



# Park Rx America



## A Scalable Park Prescription Model

Our MISSION is to ease the burden of chronic disease, increase health and happiness, and foster environmental stewardship by encouraging doctors to routinely prescribe time in nature to patients.



**DR ROBERT ZARR, PHD**  
*Founder and  
Medical Director*

Dr. Robert Zarr is a board-certified pediatrician at Unity Health Care, located in Washington, DC, where he cares for low-income and immigrant populations. He previously served as advisor to the National Park Service on park prescriptions. You will often find him riding his recumbent trike on the Capital Crescent Trail.



**JOHN HENDERSON**  
*Executive Director*

John is a Certified Parks and Recreation Executive, city planner, public participation practitioner, arbitrator, and mediator. He is also an attorney licensed to practice law in Illinois and the District of Columbia. He enjoys hiking and biking and is passionate about finding opportunities to bring nature into city neighborhoods.



**MATTHEW SCRIBNER**  
*Chief Technology Officer*

Matthew is a DC native “full-stack” developer with knowledge in both front-end to back-end software development. He believes in coding for a cause and finding ways to make technology easy and accessible and has been developing custom web-based applications since 2001.



**PATRICK LUNSFORD**  
*Director of  
Communications*

Patrick manages public outreach and funding efforts. Previously, he was a public affairs manager for a financial regulatory agency and a journalist for more than a decade. His love of the outdoors and commitment to accessible public lands brought him to Park Rx America.



# Healthy Parks Healthy People

Healthy Parks Healthy People connects people to parks through health promotion by:



**Forging new partnerships** that establish the health and medical care community's use of parks as a healing tool and a vital component of healthy living;



**Providing access** to parks and healthy visitor experiences;



**Enhancing and protecting** park programs, facilities, and environments as places for people to have fun, learn something and derive health benefits;

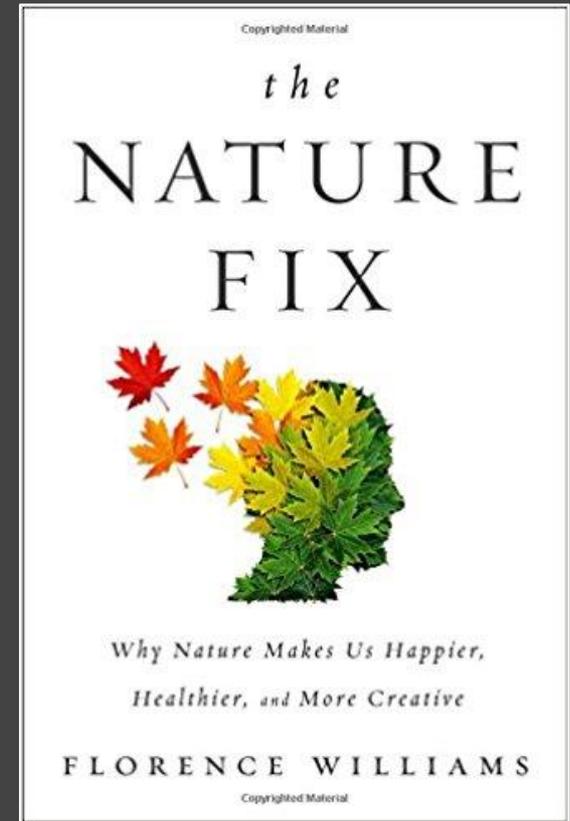
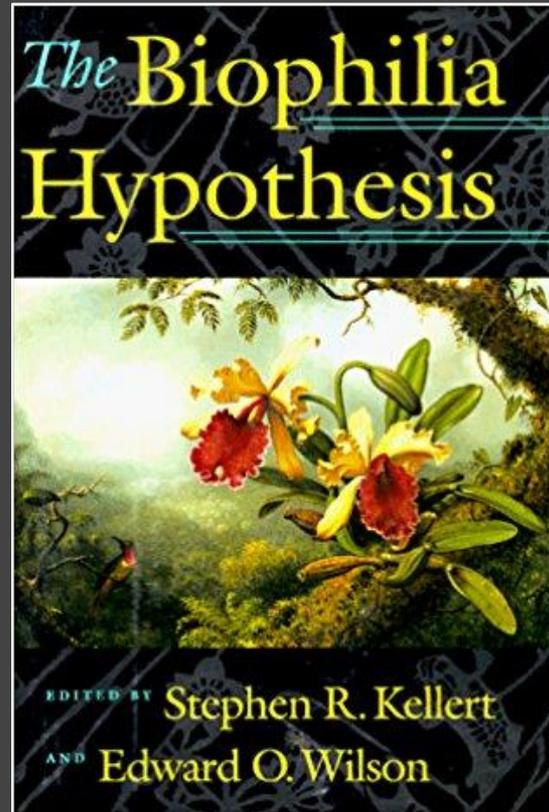
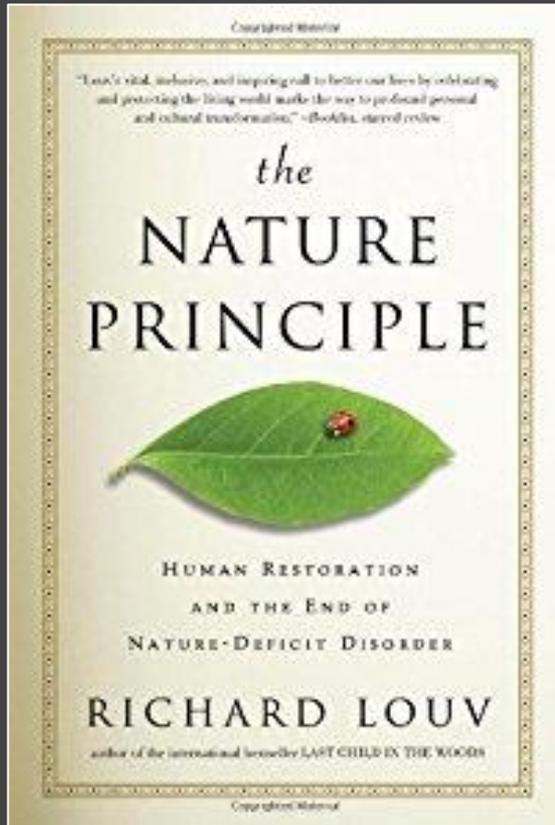


**Reaching diverse, multicultural audiences** and engaging the next generation of national park stewards;



**Contributing to the advancement of science** by implementing the Healthy Parks Healthy People Science Plan.

# Books on the Nature - Health Connection





# Epidemic Levels of Chronic Disease

133 million Americans currently live with chronic disease

- 70 million American adults have high blood pressure.
- 29 million Americans live with diabetes.
- 10 million adults suffer from serious mental illness.

**For every dollar spent on healthcare in the U.S., \$0.86 is spent on patients with chronic disease.**



# 12 million Children and 78 million Adults are Obese

People suffering from obesity are at increased risk of:

- High blood pressure
- High cholesterol
- Type 2 diabetes
- Coronary heart disease
- Stroke
- Gallbladder disease
- Osteoarthritis
- Sleep apnea
- Cancer
- Mental illness



# Health Benefits of Spending Time in Nature

- Spending time in nature is linked with **decreased anxiety**, rumination, and negative affect.
- **Green spaces are restorative** and boost attention, while viewing concrete inhibits attention during tasks.
- Walking in parks improved **focus in children** with attention deficits.
- Group walks in nature are associated with **lower levels of stress** and negative affect.



Photo credit:  
Laura Anderko

# More Health Benefits...

- Forest environments are shown to **decrease cortisol levels**, blood pressure, and sympathetic nervous system activity.
- Access to parks **reduces the risk of obesity**.
- Living in a neighborhood with more opportunities for physical activity is associated with **lower risks of Type 2 diabetes**.
- Living near green spaces **reduces mortality**, even when adjusted for sociodemographic factors.



Photo credit:  
Claudia Cinquegrana

# Even more Health Benefits!

- Physical activity in a natural environment is more beneficial on **mental wellbeing** than physical activity indoors.
- Nature helps to lessen to the negative impact of **stressful life events**.
- Living near green spaces is associated with **lower rates of respiratory disease and asthma**.
- Forest bathing **increases Natural killer cell activity**; these cells kill tumors and virus-infected cells.



Photo credit: Dr. Jeff Gee

# Prescribing parks increases park time and physical activity, and reduces stress

**“Average weekly physical activity increased from 150 to 172 minutes, and number of days per month spent in a park for 30 or more minutes increased from 7 to 8 days.”**

Source: Park Prescription (DC Park Rx): A New Strategy to Combat Chronic Disease in Children." Journal of Physical Activity and Health, 14(1), pp. 1-2

**“Overall decrease in parental stress both overall and as a function of numbers of park visits per week. Paradoxically the park prescription without group park visits led to a greater increase in weekly park visits than the group visits.”**

Source: Razani N, Morshed S, Kohn MA, Wells NM, Thompson D, et al. (2018) Effect of park prescriptions with and without group visits to parks on stress reduction in low-income parents: SHINE randomized trial. PLOS ONE 13(2): e0192921.



# How a Park Prescription Works





Come to work **happy, rested, centered,**  
and focused.



Recognize **one or more chronic disease factors** in patient/family.



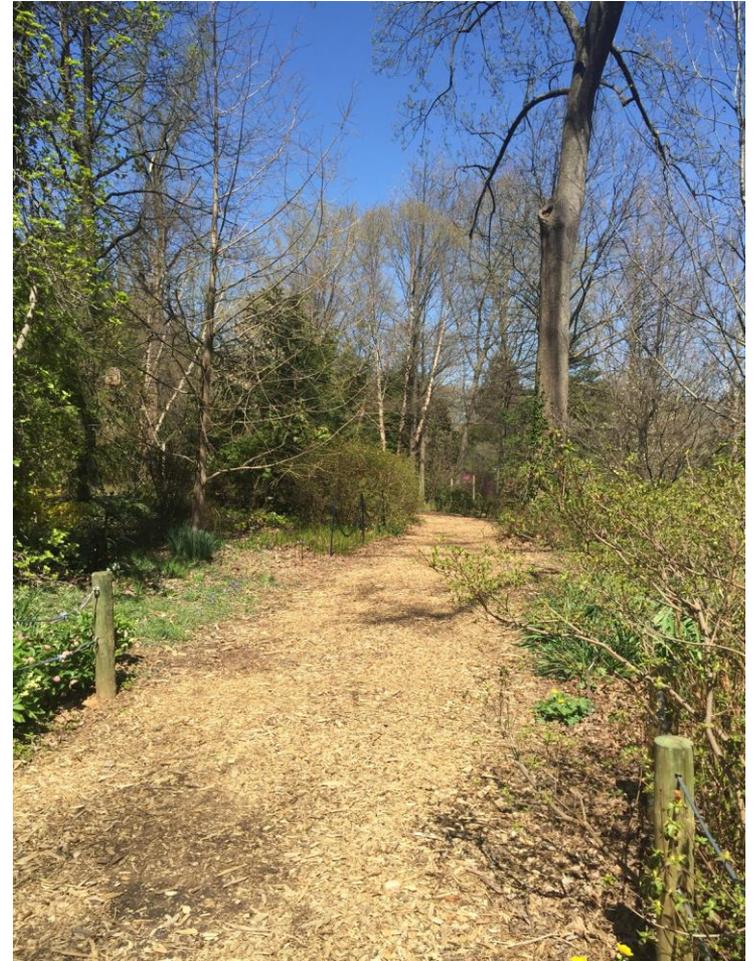
**Review daily routine** of your patient/family in terms of activity in green space, and assess Nature deficit.



# Assess readiness and willingness of patient to spend more time in green space.



Discuss and agree on **frequency** of visits to park per week, **duration** of time to be spent in park, and **activities** to engage while at the park.



**Document** the specifics of the park prescription in the electronic health record.



Agree on **date and time** of next appointment.



# Find Parks

The screenshot shows the Park Rx America website interface. At the top, there is a navigation bar with the Park Rx America logo, a 'Find Parks' button, and links for 'What is Park Rx America?', 'Resources', and 'Contact'. A 'DONATE' button is also present in the top right. Below the navigation bar, a search bar contains the text 'cci health and wellness' and a 'Go >' button. Underneath the search bar, there are radio buttons for selecting a search radius: 'WITHIN RADIUS: 0.25 MILE 0.5 MILE 1 MILE 2 MILES 3 MILES 5 MILES 10 MILES'. To the right of the radius options, it says '72 results' and a 'FILTER RESULTS' button. The main content area is divided into two parts: a map on the left and a list of results on the right. The map shows a dense cluster of red location pins in the Washington DC area, with a green arrow pointing to a specific location. The list of results is sorted by 'Distance' and includes the following entries:

Distance	Park Name	Selection
0.4mi	Pleasant View Local Park	<input type="checkbox"/>
0.4mi	Wheaton Veteran's Urban Park	<input type="checkbox"/>
0.7mi	Newport Mill Local Park	<input type="checkbox"/>
0.7mi	Wheaton Community Building Pr...	<input type="checkbox"/>
0.8mi	Kensington Heights Neighborhoo...	<input type="checkbox"/>
0.8mi	Wheaton Forest Local Park	<input type="checkbox"/>
0.9mi	Arcola Local Park	<input type="checkbox"/>

At the bottom of the results list, there is a 'CHECK TOP 5' checkbox and a 'VIEW SELECTED PARKS' button. The footer of the website features logos for various partner organizations: Parks & Recreation, United States Botanic Garden, Smithsonian National Zoological Park, children & nature NETWORK, and NRPA National Recreation and Park Association.

# 33 results

## Sports Facilities/Activities

Recreation/Fitness Center

Gymnasium

Baseball/Softball Field

Football/Soccer Field

Cricket Field

Mixed Use Field

Open Space

Trails

Athletic Track

Outdoor Basketball Court

Outdoor Fitness Stations

Tennis Court

Outdoor Practice Wall

Indoor Racket Sports

Volleyball

Pickleball

Four Square Courts

Rollerskating

Ice Skating

Inline Hockey

Skateboard Park

Horse Stables

Equestrian Rings

Stables

## General Park Amenities

Playground

Water/Spray Fountain

Restrooms

Drinking Fountains

Seating

Picnic Tables

Grills

Food for Sale

## Swimming

Indoor Pool

Outdoor Pool

## Pets

Allowed On-Leash

Allowed Off-Leash

Dog Park

Bags Provided

## Additional Features

Community Gardens

Ornamental Gardens

Visitor Center

Nature Center

Historic Site

# Park Filters

Narrow down results by choosing **activities**, **amenities**, and other **park services** that interest your patient.

# Wheaton Regional Park

11710 Orebaugh Avenue, Wheaton, MD 20902



OWNER: The Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission

Website | Events

CONTACT: (301) 495-2595



## GENERAL INFO:

**Park Type:** Regional Park

**Overall Size:** Larger than a football field

## GETTING THERE:

Parking

**Parking Instructions:** From I270: Head north on Georgia Ave toward Forest Glen Rd. Turn right onto Shorefield Rd. At the traffic circle, take the 1st exit, Turn left, Park Entrance is on the right.



## SPORTS:

**Sports Facilities/Activities:** Trails

## AMENITIES:

**General Park Amenities:** Drinking Fountains, Picnic Tables, Playground

## TRAILS:

**Trail Surface:** Paved & Unpaved

**Trail Layout:** Loop & Linear (network)

## OTHER:

**Staffing & Safety:** Police Patrol



# One-Page Park Summaries

# Saddlebrook Local Park

12751 Layhill Road, Silver Spring, MD 20906



OWNER: The Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission

Website | Events

CONTACT: (301) 495-2595



## GENERAL INFO:

**Park Type:** Neighborhood Park

**Overall Size:** Larger than a football field

**Special Features/Comments:** Fields require a Permit for Organized Play

## GETTING THERE:

Parking

**Parking Instructions:** From I270: Head north on Georgia Ave toward Bonywood Ln/Tilton Dr. Slight right onto Layhill Rd. Turn right, Turn left, Park Entrance is on the right.

## SPORTS:

**Sports Facilities/Activities:** Football/Soccer Field, Gymnasium, Outdoor Basketball Court

## AMENITIES:

**General Park Amenities:** Drinking Fountains, Playground, Restrooms

**Additional Features:** Gift Shop

## OTHER:

**Staffing & Safety:** Police Patrol, Employee/Ranger Present

## YOU ARE PRESCRIBING THE FOLLOWING PARKS:

### Marion Park

Generate Prescription Text?

NAME: [FD84VX] Park Rx America - Marion Park

TAKE: Play at|Playground

FREQUENCY: Q M, W, F

DURATION: 30-60 min

Send by Text

Send by Email

Patient Mobile Number

2025501740

**Send to Patient**





**Kids in Parks has created the TRACK Rx program to help kids and families learn how spending time in nature improves their overall health.**

**[www.kidsinparks.com](http://www.kidsinparks.com)**

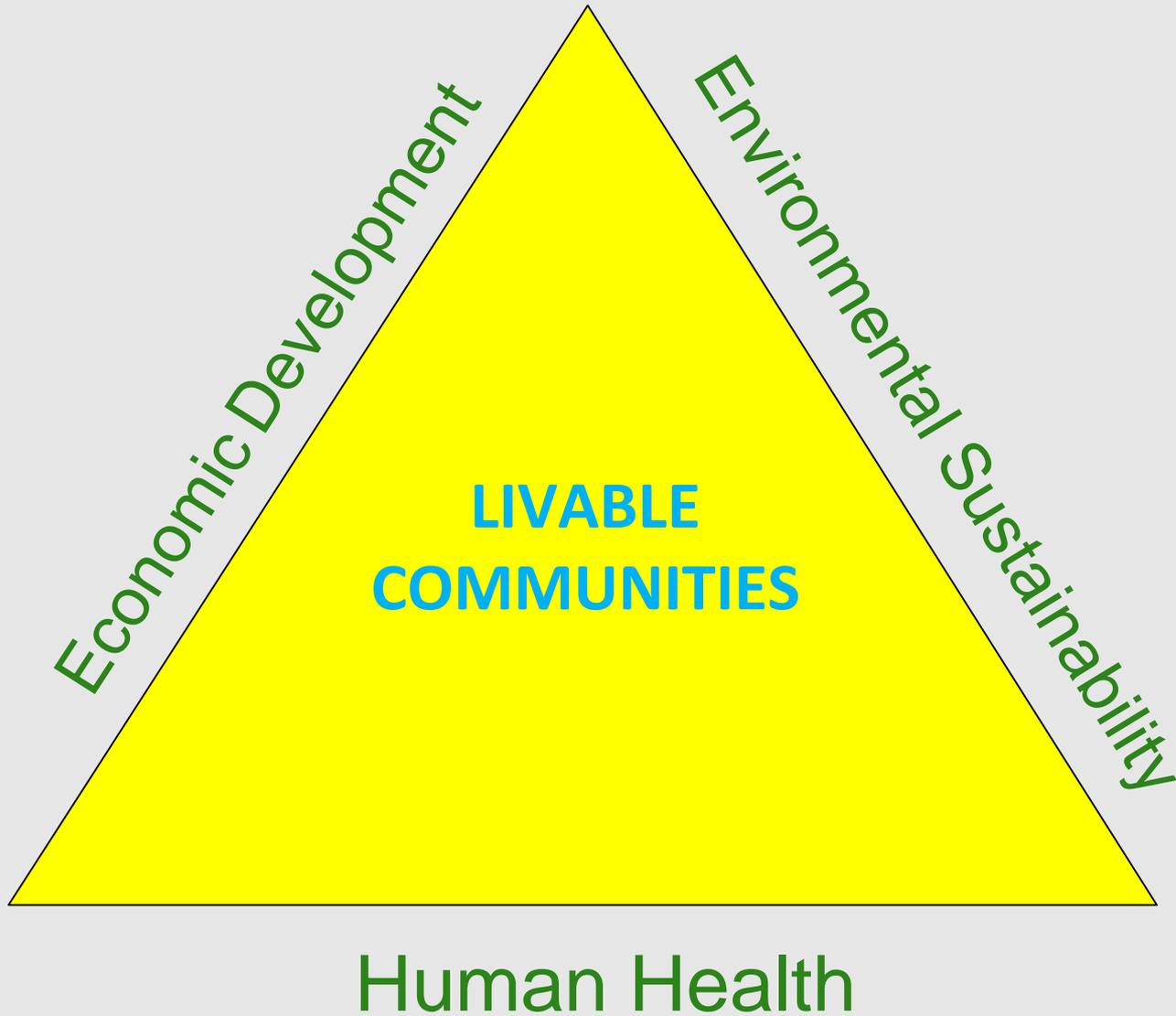
**Join us by attending a Walk near you (always free!) or by starting a healthcare provider led Walk of your own.**

**[www.walkwithadoc.org](http://www.walkwithadoc.org)**



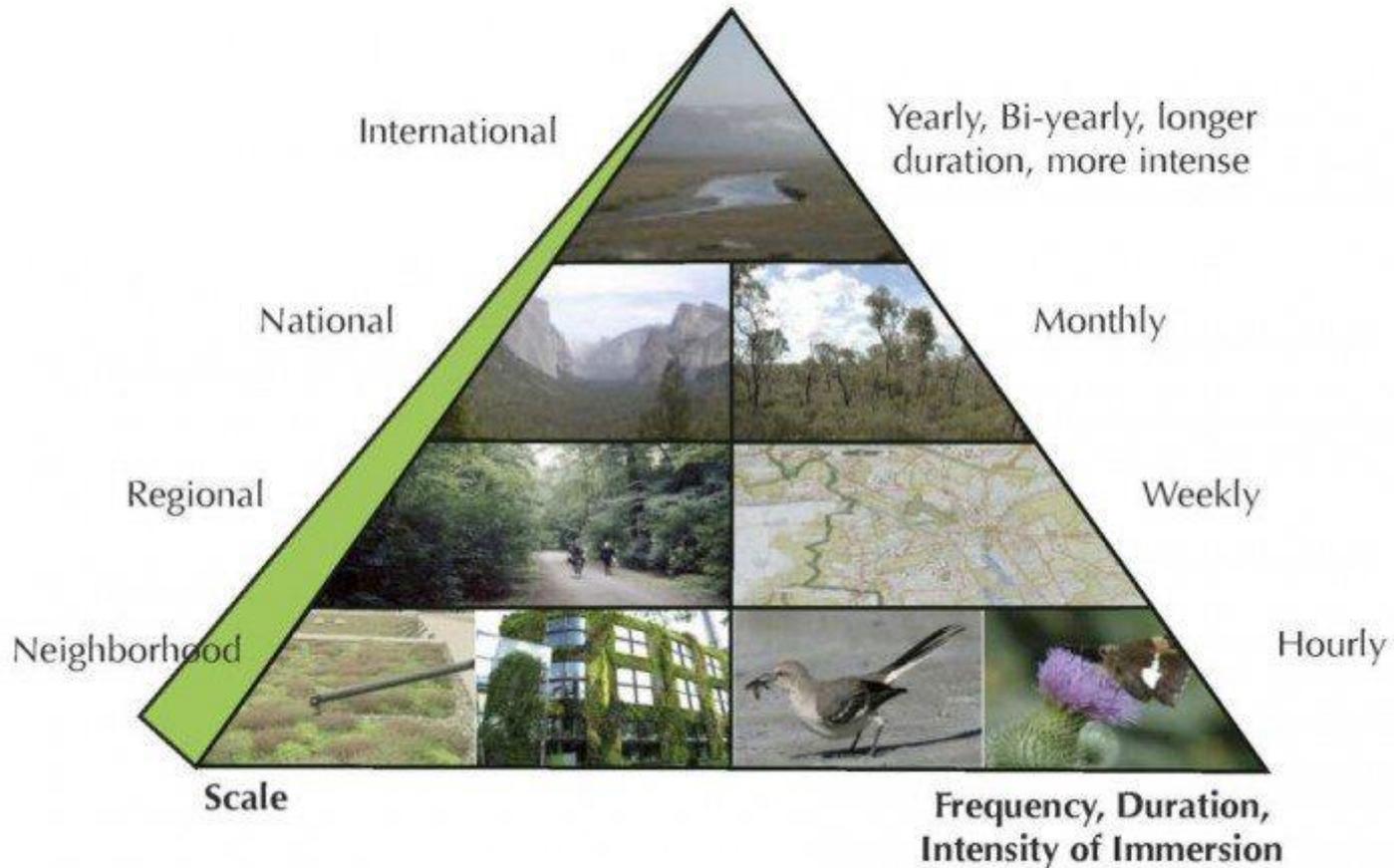
A misty forest with tall, thin trees and a green forest floor. The scene is captured in a soft, hazy light, likely during dawn or dusk, with a yellowish-green tint. The trees are tall and slender, with dark trunks and sparse foliage. The ground is covered in a thick layer of green moss and ferns, with some fallen branches scattered about. The overall atmosphere is serene and quiet.

**Why is this Important for Cities?**



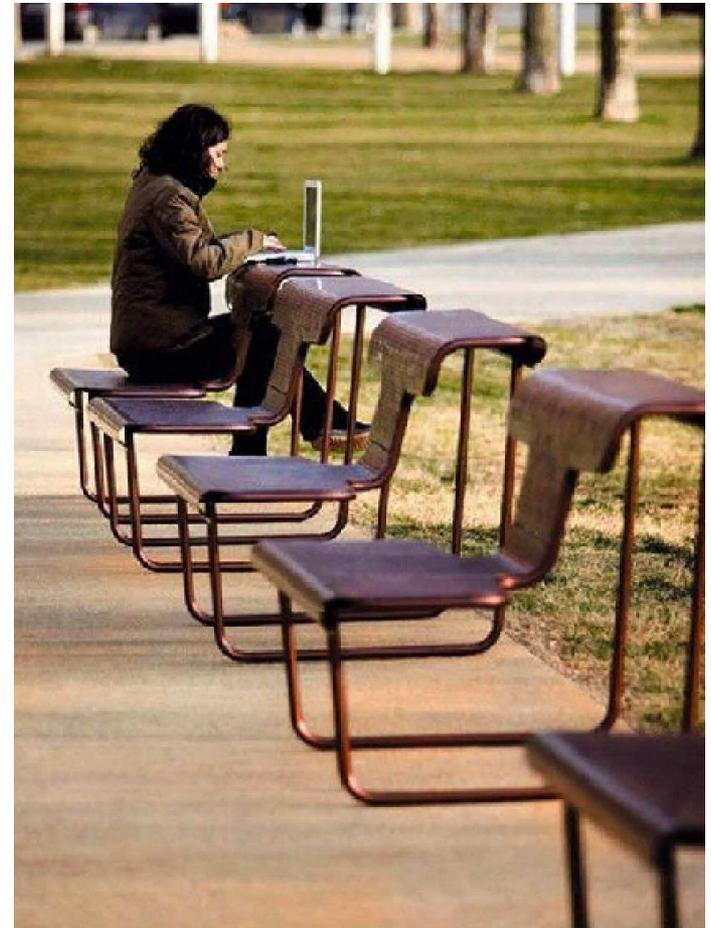
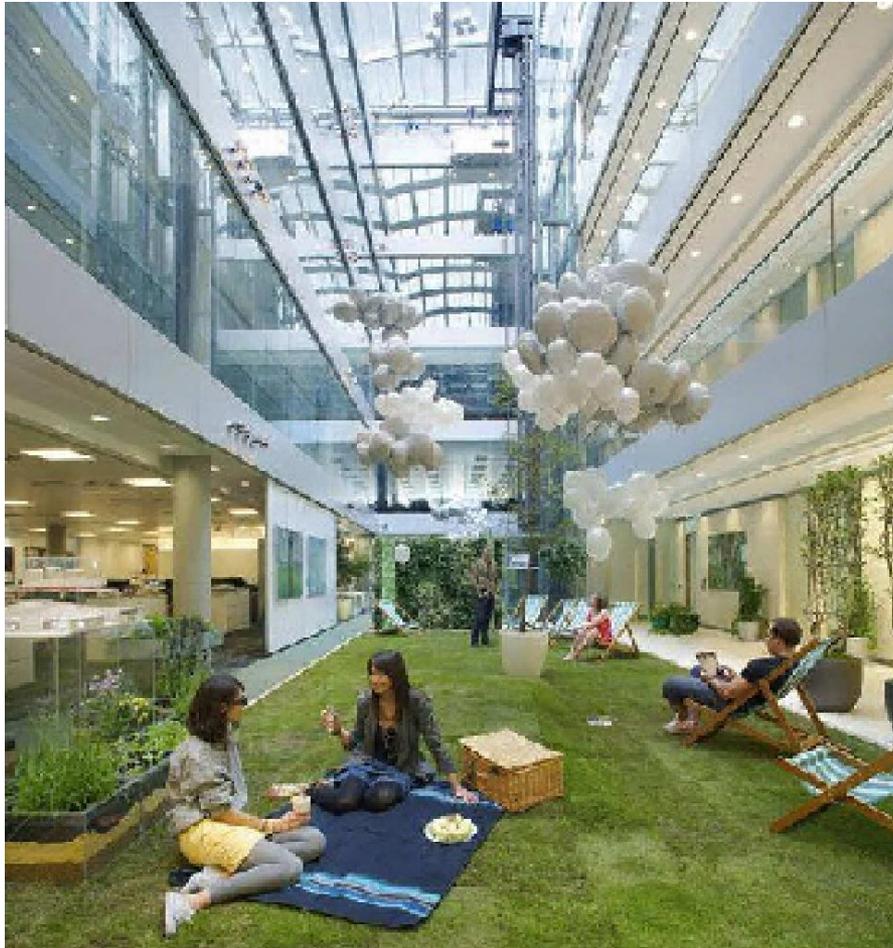
Most people visit the parks **closest** to where they live.

## THE NATURE PYRAMID

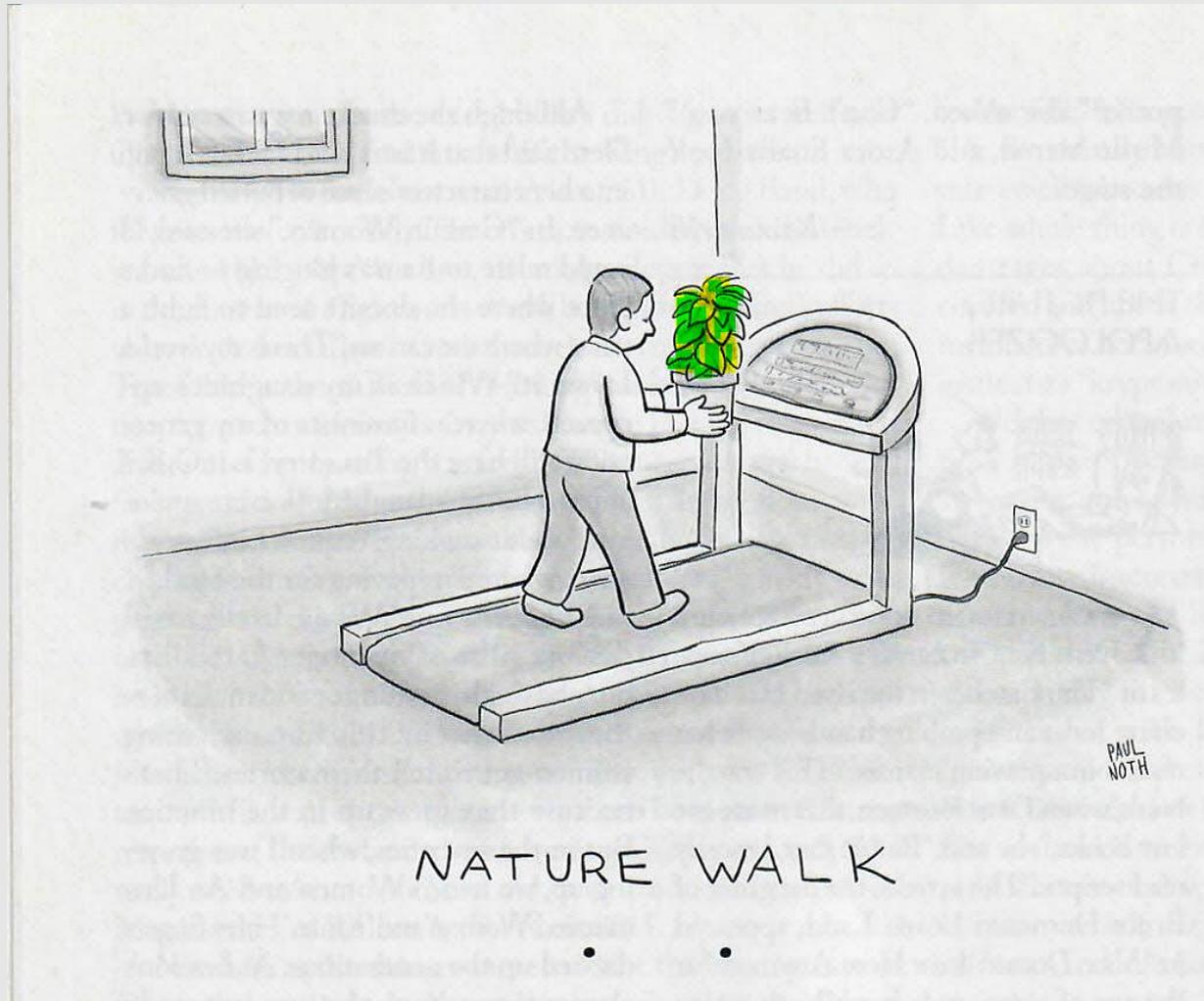


Concept by: Tanya Denckla-Cobb

Young people prefer **biophilic environments** where there are references to the outdoors indoors



For many - exercise is solely  
an **indoor activity**



You can still get **benefits** in the city



**Programming** can provide and  
**incentive** to get outside.



**Activity outdoors** is better than the same or a similar activity outdoors



# Biophilia in the workplace



**Questions??**

Please write:  
[DocZarr@ParkRxAmerica.org](mailto:DocZarr@ParkRxAmerica.org)



**And Prescribe a Park today!**