Restoration Management of Ancient Woodland Sites in Northern Ireland

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• Policy Background and Developing Practice
• NI Forest Service PAWS Restoration Strategy
• Ancient Woodland Inventory
• Forest Service AWI Woodland Management Strategy
• Achievements and Future Prospects
Policy and Practice

• Sustainable Forest Management
• UKWAS – 1\textsuperscript{st} and 2\textsuperscript{nd} editions
• NI Biodiversity Strategy
• Research and Guidance Publications
• Monitoring
Forest Service PAWS Restoration Strategy
2000-2001

•‘Hand of God’ - 1998 Boxing Day Storm
•Survey and strategy to conform with UKWAS requirements
•30 PAWS sites amounting to 530ha
•Ecological Surveys and Management Plans
•Quadrat-based ecological monitoring studies
The Ancient Woodland Inventory (AWI) 2007

- GIS dataset (www.backonthememap.org.uk)
- 1/3 of AWI woodland falls within Forest Service forests
- ½ of all Planted AWI woodland falls within Forest Service forests – and ¾ planted conifer
- Most FS planted AWI woodland is long established – however this includes designated areas, areas included in the FS PAWS restoration strategy, and historic landscape areas
- Around 35% of Forest Service AWI woodland is potentially at risk of loss of biodiversity from shading
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Woodland Type</th>
<th>Ownership Category</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Non-FS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Semi-natural broadleaf</td>
<td>1968</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Planted broadleaf</strong></td>
<td><strong>1585</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Planted conifer</td>
<td>671</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Planted mixed</td>
<td>709</td>
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<tr>
<td>Scrub</td>
<td>219</td>
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<tr>
<td>Parkland</td>
<td>1004</td>
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<tr>
<td>Semi-natural conifer</td>
<td>0</td>
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<tr>
<td>Semi-natural mixed</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No type recorded</td>
<td>246</td>
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<tr>
<td>TOTALS</td>
<td><strong>6436</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Area (ha) of each type of Forest Service planted AWI woodland classed as ancient, probably ancient, possibly ancient, and long established

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Woodland Type</th>
<th>Ancient</th>
<th>Probably ancient</th>
<th>Possibly ancient</th>
<th>Long established</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Planted broadleaf</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>117</td>
<td>134</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Planted conifer</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>249</td>
<td>394</td>
<td>1329</td>
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<tr>
<td>Planted mixed</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>281</td>
<td>436</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All planted</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>362</td>
<td>792</td>
<td>1899</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Forest Service AWI Woodland Management Strategy (2008)

• Risk assessment to prioritise areas for intervention

• Field assessments to determine the potential of AWI woodland to contribute to habitat networks both throughout the forest, and within the landscape

• AWI with remnant features gradually converted to native woodland using an alternative to clearfell.

• Controls to protect remnant features and associated biodiversity in AWI woodland in which operations are planned.
Achievements and Future Management

• New native woodland at Aghaleague
• Risk of colonisation by invasive species
• Restoration management embedded in forest planning
• Low impact interventions increasingly favoured
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Annesley Malley, Queens University Belfast
Sian Thomas, The Woodland Trust
John Griffin, Stephen McCartney and Colin Reilly,
Forest Service