

Definitions of Favourable Condition for designated features of interest



These definitions relate to all designated features on the SSSI, whether designated as SSSI, SPA, SAC or Ramsar features.

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Name of Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)	
SWANPOOL WOOD and FURNACE GROVE SSSI	
Names of designated international sites	
Special Area of Conservation (SAC)	WYE VALLEY WOODLANDS
Special Protection Area (SPA)	N/A
Ramsar	N/A
Relationship between site designations	
This SSSI is one of the component SSSIs of the Wye Valley Woodlands SAC	

Version control information		
Status of this Version (Draft, Consultation Draft, Final)		Final
Prepared by		Alan Foulds
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Quality assurance information		
Checked by	Name Peter Holmes	Date 3 January 2014
	 Signature	

Definitions of Favourable Condition: notes for users

Definitions of Favourable Condition

The definitions comprise one or more condition definitions for the special interest features at this site. These are subject to periodic review and may be updated to reflect new information or knowledge. They will be used by Natural England to determine if a site is in a favourable condition. The standards for favourable condition have been developed and are applied throughout the UK.

Standards for favourable condition are defined with particular reference to the specific designated features listed in Table 1, and are based on a selected set of attributes for features which most effectively define favourable condition as set out in Tables 2, 2a and 3. When an SSSI's features meet these attributes, then they are said to be in 'favourable condition'.

Explanatory text for Tables 2 and 3

Tables 2, 2a and 3 set out the measures of condition which we will use to provide evidence to support our assessment of whether features are in favourable condition. They have been tailored by local staff to reflect the particular characteristics and site-specific circumstances of individual sites. Quality Assurance has ensured that such site-specific tailoring remains within a nationally consistent set of standards. The tables include an audit trail to provide a summary of the reasoning behind any site-specific targets etc. In some cases the requirements of features or designations may conflict; the detailed basis for any reconciliation of conflicts on this site may be recorded elsewhere.

Use under the Habitats Regulations

The Definitions of Favourable Condition (DFCs) are used to periodically measure and assess the condition of both notified SSSI features and designated European Site features.

Where SSSIs also form part of a European Site (such as a SAC or SPA), a separate document containing specific European Site Conservation Objectives will have been prepared. These objectives are those referred to in the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010 (the "Habitats Regulations") and the Habitats Directive 1992. They are for use when either the appropriate nature conservation body or a competent authority is required to make an 'appropriate assessment' of the likely effects of a proposed plan or project on the integrity of a European Site under the relevant parts of the respective legislation. The European Site Conservation Objectives are available at www.naturalengland.org.uk.

The concepts of 'site integrity' and 'favourable condition' are similar and the assessment of a feature's condition will measure attributes that also represent aspects of a site's ecological integrity. However, the periodic determination of a feature's condition is separate from a judgement about the effect upon a site's overall integrity. This is because the DFCs do not represent a comprehensive or definitive list of all of the elements that might contribute to site integrity, merely those that are most appropriate to monitor in order to rapidly determine the present condition of a feature. The full range of factors that are components of a site's integrity, and which may need to be considered by an appropriate assessment, will be specified in the European Site Conservation Objectives. Some of the information contained within the DFCs may however contribute to such assessments.

Table 1 Individual designated interest features

BAP Broad Habitat type / Geological Site Type	Specific designated features	Explanatory description of the feature for clarification	SSSI notified interest features	SAC qualifying interest features	SPA qualifying interest features dependency on specific habitats			Ramsar criteria applicable to specific habitats			
					Annex 1 species	Migratory species	Waterfowl assemblage	1a Wetland characteristics	2a Hosting rare species &c	3a 20000 waterfowl	3c 1% of population
Broadleaved, mixed and Yew woodland	W7 <i>Alnus glutinosa</i> - <i>Fraxinus excelsior</i> - <i>Lysimachia nemorum</i> woodland	Part of the Wye Valley woodland series with its diversity of stand-types. These two relict coppice woods overlie limestone and sandstone, along with some local flushing. The ground flora is diverse including many species favouring damp/wet conditions. Within the calcareous streams are tufa formations which support the moss <i>Cratoneuron commutatum</i> (some sub-species of which are Nationally Rare).	*	*							
	W8 <i>Fraxinus excelsior</i> - <i>Acer campestre</i> - <i>Mercurialis perennis</i> woodland		*								

NB. Features where asterisks are in brackets (*) indicate habitats which are not notified for specific habitat interest (under the relevant designation) but because they support notified species.

Table 2 Habitat extent objectives

Extent - Dynamic balance	To maintain the designated features in favourable condition, which is defined in part in relation to a balance of habitat extents (extent attribute). Favourable condition is defined at this site in terms of the following site-specific standards.
	On this site favourable condition requires the maintenance of the extent of each habitat type (either designated habitat or habitat supporting designated species). Maintenance implies restoration if evidence from condition assessment suggests a reduction in extent.

Habitat Feature (BAP Broad Habitat level, or more detailed level if applicable)	Estimated extent (ha) and date of data source/estimate	Site Specific Target range and Measures	Comments
Broadleaved, mixed and Yew woodland	13.59 ha from SSSI designation in 1984		

Audit Trail
Rationale for habitat extent attribute (Include methods of estimation (measures), and the approximate degree of change which these are capable of detecting).
Both units are ancient semi-natural woodland and the extent of this should be maintained.
Rationale for site-specific targets (including any variations from generic guidance)
Other Notes
14.15ha given as extent on ENSIS (derived from GIS in 1996).

Table 3 Site specific Habitat condition objectives

To maintain the Broadleaved, mixed and Yew woodland at Swanpool Wood and Furnace Grove SSSI in favourable condition, with particular reference to relevant specific designated interest features. Favourable condition is defined at this site in terms of the following site-specific standards:
Site-specific details of any geographical variation or limitations (where the favourable condition standards apply)
Swanpool Wood (Unit 1) and Furnace Grove (Unit 2).

Site-specific standards defining favourable condition

Criteria feature	Attribute term in guidance	Measure	Site-specific Targets	Comments	Use for Condition Assessment?
W7 <i>Alnus glutinosa</i> - <i>Fraxinus excelsior</i> - <i>Lysimachia nemorum</i> W8 <i>Fraxinus excelsior</i> - <i>Acer campestre</i> - <i>Mercurialis perennis</i>	Habitat extent	Field survey and/or aerial photography, in relation to baseline map	No loss of ancient semi-natural stands. At least current area of recent semi-natural stands maintained, although their location may alter. No loss of ancient woodland.	Stand loss due to natural processes e.g. in the minimum intervention stands may be acceptable. Stand destruction may occur if the understorey and ground flora are irretrievably damaged even if the canopy remains intact. As a guideline, loss can be defined as at least 0.5 ha or 0.5% of the stand area, whichever is the smaller. 20% canopy cover is conventionally taken as the lower limit for an area to be considered as woodland.	
W7 <i>Alnus glutinosa</i> - <i>Fraxinus excelsior</i> - <i>Lysimachia nemorum</i>	Structure and Natural processes	Assess by field survey using structured walk and/or transects	Understorey (2-5m) present over at least 20% of total stand area).	The area lacked veteran trees and therefore the range of age-classes is limited to two in the	Yes

Criteria feature	Attribute term in guidance	Measure	Site-specific Targets	Comments	Use for Condition Assessment?
W8 <i>Fraxinus excelsior</i> - <i>Acer campestre</i> - <i>Mercurialis perennis</i>			Canopy cover present over 30-90 % of stand area except in coppice stands where it should not exceed 30%. At least two age-classes spread across the average life expectancy of the commonest trees. Unit 2 should contain areas of relatively undisturbed mature/old growth stands or a scatter of large trees allowed to grow to over-maturity/death on site. (e.g. a minimum of 10% of the woodland or 5-10 trees per ha). A minimum of 3 fallen lying trees >20 cm diameter per ha and 4 trees per ha allowed to die standing.	shorter term, with long term plans to allow trees to develop into veterans.	
W7 <i>Alnus glutinosa</i> - <i>Fraxinus excelsior</i> - <i>Lysimachia nemorum</i> W8 <i>Fraxinus excelsior</i> - <i>Acer campestre</i> - <i>Mercurialis perennis</i>	Composition	Assess by field survey using structured walk and/or transects	At least 95% of cover in any one layer of site-native or acceptable naturalised species. Death, destruction or replacement of native woodland species through effects of introduced fauna or other external unnatural factors not more	Sycamore is not an acceptable naturalised species in this site.	Yes

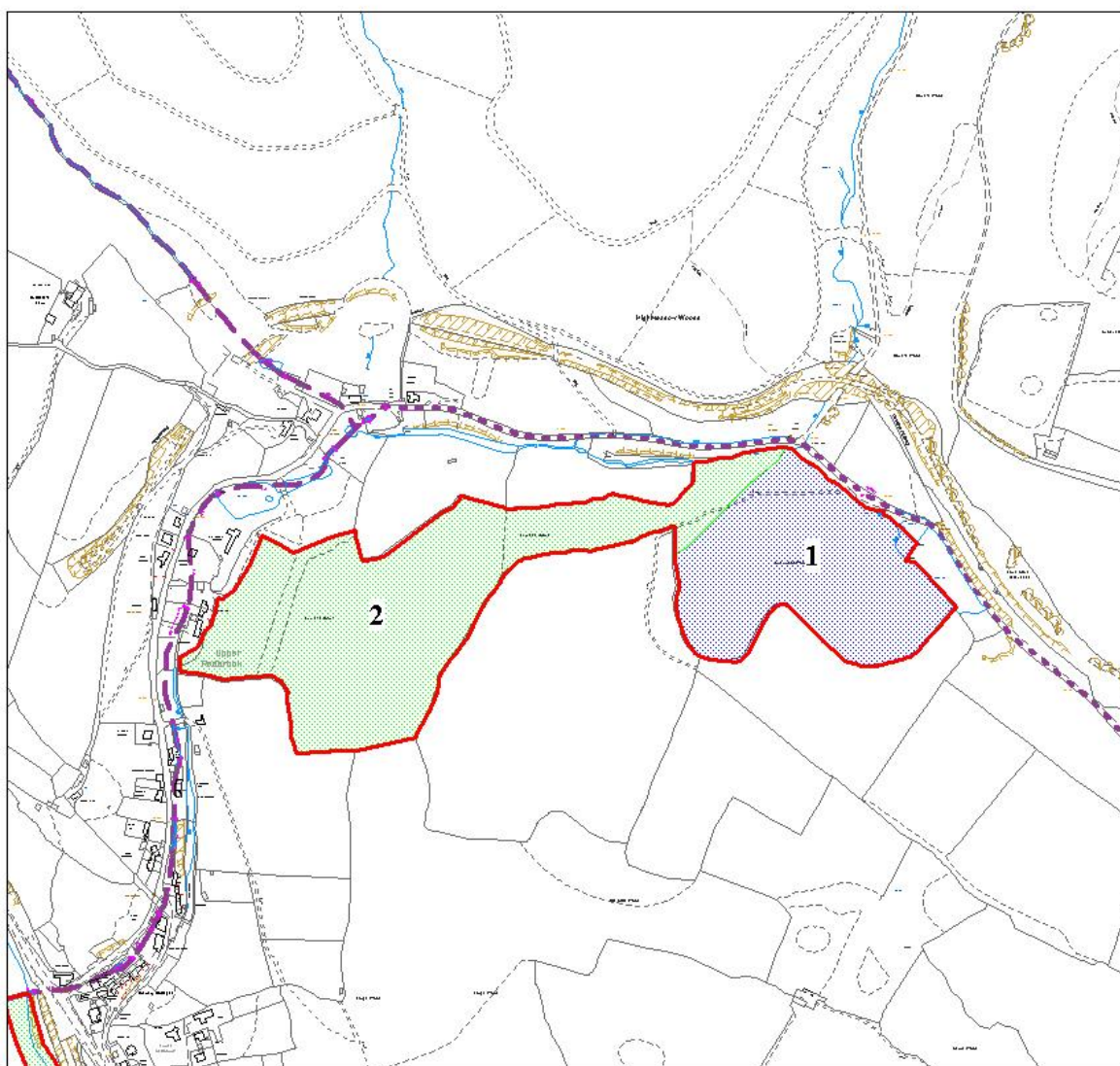
Criteria feature	Attribute term in guidance	Measure	Site-specific Targets	Comments	Use for Condition Assessment?
			than 10% by number or area in a five year period.		
W7 <i>Alnus glutinosa</i> - <i>Fraxinus excelsior</i> - <i>Lysimachia nemorum</i> W8 <i>Fraxinus excelsior</i> - <i>Acer campestre</i> - <i>Mercurialis perennis</i>	Indicators of local distinctiveness	Assess by field survey using structured walk and/or transects.	80% cover of ground flora referable to relevant NVC community.	This attribute is intended to cover any site-specific aspects of this habitat feature (forming part of the reason for notification) which are not covered adequately by the previous attributes, or by separate guidance (e.g. notified species features). For notable species it is not intended to set a target for detailed species monitoring, rather to provide a rapid indication of presence/absence and/or approximate extent, allowing for natural fluctuations in population size.	Yes
W7 <i>Alnus glutinosa</i> - <i>Fraxinus excelsior</i> - <i>Lysimachia nemorum</i> W8 <i>Fraxinus excelsior</i> - <i>Acer campestre</i> - <i>Mercurialis perennis</i>	Regeneration potential	Assess by field survey using structured walk and/or transects	Signs of seedlings growing through to saplings to young trees at sufficient density to maintain canopy density over a 10 year period (or equivalent re-growth from coppice stumps).	A proportion of gaps at any one time may develop into permanent open space; equally some current permanent open space/glades may in time regenerate to closed canopy. Regeneration may often occur on the edges of woods rather than in gaps within it.	Yes

Audit Trail
Rationale for limiting standards to specified parts of the site
Unit 1 is predominantly even-aged but a few areas have two age-classes where large Sycamore trees have been removed and the gaps have been planted up with Cherry, Oak and Lime. The planted trees are in individual tree-tubes and, in due course, these should be removed to prevent them damaging the trees. However, deer are likely to threaten the young trees when the protection is removed. The coppice stools are overgrown and have not been cut on rotation. Coppicing is unlikely to be beneficial until the deer grazing pressure has been reduced. However, the native ground flora, trees and shrubs are not being damaged so much that they could not recover, which makes the condition Unfavourable No Change rather than Unfavourable Declining. Natural regeneration and coppice re-growth is evident in Unit 2 in the areas that have been felled and fenced from deer. Therefore, if the present management is continued, this unit could be considered to be in Favourable or Unfavourable Recovering condition. On the other hand, taking the woodland as a whole and the effect of deer grazing outside the fenced area, the area is considered to be Unfavourable No Change.
Rationale for site-specific targets (including any variations from generic guidance)
The woodland is predominantly hazel and ash coppice woodland with a range of native tree species, but no veteran trees. Therefore, the lack of veteran trees would not cause the woodland to fail the condition assessment as long as there is evidence that some trees are being maintained to eventually develop into veterans.
Rationale for selection of measures of condition (features and attributes for use in condition assessment)
(The selected vegetation attributes are those considered to most economically define favourable condition at this site for the broad habitat type and any dependent designated species).
Other Notes
There was evidence of wild boar rooting and the impact of this species should be monitored. The NVC map below does not indicate the presence of W7 woodland – one of the notified features – this needs resolving.

Annex 1 Maps of key areas for monitoring

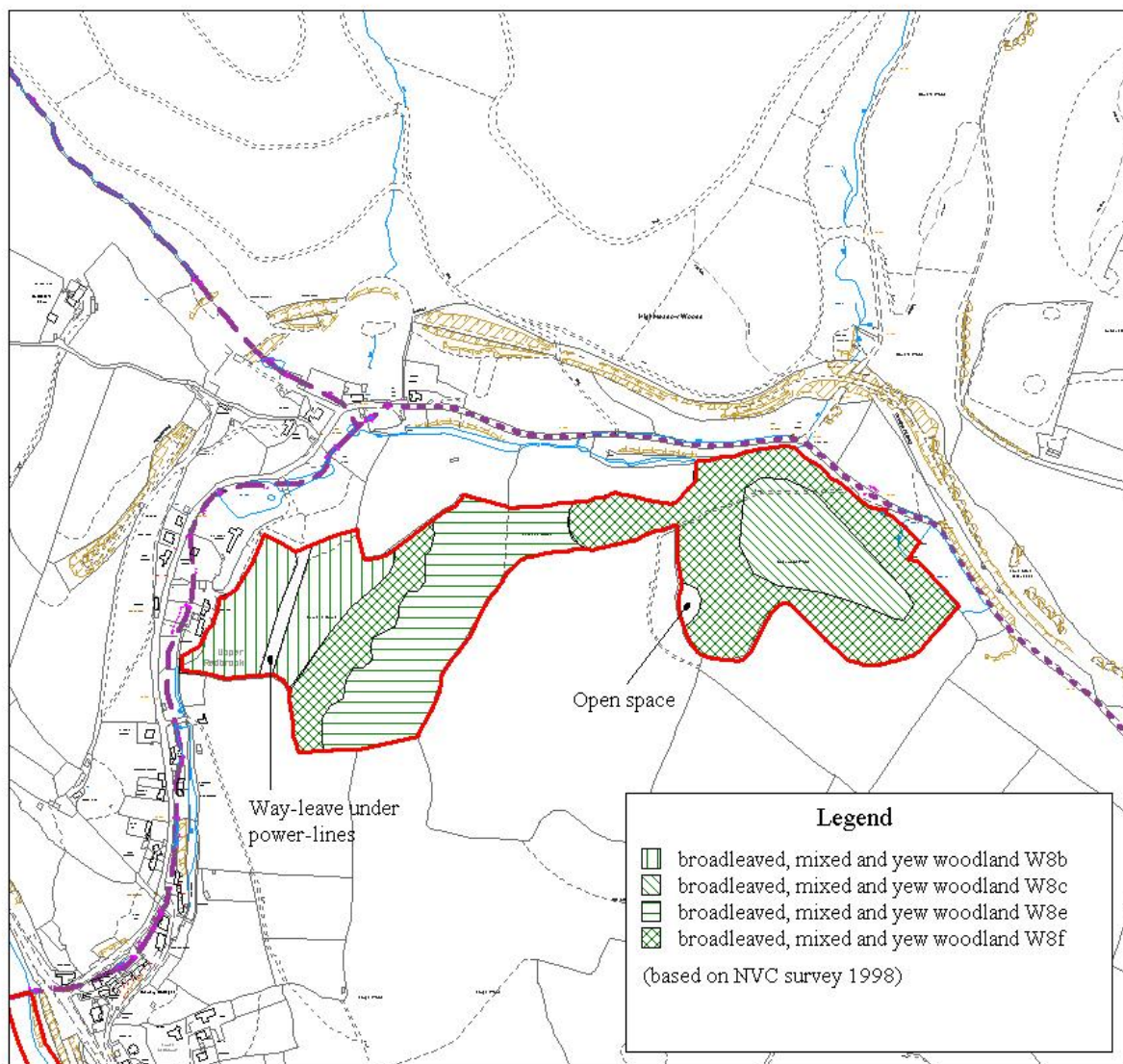
SWANPOOL WOOD and FURNACE GROVE Unit boundaries

Scale: 1:7,500



SWANPOOL WOOD and FURNACE GROVE
Special Interest Features map

Scale: 1:7,500



Annex 2 Location of features by unit

Features	1	2
W8	x	x
W7	?	?

Only W8 woodland appears to be mapped on the NVC map above in Annex 1, although W7 is also a notified feature.