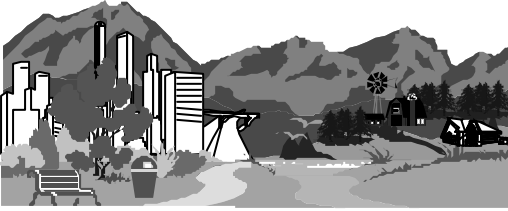


Linking Lands for Nature and People

Dr. Mark A. Benedict, The Conservation Fund
Senior Associate, Strategic Conservation & Training



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The Challenges of Growing Communities



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The Challenges of Growing Communities



Accelerated fragmentation & consumption of open land ..

- ☐ 1992-1997 = 2.2 million acres/year
- ☐ 1.5 X rate 1982-92 (1.4 mil. ac./year)
(Source: NRCS National Resources Inventory, 2000)

.. with rates exceeding population growth!

- ☐ 47.14% change in urbanized area
- ☐ 17.02% change in population
(Source: Brookings Institution, 2001)

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The Challenges of Growing Communities

✓ Ecological Consequences



✓ Social Consequences



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Public Lands and Growth



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The Challenges of Growing Communities

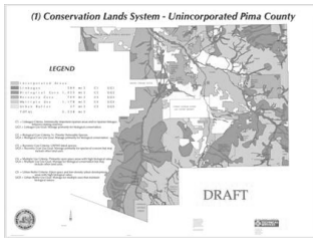
Smart Growth – Providing Tools to Guide the Pattern & Style of Development



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The Challenges of Growing Communities

Smart Conservation -
To Face Today's Conservation Challenges

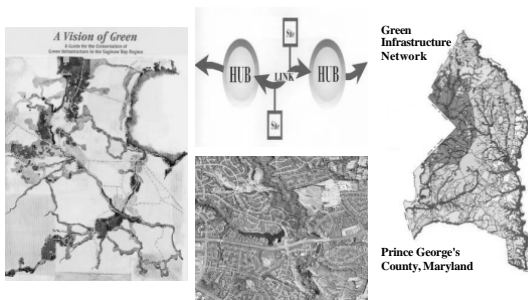


"The significant problems we face cannot be solved by the same level of thinking that created them".
Albert Einstein

"We are called to be architects of the future, not its victims".
R. Buckminster Fuller

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Networks of Interconnected Natural Lands & Open Space



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Networks of Interconnected Natural Lands & Open Space

A Wide Range of Initiatives:

The Wilderness Society – the establishment of a connected system of wildlands

The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation – parks, trails, greenways & interconnected lands to promote health / wellness

American Forests – natural systems to maximize the economic and community benefits of trees and vegetation

Rails to Trails Conservancy – a national system of recreational trails bordered by natural resource lands

The Green Infrastructure "Work Group" – networks of natural lands and other open spaces that conserve ecosystem values and functions and provide benefits to human populations

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Networks of Interconnected Natural Lands & Open Space

Diverse Landscape Elements:

- ✓ Natural Areas & Conservation Lands
- ✓ Working Forests, Farms & Ranches
- ✓ Greenways and Trails
- ✓ Other Protected Open Spaces



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Why Linked Land Networks?



Protect Resource Values

- ✓ Sustain native plants, animals & their habitats
- ✓ Maintain ecological processes & functions
- ✓ Provide clean water and air
- ✓ Reduce built infrastructure costs
- ✓ Contribute to rural economies
- ✓ Provide a land base for tourism

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Why Linked Land Networks?



Enhance Community Livability & Quality of Life

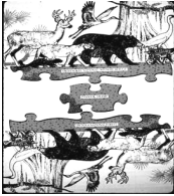
- ✓ Improve physical and mental health
- ✓ Maintain a connection to nature
- ✓ Provide sites for outdoor education
- ✓ Engage people in land stewardship
- ✓ Enhance property values
- ✓ Attract new residents and businesses

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Guiding Principles

Linkage is key!

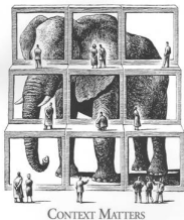
- ✓ For connecting natural areas & features!
- ✓ For connecting people & Programs!



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Guiding Principles

Context matters!



Exam: Conservation in Practice, Summer 2002

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Guiding Principles

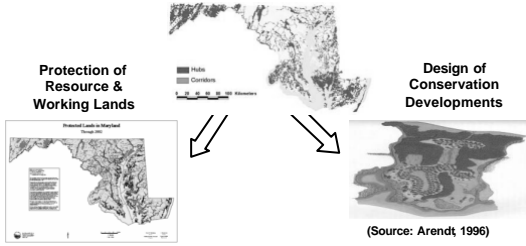
It is critical to excite and engage diverse people & communities from day one!



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Guiding Principles

Linked land networks can and should function as the framework for conservation & development!



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Infrastructure Approaches

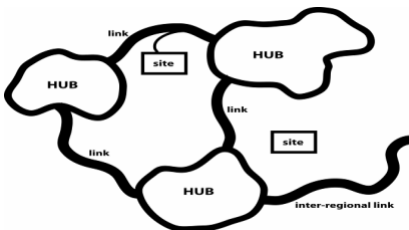
Infrastructure – “the substructure or underlying foundation on which the *continuance and growth of a community depends*” Webster’s New World Dictionary



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Infrastructure Approaches

Design networks that will function across geographic scales & political boundaries!



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Infrastructure Approaches

Identify and protect network elements before or concurrent with development / redevelopment!

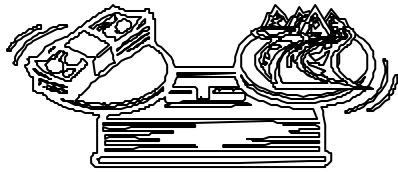


1971 St. Charles, Missouri (Outside St. Louis) 1996

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Infrastructure Approaches

Fund networks “up-front” using the full range of available financing options!



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Infrastructure Approaches

Manage / maintain network features & processes to provide essential ecological services!



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Infrastructure Approaches

Emphasize that the network is a necessity not an amenity - a "must have" not a "nice to have"!



(Source: USDA National Agroforestry Center)

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A National Roundtable on Linking Lands for Nature and People – September 12-14, 2005

40 Participants Representing:

- Livable Communities
- Conservation
- Water Resources
- Working Lands
- Health & Recreation



“to brainstorm how to better use our scarce resources, avoid duplication, educate the public and propose a course for future collaboration”

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Linking Lands Roundtable – Goals

- Understand each other's activities
- Embrace the values of interconnected networks Working Lands
- Articulate a common vision of linked lands
- Identify key actions and a process for advancing common vision & goals



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Linking Lands Roundtable - Outcomes

Why Linking Lands?

- ✓ Ecological Imperative
- ✓ Human Health & Safety Imperative
- ✓ Economic Efficiency and Sustainability
- ✓ Stewardship Ethic & Community Livability
- ✓ Planning & Coordination
- ✓ Big Messages



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Linking Lands Roundtable - Outcomes

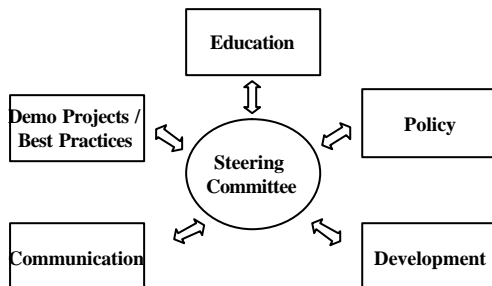
Preliminary Vision Statement

Connecting America's communities, lands, and water to efficiently and effectively protect, restore, and enhance our environment and economy for the benefit of people, communities and the natural resources on which we depend.



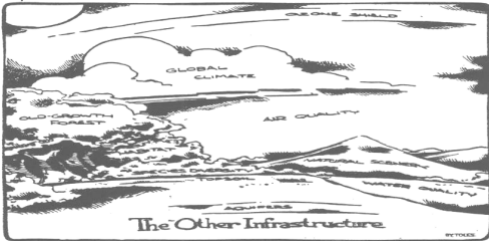
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Linking Lands Roundtable - Outcomes



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Networks of Interconnected Natural Lands & Open Space



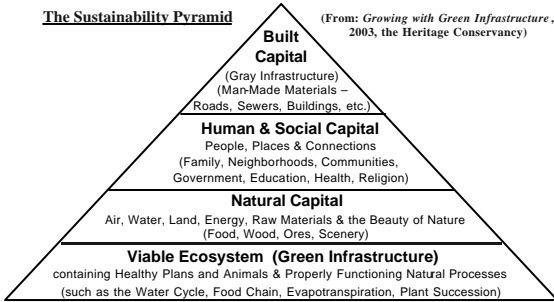
Green Infrastructure - Our World's Natural Life Support System!

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Providing a Foundation for Sustainable Communities

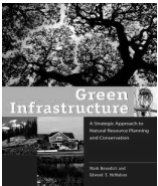
The Sustainability Pyramid

(From: *Growing with Green Infrastructure*, 2003, the Heritage Conservancy)



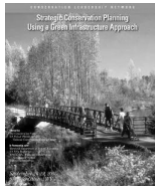
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To Learn More



←
Read the New Book -
Island Press, Spring 2006!

→
Take the Next Course -
NCTC, June 12-16, 2006!



Visit the Website - www.greeninfrastructure.net



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