

# Woodland Management Plan

To be completed by the plan author:	
<b>Woodland or Property name</b>	<b>Severn Gorge Countryside Trust</b>
<b>Woodland Management Plan case reference</b>	<b>1051647</b>
<b>The landowner agrees this plan as a statement of intent for the woodland</b>	<b>Yes</b>
<b>Plan author name</b>	<b>Nathan Morris</b>

For FC Use only:			
<b>Plan Period</b> <i>(dd/mm/yyyy - Ten years)</i>	<b>Approval Date:</b>		<b>Approved until:</b>
<b>Five Year Review Date</b>			

Revision No.	Date	Status (draft/final)	Reason for Revision
2	30/10/2020	Draft	Old plan not fit for purpose

#### Template user support:

The functionality in this version of the management plan template has been downgraded to ensure compatibility with Word 2003. This document is not protected and as such rows can be added & deleted or copied and pasted from tables where needed.

## UK Forestry Standard management planning criteria

Approval of this plan will be considered against the following UKFS criteria.  
Prior to submission review your plan against the criteria using the check list below.

UKFS management plan criteria		Minimum approval requirements	Author check <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
1	<p><b>Plan Objectives:</b> Forest management plans should state the objectives of management and set out how an appropriate balance between social, economic, and environmental objectives will be achieved.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Management plan objectives are stated.</li> <li>Consideration is given to environmental, economic and social objectives relevant to the vision for the woodland.</li> </ul>	Yes
2	<p><b>Forest context and important features in management strategy:</b> Forest management plans should address the forest context and the forest potential and demonstrate how the relevant interests and issues have been considered and addressed.</p>	<p>Management intentions communicated in <b>Sect. 6</b> of the management plan are in line with stated objective(s) <b>Sect. 2</b>.</p> <p>Management intentions should take account of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Relevant features and issues identified within the woodland survey (<b>Sect. 4</b>)</li> <li>Any potential threats to and opportunities for the woodland, as identified under woodland protection (<b>Sect. 5</b>).</li> <li>Relevant comments received from stakeholder engagement and documented in <b>Sect. 7</b>.</li> </ul>	Yes
3	<p><b>Identification of designations within and surrounding the site:</b> For designated areas, e.g. National Parks or SSSI, particular account should be taken of landscape and other sensitivities in the design of forests and forest infrastructure.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Survey information (<b>Sect. 4</b>) identifies any designations that impact on woodland management.</li> <li>Management intentions (<b>Sect. 6</b>) have taken account of any designations.</li> </ul>	Yes
4	<p><b>Felling and restocking to improve forest structure and diversity:</b> When planning felling and restocking, the design of existing forests should be re-assessed and any necessary changes made so that they meet UKFS requirements.</p> <p>Forests should be designed to achieve a diverse structure of habitat, species and ages of trees, appropriate to the scale and context. Forests characterised by a lack of diversity, due to extensive areas of even-aged trees, should be progressively restructured to achieve age class range.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Felling and restocking proposals are consistent with UKFS design principles (for example scale and adjacency).</li> <li>Current diversity (structure, species, age structure) of the woodland has been identified through the survey (<b>Sect. 4</b>).</li> <li>Management intentions aim to improve / maintain current diversity (structure, species, and ages of trees).</li> </ul>	Yes
5	<p><b>Consultation:</b> Consultation on forest management plans and proposals should be carried out according to forestry authority procedures and, where required, the Environmental Impact Assessment Regulations.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Stakeholder engagement is in line with current FC guidance and recorded in <b>Sect. 7</b>. The minimum requirement is for statutory consultation to take place, and this will be carried out by the Forestry Commission.</li> <li>Plan authors undertake stakeholder engagement (ref FC Ops Note 35) relevant to the context and setting of the woodland.</li> </ul>	Yes
6	<p><b>Plan Update and Review:</b> Management of the forest should conform to the plan, and the plan should be updated to ensure it is current and relevant.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A 5 year review period is stated on the 1st page of the plan.</li> <li><b>Sect. 8</b> is completed with 1 indicator of success per management objective.</li> </ul>	Yes

## Section 1: Property Details

Severn Gorge Countryside Trust			
Name	Nathan Morris	Owner YES	Tenant
Email	Nathanmorris@severngorge.org.uk	Contact Number	01952433880
Agent Name (if applicable)			
Email		Contact Number	
County	Shropshire	<a href="#">Local Authority</a>	Telford and Wrekin council/ Shropshire council
Grid Reference	SJ 676035	Single Business Identifier	107192327
What is the total area of this woodland management plan? (In hectares)		229.2ha	
You have included an Inventory and Plan of Operations with this woodland management plan?		Yes	
You have listed the maps associated with this woodland management plan?		Yes Forestry Comp Maps - 6, Woodland Habitat Types - 6, Constraint Maps - 6, Felling Maps - 5	
Do you intend to use the information within this woodland management plan and associated Inventory and Plan of Operations to apply for the following?		Felling Licence	Yes
		Thinning Licence	Yes
		Woodland Regeneration Grant	No
You declare that there is management control of the woodland detailed within the woodland management plan?		Yes	
You agree to make the woodland management plan publicly available?		Yes	

## Section 2: Vision and Objectives

To develop your long term vision, you need to express as clearly as possible the overall direction of management for the woodland(s) and how you envisage it will be in the future. This covers the duration of the plan and beyond.

### 2.1 Vision

Describe your long term vision for the woodland(s). (*Suggest 300 words max*)

Severn Gorge Countryside Trust's Vision is to manage this internationally important landscape using Continuous Cover Forestry (CCF) principles for the very long term. Over the duration of this plan the woodlands will be more open with an irregular structure made up of different age classes and mixed species. In woodlands with high ash content, there will be increased levels of deadwood both standing and fallen, trees next to highways and neighbouring properties and major footpath surveyed and worked on. Rides will be cut and open with improved shrubby levels providing habitat for invertebrates, mammals and birds. The open rides combined with the open irregular structure of the woodland will make it more inviting place to be. Groups will be using the woodland for recreation and education purposes. The woodland will be contributing to the trust finances, and the timber quality will be increasing.

### 2.2 Management Objectives

State the objectives of management demonstrating how sustainable forest management is to be achieved. Objectives are a set of specific, quantifiable statements that represent what needs to happen to achieve the long term vision.

No.	Objectives (include environmental, economic and social considerations)
1	Use CCF approach to managing the woodlands
2	Ride improvement to increase the amount of edge habitat for invertebrates and birds.
3	Produce a sustainable increment of timber over the holding each year.
4	Maintain and improve appropriate recreation opportunities.
5	Maintain, conserve and enhance biological diversity within the woodland ecosystem.
6	Protect Archaeology.
7	Maintain resilience to landslip on the steeper slopes.
8	Use the woodland as a learning space and tool for a wide range of groups.
9	Mitigate the effects of deer and squirrel damage on regeneration and tree health.
10	Ensure the long term survival of veteran trees.



## Section 3: Plan Review – Achievements

Use this section to identify achievements made against previous plan objectives. This section should be completed at the 5 year review and could be informed through monitoring activities undertaken.

Objectives	Achievement

## Section 4: Woodland Survey

This section is about collecting information relating to your woodland and its location, including any statutory constraints i.e. designations.

### 4.1 Description

Brief description of the woodland property:

#### Location

The Trust has most of its woodland on a 999 year lease from Telford and Wrekin Council. The Trust does own the freehold of 6.8ha at Preenshead in Jackfield. Most of the woodland is located in The Gorge Parish which is part of south Telford in Shropshire. The total woodland holding is 229.2 hectares of mixed, predominantly broadleaved woodland much of which is on the steep sides of the Severn Gorge as it flows through Ironbridge and the Upper Coalbrookdale Valley. The woodlands are part of an intimate landscape of traditional hay meadows, very small heathlands and ponds. The woodlands are surrounded by many neighbouring gardens and landowners including farmers and Large estates.

#### History

The makeup of the woodlands reflects the history of the complex industrial past of the area, it is the birthplaces of the Industrial Revolution. There is evidence via many charcoal pits that timber was originally made into charcoal for iron smelting, before Abraham Darby 1st pioneered the use of coke in 1709. The woodlands of Benthall Edge and Lincoln Hill were heavily used for the extraction of lime; coal and ironstone from as far back as medieval times, The woodlands of Lydebrook and Loamhole were used for the extraction of sandstone to make pig iron moulds.

#### Past management

Over the last ten years management has focussed on Sutton Wood. Using a CCF approach we have taken sample plots to work out basal area and top height to establish whether the compartments we were fully stocked. The Thinning was marked very much on an individual tree basis with a view to diversity species and age class.

Once marked the timber was sold to local contractor standing, while this brings a lower return for the Trust, it is a way of getting work completed without having to spend more resources than necessary. Due to the nature of the Gorge and the local road network there is very poor HGV access to many of the woodlands, this coupled with volatile timber prices and ever increasing harvesting cost limits the return we get from works. On the flip side the trust did get a return and some really good management carried out which has improved the woodland conditions for landscape, biodiversity and recreation.

Ride mowing and creation of different zones has been carried out on site where felling has taken place. These areas offer good edge habitat for birds and invertebrates. Bramble growth and bird populations flourish after felling work have taken place.

The Trust has a very robust tree safety program in place and works to both woodland edge and ride edge trees tree having been surveyed and work carried out. We have worked on hundreds of trees, leaving standing and fallen deadwood where safe to do so. Tree survey works sometimes give spontaneous benefits to woodland and ride edges and can be good ways to improve site conditions for biodiversity improvements.

#### Deer

After nearly 20 years of not having an active deer management programme, the Trust started culling in 2014/15. Extensive consultation took place with the FC, NE, DI, police, neighbouring landowners, and the public. In the past the Trust used to use large deer enclosures to keep deer from browsing areas where work took place. While they are somewhat effective they are easily damaged by falling trees and animals and have a large maintenance cost.

#### Squirrels

The Trust in the past used springer traps in wooden tunnels, while they can be effective they require a huge investment in traps and resources. The Trust stopped using this method of control after a young badger became stuck in a trap. The Trust then started shooting as it principle means of control.

#### Geology

The underlying geology is a complex mix of upper and lower coal measures, and Wenlock shale with a band of Wenlock Limestone which stretches from Wenlock Edge through Benthall Edge and Lincoln Hill. Soils vary from silty clay loams to clay.

#### Access and recreation

Access to the woodlands is good for the general public and visitors, but less so for people with special needs due to the nature of the terrain. The Trust has invested heavily in access infrastructure over the past 30 years. The Trust has a completely open access policy through all of the woodlands and which are traversed by a network of over 30 kilometres of rights of way and permissive paths. The Trust has also installed a network of woodland rides for forestry operations and maintenance, though ideally more would be created.

### Ecological

The Trust commissioned extensive baseline ecological data for all its woodlands in 2005 and has carried out botanical and bird surveys since on the majority of sites using a professional ecologists and ornithologists. Surveys of its woodland ponds and heathlands have taken place, as well as surveys of invertebrates, lichens, mosses and bats. The survey of Lloyds Coppice in 2013 (Boardman et al) revealed one red data book species of fly, seven nationally scarce species and 8 new species for Shropshire.

Ornithological report and sighting on site have shown that the Trust has red and amber list bird on many of its sites. There are records of kingfisher, cuckoo, spotted flycatcher, marsh tit, willow tit, bullfinch, song thrush and woodcock. Previous works in selective felling and ride management have in compartment 18 made significant improvements for birds.

We have records of many species of bat using our woodland sites. Soprano and Common Pipistrelle, Noctule , Brandt, Whiskered, Daubenton's, Long Brown Eared have all been recorded.

Dormice are an iconic species and while they are not present in Benthall Edge SSSI currently, the habitat is suitable for a reintroduction. Improvement works on connecting suitable areas of habitat for the dormice would increase the potential of the site. (We are currently in discussion with the PTES about a reintroduction to Benthall edge DEC 2020).

We aim to monitor our woodland sites every 10 years using our consultant ecologist. The work of the Trust has a sound ecological base, if we change management significantly or any propose any new features, the Trust carries out an ecological analysis with before and after reports.

### Designations

Much of the woodland estate lies within the Ironbridge Gorge World Heritage site and Severn Gorge Conservation Area, Making them very important landscape features. The Trust looks after 3 SSSI's, Benthall Edge, Lydebrook dingle and Lincoln Hill and a number of county wildlife sites.

Benthall edge citation is as follows:

An extensive area of ancient native mixed deciduous woodland on north and west facing scarp slopes overlooking the Severn Gorge. Most of this woodland lies on soils derived from Wenlock Limestone and Wenlock Shale of the Silurian Period, but an area at the eastern end of Benthall Edge wood is underlain by the clays and sandstones of the Coal Measures. The variation in geology is reflected in the vegetation. On the Coal Measure sandstones, acidic soils have developed, and these support sessile oak *Quercus petraea* and birch *Betula* spp. Woodland with a ground flora which includes wavy hair-grass *Deschampsia flexuosa*, greater woodrush *Luzula sylvatica*, bilberry *Vaccinium myrtillus* and hard fern *Blechnum spicant*.



The more base-rich soils on the Wenlock Limestone and Shale support more mixed woodland which includes a number of stand types dominated by (i) ash *Fraxinus excelsior* and wych elm *Ulmus glabra*, (ii) ash and hazel *Corylus avellana* and (iii) ash and small leaved lime *Tilia cordata*. There is also an area dominated by wild cherry *Prunus avium*. The ash/wych elm stands which contain abundant sessile oak are a woodland type characteristic of the Silurian limestones and calcareous shales of Shropshire and are particularly well developed. The ground flora includes plants such as ramsons *Allium ursinum*, sanicle *Sanicula europaea*, sweet woodruff *Galium odoratum* and dog's mercury *Mercurialis perennis* which are characteristic of base-rich soils.

Several uncommon plant species have been recorded, including fingered sedge *Carex digitata* in its only known Shropshire locality, wood barley *Hordelymus europaeus*, toothwort *Lathraea squamaria*, violet helleborine *Epipactis purpurata* and wild service tree *Sorbus torminalis*.

Although most of the woodland is believed to be primary, there are some areas of secondary woodland which have developed on ground disturbed by quarrying for limestone and clay. There are also areas of scrub and grassland with a rich flora which includes dyer's greenweed *Genista tinctoria* and a number of lime-loving plants (calicoles) including salad burnet *Sanguisorba minor*, burnet saxifrage *Pimpinella saxifraga*, greater knapweed *Centaurea scabiosa*, marjoram *Origanum vulgare* and pyramidal orchid *Anacamptis pyramidalis* (Natural England 2020).

Lydebrook Dingle SSSI citation is as follows:

A narrow, steep-sided wooded dingle on Coal Measures and basalt, through which flows the Lyde Brook, a tributary of the Severn. This is considered to be the best example of this type of ancient, relatively undisturbed, woodland in this part of Shropshire.

The woodland vegetation consists of three distinct stand types, dominated by i) ash *Fraxinus excelsior* and wych elm *Ulmus glabra*, ii) oak *Quercus petraea* and birch *Betula pendula*, and iii) alder *Alnus glutinosa*. There are also rock face communities and an area of marsh with abundant pendulous sedge *Carex pendula*. The woodland ground flora varies according to under-lying geology, as do the dominant trees. Oak and birch dominated stands have developed on acidic soils and possess a ground flora with abundant great wood-rush *Luzula sylvatica*, wavy hair-grass *Deschampsia flexuosa* and bilberry *Vaccinium myrtillus*. Ash and wych elm stands, which have been badly affected by Dutch elm disease, occur on more base-rich soils, and have a ground flora characterised by dog's mercury *Mercurialis perennis*, tufted hair-grass *Deschampsia cespitosa*, and woodruff *Galium odoratum*. The alder stands have pendulous sedge and giant horsetail *Equisetum telmateia*, and locally opposite-leaved golden saxifrage *Chrysosplenium oppositifolium*.

Lime rich water from the springs along the valley sides has caused the accumulation of large deposits of tufa, mainly in association with the moss *Cratoneuron commutatum*. Other plants found include uncommon species, such as wood barley *Hordelymus europaeus*, wood horsetail *Equisetum sylvaticum* and the moss *Hookeria lucens*. Other trees and shrubs include small-leaved lime *Tilia cordata*, yew *Taxus baccata* and field maple *Acer campestre* (Natural England 2020).

Lincoln Hill SSSI citation is as follows:

This is an historically famous fossil locality showing strata of Wenlock Series age. The abundant shelly faunas here have been studied since the time of Murchison, who first described and figured the site. This is the type locality for a number of fossil groups, notably ostracods, and has played a key role in recent years in fresh studies of the fossil faunas of the Wenlock Series of the Silurian period. Detailed studies of the Lincoln Hill faunas have been important in understanding the environment of the famous Wenlock reef and its adjacent back reef lagoon.

SGCT works closely with local people and has used extensive methods of community consultation for its past woodland works as well as having an active volunteer programme which has contributed thousands of hours of work.

## 4.2 Information

Use this section to identify features that are both present in your woodland(s) and where required, on land adjacent to your woodland. It may be useful to identify known features on an accompanying map. Woodland information for your property can be found on the [Magic](#) website or the Forestry Commission [Land Information Search](#).

Feature	Within Woodland(s)	Cpts	Adjacent to Woodland(s)	Map No
<b><u>Biodiversity- Designations</u></b>				
Site of Special Scientific Interest	Yes	12a,b,c, d,e,f,i,j, 1a,b,10 a	Yes	Constraints map
Special Area of Conservation	No		No	
Tree Preservation Order	No		No	
Conservation Area	Yes	7-17, 18a/b, 19-21	Yes	Constraints map
Special Protection Area	No		No	
Ramsar Site	No		No	
National Nature Reserve	No		No	
Local Nature Reserve	No		Yes	
Other (please Specify):	No	No	No	
<b>Notes</b>				

Feature	Within Woodland(s)	Cpts	Map No	Notes	
<b><u>Biodiversity - European Protected Species</u></b>					
Bat	Species (if known)	Yes	All	Refer to Bat survey	Soprano and Common Pipistrelle, Noctule, Brandt, Whiskered, Daubenton's, Long Brown Eared
Dormouse		Possible reintroduction (release date June 2021)	12	CPT maps	Dormouse project in discussion Dec 2020
Great Crested Newt		Yes	5,16, 18	habitat maps	Lloyds, Wynnes, Sutton Wood ponds.

Otter	Yes	12 h, 12 g, 12i, 13a, 13c	Refer to SGCT records	Ladywood riverside	
Sand Lizard	No				
Smooth Snake	No				
Natterjack Toad	No				
<b>Biodiversity – Priority Species</b>					
<a href="#">Schedule 1 Birds</a>	Species: Kingfisher Willow tit	Yes	1,4,16,18,17	Refer to survey	Other species if Interest, Cuckoo, Spotted Flycatcher, Marsh tit, Bullfinch, Song Thrush, yellow hammer and gold finch.
Mammals (Red Squirrel, Water Vole, Pine Marten etc)	No				
Reptiles (grass snake, adder, common lizard etc)	Yes			Refer to survey	Crostan, Dale Coppice.
Plants	Yes			Refer to Working copy	Yellow Bird's Nest. Lesser Butterfly Orchid
Fungi/Lichens	yes			Refer to Working copy	
Invertebrates (butterflies, moths, beetles etc)	Yes			Refer to survey	Dingy Skipper, White Admiral, White Letter Hairstreak, Dark Brocade, Oak Lutestring, Small Emerald, Dot Moth, Argent and Sable, Cinnabar
Amphibians (pool frog, common toad)	Yes	18,14,12,5	Habitat maps		frog, toad
Other (please Specify):	No				
<b>Historic Environment</b>					
Scheduled Monuments	No				
Unscheduled Monuments	Yes	9,10,12,14,16,18	Refer to structure report		60 historic structures including a cold store and 18th Century Lime kilns

				and remains of a Rotunda
Registered Parks and Gardens	No			
Boundaries and Veteran Trees	Yes	all	habitat maps	
Listed Buildings	No			
Other (please Specify):	No			
<b>Landscape</b>				
<u>National Character Area</u> (please Specify): Mid Severn sandstone Plateau				
National Park	No			
Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty	No			
Other (please Specify): Ironbridge Gorge World heritage site	Yes	7-17, 18a, 18b, 19-21	Constraint maps	
<b>People</b>				
CROW Access	No			
Public Rights of Way (any)	Yes	All	Refer SGCT data	
Other Access Provision	Yes	All		Permissive access all sites
Public Involvement	Yes	All		
Visitor Information	Yes	All		
Public Recreation Facilities	No			
Provision of Learning Opportunities	Yes	3	Compartment maps	SGCT Outdoor Learning Programme and Madeley nursery.
Anti-social Behaviour	Yes/No	8,9,12	Compartment maps	Mountain and Motor bikes, anti-social behaviour including alcohol, drugs and litter.
Other (please Specify):	Yes/No			
<b>Water</b>				
Watercourses	Yes	12	Habitat maps	
Lakes	No			
Ponds	Yes	5,12,14,16,18	Habitat maps	Lloyds Coppice , Ladywood and Wynnes Coppice
Other (please Specify):				



## 4.3 Habitat Types

This section is to consider the habitat types within your woodland(s) that might impact/inform your management decisions. Larger non-wooded areas within your woodland should be classified according to broad habitat type where relevant this information should also help inform your management decisions. Woodlands should be designed to achieve a diverse structure of habitat, species and ages of trees, appropriate to the scale and context of the woodland.

Feature	Within Woodland(s)	Cpts	Map No	Notes
<b>Woodland Habitat Types</b>				
Ancient Semi-Natural Woodland	Yes	1a1b 4a4b 5,12, 16,1 8, 20	Habit at maps	Benthall Edge and Lydebrook Dingle SSSI's have several stands of Herb paris, early purple orchid,
Planted Ancient Woodland Site (PAWS)	Yes	2,4c, 11	Habit at maps	Though these areas are mapped as Paws on the national inventory, there is generally low conifer content and a diverse species mix already.
Semi-natural features in PAWS	No			
Lowland beech and yew woodland	No			
Lowland mixed deciduous woodland	Yes	All	Habit at maps	Peterken has pointed out that SGCT woods are in a transition zone between Upland and Lowland and are unique and don't quite fit these definitions
Upland mixed ash woods	No			
Upland Oakwood	No			
Wet woodland	Yes	1b		
Wood-pasture and parkland	No			
Other (please Specify):	No			
<b>Non Woodland Habitat Types</b>				
Blanket bog	No			
Fenland	No			

Lowland calcareous grassland	Yes	12j	Habit at maps	Patten's Rock Quarry
Lowland dry acid grassland	No			
Lowland heath land	Yes	9,15,	Habit at maps	Crostan, Dale Coppice
Lowland meadows	No			
Lowland raised bog	No			
Rush pasture	No			
Reed bed	No			
Wood pasture	No			
Upland hay meadows	No			
Upland heath land	No			
Unimproved grassland	No			
Peat lands	No			
Wetland habitats	No			
Other (please Specify):	No			



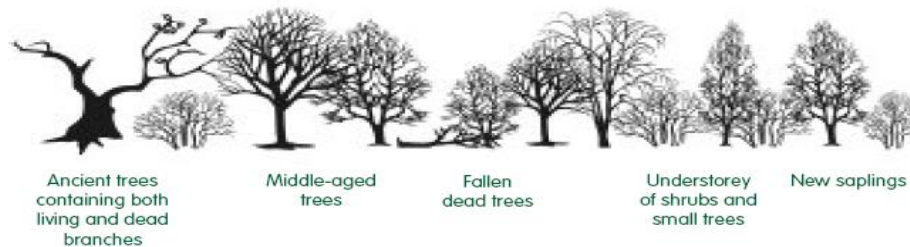
## 4.4 Structure

This section should provide a snapshot of the current structure of your woodland as a whole. A full inventory for your woodland(s) can be included in the separate Plan of Operations spreadsheet. Ensuring woodland has a varied structure in terms of age, species, origin and open space will provide a range of benefits for the biodiversity of the woodland and its resilience. The diagrams below show an example of both uneven and even aged woodland.

Woodland Type (Broadleaf, Conifer, Coppice, Intimate Mix)	Percentage of Mgt Plan Area	Age Structure (even/uneven)	Notes (i.e. understory or natural regeneration present)
Native broadleaves	80	Even aged	Understorey is mixed in terms of amount and species including hazel by area as is natural regeneration. Deer has been a problem with regeneration
Intimate mix	20	Even aged	Larch is the dominant conifer mix species

Uneven-aged woodland – many wildlife habitats because of high diversity

Even-aged woodland – tidy but of low diversity



## Section 5: Woodland Protection

Woodlands in England face a range of threats; this section allows you to consider the potential threats that could be facing your woodland(s). Use the simple Risk Assessment process below to consider any potential threats to their woodland(s) and whether there is a need to take action to protect their woodlands.

**Note:** To add more tables, Copy the table and Paste below.

### 5.1 Risk Matrix

The matrix below provides a system for scoring risk. The matrix also indicates the advised level of action to take to help manage the threat.

<b>Impact</b>	High	Plan for Action	Action	Action
	Medium	Monitor	Plan for Action	Action
	Low	Monitor	Monitor	Plan for Action
		Low	Medium	High
<b>Likelihood of Presence</b>				

### 5.2 [Plant Health](#)

Threat (e.g. Ash Dieback, <i>Phytophthora</i> , Needle Blight etc)	Ash Dieback (ADB)
Likelihood of presence (high/medium/low)	high
Impact (high/medium/low)	high
Response (inc protection measures)	Ash is an important component of the woodlands and in some sites the percentage is quite high. ADB will inflict changes on the woodland make up like those seen during the 1970 with DED. There is also a massive cost implication. Many of the Trust woodlands are next to roads, houses and Gardens. Our strategy will be to continue to monitor for ash die back focussing on the areas with the high risk to people, road and buildings. During our biannual Tree Safety Assessment, our consultant will highlight areas that have advanced ash die back. Where trees need to be worked on whether they are ash trees or not we will seek to use any traffic management or personnel working on site to try and remove ash trees in that area, whether they are showing advanced

	<p>symptoms or not. Using this approach will help spread the cost of the work and reduce the risk over time. Trees within a woodland setting and that pose a low risk will be left; this will increase the standing and deadwood component in the woodland.</p> <p>During selective and thinning operations we will favour other species on site and seek to reduce the percentage of ash in the woodland composition. Removal of ash completely from the woodland will not be favoured.</p> <p>While the cost and changes will be significant, many of the Trust woodlands already have a good species mix and the woodland work can continue to improve the resilience to ADB</p>
--	---

Threat (e.g. Ash Dieback, <i>Phytophthora</i> , Needle Blight etc)	Phytophthora ramorum
Likelihood of presence (high/medium/low)	low
Impact (high/medium/low)	medium
Response (inc protection measures)	<p>The outbreak map dated 2020 shows that P.ramorum is moving towards the Shropshire border. While it not an immediate threat, the Trust will monitor the situation and keep a track on the movement of the disease.</p> <p>Larch is the most common conifer in the woodlands. Infection with P.ramorum would in conjunction with ADB have a massive impact on the landscape, climate change resilience and biodiversity. If clear felling had to take place the Trust would still be able to sell the timber. We will continue to remove any Rhododendron.</p>

Threat (e.g. Ash Dieback, <i>Phytophthora</i> , Needle Blight etc)	Acute oak decline (AOD)
Likelihood of presence (high/medium/low)	low
Impact (high/medium/low)	medium
Response (inc protection measures)	<p>ACD is spreading in and around Shropshire. We will monitor the movements using the distribution maps from FR. Using our biannual</p>

	Tree Safety Assessment as a monitoring tool we should be able to monitor and identify cases within a small timescale. While tree diseases are impacting the woodlands more, the Trust woodlands do have good species mix and using our CCF approach we can favour other species during work, increasing the overall resilience of the woodland.
--	---

Threat (e.g. Ash Dieback, <i>Phytophthora</i> , Needle Blight etc)	
Likelihood of presence (high/medium/low)	
Impact (high/medium/low)	
Response (inc protection measures)	

### 5.3 [Deer](#)

Species - Likelihood of presence (high/medium/low)	Fallow, Muntjac- High
Impact (high/medium/low)	Medium
Response (inc protection measures)	<p>From our impact and damage assessments both fallow deer and Muntjac deer are known to be present across whole area. Following 2 years of consultation, carrying out deer impact surveys (2008/2014). We now employ a deer stalker who began work in season 2014/15. We have a deer management plan in place which details our cull targets and follow the D.I best practice guidelines. Following several years of trying deer exclosures with varying degrees of success, we have moved away from installing them, opting for smaller exclosures around single or small groups of trees. The Trust has in the past tried to collaborate with neighbouring land owners but there is not an appetite for setting up a deer management group for the local area or even sharing information.</p> <p>We will continue with the annual cull as we are starting to see success in terms of reduced impacts of deer in the woodland that we shoot</p>

	in. The cull figures will be updated and informed by the impact and damage surveys. Moving forward small deer enclosure plots could be installed to protect any natural regeneration from grazing pressure.
--	---

## 5.4 [Grey Squirrels](#)

Likelihood of presence (high/medium/low)	High
Impact (high/medium/low)	High
Response (inc protection measures)	<p>Squirrel control requires a national effort. At a local level a landscape scale approach is need to effective control grey squirrels, add in the complexity of an urban fringe environment and the high number of recreational users makes effective squirrel control difficult over the Trust woodlands.</p> <p>The Trust in the past used springer traps in wooden tunnels, while they can be effective they require a huge investment in traps and resources.</p> <p>Currently we shoot squirrels in the high risk time for bark stripping which is April to August. This sits well with the deer seasons and uses our limited resources in the most effective way.</p> <p>Going forward Good Nature traps which are auto resetting look like a good use of resources. Good nature trap would only be considered on sites where no protected species where present, they would not be used in Benthall Edge if the dormouse Reintroduction took place. Pine Marten’s are not known to be present in any of the Trust woodlands, but there are population in Shropshire and they spread to the woodland within the time scale of this plan. If that were to happen trapping of squirrels would stop.</p>

--	--

## 5.5 Livestock and Other Mammals

Threat (Sheep, Horse, Rabbit etc)	Escaped livestock
Likelihood of presence (high/medium/low)	Low
Impact (high/medium/low)	high
Response (inc protection measures)	<p>Benthall Edge SSSI is surrounded by pasture and livestock have escaped into the woodland on a number of occasions. While the sheep are usually quickly removed by the farmer, the damage they cause could be detrimental to the woodland especially if a large number of sheep escaped.</p> <p>The Trust seeks to keep the good working relationship with the farmer so if sheep to escape we can communicate effectively to remove the sheep as quickly as possible.</p>

Threat (Sheep, Horse, Rabbit etc)	
Likelihood of presence (high/medium/low)	
Impact (high/medium/low)	
Response (inc protection measures)	

## 5.6 Water & Soil

Threat (Soil Erosion, Acidification of Water, Pollution incidents etc)	Soil erosion leading to landslip and landslip blocking river
Likelihood of presence (high/medium/low)	Low
Impact (high/medium/low)	high
Response (inc protection measures)	Check regularly for areas of landslip and create an irregular stand structure of diverse species that is more wind firm than even aged stand of trees.

Threat (Soil Erosion, Acidification of Water, Pollution incidents etc)	Pollution from machines working on site.
Likelihood of presence (high/medium/low)	low
Impact (high/medium/low)	medium
Response (inc protection measures)	Watercourse drains and ditches are identified in the OSA and associated site plans before work starts. When planning work, the Trust tries to keep distance from wet areas and watercourses to prevent ground damage and disturbance, this reduces the likelihood of any spills making into watercourses. During work if inclement weather causes ground conditions to deteriorate then we endeavour to stop work and restart once they have improved. Contractors working onsite with machinery should have spill kit on site at all times to deal with incidents.

## 5.7 Environmental

Threat (Pollution, Fire, Flood, Wind, Invasive Species, etc)	Fire
Likelihood of presence (high/medium/low)	low
Impact (high/medium/low)	Medium
Response (inc protection measures)	While forest fires are a rarity in the Gorge, the Trust does get small fires that are not extinguished properly at some sites. The Crostan has a dense layer of needle litter that smoulders rather than flares up. These fires can be extinguished by hand. The fire services have been called upon for other deliberate fires across the Trust land holding but these do not spread far and fire breaks are considered unnecessary

Threat (Pollution, Fire, Flood, Wind, Invasive Species, etc)	Flood
Likelihood of presence (high/medium/low)	Medium
Impact (high/medium/low)	low

Response (inc protection measures)	Areas of woodland that are within the flood plain of the river Severn seem adapted to that location. Climate change and particularly the change in the intensity of weather events and the frequency of flood will have an impact on the riparian woodland. Increased assessment of these areas after flood events should take place.
------------------------------------	---

## 5.8 Social

Threat (Rights of Way, CROW, permissive access, events sporting rights, Anti-social Behaviour etc)	Anti-social use
Likelihood of presence (high/medium/low)	low
Impact (high/medium/low)	medium
Response (inc protection measures)	<p>Due to the location of some of the woodland next to area of deprived communities' anti-social behaviour manifest itself as fires, fly tipping and encroachments.</p> <p>We also get anti-social behaviour from inappropriate use of the footpath/ride network. We work with Police, Telford &amp; Wrekin Council, Shropshire Council &amp; statutory agencies to deter illegal mountain bike, motorbike and horse riding on sites.</p>

Threat (Rights of Way, CROW, permissive access, events sporting rights etc)	
Likelihood of presence (high/medium/low)	
Impact (high/medium/low)	
Response (inc protection measures)	

## 5.9 Economic

Threat (Timber forecasting, markets, products, operational costs etc)	Timber prices
---	---------------



Likelihood of presence (high/medium/low)	high
Impact (high/medium/low)	low
Response (inc protection measures)	The volatility of timber price is not a new threat to woodland owners. With access so restricted in the Gorge, timber prices will always be on the low end of the scale. While the Trust does get a smaller return harvested timber the wider benefits of the felling taking place out weight the lower price received.

Threat (Timber forecasting, markets, products, operational costs etc)	Increasing operational and fuel costs
Likelihood of presence (high/medium/low)	Medium
Impact (high/medium/low)	Medium
Response (inc protection measures)	Increased costs have a knock on effect to the already low price we receive. As above the benefits of the harvesting work help to balance the lower price.

## 5.10 Climate Change Resilience

Threat (Uniform Structure, Provenance, Lack of Diversity etc)	Species poor mixes and poor woodland structure
Likelihood of presence (high/medium/low)	Medium
Impact (high/medium/low)	Medium
Response (inc protection measures)	Restructure the woodland through thinning and selective felling using a CCF approach. A well-structured mixed species will build resilience against climate change. We will favour trees that are growing well on site, very much on an individual basis, taking a flexible view and creating a species mix that contains a percentage of conifers will also add an element of resilience. Well managed woodland will offer better protection from the increased and severity of winter storms.

Threat (Uniform Structure, Provenance, Lack of Diversity etc)	
---	--

Likelihood of presence (high/medium/low)	
Impact (high/medium/low)	
Response (inc protection measures)	

Threat (Uniform Structure, Provenance, Lack of Diversity etc)	
Likelihood of presence (high/medium/low)	
Impact (high/medium/low)	
Response (inc protection measures)	

## Section 6: Management Strategy

This section requires a statement of intent, setting out how you intend to achieve your management objectives and manage important features identified within the previous sections of the plan. A detailed work programme by sub-compartment can be added to the Plan of Operations.

Management Objective / Feature	Management Intention
<p>use CCF approach to managing the woodlands</p>	<p>Selective felling and thinning to certain compartments to open up and diversify stand structure to create woodland with a range of size classes and mixed species, helping mitigate the effect of climate change and pests and diseases.</p> <p>Each stand to be worked on will be measured for basal area and top height to give an accurate picture of stocking density and this will be recorded as a baseline for future management operations. It will also give a good forecast on volumes to be removed helping to reduce the likelihood that too much timber is removed when operations start.</p> <p>The impact of ADB in areas where it is dominant will be should not be underestimated; it reduces the short/medium term options when it comes to marking for operations and natural regeneration success. The Trust woodland already have a good species mix so impact of ADB can partly be mitigated by the favouring of other species such as SYC, Maple, Elm, Birch and Cherry. Problems may arise if <i>P. ramorum</i> does infect larch in the Gorge. We have sites of secondary woodland that are Ash Larch mixes. ADB will give the Trust a chance to work on it deadwood targets.</p> <p>ADB will bring forward the Trust vision to diversify stand structure to create woodland with a range of size classes and mixed species, albeit in a non-conventional way.</p> <p>Planting on sites where natural regeneration has not established will be considered for enrichment planting after 2 years. Small exclosures will be installed to reduce the grazing pressure on the natural regulation and improve the success.</p>

	<p>Where Work is carried out by Contractors we will endeavour to make sure that the FC advice on Bio security is followed by supplying contractors with the Keep it clean leaflet, and spot checks to ensure the advice is being followed.</p>
<p>Ride improvement to increase the amount of edge habitat for invertebrates and birds</p>	<p>Zone 1 of the ride network is mown annually. Where zone 2 existing already we will aim to manage this on 3 to 5 year rotation allowing the shrubby layer to get between 2m and 4m,. When cutting takes place it will be on one side of the ride only. When selective felling and thinning take place we will aim to create Zone 2 where it does not exist at the currently. We will follow the FC guide on manging open space for wildlife. These ride works will also allow us to connect areas of good habitat increasing the ability for species such a dormouse and willow tit to expand into larger areas. This work will also increase the feeding corridor for the many species of bats fond in the woodlands.</p>
<p>Produce a good increment of timber over the holding each year.</p>	<p>We will measure the basal area of each compartment we work in with the aim of gradually converting the stand from even aged/size to a range of sizes from regeneration to saw log sized trees. This data will allow us to measure the effect of the works we are carrying out.</p>
<p>Maintain and improve appropriate recreation opportunities</p>	<p>We carry out a bi annual footpath survey of all recreation routes and rides to make sure they are safe for users, works that arise from these surveys are then risk assessed and dealt with on their risk score. Major improvement or replacement of recreational infrastructure is linked to external grants and funding streams.</p>
<p>Maintain, conserve and enhance biological diversity within the woodland ecosystem.</p>	<p>When Selective felling and thinning take place we aim to work towards a target of 100 cubic metres/ha standing and fallen deadwood (ratios of each will vary per compartment to make up 100/ha total) suggested by Dr George Peterken.</p> <p>The selective felling and thinning works are spread over the Gorge area. The works will open up the woodland structure and allow ground flora and shrubby layer to increase.</p>

	<p>This work combined with the ride mowing increase the scale of the habitat improvement for invertebrates and UK bap species of bird, of cuckoo, yellow hammer, marsh tit, willow tit, bullfinch and song thrush.</p> <p>The increased shrubby habitat and dead wood will help improve invertebrate habitat, a key bat food source. The location of many of the woodland along the edge off or within the vicinity the river further improves the habitat for bat foraging.</p> <p>The re-introduction of the dormouse in Benthall Edge would be a huge success and the connectivity and ride works would improve the habitat for not only the dormice but the birds, bats and the biodiversity of the wider landscape.</p> <p>When the Trust carries out sound woodland management based on good practice and ecological principals, our extensive survey data shows that biodiversity thrives with our sites.</p> <p>Coppicing of ride edges and is established coups will continue to add improvements for biodiversity. While coppicing is not a system used extensively in the Trust, There are established coups that are cut on rotation of between 7 and 15 years, these areas diversify the structure of woodland.</p>
Protect Archaeology	<p>Selective felling and thinning works will aim to stay away from the areas with archaeology. Where works do take place we will consult with an archaeologist and the SHINE data to determine the best course of action.</p>
Maintain resilience to landslip on the steeper slopes	<p>Using the data provided by Telford and Wrekin Council's slope stability survey, ensure that during thinning operations trees that contribute to slope stability are retained and others that could do so are also retained.</p>
Use the woodland as a learning space and tool for a wide range of groups.	<p>We will work with Universities, schools and nursery to encourage the use the landscape as a classroom and teaching aid. Where resources allow staff will explain the work on the Trust to these groups. We aim to keep and run the Outdoor Learning Programme going, a series of walks and workshops to better engage people in the local landscape. Our Volunteer</p>

	programme will continue to run and will be used on site to carry out maintenance and improvement works.
Mitigate the effects of deer and squirrel damage on regeneration and tree health	<p>We intend to continue with our Deer management works and to will conduct impact and damage surveys and adjust our cull figures on the results. The cull figure will on be a guide and not a target. While a landscape scale approach is need with deer management, there is little appetite from neighbouring landowners to collaborate. We will aim to keep those discussions going. Use of enclosure plots and small deer fenced areas will allow natural regeneration and planted trees to successfully establish.</p> <p>Grey squirrel damage in noted in the annual tree safety assessment. Without a national effort and a truly landscape scale approach we aim to continue to shoot squirrels in the high risk time for bark stripping which is April to August. If resources allowed we would aim to control squirrels using an auto reset trap on certain sites.</p> <p>Due to the location of the woodland and the amount of recreational user and visitor it is not appropriate to control squirrels in all areas. We focus on the more remote, less visited areas.</p>
Ensure the long term survival of veteran trees	Carry out a survey for veteran trees in the compartments to be worked within the Plan of Operations and devise prescriptions for management on a selection of the trees that would most benefit. Using CCF approach retention of veteran trees as a seed source is important. The long term retention of veteran trees will also offer improved roosting potential for bats and birds.



## Section 7: Stakeholder Engagement

There can be a requirement on both the FC and the owner to undertake consultation/engagement. Please refer to [Operations Note 35](#) for further information. Use this section to identify people or organisations with an interest in your woodland and also to record any engagement that you have undertaken, relative to activities identified within the plan.

Work Proposal	Individual/ Organisation	Date Contacted	Date feedback received	Response	Action
Slective felling and thinning works and Consultation on plan	Telford & Wrekin Council	25/02/2021			
Work in SSSI and Consultation on plan	Natural England for SSSI's	25/02/2021			
Consultation on plan	Tickwood, NT Benthall Hall, Apley Estate	25/02/2021			
Consultation on plan	Gorge Parish Council Broseley Town council	25/02/2021			
Consultation on plan	Historic environment team, Shropshire Council.	25/02/2021			
Consultation on plan	English heritage, historic England	25/02/2021			




## Section 8: Monitoring

Indicators of progress/success should be defined for each management objective and then checked at regular intervals. Other management activities could also be considered within this monitoring section. The data collected will help to evaluate progress.

<b>Management Objective/Activities</b>	<b>Indicator of Progress/Success</b>	<b>Method of Assessment</b>	<b>Frequency of Assessment</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>	<b>Assessment Results</b>
Use CCF approach to managing the woodlands	Plan of ops has been completed	Timber Volumes from works	After Works have taken Place	SGCT staff	
Ride improvement to increase the amount of edge habitat for invertebrates and birds	Mowing of ride zones	Fixed point photography	Year after work takes place	SGCT staff	
Produce a good increment of timber over the holding each year.	Up to date mensuration data	Survey	Before selective /thinning works take place	SGCT staff	
Maintain and improve appropriate recreation opportunities	Foot path survey	Survey	Every 6 months	SGCT staff	
Improve the biodiversity within the woodland.	An increase in percentage deadwood fallen and standing. Bird and invertebrate surveys. Woodland monitoring	Survey	Each woodland site is monitored every 10 years	Consultant ecologist	

Improve the biodiversity within the woodland.	Survey for Bap species.	Survey	Every five years	Consultant ecologist	
Maintain resilience to landslip on the steeper slopes	Limit number of landslips	Survey	Every five years	SGCT staff/T&W Council engineers	
Use the woodland as a learning space and tool for a wide range of groups.	Feedback from site users	Form	After each use or block of visits	SGCT staff	
Mitigate the effects of deer and squirrel damage on regeneration and tree health	Annual cull figures and impact and activity survey results in trustee report	Survey	annually	SGCT staff/Stalker	

## UK Forestry Standard woodland plan assessment

For FC office use and approval only:

UKFS management plan criteria	Minimum approval requirements	Achieved	Review notes
<p><b>Plan Objectives:</b> Forest management plans should state the objectives of management and set out how an appropriate balance between social, economic, environmental objectives will be achieved.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Management plan objectives are stated.</li> <li>• Consideration is given to environmental, economic and social objectives relevant to the vision for the woodland.</li> </ul>	Yes/No	
<p><b>Forest context and important features in management strategy:</b> Forest management plans should address the forest context and the forest potential and demonstrate how the relevant interests and issues have been considered and addressed.</p>	<p>Management intentions communicated in <b>Sect. 6</b> of the management plan are in line with stated objective(s) in <b>Sect. 2</b>.</p> <p>Management intentions should take account of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Relevant features and issues identified in the woodland survey (<b>Sect. 4</b>).</li> <li>• Any potential threats to and opportunities for the woodland, as identified under woodland protection (<b>Sect. 5</b>).</li> <li>• Relevant comments received from stakeholder engagement are documented in <b>Sect. 7</b>.</li> </ul>	Yes/No	
<p><b>Identification of designations within and surrounding the woodland site:</b> For designated areas, e.g. National Parks or SSSI, particular account is taken of landscape and other sensitivities in the design of forests and forest infrastructure.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Survey information (<b>Sect. 4</b>) identifies any designations that impact on woodland management.</li> <li>• Management intentions (<b>Sect. 6</b>) have taken account of any designations.</li> </ul>	Yes/No	
<p><b>Felling and restocking to improve forest structure and diversity:</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Felling and restocking proposals are consistent with UKFS design principles (for example scale and adjacency).</li> </ul>	Yes/No	

<p>When planning felling and restocking, the design of existing forests should be re-assessed and any necessary changes made to meet UKFS requirements.</p> <p>Forests should be designed to achieve a diverse structure of habitat, species and age range of trees, appropriate to the scale and context.</p> <p>Forests characterised by a lack of diversity, due to extensive areas of even-aged trees, should be progressively restructured to achieve age class range.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Current diversity (structure, species, age structure) of the woodland has been identified through the survey (<b>Sect. 4</b>).</li> <li>• Management intentions aim to improve / maintain current diversity (structure, species, and ages of trees).</li> </ul>		
<p><b>Consultation:</b></p> <p>Consultation on forest management plans and proposals should be carried out according to forestry authority procedures and, where required, the Environmental Impact Assessment (Forestry) Regulations.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Stakeholder consultation is in line with current FC guidance, and recorded in <b>Sect. 7</b>. The minimum requirement is for statutory consultation to take place, and this will be carried out by the Forestry Commission.</li> <li>• Plan authors undertake stakeholder engagement (ref FC Ops Note 35) relevant to the context and setting of the woodland.</li> </ul>	<b>Yes/No</b>	
<p><b>Plan update and review:</b></p> <p>Management of the forest should conform to the plan, and the plan should be updated to ensure it is current and relevant.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A 5 year review period is stated on the 1<sup>st</sup> page of the plan</li> <li>• <b>Sect. 8</b> is completed with 1 indicator of success identified per management objective</li> </ul>	<b>Yes/No</b>	

<p><b>Approved in Principle</b></p> <p><i>This means the FC is happy with your plan; it meets UKFS requirements.</i></p> <p><i>a) You can use it to support a CS-HT or other grant application.</i></p> <p><b><i>b) You do not yet have a licence to undertake any tree felling in the plan.</i></b></p>	<p><b>Name (WO or FM):</b></p>	<p><b>Date:</b></p>
<p><b>Approved</b></p>	<p><b>Name (AO, WO or FM):</b></p>	<p><b>Date:</b></p>

*This means FC is happy with your plan; it meets UKFS requirements, and we have also approved a felling licence for any tree felling in the plan (where required).*