restoration	Legal issues, No/poor vehicular access within the site, Very steep slope/cliff/quarry/mine shafts/sink holes etc	Planted Ancient Woodland Site, Site of Special Scientific Interest
<p>Ancient Woodland. This area is dominated by a mature oak canopy, with occasional beech and rare Douglas fir (canopy 95% cover). The understorey is sparse (5% cover) consists of frequent oak and ash, the latter to the east,</p>						

Cpt No.	Area (ha)	Main Species	Year	Management Regime	Major Management Constraints	Designations
<p>and occasional beech, rowan and hawthorn. There is frequent holly, occasional oak and rare hawthorn, Sitka spruce, ash and beech regeneration. In 2008 (under a SFGS) a small area of selective thinning was carried out. Followed in 2009 by enrichment planting of 300 mixed native broadleaves in 1.2m tree shelters. Occasional deer browsing on oak and holly regeneration is evident. There are occasional empty tubes towards the west end of compartment. Ground flora (95% cover) consists of abundant grasses, wood sorrel, broad buckler, male and lady ferns, bracken (particularly towards west), frequent barren strawberry, violets, wood avens, and dog's mercury, frequent but patchy bramble in more open areas, and occasional blaeberry. There is also rare speedwell, herb Robert and foxgloves. There is abundant hardwood dead wood from windblow and fallen limbs.</p> <p>AWR Assessment – Zone 5 – Threatened – the presence of both mature beech trees and their prolific regenerating beech saplings is a risk to the relic native trees and specialist woodland flora.</p>						
5c	0.35	Birch (downy/silver)	1989	PAWS restoration	Legal issues, No/poor vehicular access within the site, Very steep slope/cliff/quarry/mine shafts/sink holes etc	Planted Ancient Woodland Site, Site of Special Scientific Interest
<p>This is a small area lacking a mature canopy following felling in 1988, but with established re-planting with native mixed broadleaves and mixed broadleaved natural regeneration and several patches of open ground. The understorey (65% cover) is dominated by juvenile birch, with occasional ash, rowan, oak, hawthorn, and rare Scots pine. There is abundant beech and frequent birch and rowan regeneration. Ground flora (95% cover) consists of predominantly grasses, with abundant patches of bracken, occasional foxgloves, broad buckler fern, bramble, greater stitchwort and blaeberry. Limited deadwood.</p> <p>AWR Assessment – Zone 5 – Threatened – Beech regen</p>						
6a	1.59	Oak (sessile)	1850	PAWS restoration	Legal issues, No/poor vehicular access within the site	Planted Ancient Woodland Site, Site of Special Scientific Interest
<p>Ancient Woodland. This compartment can be subdivided into stand types : to the east and west it consists of dominant juvenile and semi-mature birch; the middle section contains frequent mature, gnarled sessile oak, with abundant birch. Overall, both species are equally abundant and the canopy covers 85% of the area. The understorey (5% cover) is dominated by birch with rare holly. There is abundant regeneration of beech as well as frequent rowan and occasional holly and birch regeneration. Ground flora is abundant (95% cover) and is dominated by grasses with abundant blaeberry and wood sorrel, frequent heathers and occasional violets, speedwell, bedstraw, tormentil with bracken in patches (NVC W17b on the north facing slope & W11 on the western slope to the Armour Burn). The</p>						

Cpt No.	Area (ha)	Main Species	Year	Management Regime	Major Management Constraints	Designations
<p>riparian environment of the Armour burn is in good condition, consisting of open woodland with dappled shade. There are occasional deer paths throughout. Fallen oak limbs and branches make up the occasional dead wood. Scattered larch was subject to SPHN felling in 2019 due to P.ramorum -thinned to recycle. Occasional browsing by roe deer occurs.</p> <p>AWR Assessment – Zone 5 – Threatened.</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:

The Woodland Trust, Kempton Way, Grantham, Lincolnshire NG31 6LL.

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Plora Woods

AWR Strategy Map

Legend

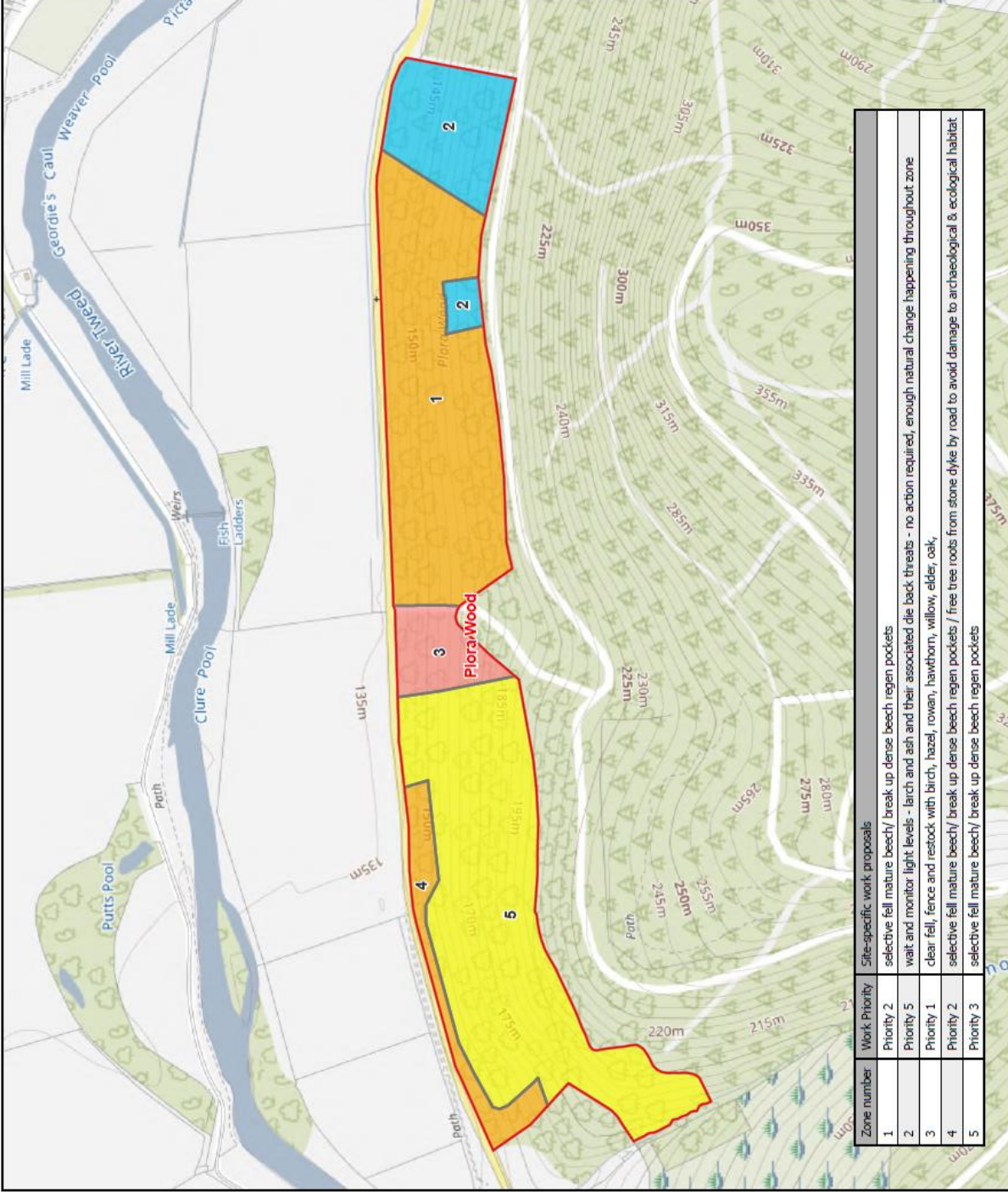
Work Priority

- Priority 1
- Priority 2
- Priority 3
- Priority 4
- Priority 5
- Woodland Trust
- Boundary

DATE: 06/02/2024 | SCALE: 1:5,000 | USER: SBU

0 10 20 40 60 80 METERS

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Zone number	Work Priority	Site-specific work proposals
1	Priority 2	selective fell mature beech/ break up dense beech regen pockets
2	Priority 5	wait and monitor light levels - larch and ash and their associated die back threats - no action required, enough natural change happening throughout zone
3	Priority 1	clear fall, fence and restock with birch, hazel, rowan, hawthorn, willow, alder, oak,
4	Priority 2	selective fell mature beech/ break up dense beech regen pockets / free tree roots from stone dyke by road to avoid damage to archaeological & ecological habitat.
5	Priority 3	selective fell mature beech/ break up dense beech regen pockets

Plora Wood

AWR Assessment Map

- Legend**
- Woodland Trust Boundary
 - AWR Survey
 - Critical
 - Secure
 - Threatened
 - Threatened-Declining
 - Threatened-Recovering
 - Public Right of Way
 - Path
 - WatercourseGB

Remnant archaeological features

- Remnant biodiversity features
- Remnant biodiversity features
- Remnant biodiversity features
- Important non-remnant biodiversity features

Date: 08/02/2024 Scale: 1:5,000 User: SBU



0 10 20 40 60 80 meters

