



Natural Infrastructure

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WILLAMETTE
PARTNERSHIP

Natural Infrastructure

The strategic use of natural lands (forests, wetlands) and working lands (farms, ranches) to meet the infrastructure needs of human communities.





Clean Drinking Water

Manage headwater forests

Reduce toxic spill risk

Reduce harmful algal blooms
(nutrients, temp, sediment)

Use filter strips and buffers



Water Quality

Wetlands and basins at the end of tile drains

Natural filters and riparian buffers

Urban forests

Parks and open spaces



Restoring habitat

More water in streams

Protecting and restoring cold water refugia/confluences

Natural filters and riparian buffers



Managing floods

Restoring access to the floodplain

Increasing landscape storage (e.g., wetlands)

Slowing runoff (e.g., increasing pervious area and tree canopy coverage)



Opportunities

A photograph showing two people engaged in planting a tree in a grassy field. One person, wearing a red jacket and a patterned beanie, is kneeling and working with the soil. The other person, wearing a black puffer jacket and blue jeans, is also kneeling nearby. A shovel with a yellow handle and a red-handled tool are standing upright in the ground. The background shows a line of young trees and a grassy slope under a clear sky.

Multi-benefit (Health, Workforce, Fire and flood risk reduction, Resilience)

Grows as cities grow

Can save \$

Connects community to infrastructure and nature

Supportive policy options

A photograph showing two people engaged in tree planting. One person, wearing a red jacket and a patterned beanie, is kneeling on the left, working with the soil. The other person, wearing a black puffer jacket and blue jeans, is kneeling on the right, also working with the soil. A shovel with a yellow handle and a red-handled tool are standing upright in the ground between them. A black plastic nursery container lies on the ground. The background is a grassy field with several young trees planted in rows.

Clear authority in state law or executive actions (e.g., MD)

Preference in infrastructure funding (e.g., PA, IA)

Clarity around how to propose as a compliance option & track results