Internship Report of Rudolf Benter

My internship at SURE was a great opportunity for me to deepen my knowledge about Urban Ecosystem Services and especially about urban woodland. Moreover I am very interested in renaturation projects. Combining these two fields of research, my supervisor Professor Dr. Breuste introduced to me the project "Waldstadt Silberhöhe".

Halle Silberhöhe is a part of the city of Halle/Saale in Germany. It has been built up from 1979 to 1989 in the former DDR as place for workers in the industrial area Leipzig/Halle. With the German reunification in 1990 the former DDR industry closed and the vacancy rate in Halle Silberhöhe rose. In order to oppose this process, the city government decided to dismantle houses until 2010. To increase the attractiveness of Silberhöhe, the concept of a "Waldstadt" has been invented. The main idea was to grow trees on the former built-up areas.

A visit in October 2015 gave the opportunity to get an own view of the area and to talk to the stakeholders. Taking a report from 2009 (Breuste&Wiesinger) was a good way to analyze the development. Also I read a lot about the advantages of urban forests in the run-up of the internship as there already are some works on the research area.

As most of the areas with trees were established as reserve areas, changes in land-use have been undertaken and only one bigger area with woodland is left. The interview with the stakeholders showed many problems within the planning and organization of the "Waldstadt"- concept. Though there is the "Forum Silberhöhe", which is a committee including most of the stakeholders, priority is given to the social structure of Silberhöhe and not to ecological purposes. Nevertheless the area gives the opportunity to analyze the different development of urban forest with different maintenance. For me it was a great chance to have a look at planning of projects and their actual implementation. As there have to be taken further investigations about this concept I will continue my research within my Master Thesis.