

Drovers Woodland Management Plan Summary 2023-2033

Compartment DR5b

Nature
Trust



**91 hectares of
mixed woodland in
West Sussex**

Habitats and Species

The old railway tunnels at this site “constitute the most important sites for hibernating bats in south-east England and are the fifth most important in Britain” (Nature Conservancy Council, 1989). The matrix of farmland, grassland, woodland and hedgerows, together with the tunnels and the river, provides habitat for an excellent diversity of plants and animals, including important feeding territory for the bats. Woodland and calcareous grassland are the habitats of most conservation importance in the landscape. The remaining semi-natural areas of oak/ash/hazel coppice woodland, with an open ride network, have rich ground floras and some uncommon associated invertebrates. Wood-decay communities, associated with older generation trees within the farmland, are of regional value.

The key woodland management issues on the Estate are continued protection of the bat roosts in the tunnels and maintenance and enhancement of the semi-natural coppice woodlands, and restoration of plantations;

Designations

All of the compartments at this site have been designated as Ancient Semi-Natural Woodlands (ASNW), this means it is a woodland that has existed continuously since or before 1600. In these compartments work will focus on maintaining and enhancing the health and diversity of the woodland habitat, protecting veteran trees, and management for health and safety.

Parts of compartments DR1, 2, 3, and 5 are classified as Plantations on Ancient Woodland Site (PAWS), this is a result of the planting of sweet chestnut and conifer into these ancient woodland sites. In these compartments we will seek to restore and protect the woodland’s natural characteristics and features.

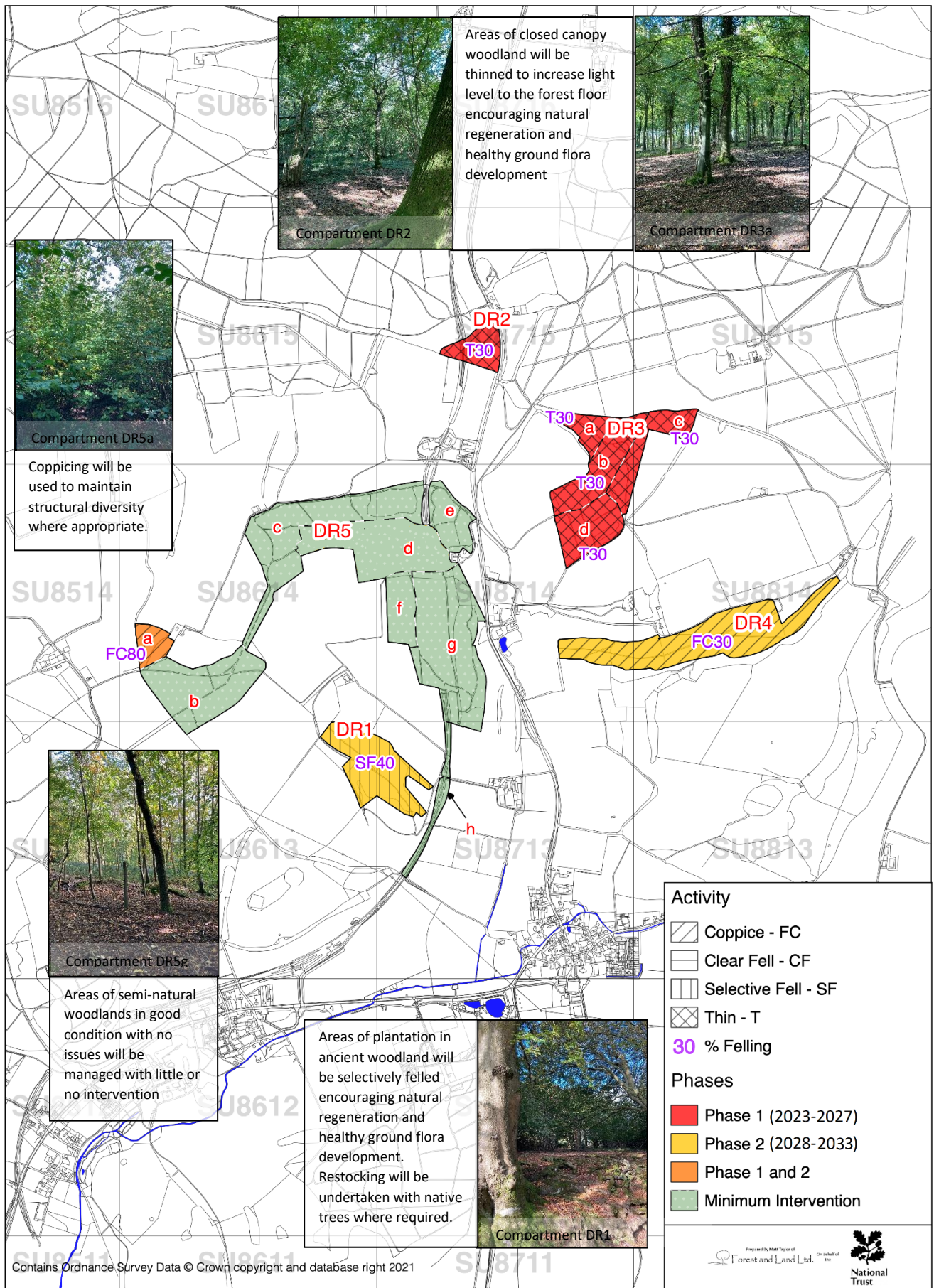
Compartment DR5 contains the Singleton and Cocking Tunnels SSSI, designated for being the most important site for hibernating bats in south-east England and are the fifth most important in Britain. The Natural England ‘Views about management document’ suggests that disturbance should be minimised and that emergence points and flight lines should be maintained as unobstructed and free from artificial light, though vegetated cover around the entrance is desirable.

Management Approaches

The proportion of non-native trees in areas of ancient woodland will be gradually reduced to protect remnant features of high ecological value.

Coppicing will be used to maintain and enhance structural diversity

Thinning will open up areas of closed canopy woodland allowing better development of ground flora and natural regeneration of native trees.



South Downs Woodland Management Plan—Drovers Map 2: Activity and Work Phase

Scale 1:13000 at A3