

18 SETTLED UNWOODED VALE

Mixed arable and pasture is dominant with occasional orchards.

Woodland is largely absent and is restricted to a limited number of farm copses.

Key Characteristics relating to Woodland

- **Limited woodland and ancient woodland cover.**

Management Guidelines

- Woodland creation is not appropriate within this landscape type.

19 UNWOODED VALE

The Unwooded Vale is a wide, open agrarian landscape with a patchwork of arable and pasture.

Woodlands are not characteristic of this landscape type. Where present it is restricted to linear belts along streams, occasional small copses and within landscaped parks.

Key Characteristics relating to Woodland

- **Woodlands are not a characteristic feature of the landscape**
- **Adjacent steep escarpment landform and associated woodlands generally limit views.**

Management Guidelines

- Conserve, enhance and replant existing farm woodlands.
- Woodland creation is not appropriate within this landscape type, the exception being some limited tree planting around villages to create links with existing woodlands and the hedgerow network and to integrate new development with its surroundings.

The Cotswolds landscape is nationally important and designated as an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, (AONB). This means that the area is protected by law and that special emphasis is required to be placed on its conservation and enhancement.

Woodlands are one of the major components of the landscape. Varying in type and size, they form an important element in defining landscape character. Nineteen differing landscape character types are identified within the Cotswolds AONB in the Landscape Character Assessment, (2003).

Purpose of this Guide

It is important that land managers recognise the character of the landscape in which they are working so that plans for managing and establishing woodlands can enhance rather than detract. This leaflet is intended to help in this process by emphasising the character of the woodlands in each of the identified landscape character types. Each character type has specific characteristics. These “key” characteristics are created by various landscape elements and combinations of elements particular to each landscape type. The landscape types are named and mapped. See inside back cover.

Overview

These guidelines are intended to provide a broad basis for management decisions, rather than site-specific advice.

When drawing up your woodland plan please first consider the following:

- The contribution any existing woodland makes to the character of the landscape e.g its position, type, size and form.
- The existing landscape features such as grassland, streams, ponds, quarries, buildings, walls and hedges.
- How your proposal will conserve and enhance the landscape character.

Where a particular site or area falls close to the boundary line of a landscape type, it is recommended that the characteristics and strategies for each of the adjacent landscape types are taken into consideration.

Woodland in the Cotswolds

Woodland amounts to around 8% of the total land area of the Cotswolds AONB and the type and location of woodland cover is an important element of landscape character.

The most important woodlands tend to be of ancient origin and consist largely of native hardwoods. Such woodlands have existed for centuries, and are rich in plants and animals and evidence of human activity. Some

of the most impressive are the beech woods that lie along the escarpment between Dursley and Birdlip. Elsewhere in the Cotswolds AONB, woodlands are typically oak, ash and field maple. Some of these have traditionally been managed as coppice with standards, with oak predominating over a hazel understorey.

Conifer plantations occur occasionally across the Cotswolds AONB, usually in the high wold and dip-slope landscape character types, either as single species blocks or as a replacement within or on ancient woodland sites. The ideal for the landscape would be to gradually replace/replant these with broadleaved woodland in keeping with the character of the Cotswolds AONB. However, it is recognised that these plantations may have an economic value and function in their own right.

AONB Wide Guidelines

The following guidelines should be followed throughout the AONB.

WOODLAND MANAGEMENT

The seeking and implementation of woodland management advice is actively encouraged.

Regeneration of existing woodland, to achieve a more desirable diverse age structure, is likely to be best achieved by a phased programme of group or selective felling and replanting or natural regeneration. As well as protecting landscape interests this will allow ground flora to remain under retained tree groups and re-colonise cleared areas.

Opportunities should be taken to re-design the shape of existing woodland, or link them together where this conserves and enhances landscape character. Clear felling is best avoided. Good advice will help prevent harm to landscape character and enhance biodiversity.

On Ancient Woodland sites conifers and exotic hardwood plantations should, ideally, be converted to appropriate native hardwoods. Conversion of other such plantations on other sites is also encouraged as part of a phased management programme to enhance landscape character.

Clear felling without replanting may be appropriate in certain instances where woodland has developed around archaeological sites, geological sites or over important grassland areas, or where woodland harms landscape character. Felling should not be carried out during the bird-nesting season or when bats are roosting. Forestry operations should be planned accordingly.

Phased regeneration should be planned to avoid loss of small landscape features, such as roundels through simultaneous over-maturity of individual trees. Clear felling could also cause problems for young tree establishment in an exposed location and specialist advice should be sought.

Implementation of new tree planting should allow for good ground preparation and aftercare, including the reduction of herb competition, pruning, thinning and suitable protection from rabbits, deer and stock.

Other Considerations

BIODIVERSITY

You should find out about the ecological interest of your land before starting work. Contact your County Wildlife Trust or Local Authority Ecologist. Information on SSSIs is available from English Nature's website: www.natureonthemap.org.uk

Semi-natural and ancient woodlands should receive special attention to ensure their continuity and species integrity. Specialist advice should be sought when drawing up management proposals. The biodiversity value of existing woodland can be enhanced by creating and managing rides and glades.

New tree planting may not be appropriate on sites of biodiversity or geological interest.



ARCHAEOLOGY

The Cotswolds AONB is rich in archaeology and it is essential to know what you may have on your land. Contact the Archaeology Officer at your County Council or Unitary Council.

Tree planting on or adjacent to archaeological sites is inappropriate as root activity may cause long-term damage, as well as obscuring remains.

Uncontrolled growth of trees around an archaeological defensive site which is historically selected for its long panoramic views will hinder site interpretation, and a programme of selective felling may be appropriate.

GRASSLAND

Permanent pasture, including unimproved grasslands, has been identified as an important landscape feature. Consequently, permanent pasture is to be retained and proposals for woodland creation would not normally be supported. No woodland creation should take place that will have an impact on unimproved grassland sites.

TREE PROTECTION

Woodlands, groups of trees and individual trees may be protected by Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs), or by being in a Conservation Area. It is advisable to contact your District or Unitary Councils Planning Officer for information.

DEER AND GREY SQUIRREL

It is important that population levels of deer and grey squirrel are controlled to reduce damage to existing and new woodlands. Control is best achieved by working in co-operation with neighbouring landowners and managers.

Design

Proposals for new woodland planting would benefit from specialist advice with respect to position, species mix and implementation. It may not be appropriate for a particular site to be planted because of the value of the existing habitat or landscape character. Any proposals should conserve and enhance this character. In particular the open character of much of the Cotswolds AONB must be respected. Consequently there are guidelines to limit woodland creation and state where it is inappropriate for a landscape type.

Tree species for new planting should be chosen from within the range of broadleaves which are traditionally used in the particular location. This will ensure a long term landscape and ecological value for the woodland. Typical species include beech, ash, pedunculate oak, field maple and whitebeam. Oak/ash woodland associations are predominant on



deeper soils, beech is traditional on the thinner calcareous soils and any new woodland plantings should respect these associations. The use of local provenance trees for new planting is encouraged.

Conifer planting for decorative or "screening" purposes is generally unacceptable within the Cotswolds AONB. A small proportion of pine or larch may be appropriate as a nurse, mixed with longer term broad-leaved species. Any woodland mix should be dominated by broad-leaves which will provide long-term ecological and landscape benefits.

VIEWS

Consideration should be given to conserving views, particularly from the public highway and access land.

1 ESCARPMENT OUTLIER

Productive pasture and arable land occur on the lower slopes, giving way to open areas of larger fields and rough grassland on the upper slopes.

There are few large woodlands. The majority of woods are small and occupy steep slopes and areas bordering streams.

Key characteristics relating to woodland

- Woodlands and belts of trees often occupy steeper slopes of the outliers and border the gullies of brooks draining radially into the vale.

MANAGEMENT GUIDELINES

- Conserve and enhance areas of existing woodland. Consideration should be given to preserving their irregular forms, relationship to landform and interlocking patterns with hedgerows.

- Some new opportunities for planting where appropriate.
- Conserve existing orchards and orchard trees, and create new orchards, where viable, on lower slopes. Priority should be given to the sites of former orchards.
- Protect views, particularly from the upper slopes.

2 ESCARPMENT

The steeper scarp slopes are predominantly covered by grassland and broadleaved woodland. The small to medium sized pastures on the middle slopes are defined by a strong pattern of hedges with hedgerow trees, which follow landform.

Woodland ranges from beech hangers at the top of the scarp on the steepest slopes and thinnest soils, to ash and oak woods on lower slopes. A high proportion of scarp woodlands have been identified as ancient woodland, some being designated as SSSIs.

Whilst extensive woodlands are evident along some stretches of the scarp, particularly Uley to Cooper's Hill and Winchcombe to Dover's Hill, elsewhere a distinctly unwooded character is evident.

Key characteristics relating to woodland

- Steep, exposed and elevated west facing scarp slope, partly cloaked in semi natural broadleaved woodland.
- Summit of the scarp slope marked by dramatic linear beech hangers.
- Woodlands, hedgerows, scrub and isolated trees give the impression of a well-treed landscape.
- Intermittent historic parks and designed landscapes provide distinctive features on the escarpment.

MANAGEMENT GUIDELINES

- Conserve the open, remote character of the landscape.
- Conserve and enhance areas of existing woodland, with priority given to ancient woodlands.

Consideration should be given to preserving their irregular forms, relationship to landform and interlocking patterns with hedgerows.

- Conserve woodlands along gullies and streams.
- Create new woodlands that link to existing woodlands on lower escarpment slopes to counteract the impact of intrusive or degraded urban edges.
- Ensure that new woodland planting does not detract from views to and from the escarpment or results in the loss of permanent pasture/unimproved grassland.
- Ensure new woodlands respond to the scale and form of existing escarpment woodlands.
- The planting of extensive areas of conifers is not appropriate.

3 ROLLING HILLS AND VALLEYS

The Rolling Hills and Valleys comprise an area of valley complexes that are narrow at source, broadening when joining the adjacent Unwooded Vale and separated by relatively narrow, and often open, spurs of land supporting areas of grassland.

Hedgerow trees are frequent on the valley slopes and contribute to the overall wooded feel of the valleys, which contain extensive woodland, particularly on the steep upper slopes and valley rims, many of which are identified as ancient woodland.

Key characteristics relating to woodland

- Steep sided concave valleys with steeper upper slopes often dominated by woodland.
- Area principally under pastoral use mainly within the valley slopes and bottom.

Management Guidelines

- Conserve, enhance and restore valley side woodlands through effective long-term management and replanting.
- Conserve open character, particularly of the plateau areas.
- Counteract the impact of degraded urban edges with new woodland planting that links to existing woodlands on the valley slopes.
- Create limited extensions of existing wet woodland along the course of rivers and streams.

4 ENCLOSED LIMESTONE VALLEY

Predominant landcover is arable and pasture, although the arable is more frequent on the lower slopes.

On the steeper slopes of the valley sides and valley tops, are some significant blocks of woodland, which in some areas extend down the valleys sides creating a sense of enclosure. The blocks vary in size and form and are primarily deciduous plantations. A large proportion of the woodland is registered as ancient woodland.

Key characteristics relating to woodland

- Significant areas of woodland, of which a number are ancient semi-natural woodlands, particularly on upper and steeper slopes and form a wooded backdrop to many views in the valley.

MANAGEMENT GUIDELINES

- Conserve, enhance and restore existing valley side woodlands through effective long-term management and replanting, but avoiding areas of nature conservation interest such as species-rich grasslands.
- Give priority to planting on areas where woodland cover has been lost, particularly on arable areas, and encourage natural regeneration, particularly in proximity to ancient woodlands.
- Create limited extensions of existing wet woodland along the course of rivers and streams.
- Counteract the impact of degraded urban edges with new woodland planting that links to existing woodlands on the valley slopes.

5 SETTLED VALLEY

Pastoral land dominates the valley sides interspersed with arable land. Deciduous woodlands cling to the valley sides and combine with the hedgerow network to create, in some areas, a relatively well wooded character.

Some substantial blocks of woodland have become established and, in some areas, extend the length of the valley. The woodland responds to landform, with the majority being broadleaved and classed as ancient.

Key characteristics relating to Woodland

- **Relatively well wooded with deciduous species predominating, with a large proportion of ancient woodland.**
- **Woodlands provide a textural backdrop to urban areas.**

MANAGEMENT GUIDELINES

- Conserve, enhance and restore valley side woodlands through effective long-term management and replanting.
- Encourage natural regeneration, particularly in proximity to ancient woodlands and seek the phased removal of non-native species.
- Give priority to woodland creation on areas where woodland cover has been lost.
- Create limited extensions to areas of existing wet woodland along the course of rivers and streams.
- Counteract the impact of degraded urban edges with woodland planting that links into existing valley slope woodlands.
- Conserve views, particularly those accessible to the public.

6 IRONSTONE HILLS AND VALLEYS

It is a tranquil area, generally remote in character, principally under arable cultivation. Areas of pasture occur, principally within the more secluded valley bottoms.

There are some occasional larger areas of woodland, but mainly they are confined to small rectilinear plantations and copses. Woodland cover is limited.

Key characteristics relating to Woodland

- **Limited woodland cover with exception of occasional larger stands of ancient woodland.**

MANAGEMENT GUIDELINES

- Conserve and enhance areas of existing woodland. Consideration should be given to preserving their irregular forms, relationship to landform and interlocking patterns with hedgerows.
- Woodland creation is not appropriate within this landscape type.

7 HIGH WOLD

The High Wold is an extensive area of upland plateau that is expansive, large scale and windswept. Its elevated position allows long distance views over wide areas with a sense of exposure.

There is a pattern of small to moderate size geometric woodlands, many comprising copses and shelterbelts and frequently located within or on the perimeter of the valleys. Plantations bordering roads occur with occasional larger plantations along with small copses at field corners and coverts. Very few of the woodland are ancient.

Key characteristics relating to Woodland

- **Small to moderate size geometric farm woodlands, many comprising small coniferous and broadleaved plantations and shelterbelts, and plantations bordering roads.**

MANAGEMENT GUIDELINES

- Conserve the open, remote character of the landscape.
- Encourage opportunities to manage and replant existing shelterbelts using traditional species.

- Limit new woodland and shelterbelt planting to retain the open character and wide panoramas.
- Promote the felling of inappropriate coniferous plantations and replanting of farm woodlands especially on former ancient woodland sites using suitable species.
- The planting of new coniferous shelterbelts is not appropriate.
- Seek opportunities to clear fell shelterbelts that do not comply with landscape character.

8 HIGH WOLD VALLEY

The valleys have a sheltered, secluded character distinct and separate from the more open and expansive highwold. The valleys display a mosaic of land uses.

In areas, broadleaved woodland clothes the steeper slopes forming a backdrop to the predominant pasture land. Dense woodland cover is notable within some of the smaller, more incised valleys.

In the Painswick Valley woodland is principally confined to extensive stands at the head of the valley and on intervening ridges.

Key characteristics relating to woodland

- **Extensive areas of predominantly broadleaved woodland cloaking sections of the valley sides, particularly across the steeper sections.**
- **Deeply incised and inaccessible wooded slopes extending across some valley sections.**
- **Significant area of ancient, semi-natural woodland in the upper reaches of the Painswick and Slad valleys.**

MANAGEMENT GUIDELINES

- Conserve and manage ancient, semi-natural woodlands.
- Initiate schemes for the phased removal of invasive, non-native species within semi-natural and ancient woodland.
- Conserve views.
- Plant new woodland or allow natural woodland regeneration on valley sides and surrounding new development, but not on areas of permanent pasture or unimproved grasslands.

9 HIGH WOLD DIP-SLOPE

This landscape type is characterised by gently rolling landform with an elevated and open character with long distance views and south facing panoramas. Intensive arable farming predominates giving the landscape a productive and well-maintained character.

Woodland cover is sparse and restricted to small plantations. Large woodlands exist forming the wider parkland setting of Cirencester Park and the Wychwood Forest.

Key characteristics relating to woodland

- **Large-scale open arable fields with little tree cover.**
- **Distinctive pattern of large estates and associated planned parkland landscape and woodland are evident across the Dip-Slope Lowland landscape.**
- **Significant areas of ancient woodland and evidence of assarting in Wychwood Forest and Cirencester Park.**

Management Guidelines

- Limit new woodland and shelterbelt planting to retain open character and wide panoramas.
- Retain areas of ancient semi-natural woodland.
- Promote the felling of inappropriate coniferous plantations and replanting of farm copses especially on former ancient woodland sites using indigenous species.
- Any new woodland to reflect the shape and size of existing plantations.

10 HIGH WOLD DIP-SLOPE VALLEY

The valleys have a sheltered, secluded character. They display a mosaic of land uses but pasture predominates.

Woodland consists of copses and intermittent areas of broadleaves, clothing the steeper slopes and forming a backdrop to the pasture land. In some areas woodland cover is particularly limited and confined to small rectangular copses.

Key characteristics relating to woodlands

- **Intermittent areas of predominantly broadleaved and mixed woodland extend across sections of the valley sides, particularly across the steeper sections.**

MANAGEMENT GUIDELINES

- Protect remnant areas of ancient woodland and species-rich grassland.
- Limit large-scale woodland and shelterbelt planting.
- Encourage new planting and natural regeneration in and around existing woodlands, giving preference to areas of ancient woodland.
- Encourage opportunities to extend and link woodlands on valley sides to areas of riverside habitat, promoting the use of natural regeneration where possible but not on permanent pasture or species rich-grassland.

11 DIP-SLOPE LOWLAND

Agriculture is the principle land use across the dip-slope lowland with much of the land under mixed arable and improved pasture with an open, strongly structured and productive character.

Woodland cover is generally limited and confined to a pattern of small copses and shelterbelts. The exception is the extensive woodlands and planned features of designed Parks.

Key characteristics relating to woodland

- **Woodland cover limited to intermittent copses and shelterbelts within agricultural land creating wide, expansive views, but balanced by extensive broadleaved, mixed and coniferous plantations within the large estates and associated farmland areas.**
- **Limited areas of ancient woodland and species-rich grassland.**
- **Distinctive pattern of large estates and associated planned parkland landscape and woodland occurring throughout the Dip-Slope Lowland.**

Management Guidelines

- Limit new woodland and shelterbelt planting.
- Promote the felling of inappropriate coniferous plantations and replanting of farm copses and shelterbelts using locally native species.
- Any new woodland is to reflect the prevailing shape and scale of existing geometric and linear woodlands.

12 DIP-SLOPE LOWLAND VALLEY

Open pastoral farmland predominates and is interwoven between intermittent wooded slopes and along valley bottoms, with pockets of arable land.

The distinctive character of the valleys is, in part, a product of the woodland cover, with significant blocks of broadleaved woodland combining with riverside trees and overgrown valley side hedgerows, to give a distinctly wooded character in some sections, particularly in the By Brook.

Key characteristics relating to woodland

- **Extensive areas of broadleaved woodland including ancient woodlands, and intermittent coniferous plantations.**
- **Linear belts of mixed and broadleaved woodland follow steeper landform and often extend up to the river edge.**

MANAGEMENT GUIDELINES

- Conserve and enhance areas of existing woodland, with priority given to ancient woodlands.
- Promote opportunities to extend and link woodlands on valley sides to areas of riverside habitat, encouraging the use of natural regeneration where possible.
- Initiate a programme of new tree planting to ensure that there is a new generation of locally-native riverside trees.

13 LOW LIMESTONE PLATEAU

Arable and pastoral land, combine in equal amounts to dominate land use in this area.

Woodland cover is very limited. Where woodland occurs it is restricted to small, scattered blocks that are regular in shape and fit with the pattern and texture of the landscape.

Key characteristics relating to woodland

- Sparse woodland cover of small farm woodlands and shelterbelts.

MANAGEMENT GUIDELINES

- Woodland creation is not appropriate within this landscape type.
- The exception is some limited woodland creation to link existing adjacent woodlands and encourage the use of natural regeneration where possible.

14 CORNBRAsh PASTORAL LOWLANDS

Land use is focused on arable cultivation with some limited areas of pasture. Intermittent woodlands, mainly geometric in form, extend across the area. They provide landmarks within an otherwise agricultural landscape.

The woodlands comprise a mix of coniferous plantations and broadleaved woodland including some areas of ancient woodland on the steeper banks of the Sherston branch of the Avon.

Key characteristics relating to woodland

- Occasional wide views over productive farmland limited only by small farm copses and woodlands.
- Infrequent woodland cover of mainly geometric broadleaf and coniferous plantations.

MANAGEMENT GUIDELINES

- Conserve and enhance the ancient woodlands.
- Conserve, enhance and replant farm woodlands using suitable native species, giving priority to planting on former woodland footprints.
- Limit new woodland creation.

15 FARMED SLOPES

The slopes support a mosaic of mixed farmland and woodland.

The woodlands are generally small-scale farm woodlands and often form linear belts bordering streams and regular geometric copses close to farmhouses. Significant areas of woodland tend to be associated with historic parks and mark the outer limits of grazed parkland.

Key characteristics relating to woodland

- Small, often geometric, broadleaf and coniferous woodlands and tree belts along watercourses draining the slopes.
- Large deciduous and mixed woodlands bordering parklands integrated by strong hedgerow network.
- Limited ancient woodlands.
- Numerous historic parklands.

MANAGEMENT GUIDELINES

- Conserve, enhance and replant farm and park woodlands using species native to the area.
- Limit new woodland creation.
- Protect views from the slopes.

16 BROAD FLOODPLAIN VALLEY

Land use is dominated by pasture. The watercourses are fringed by wet pastures and meadows. These are bordered by a patchwork of improved pastures and arable fields that rise onto the gentle valley slopes.

Tree cover is restricted to pollards along the course of the river, occasional small copses on the slopes above the floodplain and shelterbelts associated with large parkland landscapes.

Key characteristics relating to Woodland

- Wooded bluffs and areas of species-rich grassland on areas of steep landform.

MANAGEMENT GUIDELINES

- Protect remnant areas of ancient woodland and species-rich grassland.
- Limit new woodland creation.

17 PASTORAL LOWLAND VALE

The Pastoral Lowland Vale is largely pastoral with areas of unimproved grassland and wet meadow bordering streams.

Large woodlands are not characteristic. Small and often geometric copses may be found in the proximity of farms.

Key characteristics relating to Woodland

- Limited woodland cover including ancient woodland.

MANAGEMENT GUIDELINES

- Protect and manage remnant areas of ancient woodland and species-rich grassland.
- Woodland creation is not appropriate within this landscape type.