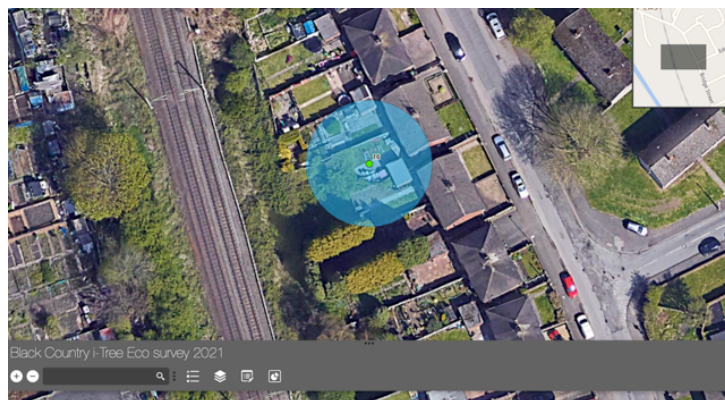


News release

7 September 2021: [For Immediate Release](#)



Surveying the Black Country's trees

The 'Big Black Country i-Tree Eco project' is now in progress, and surveyors are out in the area, measuring trees. The sample plots being surveyed are located in Dudley, Wolverhampton, Sandwell and Walsall. There are 1000 of them in total, each measuring 11.3 metres in radius. Plot areas are assessed and broken down into land use categories: tree, shrub, and other land cover. Also noted are the types of trees present, and the sizes of the trees. Plots are located in a variety of urban locations: parks, woodlands, as well as public and private land.

Those carrying out the data collection include not only experienced surveyors from Barton Hyett Associates and Forest Research, but also volunteers from across the area. These volunteers are mostly tree wardens, but also some students from local universities, such as Wolverhampton, Birmingham, and the Birmingham Institute of Forest Research (BIFoR). All volunteers have been trained in how to assess plots, and have been given equipment with which to do so. They are encouraged to use an app called PlantSnap, to help them identify the trees they find, and apps to help with measuring tree height: including 'Arboreal' and 'Trees'. to help with tree height. Volunteers are encouraged to identify the trees and shrubs they find, or to seek help if they are unsure.

Paul Barton, of Barton Hyett Associates, is pleased with how the surveying is going so far: "Our teams of surveyors are making good progress with the survey and are generally well received by the local community, where they need to access plots on private land. We always find that explaining to landowners what we are doing is in itself worthwhile, as it gives us an opportunity to explain a little about how the urban forest provides so many benefits. This study will be a really interesting one given the Black Country's industrial heritage and we hope will lead to positive action to ensure trees in the area are valued by all."

Over 500 plots have now been surveyed, and it is estimated that surveying will continue until the end of October. Once the fieldwork is complete, the data will be analysed using 'i-Tree Eco', a software package used around the world to assess the environmental benefits of urban trees and their value to society. The final report will reveal exactly what the Black Country's trees are contributing to the environment, and to the people who live and work there.

Kieron Doick of Forest Research, is an advocate for i-Tree studies across the UK, and commented: “We’re really very pleased to partner in this very exciting project to deliver the second largest i-Tree Eco project in the UK and to help the people of the Black Country to learn more about this really important natural capital asset. We’ve been delivering i-Tree Eco projects in the UK with Treeconomics for ten years now, and this year has seen more projects and more partnerships than ever before. Urban trees improve our health and quality of life. So, it really is very important that we understand them, and their health, and plan for their future.”

This study is being led by the Black Country Consortium, in partnership with Birmingham Tree People, Treeconomics, Barton Hyett Associates, and Forest Research. The project is being funded by The Woodland Trust.

The Black Country Consortium Ltd is a diverse, economic development, intelligence and strategic team working with partners from public and private sectors to steer and support the delivery of the Black Country Strategy on Growth and Competitiveness. It provides strategic support, advice and on occasion leadership across the interconnected key areas for growth within the Black Country.

Birmingham Tree People are Birmingham city’s tree warden programme and are the largest urban network in the UK, serving to meet the urban forest requirements of community engagement across Europe’s largest municipality.

Treeconomics is a social enterprise which works internationally with community groups, research organisations, public bodies, municipalities and private business to complete projects which highlight the value of trees.

Barton Hyett Associates is an arboricultural consultancy, established in 2009, which helps organisations to understand, manage and develop their trees, for the enhancement of their environments and the safety and benefit of their people and customers.

Forest Research is the research agency of the Forestry Commission and the leading UK organisation engaged in forestry and tree related research. The agency aims to support and enhance forestry and its role in sustainable development by providing innovative, high quality scientific research, technical support and consultancy services.

IMAGE ATTACHED: Digital plot map screenshot

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