

Growing Greener in Southwest Michigan

Berrien, Cass and Van Buren Counties

“An interconnected network of land and water that contributes to the health, economic well-being and quality of life for communities and people”

Americans are currently facing a variety of health problems and many of those problems have been linked to a lack of physical activity (such as heart disease, obesity, diabetes and work levels that may lead to high degrees of stress and fatigue). Businesses and law makers are left trying to find solutions to the rising costs of health care.

One solution that could potentially change the daily lives of many residents of southwest Michigan is to have every home near a green infrastructure network.

Green Infrastructure incorporates the best of our built environment with our natural environment. By linking people and nature or open spaces together, more people would have the option of getting out of their homes to enjoy the peace and calm that nature affords.

Trails, bike paths, greenways and open spaces, allow for a higher degree of physical activity. The list that follows is just a short list of the potential benefits that can be achieved by having Green Infrastructure in southwest Michigan.

Health Benefits of Green Infrastructure

- Promotes physical activity which decreases the chances for obesity
- Provides opportunities to walk or ride a bike to school or work
- Improves air quality and respiratory health
- Lessens health risks and health insurance costs
- Improves water quality
- Reduces waterborne diseases
- Alleviates mental fatigue
- Reduces stress levels

“Just as we must carefully plan for and invest in our capital infrastructure - our roads, bridges and waterlines, we must invest in our green infrastructure - our forests, wetlands, streams and rivers”.
Paris Glendening, Governor of Maryland

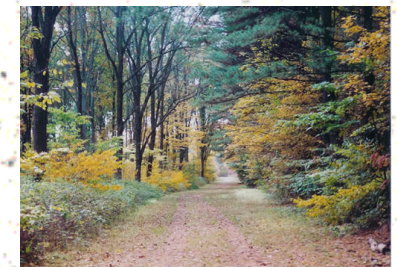
What does YOUR Green Infrastructure look like?



St. Joseph River



Galien Wetland



Russ Forest

To learn more about
Growing Greener in Southwest Michigan visit
www.swmpc.org/growgreen.asp