

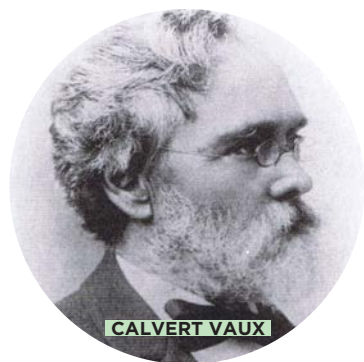




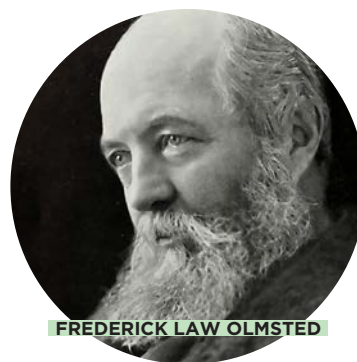
NEW-AGE Central Parks

SMALL AND INNOVATIVE: THAT'S WHAT WORKS TODAY.
By RUTHERFORD H. PLATT AND PETER HARNIK

Reflections on city gems: A high rise dweller snapped a photo of Millennium (at upper right in photo) and Maggie Daley parks from inside his rooftop gym. The metal, Frank Gehry-designed BP Bridge links the two compact spaces. The Modern Wing of the Art Institute of Chicago (center, top) connects to Millennium via another bridge.



CALVERT VAUX



FREDERICK LAW OL MSTED

AUDACIOUS VISIONARIES

CITY PARKS DON'T JUST HAPPEN; each is a unique blend of nature, technology, design, culture, politics, and vision. Many European city parks are remnants of former royal estates. Examples include London's Hyde Park and Regent's Park, Jardin des Tuileries and Jardin du Luxembourg in Paris, Berlin's Tiergarten, and Vienna Woods. **■** American cities, lacking such aristocratic legacies, have had to fabricate parks out of colonial commons in New England, former military sites like San Francisco's Presidio, filled land such as Chicago's lakeshore parks, distinctive natural or scenic sites, or simply nooks and crannies of underused land. **■** An early notable example in the U.S. was the audacious 1858 Greensward Plan for Central Park by Frederick Law Olmsted and Calvert Vaux, which transformed 843 acres of rocky wasteland into the world's best-known urban park. That masterwork in turn spawned an urban parks movement that endowed American cities with hundreds of parks and landscapes designed by Olmsted and his successors until the 1970s. **■** That era is over: Big new parks on the scale of Central Park aren't feasible today. One attempt to convert a former military base into a 1,300-acre Great Park in Orange County, California, has been tangled in design and financing

issues. (See "Too Big to Fail?" in the April 2014 issue of *Planning* and a follow up in June: "Audit: 'Hubris' Killed Great Park Plan.") The winning design for Governors Island in New York Harbor may be as innovative as Greensward in its day, but the island can only be reached by ferry. One of us (Harnik) has documented how parks now are cobbled together in surprising places like rooftops, landfills, cemeteries, freeway decks, and stormwater channels.

While the size and complexity of the great Olmsted parks can't be replicated today, a new generation of much smaller but hugely successful facilities may claim to be "new-age central parks." This judgment is based not on whether they look Olmstedian; most do not. Rather, the resemblance lies in their audacity: How bold are they in concept and execution and how inventively do they use available scraps of urban space and serve diverse people?

The audacity of Central Park was reflected in such

factors as:

VISION: advocacy by New York civic leaders to set aside a "central park" before Manhattan Island was fully built out

OPPORTUNISM: New York City's timely purchase of underused land in the path of development as a site for the future park

INGENUITY: creative adaptation of legal authorities, technology, financing, and landscape design

TENACITY: confronting bureaucracy and politics, requiring leaders and activists with unusual creativity, stamina, and political skills

HUMANISM: in Olmsted's words, welcoming "vast numbers of persons brought closely together, poor and rich, young and old, Jew and Gentile."

With these indicators in mind, we now visit some of our favorite "new-age Central Parks," beginning in New York City, close to the mother lode.

New York and vicinity

Since the 1980s, much of New York City's waterfront has been transformed from a no-man's-land of derelict piers and warehouses to a green fringe of exciting new parks and bikeways. Unlike the Chicago lakeshore parks, which are managed chiefly by one agency (the Chicago Park District), New York's waterfront is a hodgepodge of diverse facilities, each with its own history, physical obstacles, vested interests, design features, funding sources, and administrative structure.

Riverbank State Park is one of the city's busiest but least known newer parks. It occupies the 28-acre rooftop of the North River Sewage Treatment Plant, which extends 600 feet into the Hudson River at the edge of Harlem. The park originated as "compensation" to offset the environmental injustice of placing the city's biggest sewage plant on the doorstep of one of its poorest communities.

Designed and constructed over 15 years (1978–93) by Dattner Architects and ABB Landscape Architects, Riverbank features an Olympic-size swimming pool, basketball and tennis courts, garden plots, a year-round skating rink, cultural center, restaurant, and a 2,500-seat athletic complex. Modeled

on Tokyo's Arakawa Nature Park, it demonstrates the feasibility of locating a park above municipal infrastructure and folding its capital cost into the overall project budget. Riverbank State Park attracts about four million visitors a year.

Continuing downstream, the west side of Manhattan is lined by eclectic old and new parks: Riverside Park, originated by Olmsted and completed by Robert Moses in the 1920s; Riverside Park South, donated by Donald Trump in the 1990s as a condition for approval of a high-end residential complex; Hudson River Park, built and managed by a state-created authority after defeat of a massive highway and park project (Westway) in the 1980s; Battery Park City, with 36 acres of public parks provided by the BPC development authority; and Battery Park, a historic common ground dating back to Dutch settlement in 1623.

Just inland from Hudson River Park, the renowned High Line snakes around former lofts and warehouses now going upscale at a dizzying pace. The High Line is a showcase of new-age park creation. An abandoned 1.45-mile rail viaduct on Manhattan's Lower West Side provided the opportunity. The vision to convert it into a linear public park, modeled on the Promenade Plantée in Paris, originated with neighborhood residents Robert Hammond and Joshua David, who founded the Friends of the High Line Greenway, Inc. in 1999.

Some \$50 million from the city and even more in private donations funded an international design competition in 2003. The winning concept by James Corner Field Operations in partnership with Diller Scofidio+Renfro and Piet Oudolf has transformed the rusty viaduct into an elevated ribbon of walkways, gardens, casual seating, and public art—entirely removed from traffic and offering glorious views of the city and the Hudson River.

As a public-private partnership, the High Line is city-owned but managed



Built atop a sewage treatment plant—to help mitigate that facility's community impacts—Riverbank State Park rises 69 feet above the Hudson River, with spectacular views of the river, the cliffs of the Palisades, and the George Washington Bridge.



The granite steps—built from stones salvaged from the Roosevelt Island Bridge reconstruction—of Brooklyn Bridge Park offer gorgeous views of Manhattan and the New York Harbor.

by the well-financed Friends of the High Line. Now open for its entire length, the High Line is jammed with residents and tourists, in good weather and bad. Surrounding neighborhoods are exploding in value and new development is going up at a scale perhaps not seen since Central Park itself was built.

Just across the East River from lower Manhattan, the acclaimed Brooklyn Bridge Park, which won a 2014 National Planning Excellence Award for Urban Design from APA, is shoehorned onto a 1.3-mile strip of waterfront and abandoned piers bordered on the inland side by the Brooklyn Heights Promenade and the Robert Moses-era Brooklyn-Queens Expressway. BBP's modest 85 acres (one-tenth the size of Central Park) is offset by inventive design and stunning views of the Manhattan skyline, with the Brooklyn Bridge and Manhattan Bridge arching overhead.

The vision for the park came from a community group, Friends of Fulton Landing (later renamed the Brooklyn Bridge Park Coalition), when the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey decided in 1984 to divest some obsolete waterfront properties. In 2002, the coalition persuaded the city and state to establish the BBP Development Corporation to design, build, and operate the park. Public agencies contributed \$360 million toward its construction, but operating costs were to be generated mostly from concession revenue and high-end real estate development.

Under the 2005 BBP master plan by Michael Van Valkenburgh Associates, the challenging site (including its piers) has been transformed into a collage of small hills, lawns, trees, playgrounds, sports fields, food vendors, wetlands, a pocket beach, boat ramps, and the 1920s-era Jane's Carousel, restored and donated by a local

couple, Jane and David Walentas.

In October 2012, when Hurricane Sandy slammed the new park with a 13-foot storm surge, thousand-pound concrete planters became floating objects, low-lying electrical and mechanical equipment was disabled, and some playgrounds and landscaping were damaged. But the Van Valkenburgh plan anticipated sea-level rise in its selection of park elevations, soil types, vegetation, tree placement, and edge design, and timely sandbagging narrowly saved Jane's Carousel.

The unusual practice of funding a park's operation from real estate development inside its boundaries remains controversial. In April 2015, completion of a luxury residential building was stayed by court order pending the outcome of a lawsuit by a neighborhood group, Save the View Now, which fears the project will obstruct views of the Brooklyn Bridge and Midtown Manhattan.

Eighty miles north of Times Square, the Hudson River is spanned by another audacious new park: the Walkway over the Hudson. In 1889, the Poughkeepsie-Highland Railroad Bridge opened as the longest bridge in North America and the only Hudson River span south of Albany at the time. Until closed by a fire in 1974, the 1.28-mile bridge was a vital route for trains bringing coal from Pennsylvania to New England.

Due to be scrapped, the decrepit bridge attracted the attention of Poughkeepsie resident Bill Sepe, who saw an opportunity to create a level-grade bike and walking route high above the most scenic reach of the mid-Hudson Valley. In 1992, Sepe and a local attorney founded Walkway Over the Hudson to promote the project.



Seventeen years later, at a cost of \$38 million (substantially provided by the Dyson Foundation in Millbrook, New York), the bridge reopened as the Walkway Over the Hudson State Historic Park. Now paved, lighted, and handicap accessible, the span is the world's longest elevated walkway—and one of the highest at about 200 feet above the river and the Poughkeepsie riverfront. A 21-story high-speed elevator, completed in 2014, connects the walkway deck with a riverfront park and train station beneath it. Some 700,000 people visit the walkway annually.

Ironically, both the walkway and the High Line benefited from a kind of making-the-best-of-it audacity. Each used obsolete structures that were too big to tear down. (Simply removing the elevated viaduct in Manhattan would have cost Consolidated Rail Corporation about \$30 million.) The new park facilities were in effect “Plan B” concepts to save the government from expensively tearing down a huge, orphan structure.

Around the country

Chicago's much admired 30-mile chain of lakefront parks was long interrupted by a gaping void of parking lots and train tracks east of the city's Loop, its downtown business district, so named for the elevated railroad tracks that encircle it.

In 1997, Mayor Richard M. Daley, reportedly looking down at the unattractive scene from his dentist's office, resolved to seize a

golden opportunity to convert this beleaguered site into a world-class park. His germ of an idea, implemented by a formidable public-private partnership, led to the construction of Millennium Park on a 25-five acre platform above a new parking garage. At \$475 million (split about 50–50 public and private), Millennium is the most expensive city park ever created, but the investment has already stimulated billions of dollars in nearby real estate construction and tourist spending.

When it opened in 2004, Millennium Park attracted more than 1.5 million visitors in its first six months, lured by its many delights: the wading pool between digital towers at Crown Fountain, a native-plant horticulture garden, a mirrored sculpture (Cloud Gate, usually called “the Bean”), a sinuous pedestrian bridge and outdoor performance extravaganza (both designed by Frank Gehry), and a bicycle station for commuters.

Located downtown, Millennium Park established a new public focal point and center-city destination, and thousands of high-end apartments and condos have since been constructed within sight of it. Its role as a free and democratic playground for millions of people is in the best Olmsted tradition.

Also downtown and connected to Millennium Park by the Gehry bridge, the 25-acre Maggie Daley Park is named for the late wife of the former mayor. (The relationship of the two parks can be seen in the photo on pages 14 and 15). Opened this spring,



Known as the High Line at the Rail Yards—where visitors can interact with the rails and other freight artifacts—the last section of the elevated trail opened last September, extending it north to West 34th Street.

it reenvisioned a corner of the enormous lakefront Grant Park, where seldom used tennis courts and formal gardens have been replaced with climbing walls, undulating hills, an ice skating ribbon, and inventive, adventuresome play spaces.

There's a great new park in Dallas, too, although its genesis came at a painful moment for the city. When the Boeing Corporation announced the relocation of its headquarters from Seattle to Chicago in 2001, the news hit Dallas like a bombshell. Dallas had been a contender and was accustomed to winning these kinds of competitions, especially when up against older Rust Belt cities. But Boeing let it be known that it was the quality of urban living—including parks—that had tipped the balance to Chicago.

Dallas's powerful corporate community immediately began refocusing from simple growth to complex placemaking. And the city sprang into action on both the public and private fronts. Among many parks that have grown from these initiatives, the most transformative has been Klyde Warren Park, constructed on a deck over the Woodall-Rogers Freeway.

Barely five acres in size, the park packs in a load of spaces from dog park to event lawn to reading and games courtyard to jogging trail to performance pavilion to restaurant, along with more than 300 trees and 900 shrubs. Further, the park links downtown office towers and cultural icons with the arts district and residences situated in uptown.

Because the park has healed the 50-year-old gash of the below-grade freeway, it has stimulated downtown high-rise housing, something quite rare in Dallas. Named for the nine-year-old son of the park's biggest benefactor, Klyde Warren Park is certainly not Olmstedian in design or in conception, but it is having the kind of impact on real estate and city shaping that the best of the greensward parks did more than a century ago.

Klyde Warren Park is not the first park to be built on a deck over a highway—the earliest on record was built in New York City in 1939—but it is quickly becoming the most influential since Seattle's Freeway Park opened to great fanfare during the nation's bicentennial year in 1976. The concept of a green and social oasis in the middle of a human and architectural bazaar is so novel and intriguing in formerly white-bread Dallas that it has become the place to see and be seen, just as Olmsted's more bucolic parks first were 150 years ago.

Not to be outdone in the new city park competition is Houston, Dallas's friendly rival. Already home to 445-acre Hermann Park (with the city's zoo and an iconic lake) and 1,466-acre Memorial Park (whose three-mile running track gets 10,000 users a day), Houston now boasts a new 12-acre gem in the



Klyde Warren Park is the new central gathering space in Dallas—a far more inviting spot than the Woodall Rodgers Freeway that it caps. At 5.2 acres, the urban park features a performance pavilion, two restaurants, walking trails, a dog park, and the requisite children's play space.

bull's-eye center of its downtown. Called Discovery Green, the \$182 million park was carved out of former parking lots and several streets that the city decertified and donated to the assemblage.

Funded about one-third publicly and two-thirds privately, the park is chock full of things to see, use, and experience—a playground, interactive fountain, dog park, cafe, putting green, kayaking pond, model boat basin, ice skating rink—and, like Klyde Warren, has stimulated a localized development boom, including the first downtown apartment tower built in 50 years. Discovery Green is located near the city's gargantuan Convention Center—the kind of facility that is usually the kiss of death for its surrounding neighborhood—but, with 1.2 million park visitors a year, it thus far has held its own against the needs of out-of-town conventioners with other things on their minds.

Thanks to aggressive programing by the indefatigable Discovery Green Conservancy, the park is being adopted by Houstonians as their own special place. Although the number of children living downtown is still small, the Houston Independent School District schedules numerous field trips to the park, and Discovery Green is frequently encircled by yellow buses while students play in the water, listen to music, learn ecology, picnic, or happily take part in other activities.

Other cities are making their marks with high-profile parks as well. Cincin-

GREENWAY SPIN-OFFS *By Brian Barth*

Northwest Arkansas is booming. The metropolitan statistical area anchored by the cities of Fayetteville, Springdale, and Rogers doubled in population between 1990 and 2010 and has grown another eight percent since then, eclipsing the half-million mark in 2014. Dozens of roadway expansion projects are in the pipeline, but the newest transportation project is just 12 feet wide: the 37-mile Razorback Greenway.

Traversing the entire length of the urbanized corridor from the south side of Fayetteville to the north side of Bentonville, Razorback is the newest greenway in North America (the final segment opened on May 2), and one of the most substantial regional trails to date. Most notable is how it was planned: While most greenways give priority to recreation and conservation goals, the proponents of this trail were serious about getting people from point A to point B.

By connecting existing trail systems and dozens of new spurs, the Razorback Greenway forms an alternative transportation corridor through the region; it links six downtown areas, three hospitals, 23 schools, a college and a university, two museums, the Botanical Garden of the Ozarks, the corporate headquarters of Walmart, J.B. Hunt, and Tyson Foods, and scores of shopping areas, historic sites, parks, and residential communities.

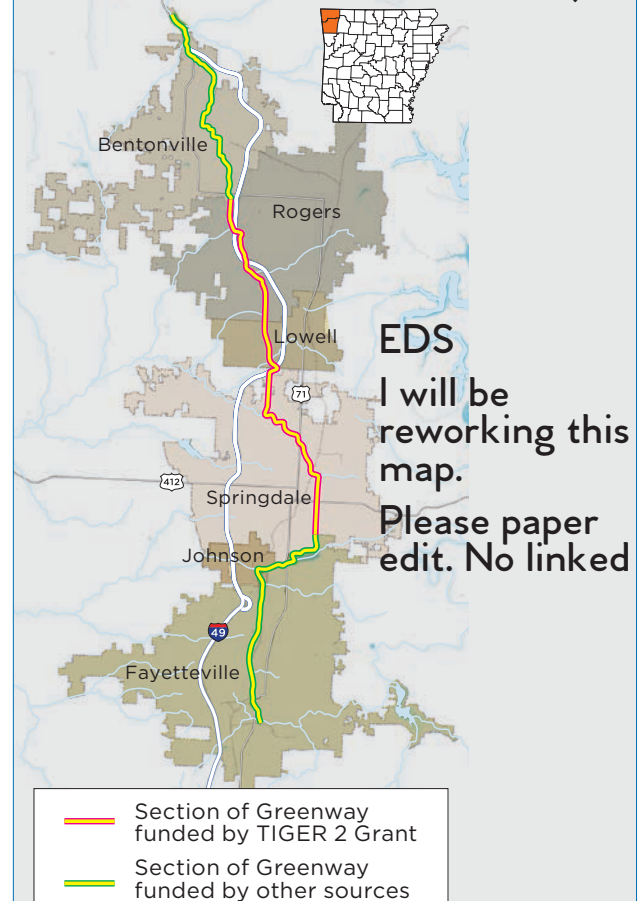
"It's a different kind of greenway," says Chuck Flink, FASLA, of Greenways Incorporated, who oversaw the design and construction of the project and who has spent his three-decade career focusing on greenways. He has become a champion of on-the-ground bike and pedestrian planning in the U.S. Greenways should be seen as an indispensable part of development infrastructure, he says, and most of his current projects do just that. "Greenways become the focal point around which development occurs" on a given site and in a region.

In updating the bike and pedestrian plan for Northwest Arkansas in 2008, planners at the Northwest Arkansas Regional Planning Commission "took all the master trails plans for the urbanized areas in the region and put them all on a map and looked for common connections to link the cities together," says John McLarty, a transportation planner and assistant director at the agency. "We considered population density and density of employees in linking the six cities, so [the greenway] is not just for recreation, but for commuting." About 76,000 people live (and 80,000 work) within a half-mile of the greenway.

The Razorback Greenway runs parallel to the notoriously congested I-49 corridor, which transects the region. McLarty says the NWARPC envisioned a long-term, piecemeal build-out and focused at first on a short prototype segment. Funding is hard to come by for alternative transportation projects of this scope, but the philanthropic community stepped in. One of them was the Walton Family Foundation; Walmart's global headquarters is in Bentonville.

"The Walton Family Foundation started attending some of our meetings, saw the direction we were going, and asked if they could help us," says McLarty. The foundation offered a \$15 million grant, which was matched by a TIGER II grant from the U.S. Department of Transportation. Several municipalities along the route pitched in, too, and construction began in early 2011.

The 37-mile Razorback Greenway



Four years and nearly \$40 million later, the greenway is complete—lightning speed for a project this big. While it's too early to gauge success, McLarty says, "We're seeing a lot of interest and activity in trailside development . . . and when school lets out, armies of kids are using the trail to get home."

A survey of 307 users along one of the first functioning segments found that 42 percent were using the greenway for shopping, errands, school, or business purposes; 62 percent were using the trail five times or more per month; and 70 percent said they expected to spend money while they were out and about.

Businesses large and small are embracing the greenway. Arsaga's, a popular local coffee shop along the route, has opened a new patio facing the greenway, and the Phat Tire Bike Shop has added a new location to accommodate demand. Tyson Foods, which long ago vacated its historic headquarters in Springdale, has announced that it will move some of its employees back to the central business district—partly because of the greenway, Flink says.

"People want to front on greenways," he notes. "It's like a new [type of] main street—or a new version of the old main street—it's where people see each other, it's where people interact and engage."

Brian Barth is a writer with a background in environmental planning. He is currently working on a book titled *Invisible City: A Natural History of the Urban Landscape*.

nati has invested \$120 million its downtown waterfront. Smale Riverfront Park is a dramatic 45-acre destination that includes a stage and event lawn, an adventure playground, a carousel, a stairway that incorporates a light show, two interactive fountains, a striking Civil War monument to the Black Brigade, tree groves, a meditative labyrinth, a bike center, and a brewpub. (Future phases will include a marina and a boat dock.)

Cincinnati has, in fact, boasted an exemplary park system for many decades, but since the hilly city is segmented into dozens of insulated neighborhoods, each with its own special green space, there has been no central park that all citizens could share as owners. Smale Park, located in Cincinnati's front yard, between the baseball and football stadiums and facing the iconic Roebling Bridge, solves that problem in a way that would make Olmsted proud. Fittingly, despite the high-tech nature of some of the amenities, the park's most memorable and coveted features are the gently swinging steel benches with their alluring vistas of the Ohio River and Kentucky in the distance.

Small but mighty

Not every city park can or should be as iconic as Millennium Park or the High Line. Older city neighborhoods are often served only by scruffy, down-at-the-heels parks in dire need of help. The "new-age Central Parks" summarized in this article represent the most audacious level of park creation in the finest Olmsted tradition. But even the humblest city park may be revitalized through neighborhood initiative, supported by public and private funding.

The New York Restoration Project founded by Bette Midler has revitalized many neglected parks in distressed neighborhoods of New York City. While not world-class showcases, such revived parks may also reflect the humanitarian instincts of Frederick Law Olmsted and his successors. Nearly two centuries after his birth, creating and revitalizing city parks is a crucial part of making urban America more green, healthy, equitable, and humane. ■

Rutherford Platt is professor of geography emeritus at the University of Massachusetts Amherst and the author of *Reclaiming American Cities: The Struggle for People, Place, and Nature Since 1900*. Peter Harnik directs the Center for City Park Excellence of the Trust for Public Land in Washington, D.C., and authored *Urban Green: Innovative Parks for Resurgent Cities*.

Neighbors: Living Next to Chicago's 606

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EDS:

Jim is updating his blog this weekend and will also have additional posts to come before the July magazine is out. (This is a perfect partnership for continuing coverage)

BLOG



MORE ON THE 606. A 2013 APA INTERVIEW WITH THE TRUST FOR PUBLIC LAND'S JAMIE SIMONE, AICP, EXPLORES THE HISTORY OF THE BLOOMINGDALE TRAIL, AKA THE 606.

VIDEO

RESOURCES

FROM APA

"Too Big to Fail." *Planning*, April 2014.

"Audit: 'Hubris' Killed Great Park Plan," *Planning*, June 2015.

Video about Brooklyn Bridge Park: www.planning.org/awards/2014.

"The Role of Parks in Shaping Successful Cities," with the National Recreation and Park Association, May 2014; available as a pdf at www.planning.org/cityparks.

IN PRINT

Public Parks: The Key to Livable Communities, by Alexander Garvin.

Reclaiming American Cities: The Struggle for People, Place, and Nature Since 1900, by Rutherford H. Platt.

Urban Green: Innovative Parks for Resurgent Cities, by Peter Harnik.

'If you build it they will come . . . And it doesn't have to be five acres. It can be a fifth of an acre. Really, a safe green space is all you need to provide and the kids will use it.'

MARVIN BOUKNIGHT, DIRECTOR, CHARLOTTE NATURE MUSEUM

ON A RELATED TOPIC

PUTTING NATURE FIRST—FOR KIDS *By Charlene Oldham*

At the Cincinnati Nature Center's Marge & Charles Schott Nature PlayScape, children have 1.6 acres to explore, but it often doesn't take much more than an old log to entertain kids for hours. "It might become a balance beam. It might become a rocket ship. Sometimes it becomes the side of a fort," says Eve Smallwood, the center's family program coordinator. "It could be anything."

At the Charlotte Nature Museum's Fort Wild, Marvin Bouknight sees children transform landscaping timbers cut into one-foot segments into everything from towers to pieces for an invented game with its own intricate rules. "And that was facilitated just by providing blocks," says Bouknight, the museum's director. "There's no right or wrong. It's just letting children use their imaginations."

Other innovative play spaces are popping up everywhere from Brooklyn's Prospect Park to Chicago's Indian Boundary Park. These places are part of a trend toward providing less structured, more imaginative, nature-oriented play spaces for children.

"If you build it they will come," Bouknight says. "And it doesn't have to be five acres. It can be a fifth of an acre. Really, a safe green space is all you need to provide and the kids will use it."

With funds from the U.S. Forest Service, the National Wildlife Federation and North Carolina State University's Natural Learning Initiative recently produced *Nature Play & Learning Places*, national design guidelines showing managers of schools, parks, child care centers, and public lands how to integrate nature into children's outdoor play and learning areas. The guidelines

suggest some simple additions, including introducing logs and "loose parts" like sticks or pine cones, or setting aside digging areas, that could make natural play areas more accessible to a greater number of kids.

"Those provide endless opportunities for creativity," says Smallwood. "You really don't have to have a ton of space or money to make these small changes that allow for kids to have a lot more creative outdoor play time."

It's relatively easy to introduce elements of natural play spaces into backyards, neighborhood parks, or school playgrounds. And a growing body of research emphasizes the importance of kids spending more unstructured play time in natural settings whenever and wherever they can.

"It appears that creative play, balance and large motor skills, healthier body weight, and concentration are just a few of the developmental benefits fostered by nature play," says Andrea Faber Taylor, child environment and behavior researcher at the University of Illinois Landscape and Human Health Laboratory. "The evidence suggests that taking a break in a natural setting is potentially much more productive than heading to the basement to play video games or to the shopping mall."

Attention Restoration Theory, the basis behind Faber's findings, suggests that small spaces can be restorative if they have elements like water and plants, and wildlife like squirrels and bees. Natural areas can provide a sense of escape, even if kids just go outside to read or take a stroll, says Robin Moore, director of the Natural Learning Initiative and lead author of

Nature Play & Learning Places.

"The human species has only been living in cities and . . . experiencing our contemporary lifestyle for a very short period of time," he says. "So 99 percent of human evolution has taken place in nature and has been dependent on nature."

In previous generations, children spent time outside playing pickup games and exploring the open areas in their neighborhoods without much prompting. But with cultural shifts, including a growing reliance on structured academic and athletic activities, parents' concerns about safety, the rapid development of the digital environment, and cuts in parks and recreation funding, kids today spend less time outside and more time packing on pounds in front of television, computer, and smartphone screens.

Moore says a number of health statistics and other factors, including the 2005 publication of *Last Child in the Woods* by Richard Louv, served as a call to action. Today, parks departments, school administrators, public health officials, and parents are identifying and adding natural play spaces in their communities to show kids that watching a video of a firefly can't compare with seeing the real thing.

Charlene Oldham is a writer and teacher based in St. Louis whose work can be found at charleneoldham.com.

