

# THE AMERICAN GREENWAYS PROGRAM



THE CONSERVATION FUND

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## What is a Greenway?

Greenways are corridors of protected public and private land established along rivers, stream valleys, ridges, abandoned railroad corridors, utility rights-of-way, canals, scenic roads or other linear features. Greenways often link recreational, cultural, and ecological features while improving network pathways for people and wildlife. Greenways also function as buffers to protect forests, wetlands, grasslands, and rivers and provide a multitude of benefits for people, wildlife and the economy.

- In cities and other urban areas, greenways can encompass natural or man-made features and can be managed primarily for resource conservation or recreation. Urban greenways can stimulate the local economy and improve the community's image.

- In the countryside, greenways are planned natural corridors linking large natural areas like state parks, national forests, or wildlife refuges. Rural greenways preserve native habitats and wildlife migration routes and can be an impetus to restore environmentally valuable landscapes. In conjunction with existing and proposed recreational trail systems, rural greenways will form the heart of America's network of greenways.

From the hills of inland America to the beaches and barrier islands of the coast, greenways provide a vast network linking our nation's special places and providing a whole that is truly greater than the sum of its parts.

## What are the benefits of greenways?

No other conservation initiative provides so many ecological, economic, and quality of life benefits to the communities that create them. Greenways not only protect environmentally important lands and native plants and animals, they also link people with the natural world and outdoor recreational opportunities.

### *Greenways can also:*

- Help preserve the biological diversity of plant and animal species by maintaining the connection between natural communities.
- Soften urban and suburban landscapes with ribbons of green that improve the quality of life and enhance property values.
- Help protect the quantity and quality of water -a natural resource vital to people, plants, and wildlife.
- Direct development and growth away from important natural resource areas.
- Provide alternative transportation routes that connect people, communities, and the countryside.
- Act as outdoor classrooms.
- Provide the possibility for joint-use partnerships along corridors with sewer, utility, and fiber-optic lines and railroad interests.
- Protect our nation's cultural heritage.

## **What is the American Greenways Program?**

The American Greenways Program is a program of The Conservation Fund, a national organization committed to land and water conservation. American Greenways was created to help assemble a national network of linked natural areas and other open spaces. The program serves as an umbrella organization, promoting the greenways concept at the national, state, regional, and local levels. It provides professional and technical assistance to interested citizens, private landowners, non-profit and for-profit organizations, and government agencies.

Through the formation of conservation partnerships, American Greenways operates by working with state agencies as well as private and public efforts at the grassroots level. American Greenways helps create state and regional greenway networks and fosters the establishment of local level greenway projects.

## **How can you help?**

We invite you to join the growing partnership of individuals, organizations, communities and public agencies working to foster a national network of greenways. We encourage you to provide greenway leadership in your community by utilizing the information from these fact sheets to promote the establishment of greenways in your area. For additional information, contact us at:

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