

Forest Plan

Idless

2014 - 2024



Forestry Commission
woodlands have
been certified in
accordance with the
rules of the Forest
Stewardship Council.



CONTENTS

Page

Application Form

2

1.0 Forest Plan Summary

3

2.0 Policy & Context

2.1 Strategic Objectives

4

2.2 Consultation

2.3 Implementation

2.4 Protected species and habitats

2.5 Cultural Heritage

5

3.0 Location Map

6

4.0 General Description

7

4.1 Woodland Summary

4.1.1 Production Forecast

8

4.2 Location and Access

9

4.3 Tenure

4.4 Physical Environment

10

4.5 Landscape setting & designations

5.0 Management Objectives

11

CONTENTS

Page

6.0 Silvicultural Management & Implementation

12

Current Land Use

12

Current Species Groups

Age Structure

Future Species

13

Woodland Naturalness

14

NVC Classification

PAWS Management

15

Maps

Analysis

16

Concept

17

Summary of Silvicultural Systems

18

Felling years and Management Types

19

Schedule for canopy removal in shelterwood areas

20

Future Species / habitat

21

Appendix 1- Record of consultation

23 - 26

Appendix 2 – Major Policy Documents

27

FORESTRY COMMISSION - Application for Forest Design Plan Approval

Forest District: West England Forest District (FD)

Woodland or property name: Idless

Nearest town, village or locality: Idless Village / Truro

OS Grid reference: SW82694845

Local Authority district/unitary Authority: Cornwall Council

1. I apply for Forest Design Plan approval for the property described above and in the enclosed Forest Design Plan.

2. I confirm that the scoping, carried out and documented in the Consultation Record attached, incorporated those stakeholders which the FC agreed must be included. Where it has not been possible to resolve specific issues associated with the plan to the satisfaction of consultees, this is highlighted in the Consultation Record.

3. I confirm that the proposals contained in this plan comply with the UK Forestry Standard.

4. I undertake to obtain any permissions necessary for the implementation of the approved Plan.

 Signed.....
 (FE) Forest Management Director

 Signed.....
 (FS) Regional Director

District.....

Region.....

Date

Date of Approval

Date approval ends:

(ha)	Conifers	Broadleaves	Open Space
New planting	Nil	Nil	N/A
Felling	Nil	Nil	N/A
Restocking *	Nil	Nil	N/A
Managed under continuous cover**	113.7		

* All felled areas have been restocked at time of writing. Some enrichment / under planting and amenity planting of native broadleaves only may occur during the 10 year plan period ** Some areas are scheduled for clear felling but are out with the 10 year plan period.

Total plan area 113.7 hectares

1.0 Idless Forest Plan Summary

The Idless Forest Management Unit (FMU) extends over 113 Hectares (280 acres) of the Public Forest Estate. It is situated just to the north of Truro and is within the Cornwall Council Unitary Authority.

The woodland is a mix of conifer (68%) and broadleaves (32%) most of which are being actively managed to provide timber for local and national markets (approximately 700 - 800 cubic metres of timber per year) and to improve the quality of the remaining crop. The entire woodland, with the exception of a small area which is an ancient hill fort, is classed as an 'Ancient Woodland Site', which means that an area has been continually wooded since AD 1600. In the period 2010 – 2012 a disease called Phytophthora Ramorum had infected and was killing a particular species of conifer called larch. Some 31 hectares (76 acres) of young and mature larch crops were cleared which left a greater than normal amount of non wooded areas.

This block is owned freehold by the Forestry Commission and is dedicated open access under the countryside rights of way act. There is an informal car park which provides access to over 10 Km (6.2 miles) of forest roads, rides and trails over varied terrain and slopes and is popular with local people for walking, cycling and horse riding. There are also several heritage features within the FMU, one of which is scheduled by English Heritage.

The woodland habitat supports a wide variety of wildlife including ground nesting and other birds, several birds of prey and various species of butterflies. There is also roe and red deer and grey squirrel. This plan seeks to increase the amount of permanent / managed open space, which will improve the matrix of habitats for a wide range of flora and fauna.

The purpose of this Forest Plan is to make people aware of the way the Forestry Commission manage the public forest estate and its planned future management of this site. It aims to outline how every aspect of the forest will be managed for timber production, habitats and landscape as well as look at other elements such as how recreational opportunities in the forest will be managed. Forestry requires us to be forward looking and so this current management plan gives details of the management of Idless from 2014 until 2024. The plan outlines our intentions for the continued management of the site and contains information on the following topics:

Continue the process of restoring ancient woodland sites. Many of the ancient woodland sites currently have a commercial crop of conifer or non native broadleaves growing on them. These areas are called 'Plantation on Ancient Woodland Sites' or PAWS. There will be a number of ways in which restoration will be implemented depending upon the character and requirements of each area. However in the majority of cases the process will be carried out gradually and in some instances will take many generations, perhaps hundreds of years, to complete. Whilst habitat improvement is the main objective in PAWS it is also of fundamental importance that productivity and sustainable forest management continues in these areas. A key component in achieving success will be to monitor representative sites. After implementing this plan over the next 10 years we hope to see an 11% increase in the area of native broadleaves.

Increase resilience to climate change, pests and diseases. We will achieve this by increasing the diversity of tree species and age structure of the woodland. There will be an ongoing programme of clear felling and replanting (out with this plan period) but we are also looking to implement and develop continuous cover management systems. This means establishing one or more storeys of young trees in an area before the canopy of older trees is removed.

Forests for people. The Forestry Commission will continue to forge links with local councils, user groups and other organisations to pursue any opportunities to develop the recreational potential at Idless.

2.0 Policy & context

The Forestry Commission has been independently audited against the UK Woodland Assurance Standard (UKWAS) and its management standards have been endorsed by the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) and the Programme for the Endorsement of Forest Certification (PEFC). The FC is committed to maintaining woodland management to these standards.

This plan has been prepared in order to achieve compliance with UKWAS and comply with FSC and PEFC standards.

The Public Forest Estate in the Idless Forest Management Unit lies within West England Forest District which covers the west of England as far as North Shropshire.

2.1 Strategic objectives for the management of woodland on the Public Forest Estate in the South West.

Management of woodlands on the Public Forest Estate will deliver Government aims for forestry in England as described in the Forestry Policy Statement which is available from the DEFRA website. In Summary we will seek to achieve the following key objectives:

- **Protecting** the nation's trees, woodlands and forests from increasing threats such as pests, diseases and climate change,
- **Improving** their resilience to these threats and their contribution to economic growth, people's lives and nature,
- **Expanding** them to increase further their economic, social and environmental value.

Further details on how these objectives will be achieved and implemented in West England are available in our strategic plan due for publication in 2014.

2.2 Consultation

Consultation has been carried out with identified stakeholders as shown in the consultation record at appendix 1. Our method of identifying consultees is based upon the three major sensitivities of any particular woodland : landscape, recreation and environment, coupled with the level of change we anticipate being caused by the renewed Plan.

2.3 Implementation of plan objectives

Before major forest operations are undertaken a documented Operational Site Plan is completed for the proposed operation. This identifies site constraints and opportunities and ensures that all actions are consistent with current statutory and UKWAS requirements.

2.4 Protected Species and habitats

Where the Operational Site Plan has confirmed that European Protected Species (EPS) or other protected species or habitats are present on a site, operations are undertaken in accordance with guidelines agreed by Natural England.

2.5 Cultural Heritage

Scheduled Monuments

All Scheduled Monuments are subject to a separate Management Plan, agreed with English Heritage.

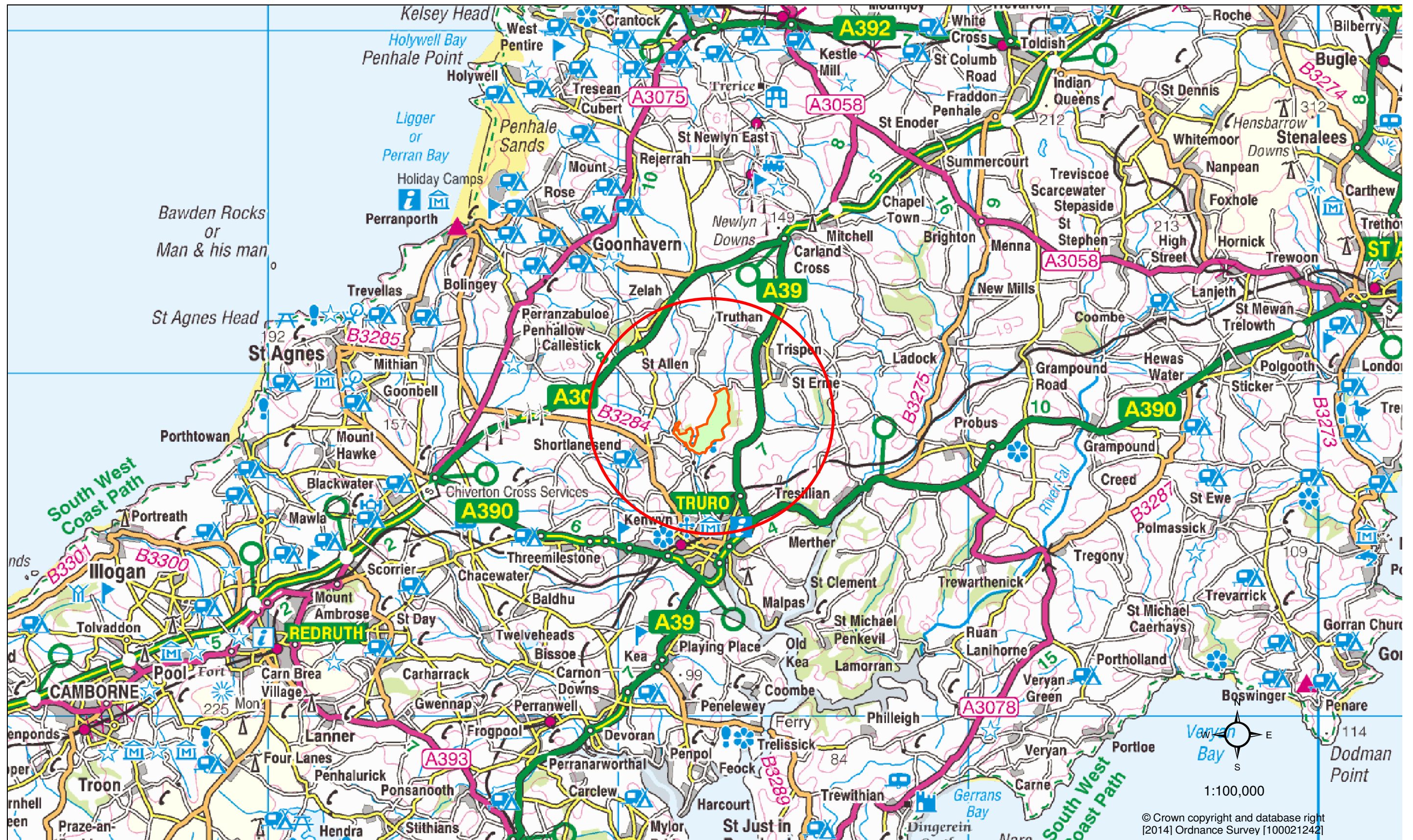
At Forest Plan level Scheduled Monuments will simply be mapped on the Heritage map layer. Any additional felling agreed in the Scheduled Monument plan will be subject to liaison with Forest Services.

Consultation with English Heritage on any potentially damaging operations to Scheduled Monuments will take place at the Operational Site Plan Stage.

Other Heritage Features

Work on all other heritage features are subject to an agreement with Local Authority. Heritage features will be identified by liaising with the relevant representative within the organisation and a suitable working method agreed prior to operations via the Operational Site Plan process.

3.0 Location Map



4.0 General Description

Topic	Description	Implications for Management	Proposals
4.1 Woodland Summary	<p>The Idless Forest Management Unit (FMU) extends over 113 Hectares of the Public Forest Estate in Cornwall. The woodland is a mixture of productive conifer plantation and mature / regenerating broadleaves.</p> <p>There is not a great diversity of ages in Idless, with 83% between 50 and 70 years old. Removal of large areas of Larch in a short period, which would have diversified the structure, has had a negative impact. (See Age Structure chart in section 6, Page 12).</p> <p>There are a wide range of tree species present but the vast majority of introduced species are western hemlock, pines and firs. (See species mix chart in section 6)</p> <p>Approximately 98% (110 ha) is classified as an ancient woodland site and isolated pockets / individual remnants of native broadleaves are evident, particularly adjacent to water courses. The Ancient woodland survey show predominantly W10 (77 ha) – pendunculate oak, bracken, bramble with smaller areas of W14 (21 ha) – beech bramble, W16 (12 ha) oak, birch and wavy hair grass.</p>	<p>A general move towards native broadleaves will, in time have an impact on the productive potential as the present and future productive and commercial value of the conifer crops is significant. In addition the non site native broadleaves (beech) have also been regularly thinned and as such have yielded regular volume and income.</p> <p>The native broadleaf resource requires targeted management to provide the opportunity for expansion.</p> <p>Age structure requires diversification.</p>	<p>Increase the potential for natural regeneration of native species throughout (See PAWS strategy maps).</p> <p>Age structure will be developed over the medium term. There are no significant clearfell coupes scheduled over the next 10 years due to the high proportion of recently felled and restocked areas (formerly larch). However clearfell coupes beyond the 10 years will be included and will be designed to enhance native woodland establishment and break up the age structure.</p>

Topic	Description	Implications for Management	Proposals																																																																																								
4.1.1 Woodland Summary (Production)	<p>Timber Production Forecast</p> <p>Forecast based on the existing Forest Plan:</p> <table> <tr> <th>Forecast Period</th><th>All Species</th><th>All Conifers</th><th>All Broadleaves</th></tr> <tr> <td>2013-2016</td><td>260</td><td>88</td><td>168</td></tr> <tr> <td>2017-2021</td><td>587</td><td>580</td><td>7</td></tr> <tr> <td>2022-2026</td><td>201</td><td>104</td><td>96</td></tr> <tr> <td>2027-2031</td><td>318</td><td>305</td><td>13</td></tr> <tr> <td>2032-2036</td><td>417</td><td>321</td><td>96</td></tr> <tr> <td>2037-2041</td><td>405</td><td>390</td><td>15</td></tr> <tr> <td>2042-2046</td><td>908</td><td>799</td><td>110</td></tr> <tr> <td>2047-2051</td><td>449</td><td>411</td><td>38</td></tr> <tr> <td>2052-2056</td><td>458</td><td>362</td><td>95</td></tr> <tr> <td>2057-2099</td><td>1073</td><td>888</td><td>186</td></tr> </table> <p>Forecast based on this Forest Plan:</p> <table> <tr> <th>Forecast Period</th><th>All Species</th><th>All Conifers</th><th>All Broadleaves</th></tr> <tr> <td>2013-2016</td><td>248</td><td>88</td><td>160</td></tr> <tr> <td>2017-2021</td><td>584</td><td>576</td><td>7</td></tr> <tr> <td>2022-2026</td><td>324</td><td>230</td><td>94</td></tr> <tr> <td>2027-2031</td><td>1388</td><td>1377</td><td>11</td></tr> <tr> <td>2032-2036</td><td>1179</td><td>1085</td><td>94</td></tr> <tr> <td>2037-2041</td><td>200</td><td>182</td><td>18</td></tr> <tr> <td>2042-2046</td><td>785</td><td>633</td><td>152</td></tr> <tr> <td>2047-2051</td><td>1318</td><td>1258</td><td>59</td></tr> <tr> <td>2052-2056</td><td>434</td><td>350</td><td>84</td></tr> <tr> <td>2057-2099</td><td>923</td><td>741</td><td>182</td></tr> </table> <p>(The figures shown represent an estimate of the average volume production per year. All figures are M3 over bark standing.)</p>	Forecast Period	All Species	All Conifers	All Broadleaves	2013-2016	260	88	168	2017-2021	587	580	7	2022-2026	201	104	96	2027-2031	318	305	13	2032-2036	417	321	96	2037-2041	405	390	15	2042-2046	908	799	110	2047-2051	449	411	38	2052-2056	458	362	95	2057-2099	1073	888	186	Forecast Period	All Species	All Conifers	All Broadleaves	2013-2016	248	88	160	2017-2021	584	576	7	2022-2026	324	230	94	2027-2031	1388	1377	11	2032-2036	1179	1085	94	2037-2041	200	182	18	2042-2046	785	633	152	2047-2051	1318	1258	59	2052-2056	434	350	84	2057-2099	923	741	182		
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Topic	Description	Implications for Management	Proposals
4.2 Location & Access	<p>The Idless FMU is located to the north of Truro. The entire woodland is dedicated as open access under the countryside rights of way act.</p> <p>It is spread over two Parish council areas – St Allen and Kenwyn.</p> <p>Vehicular Access to the FC landholding is good.</p> <p>Internally the woodland is serviced by a good network of forest roads, tracks, rides and routes suitable for forest machine access.</p>	<p>The network of access routes within the woodland offer a valuable recreational resource to the local community, and as such it is well used, mainly by dog walkers.</p>	<p>Maintain open access and provision for visitors including the informal car park at the current standard.</p>
4.3 Tenure & management agreements	<p>The woodland is registered as freehold with the Land Registry.</p>	<p>Sporting rights are not let in this woodland. There are no other 3rd party agreements.</p>	<p>Maintain current arrangements into the future.</p>
4.4 Physical Environment	<p>Elevation of the plan area ranges from 30 – 100m above datum.</p> <p>The majority of the woodland has a Southerly or Westerly aspect but discrete areas and valleys have a range of aspects.</p> <p>Rainfall ranges from 385mm in the Summer to 699mm in the winter.</p> <p>The underlying geology is the Gramscatho group. Soil type is mainly Upland brown earth (1u); ; a Shallow; Rock (13r); (1u/(1ua)/(13r))</p> <p>There is obviously a variation across the area but in general the Soil Moisture Regime is fresh and the Soil Nutrient Regime is poor.</p>	<p>The Forestry Commission Ecological Site Classification tool (ESC) rates the main species currently on site as suitable at the present time.</p> <p>Using the same tool the 2050 HI model which predicts impact of climate change rates the main species as follows:</p> <p>Suitable / Very Suitable – Corsican pine, Western hemlock, Beech, Pedunculate oak.</p> <p>Marginal - Douglas fir, Sitka spruce.</p> <p>None of the main species currently on site are considered unsuitable.</p>	<p>Due to the current policy for restoration of PAWS the choice of species will be site native broadleaves. Therefore the favoured approach, in general, will be to allow areas to regenerate naturally and monitor proportions of species components.</p>

Topic	Description	Implications for Management	Proposals
4.5 Landscape Setting and Designations	<p>Natural England Landscape Character Area Profile is 152 Cornish Killas.</p> <p>The Idless Forest Plan area is not within an AONB and does not contain any SSSI.</p>	<p>Relevant extracts from the NE LCA: Numerous broadleaved wooded valleys, varying greatly in size. Northern valleys generally narrow and densely wooded.</p>	<p>Manage the woodland to deliver economic, environmental and social benefits and ensure that future management compliments the local landscape.</p>

5.0 Management Objectives

- **Continue sustainable management of the woodland resource and develop woodland resilience.**

There will be a presumption for thinning all areas. Continuous cover and low impact silvicultural systems will be adopted where applicable. Where this is not a viable option, clear felling will continue with the intention of diversifying age structure and species composition. Due to the amount of recent felling and clearance of Larch there are no clearfell coupes within the 10 year plan period. Move to a greater cover of native broadleaves in time.

- **Maintain the wooded landscape.**

Ensure quality of coupe design enhances the external landscape. Monitor development of areas designated as successional habitat and react to natural processes to influence the diversity and productivity and continue to manage invasive exotic weed competition in these areas.

- **Enhance the woodlands value for nature conservation and biodiversity.**

Continue to diversify the woodland age structure and tree species diversity. Consolidate existing managed open space and develop a matrix of open and semi open habitat to provide linkages for nature through management of existing corridors, particularly ride and water courses.

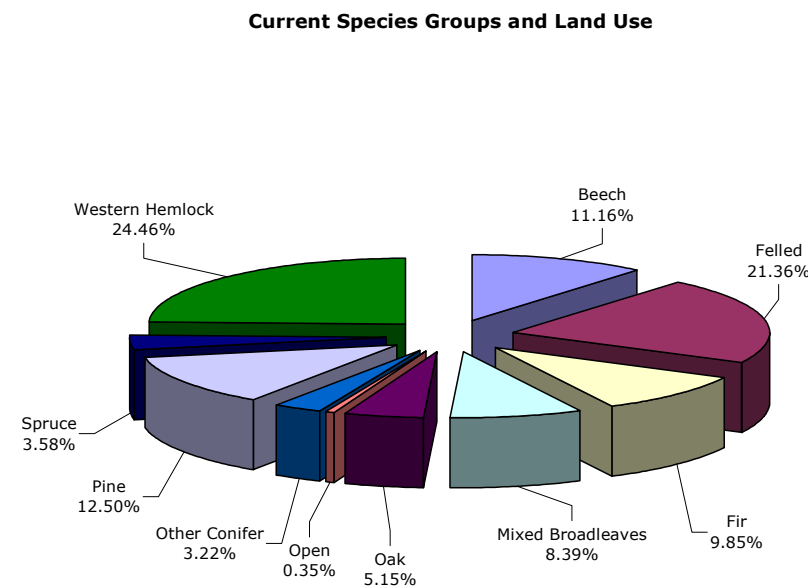
- **Conserve all cultural and heritage features.**

Adopt appropriate mitigation measures to avoid damage and where possible improve any issues which may increase the risk of deterioration. Carry out work on the scheduled ancient monument site in accordance with the management plan agreed with English Heritage.

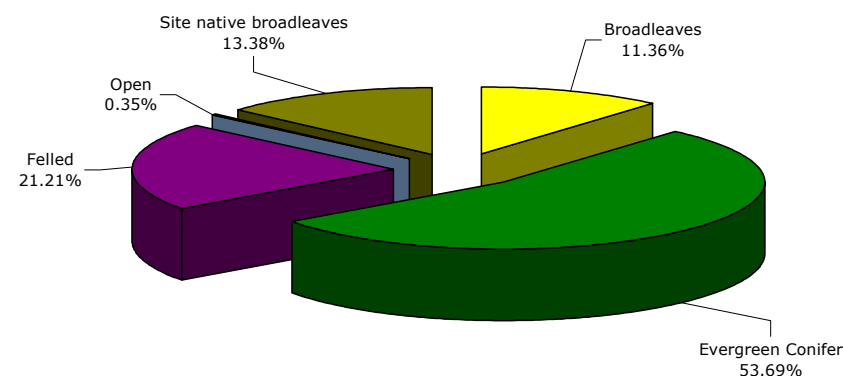
- **Maintain open access for informal recreational activity.**

Enhance visitor experience by managing internal landscaping along existing corridors, and maintaining access points.

6.0 Silvicultural Management and Implementation



Current Species Groups and Land Use (SUMMARY)



Species and Habitat Composition

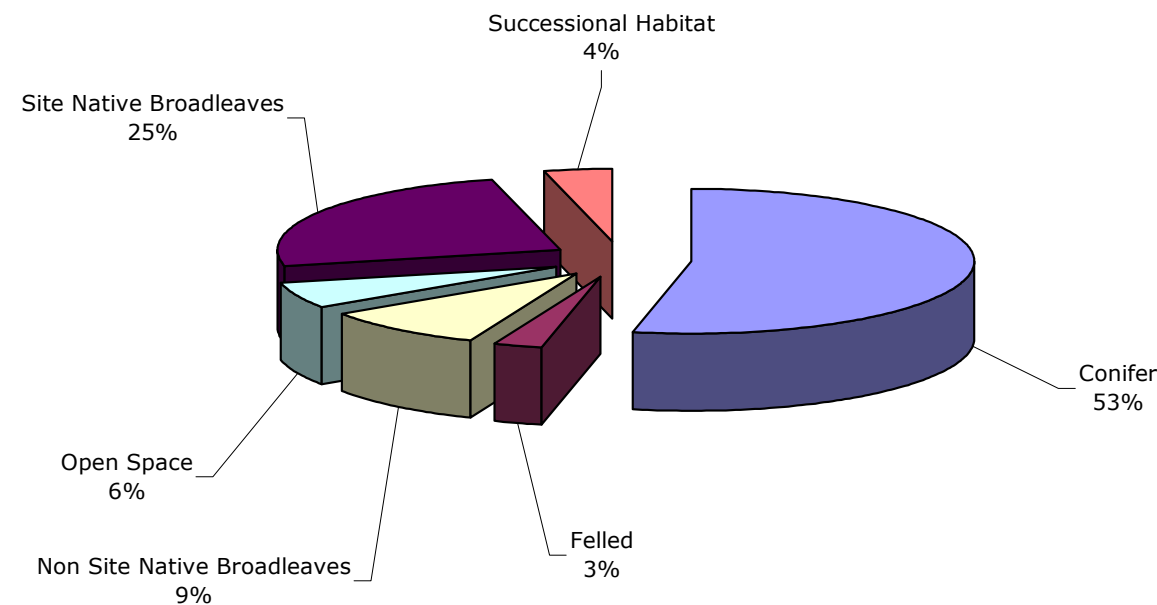
This forest plan starts to deliver a move from conifer plantation towards a greater proportion of broadleaved species. There is advanced regeneration of various broadleaved species, shown as MB in the illustrations on this page. The amount of permanent open space will be increased during the life of this plan.

Age structure

The plan aims to increase the diversity of the age structure and begin the process of achieving a greater degree of naturalness.

Future Species Model

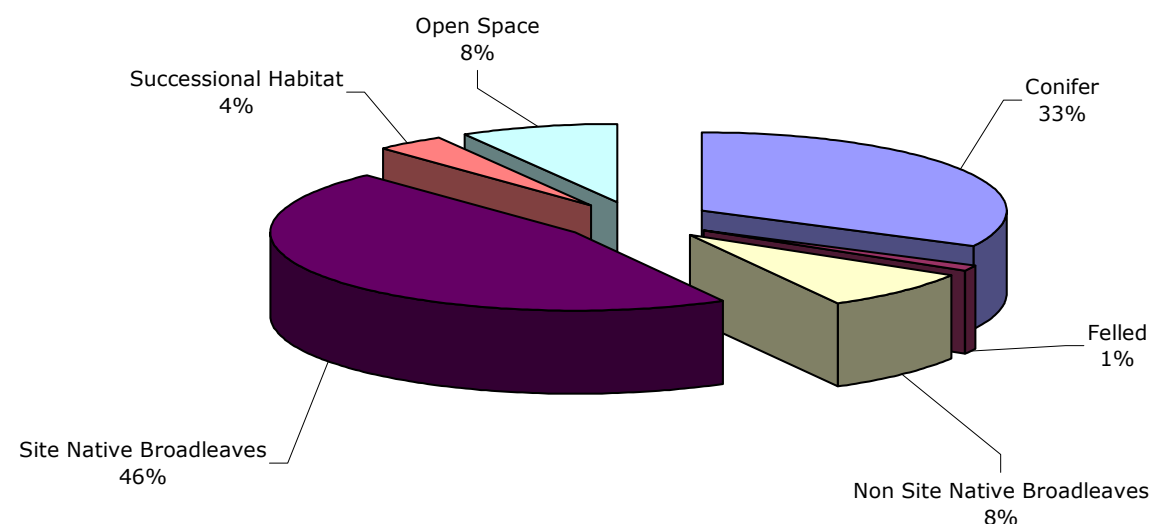
Future Species Groups and Land Use 2024

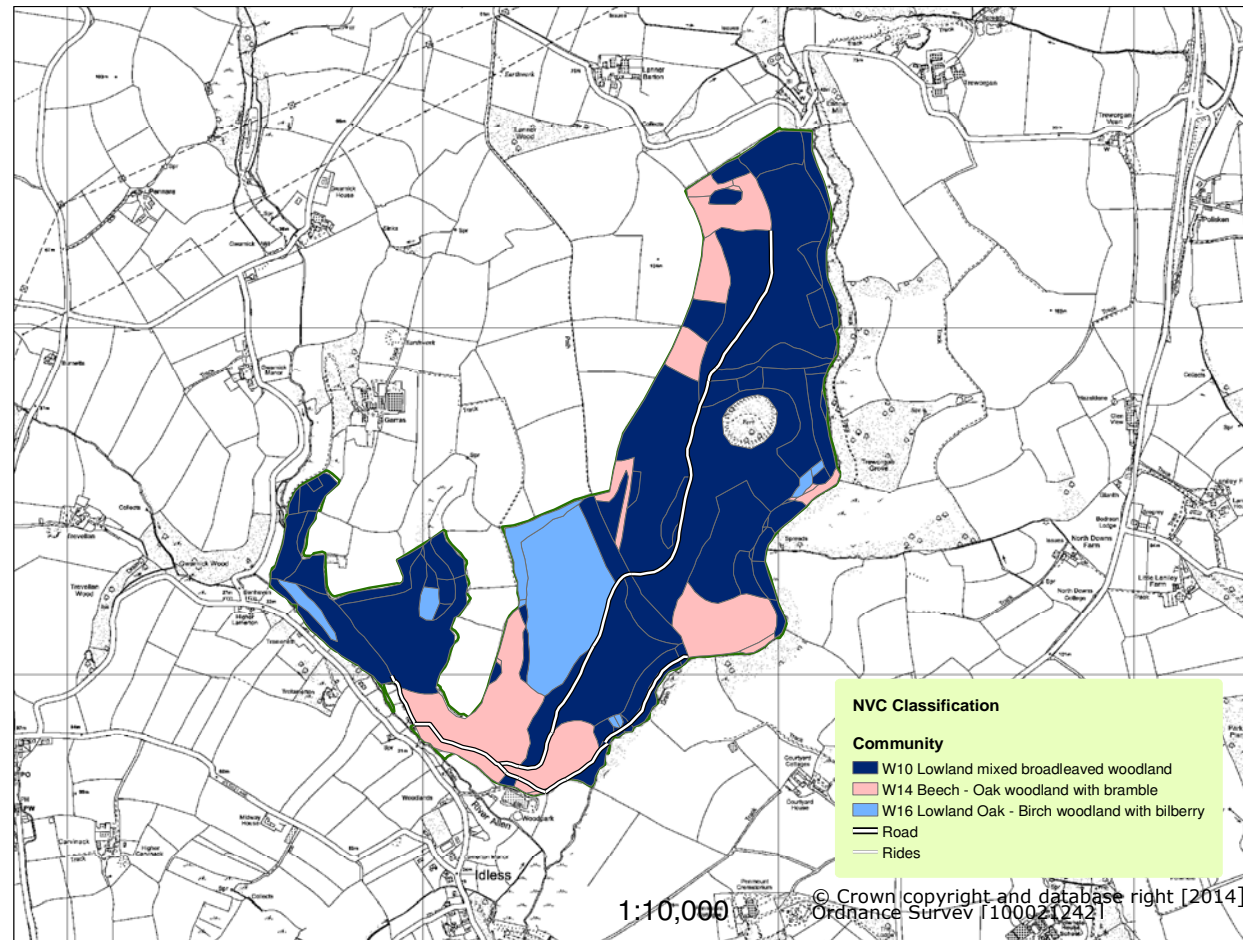


There is a combination of silvicultural system in this woodland block, clearfell and restocking and continuous cover relying on natural regeneration. Because of the amount of woodland being managed under a continuous cover regime the timing of establishment and composition of species is difficult to predict accurately. The charts on this page seek to illustrate how the woodland is expected to develop over time given the management interventions (woodland thinning and felling) described in this plan.

The preferred method of regeneration, particularly in PAWS areas is to allow it to occur naturally. Major factors which will have an influence on regeneration is lack of seed source, competition from vegetation and predation from mammals. The PAWS management strategy later in this document explains in broad terms how we intend to manage these areas in order to achieve the objectives of the Forestry Commission PAWS policy.

Future Species Groups and Land Use 2044



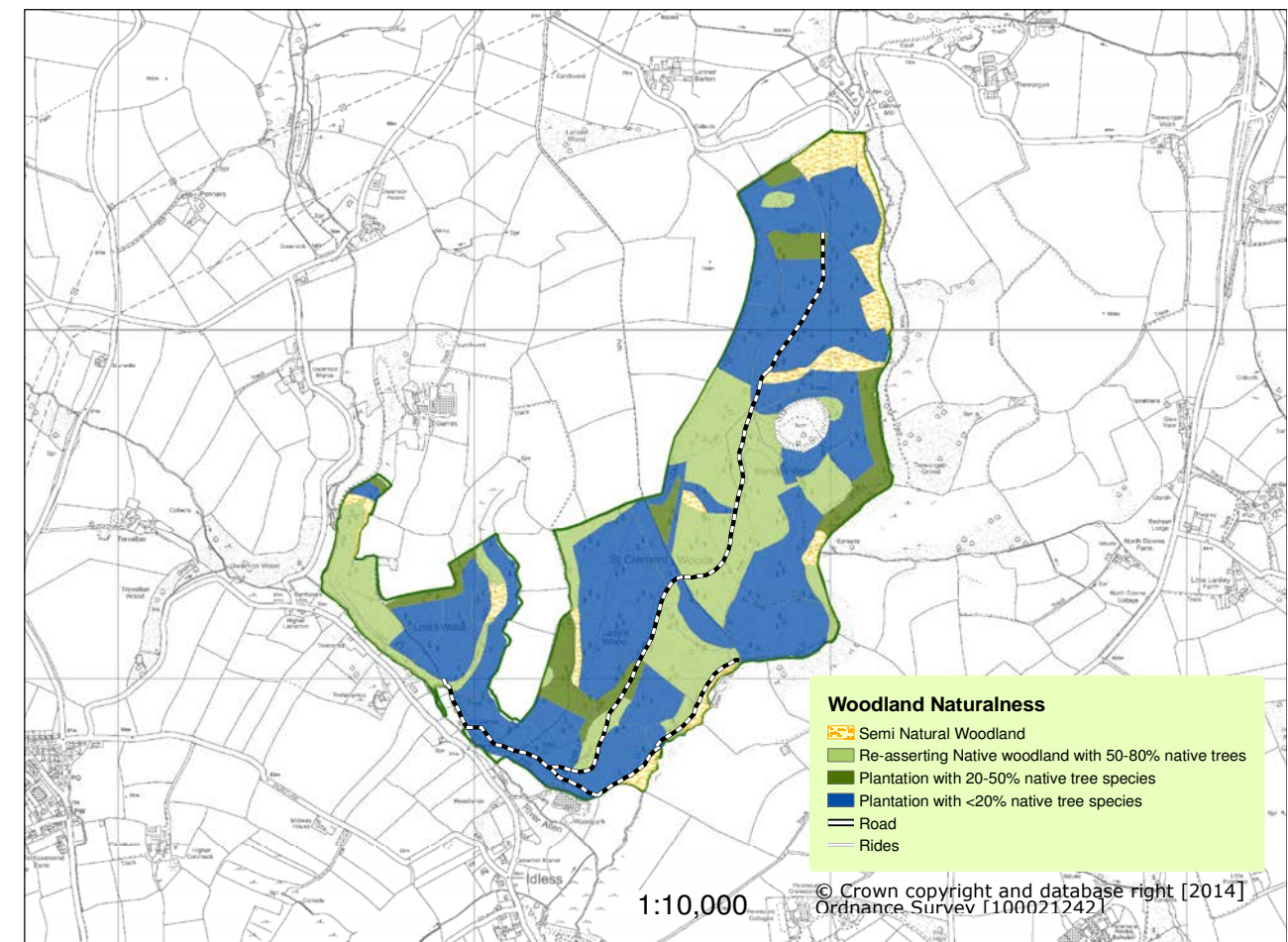


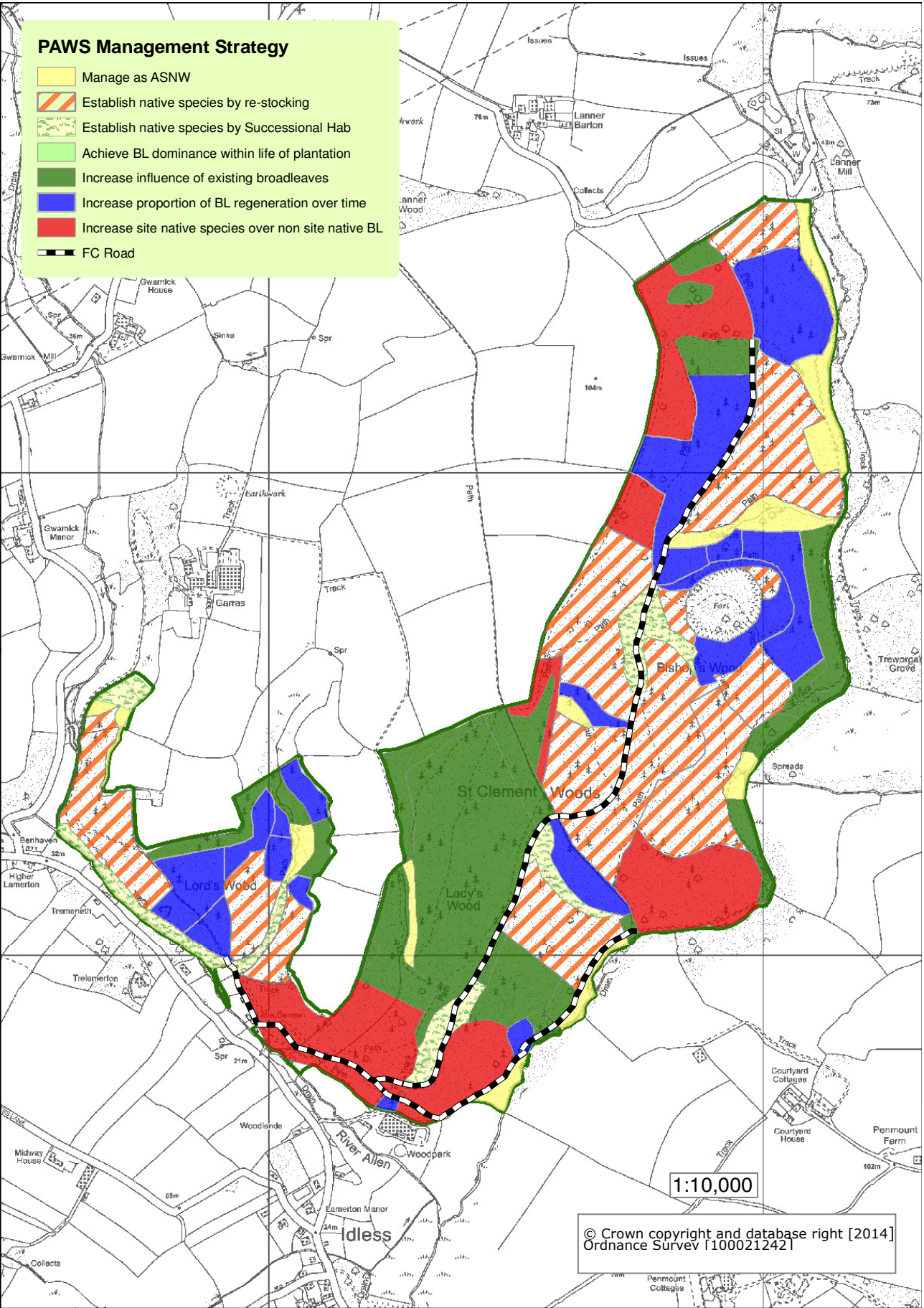
Significant progress has been made over the last 10 years in moving towards a greater proportion of site native broadleaves. A great deal of this change is due to Larch being removed under plant health notice. Some areas have been restocked with site native broadleaves and some have been left to regenerate over time through natural processes.

The maps on the following page shows how we intend to manage the PAWS area over the life of this plan and beyond. Sample areas will be monitored through site survey and fixed point photography.

The map below shows the woodland naturalness assessed in 2014. The following table shows the change in woodland composition in percentages over time:

	% 2007	%2014
>80 Site native tree species (SN)	3	7
50 – 80% site native tree species (RA)	4	27
20 – 50 % Site native tree species (P3)	2	8
<20% site native tree species (P4)	91	58





Management Strategy and Likely outcomes		
Management Strategy	Management description	Likely outcome
1	Manage as ASNW	ASNW
2	Establish native broadleaf cover by restocking following the scheduled clearfell of existing crop.	When the existing non natives are removed this area will be classified as SN.
3	Manage to achieve maximum regeneration of native tree species through natural processes, following scheduled clearfell of existing crop.	This area should fall into P3 or RA classification through successional habitat, or enrichment planting.
4	Manage to achieve broadleaf dominance in the regenerating understory within the life of existing plantation.	When the existing non natives in the over story are removed classification of this area will be SN.
5	Manage to increase influence of mature / competing broadleaves in the canopy and sub canopy to encourage a greater proportion of broadleaved regeneration within life of the existing plantation.	When the existing non natives in the over story are removed this area is likely to move into classification P3 or RA.
6	Manage to achieve a greater proportion of broadleaf regeneration within life of existing plantation.	This area has a predominantly non native conifer composition. Because of the regeneration potential and shade tolerance of many conifers and the lack of broadleaf seed source, this area will require heavy thinning of non native species and perhaps introduction of native species over the next rotation to progress restoration.
7	Manage to achieve greater proportions of site native tree species in favour of beech.	This area has a predominantly beech over story. Because of the regeneration potential and shade tolerance of beech this area will require heavy thinning of non native species and perhaps introduction of native species over the next rotation to progress restoration.
Note : Some of the areas shown in strategy 2 and 3 may have recently been felled. Those areas which are scheduled for felling in the future are shown on the 'Fell Years and Management Types' map on Page 19.		

