

# Infrastructure in States and Regions Working for You

Large cities, and metropolitan areas, the network of forests and parks, and farmland that sustain natural systems, and are vital to...

of its water in the face of continuing population... has forged a Green Infrastructure plan to... effective strategies for their conservation. The... of the area's wetlands and 75% of its forests, ... \$1.7 billion annually. These benefits, or... water as well as flood protection. Since... River enters the Chesapeake Bay, the health... quality and wildlife.



## Planning Organization (Iowa)

of the Missouri River in 1993, the... network that protects... flooding. The 1993 floods left... and caused \$786 million in damages... stream corridors, providing both... of riverside trails and parks also... recreational outlets in an...



grasslands are... around the City of... wilderness. ... absorb over 60%... vehicles yet cover... trees mean

decision making... and learn about

## Sonoran Desert Conservation Plan (Arizona)

Larger than many states—and home to the hottest and most biologically diverse desert in the US—Pima County, Arizona has sponsored an ambitious, multi-million acre conservation strategy. There are 23 threatened or endangered plant and animal species in the County, from the tiny cactus frog to the graceful Sonoran pronghorn and the healthy jaguar. Linking the need to protect endangered species habitat and precious water resources with the desire to guide growth and preserve historical and cultural resources, the area's Green Infrastructure network is comprised of biological reserves, parks, working ranches, and wildlife corridors.



## Land of Sky (North Carolina)

Green Infrastructure in the Land of Sky Region in North Carolina (Madison, Buncombe, Henderson and Transylvania Counties, City of Asheville) provides economic, environmental and social benefits. The network protects against floods, purifies the region's drinking water, provides forested corridors for wildlife migration, provides food and fiber from working farms and forests, and creates recreation opportunities through its regional trail system. The Land of Sky Green Infrastructure network includes such significant elements as the Appalachian Trail and Blue Ridge Parkway, the French Broad River, Pisgah National Forest, and the Great Smoky Mountains National Park.



## Kansas City Metropolitan Region (Missouri)

Booming growth in this part of the US is expected to bring another 350,000 people over the next 25 years. Choosing to confront this challenge and improve local air and water quality, the Kansas City Metropolitan Region has adopted a Green Infrastructure approach to conservation. Working with many other partners, the Mid-America Regional Council is actively creating a connected network of forests, glades, prairies, streams, rivers, lakes and wetlands—ecosystems that serve and will continue to serve the population.



# Green Infrastructure Links Landscapes and Communities It Means Nature Working for You

## What is Green Infrastructure?

Green Infrastructure is the interconnected network of land and water that sustains all life. It provides habitat for plants and animals. It links natural lands, working lands such as farms and ranches, and other open spaces. Green Infrastructure is our natural life-support system, providing water to drink, air to breathe, and food to eat.

Connectivity is the key to the benefits we receive from natural systems. Just as a road needs to be connected to other roads to provide effective transportation, so too ecosystems must be connected in order to allow plants and animals to mix and migrate, water to flow, and nutrients to cycle. Green infrastructure connectivity is important from the broad landscape scale (spanning cities, counties, and states) down to the scale of individual neighborhoods, yards and buildings.

Green Infrastructure is not always green. It can be blue, brown, and other hues. The United States is home to a diversity of ecosystems, including tidal marsh landscapes, evergreen mountains, tall grass prairies, and deserts. Each provides services essential to our well-being.

## Did you know

- In 2001, 82 million people spent more than \$140 billion on nature-based tourism. That includes watching and photographing wildlife, hunting, and fishing. Protecting Green Infrastructure can help sustain local and regional economies. (Benedict & McMahon 2006)
- America loses more than 2 million acres of open space to development every year – a rate of 4,000 acres each day. (US Forest Service)

## Community of Practice

The Green Infrastructure Community of Practice is a growing national network of partners working together to improve conservation planning techniques that support healthier ecosystems and communities. Current partners include: Appalachian Trail Conservancy - Bureau of Land Management - Centers for Disease Control - DC Department of Transportation - Defenders of Wildlife - EcoAgriculture Partners - Environmental Finance Center - Federal Highways Administration - Green Infrastructure Center - LandCare Center - Low Impact Development Center - Minnesota Department of Natural Resources - National Association of Local Government Environmental Professionals - National Association of Regional Councils - National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration - National Park Service - Soil Design - The Conservation Fund - Trust for Public Land - US Department of Agriculture - US Department of Defense - US Environmental Protection Agency - US Fish and Wildlife Service - US Forest Service - World Resources Institute

## Green infrastructure connects people and nature



Fishing with Dad

## Everybody needs nature



Kids Marvel Over Bugs

## Greenways and trails connect people and nature



Being Active on a Greenway

## Wildlife needs green infrastructure



Wolf Wolf

## Green infrastructure can be blue... or even brown!



Grand Canyon National Park

## Farms form part of green infrastructure



North Carolina Bean Harvest

## Forests provide clean drinking water

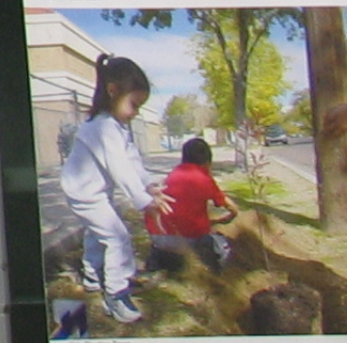


New Hampshire Trout Stream

# Green Infrastructure Nature Working for You

With every breath, every drink of water, every bite of food, we rely on Green Infrastructure. Healthy forests keep our air and water clean. Working farms provide nutritious food. Local parks and urban trees cool hot streets and sidewalks. Look around and you will see interconnected networks of blue and green—stream corridors, trails, community parks and regional preserves—that provide opportunities for walking, bicycling, fishing, and boating—while also providing wild creatures with a safe means for moving across the landscape.

You can find Green Infrastructure right in your backyard. Green Infrastructure provides natural connections across the landscape. It starts at our homes, schools, workplaces, and on our streets. Rain gardens, set with beautiful native plants, catch rainfall and snowmelt. They help water seep slowly into the ground, filtering out dirt, chemicals, and fertilizer. They might otherwise reach our waterways and drinking water supplies. Street trees provide many of the same services. And green roofs—covered with soil and plants—can reduce stormwater runoff, provide habitat for wild creatures, and help cool the buildings in our cities and towns.



Kids Playing Trees

