

Ostlers

Forest Plan

10 year review

2017 - 2027

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Ostlers Forest Plan 10 year review

This section is a brief review of the current Forest Design Plan (FDP), known as “Ostlers – Design Plan 62”. This plan was due to expire in 2012 but was rolled over until 2017 in order to allow for the construction of a new plan and consultation on the review. The new plan will again run for 10 years with a mid-term review at the 5 year point.

The purpose of this 10 year review was to assess the previous plans and set a direction of travel for the new plan; in line with OGB 36 – Forest Design Planning. The proposed plan will continue to adhere to UKFS and UKWAS as well as working toward delivering results in areas identified by SSSI plans and local consultees.

The previous FDP met its objectives and these will mostly be carried forward to the new plan. Small scale clearfell and age restructuring has taken place in a number of coupes. However, other than the most recent on, these were restocked with Corsican Pine and the vulnerability to Dothistroma Needle Blight will need to be considered in the new plan.

Open space and habitat connectivity with the neighbouring SSSI has been created and maintained. However, there will be scope for evolving this in the new plan. Broadleaved areas are favouring native species as planned.

Recreation provision has been consistent with the scale of demand. A car park and picnic area have been maintained. The Second World War infrastructure and the plantation nature of Ostlers have meant that numerous paths and rides are available as walking routes. There is possibly scope for minor changes to our offering in the new plan, but these will continue to need to be factored against the level of demand.

Terms of Reference for Ostlers Plantation Forest Plan

	Important Themes	Particular Issues to be addressed
Economy	Timber Production	Demonstrate the continuation of a structured and sustained programme of clearfell and thinning to include infrastructure requirements (roads and main drains). Select suitable species and appropriate silvicultural techniques to regenerate (either naturally or through planting) commercially productive but more structurally and species diverse and resilient crops.
Environment	Statutorily designated sites and non-designated priority habitats	Demonstrate appropriate management to maintain the current extent and ecological value of the non-designated priority habitats. Recognise the requirements of adjacent SSSI.
	Trees of Special Interest and Deadwood	Identify existing locations of TSIs and demonstrate appropriate management to both maintain the current resource and to recruit future veteran replacements. Identify appropriate areas to increase deadwood habitat and propose management to maintain a sustainable resource.
	Species	Identify key species and sites and make appropriate provision for their requirements.
	Invasives	Demonstrate how the plan links to the Forest District invasives strategy.
People	Cultural Heritage	Recognise and make provision of the cultural heritage of the site.
	Landscape	Diversify species composition and structure, and plan sympathetically designed and appropriately scaled interventions to improve and maintain the visual integration of the forest into the wider landscape.
	Informal Public Access	Recognise the location and scale of demand in making appropriate provision for public access.

Application for Forest Plan Approval

1. Plan area identification

Forest District: Central England Forest District
 Beat: Sherwood East Beat (Lincolnshire)
 Name: Ostlers Plantation Forest Plan
 Nearest Town: Woodhall Spa
 Total Plan Area: 102.9 hectares
 OS Grid Ref: TF 215 625
 Local Planning Authority: Lincolnshire – East Lindsay D.C
 Plan reference: Central/02 (17)

2. Designations

Notable plant, reptile, and mammal species. An abundance of Second World War buildings of Heritage interest.

3. Date of commencement of plan

As soon as possible after the approval date.

4. Planned operations within 10 year period of the plan

Area (ha)	Conifers	Broadleaves	Total
Felling	5.5	0	5.5
Restocking	5.5	0	5.5
Underplanting	17.7	0.3	18
Thinning			205.8

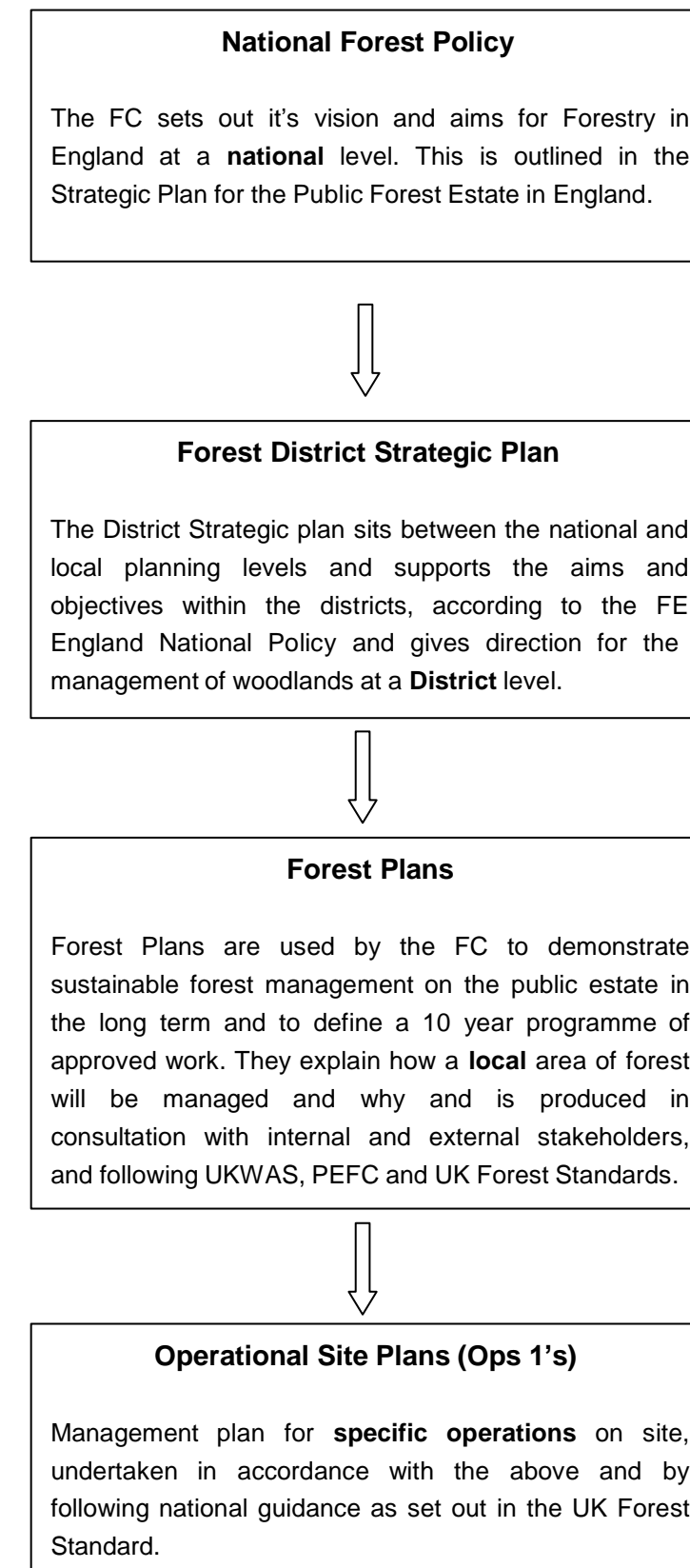
Signed.....
 Forest Management Director (FE) Field Manager (FS)
Date

Introduction

This plan replaces and updates the existing plan for Ostlers. It sets out our management proposals for the next 50 years and facilitates approval for felling and thinning, both conventional and unconventional, for the next 10 years.

This Forest Plan is guided and directed by a number of policies and strategies, the main points of which are summarised below (Fig.1). Delivering this plan will require the Forestry Commission to be responsive to shifts in our operating environment, and to be increasingly flexible in our approach in order to sustain this responsiveness over decades to come.

Fig 1. Forestry Commission England's Planning Strategy



1.0 Key Characteristics and Survey Data

1.1 Location

- See Location map
- Ostlers lies 1.5 miles south east of Woodhall Spa.
- OS Grid References:

	Ostlers
Access Point	TF 216 630
Centre of Wood	TF 215 625

The area covered by the Forest Plan amounts to 102.9 ha of which 89.6 ha is woodland. Of the planted area, 80% is conifer and 7.6% is broadleaved woodland (See Fig.2). 10.1ha of the plan area is currently open space; this element will increase and decrease rotationally due to usual clearfelling, thinning and restocking operations and natural regeneration.

1.2 Geology and Soils

- Soil pits dug on site and research into local soil types suggests Ostlers sits on naturally wet, very acid sandy and loamy soil. The Underlying geology is Clay Mudstone.

1.3 Aspect Landscape and Natural Character Area

1.31 Aspect

- Ostlers is a single block of plantation woodland; lying just on the edge of Woodhall Spa, in a typical Lincolnshire agricultural landscape. It is bordered by a road and woodland on the north side and a nature reserve to the east. To the south there is a disused airfield/sand and gravel pit (recently

acquired by the wildlife trust as a nature reserve) and agricultural land to the west. It is a mixture of conifer and deciduous, 20m above sea level.

- Ostlers is visible from the road to the north and the neighbouring nature reserve. It is visible in the distance from B1192 and it is quite likely there are views from houses and gardens on the southern edge of Woodhall Spa.

1.32 Landscape Character Area

- Ostlers is within the "F1 Woodhall Spa to Coningsby River Terrace" Landscape Character Area (LCA). Coniferous Plantations and Birch Oak Woodlands are described by East Lindsey District Council as a key characteristic of this area.

1.33 National Character Area

- The plan sits in the Central Lincolnshire Vale National Character Area (NCA). Woodland in this area is described as:

"Woodland cover is variable with little on the central and northern clay soils, much more on the Coversands and Fen Edge Gravels including extensive conifer plantations."

"A variety of recreational assets including routes within the Lincolnshire, Limewoods, several Forestry Commission managed plantations..."

1.4 Hydrology

- Drainage is important in Lincolnshire and Ostlers is no exception; containing forest drains and a land drain.
- There are also a couple of small ponds, the main one being on the eastern edge of the plantation.
- The local area receives an average of 590mm of rainfall per year and it rains on average 112 days per year (according to long term Met Office statistics).

1.5 Archaeology and Heritage

- ✓ The plantation is believed to have been originally owned by a “Mr Ostler”, whose name it has subsequently taken.
- ✓ Ostlers was once part of the RAF Woodhall Spa airfield. The woodland contains concrete surfaces and aircraft dispersals, bomb storage and fusing areas as well as various other buildings and shelters.
- ✓ During the Second World War, amongst other units, Woodhall Spa was home to the famous 617 Dambusters squadron. The airfield opened in 1942 as a satellite airfield for RAF Coningsby. After the war it became a base for Bloodhound air defence missiles. When the missiles left in 1964, most of the existing airfield was sold off for mineral extraction. Amongst the exceptions to this were the Ostlers Plantation and a small area kept by the RAF as an outstation for servicing jet engines, which was closed in 2003.
- ✓ During the Second World War, the airfield was home to servicemen from New Zealand, who may have brought with them the invasive Piri Piri plant (see section 1.62).

1.6 Designations, Habitats and Species

1.61 Designations

- ✓ Ostlers is not designated, however land bordering the plantation to the north and east is designated Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). This area is designated for heathland, wetland, woodland, birds, plants, vertebrates and invertebrates of scientific interest.

1.62 Species of Note

- ✓ Natterers Bats live in the plantation all year round and roost within the WW2 buildings over winter. Noctule, Common Pipistrelle, Soprano Pipistrelle, Brown Long Eared, Wiskered, Daubentons and Barbastelle bats frequent the plantation during the summer.

- ✓ Grass Snakes, Adders, Common Lizards and Slow Worms are all present within the plantation.
- ✓ There are a number of Badger setts within the plantation.
- ✓ Two Ponds, one with an adjacent colony of Bog Myrtle.
- ✓ A number of veteran Oak trees are present in the north west corner of the plantation. These are being treated as Trees of Special Interest (TSIs).
- ✓ Piri Piri Plant and to a lesser extent Rhododendron are present within the plantation.
- ✓ Information from Lincolnshire Wildlife Trust suggests Nightjar, Woodcock and Hobby may be frequenting the southeast corner of Ostlers.

1.7 Social and Community Interest

- ✓ Ostlers has an active archery group, based within the wood.
- ✓ The plantation is popular with dog walkers and has a car park & picnic benches.
- ✓ Horse riding is permitted within the wood by a permit scheme.
- ✓ Annual events include a charity cyclocross race and a cross country run which forms part of the armed forces inter services cross country series.
- ✓ All of Ostlers is dedicated as Open Access land.

2.0 FC Management Objectives

Economic - produce sustainable timber yields, encourage and support new and existing business activity associated to the public forest estate and to make the economic potential of our forests and woodlands more resilient in the face of a changing climate. Growing and diversifying our income from a wide range of sustainable activity on the estate, including non-forestry activities.



Environmental - To increase where possible the environmental contribution made by the Estate to the range of ecosystem services delivered and to protect and enhance its overall biodiversity and heritage value at both the landscape and local level.

Social - Enable everyone, everywhere to connect with the nations' trees and forests so that they understand their importance and act positively to safeguard forests for the future.



3.0 Forest Plan Objectives

3.1 Woodland

The Majority of Ostlers was acquired freehold in 1938, with the south west corner added in 1971. Planting commenced in 1940 and was largely completed by 1960.

Table 1 shows the breakdown of current species by area and Figure 4 shows the current age classes.

The woodlands will be managed using a variety of silvicultural systems to allow for the production of commercial conifer and broadleaved species. All forest operations will be carried out in accordance with current best practice and will be assessed at the Operational Planning stage. Operations comply with UK Woodland Assurance Scheme (UKWAS), UK Forest Standard (UKFS) and Forest District Strategic Plan to ensure that the woodlands are managed sustainably.

3.11 Current Species, Age Structure and Yield Class

The woodlands within the plan area are 7.6% broadleaf woodlands and 80% conifer. Approximately 87.6% of the area is planted with 9.8% being open space. In addition, the cycle of clearfelling and restocking provides rotational open space which will be restocked or naturally regenerate in due course. See Fig. 2 Current Forest Structure. Table 1 shows a breakdown of species composition.

The woodland has been managed sustainably in the past and this will continue. Table 2 shows the current production forecast from the previous plan.

Fig. 2 Current Forest Structure

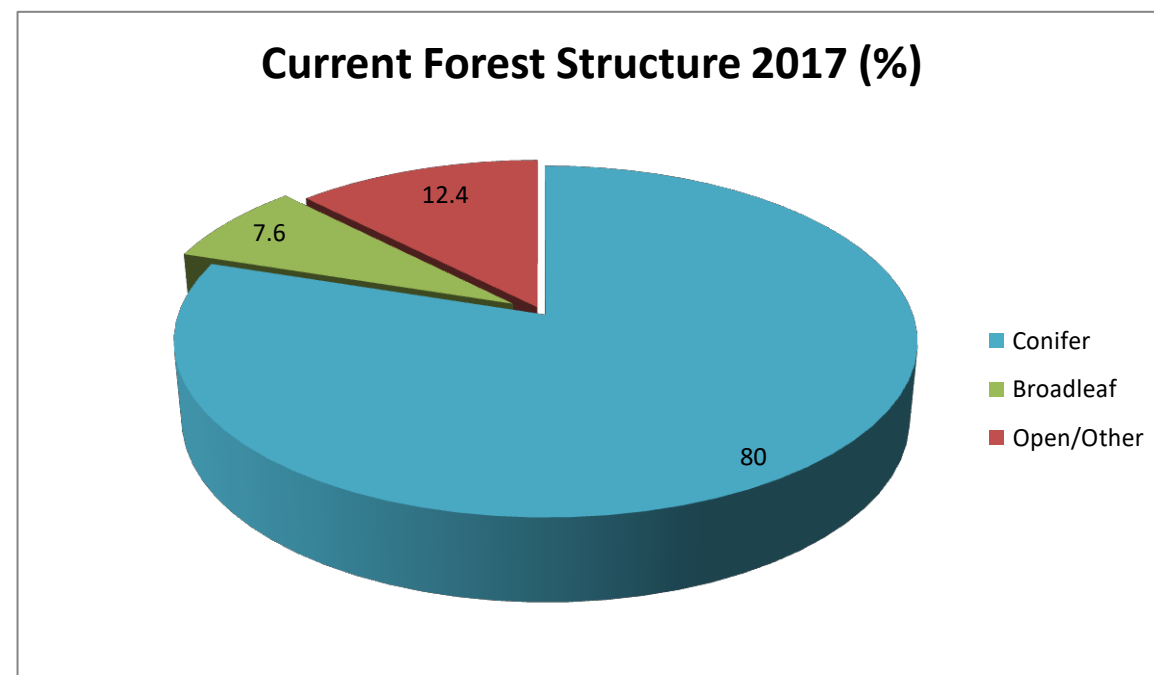


Fig. 3 Current Land Use

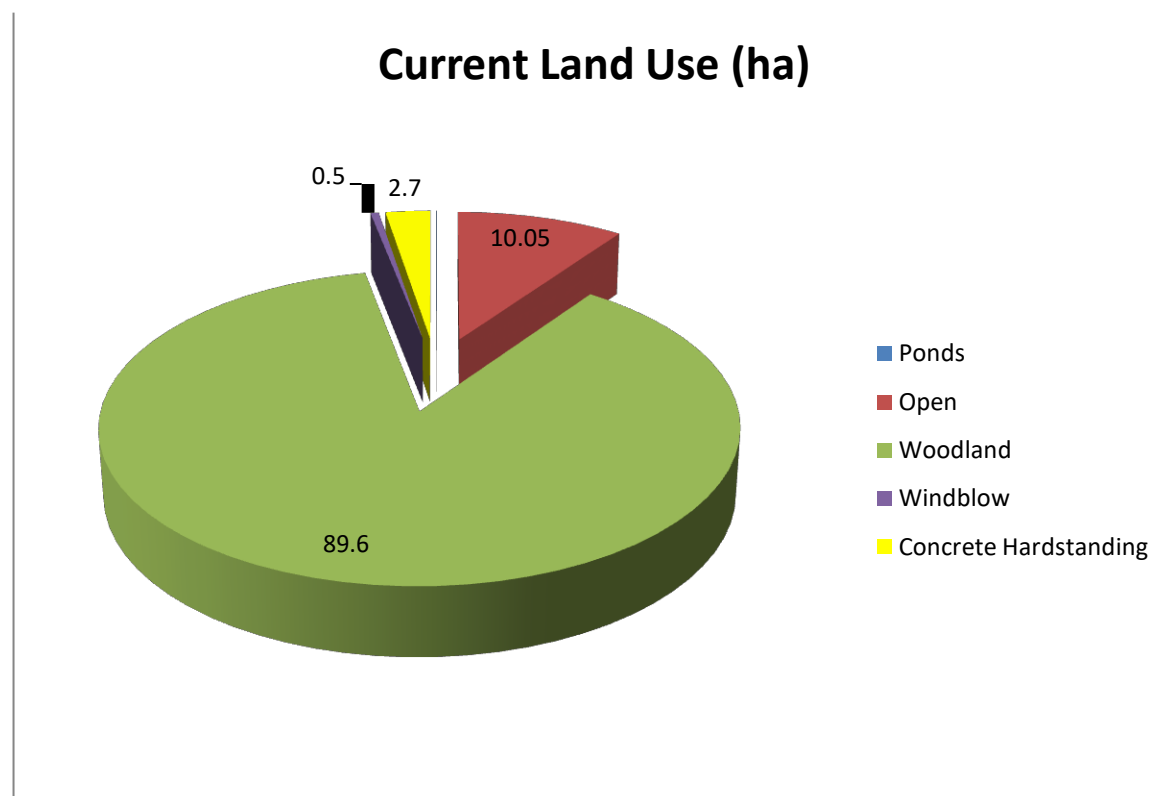


Table 1 – Current Species (as of 2017)

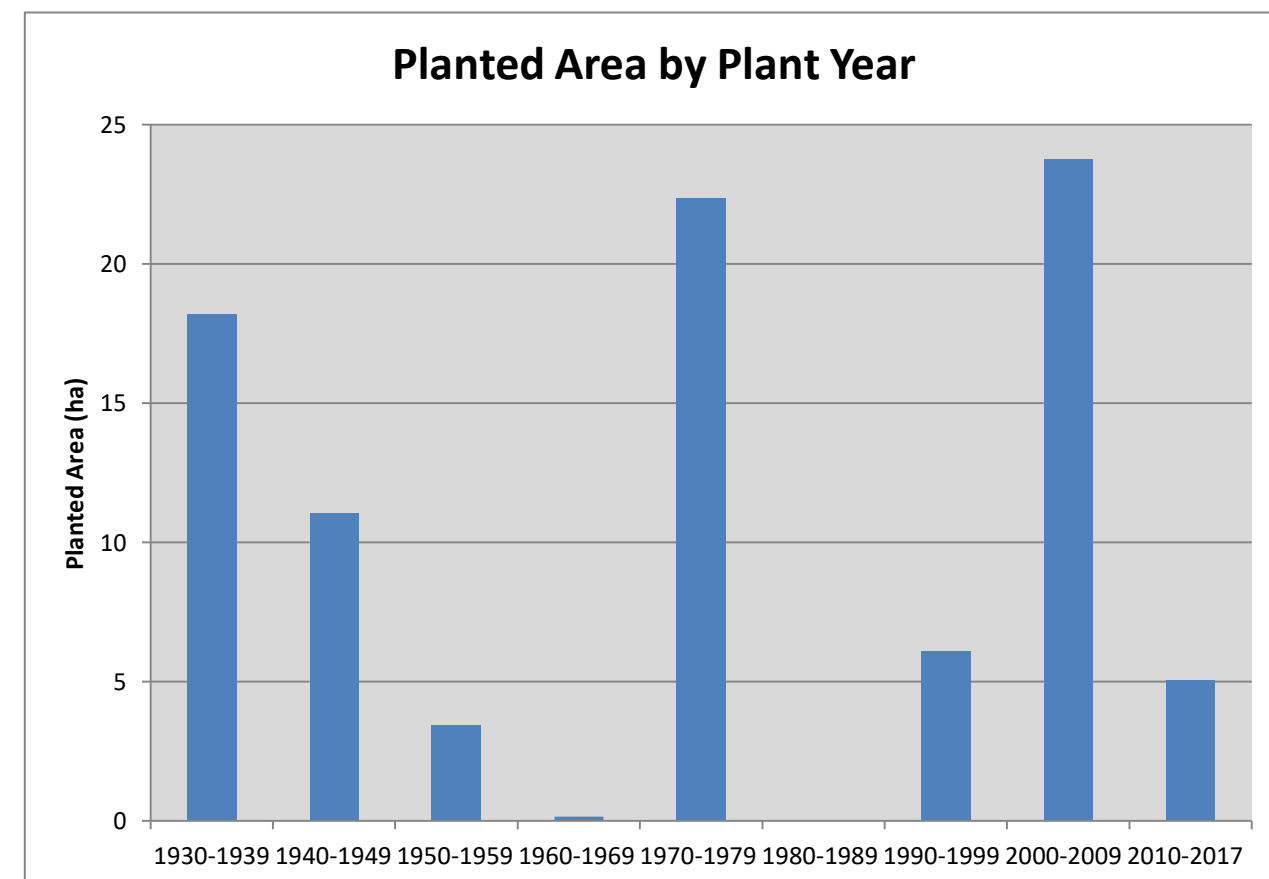
Species	Area (ha)	Percentage of Total Area
Conifer		
Corsican Pine	49.1	47.7%
Scots Pine	28.1	27.3%
Monkey Puzzle	2.5	2.4%
Nordmann Fir	2.3	2.3%
Douglas Fir	0.3	0.3%
Total Conifer	82.3 ha	80.0%
Broadleaf		
Birch	7.6	7.4%
Goat Willow	0.2	0.2%
Total Broadleaf	7.8 ha	7.6%
Other		
Open	10.1	9.8%
Concrete Hardstanding	2.7	2.6%
Total Other	12.8 ha	12.4%
Total Area	102.9ha	100 %

Table 2 – Current Production Forecast

	Period	All Species	All Conifer	All Broadleaf
Volume	2017-2021	1082	1081	1
	2022-2026	544	544	1
To	2027-2031	1537	1497	40
	2032-2036	130	126	5
7cm	2037-2099	519	509	10

Note: values given are for m³ per year for each year of that period.

Fig. 4 – Planting Area by Period



- Figure 4 above shows how much area was planted in which time period.
- Ostlers Plantation contains no Ancient Semi-Natural Woodland (ASNW) or Plantation Ancient Woodland (PAWS).

3.2 Environmental

3.21 Retentions

- Veteran Oaks in the North West corner of Ostlers will be retained whilst the trees around them will be thinned or felled and restocked. They will be retained for their biological interest and to improve the diversity and age structure of the plantation.
- Deadwood will be retained where appropriate, working towards the Forestry Commission's policy on retention and creation; which is set out in the Forestry Commission's Practice Guide – Managing deadwood in forests and woodlands. One way of achieving this would be leaving brash on site from felling, thinning and coppicing operations as well as retention of trees of special interest (TSIs), including veteran trees.

3.22 Biodiversity

- The Forestry Commission maintains records on biodiversity and these are consulted at the operational planning stage. Important species will be highlighted and protected as part of this. We also welcome records from organisations and groups that can help us improve our understanding of biodiversity within our woodlands.
- The Forestry Commission has its own rigorous policies and standards in addition to the United Kingdom Forest Standard (UKFS); to which management and operations within these woods will adhere.
- The plan area does not meet the UKFS 10% open space targets, by currently having only 9.8% open space. There is an additional 2.6% of Concrete Hardstanding that fulfils some of the functions of open space, for example providing edge habitat. If possible an additional 0.2% (0.2ha) of open space will be found in the new plan; this could be achieved through ride widening or incorporating open space into restock plans.

3.23 Invasive Species

- The invasive Piri Piri plant (*Acaena spp*) is abundant in Ostlers plantation. It was believed to have been brought here from its native New Zealand by servicemen during the Second World War. It seems to prefer growing on and close to the concrete hardstanding that run throughout the plantation. It is characterised by the balls of hooked seeds it produces, which cling to animals and clothing and are very difficult to remove.
- Due to Piri Piri being concentrated at Ostlers, it has been singled out as a district priority for eradication; as part of the District Invasive Species Strategy. A strategy of scraping the concrete with an excavator and gathering the soil and Piri Piri into large piles has been adopted. These are then sprayed with herbicide, to control the Piri Piri whilst minimising the area of chemical spraying.
- So far work has been targeted at areas closest to the neighbouring SSSI and will move inwards as the Piri Piri is eradicated. This is an ongoing project and it is envisaged this will continue through the next plan period or until the Piri Piri is eradicated.

3.3 Social

- The plantation remains popular with walkers, dog walkers & horse riders; as well as the sports clubs and groups which run activities and events within the wood. We currently feel the level of recreation provision within the wood is appropriate for the level of demand, but we will continue to review this as part of our ongoing management.
- If future funding permits, it is an aspiration to restore and preserve the Second World War era structures within the wood. We would also like to provide interpretation boards for each structure explaining its wartime purpose; subject to funding being available.

- We will continue to promote access where possible; as well as actively engaging and encouraging local groups and individuals where there is mutual benefit from their involvement in these woods.

3.4 Archaeology and Heritage

- All of the known Second World War buildings and structures are recorded on our Heritage Maps.
- Heritage features will be identified at the operational planning stage and specific protection or preservation strategies will be implemented for any features which may be adversely affected by operations.
- Heritage features and operations in their vicinity will be managed in line with Forestry Commission and UKFS policy. If there are any new finds of importance, the County Archaeologist will be informed.

3.5 Landscape

- Ostlers is a visible, but not dominant feature in the local landscape. It is very typical of the local landscape character in its current form and future management will seek to enhance and preserve this status.
- There are some external views from Woodhall Spa and nearby roads. Clearfell coupes on the edge of the plantation will be small scale or well planned to avoid dramatic view changes. Where possible edge crops will be retained or managed as continuous cover systems to prevent dramatic changes. This will allow gradual changes over time though thinning and under planting.
- Clearfell coupes within the woodland have been planned to avoid adjacent coupes being felled in similar felling periods. This should minimise internal landscape changes whilst allowing ongoing timber production.

4.0 Restocking and Future Management

Of the 102.9 ha plan area:

4.1 Felling & Thinning

- The clear-fell and restock element of the Forest Plan will amount to 5.5 ha over the next 10 years. Restocking will be achieved by planting with Conifers or Broadleaves; other than a few smaller areas which may be allowed to naturally regenerate with Birch.
- Throughout the plan all compartments will be thinned on a five year rotation totalling 205.8ha. In some areas this will be a thinning biased towards achieving volume whilst in others it will be biased towards the crown, improving canopy structure. This will improve the quality of existing trees whilst opening up canopy gaps for succession of understory trees or for us to undertake underplanting with alternative conifers.

4.2 Natural Regeneration & Restocking

- Natural regeneration may be used in some areas instead of restocking/planting. If suitable regeneration is not achieved by year five; beat up, supplementary planting or full restocking with appropriate species will be implemented as appropriate to ensure woodland cover is restored. As felling is happening in stages within the wood, it will be possible to use the results of regeneration in previous felling coupes to influence whether supplementary planting or complete restocking is required from the outset in future nearby coupes. This will allow us to manage restocking on areas where the water table rising after felling could hinder attempts to restock. The use of Continuous Cover Forestry (CCF) in some areas as opposed to clearfell, will also help mitigate against this.

- Some areas at the edges of the plantation will be converted to Broadleaf or Broadleaf Conifer mix over the next 50 years. These will be managed on a Continuous Cover basis. They will provide unchanging external views, as opposed to the clearfell and restock of pure conifer crops. On the eastern edge, broadleaf and open space will provide a transitional edge habitat on the boundary with the SSSI.
- The proportion of Broadleaf will increase from 7.6% in 2017 to 20.5% in 2067.

4.3 Other Management

- 18ha will be underplanted over the next ten years. This will be under thinned conifer crops and will be mostly conifer, or a mixture of conifer and broadleaves. Additional areas for underplanting may be identified during the plan period.
- Long term retention of Oak Trees of Special Interest, within the North West Corner of Ostlers (see section 3.21).
- The amount of open ground within the Forest Plan will remain stable at just below 10% (10.1ha). This does not include 2.7ha of concrete hardstanding which is kept clear and fulfils some of the functions of open space such as providing edge habitat. The inclusion of this would bring the total open space to 12.4%.
- Feedback from the wildlife trust suggests the current ride network is benefiting the neighbouring SSSI, although they felt wider rides would be of greater benefit. We consider wider rides but felt as Ostlers is already an isolated block with a lot of woodland edge, the current provision of open space within the plantation is appropriate. This will remain under review and we would also expect normal clearfelling and restocking of areas to provide transitional open space.
- The trees/vegetation around ponds will be cleared; if needed to maintain their condition.
- Table 3 and figure 5, 6 & 7 show a breakdown of future forest structure:

Figure 5 - Future Forest Structure (2067)

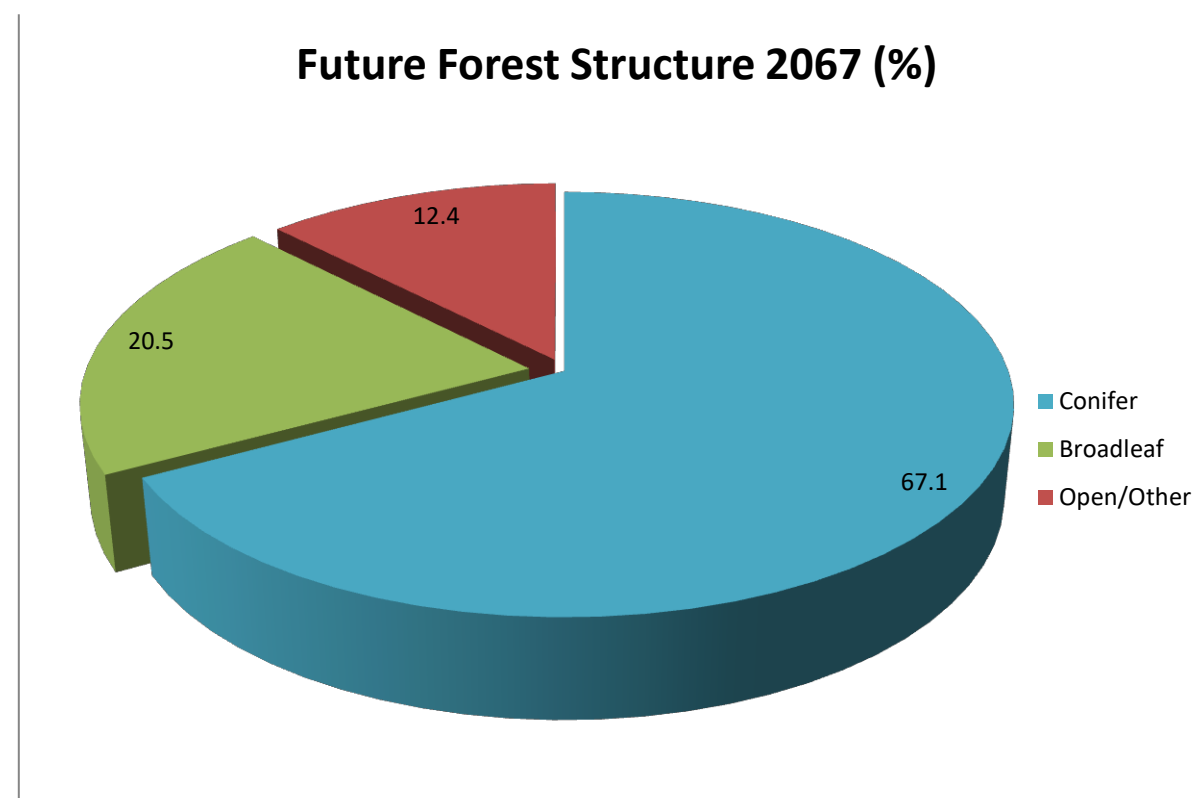


Figure 6 - Future Land Use (2067)

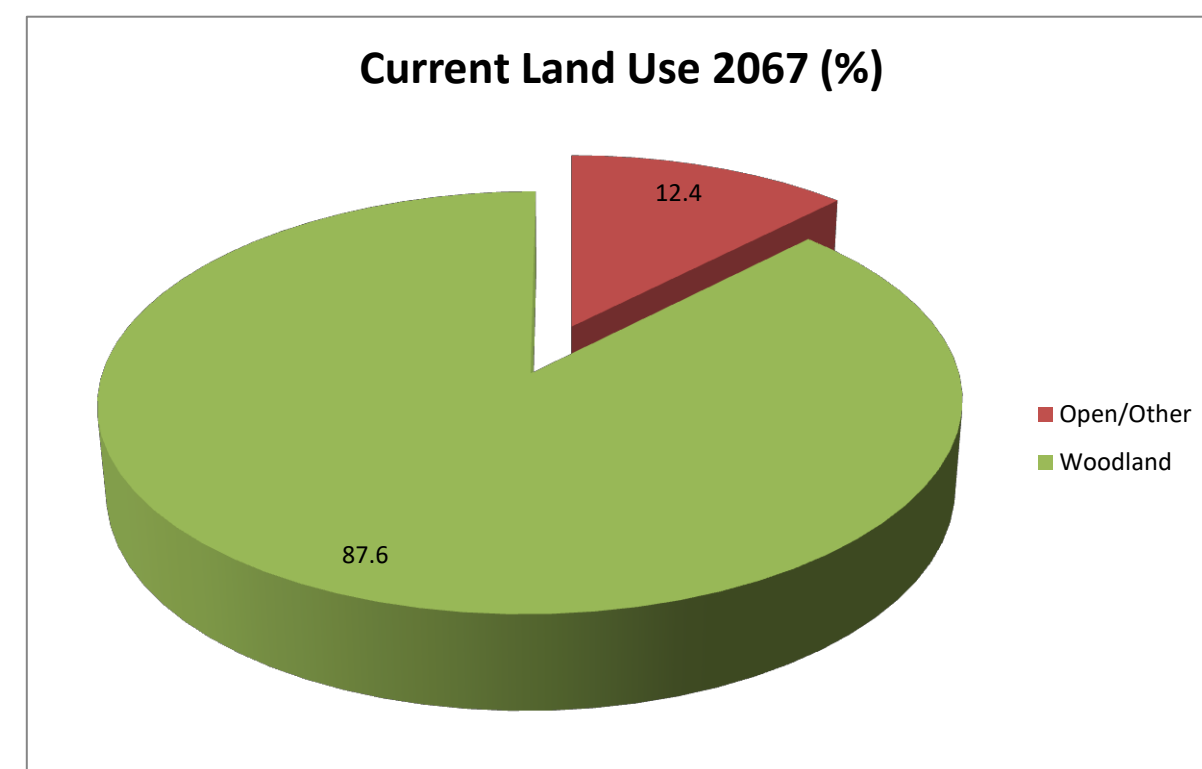


Table 3 – Future Species (as of 2067)

Species	Area (ha)	Percentage of Total Area
Conifer		
Overstory mixtures of Corsican & Scots Pine. Underplanted areas with alternative conifers Clearfell restocks with alternative conifers.		
Total Conifer	69.0	67.1%
Broadleaf		
Mostly Birch on Cleafells with Oak and Willow to a lesser extent. Shade tolerant broadleaves such as Beech may be used in underplanting areas.		
Total Broadleaf	21.1	20.5%
Open/Other	12.8	12.4%
Total Area	102.9ha	100%

The aim is to achieve restocking by a mixture of planting and natural regeneration as appropriate; because of this proportions of species have been estimated. On a coupe by coupe basis, the decision may be taken to opt for planting rather than natural regeneration, if that offers the most effective means of achieving the plan objectives. This gives us the flexibility to counter threats such as pests and diseases; as viable regeneration may not lead to canopy cover in the future.

Section 8.7 Future Species suggests species making up the majority of each coupe based on the species that are currently dominant in each coupe and management proposals such as diversification.

5.0 Meeting and Monitoring Objectives

Objective	Description	Proposals	Methods of Monitoring
Woodland	The woodland will be managed to produce high quality commercial conifer and broadleaved timber using a variety of silvicultural systems which will be chosen to meet the other management objectives.	The timing, scale and shape of future felling operations will be designed to create a diverse woodland structure.	Monitored through our Geographical Information Systems (GIS).
Biodiversity	Plantation species of interest, including Bats, Snakes/Slow Worms and Bog Myrtle amongst other species.	Surveys within Ostlers will continue to be used to improve management. The maintenance of ponds, buildings and open space will maintain and improve habitats for key species.	Consultation with environment and heritage team as part of the ops 1 process will help improve outcomes for biodiversity. New surveys will be reviewed and their results compared with existing data and used to improve management.
Invasive Species	Piri Piri Plant	Current program of Piri Piri management will continue.	Beat and Ecology teams will review ongoing progress and priorities.

Biodiversity	Open space.	The current areas of open space will be managed to maintain their value to wildlife.	Beat team to monitor regeneration on open ground and manage in a way that's sustainable, but will provide positive outcomes for relevant species.
Recreation	Designated walking routes and interpretation provided where appropriate.	Current features will be maintained. New features to be added where appropriate. This could include the interpretation for WW2 structures if funding became available.	Beat and RPA teams to monitor in line with operational objectives throughout the plan period.
Heritage	Protect and conserve designated features.	Protect, preserve and restore features as appropriate. Any new features to be recorded and reported to the county archaeologist if warranted.	Beat team review heritage features at the operational planning stage and to liaise with local/ national historical bodies as and when appropriate.
Forest Standards	The woodland will continue to be managed in a sustainable and productive way.	Guidelines set out be UKWAS, UKFS, and Forest District Strategic Plan will be adhered to	Mid-term monitoring of the FP, UKWAS and SGS audits and Beat staff.
District Strategic Plan	The woodland will be managed in line with the goals of our strategic plan.	Plan to be based around and contribute towards the Economy, Nature and People drivers of sustainable land management.	Incorporated at planning stage and at Mid-term review of the FP.

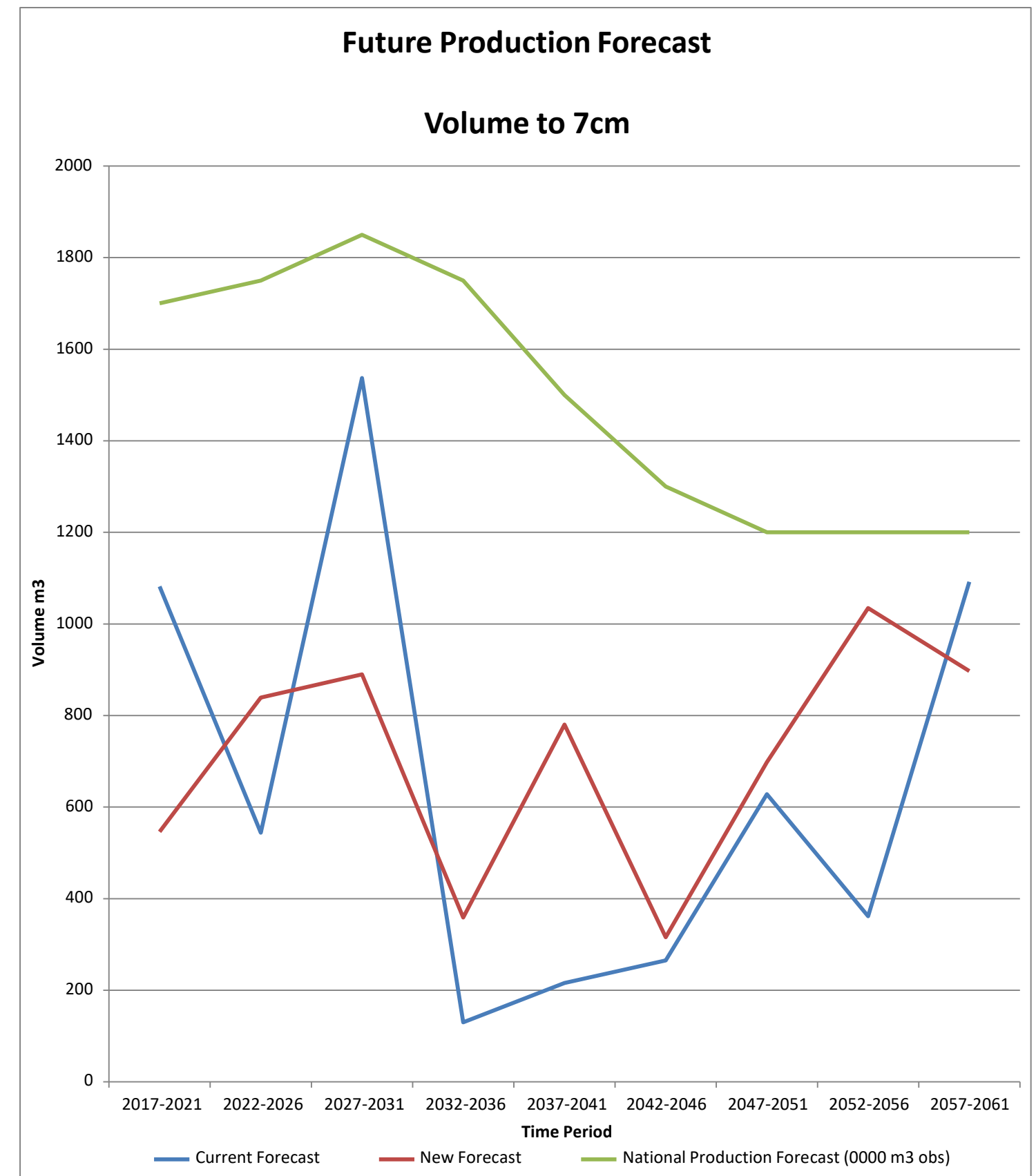
6.0 Economic forecast

The woodland will continue to be managed sustainably as set out in previous and current objectives relating to Forest Standards. Table 4 shows the future production forecast which takes into account changes in silvicultural systems and felling years.

Table 4 – Future Production Forecast

	Forecast Period	All Species	All Conifers	All Broadleaves
Volume to 7cm	2017-2021	546	546	0
	2022-2026	839	839	0
	2027-2031	897	890	7
	2032-2036	365	359	6
	2037-2099	665	646	19

Note: values given are for m³ per year for each year of that period.



7. Consultation

7.1 Consultees

D Pickard & Sons Ltd.

East Lindsay District Council

Historic England

Kirkby on Bain Parish Council

Lincolnshire County Council

Lincolnshire Wildlife Trust

Martin Robinson & Sons Timber Ltd.

Natural England

Tilhill Forestry

Woodhall Spa Parish Council

Other interested parties will be directed via on site signage to Woodhall Spa library where copies of the plan will be held. Consultation of the plan will also take place on the Citizenspace website.

All of our forests and woodlands in this Forest District are certified by the Forest Stewardship Council®(FSC®) and the Programme for the Endorsement of Forest Certification (PEFC). All Forestry England forests and woods are independently certified as sustainably managed, to continue to benefit future generations. The FSC is an international, non-governmental organisation dedicated to promoting responsible management of the world's forests. The PEFC is an international non-profit, non-governmental organisation dedicated to promoting sustainable forest management.



8. Maps

8.1 Location



Central Forest District

Location Map

Ostlers Location



Forestry Commission
England

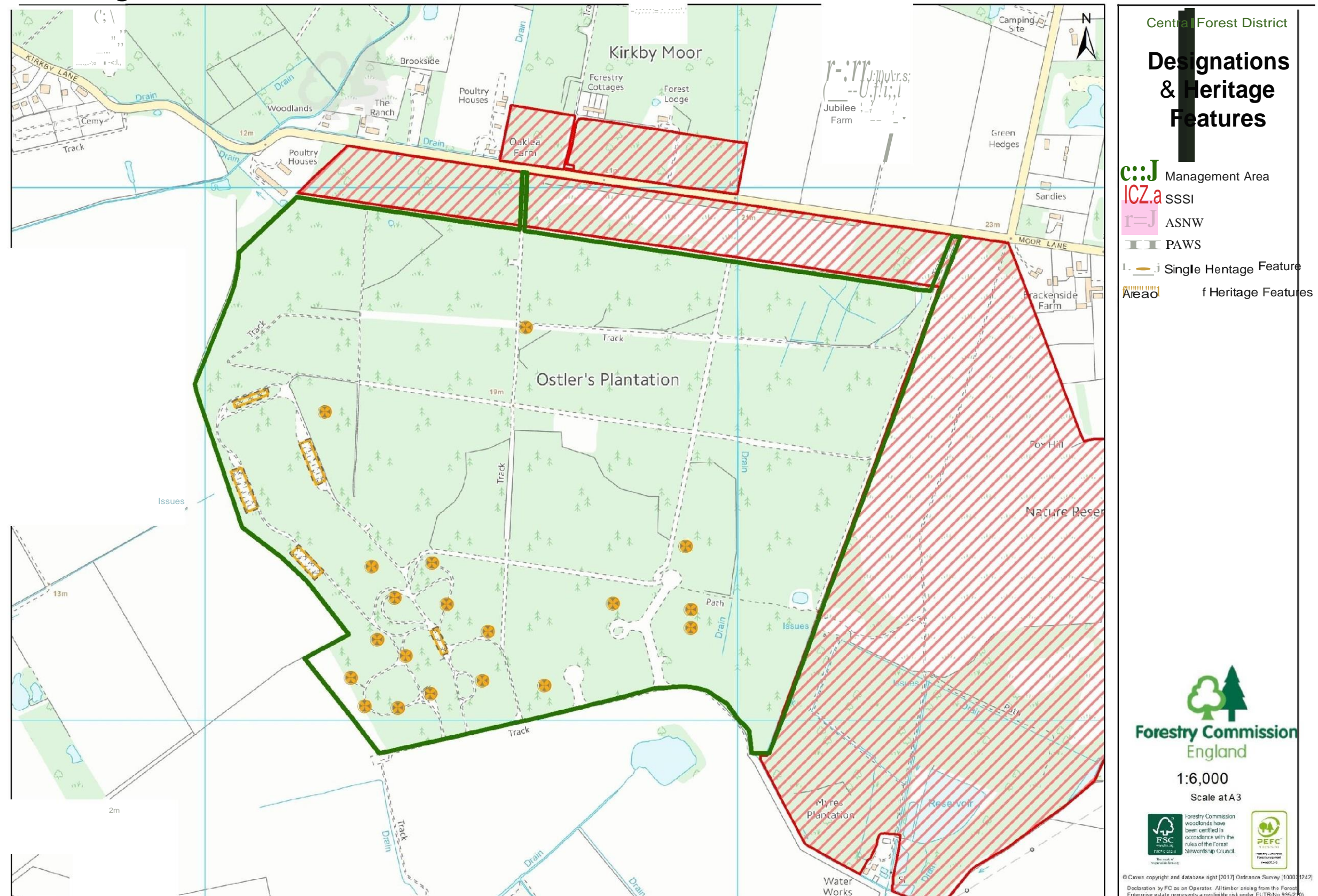
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Scale at A3

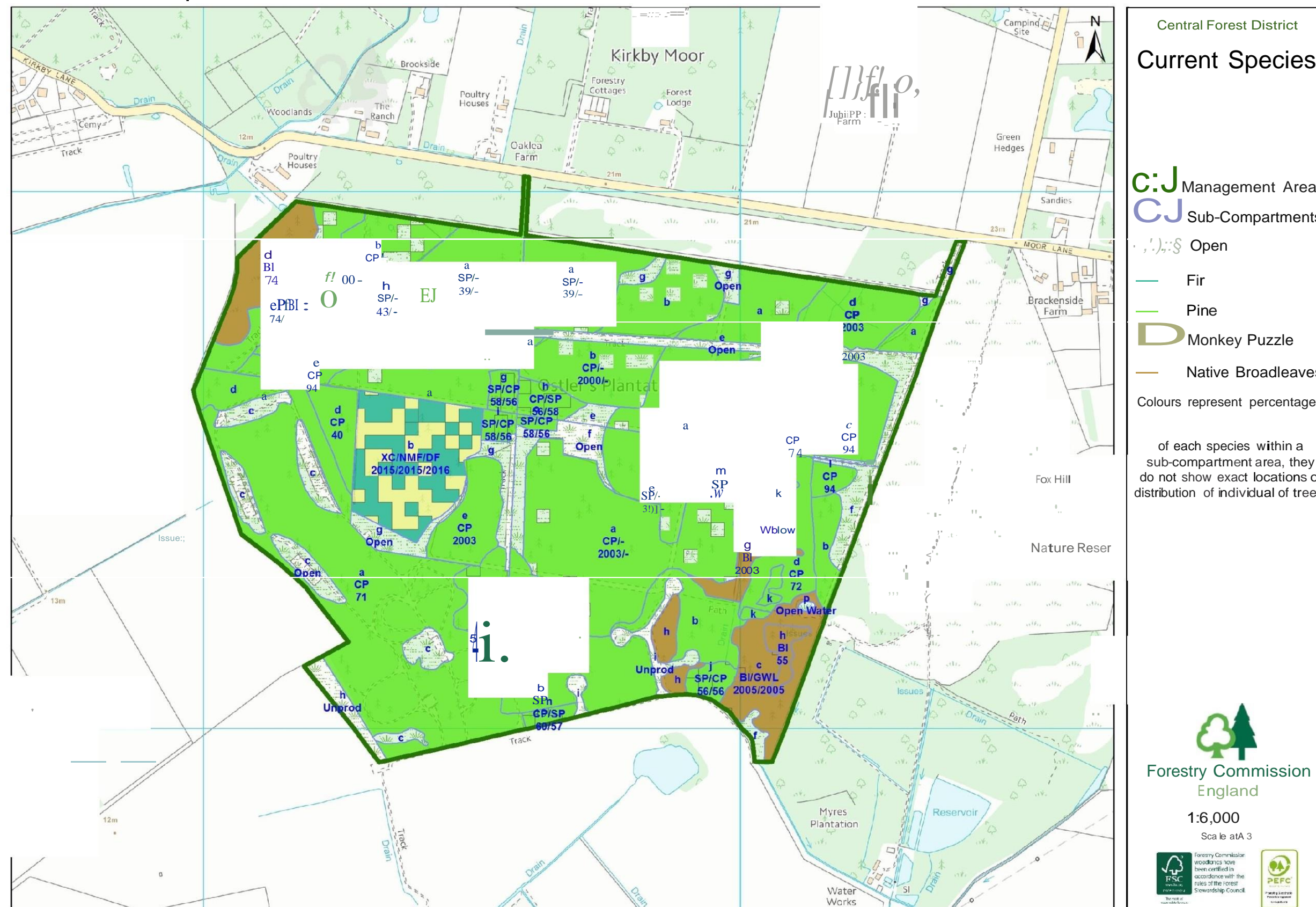


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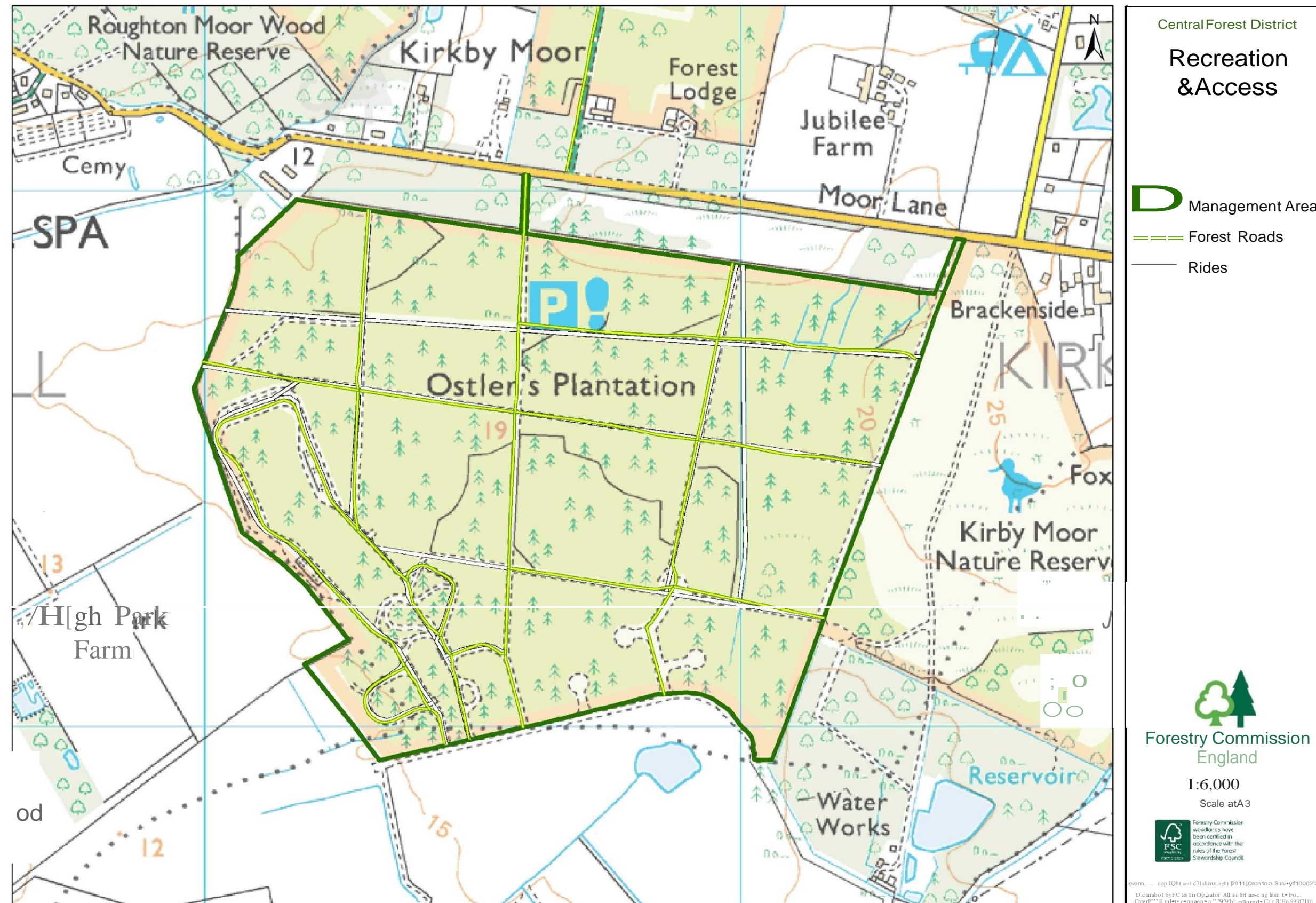
8.2 Designations



8.3 Current Species



8.4 Recreation & Access



Edge Pine coupes will transition to broadleaf through underplanting during the next rotation. By managing these areas as Continuous cover, we will maintain landscape views from Woodhall Spa.

Corsican Pine clearfell coupes brought forward in case Dothistroma Needle Blight prompts early felling.

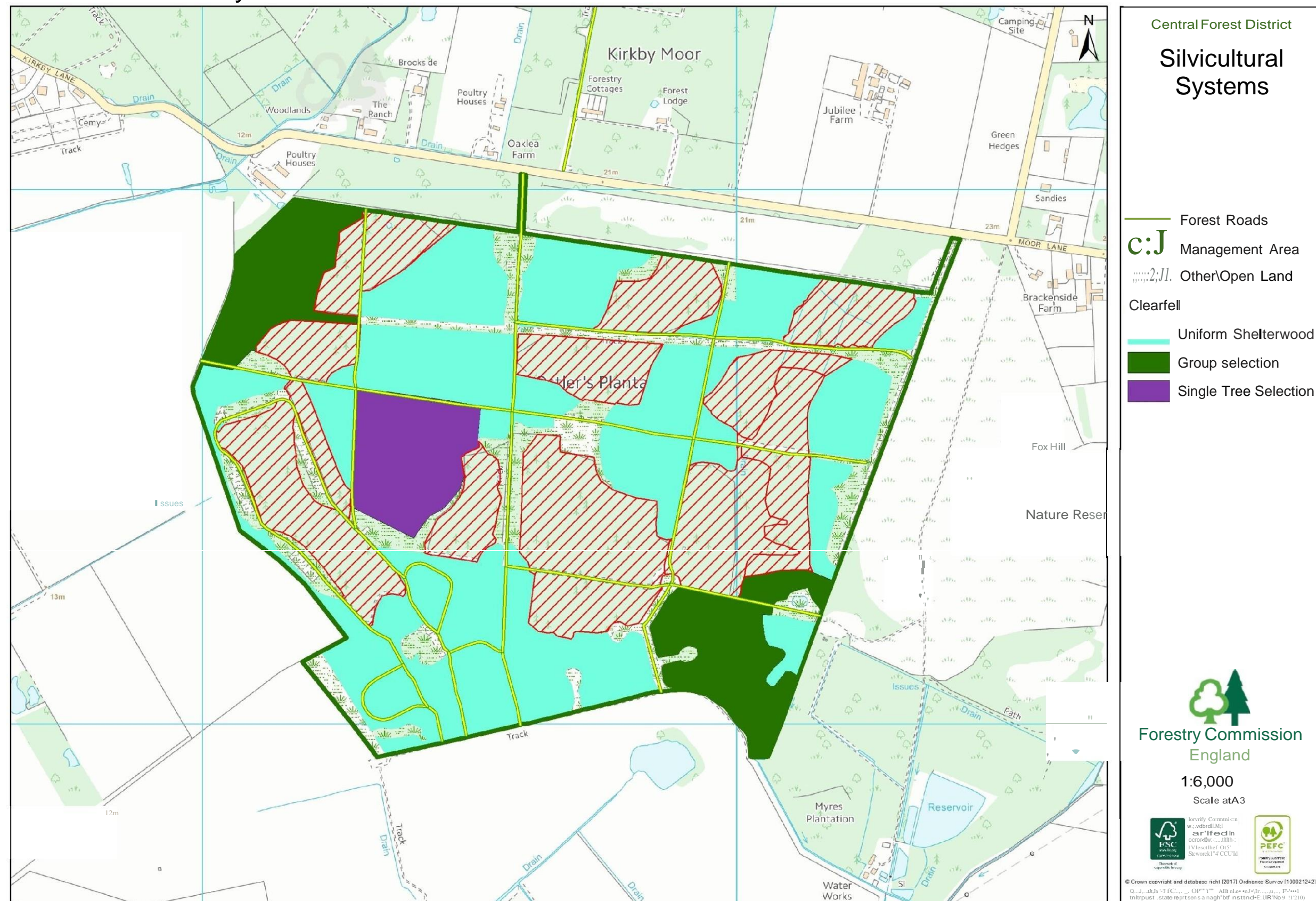
Restock changed to broadleaves to provide a more natural transition between the SSSI and the plantation.

Open space surrounding pond to be maintained.

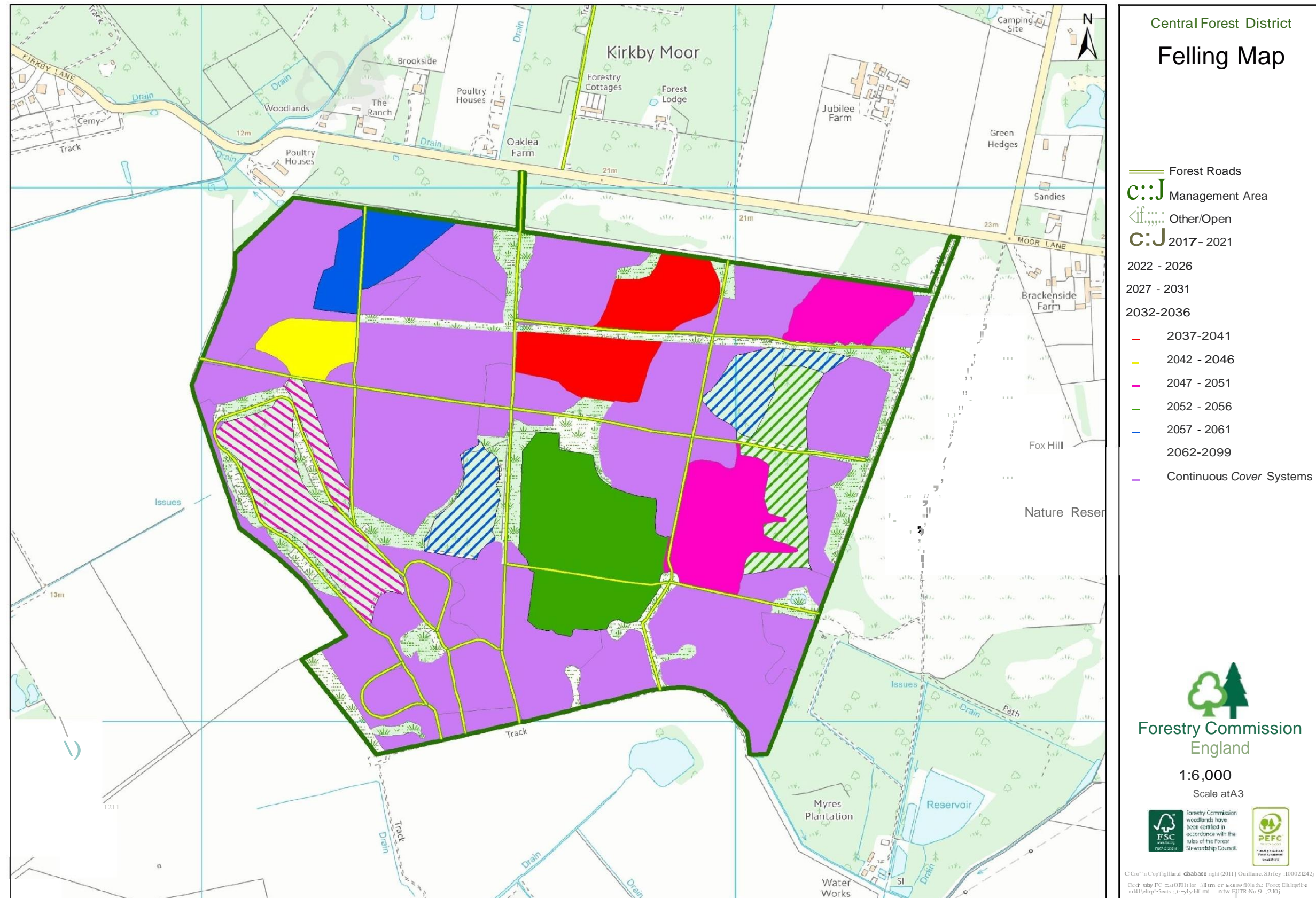
Heritage areas will be maintained as open space. If funding became available, it is our aspiration to install visual interpretation signs, explaining to visitors the purpose and history of each structure.

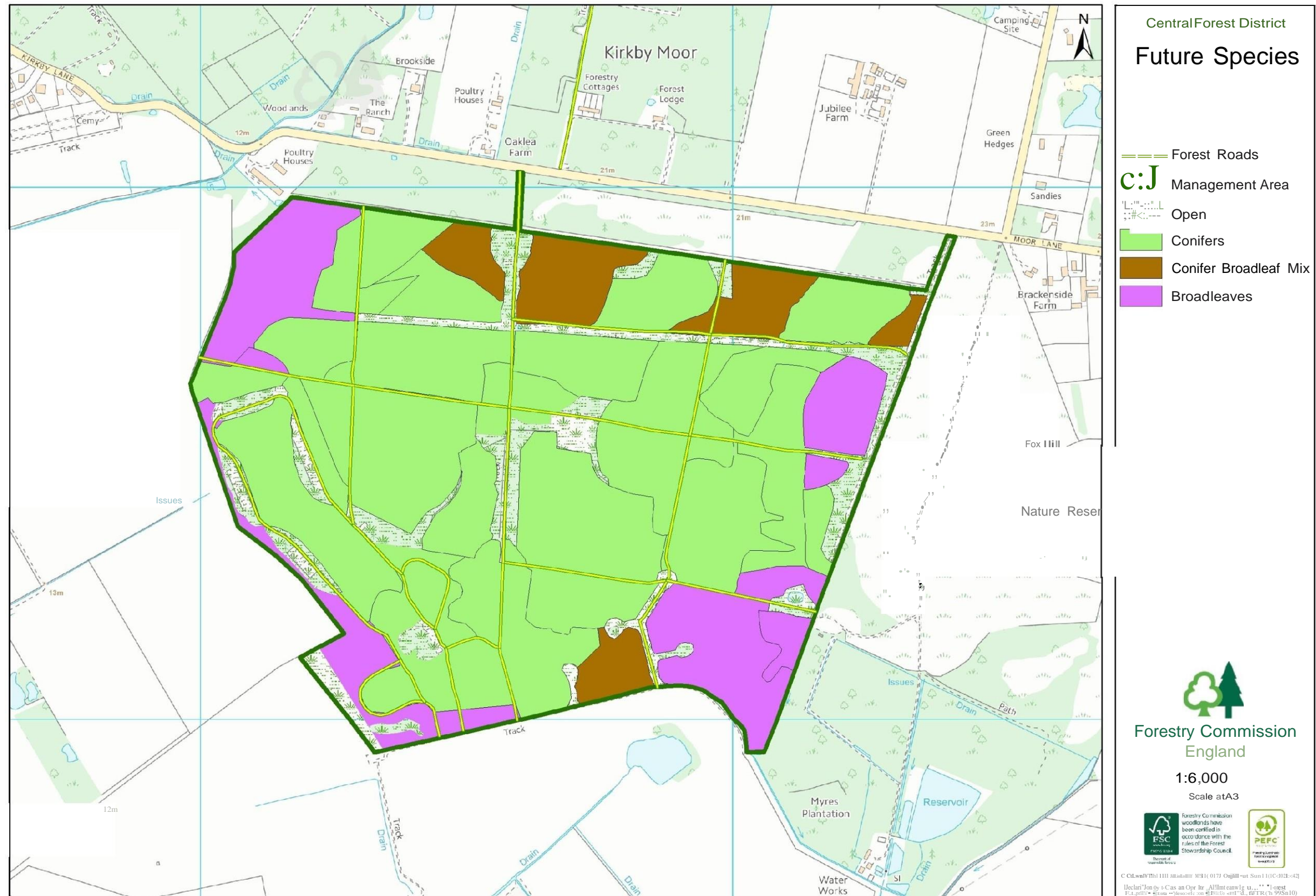
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8.6 Silvicultural Systems



8.7 Felling Map





9. Relevant Forestry Commission & Government Policies

- ✓ East Lindsey District Council, 2011. "East Lindsey Landscape Character Assessment, F1 Woodhall Spa to Coningsby River Terrace" Available at: <http://www.e-lindsey.gov.uk/article/2142/Landscape-Character-Assessment>
- ✓ Natural England, 2014. "National Character Area profile: 44. Central Lincolnshire Vale" Available at: <http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/5902941076586496>
- ✓ Forestry Commission, 2014. Central England Forest District Strategic Plan 2014-2020.

End of Document