



The joy of the children playing at this schoolyard remind us that natural areas, parks and green spaces are essential for our ecological and physical health. We need green communities.

In the past, many children went out their back doors — to empty lots, town parks, nearby woods, and open fields — and freely experienced nature. All too often, children today are alienated from nature: communities frequently lack unstructured open space for kids to wander in, landowners fear lawsuits from children climbing trees, and kids engage in video games more often than in free, imaginative play. Children of all ages need access to nature for exercise, exploration, stress relief, and a sense of wonder and discovery.

Natural and green areas provide essential services such as clean air and water, wildlife habitat, food production, and recreational outlets. These areas serve as the "green infrastructure," a network of interconnected green spaces. The green infrastructure, just like your water treatment plant, is a necessity, not just an amenity, and, like sewer pipes, it needs to be connected to work right.

Care for your community by increasing green space and linking parks and natural areas together. Make sure you plan, protect, invest in, and manage natural resources, farmland, and green spaces to keep your community green for children and adults.