MULTI-FUNCTIONAL PLANNING OF MUNICIPALLY OWNED URBAN FORESTS IN FINLAND
Agenda

- Urban forest planning in Finland

- "Road map": Project for developing urban forest planning
  - Results of the project: present good practices and problems in planning and managing urban forests

- Project: "Planning process in Puijo" 2008-
BACKGROUND: Municipalities as forest owners

They own most of the urban forests in Finland. About 80% of urban green spaces are forests.

Urban forest: indigenous forest vegetation, close to residential areas. So called everyman’s rights (law) -> very actively used areas
Special features/challenges of urban forests

Provide multiple values for inhabitants in planning and managing these forests

- integrate recreation, aesthetics, culture, biodiversity, economy

- take into account city planning, administration, local politics, needs and views of local inhabitants & other stakeholders

- participatory planning gives local people an opportunity to influence forest management

Photo: Erkki Oksanen/Metla
Planning of municipally owned urban forests

Aims of the project:

(1) gain overall picture of planning processes

(2) discover the main development needs of planning processes together with practitioners

(3) study the applicability of multi-criteria decision analysis and advanced decision support tools to the urban forest planning

(4) work out a development program for urban forest planning together with practitioners

"Road-map" for planning municipally owned urban forests
Carrying out the project

Methods:
- Analysis & follow-up of ongoing planning processes
  - six cities were involved
- Workshops & seminars for urban foresters & planners and researchers (over 100 participants)
- Interviews & inquiries of urban foresters and planners
- Qualitative methods were used in data analysis
  - N-Vivo program

RESULTS:
- Found out many good practicies in forest planning
- Interactive learning process: Practitioners learned from each others and from researchers, who also learned a lot from practice
... RESULTS ...

Problems in present planning processes in urban forests

Lack of clear objectives (goals) in planning and management
  ▪ Partly due to insufficient resources (a lack of forest practitioners)

Lack of clear objectives (goals) in public participation
  ▪ First question: Why to participate -> select suitable methods and participants
  ▪ Participatory planning has increased rapidly (v. 2000 - 20%, v. 2006 - 60%)
  ▪ Methods: meetings for public, inquiries, internet, planning groups
  ▪ How to reach, motivate and integrate "silent majority" to planning process
  ▪ How to integrate gathered qualitative data into planning process?

Difficulties in integrating multiple values - recreation, biodiversity, culture, aesthetics - to planning process
Conflicts between recreational use and biodiversity conservation in urban forests

- no conflicts = 45 % of municipalities
- at least some = 55 % of municipalities
Reasons for conflicts when enhancing biodiversity and recreational use of urban forests

Unmanaged forests
  Safety
  Easy access
  Aesthetics (’clean’ views)
  The vitality of trees

Lack of ecological knowledge
"Participants who had ecological knowledge (why to leave dead wood etc.) accepted better unmanaged forests and decaying trees"

Photo: Erkki Oksanen/Metla
... RESULTS & CONCLUSIONS
How to integrate different values in urban forest planning

- Goal-orientated, multi-functional **strategic** and operative and tactical planning
- Clear objectives - also in public participation
  - New methods for integrating various qualitative data into numerical forest planning
  - E.g. mapping of specific places
- Integrate the different values in higher regional level, not only in forest stand -level
- Alternative forest plans and management schedules
- Planning guidelines, models and instructions for urban forests
- More research projects that produce applicable models and results benefitting the practice
Multi-functional planning process of Puijo forest (in Kuopio)

- Intensively used urban forest area (500 ha): recreation, winter sports (international competitions), tourism (75 m high tower with restaurant, hostel), cultural value, biodiversity (nature protection area)
Planning process in Puijo forest

1. Steering group
2. Consultant
3. Forum for public
4. Mail inquiries
5. Other interest groups e.g. companies in Puijo Team work

Their goals and preferences

Steering group: Goals and criteria for management and use of Puijo forest

Alternative plans (5-8) produced by consultant

Forum for public & other interest groups: prioritising plans (e.g. by voting method)

Steering group: Best alternative (plan)

Politicians: Final decision
Role of research: Develop a planning process, organize, and study participation with different techniques. Serves as a testbed for planning of other forest areas owned by Kuopio city.
THANK YOU
KIITOS 😊

Researchers:
Irja Löfström
Mikko Kurttila
Nella Mikkola
Jouni Pykäläinen
Jukka Tikkanen