

Well-being Theme

'Well-being is a positive physical, social and mental state; it is not just the absence of pain, discomfort and incapacity. It arises not only from the action of individuals, but from a host of collective goods and relationships with other people'. (DEFRA, 2008). In the well-being research programme we are interested in the contribution of trees, woods and forests (TWF) to people's well-being. Can TWFs contribute to people's quality of life, can activities such as learning and volunteering in woods improve confidence and self esteem and provide meaningful activities for people, how can TWFs contribute to education and learning and the development of a range of skills and can this lead to behaviour change? In what ways do TWFs contribute to health and restoration and provide social spaces where people can spend time with friends and family, but also be places to meet others and develop new social networks? How are TWFs embedded in contemporary cultural practices, features and meanings within British society, what is the relevance and the importance of an ecosystems approach that links ecosystem services to people's well-being?

How are the different aspects of individual well-being socially and geographically distributed across society; are the people who use and enjoy woods representative of wider society. What methods can be used to gather relevant evidence and how should researchers integrate qualitative and quantitative approaches. How best can we use the SERG systematic framework developed in the Society and Diversity Work Area to ensure that we build a comprehensive picture of well-being gained from TWF across Britain?

At present this work area focuses on four themes and within each of these themes a range of research projects are running or have recently been completed. These are outlined below.

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Health and restoration - current work 2010/11		
Title	Description and links	Contact
Barriers to accessing woods	Drawing together existing evidence of the range of barriers faced by different groups to accessing woodlands focusing on physical/structural barriers and social, cultural economic and personal barriers.	Jake Morris
Health and well-being from woodlands	Case study research focusing on how people engage with trees and woods for health, also exploring health inequalities and the role of woodlands.	Liz O'Brien
Lyme Disease and risk perception	A project to help those involved in the countryside to understand better how to deal with diseases such as Lyme, including the development of a framework for disease communication outlining potential points of intervention.	Chris Quine
Education and learning - current work 2010/11		
Review of the Forest Education Initiative	Explores seventeen years of FEI: its development, current activities, aims and governance.	Liz O'Brien
Woodland education and behaviour	A focus on FC apprenticeships and how this might/can lead to behaviour change.	Claudia Carter
Volunteering and skills development – current work 2010/11		
Volunteering in FC	To take stock of current volunteering activities within FCS and FCW and develop a typology of the types of	Liz O'Brien

	volunteering undertaken by FC or in partnership with others	
Cultural identity, practices and meaning – current work 2010/11		
Cultural values of trees and woods	A literature review with primary research to explore the importance of the cultural values of trees and woods.	Liz O'Brien
Inventory of social evidence related to place making and urban regeneration	The aim of this inventory is to identify and draw together what evidence exists in relation specifically to trees and woods, identify gaps in evidence and provide a resource, primarily for forestry policy-makers and researchers.	Amy Stewart
Cultural values and engagement	Case study work to explore partnership cultural projects that engage a range of stakeholders.	Liz O'Brien
Other recent/current work not related to a specific theme		
Profiling of FC projects, programmes and partnerships	An internal report to explore definitions of well-being projects and programmes within FC and identify range.	Liz O'Brien
Visitor monitoring methods	A review of methods used to monitor visitor and visit numbers to woodlands.	Liz O'Brien
Well-being discussion paper	A short discussion paper focusing on well-being, ecosystems and forestry.	Liz O'Brien

Health and restoration – recently completed work 2009/10		
Active England woodland projects evaluation	3 year evaluation of 5 AE woodland projects. http://www.forestresearch.gov.uk/fr/INFD-6W8KLM	Liz O'Brien
Encouraging healthy activity amongst under-represented groups'	Overview paper of the Active England woodland projects research drawing on engagement with specific societal groups	Jake Morris
Urban health, health inequalities and the role of urban forestry'	This literature review identified empirical research on the role of trees, woods on people's health in urban areas. http://www.forestresearch.gov.uk/fr/INFD-83EHVX	Liz O'Brien
Children's play and health	Exploration of how children use their time and children's outdoor activities	Liz O'Brien
Education and learning – recently completed work 2009/10		
'Wood you believe it?'	A research project exploring children's perceptions of climate change and the role of trees and woods. http://www.forestresearch.gov.uk/fr/INFD-7UCASC	Liz O'Brien
Review of evidence of the role of woods in formal education and learning	This report identified current research and outlines gaps in research. http://www.forestry.gov.uk/fr/INFD-85RHHY	Liz O'Brien
Volunteering and skills development – recently completed work 2009/10		
Environmental volunteering	Research into the motivations and benefits of practical conservation volunteering. http://www.forestresearch.gov.uk/fr/INFD-7GDHD3	Liz O'Brien
Offenders and nature	Research to identify the scheme being run by the Forestry Commission and the impacts of the schemes on offenders and their rehabilitation.	Claudia Carter