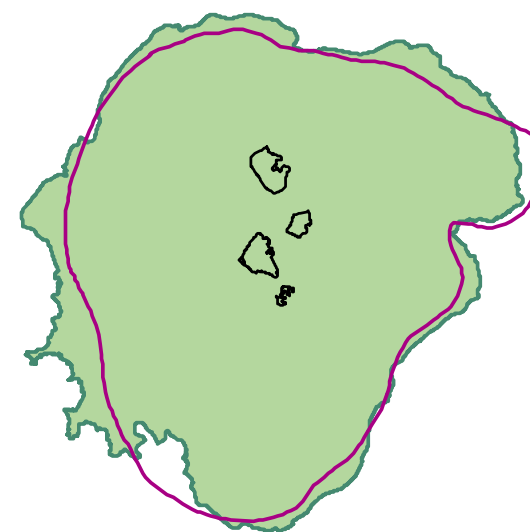




## Dartmoor National Park (DNPA, 2014)

Dartmoor's special qualities include:

- open, windswept **upland moors** with wide views and a sense of remoteness and wildness, distinctive granite tors surrounded by loose rock or 'clitter', and large expanses of grass and heather
- moorland blanket bogs, and valley mires providing habitats for distinctive wildlife such as skylark and cuckoo, and rarities including Vigur's eyebright and southern damselfly;
- **sheltered valleys** with upland oak woodland, rhôs pasture and fast-flowing boulder-strewn rivers, home to characteristic wildlife including the pied flycatcher and salmon, and rare species such as the marsh fritillary butterfly;
- **enclosed farmland** with small irregular pasture fields, bounded by dry stone walls and hedgebanks, providing a mosaic of different wildlife habitats, including hay meadows and species rich dry grasslands with wildlife such as the beautiful greater butterfly orchid;
- a **varied geology**, including the granite bedrock, providing the dominant building material throughout history, and a wide range of valued minerals including tin, copper, lead, silver and arsenic;
- **timelessness - a place** spared many of the intrusions of modern life, with dark night-time skies;
- **tranquillity**, where it is possible to find absolute peace, offering spiritual refreshment and opportunities for quiet reflection, escape and creativity;
- unrivalled opportunities to roam at will over the extensive open moorland, and an exceptional **rights of way network** for walking, riding and cycling;
- **traditional farming practices**, using the moorland commons for extensive grazing of hardy cattle, sheep and ponies including locally distinctive breeds;
- **clean water** - the catchment area for most of the rivers of Devon - historic leats still supply water to settlements. The peatlands and open water of the
- reservoirs provide an important water store helping to regulate the flow of water off the moor;
- one of the most **important archaeological landscapes** in western Europe revealing a chronology of human activity stretching back over 8,000 years, from ancient field systems to the legacy of tin mining;
- a wealth of **historic buildings, structures and townscapes**, including a strong medieval settlement pattern of **scattered farmsteads, hamlets, villages and towns**, set within enclosed farmland surrounding the open moor and linked by an intimate pattern of sunken lanes;



Legend:  
 Dartmoor National Park  
 Dartmoor NCA



## National Character Area – Dartmoor 150 (Natural England, 2014)

Dartmoor's extensive upland moorland core rises above the surrounding small-scale, enclosed, predominantly pastoral landscape. Granite unites and characterises the entire National Character Area (NCA). On the moors the distinctive tors create key landscape features, interrupting otherwise unbroken skylines and ridges, and provide focal points for visitors. Isolated farmsteads and scattered villages utilise granite for buildings and walls; and the area's strong time depth and rich cultural heritage are visually evident because of the granite, which includes the largest concentration of prehistoric stone rows in Britain. The high moors are overlaid with thick deposits of peat and support internationally important blanket bogs surrounded by large expanses of upland heathland and grass moorland. The bogs and valley mires absorb and store significant amounts of water, as well as carbon, released into the 16 rivers and 8 reservoirs that supply the surrounding urban and rural populations and industry. As rivers leave the high moor they flow through deep-cut valleys steeped in woodland – both semi-natural broadleaved and coniferous plantation. The fast-flowing rivers, strewn with granite boulders, are popular for recreation, both passive and active.

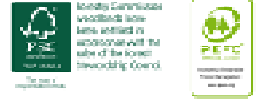
Dartmoor is not a highly wooded landscape, but woodlands are significant elements. Dark, regular-shaped blocks of coniferous plantation are prominent, incongruous features on the moors. These post Second World War plantations are reaching maturity and areas are being felled and forests restructured, changing their visual appearance, character and setting in the landscape. With climate change here might be increased pressure to plant further areas of coniferous plantation and woodland (impacting on open character); planted to enhance the landscape's roles in filtering water, minimising downstream flooding, storing and sequestering carbon dioxide and providing low-carbon fuel sources (through coppice management).

### Opportunity

Protect and restore ancient and important woodland, managing and enhancing its contribution to landscape character, biodiversity and recreation. Seek opportunities to support the local economy through wood products.

For example, by:

- Planning for the long-term restructuring of conifer plantations on the open moor, softening hard visual edges and undertaking a phased removal programme and reversion to heather moorland.
- Planning and managing the extension and connection of areas of semi-natural woodland, particularly along the steep river valleys.
- Encouraging initiatives that promote the use of local timber and wood products and facilitate communication and greater understanding between wood producers (large and small), processors and users.
- Working with the local forestry industry and timber processors to ensure that the necessary skills and knowledge are maintained, shared and enhanced to enable sustainable woodland management.
- Encouraging management practices that ensure well-structured woodland with high-quality timber and, where appropriate, that achieve multipurpose objectives.
- Supporting community schemes that promote positive woodland management and the use of wood products.
- Supporting and encouraging local initiatives that promote the sustainable management of woodlands and hedgerows for wood fuel production. Encourage join-up between landowners and local communities and knowledge and skills sharing and enhancement.
- Encouraging the consideration of carbon storage as an integral part of woodland management, and promoting the sustainable management of woodlands not currently under a management regime.
- Supporting, planning and managing the use of forests and woodlands for both active and passive recreation.
- Supporting the restoration of ancient woodland sites by removing conifer plantations and managing sites for the benefit of biodiversity and a range of ecosystem services.



A number of important statutory designations are located within, or close to the Dartmoor Forest Plan area. These designations are overseen by the appropriate statutory authorities, namely Historic England for heritage designations and Natural England for ecological designations.

## Conservation Designations



Laughter Quarry SSSI is a site of considerable geomorphological importance for its assemblage of periglacial and granite weathered features typical of Dartmoor. Situated within the south-east of Bellever, it is one of the best sites demonstrating many of the classic slope features of Dartmoor in a single exposure.

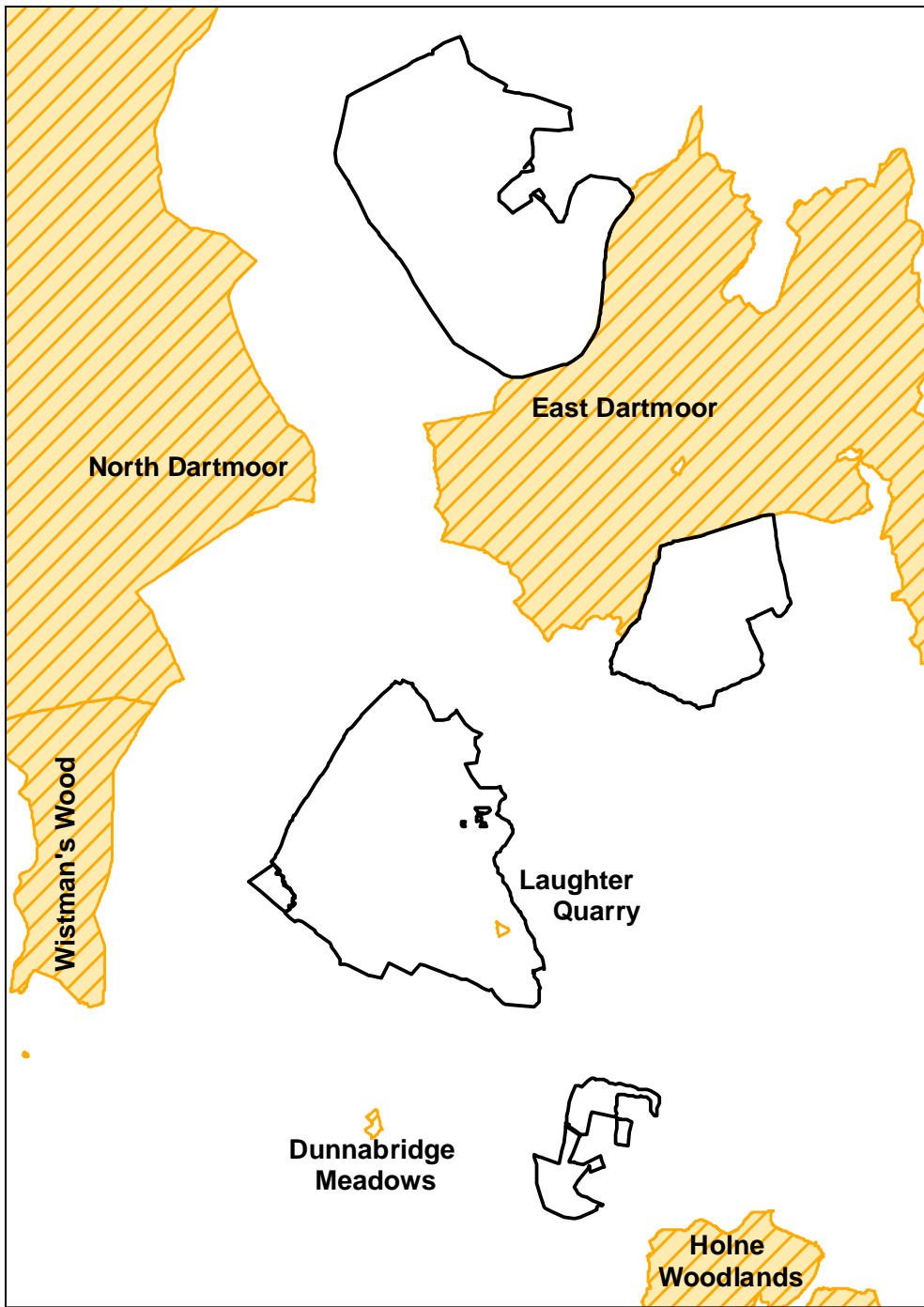
East Dartmoor SSSI (SAC) which dissects Fernworthy and Soussons contains the largest area of heather moorland remaining on Dartmoor. The sub-montane acidic dwarf shrub heath concerned is associated with acidic grassland and valley mires.

North Dartmoor SSSI (SAC) situated to the north-west of the Plan area contains one of the largest areas of upland semi-natural habitat in southern Britain. It is particularly important for western blanket bog and mixed valley mire communities, but also supports a diverse upland breeding bird community.

Other significant designations in the area include Holne and Wistman's Woodlands notified for their upland ancient semi-natural oak woodland character and Dunnabridge Meadows which is an herb-rich upland meadow

Although not designated Fernworthy, Soussons and Bellever between them support c.1.5% of the national nightjar population, exceeding by some way the threshold for **Legend** under the EU Wild Birds Directive.

 Site of Special Scientific Interest  
 Special Area of Conservation




## Heritage Designations

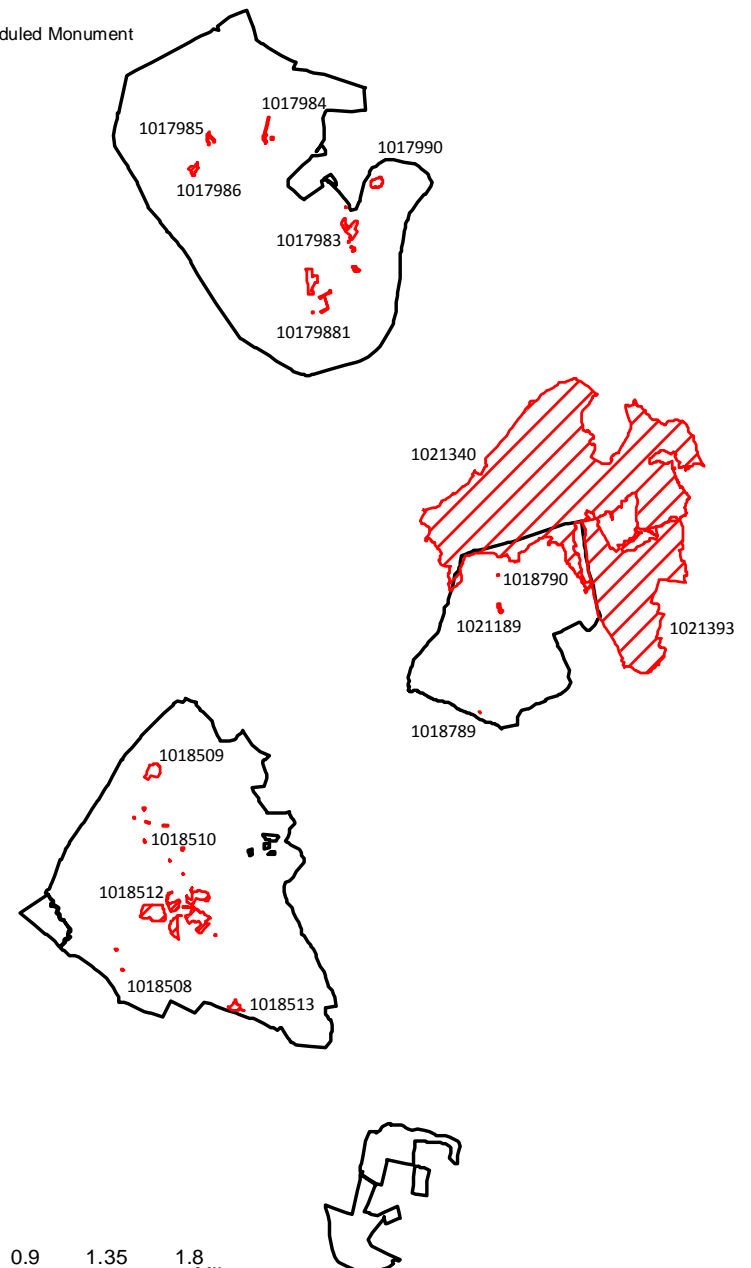
The Dartmoor area is renowned for its huge assemblage of heritage and archaeological features. A large number of these are designated as Scheduled Monuments (SMs).

The Plan Area contains seventeen SMs which are made up of thirty-six separate features. These are of varying age and size and are outlined below:

ID	Name	Area (ha)
1017981	Stone alignment, hut circle settlement, medieval long house and post-medieval farmstead at Assycombe	1.87
1017983	Dispersed stone hut circle settlement and associated fields 490m south east of Silk House	1.57
1017984	A stone circle, known as Fernworthy Circle, three stone alignments and five cairns 425m and 525m north west of Sandeman Bridge	0.46
1017985	Unenclosed stone hut circle settlement on Tom's Hill, 870m north west of Sandeman Bridge	0.22
1017986	Unenclosed stone hut circle settlement, two cairns and section of field system 330m north east of Hemstone Rocks	0.47
1017990	Partially enclosed stone hut circle settlement 780m south west of Metherall	0.84
1018508	A cairn and cist 380m west and a cairn and standing stone 370m south west of Bellever Tor, forming an outlying part of a cairn cemetery	0.04
1018509	Partially enclosed stone hut circle settlement known as Kraps Ring	1.35
1018510	Five cairns, two stone alignments and three cists, forming part of a ritual complex on Lakehead Hill	0.17
1018511	Two cairns with two cists and a stone hut circle on the east facing slope of Lakehead Hill forming part of a ritual complex	0.06
1018512	A prehistoric settlement with enclosures, an irregular aggregate field system and cairn north of Bellever Tor	9.03
1018513	An agglomerated enclosure and two stone hut circles 580m west of Laughter Hole Farm	0.54
1018789	A ring cairn 700m south east of Runnage Bridge, on the southern side of Soussons Down	0.02
1018790	Round cairn on Soussons Down, 1.2km north west of Soussons	0.01
1021189	Four round barrows on Soussons Down, 960m north west of Soussons	0.23
1021340	Tinworks, field systems, settlements, warren, cairns and a stone alignment at Headland Warren	237.13
1021393	Medieval strip field system, tinworks, part of a prehistoric settlement, a cairn and reave on Challacombe Down	81.50

## Legend

 Scheduled Monument



0 0.225 0.45 0.9 1.35 1.8 Miles

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Ordnance Survey [100021242]

Fernworthy is a block of 575ha which sits in a small catchment surrounding the reservoir. The forest has a north easterly aspect with elevation mainly between 350 and 400m asl but reaching nearly 500m asl on Assycombe Hill. Soils are typically moist and moderately fertile and are primarily of the peaty podzolic type based on the characteristic Dartmoor granite intrusion. The forest is dominated by high yielding Sitka spruce reaching up to Yield class 24 and large diameter (3 m<sup>3</sup>) final crop trees, often on CCF systems which the forest is renowned for. Fernworthy plays host to an array of flora and fauna species including supporting c.1.5% of the national nightjar population and remains a quietly enjoyed forest within the Dartmoor landscape.



**Analysis:** There are considerable areas of example and trial CCF systems at various stages of implementation and varying degrees of successful regeneration.

**Concept:** An appraisal of stands and their suitability for CCF will occur with the majority remaining on the lower, more sheltered sites.



**Analysis:** Currently unstable and exposed crops managed on a shelter wood system are susceptible to wind blow.

**Concept:** Consider moving these coupes to a clearfell system with the fell year brought forward to reduce the risk and impact of windthrow.

**Analysis:** Fernworthy Reservoir is managed by South West Lakes Trust and is a popular visitor destination and ecological area as well as a key South West Water drinking supply for south Devon. The area surrounding the reservoir is mosaic of open space and scrubby mixed broadleaf woodland.

**Concept:** The prescriptions proposed will ensure the stability of the catchment, the high water quality it provides for south Devon and maintain the amenity value of the reservoir and its surroundings.



**Analysis:** Multiple scheduled monuments are found throughout the forest. Some clear of tree cover and others fully stocked.

**Concept:** The aim is restore and maintain these heritage assets free from tree cover to preserve and enhance their cultural value for perpetuity, as agreed with Historic England.

**Analysis:** The contrast between high forest and open moorland creates a significant step on the landscape, visible from considerable distance.

**Concept:** A feathered edge will be created over time and in line with standard operations to minimise the contrast between high forest and open moor.



**Analysis:** Significant area of open space within high forest which was part of a historical larger landscape integration plan is showing significant scrub encroachment.

**Concept:** This is a suitable site for future compensatory planting for other, more appropriate landscape integration proposals.

**Analysis:** The Assycombe Brook, Lowton Brook, South Teign River and the watercourse around Thornworthy Down source in the Fernworthy catchment and traverse the forest creating stream sides, steep gradient slopes and low lying wet patches. The quality of the watercourses is of particular interest given the impact of dissolved peat on the coloration of the drinking water supply.

**Concept:** These will be managed sensitively as riparian zones, where soil and nutrient stability are prioritised. The target will be to reach a maximum of 50% forest cover of site appropriate wet woodland species.

**Analysis:** Bryoria, a lichenized fungi, is found in abundance in the more open areas of the larch stands here.

**Concept:** Where appropriate gaps will be maintained and clearfelling minimised to create climate and conditions suitable for the bryoria.

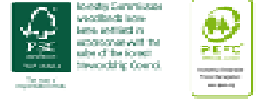
**Analysis:** East Dartmoor SSSI (SAC) borders the forest boundary. Many of the units in proximity to forest are in 'unfavourable-recovering' condition.

**Concept:** Proposals will complement the SSSI where appropriate and aid its recovery to 'favourable' condition.

**Analysis:** Assycombe Hill is the highest point of the forest at 497m asl and is fully stocked with p.51 SS. The current crop is now fairly isolated with surround crops much younger and lower in height. This creates a significant feature and step on the landscape.

**Concept:** A feathered edge will be created following clearfelling to minimise the contrast between high forest and open moor. Given the height of planting, site suitable species will be considered carefully.

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Ordnance Survey [100021242]  
0 0.0750.15 0.3 0.45 0.6 Miles



Soussons is a block of 215ha of coniferous forest leased from the Duchy of Cornwall. It is surrounded by open moorland with an elevation of between 300-400m asl. The soils are similar to that of Bellever and Fernworthy being deep, peaty and well drained with a tendency to form an ironpan and gley towards the north of the forest. The forest is almost entirely stocked with Sitka spruce the majority of which was planted by the Duchy in the 1940s. Much of this has now either been felled and restocked or is reaching the end of its rotation. The forest is relatively exposed and having been delayed in its first thinning the older crops do not lend themselves to CCF transformation. The forest is rich with cultural heritage which is in varying condition, this together with quality scrub and open habitat adjacent to conifer crops delivering quality habitat for a number of nationally important moorland species, creates a valuable forest in the landscape.

**Analysis:** Popular tourist route, B3212, has extensive views into the woodland from a higher promontory.

**Concept:** The Plan will look to create and maintain the forest as a valuable landscape feature.

**Analysis:** Area of open space delivering quality scrub/moorland habitat for variety of rare species together with valuable visual and ecological convergence with high forest.

**Concept:** The proposals will ensure the stability of this habitat and maintain their ecological and amenity value.



**Analysis:** Tinworks, field systems, settlements, warren, cairns and a stone alignment at Headland Warren as well as round barrow found in northern region of the forest. Some of these are under tree cover and others on very uneven/steep ground.

**Concept:** The aim is to restore and maintain these heritage assets free from tree cover to preserve and enhance their cultural value for perpetuity, as agreed with Historic England.

**Analysis:** East Dartmoor SSSI (SAC) borders the forest boundary. Many of the units in proximity to forest are in 'unfavourable - recovering' condition

**Concept:** Proposals will complement the SSSI where appropriate and aid its recovery to 'favourable' condition.

**Analysis:** Area of managed open space showing significant scrub encroachment.

**Concept:** A suitable site for future compensatory planting for other, more appropriate open space creation proposals.

**Analysis:** Significant area of spruce crops reaching economic maturity (p.48), having had first thinning delayed and then conventionally thinned

**Concept:** Manage through clearfell and restock despite some indication of natural regeneration now in evidence.

**Analysis:** Some small areas of crops are exposed and susceptible to wind blow.

**Concept:** Assess the stability of these crops and consider felling to reduce the risk and impact of windthrow.

**Analysis:** A ring cairn (Scheduled Monument) is situated on the south edge of the forest and is in keeping with the rich cultural heritage of the region.

**Concept:** This heritage asset will be maintained free from tree cover to preserve its cultural value and enhance its setting as agreed with Historic England.

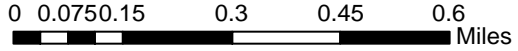
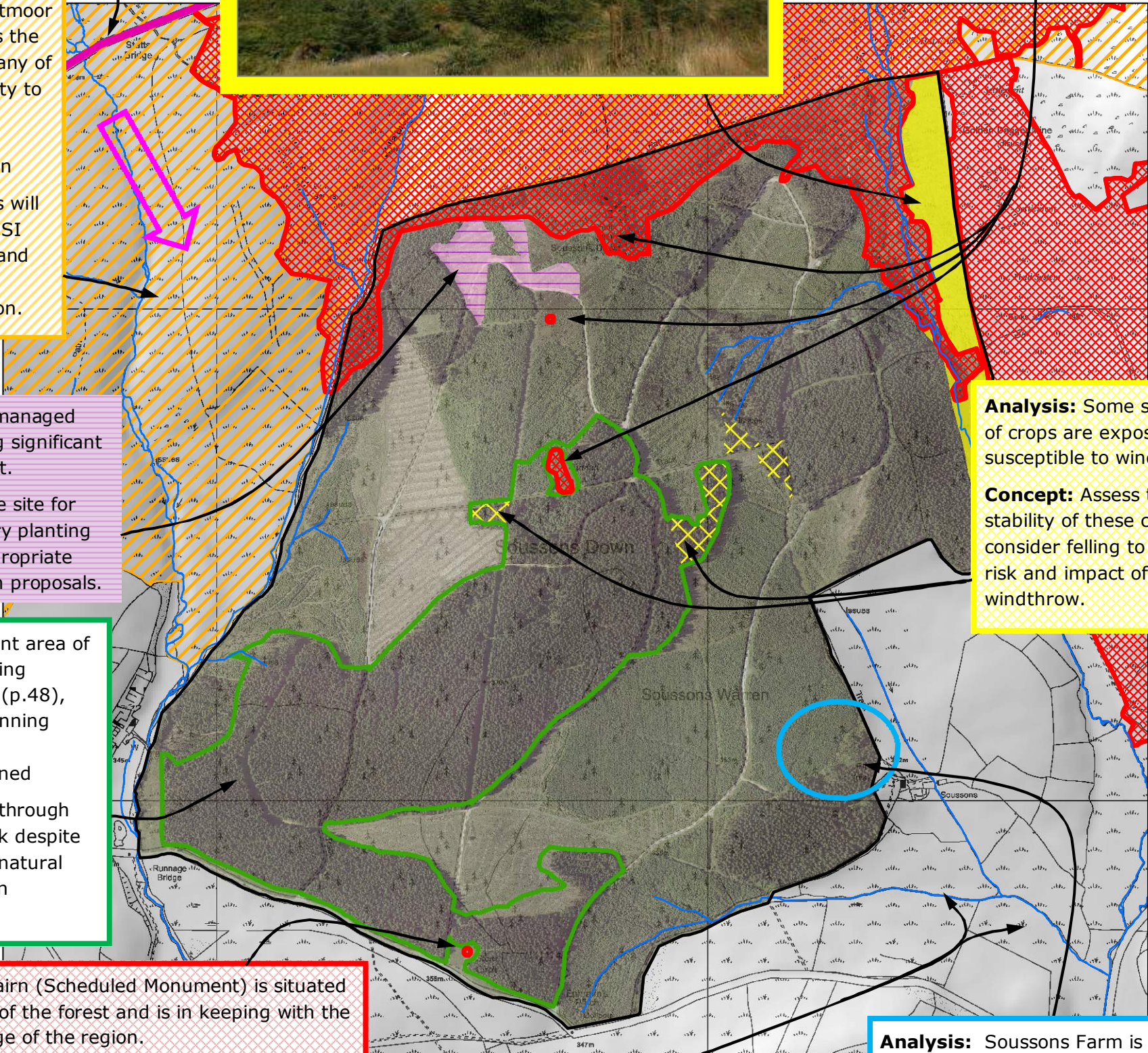


**Analysis:** Walla Brook and West Weyburn River flank the western and eastern edges of the forest with a number of small streams and drains flowing from within the forest into these watercourses.

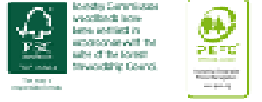
**Concept:** Surrounding areas will be managed sensitively as riparian zones, where soil and nutrient stability are prioritised. With the objective to reach 50% continuous cover of site associated wet woodland species where appropriate.

**Analysis:** Soussons Farm is located in close proximity to the south-east corner of the forest with the trees providing substantial shelter from the wind.

**Concept:** Proposals will look to minimise the impact of felling on Farm as appropriate.



# Bellever Analysis & Concept



Bellever is a block of 416ha of predominately Sitka spruce much of which sits above 300m asl, with planting reaching 400m asl close to Bellever Tor. The soils tend to be acid, but reasonably fertile where drainage is good. However drainage is impeded over much of the forest due to a layer of reddish/brown clay which occurs at a depth of between 1 and 2 metres, with peat forming above this. There is a tendency for an iron pan to form. Despite this Bellever produces excellent Sitka spruce (YC14-18). Windblow can be a major problem throughout the woodland with the western side the area most exposed to the prevailing SW winds. The forest supports a variety of common, protected and rare ecological species and is the main focus for recreation visits for the Forestry Commission on Dartmoor with approximately 6000 paid car visits per year.

**Analysis:** The feathered edge creates an attractive margin between the high forest and the moor for the road user.

**Concept:** The development of this dynamic edge will continue with a mixture of transient open space, broadleaves and conifers.

**Analysis:** Multiple scheduled monuments are found throughout the forest. Some clear of tree cover and others are not.

**Concept:** The aim is restore and maintain these heritage assets free from tree cover to preserve and enhance their cultural value for perpetuity, as agreed with Historic England.

**Analysis:** Areas of open heathland and enclosed agricultural field systems managed by Devon Wildlife Trust for the primary benefit of grass and heathland ecology.

**Concept:** Proposals will ensure that these open areas are not compromised by felling and future management.

**Analysis:** Currently unstable and exposed crops managed on a shelter wood system are susceptible to wind blow.

**Concept:** Move this coupe to a clearfell system with the fell year brought forward to reduce the risk and impact of windthrow.

**Analysis:** Significant area of spruce crops reaching economic maturity (p.49), with varying levels of regenerating spruce understorey.

**Concept:** A large proportion of this area will be managed through strip shelterwood to maintain wind resistance and stimulate CCF system where possible.

**Analysis:** Recent felling of relatively isolated and visible block, which had provided shelter for the residents.

**Concept:** Plant as a mixed amenity woodland which retains productive capacity whilst creating visual impact and continuous shelter for Bellever village.

**Analysis:** Bellever village is a small settlement (population approx. 50-100) which also contains a popular Youth Hostel.

**Concept:** Proposals will be consulted on with local residents and in keeping with the local character.

**Analysis:** The East Dart open streamsides are the primary focus of recreation visits with car parking and toilet provision.

**Concept:** Management of surrounding crops will be in sympathy with the aesthetics for the visitor.

**Analysis:** Crops are currently unthinned, unstable and susceptible to wind blow.

**Concept:** Proposals will need to account for the high risk these crops are currently exhibiting but the protection they provide to adjacent crops.

**Analysis:** The water courses feed into the East Dart River. Stream sides, steep gradient slopes and low lying wet patches.

**Concept:** Managed sensitivity as riparian zones, where soil and nutrient stability are prioritised. With the objective to reach 50% continuous cover of site associated wet woodland species where appropriate.

**Analysis:** Bellever Tor is the highest point in the forest (443m asl), sits in an area of extensive open ground flanked by trees and is the focal point for walkers.

**Concept:** Proposals will ensure that the landscape value both of and from the Tor are maintained into the future.

**Analysis:** Areas of open heathland (81ha) managed through grazing of Dartmoor Pony under Farm Business Tenancy.

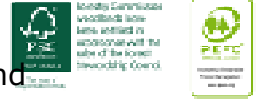
**Concept:** Proposals will ensure that these open areas are not compromised by felling and future management.

**Analysis:** Laughter Quarry SSSI, Notified for its outstanding exposed geological features, which typify the Dartmoor landscape.

**Concept:** Continue to manage in favourable condition as agreed with Natural England.



# Brimpts Analysis & Concept



Situated on the south side of the East Dart, Brimpts rises steeply from the river bank from 250m to 350m asl and lies between the agricultural land of Brimpts Farm and the open moor. At 58ha, the forest is relatively small in comparison to the other Dartmoor blocks and is slightly more lowland in character. This is as a result of the fairly fertile and fresh upland brown earths which are undermined by a stony scree substrate. This combined with the exposure to SW winds means that some areas on the plateau are particularly wind vulnerable. The forest mainly consists of Sitka spruce with some of the larch removed in recent years. There is a relatively large broadleaf component which is focussed around the edges and lower slopes. The forest acts an area of transition from high open moor to the more lowland character and sees little recreation usage which is predominantly walkers.

**Analysis:** The planted broadleaf and conifer edge creates an attractive margin between the high forest and the moor

**Concept:** The development of this will continue with a mixture of transient open space, broadleaves and conifers.

**Analysis:** Crops with edges exposed to the prevailing wind are experiencing creeping windblow.

**Concept:** Consider clearing this area to minimise the impact of continued blow and replanted together with the wider felled area.

**Analysis:** Outstanding p.1880s and 1920s Douglas fir and oak on steep slopes delivering exceptional old riparian forest conditions with high cultural and ecological value.

**Concept:** Continue to manage sensitively through single tree selection to maintain the value of this distinctive woodland in an otherwise predominantly moorland landscape.



**Analysis:** Currently unstable and exposed crops are showing signs of creeping windblow, with a likelihood to create a break in forest cover.

**Concept:** Proposals will address the issue by removing vulnerable trees and the not restocking. This will create a corridor from the high moorland to the pasture of Brimpts Farm.

**Analysis:** Pinch point at risk of windblow following programmed and then SPHN felling

**Concept:** An adaptive approach will be used in this area, to minimise the impact of wind events with a threshold of when clearance of remaining trees will occur. Generally the aspect and shape of the forest and the resultant ongoing windthrow issues mean that larger targeted clearfells may be appropriate in the future.

**Analysis:** Minimally thinned and particularly drawn up crops managed with long term objective to convert to broadleaf through CCF.

**Concept:** Move this coupe to a clearfell system to reduce the risk and impact of wind throw.

**Analysis:** The East Dart river borders the forest in the north east corner with stream sides, steep gradient slopes and low lying wet patches.

**Concept:** Managed sensitivity as a riparian zone, where soil and nutrient stability are prioritised.

**Analysis:** The planted broadleaf edge creates an attractive margin between the high forest and the moor for the road user.

**Concept:** The development of this will continue with a mixture of transient open space, broadleaves and conifers.

**Analysis:** There is a rich tin mining heritage in the area surrounding the forest with the Brimpts Tin Mine Trail running through the woodland.

**Concept:** The recognition and protection of any features within the forest will be made and proposals will be sympathetic to the rich cultural heritage.

**Analysis:** Brimpts Farm neighbours the forest and offer a mixture of recreation, utilising the woodland and accommodation facilities as well as traditional farming.

**Concept:** Proposals will be in consultation with neighbours and compliment the features of the Farm.

