

Micheldever Wood

Location

Micheldever Wood is situated approximately 5 miles north east of Winchester adjacent to the A33.

Tenure

Forestry Commission is the freehold owner for the main, northern section of Micheldever Wood. The southern portion, known as Itchen Wood is held under long-term lease.

Landscape

Micheldever Wood is substantial in size within its locality, being some 370 hectares in total. Surrounded by mixed agriculture, small villages and the larger conurbation of Winchester to the south, it is to the north, around 2 miles away that the nearest comparable sized woodland, Black Wood (also owned and managed by Forestry Commission) is located. Micheldever and Black Wood dominate this area which is otherwise a mosaic of much smaller woodlands. Within the woodland there are several notable feature trees, both broadleaf and conifer, individual and in groups, which add to the internal landscape aesthetic.

Current Woodland Structure

Approximately 24% of the woodland area (~92 ha) is classified as ancient semi-natural woodland (ASNW) with around 63% (236 ha) classified as plantation on an ancient woodland site (PAWS). Native broadleaves account for over 85% of the total area. Beech is by far the dominant species, making up 71% of the woodland.

The age class of canopy trees ranges from 0 to over 100 years old. The age distribution is very biased to older classes, with over 90% of the woodland area covered by trees of over 60 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 Micheldever Wood.

The woodland has been designated as a Site of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINC) by Hampshire County Council due to the ancient woodland status.

Protected and important species such as bats, other small and medium mammals, birds of prey, corvids and butterflies and moths 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

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

The freehold areas are dedicated for open access under the Countryside and Rights of Way Act (2000) (CRoW).

Open junctions, wide rides and clear paths enhance the experience of a walk around Micheldever 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

Micheldever Wood, with the exception of Dodsley Wood, is a scheduled monument in its entirety. The woodland also contains numerous site specific historical features.

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

Soils

The soils of Micheldever Wood are characterised as Brown Earths and Calcareous with an underlying geology of predominantly London clay with Bagshot sands in the south.

Brown Earths are free draining with good aeration with organic matter well incorporated into the mineral soil.

Calcareous soils are generally gleys (characterised by permanent or seasonal waterlogging) with a pH greater than 7. (Kennedy, 2002)

Water

Drains are the only water flows through Micheldever Wood. 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 Micheldever Wood and so pose little threat to the woodland as a whole.

However, with such a reliance on a limited range of species there is a risk of forced structural change if a prolific pathogen arises, attacking either of the three main species; Beech, Oak and Norway Spruce, highlighting the need for increased species diversity.

In addition to the threat of browsing by deer, squirrel populations also pose a threat to the quality of timber produced within the woodland, particularly that of Beech.



Micheldever Wood

Location



Key

Micheldever Management Area

Date: 06/05/2014

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Micheldever Wood

Aerial



Key

 Micheldever Management Area

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