

**LWT woodland condition assessment****Site: Rushton House Farm****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	Y	Y				

**Structure –****2. Can you see mature trees?**

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

**3. Can you see at least five individual native shrubs or coppice? (H=Holly)**

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Y(H)	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	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Y	Y	Y	N(B)	N(bg+B)	Y				

**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	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	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
N(exH)	N	N	Y	N	N(exH)				

**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)?**

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

**9. Is your field of vision free of unwanted canopy tree species (Grey Alder: GA, Horse-chestnut: Hc, Norway Maple: NM, Pine: P or Sycamore: S)?**

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
N(P,S)	N(P,S)	(NM,P,S)	N(GA,NM,P)	N(S)	N(Hc,S)				

**10. Is your field of vision free of other non-natives? (JK=Japanese Knotweed).**

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

\* = not including Balsam (B) which is already accounted for in Stop 4 question 4.

## **LWT woodland condition assessment**

**Site: Rushton House Farm      Recorder(s): John Lamb      Date: 29/05/19**

Of the 100 points available at the six stops assessed in May 2019, the plantation woodland at Rushton House Farm scored 38 Yes's and 22 No's, i.e.  $38/60 = 63\%$ .

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%,
- Abbot Clough scored 66%, and
- Warcocks Green scored 66%.
- 

The average for the sites assessed in Hyndburn in May 2019 is 73.9%, hence with 63%, Rushton House Farm 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 63%, Rushton House Farm scored significantly less than the average in Hyndburn, and is the 17<sup>th</sup> highest (2<sup>nd</sup> lowest) scoring woodland assessed in Hyndburn to date.

The negative points at Rushton House Farm can be addressed through management by, for example;

2. It will take time (decades) for trees to become mature and over-mature so progress cannot be made quickly to address item 2 (6 points in the long-term).
4. Control non-native ground flora and thin canopy to let more light in (2 points in the short to medium-term).
7. Plant trees, protect natural regeneration and/or thin the canopy to let more light in, to address item 7 (5 points in the short to medium-term).

## **LWT woodland condition assessment**

**Site: Rushton House Farm      Recorder(s): John Lamb      Date: 29/05/19**

9. The non-native tree species (Horse-chestnut, Norway Maple, pine and Sycamore in this case) can be selectively felled, either as part of canopy thinning, or a separate operation, to address item 9. Any natural regeneration of these species will need to be controlled/removed in the future (6 points in the medium to long-term).

10. Eradicate Japanese Knotweed asap. Non-native plants (Himalayan Balsam in this case) can be controlled to address item 10. This will be an ongoing process if the species isn't controlled on adjacent landholdings (3 points in the short-term).

In the short to medium-term, the score for the woodland at Rushton House Farm could be increased by up to 10 points, which would bring the score up to  $48/60 = 80\%$ , leaving 6 points (10%) from trees becoming mature in the long-term (question 2) and 6 points (10%) from canopy tree species (question 9). Hence a target of a 10-point increase to 80% could be applied to the woodland at Rushton House Farm in the short to medium-term.

## LWT woodland condition assessment

Site: Rushton House Farm Recorder(s): John Lamb Date: 29/05/19

1. GPS: SD74933 26740, 236m asl. Two photos taken stood a few metres inside the wood having entered from the South-west corner above the public footpath, looking NW and East.

Canopy dominated by: Pine, Alder, Sycamore and Wild Cherry.

Understorey: Holly, Ash and Sycamore with Gorse on the boundary.

Field layer dominated locally by: Creeping Soft-grass, Yorkshire-fog, Bramble and Wavy Hair-grass. Other flora included Sweet Vernal-grass, Broad Buckler-fern, Cock's-foot and Common Sorrel.



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

2. GPS: SD74905 26531, 227m asl. Two photos taken stood with back touching a corner straining post looking both ways along the fence line (visible in the photos).

Canopy dominated by: Pine, Alder and Sycamore.

Understorey: Holly and Hawthorn.

Field layer dominated locally by: Bramble, Sweet Vernal-grass and Yorkshire-fog. Other flora included Broad Buckler-fern.



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

3. GPS: SD74871 26547, 226m asl. Three photos taken stood underneath a Norway Maple tree where the fence line in the field to the west meets the woodland boundary, looking NW, North and East.

Canopy dominated by: Pine, Sycamore and Wild Cherry.

Understorey: Holly, willow and Hawthorn.

Field layer dominated locally by: Broad Buckler-fern, Creeping Soft-grass, Yorkshire-fog and Bramble. Other flora included Himalayan Balsam, Rosebay Willowherb, Foxglove and Bilberry.

## LWT woodland condition assessment

Site: Rushton House Farm

Recorder(s): John Lamb

Date: 29/05/19



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

Below: Stop 3 photo 3 of 3, 29/05/19.



4. GPS: SD74915 26612, 219m asl. Two photos taken stood next to a tree stump and close to a sizeable Norway Maple tree adjacent to the boundary post and rail fence with road signs visible on the other side of the fence, looking both ways along the fence line.

Canopy dominated by: Pine, Alder, Grey Alder, Norway Maple and Sycamore with Wyche Elm also present.

Understorey: Holly, Grey Alder suckers, Wild Cherry, Alder, Ash, Sycamore, Elder and Hawthorn.

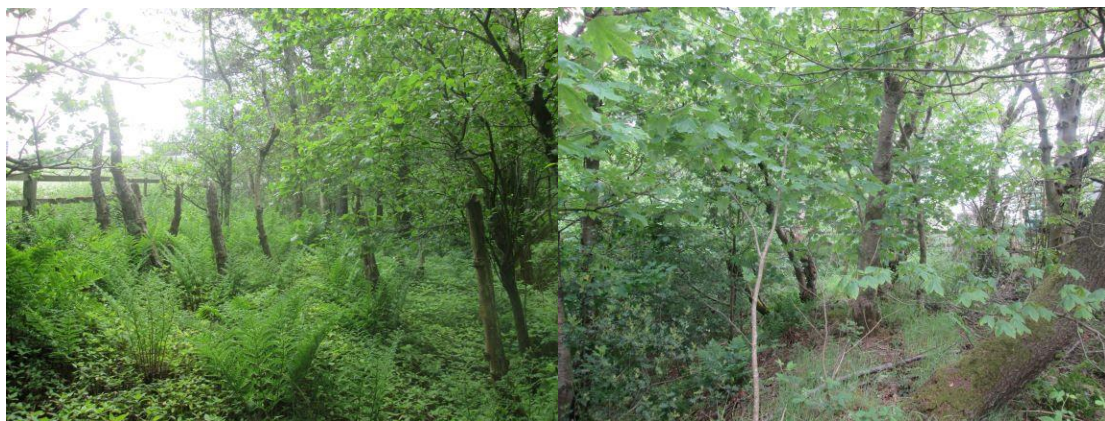
Field layer dominated locally by: Himalayan Balsam, Broad Buckler-fern and Yorkshire-fog. Other flora included Bramble, Broad-leaved Willowherb, Rosebay Willowherb and Cleavers.

## LWT woodland condition assessment

Site: Rushton House Farm

Recorder(s): John Lamb

Date: 29/05/19



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

5. GPS: SD74954 26544, 227m asl. Four photos taken stood next to a small clump of Soft-rush in a depression (damp at the bottom) along the eastern edge of the plantation, looking in four directions.

Canopy dominated by: Sycamore, Alder and Pine.

Understorey: Holly, Hawthorn, Elder, Ash and Alder.

Field layer dominated locally by: Himalayan Balsam, Creeping Buttercup, Creeping bent, Yorkshire-fog, Broad Buckler-fern and Bramble. Other flora included Tufted Hair-grass, Japanese Knotweed and Male-fern.



Above left: Stop 5 photo 1 of 4. Above right: Stop 5 photo 2 of 4, 29/05/19.

Below left: Stop 5 photo 3 of 4. Below right: Stop 5 photo 4 of 4, 29/05/19.



6. GPS: SD75002 26495, 238m asl. Two photos taken stood under a pine tree near the northern end of a ridge running parallel to the eastern boundary post and rail fence,

## **LWT woodland condition assessment**

**Site: Rushton House Farm**

**Recorder(s): John Lamb**

**Date: 29/05/19**

with a Horse-chestnut tree adjacent to the fence on the right hand side, looking NW and SE.

Canopy dominated by: Pine with Alder and Horse-chestnut present.

Understorey: Holly, Alder and Sycamore.

Field layer dominated locally by: Bramble and Broad Buckler-fern, Wavy Hair-grass and Creeping Soft-grass/Yorkshire-fog. Other flora included Japanese Knotweed.



Above left: Stop 6 photo 1 of 2. Above right: Stop 6 photo 2 of 2, 29/05/19.

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.