

Eggerslack and Hampsfeld Forest Plan 2016



Planning and District Context

The Strategic Plan for the Public Forest Estate in England outlines the delivery of forest policy at a national level. At a regional level there are six Forest Districts covering the country that directly oversee the implementation of policy actions in local public forest estate woodlands. Forest Enterprise England is the organisation responsible for managing the English public forest estate.

North England Forest District (NEFD) is the management unit that manages the public forest estate in Northern England. This is an extensive area encompassing 9 county or unitary authority areas from the Scottish border to Durham and Lancashire.



Our task is to realise the potential of each of the forests in our care for sustainable business opportunities, wildlife and nature conservation, and the enjoyment and well-being of local people and visitors. Each of our forests supports the economy through local jobs, sustainable timber production and the provision of recreation and tourism opportunities. All are funded by revenue from timber sales and recreation provision.

The woodlands of the district are currently arranged in 62 management areas, and their management is covered by individual ten year Forest Plans that identify local issues and the broad silvicultural management of the woods. Forest Plans are reviewed every five years.

These plans and their associated forest operations ensure that produce from the woodlands is endorsed by the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) and the Programme for the Endorsement of Forest Certification (PEFC) as being produced from woodlands under good management that meet the requirements of the UK Woodland Assurance Scheme (UKWAS) and the UK Forest Standard (UKFS).

Individual Forest Plans aim to deliver a range of public benefits with achievable objectives that deliver the three drivers of sustainable land management outlined in the North England Forest District Strategy.



These key drivers are supported by the following Forest District Policy;

- we will optimise the financial return from timber production compatible with achievement of other forest district objectives while complying with the UK Forestry Standard and meeting the requirements of the UK Woodland Assurance Scheme
- we will provide public access to all our forests and woodlands where there are no legal or safety restrictions. We will encourage and permit a wide range of recreational activities from walking and quiet enjoyment to more specialised activities including orienteering, horse riding and motor sports.
- we will ensure that rare and threatened habitats are protected and managed to maintain or enhance their conservation value

Eggerslack and Hampsfield Forest Plan

This is the third revision for Eggerslack and Hampsfield Forest Plan. There are no significant changes to the previous plan but brings it up to date in terms of work achieved over the last 10 years and ongoing implementation of the management objectives.

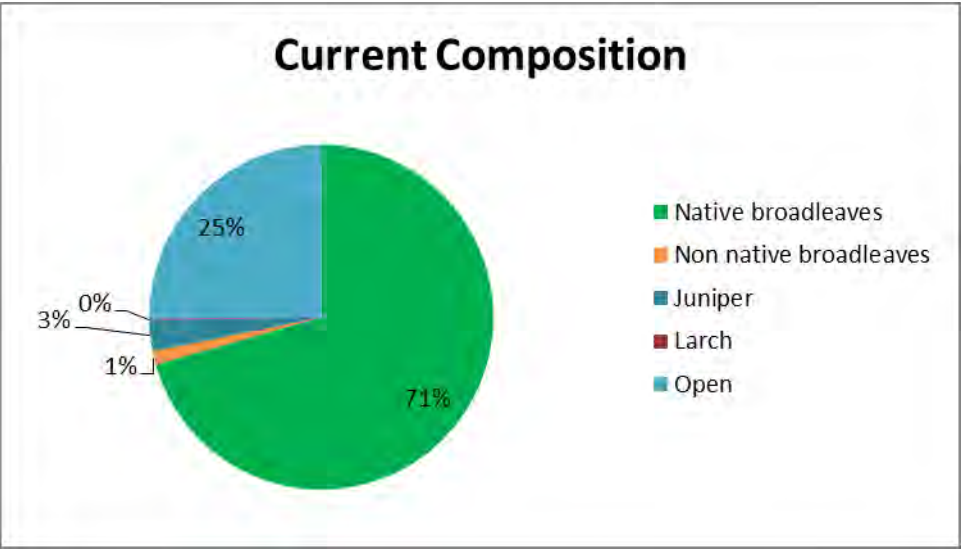
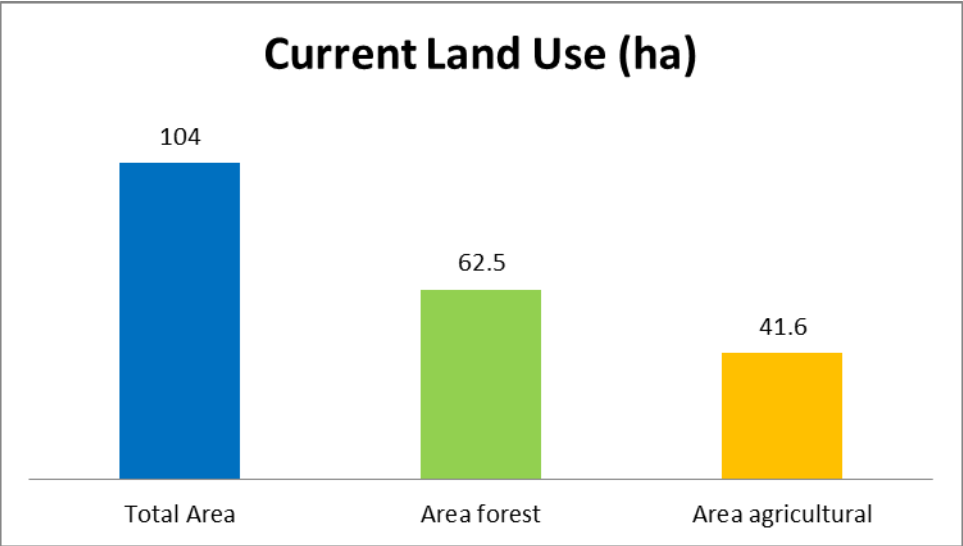
Part 1 Background Information

Introduction

Eggerslack Wood and Hampsfield Allotment are situated on Hampsfell, just to the north of Grange-over-Sands in Cumbria. Hampsfield Allotment lies within the Lake District National Park. The woodlands were originally acquired by the Forestry Commission in 1959 and are both freeholds. The combined area amounts to 104 hectares.

Current Woodland composition, species and timber potential

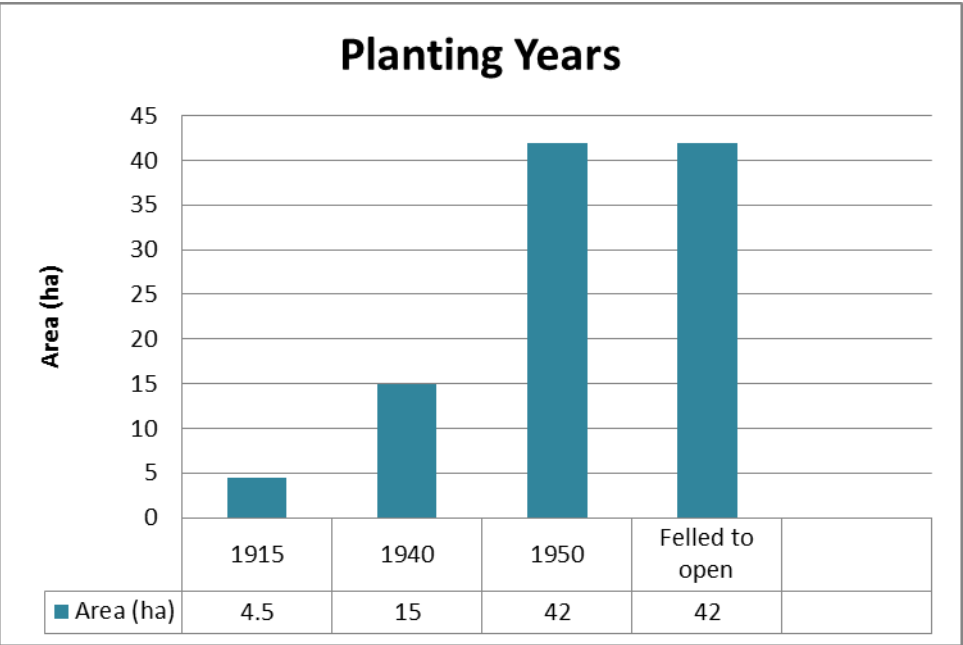
Of the total area approximately 62.5ha is wooded and 41.6ha managed either as permanently open or open/scrub habitat under an agricultural grazing let. Woodland cover includes broadleaf plantation and a diverse range of locally native woodland types dominated by northern calcareous hazel-ash woodland present as high forest, neglected coppice and scrub. Also present are areas of small-leaved lime, juniper and yew. The percentage of non-native conifer species is very low following the removal of significant areas of corsican pine and larch during the previous plan period.



The productive capacity of the area is poor to moderate and previous commercial Corsican pine plantations typically achieved Yield Class 8 to 10. Reasonable quality broad-leaved species are present and generally achieve Yield Class 4 on the better soils.

Age class

Most of the initial conifer planting took place during the late 1950's consisting of Corsican pine and larch, mostly on Hampsfield Allotment. These conifer plantations were highly visible in the landscape and occupied semi-natural habitat of high conservation value. As a consequence these areas have not been replanted.



Designated areas

Hampsfield Allotment lies wholly within the Lake District National Park. Eggerslack Wood and Heaning Wood, to the west of Hampsfield Allotment, are Ancient Woodland Sites. Both Eggerslack and Hampsfield Allotment support important geological and biological features that are listed under the EC Habitats Directive and/or the Cumbria Biodiversity Action Plan. The national importance of the limestone pavement on Hampsfield Allotment was recognised in 1982 when it was included in the first Limestone Pavement Order (LPO) served in the UK.

Landscape, Topography and Soils

Eggerslack and Hampsfield Allotment are located in a prominent position and lie between 30 and 200 metres above sea level on the limestone hill of Hampsfell. Hampsfell slopes steeply to the west and more gently to the east with extensive views into the Lake District to the north and over Morecambe Bay and Arnside to the south. The underlying limestone is exposed as limestone pavement, scree and scars over much of the woodland area. These outcrops of rock were laid down in the Carboniferous period, some 350 million years ago and are referred to as the Urswick limestones part of the extensive area of limestone surrounding Morecambe Bay. There is a marked contrast between the sheltered wooded pavements in Eggerslack Wood and the open pavement along

the higher ground of Hampsfield Allotment. Eggerslack Wood on the south east slopes of Hampsfell has ridges of steeply sloping mossy and wooded pavements in clearings toward the top of the hill. In contrast the open pavements on Hampsfield Allotment are characterised by areas of exposed limestone with Clints and grikes situated in flower rich calcareous grassland. Toward the edges they are often with a sheltering cover of trees and shrubs. The soil, where it is present, is calcareous and includes rendzina and brown earths.

The woodlands are located within the 'Open Farmland and Pavements', Sub type 3a Landscape Character Area. This sub type is typically found along the coast of Morecambe Bay south of Ulverston and west of Grange. Where it extends inland around Grange and Kendal it is classified as Type C – Coastal Limestone in the Lake District National Park Landscape Character Assessment. Key characteristics of the area include:

- Steep scarp limestone slopes, limestone pavement or other rocky outcrops
- Grazed land with stone wall field boundaries
- Rough pasture as open common or fell in higher areas
- Sporadic scrub and woodland on steep scarp slopes
- Stately homes and parklands in lower areas
- Extensive open and uninterrupted views from high ground

The limestone pavements, calcareous grasslands and ancient semi-natural woodlands associated with Eggerslack and Hampsfield Allotment are important components of this landscape and will be conserved and enhanced through positive measures and management practices.

Conservation

Within Eggerslack and Hampsfield Allotment there are an extensive and varied series of semi-natural habitats. The sites compose a diverse and complex association of calcareous and acidic grassland, woodland, limestone scars, scree and pavements which support significant populations of nationally rare and uncommon plants and have a notable invertebrate fauna. The open pavements at the top of Hampsfield Allotment are rich in lime-loving plant species and the grikes are home to ferns and other plants which like rocky but sheltered environments. Surrounding the limestone pavement blocks are areas of limestone grassland characterised by blue-moor grass. This excellent habitat supports a wide variety of butterflies, notably High Brown, Pearl Bordered and Small Pearl Bordered fritillaries, Green Hairstreak and Northern Brown Argus which are found on the open limestone grassland and Dark Green fritillary, Comma and Speckled Wood butterflies which are present in the woodlands.

Over the period of the previous plan all the exotic conifers have been removed from Hampsfield Allotment in order to safeguard the important calcareous grassland community. A conservation grazing scheme is helping to restore and enhance the condition of the grassland and manage the natural regeneration of scrub across the site.

The wooded limestone pavements at Eggerslack Wood are dominated by an oak/ash cover with species such as bird cherry, hazel and spindle found in the under storey. Whitebeam, yew and lime can also be found occasionally through the woodland. Heaning Wood, west of Hampsfield Allotment and Eggerslack Wood are Ancient Woodland sites. The ground flora of these woodlands is dominated by dog's mercury, lords-and-ladies and herb-Robert, and there are frequent occurrences of ivy, wood-sorrel and woodruff with a carpet of bluebells in the spring.

Heritage

Across Hampsfell there is evidence of thousands of years of human habitation and use through discovery of various stone implements, a burial cairn, and possible pre-historic hut circle and field markers. The division of land into 'allotments' during the early nineteenth century Parliamentary Enclosure Act is evident by the occurrence of straight walls surrounding Hampsfield Allotment. The western boundary of Eggerslack Wood is divided from the main body of Hampsfell by a meandering wall which is much older than these straighter boundary features and marks a medieval boundary. A track which runs through Eggerslack and across Hampsfell known as 'Pilgrims Way' was part of a pilgrimage route to the Cistercian monastery at Cartmell. There is a pair of upright Clints used as standing stones at Heaning Wood, known as Robin Hood and Little John which are likely to be boundary markers. The quarry and old track way on Hampsfield Allotment is evidence of limestone quarrying from the area

for hundreds of years to support lime kilns used for building and agricultural purposes. Although of interest none of these historical features are scheduled but are routinely protected during any forest operations.

Communities and recreation

It is Forestry Commission policy to promote informal recreation such as walking, cycling, picnicking, and studying wildlife. We also seek to provide opportunities for more specialist users and for events when this is compatible with site conditions and other management objectives.

Eggerslack Wood and Hampsfield Allotment are popular venues for walkers and are often visited as part of more extended walks over Hampsfell. Eggerslack is well placed to offer short walks from Grange-over-Sands or from the small informal parking area on Hampsfell road. Several public footpaths pass through the woodland including part of The Pilgrim's Way long distance walk. In addition there is a maze like network of other informal paths and tracks through the woodland.

One public footpath passes through Hampsfield Allotment, affording fine views of the Cartmel valley and beyond to the Lake District hills. This has been significantly enhanced since the removal of the conifer plantations and Hampsfield Allotment now links with the rest of the open access land of Hampsfell. Eggerslack Woods are dedicated under the CROW Act.

Due to the age of many of the trees in Eggerslack Woods, the wide network of paths and high levels of use particular diligence is needed to ensure that wind damaged trees do not block paths or present an undue hazard to visitors. Both woodlands form part of a wider area that is used for occasional orienteering events. Timing and size of events needs to be carefully controlled to avoid compromising the conservation interests within the woodlands. As such it is not felt appropriate to provide any further recreation facilities.

Pests and diseases

Roe deer are resident in the area and there is potential for damage to both tree crops and other habitat types through browsing and grazing. The stalking rights are retained and an annual cull is taken by Forestry Commission rangers.

Grey squirrels are prevalent throughout the woodlands and have the potential to cause damage to mature trees. Previous attempts at population control have proved futile given the proximity to neighbouring woodland where little grey squirrel culling has taken place.

Access and roading

Vehicular access to both woodlands is fairly poor. Eggerslack is bounded to the south-west by a narrow and twisting public road. There is also a narrow access point on to the B5271 about a mile north of Grange. Access to Hampsfield Allotment is via the narrow farm track to Hampsfield Hall, to the west of the woodland which stops well short of the woodland boundary.

Part 2 Analysis and Concept

The factors outlined in Part 1 present various opportunities and issues. These are summarised below:

Factor	Opportunities	Issues
Management type	Heaning Wood managed as 'Natural Reserve' and Low Intervention management in Eggerslack Wood and Hampsfield Allotment	
Biodiversity	Conservation is the prime objective of management due to their conservation interest (PAW's, ASNW, and LPO) and notable species and habitats.	
Access/Roading		Limited access for woodland management. Internal access is also very restricted.
Harvesting	Some sustainable woodland management opportunities for firewood, charcoal	Restricted access to woodlands for management
Pests and disease		Woodland habitat/ground flora at risk from resident roe deer population
Future Species/ Climate change	Opportunity to extend range of locally native species through appropriate management	
Current species		Small amounts of non-native trees species present in Eggerslack Wood
Public access	Low key public access appropriate to the area and other management objectives. Good public transport links to Grange-over-Sands	Parking is restricted but good access on foot from Grange-over-Sands

Appraisal of Opportunities and Constraints

Conservation and habitat restoration remain the key drivers for Hampsfield Allotment and Eggerslack. Previous successful removal of corsican pine and larch plantations from Hampsfield Allotment has had a positive impact on the restoration of semi-natural habitats and integrates the area well with the wider habitats and land use of Hampsfell. Introduction of a conservation grazing regime to areas of calcareous grassland is improving the species richness and quality of this habitat. The presence of some non-native tree species in the Ancient Woodland areas of Heaning Wood and Eggerslack Wood does not present a major threat. Eggerslack contains a small percentage of larch, sycamore and beech and there may be potential for some active management to provide a source of sustainable income but current access is somewhat restrictive. Low key public access is well catered for through the extensive network of public and informal paths and open access land.

Part 3 Objectives and Proposals

The following objectives have been identified based on FEE National Policy and NEFD Strategic Plan

Forest District Strategic Goal	How Forest Plan delivers
ECONOMIC <u>Wood Production</u> – <i>‘we will optimise the financial return from timber production compatible with the achievement of other district objectives whilst complying with the UK Forestry Standard and meeting the requirements of the UK Woodland Assurance Scheme’</i>	Some areas of Heaning Wood and Eggerslack Wood contain trees of reasonable quality. Active management may provide a source of sustainable income dependant on suitable, permanent access being arranged.
NATURE <i>‘we will continue to diversify the age class structure of our even-aged woodlands and increase the value of all our woodlands and forest for wildlife’</i> <i>‘we will ensure that rare and threatened habitats are protected and managed to maintain or enhance their conservation value’</i>	Continue with grazing management on Hampsfield Allotment to safeguard and enhance the mosaic of calcareous grassland and native tree and shrub species. As opportunities arise remove small area of remaining larch in Eggerslack. Coppice approximately 2.5ha (in three defined areas) within Eggerslack. Aim to fell sycamore and beech and coppice a proportion of birch, hazel and ash seeking to create a more open mosaic of semi-natural habitat with linkage between fragments of existing open space. Monitor levels of scrub regeneration across Hampsfield Allotment and manage as appropriate. Continue to monitor butterfly species and abundance.
PEOPLE <i>‘we will utilise the land and resources at our disposal to assist communities close to our forests to enhance their environments and hence their quality of life’</i> <i>‘we will provide public access to all our forests and woodlands where there are no legal or safety restrictions...’</i>	Work with Butterfly Conservation volunteers to create and manage areas of coppice and open habitat in Eggerslack. Maintain the network of paths clear of obstructions and ensure that retention of any standing deadwood does not present a hazard to visitors. Ensure that public rights of way are clearly marked.

Part 4 Monitoring plan

The objectives identified in section 3 will be monitored in the following ways;

Objective	Criteria for success	Assessment
ECONOMIC		
Wood production	Marketable parcels of timber on offer to local contractors for potential production of firewood, charcoal or on site sawmilling.	Contract and sales records
Sustainable economic regeneration	Improved timber harvesting access and infrastructure	
NATURE		
Restructuring	Delivery of Forest Plan felling/thinning/coppicing proposals	Five yearly Forest Plan review
Species	Maintenance and enhancement of butterfly species	Butterfly transects (Butterfly Conservation)
PEOPLE		
Visual enhancement to visitors.	Maintenance of Ancient woodland characteristics and ongoing restructuring of the woodland.	Five year Forest Plan review.

Part 5 Forest Plan Maps

- Location – 1:50,000 scale showing location in context of other woodland in the local area
- Current Species – species composition in 2016
- Landform – indicating topography of the woodland and local area
- Soils and Geology – indicating soil composition and underlying geology across the woodland
- Conservation and Heritage – statutory and non-statutory conservation and heritage features.
- Recreation, Access and Services - formal public rights of way, FC access and local services.
- Design Concepts – representation of primary objectives of management.
- Operations Proposals – showing felling proposals and areas of Natural Reserve/Low Intervention.
- Future Species – representing the long term vision for future species composition and open habitat.



Forestry Commission
England

Eggerslack and Hampfield Allotment Location



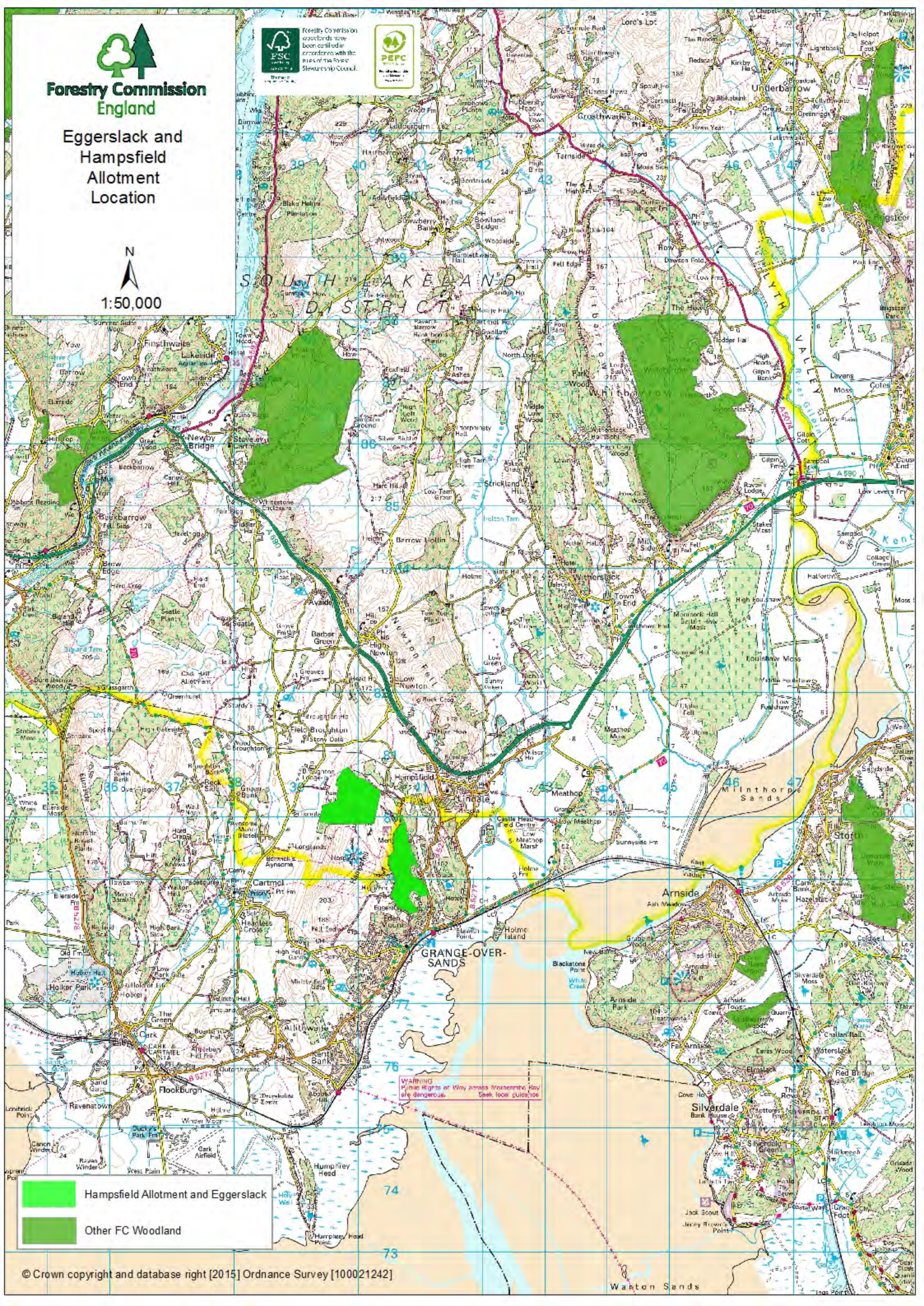
1:50,000



Forestry Commission
woodlands have
been certified in
accordance with the
rules of the Forest
Stewardship Council.



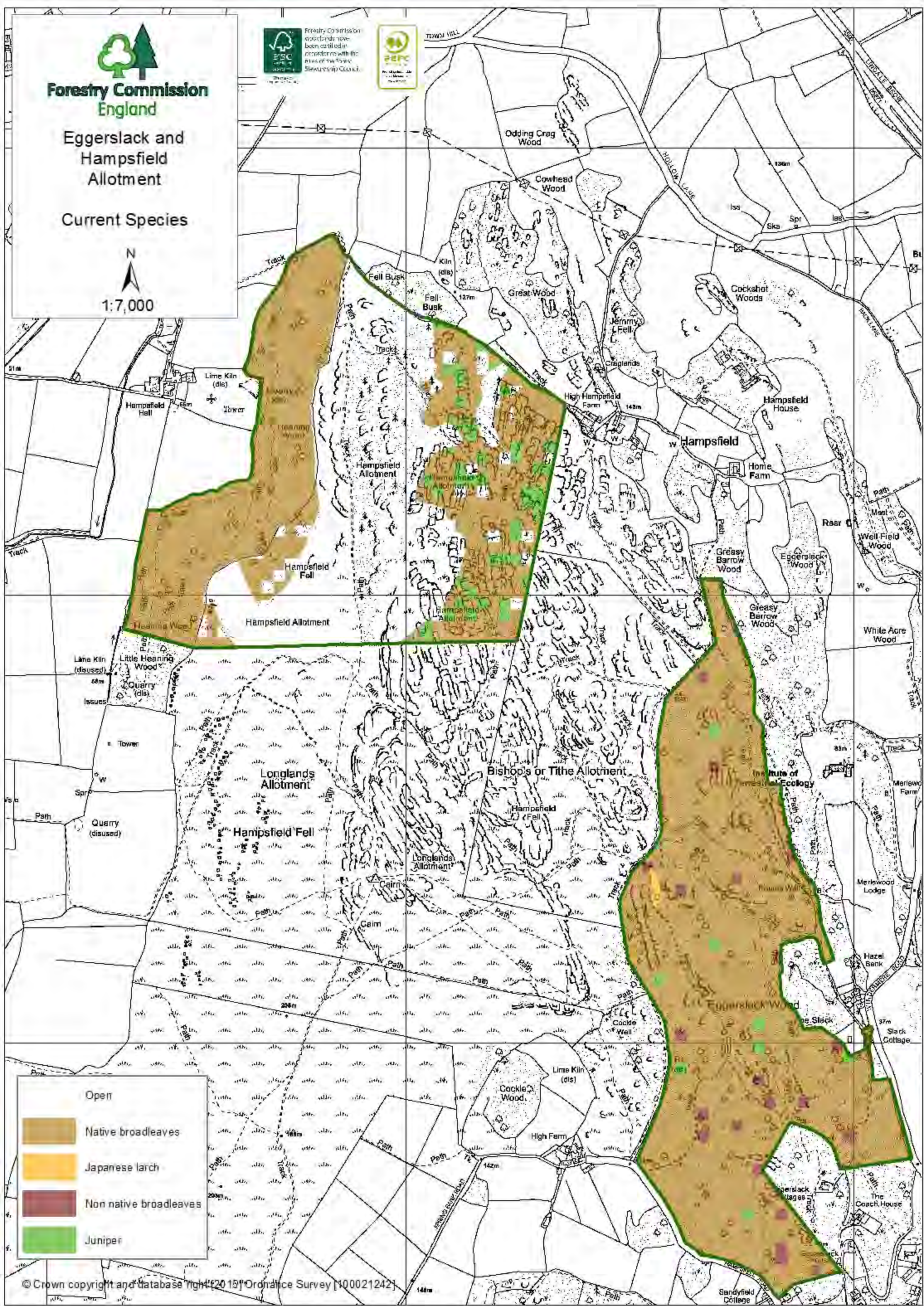
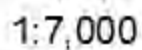
PEFC
Programme
Certified





Eggerslack and
Hampshire
Allotment

Current Species



© Crown copyright and database right [2015] Ordnance Survey [100021242]



Forestry Commission
England

Eggerslack and Hampfield Allotment

Soils/Geology



1:7,000



Forestry Commission
woodlands have
been certified in
accordance with the
FSC standards by the
UK Forestry Standard
Scheme.



PEFC
Programme
Certified
by the
UK Forestry
Standard
Scheme.

The underlying limestone is exposed as limestone pavement, scree and scars over much of the woodland area. The soil, where present, is calcareous and includes ranker and brown earth.

Under the Wildlife and Countryside Act (1981) limestone pavement is subject to protection measures known as Limestone Pavement Orders (LPO). Areas of limestone pavement can be notified to the local authority (for example Cumbria County Council or National Park Authority), who may then make a LPO to protect the pavement.

The Hampfield pavements were the first limestone pavements in England to be designated with a LPO after the 1981 Wildlife and Countryside Act in recognition of the value of this rare habitat. The wooded pavements (including Eggerslack Wood) were designated as The Grange-over-Sands Woodlands in 1994. Removal of rock is a criminal offence and anyone taking pavement from a designated site can be prosecuted and fined, even if the rock they remove is loose or lying in a field.

Brown Earth

Brown Ranker



**Forestry Commission
England**

Eggerslack and Hampfield Allotment Nature Conservation and Heritage



1:7,000



Forestry Commission
woodlands have
been certified in
accordance with the
rules of the Forest
Stewardship Council.



Conservation grazing, supported by Environmental Stewardship aims to encourage grazing that benefits wildlife, landscape and cultural heritage. Conservation grazing is livestock grazing that meets nature conservation objectives and includes extensive, low-intervention grazing schemes meeting welfare needs of livestock while allowing natural processes to occur to optimize sward structure for invertebrates, small mammals and birds.

Within Eggerslack and Hampfield Allotment there are an extensive and varied series of semi-natural habitats. The sites comprise a diverse and complex association of calcareous and acidic grassland, woodland, limestone scars, screes and pavements. They have geological and biological features that are listed on the EC Habitats Directive and/or the Cumbria Biodiversity Action Plan. They also support significant populations of nationally rare and uncommon plants and have a notable invertebrate fauna.



Undesignated heritage feature



Undesignated heritage line feature



Lake District National Park



Managed under Environmental Stewardship



Ancient Semi-natural woodland



**Forestry Commission
England**

Eggerslack and Hampsfeld Allotment Recreation, Access and Services

N
1:7,000



Eggerslack Wood and Hampsfeld Allotment are popular venues for walkers and are often visited as part of more extended walks over Hampsfeld Fell. Eggerslack is well positioned to offer short walks from Grange-over-Sands or from the small informal parking area on Hampsfeld Road. Several public footpaths pass through the woodland. In addition there is a maze like network of other paths and tracks throughout the woodland.

The Forestry Commission is committed to ensuring that the public rights of way and other established paths within these woodlands are kept free of obstructions and are easy to follow. In order to avoid compromising the conservation values of the area it is not felt appropriate to provide any further recreational facilities.

- Dedicated land (CROW)
- Access Point
- Bridleway
- Footpath
- Track
- Public Highway
- Overhead powerline
- Spring
- Tank
- Well



Forestry Commission
England

Eggerslack and
Hampfield
Allotment

Design Concepts



1:7,000



Forestry Commission
woodlands have
been certified in
accordance with the
rules of the Forest
Stewardship Council.



Corsican pine and larch plantation felled in 2005. Mosaic of restored calcareous grassland and native tree and shrub species is developing managed under an agricultural conservation grazing let.

Corsican pine removed. Juniper and native broadleaved scrub

Hampfield Allotment comprises a range of important habitats and species. Significant conservation enhancement opportunities through the restoration of ash woodland, calcareous grassland and juniper stands.

Small area of larch in Eggerslack Woods will be removed when opportunity arises. Its presence is not affecting the integrity of the Ancient Woodland designation.

Woodland areas with trees of reasonable quality. Active management may provide a source of sustainable income dependant on suitable, permanent access being arranged.

Eggerslack Wood and Heaning Wood are Ancient Woodland Sites. Scattered non-native trees will be removed over time as opportunities arise.

Heaning Wood

Eggerslack Wood



Forestry Commission
England

Eggerslack and
Hampsfield
Allotment

Operations



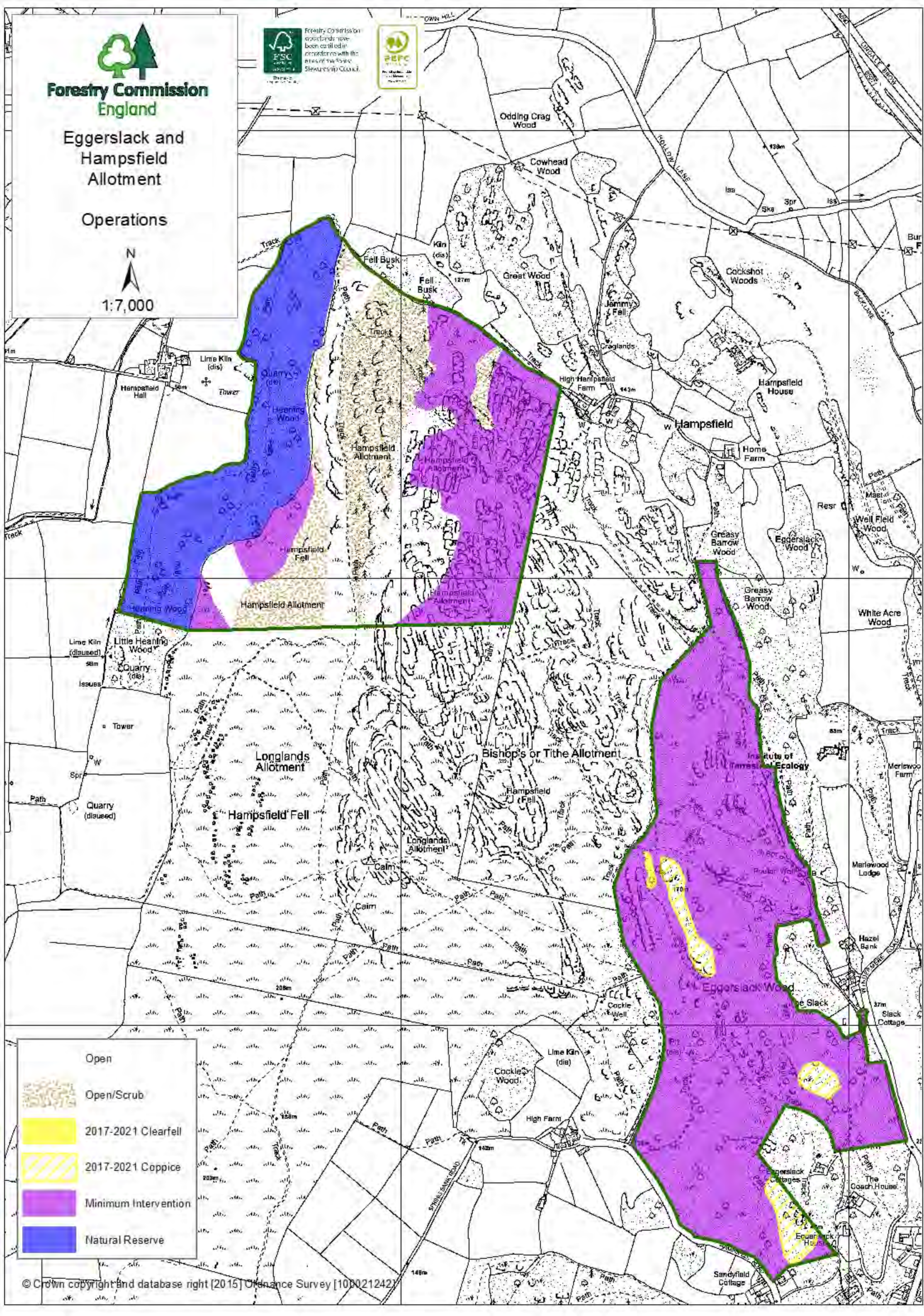
1:7,000



Forestry Commission
woodlands have
been certified in
accordance with the
principles of the Forest
Stewardship Council



PEFC
Principles of the Forest
Stewardship Council





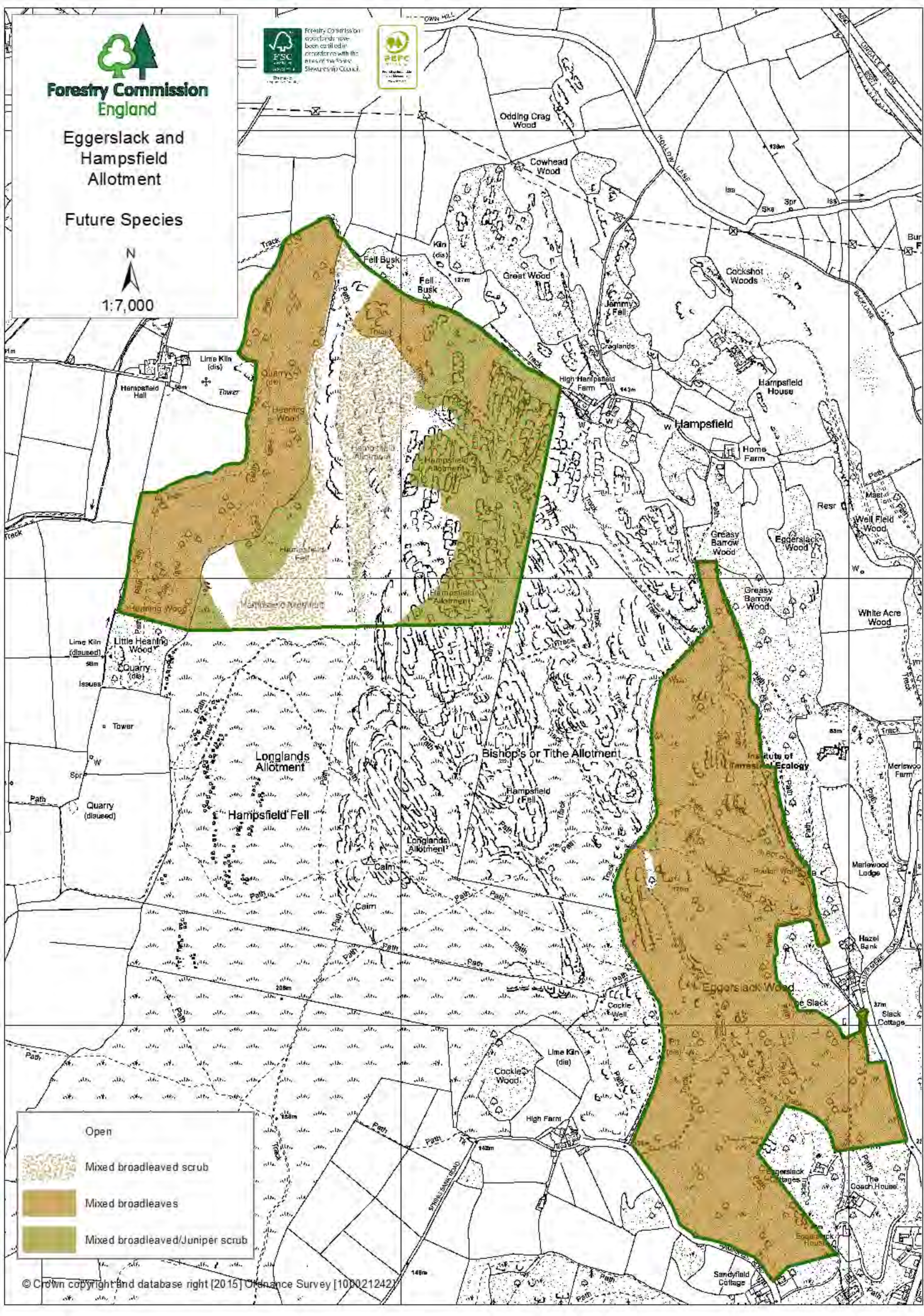
Forestry Commission
England

Eggerslack and
Hampshire Allotment

Future Species



1:7,000



Open

Mixed broadleaved scrub

Mixed broadleaves

Mixed broadleaved/Juniper scrub

Part 6 Forest Plan Outcomes

Nature Conservation

- Through the ongoing management of Hampsfield Allotment and Eggerslack Woods we will;
- Protect the limestone pavements and maintain and protect their botanical interest.
 - Enhance the species richness of the important calcareous grassland community and continue to expand its range onto areas where it would have been present prior to afforestation.
 - Increase the cover of yew woodland and juniper scrub.
 - Restore species richness of the semi-natural woodland communities.
 - Maintain and enhance other habitats of local and national importance.
 - Maintain the populations of rare and nationally scarce species in a favourable condition.

Landscape Appraisal

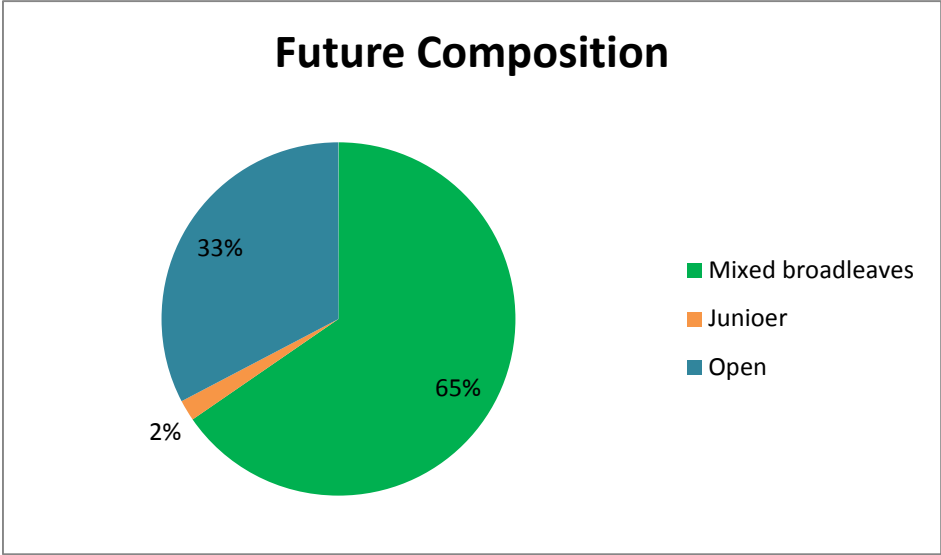
Visual sensitivity is assessed with consideration to the importance and nature of views of the woodlands from key viewpoints. The previous removal of the larch and corsican pine plantation from the top of Hampsfield Allotment has significantly benefited the visual impact and the ongoing management for open/scrub woodland will protect this. Heaning Wood and Eggerslack Woods both fit well in the landscape in their current form and continuous cover management through long term retention will protect the landscape character of these woodlands.

Timber production

Timber production is not a major objective of the Forest Plan and therefore there is no analysis of future timber yield or productive capacity. The harvesting of timber, through either the removal of any remaining exotic conifer or non-native broadleaved species will be taken on an opportunistic basis.

Future Species

The percentages of future species composition shown below exceed the minimum requirements for UK Woodland Assurance Scheme and UK Forest Standard.



The United Kingdom Forest Standard (UKFS)

The UKFS is the reference standard for sustainable forest management in the UK. The UKFS is supported by a series of guidelines which outline the context for forestry in the UK, defines standards and requirements and provides a basis for regulation and monitoring. These include General Forestry Practice, Forests and Biodiversity; Climate Change, Historic Environment, Landscape, People, Soil and Water.

Eggerslack and Hampsfield Allotment Forest Plan is able to demonstrate that relevant aspects of sustainable forest management have been considered and the stated objectives in Part 3 show how sustainable forest management will be achieved. The plan provides a clear means to communicate the proposals and to engage with interested parties and serves as an agreed statement of intent against which implementation can be checked and monitored.

In addition to conforming to general sustainable forest management principles UKFS is demonstrated in the following key areas:

Productivity	Productive potential is optimised through the delivery of ecosystem services and other non-market benefits included in biodiversity, climate change mitigation, water, people and landscape.
Structure	Future species composition; 67% native species and 33% permanent open ground exceeds UKFS minimum requirements. Long term structure will improve through linking of permanent broadleaved and open habitats.
Silvicultural	Continuous cover forestry (CCF) principles will be adopted with long term retention (LTR) of areas of broadleaved woodland. This will improve species and age class diversity over time.
Biodiversity	Management of priority habitats and species are the primary objective. Ecological connectivity achieved by extending and linking areas of native broadleaved woodland and open space will be enhanced ensuring that the area is managed with conservation and biodiversity as a major objective.
Climate change	CCF and LTR areas will minimise soil disturbance. Forest resilience will be enhanced over time.
Landscape	The planning process refers to the Local Landscape Character Assessment to inform the appropriate woodland management and design.
Historic	Historic features are recognised and their safeguard will be incorporated into operational management.
People	The Forest Plan is consulted with individuals, the local community and organisations with an interest in the management of the area.
Water	Water quality will be protected through a low intervention management regime with adherence to Forest and Water guidelines as a minimum during any harvesting and forest management operations.

Longer term management proposals

The proposals in this plan continue to build on the success of previous plans to support the management of Hampsfield Allotment and Eggerslack Woods as sites for a range of nationally and locally important habitats and species. Exotic conifers and non-native broadleaves will continue to be removed which could offer potential for local woodfuel markets and public access will be maintained and managed to provide both a resource for the local community and visitors to the wider area.