

Photo: Compartment 11

West Coniston

Woodland Management Plan September 2018- August 2028

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Forest and Land Ltd. On Behalf of the



National
Trust

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Section 1: Background to the Woodlands



The aim of this plan is to provide a ten year programme of woodland management that will meet the aims and objectives of the National Trust at West Coniston in Cumbria. The detail of the plan focusses on tree thinning and felling works at the site. Detail relating to the landscape, access and built structures at the site form the content of other plans. There are also detailed ecological and tree surveys that have been undertaken recently which have informed the work identified in this plan.

Background to the Woodlands at West Coniston

The property, owned by the National Trust to the west of Coniston Water is located in an area of particular natural beauty, with the farms, fields and hedgerows creating a mosaic of colour that extends over the gently undulating lowlands. At the centre of the property are two large enclosed woodlands. Smaller woods and copses can often be seen on rocky outcrops or adjacent to farms. The property is one of the most significant areas of lowland landscape within the Lake District in the care of the National Trust. It offers a distinct contrast with the rugged peaks of the central fells. All the woodlands within the area covered by this plan sit within the Lake District National Park.

The woodlands in the Coniston basin are likely to have remained untouched until the 10th Century as Norse settlers began to colonise the valleys on the edge of the central fells, establishing forest communities and enclosing land in the valley bottom, utilising the surrounding woodlands to graze their animals. Only a handful of small farmsteads are likely to have existed at the north western edge of Coniston water by the time of the Norman Conquest. At the end of the 13th Century the valley bottom land, most of which had become a deer park , had been enclosed.

The steady deforestation of the southern Lake District appears to have quickened during the late 16th century as a result of the growth of the Furness iron industry. By the end of the 18th century the majority of the woodland in the valley bottom is likely to have been removed (Thomas Quest 1774),. The woodland within the deer park would have been largely preserved until the 1720's but after that intense industrial activity, supplying charcoal saw intense exploitation between the 18th Century and the end of the 19th century.

All the woods are on an eastwards facing slope on the West Shore of Coniston Water. Elevation is from 46m at Lake level to 190m at the top of Bleathwaite Coppice. The Woods form a particularly extensive single block with only small recently planted screens and the wet woodlands at Storth Gutter going down to the lake shore. They form quite a distinctive feature as a solid block of oak which contrasts with the imposing edifice of Coniston Hall and its hunting park of wide open spaces and individual trees. These woodlands, especially Bleathwaite and Park coppice have been a part of the landscape and associated with the local economy for hundreds of years. As the forest industry declined the woodlands are now less disturbed and more mature than they have been for centuries.

Section 2: Our Biodiversity



Habitats

The protection, enhancement and management of our priority habitats is critical if we are to achieve our objectives. Our Priority Habitats are outlined below:

Habitats represented in the Cumbrian Biodiversity Action Plan present at West Coniston include, **Aquatic Rivers and streams, Upland Oak Wood, Wet woodland and Reedbeds.**

At Storth Gutter the woodland type sits within the ***Salix cinerea – Betula pubescens-Phragmites australis* woodland, *Alnus glutinosa – Filipendula ulmaria* sub community (W2a)** of the National Vegetation Classification system (NVC). These woodland types are rare in the North of England and are generally more confined to East Anglia and the Cheshire and Shropshire meres.

At Bleathwaite Coppice there is **W17 oak woodland** with **W7 alder wet woodland** in the wetter sections.

Veteran Trees are found across the area and represent an important component of our woodland habitat.

Species

There are numerous bat roosts in this area. **Bats** seen feeding over large waterbodies and rivers. Little is known about bat populations. Research is needed to determine their distribution, habitats and threats. At Storth Gutter, **Otter** have been seen in the main gutter as well as in the Coniston Hall Shelterbelts and Park Coppice. There are historic records of **Red Squirrel** throughout the woodlands.

At Bleathwaite Coppice there are some **small leaved lime**. The bryophyte flora particularly on the boulders is fairly diverse and includes more oceanic plants such as ***Bazzania trilobata*** and ***Leucobryum juniperodeum***. Very locally on more rich soils there is some **Dogs mercury, primrose, false brome, and Tutsan**. On the roadside **Black bryony** is also found, almost at its northern limit.

At Park Coppice between the road and the dismantled railway is a stand of mostly tall and dense coppiced alder. There is a damp woodland ground flora of **remote sedge, creeping buttercup, buckler ferns, false brome** and a large population of **beech fern *Phegopteris connectilis***.

Curlew have bred at Storth Gutter in the recent past, breeding **Bullfinch** and **Redpoll** have been confirmed here too.

At Bleathwaite Coppice breeding birdlife include good numbers of insectivorous species such as **tits, woodpeckers** and **nuthatch**. **Hawfinch** have bred in the recent past. **Pied flycatcher, wood warbler** and **redstart** have also been reported.

At Matthew Coppice breeding birds include Nuthatch, Jay, Redstart, and buzzard

Also at Matthew Coppice invertebrate species of interest include ***Mathodes flavoguttatus*** a soldier beetle. breeds in small dead branches, ***Trixagus dermestoides*** False click beetle, and the nationally scarce ***Quedius plagiatus*, Northern rove beetle**.

Glossoma intermedium is found in the Hoathwaite Shelterbelts. (a caddisfly BAP species present in Hoathwaite Beck)

At Bleathwaite Coppice, molluscs appear fairly rich including the **Ash-black slug *Limax cinereoniger*, brown snail *Zenobiella subfruscens*** and **prickly snail *Acathinula aculeata***.

Section 3: Our Aims and Objectives



Photo: Compartment 1

What we want to do	Why we want to do it?	How can we achieve it?
<p>Maximise the value of our woodlands for biodiversity through restoration of Ancient Woodland sites. Manage our woodland to create a diverse age structure and sustainable, dynamic forest ecosystem. Our management will aim to protect and enhance biodiversity in all woodland and open habitats.</p>	<p>Britain’s woodland biodiversity is in trouble. Reports show that 60 per cent of our woodland species have decreased and 34 percent have decreased strongly over recent decades. Species decline is attributed to a lack of structural diversity in our woodlands with low management intervention and increased deer numbers resulting in uniform and aging woodlands. We want to do what we can to reverse this trend and help save Britain’s natural heritage. We’ve identified those species and habitats listed as being of high conservation importance, these are detailed in our section on Biodiversity on page 2.</p>	<p>Thinning is the primary intervention in this plan. This will have a number of benefits our woodland and the species which inhabit them. It will open up the canopy allowing regeneration of tree and scrub species. This will diversify the woodland structure creating habitat more suitable for priority bird species such as the willow tit. By diversifying the woodland’s age structure, we will also ensure the long term survival of our woodlands in to the future.</p> <p>Thinning will be used to release veteran trees from competition increasing their health and longevity. It will protect the rare species and habitat they provide and maximise their landscape value.</p> <p>Use a combination of natural regeneration and enrichment planting with native species to regenerate or restock sites to favour red squirrel. Take advantage of natural processes eg. storms & disease to diversify species mix and age structure. When restocking, consider provenance and species in relation to climate change.</p> <p>Continue to evaluate the current nature conservation value of the woodlands through stakeholder communications and survey work and respond accordingly.</p> <p>Monitor selected priority species and habitats to help assess improvement and gain a better understanding of current position.</p> <p>Control non-native invasive species including rhododendron and grey squirrel.</p> <p>Encourage the development of greater structural and species diversity through supplementary tree planting where natural regeneration is not apparent or of the desired species.</p> <p>Increase dead wood volumes by ring barking selected trees where this fits within the Trust Tree safety Management Policy.</p> <p>Identify and conserve veteran trees. Avoid work to mature/veteran trees unless absolutely necessary for safety reasons.</p> <p>Protect wildlife and ancient woodland features by marking them on the ground during operations and including them in operational constraints maps.</p> <p>Ensure woodland is protected from trespass grazing through boundary maintenance and replacement.</p> <p>Take an active role in local deer management groups to deliver sustainable landscape scale deer control.</p>

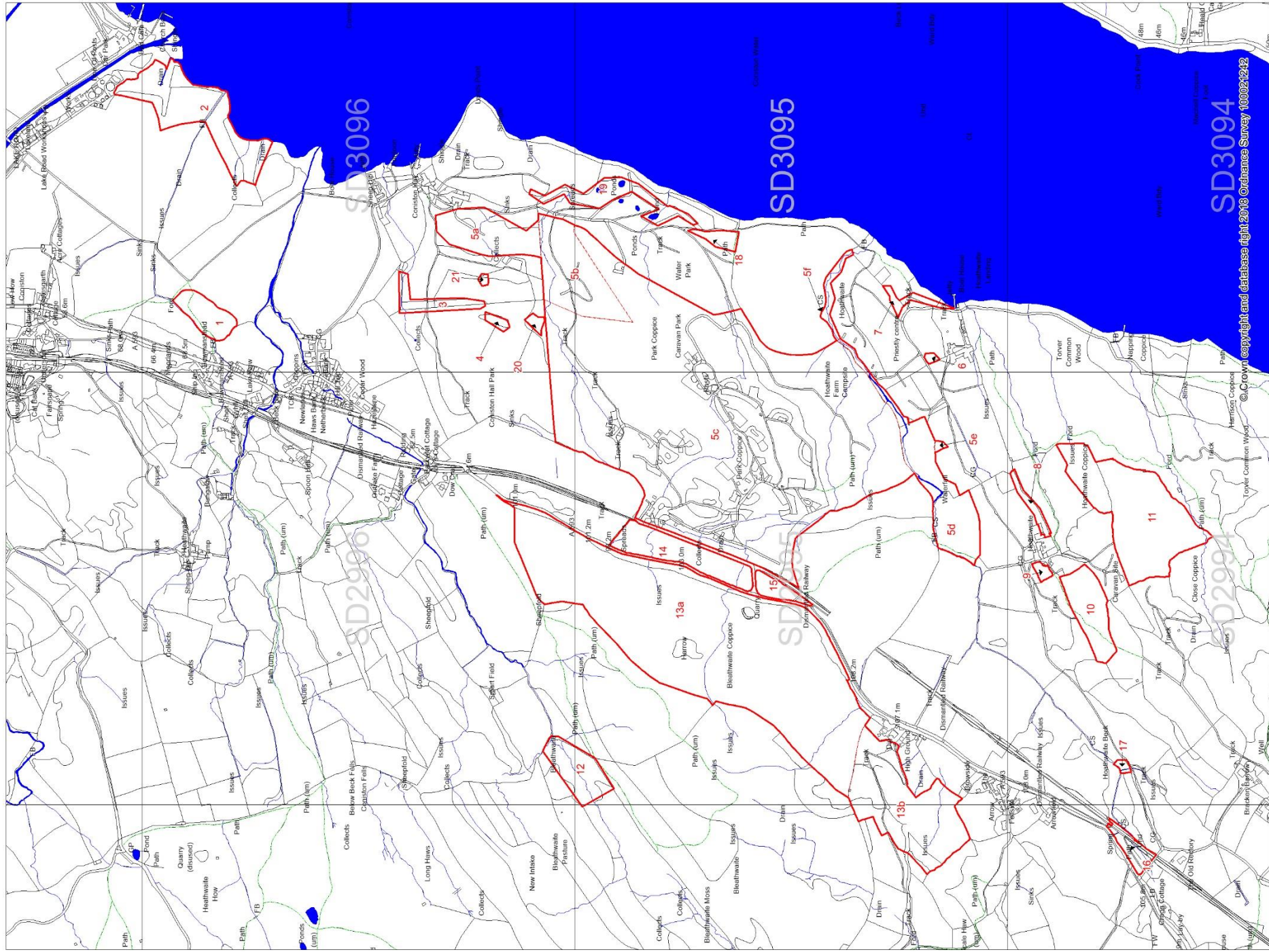
What we want to do	Why we want to do it?	How can we achieve it?
To improve access for management and enhance and encourage safe and sympathetic public access, extending opportunities for education, recreation and participation where this does not conflict with the other objectives.	The quality of experience for our visitors is important to the Trust. This plan aims to maintain our woodlands wild feel and to ensure that our woodlands can be enjoyed by generations to come.	<p>Continue to assess the current access situation and map where access can be improved/created.</p> <p>Develop opportunities for the local community to get involved in our woodlands through volunteer opportunities.</p> <p>Work with local schools to enable them to use our woodlands to get outdoors and closer to nature.</p> <p>Improve access and facilities throughout the woodland to facilitate management programmes and enable people to enjoy and get more from their visit.</p> <p>Use our programme of woodland management as a tool to engage visitors and inform them about the importance woodland conservation and what our woods can offer.</p> <p>Ensure our woods are safe to visit and that our trees are inspected in line with the Trust Tree Safety Management Policy.</p>
Reduce our carbon footprint	<p>The Earth’s temperature is warming a result of human activities. Global Warming is already having a terrible impact upon the lives of people and nature across the globe.</p> <p>If the global rise in temperature can be kept below 2 degrees Celsius, the negative effects of climate change can be minimised, this however will require a change in all of our carbon outputs.</p> <p>The Trust is committed to a 50% reduction in fossil fuel use by 2020. We therefore wish to minimise carbon outputs and sequester as much carbon as possible through natural processes.</p> <p>NB: Although the South Lakes property is a wooded landscape the amount of carbon stored in trees/woodland is relatively small compared to that stored in peat in upland mires.</p>	<p>Trees store carbon. We will conduct woodland management which promotes the growth of new trees and rapid growth through tree species selection for replanting and silvicultural systems such as coppicing.</p> <p>Identify suitable new sites for tree planting.</p>

What we want to do	Why we want to do it?	How can we achieve it?
Contribute to the local economy	We want our land to contribute to the quality of life for local people. We will seek to build links with local woodland contractors, timber buyers and craftspeople to support their business and give them confidence to invest in new equipment.	<p>Where possible and appropriate, trees will be harvested when they achieve their optimal economic potential.</p> <p>Apply for appropriate woodland/countryside grant schemes and regional funding to achieve stated objectives.</p> <p>Where possible generate timber income through thinning/harvesting programmes to help fund the ecological restoration process and wider woodland improvement programmes.</p> <p>Work with regional contractors to develop a contractor base adapted to local woodland conditions ie. Small scale, steep, sensitive, access issues.</p>
Ensure the woodland habitats are resilient to climate change and new plant diseases	Climate change and new pests and disease present an unprecedented threat to our woodland ecosystems. By creating woodlands diverse in structure and species we will increase the overall resilience of these ecosystems.	<p>Increase resilience by increasing structural and species diversity where ever possible through thinning/harvesting to allow natural regeneration where possible.</p> <p>Seek alternative native species to replace ash & larch and broaden the area of provenance to favour appropriate southern species.</p> <p>Remove species known to increase the likelihood of disease transmission e.g Rhododendron</p> <p>Seek opportunities to increase habitat connectivity through tree planting.</p>
To manage Health and Safety in our woodland.	There are risks of injury to our staff, volunteers, contractors and visitors from falling trees and woodland management operations. There are also risks of damage to buildings and property. The Trust has a statutory and common law duty to assess and manage these risks. The duty is established in criminal law under the Health and Safety at Work Act, and in civil law under the Occupier’s Liability Act. The Trust must take all precautions as far as is reasonably practicable to avoid risks to the safety of visitors, staff, contractors and volunteers.	<p>By following National Trust’s Tree safety Management Policy.</p> <p>When employing contractors by following the Trust’s guidance documents ; General Requirement for Countryside and Garden Work & Special Requirements for Arboricultural Work</p>

What we want to do	Why we want to do it?	How can we achieve it?
<p>Conserve the Lake District World Heritage Site.</p>	<p>We recognise the international importance of the Lake District and our responsibility towards protecting it’s Cultural and Historic Landscape.</p>	<p>Using the Site and Monuments register record the condition of the archaeological features across South Lakes Woodland.</p> <p>When carrying out woodland work ensure that the historic environment is protected in line with guidance from Historic England.</p> <p>Working with the NT archaeologist discuss the further research recommendations from historic environment report (where applicable) and the potential to achieve them.</p> <p>Maintain and protect designed woodland landscape elements across the site.</p> <p>Protect woodland archaeology during management operations by marking sites on the ground and on job sheets and operations maps.</p> <p>Understanding the Outstanding Universal Values (OUVs) for the South Lakes property and how woodland management can impact upon them.</p>

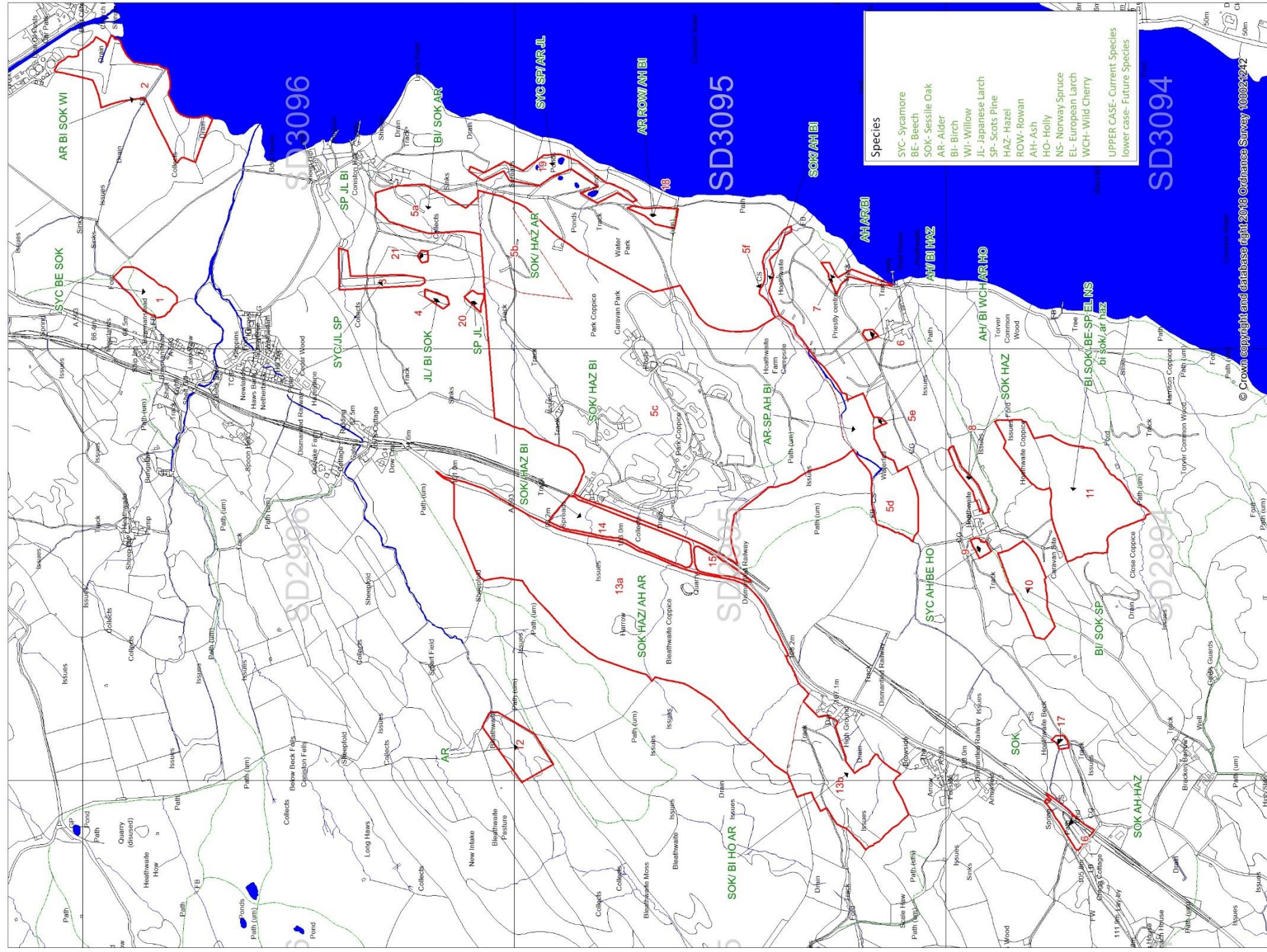
Section 4: Site Maps

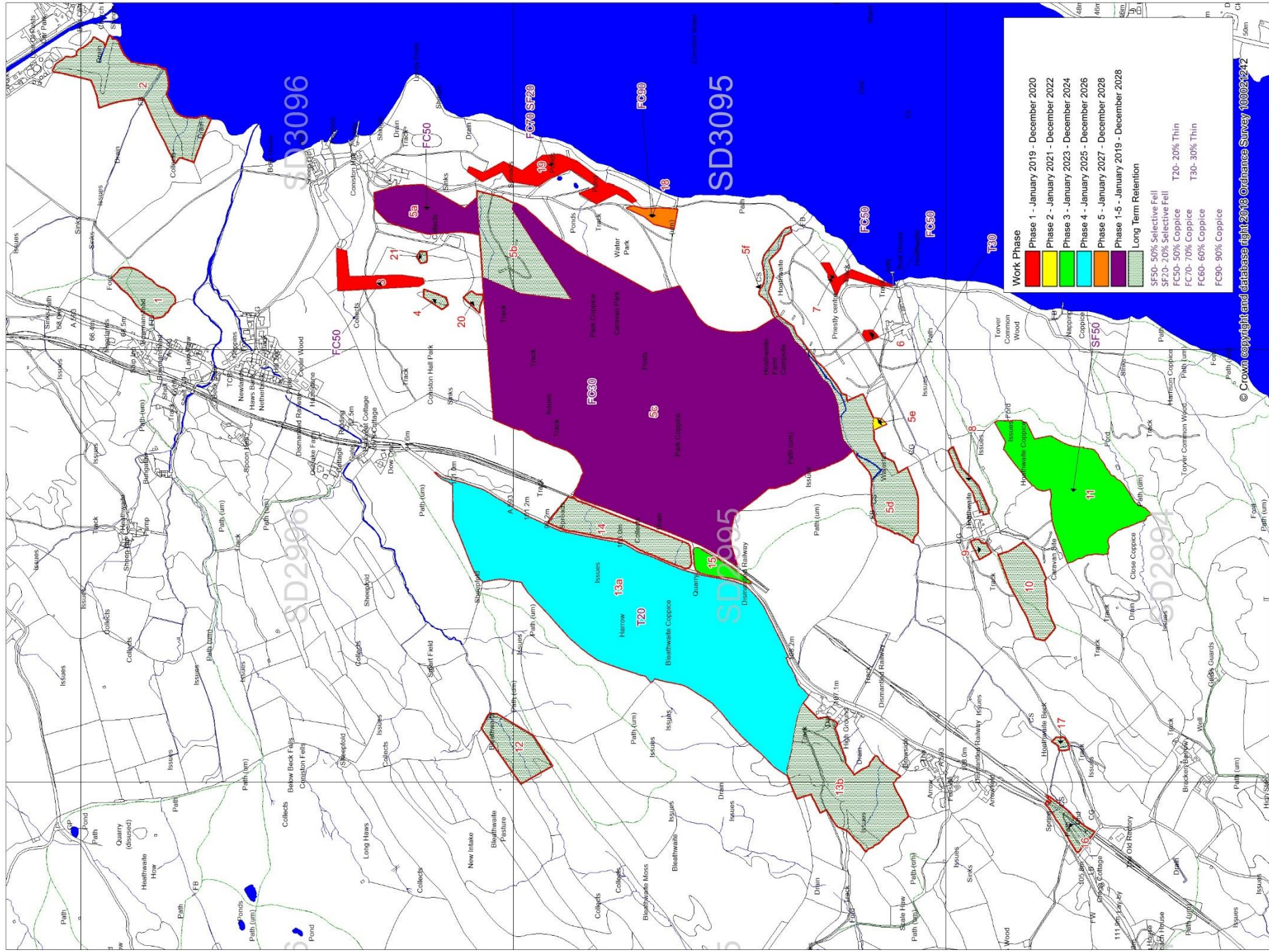




West Coniston Forest Plan: Map 1 - Compartments

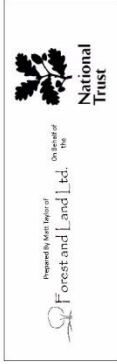
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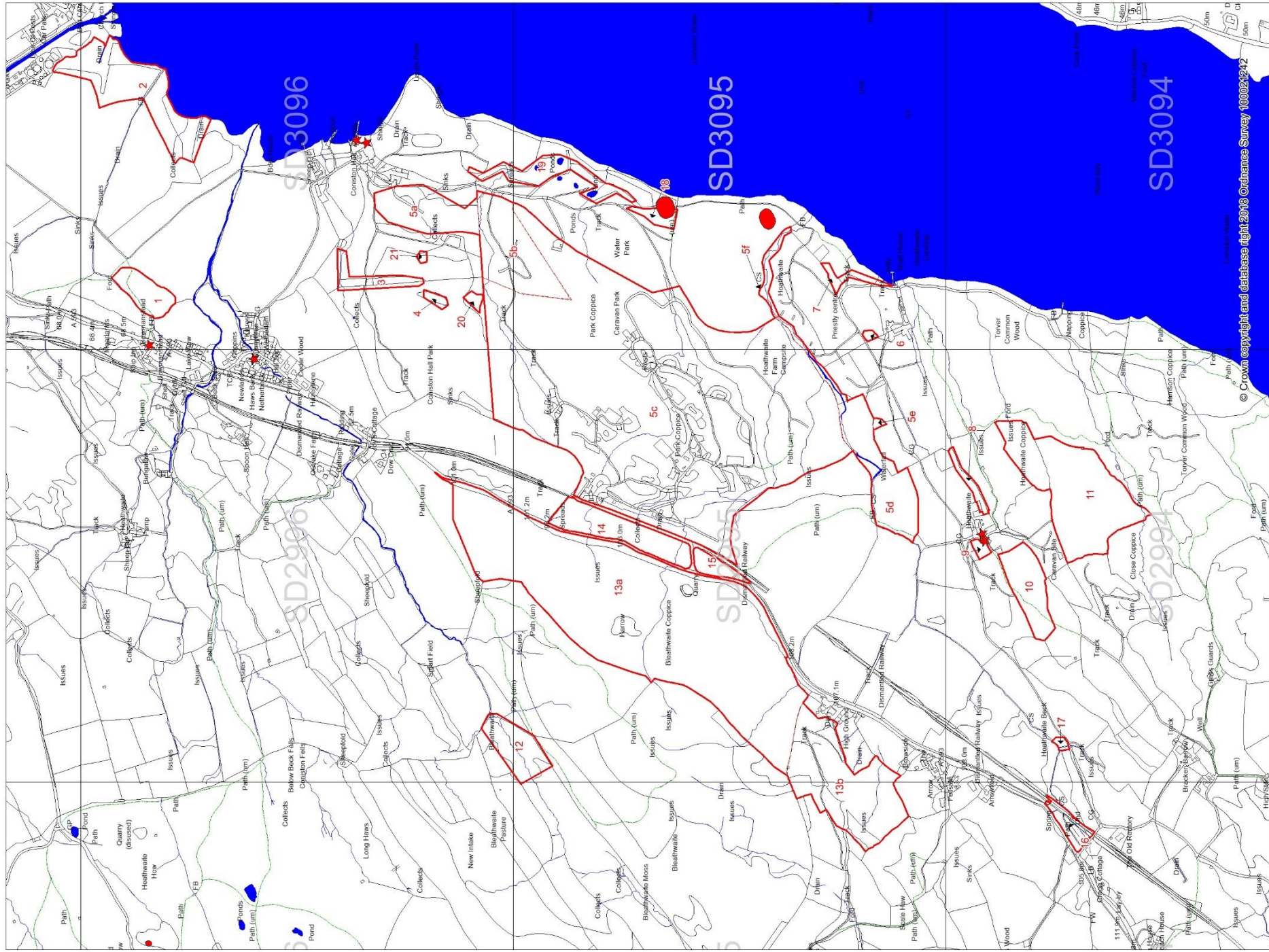




West Coniston Forest Plan: Map 3 - Work Programme

Scale 1:7500 at A3





West Coniston Forest Plan: Map 4 - Statutory Designations

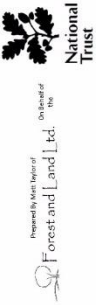
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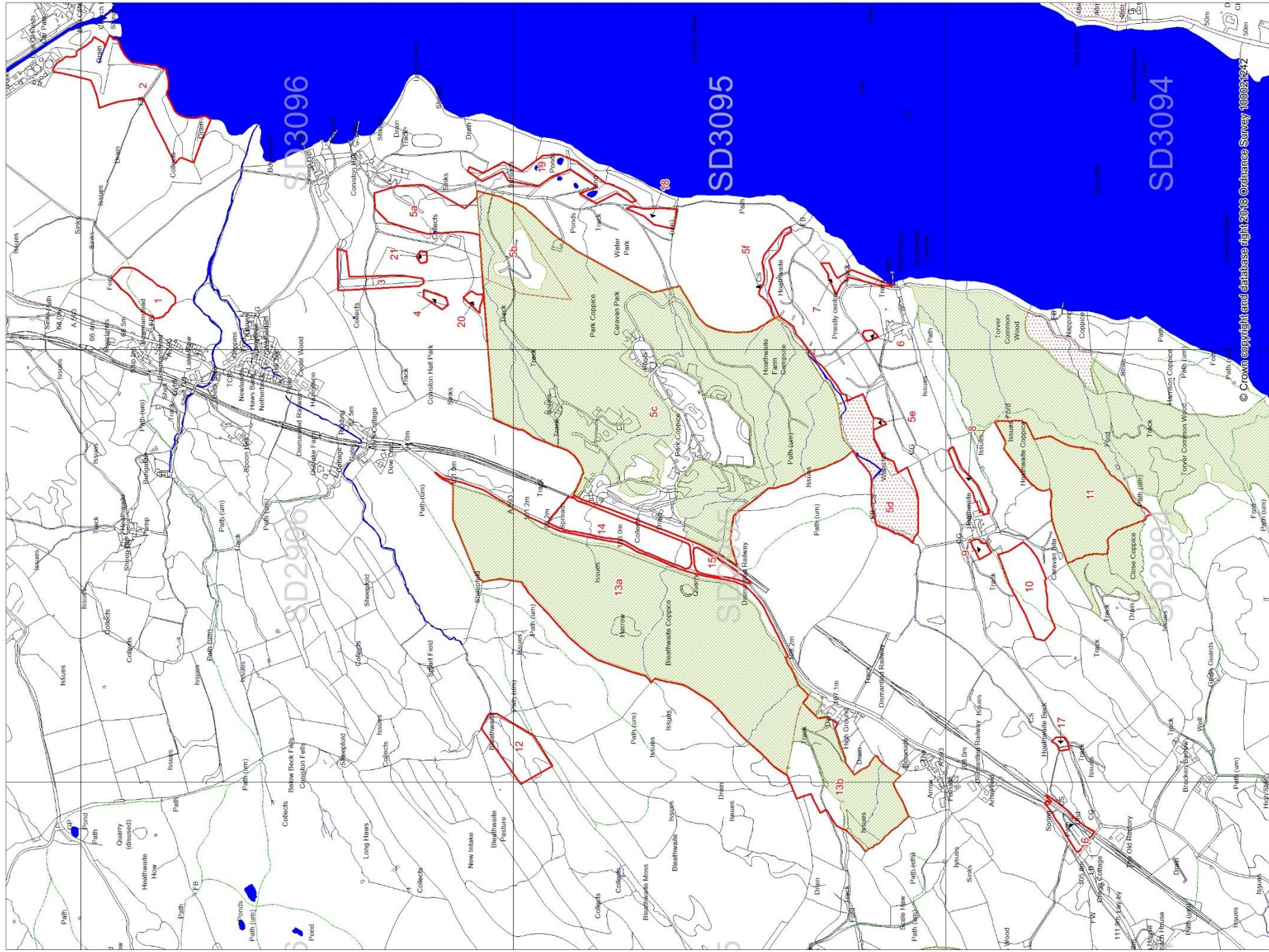


Listed Buildings

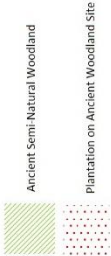


Scheduled Monument

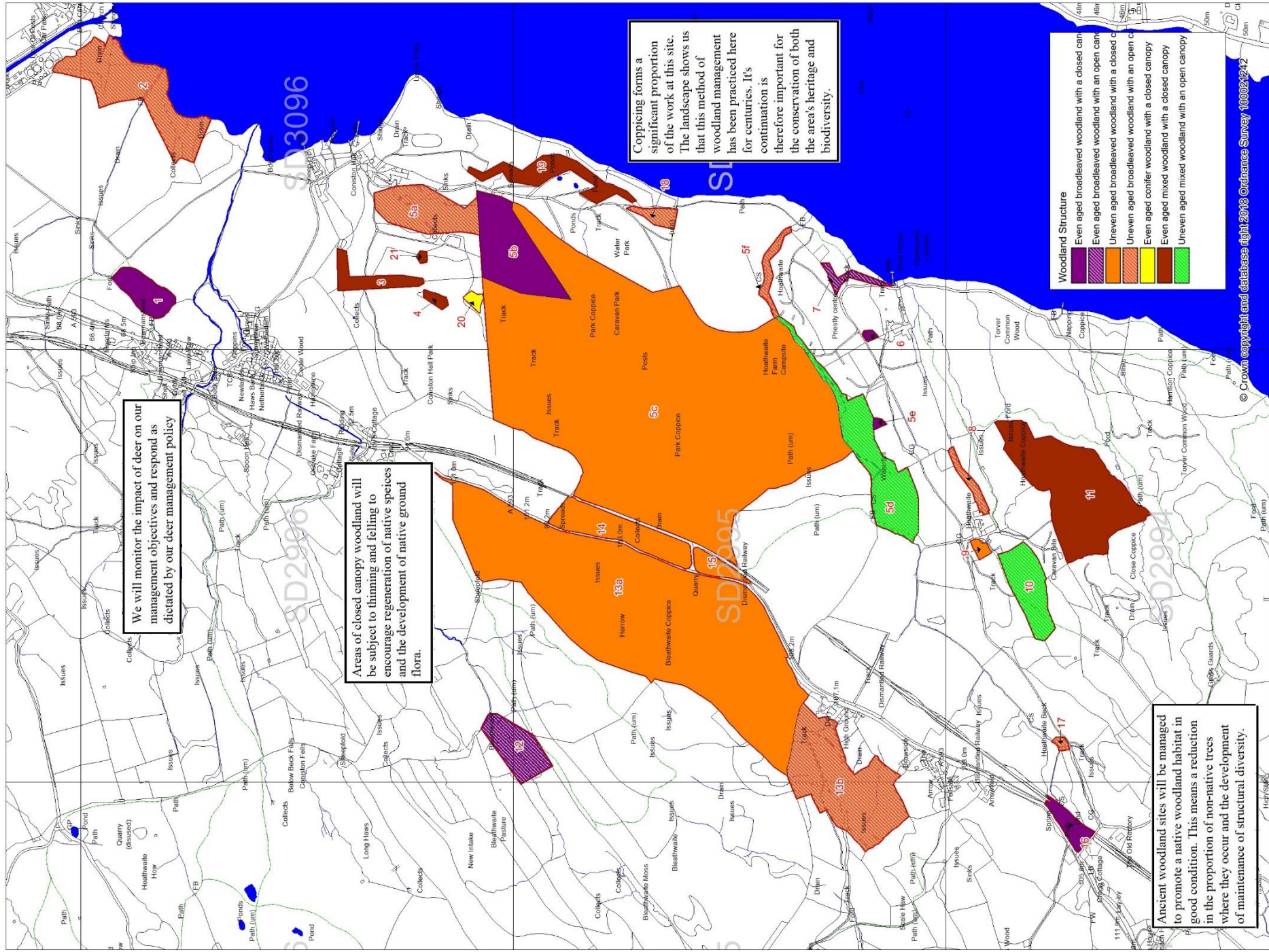




West Coniston Forest Plan: Map 5 Ancient Woodland Inventory
Scale 1:7500 at A3



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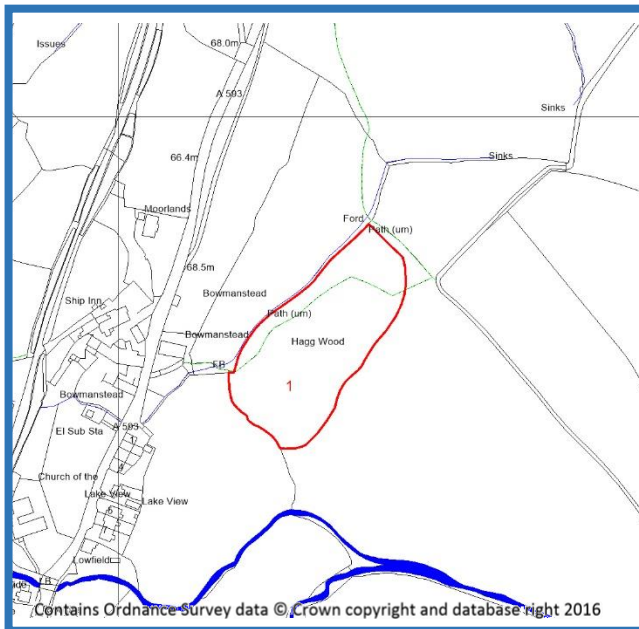


West Coniston Forest Plan: Map 6 Structure and Concept

Scale 1:7500 at A3

Section 5: Compartment Summaries





Compartment 1 Hag Wood **Hectares** 0.9

Area West Coniston

Issues Grazing

Work Phase Long Term Retention

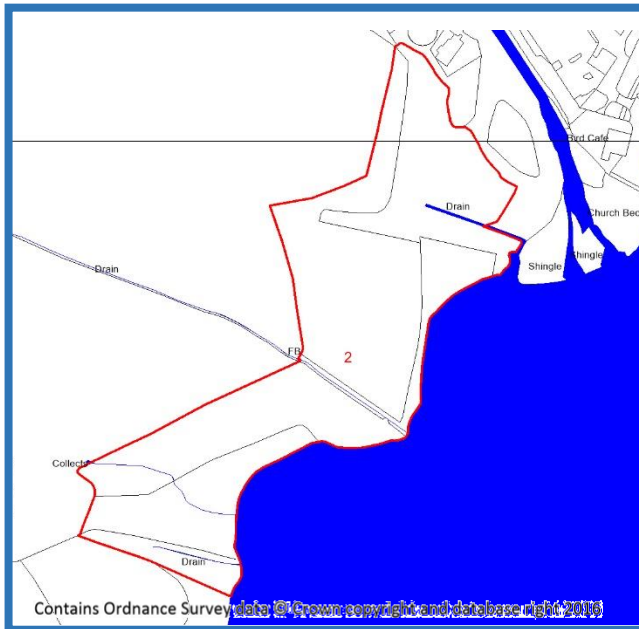
Species Sycamore, Beech and Sessile Oak

Activity None

Designations None

Woodland Type Even aged broadleaved woodland with a closed canopy

Aim To allow the woodland to mature naturally, ensuring continuity of habitat for our priority species.



Compartment 2 Storth Gutter

Area West Coniston

Hectares 3.47

Issues Himalayan Balsam and Grazing

Work Phase Long Term Retention

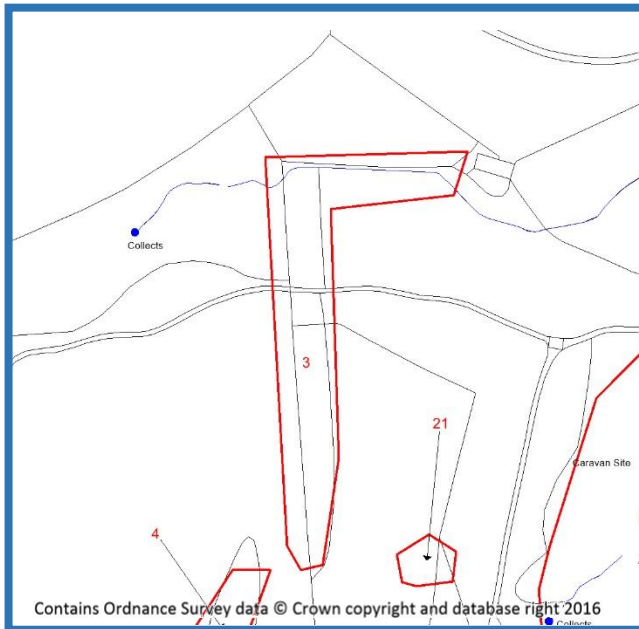
Species Alder, Birch, Sessile Oak and Willow

Activity None

Designations None

Woodland Type Uneven aged broadleaved woodland with an open canopy

Aim To allow the woodland to expand and mature naturally, ensuring continuity of habitat for our priority species.



Compartment 3 Caravan Shelterbelt

Area West Coniston

Hectares 0.67

Issues None

Work Phase Phase 1- April 2018 - March 2020

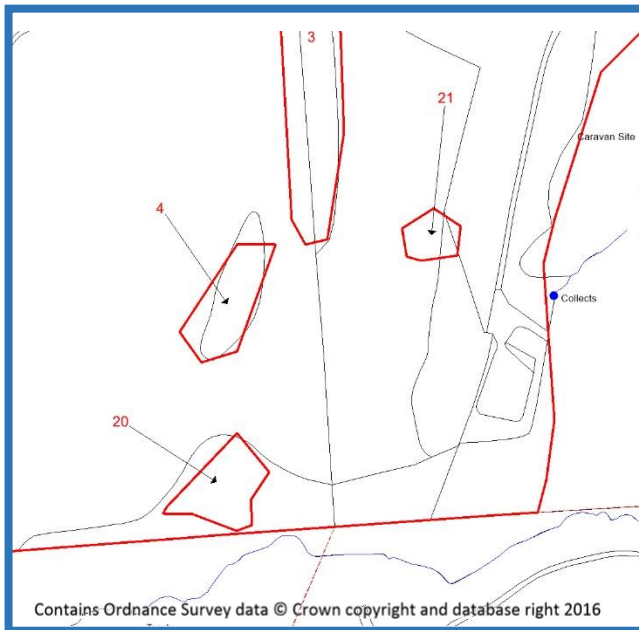
Species Sycamore with Japanese Larch and Scots Pine

Activity Coppice 50% of the stand. Halo around veteran Oaks

Designations None

Woodland Type Even aged mixed woodland with a closed canopy

Aim To enhance the woodland habitat creating open spaces and a diverse structure. To protect veteran trees. To preserve and continue the woodlands working history.



Compartment **4** Caravan Shelterbelt **Area** West Coniston **Hectares** 0.13

Issues None **Work Phase** Long Term Retention

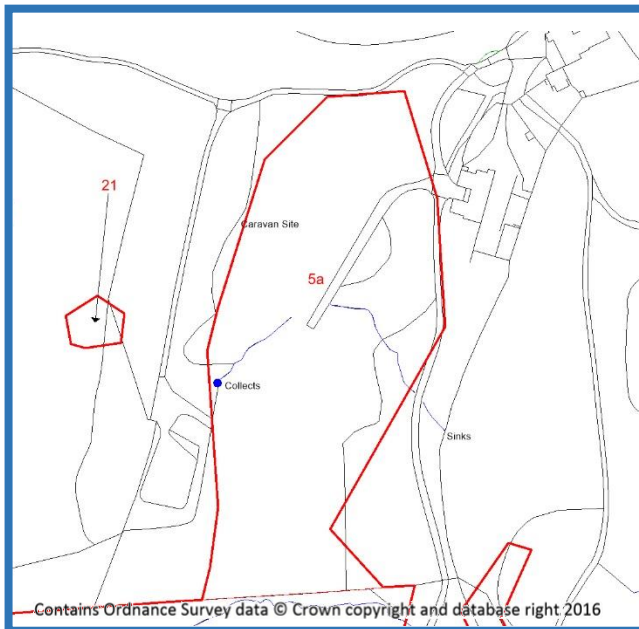
Species Japanese Larch with Birch and Sessile Oak

Activity None

Designations None

Woodland Type Even aged mixed woodland with a closed canopy

Aim To allow the woodland to mature naturally, ensuring continuity of habitat for our priority species.



Compartment 5a Boat Park Wood

Area West Coniston

Hectares 1.65

Issues Japanese Knotweed and Grazing

Work Phase Phase 1-5

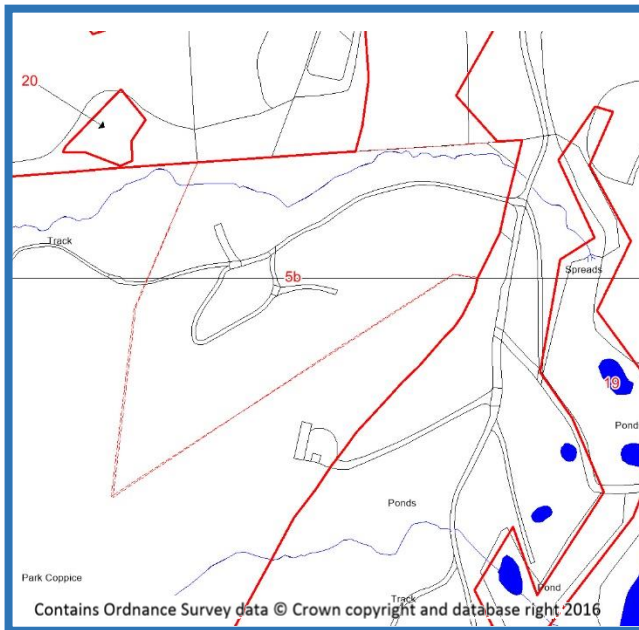
Species Birch with Sessile Oak and Alder

Activity Coppice 50%

Designations None

Woodland Type Uneven aged broadleaved woodland with an open canopy

Aim To protect veteran trees, to diversify the woodland structure and to continue the woodlands working history.



Compartment 5b Caravan Wood

Area West Coniston

Hectares 2.82

Issues Firewood collection leading to lack of deadwood. Grazing

Work Phase Long Term Retention

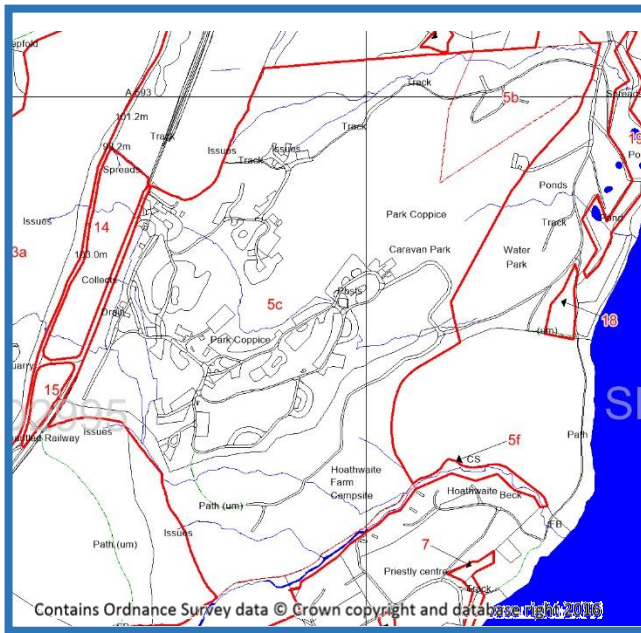
Species Sessile Oak with Hazel and Alder

Activity None

Designations None

Woodland Type Even aged broadleaved woodland with a closed canopy

Aim To allow the woodland to mature naturally, ensuring continuity of habitat for our priority species.



Compartment 5c Park Coppice

Area West Coniston

Hectares 35.85

Issues Grazing

Work Phase Phase 1-5

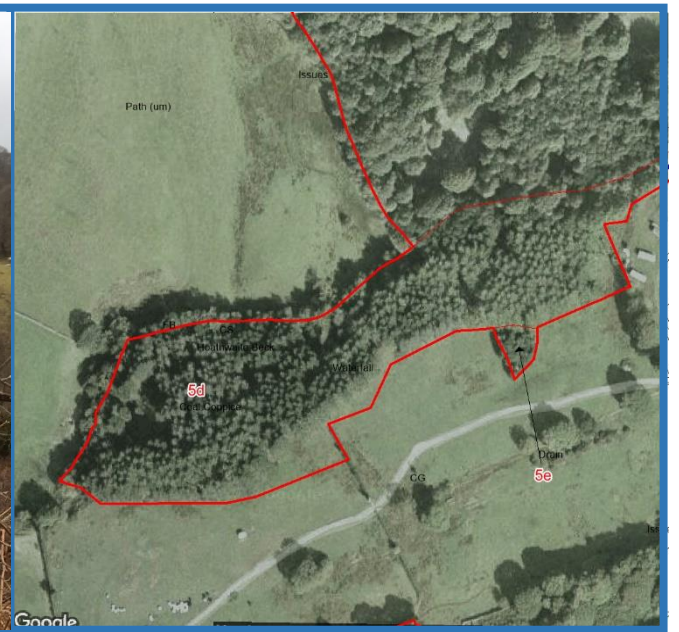
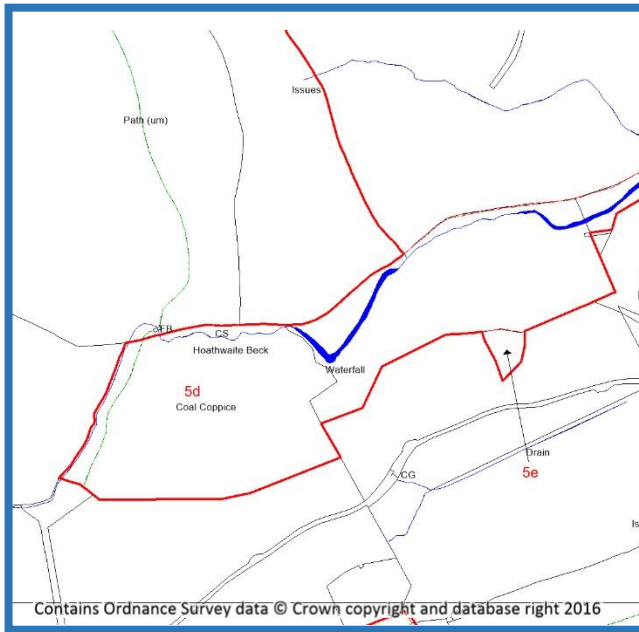
Species Sessile Oak with Hazel and Birch

Activity Coppice 30% of the stand

Designations None

Woodland Type Uneven aged broadleaved woodland with a closed canopy

Aim To enhance the woodland habitat creating open spaces and a diverse structure. To preserve and continue the woodlands working history.



Compartment 5d Coal Coppice

Area West Coniston

Hectares 2.94

Issues Rhododendron and Laurel

Work Phase Long Term Retention

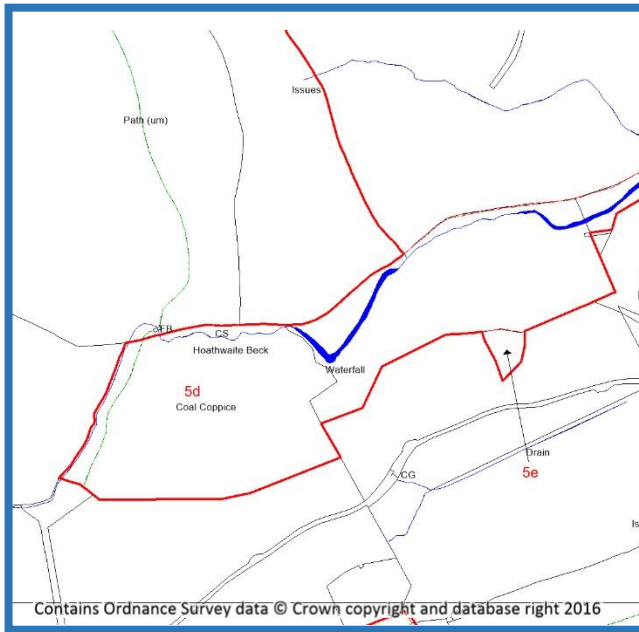
Species Alder, Scots Pine, Ash and Birch

Activity Restock with native broadleaved trees and sweet chestnut

Designations PAWS

Woodland Type Uneven aged mixed woodland with an open canopy

Aim To allow the woodland to mature naturally, ensuring continuity of habitat for our priority species.



Compartment **5e** **Coal Coppice** **Area** West Coniston **Hectares** 0.05

Issues None **Work Phase** Phase 2- April 2020 - March 2022

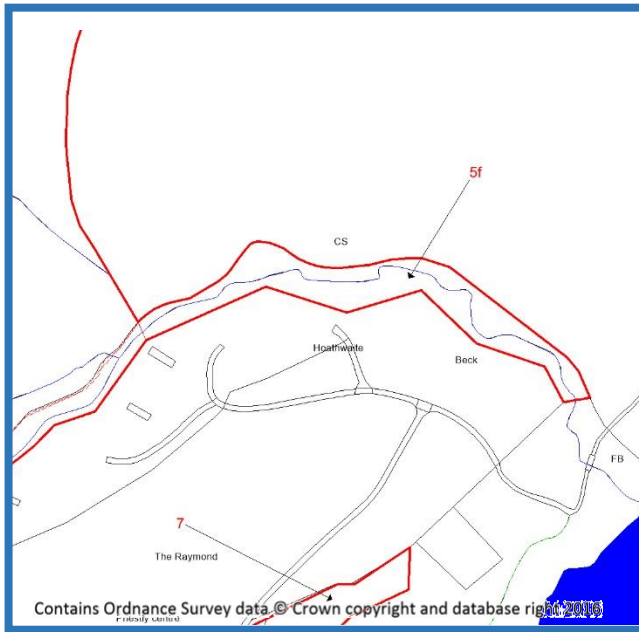
Species Ash with Birch, Wild Cherry, Alder and Holly

Activity Thin 30% of the stand

Designations None

Woodland Type Even aged broadleaved woodland with a closed canopy

Aim To thin the woodland to create small open spaces and increase the deadwood component.



Compartment 5f

Area West Coniston

Hectares 0.37

Issues Fly Tipping

Work Phase Long Term Retention

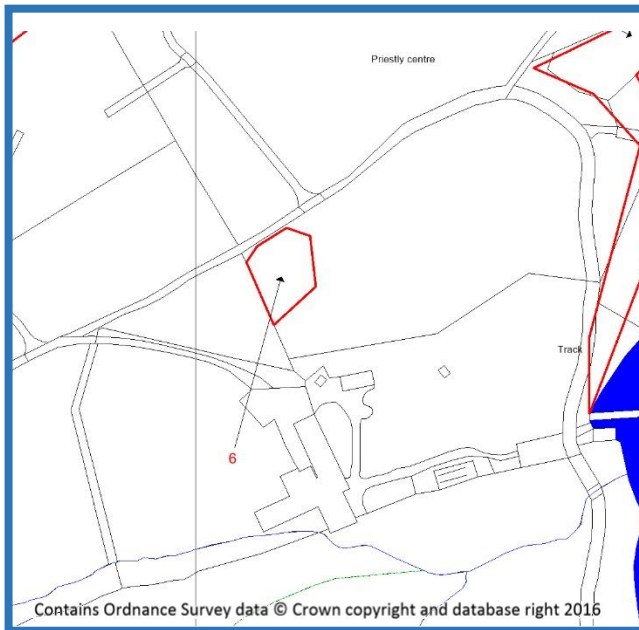
Species Sessile Oak with Ash and Birch

Activity None

Designations None

Woodland Type Uneven aged broadleaved woodland with an open canopy

Aim To allow the woodland to mature naturally, ensuring continuity of habitat for our priority species.



Compartment **6** Hoathwaite Shelterbelt

Area West Coniston

Hectares 0.06

Issues None

Work Phase Phase 1- April 2018 - March 2020

Species Ash with Birch and Hazel

Activity Coppice 50% of the stand

Designations None

Woodland Type Even aged broadleaved woodland with a closed canopy

Aim To enhance the woodland habitat creating open spaces and a diverse structure. To preserve and continue the woodlands working history.



Compartment 7 Hoathwaite Shelterbelt

Area West Coniston

Hectares 0.28

Issues None

Work Phase Phase 1- April 2018 - March 2020

Species Ash and Alder with Birch

Activity Coppice 50% of the stand

Designations None

Woodland Type Even aged broadleaved woodland with an open canopy

Aim To enhance the woodland habitat creating open spaces and a diverse structure. To preserve and continue the woodlands working history.



Compartment 8

Hectares 0.29

Area West Coniston

Issues Trespass Grazing

Work Phase Long Term Retention

Species Sessile Oak and Hazel

Activity None

Designations None

Woodland Type Uneven aged broadleaved woodland with an open canopy

Aim To allow the woodland to mature naturally, ensuring continuity of habitat for our priority species.



Compartment 9 Hoathwaite Farm Wood

Area West Coniston

Hectares 0.12

Issues None

Work Phase Long Term Retention

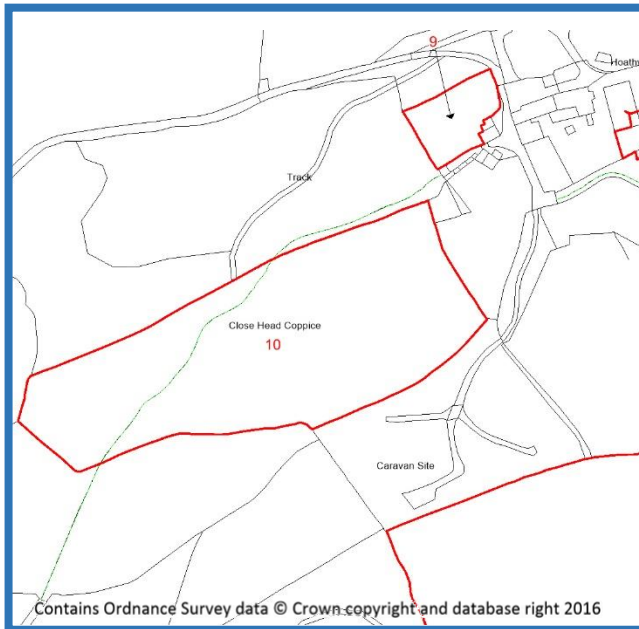
Species Sycamore, Ash, Beech and Holly

Activity None

Designations None

Woodland Type Uneven aged broadleaved woodland with a closed canopy

Aim To allow the woodland to mature naturally, ensuring continuity of habitat for our priority species.



Compartment 10 Close Head Coppice

Area West Coniston

Hectares 1.48

Issues Rhododendron

Work Phase Long Term Retention

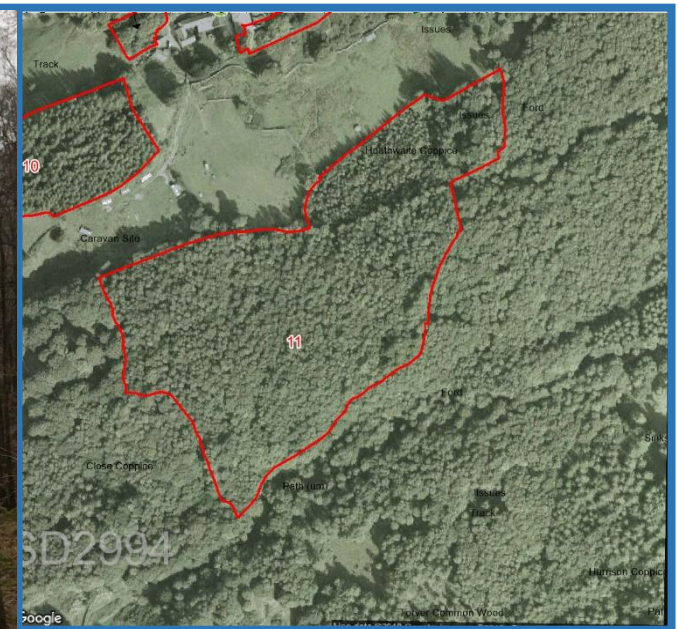
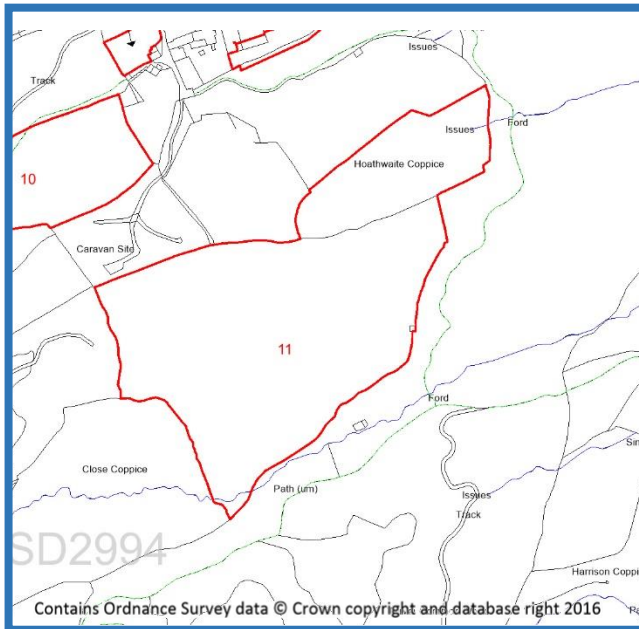
Species Birch with Sessile Oak and Scots Pine

Activity None

Designations None

Woodland Type Uneven aged mixed woodland with an open canopy

Aim To allow the woodland to mature naturally, ensuring continuity of habitat for our priority species.



Compartment **11** Hoathwaite Coppice

Area West Coniston

Hectares 5.1

Issues None

Work Phase Phase 3- April 2022 - March 2024

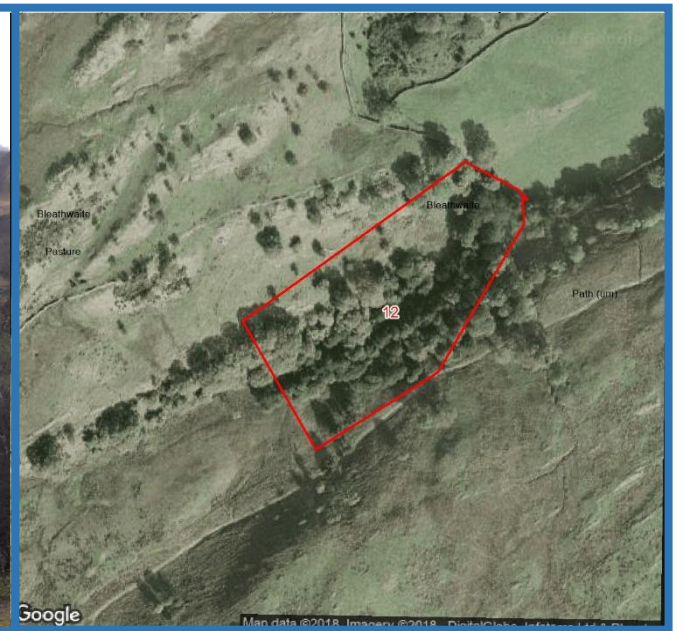
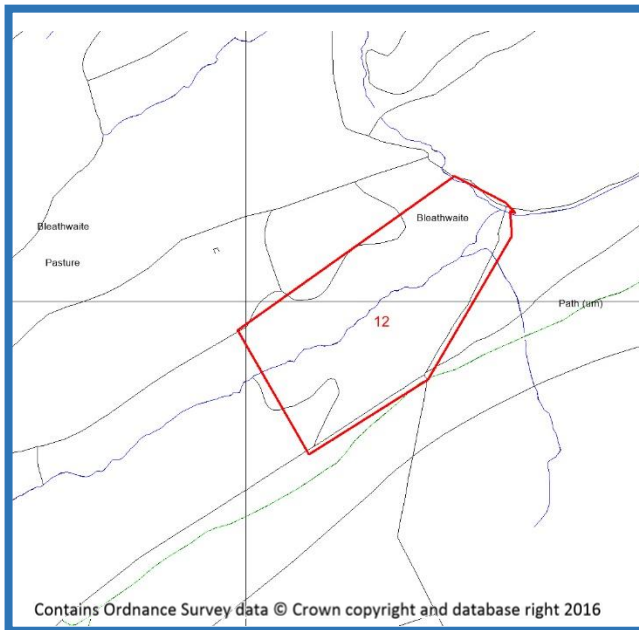
Species Birch and Sessile Oak with Beech, Scots Pine, European Larch and Norway Spruce

Activity Selectively fell Conifer and nonnative trees and restock with Alder and Hazel. Coppice areas of Oak and Birch

Designations None

Woodland Type Even aged mixed woodland with a closed canopy

Aim Selectively fell Conifer and non native trees and restock with Alder and Hazel



Compartment 12 Bleathwaite Old Wood

Area West Coniston

Hectares 1.32

Issues Grazing

Work Phase Long Term Retention

Species Alder

Activity None

Designations None

Woodland Type Even aged broadleaved woodland with an open canopy

Aim To allow the woodland to mature naturally, ensuring continuity of habitat for our priority species.



Compartment 13a Bleathwaite Coppice **Area** West Coniston **Hectares** 20.18

Issues Grazing **Work Phase** Phase 4- April 2024 - March 2026

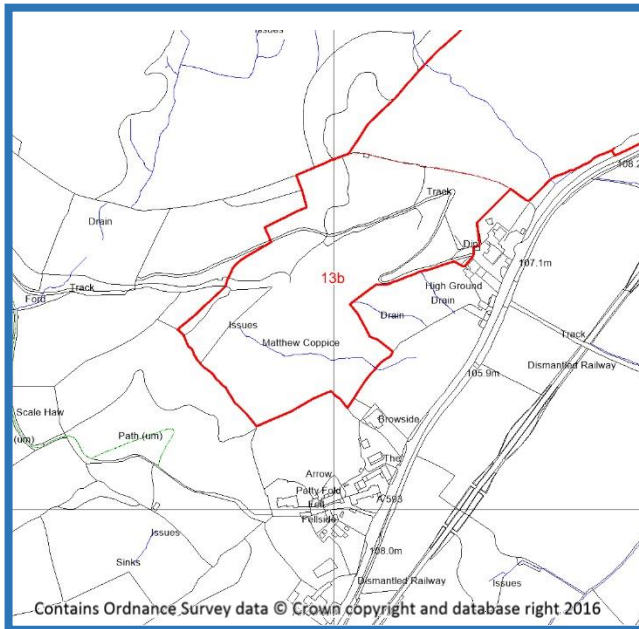
Species Sessile Oak and Hazel with Ash and Alder

Activity Thin 20% of the stand

Designations None

Woodland Type Uneven aged broadleaved woodland with a closed canopy

Aim To thin the woodland to create small open spaces and increase the deadwood component.



Compartment **13b** Matthew Coppice

Area West Coniston

Hectares 4.66

Issues None

Work Phase Long Term Retention

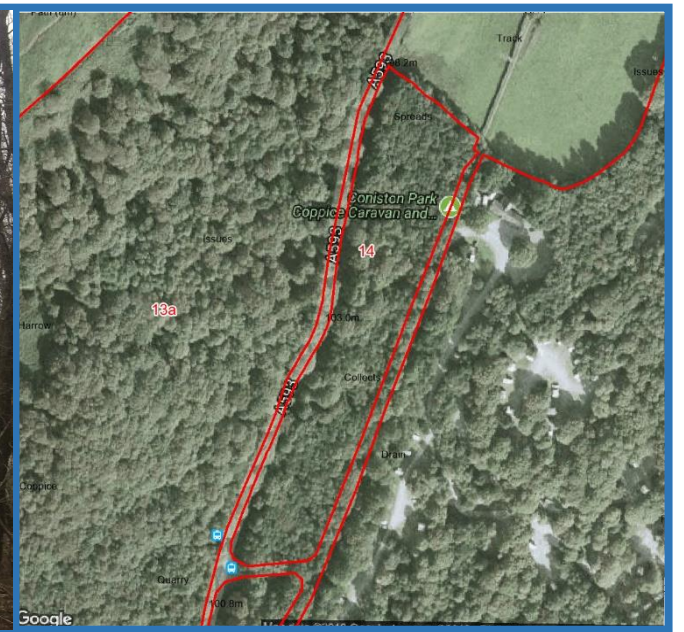
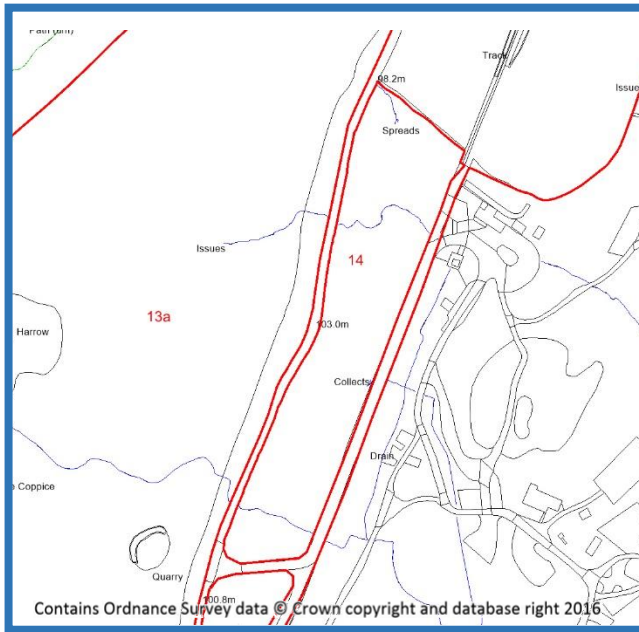
Species Sessile Oak with Birch, Holly and Alder

Activity None

Designations None

Woodland Type Uneven aged broadleaved woodland with an open canopy

Aim To allow the woodland to mature naturally, ensuring continuity of habitat for our priority species.



Compartment 14 Park Coppice

Area West Coniston

Hectares 1.96

Issues None

Work Phase Outside of Plan Period

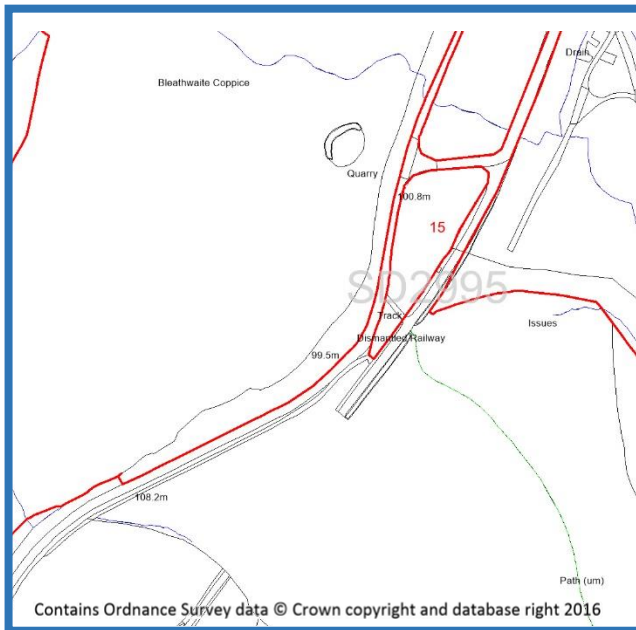
Species Sessile Oak with Hazel and Birch

Activity None

Designations None

Woodland Type Active Coppice with Standards

Aim To enhance the woodland habitat creating open spaces and a diverse structure. To preserve and continue the woodlands working history.



Compartment 15 Park Coppice

Area West Coniston

Hectares 0.45

Issues None

Work Phase Phase 3- April 2022 - March 2024

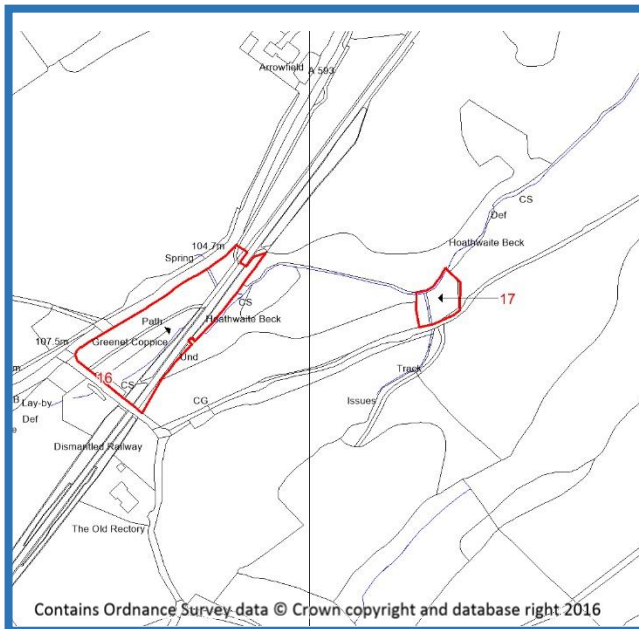
Species Sessile Oak with Hazel

Activity Coppice 60% of the stand

Designations None

Woodland Type Uneven aged broadleaved woodland with a closed canopy

Aim To enhance the woodland habitat creating open spaces and a diverse structure. To preserve and continue the woodlands working history.



Compartment 16 Greenet Coppice

Area West Coniston

Hectares 0.51

Issues None

Work Phase Long Term Retention

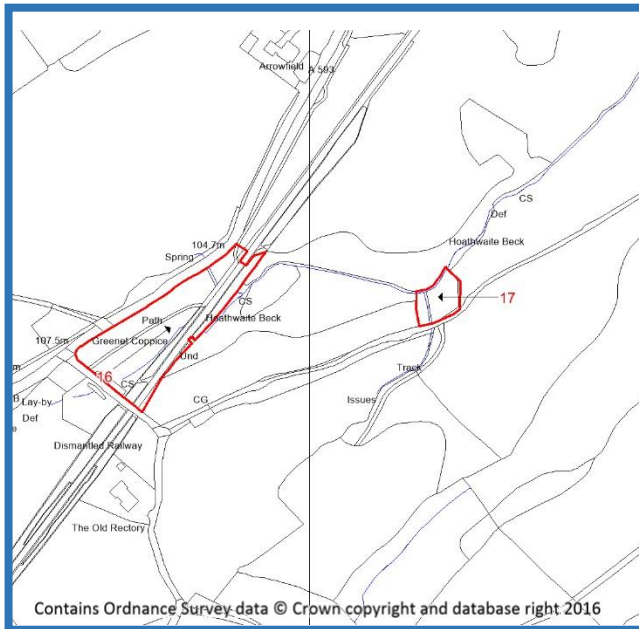
Species Sessile Oak, Ash and Hazel

Activity None

Designations None

Woodland Type Even aged broadleaved woodland with a closed canopy

Aim To allow the woodland to mature naturally, ensuring continuity of habitat for our priority species.



Compartment 17

Hectares 0.08

Area West Coniston

Issues None

Work Phase Long Term Retention

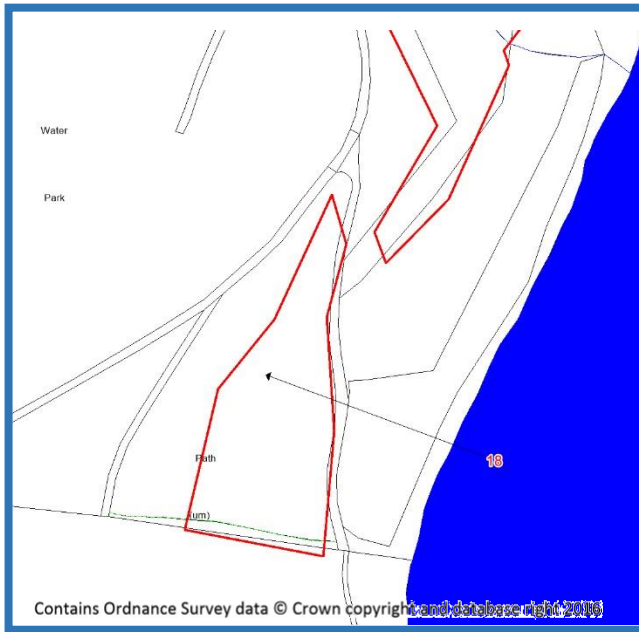
Species Sessile Oak

Activity None

Designations None

Woodland Type Uneven aged broadleaved woodland with an open canopy

Aim To allow the woodland to mature naturally, ensuring continuity of habitat for our priority species.



Compartment 18 Coniston Hall Shelterbelt

Area West Coniston

Hectares 0.32

Issues Litter, firewood removal.

Work Phase Phase 5

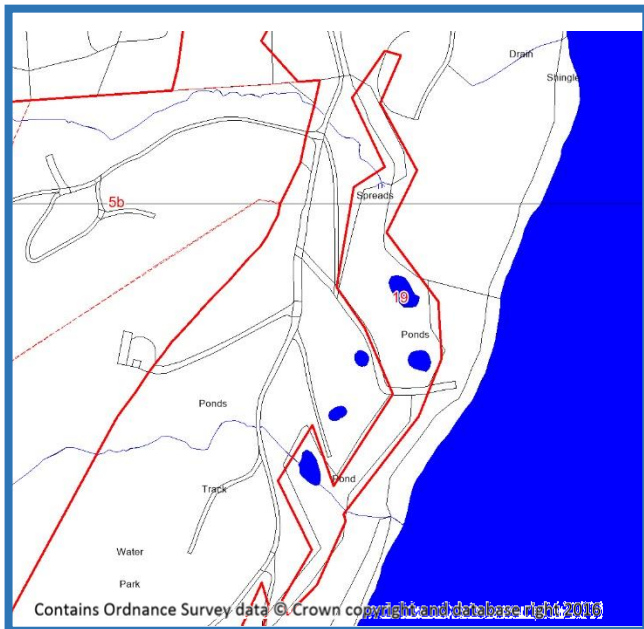
Species Alder and Rowan with Ash and Birch

Activity Coppice 90% of the stand

Designations Scheduled Monument

Woodland Type Active coppice with standards.

Aim To enhance the woodland habitat creating open spaces and a diverse structure. To preserve and continue the woodlands working history.



Compartment 19 Coniston Hall Shelterbelt

Area West Coniston

Hectares 1.27

Issues None

Work Phase Phase 1- 5

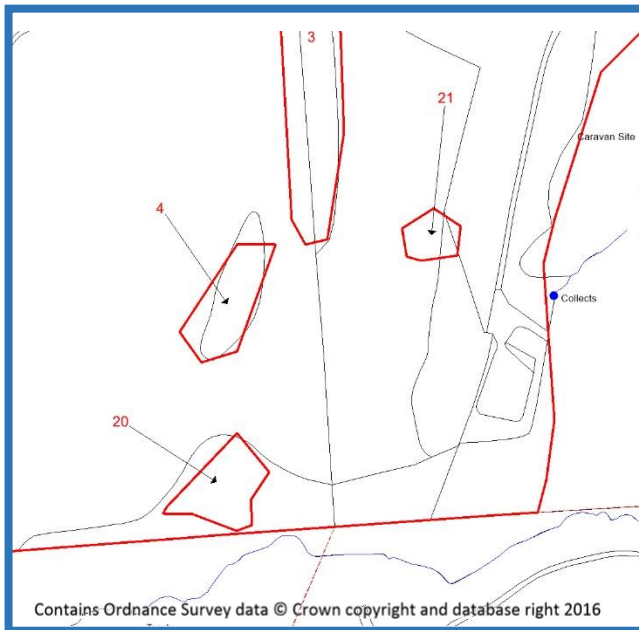
Species Sycamore and Scots Pine with Alder and Japanese Larch

Activity Coppice 70% of the stand and Selectively fell conifers retaining some Scots Pine

Designations None

Woodland Type Even aged mixed woodland with a closed canopy

Aim To enhance the woodland habitat creating open spaces and a diverse structure. To preserve and continue the woodlands working history.



Compartment 20 Caravan Shelterbelt

Area West Coniston

Hectares 0.12

Issues None

Work Phase Long Term Retention

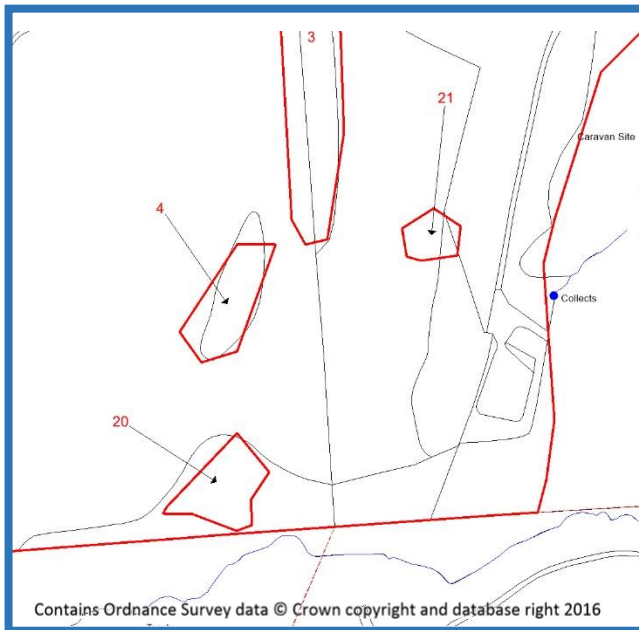
Species Scots Pine and Japanese Larch

Activity None

Designations None

Woodland Type Even aged conifer woodland with a closed canopy

Aim To allow the woodland to mature naturally, ensuring continuity of habitat for our priority species.



Compartment 21 Caravan Shelterbelt

Area West Coniston

Hectares 0.05

Issues None

Work Phase Long Term Retention

Species Scots Pine, Japanese Larch and Birch

Activity None

Designations None

Woodland Type Even aged mixed woodland with a closed canopy

Aim To allow the woodland to mature naturally, ensuring continuity of habitat for our priority species.