

## Connection to Nature

### Americans love our open spaces.

- Three out of every four Americans feel an "emotional or spiritual uplift" from spending time in natural areas<sup>1</sup>.
- 85 percent of Americans say it is important to be able to access them.<sup>2</sup>

### Access to nature is good for our health.

- Living near green space can [add up to 2.5 years](#) to an American's life.<sup>3</sup>
- Exposure to greenspace is associated with a wide range of health outcomes, including decreased blood pressure, stroke, hypertension, asthma, and coronary heart disease.<sup>4</sup>
- Green space exposure can improve the quality and quantity of [sleep](#).<sup>5</sup>
- Access to nature can limit the impact of [life stress on children](#).<sup>6</sup>
- Views of greenery can enhance the recovery of patients.<sup>7</sup>
- Time spent in forests decreases depression and increases liveliness.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Pulse Opinion Research Survey, May 15-27, 2020. *From Sea To Sprawling Sea*, Appendix G, pp. G-1, G-2.

<https://sprawlusa.com/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/NatlSprawl.pdf#%5B%7B%22num%22%3A80%2C%22gen%22%3A0%7D%2C%7B%22name%22%3A%22FitR%22%7D%2C-75%2C178%2C686%2C768%5D>

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> Kyeezu Kim, et. al. Inequalities in urban greenness and epigenetic aging: Different associations by race and neighborhood socioeconomic status. *Science Advances*. June 28, 2023.

<https://www.science.org/doi/10.1126/sciadv.adf8140>. See also: "Living near green spaces could add 2.5 years to your life, new research finds," by Allyson Chiu, *The Washington Post*, June 28, 2023.

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/climate-solutions/2023/06/28/aging-green-spaces-nature-health/>

<sup>4</sup> Caoimhe Twohig-Bennett, Andy Jones, The health benefits of the great outdoors: A systematic review and meta-analysis of greenspace exposure and health outcomes, *Environmental Research*, Volume 166, 2018, Pages 628-637, ISSN 0013-9351, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.envres.2018.06.030>.

(<https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0013935118303323>)

<sup>5</sup> Shin JC, Parab KV, An R, Grigsby-Toussaint DS. Greenspace exposure and sleep: A systematic review. *Environ Res*. 2020 Mar;182:109081. doi: [10.1016/j.envres.2019.109081](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.envres.2019.109081). Epub 2019 Dec 24. PMID: 31891829.

<sup>6</sup> Wells, N. M., & Evans, G. W. (2003). Nearby nature: A buffer of life stress among rural children. *Environment and Behavior*, 35(3), 311–330. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0013916503035003001>

<sup>7</sup> Ulrich, R. 1983. Aesthetic and affective response to natural environment. Chapter 3 in I. Altman, & J. F. Wohlwill (Eds.), *Human Behavior and Environment: Volume 6* (pp. 85-126). New York: Plenum Press; Ulrich, R. 1984. Views through a window may influence recovery from surgery. *Science*, 224, 420- 421.

<sup>8</sup> Morita E, Fukuda S, Nagano J, Hamajima N, Yamamoto H, Iwai Y, Nakashima T, Ohira H, Shirakawa T. Psychological effects of forest environments on healthy adults: Shinrin-yoku (forest-air bathing, walking) as a possible method of stress reduction. *Public Health*. 2007 Jan;121(1):54-63. doi: [10.1016/j.puhe.2006.05.024](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.puhe.2006.05.024). Epub 2006 Oct 20. PMID: 17055544.

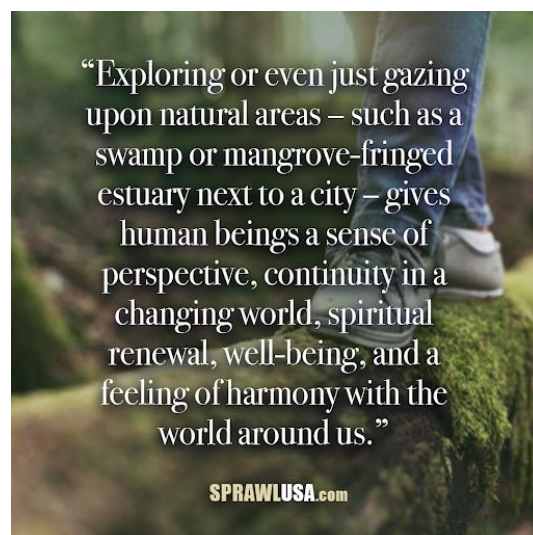
Updated: May, 2024

- Just looking at pictures of nature can improve focus and attention.<sup>9</sup>

**However, open space is being lost to other land uses at an alarming rate.**

- Each day in America, an estimated 2,000 acres (3.3 square miles) of open space is developed, mostly near the urbanized areas where most Americans live, and mostly due to an increased number of people living in those areas.<sup>10</sup>
- The Census Bureau projects the U.S. population will add 75 million people by the Year 2060, with roughly 90 percent of that growth resulting from immigration.<sup>11</sup>

As our population grows, parks and beaches simply cannot keep pace with the demand, and access to America's open spaces - whether majestic or modest, where people can find solitude, enjoy peace-of-mind, and observe nature in action - will become increasingly [restricted](#).



"It is not good for man to be kept perforce at all times in the presence of his species. A world from which solitude is extirpated, is a very poor ideal..." - John Stuart Mill, "[Of the Stationary State](#)," from his *Principles of Political Economy*

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<sup>9</sup> Berman MG, Jonides J, Kaplan S. The cognitive benefits of interacting with nature. *Psychol Sci.* 2008 Dec;19(12):1207-12. doi: [10.1111/j.1467-9280.2008.02225.x](https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-9280.2008.02225.x). PMID: 19121124.

<sup>10</sup> Leon Kolankiewicz with Roy Beck and Eric Ruark, *From Sea To Sprawling Sea*, 2022, p 137. <https://sprawlusa.com/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/NatlSprawl.pdf>

<sup>11</sup> Sandra Johnson, A Changing Nation: Population Projections Under Alternative Immigration Scenarios, Current Population Reports, U.S. Census, 2020. <https://www.census.gov/content/dam/Census/library/publications/2020/demo/p25-1146.pdf>

