

Lang Craigs

(Plan period – 2026 to 2031)



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

Location:	Dumbarton	Grid reference:	NS429773	OS	1:50,000	Sheet	No.	64
Area:	250.71 hectares (619.52 acres)							
External Designations:	Ancient Semi Natural Woodland, Long Established Woodland of Plantation Origin, Site of Special Scientific Interest							
Internal Designations:	Welcoming Sites Programme							

2. Site Description

Location

Lang Craigs is located close to the outskirts of Dumbarton, in the foothills of the Kilpatrick Hills. It occupies the glens of the Overtoun Burn and Garshake Burn, including the high plateau between them, and it adjoins the grounds of Overtoun Estate, of which it once formed a part.

Geology & Soils

The site is dominated by the Lang Craigs themselves. These are a line of cliffs, whose collapse following the retreat of the glaciers has formed the undulating landscape currently found in Overtoun Glen. Directly below the Craigs is a dry swale and debris ridge resulting from the collapse, which is regarded as a good example of this sort of feature. The underlying geology of the rest of the site is mainly Carboniferous period siltstones, with notable layers of limestone nodules (cornstones) which outcrop impressively in some of the stream gullies.

The soils vary from screes and stony skeletal soils under the Craigs, to well-drained brown earths in the mid-slopes, surface water gleys where drainage is poorer, and peaty gleys and deep peats in the highest parts of the central plateau.

New Native Woodland

Around 160ha of native woodland was planted in 2012-14 for the benefit of people and wildlife. The majority of this new native woodland has now established. The planting was focused around the two glens, and the key species are birch, oak, Scots pine, alder and ash, with rowan, hazel, hawthorn, and grey and goat willows making up some of the total of 16 species in the scheme. In all some 160ha of new native woodland was planted (including integral open ground) totalling some 234,000 trees. There are two areas where the planting used non-standard designs: planting in the lower part of Overtoun Glen was in discrete groups to reflect the designed landscape of Overtoun House and retain internal and external views; planting above the Black Wood was at variable density to create habitat for black grouse.

Established Woodlands

There are approximately 40ha of existing woodland and scattered trees on the site. These were mainly planted in the latter part of the 19th century as part of the development of Overtoun Estate. Where these woodlands were planted for timber most of the original trees were felled in the 1950s, and now a mix of remnant mature trees (mainly Scots pine and sycamore) remains with mature naturally regenerated woodland of mainly birch. In areas planted for scenic value (Garshake Glen and the Craigs) the woodlands have probably not been actively managed since planting, and the original pine and sycamore are supplemented with species such as beech, oak, and Norway maple, as well as naturally regenerated birch, ash and hawthorn. All the established woodlands suffered from a dense understory of rhododendron, which also reached into some of the open ground around. This rhododendron continues to be removed under a programme of eradication.

Public access

Lang Craigs is an extremely well-used site for many types of recreation, and together with Overtoun Estate and Overtoun House provides an important recreation resource for the area. Since the purchase of the site, the

Woodland Trust have worked in partnership with West Dunbartonshire Council and Overtoun House to develop an integrated visitor experience and access network across the estates. It is believed that there are around 30,000 visits per year. As well as local recreational walkers, it is used by people heading into the Kilpatrick Hills to walk or fish, and is also popular as a descent route with mountain bikers. The route through Overtoun Glen is a public right of way, and there is a good network of grass and surfaced paths throughout the site. Some of these are waymarked routes.

Wildlife

The site supports a rich and varied wildlife, mainly centred around the woodlands and burns. A breeding bird survey in 2009 identified over 50 bird species present within the site and a 500m buffer zone. In addition to the usual common bird species, the following were found associated with woodland: redstart, buzzard, kestrel, dunnoek, willow warbler, wood warbler, goldcrest, tree creeper, song thrush, gold finch, greenfinch and yellowhammer. Most prolific in open ground were skylark, tree pipit, meadow pipit, wren, whinchat, stone chat and spotted flycatcher. Other species on the red/amber list or Scottish Biodiversity List were Black Grouse, snipe, whitethroat, cuckoo, curlew, grey wagtail, hen harrier, house martin, swallow, linnet, northern wheatear and reed bunting.

Otters have been found to use both the Garshake and Overtoun Burns. Active hovers (resting places under a bank or tree roots) have been found as well as spraints (droppings) throughout the burns. It is believed that otters use these burns as a route into the lochs in the Kilpatrick Hills (e.g. the Black Linn) where there are brown trout, or to link with other glens. There are very few fish in the burns and so they cannot support the otters as breeding habitat.

Also present in the area are roe deer, brown hare, foxes, pine marten and an abundance of field voles. Red deer are present in the Kilpatricks in small numbers but rarely venture to the lower ground.

Historical & cultural features

The cornstone layers that outcrop in the burn beds are part of the Ballagan Beds formation, known for its fossils. In the neighbouring Auchentroch Glen an important fossil (called Pederpes) was found which was one of the first land animals (and now resides in the Hunterian Museum). It is possible that there are also fossils to be found at Lang Craigs.

There are a number of pre-historic relics of human habitation, including at least one cup-marked stone, some early enclosures or farmsteads and a network of earth dykes of unknown age or purpose.

In more recent history there are many reminders that this was part of a Victorian designed landscape, with some fine parkland trees and roundels (groups of trees), remains of the metal estate fencing delineating locations of existing or previous woodland, and some skilfully built drystone dykes. Lady Overtoun's Walk is a route cut high on the slope of the Craigs. There is also an extensive network of pipes, stone conduits, inspection chambers and two weirs probably dating from the early 20th century.

In the west of the site is a WWII bunker which was part of a decoy network to prevent enemy aircraft bombing the local towns. The project was called 'Special Fire' or SF which was codenamed 'Starfish'. The bunker housed a control room and generator room for controlling a system of fires and lights on the moorland, and a number of concrete plinths for the fire baskets are still present on the moorland beyond. Some bomb craters near the site are testament to its success in protecting Dumbarton.

3. Long Term Policy

The long-term vision (50 years +) is that the site should be a thriving mosaic of woodland and open ground for the benefit of people and wildlife.

We will continue to manage the new native woodland until it is well established and free from browsing and other threats. This will develop into an attractive woodland of mixed native species, providing habitat for a variety of wildlife.

The mature woodlands will be free of rhododendron, with a woodland specialist ground flora. These woodlands will be allowed to develop naturally where this is compatible with their sustainability and will develop a varied structure as older trees are lost and natural regeneration occurs.

Our aim is to make the site accessible and welcoming for a range of visitors for informal recreation. The site will be well known both locally and elsewhere in greater Glasgow as an interesting and attractive place to visit. There will be a range of different routes available to visitors, with well-drained paths, places to rest and long-distance views from key viewpoints. There will be clear signage and orientation to guide visitors to and through the site and interpretation that will engage visitors with the site and the wider work of the Woodland Trust.

We will protect the important features of the sites, both natural (i.e. SSSI) and historic, and where possible use these features to inspire people to visit and explore the site.

We will continue to work in partnership with our neighbours and other organisations to integrate visitor access within the Kilpatrick Hills.

4. Key Features

4.1 f1 New Native Woodland

Description

Lang Craigs is a significant native woodland creation project that has delivered substantial benefits for people and wildlife. The site was purchased in 2011, and after a period of planning work began in 2012. Between 2012 and 2014, a gross area of some 160ha of new native woodland was created, with the planting of over 234,000 trees.

Five different woodland mixes have been planted, depending on local drainage and fertility. These are National Vegetation Classification W1 (wet willow) on the wettest ground; W4 (wet birch) on the poorer and wetter soils; W7 (wet alder/ash) on the more fertile wet soils; W9 (upland ash) on the better drained and more fertile soils (see note below re ash); W11 (birch/oak) on the better drained but more moderately fertile soils.

In the first season (2012) ash was included in the planting mix, but with the spread of ash dieback other species were substituted in subsequent plantings. In W9 'ash wood' areas the proportions of downy birch, sessile oak and hazel was increased to replace the ash. Almost all of the planted ash has died, but given the success of other species and the general low proportion of ash in the mix the integrity of the woodland has not been compromised.

Between the different mixes 16 species of native tree and shrub have been planted, namely: alder, downy birch, silver birch, rowan, pedunculate oak, sessile oak, goat willow, aspen, Scots pine, blackthorn, hazel, bird cherry, hawthorn, grey willow and holly. The most numerous are the birches, followed by the oaks, Scots pine, alder and rowan.

The trees are protected from deer and stock browsing by a deer fence (9010m) which encloses the whole planting. The southern (lower) parts of this fence (5160m) are rabbit netted, to prevent rabbit colonisation from neighbouring woods and farmland. The upper (northern) parts of the fence (2890m) are marked with batons to prevent bird strikes. Marking is at 0.5m spacing in the key areas (2900m) and 1.0m spacing in the less sensitive areas (540m). The trees were all individually protected against vole damage by 20cm vole guards.

Planting is on excavator mounds over most of the site, at 2500 stems/ha in most planted areas. Where the ground was too steep hand or herbicide screefing was used.

The majority of the woodland has now established. There is a trend to better establishment, with trees reaching thicket stage in the southern and lower parts of the site, where it is more sheltered and better soils, and slower establishment at higher elevations.

The boundary deer fencing is now in need of replacement or serious repair in many places. It has sustained snow, storm and wildfire damage since being installed, with many of the posts and strainers now rotten. The fence has been regularly fixed to maintain a stock-proof barrier, but as the fence no longer forms an adequate barrier to deer, deer

management takes place across the site.

The site can be seen as three areas:

(i) West of the Garshake Burn - The southern part of this area around Maryland Farm (compartment 1) is on improved brown-earth soils having had a history of agricultural management. For the most part it is well-drained, although there are some areas of rush encroachment in hollows and the slope leading down to the burn. This area has been planted with a mix of all the woodland types depending on drainage and fertility. Establishment in this area has been excellent.

To the north of the starfish bunker (compartment 3) was predominantly rush meadow and has been planted with wet birch (W4) woodland. Establishment here has been slower due to a combination of poor soils, greater exposure and deer browsing pressure. In the far north (sub-compartment 3c) a fire in 2023 caused the death of many trees. While some trees survived the scorched ground also provided a good seed bed for natural regeneration of birch which will re-establish with appropriate deer control.

(ii) Between the Garshake and Overtoun burns - The slopes running down to the Garshake burn (compartment 5) are mainly well-drained and moderately fertile and have been planted mainly with oak/birch (W11) woodland and ash (W9) woodland. Establishment here is generally good, although slower in the north, with browsing a factor.

The high plateau above the square wood (compartment 7) is poorly drained with peatier soils and high exposure. This was designed to provide good habitat for black grouse and planted at lower density (1250/ha average) with groups of variable density (up to 1600 to 3000/ha, plus small groups) and up to 40% open ground to give lots of woodland edge. Establishment here is very slow due to the site conditions and browsing near the Black Wood. Grey willow has fared best in this area and will give good cover in time.

(iii) Overtoun Glen (east of Overtoun Burn) - In the lowest parts of the glen (compartments 10 and 11), planting is in 16 discrete groups with over 50% open ground to reflect and provide a transition from the designed landscape of Overtoun Estate. There is a mix of woodland types in this area, and many of these trees were planted by volunteers and local school children. The trees are well established in this area and now at thicket stage. Compartment 11 is the only area that lies outside the fence and was planted in 1.2m tree shelters in an area previously cleared of rhododendron.

In the upper parts of the glen, the planting is mainly oak/birch woodland on the bracken and grass slopes that run down from the Craigs. This is a large compartment with a large altitude range and there is a gradient of establishment being best at the southern (lower) end. Despite the glen path, the more remote parts are frequented by deer, and soils get poorer and exposure more severe in the upper parts.

Significance

This is a very significant new native woodland in terms of both size and location. The new woodland links together the woodlands within the site (Lang Craigs Wood (ASNW 2a), the Black Wood, Square Wood, the wooded Garshake Glen and Barr Wood) into a single ecological unit.

At lower elevations it links into the woodlands outwith the WTS ownership, namely Overtoun Estate and Garshake Farm Woods (both secondary and LEPO). At the upper margin it also links with the Forestry & Land Scotland's

Auchentorlie woods and the semi-natural wooded gullies of the Black Burn. In the wider context, NatureScot's Integrated Habitat Network model shows a cluster of woodlands stretching around the margins of the Kilpatricks from Clydebank to the Loch Lomondside woodlands and indicates that woodland creation at Lang Craigs will create good ecological connectivity with this wider network.

There is also biodiversity benefit in links with other semi-natural habitats within and adjacent to the site, including acid grasslands, mires, rocky outcrops, heather moorland, and the wider open ground areas of the Kilpatrick Hills.

Opportunities & Constraints

Opportunities

The successful establishment of a substantial native woodland with good ecological connectivity, in a location that can benefit both people and wildlife.

Constraints

Deer management is challenging on the site, with most areas of young woodland now established and providing excellent cover for deer. Continued management of deer across the site will be crucial to the establishment of some areas of planting at higher elevations.

Factors Causing Change

The deteriorating deer fence means that deer now need to be managed by deer management instead of exclusion.

Wildfires are a regular feature on the site during spring and summer months, increasing due to climate change. Some have damaged areas of planted trees and will likely continue to do so.

Long term Objective (50 years+)

To create a well-established native woodland in harmony with the landscape, with a variety of woodland types suited to their location, thriving with wildlife and well-used by local people.

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

- Planting in compartment 3c was significantly damaged by a wildfire in 2020 (approximately 8ha affected). There is good natural regeneration in parts of the compartment, which will continue to be monitored during the plan period to ensure it establishes to replace lost planting. If necessary, Trico will be applied to regeneration to ensure it establishes if deer browsing pressure is an issue

- Continue to manage deer across the site to ensure densities are reduced to a sustainable level for young woodland to establish and for natural regeneration to occur. Cull targets will be set in consultation with deer management contractors and will be based on herbivore impact assessments undertaken by WT staff (every second year) and thermal imagery drone surveys (every second year). A night licence and out of season authorisation will be sought to ensure cull targets can be met. Work towards 'low' herbivore impact level by the end of the plan period

- Most of the boundary deer fencing installed for initial planting in 2012 is now porous and in a state of disrepair. Replace as stock fencing during the plan period where necessary (likely ~8000m) liaising with neighbours where this is a shared responsibility. Where possible, remove fencing completely (~800m internal fencing at Maryland and ~200m along shared boundary with West Dunbartonshire Council at Overtoun)
- Continue to remove and recycle redundant plastic vole and tree guards across the site. Compartments 1, 9b, 10, 11b and 11c were cleared in the last plan period. Removal this plan period will work higher up the hill on both the Maryland and Overtoun sides to begin compartments 9a, 3, 4, 5 and tree tubes in 11d
- Eradicate rhododendron seeding in woodland creation areas, hand-pulling seedlings or using herbicide to treat re-growth where necessary. Treatment as part of rhododendron eradication plan as detailed in 'Secondary Woodland Key Feature' in this management plan (through plan period)

4.2 f2 Connecting People with woods & trees

Description

Lang Craigs is an extremely well-used site for many types of recreation and together with Overtoun Estate and Overtoun House provides an important recreation resource for the area. Since the purchase of the site WTS have worked in partnership with West Dunbartonshire Council and Overtoun House to develop an integrated visitor experience and access network across the estates. The description that follows therefore includes many aspects on both WDC and WTS land.

Most visitors access Lang Craigs via Overtoun Estate. Both site entrances are approximately 2.5km walk from Dumbarton East train station, which is well-served from Glasgow. There is a bus service on the Stirling Road, connecting Balloch to Glasgow which provides closer access to the site. There is parking for around 15 cars to the east of Overtoun House and further parking for around 10 cars (with two disabled spaces) directly in front of Overtoun House.

At the Overtoun Estate entrances there is welcome signage for 'Overtoun Estate & Lang Craigs' which uses the Kilpatrick Hills 'look & feel' branding. This brand was developed jointly between WTS, FCS (now Forestry & Land Scotland) and WDC and is used at all access points into the Kilpatrick Hills.

In front of Overtoun House there a mown lawn with picnic tables. Adjacent to each car park is an orientation board with a sculptural frame in WTS style, but with joint WDC and WTS branding showing access routes across the estates. This includes four way-marked trails of varying lengths that run through the estates. The board also features an inset panel showing Lang Craigs and Overtoun Estate in relation to the Kilpatrick Hills and using the Kilpatrick Hills branding. A Lang Craigs leaflet showing the way-marked routes and other site information is available from a dispenser in front of Overtoun House.

Surfaced paths lead through Overtoun Estate, either along an access track used for management access to Lang Craigs, or through the attractive ancient woodland adjacent to the Overtoun Burn to enter Lang Craigs itself.

Lang Craigs is accessed through self-closing gates in the deer fence, which leads into a mown glade area with a

sculptural cairn feature. There is a circular surfaced path route from this point, which leads around a natural play trail with sculptural play features around it consisting of benches and installations for climbing.

The Overtoun Glen side of Lang Craigs is roughly zoned into three access zones:

A: The surfaced path network from the car park up to the play trail and the mown glade. This enables a wide range of visitors and those with pushchairs to access the lowest part of the site and is well suited to visitors with small children. It gives views up to the Craigs and shows visitors the more extensive network of grass paths further into the site.

B: A network of mown grass paths in the lower half of Overtoun Glen as far as the dyke that runs east-west across the site. There are good views across the Clyde and the paths lead through the young planting. Paths may be steeper, and can be slippery after rain, and have a more natural feel than zone A. Circular routes of varying lengths are possible. This zone is very popular with local dog walkers.

C: The upper parts of Overtoun Glen and the route through the Black Wood. These routes lead to the more remote parts of the site and may be somewhat steeper and rougher, although are still maintained. The main route is the path that leads into the wider Kilpatrick Hills through Forestry & Land Scotland's Auchentorlie estate. This route is popular with hill walkers and mountain bikers. The longest way marked route (red) also reaches this area, crossing the summit of Round Wood Hill, which is an excellent viewpoint. It also includes a loop that drops from the main path to give a good view of the exposed geology of the Ballagan Beds, well-known for their fossils.

Visitors also access Lang Craigs from the housing adjacent to Garshake Road. The access network in this part of the site (sometimes called Maryland) which lies in the Glen of the Garshake Burn, only links to the Overtoun Glen access network via an informal path, which is not maintained. This is due to the difficulty of crossing the deep glen of the Garshake Burn. There is no formal parking on this side of the site, although there is parking on the public road at Garshake Road as far up as the Baxter View sheltered accommodation. Vehicles are not permitted beyond this point.

Within the Garshake/Maryland side of the site there is a network of surfaced paths and informal paths. There is also a track that leads out past the WWII 'Starfish' bunker onto the moorland beyond. These paths are fairly well used by local people, although access is much lower key than at Overtoun.

Across the Lang Craigs site as a whole (excluding Overtoun Estate) there are 3200m of surfaced paths and tracks and 7700m of grass paths. There are 14 entrances with self-closing gates (120cm width) and 3 stiles over the deer fence. All entrances have WT Welcome signage (mainly dibond) which also features a reminder to close gates. Three main entrances have WTS ladder boards, installed 2012: These are at (i) Overtoun main gate; (ii) Overtoun top gate from FLS land; (iii) Garshake/Maryland main gate. There are 34 way-marker posts throughout Lang Craigs & Overtoun Estate.

The access network links well into the communities of Bellsmyre and Milton on its lower edge. The upper paths give routes into the wider Kilpatrick Hills. This extensive network of paths leads to the Black Linn reservoir, Doughnot Hill, Loch Humphrey and beyond, ultimately connecting the communities along the eastern side of the Kilpatricks and to the John Muir Way.

Lang Craigs lies on the outskirts of Dumbarton (population 21,000) and is within easy walking distance of around 17,000

people and is also only 12 miles from the centre of Glasgow. Before WTS acquisition in 2011 there was only informal access with very low visitor numbers. Since WTS purchased the site, visitor number have risen to approximately 30,000 per year (an estimate based on visitor counters in place up to 2017). The attraction of the site lies in its spectacular nature with good internal views to the Craigs, and external views across the Clyde, to Dumbarton Rock and from the upper parts of the site to Loch Lomond. The internal landscape is varied with open space, young and mature woodland, cliffs and watercourses.

Most of the site users are recreational walkers, dog-walkers and hill-walkers using the paths to access the Black Linn, Doughnot Hill and the Kilpatrick Hills beyond. Lang Craigs is popular with families due to the variety of routes available. The glen is also popular with mountain bikers, providing a good link with the Auchentorlie forest tracks. Horse riders make occasional use of the glen and can get a key to the management gate on request.

The site is very well-suited to events. During the establishment of the young woodland (2012-2014) there were three public planting events, and ten weeks of schools events during which over 2500 children participated. There is an ongoing partnership with Glasgow School of Art, who hold their environmental sculpture exhibition at Lang Craigs.

Training work has also been done with some local primary school teachers and the site has been used by Scottish Fire and Rescue's staff being trained to use new wildfire fighting equipment.

There is a small and dedicated team of volunteers that assists with site management through the Trust's Volunteer Warden role, monitoring the site, carrying out occasional practical tasks and helping with events.

Significance

Lang Craigs is significant for the scale of its woodland creation, in combination with its proximity to population centres. It also connects well into the surrounding access network and provides one of the most accessible routes into the Kilpatrick hills. Its proximity to Glasgow and location close to the A82 and Dumbarton East train station means that it has a wider attraction than just for local people.

The excellent birdlife that results from the range of habitats attracts bird watchers. It also has spectacular views, many of which can be gained without too much climbing.

The site has much history (and pre-history) associated with it including:

- The volcanic origin of the Craigs themselves and the shaping of the landscape by glaciation
- The outcropping of the Ballagan fossil beds, in which the earliest creature with legs adapted for life on land was found in nearby Auchenreoch Glen (the Pederpes fossil in the Glasgow Hunterian museum)
- Prehistoric remains, including a cup-marked stone and evidence of enclosures and earth boundary banks that stretch across the landscape

- Farming remains from various periods, including rig-and-furrow, small agricultural lime kilns and abandoned farmstead sites
- Features of the Victorian designed landscape of Overtoun Estate, including remnants of plantations and roundels, drystone dykes, metal estate fencing and Lady Overtoun's Walk which is cut into the hill beneath the Craigs. The Overtoun House grounds (and possibly the whole designed landscape) are believed to be the work of the landscaper Edward Kemp. Many mature specimen trees remain from this period, especially in Overtoun Estate
- WWII archaeology, in particular the 'Starfish' control bunker that was part of the Clyde Anti-Aircraft Defences. Starfish was code for 'Special Fire' and it controlled a system of lights and fires on the adjacent moorland that acted as a decoy for Dumbarton during bombing raids
- Many local people were born in Overtoun House and played in the area as children, so have a strong personal connection with the site

Opportunities & Constraints

There are opportunities to:

- Work with WDC to provide better approach signage and replacement of footpath signage
- Connect the access networks on the two sides of the site together in the longer term
- Improve the quality of the main Overtoun Glen path for a range of access users, the condition of which generally deteriorates every winter due to wet weather and poor drainage

Factors Causing Change

Sustained high visitor numbers is causing some section of paths to become worn and muddy. Recent wet summers have exacerbated this. This will require ongoing maintenance and possibly upgrades to surfaces in some areas.

The increased use of the site has sometimes resulted in conflicts between different user groups. In particular there is high use by commercial dog walkers using the site.

Some parts of the site are subject to anti-social behaviour, including flytipping, littering, dirty camping and off-road motorbike use.

Long term Objective (50 years+)

The site will continue to provide safe and welcoming access to a wide range of visitors. Access routes will be well-drained and clear of vegetation and barriers to access will be reduced to the practical minimum. There will be way-marking on key routes for first-time or occasional visitors. In the longer term the path network in the two glens will be linked together to provide more opportunities for routes and links into the surrounding path network.

While most visitors will come from the local area, Lang Craigs will also be more widely known as an access point into

the Kilpatrick Hills for hill walkers, horse riders and mountain bikers. Schools and third-party groups will use the site regularly for learning and recreational events.

The Woodland Trust will work in partnership with West Dunbartonshire and Forestry & Land Scotland to provide an integrated visitor experience for visitors.

Lang Craigs will be valued as a wonderful place for recreation, exercise and enjoyment of the natural world by the local community.

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

- The path network will be kept in a safe and welcoming condition. This will be achieved by annual mowing of verges, tree safety inspections, drainage maintenance and repairs as needed (annual). Options will be explored for a substantial upgrading of the main Overtoun Glen path surface through compartment 9a, which has deteriorated significantly (2027)
- Replace or refresh elements of the play trail at Overtoun entrance to ensure it provides a safe, welcoming and fun activity for families (2030)
- Continue to work with Police Scotland, West Dunbartonshire Council and other neighbours to report and manage anti-social issues on the site (throughout the plan period)
- Formalise a loop path through Barr Wood (compartment 13a) to divert walkers off the main access track and link into the existing path network (2026-7). This could help to reduce anti-social behaviour in Barr Wood by improving legitimate access
- A small team of volunteer wardens will assist the site manager in the running of the site (throughout plan period)
- Continue to facilitate Glasgow School of Art's annual environmental sculpture exhibition at Overtoun (throughout plan period)

4.3 f3 Secondary Woodland

Description

Lang Craigs has around 37ha of secondary woodland. These were all planted as part of the development of Overtoun Estate in the late 19th century and can be considered as part of its extended designed landscape. All the woods are enclosed in remnants of metal estate fencing dating from this time. There are three main areas:

Compartment 2: Square Wood covers 2.11ha and consists of a mix of mid-20th century birch and sycamore, with some older oaks and Scots pine which are the original plantings.

Compartment 4: The Garshake Glen has two distinct sections of woodland (4b and 4d, 8.93ha), with two open areas in less steep-sided parts. This contains a mix of older planted trees (oak, Scots pine, sycamore, spruces) and more recent regeneration of birch and ash.

Compartment 6a/9b: The Black Wood (25.4ha) is by far the largest block and originally extended both sides of the Overtoun Burn. The section west of the Overtoun Burn (6a) is almost entirely mature downy birch with a fringe of Scots pine in the western and northern edges. East of the burn (9b) it is much more open with some mature birch. Both areas have plentiful birch regeneration following removal of extensive areas of rhododendron. Ordnance Survey maps suggest that both parts were felled about 1955 and have regenerated with birch. The upper Scots pine fringe consists of original trees on poorer ground that were perhaps too small to fell in 1955.

Compartment 10c: The roundels in the entrance glade at Overtoun (~0.5ha) are fragments of a woodland present on the Ordnance Survey 1st edition map and appear to be part of a series of shelterbelts around Overtoun and Garshake that predate the development of Overtoun House. The Ancient Woodland Inventory classes them as LEPO 2b (Long-established Woodland of Plantation Origin), although they have little ground flora interest so have been included in the Secondary Woodland Key Feature in this management plan. The size of some of the mature trees indicates they may date from the 18th century.

Square Wood and Black Wood are generally on wet ground, featuring grasses, mosses and rushes, with occasional bracken in drier areas. Having been unmanaged for many years the woods have developed a semi-natural feel, and there is a reasonable quantity of deadwood in most areas.

When the site was acquired in 2011 almost all the existing woodland and some adjacent areas of open ground were choked with dense rhododendron. This shaded out almost all other ground flora and made the woods almost impenetrable. It also posed a risk of extending into the new native woodland. Beginning in a 2014 a phased programme of rhododendron eradication (approx. 30ha in total) was undertaken. The site was divided into three areas of work. Each area started with clearance in its first year, with follow-up control for a minimum of three subsequent years by over-spray with glyphosate. Ongoing control of regrowth continues into this plan period.

Area 1: Compartments 10c (roundels), 11c and 11d (open ground). Cleared 2014 by chainsaw cutting and herbicide stump treatment. Burning of arisings.

Area 2: Compartments 2a (Square Wood), 3b (open ground), 4a and 4d (Garshake Glen), 9a/b (open woodland east of Overtoun Burn), 12a (Craigs SSSI). Cleared 2015 by a combination of mechanical mulcher where access permitted (parts of 2a and 9a) and chainsaw cutting with herbicide stump treatment elsewhere. Where there was manual clearance, brash was raked in dense woodland (2a, 4b and 4d) with burning of arisings elsewhere.

Area 3: Compartment 6a (Black Wood). Cleared 2016/17 mainly with mechanical mulcher, but by chainsaw and stump treatment with burning of brash where steeper or where trees were tightly spaced.

Follow-up control is expected to be necessary until the end of this plan period. It is likely that ongoing monitoring and local control will be necessary intermittently during the following plan period (2031-36) to ensure eradication is successful.

West Dunbartonshire Council have also cleared their rhododendron in the same period, thus giving the potential for eradication on a landscape scale. Extensive birch regeneration is establishing in many of the areas cleared of rhododendron.
Significance
The woodlands are mainly comprised of native species and have considerable importance as visual features in the landscape and as habitat corridors for wildlife. Being at least 150 years old, the woodlands have a well-established woodland ecosystem and will have recruited many of the more mobile woodland specialist plant species. They link well into the new native woodland and form part of the network of woodland habitats that stretches around the lower slopes of the Kilpatrick Hills from Clydebank to Loch Lomond. The Garshake Glen woods link with ancient woodlands in the glen to the south (which is well-stocked with woodland specialist plants) and the semi-natural woods along the Black Burn to the north.
Opportunities & Constraints
Opportunities The removal of rhododendron from these woods will ultimately result in a great increase in ground flora diversity and allow the woodlands to host a more diverse range of wildlife in the longer term. Rhododendron removal may also facilitate opportunities for public access in these woodlands which were previously impenetrable for the most part. Constraints Wet ground and steep slopes in some areas makes work difficult.
Factors Causing Change
There is still sporadic rhododendron regrowth, so continued monitoring and treatment is essential.
Long term Objective (50 years+)
The vision is for mature woodlands of mainly native species, free of rhododendron. There will be a mix of mature trees, younger regeneration and understory species, with abundant deadwood habitat. The woodland will have a diverse natural ground flora, which is rich in wildlife. The woodlands will continue to develop an increasingly semi-natural character as older trees are lost, regeneration establishes in areas cleared of rhododendron, and the age class of the trees diversifies. Eradication of rhododendron continues to be the main management activity in the medium term and will require perhaps another 10 years of monitoring and periodic treatment to ensure eradication.

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

In the short term (5 year) the objective is the substantive eradication of rhododendron in all woodland areas (30ha). This will by:

- Follow-up spraying with herbicide of regrowth, removal by hand without chemicals of any self-seeded bushes where possible
- Areas have been split into three distinct areas, to be treated every third year:
 1. Compartment 6a (Black Wood) in 2027, 2030
 2. Compartments 9b (Overtoun quarry) and 12a (SSSI Craigs) subject to NatureScot permissions in 2028, 2031
 3. Compartments 2a (Square Wood), 4b, 4d (Garshake Glen), 10c (Overtoun entrance glade) in 2029
- Map rhododendron growth in Barr Wood (compartment 13a) which is comprised of sporadic bushes for follow-up treatment in 2027 during path upgrade works and latterly in 2030

4.4 f4 Ancient Semi Natural Woodland

Description

Compartment 12a consists of a fringe of scattered trees on the steep slopes along the base of the Craigs. The soils are thin, with screes derived from basalt and patchy glacial till, and NVC type is likely to be W9. The ground flora shows aspects of both basic and acid soils in close proximity depending on the locality. NatureScot's Ancient Woodland Inventory shows the southern portion of this as ancient semi-natural woodland (class 2a), with further ASNW extending to the south. The boundaries of this area on the ground are not clear, with variable and diffuse areas of trees (<20% canopy cover) extending along the foot of the Craigs. Some of the species present are mature trees (Scots pine, sycamore, Norway maple) likely to have been planted as part of the Overtoun Estate. There is also a scattering of birch, ash, elm, cherry, hazel and willow which has a more semi-natural appearance. It is likely that sporadic natural regeneration occurs in areas where grazing is reduced due to the steep ground. This area is outside the deer fence and has no stockproof barrier between compartment 12a and the neighbouring land. Currently the adjoining land is not used for livestock, so there is no encroachment of stock.

On acquisition of the site (2011) there was extensive rhododendron amongst the open woodland and adjacent open ground along the base of the Craigs and also scattered rhododendron in the Craigs themselves. A programme of control aiming at eradication began in 2015. Rhododendron was cut, stump treated with herbicide and arisings either chipped or burned on the lower ground. Rhododendron on the cliffs was accessed using ropes and cut and stump treated. Follow-up control will need to continue for some years to ensure eradication in this challenging terrain.

Compartment 12a is also part of the Lang Craigs SSSI, designated for its tall herb vegetation on ungrazed ledges. NatureScot Condition Monitoring in 2008 found the status to be unfavourable due to the encroachment of sycamore and rhododendron onto the ledges that hold the features of interest. A Management Agreement was entered into

between WTS and Scottish Natural Heritage (now NatureScot) covering 2015-2020, aimed at reducing the threat. In addition to the rhododendron work already ongoing across the site this included some targeted sycamore control. Sycamore from seedlings up to 35cm diameter (dbh) and within 10m of cliffs or very steep ground (i.e. the features of interest) were removed either by cutting/felling and stump treatment with herbicide or killed in situ by stem injection with herbicide (glyphosate). This targeted approach retains veteran trees for their ecological value and keeps sycamore as a canopy component in this ancient woodland area. Sycamore has an important role to play in this area, in replacing two of the other key canopy trees, elm and ash, both of which are susceptible to disease.

Compartment 13a (Barr Wood) was acquired by the Trust in 2016. It is a mix of semi-natural mature birch and birch regeneration on open ground (following felling of the conifer component in 2012). There is mature oak in the west, and a smaller group in the centre on drier ground with ground flora including some bluebells, the remainder of the compartment being generally coarse vegetation and more indicative of secondary woodland. It is shown on NatureScot's Ancient Woodland Inventory (AWI) as Long Established of Plantation Original (LEPO, 2b). Some small patches of pole-stage and occasional mature conifer remain (the remnants of a Christmas tree crop planted in 1955 and harvested in 2012).

Enrichment planting of 600 oak in 1.2m shelters took place in 2017 to diversity the abundant birch regeneration in the felled areas. Several small areas of rhododendron were cut and stump-treated with herbicide (glyphosate) in 2017 and require occasional follow-up.

Significance

Although the density of trees is very low in 12a, it seems likely that there would always have been some long-term tree cover along much of the Craigs due to the difficulties of access for stock and deer. It is unlikely that such a sparse cover has a woodland specialist flora, but there may be other epiphyte or ground flora species of interest as a result of the lack of disturbance, and thin basalt-derived soils.

Similarly the SSSI (whose boundary the woodland falls within) is notified for its unusual plants on ungrazed ledges. The woodland will link well into the new native woodland in compartment 11. The woodland forms a prominent landscape feature due to its position high on the Craigs overlooking the site.

Barr Wood (13a) is valuable in creating a diversity of age class in comparison with the rest of Lang Craigs, and in linking into other woodland areas. The western strip of oak has the most value in terms of ground flora.

Opportunities & Constraints

Opportunities

- Eradication of rhododendron will remove an element of threat from these woodlands – this is already well-underway, but concerted follow-up is needed to ensure eradication. The open space left by rhododendron clearance also creates structural diversity and provides an opportunity for natural regeneration
- Reduction of grazing by deer will increase regeneration
- Moving Barr Wood (13a) towards a more native composition by removing the remaining spruce, and prevent further spruce regeneration

Constraints

- The practicalities of excluding stock from Compartment 12a (Craigs) are challenging. Whilst fencing can reduce the encroachment of stock, the steep and complex terrain around the Craigs, means that it may be difficult to fence out stock completely. At present this area is not grazed
- It is not practical to fence deer out of compartment 12a due to the difficult terrain around the Craigs. Numbers may depend on the level of Forestry & Land Scotland deer management in Auchentorlie plantation, which is outwith WTS control
- Ash dieback threatens an important component of the Craigs woodland 13a

Factors Causing Change

The ash in 12a is likely to be lost due to ash dieback in the medium term (i.e. by 2030).

Long term Objective (50 years+)

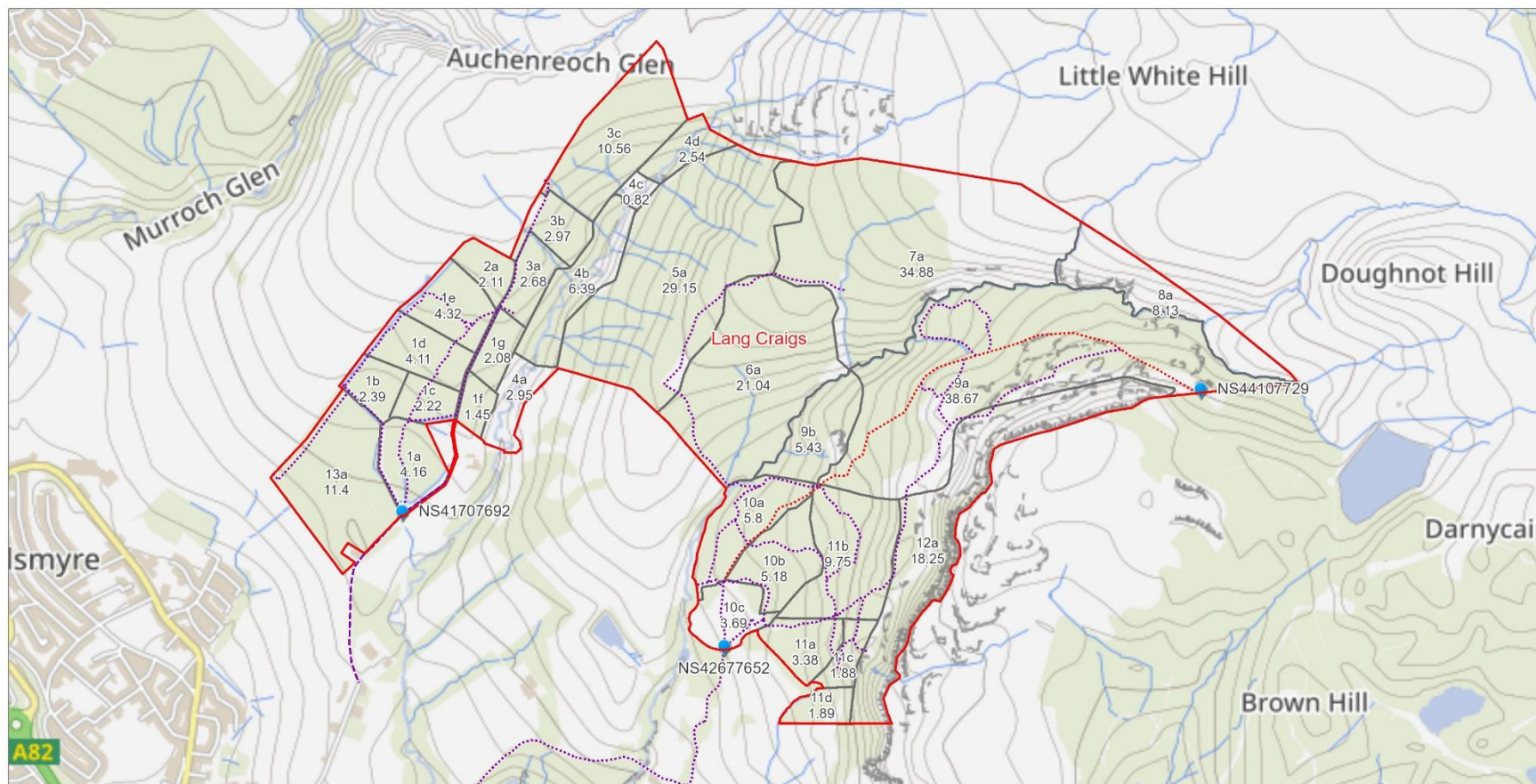
The long-term vision is to maintain tree cover at a sustainable level in compartment 12a area by ensuring that grazing is reduced to a level that permits some regeneration. The distribution of cover and species present will be in harmony with the management of the SSSI.

In 13a (Barr Wood) the vision is to restore the woodland to a semi natural composition, consisting mainly of birch and oak (NVC W10/W4).

Both areas will be free of rhododendron and will be left to develop naturally.

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

- Rhododendron will be eradicated by ensuring that regular monitoring (annual) and follow-up control takes place as needed in (compartments 12a and 13a). Control is likely to be by pulling seedlings, cutting and stump treatment of any larger stems, or targeted spot spray with herbicide of regrowth (control in these areas is planned 2028, 2031 in compartment 12a; and 2027, 2030 in compartment 13a)
- Continue to liaise with NatureScot for any management interventions in the SSSI
- Barr Wood (compartment 13a) will be thinned to remove remaining non-native conifer component and will be allowed to regenerate naturally (2027, alongside thinning required to formalise an access route through the wood)



- Woodland Trust Site Boundary Path Network Scottish --- Track
● Access Points Path SubCompartments
● Access points Right of Way

Lang Craigs Compartments

Scale: 1:16,763 @A4

Date: 02 September 2026

Author:



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Appendix 1 : Compartment Descriptions

Compartment No.	Area (ha)	Main Species	Year	Management Regime	Major Management Constraints	Designations
1a	4.16	Mixed native broadleaves	2012	Wood establishment		
A poorly drained compartment near the Maryland entrance. Part of the sub-compartment is believed to have demolition waste buried beneath a thin layer of soil. However, trial pits with an excavator revealed soil to at least 60cm, the area having been restored to agricultural use. There are rushes in the wetter parts and improved grasses throughout, with frequent docks. There are some mature oak trees along the track to Maryland farm, although many are suffering dieback due to damage and changes in soil levels from previous dumping. This sub-compartment lies within the deer fence, and 2.63ha was mounded and planted with native trees (NVC W1, W7 and W11) protected by vole guards in 2012 under a Rural Development Contract (RDC) for woodland creation. The trees are very well established. There are groups of young ash which are severely affected by ash dieback, but their loss will not compromise the canopy. An old field boundary bank defines the northern edge. A burn/ditch and a perimeter track composed of demolition rubble runs along the SW boundary.						
1b	2.43	Mixed native broadleaves	2012	Wood establishment		
The compartment lies within the deer fence and 1.59ha was mounded and planted with native broadleaves (NVC W1, W7, W11) protected by vole guards in 2012 under an RDC. The woodland is well established. The ground is poorly drained and with rushes in the lower parts. A small burn/ditch runs along the NW edge within a gorse thicket. Fires in the gorse thicket occur periodically due to antisocial behaviour. There is an old field boundary bank to the north. A ditch/burn and a perimeter track composed of demolition rubble runs along the SW boundary.						
1c	2.22	Mixed native broadleaves	2012	Wood establishment		
The compartment lies within the deer fence and 1.67ha was mounded and planted with native species (NVC mainly W11 with some W7) protected by vole guards in 2012 under an RDC. Previously an improved field, this area is generally well drained except in the western corner. The eastern part (east of the gully) was mainly planted as part of schools events in autumn 2012. An old field boundary bank runs defines the northern edge. The trees are well established.						
1d	4.11	Mixed native broadleaves	2012	Wood establishment		

Compartment No.	Area (ha)	Main Species	Year	Management Regime	Major Management Constraints	Designations
Previously an improved field, this area is generally well drained. The compartment lies within the deer fence and 3.40ha was mounded and planted with native species (NVC mainly W11) protected by vole guards over winter 2012/2013 under an RDC. The eastern part was mainly planted as part of schools events in autumn 2012 / spring 2013. The trees are well-established. There is an old field boundary bank on the southern boundary with 1a/1b. A gorse thicket enclosing a ditch/burn runs down the NW perimeter, which has suffered occasional fires.						
1e	4.32	Mixed native broadleaves	2013	Wood establishment		
Previously an improved field, this area is moderately well-drained in the west but wetter in the east with rushes. The compartment lies within the deer fence and 3.30ha was mounded and planted with native species (NVC W11, W9, W7) protected by vole guards in autumn 2013 under an RDC. The trees are well-established. A gorse thicket enclosing a ditch/burn runs down the NW perimeter.						
1f	1.45	Mixed native broadleaves	2014	Wood establishment		
Previously an improved field with an easterly aspect sloping towards the Garshake burn, this area is moderately well-drained and sheltered. The compartment lies within the deer fence and 1.05ha was mounded and planted with native species (NVC W9) protected by vole guards in spring 2014 under an RDC. The trees are well established.						
1g	2.08	Mixed native broadleaves	2014	Wood establishment		
Previously an improved field with an easterly aspect sloping towards the Garshake burn, this area is moderately well-drained. The compartment lies within the deer fence and 1.29ha was mounded and planted with native species (NVC W9) protected by vole guards in spring 2014 under an RDC. The trees are well-established. An area of open ground has been retained at the northern end to retain the outlook from the WW2 'Starfish' bunker in compartment 3a. In the northern corner of 1g are 17 trees in 1.2m shelters, planted by children of Aitken Barr primary school on 4/5/2011 as part of an event to commemorate the 70th anniversary of the Blitz, the 17 people killed in Dumbarton on that day in 1941 and the part played by the Starfish bunker. A diagonal ride was left through the compartment to facilitate a future route into the Garshake Glen if a route between the glens is created at a future date.						
2a	2.11	Downy birch	1875	Min-intervention		
This block of mature woodland was originally established in the second half of the 19th century as part of the development of Overtoun Estate (it is absent from the 1 st edition Ordnance Survey map (1860) but present on the 2 nd edition map surveyed 1896). Its current composition is mainly mature birch, with some sessile oak, sycamore, Scots pine, some exotic confers and two or three Turkey oak. It has a semi-natural structure, clearly not having been actively managed for many years. The canopy cover is around 80%. There is much standing and fallen deadwood and lichens are abundant. The woodland previously has an almost continuous understory of Rhododendron ponticum						

Compartment No.	Area (ha)	Main Species	Year	Management Regime	Major Management Constraints	Designations
(2.16ha) which was cleared in 2015 by a combination of mechanical mulcher and motor/manual cutting/stump treatment. Where the latter was carried out the brash was raked. Control has been excellent, with only sporadic regrowth (2026). An intermittent burn rises in the centre of the wood. The wood is surrounded by metal estate-style fence which is generally in poor condition. The compartment is within the deer fence.						
3a	2.68	Mixed native broadleaves	2012	Wood establishment		
A field with a south-easterly aspect sloping towards the Garshake burn, this area is poorly drained unimproved land with abundant rushes. The compartment lies within the deer fence and 1.67ha was mounded and planted with native species (NVC W4 - birch woodland) protected by vole guards in autumn 2012, under an RDC. Establishment was slower in this area, due to a combination of poor soils and browsing. Most trees are now established. When deer gain entry to the fenced area they often reside in this less visible and less-frequented area adjacent to the cover of the Garshake Glen. The WW2 'Starfish' bunker lies at the southern end of 3a, and an area of open ground has been retained around it. A track runs along the western perimeter, adjacent to Square Wood.						
3b	2.87	Mixed native broadleaves	2012	Wood establishment		
A field with a south-easterly aspect sloping towards the Garshake burn, this area is poorly drained unimproved land with abundant rushes. The compartment lies within the deer fence and 2.06ha has been mounded and planted with native species (mainly NVC W4 birch woodland with small area of W9) protected by vole guards in autumn 2012, under an RDC. Establishment has been relatively slow in this area, due to a combination of poor soils and browsing. Most species are now reaching thicket stage.. When deer gain entry to the fenced area they often reside in this less visible and less-frequented area adjacent to the cover of the Garshake Glen.						
3c	10.56	Mixed native broadleaves	2012	Wood establishment		
A field with a south-easterly aspect sloping towards the Garshake burn, this area is poorly drained unimproved land with abundant rushes. The compartment lies within the deer fence and 7.85ha has been mounded and planted with native species (NVC W4 - birch woodland) protected by vole guards in autumn 2012, under an RDC. Establishment has been badly affected in this area due to a wildfire in 2020 affected approx. 8ha. There are signs of high levels of birch regeneration from mature trees in the Garshake Glen (2026) sufficient to fully stock this area if browsing levels permit. When deer gain entry to the fenced area they often reside in this more remote area adjacent to the cover of the Garshake Glen. Some variable stocking density on this northern boundary will give a natural upper edge to the woodland.						
4a	2.97	Open ground	1875	Min-intervention	Gullies/Deep Valleys/Uneven/Rocky ground	

Compartment No.	Area (ha)	Main Species	Year	Management Regime	Major Management Constraints	Designations
An open grassy gully, through which flows the Garshake Burn. There are occasional mature trees (10% cover), mainly along the eastern boundary. This open area provides a potential crossing point of the Garshake burn for walkers, although there is currently only an informal path and the ground is quite steep. Two otter hovers were identified in 4a during construction of the deer fence. There are some good rock exposures of the sedimentary shale and cornstone layers at the southern end and associated with these is the faint remains of a circular lime kiln (WoSAS pin 66203). The compartment lies within the deer fence.						
4b	6.39	Mixed broadleaves	1875	Min-intervention	Gullies/Deep Valleys/Uneven/Rocky ground	
This steep-sided wooded section of the gully of the Garshake Burn was originally established in the second half of the 19th century as part of the development of Overtoun Estate (it is absent from the 1 st edition Ordnance Survey map, surveyed 1860, but present on the 2 nd edition map surveyed 1896). Its current composition is mainly ash and birch, with some sessile oak, Scots pine and sycamore. It has a semi-natural structure, clearly not having been actively managed for many years. The canopy cover is around 90%. The wood previously had a dense understory of mature rhododendron ponticum covering 3.34ha, which was cleared by motor-manual cutting/stump treatment in 2015. The brash was raked to allow follow up spraying, as burning was not practical with the dense canopy and steep ground. Security ropes were required to access the steeper parts. Control of rhododendron regrowth by herbicide overspray continues in this challenging area. The compartment is surrounded by a metal estate-style fence which is generally in poor condition. Otters are known to use the burn. A deer fence was installed on the eastern boundary of the compartment in 2019 to compartmentalise the site to improve deer management.						
4c	0.82	Open ground		Min-intervention	Gullies/Deep Valleys/Uneven/Rocky ground	
An open grassy gully, through which flows the Garshake Burn. There are occasional shrubby hawthorn (5% cover), mainly along the eastern boundary. This open area provides a potential crossing point of the Garshake Burn for walkers, although there is no formal path and the ground is steep on the eastern side. Otters are known to use this area. There are some good rock exposures of the sedimentary shale and cornstone layers and associated with these is the faint remains of a circular lime kiln (WoSAS pin 66239). A deer fence was installed on the eastern boundary of the compartment in 2019 to compartmentalise the site to improve deer management.						
4d	2.54	Mixed broadleaves	1875	Min-intervention	Gullies/Deep Valleys/Uneven/Rocky ground	
This steep-sided wooded section of the gully of the Garshake Burn was originally established in the second half of the 19th century as part of the development of Overtoun Estate (it is absent from the 1 st edition Ordnance Survey map, surveyed 1860, but present on the 2 nd edition map surveyed 1896). Its current composition is mainly ash, and downy birch with oak, Scots pine and sycamore. It has a semi-natural structure, clearly not having been actively managed for many years. The canopy cover is around 90%.						

Compartment No.	Area (ha)	Main Species	Year	Management Regime	Major Management Constraints	Designations
The wood previously had an understory of mature rhododendron ponticum (0.57ha), which was cleared by motor-manual cutting/stump treatment in 2015. The brash was raked to allow follow up spraying, as burning was not practical with the dense canopy and steep ground. Control has been excellent with only a few living plants remaining and requiring ongoing treatment (2026). The compartment is surrounded by a metal estate-style fence which is generally in poor condition. Otters are known to use the burn, which has a waterfall at its northern end. A deer fence was installed on the eastern boundary of the compartment in 2019 to compartmentalise the site to improve deer management.						
5a	29.15	Mixed native broadleaves	2013	Wood establishment		
A west-facing slope, leading down from the Black Wood and central plateau to the Garshake Burn, and riven by a number of burn gullies. The compartment lies within the deer fence and 22.31ha was mounded and planted with native species NVC W4 on the poorer peaty soils, W11 on the mid-slopes and W9 on the gleys) protected by vole guards in spring 2013, under an RDC. Speed of establishment has been variable, with most trees above browsing height at the southern end, but slower establishment at the northern end. An area of 0.33ha adjacent to 6a (Black Wood) was cleared of rhododendron prior to planting by a combination of cutting, stump treatment, foliar overspray and burning of brash. Only sporadic live rhododendron plant remain, with control ongoing. An additional deer fence was installed along the lower boundary (with compartment 4) in 2019 to compartmentalise the site to aid deer management. The ground vegetation is mainly unimproved grasses, with peaty-gleys at the top, areas of bracken (controlled in summer 2012) on brown earths on the mid-slopes and surface water gleys on the flatter areas near the bottom. Bluebells are present under bracken cover in and around some of the burn gullies. There are the faint remains of a farmstead (building and field boundaries, WOSAS pin 66088).						
6a	21.04	Birch (downy/silver)	1955	Min-intervention		
Known as the Black Wood, this mature woodland lies on east-facing slopes leading down from the central plateau to the Overtoun Burn. Drainage is generally poor on gleyed soils. The woodland consists almost entirely of even-aged mature downy birch, with a broken fringe of mature Scots pine around the upper (western and northern) margin. There is about 75% canopy, with some open glade areas with grasses and bracken. The tree canopy is generally fairly open, and has a semi-natural feel, not having been managed for many years. Previously there was a dense understory of rhododendron throughout most of the compartment (17.6ha) which was cleared in 2016/7 with a combination of mechanical mulcher and motor-manual cutting/stump treatment. In the latter case brash was burned. Regrowth of rhododendron is still frequent with periodic control ongoing. The open						

Compartment No.	Area (ha)	Main Species	Year	Management Regime	Major Management Constraints	Designations
areas where rhododendron was cleared , but it is not yet clear what structure will develop. Regeneration of downy birch is common in some of the cleared areas. It is believed that this woodland was planted as part of the development of Overtoun Estate in the late 19th century. (It is present on the 2nd edition Ordnance Survey map, but not on the 1st edition). It seems likely that it was planted as a timber crop, and then felled in the 1950s (it is present on the 1945-48 OS map, but only the current pine areas are shown on the 1955-61 OS map), the pine on the poor ground on the upper fringes being under-developed and so left, and the remainder naturally regenerating with downy birch. A quad bike track through the wood was constructed in 2013 to enable access to compartments 5a and 7a. The route of an old road is recorded on the WoSAS database (pin 14720) but there is little evidence of this on the ground. There is occasional evidence of old benched routes or burn crossings although this may relate to late Victorian rides which are visible on the 2nd edition Ordnance Survey map.						
7a	34.88	Mixed native broadleaves	2013	Wood establishment		
A high plateau between the Overtoun and Garshake Burns, leading onto the high ground of the Kilpatrick Hills. For the most part relatively exposed (reaching elevations of 300m) and with poor soils and drainage (peaty gleys and some deep peats), with mainly unimproved grasses, with occasional heather and sphagnum. The deer fence encloses part of the area, and 16.26ha was mounded and planted with native species (spring 2013, all W4, wet birch woodland) protected in vole guards. The planting has been designed as habitat for black grouse, with layout as a mosaic of irregular groups focusing on the better soils and avoiding any deep peat. The 16.26ha is arranged as a number of groups with dense centres (1.5m spacing) with wider spacing on the edges, surrounded by scattered groups of ten or so trees/group, and up to 40% open ground to give varying density at all scales. Within the 16.26ha the average density is 1250/ha. The planting is part of an RDC. The establishment of trees has been slow due to exposure, poor soils and browsing by deer that gain entry to the fenced area. Grey willow has done best. Previously there were scattered bushes of rhododendron in this compartment totalling approximately 0.37ha. These were cleared in 2015 by a combination of cutting and stump treatment and foliar overspray. Few if any living plants remain. The route of an old road is recorded on the WoSAS database (pin 14720) but there is little evidence of this on the ground. Open ground has been left around the likely route of this road. An earth dyke (bank) runs across the compartment (adjacent to the new deer fence line) and links with other earth dykes in 9a on the other side of the Overtoun Burn.						
8a	8.13	Open ground		Min-intervention		

Compartment No.	Area (ha)	Main Species	Year	Management Regime	Major Management Constraints	Designations
An area of unimproved grasses above the Overtoun Burn. This area has been left unplanted as a buffer zone to the Dumbarton Muir SSSI.						
9a	38.67	Mixed native broadleaves	2013	Wood establishment		
This is the main compartment forming the upper part of Overtoun Glen. The terrain is generally rough and undulating, being the result of a post-glacial collapse of the Craigs. Soils are very variable on a local level, with acid grassland on thin soils on hillocks and steeper slopes, some substantial areas of bracken (treated 2012) on well-drained, brown earths in the mid-slopes, and some wetter areas with unimproved grasses, juncus mire or iris pseudacorus (M28) mire, depending on local fertility. Focusing mainly on the bracken areas, 22.33ha was mounded and planted with native species (spring 2013) mainly NVC W11 birch/oak, with some W1 wet willow, W7 alder/ash and W9 ash, protected in vole guards. The planting was part of an RDC. The rate of establishment of the trees has been variable with generally good establishment at the southern end and slower at higher elevations. Browsing by deer that gain entry to the fenced area is likely to be a key factor, particularly in the less visible and more remote parts of the site. Some variability in density will add a natural structure to the upper northern edge. Several earth dykes (banks) run through the compartment and align with one in compartment 7a. A prominence called Round Wood Hill has faint remains of an enclosure and a cup-marked stone (WoSAS pin 7812). There are several other 'stone spreads' in the glen which may relate to old shielings. A disused pipe previously carrying water from the Black Linn to the Garshake reservoirs runs through the compartment, and there are inspection chambers, breaks in the pipe, and related spurs and pipework at various locations. The exact route of the pipe(s) is not known, but parts still carry water.						
9b	5.43	Mixed native broadleaves	2013	Wood establishment		
This area consists of a scattered birch woodland and open ground on the west-facing slopes leading down to the Overtoun Burn. It is effectively the easternmost part of the Black Wood, and like the Black Wood the sequence of historic Ordnance Survey maps show that it was originally planted in the latter 19th century and felled in the late 1950s. It has since naturally regenerated into an open (40% canopy) birch woodland. Previously a dense canopy of rhododendron occupied 3.73ha, which was cleared in 2015 with a combination of mechanical mulcher and cutting/burning/stump treatment. Scattered living plants still remain which are still under follow-up spray treatment. There is excellent birch regeneration in areas cleared of rhododendron. 0.82ha was planted with native species (spring 2013, W7 wet alder/ash woodland) protected in vole guards as part of an RDC. There is a disused quarry in the south-eastern corner of the compartment.						
10a	5.8	Mixed native broadleaves	2012	Wood establishment		

Compartment No.	Area (ha)	Main Species	Year	Management Regime	Major Management Constraints	Designations
A gently sloping grassy area of more fertile soils (brown earths and gleys). Here 2.7ha was mounded and planted with native species (NVC W9 ash woodland, W7 alder/ash and W4 wet birch woodland). This area forms a landscape unit with 10b and the design is intended to form a transition between the designed landscape of Overtoun House and more continuous native woodland further up the glen. The planting is in nine discrete groups, allowing a greater feel of space and the retention of key views between groups, and echoing the roundels to the south (10c). Most of 10a was planted by volunteers during events in autumn 2012. The planting is part of an RDC. The trees are well established. Mounding in 10a/b turned up various late 19th/early 20th century artifacts (e.g. broken glass/pottery) as well as ash, and it is likely that parts of this were used as a midden by Overtoun House.						
10b	5.18	Mixed native broadleaves	2013	Wood establishment		
An undulating area of variable drainage with bracken on more fertile soils (brown earths) and areas of juncus and unimproved grasses in hollows. Here 2.15ha have been mounded and planted with native species (NVC W9 ash woodland). This area forms part of a landscape unit with 10a and is intended to form a transition between the designed landscape of Overtoun House and more continuous native woodland further up the glen. The planting is in 7 discrete groups, allowing a greater feel of space and the retention of key views between groups, and echoing the roundels to the south (10c). Most of 10b was planted by volunteers during events in spring 2013. The trees are well established..						
10c	3.69	Open ground	1875	Min-intervention		
A sheltered glade with two areas of mature trees forming the entrance area to the site. The glade is grassy, with an area of Juncus from which a small burn rises. The two groups of trees contain some fine specimens of beech, ash, pine and sycamore. Some parts are visible on the Ordnance Survey 1st edition map as parts of a shelterbelt and listed on the Ancient Woodland Inventory as Long Established of Plantation Origin (cat 1b). Some parts were probably planted as part of the extended designed landscape of Overtoun House in the latter part of the 19th century. The largest group (north of the main path) previously had a dense understory of rhododendron (0.54ha) which was cleared in 2014 by motor-manual cutting/stump treat and burning of brash. Control of regrowth is ongoing. A surfaced path and 6-piece play trail runs around the compartment, and it also contains a sculptural Cairn as a welcome feature. Since 2024, the open habitat around the entrance Cairn has been mowed once at the end of summer and grass cuttings removed, to encourage more floristic diversity and the establishment of a wildflower meadow in this area.						
11a	3.38	Mixed native broadleaves	2013	Wood establishment		
A sheltered compartment with good brown earth soils. 2.3ha was mounded and planted in 2014, NVC W11, birch/oak woodland) protected by vole guards. The area was designated as the Commonwealth Grove in recognition						

Compartment No.	Area (ha)	Main Species	Year	Management Regime	Major Management Constraints	Designations
of the 2014 Commonwealth Games Legacy funding and planted by school children and volunteers as part of the final public planting events on site. The trees have established extremely well.						
11b	9.75	Mixed native broadleaves	2014	Wood establishment		
An area of west-facing undulating ground descending from the ridge below the Craigs to the more level ground of 10b. It has locally variable soils and drainage, having been formed from the post-glacial collapse of the Craigs. There are areas of bracken (treated summer 2012) and unimproved grasses on better drained brown-earths, with areas of juncus on soft silty soils and gleys in hollows. 6.73ha was mounded and planted with native species (spring 2014, NVC W11 birch/oak woodland) protected by vole guards. The planting is part of an RDC. Establishment has been good. Part of the ridge in this and compartment 11c had dense rhododendron thickets (0.67ha) which were cleared in 2014 by motor-manual cutting, stump treatment and burning of brash. Rhododendron in this area is substantively eradicated.						
11c	1.88	Mixed native broadleaves	2014	Wood establishment		
This is an extension of 11a, on a slight grassy ridge, with well-drained brown earth soils. 0.74ha were mounded and planted with native species (spring 2014, NVC W11 birch/oak woodland) protected by vole guards. The planting is part of an RDC. Establishment has been very good.						
11d	1.89	Mixed native broadleaves	2014	Wood establishment		
An area of undulating sloping ground with a south-westerly aspect, bordered by a burn on its west side. This area has stony soils in its upper part, becoming deeper brown earths further down. A partial understory (0.66ha) of rhododendron was cleared from this compartment in 2014. Rhododendron is largely eradicated in this area. The exception to this is a small block of rhododendron along the small burn feeding the water supply to some neighbouring properties. This has been left in place pending discussions with the water supply users. 1.15 ha of the compartment was planted with native species (spring 2014, NVC W9 woodland). It lies outwith the deer fence is protected by 1,2m tree shelters. Establishment has generally been good.						
12a	18.25	Mixed broadleaves	1875	Min-intervention		Site of Special Scientific Interest

Compartment No.	Area (ha)	Main Species	Year	Management Regime	Major Management Constraints	Designations
The compartment is defined by the boundary of the Lang Craigs SSSI, notified for rare tall herb vegetation on ungrazed ledges. The features of interest (i.e. the ledges) are on the Craigs themselves, most of the compartment acting as a buffer zone. The northern part of the compartment is devoid of tree cover. In the southern part of the compartment there is an existing scattered tree cover of mature specimens of downy birch, ash, Scots pine and sycamore. This is more recent regeneration of mainly ash, sycamore, but generally only where sheep cannot easily access. There are also occasional goat willow, hazel, sessile oak, wych elm, hawthorn, blackthorn, wild cherry and beech. The pine, sycamore and beech were most likely planted in the late 19th century as part of the development of the Overtoun Estate. Soils are thin and stony and the ground vegetation is a mix of acid grassland and plants more typical of more basic soils where they are affected by the underlying basalt rock. The area has a semi-natural feel and the southern part of the area is shown on the ancient woodland inventory. However, it is likely that there has always been an element of woodland along the base of the Craigs (if not exactly in its current location) and so to err on the side of caution the whole compartment (where there are existing trees) should be regarded as a potential ancient woodland site. No planting is allowed in this area due to the SSSI constraints. A Management Agreement (2015-2020) was set up with SNH to control sycamore in some parts of the compartment to prevent seeding into the features of interest. To avoid unnecessary loss of woodland cover or veteran trees, only those sycamore up to 30dbh and within 10m of cliff or very steep ground were targeted, by a mix of stem injection, felling and stump treatment and foliar overspray. By 2019 very few living plants in this category were left. Thickets and isolated bushes of rhododendron (1.60ha) previously occurred below and amongst the Craigs and these were cleared in 2015 by motor-manual cutting (some using safety roping) followed by burning or chipping. Follow-up treatment is ongoing, subject to NatureScot permissions. Some roped access work was carried out to access the most difficult to reach areas in 2019. Directly below the Craigs is a dry gully with a ridge to its west which is the result of the post-glacial collapse of the Craigs. This is a good example of this type of feature, and it has been considered as a RIGS (Regionally Important Geological Feature). No planting is planned in 12a to prevent seeding into the ledges, although the deer fence runs along the gully to hide it from long-distance view. The area is difficult to fence and was previously subject to sheep encroachment although the neighbour no longer seems to have sheep in the adjacent area.						
13a	11.4	Downy birch	1955	High forest		
This compartment is known locally as Barr Wood and was purchased by the Trust in 2016. The woodland is Long Established of Plantation Origin and the most mature components are a strip of mature oak along the NW boundary, and another smaller group of oak in the centre of the compartment. The remainder consists of naturally regenerated birch and other minor species (of ages up to 50 years) and an open area regenerating with dense downy birch resulting from a clearfell of spruce in 2012 (originally planted as a Christmas tree crop in 1955 and never harvested).						

Compartment No.	Area (ha)	Main Species	Year	Management Regime	Major Management Constraints	Designations
Enrichment planting of 600 oak was carried out in 2017 in 1.2m shelters in small groups in the more open areas where birch had not colonised so strongly. There are still some small groups and individuals of spruce in the woodland. There are also scattered rhododendron bushes (on which control began in 2016 and is ongoing). A pipeline wayleave and two 132kV power line wayleaves cross the site. The compartment suffers from antisocial behaviour, being off the path route and with easy access from nearby communities.						

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.

Windblow/Windthrow

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

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