



Scottish Natural Heritage

CRAIGDILLY
Site of Special Scientific Interest

SITE MANAGEMENT STATEMENT

Site code: 427

SNH
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Purpose



This is a public statement prepared by SNH for owners and occupiers of the SSSI. It outlines the reasons it is designated as an SSSI and provides guidance on how its special natural features should be conserved or enhanced. This statement does not affect or form part of the statutory notification and does not remove the need to apply for consent for operations requiring consent.

We welcome your views on this statement.

Description of the site



Craigdilly Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) is situated on a north-west facing steep slope adjacent to Megget Reservoir near the Yarrow Valley.

This is one of the few remaining fragments of well-structured sub-montane scrub woodland on open hillside in the Scottish Borders. The sub-montane scrub occurs here on an open hillside as opposed to cliff and cleuch woodlands. At an altitude of between 350 and 560m, the small woodland relic at the core of the site is dominated by willow, rowan and birch. The wide range of community types (from acidic to mildly basic and from dry to wet/flushed) provide for a relatively large number of plants (140+), including a number of old woodland indicator species.

The relic woodland is dominated by eared willow *Salix aurita* and by grey willow *Salix cinerea* scrub with rowan *Sorbus aucuparia*, birch *Betula* spp with occasional hawthorn *Crataegus monogyna*, blackthorn *Prunus spinosa* and hazel *Corylus avellana*. Outside the woodland occasional birch, rowan and willow trees are regenerating in the mixed heather and blaeberry *Vaccinium myrtillus* heath.

The 2008 site condition monitoring (SCM) assessment of the scrub found the feature to be in favourable condition, displaying a good age structure and composition, acceptable levels of deadwood and healthy levels of natural regeneration.

Natural features of Craigdilly SSSI	Condition of feature (and date monitored)
Scrub	Favourable – maintained (June 2008)

View of the Northern section of the SSSI with significant natural regeneration of native trees	View from the Megget Water reservoir showing the range of vegetation cover from the reservoir edge up to the top of the slope.
	

Past and present management

Craigdilly has traditionally been grazed by sheep and the marginal heather will have been burnt from time to time in the past. The site was fenced by the owner with some assistance from the Nature Conservancy Council (NCC) in 1976 (prior to designation) and the fence was subsequently maintained and improved through a 20-year management agreement between Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH) and the owner. This agreement expired in 2009.

8 fixed point quadrats were established in 1976 with the aim of monitoring regeneration. However these have not been revisited. Difficulties with maintaining the fence stock-proof have, in the past, resulted in slower than expected expansion of the woodland, although a recent study did indicate that regeneration was occurring, with rowan predominating in the heather dominated ground, and birch, having established well immediately after the area was fenced, now forming a very small proportion of new seedlings.

There is no current requirement to maintain the SSSI boundary fence as the majority of the surrounding land is managed by Borders Forest Trust (BFT) who has fenced-off a large section of hillside including the SSSI. BFT have also carried out extensive planting of native saplings adjacent to the SSSI, which will serve to enhance natural woodland expansion. Due to the aforementioned fencing, grazing is not currently considered to be a management issue.

Objectives for Management (and key factors influencing the condition of natural features)

We wish to work with the owner to protect the site and to maintain and where necessary enhance its features of special interest. SNH aims to carry out site survey, monitoring and research as appropriate to increase our knowledge and understanding of the site and its natural features and monitor the effectiveness of management.

1. Promote the development of scrub and woodland throughout the site for the benefit of associated animal and plant species.

This can be achieved through the maintenance of the existing stock-proof fence and supplementing natural regeneration through the planting of native species of local provenance where appropriate.

Other factors affecting the natural features of the site

None noted at present.

Date last reviewed: 21 April 2010