

Woodland Management Plans - an introduction



Chiltern Woodlands Project

Registered Charity No. 1002512



Inventory recording workshop



Ash regeneration after 1990 storm



New broadleaved planting 2012

It is important for woodland owners to plan ahead if you want to sell timber, use firewood, manage the habitat or replant. This process takes time.

A **Management Plan** will bring together all the relevant information needed to manage a wood and to get the necessary consent (and potentially funding) for works. It helps show that the wood is being managed sustainably.

The Management Plan should describe what is there now, including the economic, environmental and social values of the wood. It also gives the history of the site, and where you want the wood to go.

It has a **vision** looking 20 - 50 years ahead and covers the owner's **aims and objectives** for the woodlands. These could include investment, income, fuel, conservation, landscape and amenity, shelter, recreation, shooting, etc and often in combination.

It will also show a **work programme** for the next 5 to 10 years. This needs to be detailed yet flexible (in case circumstances change due to weather conditions, tree disease, contractors and timber or fuel markets).

The Forestry Commission offer a **Management planning grant of £1,000** for woods covering up to 50 hectares, the grant then increases depending on the area owned. There is at present a minimum area of 3ha for the FC planning grants, however it may still be worth preparing a simple management plan for woods under 3ha.

Forestry Commission **grants and felling consents** can be linked to the long term plan and in future may depend on a plan being in place.

To get government grants woodland owners must be registered with the **Rural Payments Agency** and have a **Single Business Identifier**. The woods must also be mapped and registered on the **Rural Land Register**.

See www.forestry.gov.uk/forestry/infd-6dccn3 for more information on grants and felling licences and for the UK Forest Standard see www.forestry.gov.uk/ukfs (which explains how woods should be managed)

The **UK Forestry Standard** has guidelines on

- Biodiversity
- Historic environment
- People
- Water
- Climate change
- Landscape
- Soil

Felling licence & grant conditions are linked to this standard.

The **myForest** website www.sylva.org.uk/myforest has a useful **management planning template** that is free to use. It enables you to enter information and create management plans based on the Forestry Commission's template and guidance, including:

- individual compartment inventory information (see overleaf);
- plans can be saved as PDF files for printing, emailing and back up.

The **myForest** service also has online mapping, using aerial photos to help you to:

- map woodlands and compartments using simple GIS tools;
- calculate the area of your woodland compartments.

Woodland Management Plans - an introduction Continued



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Site specific information should be recorded, such as geology and soils, height, slopes, aspect, as these determine what can be done and what is appropriate.

Opportunities can be identified, such as access improvements, timber stacking areas, ride management etc

Constraints need to be listed and details given and may include:

- Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (Chilterns AONB)
- Tree Preservation Orders (TPO),
- Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)
- Public Rights of Way
- Wayleaves eg phone or power lines
- Water courses, ponds, streams etc
- Scheduled Ancient Monuments and other archaeology
- Wildlife habitats and species information, including protected species

The management plan, with its maps and information, can be a useful tool for consultation with local authorities, Natural England and others, so that they know and understand what is intended.

Woodland Compartments

These are discreet blocks of woodland, easily identifiable on maps and given a compartment number. MyForest www.sylva.org.uk/myforest/ helps you or your agent to

- carry out an inventory of the trees growing in your woodland (ie record what trees are found, whether conifer, broadleaved or mixed, what age, condition and quality they are, what proportions, and what you want to do with them)
- download Sylva's tree identification key to help you identify your trees
- upload and store photographs of each woodland compartment

Woodland Sub compartments

These are woodland subdivisions of a compartment into stands of similar tree ages and composition (often identified by a letter). These may already exist or could be created within a larger block if you want to manage different parts of the wood at different times or in different ways. It is sensible to use existing linear features as the boundaries of a sub compartment which could be tracks or rides, a public footpath, an existing woodbank, or a powerline wayleave. This will create measurable blocks of woodland (important as forestry grants are paid by area).

examples of different sub compartments



Mature beech, ancient woodland



Broadleaves planted in 1989



1961 Pine and beech plantation

It is helpful to record the dates of work that has been carried out, for example when trees were planted or when they were last thinned. Also useful to show is when the next operations are needed and what they are, such as to fell and replant, selective fell to encourage natural regeneration, thin, coppicing, carry out ride management, control of invasive plants etc

The Chiltern Woodlands Project can act as an agent for you and help prepare woodland management plans, a charge is made for this service. Please contact John Morris to discuss details, the first visit is free.

Contact John Morris, Chiltern Woodlands Project
01844 355503
email woodlands@chilternsaonb.org

You can download information sheets from:
www.chilternsaonb.org/woodlands-project.html

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