

## Wider application

In every urban area, there is a wealth of different organisations and individuals with the potential to work together. The *Forest of Belfast* shows how very effective an investment in partnership building and facilitation can be in raising public awareness and in achieving a strategic scale of increased tree cover through widescale co-operation.

## Further information

### National Urban Forestry Unit

This leaflet is one of a series produced by the National Urban Forestry Unit. NUFU provides a national focus for the exchange of information and good practice in urban forestry.

If you would like further information on other case studies or their application, or if you have examples of good practice to share with others, please contact:

**National Urban Forestry Unit**  
The Science Park  
Stafford Road  
Wolverhampton WV10 9RT  
United Kingdom

Tel : 01902 828600  
Fax : 01902 828700  
E-mail : [info@nufu.org.uk](mailto:info@nufu.org.uk)  
Web site : [www.nufu.org.uk](http://www.nufu.org.uk)

### Forest of Belfast

The Forest Officer  
Forest of Belfast  
4-10 Linenhall Street  
Belfast  
BT2 8BP

Tel: 028 9027 0350  
Fax: 028 9023 7070

### Further reading

Collins K (2000)

*Proceedings of Ireland's third national conference on urban forestry*  
Tree Council of Ireland, Dublin

Johnston M (1998)

The development of urban forestry in Northern Ireland *Irish Forestry* 55 37-58

Simon B (2000)

Carving a woodland future *Irish Forestry* In press

Simon B (2000)

Tree traditions and folklore from northeast Ireland *Arboricultural Journal* 24 15-40

Wilcox D (1994)

*Creating development trusts: good practice in urban regeneration* Department of the Environment, London

Photographs: Christopher Hill Photographic and The Forest of Belfast

PRODUCED BY



IN ASSOCIATION WITH



# Urban Forestry in Practice

## Developing city-wide partnerships



CASE STUDY 18

# Developing city-wide partnerships

## Introduction

Urban forestry can forge partnerships between central and local government, environmental organisations and city dwellers - essential for developing a co-ordinated approach to planting and managing city trees.

## Specific example

### Project name and location

**THE FOREST OF BELFAST, BELFAST**, Northern Ireland

### Project partners

- Central government agencies (Roads Service, Environment & Heritage Service, Forest Service, Planning Service)
- Non-departmental public bodies (Northern Ireland Housing Executive, Laganside Corporation)
- Local government (Belfast, Lisburn, Castlereagh and Newtownabbey Councils)
- Voluntary sector organisations (nine NGOs involved in urban tree planting and tree care)

### Project objectives

- To conserve and manage existing trees
- To increase the planting of appropriate species of trees, particularly in areas accessible to the public
- To promote an interest in and appreciation of trees and forestry
- To involve the community in tree planting and management
- To review, monitor and publish results of the initiative

### Description

The *Forest of Belfast* is active throughout the urban area of Greater Belfast, including the whole of Belfast City. It was formed in 1992 and it brings together partners from the statutory sector, voluntary groups, businesses and individual residents who become volunteer Tree Wardens.

One full time member of staff is employed, and this post is administered by Belfast City Council.



*Support from a range of sectors is critical for success. Here, representatives of the Roads Service, Belfast Parks and Amenities, Phoenix Gas and the Chamber of Commerce give hands-on support to the urban forest*

### Activities

#### • Survey of Belfast's trees

Over 36 000 trees were examined between 1993 and 1995. This survey provided information such as species composition, ownership, tree condition and age and provided the basis of a strategy for the future of the urban forest.

#### • Encouraging public involvement

European funding targeted at promoting peace and reconciliation, together with additional support from Belfast City Council, has enabled the *Forest of Belfast* to assist over 300 groups and provide nearly 90 000 trees in a three year programme. Groups are expected to ensure that landowners support the proposed projects and that sites of existing conservation value are not being planted.

*The large wooden sculptures have proved enormously popular*



Every year a range of projects is developed to bring participating organisations together and to highlight the value of urban trees. These schemes have included a celebrity tree trail, free garden trees for the families of all new millennium Belfast babies, yew tree planting in urban churchyards, environmental arts in parks and the planting of large holly trees at community centres to be decorated annually as living Christmas trees. Seeds have also been collected from notable Belfast trees, grown and planted by local groups.

#### • Environmental arts

Every year, with support from land owners, local business and arts organisations, the *Forest of Belfast* commissions two or three timber sculptures on a wildlife theme and each year an artist is commissioned to create a limited edition print of a particularly significant individual Belfast tree. These are presented to opinion formers as a way of promoting the importance of city trees.

A number of murals on the theme of Forest of Belfast have also been painted. These are in prominent locations throughout the city.



*A specially commissioned seat combines an artistic reminder of the Forest with a functional feature*

#### • Tree care

The partnership monitors street trees and private garden trees during pavement trenching operations by utility companies. The *Forest of Belfast* also helps to provide tree care training for utility contractors.

Through the Forest of Belfast, member organisations comment on planning issues such as tree preservation orders, strategic planning reviews and development proposals that affect trees.

Higher standards of tree care are promoted with leaflets on topics such as loosening tree ties and preventing strimmer damage. Seminars and meetings also promote tree issues to audiences that include representatives of central government departments, council parks departments and voluntary organisations.

### Results

- The partnership has successfully developed practical links between organisations, groups and individual Tree Wardens and with other initiatives such as *Belfast in Bloom* and the *Belfast Hills Committee*
- Member organisations of the partnership have shown greater commitment to develop their own tree programmes
- The scheme has attracted a considerable amount of new funding to develop urban tree initiatives