

RECREATIONAL USE OF URBAN FORESTRY IN LONDON, AN ANALYSIS OF VISITOR'S USE SURVEY OF TWO URBAN PARKS

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Abstract

The recreational use of urban trees and woodlands has since contributing a positive impact on urban quality of life. The study explores the perception and behaviours of local park users in the East London, and how they value the benefits of urban trees and woodlands on their life. A quantitative research method: visitor use survey is used to understand how people rate the different benefits of using urban trees and woodlands. A total of 165 woodland visitors were interviewed from two urban forests in East London. The study further investigates different types, forms and scale of urban forestry practices in London using visualisation tools.

The findings on visitor's profile, current use, frequency of visit, purpose of visit, and public rating on woodland activities and benefits are presented. The woodland visitors' rating suggests that people in general believed that the woodland and trees have a positive impact on their life and society as a whole. The woodland users from *Claybury Woods* gave their highest scores to: increased wellbeing, improved physical health, increased level of community interaction, increased awareness, improved mental health and increased self esteem. Similarly, the majority woodland users from *Lesnes Abbey Woods* expressed their strong believe on woodland benefits such as improved physical health, protecting cultural/heritage values, nature conservation, improved self esteem, improved mental health, maintaining community well being and increased community interaction. Further recommendations were made to make urban woodland more accessible, functional and enjoyable for people with different background and requirement.

Key Words

Recreational use, trees and woodland, urban forest, social benefits, visitor use survey.

Key References

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