2026 Fall Think Tank

Is Nature the Missing Ingredient in Your Workforce Well-Being Strategy?

November 9, 2026 from 9:00 AM EDT to 6:00 PM EDT
Center for Health and Wellbeing, Winter Park, FL

With support from:

Mercer

Time	Speaker
9:00 am	Welcome & Introduction: Karen Moseley & Sara Johnson
9:10 am	**Work and Life in the Anthropocene** Leigh Stringer, *Global Director of Advisory Services, Principal, Perkins & Will*
10:00 am	**The State of Nature and Health in America** Jay Maddock, PhD, *Regents Professor, Texas A&M University*
10:30 am	Stretch Break on your own (ideally outside in nature!)
10:40 am	Erin Largo Wight, PhD, *Professor & Director of the Institute of Environmental Research & Education*
11:10 pm	**Using Nature Prescriptions to Improve Employee Health and Well-being** Stacy Beller Stryer, MD, *Chief Health Officer Park, Rx America*
11:35 am	Roundtable Discussions
12:00 pm	Networking Lunch
12:50 pm	**Building Brains: How Nature and Design Build Cognitive Capital in an AI world** Upali Nando, PhD, *Global Sector Director, Innovation, HKS, Inc.*
1:15 pm	**Panel: Practical Strategies for Increasing Nature Contact in the Workforce** • Becca Schusler, *Director of Wellness, Atlantic Packaging* • Ian Siderits, *Industrial-Organizational Psychologist, NC State University* • Susan Johnson, PhD, *Founder & CEO, Nature at Work and South Carolina Healthy Business Challenge*

- Angie Rechtin, *Executive Office Supervisor, Mount Pleasant Waterworks*
- Jared Hanley, *CEO & Co-Founder, Nature Quant*

3:15 pm	Roundtable Discussions
3:35 pm	Introduce Garden Tour & Bio Break
3:45 pm	Garden Tour
4:45 pm - 6:00 pm	Awards Reception *With support from:* workpartners

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Green space. Blue space. The evidence is clear and compelling: Time in nature has a surprisingly wide array of benefits for physical and mental health and well-being, as well as cognitive performance.[1–4] Rigorous research supports the impact of nature exposure on blood pressure, cardiovascular health, inflammatory markers, cortisol, depression, anxiety, and immune function.[1,2,4–8] Combining nature and physical activity appears to supercharge the beneficial effects of both[9] and may lead to average reductions in health care costs of more than $1000 annually.[10] Biophilic design, which is focused on infusing nature connections into buildings, is gaining momentum in workplaces given its capacity to improve creativity, productivity, and well-being.[11,12] A meta-analysis of 49 studies revealed that biophilic design had a medium to large effect on increasing positive emotions and decreasing negative ones.[13]

Experts recommend a minimum "nature dose" of 120 minutes a week,[14,15] raising important questions about whether fostering time in and connection to nature is an overlooked key component of employee health and well-being strategies.

This Think Tank will explore the latest research on the link between well-being and nature, as well as practical, low- or no-cost strategies employers can implement to increase nature connections and promote time in nature.

Learning Objectives:

- Name at least three health benefits of time in nature.
- List at least two strategies employers can implement to increase employees' time in nature.

- Identify three changes that can be made to workspaces to increase connection to nature.