2nd FreshProject

Urban Algae

The Urban Algae was awarded as the 2nd FreshProject by the EFFS (European Federation for Freshwater Sciences). The Urban Algae project ran from May 2018 until June 2020, and joined about 100 young and international researchers who have been carrying out research on urban ponds.

This project wants to generate new knowledge about ecosystem services and the ecological status of ponds in urban areas. Also, the project aims to foster collaboration among young scientists (social and natural science).

Ponds are small in size (< 5 ha) and often shallow man-made aquatic systems that are commonly found in urban areas and provide several highly valuable ecosystem services such as storm water retention or recreation. While literature about the ecosystem services they provide and their ecologic status is increasing, the linkage between ecological status and social valuation of urban ponds is still not very clear. The concept of ecosystem services is a widely used tool, which shows how important ecosystems like urban ponds are to society. However, the citizens' perspective of urban ponds varies for different ecosystem services. Ecosystem services are often dependent on and affected by the ecosystem functioning of the ponds. Primary producers are key players in aquatic ecosystem functioning (nutrient recycling, carbon sequestration), but in urban environments they are influenced by multiple stressors, and as a consequence the structure and biodiversity of the primary producers varies drastically. The community of primary producers has repercussions, both to the ecosystem functioning and ecosystem services, and thus, citizen perception can be used as an indicator of their status (e.g. high eutrophic/eutrophied green ponds are not as well perceived as a clear water, macrophytes-dominated pond, even though the public does not necessarily have the scientific knowledge to distinguish trophic states of aquatic ecosystems).

Webpage: https://freshproject-urbanalgae.jimdofree.com/