

Activity 2: Economic Benefits of Ecosystems Information Sheet

Ecosystems provide economic benefits.

Corporate CEOs say quality of life for employees is the third-most important factor in locating a business, behind only access to domestic markets and availability of skilled labor. Owners of small companies ranked recreation/parks/open space as the highest priority in choosing a new location for their business (Economic Benefits of Open Space, Trust for Public Land, 1999). In the year 2000 alone, the economic value of insect-pollinated crops in the United States was estimated to be between \$20 and \$40 billion. Thus, the loss of pollinator species could lead to a series of devastating losses to our economy and food supply. (*Endangered by Sprawl: How Runaway Development Threatens America's Wildlife*, National Wildlife Federation, 2005—www.nwf.org)

“The real estate market consistently demonstrates that many people are willing to pay a larger amount for a property located close to parks and open space areas than for a home that does not offer this amenity,” writes John L. Crompton, a professor at Texas A&M University who has published extensive research on parks and recreation. (*Why America Needs More City Parks & Open Space*, Paul Sherer prepared for Trust for Public Land, 2003—www.tpl.org)

American Forests (a conservation organization) estimates that trees in the nation’s metropolitan areas

save the cities \$400 billion in the cost of building stormwater retention facilities. Yet natural tree cover has declined by as much as 30 percent in many cities over the last several decades. (*Why America Needs More City Parks & Open Space*)

A study of 27 water suppliers conducted by the Trust for Public Land and the American Water Works Association in 2002 found that more forest cover in a watershed results in lower treatment costs. According to the study, for every 10 percent increase in forest cover in the source area, treatment and chemical costs decreased approximately 20 percent, and approximately 50 to 55 percent of the variation in treatment costs can be explained by the percentage of forest cover in the source area. (*Protecting the Source: Land Conservation & the Future of America's Drinking Water*, Trust for Public Land, 2004—www.tpl.org)

Trees more effectively and less expensively manage the flow of stormwater runoff than do concrete sewers and drainage ditches. “By incorporating trees into a city’s infrastructure, managers can build a smaller, less expensive stormwater management system,” according to American Forests Urban Resource Center. (*Why America Needs More City Parks & Open Space*)