

## Woodland Management Plans - BNG

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At SPconservations, we support landowners in developing and delivering effective woodland management strategies that restore natural processes, enhance biodiversity, and ensure long-term ecological resilience. In a recent project, we undertook a comprehensive assessment of a mixed, semi-natural, woodland, producing a tailored management plan that balanced biodiversity enhancement with sustainable land stewardship.

The process began with a full ecological survey to identify key habitats, species, and structural features. This informed a multi-year plan which included selective thinning to diversify canopy structure, ride and glade creation to improve light penetration, and targeted removal of invasive species such as *Rhododendron ponticum*. Deadwood was retained in situ to support invertebrates, fungi, and cavity-nesting birds. This process involved selective felling, encouraging rotting stumps/limbs and dead hedge creation.

In addition to immediate ecological improvements, this work fed into a broader Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) strategy. The management plan was aligned with the UKHab classification system, allowing accurate habitat condition assessments and quantifiable biodiversity uplift. This ensures landowners can not only meet emerging regulatory requirements but also generate potential biodiversity units to support off-site compensation schemes.

For landowners, developing a woodland management plan and engaging in active habitat restoration brings a host of benefits. Beyond improving biodiversity and landscape value, it opens the door to a range of funding streams, including BNG credits, environmental land management payments, and carbon offsetting schemes. Well-managed woodlands can provide timber, firewood, and other sustainable products, while also enhancing access, amenity, and natural capital on the land. Most importantly, taking a proactive approach now ensures long-term ecological health and positions landowners at the forefront of the UK's nature recovery effort—delivering tangible environmental gains while securing future value from the land.

