

**CYNGOR CEFN GWLAD CYMRU  
COUNTRYSIDE COUNCIL FOR WALES**

**CORE MANAGEMENT PLAN  
(INCLUDING CONSERVATION OBJECTIVES)**

for

**Sugar Loaf Woodlands SAC/SSSI**

Version: 3

Date: 28<sup>th</sup> February 2008

Approved by: **David Mitchell**

**More detailed maps of management units can be provided on request.  
A Welsh version of all or part of this document can be made available on request.**



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## **PREFACE**

This document provides the main elements of CCW's management plan for the site(s) named. It sets out what needs to be achieved on the site, the results of monitoring and advice on the action required. This document is made available through CCW's web site and may be revised in response to changing circumstances or new information. This is a technical document that supplements summary information on the web site.

One of the key functions of this document is to provide CCW's statement of the Conservation Objectives for the relevant Natura 2000 site. This is required to implement the Conservation (Natural Habitats, &c.) Regulations 1994, as amended (Section 4). As a matter of Welsh Assembly Government Policy, the provisions of those regulations are also to be applied to Ramsar sites in Wales.

## 1. VISION FOR THE SITE

This is a descriptive overview of what needs to be achieved for conservation on the site. It brings together and summarises the Conservation Objectives (part 4) into a single, integrated statement about the site.

Around 70% of the site is covered by woodland (including temporary canopy gaps and glades), with mature sessile and hybrid oaks being dominant in the canopy. The oak woodland has trees of all age classes with a scattering of standing and fallen deadwood. Regeneration of oak trees is sufficient to maintain the woodland cover in the long term. Young ash and rowan trees may also be present in places but young beech trees are rare.

The shrub layer (where present) and ground flora consist of locally native plants that are typical of oak woodland, such as hazel, holly, common bent, wavy hair-grass, creeping soft-grass, wood sorrel, heath bedstraw and bracken. A generally grassy woodland ground flora is found in some areas, including bracken where the canopy is open or leaf litter and scattered woodland flowers where the ground is more shaded. In other areas bilberry and moss carpets are prominent. The southwest facing slopes of St Mary's Vale are important for red wood ants and here the canopy is broken providing sun warmed 'hotspots' on the woodland floor where the ants build their nests. Elsewhere in St Mary's Vale, a dense tree canopy protects the well-developed carpets of mosses and liverworts on the woodland floor, which require dense shade to retain moisture.

## 2. SITE DESCRIPTION

### 2.1 Area and Designations Covered by this Plan

Approximate centre-point grid references for the three woodland blocks are:

SO276168 (St Mary's Vale)

SO295165 (The Deri)

SO283183 (The Park)

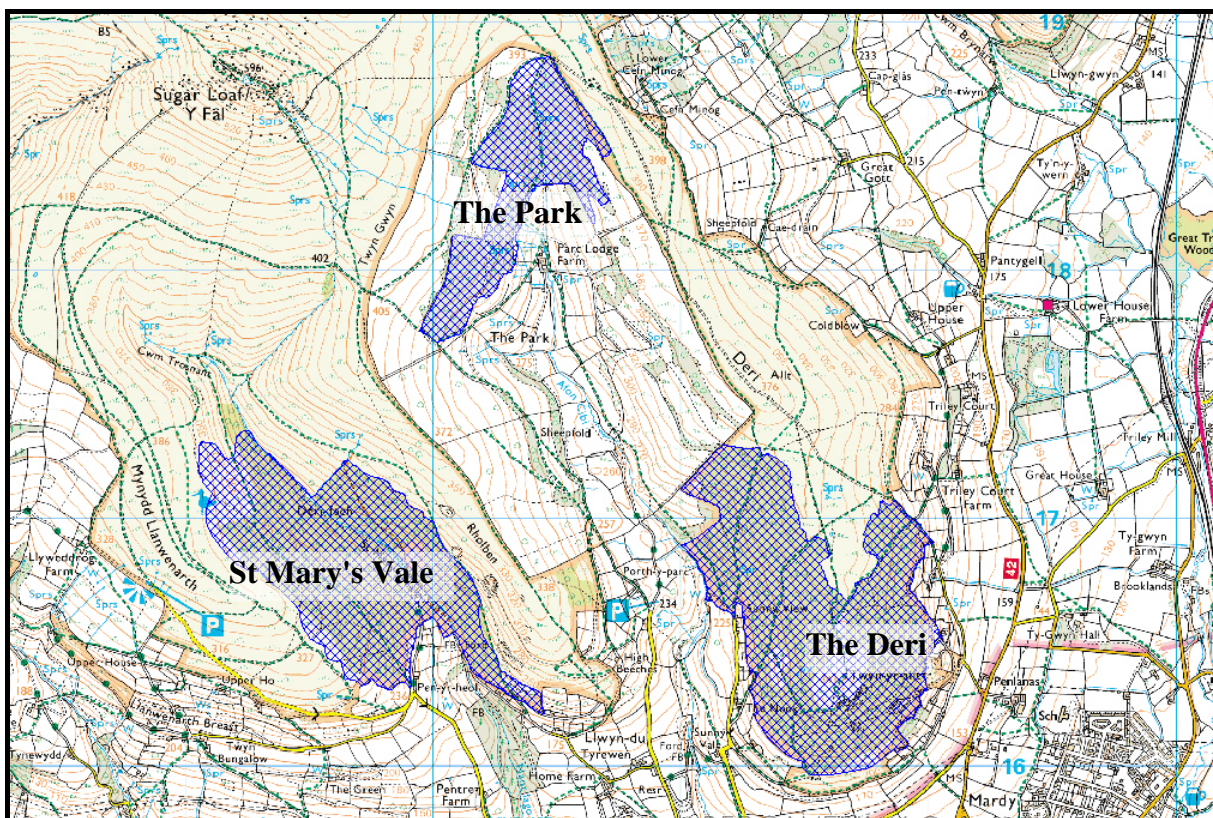
Unitary authority: Monmouthshire, Brecon Beacons National Park Authority is the planning authority.

Area (hectares): 173.8ha (SAC&SSSI)

Designations covered: Site of Special Scientific Interest and Special Area of Conservation

Detailed maps of the designated sites are available through CCW's web site: [www.ccw.gov.uk/sites](http://www.ccw.gov.uk/sites) (address tbc)

A Map 1 below shows the coverage of this document is shown.



Map 1: Hatched blue areas represent the SAC/SSSI area covered by this document.

### 2.2 Outline Description

This is an internationally important area of western sessile oak woodland, at the extreme south-eastern limits of its occurrence in Britain. Large areas of oak woodland are now rare in



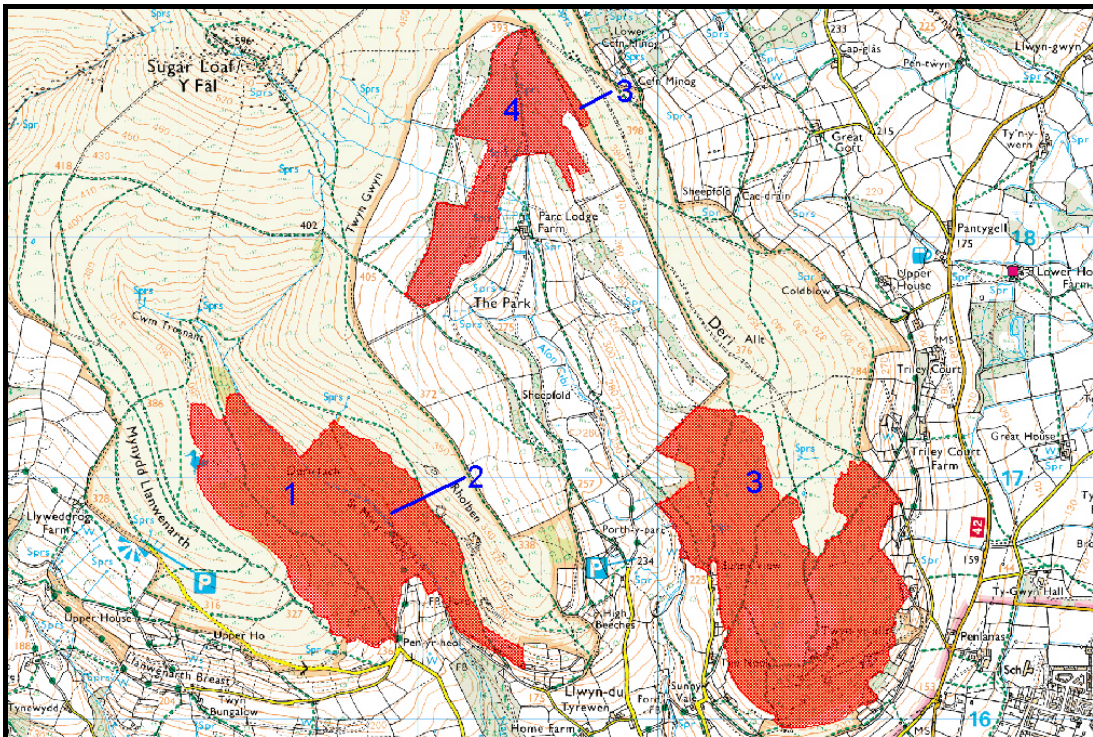
Wales. The woodland also supports a smaller area of beech woodland and a large colony of red wood ants, which are more commonly found in southern and eastern Britain.

### 2.3 Outline of Past and Current Management

Two of the woodland blocks in Map 1 (St Mary's Vale and The Deri) are within the Sugar Loaf Mountain Common (CL4), are currently grazed and have had a long a history of grazing management as part of the wider upland landscape of the Sugar Loaf. Unit 4 is currently ungrazed but has been part of a farm and so grazed for long periods before the agreement was signed. Much of the site was coppiced in the past, although this has not been carried out for many decades. Some small scale planting of beech has been carried out at St Mary's Vale, probably in the 19th Century, leading to some mature beech trees that are currently regenerating well.

### 2.4 Management Units

The plan area has been divided into management units to enable practical communication about features, objectives, and management. Map 2 (below) shows the juxtaposition of the management units referred to in this plan. In this plan the management units have been largely based on the three woodland blocks that make up the SAC and SSSI. The SAC feature is the same for each block of woodland and units 1& 3 are on the same common and so are under broadly the same management, but their geographical isolation from each other gives them the status of separate units. Unit 2 is a small privately owned and enclosed area within Unit 1. Unit 4 is on a farm in the Tir Gofal agri-environment scheme and so is easily separated from the other two units. Unit 3 includes one isolated area of woodland joined to the enclosed Unit 4, but on the common and so potentially under the same management regime as the rest of Unit 3.



Map 2: The management units for Sugar Loaf Woodlands to be referred to in this plan.

The following table confirms the relationships between the management units and the designations covered:

<b>Unit number</b>	<b>SAC</b>	<b>SSSI</b>	<b>CCW owned</b>	<b>Other</b>
<i>woodlands SSSI</i>				
1	✓	✓		National Trust (common)
2	✓	✓		
3	✓	✓		National Trust (common)
4	✓	✓		National Trust (tenanted)

### 3. THE SPECIAL FEATURES

#### 3.1 Confirmation of Special Features

<i>Designated feature</i>	<i>Relationships, nomenclature etc</i>	<i>Conservation Objective in part 4</i>
<i>SAC features</i>		
Annex I habitats that are a primary reason for selection of this site: 1. <b>Old sessile oak woods with Ilex and Blechnum in the British Isles.</b>	<b>EU Habitat Code: 91A0</b> Composed of National vegetation classification types: W11a, W16b and W17b	1
<i>SSSI features</i>		
1. Ancient semi-natural woodland	Upland oak woodland (see above), Plus some beech woodland (NVC type W15a)	1

#### 3.2 Special Features and Management Units

This section sets out the relationship between the special features and each management unit. This is intended to provide a clear statement about what each unit should be managed for, taking into account the varied needs of the different special features. All special features are allocated to one of seven classes in each management unit. These classes are:

##### **Key Features**

**KH** - a 'Key Habitat' in the management unit, i.e. the habitat that is the main driver of management and focus of monitoring effort, perhaps because of the dependence of a key species (see KS below). There will usually only be one Key Habitat in a unit but there can be more, especially with large units.

**KS** – a 'Key Species' in the management unit, often driving both the selection and management of a Key Habitat.

**Geo** – an earth science feature that is the main driver of management and focus of monitoring effort in a unit.

##### **Other Features**

**Sym** - habitats, species and earth science features that are of importance in a unit but are not the main drivers of management or focus of monitoring. These features will benefit from management for the key feature(s) identified in the unit. These may be classed as 'Sym' features because:

- they are present in the unit but may be of less conservation importance than the key feature; and/or
- they are present in the unit but in small areas/numbers, with the bulk of the feature in other units of the site; and/or
- their requirements are broader than and compatible with the management needs of the key feature(s), e.g. a mobile species that uses large parts of the site and surrounding areas.



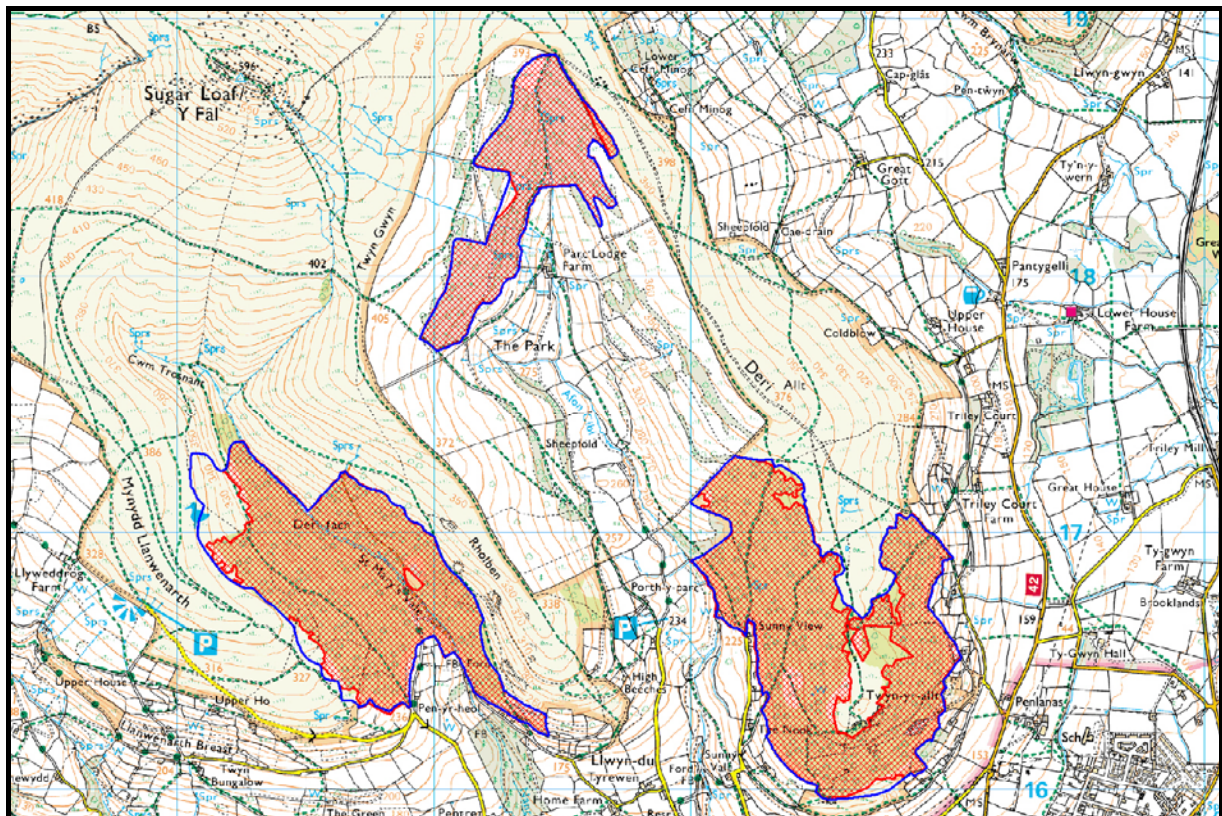
**Nm** - an infrequently used category where features are at risk of decline within a unit as a result of meeting the management needs of the key feature(s), i.e. under Negative Management. These cases will usually be compensated for by management elsewhere in the plan, and can be used where minor occurrences of a feature would otherwise lead to apparent conflict with another key feature in a unit.

**Mn** - Management units that are essential for the management of features elsewhere on a site e.g. livestock over-wintering area included within designation boundaries, buffer zones around water bodies, etc.

**x** – Features not known to be present in the management unit.

The table below sets out the relationship between the special features and management units identified in this plan:

Sugar Loaf Woodlands SSSI	Management unit			
	1	2	3	4
SAC	✓	✓	✓	✓
SSSI	✓	✓	✓	✓
<b>SAC features</b>				
<b>1. Old sessile oak woods with <i>Ilex</i> and <i>Blechnum</i> in the British Isles</b>	<b>KH</b>	x	<b>KH</b>	<b>KH</b>
<b>SSSI features</b>				
Ancient semi-natural woodland	<b>KH</b>	x	<b>KH</b>	<b>KH</b>



Map 3: The distribution of woodland cover (red cross-hatched areas) within the SAC (blue line boundary), based on 2006 aerial photography.



## 4. CONSERVATION OBJECTIVES

### Background to Conservation Objectives:

#### a. Outline of the legal context and purpose of conservation objectives.

Conservation objectives are required by the 1992 'Habitats' Directive (92/43/EEC). The aim of the Habitats Directives is the maintenance, or where appropriate the restoration of the 'favourable conservation status' of habitats and species features for which SACs and SPAs are designated (see Box 1).

In the broadest terms, 'favourable conservation status' means a feature is in satisfactory condition and all the things needed to keep it that way are in place for the foreseeable future. CCW considers that the concept of favourable conservation status provides a practical and legally robust basis for conservation objectives for Natura 2000 and Ramsar sites.

#### ***Box 1***

#### ***Favourable conservation as defined in Articles 1(e) and 1(i) of the Habitats Directive***

“The conservation status of a natural habitat is the sum of the influences acting on it and its typical species that may affect its long-term natural distribution, structure and functions as well as the long term survival of its typical species. The conservation status of a natural habitat will be taken as favourable when:

- Its natural range and areas it covers within that range are stable or increasing, and
- The specific structure and functions which are necessary for its long-term maintenance exist and are likely to continue to exist for the foreseeable future, and
- The conservation status of its typical species is favourable.

The conservation status of a species is the sum of the influences acting on the species that may affect the long-term distribution and abundance of its populations. The conservation status will be taken as 'favourable' when:

- population dynamics data on the species indicate that it is maintaining itself on a long-term basis as a viable component of its natural habitats, and
- the natural range of the species is neither being reduced nor is likely to be reduced for the foreseeable future, and
- There is, and will probably continue to be, a sufficiently large habitat to maintain its populations on a long-term basis.”

Achieving these objectives requires appropriate management and the control of factors that may cause deterioration of habitats or significant disturbance to species.

As well as the overall function of communication, Conservation objectives have a number of specific roles:

- Conservation planning and management.

The conservation objectives guide management of sites, to maintain or restore the habitats and species in favourable condition.

- Assessing plans and projects.

Article 6(3) of the ‘Habitats’ Directive requires appropriate assessment of proposed plans and projects against a site’s conservation objectives. Subject to certain exceptions, plans or projects may not proceed unless it is established that they will not adversely affect the integrity of sites. This role for testing plans and projects also applies to the review of existing decisions and consents.

- Monitoring and reporting.

The conservation objectives provide the basis for assessing the condition of a feature and the status of factors that affect it. CCW uses ‘performance indicators’ within the conservation objectives, as the basis for monitoring and reporting. Performance indicators are selected to provide useful information about the condition of a feature and the factors that affect it.

**The conservation objectives in this document reflect CCW’s current information and understanding of the site and its features and their importance in an international context. The conservation objectives are subject to review by CCW in light of new knowledge.**

#### **b. Format of the conservation objectives**

There is one conservation objective for the feature listed in part 3. The conservation objective is a composite statement representing a site-specific description of what is considered to be the favourable conservation status of the feature. These statements apply to a whole feature as it occurs within the whole plan area, although section 3.2 sets out their relevance to individual management units.

Each conservation objective consists of the following two elements:

1. Vision for the feature
2. Performance indicators

As a result of the general practice developed and agreed within the UK Conservation Agencies, conservation objectives include performance indicators, the selection of which should be informed by JNCC guidance on Common Standards Monitoring<sup>1</sup>.

There is a critical need for clarity over the role of performance indicators within the conservation objectives. **A conservation objective, because it includes the vision for the feature, has meaning and substance independently of the performance indicators, and is more than the sum of the performance indicators.** The performance indicators are simply what make the conservation objectives measurable, and are thus part of, not a substitute for, the conservation objectives. Any feature attribute identified in the performance indicators should be represented in the vision for the feature, but not all elements of the vision for the feature will necessarily have corresponding performance indicators.

As well as describing the aspirations for the condition of the feature, the Vision section of each conservation objective contains a statement that the factors necessary to maintain those desired conditions are under control. Subject to technical, practical and resource constraints, factors which have an important influence on the condition of the feature are identified in the performance indicators.

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<sup>1</sup> Web link: <http://www.jncc.gov.uk/page-2199>

#### 4.1 Conservation Objective for Feature:

Old sessile oak woods with *Ilex* and *Blechnum* in the British Isles (EU Habitat Code: 91A0)

#### Vision for feature:

The vision for this feature is for it to be in favourable conservation status within the site, as a functioning and regenerating\* oak wood, where all of the following conditions are satisfied:

- The wooded area is no less than 122 ha;
- The remainder of the site is semi-natural acid grassland, heathland, bracken and scrub, often forming a transition zone at the woodland edge;
- Saplings of birch *Betula spp*, oak *Quercus petraea*, alder *Alnus glutinosa* or holly *Ilex aquifolium* dominate the tree regeneration;
- Young beech *Fagus sylvatica* and sycamore *Acer pseudoplatanus* trees are rare;
- The woodland ground flora is composed of a range of typical native plants including bilberry *Vaccinium myrtillus*, wavy-hair grass *Deschampsia flexuosa* and the mosses *Plagiothecium undulatum*, *Rhytidiadelphus loreus*, *Dicranum majus*.
- The liverwort *Bazzania trilobata* to continue to be present in its core area of Unit 1.
- All factors affecting the achievement of these conditions will under control.

\* A "functioning and regenerating oak woodland" would include all the positive attributes described in the performance indicators.

#### Performance indicators for Feature

The performance indicators are part of the conservation objective, not a substitute for it. Assessment of plans and projects must be based on the entire conservation objective, not just the performance indicators.

<i>Performance indicators for feature condition</i>		
<i>Attribute</i>	<i>Attribute rationale and other comments</i>	<i>Specified limits</i>
A1. Extent	Upper limits for extent of oak woodland, in each of the units.	None, except unit 2*
	Lower limits for extent of oak woodland, in each of the units.	Unit 1- 49 ha
		Unit 2- None*
		Unit 3- 46.5 ha
	Unit 4- 26.5 ha	
	* Unit 2 should remain as a glade.	
A2. Canopy cover	Generally a fairly good canopy cover is needed in existing areas of oak woodland identified by the 1996 survey, apart from on the SW facing slopes of Unit 1. Here a more open structure will benefit the wood ant colonies -see Map 3 for locations. At least 50% of the woodland on the south-west slopes of Unit 1 should comply with the limits for canopy cover, elsewhere 75% compliance is expected.	<i>Upper limits:</i> No upper limit <i>Lower limits:</i> 75% canopy cover OR: 30% on the south-west facing slopes of unit 1

<b>A3. Regeneration</b>	To be met in at least 50% of significant gaps in canopy. Such gaps should be recorded at each monitoring visit.	<i>Upper limit:</i> None <i>Lower limit:</i> Presence of viable saplings of native species at least 1.5m high within 10 – 15 years of a gap appearing.
<b>A4. Woodland structure</b>	<p>A functioning woodland system will have trees of all ages present. Veteran trees provide particularly important habitat for birds and invertebrates. They are generally of large girth, with some evidence of senescence, e.g. crown dieback, dead branches, rot holes and large internal cavities.</p> <p>Variations in soil depth and acidity will mean that some areas will have a naturally sparse understorey. Therefore, the targets only need to be met in 75% existing woodland (see Map 3).</p>	No limits set BUT the canopy should show the full age range of native trees in the majority of site, including at least 10% veteran trees.
<b>A5. Tree and shrub composition</b>	In some areas non-native trees, such as beech, will be tolerated, so long as they are not freely re-generating in the understorey. Consequently, only 75% existing woodland (see Map 3). need comply with the limits set	<i>Upper limit:</i> None <i>Lower limit:</i> 95% of tree cover is composed of locally native species, such as oak, birch, alder and ash.
<b>A6. Ground flora</b>	Bracken may be naturally dominant on the deeper soils in the more open areas and so other woodland plants may be sparse in these areas. Consequently, only 75% of existing woodland (see Map 3) need to comply with this target.	<i>Upper limit:</i> Neither tufted hair-grass or bracken should be present at over 25% cover <i>Lower limits:</i> 75% cover of key oak woodland plants. These include Ferns, (excluding bracken), bilberry, wavy hair-grass and moss & liverwort carpets (which should include at least one of: waved silk-moss, little shaggy-moss or greater fork-moss). <b>AND:</b> The liverwort, greater whipwort is present in unit 1.
<b>A7. Deadwood</b>	It is difficult to set meaningful limits for dead wood but, in the short term, the limits given here should be met in 75% of existing woodland (see Map 3).	<i>Upper limit:</i> None at present <i>Lower limit:</i> Presence of some standing and/or fallen deadwood including dead mature trees.



<b><i>Performance indicators for factors affecting the feature</i></b>		
<b><i>Factor</i></b>	<b><i>Factor rationale and other comments</i></b>	<b><i>Operational Limits</i></b>
F1. Bracken and Bramble Cover	Bracken and bramble are naturally dominant in open areas and are likely to decline as the tree canopy shades them out. Therefore, the limits need only be met in 75% of the existing woodland (see Map 3).	<i>Upper limit:</i> Together, these plants should cover less than 75% of the woodland floor. <i>Lower limit:</i> None.
F.2 Non-native species	Non-native beech trees can be accepted as part of the canopy in the short to medium term. Consequently, the limits need only be met in 75% of existing woodland (see Map 3).	<i>Upper limits:</i> 5% cover of non-native trees in the canopy. AND: No beech (or other invasive non-native shrubs) in the understorey or shrub layer <i>Lower limit:</i> None.

## **5. ASSESSMENT OF CONSERVATION STATUS AND MANAGEMENT REQUIREMENTS**

This part of the document provides:

- A summary of the assessment of the conservation status of each feature.
- A summary of the management issues that need to be addressed to maintain or restore each feature.

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### **5.1 Conservation Status and Management Requirements of Feature 1: Old sessile oak woods with *Ilex* and *Blechnum* in the British Isles (EU Habitat Code: 91A0)**

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**Conservation Status of Feature at this site** (based on draft monitoring report of January 2003 and confirmed by subsequent visits):

**Unfavourable (2007), due to:**

- Grazing having a strong role in preventing some of the canopy regeneration and in creating a sparser ground flora;
- Some areas within the SAC/SSSI remain as open areas, especially on the fringe of the site. Whilst having some open areas is beneficial for a range of species, not all these open areas are of benefit to either the SAC or SSSI features;
- The even-aged and dense canopy in much of the wooded area. This is creating very densely shaded ground, field and shrub layers and is one of the barriers to regeneration of saplings and ground flora. However, more canopy gaps would be expected in the long term as the canopy trees die, or through storm damage in the more exposed parts of the site;

Canopy regeneration is a key attribute for signifying the functioning, habitat quality and sustainability of most woodland types, including sessile oak woods. The grazing within all 4 units has suppressed the regeneration of native woody species and in combination with past coppicing has resulted in a uniform age structure. The areas of Sugarloaf woodlands not subjected to continuous grazing, appear to become densely populated with saplings of all species. This may demonstrate that the main factor restricting natural regeneration of woody species in Sugar Loaf Woodlands is grazing and that current grazing levels are incompatible with sustainable semi-natural woodland at this site. The conservation objectives state that the canopy should be composed of locally native trees and, apart from a beech woodland area within Unit 1, the canopy of Sugar Loaf Woodlands is currently dominated by oak throughout. Where beech is present its seedlings tend to dominate the regeneration and without management to control these locally non-native seedlings, this will further cause parts of the SAC feature to fail.

#### **Management Requirements of Feature as at November 2007**

The following management requirements reflect the currently rather even-aged structure of the canopy trees and the constraints placed on units 1&3 by being grazed as part of the wider Sugar Loaf Common:

#### **Liaison**

- Owners/commoners – discuss possible means of managing grazing to encourage natural regeneration in the woodland areas, including possible agreements to fence all new and some existing canopy gaps.
- Most of Unit 4 is already fenced and stock free and regeneration is now taking place, though some periodic grazing may be required to control bramble.
- For the other areas CCW may wish to consider its options for encouraging the commoners to manage the use of the woodland areas to permit some regeneration with the wood.

**Manage non-native species**

- Tree/shrub – if necessary, control the spread of non-native species (principally beech) through a programme of selective removal of saplings to ensure no further trees get into the canopy.

**Manage woodland by thinning/small group felling**

- Trees could be thinned to create a more uneven age structure or open gaps in the canopy when an appropriate means of controlling grazing levels have been identified and all dead/felled timber to be left *in situ*. This is already taking place in Unit 4 but elsewhere the grazing regime may be unsuitable.
- Much of the woodland lacks structure due to past woodland management to remove timber. It is likely to be decades before a more natural woodland structure can develop.

**Increase amounts of deadwood**

- Deadwood is present on the site, but much has been removed in the past. In future, the owners should be encouraged to leave as much dead wood as possible.

**Veteran trees**

- Retain all veteran trees.

**Manage bracken**

- Bracken may require management where it is thought to be hindering successful regeneration, largely in the open areas and gaps. However, this needs to be balanced against the protection bracken offers for young saplings against browsing and its place as a key natural component of acidic woodlands.

## **6. ACTION PLAN: SUMMARY**

This section takes the management requirements outlined in Section 5 a stage further, assessing the specific management actions required on each management unit. This information is a summary of that held in CCW's Actions Database for sites, and the database will be used by CCW and partner organisations to plan future work to meet the Wales Environment Strategy targets for sites.

15.02.08

<b>Unit Number</b>	<b>CCW Database Number</b>	<b>Unit Name</b>	<b>Summary of Conservation Management Issues</b>	<b>Action needed?</b>
001	000379	St Mary's Vale	All of unit is on Sugar Loaf Common and therefore open to grazing, restricting canopy regeneration and extent & luxuriance of ground flora, very difficult to achieve "correct" grazing levels with current tools available.	Yes
002	000380	St Mary's Vale Enclosure	Unit is a small privately owned enclosure on common and is managed as a glade, the small size of the unit means if rest of site was managed correctly it would add positive diversity to the woodland structure.	No
003	000381	The Deri	All of unit is on Sugar Loaf Common and therefore open to grazing, restricting canopy regeneration and extent & luxuriance of ground flora, very difficult to achieve "correct" grazing levels with current tools available.	Yes
004	000382	The Park	Unit is presently managed as part of a Tir Gofal agreement, no issues currently.	No



## **7. GLOSSARY**

This glossary defines the some of the terms used in this **Core Management Plan**. Some of the definitions are based on definitions contained in other documents, including legislation and other publications of CCW and the UK nature conservation agencies. None of these definitions is legally definitive.

**Action** A recognisable and individually described act, undertaking or **project** of any kind, specified in section 6 of a **Core Management Plan** or **Management Plan**, as being required for the **conservation management** of a site.

**Attribute** A quantifiable and monitorable characteristic of a **feature** that, in combination with other such attributes, describes its **condition**.

**Common Standards Monitoring** A set of principles developed jointly by the UK conservation agencies to help ensure a consistent approach to **monitoring** and reporting on the **features** of sites designated for nature conservation, supported by guidance on identification of **attributes** and monitoring methodologies.

**Condition** A description of the state of a feature in terms of qualities or **attributes** that are relevant in a nature conservation context. For example the condition of a habitat usually includes its extent and species composition and might also include aspects of its ecological functioning, spatial distribution and so on. The condition of a species population usually includes its total size and might also include its age structure, productivity, relationship to other populations and spatial distribution. Aspects of the habitat(s) on which a species population depends may also be considered as attributes of its condition.

**Condition assessment** The process of characterising the **condition** of a **feature** with particular reference to whether the aspirations for its condition, as expressed in its **conservation objective**, are being met.

**Condition categories** The **condition** of **feature** can be categorised, following **condition assessment** as one of the following<sup>2</sup>:

Favourable: maintained;  
Favourable: recovered;  
Favourable: un-classified  
Unfavourable: recovering;  
Unfavourable: no change;  
Unfavourable: declining;  
Unfavourable: un-classified  
Partially destroyed;  
Destroyed.

**Conservation management** Acts or undertaking of all kinds, including but not necessarily limited to **actions**, taken with the aim of achieving the **conservation objectives** of a site. Conservation management includes the taking of statutory and non-statutory measures, it can include the acts of any party and it may take place outside site boundaries as well as within

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<sup>2</sup> See JNCC guidance on Common Standards Monitoring <http://www.jncc.gov.uk/page-2272>

sites. Conservation management may also be embedded within other frameworks for land/sea management carried out for purposes other than achieving the conservation objectives.

<b>Conservation objective</b>	The expression of the desired <b>conservation status</b> of a <b>feature</b> , expressed as a <b>vision for the feature</b> and a series of <b>performance indicators</b> . The conservation objective for a feature is thus a composite statement, and each feature has one conservation objective.
<b>Conservation status</b>	A description of the state of a <b>feature</b> that comprises both its <b>condition</b> and the state of the <b>factors</b> affecting or likely to affect it. Conservation status is thus a characterisation of both the current state of a feature and its future prospects.
<b>Conservation status assessment</b>	The process of characterising the <b>conservation status</b> of a <b>feature</b> with particular reference to whether the aspirations for it, as expressed in its <b>conservation objective</b> , are being met. The results of conservation status assessment can be summarised either as ‘favourable’ (i.e. conservation objectives are met) or unfavourable (i.e. conservation objectives are not met). However the value of conservation status assessment in terms of supporting decisions about <b>conservation management</b> , lies mainly in the details of the assessment of feature <b>condition</b> , <b>factors</b> and trend information derived from comparisons between current and previous conservation status assessments and condition assessments.
<b>Core Management Plan</b>	A CCW document containing the conservation objectives for a site and a summary of other information contained in a full site <b>Management Plan</b> .
<b>Factor</b>	Anything that has influenced, is influencing or may influence the <b>condition</b> of a <b>feature</b> . Factors can be natural processes, human activities or effects arising from natural process or human activities, They can be positive or negative in terms of their influence on features, and they can arise within a site or from outside the site. Physical, socio-economic or legal constraints on <b>conservation management</b> can also be considered as factors.
<b>Favourable condition</b>	See <b>condition</b> and <b>condition assessment</b>
<b>Favourable conservation status</b>	See conservation status and conservation status assessment. <sup>3</sup>
<b>Feature</b>	The species population, habitat type or other entity for which a site is designated. The ecological or geological interest which justifies the designation of a site and which is the focus of conservation management.
<b>Integrity</b>	See <b>site integrity</b>
<b>Key Feature</b>	The habitat or species population within a <b>management unit</b> that is the primary focus of <b>conservation management</b> and <b>monitoring</b> in that unit.

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<sup>3</sup> A full definition of favourable conservation status is given in Section 4.

<b>Management Plan</b>	The full expression of a designated site's legal status, <b>vision, features, conservation objectives, performance indicators</b> and management requirements. A complete management plan may not reside in a single document, but may be contained in a number of documents (including in particular <b>the Core Management Plan</b> ) and sets of electronically stored information.
<b>Management Unit</b>	An area within a site, defined according to one or more of a range of criteria, such as topography, location of <b>features</b> , tenure, patterns of land/sea use. The key characteristic of management units is to reflect the spatial scale at which <b>conservation management</b> and <b>monitoring</b> can be most effectively organised. They are used as the primary basis for differentiating priorities for conservation management and monitoring in different parts of a site, and for facilitating communication with those responsible for management of different parts of a site.
<b>Monitoring</b>	An intermittent (regular or irregular) series of observations in time, carried out to show the extent of compliance with a formulated standard or degree of deviation from an expected norm. In <b>Common Standards Monitoring</b> , the formulated standard is the quantified expression of favourable <b>condition</b> based on <b>attributes</b> .
<b>Operational limits</b>	The levels or values within which a <b>factor</b> is considered to be acceptable in terms of its influence on a <b>feature</b> . A factor may have both upper and lower operational limits, or only an upper limit or lower limit. For some factors an upper limit may be zero.
<b>Performance indicators</b>	The <b>attributes</b> and their associated <b>specified limits</b> , together with <b>factors</b> and their associated <b>operational limits</b> , which provide the standard against which information from <b>monitoring</b> and other sources is used to determine the degree to which the <b>conservation objectives</b> for a <b>feature</b> are being met. Performance indicators are part of, not the same as, conservation objectives. See also <b>vision for the feature</b> .
<b>Plan or project</b>	<b>Project:</b> Any form of construction work, installation, development or other intervention in the environment, the carrying out or continuance of which is subject to a decision by any public body or statutory undertaker. <b>Plan:</b> a document prepared or adopted by a public body or statutory undertaker, intended to influence decisions on the carrying out of <b>projects</b> . Decisions on plans and projects which affect Natura 2000 and Ramsar sites are subject to specific legal and policy procedures.
<b>Site integrity</b>	The coherence of a site's ecological structure and function, across its whole area, that enables it to sustain the habitat, complex of habitats and/or the levels of populations of the species for which it is designated.
<b>Site Management Statement (SMS)</b>	The document containing CCW's views about the management of a site issued as part of the legal notification of an SSSI under section 28(4) of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, as substituted.
<b>Special Feature</b>	See <b>feature</b> .
<b>Specified limit</b>	The levels or values for an <b>attribute</b> which define the degree to which the attribute can fluctuate without creating cause for concern about the <b>condition</b>

of the **feature**. The range within the limits corresponds to favourable, the range outside the limits corresponds to unfavourable. Attributes may have lower specified limits, upper specified limits, or both.

**Unit** See **management unit**.

**Vision for the feature** The expression, within a **conservation objective**, of the aspirations for the **feature** concerned. See also **performance indicators**.

**Vision Statement** The statement conveying an impression of the whole site in the state that is intended to be the product of its **conservation management**. A 'pen portrait' outlining the **conditions** that should prevail when all the **conservation objectives** are met. A description of the site as it would be when all the **features** are in **favourable condition**.

## **8. REFERENCES**

Joint Nature Conservation Committee (JNCC). 2004. Guidance on Common Standards Monitoring (CSM): Woodland, Version February 2004. JNCC Report, JNCC, Peterborough.

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