

Woodlands of Rogate Forest Plan

South England Forest District

Woodlands Included Within This Forest Plan

Combe Hill

Coldharbour

Great Hanger

Hatch Copse

Hatch Firs

Shufflesheeps

Ironhill

Date of Commencement of Plan: **January 2016**

 Approval Period: **January 2016 to January 2026 (10 Years)**
Summary of Activity within Approval Period:

A separate Felling License provides approval for standard silvicultural thinning across the South Forest District estate as a whole.

Forestry Activity	Amount of habitat type (ha)			
	Conifer high forest	Broadleaf natural regeneration or replanting	Mixed natural regeneration or replanting	Open
Clearfell in period 2016-2026	1.2			
Thinning prior to clear-fell beyond plan period.	28.2			0
Establishment Phase (natural regeneration from native seed source.).		0	8.9	0
Area managed under a shelterwood system	0	240.6		
Wet woodland management	0	4.4	0	0
Coppice Management	0	14.8	0	0
Management of permanent open space	0	0	0	16
	(plus transitional open space created by Coppice Rotations, Regeneration Fellings and Clearfellings)			
Research Plot/ seed Orchard	15.6			
Other (car parks etc)	0.9			
TOTAL MAPPED AREA	330.5			

FOREST ENTERPRISE Application for Forest Plan Approvals

 Forest District: **South England Forest District**

 FC Geographic Block No: **69**

 Forest Plan Name: **Woodlands of Rogate**

 FE Plan Reference Number: **304/69/16-17**

 Nearest town or village: **Liphook**

 OS Grid Reference: **SU 8316 2815**

 Local Authority: **Chichester District Council, West Sussex County Council**

I apply for Forest Plan approval for the property described above and in the enclosed Forest Plan.

I undertake to obtain any permissions necessary for the implementation of the approved Plan.

Signed:

Bruce Rothnie, Deputy Surveyor, South England FD

Date:

Approved:

Forest Services Area Director

Date:

Introduction

Forest Planning

Consultation and Approval Process

Objectives

Context

Location

Landscape and Historical Context

Tenure

Current woodland structure

Biodiversity and Conservation

People

Historic Environment

Soils

Water

Tree Diseases and Pests

Climate Change

Forest Plan Maps

Statistics

Monitoring and Indicators of Success

Glossary

References

Appendix A—Consultation

Appendix B—CSM 6

Forest Planning

Forest Plans define the long term vision for a woodland or a collection of woodlands, usually looking 50 to 100 years ahead. It sets objectives and illustrates how management will move towards achieving this vision over the initial 10 to 30 years.

This plan represents the first major review of the Rogate Woodlands Forest Plan that was originally consulted upon and approved in 1997. The revised Forest Plan has been prepared following a review of the original plan undertaken by FC staff, and in consultation with stakeholders. It has incorporated developments in policy and local initiatives that have occurred in the intervening years.

Consultation and Approval Process

At key points throughout the Forest planning process, we seek the views of external stakeholders, including local communities and organisations involved with nature conservation, public recreation and the timber industry. Through this consultation process we can ensure that an appropriate balance of objectives is achieved. Details of the consultation strategy for this forest plan can be found in Appendix A.

Approval of the Forest Plan is granted by the regulatory arm of the forestry commission, known as Forest Services. This regulatory approval is usually valid for 10 years and grants a 10 year felling licence.

The Approved plan will be reviewed at year 5 to ensure proposals are still relevant, suitable and in line with current policy and guidance. This will also be an opportunity to evaluate the success of management over the 5 year period and engage any amendments to the forest plan that may be required.

Objectives for the Woodlands of Rogate

- Maintain and increase the native composition of ancient semi-natural woodland.
- Initiate restoration of planted ancient woodland sites to native and honorary native woodland.
- Take opportunities to increase the nature conservation value of existing habitats and enhance and support the development of open space
- Provide, maintain and enhance where possible the recreational capacity of the woodland.
- Maintain and increase the species and age diversity of the woodland.
- Control invasive plant species and reduce their impact across the sites.
- Provide a regular supply of quality timber to support local employment and local timber processing industries.

Location

Reference: Location Map

The south western end of the Rogate block of woodlands lies approximately 6km north east of Petersfield and follows the line of the B2070. Between the woodlands lies the towns of Liss and Liphook.

Landscape and Historical Context

The Rogate Woodlands cover an area of 330.5 hectares and provide important landscape value. In the wider area they form a larger woodland complex which helps to connect other areas of woodland, heathland and common. The woodlands are located within the South Downs National Park but aside from this have very little in the way of statutory designations apart from a Grade II* Registered Park and Gardens designation in one of the north eastern blocks which will not affect the proposed management.

A couple of the woodlands do border Specialist Sites of Scientific Interest and this will be taken into account when construing the most appropriate management interventions.

Parts of the woodland block are also covered by tree preservation orders (ref - current structure map). Before any forestry work commences the Forestry Commission will seek formal approval to manage these areas.

The forest falls within the Naturals England's Wealden National character area typified by an irregular undulating landform with a mix of conifer woodland, heathland and agriculture. Altitude ranges from 90m to 160m with localised steep slopes.

The climate is typical of south-east England with rainfall below 700mm per annum and temperatures ranging from a mean 14.2°C for the warmest month and 5.3°C for the coldest month.

The forest falls within South England Forest District and is managed by Forest Enterprise an agency of the Forestry Commission.

Tenure

The Forestry Commission is a freehold owner of the woodland except 2 small sections in the north of the blocks. Public access is open and encouraged as per the public forest estate access statement. The woodlands lie in an area which historically has been a dynamic and changing landscape for hundreds of years.

Current Woodland Structure

Ancient Semi-Natural Woodland comprises a total of 14.1 hectares which makes up 4.2% of the Blocks Plantation on Ancient woodland comprises a total of 54.4 hectares which makes up 16.4% of the block.

There is a significant conifer component throughout the blocks including Corsican Pine, Douglas Fir, Scots Pine, Western Hemlock, European Larch and Norway Spruce. Broadleaved species present include, Oak, Sweet chestnut, Beech and Birch.

The age's of the trees range from 100 plus to 3 years old. However around 29% of the area accounts for one age class (51-60 years old).

The introduction of continuous cover management systems aims to develop a much more varied age structure, leading to a more resilient woodland.

Across areas with lighter canopy cover, some significant natural regeneration of multiple broadleaved species and conifer species already occurs.

Biodiversity and Conservation

The Rogate woodlands are successfully providing quality habitat for an array of species including protected mammals and insects and support the following UK Biodiversity Action Plans*

Principal: Woodland, Lowland Heathland

Minor: Lowland dry acid grassland, Lowland Meadows and Ponds

Combe Hill wood lies in a Biodiversity Opportunity Area as defined by the Sussex Biodiversity Record Centre. Opportunities for biodiversity enhancement include increasing ecological networks, diversification and restoration of woodlands and heathlands.

These opportunities will be addressed during management interventions. A systematic process of ride widening will be carried out as well as connecting areas of open space to existing heathland in the wider landscape. A wide use of the shelterwood silvicultural system will increase diversification and create periodic areas of different age habitats and a diverse range of species in the blocks. The FC policy of restoring ancient woodland and maintaining and increasing native woodland will also be a benefit for biodiversity enhancement.

Veteran dead wood is also important throughout the woodlands particularly in boundary settings, a system of appropriate management will look to conserve this resource for the future.

Coppice in the form of Sweet Chestnut is present and management interventions will look to continue this habitat.

Combe Hill and Hatch Copse also have important areas of wet woodland which will be looked to be maintained and enhanced.

Decisions about the scale and location of interventions will be made at the operational stage of management.

People

As the majority of the Rogate woodlands are owned by the FC, public access is encouraged and open in nature. A network of countryside rights of way runs through the blocks including a 64 mile long distance walk called the Serpent Trail.

The rest of the blocks highlights include viewpoints and beauty spots overlooking wooded and down land valleys, 2 car parks and a bike park in Combehill. Regular recreation permissions active in the blocks include licensed game shoots, motorsport events, and mountain bike races.

* note UK BAP's were succeeded by the 'UK Post-2010 Biodiversity Framework' in July 2012

The woodland areas are also important to local community groups who use them for a variety of purposes, examples include a volunteer group which carries out conservation tasks to increase heathland and herpetofauna habitat.

Open junctions, wide rides and clear paths enhance the experience of a walk through the woodlands. During management interventions opportunities to enhance the visual impact of rides and individual trees will be taken by selecting trees for retention based on character as well as widening rides.

Soils

Soils types throughout the block are classified as typical podzols.

Water

Drains are the only water which flows through the woodlands, and there are 4 small ponds located in Combe Hill and Hatch Copse respectively.

Historic Environment

There are a total of 8 recorded historical features within the Rogate Woodlands. These range from sandpits, boundary stones and limekilns to iron working sites and a hydraulic ram. These are all currently unscheduled. As with all FC sites, continued monitoring will take place to ensure that anything relevant found in the future is recorded and fed into operational planning in line with statutory responsibilities and best practice guidelines.

Tree Diseases and Pests

The main diseases of concern currently are Dothistroma (red band) Needle Blight on Corsican Pine, Phytophthora ramorum on Larch and Hymenoscyphus Fraxinea (Ash Dieback). Although Ash is present, its number is minimal within the scale of the woodland, therefore is not considered critical to the wood. Corsican Pine is a significant component and there is Larch growing. However, species diversity does make the woodland more resilient if a significant pathogen does arise.

Invasive rhododendron and Impatiens glandulifera (Himalayan balsam) are also spreading. But continued monitoring does take place to ensure that species posing a threat to native flora do not become established.

Guidance and action plans regarding plant health are constantly evolving to adapt to plant health threats. The sudden emergence of a disease can result in the need to fell a coupe earlier than planned or alter restocking plans. We will continue to monitor for disease as required and take appropriate action. Any changes to the forest design plan will be notified or agreed with Forest Services in accordance with the relevant guidance.

Mammal browsing is also a threat to the sustainability of woodlands in southern England. Roe and Muntjac are the most prevalent browsing mammals within the Rogate Woodlands.

Deer will be managed in accordance with the South England Forest District Deer Management Strategy.

Climate Change

Climate change represents one of the greatest long-term challenges facing the world today. Conventional forest management systems have developed in a climate that has undergone fluctuations but remained relatively stable since the end of the last ice age (around 10,000 years ago). However, the average global temperature is now rising and there is evidence that rainfall patterns are changing. There is also likely to be an increase in the incidence of extreme weather and the frequency and severity of summer drought.

This is likely to represent the greatest threat to woodlands from climate change in the UK over the coming decades. UK forest management needs to respond to these threats in two principal ways: through mitigation, including ensuring management is sustainable and adaptation, including species diversification.

Forest Plan Maps

When consulting on the maps, please refer to the glossary for further detail about the prescriptions.

Location

Aerial

Indicative age

Shows the planting year and age of the trees within the woodlands.

Indicative age

Shows the planting year and age of the trees within the woodlands.

Species diversity

Gives an indicative illustration of the number of different species within the woodlands (includes open space). However it should be noted that the data only accounts for trees in the canopy and should only be taken as a general overview of the number of different species present.

Current structure

An overview of the current habitat types existing in the woodlands.

Long Term Vision

Illustrates the proposed long term structure of the woodlands and other habitats consistent with the Forest Plan objectives. While there is no fixed time scale for the habitat transformations depicted, an indicative term of around 100 years is assumed.

Habitat restoration and felling

Shows the management proposals in the shorter term, 10 to 30 years. These proposals are the initial stepping stones towards achieving the long term vision.