



Today's Challenges and Opportunities Kids in the Woods

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Briefing Paper

“The challenges of water and climate change are related, and they are huge. They will not be solved in a few years. It will take decades. Future generations will need to rise to these challenges no less than our own. As conservationists, we have an obligation to help kids connect to the outdoors—to understand the connection between forests and water ... to understand the implications of their own choices and actions, both now and when they are grown.”

—Chief Abigail Kimbell to North American Association of Environmental Educators, 10/08

Under the banner of “Kids in the Woods,” the Forest Service is continuing our long tradition of working with kids, highlighting our ongoing education and outreach programs and developing new efforts. The goal of the “Kids in the Woods” is to create an enduring impact on young people’s values and attitudes toward nature and their understanding and appreciation for their role in conserving natural resources.

Forest Service employees in all of our mission areas are working with educators, volunteers and community, state and international partners to connect America’s youth and their families to nature. Working with so many individuals and entities increases our capacity to reach all this special segment of our society, including the underserved and culturally diverse populations.

National forests and grasslands provide an abundance of natural outdoor classroom opportunities to urban, suburban and rural kids for learning and caring about the environment, and for sheer enjoyment. Our collaboration with state, and nongovernmental partners are also building appreciation of forests and open spaces in developed areas and on public and private lands.

An agency framework to integrate and guide our efforts for “Kids in the Woods” is in development. In the long run, “Kids in the Woods” activities will help create a citizenry that is informed about their natural resources and the importance of sustaining our reliance on them for our long-term wellbeing and quality of life.

Web Links to “Kids in the Woods” Activities

Conservation Education Program

Chief Kimbell recently addressed hundreds of environmental educators at the North American Association for Environmental Educators annual meeting. A copy of her speech is available online at <http://www.fs.fed.us/news/2008/speeches.shtml>.



Get Outdoors, It's Yours

Visit: <http://www.getoutdoorsitsyours.gov/>

MonarchLIVE

Visit: www.fs.fed.us/monarch to learn about future MonarchLIVE events.

NatureWatch

Visit: <http://www.fs.fed.us/outdoors/naturewatch/wheretow.htm>

More Kids in the Woods

Visit: <http://fsweb.wo.fs.fed.us/mkiw/#>

National Get Outdoors Day

Visit: <http://www.getoutdoorsusa.org/>

Natural Inquirer

Visit: <http://www.naturalinquirer.org/>

Urban Outreach

<http://www.fs.fed.us/emphasis/kids.shtml>

For specific facts and references, see *Kids in the Woods Quick Facts*,
<http://www.fs.fed.us/emphasis/products/kids-facts.pdf>

Forest Service Mission
Sustain the health, diversity, and productivity
of the Nation's forests and grasslands
to met the needs of present and future generations.

