

# WOODLAND MANAGEMENT

AS APPROVED BY TRUSTEES, 15<sup>TH</sup> MARCH 2011



## Background

Our vision<sup>1</sup> is that restoration of natural processes across large areas of wild land will help to reverse declines in native wildlife, that peat lands will be restored, and that native woodland will expand across large areas of its natural range as a result of reduced grazing pressure.

The John Muir Trust's aim for wild land management is to encourage and facilitate natural ecological processes with minimum intervention. For woodland management this means woodlands reaching their natural potential based on soil conditions, altitude and exposure, through natural regeneration without fencing, and in doing so ameliorating the impact of climate change.

Where conditions are suitable for woodland but seed sources are no longer present, planting and protection may be needed to 'kick-start' the natural process.

Where the Trust has acquired plantations of non-native species on land naturally suited for woodland, the aim will be to convert to native species. Where possible this will be achieved through re-structuring (whilst maintaining continuous cover) and natural regeneration of the appropriate range of native species without fencing.

Outwith core wild land, woodland on Trust land may also be managed for other objectives such as amenity, firewood or timber production. In these situations, forestry practices with the least impact and using native species will be preferred where possible. These practices are described below. Trust and local volunteers will be involved wherever possible in establishing, maintaining and monitoring woodland.

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.jmt.org/vision.asp>

## Tree establishment

To create as natural a situation as possible the following establishment techniques will be considered in order of preference:

- Natural regeneration
- Re-establishment techniques including re-seeding or direct planting - using indigenous stock sourced as locally as possible, and planting based on local site assessment in as natural a manner as possible
- Cultivation – ripping / scarification
- ‘Random’ hand mounding
- Hand weeding
- Mechanical mounding
- Application of fertilisers, herbicides

It is unlikely that ditching or ploughing would be considered. There will be a presumption against bracken control, where natural regeneration is the method of establishment.

## Tree protection

To create as natural a situation as possible the following protection techniques will be considered in order of preference:

- Management of deer through culling<sup>2</sup>
- Strategic / deflection stock fencing where livestock are a threat (as opposed to protection of small blocks)
- Strategic / deflection deer fencing (as opposed to protection of small blocks)
- Brash fencing
- Tree protection such as short tubes

## Harvesting and extracting

Where woodlands are to be felled for re-structuring to native woodland or for harvesting of firewood or for timber production the following techniques will be considered in order of preference:

### Silvicultural

- Selective felling, continuous cover
- Continuous cover with small scale coupe fellings
- Clearfell

### Harvesting

- Motor manual harvesting,
- Mechanical Harvesting

### Extraction

- Horse, cable crane, pulp chute
- Forwarder, tractor

## Woodland maintenance

Non-native invasive species will be controlled or eradicated.

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<sup>2</sup> See the Trusts deer management policy. The Trusts sees deer at a low density as an integral part of the woodland ecosystem