

Harrison's Rocks Woodland

Management Plan Draft 4

Date (dd/mm/yyyy)	06 April 2010	To	05 April 2030
Date of last review ¹ (2.1.3)			
Owner / tenant	Owner: BMC Land and Property Trust (British Mountaineering Council)		
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Signed declaration of tenure rights and agreement to public availability of the plan ² (UKWAS 1.1.3/1.1.5/2.1.2)			

¹ The plan must be reviewed every five years.

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² As owner, tenant or manager, you have the right to manage the wood in accordance with this plan. At least a summary of the management plan must be made publicly available on request.

Location

Nearest town, village or feature	The Harrisons Rocks Woodlands are situated ½ a mile South of the village of Groombridge which is 3 miles SW of Tunbridge Wells Kent.
Grid reference	TQ532356 marks the centre of the woodland
Total area (ha)	4.39ha covers the land owned by the BMC and as shown on the maps attached as Appendix A and B

Description of the woodland(s) in the landscape

Harrison's Rocks Woodland, a mainly deciduous wood, lies adjacent to and immediately west of Birchden Woods (a Forestry Commission plantation with both deciduous and evergreen trees, which is marked as an Ancient Woodland under the PAWS scheme)

The 4.39 hectare woodland site has recently been acquired by the British Mountaineering Council who wish to restore the woodland to health in keeping with the cliff environment.

In the SE of England (south east of a line from The Wash to Portsmouth) the only climbing rocks extant are a few sandstone outcrops of the Weald. Of these Harrison's Rocks is the most popular and streams of climbers migrate from London and elsewhere in South East England to climb the small cliffs within the woodland site.

The fact that many of the local schools take their pupils there to enjoy bouldering and outward bound type activities, means that the woodland site gets an unprecedented number of visitors throughout the year.

The sporting activities also tends to attract many local dog-walkers and ramblers, who enjoy the general exciting atmosphere at the rocks and views west across the valley.

The Tunbridge Wells Circular Walk traverses the bottom of the valley along the western border of the woodland site. 50 years ago you could see the magnificence of the sandstone outcrop which is now almost obscured by the tree canopy. Implementing this woodland plan will not only create a much healthier wood in terms of a more diverse flora and fauna but will also enable this scenic vista to re-appear.

The British Mountaineering Council will be dedicating this woodland as Open Access Land.

History of management

The Harrison's Woodland is a narrow strip of woodland mainly below the cliff edge running down the valley slope to the fields below. It is a very young, self-seeded, woodland that has grown up over the last 60 years.

A photo of the rocks taken sometime during the war shows very few trees at all except for a few older boundary trees at the bottom of the slope, some holly/yew scrub trees to the right of the rocks in the picture and a few older beech and oak trees at the top of the cliff planted circa 1900. At that time the rocks as seen in this photo below are plainly visible and there is very little woodland there. Notice the prominent Douglas Fir on the boundary at the bottom of the slope.



The slope from the rocks down to the TW Circular Walk is very sandy and during the 70s and 80s the then Warden of the Rocks even planted trees to try to stabilise the loss of sand from the path along the base of the cliff.

There has been constant work since that time at shoring up the climbing corridor (about 10 metres wide) that runs along below the cliff. This 10 metre corridor will need to have special attention and will need to be strengthened with revetments as a part of this plan.

Since the 80s the wood has been allowed to propagate willy-nilly with no formal woodland plan or any thought as to the effect that it's haphazard growth has had

on the rock condition and the general view for walkers looking up from the valley floor. No real planning has been made to foster the four-tier woodland layers (tree layer, shrub layer, field layer, ground layer) and, as a result, a rather dark and oppressive woodland has resulted, with little fauna and flora under the trees.

There is evidence that coppicing was done in the 80s but instead of harvesting the poles every 7 years to promote activity in the field and the ground layer, the mainly birch trees have been allowed to grow ever upwards to give a canopy that has shaded detrimentally both the woodland and the rocks.

This shade has reached a point in the last 10 years where the rocks are no longer visible from below and they are so shaded from wind and sun that their condition has deteriorated and they have become damp and therefore very friable.

The same picture taken in November 2010 from the identical position as the previous picture shows the height that these trees have reached such that no rock is visible. The tall Douglas Fir is only just taller than the rest of the trees.



The cliff environment is very precious for the extensive sporting activity that it receives. If the sandstone is allowed to get over saturated with dampness, then the hard rock crust can easily disintegrate. It is essential therefore that the woodland is organised to give maximum visibility of the rock surfaces and rock passages so they can therefore receive both the wind and the sunshine to keep them dried out.

One reason for allowing the trees to grow unchecked may have been that in 1983 a dangerous leaning Oak near the boundary with the TW Circular walk was cut down without a tree survey and without reporting it to the local Wealden Council. As a result of that action and a complaint by a local villager, a Tree Preservation Order was slapped on the whole of the woodland.

The British Mountaineering Council, now that they own this site, want to bring the woodland under proper control and management. This 20 year plan will ensure that this is achieved in the coming years.

2.0 Woodland information

Areas and features

2.1.1 Designated areas	In woodland	Adjacent to woodland	Map
Special Areas for Conservation (SACs)	-	-	-
Special Protection Areas (SPAs)	-	-	-
Ramsar Sites (see note on Guidance)	-	-	-
National Nature Reserves (NNRs)	-	-	-
Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs)	-	-	-
Other designations e.g.: National Parks (NPs), Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONBs), Local Nature Reserves (LNRs)	AONB to be sorted		
Details			
2.1.2 Rare and important species	In woodland	Adjacent to woodland	Map
Red Data Book or BAP species	-	-	-
Rare, threatened, EPS or SAP species	-	-	-
Details			
2.1.3 Habitats	In woodland	Adjacent to woodland	Map

Ancient semi-natural woodland (ASNW)	Ancient Woodland to be sorted		
Other semi-natural woodland	-	-	-
Plantations on ancient woodland sites (PAWS)	-	Birchden Wood (FC)	This is marked as Birchden Wood on the detailed map Appendix B and is owned by the Forestry Commission
Semi-natural features in PAWS		Birchden Wood (FC)	Only in certain areas since the great storm 1977?
Woodland margins and hedges	The western boundary with TW Circular Walk and also the western boundary field	The eastern boundary is the forest road of the Birchden Wood (FC)	See diagrammatic map of the woodland showing the compartments
Veteran and other notable trees	See tree survey in Cliff Corridor in Appendix C		

Breeding sites	We have had an initial bat survey and one possible roosting site has been indicated.		
Habitats of notable species or subject to HAPs	-	-	-
Unimproved grassland	-	-	-
Rides and open ground	-	-	-
Valuable wildlife communities	-	-	-
Feeding areas	-	-	-
Lowland heath	-	-	-
Peatlands	-	-	-
Others	-	-	-
Details			
<p>The woodland has a few trees that were boundary trees before 1950. We plan to keep these but some of them will need to have their crowns raised. These include Oaks, Beech and two Douglas Firs which are magnificent.</p> <p>The trees in the cliff 10 metre corridor have been fully surveyed and details of these are included in Appendix C. They consist of some oaks planted at the base of the cliff and all along the top of the cliff are various old beeches and yews that must have been planted in the late Victorian times.</p>			

2.1.4 Water	In woodland	Adjacent to woodland	Map
Watercourses	-	-	-
Lakes	-	-	-
Ponds	-	-	-
Wetland habitats	-	-	-

Details

There are no ponds or water collections in the woodland. There are a number of tiny springs that seep out of the base of the rock at various points along the escarpment, which drain down the slope and are lost in the sand. These originate from the Birchden Wood and are evident more in the winter and tend to dry up in the summer after a dry period.

2.1.5 Landscape	In woodland	Adjacent to woodland	Map
Landscape designated areas	-	-	-
Landscape features	The rock cliff called Harrison's Rocks	-	-
Rock exposures	Visibility needs to be regained by this plan	-	The Rock cliff is shown in the map in Appendix B.
Historic landscapes	-	-	-
Areas of the woodland prominent from roads	See below		-
Areas of the woodland prominent from settlements	See below		-

Details

The spectacle of the rock cliff should be brought back to its splendour circa 1950 which was viewable from the TW Circular Walk and from the road that goes from Eridge Station to Motts Mill and Groombridge. Also the main line from Uckfield to London runs along the western border (parallel and just outside the TW Circular Walk). Passengers cannot see at present the rock environment, which of course is very rare in SE England.

This plan once implemented should regenerate the woodland and especially the shrub layer which has been sadly neglected over the last 50 years. The scrub trees can be kept at a scrub height which still allows the magnificence of the rock cliff to be seen and appreciated.

There is a three house hamlet to the south of the woodland. It is planned to allow the tree canopy to remain dense towards the boundary fence at the south west corner of the woodland to allow the residences their privacy.

2.1.6 Cultural features	In woodland	Adjacent to woodland	Map
Public rights of way The BMC will be dedicating the woodland as Open Access Land."	3 entrances to the woodland	The main access is via the FC Birchden Wood	All of these entrances are marked on the compartment map by red crosses
Prominent viewing points	See notes above	All along top of the rocks gives a good view of the valley	See map in Appendix B which shows the cliff face where the top is on the East side.
Permissive footpaths	There are various permissive footpaths through the wood designated by log poled boundaries	The top of the cliff can be reached from the forest track	See the footpaths marked in red on the more detailed map Appendix B
Areas managed with traditional management systems	-	-	-

Details

Entrance 1 – At Forge Farm, there is a public right of way which crosses the railway from the west and goes along the TW Circular Walk and thus into the Harrison’s site. Visiting climbers are discouraged from using this entrance to minimise traffic through the settlements mentioned above. Only climbers on foot that have come from London to Eridge station usually use this entrance to the woodland and the rocks.

The main entrance to the rocks is from the Car Park and Toilets at the northern end of Birchden Wood and very close to Groombridge. From there visitors can walk approximately ¼ mile to two entrances:

Entrance 2 - At the North Boulder, from the Car Park there is a footpath across the fields and via the TW Circular Walk to a gate entrance at the bottom of the northern end of the cliff near the distinctive North Boulder.

Entrance 3 – At the Forest Road, from the Car Park follow the forest track to the top of the rocks about half way along the cliff. A steep path from there leads to the bottom of the rocks.

Both of these routes are shown on the large map that is posted on the main notice board in the Car Park.

2.1.7 Archaeological features	In woodland	Adjacent to woodland	Map
Scheduled monument	-	-	-
Historical features	-	-	-

Details

Woodland resource characteristics

The first resource of course is the rocks and woodland environment that attract a large number of climbers, educational groups, walkers and dog walkers that visit the site. These visitors park their cars and other transport in the Car Park for which a small donation is encouraged. This money is collected by voluntary means and is used to maintain the car park and toilet block.

The BMC's policy is not to charge any entrance fee to enter the woods for climbers, educational groups, walkers and dog walkers that visit the rocks. However, there is a collective ethic in the climbing fraternity that for the free use of the rocks, climbers and other interested visitors volunteer to give something back to the rocks. This is organised under the direction of the Sandstone Volunteer Group which organises active work parties to maintain the rocks and the woodland.

Even though we will eliminate completely any non-native species to prevent re-seeding (mainly Sycamore and Rhododendrons) the reduction of the existing oppressive tree canopy will be achieved entirely by coppicing (cutting the stems of the trees at the bottom) or pollarding (Cutting the branches at a height of 20 feet). The reason for this is that we need to keep the stools in place to prevent the mainly sandy soil being washed down the slope to the West boundary.

In fact the number of stools will be increased as we intend to seed a new scrub layer of trees (Hazel, Hawthorn and Alder Blackthorn) to hold the sandy slope in place, but on the other hand will keep a lower canopy that does not prevent the wind and sun getting to the rocks.

The BMC has no commercial aspirations at all and no wood cut will be removed from the site. Any timber that is cut down will be used for revetments to keep the 10 metre corridor in place which takes most of the foot traffic that enters the woodland.

Any smaller poles and wood will be chipped for use in lining the approach footpaths and the corridor. Any brush will be burnt or used to delineate areas where we are trying to promote growth of grass and field plants.

Therefore there are no plans to farm any timber or to sell wood for fuel.

Site description

The Harrisons Rocks Woodland consists of two types of trees. There are older trees which were extant pre 1950. These are mainly Pedunculate Oak (*Quercus robur*) on the lower western boundary and Beech (*Fagus sylvatica*) along the top of the cliff edge. There are two magnificent Douglas Firs (*Pseudotsuga menziesii*) near the cliff and a few Yews (*Taxus baccata*) also along the top of the cliff edge. In general these trees will remain with a few of them being crown lifted to let in more light.

The newer (less than 50 year old) trees are the Mountain Ash or Rowan (*Sorbus acuparia*) and Silver Birch (*Betula pendula*) which are prolific and dotted down the sandy slope.

At the scrub level there are Hazel (*Corylus avellana*), Holly (*Ilex aquifolium*), Brambles and Ivy and a few Field Maple (*Acer Capestre*) in the southwest corner near the 3 house hamlet. The plan will aim to increase the number of shrub trees that will be kept at a lower height so as not to obscure the rock formations.

As for non-native species, there are quite a few Sycamore (*Acer pseudoplatanus*) along the western boundary which will need to be removed to prevent re-seeding. On the top of the rocks there are some Rhododendrons (*R. ponticum*) which will be removed.

At the field layer there is not much bio-diversity. The Bracken is rampant and the only other plant that seems to have flourished in the oppressive shaded environment is the Bluebell (*Hyacinthoides non-scripta*).

Along the 10 metre (30 foot) high cliff face there is a 10 metre corridor which has had some revetment work to prevent the sand at the cliff edge from running down the slope to the valley below. This corridor platform

needs constant attention as water running-off from the cliff and rock passages tends to form channels that then take the sand away.

The steep sandy slope drops another 30 metres to the western boundary fence.

Considering the woodland is a quarter of a mile walk from the Car Park it has an unprecedented number of visitors throughout the year. Harrison's Rocks has more climbers regularly climbing than any other single crag in the UK.

The access from the car park along the forest road or the western footpath is very good. However once the woodland is entered most visitors traverse the cliff via the 10 metre corridor platform. There is an ongoing attempt to divert the traffic via two other paths that were made through the woodland and certainly a small percentage of visitors do use these alternatives.

However the attraction for both climbers and non-climbers is to view the action on the rock, so at present the cliff platform gets at least 85% of the traffic. This plan has to bear in mind the importance of this major thoroughfare and to ensure that the cliff rock and this platform stay dry and stable.

If the tree canopy is opened up to sunlight by good woodland management then there may very well be a better field layer of flowers and animals and a clearer view of the rocks, both of which will invite more visitors to use the alternative footpaths.

Significant hazards, constraints and threats

(1.2.1) (proposed addition to guidance – need to show evidence of response to problems in strategy)

The main **hazard** is the cliff itself. The Harrison's Rocks Management Group (the volunteer group representing the BMC in the local area) has put up special notice boards at the car park and at the entrance to the rocks, to warn and educate visitors about the rocks and the woodland.

There have been moves over the last 20 years to educate all climbers to use long slings so that the rock does not get damaged when climbing. There is also a ban on lowering off and abseiling. These precautions are avidly enforced by local climbers who are very protective of their rocks.

The main **constraint** with regards to the regeneration of the woodland (and specifically the cutting of trees) is public opinion from local non-climbers from the villages around the site. There are quite a few walker and dog-walker visitors who might think that cutting/coppicing/pollarding/crown-lifting trees of any kind is unacceptable without realising that a well managed wood will be much more attractive than a non-managed one.

As a part of this plan we are conducting an extensive consultation with our neighbours and other residents in the local village of Groombridge about the specific regeneration activities we will be carrying out in this plan over the next 20 years - see section 5 Consultation below.

The **threats** to the woodland would be:

- (a) Fires – There is a ban on lighting any fires at the site and this is well documented in the Southern Sandstone Climbers Club Guide. We are liaising with the local Fire and Rescue Services about briefing their fire crews regarding access to the site – see section 4.4.2 below.
- (b) Vandalism – This is covered by the BMC notices on graffiti at the rocks and enforced by local climbers. There has been significantly less graffiti at Harrison's than at other local sandstone outcrops,

and hardly any damage to trees.

3.0 Long term vision, management objectives and strategy

Long term vision

Long Term Vision

1. Manage the 10 metre corridor so that the rock cliff remains dry and the platform used by visitors and climbers is stabilised.
2. Manage the woodland to protect the cliff environment, to give better views for walkers across the valley and to regenerate the health of the woodland to support more fauna and flora.

Management objectives

No	Objective
1	Manage the Harrisons Rocks woodland in accordance with UKWAS.
2	Divide the woodland into 5 distinct compartment areas for regeneration with special attention to the 10 metre corridor at the base of the cliff face. This gives a five year rolling plan that is manageable for the HRMG (Harrisons Rocks Management Group) to oversee and for professional forest experts and the Sandstone Volunteer Group to carry out the needed work and regeneration.
3	Remove completely all non-native species. We will also remove the invasive bracken that seems to have taken over the sandy slope and has prevented other flora from flourishing.
4	Earmark one of the areas (at least 15%) for a special objective of

	biodiversity. This will be generally to add some more and different scrub trees all along the sandy slope and more specifically to plant more trees in the south western corner of the woodland to give the small Forge Farm Hamlet more privacy.
5	Over 5 years reduce the canopy of trees by 60-70% to increase light to the lower storey and encourage plants and animals at the field and ground level.
6	Introduce a five or seven year rotation for coppicing/pollarding to keep the canopy at a level which enables the cliff to receive enough wind and sun to keep it dry and make it less prone to wetness and therefore disintegration.

Strategy

We will distribute information on the completed management plan to the local Groombridge community and to the Forge Farm Hamlet to get the locals on our side about regenerating the Harrisons Rocks Woodland.

We will also invite comments from all users of the woodland site (stakeholders) such as schools and charity organisations that send groups to the site, climbing clubs that regularly use the rocks, professional instructor organisations and climbing walls that use the environment for their courses, and individual climbers that use the cliff environment for recreation.

The full plan will be accessible for all to view from the BMC volunteer group website.

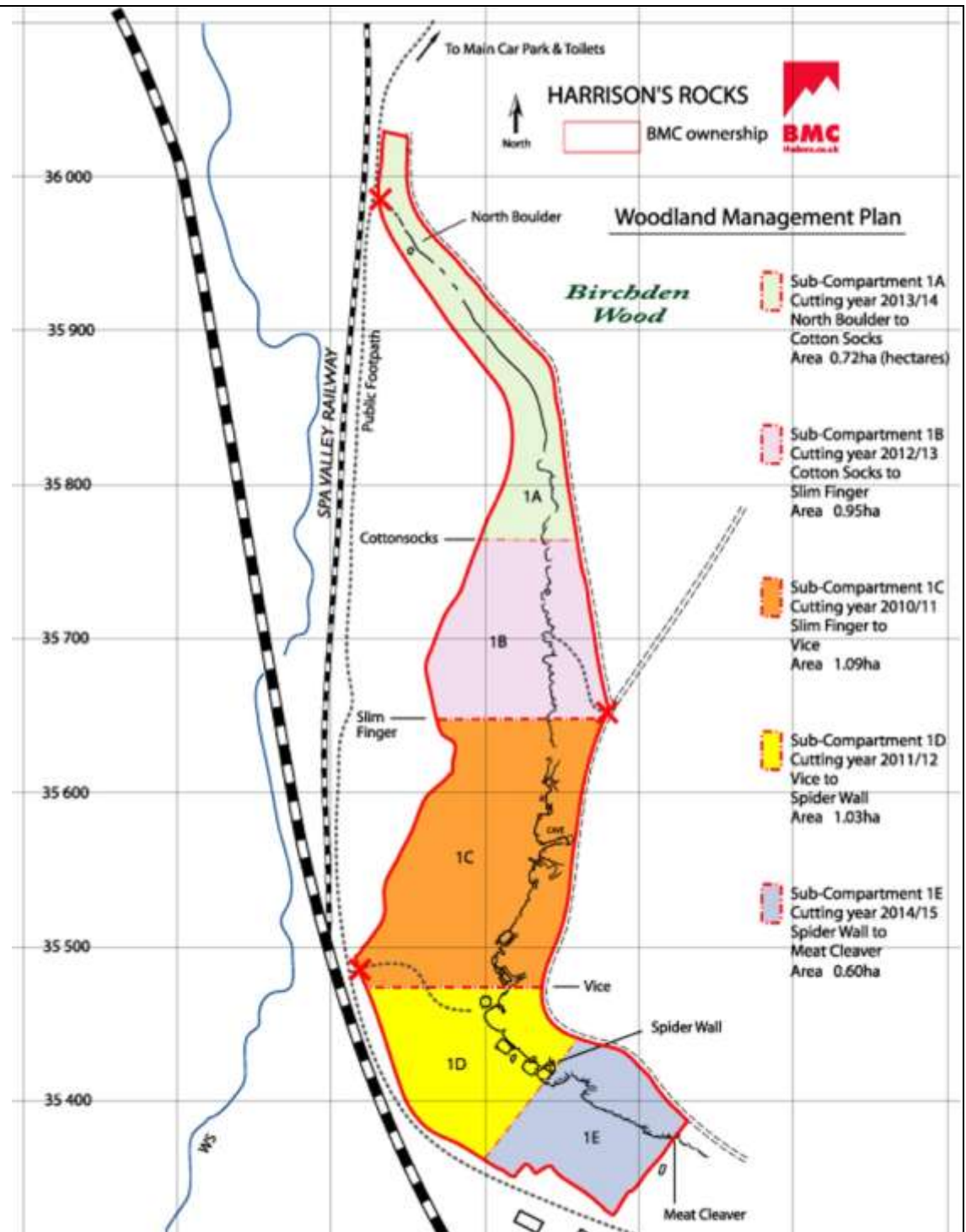
A 10 metre corridor running the length of the cliff will be earmarked for special immediate attention and then the rest of the wood will be divided

into 5 areas to be tackled during 2010/11 to 2014/15.

The agenda for dealing with the implementation is as follows:

- 2010/11 – Cliff 10m Corridor plus 1C Slim Finger to Vice
- 2011/12 – Compartment 1D Vice to Spider Wall
- 2012/13 – Compartment 1B Cottonsocks to Slim Finger
- 2013/14 – Compartment 1A North Boulder to 1B Cottonsocks
- 2014/15 – Compartment 1E Spider Wall to Meat Cleaver

The map on the next page shows the compartments and the cutting order. There is a larger version of this map as a PDF in Appendix A.



Woodfuel initiative

Would you be interested in receiving information on funding opportunities for the purchase of harvesting machinery or wood fuel boilers?

No –

4.0 Management prescriptions/operations

Silvicultural systems

4.1.1 Harvesting

All felled timber and cuttings will be used within the woodland for:

- (a) revetment work to keep the heavily used 10 metre corridor stable
- (b) marking the public access paths with boundary poles
- (c) Brush will be used to build a habitat hedge to separate the climbing corridor from the wilder parts of the wood so that animals and birds can enjoy the wood as well as visitors.
- (d) Brush will also be used to keep visitors from straying off the paths.

4.1.2 Phased felling and restructuring of plantations

(Proposed amendment to guidance – applies to all even-aged woodland 3.2.3)

During the period to the 5th April 2011 this first year's proposed silvicultural work will be undertaken.

10 Metre Cliff Corridor Area

A 10 metre corridor running the length of the cliff will be earmarked for special immediate attention during the 2010 winter months up to end of March 2010.

A study of the annotated map will show that all the visitor traffic to the woodland tends to go along this 10 metre area, and it needs this special corridor to enable the paths to be reinforced and repaired and enough space for the rocks to dry out.

All the trees and scrubs in this area will be coppiced except for certain older trees that were extant in the 1950s. See Appendix C for a list of these. These older trees like Oak, Beech and the Douglas Firs will be retained and will give some shade to climbers in the summer months. However they may very well be crown lifted to a height above the rocks, so that the sun and wind can still get to the rock to dry it out.

All the trees and scrubs will be retained except for non-native species such as Sycamore and Rhododendrons and we will endeavour to fully eliminate these so they do not re-seed.

We need the rest of the tree and scrub roots to remain to help prevent the sandy paths from being washed down the slope. So the coppiced or pollarded trees nearer the cliff will be put on a short cutting cycle of about 3 years so they will be cut back as soon as they are starting to shade the rock, but their roots will remain to keep the path platform stable.

In fact, revetment work has been done in the past to build up a platform out from the base of the rock to take the busy foot traffic. The poles that will be cut during each winter pollarding will be dragged to this corridor to

help build the revetments that are required to keep this footpath platform in place.

A list of trees in this Cliff Corridor area with diameter more than 15cms at 1.3 metres above the ground, that will be coppiced or pollarded, is given in Appendix C.

Compartment 1C Slim Finger to Vice

The scrub layer (Hazel, Holly, and Rowan) will be coppiced in a 5-7 year rotation to encourage more light to get to the field and ground layer.

We will plant new scrub trees (Hazel, Hawthorn and Alder Blackthorn) to increase bio-diversity and to encourage trees that will house more flora and fauna.

The existing tree layer of oaks and beech will be crown lifted to let more light into the wood.

The trees like Ash and Birch nearer the rocks but down the slope will be thinned and those remaining coppiced, to give a wind corridor to the rock surfaces. This will also give walkers a more original view of the cliff escarpment from the valley, and will also allow the rocks to be seen again from the westward vista (From the TW Circular Walk, from the railway and from the road).

Overall the high canopy of trees and scrubs will be reduced by 60-70% by coppicing and pollarding to increase light to the lower storey and encourage plants and animals at the field and ground level.

At the bottom of the slope in this area are quite a number of Sycamore trees that need to be felled and then fully eliminated so they do not re-seed. Most of these are on the boundary fence and need to be fully handled before the new fence to the BMC Open Access Land is constructed.

There are a few Sycamores on the other side of the fence (in the field owned by the lady in Birchden Forge Farm, Mrs Treptie). We now have an agreement with her to fell all the Sycamores.

The yearly program outlined in this compartment will be repeated each year for the other 4 compartment areas, see below for yearly details.

4.1.3 Establishment, restocking and regeneration

The felled trees will be replaced with more scrub trees that can be kept at a lower height and which will encourage more wildlife than has been extant for the last 40 years. These will be Hazel, Hawthorn and Alder Blackthorn.

New planting

(Proposed additions to guidance to clarify consideration of design impacts etc 3.2.1/3.2.2, to add reference to local native seed zones and FRM regulation 6.3.3)

Other operations

(Proposed addition to guidance to clarify acceptable scenarios for conversion to non-forest land 3.5.1)

The woodland will be fenced completely on the western side. There is already a gate at the North Boulder Entrance 2 the northernmost point that visitors leave the TW Circular Walk Bridleway.

There will be a stile constructed in the new fence at the Forge Farm Entrance 1 which will allow walkers to enter the woodland just below the Vice area. This entrance can be used by visitors coming by train to Eridge Station and walking to the rocks (but is not used by the normal visitors or climbers out of courtesy to the Forge Farm hamlet).

The Sycamore trees at the bottom of Area 3 will need to be removed before the fencing can be started. Also it is not planned for the fencing at the South West end to be completed until the winter of 2011/12 as there are a considerable number of fallen trees that need to be removed from the line of the fence.

Protection and maintenance

4.4.1 Pest and disease management

(Proposed addition to guidance – if fencing used, take account of impacts on existing users 5.4.2)

None expected

4.4.2 Fire plan

We have contacted the Fire and Rescue Services. In the event of a fire there are four services that could attend.

For the woodland itself, the nearest station would be Crowborough and

they have a backup water tender unit at Wadhurst which may be necessary because of the lack of water points around the wood.

If there was a fire in the Birchden Wood (FC) which may spread to the BMC Harrison's Rocks Woodland then the Tunbridge Wells Fire brigade would be the best to attend. They have a volunteer unit at Rusthall which may be the closest.

The Watch Manager from the Tunbridge Wells Service is organising a visit to Harrison's Rocks to carry out a recce of access points and water supplies etc.

4.4.3 Waste disposal and pollution

There are dustbins at the Car Park but no dustbins are provided at the rocks. The present norm is that all climbers and visitors take their rubbish home with them and that has not been a problem in the past.

4.4.4 Protection from unauthorised activities

Fly tipping has never been a problem in the woodland as there is no road near enough to the woodland for fly tipping to occur. Also vehicle access to the FC Birchden Wood and thus to the top of the Harrisons Rocks site is restricted.

Vandalism and graffiti are possibilities but have not been a major problem in the past. There is a warning about graffiti on the notice board at Entrance 2 and 3 of the rocks. Local climbers are very vigilant regarding both these unauthorised activities and monitor them constantly.

4.4.5 Protection of other identified services and values (4.1.1)

(Move some guidance from 4.3, add some new guidance)

There have been moves over the last 20 years to educate all climbers to use long slings so that the rock does not get damaged when climbing. There is also a ban on lowering off and abseiling. These precautions are avidly enforced by local climbers who are very protective about their rocks.

Game management

Not applicable

Protecting and enhancing landscape, biodiversity and special features

4.6.1 Management of designated areas

We will earmark Compartment 1E for special protection to enhance biodiversity. The canopy here is to remain naturally dense because of the nearness to the Forge Farm settlement.

We will increase biodiversity throughout the five compartments each year by promoting natural growth of more scrub trees (Hazel, Hawthorn and Alder Blackthorn) and planting these scrub trees where they are not already flourishing.

4.6.2 Measures to enhance biodiversity and other special features (2.1.1k and 6.1.1)

(Also addition to guidance to 6.1.1)

(Guidance needs to updated to reflect new deadwood guidance in 6.2.2)

Standing dead wood will remain and habitat piles will be created using some of the cut wood to promote fungus and moss growth at the ground level.

4.6.3 Special measures for ASNW and SNW

-

4.6.4 Special measures for PAWS

(Guidance needs to updated to reflect new PAWS requirements in 6.3.2 UKWAS)

-

4.6.5 Measures to mitigate impacts on landscape and neighbouring land

(3.1.2)

-

Management of social and cultural values

4.7.1 Archaeology and sites of cultural interest

4.7.2 Public access and impacts on local people

(add reference to H&S consideration and other impacts in guidance to 7.4.2)

The public, walkers and climbers have full access to Harrison's Rocks woodland and the BMC are making the land Open Access Land.

5.0 Consultation

Organisation/individual	Date received	Comment	Response/action
<p>The BMC Land and Property Trust</p> <p>Trustees Bill Renshaw (Chair) Bob Moulton Dave Turnbull</p>	Nov 2010	Our recent acquisition of the Harrison's Rocks Woodland and cliff site by the BMC charity means that we can now put in place a positive management plan to regenerate the woodland and cliff environment for the use by the wider public and for the sporting amenity this site creates.	
<p>The British Mountaineering Council (BMC)</p> <p>Chief Executive Officer Dave Turnbull</p>	Nov 2010	Now that we have acquired this jewel in the crown of the Wealden sandstone outcrops we will put the full weight of the BMC behind this plan and its implementation. I will brief my officers as below to give all necessary help and assistance in seeing the regeneration is achieved.	
<p>BMC Access & Conservation Officer Elfyn Jones (25 years experience in land management and related industry)</p>	22 Nov 2010	The BMC Access & Conservation team, with advice from the Land Management Group will oversee the management of Harrison's Woodland and cliff and going forward monitor the results of the plan implementation. We will see that where necessary we will ensure the work is carried out by qualified foresters.	

<p>BMC Access & Conservation Officer (regions) Rob Dyer</p>	<p>Nov 2010</p>	<p>We at the BMC are ready to make the Harrison's Rocks site have Open Access Land status so that the general public can enjoy the woodland and the cliff environment, as well as for the sporting amenity. Rob you may want to change or extend this.</p>	
<p>Harrison's Rocks Management Group Chair Tim Skinner</p>	<p>Nov 2010</p>	<p>As chair of HRMG I am more than happy to endorse this plan - I'm convinced it will make a real and long term improvement to the rocks and woodland, enhancing everyone's enjoyment of this extremely popular and much loved crag</p>	
<p>Sandstone Volunteer Group Chair Graham Adcock</p>	<p>Nov 2010</p>	<p>Local climbers, environmentalists and even dog walkers volunteer their time to help keep the woodland and cliff under control. This plan really gives us something to get our teeth into but it is a good job that the work is split over 5 years, even if we can have 40+ volunteers attend.</p>	
<p>Wealden District Council Tree Preservation Officer Richard Webber</p>	<p>Nov 2010</p>		<p>Awaiting comment</p>

<p>Ecologist AIEEM Mandy Apps (Associate member of the Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management)</p>	<p>21 Nov 2010</p>	<p>Following an ecological scoping assessment of the area, the proposed works to restore the habitats for the benefit of climbing are expected to have no negative impact on biodiversity. Some positive impacts may result from the strategic management plan which has been carefully designed to be undertaken gradually both temporally and spatially, with one area set aside primarily for biodiversity. Bats use the area for foraging and a single tree has been identified within the area which has bat roost potential. No works are planned for this tree.</p>	<p>The tree is the Beech No 17 in Appendix C and has been marked as No Action permanently.</p>
<p>Wealden District Council (Withyham PC) Wealden District Council Councillor Johanna Howell</p>	<p>Nov 2010</p>		<p>Awaiting comment</p>
<p>Wealden District Council (Frant PC) Councillor John Padfield</p>	<p>Nov 2010</p>		<p>Awaiting comment</p>
<p>Sussex Wildlife</p>	<p>Nov</p>		<p>Awaiting comment</p>

Trust Director? ?	2010		
High Weald AONB Director ?	Nov 2010		Awaiting comment
Kent Fire and Rescue Services Contact William Skinner	Nov 2010		Awaiting comment
Southeast Coast Ambulance Service Paramedic Team Leader Tunbridge Wells Richard De Coverly	Nov 2010		Awaiting comment
Forge Farm (hamlet) Contact Mrs Treptie	Nov 2010		Awaiting comment
Oast House (hamlet) Contact ?	Nov 2010		Awaiting comment
Top House (hamlet) Contact	Nov 2010		Awaiting comment

?			
House 1 Contact ?	Nov 2010		Awaiting comment
House 2 Contact ?	Nov 2010		Awaiting comment
House 3 Contact ?	Nov 2010		Awaiting comment
House 4 Contact ?	Nov 2010		Awaiting comment
House 5 Contact ?	Nov 2010		Awaiting comment
Groups with handicapped children Contact ?	Nov 2010		Awaiting comment
Local schools that bring kids down Contact ?	Nov 2010		Awaiting comment
Tunbridge Wells Mountaineering Club	Nov 2010		Awaiting comment

Chair John Mitchener			
Brighton Explorers Club Chair ?	Nov 2010		Awaiting comment
Hasting Rock and Fell Chair ?	Nov 2010		Awaiting comment
South Downs Climbers Secretary Graham Enright	Nov 2010		Awaiting comment
Battle Climbing Group Chair Phil Loasby	Nov 2010		Awaiting comment
Croydon Mountaineering Club Chair ?	Nov 2010		Awaiting comment
White Lion Mountaineering Club (Warlingham) Chair Ian Paul	Nov 2010		Awaiting comment
Bookham Crag Rats Chair Andre Hedges	Nov 2010		Awaiting comment

North London Mountaineering Club Chair ?	Nov 2010		Awaiting comment
London Ladies Mountaineering Club Chair ?	Nov 2010		Awaiting comment
Green Peace London Chair ?	Nov 2010		Awaiting comment
Rock Climbing Classes Headmistress Sarah Cullen	Nov 2010		Awaiting comment
Evolution Climbing Centre Director Chris Tullis	Nov 2010		Awaiting comment
Note we will add many more clubs and climbing walls who use Harrison Rocks	Nov 2010		Awaiting comment

6.0 Monitoring plan summary

Objective number, issue or UKWAS Requirement	Indicator	Method of assessment	Monitoring period	Responsibility	How will information be used?
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<p>Manage the Harrison's Rocks woodland in accordance with UKWAS (1.1.5)</p>	<p>A minimum of 15% of the area of the woodland will be managed with biodiversity as a major objective (6.2.1)</p>	<p>At present a very poor scrub level in the woodland. So we plan to add Hazel, Hawthorn and Alder Blackthorn in each of the 5 compartments and some extra tree types in compartment 1E. So we will note the extra trees added each year.</p>	<p>Over 15 years which gives a 5 year planting program and then a yearly check to see how many of those planted have survived.</p>	<p>SVG Sandstone Volunteer group to do work. HRMG Harrison's Rocks Management Group to monitor.</p>	<p>If after each year check the number of scrub trees has not increased by 1% the plan needs to be revised,</p>
<p>Divide the woodland into 5 distinct compartment areas for regeneration with special attention to the 10 metre corridor at the base of the cliff face. This gives a five year rolling plan.</p>	<p>Count the number of trees that have been coppiced that year. Count the number of trees that have been pollarded that year. Count the number of trees that have been crown lifted that year</p>	<p>SVG will walk through compartment and note these statistics at the end of each of their volunteer days.</p>	<p>First five years is exactly per the plan. On the 6th year monitor the height of the trees in the first compartment and see if the pollarding cycle needs to be started again. And so on each year for another 15 years.</p>	<p>HRMG Harrison's Rocks Management Group to monitor.</p>	<p>The key is to monitor that the woodland is being regenerated with a better scrub tree level (which will automatically give a better field and ground layer) but that it's height has been minimised to ensure the rock environment is visible and stays dry.</p>

Remove completely all non-native species and bracken	Take account of the number of extant Sycamore trees and Rhododendron bushes.	SVG will need to mark the trees to be felled and so keep the statistics.	2 years	SVG	Check that all Sycamore and Rodos have been eliminated by the second year and then a yearly check to see if any of these species have reseeded.
Regenerate more fauna and flora in the Woodland	Keep a note of species in the wood and see if they are increasing	Ask three separate volunteers to monitor 1. Birds - Phil Loasby 2. Fauna including bats Mandy Apps 3. Flora and fungi (to be appointed) 4. Produce a report on any new species that has been spotted and send to the Kent and Medway Biological Recording Centre when complete.	Each year for 20 years	HRMG to invite whoever the volunteers are for that year to the SVG meeting to make an annual report	If there seems to be no increased bio diversity happening then take steps to rectify.

Manage the 10 metre corridor so that the rock cliff remains dry and the platform used by visitors and climbers is stabilised.	Choose a half a dozen spots along the rock and test the rock moisture content Check at the same time the state of the cliff platform	There is a scientific instrument that can be used to record moisture content see Mike Eden. HRMG does monitor the platform now so continue and make a yearly report	Each year for 20 years	HRMG	As the control over the woodland takes hold there should be an improvement in the cliff environment. If not take further steps to rectify.
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(Amendments to guidance – replicable to allow comparison over time 2.3.2b and required scope of monitoring activities 2.3.2c plus annual monitoring related to effectiveness of measures for special areas 2.3.5)

7.0 Work programmes

Outline long-term work programme (2016 to 2030)

Compartment or area	Activity	Year		
		6-10	11-15	16-20
5 year plan repeated	Thinning, Coppicing and Crown lifting as seen fit to keep woodland buoyant	2016-2020		
5 year plan repeated	Thinning, Coppicing and Crown lifting as seen fit to keep woodland buoyant		2021-2025	
5 year plan repeated	Thinning, Coppicing and Crown lifting as seen fit to keep woodland buoyant			2026-2030

Short-term work programme (2010 to 2015y)

Compartment or area	Activity (note 11 indicates 10/11 year)	Year				
		1	2	3	4	5
10m Rock corridor	Clearing except for old pre 1950 trees	11				
Compartment. 1C	Thinning, Coppicing and Crown lifting plus felling none-native trees	11				
Compartment. 1D	Thinning, Coppicing and Crown lifting plus felling none-native trees		12			
Compartment. 1B	Thinning, Coppicing and Crown lifting plus felling none-native trees			13		
Compartment. 1A	Thinning, Coppicing and Crown lifting plus felling none-native trees				14	
Compartment. 1E	Felling none-native trees, some coppicing + special biodiversity project					15

8.0 Costings

Outline projected costs and income over plan period. Please read guidance note for further information.

There will be no income from timber revenues because all wood will be used for revetment work to maintain and stabilise the 10 metre corridor, or in habitat piles.

The work will be done by a combination of volunteers (for scrub clearance and cutting small trees) and professional arborists (for cutting the larger trees). An additional cost will be the replacement of existing fencing, mainly on the west boundary and eradication of non-native species and bracken.

A Woodland Improvement grant will be applied for to help with these costs, with the balance being paid by the BMC.

9.0 Maps

List all maps and tables here and append to plan.

Map No./Title	Description
Appendix A Woodland.pdf	Digital map showing the woodland site with a detailed representation of the rocks (i.e. 10 metre corridor) and the 5 compartments together with the three entrances.
Appendix A(2)	A hard copy FC 1:2500 scaled map showing the same data as the digital map.
Appendix B Harrisons.pdf	A more detailed map of the woodland and rocks showing the internal footpaths and the adjacent Birchden Wood owned by the Forestry Commission.
Appendix C corridor.xls	Tree survey and cutting table for the 10 metre corridor which lists all the ancient trees (Oaks, Beech and Yews)

10.0 Thinning, felling and restocking proposals

Applicants seeking funding through the wood fuel initiative for harvesting machinery or wood fuel boilers must indicate the total volume that is to be thinned and felled during the period of this plan, **by completing Table A.**

This section **should not be completed** for any other applications.

All applicants **must** complete **Table B.** where harvesting work is to be undertaken.

Table A.

Species	Total estimated volume to be harvested during plan period (m ³)
Broadleaves	Not applicable
Conifers	Not applicable

Table B.

This section must be completed if you wish to gain felling licence approval from the Forestry Commission. The work detailed below should match the proposals set out in the plan.

For details on how to complete the table, please refer to [EWGS 4 Woodland Regeneration Grant Guide \(PDF 84kb\)](#).

Cpt/sub cpt	Area	Area to be worke d	Type of felling	% of felled area comprising		Type of licence	Change in woodland type	Preferred claim year	Restock species %	Establishment by natural regeneration %	Standard proposals	Notes
				BL	CO N							
1C	1.09 ha	10%	FIT	100 %		C	BL – P to WBL	10/11	WSH 30%	70%	Remove sycamore and rhodos	
		60%	FC	100 %		C		10/11		100%	Coppice birch, ash	Also coppice scrub trees like holly
		30%	NONE					10/11			Beech, oak	Crown lift if necessary
1D	1.03 ha	10%	FIT	100 %		C	BL – P to WBL	11/12	WSH 30%	70%	Remove sycamore and rhodos	
		60%	FC	100 %		C		11/12		100%	Coppice birch, ash	Also coppice scrub trees like holly
		30%	NONE					11/12			Beech, oak	Crown lift if necessary
1B	0.95 ha	10%	FIT	100 %		C	BL – P to WBL	12/13	WSH 30%	70%	Remove sycamore and rhodos	
		60%	FC	100 %		C		12/13		100%	Coppice birch, ash	Also coppice scrub trees like holly

		30%	NONE					12/13			Beech, oak	Crown lift if necessary
1A	0.72 ha	10%	FIT	100%		C	BL – P to WBL	13/14	WSH 30%	70%	Remove sycamore and rhodos	
		60%	FC	100%		C		13/14		100%	Coppice birch, ash	Also coppice scrub trees like holly
		30%	NONE					13/14			Beech, oak	Crown lift if necessary
1E	0.60 ha	10%	FIT	100%		C	BL – P to WBL	14/15	WSH 30%	70%	Remove sycamore and rhodos	
		60%	FC	100%		C		14/15		100%	Coppice birch, ash	Also coppice scrub trees like holly
		30%	NONE					14/15			Beech, oak	Crown lift if necessary

Addition information if required