

## Delivering Ecosystem Services through Urban Forestry

By Cecil C. Konijnendijk, Forest & Landscape, University of Copenhagen, Denmark  
Deputy Coordinator of IUFRO Research Group 6.07.00 Urban Forestry  
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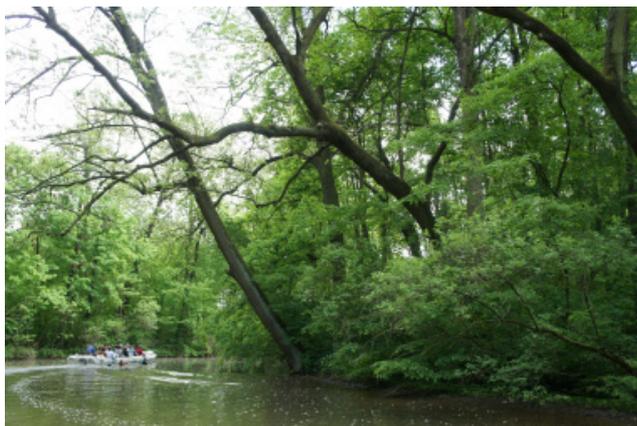
Urban biodiversity loss needs to be halted for many reasons, not in the least because of the role it plays in the provision of essential ecosystem services. At a recent meeting co-organized by IUFRO, researchers and practitioners from across the globe discussed the specific contributions of urban forestry, linking between strategies and day-to-day maintenance activities. The German city of Leipzig, which actively uses its extensive green infrastructure for its development, provided an appropriate setting for these debates.

### Essential urban nature

Countries such as Germany are beginning to take their urban biodiversity more seriously, as illustrated by national policies and programs aimed at protecting biodiversity in cities and towns. These initiatives focus on the roles of urban nature in adapting cities to climate change and promoting human health and wellbeing, among other things. Urban forestry, one of the delivery approaches in this respect, can build on almost fifty years of history in bringing woods and trees to urban people's doorsteps. Another important approach is that of green infrastructure, as it uses a 'language' that has attracted the attention of politicians, planners, and the private sectors. Examples of innovations in both urban forestry and



are increasingly recognized, research has only touched upon the tip of the iceberg, not in the least where mechanisms (why does nature enhance our health?) are concerned. In one of the keynote addresses, professor Marina Bergen Jensen of the University of Copenhagen offered inspiring examples of how research and practice have collaborated to deal with 'green' solutions for storm-water management. Green space is not just nice, it is a necessity for sustainable cities.



green infrastructure delivery were presented in Leipzig, ranging from post-hurricane restoration of the Point Pleasant urban forest in Halifax to the establishment of native woodland on green roofs in Hong Kong.

### Evidence-based solutions

But delivery needs to be supported by sound evidence, as several contributions at the conference stressed. An ongoing systematic review of evidence is showing, for example, that many of the benefits of urban parks are still poorly documented. Although the benefits of nature for public health

### 15th European Forum on Urban Forestry

The conference under the title 'Urban Forests – Ecosystem Services and Sustainable Maintenance' was held during 8-12 May. The event was also the 15th edition of the European Forum on Urban Forestry (EFUF), an annual meeting of planners, managers, researchers and educators dealing with woods, parks and trees in cities and towns. This edition of EFUF was a truly global event, with more than 80 participants from 22 countries, including Canada, the US, China, Hong Kong, and South Africa. Local organizers were the City of Leipzig and the Helmholtz Centre for Environmental Research (UFZ), under the leadership of Torsten Wilke and Hans Kasperidus. Next year's EFUF will take place in Milan, Italy, in the second half of May, with the 2014 edition set to be hosted by the Swiss city of Lausanne.

Photos by Matilda Annerstedt:  
Excursion to Leipzig floodplain forests (left)  
Group exercise (top)