Bank Woods

Bank Wood Farm, Summerbridge, Harrogate, North Yorkshire, HG3 4JR

2017

Bank Woods, a 111-acre site near Summerbridge in Nidderdale Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, was purchased. The landscape features steep slopes, several small streams, upland scrub, semi-improved grassland and includes 20 acres of ancient woodland with many veteran trees.

2018

9,000 trees planted, along boundaries and between ancient woodlands, with support from The Woodland Trust. Deer fence installed to protect ancient and new woodlands. Introduction of conservation grazing with a small herd of Belted Galloway cows to manage vegetation and maintain paths through gorse.

2020

Designated as a Site of Importance for Nature Conservation, recognizing its rich biodiversity especially the extensive wildflower populations.
From autumn 2020 to spring 2025, six Exmoor ponies from the Yorkshire Exmoor Pony Trust joined the conservation grazing team.

Ongoing

A hazel coppice being added to each year.
Restoration of wildflower hay meadows improving pollinator habitats.
Creation of wildlife ponds and 'leaky dams' to reduce flooding and create aquatic habitats.
40 bird boxes installed, mainly among the ancient woodland, to support breeding birds.
Nest boxes for barn owls and other large birds added, as well as bat boxes.

2025/6

Positive ecological outcomes including increased floral, fungal and wildlife diversity, with huge increase in resident moth species, rare bats identified, breeding barn owls, pied flycatchers and tawny owls.
December 2025, our ancient meadows recognised as 'Internationally Important' due to the abundance of meadow fungi which are threatened with extinction.

Future plans

Continue habitat management and restoration: maintain rewilding and conservation grazing, with particular focus on protecting the ancient meadows. After a trial with goats, specifically to manage gorse, we may employ them again.

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