

# Sustainable Schoolyards

Sustainable Schoolyards create a smart, healthier and more livable community. This exhibit illustrates some of the outdoor classroom concepts, ecological teaching tools, and creative play ideas that can be added to almost any schoolyard in America. The features included in this design are already present in schools across the country and all are easily replicable.

Explore our exhibit and learn how Sustainable Schoolyards contribute to active living, sustainable communities, and smart growth. We hope you will take home to your schools and communities some of the ideas and examples you see here. Enjoy!

For more information visit: [www.sustainableschoolyard.org](http://www.sustainableschoolyard.org).

## Benefits of Sustainable Schoolyards

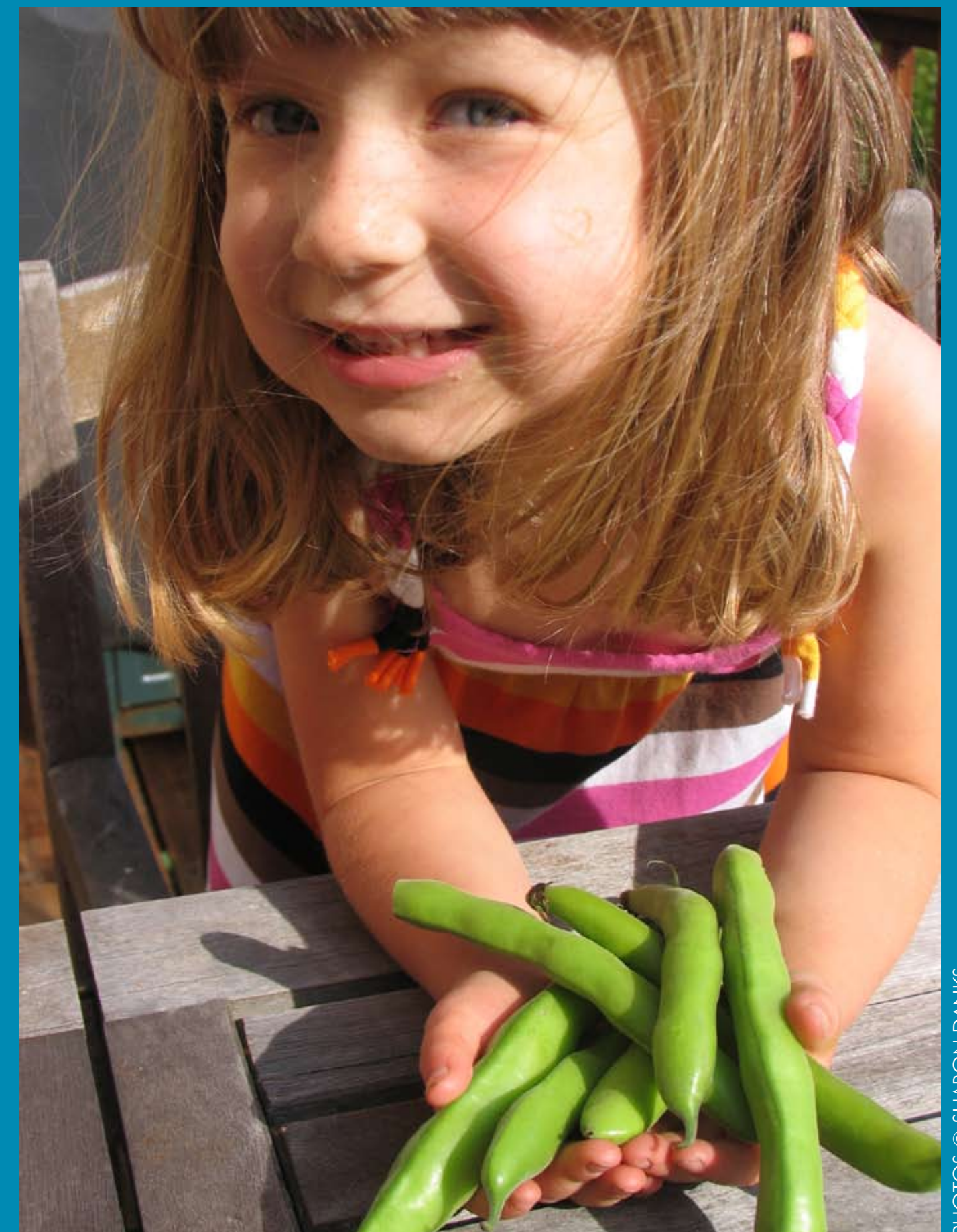
Sustainable Schoolyards create and maintain healthy and dynamic learning environments that demonstrate interconnectedness and a sense of place. Children, teachers, parents and the community design, grow, and maintain these community assets. Schools are a center of learning and growing — not only for children's development, but for the entire community.

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### Exhibitors: Friends of Smart Growth & Sustainable Communities

We are a diverse group of national organizations that have come together to create this exhibit. Learn more about the organizations actively working for smart growth and the greening of America by visiting our Web site [www.sustainableschoolyard.org](http://www.sustainableschoolyard.org).

**Designer: Bay Tree Design, Inc. ~ [www.baytreedesign.com](http://www.baytreedesign.com)**



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# From Schoolyards to . . . Active Communities

A green schoolyard is an ideal place to attract students and nearby residents on foot or bike. When schools are located in the same neighborhoods as the children they serve, more kids walk or bike to school. When schools are centers of their community — places where people go to play, learn, and gather — more walkable places result. Providing opportunities for people to walk, rather than drive, also helps to reduce greenhouse gases that contribute to climate change. Walkable communities encourage more exercise, healthier life styles and promote less driving — but they don't happen by accident.

Great communities take great planning. By working together with neighborhood groups, local government officials such as mayors and county leaders, businesspeople, builders, and many others create the best places to live, work, and play.

The link between peoples' health, community design, and the effect on health and travel is very important. Active communities encourage physical activity as a routine part of daily life; emphasize accessibility and safety for pedestrians such as bike lanes and crosswalks; create parks and other public spaces that are within walking distance of every person; and design places that are inviting and comfortable for all.

Do you live in an active community? How many places are within a quarter of a mile of your home? Within one-half mile? Is there a park or recreation area nearby? Are there sidewalks and bike lanes for you to use? Get involved and help make your community more walkable and healthier.

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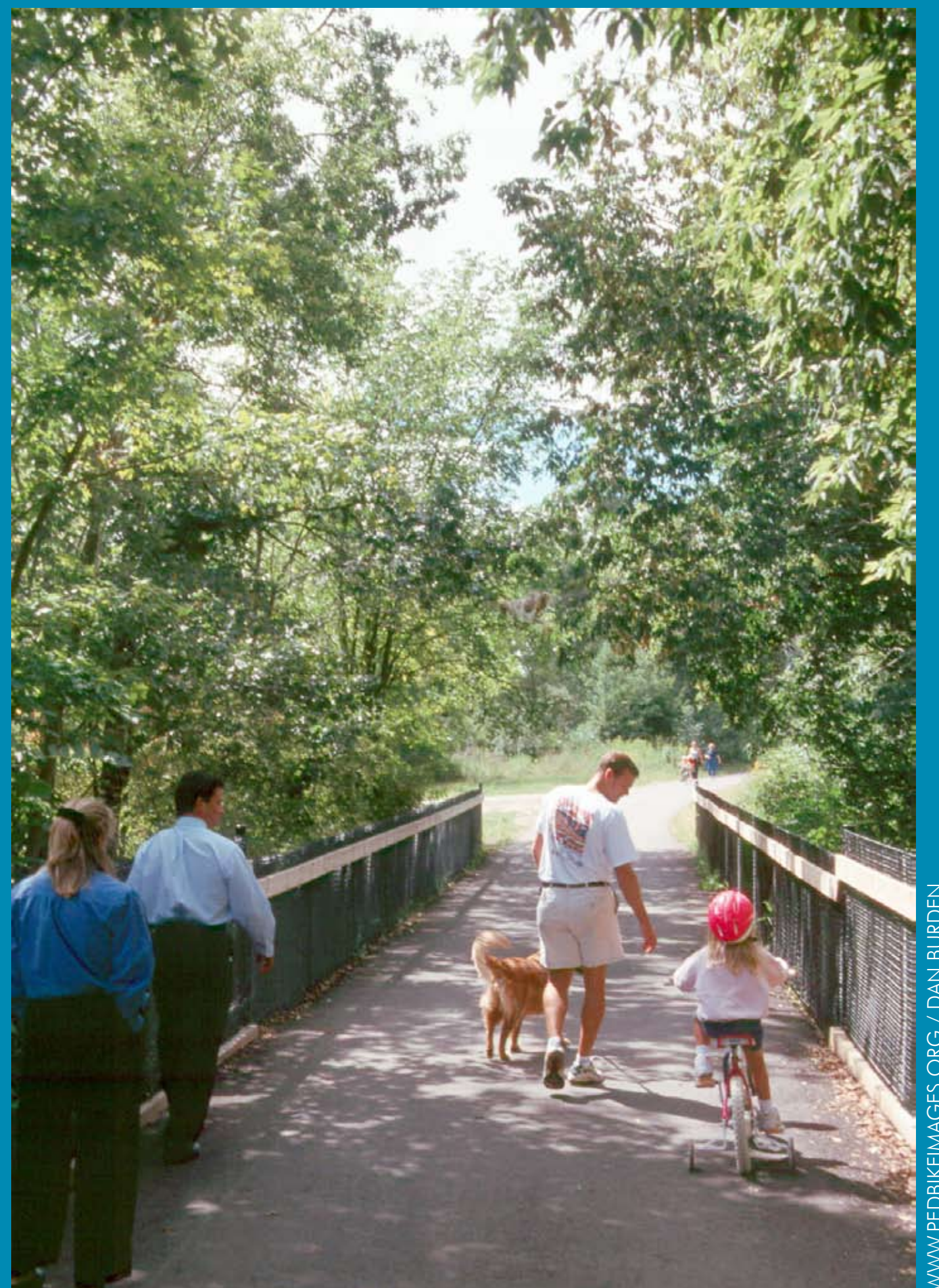
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# From Schoolyards to . . . Livable Communities

## What Makes a Neighborhood a Great Place to Live?

Work, school, shops, parks, and places to meet friends are all close by. Walking or biking is the easiest way to get there. The mix of uses creates a buzz of activity most hours of the day.

Wide sidewalks are lined with healthy trees and dotted with flashes of flowerbeds. Fresh, healthy food grown on nearby farms is featured at local eateries and plentiful at the weekly farmers' market.

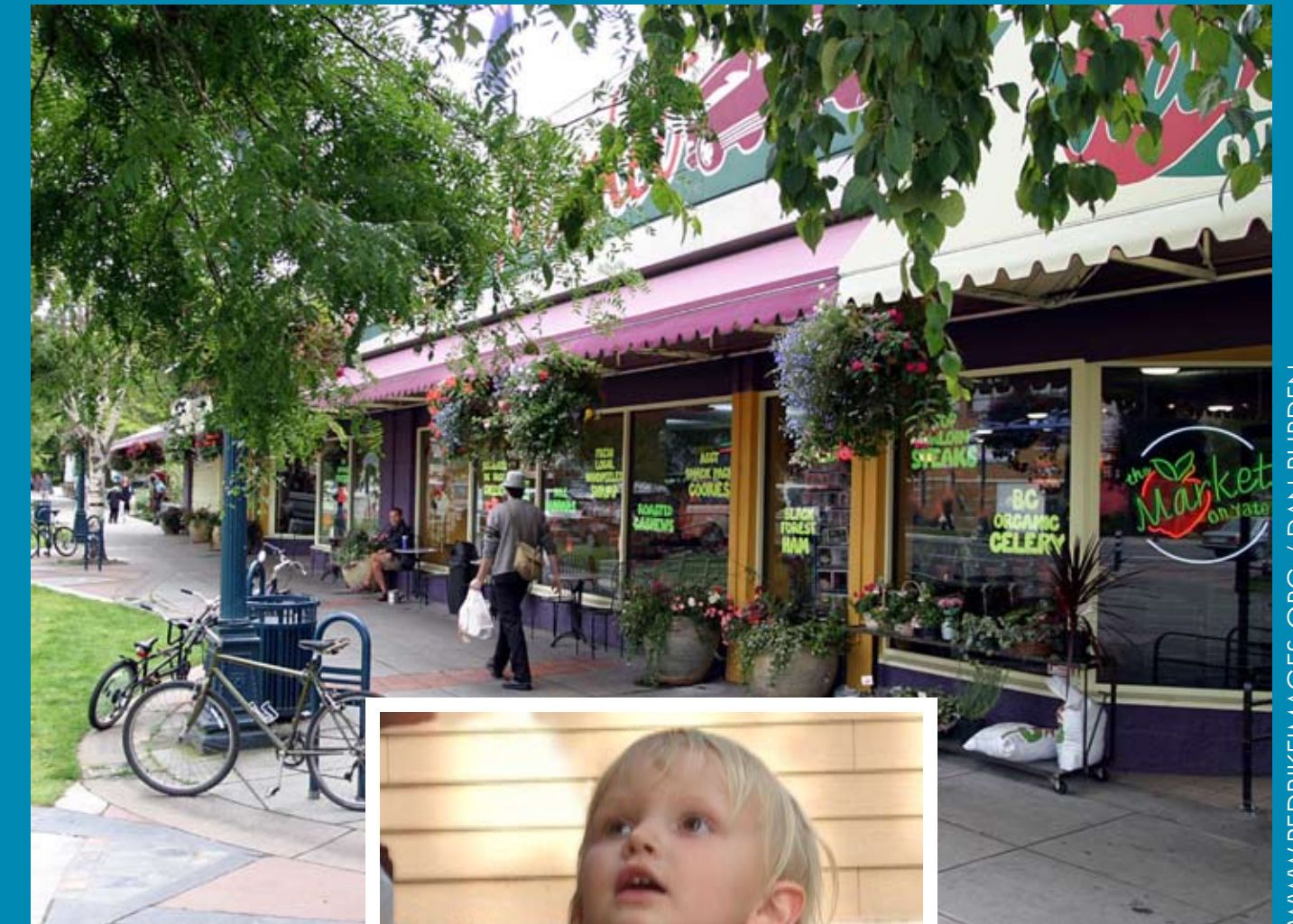
People live above the shops or in nearby affordable homes, the value of which is protected by all the community has to offer.

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**APA**  
American Planning Association  
*Making Great Communities Happen*  
[planning.org](http://planning.org)

**REALTOR**

**NACO** National Association of Counties  
*The Voice of America's Counties*

**THE CONSERVATION FUND**  
*America's Partner in Conservation*

**American Farmland Trust**  
SAVING THE LAND THAT SUSTAINS US

**SMART GROWTH NETWORK**

**THE CLOUD INSTITUTE FOR SUSTAINABILITY EDUCATION**

**CONCERN, Inc.**



# From Schoolyards to . . . Green Communities

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.

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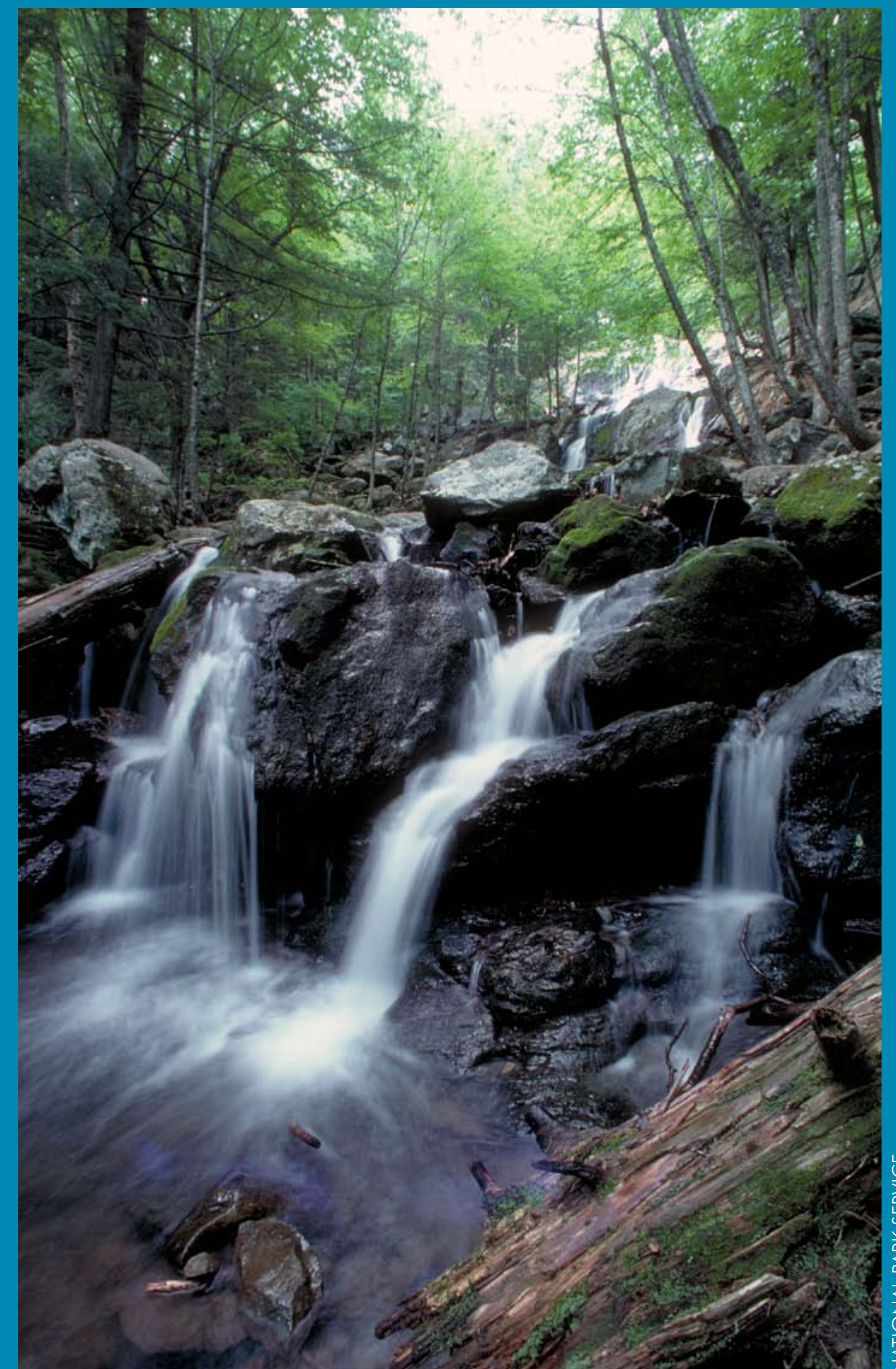
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