The Economic and Intrinsic Values of Parks

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SESSION DESCRIPTION
Can you imagine a world without parks? Parks are not only beautiful places to recreate, but they provide a wealth of value both economically and intrinsically to individuals and communities. The benefits and contributions that parks generate are long known and quantified in this session. Next time someone asks you why you do what you do, you’ll be able to tell them how important these public lands and your agency are!

SESSION LEARNING OBJECTIVES
- Identify the economic, ecological, community and other values of parks and public lands.
- Describe the value of parks on a personal level in order to develop an accurate and effective communication about parks for sharing with the public and fellow employees.
- Describe the emerging science of ecosystem services and markets and understand how these services can influence the value of parks and public lands.
- Understand ways to communicate the values of parks in a broader and more deliberate way with the goal of gaining broader support for your park agency or organization.
What are the multiple roles of parks and open space?
Economic Development

Civic and Social Capital

Parks as Community Places

Public Health

Civic and Social Capital

Park-making as civic engagement

Public Health

Clean Air and Water
Public Health
Physical Activity

Public Health
Vitamin N(ature)

Education
Weeding and Writing

Education
Beyond Buildings

Culture Expression
What are the benefits to assigning parks these multiple roles?

The proper hierarchy of planning is life, space, and buildings, not buildings, space, and life. Jan Gehl

Funding

ISTEA and TEA21

$3 BILLION for Bike & Pedestrian Projects

Parks Partnerships

Economic Dev.  
Chambers of Commerce  
Tourism Bureau  
Governmental BIDs

Public Health  
Hospitals  
Health Clubs  
YMCA's  
Sports Orgs  
Public Health Orgs.

Civic & Social 
Capital  
Hospice's  
Assn.  
Churches  
Election Board  
Housing Authorities  
Gated Communities

Green Infrastructure  
Environmental Orgs  
Water Authorities  
Bike Datas

Urban Form  
Real Estate Developers  
Metro Planning Orgs  
Airport Transportation Orgs.

Cultural Expression  
Dance  
Music  
Film  
Theaters  
Museums  
Exposition Orgs.

Education  
Schools  
Child Care Agencies  
Library Orgs  
Job Training Programs

Park Partnerships  
Business Orgs  
Commerce  
Tourism Bureau  
Corporations  
BID's

Environmental Orgs  
Water Authorities  
Birders  
Bike Clubs  
Schools  
PTA's  
Child Care Agencies  
Literacy Orgs.  
Job Training Programs  
Urban Form  
Real Estate Developers  
Metro Planning Orgs  
Adjacent towns  
Transportation Depts.

Election Boards  
Housing Authorities  
Gated Communities  
Civic & Social Capital

Expand Constituencies

How do we maximize assigning parks these multiple roles?
Connect

Research

“Our new study of over 3,800 inner city children revealed that living in areas with green space has a long term positive impact on children’s weight and thus health,” added Liu, of the Indiana University School of Medicine.

Dr. Liu, Dr. Wilson and study co-author Janice F. Bell, Ph.D., MPH, note that further research is required …… “Ideally, this research will be multidisciplinary – involving city planners, architects, geographers, psychologists and public health researchers – and will consider the ways children live and play in urban environments.”

Communicate the benefits

Multiple Roles of Parks and Open Space

- Green Infrastructure
- Economic Development
- Civic and Social Capital
- Public Health
- Education
- Cultural Expression
- Urban Form
- Recreation

Benefits to assigning parks these multiple roles

- Better Community Design
- Funding
- Expanded Partnerships
- Expanded Constituencies

Maximize these new park roles

- Connect with others who share your goals
- Research to provide LOCAL examples
- Communicate the benefits
The future of parks is in our hands.....
Parks: Economic Stimulus for the Long Term

Megan Lewis, AICP
Great Lakes Parks Training Institute, February 23, 2010

Benifits of Parks and Open Space

- Health
- Community
- Beauty
- Quality of life
- And the bottom line

Image Problem

- Public expense – not revenue
- Extra amenity – not necessity
- Luxury for “the good times” – not during economic downturn

Both Sides of the Economic Picture

Can see this in three ways:

- Income to a community
- Savings for a community
- Environmental services provided to a community

Income to a Community

- Land Values and Property Taxes
- Economic Development
- Job Development
- Tourism Value
- Attracting Retirees
Land Values and Property Taxes

Central Park

$13 million
$209 million
1500% return
90% annually

Chattanooga, Tennessee

Land Values and Property Taxes

Middleton, Wisconsin

Economic Development

$254 million
$74 million
Nearly 30% spent locally

Economic Development

11% higher prices
30% higher quality

Job Development
Tourism Value

San Antonio, Texas

Attracting Retirees

- Mobile
- Active
- Expendable Income
- “Positive taxpayers”
- Local financial base

What You Can Do

- Identify community issues and connect to parks
- Promote and enhance existing amenities
- Program activities for population groups
- Measure and report the results

Savings for a Community

- Conservation versus Development
- Cluster Development versus Sprawl Development

Conservation versus Development
Cluster Development versus Sprawl Development

Amherst, Massachusetts

What You Can Do

- Estimate cost of services
- Promote land conservation
- Support cluster development – affordable housing
- Connect back to income generation aspects of conservation

Environmental Services

- Climate Management and Energy Demand
- Flood and Stormwater Management

Energy Demand and Climate Management

What You Can Do

- Inventory Natural Resources and Identify Services
- Compare Functions to “Hard” Infrastructure Costs
- Pursue Project Funding: Great Lakes Restoration Initiative Funds
For More Information

- American Planning Association: www.planning.org
- American Farmland Trust: www.aft.org
- Trust for Public Land: www.tpl.org

Direct Additional Questions to:

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Ecosystem Services

- Recreation and Cultural Benefits
- Stormwater Storage
- Water Purification
- Water Availability
- Climate Regulation
- Food & Fiber Provisioning
- Energy & Biofuel
- Ecosystem Resiliency
- Climate Change Adaptation/Mitigation

Defining Ecosystem Services

Revenue Streams – Banks & Offsets

- Wetland & Stream Mitigation
- Carbon Offsets
- Water Quality Offsets
  - Nutrient Load Reduction
  - Sediment Loading
- Wildlife/Biodiversity Offsets
- Air Quality

The Carbon Market Approach

Register the forest with a Carbon Exchange and sell the carbon offsets generated by the trees and reinvest in the community.

- Maintain and manage habitat
- Generate jobs
- Sell the carbon credits
- Sequester Carbon and other GHG
- Economic and environmental development

Ecosystem Services vs. Engineered Services

Human Impacts Affect Ecosystem Function
Categories of Impacts

- Land Use
  - Impervious Cover
  - Soil Compaction
  - Soil Erosion
- Stormwater Conveyance
- Pollution
  - Point-Source
  - Non-Point Source
  - Brownfield
- Invasive Species

Trends in Ecosystem Service Values

- Emergence of PES* / Offset Markets
  - Carbon
  - Water Quality
  - Habitat
- Earmarks For Green Infrastructure
- “Undeveloping”

* PES = Payment for Ecosystem Services

Implementation

Calumet Area Land Use Plan

Calumet Open Space Reserve

Earmarks For Green Infrastructure

“Undeveloping”
Hydrological
Ecological
Nutrient

Watershed Characterization
- Baugo Creek Watershed
- Assess wetland loss
- Characterize watershed
- Determine highest priority streams for restoration

Planning, Prioritization and Implementation

Step Down Regional Frameworks:
• Scalable, performance based, and outcome oriented
• Multitude of stakeholder (municipalities, industry, agriculture, private land owners, NGOs)
• Low Impact Development
  • Decentralized stormwater management
  • Commercial, industrial, agriculture and residential

Water Resource Management
• Hydrologic Modeling
• Flood Risk and Storm Water Engineering
• Ground Water / Aquifer Modeling
• Watershed, Lake & Stream Enhancement

Today, nonpoint source pollution remains the nation's largest source of water quality problems.
Indiana Dunes State Park ~ Porter County, Indiana

Marquette Park Lakefront East Project
- Enhance access to and circulation within the park
- Ecological restoration
- Provide new recreational and educational amenities
- Restore signature historic facilities
- Reinvigorate the park as a regional destination

Image courtesy of Hitchcock Design Group

Creating Destination Through Restoration

Coffee Creek Watershed Preserve
- 5 miles of multiuse trails
- 3,000 linear feet streambank restoration
- New native landscapes
- Riparian forest restoration
- Sustainable stormwater management

Great Konomick River Restoration
Creating an Action Plan

**Scoping & Prioritization**
- Identify High Priority Ecosystem Services
- Identify and Involve Key Stakeholders
- Identify and Screen Available Information Resources
- Identify Potential Funding Sources / Markets

**Ecosystem Assessment**
- Inventory Ecosystem Resources
  - Land
  - Water
  - Biological
  - Cultural
- Assess Impacts to Ecosystems
  - Land Use Impacts
  - Pollution and Toxicity Impacts
  - Invasive Species Impacts
  - Existing and Planned/Expected Impacts
  - Positive and Negative Impacts

**Action Planning**
- Conceptual Project Design
- Economic Impact Assessment
  - Value-Added / Cost-Benefit
  - Preliminary Screening of Many Projects
  - In-Depth Assessment of Best Projects
- Ordinance Review
- Funding Pursuit

*Example Site*

Image courtesy of Hitchcock Design Group
Green Infrastructure

- Design, Engineering, Implementation
- Bio Swales & Rain Gardens
- Storm Water Management
- Wastewater Treatment Wetlands
- Habitat Protection & Preservation

Conservation Planning & Restoration

- Ecological Inventories
- Water Resource Assessments
- High Value Habitat Assessments
- Cultural / Historical Assessments
- Recreational / Quality of Life

Low Impact Development

Site Assessments
- Topography
- Hydrology

Site Design & Engineering

LEED-ND Planning & Design

Permitting & Compliance

Project Implementation

Sustainable Landscapes

- Reduced mowing ($)
- Reduced chemical treatments ($)
- Energy conservation ($)
- Reduce/prevent pollution
- Reduce soil erosion
- Improved water quality
- Increase wildlife habitat
- Beautification/aesthetics
Maximizing Use of Open Space

Combined costs of install and maintenance for natural landscapes over a 10-year period may be one-fifth the costs for conventional landscape maintenance.

Questions?

Thank You
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