

B4 - Growing Green In The City: Inclusion Of Natural Areas & Food Production In Urban Areas

Presentation # 1 title: Urban Forest Management - A new age of managing urban natural areas

Presenters:

Trevor Cox - Diamond Head Consulting Ltd
Mike Coulthard - Diamond Head Consulting Ltd

Abstract

Natural areas and parks within our urban centers are being put under increasing pressure as our population base continues to grow. Continuing human development, in addition to natural processes, are placing more pressure on our natural ecosystems and can threaten ecological integrity. Natural and human disturbances, recreational use, habitat fragmentation, wind storms, pest incidence and disease and introduction of non-native species are some of the factors that have been affecting the natural processes of these ecosystems. Therefore, developing effective management strategies to properly manage sensitive and ecologically unique areas and habitat in a sustainable manner is critical for the preservation of ecological biodiversity on local, regional and provincial scales. What and how these natural areas should be inventoried and how these natural areas can be managed in relation to their use will be the focus of the discussion. Emphasis will be placed upon ecosystem based planning.

Speaker Biography

Trevor Cox is a registered planner and a certified arborist. His experience has focused primarily in the field of ecosystem based planning and forest management. His career started in forestry where he traveled the coast of BC conducting thousands of detailed ecosystem inventories and analyzing the successional processes and their responses to disturbances. Trevor has an excellent understanding of the regulations and acts governing impacts to the environment and has prepared numerous, innovative applications for work in and adjacent to sensitive areas. Having conducted much of the operational work he has prescribed, he has knowledge of how the work can be implemented efficiently without wasting resources from the initial planning stages. He has drawn upon this breadth of knowledge to develop cost effective management plans that consider the needs of the client, various agencies and public interest groups. He regularly participates in public consultation programs and always brings energy and enthusiasm to the projects he is involved in.

Mike Coulthard is a registered professional forester (RPF) biologist (RPBio) and has over 14 years of experience managing ecosystems throughout BC. He works with municipalities and land developers throughout the lower mainland to assess and manage natural areas, waterways, wildlife habitat and trees throughout the planning and construction phases of large and small-scale developments.

Presentation # 2 title: Designing for Greenspace and Food - Siting Urban Agriculture in the City of Nanaimo, BC

Presenter:

Kelsey Cramer - University of Guelph

Abstract

The environmental and social benefits of urban greenspace have been of interest to researchers and practitioners for several years. A parallel interest in urban food production is also growing – as seen by some communities developing urban agriculture policies. Urban agriculture as a form of greenspace can provide multiple social, ecological and economic benefits; however, it is rarely incorporated into community or greenspace planning. As more land is lost to development there is a real need to examine and discover opportunities for integrating both urban greenspace and urban agriculture into the design of our cities. The goal of this research was to locate sites suitable for urban agriculture in the City of Nanaimo, B.C., and to identify those that enhance the city's greenspace network. Through a focused

literature review, three key informant interviews, and geographic information system (GIS) mapping, this study used biophysical and urban-context criteria to identify public and private land suitable for growing food within the City of Nanaimo. Previous studies aiming to locate urban agriculture tend to focus on socially-oriented types, such as community gardens, and often focus on publicly-owned city or institutional land. This project differs in that it explores social, economic and ecological goals of urban agriculture and seeks to assess both public and private land. Given sufficient access to data, GIS can be a useful tool for locating sites suitable for urban agriculture and for integrating local food planning into community planning and networking initiatives. The results of this research suggest that a broad-scale approach with GIS mapping methodology is an appropriate first step in the analysis; however, a finer site-scale analysis using aerial photos and site visits must ultimately be conducted to fully determine site suitability. The site-scale analysis responds to criteria not accounted for in the GIS data and allows for the inclusion of a subjective layer of overall visual impression for the type of urban agriculture best suited to the site. The relationship between greenspace and urban agriculture requires further research at multiple scales. A full examination of both the pros and cons of integrating urban agriculture within greenspace networks and the landscape-context implications for site design and programming are required. The information gained through this thesis is relevant for planners and landscape architects who are interested in integrating urban agriculture into community planning. Provided adequate data is available, land suitability analyses are a valuable approach to begin assessing where urban agriculture can be located in a city. Further research in policy, planning and design is required to better understand how to do so successfully – to ensure positive social, ecological, and economic interactions within the urban realm.

Speaker Biography

Kelsey has recently completed her Masters Degree in Landscape Architecture at the University of Guelph. Her previous education and experience in environmental biology and restoration ecology positioned her to question how urban planning and design can better integrate opportunities for people to engage with nature. With the awareness that people are increasingly disconnected from food – where it comes from and who produces it – she decided to focus her thesis on urban agriculture. She intends to continue exploring the values of growing food in the urban environment in her professional career. Co-author's Biography: Karen Landman is an Associate Professor in Landscape Architecture with the School of Environmental Design & Rural Planning at the University of Guelph, Ontario. Her background is in horticulture, landscape architecture, planning and cultural geography. As such, her research interests are broad, but generally involve the 'greening' potential of the landscape, from the urban core, to suburbia, to rural, to the wilderness. She is currently researching local food systems and urban agriculture.