



**SCHOOL OF PUBLIC AND
ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS**

INDIANA UNIVERSITY

The Great Urban Disconnect Between Ecologists and Foresters

Burney Fischer, Clinical Professor Emeritus
School of Public and Environmental Affairs
Indiana University - Bloomington

Story Line

Published: Ag Res & Tech Open Access Journal & 3 column series for Indiana Arborist Newsletter (2017) – Winter, Spring, Summer)

- Teaching UFM at IUB SPEA, grad students asked for second course
- We settled on Urban Ecology – A readings/discussion course
- What we learned per the connections between UFM & Urban Ecology
 - Two field are very different and not connected
 - UF is management – delineate city as social units (NH, Council Districts, etc)
 - UE is science/theories – delineate as ecological units (forests, wetlands, etc)
 - Yet, foresters in rural settings are trained to delineate woodlands into forest stands (i.e. ecological units based upon species, structure, soils, etc.)
- So, can we find a connection?

Urban Ecology

Study of relationships of living organisms with each other and their surroundings in the context of an urban environment

Urban ecosystem dominated by humans & manmade structures

Generally clarified “social-ecological system” to focus social emphasis (

Urban Ecologists talk about ecology “in”, “of” or “for” the city

Typically ask how research project/paper is focused:

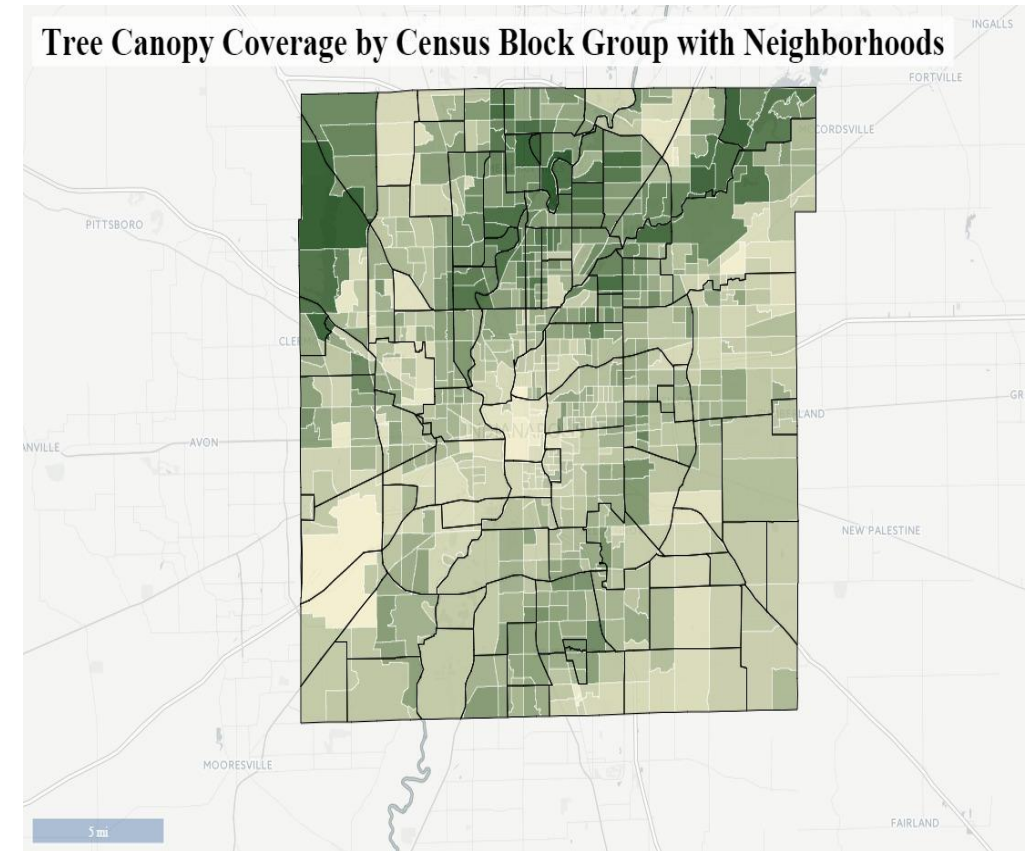
- “In” the city – study of unique “natural” fragment
- “Of” the city – connecting/linking the fragments
- “For” the city – research outcomes lead to protection/restoration,

Urban Forestry

- In – Arborists treat individual/small groups of trees
UF's manage urban forest patches
- Of – UF's inventory the city by social units to make comparisons
Arborists hired to address tree problems
- For – UF's & UGNP's plant and manage trees for ecosystem services

Communication between Ecologists & Foresters

- Delineating units of interest
 - UE concept of ecological – biological oriented
 - UFM concept of social – people oriented
 - Social-Ecological combines but is rarely utilized
 - Can neighborhoods be classified by the tree/forest demographic?
 - NH classification by residents demographics
 - BES – LifeModes – “Affluent Estates”



So, what's the point?

- Urban ecologists offer another source of knowledge
- Urban ecologists want to do work “for” the city
- There's another group of students to tap
- We're all in this together!