

## CASE STUDY 07

# woodlands, resource protection & biodiversity

## PAWS restoration in Woodland Trust woods, Bovey Valley, Dartmoor

These woods are part of a mosaic of a Special Area of Conservation, National Nature Reserve and Sites of Special Scientific Interest. Some areas were felled and replanted with a variety of conifer species in the 1960s and have received varying levels of management in the past.

The long-term restoration of these PAWS (Plantations on Ancient Woodland Sites) areas helps meet government targets for Forestry and UK Biodiversity Action Plans and contributes to similar aims for the National Park, additionally including landscape and tourism. Following a detailed restoration plan, investment was made in the track and road infrastructure in 2002 to enable a large harvesting operation.

Removing 6000m<sup>3</sup> of timber from a PAWS was not radically different to a normal harvesting site though took almost a year. Terrain and conditions were extremely challenging in places, with steep rocky ground, water courses and fords. The timber had to travel up to 3 miles to roadside. Controversially, areas of clear fell were included as part of a research project to demonstrate the disadvantages of clear felling on PAWS. The track improvements have also provided new public access opportunities throughout the woods.

The last phase of operations was immensely challenging and economically marginal but the long term investment means that the future of the woods is bright. The Ancient Woodlands and their wildlife are responding to the improved light conditions and they are more attractive to visit. The quality and size of the remaining conifers will continue to improve, whilst the long term retention of a canopy over most of the site will require future thinning operations which will be far easier next time.



Top: Forwarder operating in woods  
Above: Aerial view of Bovey Woods  
Below: Recently thinned Douglas Fir on right of stream  
PHOTOS: © PAUL GLENDELL/WOODLAND TRUST

