



**CITY OF EUGENE**

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Earth Economics provides robust, science-based, ecologically sound economic analysis, policy recommendations, and tools to positively transform regional, national and international economics, and asset accounting systems. Earth Economics is a non-profit located in Tacoma, Washington dedicated to researching and applying the economics solutions of tomorrow, today.



*Amazon Creek*



**EARTH  
ECONOMICS**

# NATURE'S VALUE

## AN ECONOMIC VIEW OF EUGENE'S PARKS, NATURAL AREAS AND URBAN FOREST

*Hendricks Park*



Whilamut Natural Area



West Eugene Wetlands

Eugene's Parks and Urban Forest cover more than 4,000 acres and include:

Over 50,000 street trees

Over 250 acres of land along waterways protect our rivers, streams, ponds, and lakes

528 acres of wetlands

179 acres of freshwater creeks and ponds

1,560 acres of forest

1,311 acres of open grass and prairie

280 acres of natural shrublands

15 acres of community gardens

### Eugene's Natural Capital Average Values

\$ in millions per year

Water Quality \$5.4

Flood Protection \$1.3

Air Quality \$1.2

Property Values \$13.5

Outdoor Recreation \$21

**TOTAL = \$42.4**

**If Eugene's natural assets were appraised like a business, based on the value of the goods and services they provide, how much would they be worth?**

**The answer is an average of \$42.4 million in economic benefits each year.**

Eugene's parks, natural areas and urban forest produce economic benefits through natural capital — the trees, grasses, water, soil and other natural components existing in nature. We derive tangible services from nature, which help maintain environmental conditions that keep us healthy and safe, provide clean water, support fish and wildlife habitat, and give us meaningful interactions with nature.

This analysis by Earth Economics is the first valuation of these natural goods and services in Eugene which contribute significantly to our excellent quality of life. The dollar values presented here represent the average from a range of values generated by analysis of peer reviewed economic studies.

### Improving Water Quality

When rain runs off of roads, sidewalks and other impervious surfaces it picks up dirt and pollutants which can cause significant ecological problems and harm fish and wildlife. Eugene's wetlands and green spaces along waterways, such as Amazon Creek and Meadowlark Prairie, provide natural water filtration and reduce the amount of pollution flowing into our water **saving \$5.4 million in stormwater processing costs each year.**

### Protection from Floods

Grasslands, wetlands, and forests in Eugene's parks, and trees along its streets reduce the amount of water runoff during a storm by absorbing and intercepting heavy rains. This lowers flood risk and **saves the community an average of \$1.3 million in potential flood damage costs each year.**



Ridgeline Trail



Delta Ponds

### Cooling Our Air and Removing Pollution

Natural areas, street trees and developed parks impact climate on both the local and global level. Eugene's urban forest provides shade which reduces temperatures in the summer providing significant energy cost savings. These areas also remove air pollutants such as carbon dioxide out of the atmosphere, which affects global climate stability and buffers our community from the negative impacts of climate change, like extreme weather events and temperature rise. Together, these areas provide Eugene with **an average of \$1.2 million dollars per year in energy savings and climate protection.**

### The Value of Seeing

Proximity to or even just a view of Eugene's parks and natural areas has a positive effect on nearby residential property values. The aesthetic beauty provided by parks and street trees in Eugene also make people want to live here and be near nature. Together, estimates of a person's **willingness to preserve views and green spaces along with actual increases in housing prices near parks and natural areas provide a total \$13.5 million in benefits each year.**

### The Value of Doing

Outdoor recreation provides health and happiness to people through numerous activities. Parks and natural areas in Eugene offer opportunities to play, run, hike, bike, view wildlife or simply relax. These activities provide benefits whose economic value can be determined through looking at the costs people are willing to pay for using sites for outdoor recreation. By using these areas, **people derive benefits averaging \$21 million each year.**