



The Forest and the City – Developing Community Forests for the Future

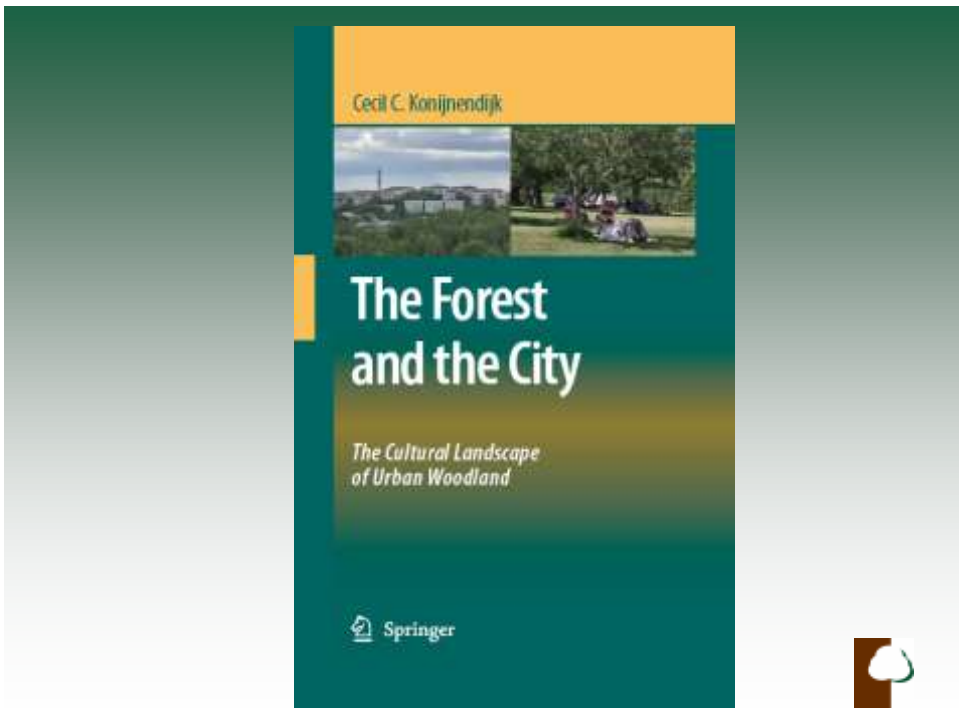


"A tree on your doorstep is a forest in your mind!"

Contents

- **Community Forests as cultural landscapes**
 - People-forest links in focus
 - Heritage, present and future
- **Dealing with the urban challenge**
- **Important role of Community Forests as Forests for the Future**
 - Multifunctional landscapes
 - Building communities
 - Keeping in touch with nature





European Forests as Cultural Landscapes (1)

- **Importance of understanding nature-society relations**
 - “*Individuals nor settings can be understood or defined without reference to the other*” (Gifford 2002)
- **Society, Nature, Landscape**
- **Cultural landscapes (Arntzen 2002):**
 - *Material*: physical and visible manifestations of lives and activities of human communities
 - *Immaterial*: in spiritual or symbolic sense; embodying significance for members of a culture, even if it has no visible, physical traces of human activity



European Forests as Cultural Landscapes (2)

- **Forests in Europe are cultural landscapes**
- **Meaning of forests shifting in different national cultures (Schama 1995)**
 - “Not all cultures embrace nature and landscape myths with equal ardor, and those that do, go through periods of greater or lesser enthusiasm. What the myths of ancient forest mean for one European national tradition may translate into something entirely different in another.” (p. 15)



City/Community Forests

- 'Most cultural' forest landscapes
- Stadsbos, Stadtwald, Kaupunkimetsä, byskov, ...
- Traditionally: forest owned / managed by certain city
- Then: forest in or adjacent to city, closely linked
- Also: part of 'urban forest', green structure



Source: Schama (1995)



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City Culture's Influence on City Forests

- **Nature and Culture: changing societal views and appreciation of nature**
- **Urbanisation: exploitation of forests when cities developed**
 - European civilisations, city states and dependency on forests (Perlin 1989)
 - Subsistence, timber, fuelwood, industry
- **Closing off and protection by elite**
 - Development of 'parks' in England, elsewhere
- **Urban culture: recreational use of nearby forests**
 - New appreciation of nature
 - From elite to mass use
 - Recreational developments and fashions
- **Biodiversity & environmental services**
- **Conflicts of use**



City Forest Impact on City Culture

- **Forest as all encompassing environment - the forest as 'poor man's overcoat' (Westoby 1989)**
- **Love and hate relationships**
- **Myths, folklore and fairytales**
- **Source of inspiration**
- **Representing nature**
- **Refuge and entertainment**
- **Power, prestige and conflict**
- **'Extension' of city park/square**
- **City and community identity**



The Urban Challenge

- Suburbanisation and sprawl threatening urban identity
- Local identity crucial
 - Attracting and keeping residents
 - Strengthening social ties
 - Competition, e.g., for finances
- Cities need to be sacred, safe and busy (Kotkin, 2005)
 - Sacred: identity, community
 - Safe: quality of life, feeling at ease, security
 - Busy: economic, social, cultural activities
- New hierarchy of cities
 - ‘Second Cities’, ‘burbs’ in focus

Second Cities

- Meeting the demands of a changing population
 - Ageing
 - Creative classes
 - Multi-ethnic (see lecture on Thursday)
- Information society
- Transportation
- Developing ‘urbanity’, identity, community



Developing Forests for the Future

Forest-related Action

- **Developing attractive urban landscapes**
 - Multifunctional Community Forest landscapes
- **Building communities**
 - Community forests as 'Place'
- **Maintaining links with nature**
 - Community forests as 'Space'



City Regions and New Urban Landscapes

- **“Competitive city regions are ones that can attract and retain viable businesses and their employees by offering a good quality of life”.**
- **“New urban landscapes are an essential element in building Europe’s future economic structures and social well-being.”** (The SAUL Partnership 2005)
- **Community Forests are part of these new urban landscapes**



Source: The National Forest, UK

Role of Community Forests

- **Fruitful Forests**
 - Providing wide range of goods, e.g. bio-energy
- **The Great Escape**
 - Landscapes for recreation and tourism
- **The Healthy Forest**
 - Green gym, stress prevention, therapeutic landscapes
- **Forest for Change**
 - ‘Transformative action’ of trees (Jones and Cloke, 2002)
 - E.g. dealing with former industrial land (see UK, Germany, etc.)
- **Community Forest Landscapes**
 - Bridging the urban-rural divide, mixture of land use
 - ‘National City Parks’, e.g. in Sweden





Building Communities

- **The Social Forest**
 - Community Forests as social stages, part of communities
- **Trees and place making**
- **“you can put up and populate buildings – even with green spaces – but you cannot just create a community” (Gilbert, 2006)**
- **Access is crucial**
 - Physical, social, ...
- **Developing local commitment**
 - Conflict can be a positive sign
- **Be aware of exclusion**



Community Forests as “Place”

- **Place: varied definitions - attributed meaning to locality**
- **Place is about community, safety, home (Tuan, 2007)**
- **Place identity (Proshansky et al. 1983)**
- **Sense of place (e.g., Ardoin 2005)**
- **Role of trees and forests in (cultural) ‘place making’**





Photo: Anders B. Nielsen

Myths, Folklore, Fairytales, Worship

Source: National Geographic



Source: Schama (1995)



Neighbourwoods; woods at people's doorsteps a contact with nature even in the most urbanised areas.

neighb**OUR**woods, planned & managed for and by local residents. Public spaces are an integral part of local communities and provide local identity.

neighbour**WOODS**: woodlands of different sizes and character close to where urbanites live beyond the traditional concepts of forests



Keeping in Touch with Nature

- **Decline in use of forests and nature, especially among certain groups**
 - Youths, see Richard Louv's *The Last Child in the Woods*
 - Ethnic minorities, e.g., because of fears
- **Wild side of town**
 - Escape, 'rough' edge, adventure
- **A Work of Art**
 - Wild forest for inspiration, culture
- **The Spiritual Forest**
 - Health aspects of wilderness, transcendence



City Forests as “Space”

- **Space is about the wild, the unknown, adventure (Tuan, 2007)**
- **See also ‘outer space’**
- **Space still needs to be defined, claimed by a community to become ‘place’**
- **Space and Place are both important, as opposites of a spectrum**
 - In city: necessary alternative to regulated, artificial urban life and environment





UNCOMMON

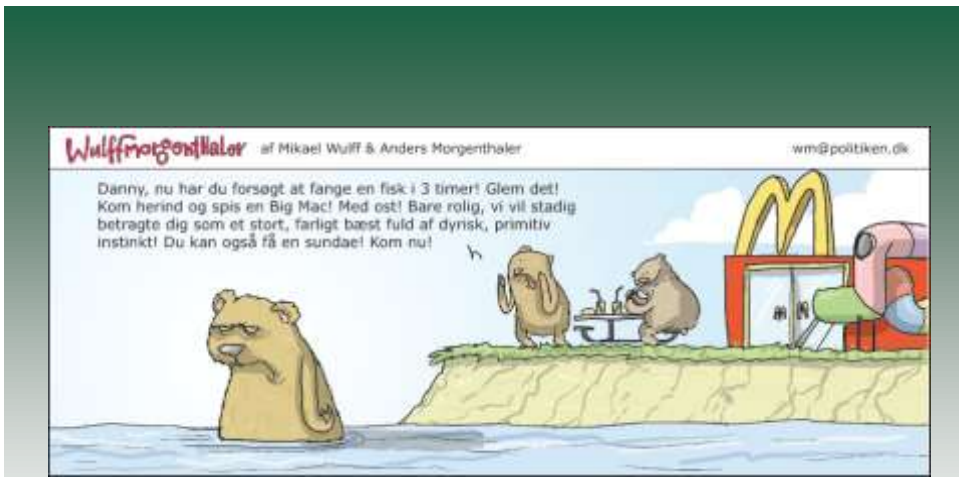


GROUND

Rethinking the Human Place
in Nature

edited by
WILLIAM CRONON





Danny, you have been trying to catch a fish for 3 hours. Forget about it! Come here and eat a Big Mac. And just relax, we will still see you as a big, dangerous beast with a animal, primitive instinct! You can also get a Sundae.. Come now!





Landscape Laboratory 'Sletten', Holstebro, Denmark. Material provided by Anders B. Nielsen

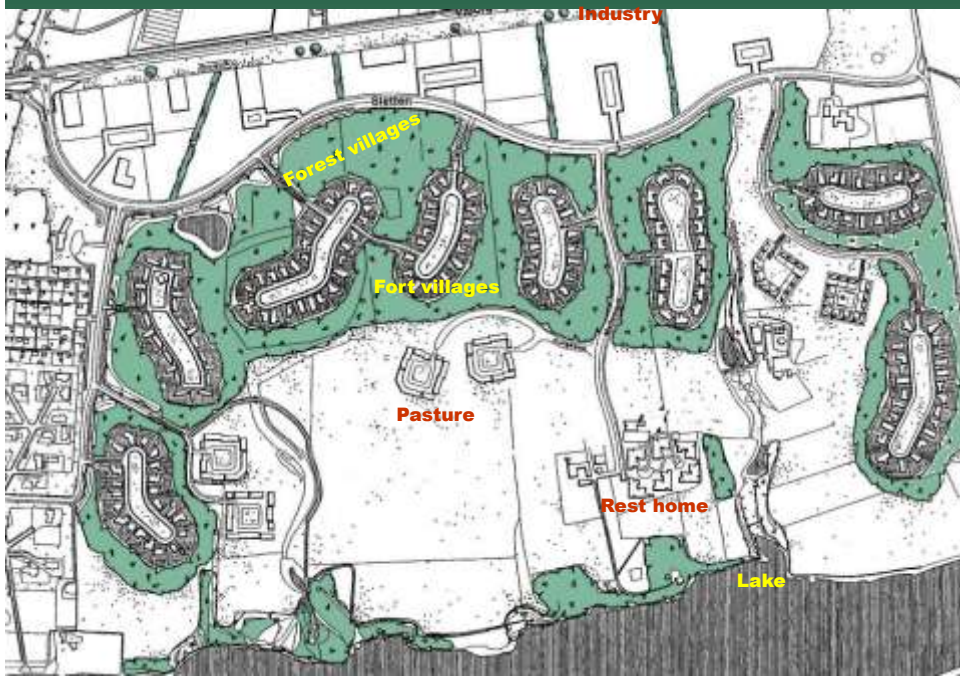


Photo: Anders B. Nielsen

Conclusion

- **Community Forests play an important role in developing successful Future Forests**
- **There is a need to balance their role as **Place and Space**, as Home and the Wild**
- **Community Forests contribute to competitive and attractive city regions and multifunctional landscapes**
 - **This requires a landscape and partnership approach**
 - **This requires a different view of what is a (Community) Forest**



Thank you!

