Lobarion lichen communities

Areas and status: Species forming this lichen community were historically widespread but are now largely restricted to western and northern parts of the UK. Air pollution since the 19th century has played a large part in this change. The Lobarion community is characterised by large leafy lichen species, particularly the four *Lobaria* species, and associated species such as *Sticta, Nephroma, Nephroma, and Peltigera*. The community grows on trees with mildly acidic or alkaline bark, and many of the species within the community are ancient woodland indicators. The British Isles holds some of the finest examples of the Lobarion communities in Europe, many of the species are not found in other parts of Britain and Europe and some are globally rare. It is therefore vitally important that that these communities are protected and their conservation status is enhanced.

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Woodland type: Atlantic woodlands, old parkland, wood pasture

Preferred habitat niches:

- Trees with mildly acidic or alkaline bark such as old oak, ash, sycamore, willow, rowan, and hazel
- Woodlands with continuity of cover and old growth trees
- Oak tree bark chemistry becomes less acidic at about 400 years old

Potential habitat management issues associated with decline:

- Removal of old growth trees and/or species with mildly acidic or alkaline bark such as ash, sycamore, willow, rowan and old oak.
- Woodland stands with very high canopy cover and no glades can become too shaded and dark for the lichens to thrive, or restrict them to the upper parts of trees.
- Thick understorey or scrub growth can also have a shading effect, especially where it is growing under or around veteran trees. This can be managed carefully by shrub/scrub management and grazing.
- Linked to the above point, growth and spread of invasive non-native species such as Rhododendron ponticum is likely to have had an impact in shading lichens living on the lower halves of trees.

Potential habitat management solutions:	
Prescription	*Comment*
INNS management, e.g. Rhododendron removal	
Glade creation to increase light levels	Would need to be undertaken with care.
Thinning of regeneration/shrub layer around veteran trees	
Grazing	
Ensure retention of old growth trees and future generations	