

America's Great Outdoors
Notes from Youth Listening Session

Location: Asheville, North Carolina

Date: July 15, 2010

President Obama launched a national conversation about conservation in America at the White House Conference on the Great Outdoors on April 16, 2010. The President understands that protecting and restoring the lands and waters that we love and reconnecting people to the outdoors must happen at the local level. Therefore, President Obama directed the principal leaders of the Initiative to travel across the country to listen and learn from people directly involved in finding grassroots solutions to conserve our lands, waterways, historical and cultural resources and to reconnect Americans with the Outdoors. The President indicated that the sessions should engage the full range of interested groups, including tribal leaders, farmers and ranchers, sportsmen, community park groups, foresters, youth groups, businesspeople, educators, State and local government, recreation and conservation groups and others. The President placed a special priority on engaging with America's youth. Below are notes from the breakout groups at the Listening Session sorted by Discussion Question. Please feel free to use the ideation tool at <http://ideas.usda.gov/ago/ideas.nsf/> if you would like to share your thoughts.

Discussion Questions

- Y1. Where do you go when you are not indoors?
- Y2. What do you do personally to protect the environment?
- Y3. What are some obstacles and challenges that prevent young people from spending time outdoors?
- Y4. What recommendations would you make to President Obama to get more young people engaged in, and connected to, the outdoors?

Discussion Question Y1-Y4	Comment
Y1	Focus on city, local parks
Y1	Urban setting, go to the local pool, city park; not necessarily a big focus on national parks, traveling to get to parks
Y1	Freedom of not having to be inside (watching TV etc); freedom to be active, lively
Y1	I enjoy outdoor activities when others are enjoying it with me. I'm often deterred if I can't find others to go with or if I don't feel secure.
Y3	Safety definitely an issue for young, single women
Y3	Experiencing nature is a new phenomenon, rather than just watching it on TV
Y1	Pay-off is so much more rewarding than going to the gym
Y1	In a lot of urban areas there's concrete, etc. Compared to more rural areas, lots of outdoor activities, woods, etc.
Y3	Urban areas, gang violence: lot of parents don't have the time to go with their children, and refuse to let them out on their own
Y3	Lack of it being explained and taught in schools (history of the parks, etc.); normally just about going to visit what we have in Washington, DC

Y1	Nature Conservancy; the land we have right now, the sights and sounds of nature alone can attract people outdoors
Y3	Part of the challenge is how to get people who don't have nearby outdoor recreation activities to participate. A lot of people take the opportunities they have for granted. Have to break the original barrier of getting others outside.
Y4	Federal government working with schools to do more class trips and getting classrooms to hold class outdoors (especially to target urban schools, historically black college [HBCU's], no child left inside); emphasize parks in biology and environmental science classes
Y4	Emphasize funding for low-income communities
Y4	Media partnership: team up with television stations to hold "black-out day" allowing kids to get away from technology and get outdoors
Y4	New advertising campaign (ie. Smokey the Bear)
Y4	Make all parts "cool" through advertising (direct and indirect) and holding outdoors events/concerts/etc. in parts to get folks interested
Y4	Education for parents: often with multiple jobs, busy schedules it's tough, but sharing information with parents about parks and programs
Y4	Safety in the outdoors, but without confining with cameras, security, police, etc.
Y4	Community run program with local volunteers
Y4	Programs (like day-care) where working parents can bring kids to enjoy outdoors for the day
Y4	Volunteer programs (like anti-litter) in parks and local communities to get kids interested and involved in enjoying and protecting outdoors
Y4	Lots of parks have limitless programs, but not enough public outreach to increase awareness of programs
Y4	Can be integrated into local school districts, teaching (teaching teachers how to teach in the outdoors)
Y4	Emphasize No Child Left Inside in urban schools and Historically Black Colleges with greater emphasis on parks, landscapes, and outdoor fields trips
Y3, Y4	Create after-school programs and outing clubs that are led by youth
Y4	Media and government partnership to spark public outreach in classrooms and with parents; with the classrooms, emphasize teaching teachers HOW to teach in the outdoors; for parents, educating them on how to be safe and create safe havens in the outdoors for yourself and your children
Y1	Hiking in the foothills
Y1	Kayaking
Y1	Rafting in Chataloochie
Y1	Fishing
Y1	Play sports
Y1	Interconnectedness of nature
Y1	Learn from nature, natural processes
Y1	Physical exercise
Y1	Working outside-always something different to notice
Y2	Educate people about the environment
Y2	Provide opportunities to conserve specific endangered species to people who aren't familiar

	with the environment
Y2	Practice and teach Leave No Trace
Y2	Enjoy teaching people to preserve the environment and improve it
Y2	Bike around town
Y2	Eating vegetarian
Y2	Eating local food
Y2	Native gardens
Y2	Composting
Y2	Harvesting wind energy
Y2	Farm initiatives in Atlanta schools - outreach to kids
Y3	Access - closer natural areas
Y3	Safe access
Y3	Safe transportation
Y3	Marketing - jobs, funding, more local, community-based advertising
Y3	Fear of nature
Y3	Cost
Y3	School buses, transit buses can be used
Y3	Free time
Y3	Video games
Y3	Interesting incentives
Y3	Parents fearful for children of nature
Y3	Lack of knowledge, what will I gain from going outside?
Y2	Integrating outdoor learning to classroom setting - making a connection with nature
Y2	Having a specific area for teachers to teach outside
Y2	Connect children to their specific environment
Y2	Transportation
Y2	Greenways
Y2	Turning dammed rivers into natural rivers
Y4	Have something available for all ages (disc golf)
Y4	Easier access
Y4	Increase awareness of outdoor opportunities like SCA
Y4	Increase state and local funding and info
Y1	Hiking on BRP
Y1	camping
Y1	Driving around looking for places to go
Y1	exploring fields
Y1	Running especially at the arboretum
Y1	Doing sports with friends
Y1	Mountain biking riding in Brevard and on BRP
Y1	Skateboarding
Y1	Swimming

Y1	Rock climbing/rappelling
Y1	Bike riding
Y2	Boy Scout Code - LNT, clean up after self and others
Y2	Recycle
Y2	A lot of clubs in town trying to get people to do stuff outdoors
Y2	Composting at restaurants
Y2	Hotels have the option to not wash sheets/towels to conserve water
Y3	School
Y3	Don't have a car, access to trails
Y3	Electronics - TVs, computers
Y3	Parents (afraid kids will get hurt)
Y4	People don't know what to do outdoors, show them what there is to do
Y4	Make gym class outdoors
Y4	Shut down Nickelodeon TV so kids will go outside
Y4	Do a lot of rock climbing at climbing gym, get gym to go outside and take people climbing
Y4	Make forests more exciting with laser tag, paintball
Y4	More showers, nicer bathrooms in campsites
Y4	Keep open/reopen road areas for four-wheeling
Y4	Not many roads you can bike on without cards
Y4	Government could sponsor a summer camp for kids who would normally spend summer indoors because their families don't have money
Y4	Government could take inner city kids outside - discussed outward bound trip to show people how to live in the outdoors
Y4	Canopy tours
Y4	Advertise great outdoors as being healthy
Y4	More money into programs to get kids out
Y4	Get youth prisoners to do outdoor work (trail maintenance, hiking...)
Y4	Put more land adjacent to the BRP so that housing developments don't get too close
Y4	Limit where people can build near federal land
Y4	Opportunities for federal jobs (like veteran points for SCA, YCC) for young people
Y3	Read
Y3	Shopping
Y3	Work/school
Y4	More visitor centers/education to the public on parks
Y4	Challenge the American public to go a day "unplugged"
Y4	Better education in public schools about parks and the outdoors
Y4	More outdoor classrooms, trips to parks, zoos, nature in schools
Y4	More celebrity/public figure campaigns to children/youth to get outside
Y4	Providing information of activities to do in parks based on age and family structure
Y4	More junior age like programs (funding)
Y4	Continue funding at all levels of local, state and federal government.