GREEN CITIES RESEARCH ALLIANCE

PARTNERING FOR SUSTAINABLE CITIES THROUGH SCIENCE, POLICY, AND CITIZEN ACTION

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Integrated Urban Forest Assessments:
Green Jobs and Urban Ecosystem Services

King County Land Cover - 2001

1:150,000

King County Department of Natural Resources and Parks Water and Land Resources Division
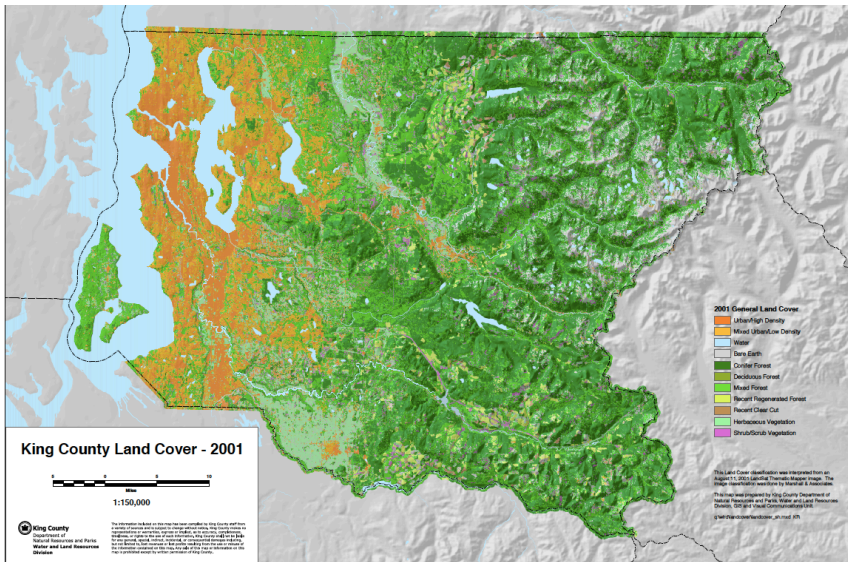
What is the Need?

The presence of trees and natural areas makes cities more livable and sustainable. The urban forest of the City of Seattle and King County includes parks, forested open space, and the canopy cover of private and public lands. There is much to learn about these valuable resources. What is the value of the trees that are located in the midst of the places where people live, work, learn, and play? What information is needed to effectively manage urban natural resources? Who can help steward the lands and trees?

The Integrated Urban Forest Assessments Projects

A program of city and county-wide assessments are underway - combining green jobs and extensive partnerships. Assessments include sampling of forest conditions on all land uses in the metro area, and a rapid assessment of forested parcels for health condition. This will reveal baseline conditions, enable calculations of ecosystem services values, and help to prioritize long-term management strategies. As volunteer participation is essential for broad scale land management, a stewardship motivations assessment will help to shape effective and efficient volunteer programs. We are also exploring the relationship of urban green spaces and the health of young people.

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Green Jobs for Better Cities

IUFA jobs will promote urban ecosystem health, support creation of local green jobs, and provide our work team with valuable career skills.

Assessment Projects

- Develop methods for *rapid assessment of forest parcels* on public & private lands in urbanized landscapes,
- Provide a *comprehensive assessment of forest parcel condition* and character across all of Seattle and King County,
- Apply *ecosystem services analysis* tools to determine public values of the urban forest system,
- Evaluate *stewardship motivations* and organizational capacity,
- Investigate the importance of *urban greening for children's health*,
- Implement a *cross-project geospatial platform*, and use geospatial analysis tools (such as i-Tree Eco) to determine forest condition and function, and
- Build and strengthen *colllaborative partnerships* for science metro Seattle and King County.

Projects Approach

Data colllection and analysis is happening across multiple scales and science disciplines. Forest parcels in the study area are being sampled for detailed on-the-ground analysis. Remote sensing sources provide data about all parcels at a broader scale. Surveys, interviews, and focus groups methods will assess the volunteer stewardship experience. The data sets are being stored and analyzed using a GIS platform and ecosystem services protocols.