

GLENARM WOODS

Views About Management The Environment (Northern Ireland) Order 2002 Article 28(2)

A statement of Environment and Heritage Service's views about the management of Glenarm Woods Area of Special Scientific Interest ("the ASSI")

This statement represents the views of Environment and Heritage Service about the management of the ASSI for nature conservation. This statement sets out, in principle, our views on how the area's special conservation interest can be conserved and enhanced. Environment and Heritage Service has a duty to notify the owners and occupiers of the ASSI of its views about the management of the land.

Not all of the management principles will be equally appropriate to all parts of the ASSI and there may be other management activities, additional to our current views, which can be beneficial to the conservation and enhancement of the features of interest. It is also very important to recognise that management may need to change with time.

The management views set out below do not constitute consent for any operation or activity. The written consent of Environment and Heritage Service is still required before carrying out any operation or activity likely to damage the features of special interest (see the schedule on pages 3 and 4 of the attached Document B for a list of these operations and activities). Environment and Heritage Service welcomes consultation with owners, occupiers and users of the ASSI to ensure that the management of this area maintains and enhances the features of interest, and to ensure that all necessary prior consents are obtained.

MANAGEMENT PRINCIPLES

Woodland

Woodland is an important habitat for wildlife, and Glenarm Woods incorporates both Oakwood and Mixed ashwoods. These provide food and shelter for a wide variety of mammals, birds and invertebrates.

Environment and Heritage Service would encourage the maintenance and enhancement of the woodland through the development of its structure and the conservation of its associated native plants and animals. These include rare plant species and important invertebrate communities.

Specific objectives include:

Encourage the woodland to become more "mature" by avoiding disturbance.
The structure of the wood will gradually become more diverse, with



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well-developed canopy, shrub and ground layers, and an abundance of species like Ivy, mosses, liverworts and lichens that live on the trees themselves.

Encourage the retention of dead wood both on the woodland floor and still standing in the canopy. Dead wood is a very important habitat for some of the less conspicuous woodland species such as fungi and invertebrates.

Encourage regeneration of woodland through the control of grazing. In general, natural regeneration is preferable to planting.

Parkland

Parkland is a special type of woodland. It typically consists of a mosaic of scattered old trees (known as “veterans”) and relatively extensive open areas of grassland, with patches of scrub and young tree growth. The habitat is maintained by higher levels of grazing than are common in other types of woodland.

Veteran trees growing in these open conditions often contain large quantities of both standing and fallen dead wood and provide an important habitat for less conspicuous plants and animals such as fungi, mosses, lichens and invertebrates. These species are of particular importance within the Glenarm Estate, which is one of the best examples of parkland habitat in Northern Ireland. Environment and Heritage Service would encourage the maintenance and enhancement of the parkland by continued low levels of grazing and minimal management of the mature trees.

Specific objectives include:

Environment and Heritage Service would encourage the retention *in situ* of large dead branches, fallen dead wood and the remains of old trees. These often contain important populations of fungi and/or invertebrates.

Grazing or cutting of the grassland will maintain the old trees in relatively open conditions, which is desirable where these are important for lichens and invertebrates. Environment and Heritage Service would encourage the continuation of this practice.

It is important that there are younger trees available to act as replacements for the veteran trees when they eventually die. Environment and Heritage Service would encourage the establishment of suitable young tree growth, either through planting of appropriate species or periodic reduction in grazing levels.

Lichens are very sensitive to nutrient enrichment. Environment and Heritage Service would seek to ensure that there is no application of slurry or fertiliser in the vicinity of the veteran trees.

Purple Moor-grass and rush pastures

Purple Moor-grass and rush pastures are an important habitat for wildlife. Environment and Heritage Service would encourage the maintenance and

enhancement of the grassland through the conservation of its associated native plants and animals.

Many of the more sensitive species can be quickly lost through intensive management treatments, such as fertiliser and herbicide application. However, grassland generally needs some management to retain its interest. Although occasional small patches of scrub can be valuable in providing additional habitat niches for birds and invertebrates, in the absence of management, coarse grasses can quickly take over and ultimately woody species may become dominant.

Grazing by cattle is the most effective way of controlling the growth of more vigorous species and helping to maintain open areas and a diverse sward structure, although overgrazing should be avoided as the wet soils are particularly susceptible to poaching. In the absence of grazing, cutting of the vegetation to create open areas and reduce the dominance of coarse grasses is desirable.

Specific objectives include:

Low intensity grazing has contributed to the conservation and enhancement of the grassland. Environment and Heritage Service would encourage the continuation of this practice.

Maintain the diversity and quality of the species-rich grassland by ensuring there is no application of fertiliser, slurry or herbicide to the site.

Prevent the loss of more sensitive grassland species through the control of scrub, bracken and rushes. In general, this can be achieved through the appropriate grazing regime. In some cases other methods of control, such as cutting, may be required.

Where appropriate, encourage the blocking of drains to prevent the grassland from drying out.

River

The river bed and channel

Environment and Heritage Service would encourage the maintenance of varying flow rates and natural erosion and sedimentation processes by the appropriate management of channels and banks. Such management should include avoiding excavation of gravel shoals and bars, minimising in-river and bankside defence works, limiting abstraction during low flow years and avoiding dredging in the channel.

Pollution

Environment and Heritage Service would encourage a continuing reduction of pollution from industrial or agricultural sources such as mineral workings or the run-off of silt and nutrients from agricultural land.

Animals

The ASSI provides a habitat for a wide variety of mammal, bird, fish and in particular invertebrate species. Environment and Heritage Service would encourage the maintenance and enhancement of these species and their habitats.

Bankside Habitats

The ASSI supports rich and varied river and bankside wildlife habitats. Environment and Heritage Service would encourage the conservation and enhancement of the variety of vegetation present by careful bank use and maintenance. Marginal woodland is particularly important because it helps to stabilise the river bank and regulate the local climate while submerged roots create a refuge for fish. Many of the insects and other invertebrates associated with the woodland provide food for fish.

Fishing

Environment and Heritage Service recognises the important economic and social roles of fishing and welcomes sustainable fishery management that is sensitive to the special interests of the ASSI.

Grazing

Low intensity grazing on riverside grasslands and stock feeding away from the banks has contributed to the conservation and enhancement of the features of interest. Environment and Heritage Service would encourage the extension of this practice.

Management Principles applicable to all habitats throughout the site

Ensure that disturbance to the site and its wildlife is minimised.

Discourage non-native species, especially those that tend to spread at the expense of native wildlife.

Maintain the diversity and quality of habitats associated with the woodland, parkland, species-rich grassland and river, such as scrub. These adjoining habitats can often be very important for wildlife, especially invertebrates.



E Diane Stevenson
Authorised Officer

Dated the 01st of February 2008