



YORKSHIRE DALES
National Park

Dales Woodland Strategy 2013-2018

Foreword

This is the fourth revision of the Dales Woodland Strategy since it was first published in 1995. This strategy lays out the Dales Woodland Forum's policy towards the trees and woodlands within the National Park for the next five years.

The Dales Woodland Strategy is closely linked to the Yorkshire Dales National Park Management Plan 2013-2018 and also supports and reflects the national strategies. In doing so, this Dales Woodland Strategy will continue to guide and support the National Park Authority and its partners on the use of resources and on applications for external funding in order to achieve the objectives of the strategy.

Introduction

Deciduous woodland is identified in the National Park Management Plan as being one of the special qualities of the Yorkshire Dales National Park:

"Small areas of broadleaf woodland representing remnants of former more extensive broadleaved woodland or later plantings. Surviving areas of ancient woodland are of particularly high biodiversity value"

- National Park Management Plan 2013-2018.

Within the new National Park Management Plan, the small areas of broadleaved woodland and ancient semi-natural woodlands are once again highlighted as being particularly important.

The Dales Woodland Strategy forms the framework for action to focus on the local, regional and national importance of the Dales' woodlands. The Dales Woodland Forum has been instrumental in revising the Strategy and continues to help and to guide the National Park Authority with the delivery of the objectives of the strategy.

Policy context

Woodland and national policy

In January 2013, Defra published the 'Government Forestry and Woodlands Policy Paper'. In this paper was the Government's response to the Independent Panel on Forestry's final report which had been published the previous year. The 'Forestry and Woodlands Policy Paper' brought a new vigour to the importance that the nation places on forestry and woodlands.

The policy can be found at <http://www.defra.gov.uk/publications/2013/01/31/pb13871-forestry-policy-statement/>.

The statement supports a great deal of the work of the National Park Authority as well as building on aspects of it. Broadly, it:

- puts greater emphasis on protecting woods and forests from pests, disease and other threats
- reiterates the desire to sustaining, managing and improving forests and woodlands so that they contribute to economic growth and benefit people and nature
- aims to increase the total area of woodland to 12% by 2060, and
- seeks to get more 'value' out of woodlands.

Woodland and regional policy

The two regional forest framework documents are still current documents which cover the National Park. The first, which covers the Yorkshire part of the National Park is called 'The value of trees in our changing region'. The second, called the 'Agenda for growth', covers the Cumbria part of the National Park. Both were published in 2005. These frameworks bring together national priorities with local aspirations and identifies where a regional approach can add value. Both documents recognise the value of the trees and woodlands within the National Park and support the objectives of this strategy. The Cumbria and the Lake District trees, woodlands and forests strategy is currently being worked up and will be published in due course.

Woodland and local policy

The National Park Management Plan reflects the views and the aspirations of the people who live in the National Park as well as those who visit and work there. The Management Plan focuses on the delivery of National Park purposes – conserving the natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage of the National Park and promoting understanding and enjoyment of its special qualities. This Dales Woodland Strategy is closely aligned to the National Park Management Plan and builds on the importance that the Management Plan puts on trees and woodlands.

'*Nature in the Dales – 2020 Vision*' is the local Biodiversity Action Plan for the National Park. The BAP reflected the aspirations for woodland management and new woodland and continues to support the objectives of the Dales Woodland Strategy.

Yorkshire Dales National Park woodland cover in 2013

In September 2006 there were 7,827 hectares of woodland, covering about 4.45% of the National Park. This includes small lines of trees, small groups of trees and small areas of scrub but does not include parkland or hedges. This figure has now increased to 4.82% as a result of the creation of new woodlands through out the Park.

The amount of **ancient semi-natural woodland** is likely to be the same as previously recorded. However, it is almost certain that there are additional areas of woodland that

show ancient woodland characteristics. These are recorded as semi-natural woodland at present. The amount of ancient semi-natural woodland is 1,480ha or 0.84% of the National Park.

Conifer plantations occupy much the same land area as previously. The overall area is 3,411ha or 1.94%. Extensive work is being undertaken in order to introduce broadleaves into these conifer areas as well as managing them for Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) species – for example, red squirrels.

The area of **Plantation Ancient Woodland Sites (PAWS)**, which is non-native woodland planted on ancient woodland sites, remains the same at 408ha or 0.23%.

The figure for semi-natural, mixed and plantation **broadleaved woodland** remains the same at 1,868ha or 1.06%.

In the original Dales Woodland Strategy the aim was to double, what was then calculated to be, the area of existing broadleaved woodland. In order to achieve this, an area of 2,000 hectares of woodland would need to be planted throughout the National Park by 2020. Since 1995 (to 2013), approximately 1,301 hectares of **new woodland** has been planted. This has been done through a number of mechanisms but was particularly successful when a combination of grants from the Forestry Commission (Challenge Fund), the Yorkshire Dales Millennium Trust (Heritage Lottery), the Woodland Trust (legacy), Yorwoods (environmental grants) and English Nature (Wildlife Enhancement Schemes) meant that the vast majority of the costs of the planting could be covered. These grants have been successfully distributed and are no longer available.

Grants that are available at the present time from the Forestry Commission (England Woodland Grant Scheme) are generous, however this is likely to change in the near future when the Rural Development Plan is renegotiated. In addition to this the National Park Authority (New Native Woodland grant) and Environmental Stewardship (Higher Level Scheme) continue to support woodland creation. All of this funding is regularly complemented by funding from the Yorkshire Dales Millennium Trust which continues to fundraise to support woodland activity within the National Park.

Woodland cover in the Yorkshire Dales National Park in 2013

Woodland type	Area (hectares)	% of the land cover
Ancient semi-natural woodland	1,480	0.84
Conifer plantations	3,411	1.94
PAWS	408	0.23
Broadleaved woodland	1,868	1.06
New planting (1995-2013)	1,301	0.75
Total	8,468	4.82

The strategy

Overall aim

All trees and woodlands are appropriately managed and increased so that they continue to benefit the environmental, economic and social development of the region.

Justification

Using the guiding principles of the UK Forestry Standard, the protection, management and enhancement of woodlands shall seek to make positive contributions to the management of water, including water storage and quality; contribute to climate change mitigation through carbon storage or climate change adaptation through species diversity; and contribute to biodiversity by using appropriate species mixes and having well managed woodlands.

Objectives

The objectives of the Dales Woodland Strategy are that, by 2020:

- **all semi-natural woodland, including scrub, is managed**
- **all ancient replanted woodland is restored to a semi-natural state**
- **the overall coverage of semi-natural and mixed woodland is increased to over 5,000ha.**

Principles

In order to achieve these objectives the Authority and its partners will be guided by the following three principles:

Woodland for environmental benefit

- a) The creation of woodland is promoted, with specific woodland types being appropriate for biodiversity, water management and climate change mitigation/adaptation.

Woodland for economic benefit

- a) Assist landowners to create a sustainably managed tree and woodland resource which supports the retention and development of a viable and vibrant forestry sector.
- b) Encourage the future development of an active market, including tourism, recreational, renewable energy and carbon marketing opportunities, for both traditional and innovative woodland products that contribute to the economic vitality of the Dales in particular the local production of high quality timber.

Woodland for society

- a) Create more opportunities within woodlands for recreation, training and education activities by promoting and increasing the recognition of the value of trees, woodland and scrub woodland.
- b) Archaeological and cultural heritage values of woodland and those within woodland are protected and promoted where it supports other elements of the strategy.
- c) Landscape enhancement and management of trees and woodlands is in sympathy with the individual dale landscape, and individual trees and groups of trees that have aesthetic and landscape value are protected, managed and restored.

Woodland Siting and Design Guide

In 2002, the National Park Authority commissioned a comprehensive assessment of the landscape character of the National Park. The report identified 40 distinct 'landscape character areas on a dale-by-dale basis (and including separately identified upland character areas). It describes their key characteristics and landscape character and the forces that have shaped the landscape of each dale or geographic area.

This landscape character assessment, in combination with the Local Biodiversity Action Plan (and a forthcoming historic character assessment of the Dales), are used by the Authority and its partners to guide future decision-making, policy and management, including in relation to woodland planting. A copy of the landscape character assessment is available on the Authority's website at www.yorkshiredales.org.uk.

Previous strategies have included information about landscape guidelines, however the National Park Authority has now published the 'Woodland Siting and Design Guide'. The 'Woodland Siting and Design Guide' has used the fundamental principal of developing landscape guidance based on landscape character assessment to develop detailed landscape character guidelines covering the whole National Park. The Design Guide also uses a key reference of the Forestry Commission's 'Consultative Draft Forest and Landscape Guidelines' (2009) as well as the Forestry Commission's 'Small Farm Woodlands Design Guidance'.

The 'Woodland Siting and Design Guide' will be used to guide the design of new woodland creation as well as management of existing woodlands.

The Dales Woodland Forum

Chair: Chris Clark, Landowner
Secretary: Geoff Garrett, Trees and Woodlands Officer,
Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority

Iwan Downey	Field Officer	Forestry Commission (Yorkshire)
Jim O'Neil	Woodland Officer	Forestry Commission (Cumbria)
Andrew Colley	Member	National Park Authority
Will Richardson	Director	Yorwoods
Edward Mills	Project Director	Cumbria Woodlands
George Hay	District Manager	UPM Tilhill
Holly Rogerson	Red Squirrel Project Officer	UPM Tilhill
Phil Lyth	Project Director	YFWP
Michael McKenzie	Farmer	Littondale
Liam O'Reilly	Conservation Officer	Natural England
Tim Bailey	Head Ranger	The National Trust
Brian Rycroft	Land Agent	Ingham and Yorke
Peter Townson	Director	Croft Forestry Ltd
Peter Leeson	Land and Property Manager	Woodland Trust
David Pearson	Farmer (Deepdale)	NFU
Roy Lingard	Head Forester	Bolton Abbey Estate
Chris Lodge	Woodland Officer	Yorkshire Dales Millennium Trust
Alistair Boston	North West Deer Project Officer	Deer Initiative
Jane Harrison	Rural Advisor	Country Land and Business Association

Contact details

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