LWT woodland condition assessment
Site: Abbott Clough Recorder(s): John Lamb Date: 29/05/19

It is important to monitor woodlands to ascertain what condition they are in and whether management targets are being met. The following condition assessment should be carried out for woodland areas every 5 years. If the woodland is linear and has difficult terrain all observations should be made from the boundary looking into the wood - the area of assessment is that which can be seen in front of the assessor with their back towards the nearest external boundary. Using a good scale map walk the site stopping ten times to make assessments. These stops should be marked on the map so that they can be reproduced in later assessments. The stops should be evenly spaced throughout the site (e.g. about 100m between) but can be positioned anywhere.

At each stop record the answers to the following ten questions (see overleaf for stop descriptions and map for their locations):

Extent –

1. Is the area or boundary of the woodland as it should be?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Y	Y	Y	Y	N					

Structure –

2. Can you see mature trees?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
N	N	N	N	Y					

3. Can you see at least five individual native shrubs or coppice?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Y	Y	Y	Y	Y					

4. Can you see at least a 50% coverage of native ground flora (not including bare ground: bg, and/or non-native flora e.g. Himalayan Balsam: B)? [1] = close.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Y	Y	Y[1]	Y but	N(B)					

5. Can you see any standing or hung-up deadwood?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Y	Y	Y	Y	Y					

6. Can you see any laying deadwood over 2m long?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Y	Y	Y	Y	Y					

Regeneration –

7. Can you see at least five native tree seedlings over 2m tall?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Y	N	Y	Y	N					

Undesirable species (different species can be substituted for those used below) **–**

8. Is your field of vision free of non-native shrubs (e.g. Rhododendron: R, Laurel: L)? * = Cotoneaster at Stop 5.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Y	Y	Y	Y	N*					

9. Is your field of vision free of unwanted canopy tree species? (B=Beech, Hc=Horse-chestnut, Nm=Norway maple, S=Sycamore, Sw=Swedish whitebeam).

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
N(Nm)	Y	N(B,Sw)	Y	N(Hc,S)					

10. Is your field of vision free of other non-natives? (Wp=Welsh poppy)

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
N(B)	N(B)	N(B)	N(B)	N(Wp*)					

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1. GPS: SD71196 28126, 150m asl. Three photos taken stood with back to corner post in post & rail boundary with adjacent field (being developed at the time of survey), looking North, West and South
Canopy dominated by: Alder and willow.
Understorey: Hawthorn, willow and Ash.
Field layer dominated locally by: Grasses (Rough Meadow-grass and Yorkshire-fog) and buttercups (Creeping & Meadow). Other flora included Hogweed, Himalayan Balsam, Herb-Robert, Cleavers, willowherb, Field Horsetail and Broad-leaved Dock.




Above left: Stop 1 photo 1 of 3. Above right: Stop 1 photo 2 of 3, 29/05/19.
Below: Stop 1 photo 3 of 3, 29/05/19.



2. GPS: SD71197 28182, 151m asl. Two photos taken stood in between five Field Maple trees in the eastern corner of the site overlooking a depression/borrow-pit, looking South and SW.
Canopy dominated by: Birch, Alder, Field Maple and oak.
Understorey: Willow, Field Maple and Guelder-rose.
Field layer dominated locally by: Rough Meadow-grass, Nettle, Himalayan Balsam, Wood Avens and bare ground. Other flora included willowherb, Cow Parsley, Ivy, Hogweed, Soft Shield-fern, Dandelion and Male-fern.

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Above left: Stop 2 photo 1 of 2. Above right: Stop 2 photo 2 of 2, 29/05/19.

3. GPS: SD71113 28249, 136m asl. Two photos taken stood with back to a 90-degree bend in the boundary post & rail fence, looking SW & NE.
Canopy dominated by: Birch.
Understorey: Oak, Alder, Beech, Swedish Whitebeam, Hawthorn and apple.
Field layer dominated locally by: Bluebell, Bramble and Broad Buckler-fern on the slope with Creeping Buttercup and Himalayan Balsam at the base of the slope. Other flora included Wavy Hair-grass and bent grass (*Agrostis* sp.).



Above left: Stop 3 photo 1 of 2. Above right: Stop 3 photo 2 of 2, 29/05/19.

4. GPS: SD71024 28310, 143m asl. Two photos taken stood on a bank where the river is eroding the east (west-facing) slope, looking NW & SW.
Canopy dominated by: Birch and oak on the slope, with willow on the floodplain.
Understorey: Hawthorn, Hazel, willow and Alder.
Field layer dominated locally by: Bluebell, Bramble and Broad Buckler-fern on the slope with Himalayan Balsam at the base of the slope. Other flora included Cow Parsley, Nettle, Male-fern and Hogweed.

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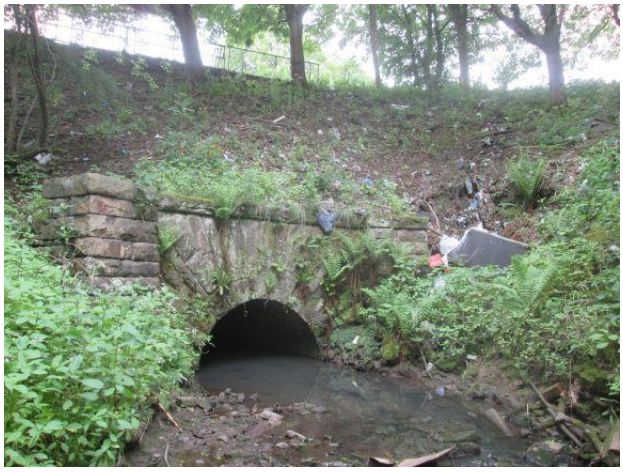


Above left: Stop 4 photo 1 of 2. Above right: Stop 4 photo 2 of 2, 29/05/19.

5. GPS: SD71090 28094, 153m asl. Two photos taken stood at the eastern end of a culvert (see photo below), looking downstream (North) and East.
Canopy dominated by: Alder, willow, birch and Sycamore.
Understorey: Hawthorn, Elder, Norway Maple, Horse-chestnut, willow and Cotoneaster.
Field layer dominated locally by: Himalayan Balsam, bare ground and bryophytes. Other flora included Broad Buckler-fern, Male-fern, Hart's-tongue, Nettle, Cow Parsley, Welsh Poppy (garden escapee) and Creeping Buttercup.



Above left: Stop 5 photo 1 of 2. Above right: Stop 5 photo 2 of 2, 29/05/19.
Below: The culvert where the photos above were taken from, 29/05/19.



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Note: the western (east-facing) bank or slopes of Abbott Clough are not dense woodland but a mosaic of grassland and tall ruderal vegetation with scattered trees and scrub.

Of the 50 points available in the five stops assessed in May 2019, Abbott Clough scored 33 Yes's and 17 No's, i.e. 33/50 = 66%.

For comparison, the other sites assessed in Hyndburn in May 2019 are as follows:

- Whinney Hill No. 2 (West – Pond End) scored 88%,
- Huncoat No. 1 (West) scored 81%,
- Whinney Hill No. 1 (East – Cricket Club End) scored 80%,
- Martholme Greenway scored 77%,
- Huncoat No. 2 (East) scored 70%,
- Warcocks Green scored 66%, and
- Rushton Green Farm scored 63%.

The average for the sites assessed in Hyndburn in May 2019 is 73.9%, hence with 66%, Abbott Clough scored significantly less than the Hyndburn average.

For an additional comparison, other woodland condition assessments in Hyndburn have been as follows:

- Oak-birch woodland above Arden Hall scored 86% in 2018,
- Ash Plantation below The Coppice scored 86% in 2018,
- Arden Hall Plantation scored 80% in 2018,
- Hollins Wood scored 80% in 2018,
- Priestley Clough scored 75% in 2018,
- Foxhill Bank in Oswaldtwistle scored 74% in 2008,
- Rothwell Heights scored 74% in 2018,
- Plantation House scored 67.5% in 2018,
- Ooze Castle & Rock Haugh Clough Ancient Woodland scored 67% in 2009, and
- Park View Forest School woodland scored 60% in 2018.

The average score for the 18 woodlands assessed in Hyndburn to date is just under 75.5%, hence with 66%, Abbott Clough scored significantly less than the average in Hyndburn, and is the equal 15th highest (equal 3rd lowest) scoring woodland assessed in Hyndburn to date.

The negative points at Abbott Clough can be addressed through management by, for example;

1. Allow the west (east-facing) slopes of the clough to regenerate naturally into semi-natural broadleaved woodland and/or to replant with a variety of trees and shrubs (1 point in the medium to long-term).
2. Allow trees to become mature and over-mature (4 points in the long-term).
4. Control non-native ground flora or thin canopy to let more light in (1 point in the short to medium-term).

7. Plant trees, protect natural regeneration &/or thin canopy to let more light in (2 points in the short to medium-term).
8. Remove/control Cotoneaster (1 point in the short-term).
9. Remove/control Beech, Norway Maple and Swedish Whitebeam. Reduce number of Sycamore. Control regeneration of saplings (3 points in the medium to long-term).
10. Control Himalayan Balsam. Confine non-native species to existing areas. Control any additional non-native species that may arrive in the future, e.g. Spanish Bluebell/hybrids (5 points in the short to medium-term but ongoing control will be required).

In the short to medium-term, the score for the woodland at Abbott Clough could be increased by up to 12 points (24%), which would bring the score up to 45/50 or 90%, leaving 4 points (8%) from trees becoming mature in the long-term (question 2) and the 1 point (2%) concerning the woodland boundary (question 1). However, the majority of the increase would come from controlling Non-native and/or Invasive Species. Hence a more realistic target of a 6 point (12%) increase to 78% could be applied to the woodland at Abbott Clough in the short to medium-term.

Risk assessment checks: Steep &/or slippery slopes, trip hazards, watercourses &/or waterbodies (specify), culverts, mine shafts/adits, wet/boggy areas, hung-up trees, thorny bushes (Blackthorn, Dog-rose, Hawthorn, Holly etc.), rocks, scree, quarry faces, internal fencing/barbed wire etc.