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## By Jennifer Bernazani-Ludlum - "Greening" Infrastructure

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This spring, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) announced a strategic agenda to help communities reduce stormwater pollution and energy use through green infrastructure. The agenda includes efforts to provide tools, training, and technical support to stakeholders to promote green infrastructure throughout the nation. Simultaneously, two EPA divisions issued a memorandum encouraging green infrastructure as a way to meet Clean Water Act permitting requirements and manage wet weather in a cost-effective, sustainable and environmentally beneficial way.

### What is Green Infrastructure?

Green infrastructure is the term applied to a variety of approaches designed to reduce, capture, reuse and filter stormwater at its source before it reaches the sewer system. Green infrastructure can be used alone or to supplement conventional surface and subsurface drainage systems.

Site-specific practices can include green roofs, rain gardens, infiltration planters, tree boxes and vegetated swales. These components are designed to infiltrate, evapotranspire, capture and reuse stormwater. Incorporation of technologies such as permeable pavement and rainwater harvesting for landscape irrigation and non-potable tasks can make green infrastructure applications even more effective.

### Why use Green Infrastructure?

Clearly, green infrastructure benefits the environment: decreasing storm-water volume and pollutant content, filtering pollutants to improve air quality and assisting in groundwater recharge, among other benefits.

But green infrastructure can also have a positive impact on your bottom line. Increasing green space on and around buildings, helps shade and insulate them from temperature extremes, reducing heating and cooling costs. Incorporation of green infrastructure can result in savings on capital costs due to a reduced need for traditional stormwater ponds and treatment measures. Green infrastructure also provides properties with enhanced aesthetic and natural resource benefits and has been found to increase property values.

These days, conservation, fiscal and otherwise, is often cited as the way to achieve a sustainable future. The wide variety of green infrastructure technologies can help you to conserve both funds and the environment.

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