

Society and Diversity Theme

British society is becoming more culturally and socially diverse. There are new expectations about lifestyles, access to the countryside and green spaces, and to the social benefits we wish to enjoy from ecosystems such as woods and forests. The demands placed on trees, woods and forests by society are becoming more complicated, and understanding which sections of society are benefitting to what degree is an increasingly complex issue. The research in this work area picks up these ideas and is concerned with understanding the patterns of opportunity, engagement and impacts linked to trees, woods and forests (TWF), which are expressed at the level of communities or of wider society. There is also a focus on understanding more about how social change affects relationships with TWF, as well as how TWF can be used to drive social change. This means understanding more about particular segments of society, how they react to TWF, and what can be done to increase the benefits they enjoy from TWF or their participation in woodland-based activities and enterprises. The research includes developing methods and datasets that allow generalisations which capture these trends at different spatial and demographic scales. Five broad themes are covered:

- Spatial patterns at the level of society – distribution of benefits and impacts of TWF
- Social segmentation and behaviour of users/non-users/potential users of woods and forests
- Engagement and equal access to the opportunities and benefits from TWF
- Social change and community development leveraged by TWF
- Social and community enterprises based on TWF

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Current work 2010-2011		
Title	Description and links	Contact
Applying the systematic framework: spatial analysis and diversity	Developing a network of case study sites and national datasets that enables longitudinal and generalisable synthesis of evidence which shows patterns of engagement with, impact and value of, TWF for diverse social groups. FC funded.	Bianca Ambrose-Oji
Community enterprise	Examine the barriers to, and the benefits and drawbacks of different models of woodland-based social enterprise and identify ways to measure the related development of community capacity. FC funded. http://www.forestry.gov.uk/fr/INFD-84JD86	Amy Stewart
Public engagement	Develop FC relevant strategic and operational guidance on best practice in community engagement, through review and assessment of experiences from urban and community forestry and other public engagement processes. Particular attention on engaging the public in socially diverse and urban areas. FC funded.	Claudia Carter
Social benefits of community forests and woodlands	Spatial mapping of community woodland/forestry groups, and development of wellbeing indicators to illustrate the distribution of benefits from these in different socio-economic contexts. FC funded. http://www.forestry.gov.uk/fr/INFD-7TSD7E	Bianca Ambrose-Oji

Wildfire	Action research and spatial mapping used to explore the motivations which drive people to set fires and the assessment and testing of methods currently used to prevent such behaviour. FC funded. http://www.forestry.gov.uk/fr/INFD-7RZH6B	Matt Jollands
EU Forestry Action Plan <i>ad hoc</i> experts meeting	Co-ordination and development support for Action 12 Peri-urban Forestry http://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/fore/action_plan/index_en.htm	Amy Stewart

Recently completed work 2009-2010		
Title	Description and links	Contact
Social marketing and employment	Research which identified opportunities and barriers for people from ethnic backgrounds applying for jobs with the Forestry Commission. Social marketing informed the methodology and analysis. FC funded. Completed March 2010. http://www.forestry.gov.uk/fr/INFD-83NHZC	Bianca Ambrose-Oji
Forests and Society conference	A conference that explored the demands that society places on forestry and the role trees, woods and forests are expected to play. FC funded. Completed April 2010. http://www.forestry.gov.uk/fr/INFD-7RXC4	Bianca Ambrose-Oji
Diversity evidence review	Systematic review of evidence relating to social diversity, inclusion and equality in the context of trees, woodlands and forests to identify barriers and impacts (positive and negative) on the equalities groups. FC funded. Completed March 2009 http://www.forestry.gov.uk/fr/INFD-7QQHQE	Bianca Ambrose-Oji
Engaging with rivers in a period of uncertainty	Action research using creative approaches and imaginative engagement as a means to promote social learning and capacity building for sustainable communities and improved catchment management. Completed 2009. ESRC and HCA funded. http://www.forestry.gov.uk/fr/INFD-7LTFBG	Claudia Carter
Disability and forest recreation	Research by University of Glasgow exploring disabled peoples' attitudes, perceptions and experiences of woodlands and how these affect use. FC funded/FR managed. Completed end 2008/start 2009 http://www.forestry.gov.uk/fr/INFD-7PSL75	Bianca Ambrose-Oji