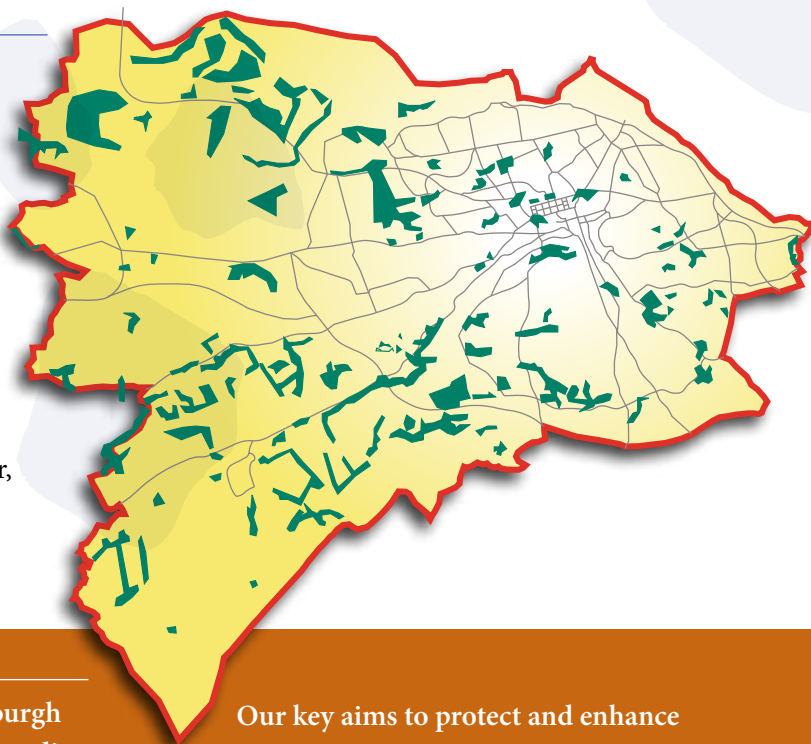


Woodlands

INTRODUCTION

Woodlands within the Edinburgh area represent a valuable resource for people and wildlife alike. As the natural vegetation type for much of the British Isles, mature woodland represents an ancient habitat which is rich in biodiversity, supporting a range of species which do not occur in any other habitat type – particularly invertebrates, fungi and lichens. In addition to the biodiversity benefits, trees and woodlands provide other benefits: shelter, screening, attractive landscapes, recreation, pollution reduction and raw materials.



OBJECTIVES

The different woodland areas within Edinburgh have a range of ongoing requirements. Immediate and appropriate management of existing sites is critical to the conservation of woodland biodiversity, but for long term ecosystem function, improving woodland connectivity to link up fragmented and isolated areas of woodland is essential to allow the movement of species. This also helps to mitigate the effects of climate change in the long term by allowing species to move through the landscape as much as possible, in response to changing conditions.

Existing areas of semi-natural mixed woodland require ongoing appropriate management and protection to maintain and enhance the biodiversity within them. The few remaining ancient woodland sites represent a particularly rich resource of biodiversity, due to their long continuity of tree cover and presence of populations of species which can be very slow to colonise new areas and require ecologically functional areas of woodland for their continued presence. The new woodlands successfully planted across the city require suitable management to ensure their ongoing establishment. Further increasing areas of new woodland, particularly in line with the Forest Habitat Networks initiative, will be integral to the delivery of this plan.

Our key aims to protect and enhance woodland biodiversity across the city are:

1. Continue to protect existing biodiversity-rich and ancient woodland sites;
2. Enhance and restore existing sites as appropriate, including ground flora enhancement;
3. Identify resources to manage existing woodlands;
4. Create new woodlands, prioritising new planting to extend or link existing sites, using best practice.
5. Provide advice to land managers, developers and planners on protection, management and best practice for woodlands and woodland species, including integration with and buffering of new development.
6. Engage with community groups, community councils and other stakeholders regarding tree and woodland issues.
7. Raise awareness with the public and land managers about the importance and benefits of woodlands and woodland species.

ACHIEVEMENTS

The main successes delivered by the partnership are:

- A Forest Habitat Network for Edinburgh and Lothians launched in June 2007 and the Edinburgh and Lothians Forest Habitat Network Partnership formed in 2008;
- The Edinburgh and Lothians Forestry Framework published 2008 and habitat network maps available online;
- Woodlands In and Around Towns (WIAT) funding secured and approximately £900k spent on management works carried out at key woodland sites owned by CEC;
- Tree warden scheme run for volunteers;
- Management plans in place for all large semi natural woodland areas owned by CEC;
- Native tree nursery project set up in partnership with Enable Scotland, at the Inch nursery, with local provenance trees provided to schools and other sites;
- The Supplementary Planning Guidance ‘Trees and Development’ has been updated;
- Deadwood management work implemented where appropriate, to benefit a range of species.

Wooded river corridors like the Hermitage of Braid are great for wildlife and people



WOODLAND MANAGEMENT - FEATURES WHICH INCREASE BIODIVERSITY

When looking at any woodland area, it is possible to identify indicators which can demonstrate how good the area is for biodiversity. These are:

- A good diversity of tree species, both broadleaved and conifer, particularly native species.
- A diversity of age and size of trees, from young regeneration to standing damaged or dead trees.
- Presence of undergrowth and diversity of undergrowth structure and composition.
- Presence of fallen dead wood and deep leaf litter.
- Gap sites, glades and rides which allow light to filter to ground level.
- Areas of bare or disturbed soil.
- A range of dry and damp or wet areas.
- Presence of transitional woodland edge habitats or riparian corridors.

All types of dead wood are important for biodiversity within a woodland ecosystem



The presence of these features in woodland indicates that suitable habitats are available for a wide range of species, in other words the woodland is of high value to biodiversity. This is especially true for ancient or long-established semi-natural woodlands. Woodland management should identify and protect these features where they already exist, and encourage them on suitable or new woodland areas.

The connectivity of woodland habitats is also an important factor – sites which are linked to other open habitats or woodlands, creating green networks, have an increased value for biodiversity by allowing species to move through the landscape, and may give additional benefits such as recreation and access.

Buffering of woodlands is important for habitat protection. Development within 30 metres of trees may have a negative impact and should be avoided or mitigated.

The Phase 1 Habitat Survey for Edinburgh 2001/02 found that base-rich mixed Elm and Ash woodland tended to be the most diverse and species rich. Good examples of woodland habitat in Edinburgh can be found at Craigmillar Castle Park, Corstorphine Hill and Ravelston Woods LNR, Hermitage of Braid LNR, Bawsinch, Cammo Estate and the riparian corridors of the Water of Leith, River Almond and Gogar Burn. Many other examples can be found, on both public and private land.

ONGOING ACTIONS AND POLICIES

The following work programmes are now carried out as core duties by Edinburgh Biodiversity Partnership organisations:

| Action | Organisations |
|---|---|
| Continue to implement woodland management plans at key CEC owned woodland sites, in line with the UK Woodland Assurance Standard and UK Forestry Standards. | CEC Forestry Service and CEC CRS |
| Produce new management plans for Corstorphine Hill LNR and Craigmillar Castle Park which enhance the biodiversity of the woodland habitat. | CEC Forestry Service and CEC CRS |
| Continue to promote and support delivery of the Edinburgh and Lothians Forest Habitat Network. | FCS, CEC, ELFHNP |
| Protect woodlands and trees through the Planning system by implementing the CEC 'Trees and Development' guideline and BS 5837 'Trees in relation to construction' | CEC Planning |
| Encourage and advise on woodland creation associated with new development, especially the use of native species. Ensure that the development management process delivers management plans and sustainable regimes for woodland habitats. | CEC Planning, CEC Forestry Service, FCS |
| Continue to identify and secure resources for woodland management. | CEC Forestry Service, FCS |
| Continue to promote management and creation of woodlands through funding schemes (SRDP, WIAT), prioritising woodland creation in line with the Edinburgh and Lothians Forest Habitat Network. | FCS |
| Continue to monitor and control Dutch Elm disease across Edinburgh. | CEC Forestry Service |
| Support the Tree Warden Scheme for volunteers. | CEC Forestry Service |
| Hold awareness raising events relating to woodlands and woodland biodiversity, including community group projects and activity days for 'Friends' and other groups. | CEC CRS, CEC Forestry Service |
| Encourage native tree planting and woodland management in school grounds through the Forest Schools initiative and other work. | CEC CRS, FCS |
| Erect nesting boxes for birds (including barn owls) at key sites. | CEC CRS |
| Promote new woodland creation through the MOREwoods scheme. | Woodland Trust Scotland |
| Continue to update and assess the Heritage Tree register. Continue to monitor and manage existing Heritage trees, and identify Heritage Trees not already covered by Tree Preservation Orders so that, where appropriate, Tree Preservation Orders can be made. | CEC Forestry Service |

Individual trees, especially old trees, are also important for wildlife such as insects and birds



FUNDED ACTIONS

The following list of actions will be carried out by partnership organisations during the lifetime of this plan, and progress will be recorded in the Biodiversity Action Reporting System:

| Grouping | Action no. | Action description | Who? | Targets |
|------------------|------------|---|--|--|
| Priority Habitat | WD01 | Using the revised information on notable species, review woodland site information for Edinburgh to identify conservation priorities for each site and inform site management plans. | CEC Biodiversity Officers , CEC Forestry Service, CEC CRS. | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Produce a conservation framework on notable woodland species by 2010 2. Incorporate guidance into management plans for CEC sites, by 2015 |
| Priority habitat | WD02 | Secure WIAT funding for Bonaly County Park woodlands. | PHRS , ELFHNP, FCS | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Secure WIAT funding for the management of Bonaly County Park woodlands by 2010. 2. Implement management works by 2015. |
| Priority habitat | WD03 | Continue to promote the Forest Habitat Network and create or restore woodland links, particularly using native species. | ELFHNP | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Hold or attend promotional events, as opportunities arise. 2. Expand the Forest Habitat Network in Edinburgh as opportunities arise. |
| Priority habitat | WD04 | Bring all woodland sites owned by CEC under active management. | CEC Forestry Service | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Produce management plans for all woodland sites owned by CEC by 2015. |
| Priority habitat | WD05 | Assess the management of privately owned woodland Local Nature Conservation Sites. | CEC Biodiversity Officers , FCS | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. For all woodland LNCS sites produce an up to date list of landowners and site information, such as management plans, by end 2010. 2. Liaise with and advise all landowners about appropriate management and available funding by 2014. |
| Priority habitat | WD06 | Update the Development Quality Handbook guidance on 'Quality of Landscaping in Development'. | CEC Built and Natural Heritage | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Update the Development Quality Handbook guidance on Quality of Landscaping in Development by end 2010. |
| Priority Habitat | WD07 | Re-draft the Urban Forestry Strategy for Edinburgh, incorporating the ELFHN and key aspects of woodland biodiversity such as habitat structure, extent, species composition, veteran trees and deadwood management. | CEC Forestry Service , CEC CRS, CEC Built and Natural Heritage. | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Produce a consultation draft by spring 2010. |
| Priority Habitat | WD08 | Hold a deadwood management event for Forestry Service and Countryside Ranger Service staff. | CEC Forestry Service , CEC CRS . | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Carry out a deadwood management event for Forestry Service and Ranger Service staff, to inform a deadwood management process for the Urban Forestry Strategy, by end 2010. |
| Priority Habitat | WD09 | Ensure monitoring of the impact of the Water of Leith and Braid Burn flood prevention works on bankside trees and other wetland vegetation is implemented. | CEC Structures and Flooding | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Ensure monitoring of the impact of the Water of Leith and Braid Burn flood prevention works on bankside trees and other wetland vegetation is implemented, once works are complete. |
| Priority Habitat | WD10 | Continue to develop the native tree nursery at the Inch using volunteers, Tree Wardens and 'Friends' groups for seed collection and planting at local sites. | CEC Forestry Unit , Tree Wardens, ENABLE Scotland | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Develop a further programme of seed collection, propagation and planting out before autumn 2011. 2. Carry out annual seed collection and propagation until 2015 3. Plant out new stock from 2012. |
| Priority habitat | WD11 | Carry out management works at selected Millennium Forest sites using volunteers to increase community involvement and link to community health projects. | CEC Forestry Unit , ENABLE Scotland, New Caledonian Woodlands. | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Carry out management works at selected sites and provide all support required to volunteers, ongoing to 2015. 2. Identify further opportunities for community involvement with woodlands management, by 2011. |

| Grouping | Action no. | Action description | Who? | Targets |
|------------------|------------|---|--|--|
| Priority habitat | WD12 | Ensure when assessing funding applications, delivery of LBAP priorities and biodiversity enhancement, including native species use, are required as part of outcomes. | FCS | 1. Ensure when assessing funding applications, delivery of LBAP priorities and biodiversity enhancement are required as part of outcomes. |
| Priority habitat | WD13 | Use current survey data to identify species rich hedgerows which can be targeted for enhancement or expansion. | CEC Biodiversity Officers | 1. Review current survey data to identify species rich hedgerows by 2010. 2. Identify sites for hedgerow creation or enhancement by 2010. |
| Priority habitat | WD14 | Engage with NHS Lothian to explore the potential to include the establishment of native species hedges and tree plantings in all NHS developments and existing sites. | CEC Planning, NHS Lothian | 1. Engage with NHS Lothian to explore the potential to include the establishment of native species hedges and tree plantings in all NHS developments and existing sites. |
| Priority habitat | WD15 | Plant specimen global Red List tree species at suitable sites across the city, in partnership with RBGE. | CEC Forestry Service, RBGE. | 1. Plant specimen global Red List tree species at suitable sites across the city, in partnership with RBGE. |
| Priority species | WD16 | Include bee friendly trees in planting schemes across the city. | CEC Forestry Service | 1. Include bee friendly trees in planting schemes across the city, as appropriate. |
| Priority species | WD18 | Continue to monitor presence of golden sock (<i>Phaeolepiota aurea</i>) at known sites and liaise with land managers to ensure provision of disturbed ground. | ENHS, CEC Biodiversity Officers | 1. Identify site managers annually to 2015. 2. Monitor presence annually to 2015. |
| Priority species | WD19 | Investigate known sites and liaise with land managers to ensure favourable management for heath cudweed (<i>Gnaphalium sylvaticum</i>). This species is Endangered and an SBL priority. | CEC Biodiversity Officers, WOLCT | 1. Obtain up to date records for Heath Cudweed, by 2010 2. Using current survey data identify sites which require management and advise landowners, by 2011 |
| Priority species | WD20 | Where giant bellflower (<i>Campanula latifolia</i>) occurs, prevent scrub encroachment. | CEC Biodiversity Officers, CEC SFC, WOLCT | 1. Using current survey data identify sites which require management and advise landowners, by 2011. 2. Using current survey data identify sites which require management and advise landowners, by 2011. |

Lead partners for each action are shown in bold.

UNFUNDED PROJECTS

At the time of writing the following projects have not yet secured resources necessary for delivery. Their implementation is dependent upon funding becoming available.

| Project | Action | Organisations |
|---|--|------------------------|
| Ancient woodlands | Liaise with landowners to provide advice on appropriate management and restoration of ancient woodland sites. Aim to bring all AWI sites under appropriate management by 2015. | CEC, FCS, WTS |
| Local Nature Conservation Sites | Assess the management of privately owned woodland Local Nature Conservation Sites. Aim to bring woodland LNCS sites under appropriate management by 2015. | CEC |
| Hedgerows | Create and/or enhance species-rich hedgerows at sites identified as having best potential to improve wildlife habitat. | CEC |
| Orchards | Create at least 3 new community orchards within Edinburgh. | CEC |
| Ground flora | Develop a ground flora enhancement project, possibly tied to a propagation scheme run at the Inch nursery. | CEC |
| Assessment of sites important for lower plants and fungi. | Carry out an assessment of sites important for lower plants and fungi. | CEC, SES Fungus Group. |
| Interpretation | Produce a suite of interpretation materials for woodland sites – panels, leaflets and web-based information. | ELGT, CEC CRS, PHRS. |
| Small scale restoration or enhancement projects | Identify sites or projects which are below minimum funding thresholds but would benefit from enhancement or restoration, possibly as part of a community project. | CEC. |