## BENEFITS Why is Green Infrastructure Important?









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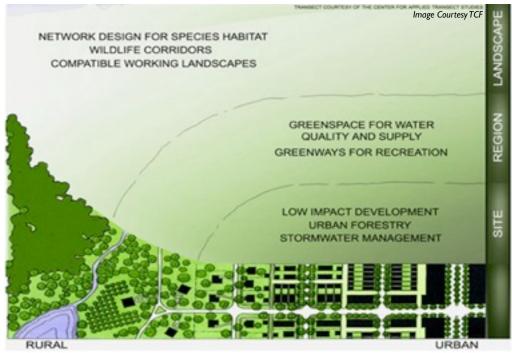
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Green Infrastructure is an interconnected network of man-made and natural systems that provide a diverse range of environmental, social, recreational, psychological, public health and economic benefits. There is often confusion and lack of clarity when discussing and visualizing green infrastructure. Green infrastructure can be many things at a variety of sizes and scales while providing benefits at each one of these scales.



Typically, planning reports and studies often look at one particular feature such as water quality or wildlife only. These approaches are often piecemeal, site specific, and narrowly focused, limiting their overall ability to provide effective value and ecological benefits. Green infrastructure, a new and evolving framework for regional-level planning, seeks to integrate natural resource conservation and the needs of increasing human populations.

There is fundamental value in planning & designing using a green infrastructure approach. It allows municipalities to identify valuable natural lands and explains why it is important to connect those lands. GI plans can be utilized by state agencies, regional councils, counties, cities, transportation entities, management agencies, government entities, and others to consider green infrastructure planning into long range initiatives.

A healthy green infrastructure system benefits a great number of people in numerous and different ways including providing clean air and water. Typically, the most important natural lands are the basis for green infrastructure and contributes a significant portion of the region's natural support system. Nature's benefits, or ecosystem services, such as cleaning the air, cooling and filtering water, storing and cycling nutrients, conserving and generating soils, pollinating crops and other plants, regulating climate, sequestering carbon, providing recreational opportunities, and maintaining aquifers, streams and rivers, are all provided by these existing green infrastructure areas. Loss of these ecologically valuable lands not only deteriorates the natural environment and the quality of life for our residents and but it also has real economic consequences. A well planned green infrastructure network can help shape our urban/suburban form and promote better patterns of development, benefitting all.

