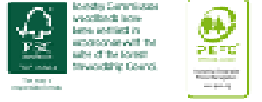


# Conservation - Habitats



Ride and road sides, together with watercourses and hedgerow management will conform to the prescriptions outlined in the District document, Design and Management of Environmental Corridors (Lucas, 2006). This document outlines the management of light levels, pinch points and forest edge dynamics and is agreed with Forest Services. The objective is to use the ride network to extend and connect with the surrounding heathland, this will be achieved through proactive, targeted widening and unstocking of edges to some coupes following felling operations to create a mixed transient open and diffuse scrubby habitat. Where appropriate, following felling and cleaning operations, opportunities will be taken to extend and buffer the priority habitats underlined. This work will be focussed on areas highlighted with red hatch -----

**Upland Oakwood** - Some very small areas of remnant oakwood exist in Fernworthy and offer valuable habitat for a multitude of woodland species. These will be managed through thinning where necessary with the objective of maintaining favourable habitat condition.

**Wet woodland** - Occurring in a number of areas of the Plan area where soils are poorly drained or seasonally wet such as flushes and streamsides with alder, birch and willow the predominant species. These will continue to be managed sensitively with attention paid to ensuring light levels promote favourable habitat conditions.

**Upland heathland and DWARF SHRUB HEATH** - Typically made up of an assemblage of dwarf shrubs such as heather, bilberry, crowberry as well as grasses such as *Erica tetralix* and *Molinia caerulea* on shallow peats. The majority of these are found internally within Fernworthy and edges of Soussons and Bellever and are similar to the surrounding typical habitat. These are managed as permanent open space with no more than 20% tree cover through mechanical cutting of regenerating tree species. The plan will look to connect these areas through the ride network

**ACID GRASSLAND** - Predominantly found in Bellever where fine-leaved grasses like red and sheep's fescues and common bent grow, alongside wild flowers like sheep's sorrel, heath bedstraw and pretty blue harebells. These areas will be managed as permanent open space predominantly through grazing.

**BOGS** - A few small areas of bog in Fernworthy, Soussons and Bellever exist where soils are constantly waterlogged and peat formation is occurring. *Sphagnum* and *Juncus* are in abundance and these areas will remain open and free from tree cover.

**IMPROVED GRASSLAND** - A number of agricultural field systems have been improved over years of use. Similar management will continue into the future, most likely through grazing.

## Legend

### Corridors

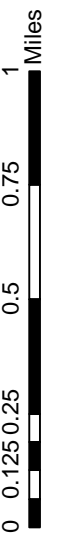
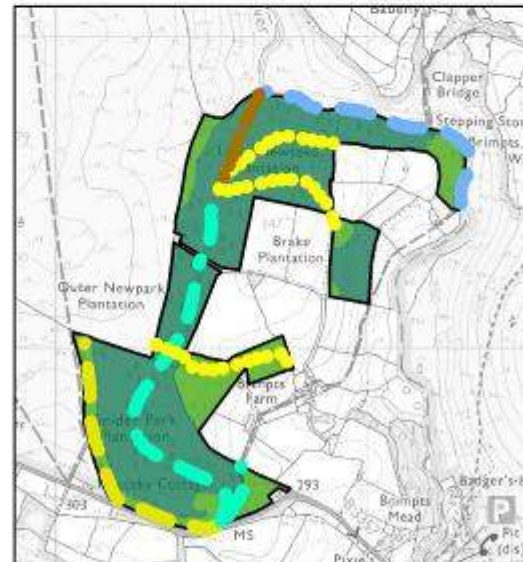
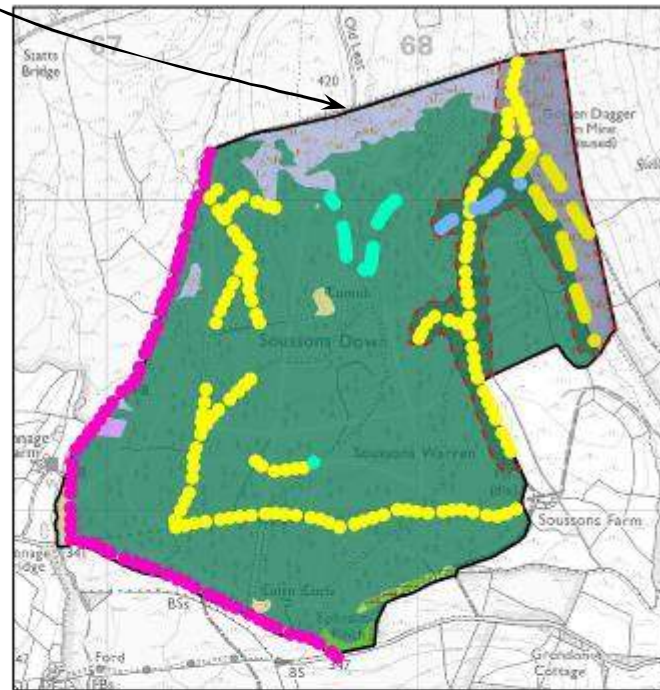
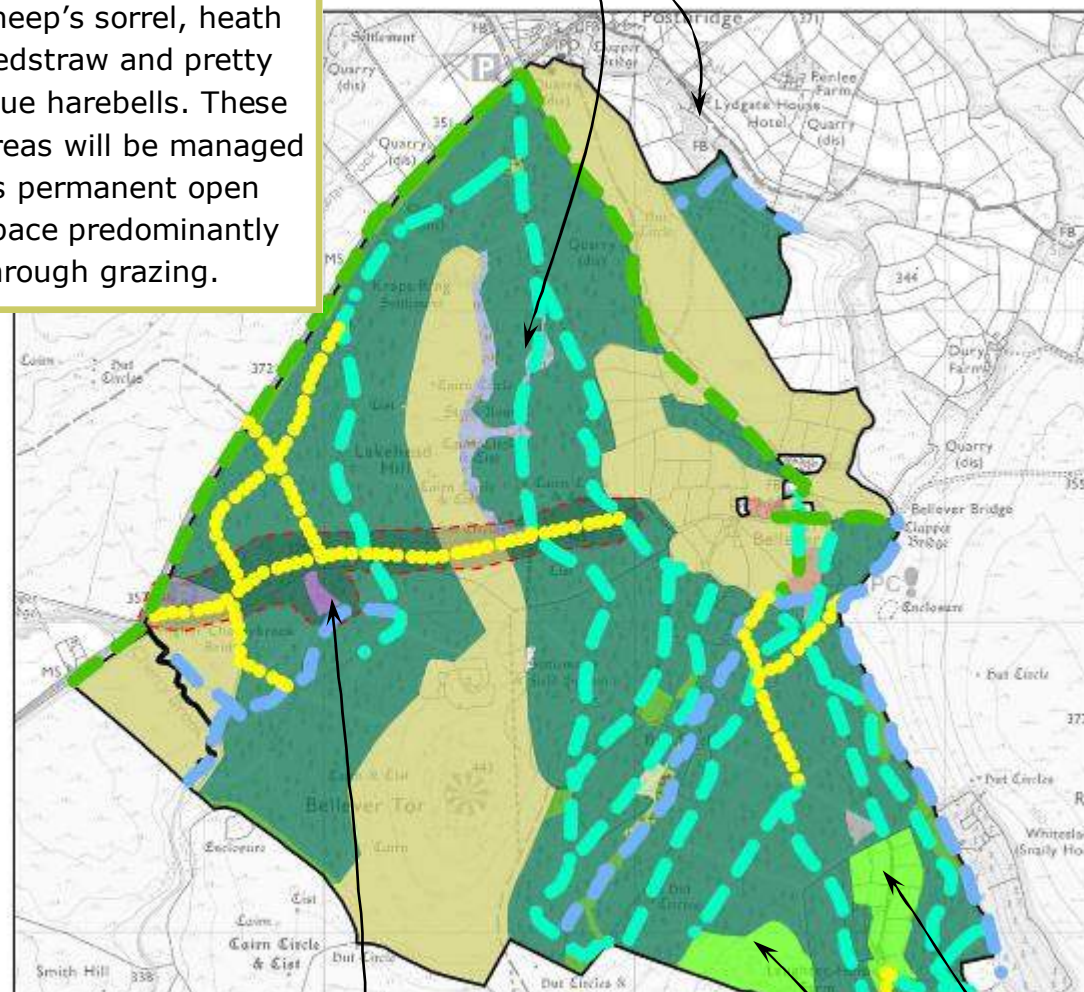
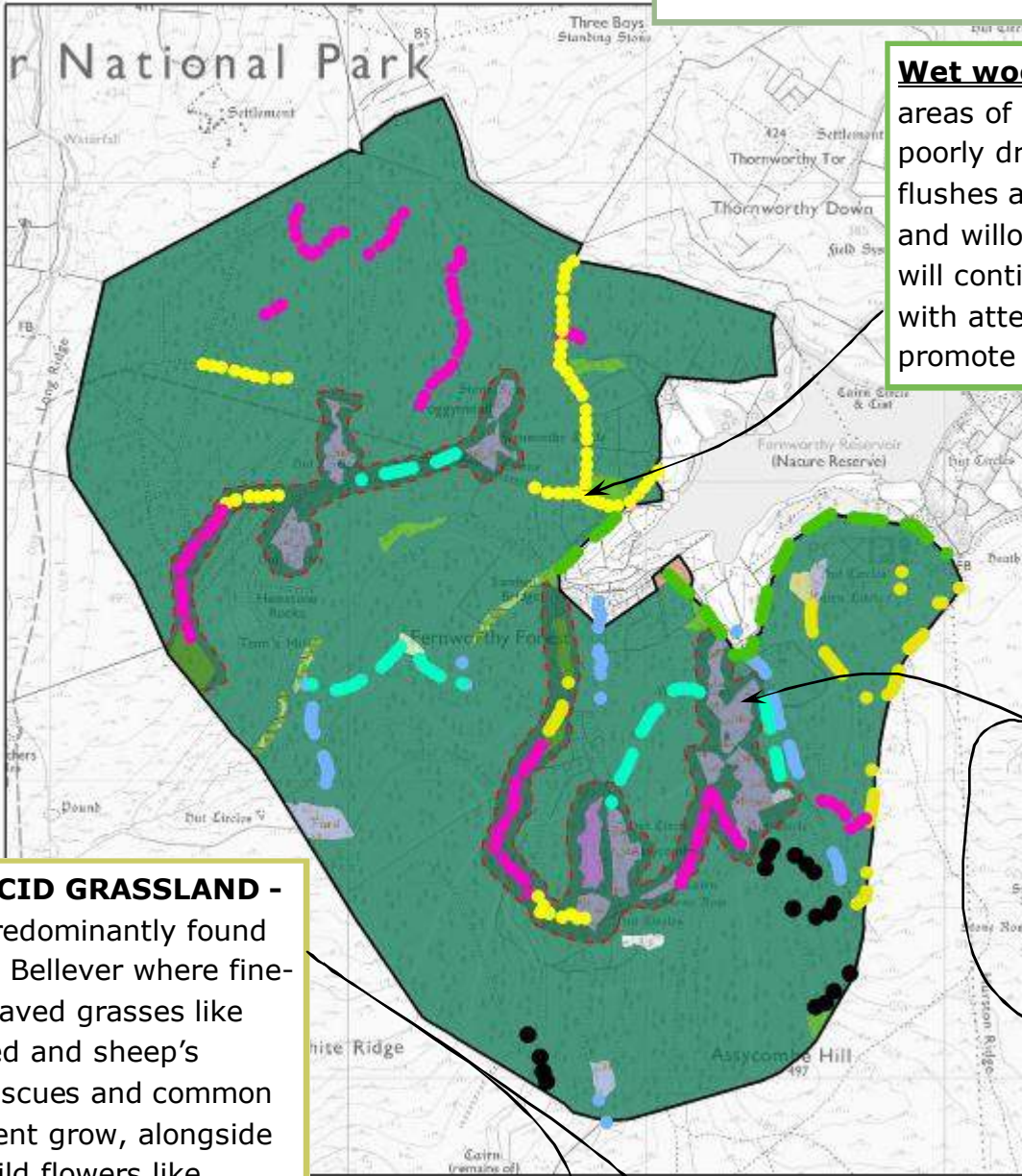
- Moor and Heath
- Hedgerow
- Forest Road Edge
- Conservation + Recreation
- Public Roadside
- Windthrow protection
- Watercourse
- Broadleaved Belt

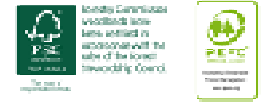
### Broad Habitat Type

- BROADLEAVED; MIXED/YEW WOODLANDS
- CONIFEROUS WOODLANDS
- ACID GRASSLAND
- IMPROVED GRASSLAND
- DWARF SHRUB HEATH
- BOGS
- INLAND ROCK
- BUILT UP AREAS & GARDENS

### Priority Habitat Type

- Upland Oakwood
- Wet woodland
- Upland heathland





The Forest Plan area is used by a vast array of common and rare flora and fauna some of which are highlighted below. The considerable contribution the forests and their associated areas make to habitat provision in the otherwise moorland dominated landscape is widely recognised.

On the other hand some non-native flora and grazing fauna species can have a detrimental impact on the forest and its features if their numbers are too high. Species such as rhododendron, encroaching sheep and ponies, wild deer, squirrel and goat will all be managed in line with District Strategy to ensure that their pressure does not have a negative impact on the condition of habitats and crops.



**Raptor** - notably hobby (above), goshawk and buzzard are known to roost and hunt within the forest areas. Many of the species choose to rest in high well branched conifer trees and then feed over open ground, making the forests ideal raptor habitat in an otherwise minimally treed landscape. The management of 14ha of appropriate large or potentially large trees for long retentions will ensure that habitat provision is maintained.

**Pearl-bordered fritillary** - is found across a number of sites in the more sheltered parts of the high moor. These, like many other Lepidoptera, choose to inhabit woodland clearings and ride and roadsides. Continued forest management through felling and notably corridor work (outlined on page 27) will ensure that their habitat is maintained and that the Plan area continues to make a valuable contribution to the Two Moors Threatened Butterfly Project, of which



pearl-bordered fritillary is a key species.

**Nightjar** - is a nationally rare bird and the Dartmoor forests supporting at least 65 churring males and nearly 5% of the south west England population. The Dartmoor forests are of national importance, exceeding the SPA qualifying threshold. The bird nests in freshly cleared areas, most notably clearfell sites. The provision of both permanent and transient open space through rotation clearfelling (230ha in Plan period) and scrubby open space creation (16ha) will continue to support this important species into the future.



**Bryoria** - is a lichenized fungi (*parmeliacea lecanorales*) which is found in abundance in the more open stands in the lower areas of north Fernworthy. It grows on the stem and low branches of the Sitka spruce. Where suitable, the maintenance of widely spaced large trees will ensure the right microclimate is retained and conditions suitable for the bryoria to thrive into the future.

**Crossbills** - although widespread throughout many parts of the UK are relatively uncommon to the south west of England. A noisy bird which feeds off the seeds of conifer, crossbill populations are known to use the Dartmoor Forest Plan area for feeding and nesting. The continued sustainable forest management techniques prescribed in the Plan will ensure their longevity.



**Otter** - are known to use the full length of both the Rivers Dart and Teign and is widespread across most rivers in Devon and Cornwall This protected species experienced a decline in previous decades but has recovered well in the south west of England. They inhabit streamside and wetland areas and the riparian woodland habitats found within the Plan area are ideal for nesting otter. The management of 14ha of riparian wet woodland (see page 37), where a minimal intervention prescription will be employed will ensure that a lush diversity of open space, scrub and high forest will ensure otter habitat is preserved to support this species.

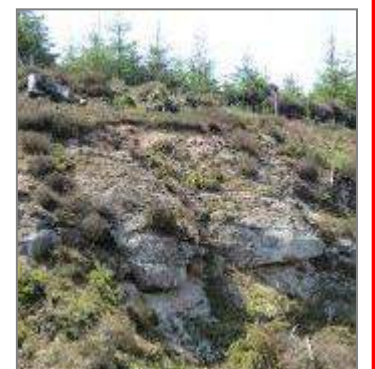


**Red-backed Shrike** - is a bird exceptionally rare to the UK which is known to have established a number of breeding sites across Dartmoor. Nesting in marginal habitat of scrub and open grassland greater than 2 ha, close to rivers and streams and moorland this bird is extremely elusive.

The maintenance of 25ha of quality permanent open space around suitable locations (i.e. within 15m of a watercourse and not within 15m of a track or road) and creation of 16ha of suitable transient open space (and an additional 14ha of remote clearfells close watercourses) over the lifetime of the Plan will significantly contribute to the Living Dartmoor Action Plan. The aim of which is to 'retain and increase the population of RBS through protection and habitat management/creation to 5-10 breeding pairs on Dartmoor by 2022' (DNPA, 2014).

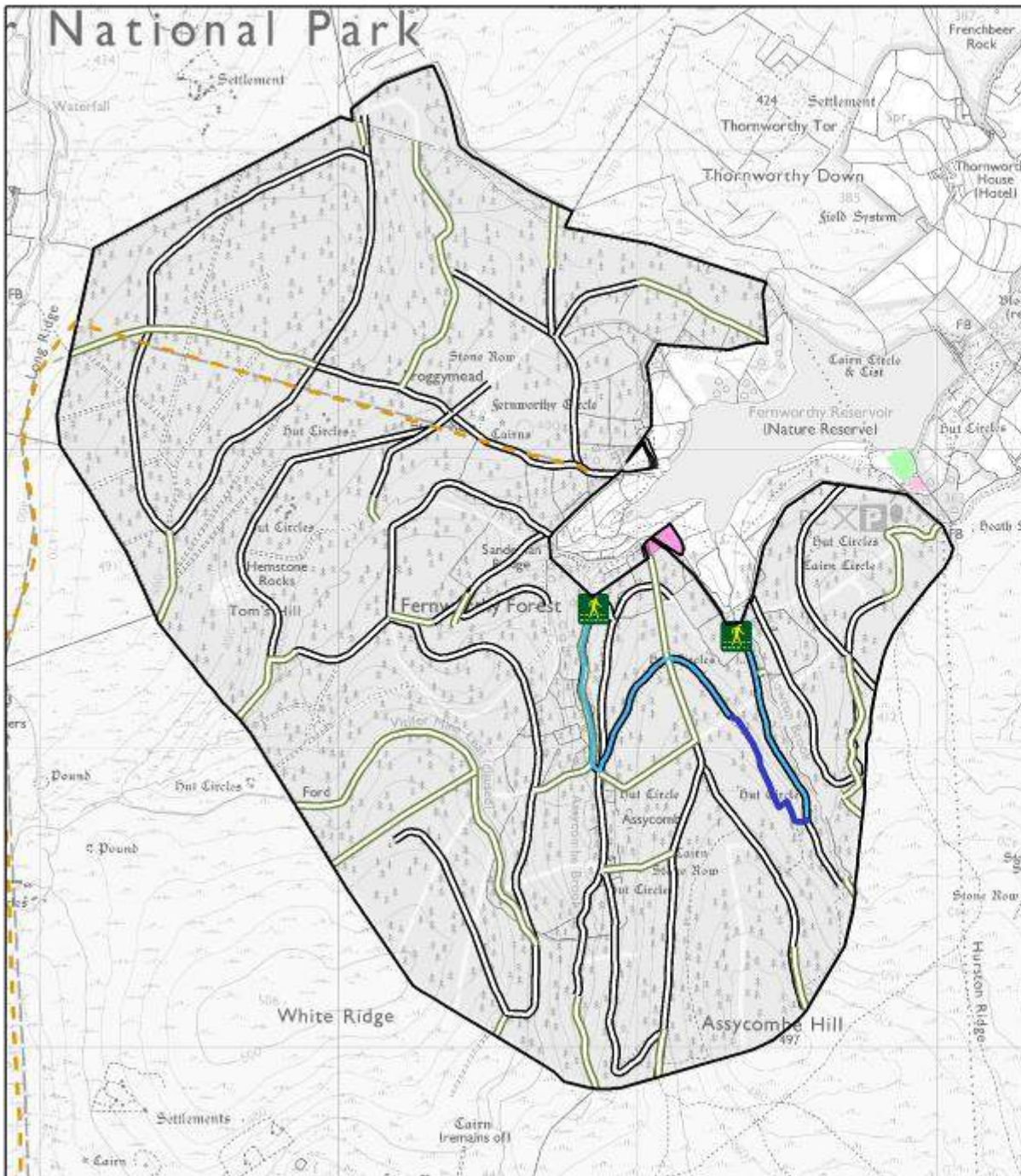


**Laughter Quarry SSSI** - is important for displaying an outcrop curvature of the periglacial and granite weathering features typical of Dartmoor. The site includes many type sections and has yielded a rich and diverse fossil fauna. These sites are currently in 'favourable condition' and proposals will ensure there will be no loss in condition quality. The Quarry will be managed in accordance with its current SSSI management plan (Appendix 5) as agreed with Natural England. Essentially this will involve maintaining exposed rock free from scrub and vegetation encroachment to ensure the geological features are visible and can be studied.



# Recreation and Public Access

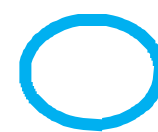
Dartmoor Forest Plan area experiences a high level of low-key recreational usage. The vast majority of the Plan area is Open Access, this is confirmed by the Countryside Rights of Way Act with the exception Soussons which is de facto Open Access due to the nature of the landholding. The use of the Plan area by local individuals as well as numerous visitors and tourists demonstrates the value of the forests to the local community, these features will be maintained in balance with ecological value. The Plan area also absorbs a lot of the recreational pressure which would otherwise be placed on the National Park and therefore protects the fragile moor land.



Three formal maintained car parks form the focal points for entry, one of which is charged at Believer. The usage is predominantly made up of walkers, horse riders and mountain bike riders with approximately 5,000 paid visits per year.

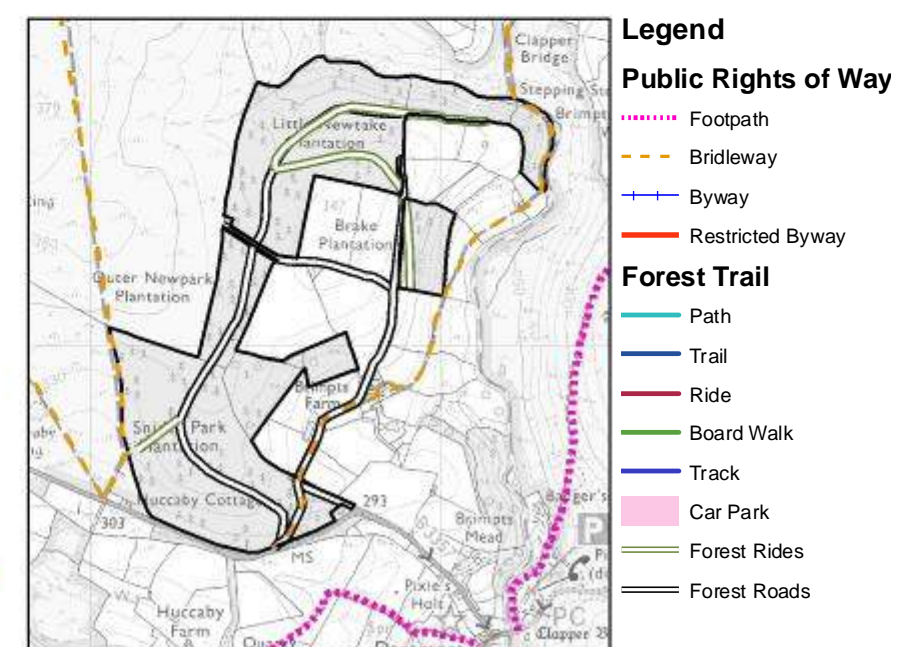
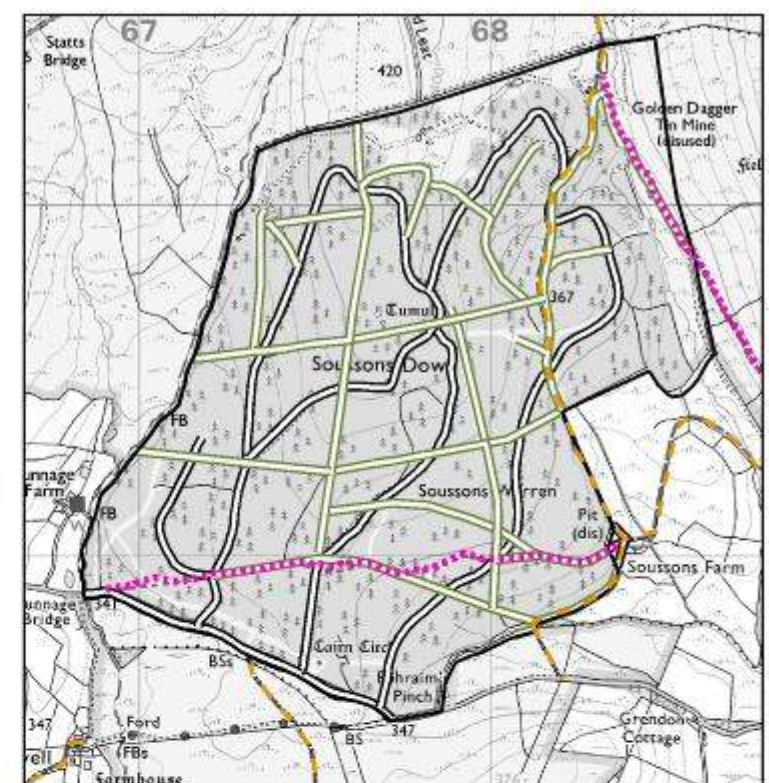
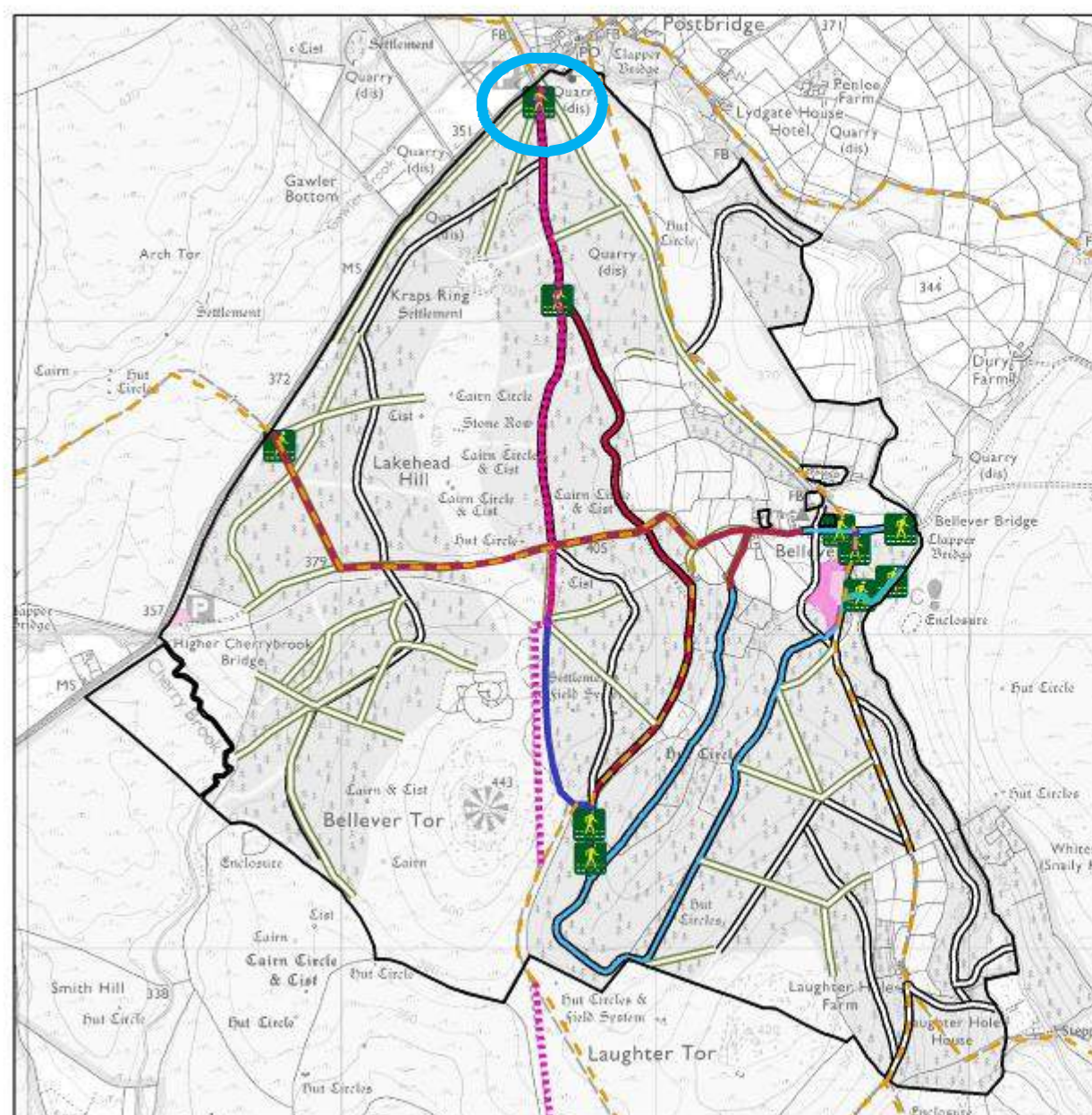
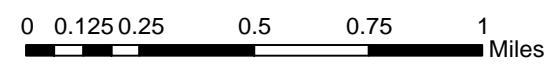
A number of Public Rights of Way in the form of footpaths and bridleways traverse the Plan area and connect with the surrounding landscape. Many of these Rights of Way are designated and/or signposted.

Numerous one-off and annual permissions are granted throughout the Plan area for recreational purposes. These include educational visits, sports and mountain biking events and cultural events.



The northern entrance to Believer, close to Postbridge, is to be developed and enhanced as part of the 'Moor than meets the eye' HLF project. Using hard landscaping, arboriculture and new planting the scheme will look to complement the Dartmoor National Park Visitor Centre and improve access into the forest

© Crown copyright and database right [2016]  
Ordnance Survey [100021242]





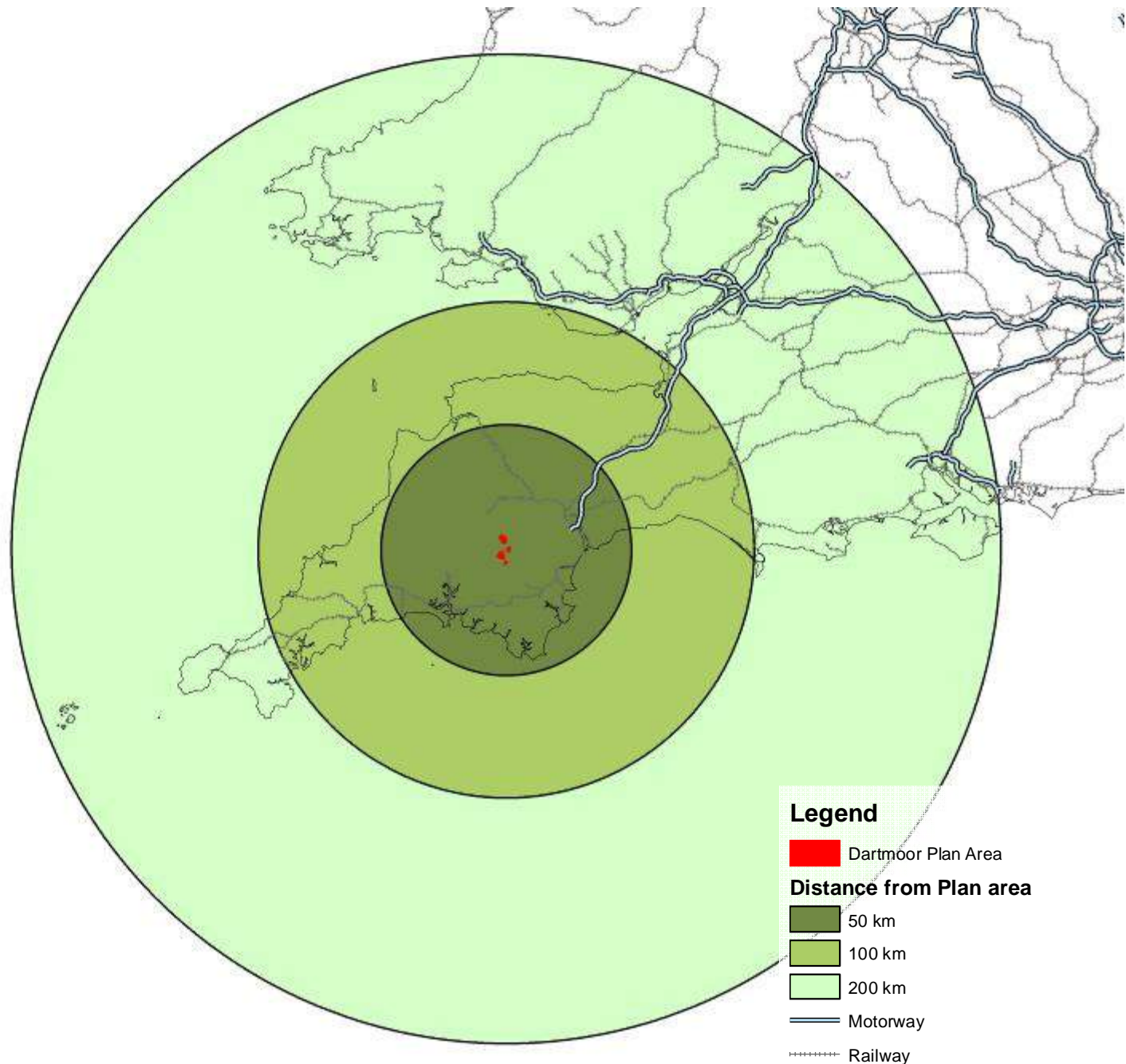
# Economic Contribution

The Dartmoor Plan area makes a significant contribution to the economy both through the substantial timber resource and numerous non-timber products and benefits. The effects are felt both locally and regionally. It is estimated that the harvesting work planned between 2017–2021 will create 1000 man days work per year (including harvesting, haulage and supervision), whilst forest management operations, such as planting, weeding, fencing and roading creates an additional 350 days per annum.

Timber production on Dartmoor also makes a significant contribution to the Forestry Commission's, West England Forest District. The planned production in 2017 – 2021 will make up over 7.5% of the District's total volume. Future contribution is anticipated to continue at around 5-7% .



The role that forests play in the recreation economy is significant too, with multiple leisure businesses working in and around the forests. As part of the wider National Park and its strong tourist industry the forests are an attraction which bring many visitors to the area.

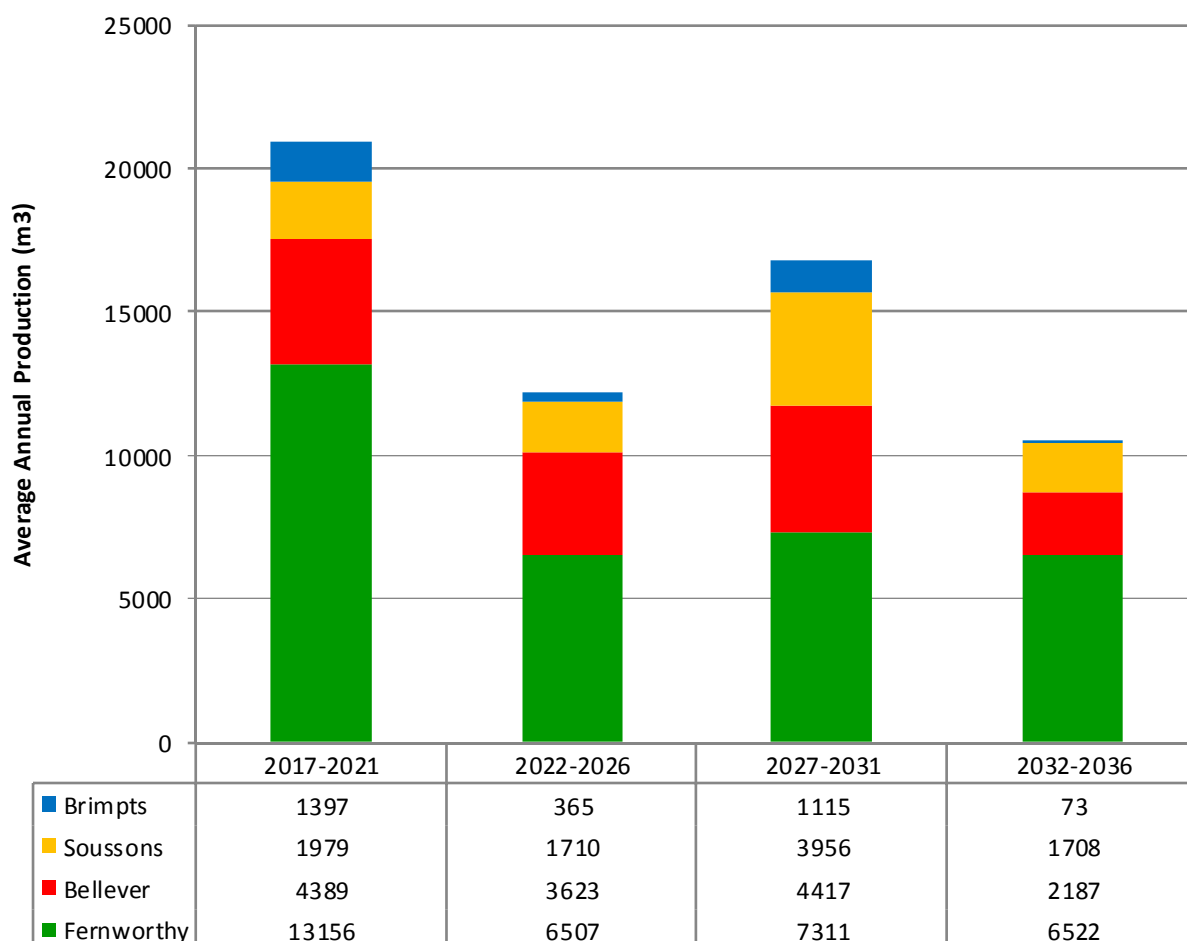


## Timber Revenue

The quality and size of softwood log produced on Dartmoor means that the timber fetches a healthy price at market (approximately £40-50 per m<sup>3</sup> at roadside).

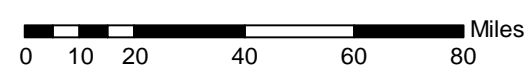
Produce is utilised widely across the south of England. Sawlogs can easily travel 200 km by road or rail with merchants attracted by the clean and consistent quality log.

The smaller material stays closer to home, with most staying with a 50km radius, either going for fencing or bars or is chipped. The chip is then used either for re-engineered timber or biomass products.



## Timber Production

The planned operations for the Dartmoor Plan area see considerable production in Fernworthy between 2017-21 (13,000m<sup>3</sup> per year), with production returning to around 7000m<sup>3</sup> per year after 2022. Bellever production remains fairly constant at around 4000 m<sup>3</sup> per year with Soussons and Brimpts seeing minor fluctuations as expected given their size.



# Heritage Assets

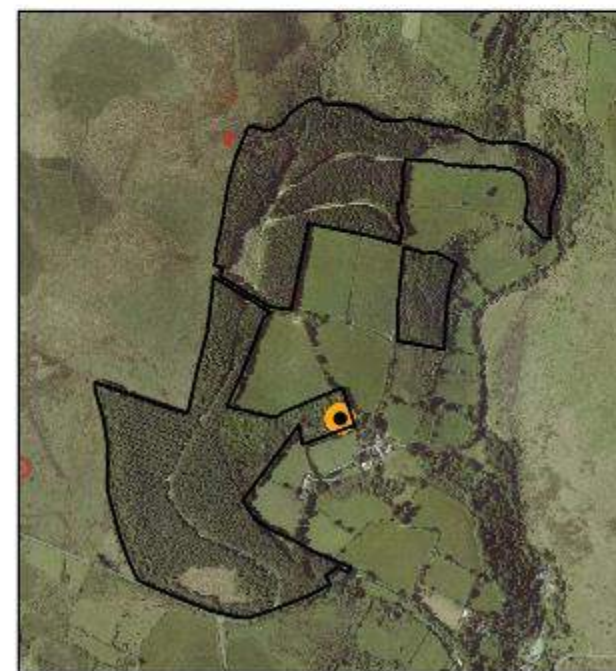
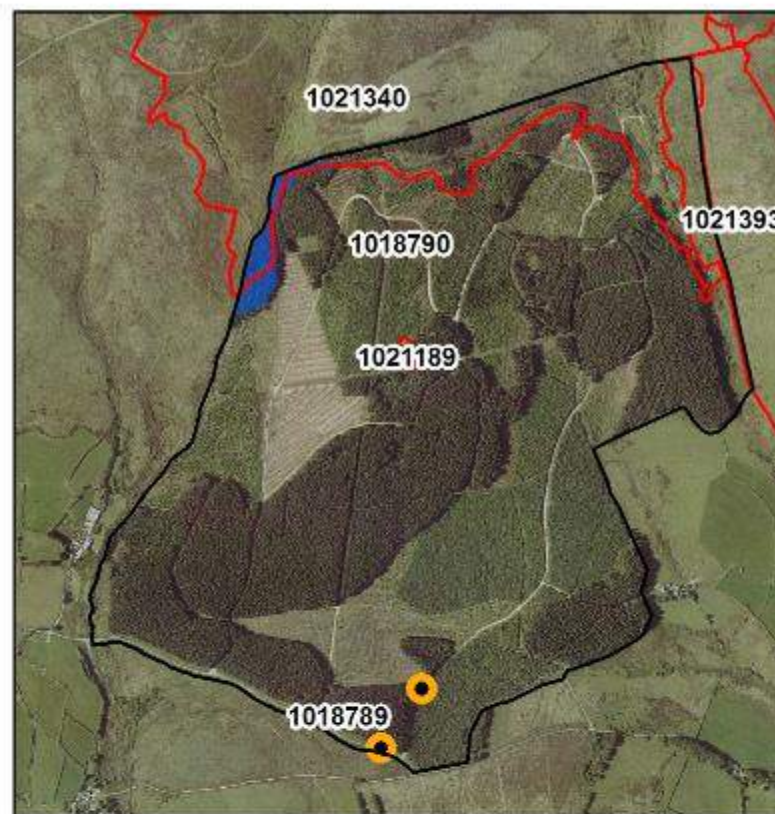
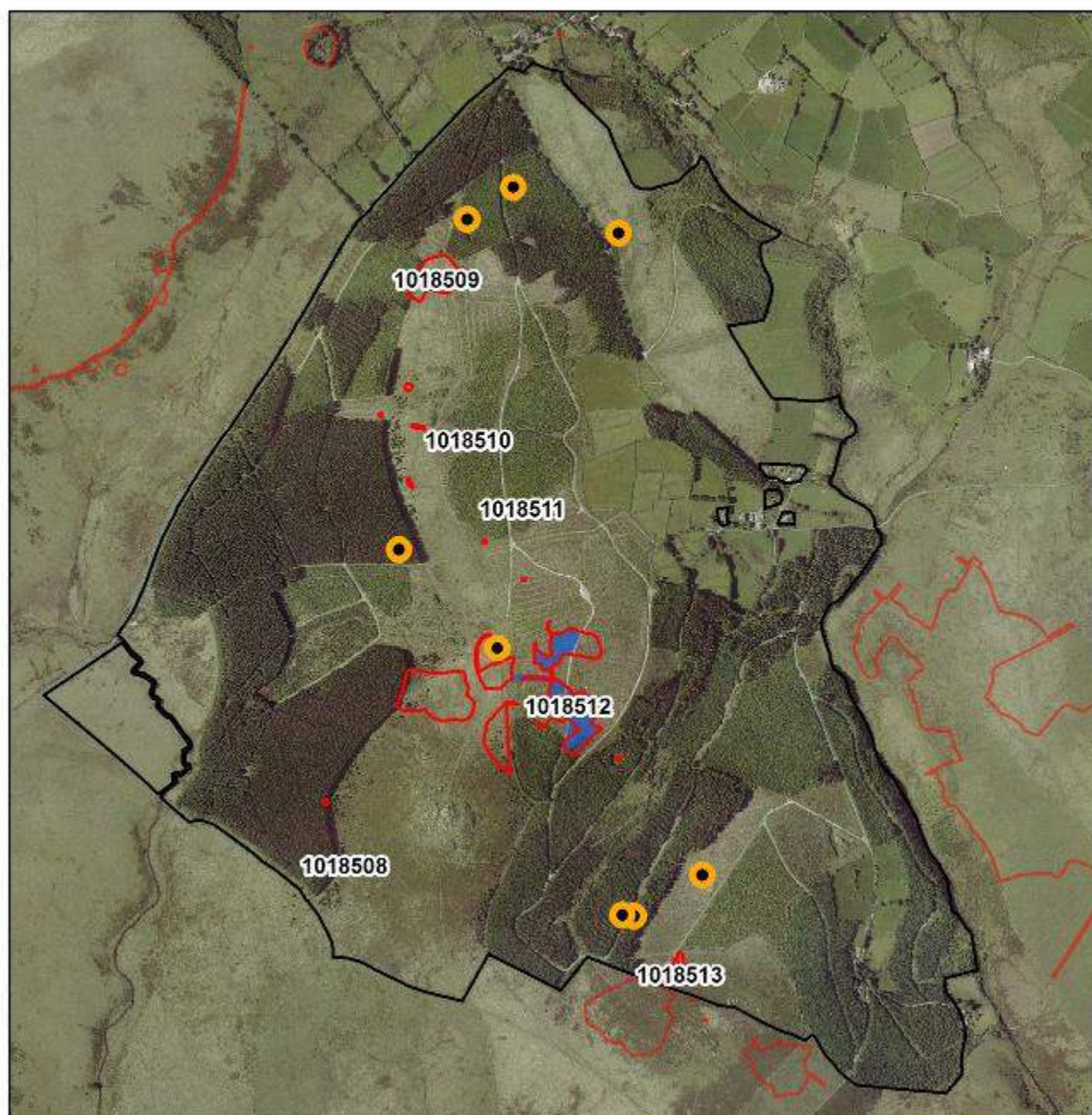
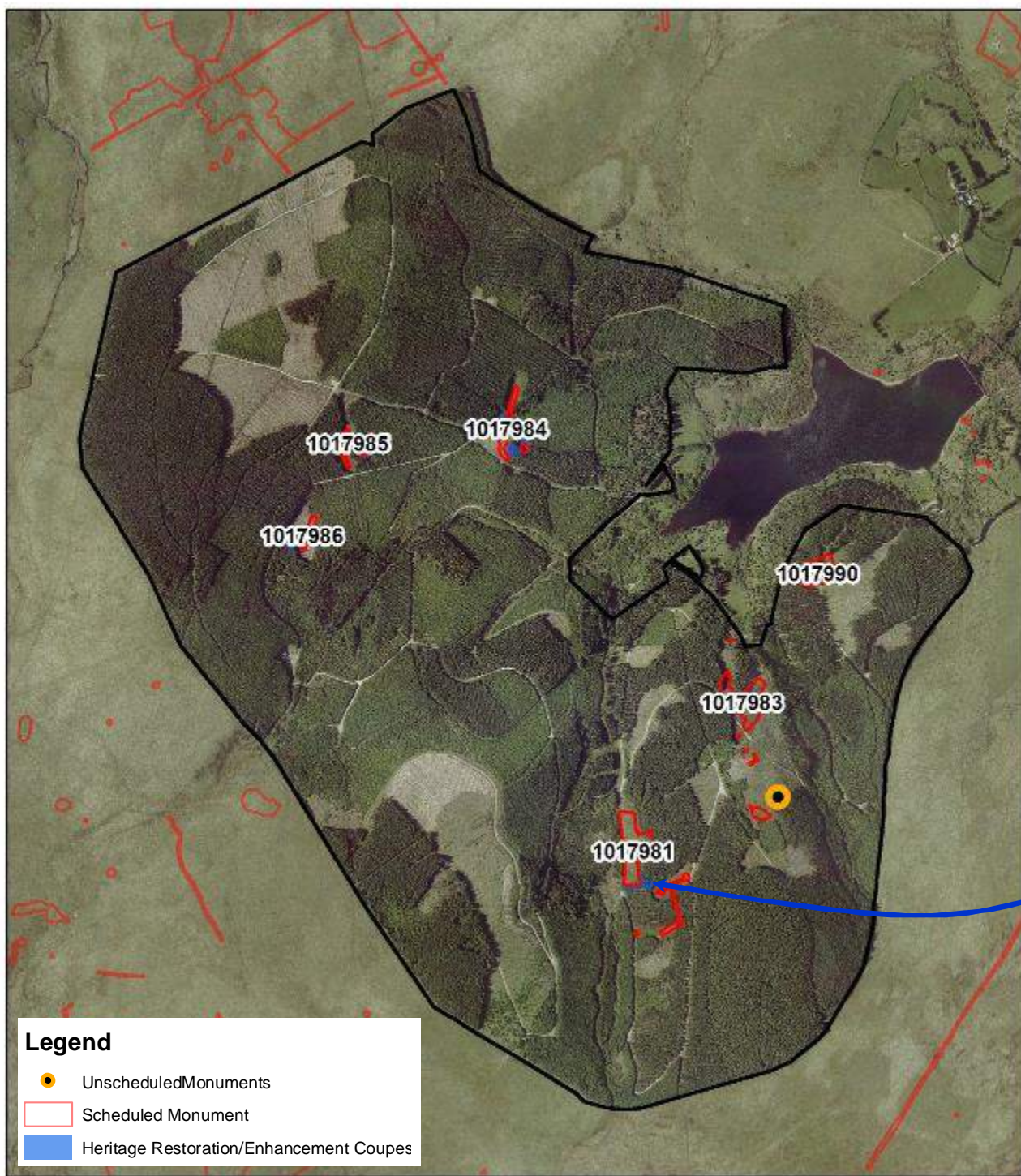
Dartmoor Forest Plan area sits within an exceptionally rich cultural and archaeological landscape. The Plan area itself contains an incredibly rich heritage with 36 scheduled monuments (SMs) and numerous unscheduled monuments, including settlements, enclosures, field systems, cairns and stone circles.



The majority of the SMs on Forestry Commission are now free of tree cover with many having been planted over in previous decades. Monuments that do still have trees growing on them will be cleared as appropriate. Once trees are removed, where safe to do so, SM's will be managed as permanent open space with only up to 20% of tree encroachment permitted.

Unscheduled monuments will be protected and managed during forestry operations in order to preserve and where possible and appropriate enhance them.

Improving the setting of many of the monuments, particularly in Fernworthy, is a key aim of the 'Moor than Meets the Eye' HLF project following extensive field work (Newman, 2013). This Plan takes steps to improve the visual and physical connectivity of the features. Like that at Assycombe Farm, as shown below, with planned removal shown in blue.



© Crown copyright and database right [2016]

Ordnance Survey [100021242]

