

Potterland Hill Management Plan (Draft)



Potterland Hill, as seen from the Northwest



Clearfelled Southwest face with seed trees



Area of disused hazel coppice (Compartment 11)

Prepared for discussion
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in Partnership with
Forest Enterprise
Autumn 2010 (updated Winter 2016)

Introduction and Background

Potterland Hill has been managed as woodland since at least 1797. Apparently, this included management as hazel coppice over several areas, probably along with oak standards. A large part of the hill was probably felled during the Great War, when the Canadian Forestry Corps had a camp and probably a sawmill at Potterland. The Scots Pines at the top are the only possible remnant of pre-war plantings.

Most of the subject area of this plan was planted in mixed broadleaves in 1951 and with sycamore and oak in 1990. A small compartment of spruce was planted in 1967. Surrounding areas have been recently cleared of Corsican Pine, Larch, and Spruce, leaving the fringe of Scots Pines above the quarry. 20th Century plantings have generally paid little attention to maintaining the coppice, such management having fallen out of fashion. In fact, 'coniferisation' was often intended to shade out any hazel stools. [Starting in 2001](#), Southwest Community Woodlands Trust (SWCWT) began to fell hazel coupes with the intention of re-establishing a rotation. Deer and contractor damage proved discouraging, and no coupes were felled between 2005 and 2009.

In 2010, one coupe was re-coppiced and another first-felled. A new deer fence has been installed.

Vision and Objectives

Long-term vision:

SWCWT would like to Potterland Hill to:

balance the productive, amenity and wildlife aspects of the woodland;

be a model of coppice restoration and broadleaf woodland management for native biodiversity;

bring community benefit in terms of new skills, walks, materials, and education.

General objectives

Operational objectives:

Wildlife conservation

No native species should be lost as a result of operations (fungi etc.) - less frequent or uncommon native species should be at least maintained.

Trees never to be felled should be identified, marked and mapped e.g. elm or holly; high habitat value individuals; ivy-clad; natural pollards; heavily colonised by saprophytes, bryophytes and lichens; trees of interesting structure;

Native species not present in the wood should be introduced where appropriate, e.g. aspen; gean (cherry); yew; guelder rose; bird cherry, hawthorn.

Encourage a shrub layer.

Establish nestboxes (including batboxes) and rotten wood piles. Habitat augmentation/creation is the greatest interface for public participation and ownership.

Encourage structural diversity within the woodland.

Maintain oldest/veteran trees (but not biosterile beech – not to be replaced as they die)

Silviculture

FCS to continue with and ideally intensify deer control

Thinning of young birch stands, selected for form and to encourage oak

Weed out beech regeneration and remove sycamore and any regeneration

Use harvested hazel for practical courses and skill development – first felling produces relatively little of good quality, and second crop is often still not prime.

Use birch thinnings and sycamore for charcoal firing and woodworking courses

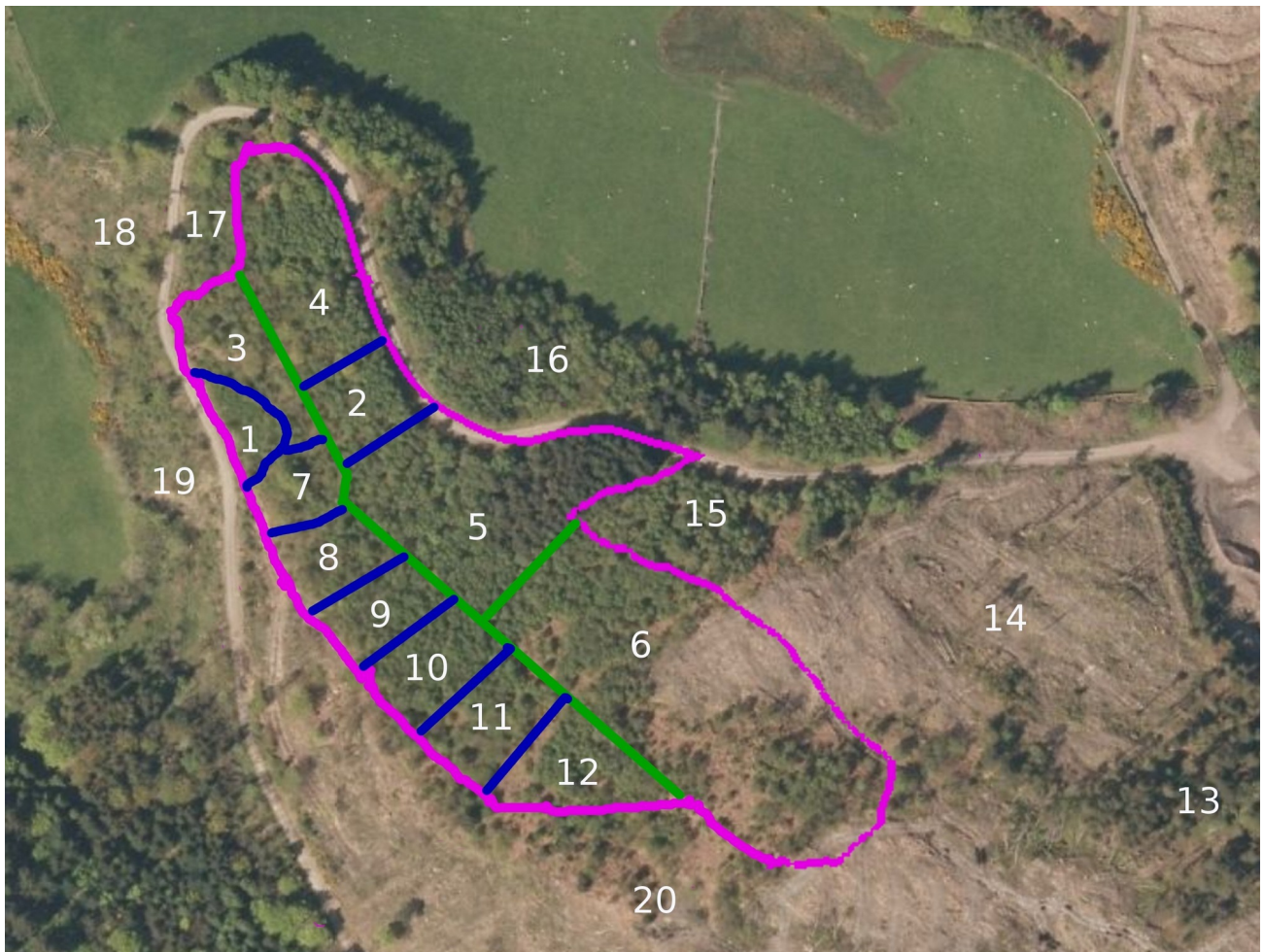
New planting – Amenity and wildlife-friendly species in compartment 6, possible hazel and oak, where appropriate and needed.

Monitor natural regeneration in recently cleared areas – weed out excessive non-pine conifer regeneration.



**Potterland Hill
as seen
from Screel**

Aerial view of part of Potterland Hill ([based on Microsoft Virtual Earth](#))



N.B. All boundaries and areas are approximate

Pink :: New deer fence

Green :: Rides

Blue :: compartment boundaries

Compartment	Area (approx)	Species present	Management
1	0.15Ha~	Hazel (stools), Birch (stools), Oak (standards) Yew (small stunted)	Felled as coppice, leaving a few oak standards in October 2001. Dead-hedged. Re-felled in February 2010, leaving oak. Probably will require control of birch Deer damage noted and fence under-gaps blocked in autumn, 2017 (February) re-felled along with Compartment 3 Suggest combining with Compartment 3 in future.
-2	0.25Ha~	Hazel (derelict) Birch (poles) Oak (standards) Holly, Rowan, BE	Feb 2010: First-felled all hazel, birch and beech, leaving other species to grow on. Brash left on ground. Will require control of birch and possibly reinforcement of hazel by planting Deer damage noted and fence under-gaps blocked in autumn,. February 2016 - felled (second felling) yielded some good hazel rods, some birch rods and larger birch 2020 February – felled with good yield of moderate quality. This is perhaps one of the better, more productive coupes, yielding after only four years.
3	0.35Ha~	Hazel (stools), Birch (stools, poles) Oak (Standards and one notable multistem) Holly, Rowan BE	Partially felled as coppice in October 2002, leaving oak and removing some beech. Re-coppiced in 2011, and a few new hazels planted Control of birch and beech regeneration to continue as needed. 2017 (February) re-felled along with Compartment 1 Suggest combining with Compartment 1 in future.
4	0.6Ha~	Hazel (overgrown) Oak, Birch, Beech (standards & poles) Rowan, Holly...	Thin birch and young beech to encourage oak. Control beech regeneration and any sycamore. Area is rich in fungi.
5	1Ha~	Birch, Spruce, Oak, Sycamore and some Hazel, Rowan, & Holly.	Remove sycamore, thin birch, and consider removal of spruce. Control any beech and facilitate development of oak and other native species. Rich in fungi and other ground flora, 2015 The area of sitka spruce was cleared in the Autumn, and will be planted in hazel seedlings by FCS apprentices.. Hazel planting failed due to drought. Not yet re-planted. 2018 Part of compartment 5 thinned by FE trainees.
6	2Ha~	Birch, Oak, Hazel,	Remove sycamore, thin birch and control any beech

		Sycamore, Rowan, Holly, and some cleared open space.	to advantage oak. Open space partially planted with ~400 wildlife-friendly and fruiting seedlings (from Woodland Trust) in January 2011 Control conifer regeneration (except Pine)
7,8,9,10,11,12	1.5Ha~	Hazel (overgrown), Oak, Sycamore, Beech, Rowan, Holly. (obvious former hazel coppice)	Re-establish hazel coppice rotation with oak standards. Birch and beech to be controlled, sycamore removed. 2012 Compartment 8 felled in Feb 2012, yielding little quality material. 2013 Compartment 9 felled Feb 2013, also little useful hazel, 2014/2015 Compartment 7 mostly felled in Feb 2014 - deer damage noted on regrowth, so Deer fence undergaps plugged and felling completed in Feb 2015. 2016 Plan for February 2016 is to fell compartment 2 (second felling) which should yield some good hazel rods and possible charcoal material. Depending on manpower, compartment 1 could be felled (3rd felling) Compartment 10 possibly to be first-felled by FCS apprentices 2018 (February) Compartment 8 re-coppiced with moderate quality yield. Part of Compartment 5 thinned by FE trainees. Hazel planting in clearfelled area >90% failure. 2019 (February) Compartment 9 re-coppiced with moderate yield.
13, 14, 15	n/a	Pine, Birch, Oak, Sycamore, Hazel, Mixed natives.	Outside the new deer fence. The hundred year old pines above the quarry (13) are to be retained as a positive biodiversity resource and seed source for natural regeneration of the cleared area (14), as with the mixed natives (15). Sycamore, beech and non-pine conifer regeneration should be monitored and controlled'
16	2.5Ha~	Birch, Hazel, Oak, Sycamore, Beech, Spruce, and Mixed natives.	Outside the new deer fence, this area is wild and dense, with wet areas, but contains several overgrown hazel coppice coupes for which felling should be considered. Sycamore and spruce should be removed and beech regeneration controlled.
17	0.3Ha~	As compartment 4	Outside fence – Beech regeneration controlled. Sycamore removed and controlled.
18	0.75Ha~	Oak, Beech, Hazel, Hemlock, Mixed natives.	This area was deer-fenced in 2005. following the felling of a stand of Corsican Pine. Control of gorse, hemlock and beech regeneration is

			needed. The area will serve as a comparison to compartment 19.
19	?	Ash, Oak, Rowan, Hazel, Elm, Beech, Sycamore and mixed natives	<p>This area was cleared of conifers in 2005. Since then it has been left to regenerate naturally.</p> <p>Beech and sycamore and any hemlock should be controlled.</p> <p>2014/2015/2016</p> <p>Vigorous regrowth of everything, especially hazel stools, many producing nuts in Autumn 2014.</p>
20	n/a	Beech, Hazel, Oak, Pine, Hemlock, and various natives	<p>This steep hillside was cleared in 2008, leaving some mature and semi-mature seed trees, mostly beech and oak with one scots pine, and will be left to regenerate naturally.</p> <p>The hilltop outside the new fence is to be left/kept clear, except for the pinewood at 13.</p>

Further Notes

- The new deer fence required some work to make it deer-proof. This was done by SWCWT volunteers in November 2010, but there was already considerable damage to the new growth in compartments 1 and 2, with preferential grazing of hazel advantaging birch to a degree.
- In January 2011, approximately 400 'wildlife-friendly' trees provided by the Woodland Trust were planted in open areas of compartment 6, with a few hazel going into compartment 3. They are mostly doing OK.
- With the fence deer-tight, the re-growth of hazel in compartment 3 is undamaged and with compartment 8 coppiced in 2012, we now have three stages of coppice available for viewing.
- In May 2012, pupils from Auchencairn Primary spent a day learning about forest management and doing coppice work under the Forest Schools programme. [Pictures:](#)
- At end April 2012, The coppice areas were visited by the Native Woodland Discussion Group as part of their annual conference and field visits held at Newton Stewart.
- A stile has been constructed over the fence at a point opposite the top of compartment 11, leading to a viewpoint overlooking Screel and Taliesin.
- Compartment 9 coppiced in February 2013. Birch and beech removed, leaving oak and ash to grow on. Very little usable hazel harvested. Suggest planting to establish new stools in sparse lower area of coupe.
- Some notes on coppice restoration: <http://home2.btconnect.com/tipiglen/coppice.html>
- SWCWT background is here: <http://www.swcwt.org/index.html>
- Potterland Hill is the subject of a short piece with further photographs here: <http://tipiglen.blogspot.com/2009/09/potterland-wood.html>
- The area of spruce in compartment 5 should be cleared as soon as practicable, and this would ideally require a new gate. Alternatively, it has been suggested that the trees could be felled and used in place to construct a shelter for the use of school parties, work parties, outdoor classes & workshops, etc.
- The above area of spruce in Compartment 5 was cleared in Autumn 2015 and is to be planted in hazel in Spring 2016 by FCS apprentices.

- Though some collection was done by the John Muir Trust group, many plastic tubes and stakes from the 1990 plantings remain to be collected.



Potterland Hill in 1797 ~ John Ainslie
Map of the Stewartry of Kirkcudbright
([National Library of Scotland](#))

