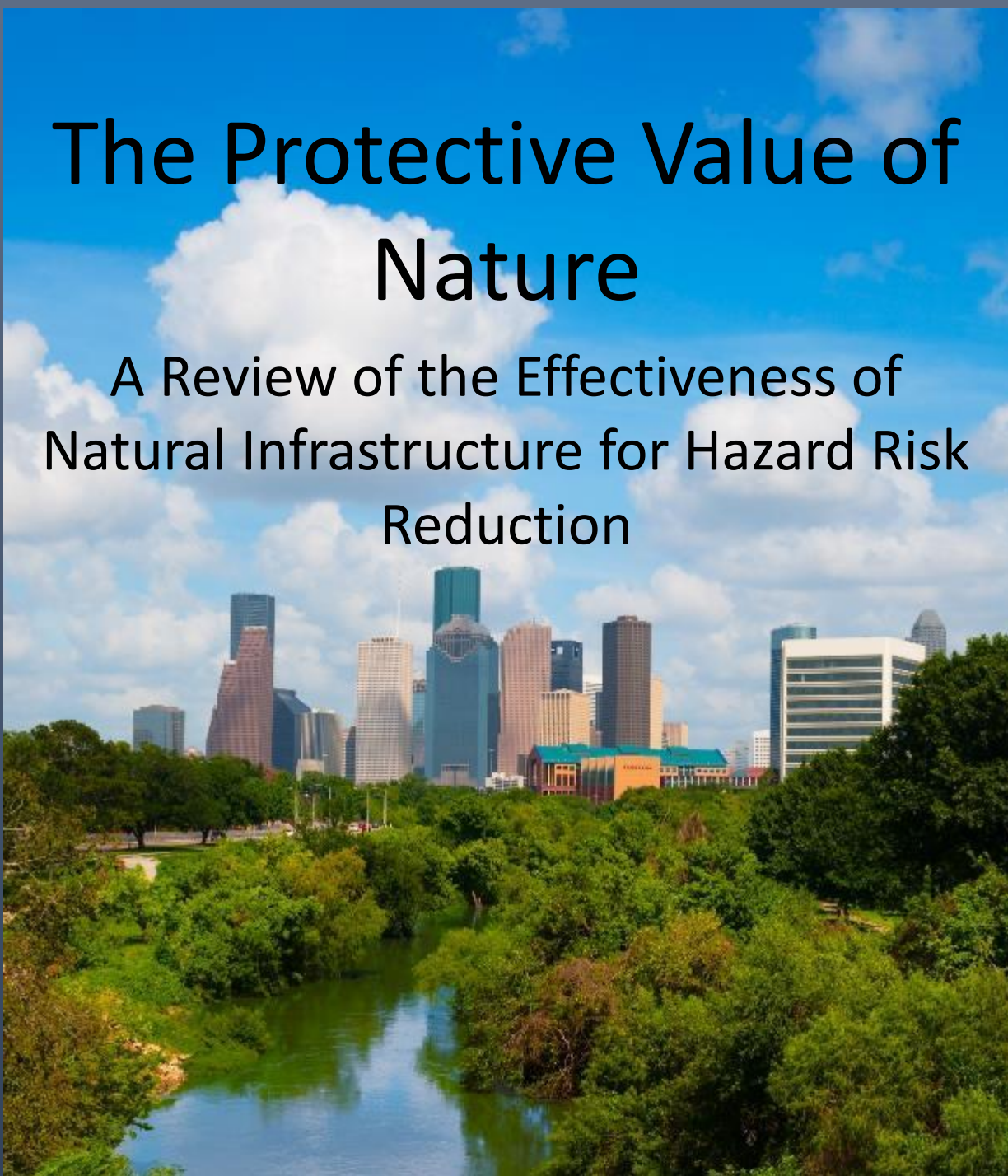


The Protective Value of Nature

A Review of the Effectiveness of Natural Infrastructure for Hazard Risk Reduction



Recommendations

Protect and restore existing features providing natural defenses

Mainstream use of natural infrastructure across sectors

Improve risk assessment and encourage smart development

Scale up investments in community resilience and supporting research



Protect and restore existing features providing natural defenses

- Support conservation programs that acquire, protect, and restore natural systems and open space
- ID natural systems providing hazard protection and other critical services to communities; Prioritize protection or restoration of these systems in plan updates and revisions
- Encourage levee setbacks to sustain and enhance wetlands and riparian habitat
- Defend and strengthen bedrock environmental laws and regulations that support healthy ecosystems and guarantee communities a voice in decisions

Mainstream Use of Natural Infrastructure Across Sectors

- Ensure NI projects are both eligible and competitive for federal dollars across sectors (surface transportation, Clean Water SRFs, etc)
- Thoroughly value and account for ecosystem services in federal and state agency decision-making and cost-benefit analyses
- Ensure that natural infrastructure projects are not subject to longer permitting timelines or more complicated permitting processes than structural alternatives
- Ensure that the Army Corps fully complies with its existing mandates to evaluate natural infrastructure project alternatives

Improve risk assessment and encourage smart development

- Increase resources to swiftly complete and maintain new national flood maps
- Reauthorize and reform the National Flood Insurance Program
- Re(establish) a federal flood standard
- Reauthorize and modernize the Coastal Barrier Resources Act

Scale up investments in community resilience and supporting research

- Expand targeted research on performance and effectiveness of natural defenses for meeting risk reduction objectives
- Ensure the designs of natural infrastructure solutions account for future conditions
- Support competitive grant programs for implementation of natural and nature-based features; require project monitoring and data reporting as a condition of the grant
- Create a national revolving loan fund for community resilience.

Thank You!

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Our report is available at:

<https://www.nwf.org/protective-value-of-nature>

