

Partnering with Nature Works



The River Unites Us: A Scenic Wild Delaware River Geotourism Conference

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What is Green Infrastructure?

Green infrastructure is defined differently by various groups and agencies depending on the goals and objectives of the organization or project. As seen in the definition examples below, the basic categories are landscape or regional to site-specific scales. At the landscape scale, green infrastructure includes natural areas and working lands, with the site-specific scale providing stormwater best management practices. Together the whole system reduces stormwater impacts and contributes social, economic and environmental benefits for communities.



ArtsQuest in Bethlehem Pa., photo by Craig Kackenmeister/LVPC

- **Green infrastructure can be thought of as the sum of all our natural resources.** It includes all the interconnected natural systems in a landscape, such as intact forests, woodlands, wetlands, parks and rivers, as well as those agricultural soils that provide clean water, air quality, wildlife habitat and food.¹
- **Green infrastructure is a cost-effective, resilient approach to managing wet weather impacts that provides many community benefits.** While single-purpose gray stormwater infrastructure—conventional piped drainage and water treatment systems—is designed to move urban stormwater away from the built environment, green infrastructure reduces and treats stormwater at its source while delivering environmental, social and economic benefits.²
- **The traditional use of the term by the conservation planning community refers to the network of natural lands across the landscape—forests, wetlands, stream corridors, grasslands—that work together as a whole to provide ecological benefits.** This broad definition includes both landscape-scale natural features and site-scale practices ranging from reduction of impervious cover to stormwater best management practices, such as bioretention and stormwater wetlands, and everything in between.³

Green infrastructure is all the natural assets of a region—the interconnected network of woodlands, parks, wetlands, surface waters, meadows, agricultural soils and other open spaces—and site design practices. The natural environment provides a variety of essential functions, including flood protection, stormwater management, clean air and water, wildlife habitat, food, and recreational opportunities, among others, and are vital to the health and well-being of a community.

GREEN infrastructure

is

agricultural soils

+

meadows

+

open spaces

+

parks

+

surface waters

+

wetlands

+

woodlands

