

The Forest Plan proposals will go through two stages of consultation:

Stage 1: Stakeholder Consultation

Environment Agency
 Natural England
 English Heritage
 Hampshire County Council
 Basingstoke & Deane District Council
 Winchester District Council
 Hampshire & Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust
 RSPB
 Woodland Trust
 Micheldever Parish Council
 North Waltham Parish Council
 Popham Parish Council

Stage 2: Placement on the Forestry Commission Public Register for 28 days

Stage 1			
Consultee	Response Date	Response	FC Follow Up
Environment Agency		No response	
Natural England		No response	

English Heritage		<p>Dear John,</p> <p>Thank you for consulting English Heritage on the Hampshire Downs draft forest plan. Overall I am happy with the section on the historic environment, which is understandably fairly general given the high level character of this document. I do however have a couple of specific points relating to particular areas/monuments:</p> <p>Ampfield Wood - Having visited the site I would be keen to see the plan include an aspiration to better reveal the park pale through appropriate thinning/felling of trees around it.</p> <p>Micheldever Wood - It should be noted here that the entire wood (with the exception of Dodsley Wood) is a Scheduled Monument and therefore that any works entailing ground disturbance would require Scheduled Monument Consent to be obtained through English Heritage. Currently the wording does not quite reflect the scale of this monument and the implications that it has for the management of this woodland. The relatively small amount of change between the aspiration and current situation is certainly positive as it would be beneficial for the archaeology for forestry operations to be kept to the minimum required for the woodland to function.</p> <p>My remit extends only to Scheduled Monuments and therefore it would also be prudent to consult David Hopkins, the county archaeologist, in relation to undesignated archaeology if you have not done so already. His email address is david.hopkins@hampshire.gov.uk.</p> <p>Regards Ben Jervis</p> <p>Ben Jervis Assistant Inspector of Ancient Monuments (Berkshire, Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire, Surrey, Hampshire & Isle of Wight)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Park Pale management noted in Ampfield Habitat Restoration and Felling Map • Micheldever text amended to better reflect the extensive SM. • This consultation was also sent to Hampshire County Council for comment.
Hampshire County Council		No response	
Basingstoke & Deane District Council		No response	
Winchester District Council		No response	
Hampshire and Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust		See following exchange of letters	
RSPB		No response	
Woodland Trust		No response	
Micheldever Parish Council		No response	
North Waltham Parish Council		No response	
Popham Parish Council		No response	

Stage 3			
Consultee	Response Date	Response	FC Follow Up

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21st August 2014

Your Ref: 304/03/13-14
Our Ref: 14.27.4

Dear John

PROPOSAL:
APPLICATION FOR FOREST DESIGN PLAN APPROVALS

LOCATIONS:
AMPFIELD WOOD, BLACK WOOD, MICHELDEVER, BUSHEY LEAZE, CHAWTON PARK, WEST WOOD, WESTON COMMON AND WINDMILL COPSE

Thank you for consulting the Wildlife Trust on the above draft Forest Design Plan. We acknowledge that through the Forest Planning Process you seek the views of external stakeholders, including organisations involved with nature conservation such as ourselves, we welcome our inclusion in this process. We also acknowledge from our previous consultations on such plans that their purpose is to provide an overall direction of travel and aspirations of management, and therefore does not include the detail of specific species objectives. The objectives included within this plan are reproduced below;

Objectives for the Hampshire Downs Woodlands
The objectives as detailed in the plan are as follows;

- Maintain and increase the native composition of ancient semi-natural woodland.
- Restore planted ancient woodland sites to native and honorary native woodland.
- Maintain sustainable access and the provision for recreation within the woodlands, taking opportunities to enhance the experience where appropriate.
- Take opportunities to increase the nature conservation value of other existing habitats.
- Maintain and take opportunities to increase the resilience of the woodlands by diversifying age structure and appropriate species mix within the woodland.
- Provide a regular supply of timber to support local employment and local timber processing industries.

Following our review of the draft Forest Plan, we would like to make the following comments;

GENERAL COMMENTS

- The Wildlife Trust supports the net shift towards broad-leaved woodland species
- We note that open features, where they exist, often follow arbitrary routes, for example, tracks and powerlines, rather than forming patches or connections between blocks of habitat within or beyond the site.

AMPFIELD WOOD

Designations

Ampfield Wood West SINC (1B/1A)
Ampfield Wood (North-east) SINC (1B/2A)
Nevil's Copse SINC (1B/1A/6A)

Comments

Ampfield Wood comprises a significant area of woodland covering approximately 381 hectares. It is a species rich habitat with one of the highest number of ancient woodland indicator species recorded than from any other woodland in Hampshire. We note that the Forest Plan states that *'the ASNW parts of the woodland have been adopted as a SINC'* whereas our records indicate that the whole woodland has been designated as a SINC.

We welcome the move towards a greater than 80% coverage of native and honorary-native broad-leaved woodland. The site has a good ride network and we welcome the proposals to take opportunities for ride widening, and the creation of scalloped edges, during management interventions. We note that there are few woodland glades and therefore open areas could be created within woodland blocks, in order to increase biodiversity and riverine habitats could be widened, again to increase biodiversity. The Trust would welcome proposals to increase and enhance the areas of small-leaved lime, where it occurs.

BLACK WOOD (Black Wood, Embley Wood, Rownest Wood and Waltham Trinley's)

Designations

Black Wood SINC (1B/6A/6C)

Comments

This area comprises four woodlands of which Black Wood is the largest, covering an area of 275 hectares. Black Wood is also designated a SINC for the presence of a significant element of ancient semi-natural woodland surviving and a significant invertebrate population.

We again welcome the move towards a greater than 80% coverage of native and honorary-native broad-leaved woodland. The site includes a good ride network and we welcome proposals to enhance woodland rides in order to increase biodiversity.

MICHELDEVER WOODS (Micheldever Wood, Itchen Wood and Dodsley Wood)

Designations

Micheldever Wood SINC (1B)
Itchen Wood SINC (1B/6A)
Dodsley Wood SINC (1A)

Comments

Micheldever Wood comprises an extensive woodland covering 370 hectares. The three woodland areas are linked although part of Micheldever Wood is bisected by the M3 motorway. The whole woodland has been designated a SINC for its nature conservation value, and small-leaved lime is present in the woodland.

We again welcome the move towards a greater than 80% coverage of native and honorary-native broad-leaved woodland. There are some rides within the woodland and we welcome proposals to enhance these. There are limited areas of open space and the creation of woodland glades or ponds would increase biodiversity at the site. The Trust would welcome proposals to increase and enhance the areas of small-leaved lime, where it occurs.

BUSHEY LEAZE (Bushey Leaze Wood, Ackender Wood/Alexander Wood)

Designations

Bushey Leaze Wood SINC (1B)
Ackender Wood/Alexander Wood (1B)

Comments

Bushey Leaze Wood and Ackender Wood/Alexander Wood combined make up Bushey Leaze and according to our records both woodlands are designated as SINC due to the presence of a significant element of ancient semi-natural woodland surviving. The Forest Plan states that there are no statutory conservation designations on the site, but as we have already mentioned the woodland is designated a SINC which needs to be recognised. Ackender Wood/Alexander Wood supports a significant number of ancient woodland indicator plant species, including the rare Wood Barley *Hardelymus europaeus* which was located in 2013. This is contrary to the statement in the plan stating that there are no records of conservation interest.

We again welcome the move towards a greater than 80% coverage of native and honorary-native broad-leaved woodland. There are some rides within the woodland and we welcome proposals to enhance these. There are limited areas of open space and the creation of woodland glades or ponds would increase biodiversity at the site.

CHAWTON PARK WOOD

Designations

Chawton Park Wood (1B)

Comments

Chawton Park Wood comprises an area of 209 hectares and is designated as SINC due to a significant element of semi-natural woodland surviving. There is a network of woodland rides but open space is limited to a linear feature that is located adjacent to one of those rides.

We again welcome the move towards a greater than 80% coverage of native and honorary-native broad-leaved woodland. But there is the opportunity to enhance the site for biodiversity by creating woodland glades and ponds at the site.

WEST WOOD

Designations

West Wood/Crab Wood Complex SINC (1B)

Comments

West Wood comprises an area of 251 hectares and is designated a SINC due to the presence of a significant element of semi-natural woodland surviving. It is contiguous with Crab Wood SSSI giving a combined area of 320 hectares. There is a good ride network throughout the wood and we welcome proposals to enhance these for nature conservation. There is a small area of open space which covers only 1.6 hectares.

We welcome the move towards a greater than 80% coverage of native and honorary-native broad-leaved woodland. There are limited areas of open space and the creation of woodland glades or ponds would increase biodiversity at the site.

WESTON COMMON

Designations

None

Comments

The area of this woodland covered by this Forest Plan is small and covers an area of 67 hectares. The woodland is contiguous with other compartments that are not included within this plan. These areas are designated a SINC due to the presence of ancient semi-natural woodland, or significant elements of it and pasture woodland and wooded commons, which are of significant biological and historical interest.

The only open space follows an arbitrary route, which in this case appears to be a powerline, biodiversity could be enhanced by creating more woodland glades and rides within the woodland. Given that the adjacent woodlands were formerly pasture woodland and wooded commons, there may be the opportunity to recreate some of these habitat types.

WINDMILLS COPSE

Designations

None

Comments

Windmills Copse is a small site covering only 51 hectares. It is stated within the Forest Plan that the ancient woodland parts of the site are designated a SINC. However our records indicate that the site is not designated and therefore clarification of this point is required. We again welcome the move towards a greater than 80% coverage of native and honorary-native broad-leaved woodland. But there is the opportunity to enhance the site for biodiversity by widening woodland rides, creating glades and ponds on the site. Currently the only open space is an arbitrary linear feature along the line of a powerline.

Our Aspirations

As you will no doubt be aware the Trust has aspirations within Hampshire and the Isle of Wight to maintain, enhance and protect the biodiversity of the Counties. With the on-going pressure from development we consider that it is essential that sites such as those within this plan are protected and managed in a way to improve biodiversity. We have therefore provided some aspirations that we consider would benefit the sites and would like to see included, or in more detail within this Forest Plan.

1. More emphasis put on restoring woodlands to their former habitat types such as pasture woodland, wooded commons and coppice-with-standards;
2. More emphasis placed on increasing woodland ride widening and enhancement to increase suitable habitats for woodland edge/scrub edge bird and invertebrate species;
3. The creation of woodland glades and selected thinning to improve the floristic value of the understorey, to promote the regeneration of woodland flora;
4. The continued widening and enhancement of the riverine corridors where they run through a site;
5. The continued management of deer in accordance with the South England Forest District since this will reduce deer browsing and promote the development of scrub habitats and floristic diversity along woodland rides and in the understorey; and
6. We welcome the eradication of non-native/invasive species where they are recorded.

Finally we would like to thank you for including us in the consultation process of this draft Forest Plan, and hope that you find our comments both constructive and useful. If you wish to discuss these matters further then please do not hesitate to contact us. I also ask that you keep the Trust informed of the progress and outcome of this draft Forest Plan application.

Yours sincerely



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01 September 2014

Your Ref: 14.27.4

Dear Trevor,

Thank you very much for your response to our consultation on the Woodlands of the Hampshire Downs Forest Plan.

I have noted your points below with comments which I hope will answer your queries:

Ampfield Wood

"We note that the Forest Plan states that 'the ASNW parts of the woodland have been adopted as a SINC' whereas our records indicate that the whole woodland has been designated as a SINC"

We are currently improving our access to SINC data. I have amended the text to reflect your point.

"We note that there are few woodland glades and therefore open areas could be created within woodland blocks..."

This comment is also reflected in your response to Micheldever Wood, Bushey Leaze, Chawton Park, West Wood, Weston Common and Windmills Copse. Our proposal to manage much of the area of the Forest Plan under a shelterwood system, which allows for some significant breaks in the canopy, potentially resulting in extensive transitional open space will hopefully offer the desired open space within these woodlands. As we introduce/continue this form of management within these woodlands we will learn more about how the woodlands respond to such techniques and how opportunities for habitat development can be taken i.e. letting the woodland decide where glades occur rather than forcing the issue in specified locations. Our continued ride and road edge enhancement should also contribute to the connectivity of such habitats.

"...riverine habitats could be widened..."

I have amended the text in the Water section of each part of the Plan to reflect the identification of opportunities (and fulfilment of where resources allow) for enhancing riverine habitat and the pond network at the operational stage.

"The Trust would welcome proposals to increase and enhance the areas of small-leaved lime..."

Also reflected in your response to Micheldever Wood. I have amended to text to greater reflect a need for the encouragement of this species where it occurs naturally. It is also an important species for enrichment of native woodlands where it is not currently present.

Bushey Leaze

"...both woodlands designated as SINC..."

We are currently improving our access to SINC data. I have amended the text to reflect your point.

"...supports a significant number of ancient woodland indicator plant species...contrary to the statement in the Plan that there are no record of conservation interest"

Thank you. I would agree that these statements contradict each other. I have emended the text within the Biodiversity section of each part of the Plan to remove any contradiction.

Windmills Copse

"It is stated within the Forest Plan that the ancient woodland parts of the site are designated as a SINC. However our records indicate that the site is not designated..."

As I have previously stated, we are currently improving our access to SINC data. I had assumed, being ancient woodland, that it the woodland was an adopted SINC. I am afraid I am not able to clarify at this very point in time. As the SINC status would not change our proposals I am not too concerned that this point is clarified before submitting this Plan for further approval.

Our (HIWWT) Aspirations

1. *"More emphasis placed on restoring woodland to their former habitat types such as pasture woodland, wooded commons and coppice-with-standards"*

We are proposing to continue the restoration of ancient woodland to a predominantly native woodland character. Restoration to more refined types of native woodland such as those stated above would require a more in depth review to ensure the long-term resources required to manage such habitats are in place, which they currently are not. The need to balance habitat restoration with the current socio-economic context and resources does limit our ability to propose and implement these types of extensive restoration at this time.

Points 2 - 6.

I agree with your points and believe that between the objectives proposed within this Plan and our operational planning systems such opportunities/enhancements can be identified and implemented where possible.

Finally Trevor, I would like to thank you once again for your thoughtful and considered response and the time you have taken. It is, as ever, greatly appreciated.

If you wish to discuss further then please get in touch.

Having made the changes to the Plan as stated above, I am looking to submit this draft to Forest Services in due course. I will keep you informed of progress.

Yours sincerely

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