

Wider application

By linking an ecologically informed approach to land reclamation with well facilitated community involvement, sustainable and effective regeneration is achievable. The employment of skilled community liaison staff greatly enhances the sense of local ownership, and this increases success wherever urban forestry is employed close to where people live and work.

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:

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Groundwork Changing Places Programme

Groundwork is one of the UK's leading environmental partnership organisations. *Changing Places* is Groundwork's millennium initiative. It aims to regenerate over 1000 hectares of derelict and neglected land. In 1995, the programme was awarded £22.1 million by the Millennium Commission, to develop 21 selected sites. For more information on these particular sites or other sites in the *Changing Places* programme, please contact:

Groundwork UK	Tel: 0121 236 8565
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Further reading

Agyeman J (ed) (1996) *Involving Communities in Forestry* Forestry Practice Guide 10 Forestry Commission, Edinburgh

Gibson T (1996) *The Power in Our Hands* John Carpenter

Goodman AC (1997) *Practical Experience of Growing Trees on Derelict and Contaminated Sites* Research for Amenity Trees No 6 HMSO, London

Handley JF (1995) *The Post Industrial Landscape A Groundwork Status Report*. Groundwork, Birmingham

Hodge SJ (1995) *Creating and Managing Woodlands around Towns* FC Handbook 11 HMSO, London

Moffat AJ (1996) *Recycling Land for Forestry* FC Technical Paper 22 Forestry Commission, Edinburgh

Moffat AJ & Bending NJD (1992) *Physical site evaluation for community woodland establishment* Research Information Note 216 Forestry Commission, Edinburgh

Moffat & McNeill J (1994) *Reclaiming Disturbed Land for Forestry* Bulletin 110 HMSO, London

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Urban Forestry in Practice

Community involvement in land reclamation



Community involvement in land reclamation

Introduction

Industrial dereliction blights the lives of local people. Colliery waste tips can be particularly dominant in the landscape, and they also pose difficult technical problems for reclamation. A combination of public participation and technical excellence is essential if they are to be restored to positive recreational use.

Specific example

Project name and location

Groundwork *Changing Places* Programme (colliery sites)

PENALLTA COMMUNITY PARK, Caerphilly, South Wales
BOLD MOSS COMMON, St Helens
ROTHWELL COLLIERY, Leeds

Grid reference ST 125 955
Grid reference SS 090 370
Grid reference SE 353 298

Project partners

Penallta

- Groundwork Caerphilly
- Caerphilly Borough Council
- Forestry Commission

Bold Moss

- Groundwork St Helens, Knowsley & Sefton
- St Helens MBC
- Forestry Commission
- Coal Authority
- Railtrack
- Countryside Agency
- Mersey Forest

Rothwell

- Groundwork Leeds
- Leeds City Council
- English Partnerships
- Forestry Commission

Project objectives

- To reclaim former colliery tips as well-vegetated landscapes for use by local people

Site descriptions

Penallta: The colliery ceased operation in 1992 and the 180 ha spoil mound was partly restored at this time. Most of the earlier tree planting failed due to compaction, weed competition and browsing by sheep.

Bold Moss Common: The colliery closed in 1984 and the 130 ha site was restored by British Coal for agricultural use. Subsequent coalwashing by R J B Mining was completed in 1997.

Rothwell: The colliery closed in 1985 and the 52 ha site transferred from British Coal to Leeds City Council who undertook the restoration.

On tough sites, existing trees are a valuable source of seed for future planting



Community consultation

Through Groundwork's *Changing Places* programme, local people were extensively involved at all three sites. Methods used included:

- use of professional community liaison officers
- public meetings and discussions with key interest groups
- staffed caravan with display touring local libraries and community centres
- leafleting of local residents
- media articles
- community representatives on steering group
- community tree planting events at launches

Taking time to seek out the views of local people pays dividends



Project design

All three sites were designed to produce a mixture of new woodland and open space with a good network of pathways and access points.

Soil analysis revealed little contamination of the soil, except at Penallta, where there were localised acidic pockets, caused by the presence of iron pyrites.

Where possible, tree stock grown from local seed was used in order to enhance local distinctiveness and improve the survival and growth rates. A community tree nursery was established at two of the sites (Penallta and Rothwell) as part of the *Trees of Time and Place* initiative, to involve local people in collecting seed and growing their own trees to plant on the sites.

Implementation

Penallta: The colliery waste was cultivated to a depth of 1m using an excavator. Pelleted sewage sludge (*Biogran*) was incorporated in order to increase the organic matter.

Bold Moss Common: After coal washing, the spoil was loose-tipped. The site was ripped several times and sewage sludge incorporated using a disc harrow. Excess ripping caused some localised waterlogging and breakdown in soil structure.

Rothwell: The ground was ripped to a depth of 1m using a winged-tine ripper. No extra organic material was added. Small sized, bare rooted stock (450-600mm, 600-900mm) was used on all sites and a 1m² weed free area was specified around each tree for the first three years.

Results

Since 1998, 15 hectares of new woodland has been created at Penallta, 36 hectares at Bold Moss Common and 9 hectares at Rothwell.

Community feedback has been positive about the work carried out so far, and further input is planned from the partners to ensure that local people are fully engaged with the process. This is seen as particularly important as the colliery tips have such strong historical, cultural and economic associations with the local community.