

Detailed guide: Create a woodland management plan

A woodland management plan gives land managers a structured way to plan and organise the sustainable management of woodland to a common industry standard.

The [UK Forestry Standard](#) sets out the UK governments' approach to sustainable forestry and woodland management, including standards and requirements, regulations and monitoring, and reporting. It applies to all woodland and woodland operations, regardless of who owns or manages it.

Why create a management plan?

1. Creating a woodland management plan can demonstrate sustainable forest management and it supports the planning and implementation of work proposals and their long term monitoring.
2. Some grant schemes ask land managers to have an approved management plan in place prior to making an application.
3. The plan of operations which makes up part of the management plan means it is possible for land managers to plan for and be issued with a felling licence for up to 10 years of felling.

If you want to create a woodland plan, you should include all woodland on your property.

How to produce your plan

For woodland holdings over 3ha, you can develop a plan using the Forestry Commission's full Woodland Plan template, the Plan of Operations template, and your own maps. A grant is available to help fund the production of a woodland plan (Countryside Stewardship option PA3), where the full Forestry Commission template is used.

Use the [small woodland plan template \(macro enabled\)](#)
(MS Word Document, 560KB)

template for woodland of an area less than 10 hectares – this is to apply for a felling licence, but is not eligible for funding to prepare a woodland management plan through Countryside Stewardship.

For non-FC woodland plan templates that don't match the Forestry Commission's woodland plan template in structure or composition, use this [cover sheet](#)
(MS Word Document, 36.5KB)

that states the UKFS criteria being assessed and provides a consistent

framework for the Forestry Commission to review the plan. Non-FC woodland plan templates are not eligible for funding to prepare a woodland management plan through Countryside Stewardship.

Download and complete the [full woodland management plan template \(macro disabled file\)](#)
(MS Word Document, 1MB)

(for any size of woodland) using information about the woodland, its history, its previous management, structure and composition, risks and issues and how they will be addressed, and the proposed work you intend to undertake.

Download and complete the inventory and plan of operations. It sets out your woodland inventory and must relate directly to compartments and sub compartments shown on your map(s). The Plan of Operations also gathers information relating to felling and restocking and is necessary for issuing a felling licence. Use this [version with various formulas](#)
(MS Excel Spreadsheet, 1.19MB)

, which highlights where data entry errors exist on the worksheets so you can make corrections. Alternatively, you can use the [version with no formulas](#)
(MS Excel Spreadsheet, 341KB)

– it enables you to enter data more freely, but it has no error checking and we may have to return it to you for corrections.

Produce a map – they're an excellent way to communicate information to support your management plan. Use several maps to show a variety of topics or themes affecting your woodland. You must ensure that each compartment you show on the map is reflected in the Inventory of the Plan of Operations. You can create a map using the [myForest service](#) or your own Geographic Information Systems.

You can use our guidance on [how to create a plan using the FC plan template](#)
(PDF, 386KB, 27 pages)

. This guidance will help you complete a woodland management plan successfully, using the FC plan template, the Inventory and Plan of Operations worksheet and your associated maps. Read this guidance thoroughly and refer to it regularly.

Submit your draft woodland management plan to the administrative hub covering your area. Make sure you include:

- a completed woodland management plan template
- an inventory and plan of operations
- a map
- a [plan submission proforma](#)

(MS Word Document, 16.3KB)

if you're receiving funding from the Countryside Stewardship scheme

Administrative hub contact details

Contact the [administrative hub](#), which covers your area, for more information.

Map request service

To create an appropriate map to support your woodland plan or a grant application you can [submit a map request](#) to the Forestry Commission.

Check if your woodland is designated or has special features

Designated areas or features should be indicated on one of the annotated maps within your plan. If a designation applies, please provide details.

Magic Map

[Use Natural England's 'MAGIC' map](#) to check if your woodland is designated, for example, as an SSSI. You can also search for other features – such as scheduled monuments, priority habitats and species – and information such as Countryside Stewardship scheme details in your area.

The Land Information Service

The Forestry Commission's [Land Information Search \(LIS\)](#) is another map-based tool that allows you to search for information about land designations or features that might already apply to your woodland. Examples of these features include:

- previous felling schemes
- grant schemes

Find out [how the Forestry Commission then supports you if you do own woodland on an SSSI](#).

Sites of special scientific interest (SSSIs) are protected by law to conserve their wildlife or geology so you must declare designations, as some require consent before you begin work on your proposed plans. If you fail to disclose any designations or features you may be acting illegally.

Authorise an agent to act on your behalf

If you choose to appoint an agent to develop your woodland management plan you must sign a form to give an agent authority to act for you when dealing with the Forestry Commission. You can [submit this Forestry Commission agent authority form](#) as part of your application for funding.

You'll also need to set agent permission levels using the [Rural Payments service](#) to appoint an agent to act on your behalf if you're applying for Countryside Stewardship funding.

Contact the Forestry Commission

[Contact your local Woodland Officer](#) for advice and guidance on completing a woodland plan, and potentially having a pre-draft site visit.