

Organizing for Urban Ecosystem Services Research:

Green Cities Research Alliance as an example of a Collective Impact Initiative

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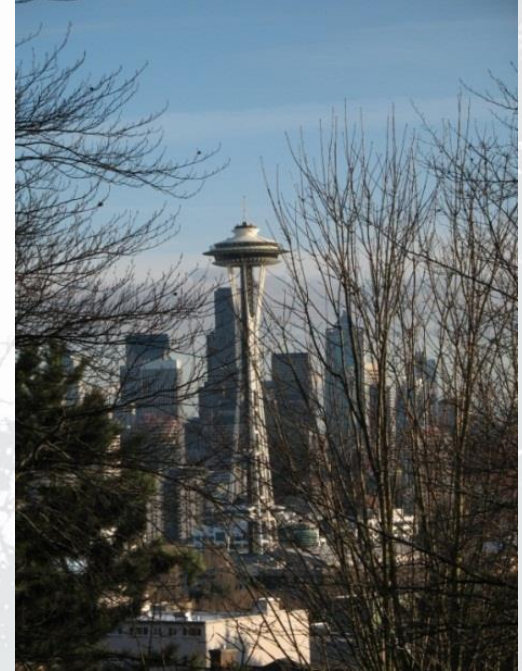


ACES Conference
Crystal City Gateway Marriot
December 11, 2014



Purpose

- Seattle Green Cities Research Alliance
- GCRA as collective impact initiative
- Application to Urban Waters Federal Partnership work
- Benefits and challenges of CI



Ecosystem Services – Need for a New Research Paradigm

- Thousands of “human benefits”
 - Monetary, quantitative, “cultural values”
 - Public perceptions of benefits (collaboration)
 - Beyond MEA
- Measurement scales and tools
- Many scales, applications
 - USFS planning
 - Political, budget justification . . .
 - Develop markets, longevity
- Decision tool, NOT assessment

Why Urban Research?

- Forest Service Strategic Plan
 - Engage urban America
 - Partnerships
- USFS R&D
 - Urban natural resources stewardship
 - Urban forest assessments
- Ecosystem Services



~ 80% of region's
population is urban

Research in the City Restoration, Stewardship & Eco Services

Seattle Lab, USDA Forest Service, Pacific Northwest Research Station



5 year research program

- urban start up in PNW
- metro Seattle partnerships
- practical applications

Green Cities Research Alliance



Sustainable cities through science, policy, and citizen action



USDA Forest Service
Pacific NW Research Station



UW Remote
Sensing &
Geospatial Lab



University of
Washington



Parks & Recreation
Division



City of
Seattle



FORT&ERRA



International Forestry
CONSULTANTS, INC.
a subsidiary of American Forest Management, Inc.

Key Informant Interviews

Primary Themes

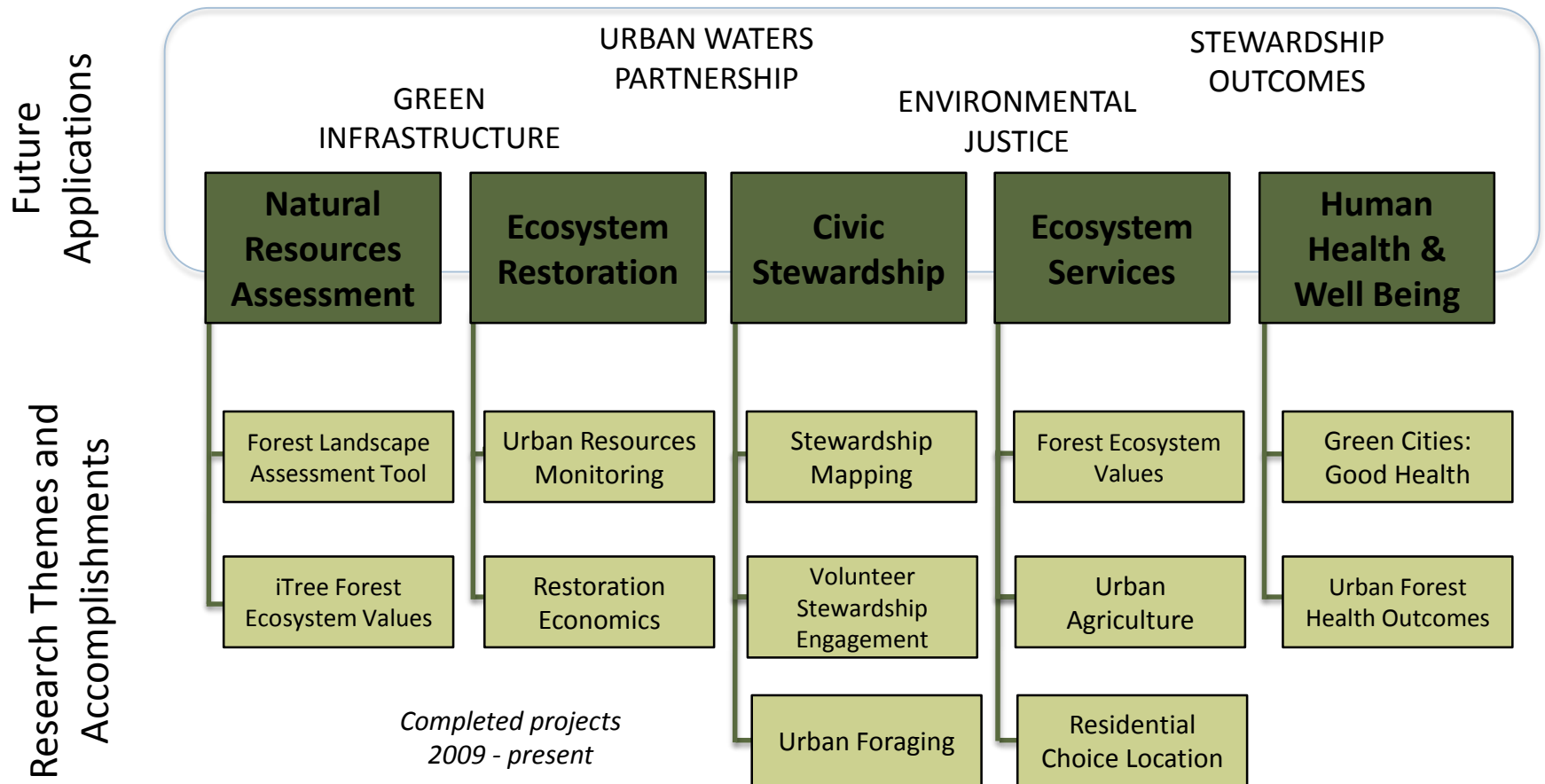
- Volunteer stewardship, forest assessment, restoration
- Interaction—social & ecological benefits
- Urban to rural gradient
- Collaboration of scientists and practitioners

ULTRA to ARRA

- ULTRA was NSF science-focused emphasis
- ARRA drove a different type of research collaboration
- Jobs focus brought range of partner types
- Allowed collaborative approach found in interviews

GCRA

Research Themes and Accomplishments

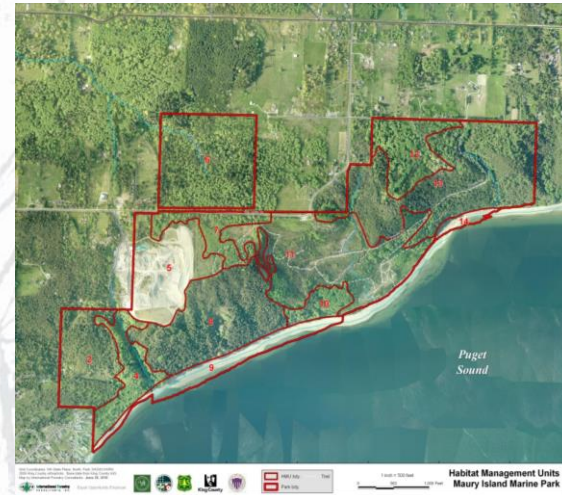


Socio-Ecological Systems :: Landscape Gradient

Project Highlights

Urban Forest Assessments

Forest Ecosystem Values (i-Tree) – City of Seattle
Forest Landscape Assessment Tool – King County



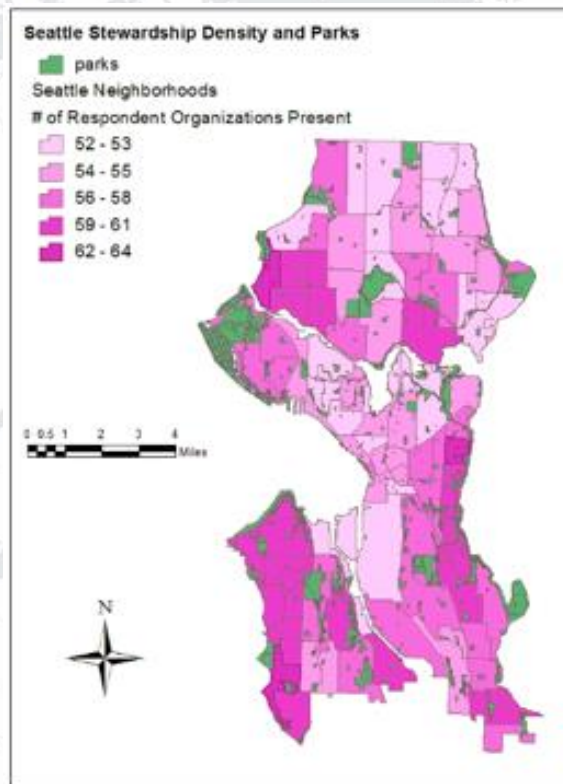
all King County
parks & open
spaces

Project Highlights

Citizen Stewardship Assessments

Citizen Stewardship Motivations

Stewardship Mapping of Organizations



Project Highlights Public Health Research

Green Cities: Good Health Science Delivery

Urban Forestry/Urban Greening Research

Green Cities: Good Health

U.S. UNIVERSITY OF WASHINGTON

INTRODUCTION RESOURCES FUTURE RESEARCH REFERENCES

Metro nature - including trees, parks, gardens, and natural areas - enhance quality of life in cities and towns. The experience of nature improves human health and well-being in many ways. Nearly 40 years of scientific studies tell us how. Here's the research ...

RESEARCH THEMES

- Livable Cities
- Community Building
- Local Economics
- Place Attachment & Meaning
- Crime & Fear
- Safe Streets
- Active Living
- Reduced Risk
- Wellness & Physiology
- Healing & Therapy

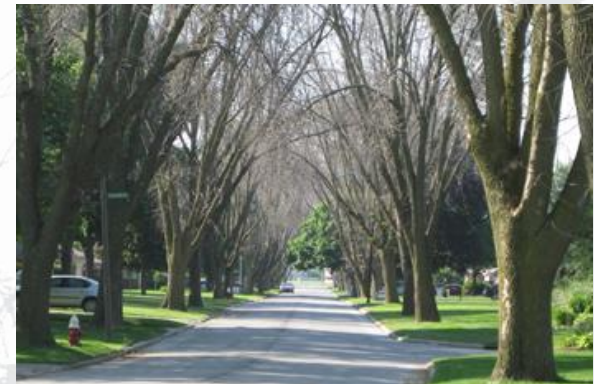


credit: Guy Kramer

www.greenhealth.washington.edu

Urban Forest & Human Health Benefits

tree loss & resident health



*Donovan et al. 2013. Journal
of Preventive Medicine*

Productive Effort

\$1.25 million for 4 years
~ \$335 K per year

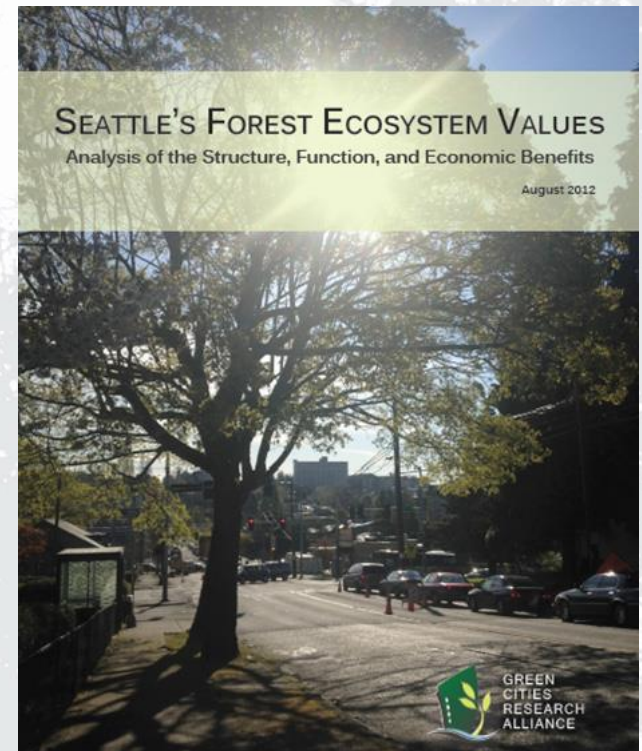


Jobs (tech, science, mgmt)

- **3.5 FTE for 3+ years**

Science Products & Outreach

- **28 peer-reviewed publications**
- **12 professional publications**
- **15+ in progress/review**
- **38 scientific/scholarly presentations**
- **50+ professional presentations**



“Collective Impact” Approach

(Kania & Kramer 2011)

Large scale change requires broad cross-sector coordination, yet the social sector remains focused on insolated interventions.

- Address complex social & environmental problems
- Involves many organizations
- Similar goals, BUT
- Often act independently
- Judged independently
- “Isolated impact”

Types of Collaboration

(Kania & Kramer 2011)

- Funder Collaboratives
- Public-private Partnerships
- Multi-stakeholder Initiatives
- Social Sector Networks
- Collective Impact Initiatives

Long-term commitments by a group of important actors from different sectors to a common agenda for solving a specific social problems. Their actions are supported by . . .

GCRA as CI Initiative?

- ***Common Agenda***
 - Research, Seattle urban environmental sustainability
 - Jobs, practitioner collaboration
- ***Shared Measurement Systems***
 - ARRA: Jobs, tools, and training
 - PNW: Research, pubs, reports, outreach, events
- ***Mutually Reinforcing Activities***
 - UW Data portal/sharing, GIS, OneHub
- ***Continuous Communications***
 - Monthly meetings, events, OneHub
- ***Backbone Support Organization . . .***

Backbone Support—The Key

- *Requires dedicated staff separate from the participating organizations with a very specific set of skills to serve as the backbone for the entire initiative.*
- Three key roles
 - *Project manager*
 - *Data manager*
 - *Facilitator*
- GCRA “Patchwork” Backbone
 - Funding went to the research/fieldwork
 - Structure and organizing was voluntary
 - PNW Station salaries and outreach
 - Primarily voluntary participation in each role

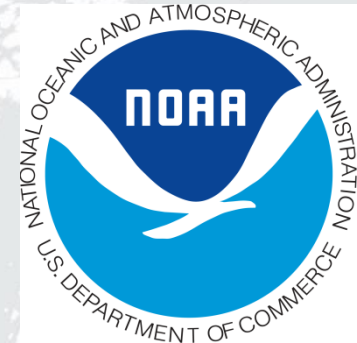
Urban Waters Federal Partnership

**Green Duwamish Watershed
Seattle - King County**



Federal Urban Waters Partnership

a national initiative



12 federal agencies are participating

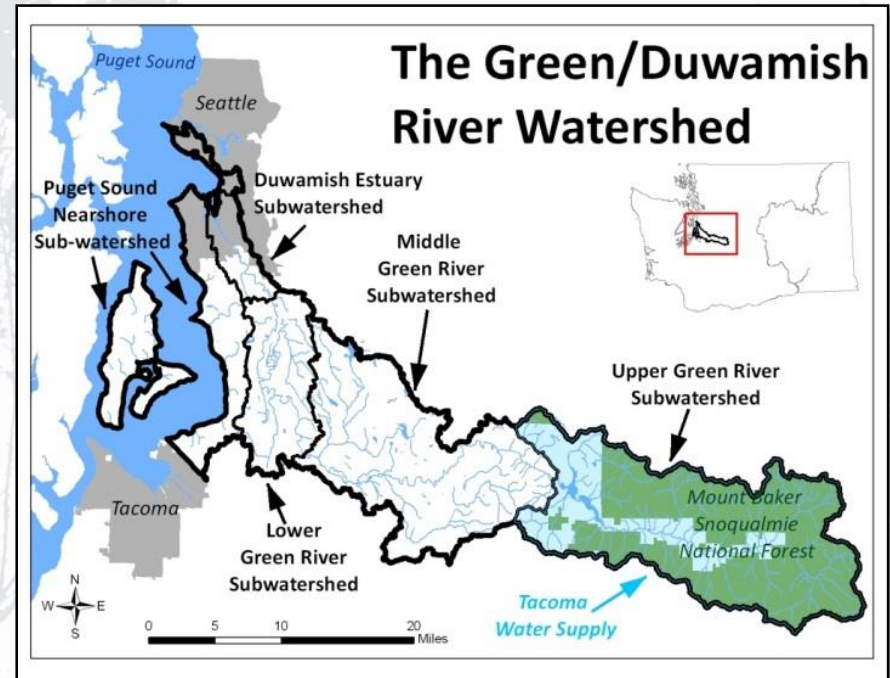
Local UWFP Project



7 Pilots in 2012

11 Added in 2013

Only site in Pacific NW



Principal Federal Partners

- USFS, PNW Research
- USFS, State & Private Forestry
- EPA
- NRCS
- Tracy Stanton (Coordinator)

UWFP Goals

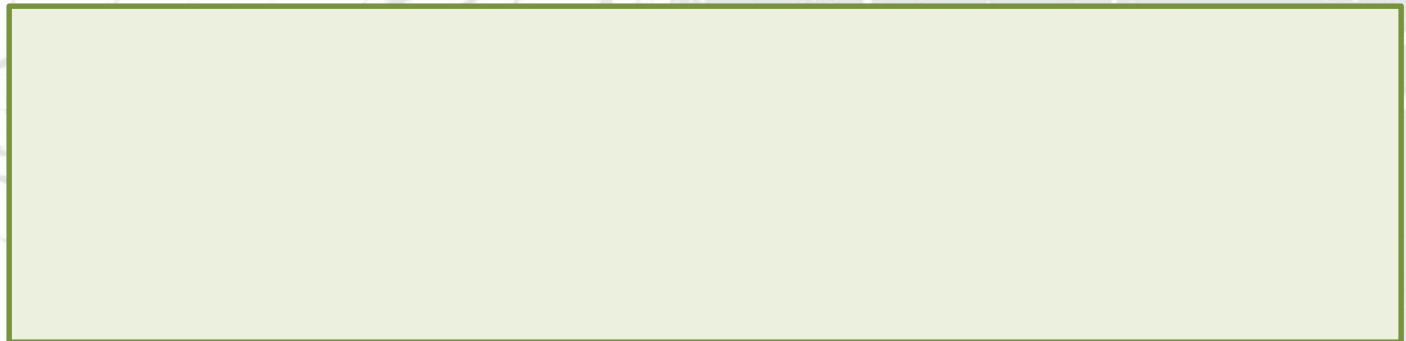
- Promote conservation, clean water
- Breakdown silos, encourage partnerships
- Reconnect people to their waterways
- Advance environmental justice
- Create local economic benefits & jobs



Leadership Strategy

Virtual Partnership Framework

- Organized by core group of partners
- Core group meets to identify key projects
- Connect groups who share similar interests & goals related to a specific project (and funding opportunities)
- Project groups meet to implement collaborative approach
- Periodic reports to existing multi-stakeholder groups in region



UWFP Project Selection?

Working toward CI approach

Work through existing multi-stakeholder initiatives:

- WRIA 9
- Federal Caucus
- GCRA
- Regional Open Space Strategy
- Puget Sound Partnership

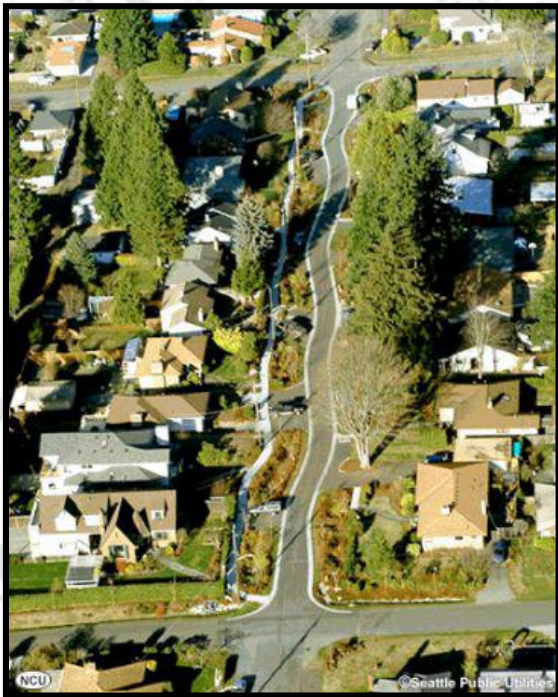
Priority Triage . . .

- Reconnect people to their waterways
- Advance environmental justice
- Create local economic benefits & jobs



Current Projects

- Green Infrastructure and Human Health – King County, GCRA, UW
- Healthy River/Healthy Communities – DRCC/TAG
- Duwamish River Blueprint – WRIA9, EPA, USFS
- Middle Green Riparian Restoration , Fish-Farms-Floods– EPA, USFS, NRCS
- Health Ecosystem Services + Economic Value –USFS, UW



Seattle Street
Street Edge Alternative

Conclusions—Benefits & Challenges

- CI can apply for organizing research efforts
- Very general goals
- Breath, depth, *and* synergy
- Merge science, practice, decision-making
- Brand, imagery, coordination time-consuming
- Longevity requires *formal* administrative structure

Thank you!

Thoughts, Comments, Discussion

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<http://www.fs.fed.us/pnw/research/gcra/index.shtml>

<http://www.urbanwaters.gov/pdf/GreenDuwamishBackground.pdf>

Kania, John & Mark Kramer. 2011. Collective Impact.
Stanford Social Innovation Review (winter: 26-31).



Research Themes

