

The Woods In and Around Towns Programme (WIAT) 2005 -

“woods on your doorstep”

Bob Frost
Community Development Policy Advisor
Forestry Commission Scotland
bob.frost@forestry.gsi.gov.uk



- Overview
- What is it about
- Some reflection on direction
- Attempting to answer the “So what?” question
- Summary

Spatial focus

1 km of settlements of 2000 people (68% population)

Areas of high social deprivation priority

FCS social forestry programmes

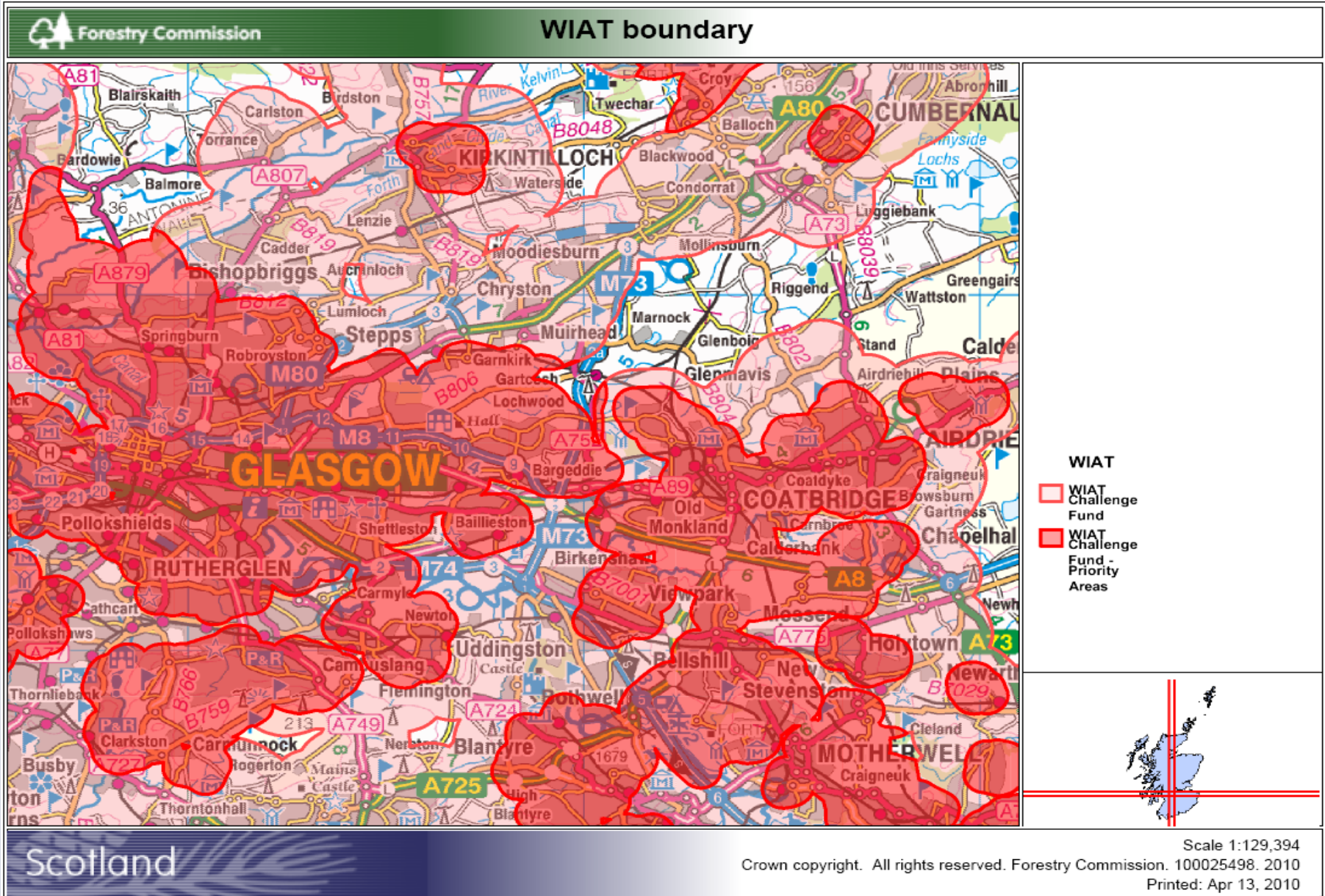
= new funding = WIAT programme

Origins (2003/04)

- forestry's role in urban Scotland?
- need - c.60% urban woodland unmanaged / post-industrial legacy - poor environments / poor people
- opportunity - champion / targeted funding / political agenda (environmental justice)
 - (key allies - strategic planners)



Where





Spatial focus

1 km of settlements of 2000 people (68% population)

Areas of high social deprivation priority

FCS social forestry programmes

Overview

Phase III 2011/14(QoL & QoP)

Phase II 2008/11 (QoL)

Phase I 2005/08 (QoP)



Headline outputs



- 150 projects
- £35 million investment
- 9000 ha of neglected woodland under management (c. 25%)
- 1000 ha new woodland
- 22,000 people involved in events

Programme of work to:


- create new woodland
- bring neglected woodland into active management
- work with people to help them use their local woodland

4 key characteristics of woodland that influence its role in improving quality of life:

- where it is
- how it is managed
- how it is connected to other woodland and greenspace
- how it is connected to people



- 1) Information and guidance (research, training etc)
- 2) Regulation (planning system)
- 3) Incentives (WIAT Challenge Funds etc)
- 4) Partnerships (Forestry Development Programme)
- 5) Direct delivery (Forest Enterprise Scotland)



Forestry Commission Scotland

Woods in & around towns: delivering Green Networks

Background

The Woods In and Around Towns (WIAT) Programme provides the focus for Forestry Commission Scotland's (FCS) work on improving quality of life in towns and cities, creating better places for people to live and work. The programme supports work in and around towns to:

- Create new woodland.
- Bring neglected woodland into active management.
- Work with people to help them use their local woodland.

WIAT will promote the creation and management of woodland that is close to other woodland and greenspace so that it contributes to green networks.

Since 2005, £35million has been invested through the WIAT programme bringing:

- 8,800ha of woodland into active management; and
- creating 1,100ha of new woodland.

Further investment of around £8 million / year is planned until 2011.

Why woods?

- Woods can be places to retreat from the hustle and bustle of urban life and get active, contributing to better health and well-being.
- Woodland is a cost-effective way of transforming derelict and post-industrial land into attractive places, a natural means of urban regeneration.
- Woods have a unique ability to improve the landscape quality and setting of urban areas, creating better places for people to live, work and visit.
- Better quality places encourage economic activity and investment.
- Woods can be for everyone, where people take part in activity, get involved and, make a difference.
- Urban woods improve environmental quality. Well-designed woods reduce noise and prevent dispersal of airborne particulate pollution. Urban woods lock up atmospheric carbon as they mature and have a role to play in sustainable flood management.
- Woods are good places for wildlife, with considerable potential to increase urban biodiversity and make wildlife accessible.
- Trees and woodlands are recognised as having a role in urban 'climate control' and that urban greening and increasing tree cover can offset temperature increases associated with climate change.

1 | Woods in and around towns: delivering green networks

Outcomes:

- Greater proportion of people living in towns and cities reaching recommended daily physical activity levels
- Increased level of satisfaction with the quality of their local environment (neighbourhood)
- More equitable distribution of high quality green infrastructure
- Management of woodland and other green infrastructure will be secure in the long-term



- strategic WIAT partnerships are in place in main urban areas
- woods and greenspace increasingly recognised in development plans
- role in delivering health, education and regeneration benefits increasingly recognised
- move from a development phase (ad hoc opportunities) to a mature phase (strategic targeting of resources)
- sustaining a legacy becoming a key issue
- new funding systems (Single Outcome Agreements / forestry grants)
- financial challenges to WIAT delivery





Longitudinal studies (preliminary results)

a) WIAT Evaluation - site level
(Openspace 2007 & 2010)

- greater physical activity
(perceived improved access)
- greater recognition of the
social benefits of woodland
- improved quality of life
- improved perception of the
quality of the local environment
and woodland

b) National urban forestry
survey (2004 & 2010)

- increase in FTEs
- proactive management
- greater community
engagement

WE BELIEVE SO!

BUT more to do



Summary & reflections

- spatial focus for social forestry programmes
- concentrate on areas of low provision and high social deprivation
- develop long-term case study areas (sustainable urban forestry) - build better understanding and capacity, improve the evidence base etc.
- balance between quality and quantity

Critical factors

- delivery focused
- partnership working
- collaboration of policy, delivery & research
- longevity and continuity

www.forestry.gov.uk/wiat