

Continuous Cover Monitoring - Analysis and Prescriptions

Introduction

Monitoring was carried out in Steward Wood in 2007/8, surveying 31 plots spread randomly through the woodland, surveying 8m circular plots.

The ideal Continuous Cover Forest graph would be a smooth, long curve down from a high stocking of seedlings and saplings, to a long tail of relatively few, larger trees. This disposition provides a vibrant diversity of both habitat and sawlog size, which when combined with slow and steady piecemeal felling will provide timber and firewood indefinitely whilst protecting the soil, saplings and trees from exposure to wind, erosion and bramble swamping.

Analysis and Prescriptions

The sapling and >7cm bands are fairly well stocked. They show clear broadleaf conversion in progress. More broadleaf saplings reaching above deer height would still be beneficial however - more replanting and deer protection required.

The 13-19cm band is under represented, and needs boosting. Try to avoid felling trees smaller than this to allow more to grow through to fill this gap.

The 19-22cm band shows a slight bulge - these trees can be felled more.

The 32-60cm (commercial conifer crop) is overstocked, and can be happily felled in quantity. Fell Larch, Fir and Pine in small coupes or singly to avoid clearfell sites and their associated high exposure and light levels which stress trees, erode soils and increase windthrow, and also fall prey to brambles swamping the regeneration.