

# Green Infrastructure



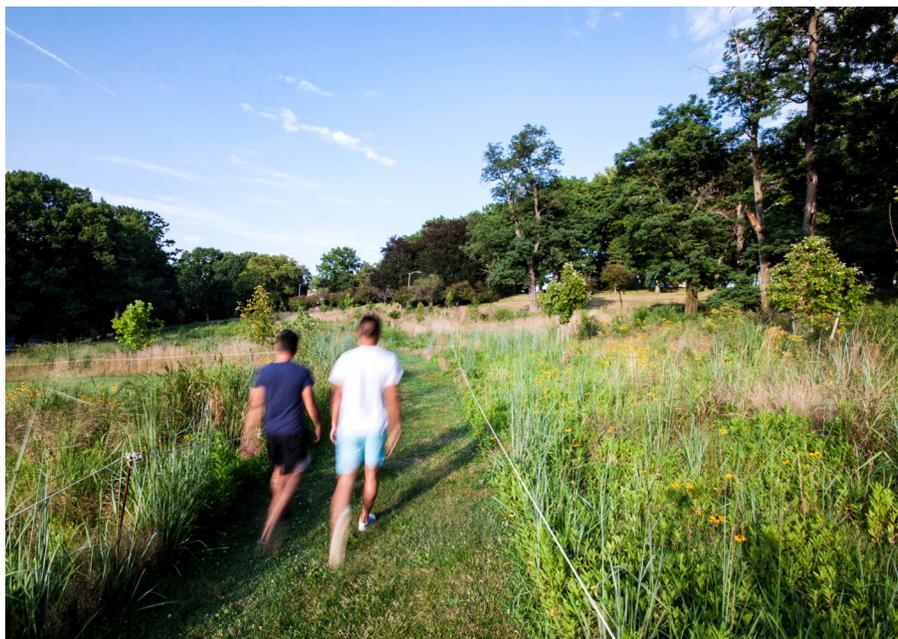
## Pittsburgh Parks Conservancy leads in green infrastructure stormwater management

As a principal environmental champion for the Pittsburgh region, the Parks Conservancy's continued focus on green infrastructure is a natural fit. Green infrastructure aims to improve community assets - like meadows that both manage stormwater and provide aesthetically pleasing community spaces - while reducing flooding and erosion, and providing or maintaining wildlife habitat. **Green infrastructure installations manage storm water while also keeping our greenspaces beautiful and healthy.** The economic and health benefits of vibrant greenspaces are well-known, and key in our city's

continued upward trajectory. Indeed, parks play a key role in the City of Pittsburgh and Pittsburgh Water and Sewage Authority's **Green First** plan, and the Parks Conservancy's rich experience in green infrastructure installations offers a unique opportunity to bring their benefits to our entire region.

The Pittsburgh Parks Conservancy has long been a leading advocate for green infrastructure in our region, working natural

stormwater management elements into every major park improvement project since the early 2000's. **Ecological restoration** (creating or restoring an ecological community), natural green infrastructure (optimizing existing ecological communities that filter stormwater via their natural structure, such as leaves or root systems), and **built green infrastructure** (constructing landscape elements to naturally manage stormwater) have been an integral part of each park project - from Mellon Square to the Westinghouse Memorial, August Wilson Park to the Frick Environmental Center, and every one in between.



*At the Beacon Street Meadow in Schenley Park, plants selected for their high water absorption capabilities look beautiful while controlling stormwater.*

Parks Conservancy projects that have significant green infrastructure components are all around our city. The **Babbling Brook at Highland Park** was one of the city's first green infrastructure projects. Careful design turned a deteriorating set of historic steps located off the eastern section of the Reservoir Drive loop into a stream channel that naturally dechlorinates and cleans water from the reservoir water treatment plant. **The Highland Park Seasonal Pools** along Washington

Boulevard were dug into a former lawn to collect stormwater from the park's hills, allowing it to seep into the ground rather than flood the surrounding land and roads.

Across town, the [Schenley Park Visitor Center Rain Garden and rain barrels](#) direct all water flow from the roof of the Visitor Center into a rain garden and collection of five rain barrels, allowing it to be used for non-potable purposes or to be absorbed into the park instead of into the overworked sewer system. In the southwest part of our region, the [McKinley Park Entrance and Rain Gardens](#) project improved accessibility, restored a historic stone wall and steps dating to the 1930s, and installed a porous asphalt parking lot and path that allows stormwater to be absorbed into the ground.

Schenley Park – with its geographically key location within Panther Hollow and Four Mile Run Watersheds – has several Parks Conservancy green infrastructure projects in place. The [Schenley Park Beacon Street Meadow](#), with its carefully chosen plants whose structure and root systems absorb water, works in tandem with large gravel-filled [Infiltration Trenches](#) to control stormwater. Park-goers have a lovely pathway that winds through wildflowers, while underground natural elements naturally absorb excess stormwater.

The northeast section of Schenley Park is home to the [Bob O'Connor Memorial Golf Course Retentive Grading](#), consisting of mounds of earth and plantings carefully placed to slow, direct, and absorb stormwater. Those passing along Schenley Drive see landscaped slopes of green as they wind down to the [George Westinghouse Memorial](#). The renewed Westinghouse Memorial's green infrastructure components

are a model of how stormwater improvements can help protect and enhance our public spaces with beauty, performance, and wildlife diversity. Meadows, native grasses, and rain gardens all work to reduce sewer overflows, flooding, and erosion problems in the larger Four Mile Run Watershed. Nearby Frick Park has the [Frick Environmental Center site](#), with an intricate stormwater management system that includes roof water collection, underground piping and holding tanks, and cascading ponds that allow natural reabsorption of water into the park.

The Parks Conservancy's green infrastructure work in the coming year includes projects in McKinley Park funded by a Great Urban Parks Campaign grant from the National Recreation and Park Association and American Planning Association. "The Parks Conservancy's green infrastructure work brings value to Pittsburgh through stormwater management and improved health of park ecosystems, supportive habitat for plants and animals, and visual enhancement of the park landscape," said Pittsburgh Parks Conservancy Director of Community Relations Heather Sage. With dedicated regional and national partnerships and support from generous park donors, the Pittsburgh Parks Conservancy will continue to be a leading force in green infrastructure, bringing its economic, health, and park amenity benefits to all in our city.

For more information about the Parks Conservancy's green infrastructure work, please visit [www.pittsburghparks.org](http://www.pittsburghparks.org), or contact Senior Restoration Ecologist Erin Copeland at [ecopeland@pittsburghparks.org](mailto:ecopeland@pittsburghparks.org) or 412.412.682-7275 ex 111.



*Tranquil trails wind along the Seasonal Pools designed to mitigate stormwater and help reduce flooding. Highland Park's Seasonal Pools also maintain wildlife habitat and keep parkland beautiful for all to enjoy.*



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