

U.S. Forest Service Chief Invites People to Participate in the National Get Outdoors Day

Climate Change is a topic that captures many headlines and the changes in the natural world are clearly measurable. And it is happening at a time when America's children are growing up with little connection to nature or the great outdoors. Kids are six times more likely to play video games indoors rather than to go outside and enjoy the natural world. Lacking experiences with nature, much of this next generation will find it difficult to appreciate the value of clean air, clean water, abundant wildlife and open space. Who will care for our precious natural resources? In response, we've created a special day to open the great outdoors to all kids.



Abigail R. Kimbell is the 16th Chief of the US Forest Service. She grew up in New England, where she spent her formative years hiking, fishing, and camping on the White Mountain National Forest.

On June 14, National Get Outdoors Day will be celebrated at more than 45 locations nationwide. This day will give kids the chance to pitch a tent, hike a trail, meet Smokey Bear and experience some of the wonders of nature. Envision a child's face as she casts a fishing rod for the first time. Imagine watching wild animals in their natural habitats. The possibilities for opening new adventures to kids are endless.

National Get Outdoors Day is co-sponsored by the U. S. Forest Service and the American Recreation Coalition and includes dozens of federal, state and local partners. Our goal is to introduce people to public lands and foster a sense of stewardship. Our vision is for every child to have the opportunity to personally experience the great outdoors, whether in a remote mountain wilderness or a city park. For many, this will be the first time they have visited national forests or other public lands.

We invite you to join us in this important endeavor. In Montana, National Get Outdoors Day will be celebrated at the Lewis and Clark National Historic Trail Interpretive Center on the Lewis and Clark National Forest in Great Falls and also at the Makoshika State Park in Glendive. Kids of all ages can participate in a variety of activities while they learn more about their environment.

The challenges of climate change and other environmental issues will not be resolved in a few years but over generations. Today's children will need to take on those challenges and develop creative solutions. Help us help them by encouraging outdoor fun and joining us on National Get Outdoors Day. We hope to instill a sense of curiosity about nature that will last a lifetime. We are all counting on it.

Abigail R. Kimbell
Chief U.S. Forest Service