



## **Parks and Green Infrastructure**

### ***Position Statement***

updated February 2, 2023

The use of green infrastructure in parks, trails and waterways is a cost-effective way for local and state governments to manage stormwater, improve water quality, and increase the resiliency of their communities in the face of climate change and more frequent extreme weather events.

Green infrastructure is the use of landscapes and natural systems to slow, reduce, capture and treat rainfall runoff where it occurs; whereas traditional “gray” infrastructure is expensive systems of pipes and concrete to transport stormwater runoff to a central location for treatment. Green infrastructure incorporates Best Management Practices, or BMPs, into park, trail and waterway systems in the form of rain gardens, infiltration basins, bioswales, pervious surfaces, flood plain restorations, and native tree and vegetative plantings.

Many parks, trails and other public recreational amenities are appropriate and attractive locations to implement green infrastructure because they are already publicly owned and operated. Incorporating green infrastructure into these locations elevates their value to the public, especially when viewed as an economical means to reduce flooding and improve water quality. Additional benefits of green infrastructure in park systems include:

- Opportunities to leverage funding from multiple grant funding sources for park, trail or waterway rehabilitation projects, resulting in minimal costs to local communities
- Creating a more varied park landscape with greater biodiversity and habitat types, including pollinator-friendly habitat
- Meeting the current and evolving needs and interests of an increasingly inclusive population of park and trail users
- Greater engagement opportunities for environmental education
- Investing in improvements to previously underserved areas of the community
- Economic revitalization of adjoining areas and increased property values
- Fewer mowed areas, resulting in lower park maintenance costs and emissions

While PRPS is very supportive of the increased use of green infrastructure in parks and other recreation areas, it affirms that such efforts be accompanied by a plan to maintain the infrastructure, have a means to fund the maintenance tasks and proper equipment, and appropriately train park personnel in how to maintain the infrastructure.