

# Growing Greener in Southwest Michigan

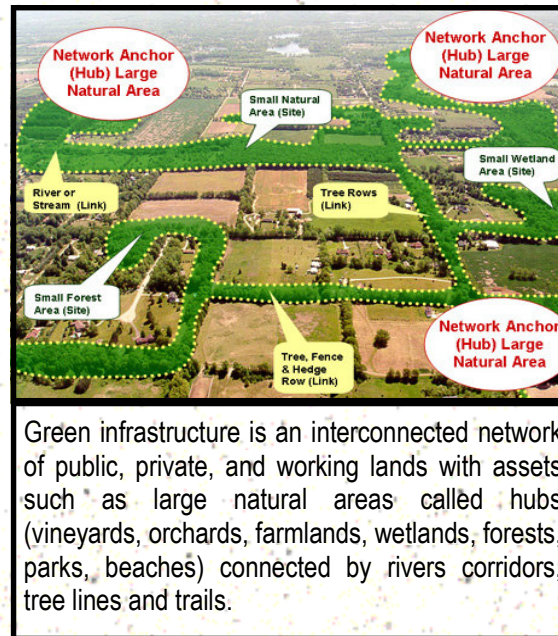
Berrien, Cass and Van Buren Counties

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

Southwest Michigan is known for its beauty and many opportunities for outdoor recreation. Therefore the protection and incorporation of these natural features into a Green Infrastructure (GI) network is essential to the continued success of our region.

## Elements of southwest Michigan's GI:

- 18,310 acres of water
- 765 lakes that are greater than or equal to one acre
- 1,023 miles of rivers and streams
- 55 miles of Lake Michigan shoreline
- 450 acres of Galien River Coastal Wetlands
- 14 public beaches
- 6 state parks
- 19 wineries



## Benefits of Green Infrastructure:

1. Enriches habitat and biodiversity.
2. Maintains natural landscape processes.
3. Increases recreational and transportation opportunities.
4. Provides people with a better connection to nature and sense of place.
5. Maintains cooler urban temperatures due to increased green space.
6. Creates green and healthy communities that attract and retain workers, employers and visitors.
7. Provides habitat for wildlife including threatened and endangered plants and animals species.
8. Provides flood control.
9. Cleanses the air by trapping dust in urban and rural areas.

## What Does Green Infrastructure Look Like in southwest Michigan?



To learn more about **Growing Greener in Southwest Michigan** please visit [www.swmpc.org/growgreen.asp](http://www.swmpc.org/growgreen.asp)