

Cogra Moss Forest Design Plan



Text & Graphs

Autumn 2008



Cogra Moss Forest Design Plan Review

Contents

Cogra Moss Forest Design Plan is presented in five separate sections :-

- Text and graphs
- Viewpoint Photos
- General Photo Survey
- Maps
- Computer Perspectives

This process by which this plan has been developed is characterised by three main stages:

- 1) Understanding the plan area.
- 2) Developing a vision
- 3) Implementing the vision

The Viewpoints and General Photo Survey principally reflect the first two stages in the process whilst the maps and text describe the full process. The table below illustrates the way that the various maps, photos and text fit into the stages in the process and helps guide the reader through the plan.

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| Developing A Vision | <i>Text</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Review and Appraisal |
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| | <i>Maps</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Future Woodland Management• Future Woodland Species• Future Access Community, Health and Wellbeing• Future Conservation and Heritage• Planning for Climate Change |
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Gareth Browning
Autumn 2008

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Introduction

Cogra Moss is situated on the north-western edge of the Lake District National Park around 2km east of the village of Lamplugh. The forest covers an area of 264ha of which approximately 100 ha is open fell and heath land above the tree line. Cogra Moss is entirely freehold having been purchased in the early 1960's. The forest was planted in the mid 1960's to early 1970's, with predominantly coniferous species.

Survey

The forest surrounds Cogra Moss, a now unused, man-made, reservoir. The reservoir is maintained by United Utilities and fished by the Cockermouth Angling Association who use a small informal car park on the southern shore. Cogra Moss is well used by the local community and visitors alike for informal recreation. The small National Park car park at Felldyke is regularly full and along with roadside parking at Leaps Gate is the main starting point for many visitors to Cogra Moss. Several circular walking and running routes can be followed using roads and tracks within the forest and on adjacent land. The higher elevation paths give spectacular views into the central fells as well as the coast, Scotland and Isle of Man.

A photographic survey showed that the forest is visible from external viewpoints such as Felldyke, Lamplugh, Arlecdon and Asby. However these views only reveal the forest edges as much of the forest is hidden from view by Knockmurton and the land rising up between Lamplugh and the reservoir dam.

The main limiting features to the management of the forest are linked to the steep slopes and poor soils around the reservoir. In addition Lodgepole pine planted across the forest has suffered significant wind blow which has further reduced the value of this poor quality timber by increasing the cost and practicalities of working.

There is considerable wildlife interest on land adjacent to the forest including heather moor land, mires and acid grassland. These habitats have been taken into account whilst developing the Plan, in addition to various industrial and ancient archaeological features. There are Regionally Important Geological / Geomorphologic Sites (RIGGS). The forest itself is home to Red Squirrel, Badger, deer and birds such as Buzzard.

The strata under Cogra Moss have in the past been an important source of iron ore and hematite. The remains of old mine workings, centred on Knockmurton, dating back to the mid-19th Century are an important archaeological feature of the area. An extensive survey was carried out in March 1996 and is included as an appendix.

Review of Achievements during last plan period.

The previous plan objectives are listed below with achievements highlighted for each objective.

- Manage all work in accordance with the District Strategic Plan, England Forest Strategy and UK Woodland Assurance Scheme. - [This has been achieved. Whilst Cogra Moss has not been specifically audited under UKWAS, North West England has and was audited in 2005 and judged to have passed.](#)
- Achieve the proposed felling plan. - [Whilst this was delayed by the 2005 storm clearance the felling plan was achieved.](#)

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- Consult and inform stakeholders, visitors and the local community about the ongoing and future management of the forest through local meetings and temporary information signing. - During the life of the plan the parish council and local community have been consulted and informed about planned work. During the recent harvesting work information signs were maintained and updated at key entrances to the forest and 50 local residences along with the caravan sites were regularly mail dropped updates.
- Draw up a simple management plan for the ungrazed fell land above the forest and continue to maintain a stock proof boundary. - This has not been achieved and will be carried forward to the next plan period.
- Take every opportunity to regularly thin the forest. - No thinning has taken place and this object will be carried forward.
- Improve the circular walk around the reservoir. - The completion of the recent harvesting on the south and east sides of the reservoir is the first stage in this process. It is hoped that by beginning of 2009 the path through the harvesting site will be much improved in terms of drainage and surface.

Review and Appraisal

Since the last plan review considerable progress has been made against the plan targets with the recent completion of harvesting to the south and west of the reservoir removing one of the most visible harsh boundaries. In addition restocking in 2005 has seen native broadleaves and open space established.

The continuing progression of wind blow, predominantly in the Lodgepole pine, requires further attention in this review. Whilst in the current market the harvesting of the Lodgepole pine is not financially attractive priority must be given to this work otherwise it may become impractical or unsafe to clear the windblown areas especially those on the steep slopes.

The area of spruce growing on the mires would be better managed as open native broadleaf woodland. This would remove the need for difficult future harvesting on these very wet soils as well as improving the conservation and recreation value of the forest. However felling of this conifer area may need to be delayed to balance leaving some mature forest habitat with felling the unstable Lodgepole pine.

There is scope to improve diversity of the forest by phasing the felling and restocking, and to create a structure more responsive to the topography of the forest. The forest stability and access for harvesting, including the steepness of slopes, all have a constraining influence on the options available.

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Objectives of the Plan

Ongoing

- Manage all work in accordance with the District Strategic Plan, The Regional Forestry Framework, A Strategy for England's Trees, Woods and Forests and the UK Woodland Assurance Scheme.
- Consult and inform stakeholders, visitors and the local community about the ongoing and future management of the forest through local meetings and temporary information signing.
- Take every opportunity to regularly thin the forest.
- Take into account developing advice on adapting to and mitigating against the impacts of climate change.

The next 5 years

- Draw up a simple management plan for the fell land above the forest and continue to maintain a stock proof boundary.
- Improve the circular walk around the reservoir.
- Achieve the proposed felling plan especially the removal of unstable Lodgepole pine.
- Remove the deer fence enclosing the trees planted in 2005.
- Establish a new native woodland on the south side of the reservoir.
- Work with the Cockermouth Angling Association and United Utilities to improve the environment around the reservoir.
- Work with the Lake District National Park Authority to improve information for visitors.

These objectives are further explored in the following maps:-

- Future Woodland Management,
- Future Woodland Species,
- Future Community Health and Well Being ,
- Future Conservation and Heritage
- Planning for Climate Change

Delivery against the North West England Forest District Strategic Plan

Cogra Moss lies within the Cumbria High fells management zone of the North West England Forest District Strategic Plan (NWEFDSP <http://fcnotes/forestry/infd-5y2mw3>) (2005 to 2009). Within the general description for this zone the Strategic Plan makes the statements below which are relevant to Cogra Moss.

- Presumption to thin all areas of WHC 3 and below (and more sheltered WHC 4). If necessary thin steep areas at zero surplus for both aesthetic and timber quality benefits.
- Main conifer species will be Sitka spruce, Larch, Douglas fir and Scots pine which grow fast and yield high quality timber when planted on appropriate sites.

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- At FDP review consider further boundary improvements to forests in zone including land swap deals to improve most visually intrusive edges where appropriate.

Detailed below are the objectives of the Cumbria High fells zone (highlighted in blue), and how the implementation of the revised Cogra Moss FDP will deliver against the objectives.

Forestry for rural development

Main conifer species will be Sitka spruce, Larch, Douglas fir and Scots pine which grow fast and yield high quality timber when planted on appropriate sites. Do not replant with Western Hemlock, Western Red Cedar or Grand fir as there is poor demand from saw millers, and replace with other species. At FDP revision felling will target the early removal of Western Hemlock where this does not significantly compromise other objectives to minimise problem of vigorous natural regeneration. The only exception to the above will be the retention of feature trees around the main visitor facilities.

Presumption to thin all areas of WHC 3 and below (and more sheltered WHC 4). If necessary thin steep areas at zero surplus for both aesthetic and timber quality benefits.

Implemented through

- Future woodland management proposes regular production of timber from Cogra Moss which will help support timber industries in Cumbria.
- Restocking proposals include replacing Lodgepole pine with better quality more productive Sitka spruce and larch.
- The intention to maximise thinning is one of the objectives.

Forestry for recreation, access and tourism

Main focus of formal recreation provision and future development will be at Whinlatter Forest Park which is now managed as a single entity with Dodd Wood.

Apply continuous cover management systems to stands of Douglas fir on lower elevation sites, particularly near recreational facilities. Preference to regenerate naturally with planting as last resort. Retain some big conifers indefinitely at Whinlatter.

Thin to improve visual amenity around main recreational facilities and at net cost if required.

In timber marketing and operations management aim to minimise disruption to recreational facilities, particularly forest walks at Whinlatter/Dodd. Market timber from Whinlatter as a long term contract to achieve greater control.

Implemented through

- Working with partners to improve information to visitors about facilities at Cogra Moss
- Improving path surface and drainage around the reservoir loop path.
- Continue working with Cockermouth Angling Association.

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Forestry for environment and conservation

At FDP review consider further boundary improvements to forests in zone including landswap deals to improve most visually intrusive edges where appropriate.

Consider re-aligning top boundary fences at FDP review to improve visual appearance of top margins e.g. Ennerdale, Dodd.

Manage and extend Upland Oak woods according to HAP. In these areas nature conservation will be the prime objective.

At Matterdale and Blengdale create permanent network of open space/broadleaves at restocking so that average coupe size can be reduced in next rotation.

Work in partnership with tenant farmers to improve conservation and landscape value of farmland and open fell. In general, reduce grazing pressure from sheep to improve heath land condition.

Through a partnership with the National Trust and United Utilities develop a long term vision for the whole Ennerdale Valley based on the principle of utilising natural processes and reflect this in the FDP, activities and operations on the FC landholding. This is a very long term, pilot scheme which has the working title "Wild Ennerdale". There will be considerable consultation with stakeholders.

Particularly high archaeological interest at Ennerdale to be protected.

Implemented Through

- Harsh boundaries improved through felling and restocking
- New native woodland developed including Oak/Birch and Juniper.
- Develop a management plan for the open fell areas.

Delivery against National Policy " A Strategy for England's Trees, Woods and Forests"

The Strategy for England's Trees, Woods and Forests (ETWFS <http://fcnotes/forestry/hcou-4ucf8j>) replaced the England Forestry Strategy as the core policy for forestry in England in 2007. The strategy has three themes Communities and Places, Land and Natural Environment and Working Woodlands.

Detailed below are the objectives of the ETWFS (highlighted in blue), grouped under its three themes and how the implementation of the revised Cogra Moss FDP will deliver against the objectives.

Communities and Places

- involving local people in planning, managing and using local woodlands and the trees in streets and green spaces, to help achieve more cohesive communities and to show how individuals can contribute to environmental sustainability;
- making it easier for people to use and enjoy woodlands particularly in ways that benefit their physical and mental health, learning and personal development;
- creating liveable neighbourhoods, towns and cities by using trees and woodlands as part of the green infrastructure which frames and connects urban and rural areas, improves the quality of a place, and regenerates brown field and derelict land;

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- using trees and woodlands to help minimise the impacts of climate change in built-up area

Implemented through

- Working with the National Park Authority to improve visitor information.
- Continue to use mail drops and temporary signing as ways of updating the local community about operations and activities.
- Making the Forest Design Plan publicly available through a Cogra Moss page within the Forestry Commission's regional website.
- Giving the local community opportunities to be involved in planting the new native woodland.

Land and Natural Environment

To create, expand and maintain a network of sustainably managed trees, woods and forests that are resilient to climate change and make a full contribution to:

- protecting and enhancing our woodland habitats and associated species and facilitating their resilience and adaptation to climate change;
- safeguarding, enhancing and celebrating the characteristic elements of rural and urban landscapes and their cultural and historic values;
- maximising the full range of ecosystem services provided by trees, woods and forests, including the protection of soil and water resources now and in the future, as needs change.

Implemented through

- Ecological site classification used to plan the choice of future woodland species.
- Creating 30ha of new native woodland.
- Forest Design Plan process based around understanding the importance of sense of the place
- Increasing the buffer of native species around the reservoir.

Working Woodlands

The Government's objectives for this Strategy can only be delivered by a healthy woodland and forestry sector with viable businesses actively engaged in sustainable management and processing at national, regional, sub-regional and local level. This will require:

- the whole sector to have the expertise and capacity to ensure that sustainable management of woodlands delivers public benefits alongside business profitability. To achieve this, partnership programmes will involve the forestry, arboricultural, silvicultural, recreation, timber processing industries and related business sectors;
- innovation to develop new markets and modernise supply chains and infrastructure;
- Government resources targeted at the provision of public goods and at developing the capacity of the sector to adapt to future needs and diversify, creating a flexible industry run by well-trained people;
- substituting wood products for fossil fuels and other materials, as a contribution to UK targets for reducing greenhouse gas emissions

Implemented through

- Replacing Lodgepole pine with Sitka spruce and larch to ensure higher quality timber production in the future.
- Providing opportunities for the local community to gather firewood from harvesting sites.
- Developing local contractors by supporting training.

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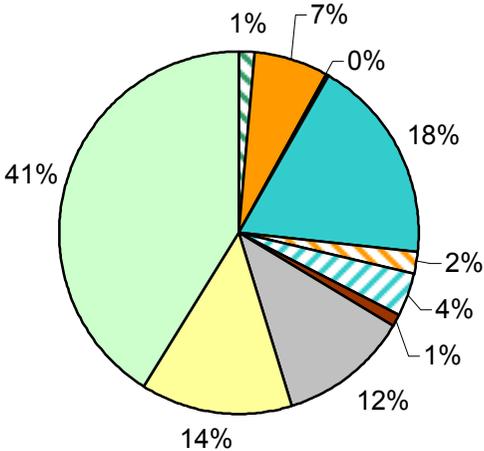
Graphs

The following graphs illustrate the percentage split of current woodland species and land use, future felling phases and future woodland species and land use.

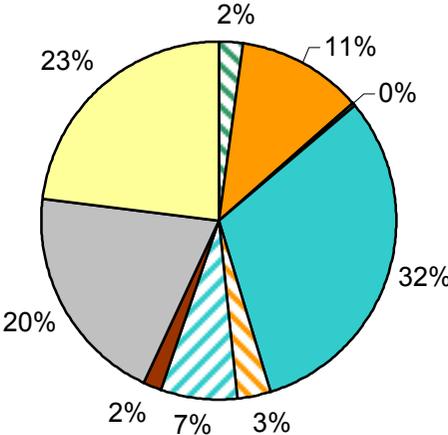
These help to assess the plan against the UK Woodland Assurance Scheme guidance and ensure that the plan is balanced and will deliver the objectives set out earlier.

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Current Species as a Percentage of Plan Areas



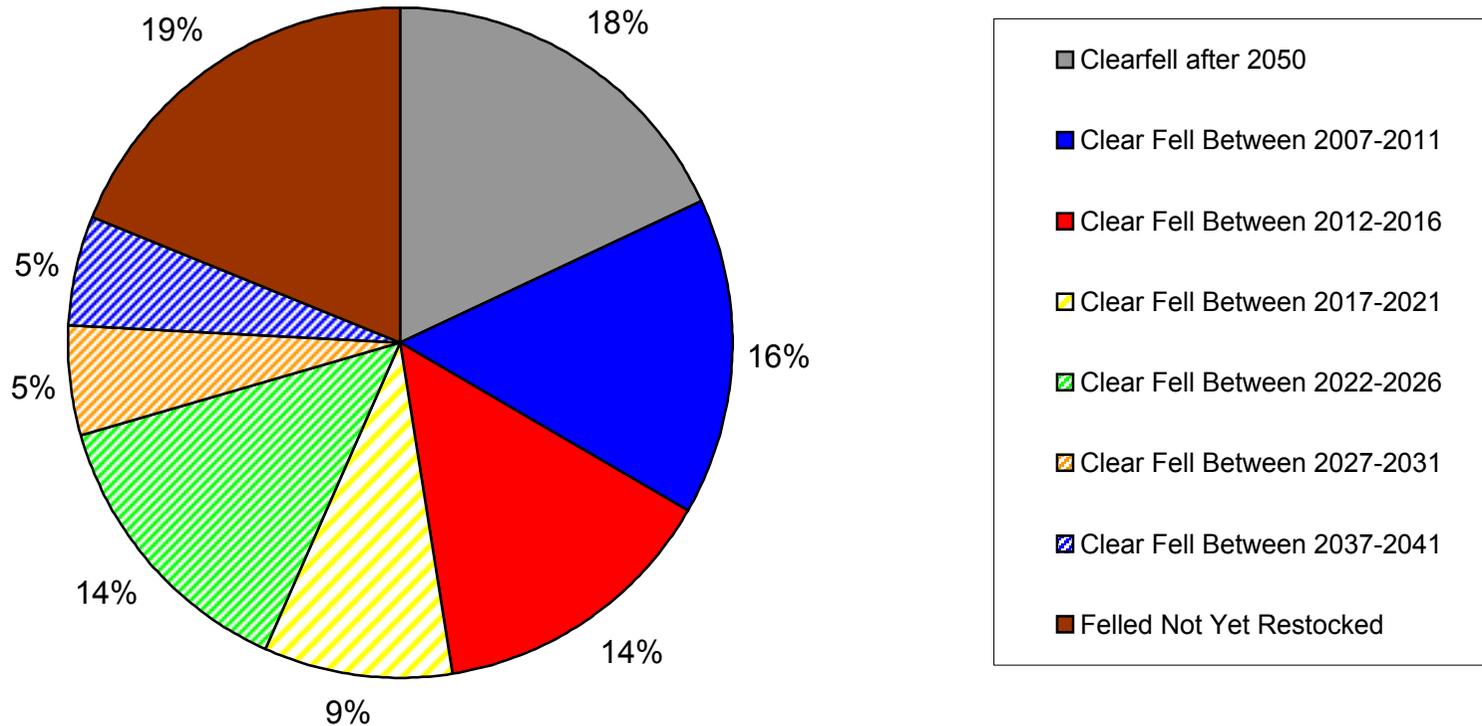
Graph showing all land



Graph showing all woodland only

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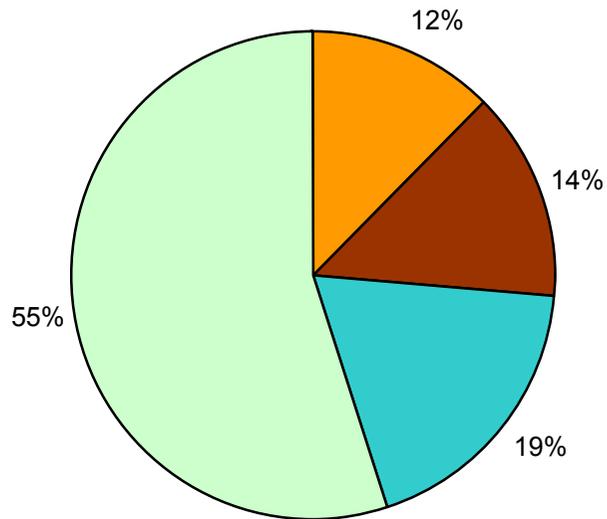
Felling Phases as a Percentage of Total Felling



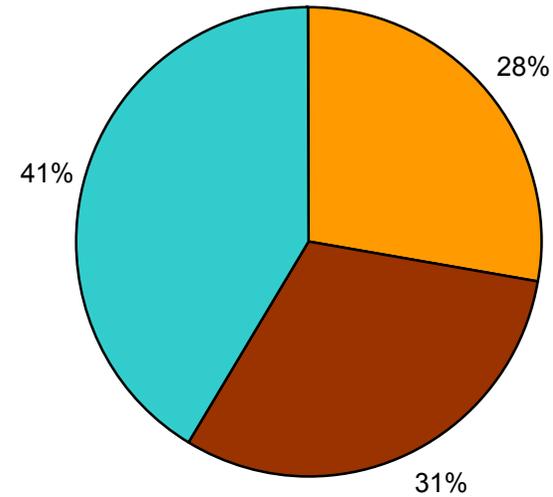
Adding together the recent felling (2008) with planned felling between 2008 and 2011 this graph shows that the plan proposes felling 35% of the forest in one 5 year period. This is higher than UKWAS recommended 25% but reflects the need to clear up windblown timber and generate suitable parcels to overcome access difficulties. The graph shows that no areas are currently being managed under a low impact system however once the recently felled area is established as native woodland it will be managed under Continuous Cover.

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Future Woodland Species and Land Use as a Percentage of Total Area



Graph showing all land



Graph showing all woodland only

■ Larch ■ Native Woodland ■ Spruce ■ Open space

This graph shows primary species only. All conifer restocking will include up to 30% other species in mix, eg larch or pine in spruce and spruce or pine in larch. Native species include Oak, Birch, Rowan and Juniper. The graph shows that the future species plan will meet UKWAS requirements for <65% primary species, >20% secondary species, >10% open space and >5% native woodland