

Beyond the Bark & Timber...
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Woodland Management Considerations

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Country Land & Business Association



- ‘The CLA’ – member body for owners of rural land & businesses.
- We champion, protect & enhance our rural economy, environment & way of life.
- We advise our members & influence rural policy.
- Our members responsible for 10m acres of England & Wales.



■ What I'll cover



- Overview of Woodland management plans
- Felling Licenses, restocking obligations & other consents
- Funding for woodland management
- *Long term success of activities in a woodland setting depends its sustainable management*



■ Woodland Management Plans (WMPs)



- A structured way to organize everything involved in managing your woodland
- Helps you plan, modify & communicate objectives & work programme
- Helps you monitor progress & secure funding for practical management activity
- *‘What have you got, what do you want to achieve, how and by when?’*



■ WMPs: What's involved?

- **Property details:**
 - Property name, location, ownership, contact details, area, attached maps, duration, review date etc
- **Vision:**
 - Overall statement(s) of direction of management & how you envisage the woodland to be in the future. Covers duration of plan & beyond:
 - Driven by nature of the woodland & owner's aims, eg:
 - *'Long term vision is to improve diversity in the woodland in terms of age, species & height, produce a sustainable yield of timber while adding ecological value'*.
 - *'Maintain & enhance amenity & biodiversity value of the forest through sympathetic management of key areas; by adopting practices which minimize damage from operations; and to exploit opportunities to enhance the environment for woodland based activities'*.



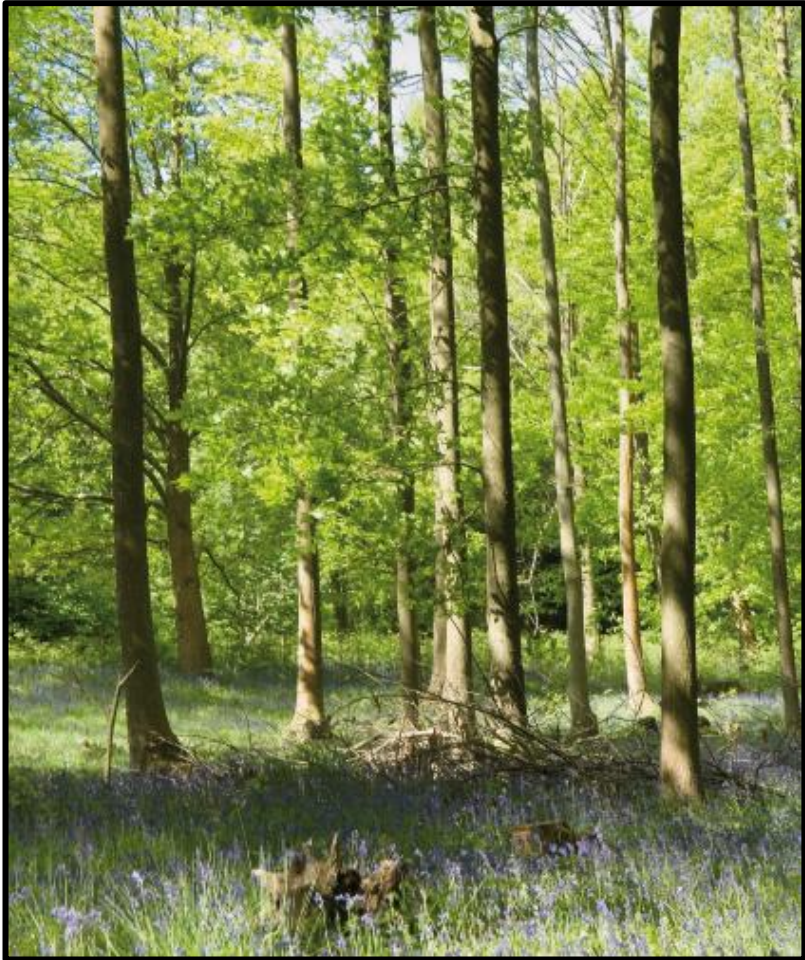
■ WMPs: Objectives & Reviews

Objectives:

- A set of specific quantifiable statements of what needs to happen to achieve the long-term vision eg:
 - *‘To produce a range of timber products to meet market requirements on a sustainable basis’*
 - *‘To create suitable access to enable extraction (whilst protecting existing paths & trails) of a range of timber products to meet market requirements on a sustainable basis’*
 - *‘To create a more diverse canopy and species structure with regard to forest resilience by designed felling’*
- **Plan Review/Achievements:**
- Completed at end of plan period/plan review date
- Objectives achieved?



WMPs: Woodland Surveys



- **Biodiversity designations** in/adjacent - SAC, SSSI, nat/local nature reserve, TPOs
- **Protected species** (eg.bats, newts) & Priority spp (birds, mammals, plants etc)
- **Historic/archaeological features:** Scheduled monuments, burial grounds
- **Landscape:** National Parks & Landscapes
- **People:** Public access; recreation facilities
- **Woodland & other habitats:** Ancient semi-natural woodland; Plantation on Ancient Woodland Site (PAWS); lowland/upland/wet woodland; bog, heath, pasture, water etc
- **Structure:** Broadleaf, conifer, coppice, mixed, % of area; age structure



WMPs: Woodland Protection



- Identify & risk assess the threats to the woodland
- Likelihood of presence, impact, urgency, required action
 - **Plant health** – phytophthora, ash dieback, spruce beetle
 - **Deer** – species, density, response (fencing, stalking)
 - **Grey squirrels** – presence, response (monitor/trap/shoot)
 - **Environmental** – wind, fire; response (create firm edge)
 - **Social** – public access, anti-social behaviour; signage
 - **Climate change resilience** – Uniform structure, provenance, lack of diversity; response (restructure & increase species diversity)



■ WMPs: Management Intentions



- Steps to be taken to achieve objectives & manage features stated earlier in plan
- More detailed work schedules & maps by compartment can be added
 - Eg. Objective: *'To create more diverse canopy & species structure with regard to forest resilience by designed felling'*
 - Management intention: *'Increase commercial species diversity where feasible & with regard to site conditions & include expansion of broadleaves within the forest.'*
 - *Thin canopy/understorey to increase light & views in selected areas adjacent to forest trails*



■ WMPs: Stakeholders & Monitoring

- Stakeholder Engagement:
 - Identify people/ organisations with an interest in the woodland
 - Record engagement undertaken in relation to activities in the management plan
 - Record issues consulted on, dates of contact & replies, feedback received & action/ changes made as a result
- Monitoring:
 - Each objective in the management plan should have indicators of progress/ success which should be checked regularly
 - Data helps monitor progress towards achieving the objectives & overall vision of the plan.



■ WMPs: Getting help

- Plans can be a lot of work - many engage a forestry professional
- Forestry Commission (FC) have free templates & **UK Forestry Standard (UKFS)** – technical standard for UK forestry also available
- **Woodland Management Plan Grant (WMPG)** helps with cost of a UKFS compliant management plan
 - £1,500 flat rate for woods 0.5ha – 50ha
 - For woods >50ha, £1,500 + £30 per additional ha over 50ha up to 100ha
 - For woods >100ha, £3,000 flat rate + £15 per additional ha over 100ha
- FC will approve plans if UKFS compliant. Approved plans:
 - Needed to access Countryside Stewardship management grants
 - Can authorise up to 10 years of felling in advance
- FC Woodland Officers can help; more support in Community Forests



■ Felling Licences



- Felling trees is legally controlled & requires Felling Licence (FL) from Forestry Commission
- Need to submit restocking proposals when applying for FL
- FC assess compliance with UKFS – proposed restock species & methods should suit site
- Once approved FL can't be amended – important to agree restock detail with Woodland Officer
- Approval takes months but FLs last for 5 yrs – or 10 yr if backed by FC approved Management Plan



■ Felling Licences – exceptions

- Exceptions to need for licence include:
 - 5m³ Calendar quarter **personal allowance**; can sell up to 2m³
 - Any **tree <8cm diameter** at 1.3m height
 - Any **tree <10cm diameter if thinning** (evenly felling of up to 30% of trees to improve growth of remaining trees)
 - **Dangerous & nuisance trees** where immediate risk of serious harm
 - Onus on owner to prove exception applies (photos, reports)
 - Where necessary to **prevent quarantine pest or disease spread** as stated on Statutory Plant Health Notice
 - SPHNs have own enforcement rules if felling not actioned within time limits
- Cannot retrospectively apply for exception after felling
- Illegal felling can incur large fines



Other consents & permissions

- Felling proposals affecting **designated areas/sites** e.g. SSSIs or Scheduled Monuments, **separate consent needed** from Natural England or Historic England
- **European Protected Species** legislation protects several species – bats, dormice, GC newts - and their habitats
 - Most operations can proceed by following best practice guidelines but if not, **EPS Wildlife Licence** needed (Natural England)
- **Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs)**: trees & woodlands can have TPOs imposed by Local Authorities (LA) to preserve ‘amenity’.
 - **Written LA consent needed** to lop, top, fell or uproot protected trees
 - Exception for dangerous trees (immediate risk of serious harm)
 - Find out any TPOs from LA & note on FL application – FC will consult LA



Tree safety & risk management

Figure 1.2a Duty holder responsibilities under civil law: the tree risk management process.



- Safety paramount when public are in your woodlands
- Trees present risk naturally esp. if weakened by disease eg. Ash dieback
- Management operations e.g. felling, deer control - present risks which need to be assessed & work planned with safety in mind
- FISA produces much useful guidance
- National Tree Safety Group 'common sense' guide to tree risk management
 - Zoning – prioritise for tree inspection areas with highest levels of people present.
 - Defendable position in event of accident
- Insurance – Essential. Review regularly.



■ Woodland Management Grants

- Funding for woodland management through **Countryside Stewardship Higher Tier** (Rural Payments Agency with FC input)
- Funds range of actions through 10-year agreements
- Applications by invitation to those with expiring previous agreements or approved management plans in place
 - Basic Woodland Improvement (£127/ha);
 - Can 'stack' one of following 3 on top: Manage PAWS (£275/ha); Manage native woods (£144/ha); Improve resilience (£202/ha);
 - Manage for flood/drought mitigation (£56/ha); Manage historic features in woods (£943/ha); Manage 2/3 zone rides (£60 & £197/ha); Fire belts £861/ha)
 - Deer Management (£105/ha); Grey Squirrels (£60/ha)
- FC approved Woodland Management Plan a prerequisite



Thank you

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