

English Woodland Grant Scheme

Woodland Condition, Opportunity & Threat Assessment

Reference

COT EXAMPLE 2

(For Forestry Commission Use)

Purpose This document is the Forestry Commission's template designed to assist with undertaking a low-level assessment of existing woodlands. The assessment is designed to be a 'snap-shot', and subsequent assessments can be used to indicate change in the woodland condition. These are not funded by EWGS Woodland Assessment Grant.

Use The COT Assessment is used...

- To briefly assess the current condition of a woodland
- To identify the main opportunities for the woodland to deliver social and environmental public benefits
- To identify the key factors that may be putting at risk the delivery of these public benefits.
- To inform decisions about subsequent management, and grant support potential.

A COT assessment of this kind is a pre-requisite for applications to the EWGS Woodland Management Grant, where no management plan exists or is otherwise required.

Assessment The COT Assessment should ideally be undertaken by a professional woodland manager or someone with good experience in woodland management.

The attached COT assessment form is available to anyone who wishes to use it, whether or not it is to support grant or felling licence applications. The Forestry Commission does not guarantee the accuracy or authority of an assessment undertaken or subsequently used for any other purpose.

Form The COT assessment form is available in the Woodland Management Grant Guide. It can also be downloaded as a pdf file or as an MS Word 97 form for on-screen use, from the FC website page www.forestry.gov.uk/ewgs-wmg.

Help for COT assessment e-form

Tab	to move to next field
Shift + Tab	to move to previous field
Ctrl + Tab	to insert a tab in a text entry
Spacebar	to toggle checkboxes

Click on a field beside a  symbol and press F1 for help

Woodland Condition, Opportunity & Threat Assessment

1. Contact and Property Information







Wood name	Oakridge Wood	
Grid Reference	SU123 345	
Wood area (ha)	25.50	
 Date of Assessment	10/10/2005	

Owner Name	Mr V Green	
Owner address	Keepers Cottage	
Post Code	SN12 2 ZX	
Owner Tel	01342 234123	Fax 01342 234122
Owner email	vgreen@provider.co.uk	
Other contact details	mobile 07831 098765	


Assessor Name	Mr C Consultant	
Assessor Tel	01234 881122	Mobile 01234 881133
Assessor email	consultant@provider.co.uk	
Other contact details	Mobile 07831 881144	

FC Contact Name	G Porter	
FC Contact Tel.	01234 567890	
FC Contact email	g.porter@forestry.gsi.gov.uk	

2. Background Survey

Tick	Designations (see below)	Name or other reference or descriptor
<input type="checkbox"/>	SSSI, SAC, SPA, Ramsar 	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	SINC, LNR, Local Wildlife site 	Local wildlife site - due to ancient status
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	ASNW, PAWS 	ASNW
<input type="checkbox"/>	National Park, AONB, TPO 	
<input type="checkbox"/>	SAM, OAM 	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Veteran Trees 	

3. Woodland benefits and desired outcomes

Benefits and Desired Outcomes	Describe
	1/ To gradually restore ASNW by reducing non-native species. 2/ To improve the woods for wildlife and conservation and preserve archaeological features. 3/ To improve public access using waymarkers. 4/ Improve quality of oak stands. 5/ To reduce squirrel and deer damage. 6/ To avoid clearfelling and encourage natural regeneration.

4. Assessment of Condition

Species composition		%
	Native Broadleaves	80
	Other Broadleaves	0
	Conifers	20
	Total	100%

Stocking	Tick one	
<i>(percentage of gross area that is under canopy cover)</i>	0 – 20%	<input type="checkbox"/>
	21 – 40%	<input type="checkbox"/>
	41 – 60%	<input type="checkbox"/>
	61 – 80%	<input type="checkbox"/>
	81 – 100%	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Age Structure	%	
	Open Space	15
	Single age class	30
	2 – 4 age classes	55
	Multiple age classes	0
	Intimate and diverse	0
	Total	100%

Understorey	Tick one	
	Present	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Patchy	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	Largely absent	<input type="checkbox"/>

Regeneration	Tick one	
<i>Are there signs of seedling regeneration in sufficient density to maintain the canopy over the next 20 years?</i>	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>
	No	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	N/A (too young)	<input type="checkbox"/>

Browsing and Grazing levels	Describe
i	Heavy deer browsing on ash regeneration, moderate on bramble. This is consistent across the wood and has resulted in little significant regen capable of forming the next generation. This has created the patchy areas of open space that occur across the wood which have actually created important habitat diversity.

Significant Other Features	Describe
i	1/ Good uniform distribution of dead wood throughout the wood. 2/ There is a reasonable number of ancient trees mostly along the southern and eastern parts of the wood. 3/ The wood is defined by wood banks. 4/ Ancient right of way traverses north south through the wood (byway). 5/ Stream runs along the southern boundary, just inside the wood.

Management Access	Describe
i	Access is good with an unclassified road running along the northern boundary and the byway running north south. No further access is desirable as any increase in unauthorised access may become a problem.

Predominant adjoining landuse	Describe
i	The wood has an unclassified road on it's northern boundary with the other three being surrounded by permanent pasture - dairy.

<i>Other comments</i>	<i>Describe</i>
i	Adjoining land is intensively managed with some fertiliser drift occurring on the margins of the wood. This is evidenced by the poorer ground flora in these areas.

5. Assessment of Opportunities and Threats

Comment on the **Management Opportunities** and **Threats** to the woodland as appropriate.

<i>Social / Cultural</i>	<i>Describe</i>
i	<p>Opportunities</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1/ Education via information boards re ancient woodland management. 2/ Highlight woodland bank. 3/ Formalise access routes through wood. <p>Threats</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1/ Mis-use of byway, increase of fly tipping. 2/ Unsafe ancient tree adjacent to permissive path. 4/ Wood banks driven on by unauthorised access. 5/ Wood bank dominated by bramble. 5/ Unauthorised horse access during inappropriate time of year

<i>Environmental</i>	<i>Describe</i>
i	<p>Opportunities</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1/ Introduce the next generation of native trees to start correcting the current age class imbalance. 2/ Increase of light levels to ground flora / woodland floor. 3/ Increase proportion of native species through thinning and felling of non-native. 3/ Safeguard ancient woodland species. 4/ Ancient trees given space and next generation identified. 5/ To introduce appropriate cull for deer and squirrel. 6/ To manage riparian zone. <p>Threats</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1/ Damage by deer and squirrel concentrated on remaining trees after management. 2/ Spray / fertiliser drift.

<i>Economic</i>	<i>Describe</i>
i	<p>The opportunity will be taken to improve the timber quality by thinning to remove the poor quality trees. This will also improve the selection of seed trees for regeneration.</p> <p>There will be little direct economic benefit from the access, with litter and fly tipping being an economic and environmental threat to the proposal.</p>

6. Work proposed to achieve the desired outcomes set out in Section 3.

<i>Proposed work</i>

- i** 1/ Remove one or two trees beside ancient trees to open up very gradually.
- 2/ Thin oak to increase quality and age class diversity.
- 3/ Respace birch regen and enrich with oak.
- 4/ Thin conifer stands to release native broadleaves.
- 5/ Areas of windblown trees within the stands of conifer to be opened up as a group selection system and restocked with NBL.
- 6/ Join local deer group and continue co-ordinated control of deer and squirrel.
- 7/ Maintain rides and paths.
- 8/ Annual safety inspections.

7. Recommendations for further survey before work commences

Recommended Surveys

- i** Bat roost survey on ancient trees.
- Annual safety inspection.
- Riparian area to recommend appropriate thinning regime.

8. Support for woodland work

Advice for woodland owner re: Potential for grants, Felling Licence needs, potential for training, seminar attendance, organisational membership

- i** Potential for grants and need for felling licences etc covered by forestry consultant.