

Wider application

Intensive survey of urban areas reveals a surprisingly large amount of land, much of which is suitable for the establishment of new woodland.

The approach adopted in this project is therefore applicable wherever road and rail routes pass through urban Britain. *Woodlands by the Motorway* is being used as a model for a similar strategic programme in the A4/M4 corridor in West London.

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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Further reading

Barker G (1997)

A Framework for the Future: Green Networks With Multiple Uses In and Around Towns and Cities, English Nature.

Freer-Smith, Holloway & Goodman (1997)

The Uptake of Particulates by an Urban Woodland: Site Description & Particulate Composition, Environmental Pollution, Vol 95, No 1, pp27-35

GFA Consulting / Tibbalds Monro (1996)

Greening the City, Department of the Environment, HMSO, London.

Government Office for London & Countryside Commission (1995)

London's Green Corridors

Highways Agency (1996)

Living with Roads: an Environmental Strategy for England's Main Roads, Highways Agency.

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Urban Forestry in Practice

Greening of strategic urban transport corridors



CASE STUDY 2

Greening of strategic urban transport corridors

Introduction

One way to maximise the visual impact of new woodland is to concentrate it where as many people as possible will see it. Focusing on land adjacent to transport corridors - trunk roads, motorways and mainline railways - brings the added benefit of contributing to the improvement of air quality in areas particularly affected by traffic pollution.

Specific example

Project name and location

WOODLANDS BY THE MOTORWAY programme

Land within sight of a 26km stretch of the M5 and M6 motorways in the **WEST MIDLANDS**, (M6 : junction 7 to Junction 10a; M5 : junction 3 to the M6 interchange).

Project partners

- Black Country Urban Forestry Unit (BCUFU) - now the National Urban Forestry Unit (NUFU)
- Department of Transport / Highways Agency
- Countryside Commission
- Esso UK plc
- Dudley MBC
- Sandwell MBC
- Walsall MBC
- Black Country Development Corporation
- Various private landowners

Programme objectives

- To enhance the environmental quality of the principal road transport route through the urban West Midlands by maximising woodland cover on land within sight of the motorways.
- To improve the environment for people living and working close to the motorways.
- To demonstrate a strategic approach to urban forestry.

Site description

The programme involved the planting of new woodland on a wide variety of discrete sites, including parks and other public open spaces, school grounds, derelict land, surplus industrial land, development sites and residential areas. Ground conditions varied from deep fertile organic soils to landfill and contaminated ground.

The programme

The programme ran from 1992 until 1996, over 4 planting seasons. There were a number of different elements:

- **Land use survey** to establish the programme area's visual boundaries and to identify planting opportunities: 225 separate sites were identified within sight of the motorways, ranging in size from 0.5 ha to 30 ha.
- **Negotiation with landowners** such as local authorities, government agencies and private landowners. Landowners were required to take long term care of the new woodland in their ownership. Where planting was funded by the Highways Agency, a licence was required from the landowner to ensure that the woodland remained on the site for at least 25 years.

A strategic plan which concentrates urban forestry along major transport routes will maximise impact



- **Community consultation and participation** was an important element in achieving local support for projects. Consultation ranged from distribution of information leaflets about proposed schemes to comprehensive *Planning for Real* exercises (where residents could contribute their ideas in an interactive way).
- **Design and implementation** Design and specification of individual planting projects was undertaken by BCUFU/NUFU and sometimes by the Highways Agency. Planting was carried out by specialist forestry contractors, local authority direct labour teams, local community volunteers and school children.
- **Funding** Core management costs of the programme, including employment of a full time dedicated project officer, amounted to £40,000 per annum, contributed by the Highways Agency, Countryside Commission and Esso UK plc. In addition, a total of around £500 000 over 3 years was raised from the following sources for implementation of individual projects:

- European Regional Development Fund
- Forestry Commission
- Highways Agency
- Black Country Development Corporation
- National Rivers Authority
- Private landowners
- Single Regeneration Budget
- English Partnerships
- English Nature
- Local authorities
- Millennium Commission

- **Establishment and management** 3 years' maintenance was built into the cost of each individual project. The planting techniques combined forestry and applied ecology (see *Case Study 1*) and demonstrated that robust, sustainable woodland can be established with minimal long term management requirements.

Long term management is the responsibility of each individual landowner, but the involvement of local people on many of the sites ensures continuing community commitment to developing the woodland.

Achievements

- Over 63 ha of new woodland planted on 56 different sites in under 4 years.
- 4000 local people personally involved in planting, including pupils from 27 different schools.
- Initial investment in the core management costs of the programme levered in over 4 times as much money for practical implementation of projects.
- Woodland cover was increased within the project area from 7.2% to 9.4%.

For many people, the perception of a region is determined by the view they have as they travel through



Even in very urban areas, there are numerous pockets of land suitable for woodland establishment