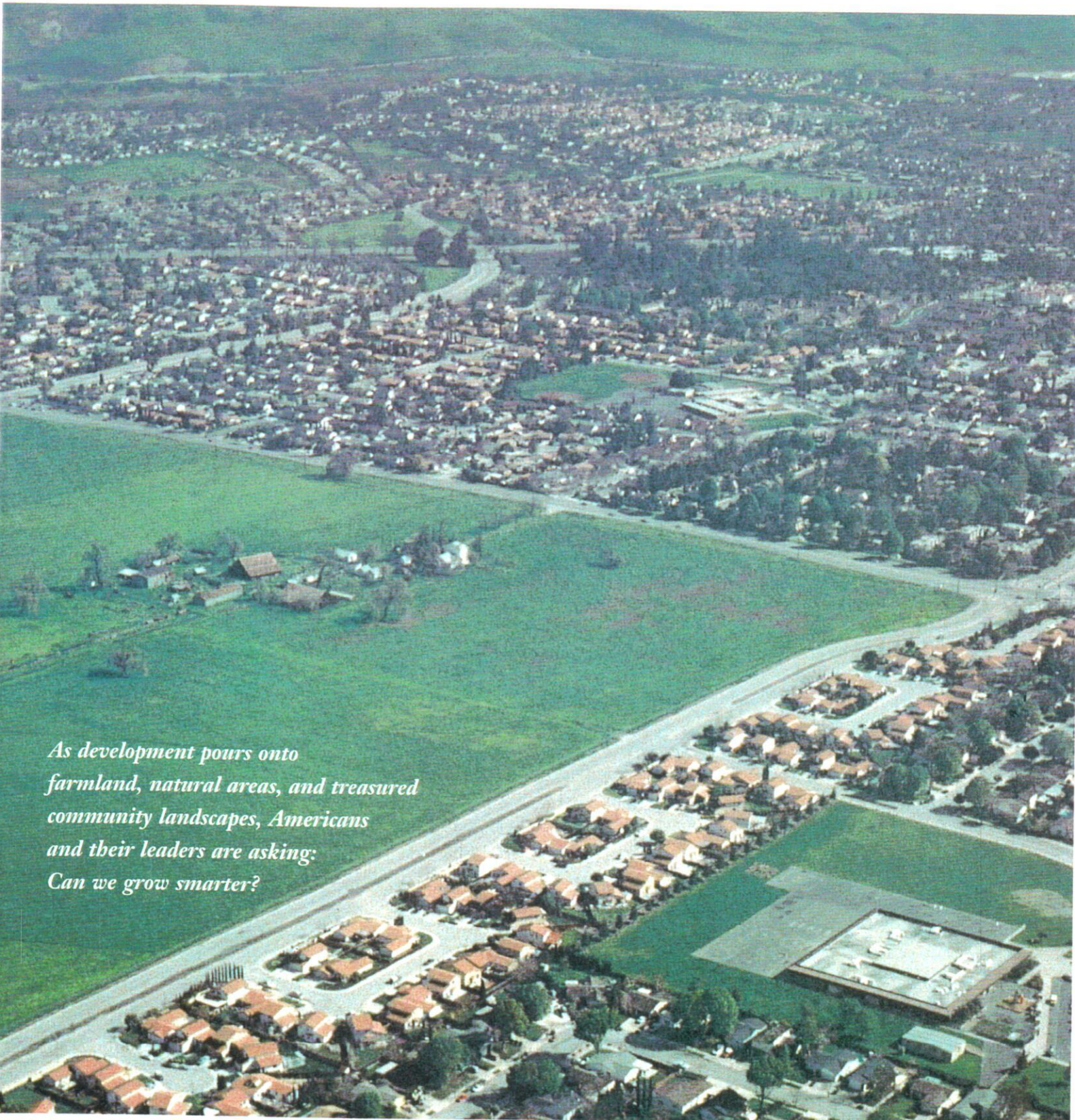


# Land & People



*As development pours onto  
farmland, natural areas, and treasured  
community landscapes, Americans  
and their leaders are asking:  
Can we grow smarter?*



Bryant Park Restoration Corporation

**Dan Biederman is co-founder of the Bryant Park Restoration Corporation.**

Across the nation, parks, protected rivers, scenic lands, wildlife habitat, and recreational open space help support a \$502 billion tourism industry and 7 million jobs. Outdoor recreation—much of it on parks and public land—generated at least \$40 billion in 1996, accounting for 768,000 full-time jobs and \$13 billion in annual wages.

Much of this recreation takes place on federal lands such as national parks, which are estimated to contribute more than \$10 billion annually to local economies. Each year, 100,000 people come to ride the famous Slickrock Mountain Bike Trail on federal Bureau of Land Management land near Moab, Utah. The trail generates \$1.3 million in annual receipts for Moab, part of \$86 million spent by visitors to nearby federal land attractions, including Arches and Canyonlands National Parks. Recreation is the second-largest producer of direct revenue from U.S. Forest Service lands—bringing in more than grazing, power generation, and mining combined.

Because of the value of tourism, many rural communities are working to protect the lands that attract tourists. “Surveys tell us that [tourists] place a very high value on open space,” says Will Shafroth, executive director of

**“Open space conservation is not an expense but an investment that repays communities over and over again.”**

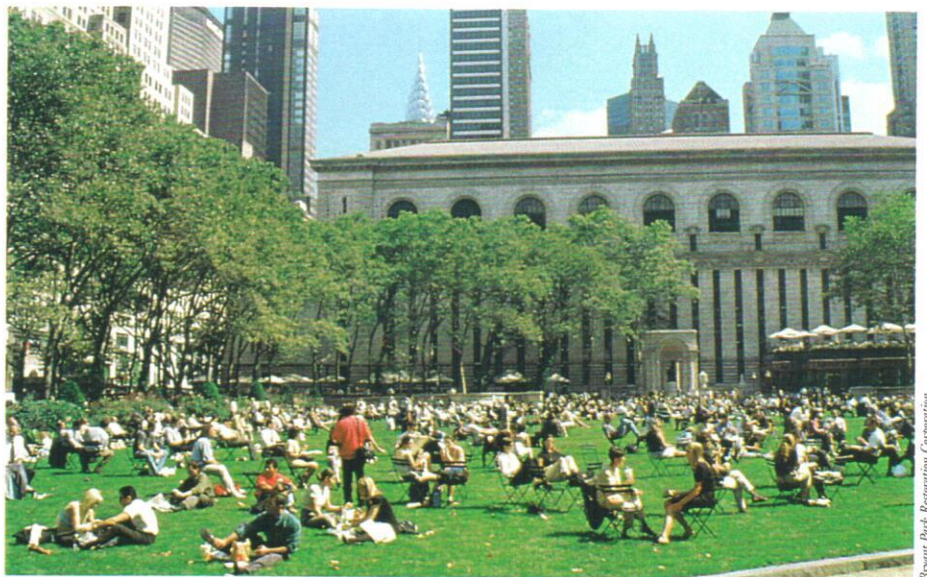
TPL President Will Rogers

Great Outdoors Colorado (GOCO), a funding agency that has channeled more than \$35 million in state lottery funds to help protect more than 60,000 acres of Colorado’s open space. One place that money is being invested is in Gunnison County, home of Mount Crested Butte ski resort, where GOCO is helping to protect ranchlands threatened with development. “[Tourists] leave the airport and they don’t have to drive through subdivision after subdivision to get to the ski area,” Shafroth says.

Of course, tourist dollars are not the only economic benefit of ranch- and farmlands. The nation’s \$202 billion agricultural industry generates approximately \$50 billion in annual farm income that is cycled through local communities. Unfortunately, some of the best Ameri-

can farmland is rapidly disappearing. The American Farmland Trust estimates that 4.2 million acres of prime or unique farmland were converted to urban uses between 1982 and 1992—a loss of nearly 50 acres every hour.

In Fresno County, California, the nation’s most productive agricultural county, farmers and business groups have formed the Growth Alternatives Alliance (GAA) to try to protect the farmland that generates \$3.3 billion in annual agricultural revenues. “Each acre of irrigated agricultural land should be considered a factory that produces between \$6,000 to \$12,000 per year for the local economy,” a GAA report contends. “The loss of even 1,000 acres of agricultural land can remove as much as \$15 million from our local domestic product.”



Bryant Park Restoration Corporation

**Bryant Park’s revival is credited with bringing millions of dollars to its New York City neighborhood. With concession receipts, the park will soon pay its way without city funds.**