



Scottish
Forestry
Coilltearachd
na h-Alba

Draft

Lower Denholm Dean Management Plan 2025 to 2035



Scottish Forestry is the Scottish Government agency responsible for forestry policy, support and regulation



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S e Coilltearachd na h-Alba a' bhuidheann-ghnìomha aig Riaghaltas na h-Alba a tha an urra ri poileasaidh, taic agus riaghladh do choilltearachd

Please refer to the Management Plan Guidance note for advice on how to complete your management plan. This template does not include a section for thinning permission.

You must have an approved Management Plan before you can apply for Forestry Grant Scheme funding.

1. Details

Management Plan Details

Management Plan Name:	Lower Denholm Dean MPL		
Business Reference Number:	379662	Main Location Code:	92/770/0055
Grid Reference: (e.g. NH 234 567)	NT 5673 1798	Nearest town or locality:	Denholm, Hawick
Local Authority:	Scottish Borders Council		
Management Plan area (hectares):	3.2ha		

Owner's Details

Title:	Mrs	Forename:	Lynn	
Surname:	Ferguson			
Organisation:	DFHC	Position:	Chair	
Primary Contact Number:	04150 870 233	Alternative Contact Number:	07950000513	
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Denholm, Hawick, Scottish Borders				
Postcode:	TD9 8PB	Country:	Scotland	

Access Consent

You are not obliged to give us consent to enter your land, however if we are denied access to your land, and cannot carry out an assessment because of this, we may reject your application. This consent is for access to assess this application.

Do you give consent for Scottish Forestry to access your property?	☒ YES	☐ NO
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Management Plan

Approval - to be completed by Scottish Forestry staff:

Management Plan Reference Number:			
Plan Period: (ten years) (day/month/year)	From:	To:	
Operations Manager Signature:		Approval Date: (dd/mm/yyyy)	

DRAFT

2. Woodland Description

Give information about the following:

- past management of the woodland
- current species and ages
- statutory and non-statutory constraints (e.g. designations, archaeological interests)
- existing or potential public access
- woodland protection

Use the Land Information Search to help you complete this section. For more detailed information on the Native Woodland Survey of Scotland use the Scottish Forestry Map Viewer found on our website: forestry.gov.scot

2.1 Maps required

Provide maps to support your plan, as outlined in the guidance note. Please list all of the maps that you are including with your management plan.

List of Maps and Appendices:
Map 1 – Location
Map 2 – Species Distribution
Map 3a – Constraints & Utilities
Map 3b – Community Use & Access
Map 4 – Concepts
Map 5 - Compartments
App 1 – Species List
App 2 – NVC Woodland Types
App 3 – Annual Maintenance Calendar
App 4 – Annual Risk Assessment
App 5 – 10 Year Work Programme

2.2 History of management

Lower Denholm Dean forms part of a larger wooded valley Denholm Dean, and has been managed for ecological restoration under previous ownerships, who sought to enhance the ancient woodland character by removing non-native species such as Sitka Spruce (SS) and replacing them with native species.

In 2019 the Lower Dean was gifted to the Denholm Feuars & Householders Council (DFHC) and is now managed by the Denholm Dean Committee on behalf of the DFHC. The Committee has organized the felling of the spruce as per the approved Felling Permission Application (FPA-11405) and restocking is now underway in accordance with the approved permission.

Past management includes:

- Removal of non-native Sitka Spruce and restocking with native species.
- Planting and encouraging natural regeneration of native tree and shrub species.
- Path maintenance & re-routing for public access, visual enhancement and conservation.
- Control & monitoring of invasive species, including few-flowered leek and beech regeneration.
- Engagement with the community in conservation efforts and volunteering opportunities.

2.3 Species and age

The whole of Denholm Dean supports a diverse range of tree species, reflecting its status as a semi-natural woodland. The woodland lies within a variably sloping valley with moderate elevation, providing mostly good drainage and conditions for broadleaf regeneration. The soils are predominantly brown earths with some alluvial deposits along the Dean Burn, supporting diverse flora and tree species.

The woodland at Lower Denholm Dean consists primarily of mixed broadleaved woodland, with areas classified under the National Vegetation Classification (NVC) system. Recorded types include W7 (alder–ash), W9 (upland mixed ash–birch), W10 (oak–hazel–bluebell), and W11 (oak–downy birch–willow). These communities reflect the varied topography and soils across the Dean, from wetter riparian ground near the burn to drier slopes. Following the removal of Sitka spruce as part of the woodland restoration, management will focus on consolidating these native woodland types, creating a structurally diverse and resilient woodland.

To adapt to the changing climate and the impact of ash dieback, other species may be encouraged to ensure a structurally and ecologically diverse woodland. Sycamore (*Acer pseudoplatanus*), in particular, shares similar ecological functions and wood properties with ash and supports a comparable range of invertebrate and fungal species. While not a primary species within the targeted NVC types, its presence may provide continuity in canopy cover and habitat, contributing to long-term woodland resilience. The management approach will prioritize natural regeneration and site-appropriate species selection, ensuring the woodland remains dynamic and ecologically rich. Further details on the NVC woodland types relevant to the site can be found in **Appendix 2**.

Age Class & Development Stage

- **Mature Trees (>100 years old):** Found throughout the site, particularly large oaks, birch, and beech.
- **Mid-aged Trees (50–100 years old):** Previously established broadleaves that survived past felling activities.
- **Young Trees (Newly Planted):** Following SS removal, areas have been restocked with oak, birch, hazel, aspen, and hawthorn. Much of the site is considered new woodland having been planted by the previous owners some 20+ years ago and thus much is even aged.
- **Restocking within 2024 following the removal of SS has aimed to accelerate natural selection and aid woodland regeneration, a structured planting approach was implemented:**
 - a) **5m Radius Species Groups:** Oak, Birch, and Aspen were planted in distinct 5m radius clusters to facilitate species dominance through natural selection. Over time (100+ years), it is expected that each radius will develop into a single-species crown, reflecting a natural succession process.
 - b) **Hazel Coppice Expansion:** Hazel was specifically planted in areas where it was already a dominant species, ensuring continuity and allowing for future rotational coppicing. These areas will provide long-term sustainable timber resources while enhancing habitat diversity.
 - c) **Shrub Layer Development:** Alongside the main tree planting, a mixture of native shrubs (including Hawthorn and Hazel) was introduced along woodland paths and in clusters between the primary species radii. This planting approach was designed to create a mosaic of habitats, improving understorey structure, food sources for wildlife, and overall canopy diversity.
 - d) **Additional Species Along Paths:** To enhance the woodland's visual appeal and structural variety, a small selection of other native species (such as Rowan, Gean Cherry, and Willow) was planted along access routes and key woodland edges.

The following tables provide an overview of the current and likely future woodland composition within Lower Denholm Dean.

Table 2.3.1 – Species Composition

Abbrev.	Species (Common name)	Latin name	Percentage (%)	Area (ha approx.)
HAZ	Hazel	<i>Corylus avellana</i>	25.9	0.83
OK	Oak	<i>Quercus robur</i> , <i>Q. petraea</i>	13.2	0.42
BI	Birch	<i>Betula pendula</i> , <i>B. pubescens</i>	10.8	0.35
EM	Elm	<i>Ulmus</i> spp.	9.0	0.29
WCH	Wild Cherry	<i>Prunus avium</i>	7.6	0.24
HAW	Hawthorn	<i>Crataegus monogyna</i>	6.1	0.20
SY	Sycamore	<i>Acer pseudoplatanus</i>	5.1	0.16
AH	Ash	<i>Fraxinus excelsior</i>	4.9	0.16
ELD	Elder	<i>Sambucus nigra</i>	4.6	0.15
ASP/WLW	Aspen & Willow spp.	<i>Populus tremula</i> , <i>Salix</i> spp.	5.9	0.19
Other Native Spp.	Rowan, Blackthorn, Common Alder, Field Maple, Beech, Holly, Yew	<i>Various</i>	1.9	0.06
OL	Other Land (paths, open ground, riparian areas)	–	5.0	0.16
Total			100	3.2 ha

Natural Regeneration

- Natural regeneration is occurring successfully, with species such as Elm, Holly, Elder, Hazel and Gean showing signs of regeneration. There is also some Sycamore and Beech regeneration, which is being monitored and controlled to prevent dominance.

Ground Flora

- The woodland floor supports a good range of species, including ancient woodland indicator species.
- Mosses, lichens, and various ferns, notably Harts tongue fern (*Asplenium scolopendrium*) thrive in the damp, shaded areas, and former Sitka spruce plantation areas are now experiencing a resurgence of native understorey vegetation, including species such as red campion (*Silene dioica*) and foxglove (*Digitalis purpurea*).
- Further information, including a comprehensive species list that encompasses both Denholm Dean and the wider surrounding area, can be found in **Appendix 1**.

2.4 Constraints and designations

The Lower Denholm Dean is subject to several constraints and designations that influence management decisions. These include legal protections, ecological sensitivities, neighbouring land uses, and operational limitations that must be considered when implementing woodland management activities.

2.4.1 Ecological and Environmental Constraints

Ancient Woodland Inventory (AWI): Denholm Dean as a whole is classified as Long-Established Woodland of Plantation Origin (LEPO), meaning it has been continuously wooded since at least the mid-19th century. Management should prioritise the restoration of native woodland characteristics while ensuring the ecological integrity of the site.

Riparian Habitat and Watercourses: The woodland is either side of the Dean Burn, a tributary of the River Teviot. This presents a key constraint in terms of soil stability, water quality protection, and riparian habitat conservation. Any forestry operations must mitigate the risk of sedimentation and protect aquatic ecosystems working to promote best practice of the Forest and Water Guidelines.

Tree Health and Disease: Ash dieback (*Hymenoscyphus fraxineus*) is present in the woodland, affecting the survival of ash trees (*Fraxinus excelsior*). A proactive approach to tree health monitoring and phased removal of hazardous trees may be required to ensure public safety and woodland resilience.

Invasive Species Presence: Non-native species such as Beech (*Fagus sylvatica*), Sycamore (*Acer pseudoplatanus*), Snowberry (*Symphoricarpos rivularis*) and Few-flowered Leek (*Allium paradoxum*) are present. Their spread must be controlled to prevent competition with native woodland species.

Deer and Herbivore Pressure: Natural regeneration is vulnerable to browsing, particularly from roe deer. Sustainable management strategies, including monitoring and intervention where necessary, are essential for woodland establishment and regeneration.

2.4.2 Operational Constraints

Public Access and Core Paths: Denholm Dean is a publicly accessible woodland with paths designated as part of the Scottish Borders Core Paths Network (Paths 125 and 129). Management interventions must ensure that public safety is maintained and that any disruption to access routes during forestry operations is communicated effectively with the SBC Access Team.

Topography and Ground Conditions: The woodland features steep slopes and areas prone to erosion, which limits certain forestry operations, particularly mechanised interventions.

Powerlines and Utilities: Overhead and underground powerlines run through sections of the woodland, requiring coordination with utility providers before any management activities near these lines can proceed. Encroaching trees are subject to height management by operator contractors to Scottish Power. There is also an underground water pipe which likely supplies the local farm (Honeyburn) water troughs.

Neighbouring Land Use: Denholm Dean is bordered by a mixture of agricultural land, a few residential properties, and other woodland areas. Consideration must be given to ensuring that woodland management does not negatively impact neighbouring landowners. Agricultural land adjacent to the woodland may be sensitive to tree planting, and ensuring cooperation with landowners can help to manage boundary issues and avoid conflicts over shading, fencing, or water supply impacts.

2.4.3 Legal and Policy Designations

United Kingdom Forestry Standard (UKFS): All woodland management activities in Denholm Dean must comply with the UK Forestry Standard (UKFS) which sets out best practices for sustainable forestry in the UK, ensuring environmental, economic, and social sustainability.

Scottish Forestry Regulations: All felling and restocking activities must comply with the Forestry (Environmental Impact Assessment) (Scotland) Regulations 2017.

Scottish Borders Local Development Plan: The site is subject to local planning policies that prioritise woodland conservation and sustainable land use.

Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 & Nature Conservation (Scotland) Act 2004: Denholm Dean provides habitat for protected species, and management activities must consider the legal protection of breeding birds, bats, and other wildlife.

SSSI and SAC Proximity: The Dean Burn is a tributary of the River Teviot, a designated tributary of the River Tweed Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and Special Area of Conservation (SAC). While the Dean Burn itself is not designated, management must avoid any potential negative impacts on the surrounding protected areas.

2.5 Public access

Denholm Dean is an important local greenspace, providing public access and recreation opportunities for the community and others. The woodland is used for walking, informal recreation, and nature appreciation but public access must be balanced with conservation objectives and safety considerations.

2.5.1 Public Rights of Way and Core Paths

- The woodland includes sections of the Scottish Borders Core Paths Network, specifically **Paths 125 and 129**, which provide pedestrian access through and around Denholm Dean.
- **Path 129** runs along the eastern boundary, linking Denholm village to surrounding countryside, while **Path 125** provides internal access within the Lower and Upper Dean.
- These paths are well-used and require regular monitoring to ensure accessibility and safety in collaboration with the Scottish Borders Council Access Team.

2.5.2 Accessibility and Infrastructure

- Paths are un-surfaced and unsealed, so prone to erosion, flooding, and treefall obstructions.
- Future management should consider path improvements, such as resurfacing high-use sections and installing drainage where needed.
- Waymarking and signage could be improved to help visitors navigate the woodland and provide information on conservation efforts.

2.5.3 Managing Public Access During Operations

- Public access must be managed during forestry works, including tree felling, thinning, or invasive species control.
- Temporary path closures or diversions may be necessary, and appropriate signage must be installed to inform visitors of potential hazards.
- Engagement with the local community should ensure awareness of any planned works that may affect access.

2.5.4 Responsible Access and Community Engagement

- Under the Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2003, the public has a right of responsible access, which must be exercised in a way that does not damage the woodland or disrupt conservation efforts.
- Visitor pressure should be monitored to ensure that increased footfall does not lead to path degradation or habitat disturbance.
- The woodland provides an excellent opportunity for community engagement, environmental education, rural skills development and volunteer activities, fostering local stewardship of the site.
- Lower Denholm Dean is also actively used as part of Denholm Primary School's Forest School education programme, providing local children with hands-on learning experiences in nature. Management should support this educational use by maintaining safe access routes and ensuring key teaching areas remain undisturbed.

2.6 Woodland Protection

Denholm Dean requires ongoing protection to maintain its ecological integrity and ensure sustainable management. Woodland protection measures focus on mitigating risks related to tree health, invasive species, herbivore impact, and external threats, whilst planning for changes in climate to ensure a resilient and ecologically diverse woodland.

Plant Health (including tree health and invasive or noxious plants)

- **Ash Dieback:** (*Hymenoscyphus fraxineus*) is present within the woodland, leading to canopy dieback and structural instability. Management actions will involve monitoring for resistance and infected trees, prioritising the removal of hazardous specimens, and restocking with alternative native species.
- **Other Pests & Diseases:** The woodland will be monitored for other pests and diseases and useful tools such as Observatree will be utilised to keep up to date with latest information and advice.
<https://www.observatree.org.uk/>
- **Invasive Species Control:** Non-native species, including beech, sycamore, and few-flowered leek, will be monitored and controlled to prevent competition with regenerating native woodland.
- **The Tweed Forum** has a long-standing invasive species control programme for the Tweed catchment, focusing on species such as Japanese knotweed and Himalayan balsam. If these or other high-risk invasive plants are found within Lower Denholm Dean, they will be reported, and collaboration with the Tweed Forum will be sought to ensure effective management and control. Regular monitoring will help identify any emerging threats, ensuring early intervention where necessary.
<https://tweedforum.org/our-work/projects/tweed-invasives-project/>

Deer, Livestock and other mammals

- **Deer Impact:** Roe deer are present in the area and can impact natural regeneration by browsing young saplings. Monitoring and management through protective fencing or population control will be considered if necessary. Additionally, we will explore landscape-scale collaboration with neighbouring landowners to develop a coordinated approach to herbivore management, ensuring sustainable woodland regeneration and biodiversity benefits across the wider area working with NatureScot and the regional DMG.
- **Livestock:** While grazing is not currently an issue, boundary fences will be maintained to prevent encroachment from neighbouring farmland. March Fence maintenance/replacement will be agreed with neighbours.
- **Other Mammals:** Mammals such as badgers, foxes, bats and otters are or could be present. Management will ensure their habitat is maintained. All woodland operations will be carried out in compliance with wildlife legislation, with pre-work surveys conducted where necessary to identify active setts, holts, or dens. If works are likely to disturb these species, appropriate mitigation will be implemented, and, where required, licences will be sought from NatureScot before proceeding.

- Nesting Birds: Woodland management activities, including felling and pruning, will avoid the breeding season from **March 1st to August 31st** to protect nesting birds. If work is required during this period, a nesting bird survey will be conducted to ensure compliance with the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 and to minimize disturbance.

Grey Squirrels

- Grey squirrels pose a threat to tree health through bark stripping, particularly impacting oak and other broadleaves.
- While red squirrels are not currently recognised as present in Denholm Dean, regional conservation efforts support red squirrel populations. Any grey squirrel control efforts will align with best practices and conservation priorities and collaboration will be sought with neighbours and local groups such as the Central Borders Red Squirrel Network and Saving Scotland's Red Squirrels.

Water & Soil (soil erosion, acidification of water, pollution etc.)

- Dean Burn & Riparian Areas: The Dean Burn flows through the woodland, making it a key ecological feature that requires careful management to prevent erosion, pollution, and habitat degradation. All forestry activities will adhere to the Forest and Water Guidelines and relevant Best Practice Guides to protect water quality and riparian habitats. If any issues arise concerning water quality, sedimentation, or environmental pollution, SEPA will be notified immediately, and appropriate mitigation measures will be implemented to prevent further degradation.
- Soil Conservation: Soil disturbance will be minimised during path maintenance and forestry activities.
- Waste Management: Redundant materials, such as tree shelters, will be responsibly collected and recycled through schemes like the Tubex Tree Shelter Collection & Recycling Programme, ensuring plastic waste is diverted from landfill.
<https://tubex.com/sustainability/tree-shelter-collection-recycling-programme/>
- Vandalism & Fly-Tipping: The woodland is publicly accessible, and instances of vandalism or fly-tipping could occur. Management will include community engagement, signage, and reporting mechanisms.
- Spawning Salmon and Trout: Works that may disturb riverbanks, sediment, or watercourses will avoid the peak spawning and egg incubation period from **October to May** to protect fish populations. If work is necessary during this time, SEPA will be consulted, and necessary licenses will be obtained. Mitigation measures will be implemented to minimize disturbance and prevent siltation, ensuring the protection of aquatic habitats.

Environment (flooding, wind damage, fire, invasive species etc.)

- Fire Risk: Fire is a low risk due to the cool, damp climate but prolonged dry periods and increased visitor numbers can elevate risks. This could be mitigated by promoting responsible use and reducing deadwood build-up near paths. In the event of a fire, the priority will be public safety and rapid emergency response, with immediate contact made to the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service.

- **Flooding:** The woodland plays a role in natural flood mitigation by stabilising soils and slowing surface water runoff. Future tree planting near the riparian zone will enhance this function. There is canopy cover over much of the burn with some fallen trees creating log jams and helping with natural flood management.
- **Wind Damage:** While recent felling has removed vulnerable conifer species, the site remains exposed to strong winds and is open to the prevailing wind from the south west. The development of a more structurally diverse woodland, including a mix of broadleaf species at different heights, will improve wind resilience over time. Selective thinning will further strengthen stand stability by encouraging deep rooting and reducing the risk of windthrow in younger trees.

Climate Change Resilience (provenance, lack of diversity, uniform structure)

- **Species Diversity:** Increasing temperatures and changing rainfall patterns will influence species viability. Future restocking efforts will prioritise climate-resilient species, such as oak, birch, aspen, and field maple, enhancing overall woodland diversity. The introduction of additional native species will continue to improve resilience and ecological richness.
- **Structure & Canopy Development:** The recent felling of conifers has already contributed to a more varied age and canopy structure, encouraging regeneration and supporting biodiversity. Further improvements will be achieved through selective thinning and a Continuous Cover Forestry (CCF) approach, promoting natural regeneration of low to mid-canopy species and ensuring a multi-layered woodland.
- **Provenance of Trees:** Trees selected for planting originate from local seed zones ensuring they are well adapted to regional conditions. Natural regeneration, once established, provides the most site-appropriate provenance, reinforcing long-term resilience. Any introduced species will also be sourced from local seed zones to maintain ecological integrity.
- **Long-Term Adaptation:** Management will align with climate adaptation guidance to ensure the woodland remains structurally diverse, ecologically robust, and resilient to environmental changes.

3. Vision and Objectives

3.1 Vision

Describe your long term vision for the woodland(s).

Denholm Dean will be a thriving, ecologically rich woodland that balances biodiversity, community involvement, and sustainable management. It will provide habitat for wildlife, opportunities for education and recreation, and a lasting natural space for future generations.

Through restoration, careful stewardship, and local engagement, the Dean will remain a resilient and accessible woodland. Sustainable management will ensure its long-term health, adapting to environmental challenges while fostering a strong connection between people and nature.

To achieve this, we have identified five core objectives to guide its management and future development.

3.2 Management objectives

Give your objectives of management and also how you will manage the woodland sustainably. Your objectives should be specific and you should also be able to measure their outcomes.

No.	Objectives (including environmental, economic and social considerations)
1	To enhance ecological value and biodiversity The objective is to restore Denholm Dean to a natural woodland by planting encouraging regeneration of native species and enhancing biodiversity by creating differing habitats such as glades and waterside areas, while incorporating deadwood features to support invertebrates, birds, and mammals.
2	To foster community engagement and involvement To develop a sense of ownership and stewardship within the local community through regular volunteer days, open events, and initiatives such as the "Sponsor an Oak Tree" programme, which will encourage residents to contribute to the woodland's restoration. Local tradespeople will be engaged for tasks that cannot be completed by volunteers, supporting the local economy while ensuring high-quality results for projects like signage.
3	To provide opportunities for education and learning Denholm Dean will serve as an educational resource for all ages, including partnerships with local schools and colleges to offer outdoor learning opportunities through forest school programmes, "outdoor classom" days, conservation projects, and field trips. Opportunities to collaborate with like-minded woodland groups to build on shared knowledge and experience will be explored. Additionally, we will encourage recording groups to carry out surveys and monitoring to assess ecological change over time
4	To adopt sustainable woodland management Sustainable management of the woodland will be ensured through low-impact practices, such as maintaining paths, bridges, and infrastructure with the help of the Scottish Borders Council Rangers Service. Areas for relaxation, such as glades with benches, will also be created to encourage the community to enjoy and derive positive health benefits from, the natural environment. Income from sustainable practices, such as the sale of coppiced materials, will be reinvested into ongoing woodland management, with advice from the Borders Forest Trust and others.

No.	Objectives (including environmental, economic and social considerations)
5	To create long-term resilience and legacy This will include regular monitoring of the woodland's ecological health and adapting management practices to address environmental challenges. Additionally, achievable goals will be set for future volunteer groups to ensure continuity without overburdening them. Where feasible, opportunities will be explored to expand the area of community-owned and managed land, strengthening local stewardship and enhancing ecological connectivity with other areas of forest habitat in the local area (in accordance with SBC BAP priorities).

4. Analysis and Management Strategy

Analyse the information from the previous sections and identify how to make best use of your woodland and its resources to achieve your objectives.

4.1 Constraints and Opportunities

Using the table below analyse any issues raised or relevant features within your woodland and record the constraints and opportunities.

Feature/Issue	Constraint	Opportunity
Public Access & Recreation	Path erosion, visitor impact on sensitive habitats. Difficult terrain, which makes access difficult for the less able.	Improve path resilience, engage the community in conservation efforts, collaborating with SBC Access Team.
Tree Health & Disease	Presence of ash dieback and other tree pests.	Diversify tree species for resilience, monitor and manage diseased trees.
Invasive Species	Non-native species (e.g., sycamore, beech, few-flowered leek).	Active removal and control to support native species regeneration.
Deer & Herbivore Impact	Browsing pressure affecting natural regeneration.	Implement prevention and control measures such as fencing and natural protection like sheep wool.
Woodland Management & Coppicing	Requires long-term planning and labour investment.	Sustainable timber production, increased biodiversity through rotational coppicing.
Riparian & Wetland Areas	Risk of soil erosion and water pollution.	Enhance wetland habitats, improve natural flood

		mitigation. Follow Forest and Water Guidelines.
Climate Change	Increased risk of extreme weather events affecting tree stability. Some native species may be adversely affected by changing weather patterns	Select climate-resilient species and improve structural diversity.
Community Engagement & Education	Need for ongoing involvement and awareness.	Strengthen local partnerships, support school and volunteer programmes. Update local web pages with activities and plans.

4.2 Management Strategy

Following your analysis, provide a broad statement describing your management strategy. Consider all aspects (economics, access, biodiversity, landscape) and pay particular attention to your silvicultural strategy for meeting your management objectives.

Lower Denholm Dean will be managed as a sustainable, ecologically resilient, and community-focused woodland, balancing biodiversity, access, and sustainable use.

- **Silviculture:** A continuous cover forestry approach using natural regeneration, selective thinning, and rotational coppicing will create a diverse, climate-resilient woodland.
- **Biodiversity:** Invasive species will be controlled, key habitats protected, and ecological connectivity improved through adaptive management.
- **Access & Wellbeing:** Paths and infrastructure will be maintained to support sustainable public access while preserving sensitive areas.
- **Community & Education:** Engagement with schools, volunteers, and local groups will foster stewardship and awareness.
- **Climate Resilience:** Species diversification and structural enhancements will strengthen the woodland against environmental change.

This strategy will be delivered through phased management, ensuring long-term sustainability and community benefit.

5. Management Proposals

Tell us the management operations you intend to carry out over the next 10 years to help meet your management objectives for the woodland. If you intend to carry out felling (e.g. clear felling) you must apply for permission separately.

The management objectives for Lower Denholm Dean will be carried out using a structured compartment approach as outlined below. This approach ensures sustainable practices that support biodiversity, public access, and community involvement. Planned operations over the next 10 years will align with the UK Forestry Standard (UKFS) to enhance woodland resilience, ecological value, and public enjoyment.

An **annual maintenance calendar** will guide routine tasks and ongoing management, ensuring the long-term success of these objectives.

Cpt	Planned Operations
Cpt 1	Left untouched with no public access, except for maintenance of burn-side trees accessed from the stream bed. Removal of old tree shelter.
Cpt 2	Selective thinning and low-level intervention to improve woodland structure and light. Remove hung-up trees. Create deadwood piles and dead-hedges on banks. Expand hazel coppice. Maintain pollard area beneath power lines. Manual weeding to support young trees.
Cpt 3	Maintain and weed new planting. Establish hazel coppice cycle. Manage boundary hedges by coppicing, laying, and hawthorn infill. Maintain stockade fencing and access to burn-side beach. Gradually clear Sitka brash to enable riparian planting and possible seating. Monitor tree health, beat-up failures, and remove old fence wire. Maintain and improve the Forest School area to support outdoor learning.
Cpt 4	Stabilise banks with shrub planting and brash barriers. Enhance riparian woodland with willow cuttings and alder. Supplement earlier planting with additional trees and natural regeneration. Remove redundant fence wire. Carry out regular manual weeding to support young trees.
Cpt 5	Maintain and extend the riparian tree belt with willow cuttings along the burn. Clear brash near the central bridge to encourage willow, wild cherry, and alder regrowth. Provide natural seating with logs. Undertake manual weeding and maintenance of new planting.
Cpt 6	Clear brash and replant in line with the restocking plan. Manage roadside planting to reduce windblow risk and improve amenity. Improve downhill access path and repair rutting. Maintain and later hedge-lay the roadside mixed hedge. Carry out periodic weeding and gap filling to ensure successful establishment.
Cpt 7 (River corridor)	Maintain the Dean Burn as an open riparian feature. Protect water quality and bank stability by following Forest and Water Guidelines. Encourage natural regeneration of riparian species (e.g. alder, willow) through selective planting and protection. Remove brash and fallen timber only where it obstructs flow or access, otherwise retain for natural habitat value. Control invasive species along the watercourse. Maintain safe public and school access to the burn for recreation and Forest School activities.

5.2 Priority Projects

These priority projects support long-term woodland resilience and community engagement. They align with the Ten-Year Work Programme (**Appendix 5**) and contribute to the management objectives outlined in Section 3.2.

5.2.1 Tree Establishment and Shelter Transition

Newly planted trees must reach a target density of 1600 stems per hectare. Annual monitoring and targeted replanting (beating-up) will maintain density. Tree shelters will be removed in phases to reduce plastic waste and encourage strong natural growth.

- Years 1–5: Annual survival surveys; replanting as required.
- Years 6–10: Gradual shelter removal.

Related Objective: 1 (Biodiversity), 4 (Sustainable Management).

5.2.2 Sustainable Coppicing & Timber Management

Rotational coppicing of hazel and willow will be established to enhance biodiversity and provide materials for habitat piles, fencing, and community projects. A 7–15 year cutting cycle will be maintained.

- Year 1: Identify and map coppice areas.
- Years 2–5: Begin coppicing and monitor regrowth.
- Years 6–10: Expand cycles and introduce additional species.

Related Objective: 1 (Biodiversity), 4 (Sustainable Management).

5.2.3 Community Engagement & Outdoor Learning

Improvements to outdoor learning spaces and Forest School areas will support community involvement. Interpretation boards will educate visitors on woodland management. Volunteer days and guided walks will be held.

- Years 1–3: Improve Forest School areas, install resources.
- Years 4–10: Organize conservation events.

Related Objective: 2 (Community Engagement), 3 (Education & Learning).

5.2.4 Public Access & Infrastructure Maintenance

Pathways, bridges, and signage will be maintained and improved. Regular inspections will ensure infrastructure remains safe and accessible.

- Ongoing: Annual inspections and maintenance.
- Years 1–3: Steps, handrails, and signage updates.
- Years 4–10: Further upgrades as needed.

Related Objective: 2 (Community Engagement), 4 (Sustainable Management).

5.2.5 Wildlife & Habitat Enhancement

Biodiversity will be increased through habitat creation, including bird/bat boxes, deadwood piles, and pollinator-friendly planting. Invasive species such as beech, sycamore, and few-flowered leek will be managed to support native woodland recovery.

- Years 1–5: Install habitat features, control invasives.
- Years 6–10: Monitor and adapt management.

Related Objective: 1 (Biodiversity), 5 (Resilience & Legacy).

5.2.6 Community Woodland Governance & Social Enterprise Development

A governance review will explore transitioning to a Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation (SCIO) and developing a woodland-based social enterprise, such as local timber processing or advisory services.

- Years 1–3: Governance review, feasibility study.
- Years 4–6: Develop a business model.
- Years 7–10: Implement viable initiatives.

Related Objective: 2 (Community Engagement), 4 (Sustainable Management), 5 (Resilience & Legacy).

5.2.7 Risk Management & Volunteer Safety

A structured risk assessment, reviewed annually, will guide safe volunteer involvement in woodland work. It will address hazards related to tree work, path maintenance, and conservation activities.

- Ongoing: Annual risk assessment reviews.
- As required: Implement additional safety measures.

Related Objective: 2 (Community Engagement), 4 (Sustainable Management).

6. Resources

6.1 Committee Resources

The Dean Committee is a Sub Committee of the Denholm Feuars and Householders Council who were gifted the Lower Dean in 2019 by Michael Braithwaite.

The committee currently consists of 6 volunteer members who have qualifications and skills in woodland management, botany, ecology, Forest School as well as business and financial experience. It meets regularly to review progress and agree priorities for action and will be key to delivering the objectives of this plan.

Terms of Reference have been agreed between the Committee and the DF & HC which makes clear the Committee's responsibility for delivering the 10 Year Management Plan and the Council's responsibility to support that.

6.2 Volunteer Resources

The Committee currently has an active group of volunteers who have carried out brash removal and tree planting in relevant Cpts and weeding. Volunteers from Borders Forest Trust have supported this work. A Volunteer Organiser sets the tasks that should be carried out each week. Detailed Risk Assessments have been prepared and reviewed and agreed by the Committee.

The continued involvement of volunteers is essential to the achievement of the plan's objectives.

6.3 Financial Resources

The Denholm Dean Committee currently holds funds of £7,000 at the end of October 2025 - raised from felling income, tree sponsorship and donations from Rotary International.

It has been agreed to set aside £2,000 as a reserve to be used only in emergencies or for essential unplanned work. The remaining funds will be allocated to achieving the plan's objectives - such as improving access, enhancing biodiversity, supporting community engagement, and encouraging sustainable woodland practices. This flexible approach allows the committee to direct funding where it is most needed, with priority given to practical, visible projects such as path improvements, habitat enhancements, and educational activities.

All financial decisions are made by committee agreement, ensuring transparency, accountability, and alignment with the objectives of the plan. Proposed projects must clearly demonstrate how they help deliver the Plan's objectives and must offer good value for money.

The committee may seek to apply for external funding to support its work where it is considered to be appropriate.

7. Stakeholder Engagement

This may be required depending on the work you intend on carrying out in the woodland and the constraints or designations that have been identified.

Individual/ Organisation	Date contacted	Date feedback received	Response	Action
TO BE UPDATED/ FOLLOWING CONSULTATIONS				

22/10/2025

DRAFT