

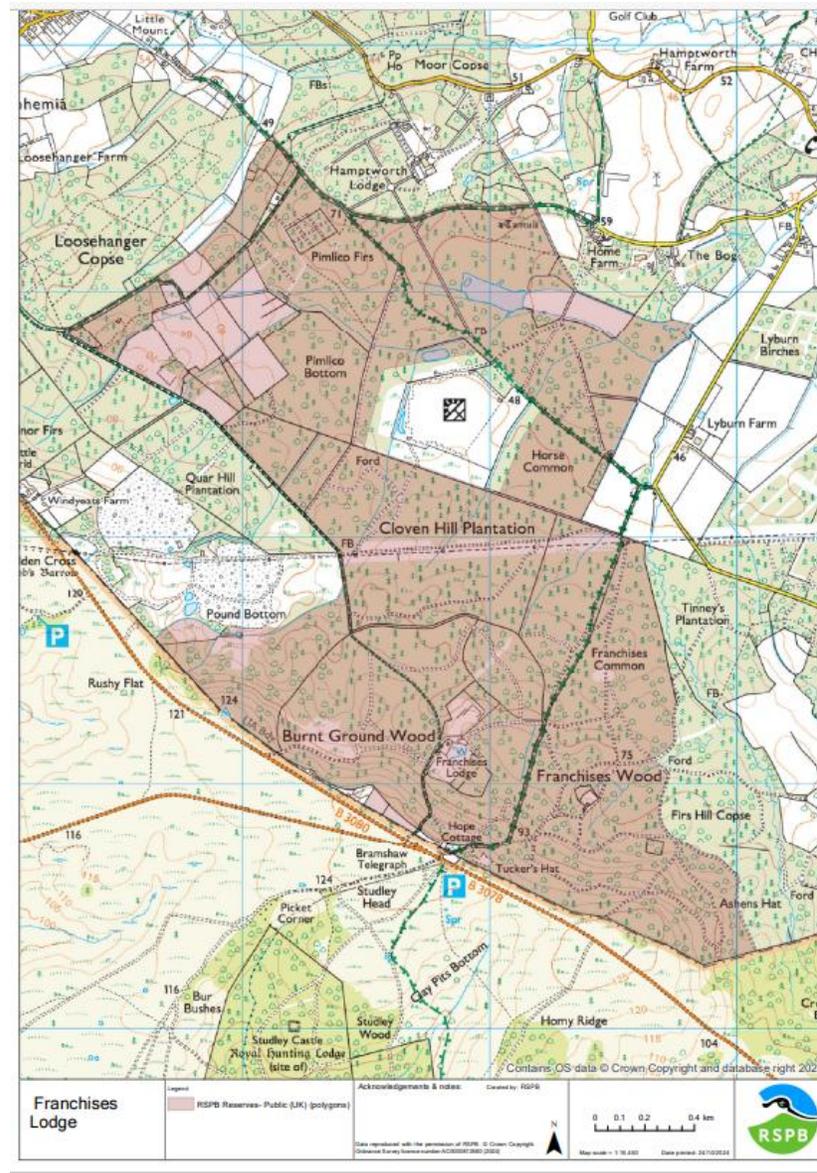
RSPB Franchises Lodge update

Izzy Williamson- Site Manager



Franchises Lodge

- 426 ha.
- Mixed woodland and conifer plantations
- Some open areas of grassland
- Small patch of heath
- High potential for restoration
- Four key areas of work



Cattle Grazing



Cattle Grazing

- Continuing to work with local commoners
- SSSI grasslands improving
- Using cattle to diversify tracts of *Molinia caerulea*



Deer Management



Deer Management

- Science-lead cull targets
- Signs of regeneration
- Condition greatly improved



Tree Thinning



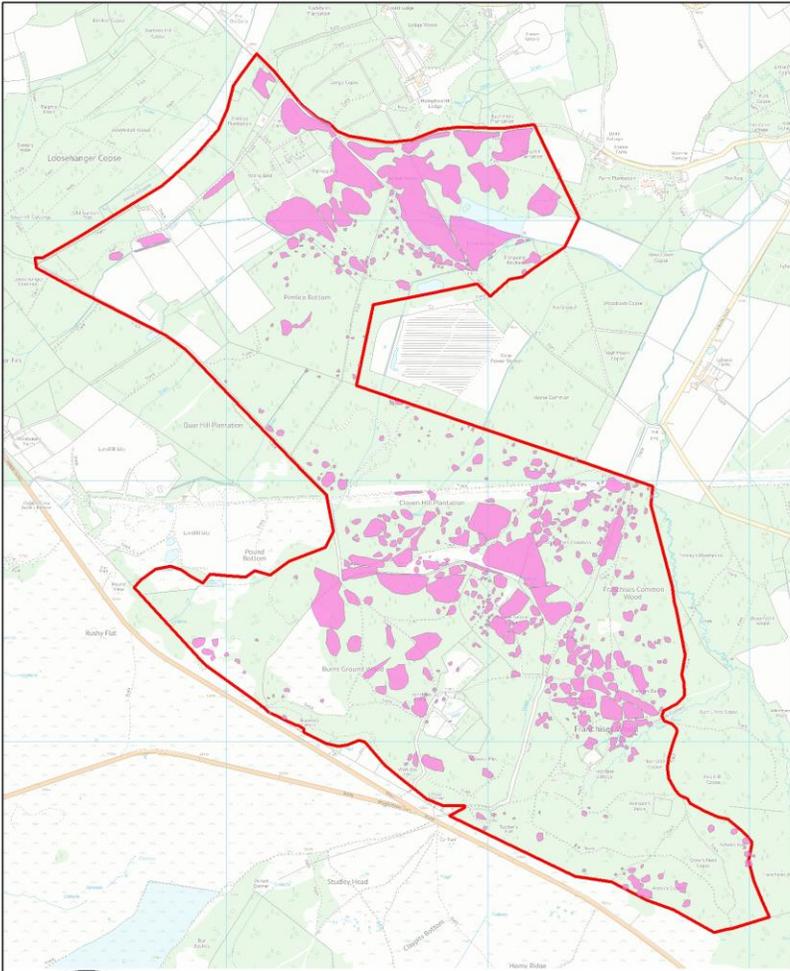
Tree thinning

- Forestry contractors & chainsaw courses
- Short harvesting season due to site conditions
- Leaving buffer zones around known and potential bat roosts
- Phased haloing of veteran or feature trees



Rhododendron Removal





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Map showing Rhododendron cover found in Franchises Wood identified through analysis of Lidar data. This equates to around 62 hectares.



Legend

- RSPB Land
- Rhododendron Mapping

Rhododendron removal

- Volunteer & contractor removal and spraying
- Estimated 62 ha of Rhododendron originally - now roughly 40 ha
- SSF project



Species Survival Fund Project



- Scrapes
- Scythes
- Rhododendron clearance



Thanks to ARC and FHT!



SSF Species highlights



- Species that were new to site or we had only a few records of
- Many notable species of fungi
- Nationally scarce invertebrates
- Trailcam footage









Cameron's Cottage

- Residential centre to engage young people (14-25) with nature
- Over 4000 young people so far
- Independently evaluated to be having a measurable impact on young people



Volunteers



Volunteers

- Survey Volunteers
- Workparty Volunteers
- Specialist Volunteers
- Cameron's Cottage Volunteers



2026

- Wessex Rivers Trust hydrology report (kindly funded by the TICP Ecological Resilience Fund)
- UKWAS
- Securing funding for further restoration, access and infrastructure projects



2026

- PhD Breaking Rhododendron: understanding the drivers of rhododendron success
- Continuing to restore habitats through grazing, deer management, rhododendron removal and woodland thinning



A huge thanks to everyone involved with Franchises Lodge in the past year!

Contact us:
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Stay connected

Keep up to date with the latest thinking, news, events, and information from the RSPB in your local community.



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Protecting habitats, saving species
and helping to end the nature and
climate emergency.