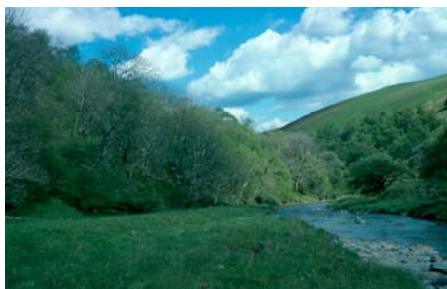




Purpose



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

Dryfe Water Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) which lies 10km north northeast of Lockerbie is a mixed deciduous woodland on a steep south west facing slope. Whilst ash is the most abundant tree, birch, oak and wych elm are also present. Hazel predominates in the understorey, with scattered areas of hawthorn. Throughout the wood, the ground flora is dominated by the grasses, including cocksfoot, common bent and Yorkshire fog, with dog's mercury, primrose and wood sorrel scattered throughout the wood. Close to the stream, narrow terraces have formed. These host some of the more unusual plants including alternate leaved golden saxifrage and alpine scurvy grass. The humid conditions provide ideal conditions for ferns, mosses, lichens and liverworts. The wood was, until recently open to grazing. Regeneration is therefore limited to the steeper areas which were inaccessible to stock.

Natural features of Dryfe Water SSSI
Name of natural feature
Upland mixed ash woodland

Current condition of the natural features

Site Condition Monitoring in 1998 identified the extent and the structure of the feature remained unchanged since notification and therefore maintains favourable condition.

Past and present management

The wood is recorded in the New Statistical Account for Dumfriesshire, published in 1845, as being of value for coppice oak and for the intermittent grazing of sheep and cattle. Previously there was limited grazing on the site but as neighbouring ground has progressively been afforested this has been removed. Recommendations following discussion with the landowner and land manager were to encourage expansion of the adjacent scrub woodland south of, but outwith, the SSSI and to further exclude access by stock across the river at times of low flow, by fencing the site. No active woodland management is carried out on the site.

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

We wish to work with the owners and occupiers 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.

1. To maintain the area as a mixed native broad-leaved woodland.

A key to maintaining a wood's natural heritage is the continuity of woodland on a site for a long period and the maintenance of a variety of habitats. Areas of dense cover with an intact canopy contrast with gaps created by fallen trees where regeneration can occur. Under the dominant trees, like oak, ideally a shrub, herb and moss layer normally develops depending on past and current management.

Management should promote natural regeneration within and adjacent to the woodland. Ash is the dominant tree over the majority of the site, while oak and wych elm are common in places. These species should be retained as they are probably native to the site and are favoured by invertebrates. Any invasive species such as sitka, sycamore and beech should be prevented from becoming established.

Fencing should be maintained to exclude grazing stock and management of deer and rabbits should allow the regeneration of trees to take place in open areas created by fallen trees. Woodland habitat links with other native woodlands along the Dryfe and its tributaries should be promoted.

2. To maintain a proportion of dead wood within the site.

A proportion of both standing and fallen dead wood should be retained in order to benefit invertebrates and birds found within the woodland.

3. To manage grazing/browsing.

The regeneration of trees can be reduced or eliminated by grazing and browsing by domestic stock, rabbits and deer. Grazing stock should therefore continue to be excluded from the site.

Other factors affecting the natural features of the site

Climate change may favour southern and non-native species which may impact on the species and structural diversity of the woodland, particularly as this is a woodland site at higher altitude. Flood risks from increasingly wet winters and frequency of spate events may have effects on the riverside woodland edge.

Date last reviewed: 9 May 2008