

Stonedown and Vernditch

Location

Stonedown is located approximately 3km north of the village of Sixpenny Handley. Access is gained via a minor road running from the northernmost part of the village to a gateway located to the south west of the woodland. The city of Salisbury lies approximately 15km to the north east.

Vernditch is located approximately 4km south of the village of Broadchalke. Salisbury lies approximately 12km to the north east. The A354 Blandford Forum to Salisbury is located to the south of the woodland. Access is through a gateway at the north west boundary.

Tenure

Forestry Commission are the freehold owners of both Stonedown and Vernditch.

Landscape

Stonedown and Vernditch are located within the Cranborne Chase and West Wiltshire Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. There are no other landscape designations present in the woodlands.

During operational planning, reference will be made to current AONB projects which may be supported by the operation.

Vernditch is viewable from the A354 which runs to the south of the woodland.

Current Woodland Structure

Stonedown is almost completely designated as Ancient Woodland, totaling 107 ha. 51 hectares of this (over 47%) is classified as Ancient Semi-Natural Woodland. Much of this area is located in the northern parts of the woodland. A further 56 ha of Ancient Woodland is found in Vernditch, of which 63% (35ha) is ASNW. PAWS woodland accounts for 25ha (23%) and 10ha (17%) in Stonedown and Vernditch respectively.

Beech is by far the dominant species, accounting for around 55% of the area across both woodlands alone. Other broadleaves including Ash, Hazel and Oak account for around a further 20%. The remaining area consists of a mixture of conifers, including Douglas Fir, Japanese Larch, Western Red Cedar and Norway Spruce.

The age class of canopy trees ranges from 0 to over 100 years old. The majority (~77%) of the woodland is aged between 41 and 80 years old, illustrating a lack of age diversity across the woodland.

There is a good proportion of open space, mainly associated with the wide edges along the road and ride network.

Biodiversity and Conservation

Stonedown and Vernditch successfully provide quality habitat for an array of species including protected mammals, birds of prey and insects.

During management interventions, opportunities for ride widening and habitat

enhancement will be taken to increase the ecotone of the woodland and provide connecting habitats for associated species. Decisions about where such enhancement work will take place will be made at the operational stage of management.

People

Stonedown and Vernditch are both held on a freehold basis and there is free access by foot across the woodlands.

The woods are used informally for recreation by many local people for walking and dog walking. The woodland is dedicated for open access under the Countryside Rights of Way Act (2000).

Open junctions, wide rides and clear paths enhance the experience of a walk along these paths. During management interventions opportunities to enhance the visual impact of rides and individual trees will be taken by selecting trees for retention based on character as well as widening rides.

Historic Environment

Vernditch contains two Scheduled Monuments. These are a neolithic long barrow and Grims Ditch, an ancient boundary network. We will continue to manage these areas in accordance with our statutory responsibilities.

In addition, there are numerous undesignated sites of historic interest present in both woodlands. A Roman Road also runs along the eastern boundary of Vernditch. Management will ensure the integrity of these sites is maintained in line with guidance outlined in the UK Forestry Standard.

Continued monitoring will take place to ensure that anything relevant found is recorded and fed into operational planning in line with statutory responsibilities and best practice guidelines.

Soils

The woodland lies entirely on the Upper Chalk. At the southern end of the wood a mantle of Clay-with-Flints overlies the chalk.

Water

There are no areas of standing water in either of the woodlands.

Tree Diseases and Pests

The main diseases of concern currently are *Chalara Fraxinea* (Ash Dieback), *Dothistroma* (red band) Needle Blight on Corsican Pine, and *Phytophthora ramorum* on Larch. Although larch and Ash are present, their numbers are minimal within the scale of the woodland and so these diseases do not pose a great risk to the current woodland character.

There are no records of invasive non-native plant species within these woodlands, but continued monitoring will take place to ensure that those species which pose a threat to native flora do not become established.




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England

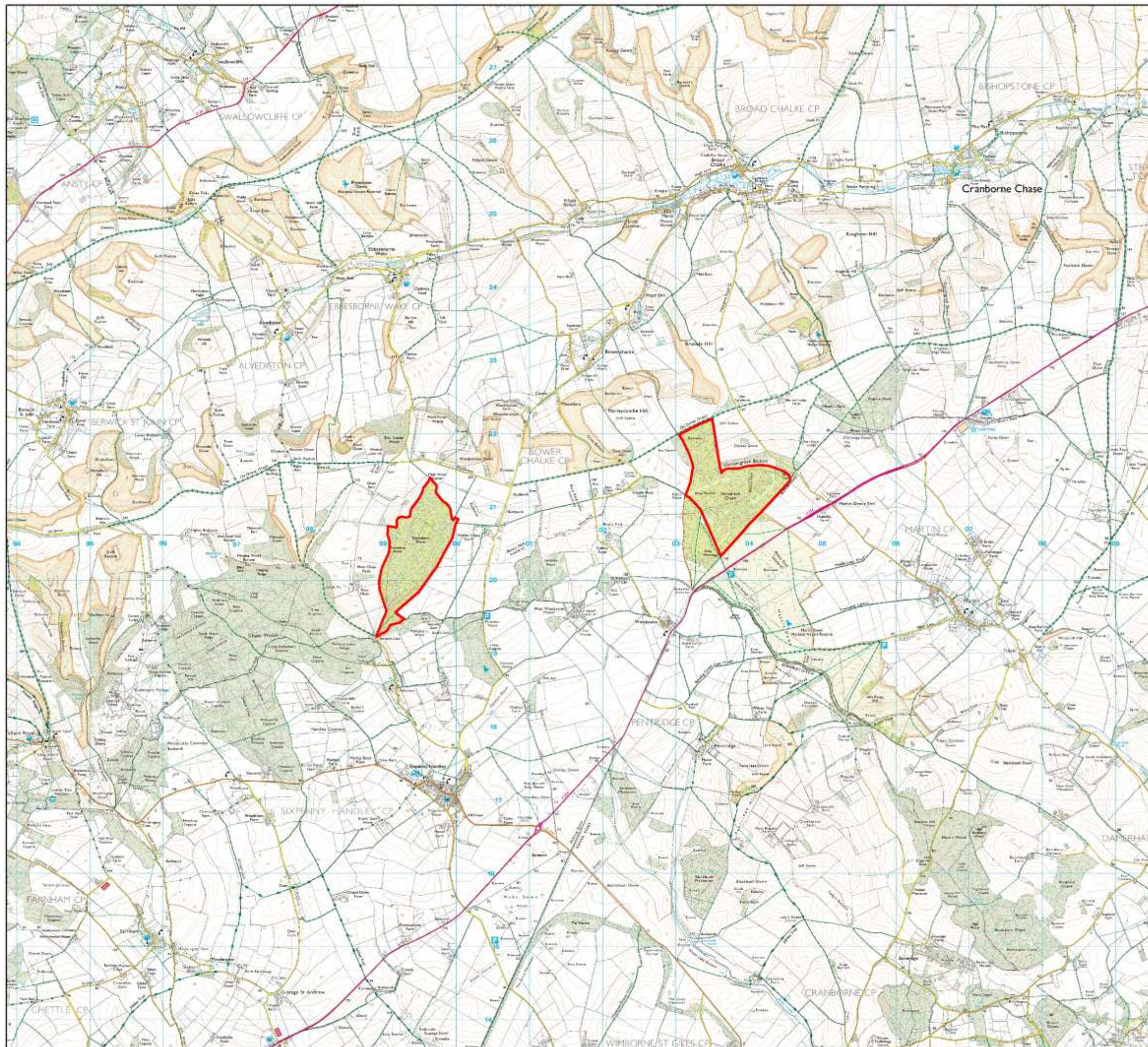
South England Forest District

Stonedown & Vernditch

Location

KEY

 Stonedown & Vernditch
Management Area



01/12/2014

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Forestry Commission
England

South England Forest District

Stonedown & Vernditch

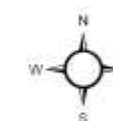
Aerial

KEY

 Stonedown & Vernditch
Management Area

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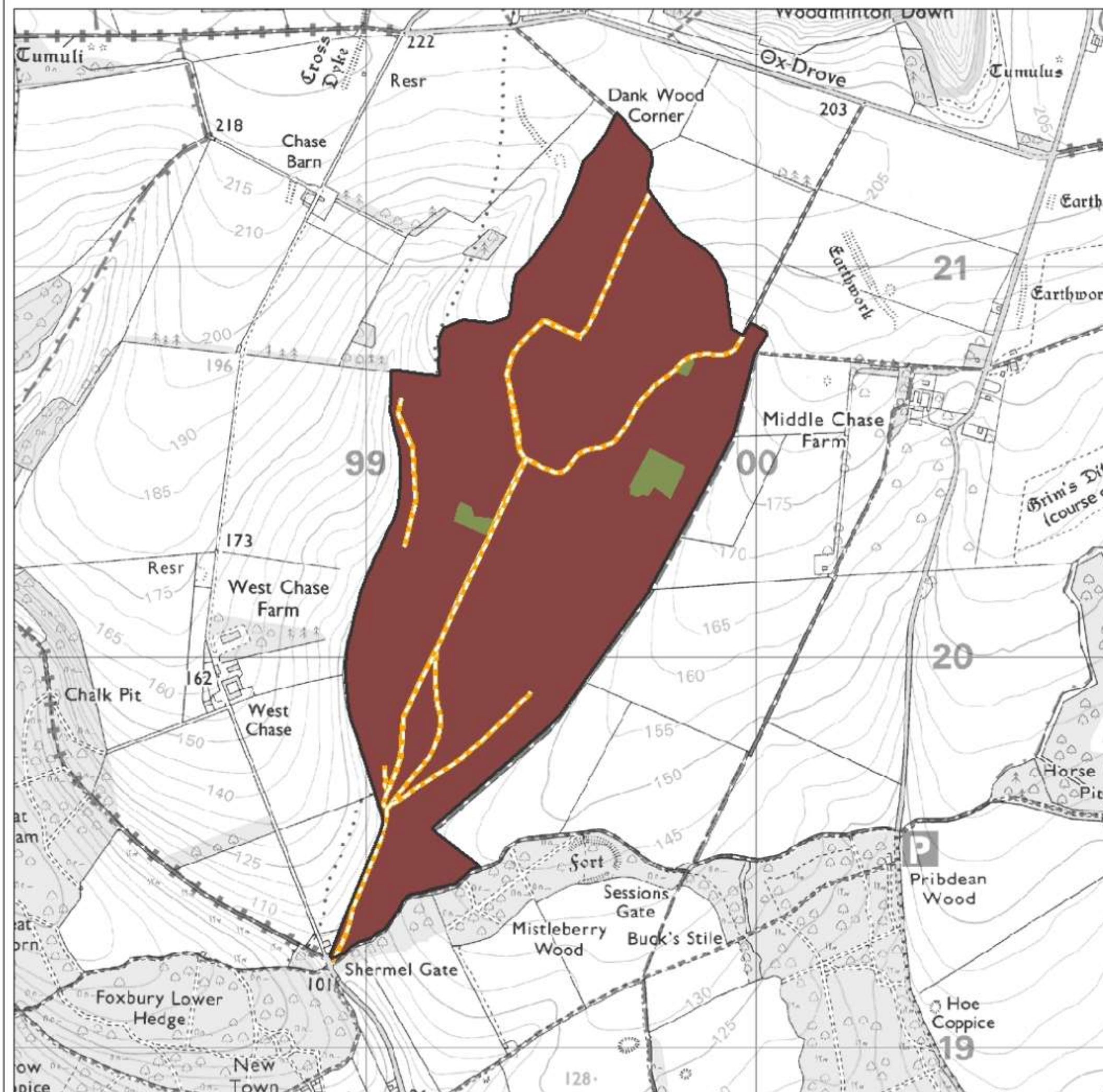


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Stonedown Long Term Vision

Illustrates the long-term
structure of the woodland.



Legend



Management Area



Native Woodland.
Woodland which is predominantly (>80%)
native species of a high forest structure
with well-developed under-storey and
areas of transitional open space.



Coppice.
Woodland with a coppice structure of
Low-growing, multi-stemmed trees with
areas of transitional open space.



Wildlife Corridors.
A scalloped network of roads, rides and
tracks providing migration routes and high
quality habitat for associated species.

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Stonedown Current Structure


Illustrates the structure of the woodland in 2016.


Legend

-  Management Area

-  Native Woodland.
Woodland which is predominantly (>80%) native species of a high forest structure with well-developed under-storey and areas of transitional open space.

-  Mixed Woodland.
No species type (broadleaf or conifer) represents more than 80% of the canopy.

-  Predominantly (>80%) conifer or other non-native woodland.

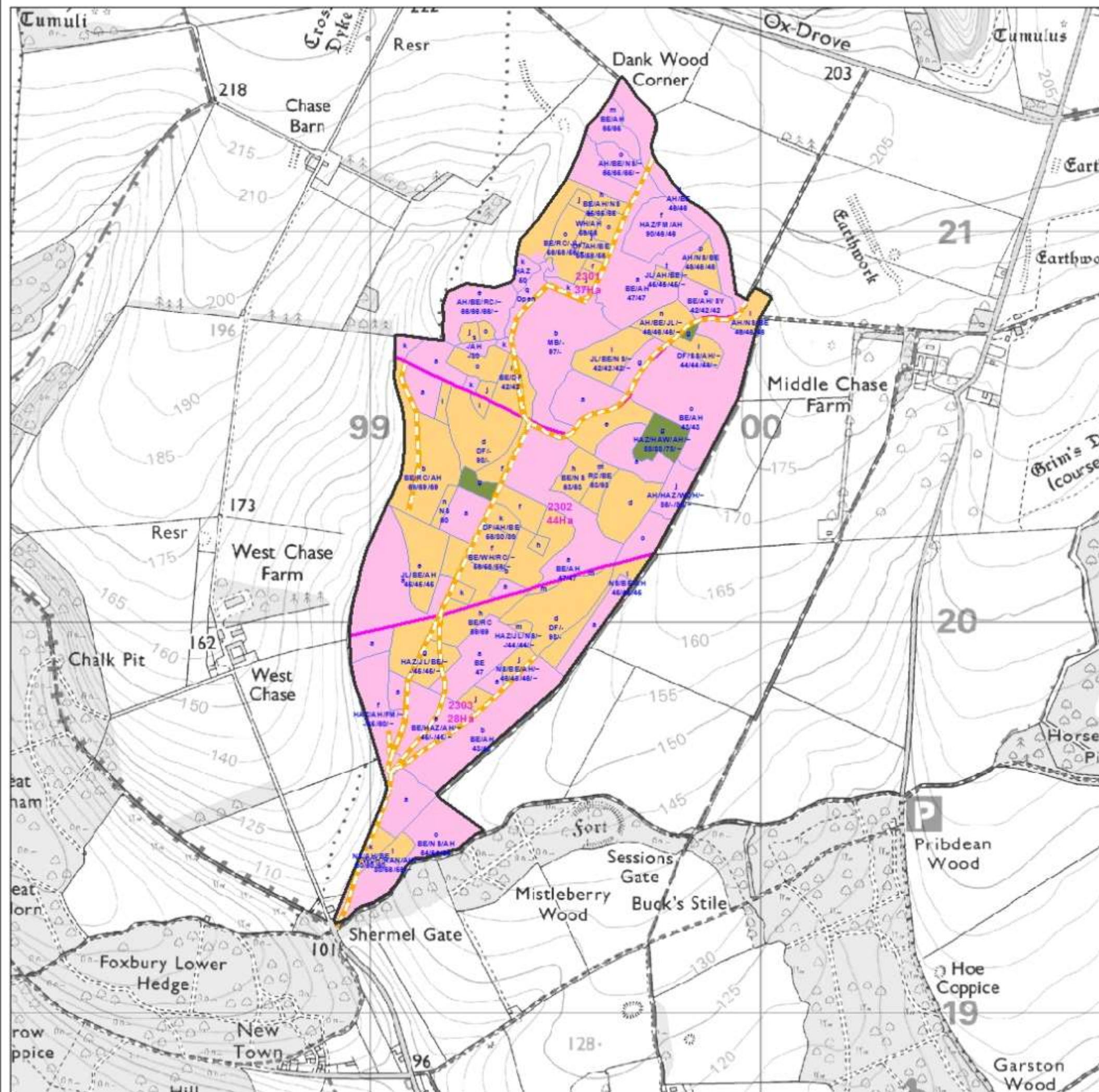
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Stonedown Habitat Restoration & Felling



Illustrates the management types
to be used over the period of this Plan.

Legend

-  Management Area
-  Native Broadleaved Woodland Management.
Manage under an appropriate shelterwood
system favouring best native tree and
focussing on the production of quality timber.
-  Native Woodland Restoration.
Manage under an appropriate shelterwood
system. Favour best native tree, focussing on
the production of quality timber and the
gradual reduction of non-native species to
20% of the canopy or less.
-  Coppice with Standards.
Thin the canopy to reduce cover to a
maximum of 20%. Coppice understorey in
an appropriate rotation to benefit
biodiversity while taking market
opportunities to utilise products.
-  Open Space.
Area of permanent open space including
grasslands, heathlands and meadows.
-  Road/Ride Edge Management.
Enhance the woodland edge, developing a
scalped and graded structure for the
benefit of biodiversity.

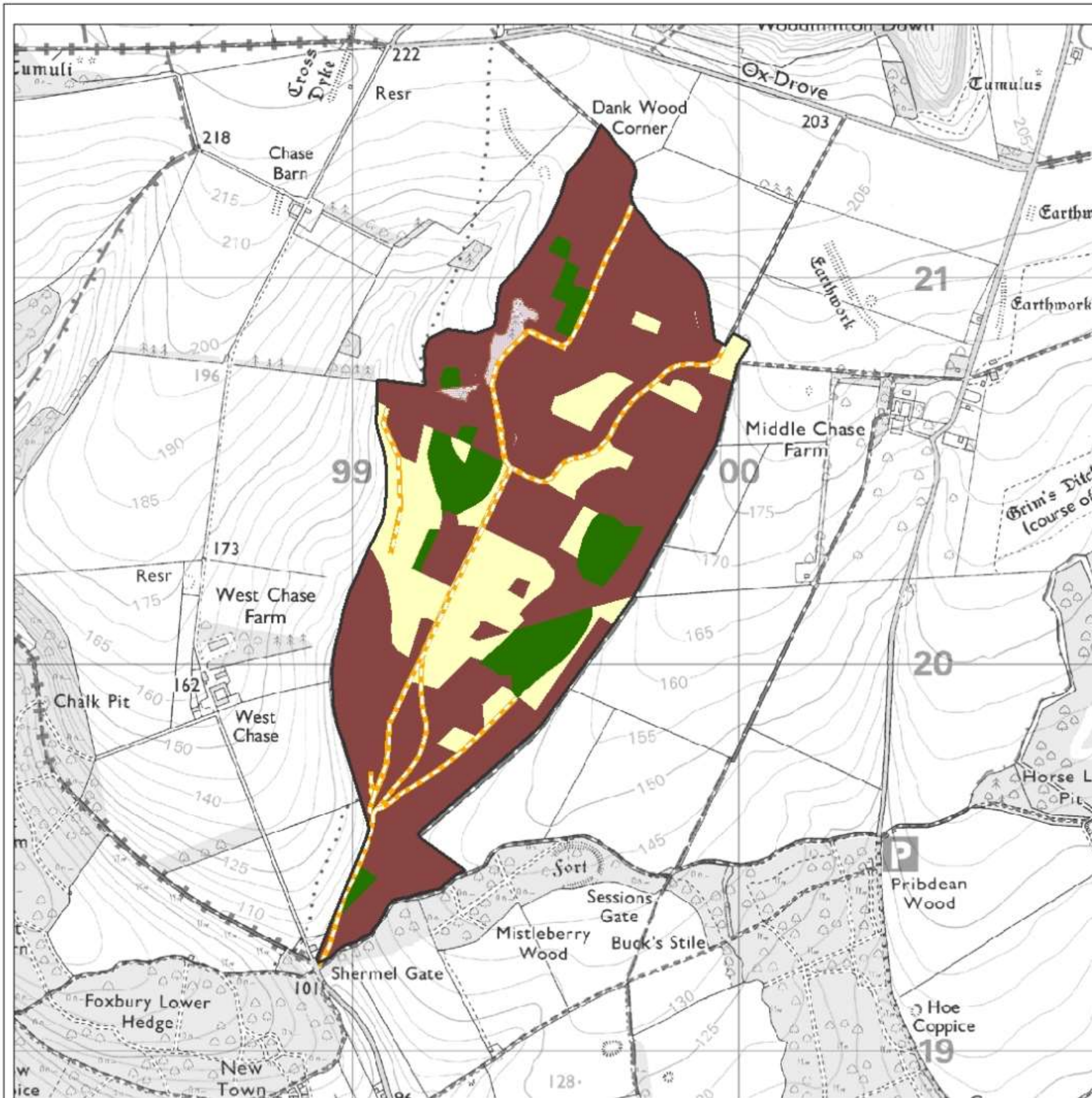
Declaration by FC as an operator.
All timber arising from the Forest Enterprise Estate
represents a negligible risk under the EUTR
(No. 995/210).

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Stonedown Medium Term Structure



Illustrates the potential structure of the woodland in 2036.

Legend

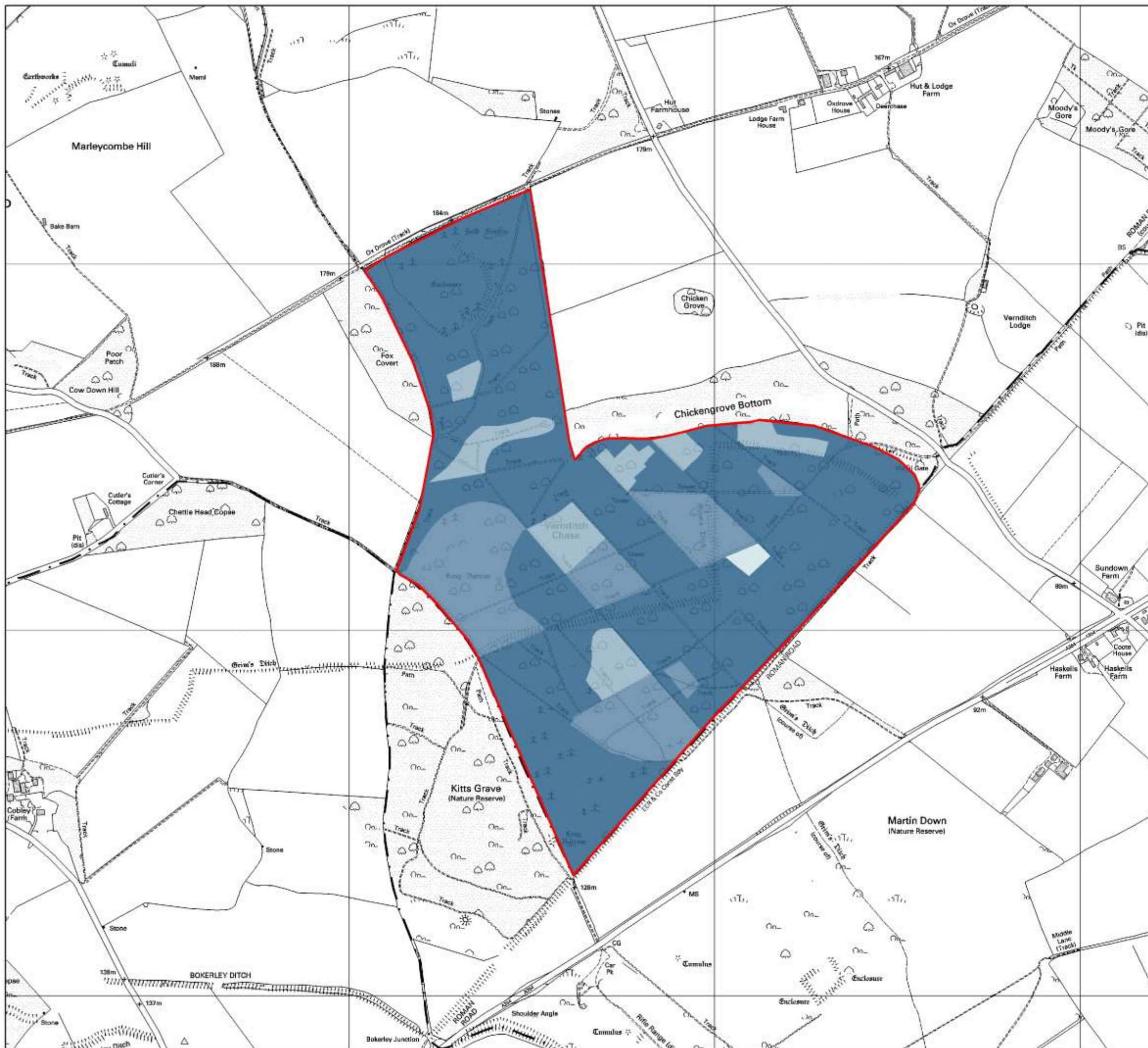
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-  Mixed Woodland.
No species type (broadleaf or conifer) represents more than 80% of the canopy.
-  Predominantly (>80%) conifer or other non-native woodland.
-  Scrub Mosaic.
A mosaic habitat of scrub and open space.
-  Wildlife Corridors.
A scalloped network of roads, rides and tracks providing migration routes and high quality habitat for associated species.

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Forestry Commission
England

South England Forest District

Stonedown & Vernditch Indicative Species Diversity

KEY

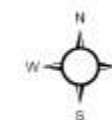
Vernditch Management Area

Number of component species within the canopy (including open space):

- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4 - 9

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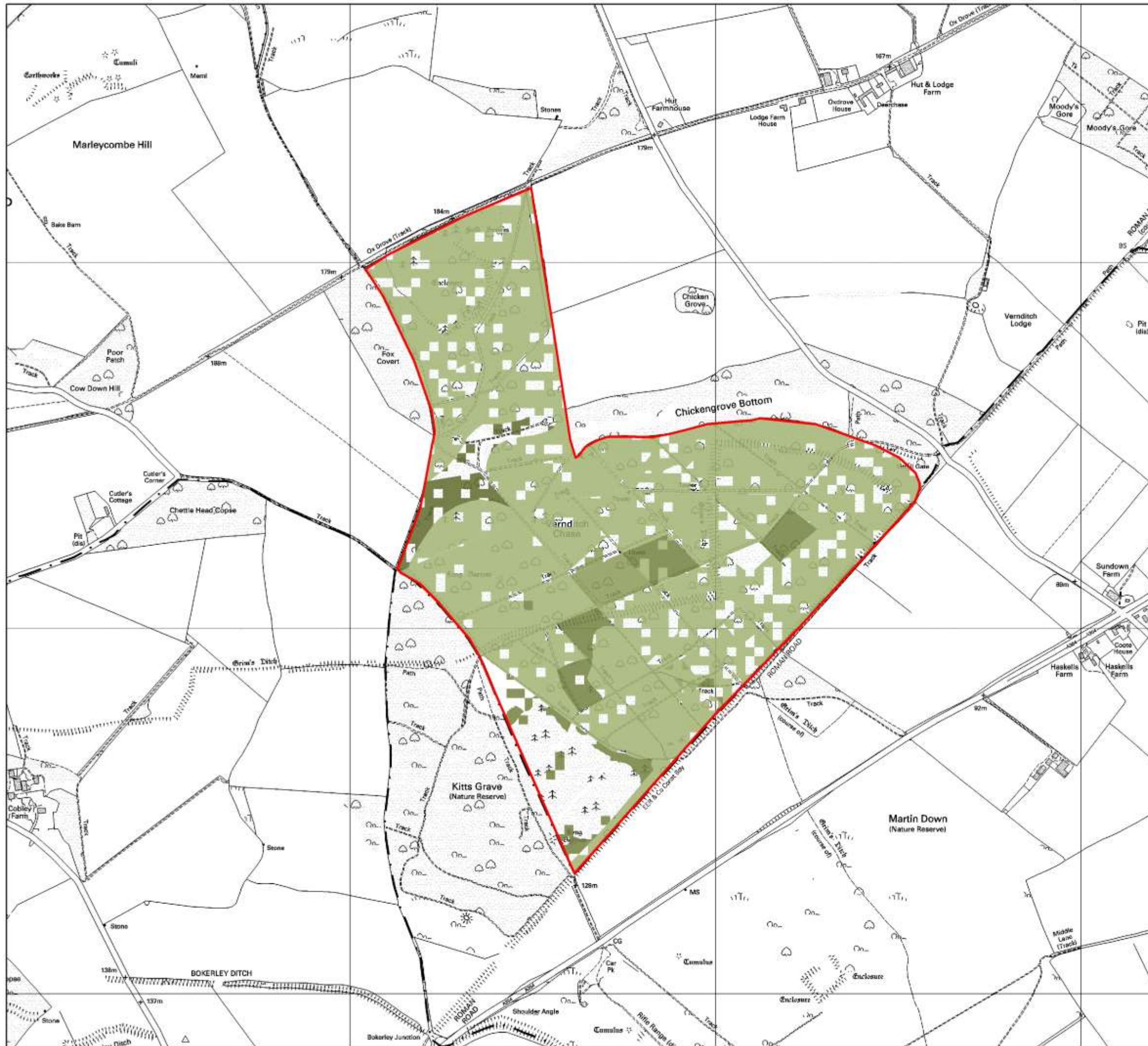
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PEFC
Programme
Certified
by the
Forest
Stewardship
Council



Stonedown & Vernditch Indicative Age Diversity

KEY

-  Vernditch Management Area
-  Over 100 Years Old
-  81 - 100 Years Old
-  61 - 80 Years Old
-  41 - 60 Years Old
-  21 - 40 Years Old
-  1 - 20 Years Old

Gaps illustrate indicative or actual open space, or areas covered by recent natural regeneration

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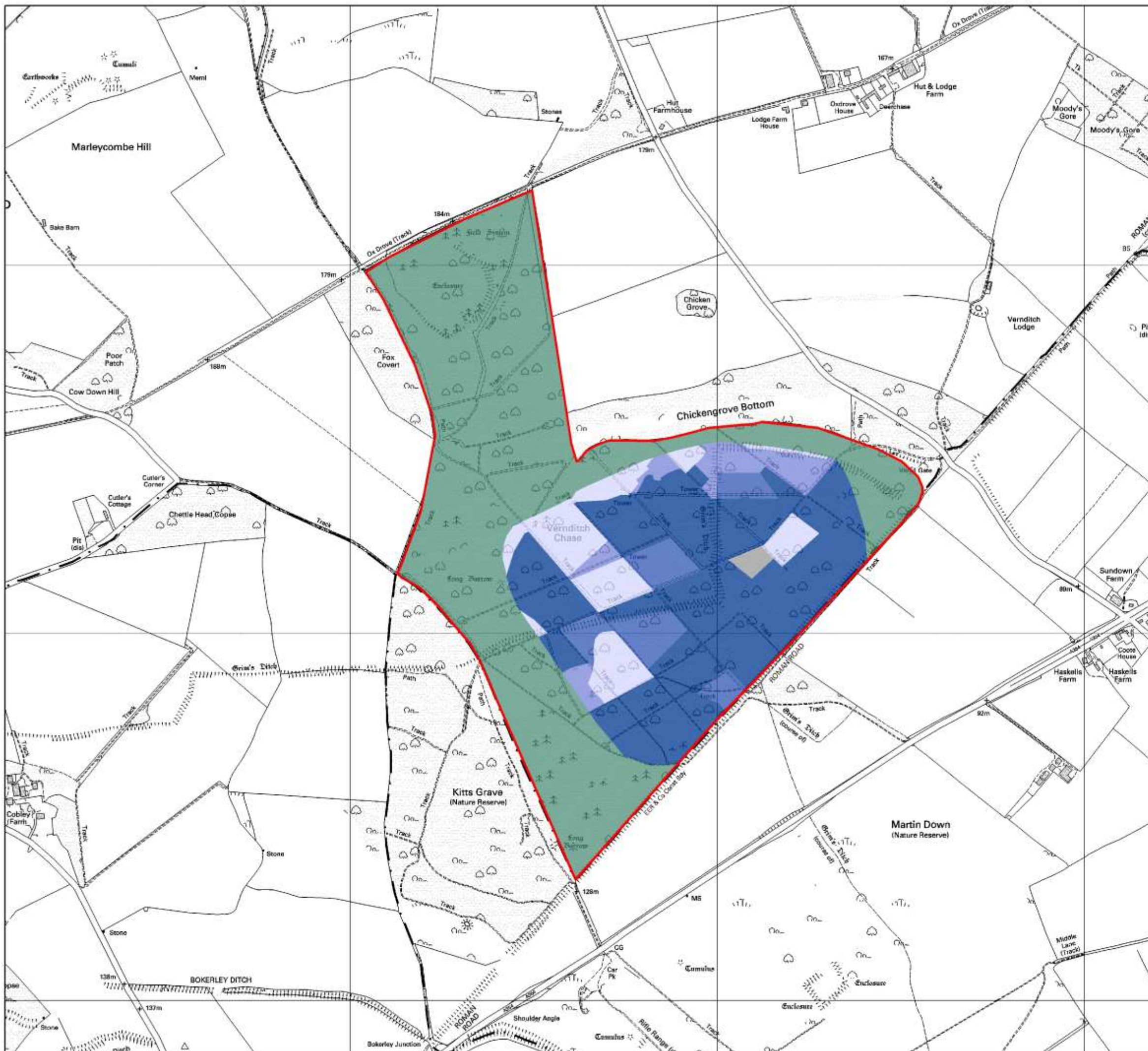
Forestry Commission
England

South England Forest District

Stonedown & Vernditch Ancient Woodland (NE) & Semi-Natural Scoring

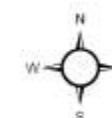
KEY

-  Vernditch Management Area
-  1 - Over 80% native
-  2 - Between 50% and 80% native
-  3 - Between 20% and 50% native
-  4 - Less than 20% native
-  Currently open or un-established woodland
-  Not Ancient Woodland



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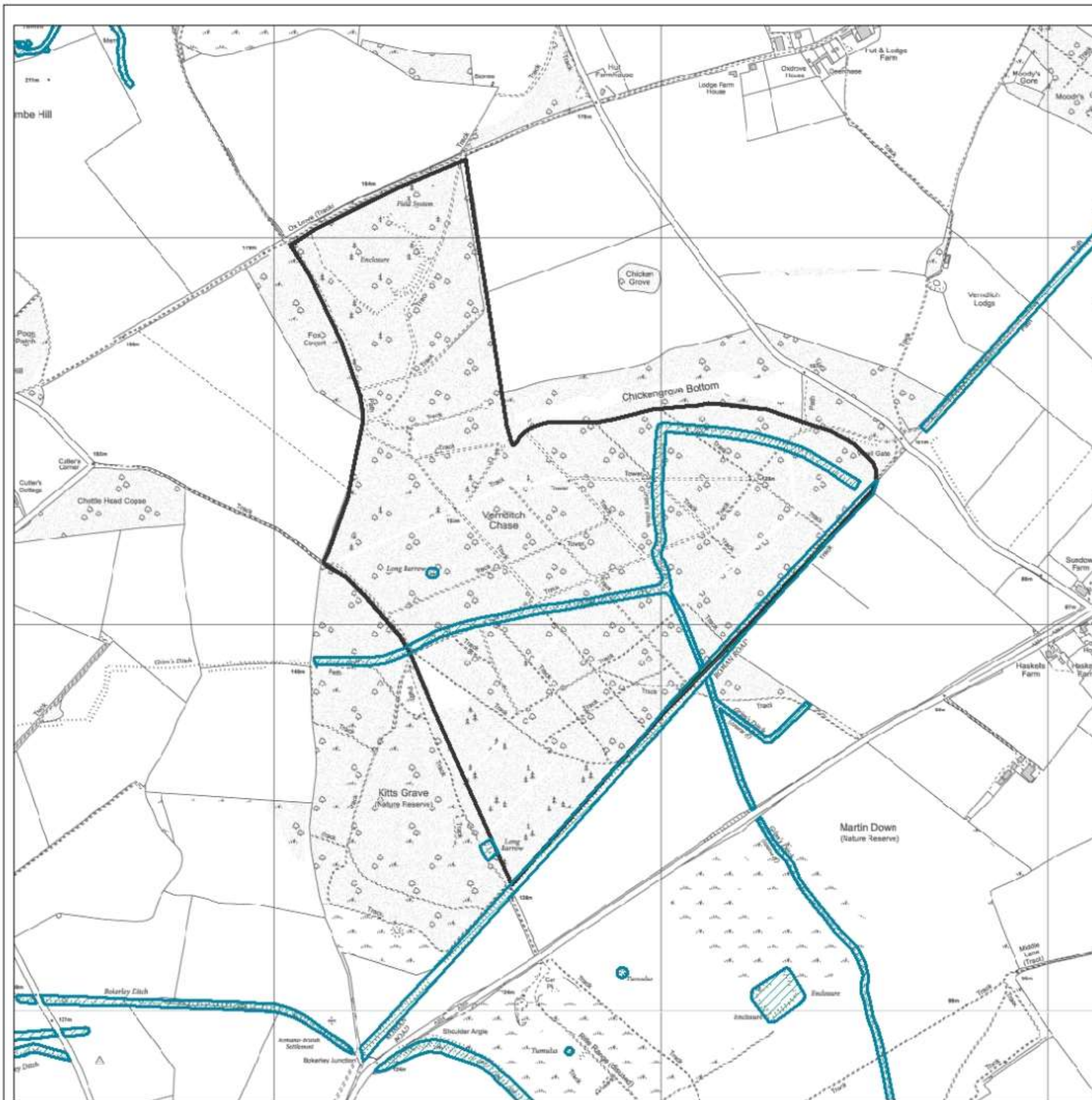


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Vernditch

Historic Environment Designations



Legend

Management Area

Heritage Designations

DESIGNATION TYPE

Scheduled Monument

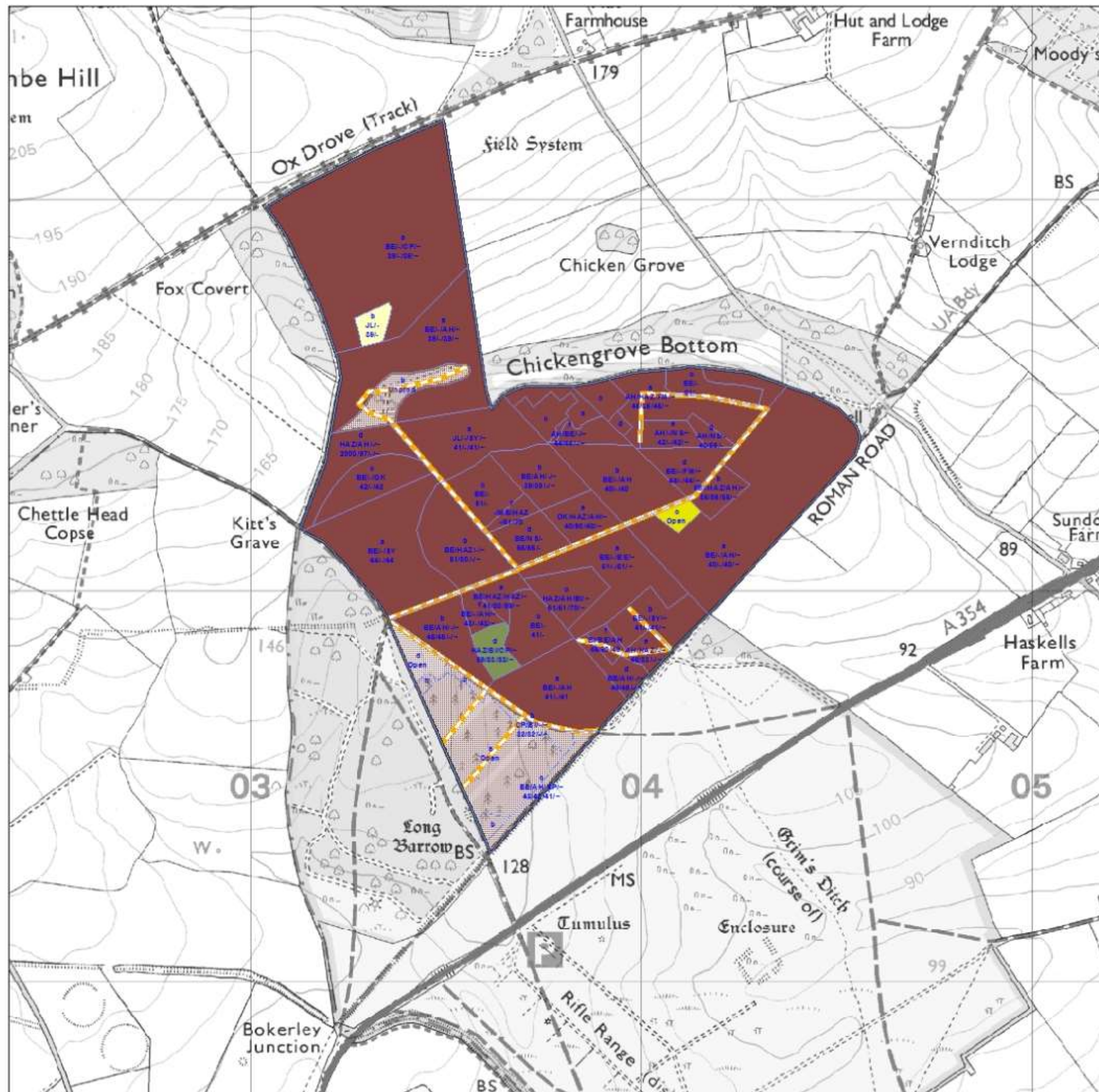
Park and Garden

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Vernditch Long Term Vision



Illustrates the long-term structure of the woodland.

Legend

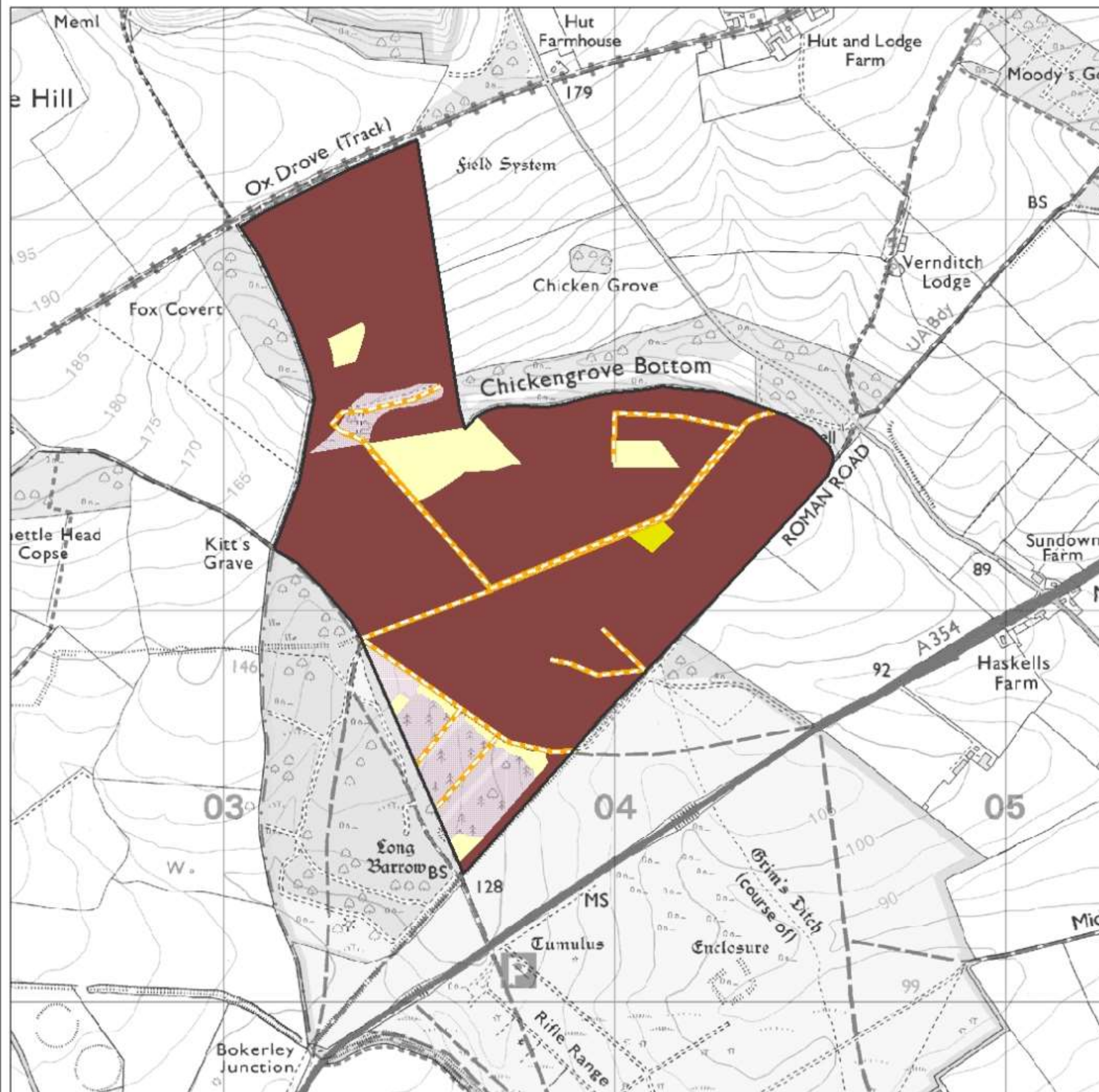
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Woodland which is predominantly (>80%) native species of a high forest structure with well-developed under-storey and areas of transitional open space.
-  Mixed Woodland.
No species type (broadleaf or conifer) represents more than 80% of the canopy.
-  Coppice.
Woodland with a coppice structure of Low-growing, multi-stemmed trees with areas of transitional open space.
-  Scrub Mosaic.
A mosaic habitat of scrub and open space.
-  Open Space.
Area of permanent open space including grasslands, heathlands and meadows.
-  Road/Ride Edge Management.
Enhance the woodland edge, developing a scalloped and graded structure for the benefit of biodiversity.

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Vernditch Current Structure



Illustrates the structure of the woodland in 2016.

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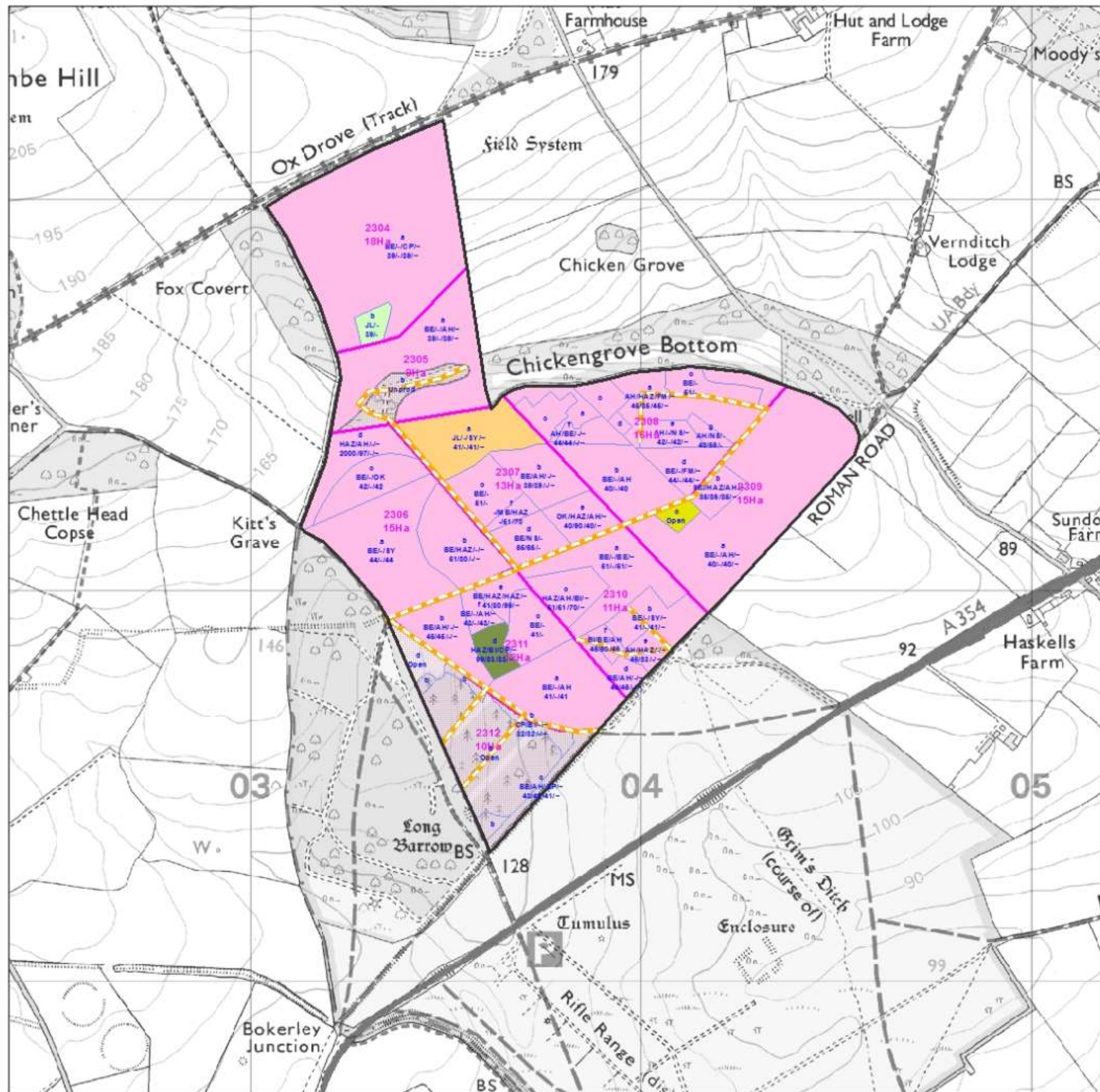
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- Native Woodland Restoration.
Manage under an appropriate shelterwood system. Favour best native tree, focussing on the production of quality timber and the gradual reduction of non-native species to 20% of the canopy or less.
- Mixed Woodland Management.
Manage under an appropriate shelterwood system. Favour best tree, focussing on the production of quality timber and species diversity.
- Coppice.
Coppice in an appropriate rotation to benefit biodiversity while taking market opportunities to utilise products.
- Scrub Mosaic.
Maintain an approximate 50:50 balance of scrub woodland and open space. High canopy to be maintained at less than 20% cover by removal of individual trees as necessary.
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