

London i-Tree Eco project (2014)



Background

The first project in the UK to utilise volunteer surveyors and when completed was the largest i-Tree Eco project in the world. The project was run by a partnership of the Forestry Commission, Greater London Authority, Treeconomics, Greenspace Information for Greater London, London Tree Officers Association, Natural England, Trees for Cities, The Tree Council and Forest Research. The project aimed to improve understanding of London's tree stock (GLA, 2005) and act as an exemplar for citizen scientists in i-Tree Eco fieldwork.

Outputs

A full report (Rogers et al., 2015) and a three page summary were produced. The report was seen as being more widely accessible[†] to a range of audiences than previous i-Tree Eco reports. The project had strong national and international uptake and recognition in the media and forestry sector. The project received high-level backing when published, including support from Lord Framlingham, the Environment Minister, Forestry Commission Chair and the Mayor of London.

Impacts

Guided new London policies:

- Information on tree numbers and value of ecosystem services presented in Draft London Environmental Strategy (Mayor of London, 2017).
- Referenced in relation to the contribution of urban trees to mitigating climate change (Future of London, 2016).
- London i-Tree Eco project used as exemplar of ecosystem valuation approach in a report by the Green Infrastructure Task Force (2015) which advocates for the use of valuation to account for value of green infrastructure.

Provided key data to support management approaches:

- Information on species diversity helped assess tree stock vulnerability (Harrison, 2017).
- Evidence of value of large and mature trees helped demonstrate need for greater protection rather than simply planting new trees (Harrison, 2017)
- Value of trees for air pollution removal, carbon sequestration and avoided stormwater runoff services has helped make trees part of the conversation in achieving targets in these areas (Harrison, 2017).

Evidence transferred to support local policies and management:

- Used within Waltham Forest's Tree Strategy as policy background and evidence on composition and benefits (Waltham Forest, 2017); includes aims to increase canopy cover to improve ecosystem service delivery.
- Used as an example of ecosystem service valuation approach, to support investigating use of i-Tree Eco as a tool by Calderdale Council (2017).
- Tree benefits quoted by Wandsworth Tree Warden Network (2017) to argue for a revised tree strategy to be produced by Wandsworth Council.

Improved understanding of urban forest values and valuation methods:

- Results used in a scoping study to assess methods and capacity to develop urban natural capital accounts in the UK (Eftec, 2017).
- Used in a review of assessments of GB tree benefits (Binner et al., 2017).
- Used to estimate urban forest value of 10 megacities (Endreny et al., 2017).

References:

- Binner, A., Smith, G., Bateman, I., Day, B., Agarwala, M., & Harwood, A. (2017). Valuing the social and environmental contribution of woodlands and trees in England, Scotland and Wales. Forestry Commission, Edinburgh.
- Calderdale Council. (2017). Taking Root: A Tree and Woodland Strategy for Calderdale 2017 - 2027.
- Defra. (2013). Government Forestry and Woodland Policy Statement. Incorporating the Government's Response to the Independent Panel on Forestry's Final Report. Defra, London, UK.
- Eftec. (2017). A study to scope and develop urban natural capital accounts for the UK. Report for Defra. London.
- Endreny, T., Santagata, R., Perna, A., Stefano, C. De, Rallo, R. F., & Ulgiati, S. (2017). Implementing and managing urban forests: A much needed conservation strategy to increase ecosystem services and urban wellbeing. *Ecological Modelling*, 360, 328–335.
- GLA. (2005). Connecting Londoners with Trees and Woodlands. A Tree and Woodland Framework for London. Greater London Authority. London, UK.
- Green Infrastructure Task Force (2015). Natural Capital: Investing in a Green Infrastructure for a Future London. Greater London Authority, London.
- Harrison, C. (2017). Valuing London's Urban Forest. Presentation at Dutch Tree Conference, May 2017, Velp, Netherlands.
- Mayor of London. (2017). London Environment Strategy. Draft for Public Consultation. London.
- Rogers, K., Sacre, K., Goodenough, J., Doick, K. (2015). Valuing London's Urban Forest: Results of the London i-Tree Eco Project. Treeconomics London, London, UK (84 pp).
- Waltham Forest. (2017). Waltham Forest Tree Strategy. London Borough of Waltham Forest.
- Wandsworth Tree Warden Network. (2017). A 21st century tree strategy for Wandsworth. A discussion paper prepared by the Wandsworth Tree Warden Network. London.