

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”

The continued threats to our natural environment due to land consumption and fragmentation are great. Consumption of natural landscapes are accelerating while human populations are only increasing slightly.

According to Benedict and McMahon (2001):

- In the Midwest, from 1982-1997 the increase in urbanized land was 32.23%, with an increase in population of only 7.06%! This translates into consumption of land that may be unnecessary.
- The amount of working lands in the United States has declined by nearly 20%-more than 200 million acres over the last half-century.
- Almost 2 million acres of farmland and half a million acres of private forest land are developed each year.



To learn more about
Growing Greener in Southwest
Michigan visit

[www.swmpc.org/
growgreen.asp](http://www.swmpc.org/growgreen.asp)

What are the Economic Benefits of Green Infrastructure (GI)?

GI increases home values and municipal tax revenues

- Homes located next to green space command 6-15% more than homes without this amenity.
- Greater values of homes could translate into more property tax revenue for municipalities.
- Green and healthy communities are better positioned to attract and retain workers, employers and visitors.

GI contributes to Michigan's economy

- Natural resources contributes \$63.2 billion
- Agriculture contributes \$15 billion
- Tourism contributes \$12 billion
- Forestry contributes \$9 billion

GI employs workers in Michigan

- Forestry accounts for 150,000 jobs
- Agriculture employs 100,000 workers
- Tourism accounts for 350,000 jobs