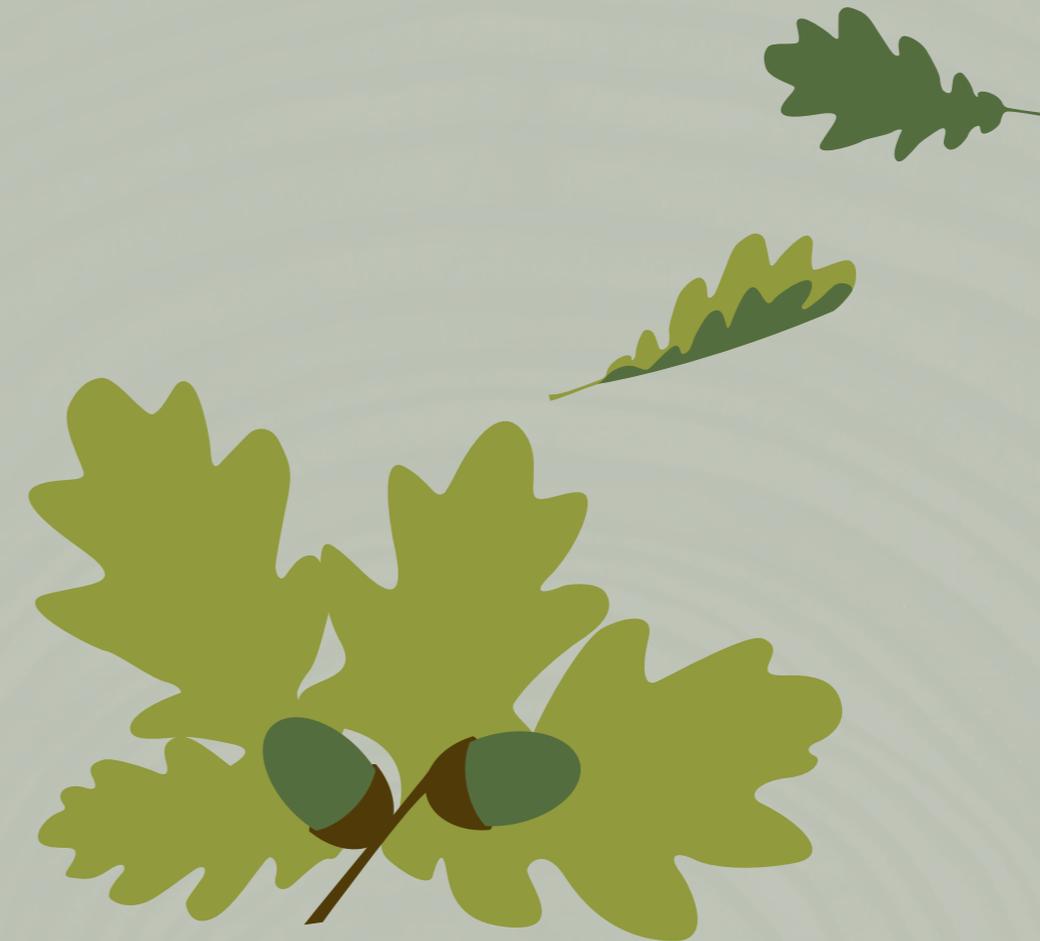
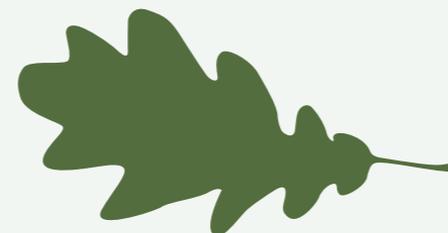
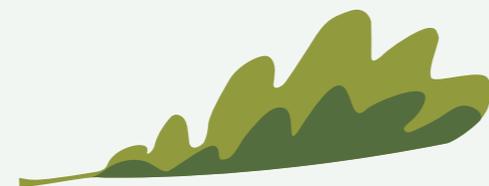
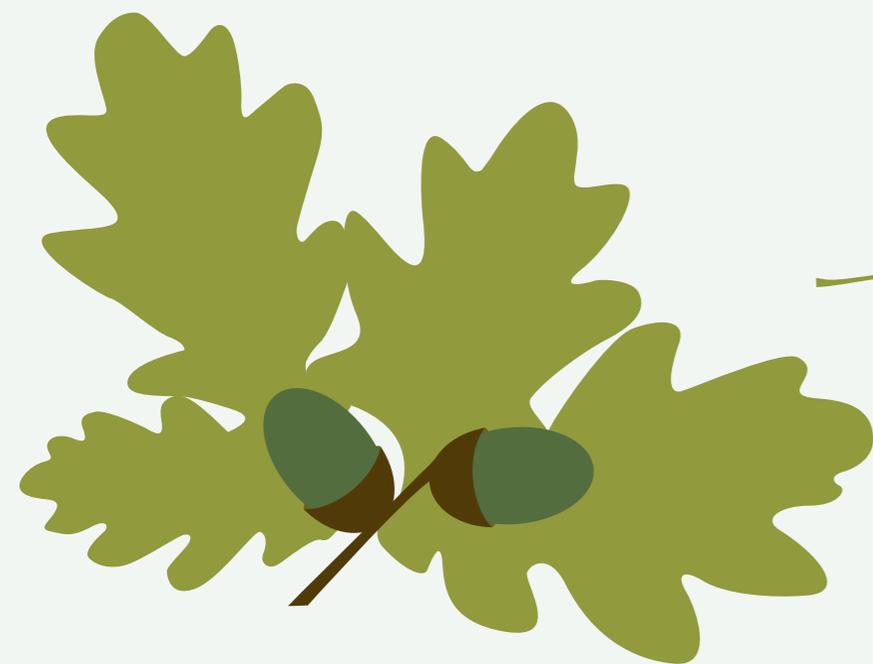


WOODLAND
MANAGEMENT IN
LONDON





MAYOR OF LONDON



CONTENTS

Capital woodlands	1
Introduction & objective	3
Why manage urban woodlands?	4
1. Getting your woods back into management	6
2. Management prescriptions	8
3. Challenges and solutions	12
4. Working the woods	15
5. Drawing it all together – forest certification	17
Appendix 1: Funding	19
Appendix 2: Publications and websites	20
Other publications & Acknowledgements	21

CAPITAL WOODLANDS

Capital Woodlands is a three-year London Biodiversity Partnership project supported by the Heritage Lottery Fund. The project aims to raise awareness and appreciation of London's woodlands and increase public benefit and participation by undertaking access, biodiversity, community and training work both in six 'flagship' woodlands and throughout the capital.

The dissemination of best practice in the management of London's woodlands is a key objective for the Capital Woodlands Project. These guidelines form a major contribution towards the sustainable management of London's woodlands providing a valuable resource for local authorities and other woodland managers.

The Capital Woodlands Project is managed by Trees for Cities, which works in partnership with the Greater London Authority, Forestry Commission, BTCV, the Peabody Trust and the London Boroughs of Bromley, Croydon, Haringey, Merton and Redbridge.



INTRODUCTION

As a capital city, London is extremely fortunate to have a relatively high woodland cover (4.5% of its land area). Of this, some 41% is believed to be ancient in origin – surviving fragments of primaeval forest with a high importance for nature conservation and heritage.

Secondary woodland, which has been planted or grown on areas that were not formerly wooded, also has an importance for nature conservation and, as with ancient woods, is a vital amenity resource within the built environment.

Despite having this wonderful natural resource on their doorsteps, many Londoners do not use their local woodland on a regular basis. Although there are notable examples of excellent management around the capital, many of London's woods are unmanaged and have fallen into a state of neglect. As a consequence, their nature conservation and amenity values are diminishing due to a lack of active intervention.

The Capital Woodlands Project has selected six flagship sites in London to champion the cause of local urban woodlands. A number of initiatives have been piloted at these woods to demonstrate how the issues commonly facing urban woodlands – such as lack of management, antisocial behaviour, neglect, and under-use by the community – can be resolved.

This is one in a series of best practice guidelines developed through the project, in which the work done at flagship sites is presented to provide real examples of how many of the issues commonly facing woodland managers in London can be overcome.

OBJECTIVE

The aim of this guide is to help owners and managers of London's woods start to bring their woods back into management so that they continue to be a resource for amenity, biodiversity and products for future generations.



WHY MANAGE URBAN WOODLANDS?

1. NATURE CONSERVATION

Neglected woodland is not an issue restricted to London. Throughout Britain the management of broadleaved woods has declined over the previous century as markets for woodland produce such as fuel and building materials have disappeared.

But why manage urban woods? In reality, the nature of Britain's woodland is the product of man's management (unlike tropical rainforests, which until recently had little or no intervention by man). The flora and fauna that we associate with our woodlands, from the primrose to the nightingale, are actually side-effects of the mosaic of light and shade created by regular cutting for products and the different habitats that result from this work.

Without being worked, many of our woodlands have become dominated by an even-aged canopy restricting the growth of new trees and stifling shrubs of the understorey and ground flora, and in many cases invasive non-native species such as rhododendron have taken over.

2. PEOPLE

The majority of London's woods have unrestricted public access. With an increasingly old tree stock, both access and health and safety of woodland users are becoming major issues. Woodland owners have the responsibility to maintain safe access routes through management.

With the widespread neglect of urban woodland as well as the decline in value of woodland products, many woods are seldom visited, a situation made worse by social issues such as fly-tipping and vandalism.



3. CLIMATE CHANGE

Climate change may also have an impact on woodlands and there are already some concerns about oak and beech dieback on drier soils. Management is the key to enhance the capacity of woodland to cope with any problems that global warming may bring and also to maintain the benefits that woodlands can provide to the urban landscape in a warmer climate.





1. GETTING YOUR WOODS BACK INTO MANAGEMENT

1.1 KNOW YOUR RESOURCE

The majority of London’s woods are owned and managed by local authorities who often do not know their exact extent or quality. The situation is worsened when different departments within the authority “own” different woods across the borough. For example in the London Borough of Croydon, some woods are under Parks Department, others under Estates and Valuers Department and yet more managed under “agreements” with wildlife trusts. The first step for local authorities is therefore to locate and map all your woods and if appropriate to define their boundaries.

1.2 KNOW YOUR WOODS

The next step is to survey your woods. This need not be an exhaustive ecological survey but simply knowing what is in the wood in terms of:

- Species, for example oak over hazel
- How it was managed, e.g. coppice until 1930s then unmanaged
- Current usage e.g. dog walkers

- Access e.g. public footpath, signage, public transport links
- Issues e.g. dead wood over access routes, antisocial uses

There are several internet resources with information on local woodland e.g. www.capitalwoodlands.org, wildweb.london.gov.uk and www.gigl.org.uk.

If nothing else a brief, recorded survey helps owners to fulfil their duty of care, especially as regards health and safety, but should also give an idea of potential costs of future management.

Claybury Wood in Redbridge was chosen as one of the six Capital Woodlands Project flagship sites.

Through Capital Woodlands, a number of woodland surveys were carried out with local volunteers on small mammals, birds and invertebrates. The identification of a nationally rare species of spider and the presence of nesting bats will have significant effect on the guidance of future management of the woodland.

1.3 FUNDING

Funding is always cited as an issue as to why woods don’t get managed. Indeed with the vast majority of London’s open space owned by cash-strapped local authorities, woodland management has tended to have money withdrawn rather than given. It is worth noting, however, that owners of public access woodlands do have a legal duty of care to ensure that their woodlands are safe and that money needs to be made available for this purpose.

Managing woods costs money, so planning must include the development of a funding strategy, including a budget and timeline, which identifies funding sources.

External funding is available but is often not known about or is perceived as too difficult to obtain, largely as the urban experience of trees is more linked to arboriculture than forestry with its grant system.

The primary source of funding is from the Forestry Commission through the London Woodland Grant Scheme (LWGS), which will fund a range of woodland work including surveys and management planning. There are also several other funding bodies that support woodlands (appendix 1).

It may be necessary to prepare a management plan outlining future costs and revenues, to assist in obtaining funds.

Woodland products can also be used to subsidise management costs and there are excellent existing markets for basic forestry products in London, for example firewood for pizza ovens, with even the smallest restaurants consuming some 20 tonnes per annum. Products such as pea sticks, bean poles and barbecue charcoal are also popular,

and saw logs are sold to mills in the home counties. There are several small forestry businesses providing these services within Greater London.

1.4. MANAGEMENT PLANNING

Hopefully with access to funding the next stage is a management plan for your woods.

In the past many woods have been saddled with a large, cumbersome management plan that provided a wealth of detail but was relatively unusable. A management plan should above all provide a realistic vision of what you want your wood to be like and how you will achieve this goal. Whilst a description is essential, elements such as species lists can form an appendix. The Forestry Commission provides a good template for a Woodland Management Plan at www.forestry.gov.uk. This can be used either for an individual wood or for a collection of small woods, each of which form a compartment on the estate.

Through the Capital Woodlands Project, woodland management plans were drawn up for all six flagship sites by the London Boroughs of Bromley, Croydon, Haringey, Merton and Redbridge using this template.

The template also provides simple work plans and monitoring schedules, all of which are essential to good management of urban woodland.



2. MANAGEMENT PRESCRIPTIONS

The following section gives different prescriptions for management of urban woodland, as well as important elements that require consideration.

Before the turn of the twentieth century, the majority of London's woods would have been actively worked on a scale that is neither practical nor realistic today. The diversity of structure that woodlands need for biodiversity can still be achieved, however, through a combination of traditional and more modern forestry practice carried out at an appropriate scale.

The following methods are used in London:

2.1 COPPICING

The majority of ancient woodland in London would have been managed by a system known as "coppice with standards" whereby the understorey, such as hazel or hornbeam, was cut on a regular cycle of seven to twenty five years, with the stumps regenerating for the next cut. The cut stumps, known as stools, produce numerous side shoots

with regrowth being as much as two metres per annum. Coppicing provides a sustainable supply of wood and prolongs the life expectancy of broadleaf tree species indefinitely. Standard trees, typically oak, would have been cut on a much longer rotation often at one hundred years.

Coppicing should be established at a sufficient scale to allow light to penetrate down to the forest floor, ideally in a series of linked or adjacent blocks so that a regular cycle is created.

This regular pattern of cutting creates temporary areas of open ground, scrub and forest at each stage of coppice regrowth to create a diverse layering of vegetation. Each layer provides a particular ecological niche, for example the thicket stage provides habitat for species such as the nightingale, whilst newly-cut open ground supports species of fritillary butterfly. Many of these woodland species have declined with the cessation of management through coppicing.

Where coppice has been reinstated in London woods this has often restored ground flora and promoted habitats for endangered species such as dormice, as well as providing local woodland products for local needs. Recent work coppicing hornbeam at Coldfall wood in Haringey has increased the number of ground flora species threefold within one year of cutting.

Further online advice about coppicing is available at www.coppicing.com



CASE STUDY: COLDFALL WOOD, HARINGEY

Coldfall Wood in Haringey was chosen as one of the six Capital Woodlands Project flagship sites.

Coldfall is an ancient oak/hornbeam wood with a long history of coppicing until the 1930s. Since then the increasingly dense canopy has shaded out any understorey layer. On entering the wood you were aware of the sudden transition into darkness. Increasing vandalism and graffiti contributed to the overall feeling of neglect and local use of the wood declined.

Through the Capital Woodlands Project, coppicing was resumed along the course of the stream and changes to the flora have been carefully monitored. Within one year of coppicing the total number of flowering plants and ferns had increased from 48 to 156 species,



more than doubling the floral diversity.

Several London rarities have appeared including slender St John's-wort (*Hypericum pulchrum*), pill sedge (*Carex pilulifera*), bristle club-rush (*Isolepis setacea*), and fiddle dock (*Rumex pulcher*). Some of these rare plants are likely to have survived in the seed bank since the wood was last coppiced some 70 years ago!





2.2 CONTINUOUS COVER FORESTRY

In contrast to clearfelling blocks of plantation woodland, continuous cover forestry aims to work with natural processes to promote the structural, visual and biological diversity of forests. Forestry for continuous cover concentrates on the management of individual or small groups of trees rather than the creation of uniform blocks.

Small areas of the canopy are removed to trigger natural regeneration and control its development with the aim of producing mixed species woodland with a variety of ages similar to that in natural woodland.

Continuous Cover Forestry has the advantage of a much lower impact on woodland biodiversity and appearance, and consequently generates less opposition from the public and practitioners. It is also ideally suited to diversifying even-aged woodlands and may be used in conjunction with traditional approaches such as coppicing (www.ccfg.co.uk).



2.3 VETERAN TREES

London's woodland contains some stunning ancient trees, such as the great pollards of Richmond Park, which are wonderful ecosystems in themselves. These veteran trees are often shaded by younger trees and have particular management requirements, such as slow release or careful pruning to promote new growth.

www.english-nature.org.uk/pubs/handbooks

www.woodland-trust.org.uk/ancient-tree-forum

2.4 DEAD WOOD

Neglect of woodlands has brought some benefits: management in recent history included no provision of dead wood, which provides vital habitat for rare species such as Stag Beetles.

When woodland is brought back into management, dead wood should be encouraged and written into management plans. Both standing and fallen dead wood is of value, so long as it is safe. Managers should try to resist the urge to 'tidy up' the wood: dead wood and dying trees provide essential habitat for a large range of wildlife including bats, invertebrates, fungi, lichens and mosses, and around a third of woodland bird species nest in holes in trees. Dead wood is not a threat to the health of the woodland.

Another feature of woods that many people try to control is ivy on trees. Contrary to popular belief, ivy does not strangle or damage trees, and should be left on the trees to provide nest sites, winter shelter and food for birds and insects.

www.forestry.gov.uk



2.5. THE COMMUNITY

Unlike their rural equivalents, most London woodlands are surrounded by large populations and have free public access. Local communities are the main users of these woods and engaging with them is an essential part of their management. Historically, many attempts to re-introduce forestry management in London have floundered because the local community were not engaged and consequently resented the work that was carried out. As a result the management was often not continued.



Where the community have actively been involved, however, typically via a Friends of group, (see 4.2) local people carry out much of the restoration work, set up nature trails and engage with the wider public. Some councils such as the London Borough of Croydon demonstrate best practice by employing a partnerships officer to both set up and support Friends of groups.

Whilst Friends of groups are a very good way to engage interested members of the community, wider consultation on management planning and any programme of works is also important, as much resentment results from lack of knowledge.

2.6 ACCESS

Maintaining and creating access is central to the management of London's woodlands as recreation is their main usage. Through neglect, many paths have been lost or are in poor condition.

Restoring paths has many benefits: channelling usage where it is most appropriate e.g. avoiding wet areas and opening up the wood by scalloping mini coppice areas alongside the paths.

Perhaps the most important issue for access is a programme of regular health and safety inspections coupled with any necessary works to protect woodland users and avoid potential litigation for the woodland owners.

3. CHALLENGES AND SOLUTIONS



Even when funding and management planning is in place, the management of urban woodland still faces a multitude of challenges. For example, whilst practical work is relatively straightforward, it is often resented and misunderstood by the general public to the extent that many initiatives have been abandoned in London.

Some of the more common issues facing urban woodland managers are detailed in table 1, together with possible solutions that have been successfully applied through the Capital Woodlands Project.



Table 1. Challenges and possible solutions in urban woodland management

Challenges	Solutions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Overcoming public resistance to the felling of trees as a woodland improvement measure Overcoming public resistance to initiating a new management regime in local woodlands 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Well-publicised programme of events such as open days, guided walks, woodland talks, and cultural and seasonal activities Educational materials widely available through range of media including <ul style="list-style-type: none"> website information boards leaflets with map community centres e.g. libraries Transparency over value of woodland products as resource for funding, timber for benches and/or deadwood habitat Inform, engage and involve community groups such as Friends, other volunteer groups and woodland users of impending works Public consultation and meetings
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Overcoming lack of awareness of woodland Broadening the appeal of woodlands as places of recreation to all social groups 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reach out to non-users through focus groups to targeted audiences e.g. schools, faith groups, local residents Organise volunteer groups and away days from local youth clubs and centres
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Challenging the public misconception that woodlands should be left to grow and look after themselves 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Organise woodland before and after visits to illustrate biodiversity benefits
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Challenging the public perception of woodlands as unsafe for family recreation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> General woodland maintenance such as regular path clearance provides reassurance that woodland is safe for visitors Publicise statistics on low crime rates Create glades, picnic/rest areas and open ride management to enhance security Family events programme
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Encouraging use of woodlands as places of education for local schools 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Formalise school day trips using seasons, variable habitats in woodlands and management techniques as an educational tool Forest School or other outdoor learning programmes Engage local schools as key stakeholders
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Antisocial behaviour in woodland 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inhibit access to vehicles with appropriate gates and fencing
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Health & Safety 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement a regular system of inspection and safety works
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Restricted access for people with mobility difficulties 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improve physical access

CASE STUDY:**BIRCH & ROWDOWN WOODS, CROYDON**

Birch & Rowdown Woods were chosen as one of the six Capital Woodlands Project flagship sites.

Birch & Rowdown are ancient semi-natural woodlands located along the Croydon/Bromley boundary. The wood was used illegally for motorcycling. Burnt out cars and scooters, fly tipping and arson became severe problems to the woodland wildlife and posed significant risk to other users of the wood.

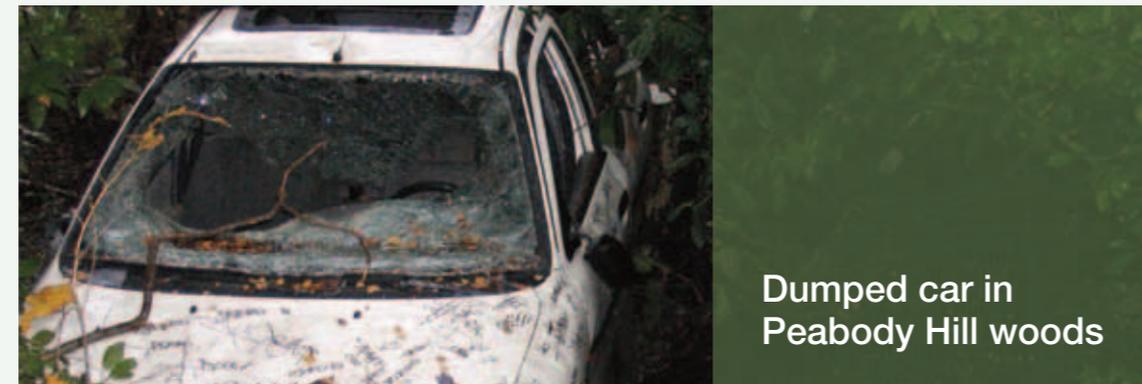
Through the Capital Woodlands Project and Forestry Commission Funding, the London Borough of Croydon and Addington Conservation Team have worked hard to improve security in the wood, installing vehicle-proof fencing and removing some heavy-duty litter.

Croydon Council also undertook an ambitious programme of outreach to local residents and schools. Events and activities included an annual

Woodland Festival and working with school children to design new woodland signs at three woodland entrances.

The Capital Woodland Project has resulted in a greater awareness of how special the woods are and the fact that they exist. Every school group had a large number of children that had never been to the woods or which only knew the woods from riding through them on motorbikes with their older brother or father. During the activities they learned to appreciate the woods and got a greater understanding of how damaging fires and motorbikes can be.

A number of girls were frightened of the woods, scared of getting lost or meeting dangerous animals. After the activities, one girl commented: "I don't know what I was frightened of; it's lovely in here, peaceful. I hope my mum will come back with me."



Dumped car in Peabody Hill woods



4. WORKING THE WOODS

With management plans in place and challenges addressed there is a strong likelihood that work will need to be carried out with other groups.

4.1 FORESTRY CONTRACTORS

Woodland management has always been seen as costly in London and is typically carried out by tree surgeons that generally charge from a schedule of rates per item of work.

In contrast, forestry contractors see wood as a product that can be sold to subsidise or even pay for the management work. In addition, foresters have more suitable equipment to carry out forestry work quickly and efficiently. Several outer London Boroughs currently use forestry contractors and as a consequence have either reduced or negated costs. For example recent restoration work on ancient semi natural woodland in Croydon was done at no net cost as the wood felled covered all expenses.

To make the use of forestry contractors effective it is helpful to link work done to products. For example there needs to be sufficient products to make up a load (17 or 22 tonnes), access for machinery to the woodland, and an area where a timber lorry can pick up products.

Forestry contractors can be found by contacting the forestry officers at Boroughs or other organisations that use them (Bromley and Croydon and the Woodland Trust).

4.2 LOCAL COMMUNITY AND FRIENDS OF WOODLAND GROUPS

Several of London woods have active "Friends Of" groups comprising local people with real interest and affection for their local wood. The role of local people in using and championing local woodland is invaluable to protect these habitats from development, misuse and poor management.

Friends groups have a long tradition of protecting London's woodlands. The role of Friends groups as watch-keepers of London's woodlands must be nurtured and encouraged by woodland owners. As local residents they can influence the securing of resources and direct local authority interest and political will into appropriate and timely action.

One mechanism by which Friends groups can influence change is how their local authority performs against indicators outlined in their Sustainable Community Strategy and Local Area Agreement. By working through Local Strategic Partnerships and championing sustainable woodland management, residents can inform local authority choices on what they want to be measured on.

In particular, Friends groups are able to improve standards of woodland management by raising the profile of performance indicators on biodiversity, climate change and air quality. In this way, Friends groups can make an invaluable contribution to the communities in which they live and work, as well as improving the quality and access of their particular woodland.

Further information on Local Strategic Partnerships, Sustainable Community Strategies and Local Area Agreements is available from the Communities and Local Government website <http://www.communities.gov.uk>.

4.3 VOLUNTEER GROUPS

London has a number of volunteer organisations such as BTCV and the London Wildlife Trust with large numbers of volunteers who can carry out more specialised volunteer work. Many have well-trained chainsaw operators and can make a huge difference to neglected woods, which in effect they often manage in partnership with local authorities. Several London woodlands have been revitalised by such partnerships managed through service level agreements.



5. DRAWING IT ALL TOGETHER – FOREST CERTIFICATION

Forest certification provides an excellent framework for a structure and system of woodland management. Indeed if the estate is over 30 hectares then forest certification is a requirement of some Forestry Commission funding.

Forest certification is the independent verification that forests are sustainably managed. In order to prove that forest management meets a complex of social, economic and environmental needs, it is audited against a standard. The standards used are local interpretations of international policies and criteria, which enable forests to be certified worldwide. Compliance with the standard is assessed by an independent third party. Largely driven by consumer demand for sustainable wood products, certification also audits the product trail from forest to point of sale.

At present the most significant international forest certification body is the Forestry Stewardship Council (FSC), whose logo may now be seen on a large number of wood products.

Currently some 40% of the UK forest area is certified. This mainly represents the larger players who have opted for this standard principally to ensure access to the market place, although some less commercial organisations have embraced the process to demonstrate the sustainability of their management, for example in London the Borough of Croydon has been certificated since 2000.

Through the Capital Woodlands Project, the process of certification is now underway for all the flagship site boroughs, including Bromley, which attained certification status in 2007.

The experience of both the Boroughs of Croydon and Bromley is that the work involved to attain the status of certification, the systems developed have improved their management and allowed access to grant monies.

Overcoming problems in the management of London's woodlands is not just a dream; there are woods in the capital that are managed as well or even better than their rural counterparts. Products are being sold into the community, diversity of structure re-introduced, local people are actively involved and these ancient places are coming to life.



CASE STUDY: CERTIFICATION IN THE LONDON BOROUGH OF CROYDON

The London Borough of Croydon has been FSC certified since 2000 and is the second local authority in the UK to meet this standard. Certification was initially attained to supply products to B&Q. Over time, however, Croydon found that the systems in place to obtain certification had wider benefits and that the annual audit helped to maintain a high standard of woodland management. The council also felt that it would be hypocritical to espouse sustainability without having its own woodlands certified.

Recent changes in the Forestry Commission Woodland Management Grant scheme now stipulates that certification is a pre-requisite to funding. Certification enables Croydon to obtain £30 per hectare across their estate.

For more information on how to revitalise your local wood, contact the Forestry Commission.



APPENDIX 1: FUNDING

SOURCE OF FUNDING

Forestry Commission

Sale of wood product

CONTACT

www.forestry.gov.uk
 London Regional Office –
 Tel No: 02072173125 or
 through Groundwork London –
 Tel No: 02079221230

www.bioregional.com

DETAILS

Available grant schemes for woodland management.

Woodchip, firewood, charcoal and rustic furniture are all being made and supplied from London's woods.

APPENDIX 2: PUBLICATIONS AND WEBSITES

FORESTRY COMMISSION

Many useful publications are listed on the Forestry Commission's website: www.forestry.gov.uk/publications.

They can be obtained from: Forestry Commission Publications, PO Box 25, Wetherby, West Yorkshire LS23 7EW.
Tel: 0870 121 4180 forestry@twoten.press.net

Alternatively, contact your local Forestry Commission Regional office.

THE FOLLOWING ARE EXAMPLES OF USEFUL PRACTICAL GUIDES AVAILABLE.

Forestry Practice Guides 18 *The management of seminatural woodlands*

Forestry Practice Guide 9 *Forest operations and badger setts*

FC Practice Note 3 *Prevention of mammal damage to trees in woodland*

FC Field Book 8 *The use of herbicides in the forest* by Ian Willoughby and Jim Dewar. HMSO, London. Gives comprehensive information on herbicides.

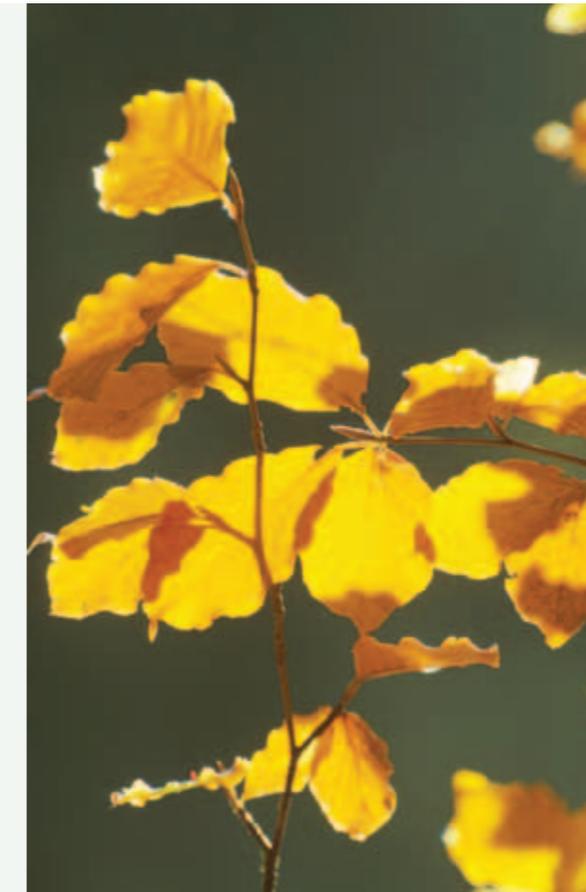
Trees for Cities (www.treesforcities.org)

How to increase business participation in community tree related activities

How to involve black and ethnic minority communities in improving public spaces in urban areas through tree planting

How to run an effective volunteering and public programme in support of urban tree initiatives

How to involve young people in urban tree planting initiatives



OTHER PUBLICATIONS

Caring for small woods by Ken Broad. Earthscan Publications. An excellent practical guide to management and conservation of small woods.

Trees in Britain, Europe and North America by Roger Phillips. Ward Lock. *A field guide to the trees of Britain and northern Europe* by Alan Mitchell. Collins Field Guides series.

Tree planting and aftercare – a practical handbook and *Woodlands – a practical handbook*, both produced by the British Trust for Conservation Volunteers. BTCV Enterprises Ltd, Conservation Centre, Balby Road, Doncaster DN4 0RH. Tel: 01302 572200 www.btcv.org, pgospel@btcv.org

Woodland rides and glades: their management for wildlife and *Coppiced woodlands: their management for wildlife*, both by M. Warren and R. Fuller. Available from: NHBS Ltd, 2–3 Wills Road, Totnes, Devon. TQ9 5XN. Tel: 01803 865913 nhbs@nhbs.co.uk www.nhbs.com.

Silva: the tree in Britain by Archie Miles, Ebury Press. A fascinating book describing the part that trees have played in all areas of British life. A wealth of information to inspire you when the weather keeps you out of the wood!

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