

WOODLAND MANAGEMENT PLANS

VISION

The estate woodlands are to be managed on a commercial basis whilst maximizing the potential environmental benefits. With the production of quality sawlogs and fuelwood products to supply firewood markets and the estates district biomass boiler.

The silvicultural approach will be one of adaptive management that will optimize the productive conifer elements, ensuring full stocking, whilst continuing the restructuring of the age class distribution and diversification of species, to provide greater protection against climate change and novel pest and disease.

Enhancement of the biodiversity value and protection of the landscape features is also key to the management of the woodlands. The targeted interventions using regeneration felling, clear felling and thinning will improve the sustainability of the estate's timber income, whilst respecting the elements of ASNW and associated species. These aspects will also be enhanced through a number of interventions such as the removal of invasive species, the identification and management of veteran trees.

The numerous archaeological features will also be protected and enhanced in agreement with Historic England and other statutory bodies' guidance.

In 20-30 years' time the woods will see a greater variation in species and age class brought about by natural regeneration, enhancement planting, restocking and woodland creation. This will increase the aesthetic appeal, conservation value and sporting interests.

MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES

1. To produce high quality sustainable timber to all markets
2. To introduce elements of Continuous Cover Forestry where conditions will permit
3. To conserve and enhance the existing wildlife habitats and biodiversity, including removal of invasives such as rhododendron, and active management of an identified stock of veteran trees throughout the woodlands
4. Introduce measures to enhance the woodland bird assemblage for the area and enhance habitat for bat species, in particular Greater Horseshoe Bat
5. To protect the landscape value of the wood and enhance it where possible
6. To use sustainable woodland management to aid the River Allan Landscape recovery where possible
7. To sequester carbon and protect long-term carbon storage
8. To produce timber for the district biomass boiler
9. To protect and maintain all known archaeological features
10. To protect and maintain public rights of way
11. Establish and manage prescriptions in line with UKWAS and the UKFS

Woodland Type	Mgt Plan Area %	Age Structure	Notes
Beech dominated woodland with elements of conifer and/or mixed broadleaf	38%	Even (some uneven aged)	Sycamore regeneration in certain compartments
Oak dominated woodland, with elements of historic hazel coppice	36%	Uneven	Browsing line present in many areas from deer.
Mixed broadleaf	11%	Uneven	Most have a significant element of Ash
Conifer	14%	Even	Limited signs of regeneration: broken understory in the SP compartments with rhododendron
Open ground	1%	N/A	Area maintained as open ground

MANAGEMENT STRATEGY

Objectives 1 and 2: The areas of woodland that contain a conifer crop will be managed with a focus on producing a sustainable income from high quality saw log production, supplying traditional soft wood markets. There is also the potential to create a sustainable income through the harvesting of individual stems of high-quality hard wood, to supply local more bespoke markets. Hardwood thinning and felling of infected ash trees will supply lucrative firewood markets. The capital value of the woodland will be maintained/increased by ensuring full stocking and introducing some novel species, with the potential to reduce the woodland susceptibility to climate change and fulfil possible future markets.

As crops are thinned, they will be assessed for their suitability for CCF systems. However, previous interventions have not produced much in the way of natural regeneration. Much of the conifer crops understory is dominated by bracken; if subsequent thinning and bracken control does not produce natural regeneration, under planting and/or coupe felling could be utilized.

The estate may seek grant aid to support improving the woodland infrastructure. To allow compartments that have been inaccessible for timber harvesting purposes to be worked.

The overarching silvicultural approach will be one of adaptive management as climate change, pests, diseases, legislation and markets adapt over the next 10 years.

Objectives 3, 4 and 6: Due to the nature of the estate woodlands, the priorities and objectives will vary somewhat on a wood-by-wood basis. These will depend upon their character, species content, accessibility and landscape context. There is a long-term strategy to de-coniferise the Beech Belt by progressively thinning the remaining nurse crop of Western red cedar and Norway spruce which has almost been completed.

Operational management will take into consideration habitat management and species protection. All operations will be carried out according to current best practice guidance.

Advice will be taken from the river Allan landscape recovery project on any work that has the potential to affect the river's habitat.

Invasive rhododendron has the potential to be a major problem within the estate woodlands, particularly within Big Wood. Mechanical management has started with good results, an area of large overmature rhododendron was removed but needs to be sprayed periodically. The smaller patches of rhododendron will be brought under control through a mix of mechanical and chemical measures.

The estate has also commenced a program of veteran tree identification and management, particularly through techniques such as halo thinning. Where those veteran trees are located within conifer compartments, the halo thinning will remove conifer stems contributing to the gradual reduction of conifer within PAWS areas over time.

There will also be increased emphasis on ride and open-space management going forward. Open spaces and glades will be enhanced and enlarged where appropriate and mown on a regular cycle, including "2-zone" cutting regimes in selected areas. Fallen and standing deadwood will be retained, and created where necessary, with a minimum average of 20m³ per hectare as a target.

The estate is keen to promote these and other measures which will benefit a woodland bird assemblage typical of the Dorset Downs and Cranborne Chase (National Character Area 134), including pied flycatcher, spotted flycatcher, redstart, tree pipit and lesser spotted woodpecker. Bird boxes for pied flycatcher will be erected in small groups as opportunities allow in appropriate mixed stands where there is a lack of natural tree holes.

The estate is also keen to introduce measures that will benefit bat populations, in particular the Greater Horseshoe Bat which is known to be present within the woodlands and wider estate.

Some of the above measures are appropriate for GHB populations, such as ride and glade management to create open areas wider than 10 meters, and veteran tree management. The estate will also take other measures such as maintaining areas of dense woodland understory in appropriate woodland compartments.

Objective 5: The estate woodlands have a high landscape value with the iconic shape of the beech belt and the patch work nature of the mixed conifer and broadleaf woodland in the southeastern end of the estate. This patch work has been emulated in the new woodland creation scheme Deer Park Wood (cpt 49). Beech will be the preferred species choice around the beech belt.

Objective 8: The estate produces all the timber needed to run the district biomass boiler; this will continue through mostly hardwood thinning.

Objective 9: The woods have many archaeological features most of which are mapped, best practice will be used at all times and location of these will be communicated to contractors.

Objective 10: The network of PRow that can be seen on maps 2 and 3 will be maintained in a state suitable for public access. Tree safety will be assessed and action taken where necessary. When forestry operations are being conducted in their vicinity where possible signage and banks men will be used instead of closure and diversion.

IDENTIFIED RISKS & RESPONSE

Ash die-back (*Hymenoscyphus fraxineus*)

Fell and restock infected trees, retain trees that are showing signs of resilience. Some areas of relatively young woods are dominated by infected ash these will be felled and restocked.

Ips typographus

There are relatively large areas of Norway spruce many of these areas have suffered windblow over the past 5 years, this increases the threat posed, there for felling and restocking of unstable crops and quick tidying of windblow will be used to reduce the risk. Restocking with alternative species and reducing the amount of spruce supp. found on the estate.

Phytophthora ramorum

Owing to felling programs conducted over the past 10 years there is only a small proportion of larch left on the estate (very few sweet chestnuts owing to soil conditions). Therefore the remaining trees will be felled when mature, unless signs of *P. ramorum* are observed then pre-emptive action will be taken.

Deer (Roe, Fallow, Sika, Muntjac)

There is an established population of Roe deer on the estate: they do not cause much damage as long as tree tubes and fencing are used in conjunction with culling. The population of Muntjac is gradually increasing and poses more of a risk to CCF systems, therefore heavy culling and monitoring will be in place. Fallow and Sika have been observed on the estate. These larger species pose more of a risk to restocks, therefore culling and observation will be used in conjunction with higher protection.

Gray squirrels

Culling measures in place but continued monitoring of numbers is necessary, especially as restocks continue to mature.

CONSULTATION & FEEDBACK

Part of forest management planning is to contact statutory bodies, neighbours and any other local interested parties to establish any potential sensitivities, constraints or opportunities that could influence the future design, development and management of the woodlands.

The maps showing proposed operations and plans for each area are available for viewing and download on our website:

<https://www.fwforestry.co.uk/shaftesburyestate>

F&W Forestry would value your input into this process and welcomes your feedback on these woodlands and the future proposals. Feedback forms can be accessed here:

<https://forms.office.com/r/Y931RW1X6V>

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