



Fox & Parrot Wood

Management Plan 2018-2023

MANAGEMENT PLAN - CONTENTS PAGE

ITEM	Page No.
Introduction	
Plan review and updating	
Woodland Management Approach	
Summary	
1.0 Site details	
2.0 Site description	
2.1 Summary Description	
2.2 Extended Description	
3.0 Public access information	
3.1 Getting there	
3.2 Access / Walks	
4.0 Long term policy	
5.0 Key Features	
5.1 Informal Public Access	
5.2 Secondary Woodland	
5.3 Local Woodland Habitat	
6.0 Work Programme	
Appendix 1: Compartment descriptions	
Appendix 2: Harvesting operations (20 years)	
Glossary	
MAPS	
Access	
Conservation Features	
Management	

THE WOODLAND TRUST

INTRODUCTION

The Trust's corporate aims and management approach guide the management of all the Trust's properties, and are described on Page 4. These determine basic management policies and methods, which apply to all sites unless specifically stated otherwise. Such policies include free public access; keeping local people informed of major proposed work; the retention of old trees and dead wood; and a desire for management to be as unobtrusive as possible. The Trust also has available Policy Statements covering a variety of woodland management issues.

The Trust's management plans are based on the identification of Key Features for the site and setting objectives for their management. A monitoring programme (not included in this plan) ensures that these objectives are met and any necessary management works are carried out.

Any legally confidential or sensitive species information about this site is not included in this version of the plan.

PLAN REVIEW AND UPDATING

The information presented in this Management plan is held in a database which is continuously being amended and updated on our website. Consequently this printed version may quickly become out of date, particularly in relation to the planned work programme and on-going monitoring observations. Please either consult The Woodland Trust website www.woodlandtrust.org.uk or contact the Woodland Trust (wopsmail@woodlandtrust.org.uk) to confirm details of the current management programme.

There is a formal review of this plan every 5 years and a summary of monitoring results can be obtained on request.

WOODLAND MANAGEMENT APPROACH

The management of our woods is based on our charitable purposes, and is therefore focused on improving woodland biodiversity and increasing peoples' understanding and enjoyment of woodland. Our strategic aims are to:

- Protect native woods, trees and their wildlife for the future
- Work with others to create more native woodlands and places rich in trees
- Inspire everyone to enjoy and value woods and trees

All our sites have a management plan which is freely accessible via our website www.woodlandtrust.org.uk. Our woods are managed to the UK Woodland Assurance Standard (UKWAS) and are certified with the Forest Stewardship Council® (FSC®) under licence FSC-C009406 and through independent audit.

In addition to the guidelines below we have specific guidance and policies on issues of woodland management which we review and update from time to time.

We recognise that all woods are different and that the management of our sites should also reflect their local landscape and where appropriate support local projects and initiatives. Guidelines like these provide a necessary overarching framework to guide the management of our sites but such management also requires decisions based on local circumstances and our Site Manager's intimate knowledge of each site.

The following guidelines help to direct our woodland management:

1. Our woods are managed to maintain their intrinsic key features of value and to reflect those of the surrounding landscape. We intervene when there is evidence that it is necessary to maintain or improve biodiversity and to further the development of more resilient woods and landscapes.
2. We establish new native woodland using both natural regeneration and tree planting, but largely the latter, particularly when there are opportunities for involving people.
3. We provide free public access to woods for quiet, informal recreation and our woods are managed to make them accessible, welcoming and safe.
4. The long term vision for our non-native plantations on ancient woodland sites is to restore them to predominantly native species composition and semi-natural structure, a vision that equally applies to our secondary woods.
5. Existing semi-natural open-ground and freshwater habitats are restored and maintained wherever their management can be sustained and new open ground habitats created where appropriate.
6. The heritage and cultural value of sites is taken into account in our management and, in particular, our ancient trees are retained for as long as possible.
7. Woods can offer the potential to generate income both from the sustainable harvesting of wood products and the delivery of other services. We will therefore consider the potential to generate income from our estate to help support our aims.
8. We work with neighbours, local people, organisations and other stakeholders in developing the management of our woods. We recognise the benefits of local community woodland ownership and management. Where appropriate we allow our woods to be used to support local woodland, conservation, education and access initiatives.
9. We use and offer the estate where appropriate, for the purpose of demonstration, evidence gathering and research associated with the conservation, recreational and sustainable management of woodlands. In particular we will develop and maintain a network of long-term monitoring sites across the estate.
- 10 Any activities we undertake will conform to sustainable forest management principles, be appropriate for the site and will be balanced with our primary objectives of enhancing the biodiversity and recreational value of our woods and the wider landscapes.

SUMMARY

This public management plan briefly describes the site, specifically mentions information on public access, sets out the long term policy and lists the Key Features which drive management actions. The Key Features are specific to this site - their significance is outlined together with their long (50 year+) and short (5 year) term objectives. The short term objectives are complemented by a detailed Work Programme for the period of this management plan. Detailed compartment descriptions are listed in the appendices which include any major management constraints and designations. A short glossary of technical terms is at the end. The Key Features and general woodland condition of this site are subject to a formal monitoring programme which is maintained in a central database. A summary of monitoring results is available on request.

1.0 SITE DETAILS

Site name:	Fox & Parrot Wood
Location:	Craghead
Grid reference:	NZ227512, OS 1:50,000 Sheet No. 88
Area:	13.43 hectares (33.19 acres)
Designations:	Ancient Semi Natural Woodland, Community Forest, Planted Ancient Woodland Site

2.0 SITE DESCRIPTION

2.1 Summary Description

Fox and Parrot Wood, named in memory of a local doctor and his beloved bird, forms part of County Durham's Great North Forest. The gently undulating grass rides make this site ideal for strolling in the fresh air and admiring the beautiful broadleaf woodland that has been taking shape here since 1998.

2.2 Extended Description

Fox & Parrot Wood, named by local people in memory of a Dr Fox (who once lived and worked in Craghead) and his parrot, is located to the Southeast of Stanley in Co. Durham, to the north of Craghead Lane (the B6313) just outside the village of Craghead (NZ 225 513). It consists of native broadleaved woodland planted in two phases on improved grassland established after much of the site was opencast mined for coal back in the nineteen eighties.

The east half of the wood (sub-cpt 1a - 8.33 ha) was planted in December 1998 as part of the Trust's Woods on Your Doorstep Project with 15300 trees and shrubs, whilst 4.96 ha to the west of this (sub-cpt 1b) was planted in February 2004 under the Forestry Commission's New Native Woodland Scheme with a further 6000 trees. The 13.29 ha wood occupies a site that is level or falls away very gently to the northeast to join the ancient semi-natural woodland of Twizell Wood that forms its northern boundary. A large gully crosses the western end of the wood running NW to SE, along which Derwentside District Council have a right of easement for a water drain. This feature also marks the district boundary between Derwentside and Chester-le-Street. A bench was chosen as the wood's millennium feature and this is located in a small glade next to the boundary between sub-cpts 1a and 1b.

Although no public rights of way exist on site, Fox & Parrot Wood is very well used by local people for informal recreation, particularly dog walkers and therefore, its creation helps to fulfil the Trust's corporate objective of increasing people's enjoyment of woodland. It also contributes to the Trust's corporate objective of increasing new native woodland nationally and because the wood is planted on improved grassland, its establishment also provides an increase in local biodiversity.

Management access to the wood is available directly off the B6313 via the two field gates. A quarter acre dedication lies at the western end of the wood to Pete Finley (Pete's path)

3.0 PUBLIC ACCESS INFORMATION

3.1 Getting there

Public access to the wood on foot is provided by five squeeze stiles located at various point along the wood's boundary. Two squeeze stiles are located on the southern boundary adjacent to Craghead Lane, whilst two others are set in the eastern boundary fence next to the public footpath that runs along the outside of this boundary and exits onto Bluehouse Bank. Another entrance provides access into Twizell Wood at the northwest corner of sub-cpt 1b to provide access to that part of the wood owned by Derwentside District Council. Visitors should take care when entering the wood off Craghead Lane, as no pavement exists alongside this busy road. Once in the wood, easy walking is provided by a network of grass rides that are cut three times a year to keep them open. The ground does slope very gently northwards but overall, the site is relatively flat though the ground can be soft and wet in places, particularly during winter time.

For those wishing to reach the wood by public transport, bus stops are located on Craghead Lane (the B6313) in Craghead village. From Craghead, the wood can be reached by walking back along Craghead Lane eastwards towards Chester-le-Street for about 300 to 400 metres to reach a squeeze stile in the wall alongside the road. Travellers by car will find a small lay-by on Bluehouse bank (the B6313) opposite the eastern end of the wood that will accommodate two parked cars.

For those needing public conveniences whilst visiting the wood, public toilets can be found in Stanley off the A6076 at Station Road next to Market Hall and at the bus station that is located next to the ASDA supermarket just off the second major roundabout on the A693. A RADAR toilet is also located in Stanley at the bus station.

3.2 Access / Walks

4.0 LONG TERM POLICY

Fox and Parrot Wood will be managed in order to realise its potential as a Woods On Your Doorstep wood by establishing and maintaining vigorous, native broadleaf high forest woodland across the site so that, over the long-term (50 to 100 years plus), the wood becomes self-perpetuating through natural regeneration, ensuring its existence in perpetuity. Informal public access will continue to be encouraged by mowing annually the permissive paths, rides and other open areas to ensure these remain unobstructed for walkers. By carrying out these activities, contributions will be made towards achieving the Trust's corporate objectives of increasing the area of Secondary woodland and also increasing enjoyment of woodland.

5.0 KEY FEATURES

The Key Features of the site are identified and described below. They encapsulate what is important about the site. The short and long-term objectives are stated and any management necessary to maintain and improve the Key Feature.

5.1 Informal Public Access

Description

To provide a wood in which people can roam freely on foot, without constraint, in order to enjoy quiet recreation and experience nature. To facilitate this, six pedestrian squeeze stiles have been created and an extensive network of rides and open spaces are cut each year. An information board, welcome signs and a seat (millennium feature for sub-cpt 1a) are all provided to help enhance visitor's enjoyment of the wood.

Significance

Providing public access to woods is a cornerstone of the Trust's management approach to its properties and is encapsulated in its corporate objective of increasing enjoyment of woodland. Although locally there are numerous public footpaths, there are very few areas where people can roam freely. The adjacent Twizell Wood has no public access across much of its area and so access to woodland locally is generally limited, a problem Fox & Parrot will help rectify.

Opportunities & Constraints

Because Twizell Wood lacks public access across much of its area, the creation of Fox & Parrot Wood greatly increases the area of woodland that is open to public access. The establishment of sub-cpt 1b has provided the opportunity of creating a link with Twizell Wood, via the squeeze stile at the northwest corner of 1b, which previously was not possible. Not only does this link the Fox & Parrot Wood into the wider landscape but also provides a crucial link in establishing a route for the public along the Twizell Burn valley between Chester-le-Street and Stanley. The creation of a second squeeze stile through the wall at the southwest corner of sub-cpt 1b also helps to bring access to the wood much nearer Craghead Village, greatly reducing the distance visitors have to walk along the verge of Craghead Lane to reach the wood, thus reducing a potential safety hazard.

Factors Causing Change

Repeated removal of the back post at the south western entrance continues to allow motor bikes into the site.

Long term Objective (50 years+)

To maintain free and unobstructed access to all parts of the wood for visitors in the future by maintaining entrances in a safe and usable condition and by keeping all permissive rides and other open areas free of obstruction for walkers.

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

All six entrances to the wood, signs, information board and seat will be inspected at least once a year to ensure they are maintained in a safe and serviceable condition for public use. The network of permissive paths will be kept open for walkers by mowing up to three times a year and collecting litter at least once a year. Public safety will be protected by maintaining a site risk assessment of all known hazards within the wood and by carrying out any necessary work in order to minimise the dangers these hazards present to those visiting the wood. Improve the security of the south western entrance by replacing the back post with an immoveable rock (2019)

5.2 Secondary Woodland

Description

Sub-cpt 1a was planted in December 1998 under the Trust's 'Woods on Your Doorstep' programme with 15300 native trees and shrubs and sub-cpt 1b in February 2004 with a further 6000 trees and shrubs under the Forestry Commission's New Native Woodland Scheme. The wood is planted on improved grassland and covers a gross area of 13.29 ha. A further 880 shrubs were also planted along the western boundary of the wood in 2004 to create a new mixed hedge. The wood was designed and planted as a number of tree blocks of differing size and shape, separated by broad grassy rides and small glades with shrubs concentrated around the edges of the planting blocks to create softer, more graduated edges that benefit wildlife.

Significance

Native broadleaved woodland is a vital habitat for many plants and animals found in the UK. Over the centuries, our countryside has lost most of its natural tree cover, with a consequent loss of biodiversity. By planting new native woodland we are helping to reverse this depletion and fragmentation of the countryside. Planting on former farmland provides a net gain in biodiversity that will increase as the wood develops. The creation of new woodland next to Twizell Wood will also help protect this Ancient Semi-Natural Wood by buffering it against potentially damaging activities such as farming or development and by ultimately increasing its core area, which is so important for wildlife. Consequently, the creation of Fox & Parrot Wood helps both to increasing the area of new native woodland and to protect an ancient wood from loss or damage and so, contributes to two of the Trust's four key corporate objectives.

Opportunities & Constraints

The establishment of woodland across Fox & Parrot appears to be subject to no obvious constraints. To date, vandalism and other anti-social behaviour has not been a significant problem on site. If extending the woodland closer to Craghead village by establishing sub-cpt 1b will create such problems has simply to be seen. One significant opportunity the establishment woodland across Fox & Parrot provides is the chance to buffer the ASNW of Twizell Wood against potentially damaging activities whilst, over the long-term, significantly increasing its core area.

Factors Causing Change

Ash dieback is present and spreading. Himalayan balsam is coming in from the north.

Long term Objective (50 years+)

The long term aim is to create a high forest of mixed native broadleaf woodland with a mix of species, structure and age composition along with a diverse ground flora. There should be an increasing volume of deadwood (both fallen and standing) across the site.

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

The trees and shrubs in sub-cpt 1a are now well established and predominantly left to minimal intervention with monitoring restricted to once per plan period as part of the woodland condition observations. Approximately 3.77 hectares of the 4.96 hectares making up sub-cpt 1b are fully stocked with native broadleaf trees and shrubs. By 2025, the plantings should have formed into dense thickets of young trees whose canopy has closed, creating the early stages of a woodland environment. Work will require planning to ensure that any silvicultural work takes account of the losses that will occur through ash disease.

We will use volunteers or small local contractors to carry out small scale management work, included in the work programme budget for 2020, this will include coppicing and thinning for wood fuel and other woodland products within the woodland and along the path edges and entrances to maintain sight lines and safety. The Trust's duty of care to neighbours and visitors will continue to be addressed through on going tree safety inspections. Monitoring of non-native invasives will continue with work added in as site inspections dictate.

5.3 Local Woodland Habitat

Description

Twizell Wood, which forms the boundary to Fox & Parrot along the north and east, is part Ancient Semi-Natural Woodland (ASNW) and part Planted Ancient Woodland Site (PAWS). The eastern half of the wood is owned by Durham County Council, whilst the western half is mostly in private ownership, except for a small strip to the south of the burn next to Fox & Parrot Wood that is owned by Derwentside District Council. Although conifers have been planted in the wood, native broadleaves still account for a substantial part of this large wood, which occupies the slopes on each side of Twizell Burn between Craghead and Grange Villa.

Significance

Semi-natural ancient woodland is both a locally, regionally and nationally rare habitat. Creating a new woodland along its southern edge will not only provide a buffer zone to protect the wood but also increases the size of the wood and therefore its core area. Over the long term, Fox & Parrot Wood will benefit from the migration of plants and animals from Twizell Wood, providing it with greater biological and structural diversity than it would otherwise enjoy if it were planted in isolate.

Opportunities & Constraints

Most of the wood is in private ownership with no public rights of way. Until sub-cpt 1b was created, this prevented the Trust creating links into the wood. However, because sub-cpt 1b extended the wood further west, it was possible to create an entrance into that part of Twizell Wood owned by Derwentside District Council.

Factors Causing Change

Himalayan balsam infestation along Twizell Burn, loss of ground flora due to shading from conifers.

Long term Objective (50 years+)

To buffer Twizell Wood and expand its useful core area by successfully establishing Fox & Parrot Wood along its southern edge. Improve the biological and structural diversity of Fox and Parrot Wood by benefiting from the migration of non-invasive native species from Twizell Wood. Where possible, try work with and encourage local councils to restore those areas planted with conifers on their land back to native broadleaves.

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

Maintain contact with local councils and other parties interested in Twizell Wood in order to advocate PAWS restoration be carried out on those parts of Twizell Wood planted with conifers. Where suitable species do migrate from Twizell Wood into Fox & Parrot, either as regeneration or resident wildlife, these will be accepted as part of the wood's make-up and protected/encouraged if necessary.

6.0 WORK PROGRAMME

Year	Type of Work	Description	Due By
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APPENDIX 1: COMPARTMENT DESCRIPTIONS

Cpt No.	Area (ha)	Main Species	Year	Management Regime	Major Management Constraints	Key Features Present	Designations
1a	8.33	Ash	1998	High forest		Informal Public Access, Local Woodland Habitat, Secondary Woodland	Community Forest
<p>The first 8.33 ha of Fox & Parrot were planted in December 1998. The total area planted is 6.79 ha and consists of native species, all broadleaves, except for 0.25 hectares of Scots pine. Sessile oak and common ash are numerically the dominant species, with lesser amounts of other species including woody shrubs making up a total of 15300 trees and shrubs. Prior to planting, the ground was ripped at 2.0 m centres to break up any iron pans or other concretions that could affect tree growth then planting was carried out at a stocking density of 2250 plants per ha. The remaining 1.64 ha is managed as open ground made up of rides and small glades with a ground flora consisting of improved grassland. The compartment drops away gradually from the southern boundary to the northern boundary where it drops away sharply into Twizell wood</p>							
1b	4.96	Sessile oak	1998	High forest		Informal Public Access, Local Woodland Habitat, Secondary Woodland	Community Forest
<p>Of the 4.96 ha making up sub-cpt 1b, Lowther Forestry Ltd and local school children planted 3.77 ha during February and March 2004 with 6000 native trees and shrubs under the Forestry Commission's New Native Woodland Scheme. Prior to planting, the ground was ripped at 2.5 m centres to break up any iron pans or other concretions that could affect tree growth then planting was carried out at a stocking density of 1600 plants per ha. Planting was carried out in single species groups of between 5-30 trees/shrubs per group with plant spacing within groups varying from 1 to 5 m and with 5 to 10 m of open ground separating groups from each other. Shrub species are concentrated along the margins of the planting blocks. Sessile oak is numerically the dominant species across 1b, followed by ash and silver birch, with lesser amounts of other species including woody shrubs. A further 880 shrubs were also planted along the western boundary of 1b to create a new mixed hedge between the wood and neighbouring grazing land. The remaining 1.19 ha is managed as open ground made up of rides and small glades with a ground flora consisting of improved grassland. Generally flat along this compartment but a manageable sharp drop that follows the contours of the neighbouring Twizell wood to the centre of the northern boundary exists. A quarter acre dedication in the way of a circular path called Pete's Path is on the western side of the wood.</p>							

Appendix 2: Harvesting operations (20 years)

Forecast Year	Cpt	Operation Type	Work Area (ha)	Estimated vol/ha	Estimated total vol.
2018	1b	Selective Fell	0.10	50	5
2020	1a	Thin	8.59	6	50

GLOSSARY

Ancient Woodland

Ancient woods are defined as those where there has been continuous woodland cover since at least 1600 AD. In Scotland ancient woods are defined strictly as sites shown as semi-natural woodland on the 'Roy' maps (a military survey carried out in 1750 AD, which is the best source of historical map evidence) and as woodland all subsequent maps. However, they have been combined with long-established woods of semi-natural origin (originating from between 1750 and 1860) into a single category of Ancient Semi-Natural Woodland to take account of uncertainties in their identification. Ancient woods include Ancient Semi-Natural Woodland and plantations on Ancient Woodland Sites (see below). May support many species that are only found in ancient woodland.

Ancient Semi - Natural Woodland

Stands in ancient woods defined as those consisting predominantly of native trees and shrubs that have not obviously been planted, which have arisen from natural regeneration or coppice regrowth.

Ancient Woodland Site

Stands in ancient woods that have been converted to plantations, of coniferous, broadleaved or mixed species, usually for timber production, including plantations of native species planted so closely together that any semi-natural elements of the understorey have been suppressed.

Beating Up

Replacing any newly planted trees that have died in the first few years after planting.

Broadleaf

A tree having broad leaves (such as oak) rather than needles found on conifers (such as Scots pine).

Canopy

The uppermost layer of vegetation in a woodland, or the upper foliage and branches of an individual tree.

Clearfell

Felling of all trees within a defined area.

Compartment

Permanent management division of a woodland, usually defined on site by permanent features such as roads. See Sub-compartments.

Conifer

A tree having needles, rather than broadleaves, and typically bearing cones.

Continuous Cover forestry

A term used for managing woods to ensure that there are groups or individual trees of different ages scattered over the whole wood and that some mature tree cover is always maintained. Management is by repeated thinning and no large areas are ever completely felled all at once.

Coppice

Trees which are cut back to ground levels at regular intervals (3-25 years).

Exotic (non-native) Species

Species originating from other countries (or other parts of the UK) that have been introduced by humans, deliberately or accidentally.

Field Layer

Layer of small, non-woody herbaceous plants such as bluebells.

Group Fell

The felling of a small group of trees, often to promote natural regeneration or allow planting.

Long Term Retention

Discrete groups of trees (or in some cases single trees) that are retained significantly past their economic felling age. Operations may still be carried out within them and thinning is often necessary to maintain stability.

Minimum Intervention

Areas where no operations (such as thinning) will take place other than to protect public safety or possibly to control invasive exotic species.

Mixed Woodland

Woodland made up of broadleaved and coniferous trees.

National vegetation classification (NVC)

A classification scheme that allows an area of vegetation to be assigned to the standardised type that best matches the combination of plant species that it contains. All woodlands in the UK can be described as being one of 18 main woodland types (W1 - W18), which principally reflect soil and climatic conditions. For example, Upland Oakwoods are type W11, and normally occur on well drained infertile soils in the cooler and wetter north and west of Britain. Each main type can be subdivided into numerous subtypes. Most real woods contain more than one type or sub-type and inevitably some woods are intermediate in character and can't be properly described by any sub type.

Native Species

Species that arrived in Britain without human assistance.

Natural Regeneration

Naturally grown trees from seeds falling from mature trees. Also regeneration from coppicing and suckering.

Origin & Provenance

The provenance of a tree or seed is the place where seed was collected to grow the tree or plant. The origin is the geographical location within the natural range of a species from where seeds/tree originally derives. Thus an acorn collected from a Turkey oak in Edinburgh would have an Edinburgh provenance and a southern European origin.

Re-Stocking

Re-planting an area of woodland, after it has been felled.

Shrub Layer

Formed by woody plants 1-10m tall.

Silviculture

The growing and care of trees in woodlands.

Stand

Trees of one type or species, grouped together within a woodland.

Sub-Compartment

Temporary management division of a compartment, which may change between management plan periods.

Thinning

The felling of a proportion of individual trees within a given area. The remaining trees grow to fill in the space created.

Tubex or Grow or Tuley Tubes

Tubes placed over newly planted trees or natural regeneration that promote growth and provide protection from animals such as rabbits and deer.

Weeding

The control of vegetation immediately around newly planted trees or natural regeneration to promote tree growth until they become established. Either by hand cutting or with carefully selected weed killers such as glyphosate.

Windblow/Windthrow

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