

Ampfield Wood

Location

Ampfield Wood is situated approximately 2.5 miles north east of Romsey on the A31 and around 5 miles south west of Winchester.

Tenure

Forestry Commission holds long-term leases for Ampfield Wood from the Braishfield and Hursley Estates.

Landscape

Ampfield Wood is substantial in size within its locality at around 381 hectares. Surrounded by mixed agriculture, small villages and the larger conurbations of Romsey and Chandler's Ford to the south, it is to the north, around 2 miles away that the nearest comparable sized woodland, Parnholt Wood is located. Ampfield, Parnholt, and West Wood Wood to the north east of Parnholt dominate this area which is otherwise a mosaic of much smaller woodlands between the Itchen and Avon rivers.

Current Woodland Structure

Approximately 13% of the woodland area (~16ha) is classified as ancient semi-natural woodland (ASNW) with around 27% classified as plantation on an ancient woodland site (~33ha). There is significant conifer component throughout the woodland including Norway Spruce, Douglas Fir and Corsican Pine. A small amount of Larch is also present. Oak is the predominant broadleaved species with some Ash, Birch and Beech also present.

The age class of canopy trees ranges from 0 to 90 years old.

There is also a good proportion of open space, mainly concentrated within the main block, but supported by wide edges to the road and ride network.

Biodiversity and Conservation

Areas of ancient woodland are the main points of nature conservation interest within Ampfield Wood.

The woodland has been adopted as a Site of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINC) by Hampshire County Council.

There are no statutory conservation designations on this site but the Ratlake Meadows SSSI does border to the east. Ratlake Meadows is a species-rich, agriculturally unimproved meadow. Shelter provided by neighbouring woodland is noted as supporting this SSSI by providing optimal conditions for invertebrates.

Significant protected species such as birds of prey, bats, reptiles, amphibians and butterflies have been recorded in recent years.

The presence of Small-Leaved Lime is also significant given its rarity in the wider environment and opportunities to increase the robustness of this presence will be identified during operational planning and acted upon as resources allow.

During management interventions, opportunities for ride widening and enhancement will be

taken to increase the ecotone of the woodland and provide connecting habitats for invertebrates and other associated species such as woodland birds.

People

Ampfield Wood is used informally for recreation by many local people for an array of activities including cycling, running and walking.

The woodland is not dedicated for open access under the Countryside and Rights of Way Act (2000), but the Forestry Commission allows open access for reasonable activities in line with its Byelaws.

Open junctions, wide rides and clear paths enhance the experience of a walk around Ampfield Wood. 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

Ampfield Wood contains a number of known historical features including Park Pales to the east which are Scheduled Ancient Monuments.

These features will be fully included during operational management planning for the woodland in line with statutory responsibilities and best practice guidelines.

Soils

The soils of Ampfield Wood are characterised as Gleys and Podzols with an underlying geology of predominantly London clay with Bagshot sands in the south.

Gley soils are characterised by permanent or seasonal waterlogging and are among the most common forest soils.

Podzols are characterised by the downward transport of iron and/or organic material and a more acidic pH. (Kennedy, 2002)

Water

Two secondary water courses flow through Ampfield Wood, which eventually join the River Test. Management practices can have an influence on downstream temperatures and water quality. Opportunities for enhancement of such habitats will be identified during operational planning and acted upon as resources allow.

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. These species are limited within Ampfield Wood and so pose little threat to the woodland as a whole.

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



Forestry Commission

South England Forest District

Ampfield Wood Location

Key

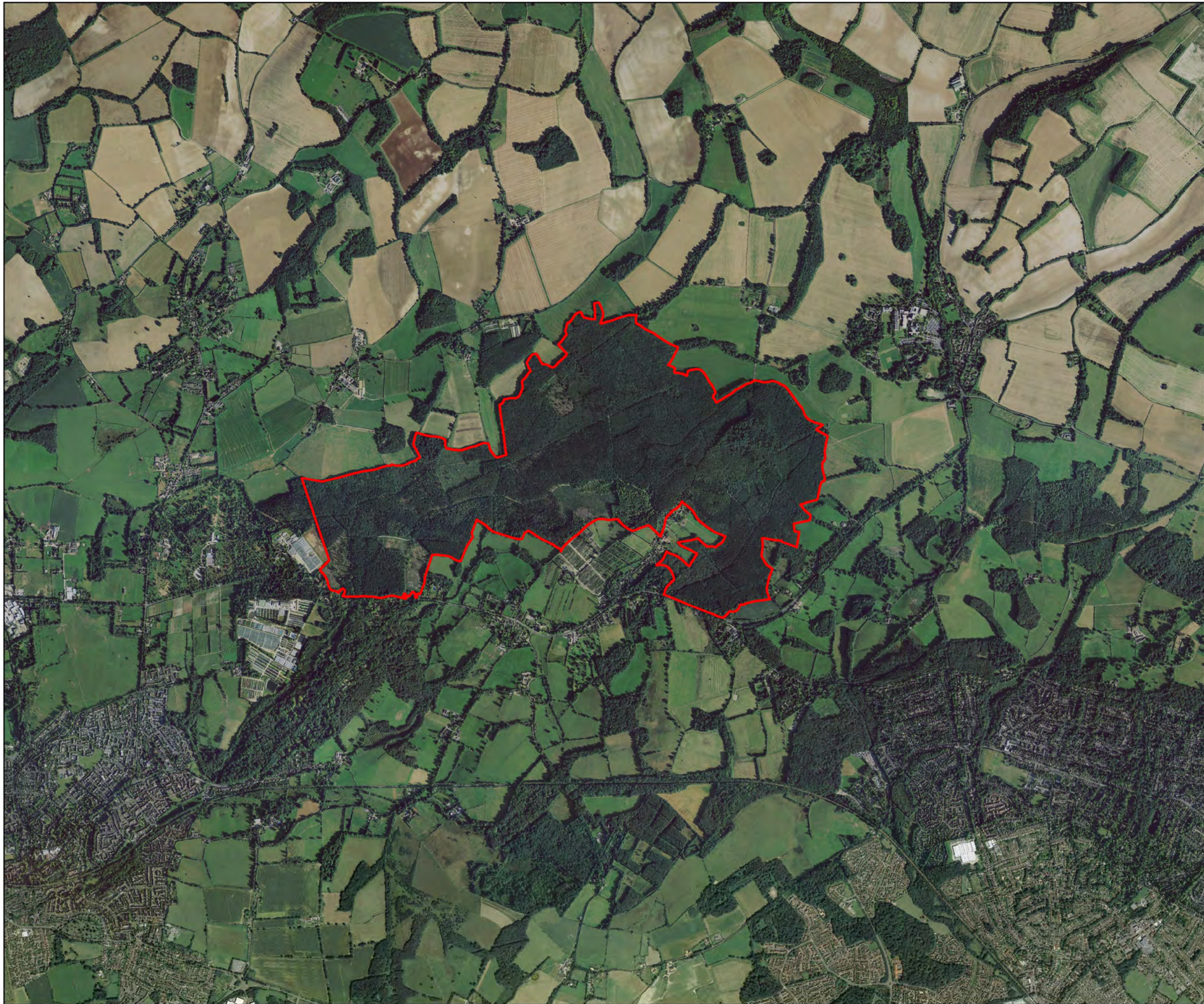
Ampfield Wood

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Forestry Commission

South England Forest District

Ampfield Wood

Aerial

Key



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