

GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE

Advancing Nature-Based Solutions to Urban Challenges

The Big Picture

Our economy is fully embedded in nature. Even in growing cities, we are surrounded by complex natural systems that we need to be working with rather than against.

Working with nature is a cost-effective and comprehensive approach to addressing our most pressing urban issues. By mimicking nature's systems, we tap into a vast network of increased benefits.

FIVE TYPES OF CAPITAL

FINANCIAL | BUILT | HUMAN | SOCIAL | **NATURAL**

We're quite good at valuing financial and built capital, and we're not bad at considering human and social capital. But we often leave natural capital completely out of the picture. A sustainable economy requires balanced consideration and maintenance of all five capitals.

CAPITAL =
THE RESOURCES
THAT KEEP OUR
COMMUNITIES
RUNNING

PROTECTING NATURE + BUILDING WITH NATURE

Green infrastructure combines **natural + built capital** to address urban challenges. It provides many **valuable co-benefits** that often make it more practical, resilient, cost-effective, and equitable than grey infrastructure alone.



Holistic Analysis

An expanded benefit-cost framework is needed to better capture the value of these many co-benefits. We take a holistic approach to assessing each project and valuing the assets and outcomes. This approach allows us to make a stronger case for projects like Thornton Creek in Seattle. By introducing ecosystem services and social and community benefits to the framework, we were able to nearly double the estimated benefits and move the city forward on a green infrastructure solution instead of a proposed grey infrastructure alternative.

THE KRESGE FOUNDATION

EARTH 
ECONOMICS

Our Approach

Using economics and systems thinking, Earth Economics makes the case for investing in nature via green infrastructure solutions. We help communities move their projects forward with the following services that can be scaled and tailored to project needs.



AWARENESS BUILDING

Awareness building is a key component of each stage of the project development process. By engaging stakeholders in the value of a project, we build public support, empower decision-makers, and knock down critical barriers.

Presentations - Either virtually or on-site, we'll introduce participants to key concepts and vocabulary for understanding natural capital, green infrastructure, and their economic contributions to communities.

Workshops - Through hands-on workshops, we can help your community gain a deeper understanding of how to take nature into account to address the specific challenges it faces.

Messaging - We'll work with your group to develop values-based definitions that build broad support.

Engagement Strategy - We'll help you build a strategy for engaging and activating key stakeholders around economic concepts and values-based messaging.



PLACE-BASED ANALYSIS

Through place-based analysis, we dive deep into the details of a community's natural assets and how they can be utilized in addressing local challenges.

Ecosystem Service Valuation - Earth Economics analysts use our own, constantly updated, comprehensive database of ecosystem service values to calculate the value of nature's benefits in your community.

Mapping - We use GIS to visualize the complex spatial relationships among the five types of capital.

Holistic Benefit-Cost Analysis - By employing our expanded framework of benefits and costs, we demonstrate greater value, consider more beneficiaries, and engage more stakeholders.

Economic Impact Studies - From job creation, to tax revenue, to tourism dollars, our analysts use numbers to tell the story of natural capital contributions to local economies.



POLICY & FINANCE RECOMMENDATIONS

We identify and develop innovative approaches and practical financing strategies to preserve, enhance, and restore natural capital assets, and we help communities and organizations interpret the policies and navigate the procedures that govern them.

Funding Mechanisms - From bonds, to grants, to cost-sharing, we help you identify and access a broad range of funding sources to develop, implement, and maintain projects at the scale that's needed.

Policy Interpretation - Economists can be pretty wonky. We'll examine the fine print and identify exactly how it affects your project.

Policy Development - We work with policymakers to better consider natural capital in order to develop policies that properly incentivize and fund nature-based solutions.

Through our partnership with the Kresge Foundation, these services are being offered to Kresge grantees in order to help them move green infrastructure forward in their communities. Interested grantees and non-grantees alike should get in touch via the email address below to discuss how our work can support your efforts, regardless of where you are in the project development process. We can work with you from concept to case-making.

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