

LWT woodland condition assessment

Site: Warcocks Green

Recorder(s): John Lamb

Date: 29/05/19

It is important to monitor woodlands to ascertain what condition they are in and whether management targets are being met. The following condition assessment should be carried out for woodland areas every 5 years. If the woodland is linear and has difficult terrain all observations should be made from the boundary looking into the wood - the area of assessment is that which can be seen in front of the assessor with their back towards the nearest external boundary. Using a good scale map walk the site stopping ten times to make assessments. These stops should be marked on the map so that they can be reproduced in later assessments. The stops should be evenly spaced throughout the site (e.g. about 100m between) but can be positioned anywhere.

At each stop record the answers to the following ten questions (see overleaf for stop descriptions and map for their locations):

Extent –**1. Is the area or boundary of the woodland as it should be?**

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Y	Y	Y	Y	Y					

Structure –**2. Can you see mature trees?**

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
N	N	N	N	N					

3. Can you see at least five individual native shrubs or coppice?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Y	Y	Y	N	Y					

4. Can you see at least a 50% coverage of native ground flora (not including bare ground: bg, and/or non-native flora e.g. Himalayan Balsam: B)? *=close.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Y*	N(bg)	Y	Y	N(bg)					

5. Can you see any standing or hung-up deadwood?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Y	Y	Y	Y	Y					

6. Can you see any laying deadwood over 2m long?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Y	Y	Y	Y	Y					

Regeneration –**7. Can you see at least five native tree seedlings over 2m tall?**

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
N	N	Y	Y	N					

Undesirable species (different species can be substituted for those used below) –

8. Is your field of vision free of non-native shrubs (e.g. Rhododendron)?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Y	Y	Y	Y	Y					

9. Is your field of vision free of unwanted canopy tree species? (Hc = Horse-chestnut, NM = Norway Maple and S = Sycamore)

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
N(S)	N(S)	N(S)	N(Hc,S)	N(NM)					

10. Is your field of vision free of other non-natives?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
N(B)	Y	Y	Y	Y					

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Note: Only five stops were made at Warcocks Green due to the openness of the plantation and relative evenness of the canopy, understorey and field layer. Warcocks Green was being used by scrambling motorbikes. Fires have been lit and there is litter in the woodland, together with Himalayan Balsam.

Of the 50 points available at the five stops assessed in May 2019, the plantation at Warcocks Green scored 33 Yes's and 17 No's, i.e. $33/50 = 66\%$.

For comparison, the other sites assessed in Hyndburn in May 2019 are as follows:

- Whinney Hill No. 2 (West – Pond End) scored 88%,
- Huncoat No. 1 (West) scored 81%,
- Whinney Hill No. 1 (East – Cricket Club End) scored 80%,
- Martholme Greenway scored 77%,
- Huncoat No. 2 (East) scored 70%,
- Abbott Clough scored 66%, and
- Rushton Green Farm scored 63%.

The average for the sites assessed in Hyndburn in May 2019 is 73.9%, hence with 66%, Warcocks Green scored significantly less than the Hyndburn average.

For an additional comparison, other woodland condition assessments in Hyndburn have been as follows:

- Oak-birch woodland above Arden Hall scored 86% in 2018,
- Ash Plantation below The Coppice scored 86% in 2018,
- Arden Hall Plantation scored 80% in 2018,
- Hollins Wood scored 80% in 2018,
- Priestley Clough scored 75% in 2018,
- Foxhill Bank in Oswaldtwistle scored 74% in 2008,
- Rothwell Heights scored 74% in 2018,
- Plantation House scored 67.5% in 2018,
- Ooze Castle & Rock Haugh Clough Ancient Woodland scored 67% in 2009, and
- Park View Forest School woodland scored 60% in 2018.

The average score for the 18 woodlands assessed in Hyndburn to date is just under 75.5%, hence with 66%, Warcocks Green scored significantly less than the average in Hyndburn, and is the equal 15th highest (equal 3rd lowest) scoring woodland assessed in Hyndburn to date.

The negative points at Warcocks Green can be addressed through management by, for example;

2. It will take time (decades) for trees to become mature and over-mature so progress cannot be made quickly to address item 2 (5 points in the long-term).

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3. Plant native shrubs, coppice existing trees and/or thin the canopy to let more light in to stimulate germination of understorey species. (1 point in the short to medium-term).
4. Thin canopy to let more light in (2 points in the short to medium-term).
7. The canopy can be thinned to let more light in, natural regeneration protected and/or young trees planted, to address item 7 (3 points in the short to medium-term).
9. The non-native tree species (Horse-chestnut, Norway Maple, pine and Sycamore in this case) can be selectively felled, either as part of canopy thinning, or a separate operation, to address item 9. Any natural regeneration of these species will need to be controlled/removed in the future (5 points in the long-term).
10. Non-native plants (Himalayan Balsam in this case) can be controlled to address item 10. This will be an ongoing process if the species isn't controlled on adjacent landholdings (1 point in the short-term).

In the short to medium-term, the score for the woodland at Warcocks Green could be increased by up to 7 points, which would bring the score up to $40/50 = 80\%$, leaving 5 points (10%) from trees becoming mature in the long-term (question 2) and 5 points (10%) from canopy tree species (question 9). Hence a target of a 7-point increase to 80% could be applied to the woodland at Warcocks Green in the short to medium-term.

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1. GPS: SD71558 26799, 177m asl. Three photos taken stood in a depression in the Southeast corner of the plantation, looking North, NE and East.
Canopy dominated by: Pine with Alder, oak, larch, Sycamore and birch.
Understorey: Holly, Elder and Rowan.
Field layer dominated locally by: Broad Buckler-fern, Himalayan balsam, Bramble and Common Bent. Other flora included Soft-rush.



Above left: Stop 1 photo 1 of 3. Above right: Stop 1 photo 2 of 3, 29/05/19.
Below: Stop 1 photo 3 of 3, 29/05/19.



2. GPS: SD71442 26754, 172m asl. Two photos taken stood under a birch tree at the base of a slope in the South-western corner/point of the plantation, looking North and East.
Canopy dominated by: Pine with birch and Sycamore on the edge.
Understorey: Elder and Alder.
Field layer dominated locally by: Broad Buckler-fern, Bramble and bare ground.
Other flora included Common Bent.

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Above left: Stop 2 photo 1 of 2. Above right: Stop 2 photo 2 of 2, 29/05/19.

3. GPS: SD71485 26859, 179m asl. Two photos taken stood on the edge of the pond along the North-western edge of the plantation, looking SW and NE.

Canopy dominated by: Pine with oak and Sycamore.

Understorey: Elder, Rowan, Wild Cherry and Ash.

Field layer dominated locally by: Broad Buckler-fern, Bramble and bare ground.

Other flora included Lady-fern, Common Bent, Soft-rush, Rosebay Willowherb and Yorkshire-fog.



Above left: Stop 3 photo 1 of 2. Above right: Stop 3 photo 2 of 2, 29/05/19.

4. GPS: SD71510 26929, 176m asl. Two photos taken stood in between an Ash and an Elder a few metres in from the Northern boundary fence (post and chicken mesh), looking SE and SW.

Canopy dominated by: Pine with Sycamore, birch and Alder.

Understorey: Elder, Alder, birch, Horse-chestnut and Norway Maple.

Field layer dominated locally by: Broad Buckler-fern, Bramble and bare ground.

Other flora included Rough Meadow-grass, willowherb species, Herb-Robert and Nettle.

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Above left: Stop 4 photo 1 of 2. Above right: Stop 4 photo 2 of 2, 29/05/19.

5. GPS: SD71498 26820, 187m asl. Three photos taken stood on a high point in the middle of the plantation with the building adjacent to Stop 1 in the SE corner and the pond along the North-western edge at Stop 3 both visible, looking SW, North and East.

Canopy dominated by: Pine.

Understorey: Elder, Alder, Norway Maple and Holly.

Field layer dominated locally by: Broad Buckler-fern, Bramble and bare ground.



Above left: Stop 5 photo 1 of 3. Above right: Stop 5 photo 2 of 3, 29/05/19.

Below: Stop 5 photo 3 of 3, 29/05/19.



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Risk assessment checks: Steep &/or slippery slopes, trip hazards, watercourses &/or waterbodies (specify), culverts, mine shafts/adits, wet/boggy areas, hung-up trees, thorny bushes (Blackthorn, Dog-rose, Hawthorn, Holly etc.), rocks, scree, quarry faces, internal fencing/barbed wire etc.