

Discussion Question 1

What works: Please share your thoughts and ideas on effective strategies for conservation, recreation and reconnecting people to the outdoors.

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Discussion Question 1

What works: Please share your thoughts and ideas on effective strategies for conservation, recreation and reconnecting people to the outdoors.

Albuquerque, NM

She formed her own coalition. There are 6 members who are very committed to the community and the land. They have a relationship with Cochiti and Santo Domingo. They are not waiting for anyone and are doing what they want. She wants the Federal Government to have a vision for the 21st century that increases public lands and have an agreement with private land owners. Northern NM wants the toxic chemicals ceased and from getting into the waterways. She would also like to see a continental conservation protection plan.

Kids get attached if given money. Have a CCC for youth. There are a lot of young people that need jobs. This will give them the responsibility.

His group is trying to get together with the youth conservation groups and bring grants into the Las Cruces Communities and get kids out into the dessert in Dona Ana County. It helps to reconnect the rest of the community. The Federal Government should pass the Omnibus Bill. The Land Bill will be helpful for the West. BLM should look for more wilderness or NCA lands. He would like to see Otero Mesa become a national monument. NLSC is now helping him put together a friends group to get grants. He would like to see the Federal Government provide more funds to organizations that support what the group does.

Students to grab concepts at the lever that they are studying. Partnerships with agencies works.

His group formed a non-profit to accept monies. The BLM was designated as a lead and he doesn't feel that they would have been funded if the BLM staff wasn't involved. One of the things they do is hire youth to do watershed restoration. You have to work with your neighbors and designate an agency to get the staffing.

One of the biggest challenges they face is that there is not enough funding for trails to fix those in existence or to create new trails. Just over the 4th of July weekend 14 members from his group cleared 80 miles of backcountry trails in the Pecos Wilderness. The Forest Service is under continuous pressure and without these kinds of groups they have no choice but to close the trails.

One of the things that she has done locally is start a climate action group in her school. One of the things that you have to take into account is to set the example first and make your voice heard. Being a community leader shows other people what they are capable of by taking the initiative.

Likes to go backpacking and camping in New Mexico, Colorado and Utah with family and friends.

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(cont.)

They employ a lot of the Acoma youth. Kids find that it is fun being employed with them. They take it back to the Native American culture. Being stewards of the earth and that it goes back to the mother earth. They find pride and joy doing that kind of work.

Birdwatching, hiking and mushroom hunting

Likes to play soccer

Biking and Swimming. Likes to go down by the River. Alameda has a nice river.

After football practice he likes to ride his bike to the pool. He lives next to an arroyo so he likes to walk up and down the arroyo

He is currently working in the Carson National Forest building a fire break between the Pueblo and the forest to help reduce the spread of a fire. They are also building trails in public lands. When people see them out on the trails they know that they are taking care of the land and they have a greater appreciation for the land. They are trying to make it more accessible for the public. They have two different crews of about 20 doing forestry work. They also have two more crews working with the youth in the community trying to get the youth to do things outside. Over the course of the year they have over 100 people working for the Youth Corp

Recommendation would be going to the community and getting young kids involved. He is currently working with water harvesting and reconstructing sites.

She and her friends go off roading in Tijeras, hiking in the Sandias and swimming

Works with the Bosque Ecosystem Monitoring Program. They monitor the Bosque which is a riparian ecosystem along the Rio Grande. They monitor water depths and litter fall for that forest. They get the youth involved and now have 700 youth that come into the Bosque to do water samples. By getting the youth involved it forms a lasting relationship with the environment and gets the kids interested in something that they normally wouldn't do.

Likes to rollerskate around the community and the Rio Grande. She likes to hang out with friends at the skate parks in the city.

Not so much physical access as much as mental access. As long as you are not part of the environment you cannot connect with it. Just working with Earthworks has educated her and has been her chain of thought on a daily basis.

Fishing, Camping, in Eagle Nest and whitewater rafting

Discussion Question 1

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(cont.)

Skiing and snowshoeing in the Sangre de Cristo Mtns. A lot of biking and camping and backpacking close to Santa Fe

Art connects with nature. Picking up recycled materials and trash and making art with it.

He also works with the youth and right now they are working at Santa Fe High building an outside classroom. Kids need hands-on-experience and ask how they can get involved. It is not only an outdoor classroom. It contains a perma-culture garden and solar panels. They will be monitoring the solar panels throughout the school year. He feels that more monies for outdoor education programs in public schools are needed so the students connect with the land instead of a textbook. It would be nice if the National Parks should have outdoor classrooms so that when the students do visit the Parks serve as an example

Farms on five acres, goes running in the foothills in the near his pueblo. Likes to go outdoors and watch the sunrise

Work out of the Ancestral Lands Office in Acoma Pueblo. Being Native American they have a certain connection to the land and they teach that to their groups. They uproot tamarisk removal, introduce native plants along the riverside. Their main focus this summer is erosion control and water conservation

He has a Five acre field that he goes to work on

Works in a community garden. He lives by the Sandias so just being near mountains and water is what he likes to do.

Thank you for coming to Albuquerque for a meeting to talk about "Wild Lands". I want to save our wild lands in New Mexico as well as other places in the U.S. and have worked to protect Otero Mesa and Valles Caldera and more needs to be done.

Wild horses belong in the west and are a symbol of the West! They evolved and developed hooves as a result of the western range. By relocating herds to sterile lands or zoo like conditions, the rich forage will cause many to sicken and die.

Backpacking and camping, goes to Colorado, Utah and around Albuquerque for camping. With youth groups and family. Enjoys any camping, even "car camping".

Biking, go to the park, go swimming, walk along the river. Primarily inner-city areas. Playing sports, soccer.

Bird watching, hiking to find birds with family, mushroom hunting with grandma

Discussion Question 1

Albuquerque, NM

(cont.)

Civilian Conservation Corps from FDR era worked. Need to re-implement a program like this.

Do something like a breast cancer walk but for conservation, recreation and parks.

Farming, trail running, watch the sunset/sunrise.

Fishing, camping in northern NM. White water rafting. From Indiana and appreciates the ability to get outdoors in the west.

Football practice, ride bike to the pool, lives near arroyo and walks it to see what he can find.

From Acoma Pueblo. Need to have incentives for getting outdoors - like jobs, scholarships. Need to focus on who you are trying to reach. Need to have youth leaders/role-models who encourage younger kids to do conservation work. (Many kids agreed wages and peer support/examples would encourage them to do conservation work.)

Gardening, community gardens, likes to be in the mountains.

Get young kids involved in the community. Educate people on green habits. Have community days where you take people to sites that are using green techniques – water harvesting etc. Educate people on work being done. Community based projects that bring people together.

Go long boarding, work in the field.

Has been doing trail work since he was 12 and loves it. Trail work and connections in Gila National Forest are deplorable. Access to trails is horrendous. Fire budgets are huge and trail budgets are small. Gila is one of the larger national forests and only 10-15 people are doing trail work, usually seasonal hires. Signage is a problem. Crew leaders can't even figure out where trail is or what trail they are on. How can the public figure it out?

Have a week where people are encouraged to unplug from media and technology and encourage them to go outside.

Have city/community projects that do conservation work.

Hiking, snowboarding, picnics, biking.

Discussion Question 1

Albuquerque, NM

(cont.)

Make federal buildings zero carbon. Need green-collar conservation corps to do this work. Use solar panels, water harvesting etc. Get people involved hands-on and educate them how to do it in their own lives.

Mentorship and culture is what works. Provide the opportunities and youth will do it (recycle bins, compost). Make it convenient, make it habit and kids will do it. Kids need role models/leaders who are doing it. Need to make opportunities for kids to apply what they learn – outdoor classrooms. Education works.

Monitors bosque ecosystem along the Rio Grande. Measures water depths, water samples, litter fall etc. Involve over 700 youth from elementary to high school who help with the monitoring. This helps youth get involved and form a relationship with the environment. They learn to appreciate the uniqueness of the bosque. This starts through the school but helps get kids involved and interested in conservation and they take these practices with them as they get older.

Moved to New Mexico to try to heal from 9/11 (eye witness of Twin Towers being hit). Inherited land and got inspired to share with others. He takes youth to public land management meetings. Youth ideas can inspire us. Individuals (adults) need to go out and get involved with young people and take them to special places, public lands.

Need to deal with climate change. Need to pass current legislation for carbon limit (CLEAR). We don't need a cap and trade system. There is a cap and dividend approach proposed by Rep/Dem senators. This would provide funding for youth corps. An aside - kids like animal poop and tracks. Take them out to do animal tracking.

Need to outreach to parents to teach them to encourage their kids to get outdoors. (Sec. Salazar – How do you outreach to parents in this day and age?) Need to educate parents on outdoor activities that are cheap – camping, hiking etc. Meet up groups in communities and conversations on how to get outdoors would be a good start.

Offer environmental scholarships to get youth employment that's related to the outdoors.

Off-roading, hiking, swimming in rivers/lakes, coach soccer in parks.

Over the last 6 years there has been a great organization effort to work with farmers and ranchers to conserve private lands. This is a great opportunity and many farmers/ranchers are willing to work with us if we educate them and partner with them. They make conservation choices everyday and we can help them make better choices. Average age of most ranchers is over 50, we need to move youth into this way of life or lands will be sold and subdivided.

Pick up trash when they see it, even if they didn't do the littering.

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(cont.)

Really likes art and thinks it's a great way to connect to nature. Used trash to create art sculptures and recycled art. Helps people realize we are trashing the environment and we need to recycle.

Roller skating, skate parks, picnics in the mountains.

Started high school climate action group. We need young people to set an example and take the lead. Wants to be a leader and have her voice heard. Doesn't buy bottled water, car pools, only shops at thrift stores. Reducing/reusing is as important as recycling. Wants others to realize what they can do to help.

State parks are wonderful local opportunities. Have good education programs. Need to protect wilderness areas.

The Youth Conservation Corps work! Keeps kids out of jail, teaches them conservation skills/job skills, employment/money, helps them find future employment.

There are young people who are doing great conservation works and know where their roots are. We need to start learning what works and maintaining cultural practices. The government ruined our (Latino) lifestyle and you want us to partner with them? Not all youth are addicted to electronics. But these can be used to reach other youth through youth already doing conservation work. Young people who know where they came from are best for reaching and reconnecting other youth.

We need to have fun. Make outdoors fun and a good time. Kids need to learn the outdoors means freedom, independence, a place in nature. Don't make it seem like formal education/structure. Let kids run and have fun. For the last few years there has been a waiting list for girls wanting to join local Girl Scouts chapter but there aren't enough adults willing to volunteer their time to work with kids and get them outdoors.

Work in ancestral lands office. Work on Acoma pueblo lands. As Native Americans have connection to the land. Introduce native plants along river, build check dams to prevent erosion, working mostly on water conservation and preventing erosion.

Working in Carson NF to reduce fire danger between Taos Pueblo and forest. Building trails on public lands across NM. Public sees them working and appreciates that there are groups working to maintain and build trails. Working to remove invasive species and reduce fire threat. Have 2 crews of 20 people doing forestry and trail work. Several other crews in communities and summer program crews that involve and educate local youth. Some bosque and wetlands environment work. Involve about 100 people throughout the year. Serve as leaders/role models to teach other people how they can help.

Volunteerism works well when it works

Discussion Question 1

Albuquerque, NM

(cont.)

Marketing campaign, partnered with local groups and businesses, radio shows

Federal funding on conservation grants, more infrastructure, more resources = more volunteers

Strong grassroots interest which involves local, State, and Fed partnership

Works best when we work together, Feds, States, Tribes, citizens. When Fed creates environment in which all can success, it works well.

We support research based multiple use wise use of federal lands. Place attachment theory – get kids out and attached to the land

Encourage Congress delegation to move protection measures forward quickly

Unplug the children. Provide alternatives. We have two urban gardens

Needs to be taken to grassroots level...involve local peoples, not just big entities and groups. Get all players at the table...if you don't there will be dissent. Respect each other.

Creation of more wilderness area – protects ecosystems which are vanishing

NM can work at landscape level on public lands protections. Otero Mesa, Organ Mountains, examples of large swathes of public land. How to connect kids? Protect it for the future.

Workgroups having fun, spend night at some place easy to deal with and affordable – NM Outdoors is a club which is having success in this area

In public schools, it really works if you can start children in enjoying the outdoors. Also, families doing activities with others outdoors. Cooperatives all across country, doing that as a way of joining together and thrive.

Father took her camping – made outdoors an integral part of her life. Initiate interest and respect through getting young people out into the natural world

Better communications into media so people know there's something out there they can connect to.

Discussion Question 1

Albuquerque, NM

(cont.)

Give people opportunities to participate, involve smaller groups

Community garden has started to feed food pantry, local foods and farmers markets work great

Youth as catalysts, instead of just recipients of services – example recycling – poor response from community and schools until they gave the job to the youth. The program went from 7 schools to 17 last year, with more signing up.

Identify ONE common goal that every member of all organizations can adhere to, start working towards one commonality, then we work together and not at cross purposes.

Partnering with Forest Service – trail maintenance, helping

It works best for me when I have a job, and I know what to do – I volunteer when I'm scheduled....better than 'come when you can'

In the All Indian Pueblo Council HS, students go to pueblos, work on community environmental projects – it works very well. At end of school year, they present their projects in school. Students have gone on to work for tribes in conservation

Most of the time, finding an overriding goal works. Unplugging kids? Can't just unplug them and send them out....you have to TAKE them out. Make yourself available for youth

"All land is local. No matter what you are going to do, I'm very proud that we have, in our jurisdiction, the City of Albuquerque Open Space Center. It is amazing. We have lots of programs that we run every week for different ages. We work with the Petroglyph National Monument. We've joined forces with them. Being as we are a rural state, we think of Santa Fe and Albuquerque as urban. The Open Space Center gives kids a chance to have open fields where they can grow stuff."

"We really have an opportunity here. Our culture (in New Mexico) is based, for the most part, on small scale organic farming. You can actually invest a lot of money in New Mexico. We can be the example for how it can work for supplying food. We've been doing this for 800 years. Community farms are unbelievable resources. It is important that children know where their food comes from. It is really how we profoundly understand the experience on our planet. Nature heals. We think we are going to solve all the natural disasters. We should pay attention to nature. Nature will tell us how to clean up these disasters. It is really important to protect nature. The other thing, so many veils have been lifted in terms of ethics, greed, etc. What I came to realize is that youth are ethical. They don't need an ethics course. They understand what's right and what's wrong. We need to work for each other."

Discussion Question 1

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(cont.)

"We are the only program fully run by Native Americans. A while back we were used as a model for other Native American Tribes in connection to the Public Lands Act that was put together in 2009. I would like to see something like this go forward. We have a great partnership with the Pueblo of Acoma and would like other tribes to have that option and to learn more about themselves, their cultural values, and their connection with nature. Tribes are losing their connection with traditional values, due to technology. Speaking from the point of view of Native Americans, I'd like to see Conservation Corps started on all tribal lands. We started with 42 members, and are now up to 80 members. We are very excited to see our program move forward, but we need some money. We train young adults to do preservation work on some of our projects. Working with young people is one of our main goals."

"I'm a rancher in Northern New Mexico. To answer the questions that you presented today - a third of the land in the U.S. is public land. We don't need any more public land or wilderness. We need to put more money towards the lands we already own and make healthier watersheds. Also, how do we protect private lands? It is by allowing people who own those lands to use them in a sustainable manner. New Mexico being a poor state, a lot of ranchers cannot partake of federal programs that require a match. That slows progress and any impetus we have. We have a whole lot to do with the lands we already have. Work on what we do have and what we need to change."

"Member of. "Great Old Broads for Wilderness". We have a new chapter here in Albuquerque. It is a national organization. We need to support the wilderness we already have and create new areas. Wilderness areas are being overused, misused. Expand them. We are at the other end of the age spectrum from those young women. We need to take our children and grandchildren out into nature. We learned to appreciate nature as children. Permanent changes – setting aside areas for wilderness is one of the few permanent changes. It can't be changed back."

"I take kids on walks through the Nature Center. We explore bugs, the pond. They love it and are fascinated by it. Kids don't even know often that there is a river here in Albuquerque. I'm constantly surprised with how little interaction these kids have with the outdoors. A lot of families don't take their kids outside. They don't have money for buses. I think that is one very simple solution. Once a year isn't enough to form a relationship with nature. If they do, they will actually care about it and form a relationship for the future."

"I proudly work for the National Park Service. Backcountry Ranger for the season. At Bandelier, people come there to see the archaeological resources. 70 percent of it is wilderness. Youth Corps is a partner, AmeriCorps, there is a Youth Conservation Corps at Bandelier, Cornerstones Program, Day Camps. We need to make things last, get kids outside, beef up State Parks education programs. Mentoring. Bring youth to be more civically engaged - example as outdoor educators or writing letters. Being part of the political process."

"I'm just a citizen, local music teacher, and composer, and a member of the New Mexico Wilderness Alliance. This group has been involved with the Manzano Mountains. I'm urging that the study area there be designated as part of the wilderness. This would create a critical wildlife corridor. That's right here. "

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(cont.)

"I work with trusts and National Preserves. I was a little unsure about showing up, I wasn't sure how many people would show up. I am really excited. This is a large group. To address the two questions, re: getting kids outdoors. Let's hold another one of these in two years. This is a solution. I think this is already a good idea. Let's do this again. And just hearing from everyone already. I can't imagine that everyone would walk away today without making some kind of networking connection. We need to help ourselves by working together."

"I would love to see permanent protection for Otero Mesa by whatever method is available. What works? Wilderness works. If you look out at the Sandia wilderness or the Pecos wilderness around Santa Fe, then you realize that lays the groundwork for everything we are talking about, giving people of all ages the chance to get out and interact with nature. Lasting change. Of course I realize that some of this is due to the legislative process. We'd like to see some of the places talked about get protected by the agencies, and we'd like to see existing laws be enforced. For example, off road use. The Forest Service needs to be aware that there are a lot of illegally created roads and they need to be closed. Defragment land ownership, preferably between the State and Federal ownership. Rationally manage."

"We were both at the youth session this morning. A lot of the youth managed to sum up really strong and significant points. It was inspiring. Youth are often full of passion and have new ideas. Everybody talks about this specific designation or this specific cog in the machinery; we need to see the big picture. It will not take just all of our organizations, but all of our organizations working together. Without the dung beetle, all of those savannah ecosystems would collapse. The dung beetle rolls the dung and carries it underground, keeping the grasslands fertile. That keeps all the elephants, zebras, etc., all of those well known animals, afloat. I know a lot of people bring up problems, but we need to follow those up with a solution. This morning we talked about a significant problem in getting kids to connect with the nature – it is just not a top priority for a lot of kids. "Mental access" someone said this morning. Also, not every kid lives near open land. Friends, shopping, preparing for college, etc., take priority. Mentors are key. We should make sure that nature is part of the way we all think. We need to get networking done right as we sit here. We've got to get all partners together to come up with solutions. This morning at the youth session, some girls talked about having a walk for conservation causes. That is what all of the 7 or so organizations I have worked for have been trying to do for ages. I think it is really important that we can all work together. Lasting change – part of that is seeing the big picture. The national picture. Implementing things that will protect places on a national scale."

Discussion Question 1

Albuquerque, NM

(cont.)

"Thousands of farmers and ranchers are not here today. We work at growing products for the world. Every one of us is intimately involved in agriculture. As we look at landscape management, if we cannot maintain our food supply, we can't recreate or worry about wildlife. We have to get back to our roots that allow us the time to do these kinds of things. I agree with a lot of things that have been said. In defense of the Forest Service, we think they are doing too much for wolves. Otero Mesa is a very special place. The reason it is a special place, people that have lived and ranched there for four generations. Go to Otero county, talk to those people. No one there knew that it might become a monument. It was the fourth worst drought in 100 years. We don't want to see gas and oil drilling there, but do we just give away that energy source?"

"I'm a former member of New Mexico Mountain Club Conservation. The reason I came here today is that I would like to say "Amen" to this man about Otero Mesa. We have to keep some lands wild. We have to keep it wild in some places for future generations. I really came also to ask the question - how are the trails for these ATVs and these off-road vehicles that are tearing up the mesas, how are they related to conservation and maintaining the beauty and the wildness of this beautiful state? We owe it to the children not to let those expand any more."

"I'd like to speak for a few moments. I'd like to voice my support for Senator Bingaman's efforts..."

Discussion Question 1

Annapolis, MD

Maryland National Capital Parks and Planning Commission. We have to understand childhood development. Consider Maslow's hierarchy of needs, such as economics. Start with core principals of youth development to think about outcomes. Skill-building promotes self-esteem and community. The ability to earn even a modest wage builds self-esteem. Positive relationships with adults determines success of programs. Parks provide stress relief. We want to change behavior and we need to change institutions to do that. Need to teach and develop staff to do outreach.

likes parks in the city, takes bus to park, hang out with friends.

Responsible for 8 county National Heritage Area with two National Parks – Cedar Creek and Shenandoah NP. Is facing similar challenges; they are tasked with protecting ten battlefields. They work with willing landowners to protect land in Rockingham (and other?) counties. Have received grants thru American Battlefield Protection Program. They've found the most effective strategy is to sit down and engage with landowners to engender a sense a pride, started a dialogue with landowners on possible tools to conserve lands, and have developed land conservation strategy specific to each parcel. Key strategy is to getting recognition of battlefields incorporated into county comprehensive plan to ensure a common vision among key decision makers.

county schools build restoration project, kids develop project. Unique way to give kids first hand experience. Invest kids in the environment. Kids go home and talk to parents, kids became advocates. New way of campaigning, facebook connection w/ kids, ask for small contribution, kids invested in process. Invest young people in environment, they want to know how conservation is progressing if they are invested.

Northern VA Regional Park Authority manages the Occoquan Water Authority. The outstanding rowing facility gets people down there – about 1,000 kids on the water in the springtime. They go down there for the rowing, not the environment - but they are seeing beaver, woodlands, etc. They bring their parents on the weekends – 2,000-3,000 people on the weekends. Through this experience, they “get” the importance of the outdoors. This is one of the few reservoirs that is open to the public – that concept should be expanded.

Education: conservation preservation.

I try to conserve as many resources as possible, like paper, or water while I'm washing dishes. And you can reduce the amount of resources you use every day

I'm trying to raise student awareness about environmental issues, but it is difficult because a lot of students aren't really interested in the issues

Discussion Question 1

Annapolis, MD

(cont.)

Public parks around neighborhood; no national park near house – but Dad works for NPS so on vacation they go to national parks – grew up going to national parks with family; historical house site – tour house; but bike and hike, too

NO – have to travel 30 minutes

stopped buying plastic water bottles; “recycling nut” – goes in trashcan and pulls out recyclables

very confusing to look online and try and find jobs

service time; educate through schools

Junior ranger program, get kids out to park and teach them. Sprouts 2-5 yr olds, start young, plant acorns. Must connect on playful level. Advertise to parents on web (follow up question on how they connect to 2-5 yr olds) build something out of sheets, kids excited no matter what. Teen rangers, trail maintenance, show kids the wildlife. Civic justice corps – bring disadvantaged youth into park, amazing for kids, parents learn from kids. Kids learn trades. Bay grass planting- kids involved, can see the grass grow. Gunpowder falls state falls

trails, likes going to different parks, works at gunpowder falls park, worried about access to public areas, likes to take family to park.

he gets youth involved in recycling efforts, get support system for recycling, trail maintenance, engage youth in environmental problems of that the community must...

he works with civic justice corps - takes at risk youth in parks, teach them about trail work, kids find their work to be rewarding through this program, see what they've done -we need more programs like the one he works with.

Junior Ranger Program home and public schools – SPROUTS (2-5 years) what is a tree? An acorn? Planting, hikes – Teen Rangers high schoolers do trail maintenance – enrichment Scales and Tails with falcons, raptors, all around us – Civic Justice Corps for at-risk youth get into the parks for grass and they love it! What is this? Enjoyable, and they go home and explain what they did to their parents and learn hands on like tree planting but also carpentry – Bay Grass Planting – temperature variations see how much grass grows in Gunpowder Park or nearby -- advertise in their newsletter or online to parents – wilderness survival sessions as well.

Education, engagement and parent participation

Discussion Question 1

Annapolis, MD

(cont.)

Educate youth on what preserving the environment means.

get kids involves get dirty – need the reinforcement of parents

Establish community gardens: come together with crops. Recreational opportunities through gardens.

likes going on the water

mandate outdoors experiences in schools. Make having to go outside mandatory. Make it another subject in school, like history.

: MD has funding (real estate transfer taxes, agricultural land conversion to communities, conversion taxes). Inclusion of GIS from DNR to create priority areas.

Over last 30 years his organization have conserved 200,000 acres of lands, headwaters of 72 watersheds. Endorse LWCF funding. They have garnered \$220M from LWCF over last 20 years. He recognizes that they can't buy all important lands. They are now doing a lot of community based work as well. Also taking a top down approach (have been able to get legislation in PA passed that mandated all 58 municipalities along AT must adopt trail friendly land use controls. But are tasked with trying to support these muns. His vols are a connection to these communities. Obstacles: information, technical assistance and financial support. Many counties that the trail passes through lack land use controls and planning staff. State funds are down. They would benefit from modest seed grants to provide temporary support to counties and municipalities trying to develop local land use controls.

Landscape preservation important, Green Infrastructure, without it is a loss of natural functions. Land conservation needs to be localized at watershed level. Losing these lands will mean more costs. Papers have made the case for the values, but hasn't been a communication platform.

A threat can really rally a lot of different people to save an area. Wilderness battlefield threatened by Walmart brings together several different organizations. The programs from the federal government need to engage volunteers between providing volunteers and organization is great to get different ages involved and contributing to conservation

I like going downtown, walking around, seeing all the hustle and bustle

I just started going green. We're in this world and it is kind of hard to go green, but we're learning. Over the past few months I've been trying to recycle and find other ways to conserve

Discussion Question 1

Annapolis, MD

(cont.)

I work for a project where we go to low income homes and teach them how to save energy by changing light bulbs to CFLs. A lot of these people aren't educated about going green, but most of them know about CFLs so we start there

It's become a sort of a trend where it's popular to do this... which is good because now everybody thinks it's cool to be green.

Yeah, the hippie kids don't really know what they're doing; they are just following the trend.

need to reinforce value of conservation and place.

Organizations need to educate

We need to reach parents if we want to reach youth. Beyond school programming, we also need to emphasize family quality time. For example our family participates in outdoor activities like trail restoration. Historic places are also important places to get kids outside and engaged. One of my kids is much more likely to want to go to someplace historic. Finally, we need to empower local organizations that are already there, rather than focusing on new programs.

also likes to bike

I like to go to state and national parks and kayak on freshwater rivers

I try to do all of those things and try to buy more local foods

I try to volunteer in student groups or wildlife based groups that clean up roads.

Life style change on a large scale. Caring for open spaces is automatic. Starts in school, starts early. Positive experience at early age. Get kids outdoors and exposed to fun activities.

Engage youth through technology at a young age, such Iphone applications involving nature related functions, commercials about listening to music outdoors, etc

Community service and volunteer hours are important

Discussion Question 1

Annapolis, MD

(cont.)

Quality of life and economic revitalization, tourism, and also wanted to add preserve culture resources because they increase quality of life, restoration projects across the country have spurred econ revitalization. Save Americas ??? provides matching program, for fed investment of 150K have inspired individuals, local governments, foundations to bring in match and that has in turn been anchor in reinvestment into some abandon communities. That match component is essential. Hope program will return after 2011 budget.

Whatever you to engage children must be fun. Start early. Show job opportunities to your children so that they're environmentalists early. They have a pilot program: Woolly mascot, buddy bison. Where has buddy bison been:? Grades preK – 8 grade. Comes with toolkit. Come with local park maps. Buddy Bison website. Buddybison.org. Twenty-one pilot schools – new education centers in California, Nevada. Uses photos, stories, artwork. National grassroots movement. Connects kids through out the country. Biggest obstacle is transportation. Set up a program that's funded by scholarships for bus funds. High school organizations say if DOI would give jobs that are available, along with course work, developing skills, could increase hiring in the DOI. Little kids to older students; Simple and scalable. Teachers love it.

Community gardens: like that idea at the Department of Agriculture. It is a great way to bring a community together and learn about environment. Think about how you can work with Dept of AG, and non-profits, ...excited to work with it. Know your farm, know your food. Farms hooking up with urban areas to provide local crops, local communities visit the farms.

Jobs...there are opportunities to get involved. USDA FS and NRCS have tremendous opportunities for young people...examples. So many exciting jobs...job corps (6000 young people learning about green jobs – green related skills).

goes on walks and rides bikes on public lands

Thinks that the environment is related to all school subjects and should be incorporated. Science teachers engage kids about biology, English teachers help kids write poetry outside, etc.

What works well? We receive recreational benefits from Rock Creek Park (MD) – but it needs help from Land Water Conservation Fund. In Virginia's Mason Neck National Wildlife / State Park – you see pollution coming from DC and entering bay and this needs to be taken care of. We need more resources from Land / Water Conservation Fund. We need to take care of our places and provide resources for places to look clean and attractive to tourism.

Copy on federal level what state's do: e.g., several agencies coming together to save land. Be more flexible on how money can be used. Idea of an investment board.

Community gardens. Initiative for funding and template to create in community and staff.

Discussion Question 1

Annapolis, MD

(cont.)

Utilizing technology – social networking sites...parks that people can post events to and youth can RSVP. Adults need to try to make cool to kids. Park can friend a kid

Parents to promote involvement with environmental education. Educate parents on how they can get kids involved from a young age through high school.

I would love to get out to the mountains but it is hard to find time

I support local food by going to local markets and frequent restaurants that use food grown on local farms

It's more of an individual thing for me which I don't like because I think that organized conservation efforts are important

The trend is a good thing, but if it is uneducated, then you need to figure out why buying local food is a good thing

Visiting National Parks has been one of most inspiring impacts on my life. Feels that a new National Park in the Chesapeake Bay would be critical to increasing understanding value of the bay, and helping residents to appreciate nature.

We start with what is common & familiar, e.g. nature, history; then we work backwards to try to make the point about preservation. We think about how to engage the five senses when we are structuring programs. Children appreciate that. We find that word of mouth is the best way to market our programs.

working with teachers on SOL, hundreds of ways nature can reinforce those SOL – need to interconnect schools with parks better with video, physically – kids can bring parent to park and say look ma, this!

likes going hiking and appreciates cool geological features

Recycling. Notes the importance of DC providing people with the blue bins to promote recycling.

implement an outdoor ed program at schools.

Discussion Question 1

Annapolis, MD

(cont.)

Partnerships and LWCF funds to protect lands & paired up with the middle school next to a historic battlefield. The principal supports the project; it has become part of the curriculum (history, geography, physical education) to learn about the Appalachian trail. They made a pledge to hike a certain distance of the trail while the teachers wrote specific activities based on locations. Used John Smith's historic raid to go through the historic record and considered the actual location to create video podcasts to publish the story of John Smith.

Suggestion: Include the culture as well as the natural resource to engage people

Look at programs that work and give them priority for funding - land and water conservation, rivers and trails program - connects people in the community, existing federal holdings in their ecosystem setting and connect them to the Chesapeake bay watershed. There's room for more national parks that would provide more access, protect more natural and cultural resources

tries not to take cars; bikes everywhere, takes metro; composts and recycles; look at labels of all brands – looks for containers that are compostable

getting voice out there – “being green is the in thing” – make being outdoors the “in” thing; have adventures and fun parties to entice kids – i.e. AdventuresNYC (free outdoors activities!); one awesome experience in the outdoors can be life-changing

Job opportunities available, accessible.

outdoor activities free and open to the public – all activities

outdoor education and service through schools

local park, Druid Hill; spends a lot of time at harbor in Baltimore City – habitat environment; beach volleyball --> historical hill

go to local/school parks, but not enough

I like to go hiking in the national forests because I live nearby

“Eat the view” --promote farmers markets.

Not many parks near house; no national parks – doesn't spend too much time outdoors

Discussion Question 1

Annapolis, MD

(cont.)

not as conscious

more youth outreach programs in high school – job opportunities; government came to him – made it much easier

never heard of NPS before they came to me

mandate volunteer time

emphasized that the method to getting around funding issues by tying it to landscape change.

Relate protection of farm and forest land and connecting people. Montgomery county about 30 years ago to protect agricultural stock, so began a program to TDR over 30 years have protected 90K acres. Other thing county has done is hired an economic development coordinator focused on agriculture, help farmers to be part of agro tourism, get kids out to farms. If you want to get people connected to land – protect land and allow farms to continue to farm and people are connecting to it.

RTCA is high on my “what works” list. They play a really important role – they are experienced planners and they serve as an extra set of hands, and we (MD DNR) don’t have to pay them. Of all the NPS programs, this one is the best because it gives back to us. Regarding boating and public access facilities: a great program, managed through the FWS, is the Sport Fishing & Recreation Grant Program – they provide an enormous amount of funding to the states. Recreation Sport Fishing money is funneled through the states to create access sites. I would hate to see the program cut. The Sport Fishing & Recreation Program is well established – these people know boating better than most NPS employees do. These people and the program are incredibly important.

Has encountered many local successful projects. Each time there have been a couple of people that are catalytic, a primary reason community has connected with project. Need new army of conservationists. Could be helped along by investing in future leadership – are many programs like this now (ie. National Conservation Leadership Institute) that could be supported nationally. This is not mainstream program – it gets corporate support, is attended by federal and state agencies. Could be a national model.

camping; no national parks near house – but local parks, Gun Powder; hiking, kayaking

Greenbelt Park... but not much of anything – just a big open space, not a park

Discussion Question 1

Annapolis, MD

(cont.)

dad found job for me

Engage through brook trout, fishing, enroll CREP not for stripped bass and crabs, but for native brook trout, so they can fish with kids, we can gain a lot about focusing on local amenities of each area. We have CREP programs, temporary easements, need to migrate to permanent so have ecological function of floodplain, is there a way to increase flex in purchase easements. States don't have funding sources and want to protect land but don't fit wetland reserve, or don't fit CREP, need to think broader about funding sources.

Wildlife refuges are a good public-private model. Most have "Friends of" programs. Could be used on a larger scale.

Everything I learned about the outdoors was from the boy scouts. No other organization introduces this # of kids to the outdoors and encourages them to stay involved. They also own large areas that need preservation

From Portland Maine- helps kids from disadvantaged situations, have kids build rowboats. Does this with his own grandkids. Personal love of water environment. Takes a week to build a rowboat.

works to clean up litter and trash

Integrate the outdoors into the education system

Integrate Earth Day into school and get kids to go outside

likes to see good scenery, defines open spaces as no buildings. He likes to be places where he can go to find himself

He tries to make sure nothing dangerous goes into runoff which goes into the gutters. He is reminded by the "Save the Bay" signs around Baltimore and motivated to preserve water quality. Thinks that environmental issues could be mitigated by increased awareness

refers to "living classrooms" in which kids go on boatrides and are taught the importance of taking care of the environment. Conservation needs to become a personal issue.

Kids in the area – if they know they will go and they will grow. Make it implied mandatory that schools use the public lands. Get the kids to come out.

Activities, popping images (sesame street)..make our public lands more animated. Make public lands fun, include activities and challenges

Discussion Question 1

Annapolis, MD

(cont.)

When we emphasize hiking, kayaking and canoeing, we emphasize conservation - not just fun. We're getting people actively involved in removing invasive species at several state parks. We're encouraging them to do something useful in nature. The "Save the Mattawoman Creek" campaign has been powerful because we pulled in local groups. We're focused on it – we are conducting major events throughout the summer. We're going to provide kayaking and hiking tours to offer people a chance to get to know about the issue. www.mattawomanwatershd.org

Congratulations on the recent actions of the EPA – good marks! Look at all of these things from a reasonable viewpoint – the federal government must lead.

Need multiple dimensions to make conservation happen. Ripple effect- multiple kinds of interests and programs and groups. Clinton admin had a program that worked well, but wasn't fully funded: American Heritage Rivers Initiatives (Loretta Neuman ran this White House initiative) State initiatives have great models, but not nearly enough funding.

I like going to State parks

Just the fact that you do it says a lot more. My family always kind of makes fun of me for the things I do to conserve energy, but it has gotten to the point where they see that it really means something to me, so they don't make fun of me anymore.

And the hippie types may not realize whether they're helping or hurting the cause.

The parks in Anacostia... I am a martial artist and I like training outside to get the chi from the ground and outside

I try to commute more by the train and bus... and get a bicycle too

A lot of my friends were really living the green way... like by not using plastic bags. The individual effort is where it starts initially before it gets organized. I try to lead by example... I will show you what I do, not tell you

Government support in school systems. Educate children

Increase communication – social media, advertising, Facebook, get word out on what we have and what we stand for.

concerned about proposed casino on the Journey Thru Hallowed Ground 3000 feet from Gettysburg battlefield. Is difficult to defeat proposal; decision left up to PA Gaming Control Board, concerned about impact on battlefield. Need buffer zone to limit casinos around National Parks ie like Vicksburg,

Discussion Question 1

Annapolis, MD

(cont.)

We teach environmental stewardship. I'm vitally interested in fishing for native trout, and our streams are at risk for an invasive species—Didymo (and algae that coats the stream bottom and chokes off all other life). Invasive species is a rallying cry for recreational use of water. Collaborative effort—environmental monitoring and outreach helps make people feel like they are a part of this. Kids can map river bottom.

got job through cousin

how do you get people outside if they're just not interested? Not events... sports. Need something for everyone

Know where the parks are. People don't know where to go.

environmental science and outdoor education needs to be in schools

P.E. cut from schools...more field trips to parks.

Grow your own food - victory gardens, pull together to grow fruits and vegetables.

In order to have access to the outdoors there has to be public access.

takes public transportation.

DOI jobs in agencies all over the country in parks, refuges, lots of lands. Encourage to talk about job opportunities

Education not just schools but parents too. Encourage engagement and education of youth

What made you so passionate about outdoors? Grew up in suburbs of Atlanta and seeing sprawl and watched Chattahoochee River turned brown to red because so much of land has been taken off so now have clay enter river. Chat national recreation areas and being able to walk to that and not needing a car that allowed me to sit quietly. Also parents banned video games.

took eco footprint test and now wants to reduce carbon footprint. She recycles, got her family involved, decreases her shower time, got recycling bins at her school. Really concerned about water pollution and chemical that pollute.

Discussion Question 1

Annapolis, MD

(cont.)

chevy forest, creek, likes to stay active, lives in DC area, running, likes to spend time with family outside camping, likes to see the stars.

trails, biking

the combination of education and getting young people on board to fight for conservation, kids go back to school and the kids can say they worked for parks, bring experience to peers.

partner with corporations, her boys like Gatorade commercials, if they promote the idea kids will think cool. That's what kids listen to, have to speak their language.

Great to be here. Impressed with consistent themes. Been in DC 3 ½ years. Promote partnerships...biggest partnership with next generation. Introduced the "No Child Left Inside (NCLI)" initiative Studies show youth spend about 7 ½ hrs day on electronics and only 4 minutes on outdoor recreation. There is a need to be tech savvy but something is out whack with those numbers. Support real resources to get youth outdoors. Primarily into school. Incorporate outdoor education. 1700 orgs across country pushing to get NCLI legislation passed. Hope to get included in education authorization. Gov has to perceive when people are pushing for new framework...new energy framework. Build new framework, the next generation, most aware of the environment, take over this issue, make it your issue, using social media you can become the leading edge in Environmental Awareness in this country. Most exciting thing in decades. Every high school should have an Environmental Club. Own it! Exciting prospect what you can do with this issue on the environment. Pledge to be a partner.

fishing, gardens.

community gardens in outdoor areas, get kids involved, many empty lots, give incentives to convert the space.

society is experiencing push for universal computer literacy- we must have similar approach to outdoor education.

have to educate youth - if they don't know, how can we expect them to help effort.

Increase communications via outreach, public forums, social media

Rock Creek Park

Discussion Question 1

Annapolis, MD

(cont.)

Areas Around Goucher College

Anacostia River, arboretums

Olmstead Woods, The National Cathedral

Southern Maryland Parks, wetlands and marshes

In my neighborhood in northeast DC, people put trashbags out on their fences and property to encourage people not to litter. It started informally, but now their available all over the place

Installed rain barrels at home and school to collect water

I pick up trash along the GW parkway for work, and make sure there are plenty of places available to put trash

Although it started originally because of a plumbing problem, now I collect water from the downspouts when it rains and use it to flush the toilets

It's important to focus on the little things you can do in your everyday life-changing light bulbs, showering efficiently, and recycling.

The environment isn't limited to just the outdoors. It's what's around us all the time. You need to be conscious of indoor and outdoor environments, then. One example is to choose plants for outside your home that improve the air quality.

It's also important to share the available information with family and parents . They're the ones who are really going to encourage interest in their children.

We could focus on education aimed at kids, to take it home to their parents. If a kid says "Hey, I heard about this cool thing to do," Parents are going to check it out

Maybe some USDA and DOI outreach programs? We also need to make sure we get to kids in the places they already are, like a TV ad campaign, a brochure, something that gets them when they're not in school.

You could also do immersion education projects. For example you could read an article and do a research project on location somewhere outdoors. This encourages discover and incorporateslots of different learning styles to find how you personally relate to the environment.

Discussion Question 1

Annapolis, MD

(cont.)

One thing we do at Anacostia to get people to see the place is river tours. Maybe we could bring schools out with free transportation so people are out there, see the pollution, and want to help. You could also provide routes using public transportation.

Yeah, Like showing parks and how to get to them on the metro maps. That would be cool. And providing people with alternate transportation that's project or experience specific.

Information outreach campaign that targets kids outside of school, with a broad view to encourage different interests.

I know Baltimore does free buses on the weekends to certain parts of the city. It would be cool if public transportation went free to parks or historic sites, make them more widespread.

The more parents know, the easier it is to tell their kids about it, even if they already know. Parents are the ones who can really encourage and make an interest. I mean amusement parks give discounts, and parents take their kids there. If you made some kind of a special event at parks people would go

It would also be good to educate people about the outdoors in a way that gets a lot of people involved, like a community garden. It draws the whole family in to create participation and awareness.

You also need enough willing participants to start the process on some sort of big community event. Like paid staffers need to back it up, and be willing to give their time to prepare and clean up and help out.

We need more days like Earth Day. One day a year is good, but there needs to be more chances for lots of people to get together and mix education and outreach.

An environmental fair would be good, too

thank Save Americas Treasures Program, through them secure funding. Echo those comments.

In Baltimore, Johns Hopkins partners with heritage organization partners with heritage with walking trails. National Parks Conservation Association – suggested for natural conservation programs to look at national conserve act.

Listening to people is huge to make them feel they are being heard and they are involved – IdeaJam and Facebook page tell people how their dollars are being used and this is all about the people and for the people—this makes our government stronger and brings people outdoors

Transportation: key accessibility. Public transportation to George Washington Parkway. Implementation. Baltimore free shuttle to areas on the weekends (examples).

Discussion Question 1

Annapolis, MD

(cont.)

Outreach: to youth and parents. Parents teach kids through communication and bond. BBQ – national BBQ free to all (gov pd) bring everyone together. Everyone likes to eat-this is a common affinity across different ethnicities and cultures.

Education: schools are cutting P.E....encourage them to keep outdoor programs and outdoor classroom areas. Get more for youth.

– SPROUTS (2-5 years) what is a tree? An acorn? Planting, hikes – Teen Rangers high schoolers do trail maintenance – enrichment Scales and Tails with falcons, raptors, all around us – Civic Justice Corps for at-risk youth get into the parks for grass and they love it! What is this? Enjoyable, and they go home and explain what they did to their parents and learn hands on like tree planting but also carpentry – Bay Grass Planting – temperature variations see how much grass grows in Gunpowder Park or nearby -- advertise in their newsletter or online to parents – wilderness survival sessions as well.

A threat can really rally a lot of different people to save an area. Wilderness battlefield threatened by Walmart brings together several different organizations. The programs from the federal government need to engage volunteers between providing volunteers and organization is great to get different ages involved and contributing to conservation.

Activities for children are skewed for younger children. Engage middle school. Engage the faith based community. Kids in Montgomery county go on Earth Day to pull invasive species in Rock Creek Park. We need to work on partnership skills. Need to facilitate relationships. How do you streamline things so that there isn't double reporting

Agriculture land preservation, farm forest enterprise, need to find common interest between people and government. Forested lands – provide more funding for woodlands workshops, home owners may not know what profit can come from land. How can make more land more profitable. And government is interested in connecting land. Also, marrying agriculture and tourism – for example Mt Pilliar farms in county – excursion with family – getting children out in open.

Aligning land conservation priorities, look from state level and look at regionally, if align, call partners can come in and work on same slate. Does allow fed priorities and local priorities to merge. Open space – transfer tax. Looking at ranking based on quality forest, hubs and corridors, so have eco function nailed down. Haven't done as good of a job with agricultural lands. Need to do better job leveraging and all agree on priorities and based on sound formulas.

All participants should go to NPS website and urge completion of national trails system. 1960 Congress created National Trails system and according to website, only one (Appalachian Trail) has been completed. Participants should also vote on priority projects at AGO website.

Area should be named national treasure. Put pressure on development watershed. Corps of engineers and DOI work together

Discussion Question 1

Annapolis, MD

(cont.)

As parent, idea of community garden is good, stumbling block is school facilities folks, slow down construction. Mortar folks need to be involved

At National Aquarium in Baltimore we had outreach programs that targeted very young children. Daycares are a good place to start. It's good to start when children are little. We sometimes try to get sponsors to help pay the entrance fees for kids to visit sites. Multi-year programs are the best way to really reach kids; providing multiple encounters. They can start with activities in school or close to home when they are younger or just starting, then can do more advanced activities as they grow up. Schools don't always apply to become partners so we have to do outreach to them. Teachers aren't always comfortable with losing instruction time. Non-science teachers were not comfortable with external programs. Teachers once they are fully trained, then become more comfortable using the programs that are available. Teachers didn't want to do training during the summer. Funding was helpful to get teachers trained for environmental education. Children going off-site can be facilitated by sponsors. Getting into the school system and into their curriculum is essential. Also need to work with private schools.

At state level, they have greened their own grants program. Grants depend on conservation externalities. Keystone principles- reward the right types of developments.

Best model of land conservation is Pine Barrens in NJ-- Strong local zoning, TDR, and governing body, good plan. Lots of federal funding. This model would work well in Chesapeake. State can do good things—eg, protecting land along Appalachian corridor. PA and MD doing better than VA.

bring Arlington Echo program attention – involves kids in stormwater restoration, lessons, plant on restoration site, first-hand experience in environment and cheap labor! – go home and talk to parents about it – projects that may have had local opposition now are supported because kids have contributed to it

Budget crisis biggest roadblock to the outdoor experience. Two park staff laid off (parks and rec). Annapolis has 200 acres of parkland. They have to rely on volunteers such as girl scouts. They use "Volunteer Voice", a weekly announcement on the local AM (WNAV) radio station. Weekly interview where need for volunteers is aired. This way really connects to the public. Also use Volunteer website: <http://www.volunteeranneandundel.org/>

building and maintaining trails relates to conservation so as not to erode or trap trash in creeks – through adults, newspapers, online and at REI they get volunteers – many in suburbs less knowledgeable than folks in cities – it's sad – if people don't understand how conservation happens they don't understand value – youth engaged through Americorps, SCA, Scouts – kids are lost – glimmer of hope when they participate and do something productive

Discussion Question 1

Annapolis, MD

(cont.)

Can encourage teenagers to teach younger kids. City of Annapolis interns work on green jobs programs. We need to look at this as stewardship, taking care of something that doesn't belong to us. Think about demographics; think about the opportunity to increase diversity in the environmental community. As government officials, look at multi-family housing when it comes in for approval. Encourage connections between trails, environmentally safe areas, storage for recreational equipment, environmental design. Give people ownership through small backyards.

Chain of habitat - connection between protected lands. Arlington - a bridge was built to enable people to get from Roslyn (urban) across the highway down to the park. Find the missing link to enable people to get from urban areas to parks.

Conduct a series of listening sessions with young folks. Talk to them directly. Gear does cost money – offering the equipment for free is an important concept.

Conservation fund. A VA strategy that has worked well is the easement acquisition incentive which was done through legislation. Enhanced income tax credit. Where tax credits are transferable. Gov Kaine set a goal of 400,000 acres of conservation with few state dollars for state conservation, most accomplished through conservation easement donated tax credit program. But also great federal programs for purchase of conservation easement, fed forest legacy program and also military partners.

county schools build restoration project, kids develop project. Unique way to give kids first hand experience. Invest kids in the environment. Kids go home and talk to parents, kids became advocates

Education for climate change and ecology in middle and elementary schools. More information for kids to understand what the career options are - internships like STEP and SCEP. If they don't get introduced to the field when they're young, they're less likely to pursue a job in an environmental field.

Emphasize the state tax credits (transferability of those credits). The majority of easements have come after the tax credits were enacted, mostly after they were made transferable. Conserves about 6 acres per hour in the state of VA. This way the easements don't get lost with the investment. Many new landowners don't have the income to leave easements instead of allowing development. Many of the land owners reinvest the money in the land and community if an easement is agreed on. Preservation trust fund - uses money to offset the costs of creating easements which is often the difference to get owners onboard. This pays for transactions including lawyers etc.

Encourage citizen engagement. By monitoring water quality, they become engaged. Government must value that engagement. Give the citizen credibility. Gives them a role in conservation.

Enhanced tax benefits needed. Good example happened in MD (50% of adjusted gross income) caused a bump in protection.

Discussion Question 1

Annapolis, MD

(cont.)

Environmental markets help supplement on top of federal funding, there will be credits earned by farmers and ranchers that is paid by private rather than federal. Want to hear more information if this can work?

Environmental trust - no transferable tax credit for MD like in VA - driven by federal tax deduction sparked rapid growth. We need to get state tax credits going through congress to take the next step.

Everything I learned about the outdoors was from the boy scouts. No other organization introduces this # of kids to the outdoors and encourages them to stay involved. They also own large areas that need preservation.

Fairfax county schools, elementary schools and parks. Work w/ teacher's standards for kids in different grades, have to have environmental education standards. use parks to reinforce issue. Connect park to school. Use park to educate kids. 4th grade kid bring parents out and kid shows them something

Farms, DC environmental education consortium. Forest communities, people only concerned w/ survival. Childhood obesity is real problem. Growing own food- impress on young people how important. Low cost, low carbon imprint food Expose kids to natural world, draw kids in, meet kids where they are and teach them. Teach teamwork, teach about parks Edible gardens, people sitting around not doing work, put them to work in gardens Agricultural runoff is #1source of pollution. Wants DOI and EPA to work on this

For those with funding issues, connect with your schools and universities. Ask for help with a neighborhood design center – find a landscape architect who is starting out, partner with university to help out with local parks and trails. Good source of free design skills.

From a programmatic standpoint, one of the biggest obstacles is the fact that folks do not have the knowledge and the skills to recreate appropriately. Folks don't have the income to try recreational activities to find out if they like them or not. Through "Get Outdoors Pennsylvania" folks are introduced to recreation and it's free! People can camp, hike, kayak, etc. Single parents are one targeted audience. The equipment is available to check out. Each time they come back to the park, they can check out fishing rods, kayaks, and other equipment.

From Portland Maine- helps kids from disadvantaged situations, have kids build rowboats. Does this with his own grandkids. Personal love of water environment. Takes a week to build a rowboat

Getting people engaged in the outdoors; we have to get them out – on the water & on the trails. Here in Annapolis – the "hidden gems" are the street ends. These street ends often lead to water – they offer people water access and the opportunity to put a kayak in. Need *increased parking and increased awareness (that these places exist.) [*Some areas permit only 2 hours of parking which is very restrictive.] What works is: Making the lands open to the public so they can get out on the water.

Discussion Question 1

Annapolis, MD

(cont.)

Harper's Ferry and JTHG partnership project –the middle school students (7th and 8th) never been in the park got in groups and interpret the John Brown raid for Susquecentennial to do vodcasts on what Brown did and what it meant to them – for example, a what would you do where a debate about slavery demonstrates the comundrum of the Civil War – service learning in nature and cultural environment is a fruitful opportunity to grow a new ethic in youth

Have caucus in house of rep. work closely with others. Historic preservation fund is important. Land water conservation should be funded

Have to discover what excites people. engage imagination. Some people like stories. Landscape in norchester county, Harriet Tubman traveled through there. People enjoy hearing about her story. Story present in landscape.

he covers region from ME to TX. Has encountered many local successful projects. Each time there have been a couple of people that are catalytic, a primary reason community has connected with project. Need new army of conservationists. Could be helped along by investing in future leadership – are many programs like this now (ie. National Conservation Leadership Institute) that could be supported nationally. This is not mainstream program – it gets corporate support, is attended by federal and state agencies. Could be a national model.

Heritage areas are limited and often 'silo'ed. Good examples are Battlefields, Heritage areas. Use various resources at a grass roots level. People will try to find whatever money is under the rocks.

Higher education can inspire change. There are specific classes that can spark interest to get kids involved. Actively get involvement rather than teach the problems

His organization raises matching funds to match federal and state funding to acquire battlefield lands. Was created 20 years ago by Congress. Key tools are American Battlefield Protection Program (ABPP), Farm and Ranch Land Program, and Transportation grants, which provide funding for conservation easements to help preserve lands and keep as working lands. Want to maintain viewsheds in productive agricultural lands, don't want to pay for maintenance. What works – having matching grants in order to ensure local folks have a stake in projects and are engaged in public private efforts. Recomm: keep funding for ABPP; make permanent conservation easement tax credits. Ensure that LWCF funds can be used to acquire inholdings (the issue is the lack of funding, not policy towards acquisition of inholdings). If NPS had funding to buy out partners (like CWPT) would allow partners to reinvest their funds in other projects. Ask for a mileage buffer around battlefield parks.

inspiration by natural resources but some more inspired by stories of people such as the Harriet Tubman story and they understand the natural landscape through new eyes as a strategy for resource conservation

Discussion Question 1

Annapolis, MD

(cont.)

Kids need safe places in urban and suburban environments that are nearby and easily accessible. We need places where kids can feel comfortable being in the outdoors. So we need not just the big parks, but also the small parks nearby that kids can safely explore. We also need local mentors to teach kids and to help them to be comfortable in nature.

Kids want and need hands on encounters—the chance to see it and touch it. Groups like Sierra Club, Chesapeake Bay Foundation can help by bringing hands-on specimens to classes.

Launched a program at park, getting kids more involved, develop job skills. At a High school in Calvert County, students attended an archeology class in a 560 acre park with limited staff. This class created a cell phone tour. They researched oral history, spoke with archeologist, transcribed, wrote the script, recorded it, developed marketing and signage. They developed serious skills. HS seniors created a system where visitors call a number and learn all about the archeological site. Replaces staff. Involves students. Gives them job skills, and buy-in. Very successful.

lives in Shenandoah Valley. We need an emphasis on Shenandoah part of CB watershed, CREP program gives incentive to get farmers to get interested. Often private firms supplement land trust. Federal government could look at VA examples and think of ways to leverage and expand on programs and create others.

Marketing is the key; take the parks to the people. At a number of water parks, we bring the naturalists to the staging areas in water parks so they can reach the people (kids). Then the people (kids) start coming to the nature centers and education centers – they never would have found the centers without this contact. A larger idea: create trails that pay for themselves and make money on top of that (through easements and fees) – we have a model of that. Bring in the Secretary of Transportation and look at our utility lines across the country – see if there's some way to use them for non-motorized trails; create a national program.

MD has funding (real estate transfer taxes, agricultural land conversion to communities, conversion taxes). Inclusion of GIS from DNR to create priority areas.

National Audubon Society and Audubon Society of VA have a program called Audubon at home which sends ambassadors to people's homes to convert their yards into more natural landscaping and habitat for wildlife. They also do that with schools and local governments. There isn't that much land left to acquire they feel that it is better to work with private landowners. These kind of program help children because they bring the experiences close to home.

Discussion Question 1

Annapolis, MD

(cont.)

Need additional tools to support the No Child Left Inside Act. Amendment of Elementary Education Act could provide funds. Maryland's Children in Nature plan is developed. Seeking to embed the ideas of No Child Left Inside within the Elementary Education Act to get outdoor and environmental education integrated as part of core curriculum. Small amount of money to these educational plans could open window. Consider how to leverage funds that are already being spent to connect kids to the outdoors. Try to get environmental education into the core curriculum of public schools. Doesn't always have to be reliant on transportation; it can be on-grounds garden or changing operation of school building and grounds.

Need more staff at refuges to be environmental educators rather than relying so much on volunteers—many of whom are elderly and it's difficult for them to get out. Disability focus—accessibility for children & adults and the less-able.

Need to promote jobs that connect the youth to the outdoors. USAJOBS is not easy to navigate; and many nonprofits don't have great websites. Need better advertising of internships and job opportunities in the environmental and outdoor recreational fields.

Need to promote new technology to make farming exciting to young adults. Groups need to work together, share office space, etc. It all comes down to money. Federal gov't requires a lot of action/goals, but not the money (unfunded mandates).

Need to work on National Landscape Conservation System (NLCS), codified in 2009. What's worked: gateway communities; work a lot with youth. Obst. No one has heard of NLCS. Best tool: need a Secretarial order to mandate conservation prescription for these lands, would help with management. Better partner: would like to see conservation as a priority. Would like to see NLCS raised as a priority within BLM.

New website, Service.gov, Volunteer.gov, a great way to connect with kids, teens. Need to develop an I-phone app where people can enter "Here are my coordinates, show me what to do in this park." (Already developed) comment.

Our county is on a peninsula – surrounded by water. We have a ChesPax(?) program. All students, grades 1-7 spend a day in the county on their "environment day". 6th grade concentrates on archeology, different topics for each grade. Important that it's required by the county. Meets Maryland service learning, which means county doesn't pay for it. They plant trees, native gardens, visit the landfill. Landfill visit consists of tours. Younger grades are given donated (from local stores) brown grocery bags. Students draw pictures, write conservation messages, advocate recycling. Then grocery stores hands out bags. Calvert County.

Our organization used RTCA to help with long-range facilitation planning. That program has helped hundreds of communities around the country.

Outdoor education centers, are very successful where schools are required by state law to have students attend one day each year. Encourage grassroots efforts in outdoor education. Counties don't have money for this education. 400-800 attendees have been involved in outdoor education with support from parents. If parent demand these activities, counties will provide.

Discussion Question 1

Annapolis, MD

(cont.)

PA Agency owns core of mountain, but foothills are fruit belt and they are struggling now to make it. Create an attraction to draw tourists from Gettysburg and market with agricultural growers and bridge gap. Landscape of apple growers is so tied to landscape in general. Agency is funding a buy local movement. CSAs popping up. Integrating working landscapes.

Parks and people in dc, recently got grant. Does work in inner city area, combat 'fear of land', and fatalism-- memory of elders is powerful. In inner city, there are elders who remember lands, kids want to connect, works in inner city. Kids sell produce, replace drug market. Simple things can be done, show kids that they can lead the way. Tiniest reasons will keep kids away. Kids don't know about what is out there. They need to be enthralled with what is out there. Bring back the magic of the outdoors, government can help.

Partnerships and LWCF funds to protect lands & paired up with the middle school next to a historic battlefield. The principal supports the project; it has become part of the curriculum (history, geography, physical education) to learn about the Appalachian trail. They made a pledge to hike a certain distance of the trail while the teachers wrote specific activities based on locations. Used John Smiths historic raid to go through the historic record and considered the actual location to create video podcasts to publish the story of John Smith. Suggestion: Include the culture as well as the natural resource to engage people.

Pennsylvania Wilds has a youth outreach concept/initiative which is a marriage of outdoors & technology. An example of this is geo-caching. Kids like to do things that involve technology & outdoors. A good strategy is to lure them in with technology, such as social networking marketing and then lead them to the outdoors. An iPhone app, like one currently in existence that uses GPS to track trails, can be very helpful.

People should feel like they are involved. Many people haven't heard of DOI, online idea jam, facebook page. People should know. More advertising is needed. Likes that Sec Salazar was out here at this listening session. Make people aware so that they can enjoy. Helps get people to great outdoors

Prepare model legislation relating to the problem. Urban planners want everything to be concrete. Worried that no conservation. Model zoning code related to conservation of resources. Same way transportation built highway Model curriculum for colleges that teach urban planning. Have rural planning and suburban planning. Model program that says incorporate these things in program. Master program for landscape master--green infrastructure.

Preservation of land. Their challenge is historic structures on historic lands. They are mothballed, or run as historic houses, due to lack of funding. Could do so much more with funding, but it's not there. Would be excellent sites for social studies and history curriculum. Challenge is that social studies program isn't supported in PG county. 27,000 acres have been preserved.

Private property adjacent to public land with no public access to public land. Someone needs to cover my insurance for people coming through my land to get to the public areas. If I am not around to grant access, then I'm liable. ANSWER: You are protected by Recreational Liability Act – most states protect landowners who allow public access.

Discussion Question 1

Annapolis, MD

(cont.)

Provide public access via private lands – explore what’s going in Santa Barbara and Montecito – they are creating biking trails across private lands.

resident program children from disadvantaged schools build rowboats connects kids – he grew up in ME – building boats part of own experience – endorse boats – built rowboat in a week with his grandson

Restore habitat on school grounds. He is involved with program that introduces kids to nature. operates 2 -3 states, needs more funding, introduce kids to importance of conservation. Meeting between Sec. Salazar and Duncan, that’s something that they can consider

RTCA recommended to the YMCA that they should partner with the American Hiking Association. Eleven million members of the Hiking Association are under 17 years of age – what an ideal way to reach that group!

schoolyard habitats program involves kids in every step of process – habitat, nature restoration operates in only a few states and could use more funding to introduce kids to restoration and conservation, environment – Sec Duncan and Salazar could talk about this at their meeting

Service learning- partnership with NPS and middle school to get kids out to the park. Kids lived in area, but never visit parks. Got kids to interpret the trail, created a podcast. Kids discussed what the park meant to them in a contemporary setting. Look at issues like slavery and civil war. NPS uses podcasts for interpretation for youth.

Special places – treasured landscapes – connect people to outdoors, make a story, people relate to a place and make them expand.

State forests are looking at ways to keep forests in forests, new markets have potential to do that, other success story that we have seen is federally assisted state programs through state private forestry, connect resource professionals with land owners to provide assistance. Forest stewardship program has been helpful. Suggests that government leverages limited resources and connect resource professionals to landowners through USDA.

Supports full funding for LWCF. Likes Go Colorado program as a model. Need to bring private capital to initiative. Need to activate Chesapeake Treasured Landscape Initiative federal leadership committee

Takes teachers from Title 1 schools who go to national parks during busy season, providing volunteer staff. Take this environment back to the classroom. Stats: 84 teacher rangers resulting in contact with 230,000 people, taught 24,000 students. Intermountain region unable to hire as many as they needed.

Tap into your private sector, develop private funds. We host 2 fundraisers, one for corporate sponsors, other for regular members. Try getting together over cocktails. Conserved over 13M acres using affluent sponsors. Look for other companies to sponsor.

Discussion Question 1

Annapolis, MD

(cont.)

Target multiple state programs on a single land mass.

Thank you to those who run RTCA and Trust Funds. There is not a magic universal wrench that works for everything. We need specialized tools. \$8 million per year is provided for services via boat registration fees. RTP is a smaller program – there are opportunities for growth – the focus is on non-highway recreational activities, including snowmobiling, etc. Trail maintenance is the key to success. Funding ongoing maintenance is terribly important. I'd like to raise an opportunity. Currently in our country we spend \$8,000 on health care per person per year. This is a lifestyle-induced situation. People eat poorly, smoke, use alcohol and drugs, etc. If you took 70% of the population times \$8,000 – we could use that funding to curtail our health expenses if we alter lifestyles. The medical community is catching on to this...a physician now may prescribe 10,000 steps per day (on trails) to a patient. The physicians could offer parking passes for their patients to park and walk! It is a tremendous opportunity. A special Town Hall on health and the great outdoors is in the planning stages; national groups are asking for this Town Hall to occur.

The ability to work with land trusts around the state as agents dealing with local farmers as opposed to the agencies who don't know them as well. Those groups can be reimbursed for the costs to develop the relationships are key.

Virginia has also enacted several transfer taxes specifically in the Piedmont area. We have to meet people where they are and talk about what concerns them in the Chesapeake watershed. Connect urban and rural populations -- where do people buy local food -- send out information to locals on where you can buy local food to support your local agriculture. It helps urban citizens understand the relationship they should have with the rural agricultural region.

was copres of DC environmental consortium with schoolyard gardens – conservation and environmental concerns not relevant to those concerned with survival – in poor urban communities problem with food access – school gardens impress on people natural environment with low carbon footprint food – Will Allen in Ohio says this also creates jobs – an incredible template for teaching about the environment, watershed if you meet them where they are – nutrition piece and teamwork, hard work – edible and community gardens productive especially on public lands unused that could change the food system, help with runoff – changing the way we eat can change the way we practice and live and demand – need more emphasis from EPA in addition to USDA

We have been working on program funded by USDA called BMP challenge, but farmers need assurance if they do implement BMPs. As we go forward and look at climate change, how can we look at nutrient trading programs down the road, to give farmers incentive to trade off nutrient credits?

Discussion Question 1

Annapolis, MD

(cont.)

We have to make the connection that public access and our parks are important for education. Kids aren't getting outside because the parents aren't taking them. We need more opportunities for people - kids especially - to get out. This is all tied to environmental sustainability. We need to invest in this – public access is so important – we should tie it to education. We need to get the schools (students) out a little more. Standards of Learning in Virginia have restricted field trip numbers – this is something that could be easily changed with funding.

We hosted an Earth Day event with 650 kids in attendance. We could have used more. DC testing precluded participation. The calendar needs to be looked at, so that events can be held. Not easy to find children's activities through the National Park Service. Need to add special section on the website.

We need sidewalk access to urban parks. Complete the "streets policy." Government space is the street system itself – promote more trees and landscaping.

We need to be more aware of other resources that may help. In 2011 \$45 million budget (Land Water Conservation Fund?) but other programs that are much larger and we need to target those. For example, the Conservation reserve program- \$1.8 billion dollars, the Wetland Reserve Program - \$500 million, Farmland Protection Program, etc.

We need to consider private access incentives. One example: someone has private land they're willing to put into an easement; add an incentive to encourage them to include public access within the easement. Offer "another carrot" to gain increased water access for the public.

Works with Americorps, got him involved in many programs. Junior ranger program, get kids out to park and teach them. Sprouts 2-5 yr olds, start young, plant acorns. Must connect on playful level. Advertise to parents on web (follow up question on how they connect to 2-5 yr olds) build something out of sheets, kids excited no matter what Teen rangers, trail maintenance, show kids the wildlife. Civic justice corps – bring disadvantaged youth into park, amazing for kids, parents learn from kids. Kids learn trades
Bay grass planting- kids involved, can see the grass grow. Gunpowder falls state falls

Youth are a good resource. Think about how youth can teach adults. Youth-led organizations, such as the Statewide Youth Board on Obesity Prevention Program can be a model. Facilitators take youth who are already interested in the outdoors and they encourage other youth to get involved. It resonates better than having adults talk down to youth.

The RTCA program is critical to our water trails program in Virginia. Outreach in the communities is critical. The other program that's essential is the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) – the funding allows us to fund our parks and to fund water access. Through VA Game and Inland Fisheries we can only fund motor boat access – LWCF allows us to fund non-motorized boat access! The program is so important to all of our parks, and to our population.

Discussion Question 1

Annapolis, MD

(cont.)

The state wildlife action plans has been helpful. What it has done is state agency and all partners and develop collaborative plan that helps endangered species. Funding for program has been successful, but not sufficient to meet goals. Half are being revised to include climate change. This is helpful for states to use to meet conservation goals. Need to use these plans to look regionally but there is not capacity in states to look at regional scale.

The two things we need to focus on are: awareness and benefits. We fail at the national/state/local level to articulate why it's important to protect a place or to invest in a certain activity. We fail to articulate our message that both physical and mental health are tied to outdoor activities. The key ingredients are: awareness overall and awareness of the public benefits.

These folks (above) are doing a great job of getting the word out. Everywhere I go (including here), I hear about the "Save the Mattawoman Creek" campaign.

They have 1500 members that hike, canoe, bike, Stewardship is key. Partnering is what helps them. Partnerships supply labor. One example, they partner with federal government on National Public Lands Day. On Assateague, members spend hours per day, cleaning up trails, providing free labor. The park provides free campsites. Gives people ownership of that park since they worked on it. One weekend in National parks – free camping – work.

To reach youth, protect land that borders youth clubs, rec centers, etc. A portion of funding should go to youth programs.

Top down support in education for these environmental programs. Sponsor programs where high schools student teach middle school students. Very meaningful experience for high school students. They have a good relationship with USFWS to teach outdoor education classes. Plan and sponsor urban outdoor camping. Develop community partnerships with the local government, museums, Make it fun. Too much do as I say not as I do. Kids see through that. We must walk the talk. Kids are not dumb.

Trail maintenance, don't have runoff into creeks, Advertise in outdoor retail stores, people in suburbs sometimes more ignorant of nature than those in city Thinks sad that people don't appreciate physical labor that built this country Likes Americorps, but thinks that kids in general are lost because the kids don't know what to do, he wants kids to start working with land. Wants kids to hike the AT

VA the system of natural heritage for natural area preserves - strategy - talk about GIS like you love it. GIS is great because it is strategic for targeting areas. Funding from LWCF can create state organizations to find the valuable land and habitat. It's important to get the leaders to understand the necessity of GIS.

Discussion Question 1

Annapolis, MD

(cont.)

Virginia does a great job developing easements on private land. However, the easements do not currently include public access to the lands. A little more credit (transferable tax credit) should be provided to the landowners if there is more public benefit included in the easement. Perpetual easements are given in Maryland and Virginia to figure out where the land will go/how it will be used. We should put a clause in the easements stating that “the land may be a park in 50 years”, or something similar.

Discussion Question 1

Asheville, NC

More national parks are esp. important for protection- expand them

Work with rivers In Middle GA- many people who live there have never experienced the river- amazed by the experience- getting them there is a big challenge- need more funding for awareness of their own backyard

Great to have multiple groups working together to actively engage on a local level. Sustainable community initiative needs traction with moving forward.

Civil War/Benton Battlefields(near Raleigh success- continue to use the farmland as it was at time of battle, still preserved and yet farmed with collaborative preservation funds, in original condition, contributes to preservation/historic value and real estate agreements with multiple land owners

continue same theme, NC state historic sites, potent force in parks- maintain them continuously, protect the land use.

Hickory Nut Gap farm- wife and sister- 50 children/horses camp, made possible by Conservation Easements. Thankful that this county most fortunate to have funding and official support. (Farm and Ranchland protection program) Makes higher quality farmland, keeping it out of development

Muddy Sneaker program that works to the future. Instilling values into children. Contract with NC elementary schools, 14 instructors, to bring children into the woods to teach school lessons. Incorporate the environment into their lessons. It works.

Reaching 8th graders is too late. Need to get to kids at an earlier age.

Easements really do work. Purchasing a wetland to use it as a central feature and the subdivision will face the wetland. The wetland will be used as a teaching area for the elementary schools.

per his work - protection of entire corridor Hickory Gap—2-land scenic road designation keep it out of development and no more billboards.

NC trust fund provides \$\$ for recreation facilities- also emphasis on planning, what communities need- provide technical assistance- process is as important as the \$\$- master plans help in build strong projects- communities initiate the request for help from NCSU-

Rocky Mount NC-got the park system with Land and Water Conservation Fund \$\$-have 40 parks now- would not have them without LWCF

Interested in Lewis and Clark trail- referenced the Stephen Ambrose book about the trail- people love the trail to death- we need to make people aware of what we have- need easy mode to educate, using vehicles such as novels, public broadcasting stations, etc

Discussion Question 1

Asheville, NC

(cont.)

Agree- collaborating with USFS as well as a community revitalization group-example: Jackrabbit mt. bike trails (Tusquitee RD, Nantahala NF) – collaboration on grant writing is esp. important

Nature Conservancy-working—funding for outdoor spaces was good- but not now being funding at level LWCF- \$900 mill a year by revenues from off-shore oil drilling but did not get to them at the level authorized for.

Important to acknowledge volunteer groups. Don't lose sight of the fact that working with volunteers also requires stewardship programs to and funding to organize volunteers.

Public Service Announcements are very important

Federal lands bring a good opportunity for students to learn in a multi-curricular/multidisciplinary activity- many disciplines in one place- such environments have a strong/lasting impact

Want people at higher levels to foster more trails and greenways- needs to come from the top down- need leadership and funding to generate the interest

Focus on gateways- hiking and fishing and biking- need to get kids away from their video games- incorporate recreation and conservation into videogames and the other “environments” kids live in

National Parks and National Forests work. Public lands are an hundred year experiment. Did it work – yes it does. We are making final choices and we need to think comprehensively.

USGS is very important for managing river water gauging- many gauges are threatened due to lack of funding

Successes of land acquisition at a larger scale. Rocky Fork tract- Demonstrates what can be accomplished when you have collaborative working groups. Make connection back to communities between quality of life and large public lands access.

The National Geographic Magazine, exposure at a young age from many sources, makes the connection for your lifetime.

The partnership between ATC and volunteers works. It is a good model for volunteer activities. Provides a good interaction with federal agencies.

Land acquisition is key. Getting community partners involved that recognize the value of having ATC in the community. Mutual benefit of putting relatively obscure communities in the visibility of recreationists.

Discussion Question 1

Asheville, NC

(cont.)

Focus on access to recreation- example: Salida CO- good development of biking and hiking- esp greenways- enjoy walking in the evening

Recreation interest- Swain Co 86% Fed owned- had made county a welfare state- and can't take care of what it has(campgrds. Parks etc) so why are we expanding land ownership. Gov't has too much lands-at what pt are we free, privately owned property rights. Never be able to own property.

Accessibility is what keeps us out of doors every day. Sustainable environments

Encouraged that administration has decided to include bicycles and sidewalks in transportation planning. Encouraged that administration has focused on cross collaboration between departments. River redevelopment project – ex. River District Project.

National Parks, State park infrastructure provide great opportunities to get out. Need to keep that infrastructure and keep it well funded. Need to maintain these.

Work with families with young children (birth to 5 yrs). Advocate the concept of previous comment down to children even younger (3 years old). Work with early childcare community to get teachers trained.

Availability and accessibility of opportunities. Transportation means, the closer we can get opportunities to people, especially children, the more likely people will take advantage.

Value of USFS to recreation is very high- the NVUM results report high satisfaction with USFS recreation- has not had the status with the agency mission it should

what seems to work well and historically has worked well is to marry local efforts with federal dollars and/or federal expertise, such as RTCA; Parks in Classrooms is a Blue Ridge Parkway program that reaches 25000 students throughout region using multi faceted partnership.

Need for local recreation groups to introduce people to resources- 5000 river and watershed organizations s across the country- provide THEM with the tools they need to address local policy issues and more effectively working with federal agencies

Build it and the will come- am an old guy in a young sport- have had to learn to bring resources TO people- use current technology- email is out of date-communication to the youth has to change- facebook, text, twitter- true of communities and pvt sector as well

Devel opment of waterways is growing a lot- a lot of local interest-bringing families and children in a safe environment-esp. need to locate them in or near towns- in OK City a park was been developed for water recreation- teaching kids about rivers and river safety

Discussion Question 1

Asheville, NC

(cont.)

Volunteer equestrians that work with Forest Service and State Parks. Appreciates the opportunity to contribute to the parks and forest as a volunteer. Volunteer groups have been very effective at keeping trail

Agency has had a positive move towards ecosystem management. Bringing prescribed fire to the landscape (through Wyden amendment- providing ability to manage across public/private lands.

Transition towards getting people on the ground. Also good to see new faces in the agencies that are bringing forward new ideas.

Youth programs in sportsman area – areas of interest to youth. Clubs such as 4H and FFA are excellent, but could be moved to include city areas. However, Rangers need additional training to know the law inside and out.

We've gotten a lot better as a result of Clean Water Act. Lack of willpower to continue pollution regulations. Water is our most important recreation resource. And they need to meet the goals of the Clean Water Act

Federal Historic preservation fund works in funneling funds to a local level to preserve historic places.

Blue Ridge National Heritage area. Work with counties on specific projects to assist in continuation o attract visitors and increase quality of life. Partnerships to provide education activities. Support conservation groups to protect land and scenic views. Visitors and locals say that scenic views are instrumental – should be careful not to alter those views by over development.

Farm Bill has assistance decreasing for private though.

Get schools involved- eg high school in Maine- "Mountain Day"- also have days to pickup trash in communities- use schools for delivery of outdoor learning

Friends of National Parks organizations are very effective in engaging the community in the Parks . They are active in community outreach and education, park clean up, and engaging young people. The Gettysburg model.

Loretta C. Woods Park in honor of Lorretta Woods. One million dollar park in Greenville. One person's influence with local politicians, etc.

SC – local land trust difficulty getting \$, except if fed tax designation- Wetlands Restoration fund does come back t help benefits. Ie, 135 acres mitigation process paid for it.

Discussion Question 1

Asheville, NC

(cont.)

NC legislators have provided \$1.5 million over the last few years for land purchases. NC does not have as much protected land as western states. Concern about increase in NC population that will put additional pressure on our existing resources. What NC does well is making the most of the dollars available – Dept of Defense is an excellent partner – Ft. Bragg and Camp LeJeune are excellent examples. DOD has lots of flexibility. DOD allows federal dollars to be spent for conservation on private lands. Stretches the dollars, and also provides protection for threatened/endangered species. Ft. Bragg recognized at the White House a few years ago for conservation efforts.

NC has harnessed private philanthropic opportunities to excellent ends. State has good partnerships with private individuals for 50/50 matches for land protection.

(riverlink) Strategic plan-need a landtrust check - repairing areas under 100 acres—gotten 400 acres given to them... restoration – easement might be 6 acres, who is monitoring it, they are filling a gap

Good people working for the federal gov't. The time that gov't employees contribute to educational events. The importance of having gov't employees having permanence in a local area.

Surveys of historic properties to help the public make informed decisions on development. Historic surveys are used to work with developers, lobby elected officials, to produce what the community wants to see.

Provision of services should be local. Facilities need to be provided locally. Need to make things happen where they are accessible to the people. In this economic environment we have the opportunity to buy land

Give people the opportunity to improve their local communities. Investment of federal dollars in local communities. Stateside LWCF

Run extended trips (academic endeavors) for college and university age students. For example, river trips create chance to get out and study river conservation while receiving literature credits. Extended experiences have a large effect - Challenge is access issues. Waterways rarely have places to spend the night. Must pull the organizations, state, local and national parks together to create public access and camping locations.

Public school children – teaching children outdoors. This a program called “muddy sneakers”. Classroom work is conducted outside. Course topics such as math, social science, geography, etc. Very good feedback from the students and teachers. Program is not funded by the state generally. Funding comes from donations, foundations, etc. School system pays for the transportation.

Hearing from the population what doesn't work for them. Segmented areas need education programs to have access to safe environment, i.e. ASAP.

Discussion Question 1

Asheville, NC

(cont.)

appreciates social aspects of hiking and hiking clubs; joining a hiking club is important – provides safe environment and exposure/awareness to recreation areas

University of TN Professor. Programs really work, we just need to get them going

Our federal lands can take advantage of new technologies. We're missing a big population by not embracing new technologies to make info available. What would you suggest as a top priority in technology?

Restoration on existing public lands 1) invasive plant species removal working with partnerships (need to remove red tape) 2) Pisgah and Nantahala NF – budget focus is on timber with restoration as an after-thought – need to prioritize restoration; surveys and legal fees have been paid for by the county – fed money would help.

Law and regulations work well – agencies should not bend to industry – need to resolve "Roadless Area" rules

Kids need to learn what things are, and see that there are friends out there, not strangers – virtual fieldtrips are really good and she hopes teachers are using them

Trails to Every Classroom – managed by Appalachian Trail Office. Trains teachers to take kids out to Appalachian Trail Communities – trains teachers to use the resources they have nearby. Great program

building broader coalitions (state and local levels); planning that engages people with diverse interests broadens conservations base. Non-traditional customers (eg: low income communities of color): conservation planning effort that engages communities; helps create and develop different kinds of priorities.

U-Par program hasn't been funded since 2001 – pay attention to emerging population of urban youth; Carolina Thread Trail is a new initiative; there are few federal funding pots to provide programmatic funding

leads outdoor learning expeditions for 5th graders – get kids outside – get kids familiar with outdoor equipment (compass, etc.) – become more familiar with learning in the outdoors – 23% increase in EOG test scores, better school attendance, better physical fitness – fosters confidence in children

National Trails like Trail of Tears National Historic Trail provide opportunities for collaboration to implement interpretation; Main Street Programs that link Blue Ridge Parkway and local communities

Botanist, works with children and adults, teaches heritage of SE, uses flora, thinks we need to teach names of organisms so that children and adults can connect with nature, all ages could benefit, as young as possible

Discussion Question 1

Asheville, NC

(cont.)

Ethno-botanist. Developing lesson plans.

Summer daycamp, amazing how many kids have not been to BRP or any national forests – partnered with Kids in Parks, to expose kids to the great outdoors – gives the kids something to latch onto – identifying trees, plants, bugs, etc.

Originally from educational arena, but in corporate area. We sit all day in school, and we continue to sit all day in the corporate world. How do we train teachers? Changing the school system to an extrinsic system to an intrinsic system is important – being outdoors will put the soul back in education.

Friends groups assist in raising funds. Teacher-Ranger-Teacher – they take the knowledge back to the classrooms.

federal agencies need to build stronger relationships with private entities

Forest Stewardship and Wildlife Habitat Improvement program, Farm Bill, Federal programs are underfunding but they are such a big help to private landowners. Forest Development program for Regen/Stand Impr, replanting- Feds could Enhance that.

protect, restore habitat,-- Farm Bill, TU Admin cost share ie fencing to leverage solutions(cattle out of streams etc)- Collaboration between all is key- National Fish Cons Habitat- joint partnerships instrumental in pristine streams/cold - Conservation Easement Tax incentives- Unknown status of the tax incentives is a huge concern- right now it's on renewal basis year to year –Federal tax incentive for donation of easement.

North Carolina State Parks is developing a pilot program of “nature immersion”, helps overcome fear of the unknowns of outside; develops appreciation and conservation ethic; learning lab at focus parks; Youth internship programs and mentoring programs; engages people who are afraid of the outdoors

Connecting communities with resources; for example, the “Snot otter” festival (a species of hellbender) where people come for bbq and bluegrass and then get into the river! Make sure interpretation is included and encourages connection with community

resources from all areas for climbing routes, boulder cliffs, etc.

bring environmental education into public schools; recommendation is specific funding be available to communities that take environmental education to public school system – because programs like this are running on a shoestring. Despite environment in WNC, many locals out of touch; must plant seeds in young people; funding is needed to keep programs like Muddy Sneakers in schools; Louvs book proves how early exposure is so important; match environmental ed to state mandated curriculum

Discussion Question 1

Asheville, NC

(cont.)

Private partnerships with state entities. Private groups have different revenue streams that are effective

Develop public and private partnerships with local governments which facilitate land easements, construction of parks. Getting the children involved – environmental education and site visits to colonial sites, etc. Virginia creeper trail is an old rail trail – hiking, biking.

In many ways, technology has connected with the great outdoors –for example earth caching or geo-caching.

New state park is developing based on LWCF and other conservation groups to expand park.

Using an historic preservation fund to purchase land and sites works. Developing historic preservation easements. The State Historic Preservation Office receives funding which is used for these easements.

Natural Register of Historical Places is part of the National Park Service as well.

Church groups were a wonderful opportunity for camping, outside activities.

Americorps' Project Conserve is a great way to connect conservation entities. 22 enrollees and more than a dozen organizations involved this year. Very successful.

Great successes with cooperative management system of public/private partnerships that form Appalachian Trail Conservancy. "Trails to Every Classroom" has been transferred to other national historic and scenic trails; train the trainer for teachers; citizen science is a great tool to engage communities about what's in their back yards – also serves as a laboratory for climate change.

Connecting lands and communities: a local four- county planning process outreaches to provide green infrastructure, etc.

Lived and worked in camps for 26 years – camps are becoming more suburbanized, but close to large populations of students – provide outdoor environmental education programs in a residential center – teach kids an appreciation and love for outdoors – Good to have national parks near urban areas to get kids outside – 14,000 kids per year go through the program

Youth Conservation Corps is great. Huge impact on kids lives.

Discussion Question 1

Asheville, NC

(cont.)

Youth Learning Institute (Clemson) claim to impact 100,000 youth each year. Lots of organizations working with youth. Opportunity – get some of these groups sitting around the same table, one organization may have fundraising arm, and another has the curriculum – mega opportunity. Reduce duplication, and don't worry about who gets credit as long as common goals are met.

Increase trail crews - they work in partnership to maintain and establish trails; very helpful when park personnel is lacking. Also a chance for people to contribute to their community. Incorporating the university to accommodate students to come to integrate instructors to share with interested students with 4H. (inter-city kids). Utilize park service camp facilities. Website is www.thesca.org. Click Serve (upper left), select Conservation Corps and select the crew for more information, i.e. PISGAH Crew.

FDA comment period open for 2010 dietary guidelines. They are proposing that we reinstitute recess, physical education, home economics into curriculum. We need to get these things back into curriculum for number of reasons including childhood obesity.

Team River Runner – disabled veterans. Suffering from too much success. Very integrated – African Americans very interested. Great program – doesn't cost much – Warren Wilson College is donating pool, staff, training. VA Hospital

Conservation very important- on specified days, the store donates 20% of sales to conservation

“Trout Towns” program; don't need license to fish in trout streams in select towns in Western NC; encourages communities to make sure their trout streams are in great shape; tourism and clean water innovation within city limits

NC is a model with trust funds leveraging

Fortunate to have a land base protected by previous generations; lots of existing land trusts; historically lots of resources to spend on conservation; have a natural heritage program in NC; link the state's natural heritage areas

Opportunities lacking for children, especially “city-slickers” and younger generations - needs to go through and be supported by the Community Centers. Centers need to take a step further and go door to door and develop methods of different outreaches that are effective. Sale the idea of outdoors and the ideas of conservation and preservation. Mix technology with the ideas behind America's Great Outdoors.

emphasis needs to be on youngest children and at risk groups; need more programs that support that.

Discussion Question 1

Asheville, NC

(cont.)

Focus on how to involve youth from urban lands. Need to repeat messages to children. Youth programs work but they need to be repeated through time, from a very young age until their through high school.

Kids fishing day a great thing-need similar days for mountain biking, hiking- referred to the recent Kids Fishing Day on the Uwharrie NF-- lots of kids

programs have provided access and experience wit areas we are tying to protect- in college outdoors instructor—took a girl camping that saw milky way for first time and camping, Ever. Chances to experience help with future appreciation.

value ecosystem services in general are important

In the 1920's, several sites were at risk. Governor Byrd contacted private citizens to build the Skyline Drive and Blue Ridge Parkway.

community based science – monitoring project in Little Tennessee Watershed has created a generation of river advocates; model of citizen science; projects needs to be funded in perpetuity. Little Tennessee Watershed – Jackson, Haywood, Graham counties

Local workshops and initiatives to help people determine how they want their future to look; one community did a model charette, lots of community diversity

responsible for wildlife management and to some extent education; one thing that's working in their agency are: Environmental Education Centers – comparable to other programs bringing the classroom into the woods ; what works – consider the local perspective. Each locality has its own uniqueness and that needs to be part of the plan. Also, in regards to Sports Fish & Wildlife Restoration Act is working. Tax is collected from industry and based on number of licensed hunters/fisherman – user pay/but everyone benefits.

NC has tax credit program for conservation easements. Program has been very successful. Would be great to be a national model. Also works for Clean Water Mgmt Trust Fund – when there's support from govt; local landowners are very willing to come into conservation easement if there's some help with funding. Can't say give me the rights on your land, and give me the money. #2 – greater growth of local greenway systems; encourage more work on greenways; #3 – Watersheds – demand exceeds supply though and creates a local liability with an increased pressure to sell non producing land – in NC program to put watersheds in conservation easement for public access/recreation areas.

add to Damon's national level- I work at state/local level- Good working arrangmts with FS and NPS- Marisue Hilliard and Steve have discussion have helped them too be more effective, ie, Clean Water Act, LCWF, projects getting done across WNC

Discussion Question 1

Asheville, NC

(cont.)

Public/private groups work well; ATC is a good example of what works well; trails to every classroom and parks in every classroom are great programs; need to connect people to what is in their backyard.

LWCF funding used commonly, but thin as of late. Partnerships and collaborative efforts working well – needs to be coordinated better. Nonprofit can intervene in land sales – broker sale. Mountains-to-Sea Trail was done this way.

have ongoing dialogue with partners and local communities – dialogue has become part of nature

Volunteerism important – should be taught and learned – some school systems require seniors to have a portfolio that includes so many hours of volunteerism – should be taught in the classroom at an early age (any type of volunteerism) – people are going to have to step up to put ‘sweat equity’

have a new tax program in NC passed in 2008 that gives landowners a tax break

Farm land – NRCS could provide more support in acquisition costs; volunteer agriculture program – 3/4s of counties have these; get federal agencies cooperating – create advisory council for agricultural land conservation; community gardening /local foods

NC’s comprehensive wildlife action plan to improve wildlife species in NC; citizen groups can partner with wildlife commission to help improve these projects; a great process to develop plans included biologists from all state’s agencies; there is a great group of professionals in the state; Passing a comprehensive carbon bill that reduces carbon and fines polluters would help fund NC’s wildlife action plan; current plan is adapted to climate change: NC’s plan is a model; NC’s wildlife federations are “bringing boots to the field”; this is a habitat model – easy to interpret; habitats that species need to survive are identified

Partnerships with federal agencies and partners/volunteers/user groups- forming coalitions with other user groups- esp. hikers, equestrians and mountain bikers working together—GA Mountain Trail is a good example- open to all three user groups- partnerships are very powerful in trail maintenance, fundraising, etc

DFR- State level working well in Urban and Comm Grant program with USFS-establis urban forestry and education, site specific programs. Inc Tree City USA, Tree Line(util) and Campus Tree programs. Lots of greenways and planting initiatives. Several non-profits help- Keep America Beautiful programs. ACT also.(neighbor-woods)

Local works. Easements and trails, local governments, local land owners have a high degree of trust with the local community.

Discussion Question 1

Asheville, NC

(cont.)

Fully fund the land and water conservation fund. Funds help to establish parks and trail, provides protection, benefit on private lands such as green ways. Annexation not allowed without putting in a new park. Parks and walking trails, nature trails, within walking distance from homes and easily accessible to everyone.

Worked as Youth Conservation Corps, Student Conservation Association – those are great programs, better than public education to help kids get into

State-wide Trails projects (theme trails) – NC Equine Trail – maps statewide equine trails; also NC Daniel Boone Trails in piedmont counties and eastern counties; resources programs like Friends of Mountain History); themed exhibit projects with museums and historic sites travel across the state (like “Civil War 150”); develops local participation with Chambers of Commerce, historic sites, Departments of Natural Resources, Blue Ridge Natural Heritage Areas; distributes newsletters

Working- Clean Water Trust Fund-brings together a lot of folks, and able to leverage the federal \$, LWCF, Forest legacies0 as someone who works all over the Southeast, NC seems to be working the Best. (FL- Defunded, SC-not much, GA-no funding) Synergy between all is good.

Educational tours and activities, etc. Advertise for it. Get the locals excited about. Eco tourism!

Money follows programs; mandates create programs – i.e. incorporating environmental ed must be mandated for money to be available.

Buncombe county advisory board is focal point of conservancy groups; can work across counties; cross-section of public and agencies; Federal and states could reward local jurisdictions with money to fund land conservancy programs

NTrust Historic Preservation – when people come for eco tourism it’s really heritage tourism – they may not want an outdoor recreation but access to local/authentic experiences. Historic/Culture orgs and Natural Resource orgs need to work better together. Historic/cultural resources offer a diversity of experiences in travel

talking about rivers and poor counties... how do people come (tourism) and how do you sustain tourism while highlighting and conserving the natural outdoors while providing recreations

Discussion Question 1

Asheville, NC

(cont.)

Land trust is working with an education program started in 1980s through the National Geographic Society. This model program sent \$\$ to universities around the country for universities to teach public school teachers about geography. Professors taught 'master teachers' the content. Then the teachers returned to their schools and taught others. Model has been going on for 22 years. Funded through endowments from National Geographic. The program is closely tied to environment education and all the curriculum is tied to state standards. The program creates many partnerships. She has worked with this program in AL. Students get not only classroom education, but they go outdoors as well. National Geographic Alliance is name of the program.

Alliance for Planet Earth at his college was an effective way to reach students. Put up an info table in high traffic pedestrian areas. Way for youth to engage other youth to recruit people for the club, Alliance for Planet Earth.

It works when people stay local. Biomimicry. Keeping things grassroots and be able to share ideas locally.

Adequate funding for LWCF; end KV funding system to increase amount of stewardship projects – keep money local; carbon accounting/offsets are important

Watauga Parks and Recreation Authority has sponsored a newly formed Tourism Development Authority pushing for more outdoor recreation opportunities; very fortunate to have tourism-based community; state and federal parks cutting staff but more people are coming to local, state and national parks.

Blue Ridge National Heritage Area has been very effective in Western NC. Every community was asked what they saw as important in their community worthy of preservation, both natural and cultural. Heritage Area needs continued funding.

New developments need to include walkable space or outdoor space. HUD needs to be part of the picture. Curbside nature is the way to go. In Heywood County every 4th grader spends at least one day in an outdoor education program. Need to have a better system to get every child outdoors.

NC takes this seriously and has added large amounts of land to public ownership, even during down economic times (Chimney Rock and Grandfather Mtn State Parks). Concerned about viewscapes along the BLRI and that state and land trusts need to work together.

what is working in my group is we're taking care of trails that haven't been touch since 1970s. Will be working on these trails for several months. The question is how to sustain the work and funding. Excellent experience for college student/early graduates and eager work force – people come into SCA who haven't even pitched a tent until

SCA is making trails accessible. See more and more folks on trails and it works well.

Discussion Question 1

Asheville, NC

(cont.)

2 programs that work with child care facilities. One for 3-5 yr olds called Preventing Obesity by Design, via Natural Learning Initiative (Blue Cross Blue Shield foundation funding). Outdoor Learning Environment is the other program that works with established child care facilities. Teaches them that 'bugs' are ok, what is ok to touch. Encourages parents to take the children into nature, into parks. We have a long way to go because there are so many children who need this.

engage celebrity (athletes, actors, actresses, etc) encouragement. Use local celebrities to promote.

all privately funded –4H kids and others – teaching wildlife habitat mgmt, forestry mgmt, disabled kids outdoor programs

Tie USDI into HUD design for developments in cities. Sustainable Communities Initiative is a federal initiative that USDI needs to be a part of.

greenways are what's working; offer intergenerational experiences; closer than other public lands and trails; trails and greenways in urban environments is very beneficial

Summer college program where students work on science-based projects. Connect students with local resource specialists/managers. Provides students with the opportunity to see that career and also have that experience in the outdoors. Provide young people with the opportunity. Training outdoor educators is also an important component. Summer camps has been one successful component.

Best ways to connect to the outdoors is through school programs. Inclined families already participate. Families without, especially under resources, minorities, and not inclined families have hard time making conversion. School programs introduce the resources, which trickles to the families. Problem – environmental education is always marginalized as an add-on to the curriculum. Need prioritization of environmental education on par with other subjects. Single best thing is to put weight of Presidents Support is “No Child Left Inside” Support must come from Top Down.

I think national forest service needs to reevaluate how we market ourselves on higher technology and social media. We need to reposition ourselves so we can take advantage of technology. We need to partner with the business world; we lag by 5 years or more.

Partnerships – Friends of the Smokies, Smokey Mtn Hiking Club.

GIS-based analysis is key – Land of Sky Regional Council's Linking Lands to Rural Communities. Use natural resource priorities to create conservation value map – piece together major hubs for protection of potential corridors. Can identify what is important to protect. Can connect farm and forest lands and programs.

Discussion Question 1

Asheville, NC

(cont.)

Partnerships – local land trusts can assemble these. Open space area preserved with private donations. Started here now has developed into greenways and blueways. Creates visible message.

Need constituency in areas you want to protect – gotta get folks out there to develop a connection with the land. Take people out to show them.

AT is good example.

Partnerships are essential for land and recreation management. Need to rely on volunteers as well.

Children's bicycling programs work to get kids to enjoy outdoors and is an activity that they already have a knowledge of. Children's bicycling also working to reach children that are diverse. Have found these students have been a natural constituent. Just transitioning these children from urban setting to more natural setting for their bike rides.

Safe Routes to School is successful legislation. Maybe this could be amended to Safe Routes to Schools and Parks. Access to national parks and local parks, not just schools.

Partnerships work. They work when host agency 'isn't afraid of you' . If a partner group is empowered, better results.

Finds programs for youth is rewarding, especially the Junior Ranger Program. Also gets the parents involved. Mobilizing volunteers gives people a sense of ownership and increases public involvement. Need increased personnel for interpretive work and maintenance. Get people out in the field and participating in the work. Urge NPS attention to support groups.

Landscape scale vision for NC that contains North America's most diverse temperate forest; highlights globally, nationally, state's significant places; gives message for focus areas and demonstrates priorities; collaborate and coordinate efforts among members; working toward same goals increases effectiveness

LWCF – Land and Water Conservation Fund; AT

Enhancement Program under DOT (FHWA) – Greenway program. Transportation-oriented projects can create greenways along highways, streams, and RR tracks. Make outdoors accessible.

one thing I see working is collaborative decision making – for natural resource protection, outdoor recreation planning, etc. – if you want to vie for competitive grants you have to show collaboration; don't plan in a bubble – it's not effective.

Discussion Question 1

Asheville, NC

(cont.)

Partnerships are key. Look at unconventional partners. Military bases and their conservation strategies. Common goals of conservation and military training – RCW example. Dedicated stream of funding works well. Importance of GIS maps and plans based on those maps. Folks can rally around info on the maps.

Wetlands Reserve Program, other programs that support conservation easement – programs could be improved but work – Forest Legacy Programs

Fed tax deductions on easement and donations of land. Questions on how to deduct. Need clarification. Make it a longer write off. Extend benefit

Clay County health dept and school systems are taking kids mt. biking- fighting obesity- currently building a skills park to help build basic biking skills

Land Trust Movement - Blue Ridge Tomorrow group works with a prioritized strategy instead of each competing for donors. Collaboration is working well. Similar to Land for Tomorrow.

Palmetto Conservation Association in SC – Trail system that has used partners to complete trail system. Wetlands Reserve Program has worked and been expanded to uplands. Takes a long time though. Basically a Federal Conservation easement.

Trails – need to be able to get to trails to get folks out. Create visitor centers and programs along trails. Works well.

Programs to take kids into the forest is great experience. Great way

State office has inventoried/identified all the environmental education centers in the state. State level sees all these programs, but does not see the support for the programming and staff at all of these centers. Also wants to see this curriculum integrated into multiple disciplines, not just into a single course (eg. not just into a science course).

SC Conservation Bank – also has preserved farmland; state initiatives are critical. Need incentives

One of the programs that works is the Appalachian Trail Conservancy/AT Office Trail to every classroom project. Focused on providing workshops to teachers that are in school systems along the AT. Teach approximately 40 teachers per year at several different workshops. Also develop curriculum related to Trail and outdoors/public lands. Play-spaced education (teach students about their local area/environment) and service-learning based (engage students in project of sorts). Bringing teachers together with local “resource” people, so that teachers get to know the local resources that they can use.

Discussion Question 1

Asheville, NC

(cont.)

Go Green. Use art (recycled materials, trash) make sculptures, talk about social justice issues, using what is around them to engage them initially – we have programs but need engagement before the kids get involved in such programs – for kids, must start in their backyard – bridge from community to the ‘great outdoors’ – gardens, water quality – circle of life (home to neighborhood to regional to national park)

Treemont at GSMNP. Views programs as partnership with the schools. The Treemont staff does part of the teaching but also have teachers do part of the teaching. Helping teachers learn these skills while working with Treemont staff. Also do summer camp experiences for students. Have students do research projects while there and then present their projects. Found that this experience enhances their school work and exposes them to career opportunities.

Teacher, need to bridge gap between neighborhood to national park – but need additional volunteers for teachers (from NPS?) – teachers need a helping hand, particularly tweens and teens

Hollywood can help. Tie in media to real life to educate. Piggyback on such media to relate and connect with communities.-check out climateproject.org

Working together as groups like Land for Tomorrow (conservation related groups that lobby as part of their activity has been very successful. The combined effort has resulted in a better, stronger use of conservation trust funds in NC.

Splitting the costs among private/public entities is working well in western NC. Everyone gives something instead of only public money.

Readiness and Env Response Initiative – Development encroachment on military bases. Use these programs to buffer military bases. Corridor near Macon where NPS is working with military to share management and conserve land – military provides some funding.

State Wildlife Action Plans are very important. States identify what most ecologically important areas are on the landscape. Opportunities for partnerships. GA WL Federation has worked with NPS to manage lands to preserve hunting.

NPS, existing systems are not being fully funded, maintenance backlog, etc. Need more money to fund these programs

Groups of land trusts – Blue Ridge Forever. Private funded.

Discussion Question 1

Asheville, NC

(cont.)

Feels that public education is best vehicle for delivering outdoor education/environmental education. Muddy Sneakers program is good example of one such program. This program emphasizes trying to bring the “summer camp” experience to public school students. Took goals and objectives from mandatory NC school standards that can be taught/learned in outdoor setting. Then took children outdoors and taught these standards in this outdoor setting. That school’s testing/standards improved by 23%. Successful program led to implementation of similar programs and “believers” in other parts of the school district.

Conservation Trust for NC. Project that tries to make land conservation movement in the state reach more diverse audience, be more inclusive. Realize that the demographics are changing and that Hispanic/latino population will be the majority—working to reach this segment of our population. Doing trainings w/ land trusts across the state on diversity importance, also working with affordable housing groups, local food groups, healthcare providers, etc. Want land trusts to realize that they need more partners to assist and more diverse partners. Bring in diverse students for summer internships etc. Also doing community gardens in urban areas. Conservation-based affordable housing-land trusts protect open space and then partnering with affordable housing groups to build high quality affordable housing in that area. All these efforts are to reach a diverse audience. Feels that this project/initiative is working well.

We need people to use the outdoor facilities; resources need to be accessible, open longer, easier access.

Land Trusts are diversifying groups they are working with – foundation grants. Higher minorities for summer, work with minority farmers, minority training, new housing developments that respect landscape.

NC Conservation Tax Credit – conservation easement based. Has protected lots of land in NC. Tax benefit is often the right incentive. 20 states have this.

Juvenile restitution programs are helpful. This creates young ones working supervised, in areas to clean up. This is an opportunity, sometimes the only one, that they have to get outdoors. One example is community gardens. Scout programs. Many places exclude animals, however many people get outdoors when they walk their dogs.

NC Farmland Protection Trust Fund has worked well statewide – but need more money

All taxa biodiversity inventory. Get people in the public involved to go out with researcher.

Privately funded groups (i.e. Yes Camp) tour parks and recreational areas and enjoy it, while getting outdoors. Kids in the Creek – 8th grades get put in the creek to catch bugs and fish, taught ecology and get exposed to elements. This may be their one chance to experience the outdoors.

Discussion Question 1

Asheville, NC

(cont.)

Need more collaboration in policy development as well

Trails to Every Classroom program-taps into teacher's creativity- give the teachers the tools

Smart phone technology. Use social media, facebook, twitter, myspace etc...

This is the time to look at business partners and cooperating associations to help with the marketing aspect. We're getting so far behind the private sector. People will be more comfortable engaging through facebook, twitter.

I don't think a lot of schools know about programs to introduce youth and minority children to NFS/NPS.integrate more information into school curriculum to make children aware of resources activities available. Need to be

It's important to engage people to share memories, histories of parks. Parks should pursue these stories. There hasn't been a concerted effort to build a history of forest lands.

We do need to connect to our children, how do we pay for all of these programs? We have a lot of good ideas but there needs to be programming funds available. Partnerships work well.

collaboration, sustainability education; private enterprise funds different conservation and education programs; need to kids out of the classroom and out into the resources

NC has 4 Trust funds

Use Cartoon network, every youth in America watches regularly.

Tax incentive is important in conservation easements

Reconnecting people with outdoors- have programs working with teachers- teachers work in the park as rangers- helps them understand what is in their back yard- also get students into the park- focus on both curriculum and recreation

NPS's Second Century Commission ----implement that vision-promote geocaching to get people outside

How do we get young people to take more ownership in parks?

Discussion Question 1

Asheville, NC

(cont.)

AT license plates have paid for School Program \$ in Hot Springs schools

Partnership with public partners – acquired new piece of land with agreement that there will be more LWCF money in future; many trails are in the area; transaction costs should cover stewardship responsibility

Need regional strategies- not easy for small communities to develop by themselves- Western NC better than most in regional development- need to cover even more areas- for example, many waters in NC empty into SC- needs federal leadership for interstate coordination

Support and build on existing programs such as Boy Scouts

Jaqueline – formed collaborative county outreach groups with knowledgeable persons; funding with LWCF and tax incentives have been important to group; received funding from fed, state, and private citizens for acquisitions; Partnership for the Blue Ridge – multiple partners in four states

NPS should partner with schools and boys clubs to help disadvantaged children. Don't count on parents to know what's available. Many parents have no experience in the outdoors to teach their children.

Outdoor classrooms work well. Don't cut bus services to field trips

How do we reach out to minorities? Do we have urban city internships?

Marketing outdoor opportunities to the schools, outward bound works.

Land trust working to get access to Catawba Falls – worked to acquire land – Fed and LWCF worked together with community.

response – easement- type of trust does pay taxes still. Karen Riverlink – More Creative – Progress Energy relicensing – there were good examples of converting to Grant \$. Also License plate \$ to Natural Heritage trust fund.

Grants from programs such as Rec Trails Program have been very helpful- keep what we have

Emile Eagle, Civil war also- mechanisms –Farm and Ranchland protection program, matching grant program, federal, state, private, Transportation enhancement funding, Conservation tax easement incentives, Land and Water conservation funds

Discussion Question 1

Asheville, NC

(cont.)

Question- More of a challenge Item-

How do you get a more hands on interface with youth to exploit opportunities on the parkway?
Discount passes for families?

We're passionate about getting children outside, need money, most money goes towards conservation.

FRIPP Program has worked well – conserve farmland

Large urban area – nature preserves in urban communities. Restore streams in neighborhoods.

Science-based information (GIS, etc.) works. County inventories. But don't know what is on private.

Scenic Byways Program has funded several important projects in NC.

SC Tax Credit – can sell SC tax credits for 80 cents on the dollar.

-camping on platforms only accessible by boat/kayak etc.

-target boy scouts and bird watchers

-have access on the water for people to use for camping. 40 miles worth

-had 5 counties come together to create a “paddle trail” system where people came recreate on the water and use camping facilities

climbing paces are on private property... strategies to simply ask residents was failing

have made rock face/climbing purchases from private homeowners through fundraising efforts and grassroots efforts

collecting donations, silent auctions, etc

Discussion Question 1

Asheville, NC

(cont.)

having access near park service facilities, and collaborating with them

VERY GRASSROOT face to face small organization, community relations conservation efforts

local level public relations

gain partnerships with other related clubs, organization etc. to increase involvement (ex: rock climbing conservation group (Carolina climbers coalition)...partner with urban rock climbing clubs, training facilities etc)

Ask what the communities want (ex: school kids want disk golf)

Large volunteer maintenance crews for trails

Citizen-financed 30,000 acres of greenspace - lightening bug, birdwatching, frog monitoring – offering orienteering in schools via junior ROTC orienteering programs

5th grade env. program – a part of NC school curriculum – working for 3 years – significant increase in science scores by participants. Kinds learning all things are connected.

get all 5th grade classes out hiking on the AT – Trail to Every Classroom – AT becomes curriculum – Am Hiking Soc – website to ID trails – ID trail days, events, trail locations

Outdoor Alliance – making sure kids have a connection to the outdoors via rec. activities – brings understanding – overcomes disconnect if they don't know it – they won't protect it

– Finally realizing that conservation and recreation are not opposed but can be partners – putting people on the land doing rec activities aids in its protection

Scouts offer service, outdoor experiences, volunteering – start at a young age, family-oriented, serve 4,000 youth – orienteering, camping, 130 Eagle scout projects this year, horsemanship, day camps

co-op w/Parkway on projects – orienteering, other outdoor activities (climbing, spelunking, etc...)

Continual revenue stream tied to city/county 6% occupancy tax (1/3 of \$ for infrastr. projects) – these all go to outdoor rec infrastructure – developing mtn bike trails, and a 15-yr mgmt plan – leveraging these funds to increase impact – double it! Building capacity for local non-profits (increases value and footprint of impact)

Discussion Question 1

Asheville, NC

(cont.)

Child care programs – outdoor program emphasis (infants to 5) - increase kids' time outside

group dwells on taking on things that go against conservation (development) – example of Va Creeper as adaptive reuse and revenue generator – an opportunity for the FS – from Parkway to valley? Would allow the FS to get away from extractive uses to keep management levels

From media perspective – facing shrinking budgets, staff – potential for non-profits to share content – need to create more formalized relationships – providing info to the media – rural areas have poor broadband access – limits communication about info available – a challenge – how to use and access the forest info very disorganized – needs improvement

the first place people call for info is local parks dept – don't have resources – no clearinghouse for outdoor tourism information – need a data base for this

Young people need to have correct scientific names, those programs work, learning about environment, partnerships work – particularly science learning centers

Problem with kids – no money/time/knowledge in schools to take kids to nature area – need to teach kids what they are looking at – doesn't have to be a beautiful forest, could just have weeds in a back lot to get kids connected to nature

All inclusiveness needed – Go Green, Getting Back To The Basics are two local programs, the y need funding to bring all children to the great outdoors

YMI Cultural Center in Asheville is centrally located, good resources for African American community.

Cooperation is key. Federal government has the opportunity to encourage collaboration and cooperation with other agencies and private sector. Sustainable communities is a great idea that puts multiple objectives into one basket.

Strongest resource is us – the public, individuals. Keep projects local and manageable but big enough to get gov't recognition for funding.

Repetition of messages over time. Repetition of messages. A concerted effort akin to Smokey Bear that brings a message to the public.

Forest is better place to learn science than classroom. Get kids into nature, you don't need capital investment to do this.

Warren Wilson College is a good reference for a college that has integrated environmental edu

Discussion Question 1

Asheville, NC

(cont.)

This listening session is an example of good governance—to come and ask for public’s input and use a bottom-up approach versus a top-down approach.

Costs to maintaining parks so there is a cost to visiting areas. Free or low costs make areas accessible.

Environmental Education also is an effective strategy.

Start a group called “Friends of Nature”. Parks with natural landscape, trails in the woods, picnic shelters. Promoted with schools and teacher. The Parks and Recreation Dept does nature camps. This gives access to small children through adults.

Another use of easement is to purchase easement from a tobacco farmer.

Passport in time with the Forest Service give citizens an opportunity to work on an archeological project.

Transportation enhancement grant. T-21 funds

Working with communities to plan a trail and other development. Develop partnerships to generate funds, etc. Rivers Trails CommunityAssistance helped with these efforts.

Every county has Soil/Water conservation office that can help private landowners address conservation needs on their property. Underutilized service.

Wants to see how all the educational outdoor programs can be better integrated. They mostly are isolated efforts and could be more effective if integrated.

Hiking in the foothills

Kayaking

Rafting in Chataloochie

Fishing

Discussion Question 1

Asheville, NC

(cont.)

Play sports

interconnectedness of nature

Learn from nature, natural processes

Physical exercise

Working outside-always something different to notice

Educate people about the environment

Provide opportunities to conserve specific endangered species to people who aren't familiar with the environment

Practice and teach Leave No Trace

Enjoy teaching people to preserve the environment and improve it

Bike around town

Eating vegetarian

Eating local food

Native gardens

Composting

Harvesting wind energy

Discussion Question 1

Asheville, NC

(cont.)

Farm initiatives in Atlanta schools - outreach to kids

Safe access

Safe transportation

Marketing - jobs, funding, more local, community-based advertising

School buses, transit buses can be used

Interesting incentives

Hiking on BRP

camping

Driving around looking for places to go

exploring fields

reunning especially at the aboretum

doing sports with friends

mountain biking riding in Brevard and on BRP

skateboarding - cat in Brevard

swimming

Discussion Question 1

Asheville, NC

(cont.)

rock climbing/rappelling

bike riding

Boy Scout Code - LNT, clean up after self and others

recycle

a lot of clubs in town try to get people to do stuff outdoors

composting at restaurants

hotels have the option to not wash sheets/towels to conserve water

advertise great outdoors as being healthy

When I was younger I used to always go outdoors; do whatever I could get my hands on. Mountain biking, etc.

Where I go outdoors depends on the time I have in the day. Only an hour I may just go to a local park.

I like to do normal day-to-day activities outside, in city parks: sports, reading, etc.

Others, agreed: focus on city, local parks

urban setting, go to the local pool, city park; not necessarily a big focus on national parks, traveling to get to parks

Freedom of not having to be inside (watching TV etc); freedom to be actively, lively

pay-off is so much more rewarding than going to the gym

Discussion Question 1

Asheville, NC

(cont.)

in a lot of urban areas there's concrete, etc. Compared to more rural areas, lots of outdoor activities, woods, etc.

Nature Conservancy; the land we have right now, the sights and sounds of nature alone can attract people outdoors

The economy and culture of the Asheville area are closely tied to our outdoor spaces and the tourism and recreational opportunities they provide. As such, a deep appreciation and commitment to conservation has grown throughout this community. The Asheville area is home to half a dozen regional land conservation organizations that have worked with federal, state, and local governments as well as private landowners to preserve farms, forests, and wetlands for the benefit of the entire population. For example, Buncombe County has developed highly successful programs which use easements and tax exempt geographical zones to successfully slow the loss of farmland to housing development near Asheville.

The Asheville area is also home to several initiatives designed to encourage greater appreciation and utilization of our outstanding natural resources. The Blue Ridge National Heritage Area, designated by Congress in 2003, is anchored here at the new Blue Ridge Parkway Visitors Center and covers twenty-five counties in Western North Carolina. The "Muddy Sneakers" organization originated in Hendersonville and serves four counties including Buncombe, Henderson, Transylvania, and McDowell and is a national model for successful incorporation of the outdoors into the classroom and vice versa Asheville is also home to the American Whitewater Association, an organization that has led the charge for more "human powered outdoor recreation" around the country_

Discussion Question 1

Bangor, ME

People in Maine have trails and opportunities available and a conservation ethic

Goals are goods, come back to Maine in 2016 100 anniversary of Acadia and NPS.

Ditto! Elementary teachers don't often have the science background, so resources will be very helpful!

We're not talking much about the ocean, but it is a part of our great outdoors. Willingness to innovate, which means taking risk. You don't always succeed but it's important to innovate and take risks. We need to evolve. Maybe all of our natural areas aren't perfect (e.g., gravel pit in natural area), but it got us to "yes." It's easy to say no, but that is not innovative. Penobscot project involved not asking for a lot of permission until they had something to show for the work they'd done. Project didn't only look at fish and river restoration but allowed the hydro work.

Working forests specifically mean fiber extraction. Loggers are Master Logger certified and are very aware of land they are working on.

Working south of Augusta...we have really cool projects in the region. Many land trusts are thinking smartly already. Trails...setting up easements for trail maintenance is important. Endangered Species Act is contentious about what it can do and fear of what it will do. Habitat Conservation Plans should be better used.

Strongly in favor of north wood national park. Its one of the last largest semi wilderness areas east of the Mississippi left and it's a shame to see it being exploited by the timber industry. To my knowledge there is no national park in this country that wasn't controversial in the community in which it was proposed. That applies to ME and what I would ask is their is great misunderstanding about what activities can and cant occur within a national park, its up to the designation document that speaks to what can occur in the national park and me citizens are very ignorant about that. Having a dept of interior come and give public hearings around the state about the national park process and what can and cant occur in a national park, for ex hunting and fishing can occur, but they don't know about that. I would thank Obama for holding a session such as this.

An important passage in the Call to this Listening Session celebrated "collaborative that] exemplify ecosystem based restoration efforts that are aimed at improving communities and their natural and their natural resources, providing clearer water, improved critical habitat for sensitive species, and economic resource for the future." Inspired by that Call and this gathering, I offer a contribution to this discussion that addresses Science in our National Parks, and especially in Acadia.

Discussion Question 1

Bangor, ME

(cont.)

Acadia National Park is well positioned to contribute to this mission. The web of life woven through the woods and waters of Acadia is an extraordinarily diverse floral and faunal endowment at the boundaries of the Northern (Boreal) and Eastern Temperate Forest biomes. The research resources of the scores of world-class universities and colleges of our New England region and the immediate proximity of two distinguished biological research laboratories and the College of the Atlantic are well known. Acadia now offers, in the recently expanded Schoodic Education and Research Center (SERe), a premier venue to support regional research into climate change and conservation issues and to convey to teachers, students, and park visitors the importance of such ecological study. Investment in science and education conducted through these regional, local and park capabilities will have robust national returns. It is important that we know how our parks may evolve and how we can act as conservationist as they do. But it is essential that we anticipate the conservation, cultural, and economic consequences of biome boundary migration - a dynamic that could effect many millions of human beings and hundreds of billions of dollars of economic activity. Good science in the parks can serve this mission.

We like to conserve mountains. Bring opportunities to the people. Think about conserving iconic places, bring people to them through pathways for walking, biking, and strolling.

Local organizations like Land Trusts that can get hands around community's needs

Local resources Non-governmental Organizations (NGO). Have people take ownership of the places. Spend a buck to get 10 bucks back by having volunteers to help. Use local resources and local people. Keep the political bologna out of the science; it doesn't help the salmon. When studying salmon restoration, for too long politics has superseded science.

Our State Wildlife Action Plan and Beginning with Habitat program brought together partners, such as land trusts and agencies throughout the state. Our programs work with local decision makers in the municipalities to develop conservation priorities. This is not top down and helps build appreciation of wildlife habitat.

Engaging and empowering the local thinking works. Rise from the grass roots up. Grass roots and land trusts are important to bring in the other programs. In the long term, the community plays a key role.

We have a trust fund for Univ of Me college students and youth to get them outdoors. Get other conservation groups (flyfishers and hunters) involved in their educational outdoor projects. We have started a Family Fun Day where all these conservation groups work with children. Activities include beginners fly-casting, bow hunting. It is all volunteer, you just have to ask.

Delphi Forecast Techniques to develop who will own forests in ME in the future. It is anonymous. This technique the Federal Government ought to use. It identifies inherent polarization.

Discussion Question 1

Bangor, ME

(cont.)

The experience works, if you have it you can apply it to your life. Break away from the good old boys, traditional way it is done. Don't tell the gov't what we want. Tell them what we can do. Help each other and have gov't facilitate it. Dove-tail for results. Network with those in the room today. Information is far more important than regulation. Need good information. Gov't makes rules and needs to enforce their rules.

Get kids outside. A lot of kids get scholarships to go to camps such as Bryant Pond Conservation Camp. This experience transformed the kids. The kids came back again and spread by word of mouth. Everyone needs to get the information out there about the camp experience.

DLT is a community-led partnership in Maine, which Grand Lake Stream residents founded it in 2001. Community well-being through conservation. 370,000 acres area 350,000 are in conservation. 33,000 community forest. Managed multi-use. Public funding was matched 6 to 1. They have a forest manager and are Forest Stewardship Council certified. They have established forest trails, water trails. These connect families to the outdoors and at the same time creates an environment that allows local businesses (guides and lodges) to be successful. This land trust project was high on the Forest Legacy list and received support in the state of Maine. The town of Grand Lake Stream appropriated \$40,000 to help the land trust. Lots of interest by various groups helped with this conservation effort. Broad sweep of agencies and programs. This is a positive example of collaborative conservation effort.

Forest Legacy is a great program. Healthy Forest Reserve Program (HFRP) is a good program for managing endangered species, but could be broadened to cost-share on management plans. NRCS needs to expand the program without adding hooks and restrictions so that people run the other way.

Build buses that are affordable so we can get kids outside

Q1: Landscape conservation as it merged is the best way to achieve the greatest goals. Means looking at large parcels of land and making sure animals can roam freely. If we look at landscape in a river for example, we are looking at an entire watershed--a system as opposed to isolated parts. Landscape conservation has emerged as the best way to achieve the greatest goals - maintaining connectivity across habitats and systems. EG - Penobscot River System include all the watersheds, all the feeder streams, all the dams all the way to the ocean.

Q1: We don't really have the time to work with one project at a time we need to look at these river systems on a whole. We don't have the time to work one project at the time as we have low numbers, we need to look at landscapes.

Discussion Question 1

Bangor, ME

(cont.)

Penobscot River and some of the issues seen: For years we had been looking at dams on an individual bases. When _____ got involved here, we saw it as a real opportunity to take a basin wide approach. One thing that was different about this project was that we all wanted to spend more money on the resources and less money on the lawyers. There has to be a better way to do business. I think for the tribe, it is our homeland, and we are lucky to be able to live in our homeland. The current project is a landscape scale project. We used to examine one dam at a dam. When PPL bought the dams, that was our chance to manage with a basin-wide approach. This took 3 years of discussion to understand everyone's interest in the various projects. We wanted to spend and money on projects, not on lawyers. It is the largest river conservation project east of the Mississippi. This is important to our people - the Penobscot have a responsibility and duty to give back to the natural world and help fix that river.

I've had a lot of people ask why do private landowners allow recreation to happen on their property. I think it is because of tradition. As managers we cannot allow it to become too costly otherwise we are not helping the landowner we are working for. Recreation Liability Law is also really important in Maine. With our state land, there is a challenge in how to fund these things. The fed. gov't could help states do some trial projects on state land. It can't all come from tax money, but can be supported by other things like user fees.

Maine has been a leader in the forest legacy program funds. Many of those have been supported by both public and private money. We were able to purchase millions of acres to be used as conservation land, and those lands can be used by the public. At the same time many are required to do sustainable forestry. Asking senators to fully funding the conservation program will help the parks in this country Maine has been a leader in using Forest Legacy funds as well as private and foundation funding. If state dollars were used, than those lands are open to the public. There is a tremendous need to fully fund the Land and Water Conservation Fund. I invite you to contact your congressional representatives.

We have two large conservation easements. One in the Penobscot area. Another It is important to keep these as simple as possible because circumstances will change, but I think they do offer the best of several worlds forestry-agriculture

We appreciate you all coming. We all have a common goal to preserve the precious resources we have. Maine is unique in its strong history of philanthropy. Donations are going down so the LWCF money becomes far more important. Flexibility in federal funding is very important.

The conventional wisdom to date has always involved NGO's, gov't, but I'd strongly encourage you to engage businesses. Create a culture of "yes". The Penobscot challenge is one example. It was a collaborative effort and the two Secretaries' challenges were a key part of is coming together.

Discussion Question 1

Bangor, ME

(cont.)

Thanks for the feds coming to town to hear us. Maine is the most heavily forested state in the country in a per-acre basis. We still have some time to get it right, and there are a couple projects in the works now that can be used as examples. Maine has always been a leader in conservation. Let us do our work. It has taken a long time to create these environmental problems and they require a long term commitment to solving them.

Connecting children with the outdoors, children are small and don't drive cars, remember as a kid going in the backyard to play, don't need much and don't need a big area, open space in urban areas, get a farm close to the malls, community gardens. Connectivity needs regional planning, encourage towns and land trusts to do regional planning, Gov provide money for facilitating regional planning.

Best way to connect ME people with the land is to get them out there, ME knows how to make collaboration work. The more we can get people out to see the resources the more likely they will want to convey to the future generations.

Leadership the last few years willing to have conversations across groups, breaking down silos, leaders willing to look into the future, come to common denominators and that is working in ME

People work together well in Maine, with each other

Federal Gov NPS protects wildlife habitat, and supports the Maine North Woods Nat Park,

Implementing forestry knowledge requires large tracts of land what has worked well is the Northeast Research Coop

Private busing system on the Acadia without Fed

Maine has long tradition of LT community, ground up conservations. The towns look to the LT and the LT's look to the community leadership. Look up to NPD for River and rails programs

Diversity interns working with FWS

Leading people outside and world class adventures, Federal lands to recreate on. Fed lands easy to sell marketing. Don't create competition across programs for enviro education progs

Amazing earth fest on the Colorado plateau, something that could be recreated elsewhere, encourage and excites people about there public lands.

Partnerships and collaborations BPL owns land timber lease held by town, town gets benefit. Collaborate with PLT to get out on the land, Forest Legacy and State money was key to success.

Discussion Question 1

Bangor, ME

(cont.)

Lots of different spectacular public lands, different programs help to fit specific lands to certain programs,

LMF is a great program and should not go un mentioned

State Wildlife plans,

Lot of professionals that are retired and donate to land trust and help,

Access on Private land is what works, keep the working forests.

FLP very successful in Maine, Money raising the private side money, money to raise the stewardship for the project

Leaders of AGO need to say we are part of the web of life and the National heritage, important the humans are part of nature and work with nature.

fundamental tool, good science is needed, we need a fed gov to make serious sustain investment in science to monitor changes from climate change, preparing us as good stewards of the land. Good Science has highest return on investment.

Need to get the message out to the Public, Fed can be a PR firm to get the word out, need to let people know what Maine already has

Feds educate people about the natural resources, gov consider a feasibility study for Maine North Woods NP

Sense of scale 1.3 Million, upper right corner of transportation corridor, doing a pretty good job of managing private lands, please pay attention to Maine scale is small impact is BIG.

Maine has most tremendous opportunity, Maine has been ignored, Atlantic Salmon \$ VS Pacific Salmon \$, Maine has largest remaining forest in the east and has a great opportunity.

Utilizing the networks that currently exist, utilizing private sector for marketing, instead of creating more and utilize what exists

Innovative Collaborations, keeping Maine's Forests report, seed money to continue

Discussion Question 1

Bangor, ME

(cont.)

2 Million acres of private lands conserved, 3-1 Private to public funding, Ecosystem service that will reward the forest landowner for the public services the land provides regardless if they are participating in a CE program.

Very important to listen to different perspectives Maine does great things locally, science, land trusts, creating projects need support without interference. Cooperative conservation and allow local systems to work as long as broad goals met

Keeping Maine's forest and keeping Maine's economy, broadband access to the rural areas of Maine, limits future business success. Public and private partnerships

Marketing advice, obstacles, fear of fed govt, in Maine, better marketing by fed LWCF money and other successes with the great collaboration in Maine, marketing this land protect by this land trust to with funds from Federal Govt, also if you guarantee public access then you must advertise, also need line item to fund recreational management plans,.

Look to the Dept of Education to update criteria to get them outdoors.

I would like to develop a trail from my land to the town. I need money, legal advice, state officials, town officials.

Cooperative Agriculture Pest Survey grants work well

USFS Forest Health Programs work well.

Large scale partnership efforts work. The Penobscot Restoration effort works because the people who started it had the long term goal. The Eastern Brook Trout and the National Fish Habitat Plan is floundering. These efforts have been supported by local agencies and efforts. We need federal support for these on the ground projects in habitat restoration.

Conservation means all of us. We are all part of the reason that the oil spill happened. We can all make a difference.

Maine is a blessed place because of the huge expanse of landscape. The Great Maine woods needs to be protected as an important part of the East Coast.

As our population grows, we need to fully fund the National Parks as these are often the first places where kids get outdoors.

We need to connect kids, and diverse populations of kids, so that these people become our future stewards. Teacher Ranger Teacher, and Acadia Qwest both work well to encourage kids to get outdoors

Discussion Question 1

Bangor, ME

(cont.)

We need to encourage advocacy, not have the federal agencies discourage advocacy.

RTCA and LWCF both work well and should be continued.

Acadia is a magnet. That is working. 2.5 million visitors. Visits are up 20% this year. It is an economic engine for 3.5\$ million. It is also a magnet for 3000 volunteers.

Grants and technical programs work well but need add'l funding. For example, the LWCF, the Rivers and Trails Program. There are many state, local and private funding that works.

The National Parks connect people to the land better than any other tool. There is nothing more important than supporting national parks and funding national parks. A Maine Woods National Park should be created.

Our organization supports public access on private lands. Maine has a model to assure that private ownership supports private access.

Our Steelworkers Union also partners with the Sierra Club. It is called the Blue green Alliance. This is a good, working model.

Private Landowners Work. The reason environmentalists love Maine is because its residents have taken care of it for 400 years. Penthouse environmentalists don't really know ME. In my lifetime, ME has GAINED 77,000 area a year. The addition of three townships of forests every year is the greatest carbon sink in the land. I can ride an ATV 100 miles on forests lands to the ocean. Private landowners make that possible.

Private ownership works. We are an outdoor people and landowners need help building more trails for snowmobiles and ATV's.

We have a successful partnership of a town of 300 people and the state and Forest Legacy Fund. The State owns the land, but the Town leases. Partnerships are the key to success.

Protecting environmental values, maintain traditional uses, and strengthen the rural economy - these are the three most important goals for ME's forests.

Dealing with private lands is Gifford Pinchot's unfinished business. "Keeping Maine's Forest" is a good, working model.

Student Conservation Association - this is wonderful program that provides jobs and experience in the woods. Entry level jobs in natural resources are very difficult. Build on the SCA or AmeriCorps models for more advanced level jobs. This will keep people working in these types of jobs all across US.

Discussion Question 1

Bangor, ME

(cont.)

Pleased to see Presidential Initiative. Reagan had them. But particularly pleased with reaching broadly to all. Other documents from other initiatives can be challenging to use and should be provided to legislatures. Can lessons learned here be used to educate lawmakers as a whole to improve funding to Fed agencies that can benefit State programs?

Penobscot is shining light of what can be done. 5 years ago they could do a trip and catch lots of striped bass and make a living guiding. Now there are none. The coast of ME north of Kennebec is in trouble. In a few years things are going to be awesome. My business has declined 60% in last 5 years back of no stripers. People don't want to go north to freshwater fish when on the coast. I invested more in my business, bought bigger boat to chase tuna. Have to go 40 miles offshore - is dangerous. I want striped bass back. Ches Bay is overfished/mismanaged and the stripers there make up those that travel to Maine. Fed Govt has not managed them well. There should be no commercial harvest of striped bass on the East Coast. Fed Govt allows ?? fishery for menhaden, which is the most important fish of sea. Only fish that eats red tide algae. If menhaden came to GOM there would be no algae. Feds need to find money to remove dams. Memo only mentioned fishing and hunting briefly, flowery language. I fear this agenda is only about watching, preserving, skiing. Need to allow rec for all Americans.

Funding. We're in a key moment as Senate votes on oil spill bills. LWCF, Forest Legacy Fund have been great. ME is an excellent place to use Fed funds due to prices. Want to see sense of spirit Congress had in enacting this legislation. See continue to focus on whole ecosystems. Fragmentation is a problem. Whole communities of interest for partnerships. ME Forest Biodiversity Project worked together years ago. State's Land Fund program is a coalition that benefits the environment. It comes out of common sense - ME has always made sure forests were taken care of. We've had engineers from China come to see Penobscot project. Keeping Maine's Forests is a discussion, not a final report. Economics have also been linked to the project. We need Fed participation in KMF program. There is a ton of work ahead not done by email, or a meeting every 6 months. A lot of people are talking about what the forest industry needs. This didn't happen 10 years ago. Conservation groups understand now that everyone needs to work together.

Maine has some of the best resources anywhere. Acadia NP is paramount and beautiful. It needs support. Needs LWCF to be made whole. The non-profits are working with landowners to acquire land. Linkages in landscapes, Appalachian Trail are important. Fed Govt could look at the new models of partnerships. Feds can facilitate a process for partnership without being a landowner. DOI and USDA could work with the State to develop a "7th Generation" view.

Discussion Question 1

Bangor, ME

(cont.)

Private land works because it is treated like public land. It's better than Federal land. Can't take my son to a trout pond and catch limit. Roads everywhere. We have a mosaic of many landowners with many different objectives. There is no one solution for every acre. Nothing nicer than having a protected preserve next to your property. We might need fed land to keep our traditions due to increased access. I disagree that youth doesn't go into forest because of electronics. I have 6 kids. The Federal No Child Left Behind law is keeping kids out of nature. Just put it into the curriculum so it's required by teachers to incorporate it. Assessment drives instruction.

5th generation slate miner. It's been taken for granted the resources we have. Over the last 10 years, things have changed. The % of people that could stay and make a living is rapidly declining. Keep knowledge base that we've developed here.

There is a ME Youth Fish and game Association spends kids traditional outdoor activities. Have summer camp for 2 weeks.

I think the Maine thing I want to say is that I personally, am not sure whether or not a national park would be in the best interest in the area, but those in the business should be because we only need to look at Ellsworth or Bar Harbor to see the benefits of this. Those in business only have to look at those and see that it works. We only have to look at the work resulting to see that it will create jobs. I would rather keep the woods the woods. When you go into the real woods, which non of us see anyone, you can really see the benefit of seeing the great woods in tact, not just for ourselves but for all the creatures.

open use policy is enhanced by the liability law that was passed in Maine

1. encourage philanthropy leveraging with public dollars. 2. encourage young people through conservation education. 3. investing in science to improve science based management decisions. Will send in comments to website.

Observation: taking young children hunting, fishing, camping. Boys commented that they wanted to stay longer and didn't miss tv, etc. How lucky Mainers are to have access to natural areas for little or no cost. Important to keep that access available.

Having national parks well advertised and available enhances usage. Having media spots will get more people out.

two older sons not interested in farming. Would like to keep farm as a protected land trust to continue farming/natural area. Concerned that the production of the farm will be adequate to keep the trust going. Perhaps the federal gov't can help? His farm is in Central Maine, and most farm trusts/easement opportunities are in Southern Maine. Wants farm land to be protected for his children or grandchildren. Money needed to maintain the trust and not sure if money from farm enough to do that.

Discussion Question 1

Bangor, ME

(cont.)

Rarity of space and type of natural areas are extensive, but not well advertised. Rare and precious are the vast openness of the natural areas. Not promoted well, people think it can be cut away. But there are hundreds of miles of snow mobile trails and rivers that can be convoked for days without crossing a road.

Lake science instruction for students/young people. There should be more access to this type of instruction with provisions made to have people come. Need to do more to get kids out, but it's tough to even afford a bus to take a group of kids out. Not every kid has a dad that will take them to these places.

Land liability statute has helped land stay open for use. Other states have asked for input on how Maine does this. 2) Leveraging volunteerism is an important resource.

They are having a positive reaction from landowners who don't typically like conservation by offering up sustainability ideas.

Canoe trips are being reduced, but the state parks' first time camping program works because it's simple. Gets people out of cars. Watershed Council runs guided canoe trips at no cost for kids who have never paddled before. These are kids who were afraid of bugs, but found they weren't as bad as they had feared.

Private funders and public funders working together to leverage resources works. The more groups that get together to leverage resources = more leveraging.

Making a living on land; NRCS programs helpful (EQIP, etc.), working with conservation districts. Challenges that others have voiced. AS FWS educator know that education is important, especially the young people. Students or people with young children need to be introduced to the natural areas. Land users have access to some programs, such as hunter safety, etc. But there isn't much available for land owners. Youth camps are very pricey and often available to non-residents. These camps should be made more available and affordable for local children to take advantage of. Funding is hard to come by for these camps experiences. Higher funding would be helpful to get youth involved so that respect for the land will grow. He is a grandfather of 5 and can see the greater appreciation that kids that have access to natural areas have in comparison to kids who have not had the access.

Land conservation discussions are usually focused on a certain parcel or area. Need to identify how these parcels being protected protects a larger habitat area. We need to have a consistent language between non-profits and government so that people can understand what each other are talking about.

Leveraging volunteers works well. People are enthusiastic to help save land that they love. It is more helpful if they feel that their volunteerism is supported by federal funding, and not instead of it.

Discussion Question 1

Bangor, ME

(cont.)

Thank you for taking the time during the America's Great Outdoors listening Session in Maine to see and hear more about the remarkable and innovative partnership to restore one of America's great rivers through the Penobscot River Restoration Project.

The Maine session was extremely well-run, leaving the attendees with a clear impression that the federal team had truly listened to their input.

We appreciated the opportunity to share what we have learned in the Penobscot Project with you and with others on your team and from the public.

As you witnessed, we are enormously proud of the Penobscot Project and the continuing commitment to its successful completion. The project includes several federal agencies, the Penobscot Indian Nation, the State of Maine, hydropower owners PPL Corporation and Black Bear Hydro LLC and several conservation groups and many other partners. The project is the result of exemplary collaborative federal leadership, from the negotiation of the agreement to technical assistance to funding. For instance, the Department of the Interior (U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, National Park Service and Bureau of Indian Affairs); Department of Commerce (National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration) and U.S. Environmental Protection Agency all play key roles; partnership with the Department of Agriculture is also promising. This vital collaboration remains critical.

Penobscot Project partners have raised \$25 million to purchase dams, engaged in thorough permitting, and are on the brink of full implementation to restore access to nearly 1,000 miles of habitat for sea-run fish including federally endangered Atlantic salmon and Shortnose sturgeon.

Received the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission permits, with Endangered Species Act consultation for Atlantic salmon and Shortnose Sturgeon, for the decommissioning and removal of two and bypass of another dam that impede sea-run fishery recovery;

Received the State of Maine Department of Environmental Protection Permits to remove the dams and construct the bypass;

Negotiated a collaborative agreement, secured permits and began construction on an updated more fish-friendly replacement water intake system at a mill associated with one of the dams;

Received funding through the Recovery Act to remove the Great Works dam in 2011;

Received funding to complete engineering for Veazie removal to begin as soon 2012;

Began extensive, cutting-edge base-line scientific monitoring, partially funded with Recovery Act through the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, and employing local university scientists, to learn, share lessons and measure the impact of the project;

Discussion Question 1

Bangor, ME

(cont.)

Prepared for fish bypass construction in Howland, including work with the town on restoration-related aspects of site redevelopment on lands adjacent to the bypass, as well as helping secure \$600,000 in Brownfields funds from U.S. Environmental Protection Agency; and

Kicked off a new \$6 million private capital campaign to leverage additional federal dollars. This will bring the private philanthropic investment in the Penobscot Project to almost \$20 million.

The Penobscot Project is demonstrating a principle crucial to conserving our nation's outdoor heritage: collaborative multi-agency, multi-stakeholder leadership can produce large-scale, lasting ecological, economic, recreational and cultural results for people and wildlife. While work remains, the Penobscot is now poised for restoration, and public-private partnerships remain crucial to every aspect of the project. Simply put, a project of this scale takes a broad partnership to be successful.

As you saw directly, "from mountains to shining sea" the Penobscot Project is truly a microcosm of America's Great Outdoors imperatives. We believe this ecosystem scale project on the Penobscot River achieves a long sought balance of environmental, economy and community needs.

We welcome your thoughts and leadership on how to ensure the Penobscot Project's success. We hope this model is the very type of project to be highlighted in the AGO report and the President's FY12 budget.

Discussion Question 1

Berkeley, CA

Employ Youth

Preserving natural lands/waters (national and local/urban)

Match youth to projects they are interested in

Youth-defined conservation

Bottom up (community) program design

Broad experiences: PR, planning, not just field work --career pathways

Outdoor industry partnerships

Co-design

Environmental education

NPS metropolitan liaisons/Youth Corps led by youth

Comprehensive collaborative (multiple partners) long-term tracking and opportunities for youth

Social media

Intensive outdoor experience in nature - inspires individuals like John Muir and David Brower; urban youth transformed by experience in backcountry; Ex. CCC backcountry; challenge, builds self-esteem; career pathway; fuels management/reduction on PG&E

Boys and Girls Club's Outdoor Camp – holistic experience that brings youth from involvement in activities rooted in their communities to the outdoor camp; peer- to-peer mentorship/communication

Discussion Question 1

Berkeley, CA

(cont.)

Have family oriented activities

Existing organizations, like corps, can set up infrastructure

Help get “kids” to parks - Ex. Yellowstone Recovery – youth corps set up spike camp, groups rotated in

National framework to take work to scale - ex. Girls on the Run, national non-profit connected to schools, funded by shoe company

Cross-sector partnerships/collaboration is really important. Outdoor industry can be a major player; Ex. REI Kids on Trails

Discussion Question 1

Bozeman, MT

To put into practice the multiple of environmental evidence on protecting our wildlife, their dispersal and migration. This needs to be a priority, especially for wildlife corridors near national parks, specifically Yellowstone in this area. An educational component is important to educate the next generation. The surface Transportation Act of 1991 adapted by Montana that allows commercial semi trucks (long haul) to go on any Mt. roads. MOOT has therefore made all roads accessible to the large semis and not all roads should carry semi trucks. Work with Montana Corridor association to agree to preserve our ecologically sensitive areas. The things that work are the Montana Dept. of Transportation and local community support.

Clean, abundant, accessible and protected water.

Organize communities to develop local strategies to protect waterways. Educate and train children on water clean and free. Employ state and federal guidelines for oversight and regulations.

Maintaining enough continuous wild land to allow ecosystems functions. Conserving soil that will allow sustainable agriculture forest and ecosystem function.

Research is required to better determine what it takes to maintain functioning ecosystems. Assume that larger continuous wild areas will maintain ecosystems functioning and facilitate purchase of lands to make continuous wild lands.

Funding for parts and balancing "mixed". Human caused destruction of our natural resources, such as global warming (climate change), uncontrolled logging, mining and its associated consequences such as the current crisis in the Gulf.

Protecting wildlife migration corridors like the Madison valley. Protecting and preserving water sources. Preserving land.

Reduce traffic speed and eliminate long-haul trucks from the Madison Valley. Implement setbacks on roads and eliminate dumping and pollution. Corridor development and get more land into conservation easements.

It is critical that outdoor activities and the facilities to provide them are available at all levels. Local governments and states have increasing use, aging infrastructure and limited staff and operations to provide these types of opportunities close to populations and with easy access.

Water and energy conservation, requiring a paradigm shift from the currently unsustainable "American way of life". Ensuring access to public land boundaries

Support grassroots efforts with federal and state money. Tough legislation to face individuals and cooperation to take appropriate action.

Discussion Question 1

Bozeman, MT

(cont.)

We are not creating any more lands, but we are supporting more people. We must preserve our diverse and unique public lands and landscapes, watersheds, wildlife, fish and bird habitats for future generations and engage young people in their protection. Uses must be appropriate not destructing public lands belonging to all Americans- whether or not they even visit them- they are out national heritage. Local people must avoid seeing these lands as theirs not ours. Politics, money and climate change.

Engaging all stakeholders in a collaborative approach resulting in solution on issues of public lands for the common good. Uses must be sustainable. Bring people together to solve problems- leave divisive rhetoric behind.

How do share access to wilderness and out doors without people feeling left out- There should be NO snowmobiles in National Parks- but there should be places for them - some with atv's on some trails ect. Balancing is the key!

To create buy in for balance- by insisting on more dialogue and more education

Climate change and building resilience into our ecosystems so they can adapt to this change. Connecting people to natural landscapes and fostering future conservation leadership. Protecting our remaining core habitats on public and private lands that do not currently have permanent protection

Local partnerships informed by the best available science. Fed govt providing funding and technical assistance to inform collaborative partnerships. Support for legislative efforts that grow from local collaborations such as SB 1470- The Forest Jobs and Recreation Act.

1. Carbon initiative- pricing 2. development guidelines 3. use less/ guidelines

Fractal landscapes form development sprawl, great demands in fewer resources - (water, air) as well as transportation routes. Threat of "no net gain "of public lands is strong in Montana, but is very shorts sided and destructive. Please protect against "no net gain" policies.

Protective laws for watersheds and lands including cluster developments and enforced air and water quality standards

Maintain large intact national areas that are interconnected to allow movement of animals and plants as the climate changes

Reconciling agenda 21 goals and maintaining private property rights. Agenda 21 specifically eliminates private property rights as well as most agricultural freedom. We cannot destroy these freedoms without destroying our way of life.

Revise our game flow to promote not destroy private properly rights. Most of the best managed lands in American are privately owned and the worst are federally owned

Discussion Question 1

Bozeman, MT

(cont.)

Fundamentally, recognized that current populations density and levels of resource consumption create pressure on ecosystems and wildlife that did not operate as strongly in the past. Consequently stronger policies for preservation of ecosystem function and species conservation are necessary.

1. strong federal policy for the preservation and expansion of protected areas and endangered species! 2. strong federal policy to internalize the environmental cost of economic activity for extractive/ pollution activities. (as with ozone, so2). 3. Strong federal promotion of the development of carbon-neutral energy.

Maintain historic western culture of agriculture producers and recreation of the past 100 years.

Back to basics, of sustainable and recreation and natural resource management

Fully fund WCF. Plus more and into working lands conservation programs like FRPP, GRP, FLP, WRP

Conservation issues in Montana are most successfully addressed by bottom-up, grass roots efforts that are based on collaboration. These are inclusive of multiple issues (forestry, weeds, wildlife, water) and the local privatization of the issues

Most land managers recognize the impact of invasive but lack of resources and energy commitment,. I reenergizes NISC give it the same emphasis as the Clinton administration did. 2. include basic funding for invasive in agencies and field units.

Lack of understanding that all the natural world is connected and we are part of this web. Showing how a philosophy of what is the common good is important not just "what's in it for me"? Implementation use of education in schools about connectedness. Get children off electronic games. understanding how to show people to understand what each does and what one state does affects all of us. (environment is not a bad word)

Keeping connection to outdoors in forefront of children. Lack of understanding of importance of natural world, everything we were given for free! We cannot create new native shows how native Americans, an ancient cultural sites are important

1. leaving natural resources , especially wildlife, of NPA Parks unimpaired for the use of enjoyment of future generations. 2. To easy, inexpensive access, for use and resulting degradation, to our public lands, by private interests at the expense of public interest . 3. dewatering rivers and streams 4. continuing decline of wildlife toward endangerment.

Support financial and with policy local watershed/ conservation groups. Support flexibility with work and school programs to encourage people to get outside. Start educating kids about restoration early -middle school, continue through college, Support these programs. Support financiers for salaries for people working on these efforts.

Discussion Question 1

Bozeman, MT

(cont.)

More trails and existing roads open to motorized vehicles. We can take turns like what was done in the 70's in the Gallatin National Forest for snowmobilers and cross country skiers. They each has designated days of the week and or weeks of the month to be on the trails and roads, and it worked.

Enforceable standards to maintain core needs and values. Financial and other assistance for coordination , communication and collaboration. Applied to a comprehensive national strategy to ensure wildlife and ecosystems can adjust to a changing climate and a national network of conservation lands sufficient to ensure all our wildlife and ecosystems will be available in abundance for future generations. Key strategies- maintain core areas such as public lands. Through short, clear, understandable and enforceable standards and through full funding for the land and water conservation fund. -Maintain wildlife and ecological connectivity including across private lands, through: strategies and programs that promote coexistence with wildlife and ecologically improved land management, including more funding for existing programs such as Forest Legacy Program, WDF- Livestock assistance program as applied to wildlife conflicts.

Education. Participating outdoor conservation programs

Future generations will judge us favorably if we are able to sustain what we have today. In the Rocky Mountains West, the best way to sustain out open spaces, forest and range land ecosystems, and wildlife habitat is to sustain our working landscapes. Working landscapes provide the buffer to public lands and the corridors between public lands.

Bottom up national development plan (including industrial and conservation components) to be the basis for all federal funding of infrastructure, subsidies, land use regulations, energy development ect. Resurrect the old 701 planning grant to combine city- county councils of government.

education, fund LWCF, work with local groups to support successful programs and efforts

An ecologically and nutritionally bereft agricultural commodity systems that could be restored to a more diverse, healthy, economical vibrant systems that would not only address the key concerns voiced by Michelle Obama but would also reach into virtually all of our sociological / economic/ political issues

Tree fight is a scientific and social experieiment that utlimateley aims to prevent the extinction of the Whitebark Pine. The purpose of Treefight is twofold: First to raise awareness of Yellowstone's most serious environmental calamity in recorded history, and second to investigate solutions into this massive ecological problem. A regionally groundbreaking effots, Treefight is using modern digital tool, social media and grassroots volunteerism to tackel an environmental problem that is rooted in climate change. Volunteers will experiece and share with the world.

Discussion Question 1

Bozeman, MT

(cont.)

Wilderness and parks, forest service and BLM land are all important to me personally and professionally. Our forests and rivers are why so many of us live and recreate in MT. Balanced use is important, but preservation can help keep our recreational opportunities pristine. Thank you for giving us this opportunity.

Thank you for the opportunity to express our thoughts. Count on us for support and leadership in helping communities organize safe access. We are the number one educators of canoe and kayak instruction and work for 2 million people who paddle every year. We work/ veterans and kids to carry on the heritage.

Thank you for the opportunity to come together with like minded individuals. I would be interested in participating in more projects that would help preserve and protect wildlife, water and lands in Madison Valley of Montana

Timber could be useful (e.g. 2 minutes max) with a bell!

Thank you President Obama more of this bottom- up approach

Thank you so much for listening, engaging all of us in a huge challenge how to maintain and enhance our outstanding system of public lands at a time of population growth and economic downturn, a time of climate change that will certainly affect many of our natural resources. Political divisiveness after stands in the way of collaborative solutions concerning our public lands. Sen. Tester's Forest Jobs and Recreation Act shows that there is a better way, Users must be regulated to provide for the common good- the best for the most in the long run. TR had it right- the recognized the diminishment of our landscapes as wildlife disappeared. We must make sure this never happens again. Inappropriate private uses- like overgrazing and industrialization- threaten biological diversity and our future. Decisions must be based on science!

Thank you reinvigorating this discussion on outdoor recreation. It is important and commendable even during this time of economic and worldwide issues to address and provide outdoor recreation. It's an important part of our heritage and provides significant health, enjoyment and understanding of our part in the greater with of life and our responsibility to understand and care for it. Fully fund the LWCF with an equal allocation to the stateside of the LWCF.

I appreciate the idea of an initiative aimed at reconnecting Americans citizens with their public lands. Make it work.

Thank you for asking citizens and groups involved in their own environments and efforts in the Americas Great Outdoors in all its forms to engage at a local level to improve our outdoors. Please inventory the many efforts so that we may work together.

Discussion Question 1

Bozeman, MT

(cont.)

Thank you for coming here, Montana holds the last examples of large intact ecosystems in America. The only place in the lower 48 states where you can find grizzly bears, lynx, wolves, sage grouse, and wild bison! Wow!! Reconnecting youth to the outdoors should be as important as music and art education in schools- all of which is disappearing. The federal government needs to invest as much into these areas as the private, non profit sector has it's time to recommit to the areas that shaped America!

Connecting people to the outdoors, especially young people as they are our future, is incredibly important. The benefits of people spending time outdoors is multifaceted. Building a respect for the environment and desiring conservation/ protection efforts, exercise in the midst of childhood obesity epidemic and enjoyment. If we could use federal funds to help youth get plugged into groups like Montana Conservation Corps (MCC) to build a hut system similar to that in New Zealand and Europe, more people could get outside and get deeper into wilderness areas. This would bring money into our state and would create jobs now in the future.

Many landscapes are degraded-much of BLM and USFS lands among them. I'd like to see a national attention to restoration- Healthy Lands Initiative has done a lot- perhaps a national designation of restoration lands. Then use science and metrics to measure progress and communicate the benefits (ecological and economic) to the public. This effort should include public- private partnership at landscape scale

Great focus on initiating and support of youth programs which get kids outside and empowered!

Encourage the development of locally driven, comprehensive water management plans at a community / watershed scale. With the development of these plans (stakeholders that much be involved include youth , local government, federal agencies, private landowners ect.) communities can receive federal or state financial incentives to institute/ implement water conservation, water quality restoration projects. Potential funding sources could include recreational equipment/ extractive industry tax... similar to hunting logger fees.

Thank you for beginning Americas Great Outdoors to Bozeman and Montana. It is a privilege for our community to participate

Youth conservation corp. is working well. Needs more funding. Work with existing groups - don't need new ones.

Youth voice is important. They suggested the greenhouse bus that is outside. Has kids as board members for the group. Strategy for success is to engage youth

Encourages NRCS to continue CRP and WRP. Utilize all WRP funds available. MT NRCS sent funds back. Fully fund CRP. Consider requiring public access on easement programs.

Discussion Question 1

Bozeman, MT

(cont.)

Trail systems around Bozeman are good. Wants to see the "complete streets" initiative implementation to make streets walkable/bikable and connected. Fund Land and Water Conservation Fund

Outdoor recreation is good for the economy. 250 billion dollars annually and 34,000 jobs in MT. Only 16% of Forest Service budget goes to recreation but results in 60% of the return. The administration needs to recognize this contribution.

Supports maintaining back country air strips. Blanket federal programs won't work - need local control

Example of an unknown, poor organization that had significant input into the Gallatin Forest Plan. Climate change is important and a concern for ice climbing. Grass roots organization - funding is important to allow them to contribute.

Supports Land and Water Conservation Fund being fully funded. Compliments the administration for supporting it. Gave examples of local and federal uses of the funds. These federal tools are just a compliment to the other state and local resources and help to leverage them. Open space and recreation are what support our local economy.

Supports reauthorization of Secure Rural School and Self Determination Act - which expires in 2 years. Decoupled from commodity payments for production on federal land.

Discussed Nature Deficit Disorder. Need to start early with kids education. Suggests reading book "Last Child in the Woods". Starting program called "land snorkeling" which focuses on slowing down, backyard habitat. Give kids time to create, invent, etc. with out a lot of adult supervision.

Take personal responsibility for kids outdoor education. Don't need federal dollars to do it. Concerned about Treasured Lands initiative locking up land in eastern MT. His kids like 4 wheelers and don't like to walk.

Promoted Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts as only national organizations that get kids out through every age group.

Water conservation is needed-more aggressive education plan-save water-low volume toilets? Watering lawns? EDUCATION!! need more aggressive conservation program, low flow toilets, smaller backyards, new technologies to use less water

Strong support of continued funding for the state & national park system Willingness from industry to support Federal government any way they can

ARRA funding, fund authorities, matching funds, tough to meet, support youth corps act of 2010, good changes, 25% cash match (big deal for non-profits), work with existing non-profits rather than creating own corps workforce

Discussion Question 1

Bozeman, MT

(cont.)

What's working ARRA- abundance of \$\$\$ benefitting our program Trying to educate agencies using cooperative agreements not contracts Benefits to all-work together

Active volunteerism, save the white bark pine, new group, taking pictures of individual trees, Facebook, new media to be used, looking for advice,

14 listening sessions around MT - riparian habitat, impacts to riparian corridors, transportation issues, snow plowing, connect rural to urban areas – riparian habitat conservation. Protect these, education , involve youth, plantings, supported by Fed. \$\$\$ – keep \$'s coming, challenges – BMP's competing and conflicting policies

protect land and sustain lifestyles, N. P. – ecological heart of the landscape, reconnect citizens to land, what's working – agreement habitat outside YNP for animals, part of broad group to provide habitat for MT bison population, working together, Protect the core NP, funding issues, YNP shortfall \$18m/yr, look at landscape not within boundaries, restore impacted landscapes, use youth, Fed bring \$'s, assistance programs, L&WCF full funding needed, collaborate!

Wanted to reiterate ideas-FS has local needs-keep roads plowed in winter for use-animal migration corridors important-get youth involved with efforts-facilitate more people to engage in activities

Make this a priority landscape to reconnect and protect remaining special places and the ecosystem, work together both on public and private lands to meet needs, Fed. Govt – encourage partnerships at local level, policies and D&S's need to be workable, Restore key and degraded habitats with partnerships-Look at broad scale initiative projects-fish & wildlife habitat restoration

What works-Public/private partnerships Accelerate conservation on the ground-working together Programs successful when done the local level Challenges-Government programs not matched well with local needs-lack of funding-NRCS program adapted to allow grazing on wetlands-

Watershed education! locals bring each other together, support needed from feds-education-get kids outside-work with curriculum-time is an issue with work, school, financial obligations, What works? Skilled facilitators to bring diverse audiences together

Civil collaboration works-appropriate uses while preserving lands, watersheds for future generations-support more folks on landscapes, need to preserve lands, No destructive uses!! Local people need to see land as "ours not theirs"

Supports wilderness, makes \$ on outdoor recreation, economics benefits to wildlife and wilderness, tourists, locals make their livings in MT as well,

Support LWCF, balance state side portion of this. Give this gives local control. Struggling to provide local communities with funds to get youth initiatives going, \$\$\$ to state parks as well and cultural centers as well.

Discussion Question 1

Bozeman, MT

(cont.)

Provides physical exercise, kids climb on these, use private funding, civic groups, see as a concept springboard across the nation-gets kids outdoors, supports full funding of LWCF

This outreach great, maintain populations of plants, animals in concert with humans, protected areas of parks are not large enough. Need community based partnerships to preserve for future, Challenges- energy development, climate change – don't compromise the environment, support scientific best science available, help funding, guidelines & regulations where necessary

Likes this initiative, encourage kids to get out is great, educated kids and general public, all people own lands

Open spaces-un-roaded spaces like the lungs-keep land open- The west lands open Thank you to the Administration for starting the listening sessions here Thanks for cancelling Bush's oil drilling in Utah No new wilderness policy needs to be revisited Lands in Utah open to ATV use & abuse & oil drilling BLM has authority to San Rafael Desert protect-do not road illegally Don't stretch authority so thin-can't enforce infractions What's working- Private groups Challenges- Group coordination Dollars stretched thin Time stretched thin Need to be showing how everything is connected vNeed to speak for fish, birds, animals, and water Like to see fear combated-change causes fear-working together is strength not weakness Vandalism-Big problem-makes her sick Teaching connectedness will help with vandalism- Last child in the Woods great book Last word- we are all connected

Won national wetlands award, wetland & riparian program working a partnership to protect large landscapes, partnerships based upon trust are the best. Find common ground, what am I willing to compromise on? Diversification of assets, 10 bird species to over 100 species, key players could go on, obstacles – trust, willingness to work with others, what's in it for them, cleaner air, water, biodiversity, common elements to all. Fed. Role - \$, expensive work to do. Need \$'s LWCF, All part of the problem all need to be part of the solution, energy, water, power, demand energy orgs help preserve what's left. Feds – flexibility is needed to be constrained by regulations & manuals. Each situation is different, CREP – 400 acres enrolled in MT, 375 acres on his property. Critical point, \$\$'s there but \$'s are being sent back to Washington, Modify programs to make it work.

Strong advocate of public ownership for hunter & angler access 2 programs have been great- Pittmann Robertson Act Dingle Act- Industries-hunters & anglers spend large amounts of money for management of wildlife & fisheries-working & working well Need to improve & expand on program-state wildlife agencies are strapped for funds-expand product or user based LAWCF funds-can't emphasize how important program is-needs to be expanded-support working landscapes & improving access

Private land conservation meets needs of wildlife, rivers, stream preservation Intersection of public/private efforts Help families who are land rich cash poor Trail programs-fewer opportunities Safe routes to schools effort-based on population-rural areas receive less funding-balance

Discussion Question 1

Bozeman, MT

(cont.)

- outdoor adventure, build partnerships, have \$'s to partner with others, reaching out to locals for partnerships, define different experiences that folks want to have.

Discussion Question 1

Charleston, SC

my focus on recreation – not to be too simplistic, but for people to reconnect to outdoors, we need access to it. I understand it's important to restrict to something. Thinks National forests are the most user friendly – they have fewest restrictions on use and still do a good job conserving resources. With Private Lands there's no avenue for them to open their lands for recreational users – too much fear of liability;

proponent of municipal and local parks; local parks are the low-hanging fruits – it's the introduction of most urban people to the outdoors – then as they get older they go to state and national parks. Municipalities have more flexibility because they're not tied to goals of fsw, etc.

Put learning stations around all the land they own' they have an old cabin so you can see how people lived in the 1800's and they have different agencies man the learning stations; lesson plans for schools; there is a liability issue for them though except they think permission forms take care of that; schools can only do one field trip a year and it's a challenge to get transportation; if we could get transportation for the kids, it would help teach the children – otherwise, they'll be taught by people that are maybe scared of the woods (ewww... snakes!). Can't get the kids to come out. They were overwhelmed that they could measure a tree. Sometimes simple logistics – coordination of the agencies to get them there.

Gullah need to connect people to their cultures. A cultural connection and history of an area are crucial to having people want to protect the area, otherwise they don't see how cultural resources and conservation and making a living can come together.

National Trust for Historic Preservation – What works is something combining historic/cultural preservation and conservation – looking at the broader picture that makes up the conservation landscape. Eating at a local business that's been there forever, or at someone's house;

Tall Timbers – game bird research facility and we have fire ecologist, too. TT is interested in managing for diversity. The overlap of interests really helps. A LO may approach us for quail, but when I go over the plan with them, they'll see there are other opportunities for income when they plant LLP; this makes them receptive to the multiple use; regular occurrence of fire brings in native plant species and wildlife community that's better suited for this area. Education is what's needed so we can get folks to see how all these elements work to create a healthy forest with multiple species (v how a forester might see things as board feet per acre).

one is a place charitable groups and others go to; another property, he charges for – please for hunting; because they pay for it, they feel responsibility – some ownership over it; people talk about how all these things should be free; I feel even if it's on public lands, you use it you pay. Then you remove the expectation that it's all for free. It costs to maintain it and do a good job of it.

American rivers. Blue ways and blue trails are a great way to connect the kids and people to the outdoors and to the cities and towns that are along the way.

Discussion Question 1

Charleston, SC

(cont.)

nationwide system of blue ways – great way to connect rural and urban areas; trails are already there – working with federal partners to develop a toolkit to help communities create their own blueways.

quality of life – trying to capture the things that people moved to area – look at wildlife values; habitat protection. People move here specifically to recreate & we're one of the only areas – it's a fine line

historical district is overlaid – zoning can allow protection of culture; for over 25 years she's done eco-tourism or cultural tourism; she calls it ecos-cultural tourism. Take the m to established buildings, etc. Where do we pull sweetgrass, where do we cast net; they have interaction with the people and don't have to go to a visitor's center; when you create people with the holistic view point, you get stewards; people are so affected they want to become stewards

forests valued like gasoline, coal; with renewed values then a lot of the small tree farmers would have incentives to keep it in trees rather than subdivide.

ecosystem services – no payback for the clean air, clean water – should be an additional funding source for those folks – we've been lucky that we've never been taxed for those amenities.

a lot of people will donate part of their land and get a tax credit

landowner workshops, meetings on weekends, evening; that's when we educate them about what easements are ;

There's a CRP program where people are paid to plant LLP – need to expand that program so it's attractive to LO's to plant LLP. Survival rates on LLP are good as loblolly or slash with containerized seedling. Give the LO's incentive to plant that tree versus another kind. LLP has as good a growth rate as loblolly on comparable soil. Thin CRP stands properly, gotta have fire – be able to burn. Quail needs it as well – that open, pine forested savannahs; help them out on the extra seedling costs, site prep , planning & offset the income they're losing & pine straw harvesting.

lo point of view RCWs love mature LLP; LLP are penalized because of the mature pine because of the RCW. If you get that there, you can't cut down the trees around the area – you've spent all that time to grow those trees and now you can't cut them and can't send their kids to school. There need to be incentives, not penalties to folks who do the LLP. They say they want to grow LLP but

Discussion Question 1

Charleston, SC

(cont.)

education – got to pay peple to be out there educating kids – teach 4, 5, and 6th graders. A cost-share prog thru FWS that match salaries of teachers and staffing the visitors center – at wildlife refuges, etc. education often isn't seen as the integral part of things and is the first thing cut. Also, when creative programs come along, they don't always match what the local prgm says. FS won't allow the land in because it says FS will always have to use the land that way, but the local prgm says because there are local tax dollars in there, they shouldn't -- Charleston County Greenbelt has a program. The piece they need has a clause that says it can revert back to the state/forest. I'm confused. \$26 million to leverage federal dollars. Definitely thinks there should be leveraging. Need to take where lessons have worked.

think about a local citizen task for ce in conjunction with this national one

The entry point for a lot of people is to introduce their children to the outdoors, conservation and outside environments. Then later in life they will visit National/State/County/Municipal Parks as they get older and have a respect for conservation practice.

donate land to use by municipality for tax credit.

Has two ways that has worked. One is a place for friends & family to enjoy – had worked for him. On another property he leases the land to hunters and since they pay to lease the land, they take care of the land and help to preserve and use conservation practices to enhance the land. They have a vested interest in the land since they pay. When the expectation is removed that everything is free, then people get the wrong idea because they tend to forget that someone is paying to provide the service.

What Works. Bring in school children and introduce them to the facility/land and history. Educate the children in conservation measures and practices. Later these will be the constituents and give support to conservation laws/regulations/practices in the future.

School children visit their land and they have placed learning station throughout the property about wildlife indigenous to the area, and an old cabin is also maintained during the tour. Different and diverse agencies come and man the stations providing education to the children as the tour and interact with the environment. The tour is set to follows the 4th grade curriculum. Classes can only take one field trip per year because of funding. We must teach children about the culture, environment, woods and what is safe. This provides a wonderful hands-on day to educate children. It is true that a picture is worth a thousand words and during the day the experiences provide many multi-sensory pictures to educate about habitat and environment. Need coordination of agencies to get the children to these events.

Forests should be evaluated the same as gas/coal, etc. The public must be educated to look at the forests as a renewal resource when other natural resources are not.

Discussion Question 1

Charleston, SC

(cont.)

Resources is the difference. Gamebird facility and fire ecologist. Goal is to manage diversity. Overlapping the interest of people helps. Landowners approaches us to increase quail population when the plan is established and reviewed, the landowner sees opportunities for income when they plant longleaf pines. This also increases the species in the wildlife community. Education is a tool and challenge to let people see how everything comes together to enhance a healthy forest.

Tax incentives work. Federal government can restore tax incentive. CRP programs work. Need to establish reenrollment for continuous CRP when CRP contracts expire to allow landowners to sign up for new contracts which will require the landowner to thin, burn and plant native grasses. Programs need to place a value on forestry land to mirror the row crop programs without a limit on it.

One pot of money to be divide - ½ cent tax deal – been great in Charleston Co. Money is divided between parks/recreation and two other agencies. Has funded these departments in the past several years for 3 counties.

Suggest landowner workshops – 3 times per year in different communities within the state/areas.

We have zoning laws locally to protect the culture and then there much be regulations to keep the environment and this ties back to protecting the culture. Eco-tourism – bio diversity – tours will visit a cultural community to established local businesses and observe how the business ties back to the culture and environment; such as sweet grass, throw shrimp nets. Connect them with people and allow them to experience the culture/environment connection through hands-on experiences. People remember when experiences make a difference in life on a given day.

Ecosystem service – no payback for the clean air, water – should be an additional funding source or a tax incentive. These things are not taxed – been lucky so far.

American Rivers - Blue ways and trails are a way to connect people and kids - to help them want to protect the waterways. When they enjoy the water this inspires them to want to protect conservation and resources.

nationwide system of blue ways. Great way to connect great outdoors to the water. Working on a tool for cities to use to utilize the blueways website. The trails and waterways are already there, need to publicize and get people to these locations

Working with partnerships on the Waaccamaw River through easements to preserve land along the river has been successful. The goal of the project is to involve children and families with the value of our natural resources on the river. Children have been able to benefit from learning conservation ethics and protecting our rivers. Children are reconnected to the outdoors by offering paddle trips and becoming engaged in identifying hardwoods as well. The value of the project is seeing a child's facial expression

Discussion Question 1

Charleston, SC

(cont.)

The Conservation Bank maintains the State's forest lands, protect and enhance significant historical and archeological sites, enhance public access for outdoor recreation and preserve uses such as hunting, fishing, and other types of outdoor recreation, and encourages cooperation and innovative partnerships among landowners, state agencies, municipalities, and non-profit organizations

NWTF has done a great job connecting state and federal agencies in restoring the turkey population as well as schools and coalition building. States have begun to understand the local culture. There has been more than 100,000 youth in the JAKES program which is dedicated to informing, educating, and involving North America's youth in the wildlife conservation and the wise stewardship of our natural resources. The success of the NWTF is "Listening" to what partners and private landowners say. Volunteers from local communities doing local fundraising to help accomplish local projects have been a successful

Clemson Extension has many youth and outdoor programs such as: H2O, hunter education classes, shooting sports, and Environmental Technicians to teach children specific outdoor activities and usually partner with local, state, and federal entities that are professionals in a specific area

The Penn Center is certified as a National Landmark Trust. The property also has worked with federal, state, and non-government agencies in order to refine and manage Longleaf Pine acres

County level funding has helped recreate and certify a national historic district as part of conservation efforts with of the Penn Center to connect local culture and get diversity into the faces working with minority landowners. It has given 10 acres of land to the county in order to build a library on the property and build walking trails. The library was built in order to help improve sustainable development among the community

stewardship contracting. Authorization set to expire in 3 years. We want to make sure that tool does not go away.

tax incentives for private land conservation. Chilling effect - enhanced benefits private tax incentives critical. Least expensive tool in the box. Low country open land trust. Leverages other funds. Greenbelt - w/ Chas. \$250/ac

partnerships between conservation agreements w/ NRCS

SCPRT LWCF funding. Public lands public access. Leverages funding that define who we are .

city of Columbia - support groups American Rivers. Blue water trails maps. Rivers are natural connections. LWCF. Greenways connecting and expanding 1st and 2nd order waterways Partnership w/ Congaree National Park

Discussion Question 1

Charleston, SC

(cont.)

Longleaf Project Nature based – early childhood education align state standards to align teaching materials. Nature based inquiry program at Univ. of SC. Getting teachers to influence natural curiosity. Capitalize Imperilled butterfly project The conservation bank – private /public partnerships. SC has a unique state/private model not seen in other states. CRP – program works great but funding is inconsistent part of the ethic .

Army Ft. Bragg – partnerships. Military, too. Funding sources. REPI – funds. DOD – WHIP and EQIP \$\$\$ Partnerships best way to get conservation work done. Focus funding where good partnerships working

Local communities – getting them involved. Ordinances developed locally. (Maine for ex) Open space/connectivity Developers (maine) had incentives to work with a local open space organization – trails, open space.

Wild scenic river.

Investment in a rural place, gives kids an incentive to stay interested. Nature trails

What is working are working forests – 2/3 of state is forested. 12.9mm acres. More forests and timber than we had in 1936. Why – because we have trees, which attract forest industry. Landowners grow trees to sell. Family forests that work and are sustainable and managed under BMP's. Once maintained, recreation opportunities follow. Private timber land around our communities. We are competing in a global mkt. PRO FORESTRY CLIMATE,, COST SHARE INCENTIVES, TAX INCENTIVES. Can continue . . . it all starts with the tree. Wood Magic, Project Learning Tree. There has to be financial incentives to continue.

Private property rights. Conservation easements – once landowners realized they could design them, pvt landowners starting trusting conservation easements. 22 land trust orgs in SC. Now landowners WANT to put easements on property. Federal programs have restrictions attached – suspicious of taking cost share \$\$ knowing there is fine print and an encumbrance may be involved. Don't over regulate private property rights.

Rx fire – reduce fuels around communities. Public needs to feel confident about use of fire on their private lands

LWCF – KEEP IT FUNDED.

WHIP

EQIP

Discussion Question 1

Charleston, SC

(cont.)

Grants

different dimension of access- visual considerations of recreational opportunities

hopes America's Great Outdoors Initiative will facilitate the ability for us to network among ourselves better; encourage more holistic thinking; get us out of our comfort box and talk more about other opportunities beyond our special interest; improve collaboration among various agencies, organizations and interested parties; enhance coordination of messages about farms, forests, and ranches, wildlife, water, and recreation and sharing right messages as appropriate at the right time; stimulate contact among people with different expertise; and capture and communicate and build upon all the great stuff that is currently going on

need to start early in order to reach kids and make them ambassadors of interest in the great outdoors; following initial dialogue need to work at building relationships and trust; made reference to the declining number of hunters and evolving recreational interest

need a conservation, recreation, reconnecting with the outdoors strategy or plan developed and prepared with interests of appropriate people considered and included

inclusiveness of everyone, especially those you wouldn't normally think of, especially in urban communities; when you exclude partners, you really undermine your efforts; building relationships is important; some kids in Jacksonville may never have seen the ocean; need for parental encouragement, children's interest, opportunity, available resources, and access to come together and everyone might be more inclined to get involved in the outdoors; we need to provide resources, for example, a free day on the bus/metro system to get people out to the woods or the beach; or find out who in the neighborhood can take others to the outdoors; made reference to restrictions related to land ownership affecting national trail connectivity because of individual parcels of land being owned by different agencies

participates in programs to teach kids about nature; recruits older persons that serve as volunteer instructors to work with the kids; activities include camping on the National Forest and trips to the South Carolina Aquarium; public/private partnerships; support of grassroots organizations ; Air Force Earth Day event, networking with many partners to reach 5th graders; "Are you smarter than a fifth grader when it comes to the environment"

interest of older people/retirees participating in outdoor and environmental education activities; has partnered with REI on outdoor programs to reach inner city youth; and worked with local Parks and other agencies

introduced daughter to hunting and fishing; need outdoor activities that really connect people to the environment; need to reach kids early, connect them to the outdoor world, and have them participate in activities that allow them to get their hands dirty in real world experiences.

Discussion Question 1

Charleston, SC

(cont.)

holding tours of the Joseph Fields Farm, three different school and a senior citizens group has toured so far, somebody has to take on continuing the tradition of farming and educate kids where agricultural products come from, tours are designed to get children involved in farm-related activities, and educate them about importance of farms and agriculture. "A Day on the Farm" is an teaching tool that could be replicated elsewhere

NWTF conducts outreach to kids, women and the disabled, in partnership with State, federal, other public agencies and membership, volunteers, private corporations and private landowners to host 1500 events touching approximately 150,000 people on an annual basis

trail events, trail maintenance and construction can be environmental and outdoor education opportunities; kids remember areas where they have worked and return to visit; need to extend beyond individual events to include the community, such as Disney Give a Day get a Day program, a great incentive to encourage connection between participants and land stewardship and conservation

spoke to South Carolina's wild and scenic rivers, and their efforts and successes related to use of trees and appropriate buffers practices and maintaining swimmable waters, and available places with access to water-related recreation and associated opportunities for outdoor activities.

promotion of land integrity through partnerships between public ownerships that provides the core of the land base, buffered by adjoining and willing private landowners and acceptance by non-landowning community, is important to successful landscape conservation efforts such as the ACE Basin, and piecing together conservation areas sufficient to provide environmental, economic and social benefits, including recreation opportunities, and large enough to facilitate land management activities designed to maintain landscape viability

South Carolina very active in partnership efforts (5th in the nation)and aggressively uses tools such as acquisitions, easements and incentives to protect conservation/recreation areas such as the ACE Basin where partnership accomplishments have far exceeded the original vision and over 200,000 acres are being conserved and open to access

Charleston County currently owns land, partners with other public lands, and has funding to acquire or provide access to land; frequently brokers land deals with land trusts and non-profit organizations; generates revenue for green space; developing business model to help raise funds to enable other actions. Park Districts are often forgotten and not on the radar but can play a prominent role

National scenic trails are a huge partnership effort in Florida; State of Florida built into State statutes liability protection if private landowners wished to provide public access across their land; Bill in Congress (HR1912 Completing America's Great Scenic Trails) aims to provide tax credit for private lands providing public access for national scenic trails; there are examples of things that can be done to help encourage or provide incentives for private landowners to work toward these goals

Discussion Question 1

Charleston, SC

(cont.)

Florida also has a policy of no net loss of hunting/recreation lands, which enables the State to create increased land-base for recreation and conservation

conservation education materials to reach kids; promoting the kids book "Longleaf"; working with businesses to support employees getting out with family members in the outdoors; working with landowners to manage and restore longleaf pine; longleaf pine systems are a great venue for outdoor education with hundreds of species, some of which are threatened or endangered, found in such systems; and technology transfer activities to increase awareness and knowledge of natural resource managers and practitioners as to the values and benefits of longleaf pine

environmental education and literacy needs to begin in Pre-K and continue and integrated with curriculum throughout the education process

outreach to kids is great but don't forget the parents; need to educate parents as well; if parents not interested it will be difficult to recruit kids

hands on events initially get kids and others involved; but once exposed it is important that follow up activities take place to retain interest; access to such opportunities may be lacking; how are they going to recreate, reconnect with nature and cultivate that interest if there is no place locally available for them to do so; access, both public (Making Public Lands Public) and private (Voluntary Public Access) initiatives need to be encouraged and expanded to enhance ongoing outreach and incentives, especially to private landowners, to make more lands accessible; spoke to each affiliation must first support the mission of their own organization, but that there are many commonalities that we can all work together on, making reference to longleaf pine restoration and the newly signed agreement between USDA, USDI, and DOD; expressed concern over the continued loss of rural lands to development

fully fund Land and Water Conservation Fund; need enhanced tax incentives for landowners who hold land for conservation purposes and enhanced programs for private donation of land and resources; mitigate conflicting government policies especially between natural resource conservation and rural development; exercise due diligence help to eliminate conflicts over different agencies policies and programs and what activities are being supported within the same areas; difficulty for federal government to accept non-federal funds; local county has one-half cent tax initiative that lead to \$65 million to benefit land acquisition for the Francis Marion National Forest; federal government needs to resolve this issue because of the great potential for use of the funds raised

regional planning efforts such as the Southeast Regional Partnership for Planning and Sustainability (SERPPASS) offers opportunities for interested entities to keep in touch and help cement holistic approaches; some of our activities can be emotional moments that will stay with people for a long time; attendees at this listening session can be advocates for conservation and should go back home and network with colleagues to elevate the ideas discussed here, change the direction of things and reconnect people to the great outdoors

Discussion Question 1

Charleston, SC

(cont.)

People inherently attracted to water; use rivers to connect with the outdoors

Saltwater paddling program along the coastline – extending up the coast from Hatteras to Virginia; need more funding and resources to maximize recreation uses – most programs about staffing

Getting teachers out to show forest management; Wood Magic – hosted at 3 places in SC (4th grade classes); talk about forestry and conservation

Reforestation; CRP programs allowed him to jack up the amount of conservation; the programs work; use resource professionals from industry and different organizations; provides for educational tours of his property to show how the conservation tools work

Driving power or jobs; economic incentives; cash flow needed to do good things

Cultural and historic preservation; historic connection to the land

Federal gov't "Blue Trails Initiative" -- connecting people to the water; need similar program for connecting people to the land

Done research on landowner; most won't make money on the land but still have a connection to it; Nat'l survey on recreation and environment showing people's use of/connection to the land has been going on since the 1960's but in jeopardy because of fundin

Land has been in his family since the 1860's; still farm it; successful strategy is that it still be profitable; allows for his family to keep it – lease to hunt, timber production, corn, cotton, wheat crops; intensively manage; CRP soil banks, EQUP progr

Connect people to the land, outdoors by mingling with the arts; hold plays/performances outdoors

Take the lessons to the classroom and teach kids/build on what they have learned outdoors

Connection of the public to outdoors – In some places, TNC lands are the only lands that folks can access if they do not live near public lands; day-to-day maintenance of these areas an issue, though

Aging stands of longleaf attract RCW's – endangered species issues; environmental laws need to be incentive based, not penalty based; Safe Harbor a good thing for RCW but Estate Taxes another deterrent; Need to have better environmental education so that

Discussion Question 1

Charleston, SC

(cont.)

Used to be that you got perpetual tax benefits for gift of 30 years conservation easement – but no more. When the gov't took that away, they deterred a lot of people.

Money given to counties by the Fed. gov't to help with infrastructure placement – no one living there but have added infrastructure – now the development follows – not most efficient use of funds. When you continue to give the money to the counties for i

Placement of infrastructure not only encourages sprawl but costs the landowners – not a good way to achieve the goal of protecting 8 million acres of LLP; In some ways, septic systems (when properly installed and maintained) are better than running water

Access to funding and technical assistance

Friends group SEWEE (Southeastern Wildlife and Environmental Education Association, partners with agencies Major focus of education spend too much time inside, parents do not take them, field trips bring them along (parents) Earth Stewards program Kids love habitats, never been to beach, field trip gets them there to appreciate 4 entities only 2 professionals rely on volunteers

Project Learning Tree-how to think not what to think Increase attentiveness, thinking skills no child left inside, pass bill

Healthy markets, capitalism works non-industrial pvt landowners, tax codes need changes, help to owners keep Land prices/hard to keep in forests Conservation Reserve Program works

zone and tax accordingly, need to keep the viable level of keeping people there Public and private, can't purchase enough for public ownership

Extend ACE basin model, good relationships among partners, then they help do each other's work

Trust important cultural landscape also part of natural landscape bring in different values, partners

Demonstration sites Management plans qualify people for programs

Talent at the ground level National Wild Turkey Federation---build there

Hike through the hardwoods, kayak the swamps

School yard habitats

Discussion Question 1

Charleston, SC

(cont.)

Western focus on invasive species, need more money here—equitable distribution of funding

Active land trusts in South Carolina very helpful

First experience feedback. It helps us to understand what people want/need in an outdoor experience

Hands on experiences. It turns young people into nature lovers. Focus on middle/high school and elementary. Get them out planting trees, etc

Not all lands are public, a lot is private, but I think staff is important. For instance, Lowcountry Open Land Trust, they go out of their way to help folks who want easements, and they provide assistance, and helping people with land planning, and we are lucky to have a resource like this

Stable rural economy, and we are seeing how to connect urban and rural environments, so that urban folks understand the importance of a stable rural economy so they grasp how important this resource is to them, and therefore will support it

Provided an overview of the South Carolina Master Naturalist program which seeks to create a corps of citizen volunteers well trained in the fundamentals of natural history, nature interpretation and the interface of humans and nature. This is a regional extension program, and it's a very successful program which can help people manage their land. Using satellite/computer tech. to promote and providing on site experience and they can learn from each other. Master naturalist program is for non-landowners to teach them history of where they live, and this is 72 hours of instruction, and they learn about natural history, and wildlife/habitat/forest/fields, and they become engaged, and will hopefully volunteer at schools, and it's very successful. Graduates of all 3 programs pay back volunteer time

Litter programs, and a positive first experience for kids in the outdoors, so they appreciate it and want to take care of it. We have education in the schools where they learn about bugs/snakes, so when they get out there they will have a better understanding of what to expect, and not be scared of the outdoors b/c it's new to them

Rivers are plentiful in SC, blackwater, piedmont, and we want to encourage people to use these rivers appropriately and safely, and have knowledge about water trails, and this is a great tool to highlight natural/cultural features. In Columbia, we take kids down Congaree River and it's a first camping experience for many kids, and the city of Columbia is unique b/c of our river system, but like many other cities, folks live within miles of navigable rivers, and don't know it, but they are a great recreational resource. Need a blueways initiative on a national level. Water trails are cheap/cost effective/b/c the resource is there, they are connectable, they bridge the gap b/t urban and rural, and in SC you paddle for two days and then paddle through a national park (Congaree National Park). By providing this experience to kids, we can create a future generation of riverkeepers

Discussion Question 1

Charleston, SC

(cont.)

We are funded by half cent sales tax, and we listen to the public and this helps them become part of the process and they feel invested in it. County gov't didn't have the expertise, so we don't purchase them, but the proceeds go to the groups who do know about land, and the partnership helps the money go further, and b/c the funds are from a public source, we had to find a balance. Easements are cheaper, and donated by landowners, but b/c this is public land, we had to find a balance b/t public and private land protection.

Low country recreation is important and unique

The issues he picked up on during this discussion on What Works are: Connecting urban and rural; Corridors are important and serve as mechanism to get folks outdoors; A centralized database is essential to show these connections b/t private/public opportunities to get folks outdoors. And environmental education is important

Comments have been awesome. Glad you are taking notes and hope it comes to something

Loblolly is also good. It secured the land/soil. LEED certification encourages importation of wood.

Closing Comments: Listening Session was valuable. It shouldn't be conservation vs. industry. Great that all agencies are working together. We have the tools we must work cooperatively. Fix capital gains tax.

Free enterprise system with capitalism- we have to provide economic incentives to grow LL Gov't incentivizes people well

Adjust the mindset that the goal of restoration is preservation. Conservation of LL (wisely use) is not the same as preservation of LL (lock it up)

Healthy markets for trees make healthy forests-provide an economic incentive for forests

NIPL's control 80+% of the wood supply in the US South. Most of them are motivated by economics/few motivated by preservation. Conservation Reserve program (CRP) has provided incentives to plant LL. LL is the preferred species of SYP for pine straw production.

Lower taxes for forest landowners (that use little or no gov't services)...Greenbelt in FL Capital gains tax rates on timber, estate taxes..keep forests with forest owners. Avoid selling forest to pay taxes.

Sustainable Forestry is largest in N. America

Discussion Question 1

Chicago, IL

National Scenic and Historic Trails implement a goal of America's Great Outdoors by bringing the outdoors to people. They provide both close-to-home and long-distance healthy recreation opportunities.

100 communities of 50,000 or more people lie along the National Scenic and Historic Trails.

The National Historic Trails provide hundreds of opportunities to experience key events of our nation's history in the places they occurred, and to learn about the people who lived them.

National Historic Trails and National Scenic Trails interpret the natural, cultural, and historic resources along them in a variety of ways, including providing locations for school and other guided field trips.

There are more than 1100 National Recreation Trails, and there is at least one in each of the 50 states. They range from less than a mile to 485 miles and cross federal, state, municipal, and private lands.

Outdoor recreation supports over 6.5 million jobs and contributes \$750 billion annually to the U.S. Economy, according to the Outdoor Industry Foundation.

The National Trails System, if completed, would implement a goal of America's Great Outdoors by establishing connective corridors to ensure adequate distribution of habitat for vulnerable wildlife... -rest of comment is cut off in PDF document-

Beginning of comment is cut off in PDF document-... Scenic Trails and 114 miles of five National Historic Trails were already located in or along the boundary of wilderness areas. Another 660 miles of yet-to-be-completed trail are projected to cross wilderness areas. The scenic and Historic Trails also connect more than 300 state parks.

The National Trails System exists through complex public/private partnerships of shared responsibility involving Federal, state, and local agencies and non-profit Trail organizations. The National Trails System is the only major system of our public heritage that is managed in this innovative and inclusive way.

A hallmark of the National Trails System is people-based stewardship of significant national natural and cultural resources. Volunteers not paid professionals often take the lead in nearly all aspects of managing the trails: resource inventorying, mapping, database construction, planning, development, interpretation, and maintenance.

In 2009 alone, 27 non-profit Trail organizations contributed a total of \$11,746,238 to the National Trails System. From 1995 through 2009, National Scenic and Historic Trail organizations have invested cumulatively \$98,971,055 in our National Trails System.

Discussion Question 1

Chicago, IL

(cont.)

National Trails volunteers are committed. In 2009, the volunteers for the National Trails organizations contributed 907,435 hours, valued in excess of \$18.6 million. Since 1995, volunteers have donated over 9 million hours, valued at over \$154 million.

In 2009, nonprofits provided \$30.5 million in volunteer labor and dollars to help sustain National Scenic and Historic Trails. For 2010, Congress appropriated \$29 million to NPS, BLM, and USFS to administrate and manage these trails.

The Supreme Court of the United States in the landmark case of *Tennessee Valley Authority v. Hill*, 437 U.S. 153 (1978), relying on the legislative history, observed that the ESA as it was finally passed, represented the most comprehensive legislation for the preservation of endangered species ever enacted by any nation. The Court stated that one would be hard pressed to find a statutory provision whose terms were any plainer.... Its very words affirmatively command all federal agencies 'to insure that actions authorized, funded, or carried out by them do not jeopardize the continued existence' of an endangered species or result in the destruction or modification of habitat of such species.... Thus, the Court stated, examination of the language, history, and structure of the [ESA] indicated beyond doubt that Congress intended endangered species to be afforded the highest of priorities.

WPC is developing an outreach program to conservation organizations, educators, and environmental specialists, and communicates freely with them. This increases the pool of volunteers to achieve common goals.

WPC is responding to national concern for improved nutrition in inner cities by developing education in horticulture, diet, and health. Note: more support is needed for this program.

Keep doing what American does better than any other nation in the world and provide new, expanded and better protected parks, wildlife refuges, monuments, rivers and trails that will benefit us all.

US EPA Clean Water funding through State EPAs (319 funds) is providing \$7,348,000 to 20 projects across the state of Illinois in 2010 and will continue to be a critical funding source in implementing GIV on the site scale. Additional directives to State EPAs from US EPA are promoting green infrastructure funding. This, and other US EPA programs such as the Water Quality Scorecard and Municipal Handbooks provide much needed guidance for local jurisdictions and the State of Illinois, Wisconsin, Indiana and Michigan.

-Beginning of comment cut off in PDF- ...natural landscape and astounding biodiversity that provide close-to-home recreation opportunities readily accessible to the public.

-Beginning of comment is cut off in PDF- ...engages at-risk, low-income, out-of-school youth ages 16-24 by helping them obtain their GED and providing on-the-job training in construction and carpentry skills, and natural area restoration activities. YCC employs a full-time staff of dedicated professionals, some of who are serving as Americorps VISTA's.

Discussion Question 1

Chicago, IL

(cont.)

The best way to save entire forests, mountain ranges or rivers is through regional planning for conservation that connects large natural areas through partnerships across all levels of government, and with land, farm and historic trusts and other nonprofit groups and private landowners.

The Chicago Metropolitan Planning Agency for Planning (CMAP) has just completed the Go To 2040 Plan. Based upon three years of research, deliberation, and public input, the plan recommends action in four themes: Livable Communities, Regional Mobility, Human Capital, and Efficient Governance. By implementing Go To 2040, our region will: emphasize support for existing communities; encourage more compact, sustainable development patterns; increase the efficiency and transparency of government through better decision making; reduce congestion by emphasizing modernization (rather than expansion) of the current transportation system; give residents more options for getting around, including transit, walking, and bicycling; improve parks and preserve open space; and reduce consumption of energy and water. Federal support and funding for Metropolitan Planning Organizations and for implementation of regional planning efforts is vital to sustainable land use planning, especially in resource rich areas. Go To 2040 Plan implementation through HUD funding is particularly important now.

Invest in public land and support local entities

Protection of public lands, and the scenic and recreational amenities they provide, supports our local economies. In total, active outdoor recreation generates over \$4 billion in revenues annually to Illinois' economy and supports 30,000 jobs. The National Survey of Fishing, Hunting and Wildlife-associated Recreation data from 2006 showed 3.7 million people in Illinois and 4.1 million people in Wisconsin participated in fishing, hunting and wildlife watching contributing \$2.3 billion in expenditures in Illinois and \$3.7 billion in Wisconsin. In the Chicago region alone the birding community generates more than \$356 million for local economies.

Technology is something you can do when you are outside. How do use screen time to promote going outdoors and then cycle back to the screen.

Outdoor Bill of Rights Activities- Provided stations for the children and parents and hoped to plant seed to help parents realize they don't need to go far- bring in fishing staff to show parents and kids what fishing is like Dealing with olde

Heard a lot of innovative things being done by park districts in Illinois and Chicago. They have been able to do these things because they have funding. Many other states they are cutting services, One of the first to be cut is parks and recreation. S

I take people on hikes to help with my psychology sessions. What a lot of people want to do is want to have fun. In this conversation, nobody is talking about having a good time. When I take kids out on a hike they have a great time. They giggle. Wha

Discussion Question 1

Chicago, IL

(cont.)

Programs that travel to schools/communities introducing outdoor activities

Clubs that get kids and parents into being outdoors, getting them to know what we could potentially lose, and showing them what the forest preserves really is.

Most enjoy- Monarch, coop for chickens and eggs and farmers market- helps community buy organic

National program run by youth in certain radius picked them up and took them out of the neighborhood. Program run by youth and organized by youth and paid for by government.

Drill team in the park. Dance team in the park. Large screen video games competitions in the park.

More programs like Eden's Place, where I love the monarch garden for butterflies, coops for raising chickens, and a farmers market to sell/buy organic food in the community.

Likes marketing idea- point out benefits of outdoor activities

Marketing is great idea- promote benefits of being outdoors. Hard facts. Give kids a good reason to go outdoors.

SCA Friends of forest preserve Get excited about the outdoors, making outdoors appeal to kids. Share stories/great experiences with kids- get anyone who has had good experiences share this so that kids can have a better attitude about outdoors.

Continue education and awareness on a local level/ supporting grassroots efforts, letting them educate. Marketing- in this country we can market anything- use the media to promote getting outdoors, and showing the benefits of being outdoors. Youth are s

Getting kids something in return; giving them life skills in return

Getting parents and families involved; need to get families engaged to get kids outdoors.

Let this message go home, and get parents and children involved. Get the message in the community. People need to start thinking out others, and not themselves. Give kids something that will be fun outside, other kids will see that there are opportunities

What people really want to do is have fun and going outside is fun. Need to propagate that idea and model that going outside is fun. Implement these programs in preschools, outdoors learning about the outdoors. Need to start being creative and move and

Discussion Question 1

Chicago, IL

(cont.)

A lot of people can't get to programs; why don't we send programs to schools/communities. Bring animals to schools and show kids what they can see if they go outdoors.

Message needs to start at home and get the parents involved. Have parents kick kids off facebook and get outdoors. Safety awareness; community needs to take heed and invest in youth and invest in future. No one will make a change if kids aren't encoura

Have organizations at a local level that can provide opportunities, and access to funds/resources. Transportation is an important issue, getting kids to places. Use media to create funds. Create something global on a marketing scheme to get funds.

Adults need to recognize that they need to use social media to get kids involved.

The outdoors is always going to be there, and we need to take the initiative to protect it, need to see what's out there, how mankind messed it up, and be out there and have fun.

Would like to change the perception of how youth view outdoors. Chicago has 68,000 acres of forest preserve, and see it as a place to recreate, want to see that perception go from recreation to preservation and conservation. Need to be in different lang

Woods and animals Where is outdoors? Springfield, IL

Trees bugs, flowers

Fresh air , spring, having fun

I'm exploring, science, wildlife and a lot of opportunity outdoors.

Forest and mountains but not really a camper person or nothing like that.

Place to get out and have fun with friends outside at the lake or wherever you are at.

Nicer environment trees, fresh air, birds chirping; going to beach, Where-Lake Mi- was fun , jet ski

Grass and at the park and basketball court. Fun and playing.

Discussion Question 1

Chicago, IL

(cont.)

Flowers nice environment for children, WHAT WAS YOUR EARLY EXPERIENCE? Girl scout camping
.WERE YOU AFRAID? Not a bug person, was distraught about it but dealt

Thinks woods, sun and sky in the springtime. Going to the park, monkey bars.

Camping was fun in a tent with a sleeping bag. No bears.

Hard work, sun, like Eden's place we are familiar with the sun; camping, canoe, hunting , hiking
biking

From working outdoors this Summer- it was hot and sweaty but fun

Learning things while working outdoors has aided her mental health

Being in the outdoors, see new things and people. How the real world might be it improves.

Loves trails very much, and loves having trails to run on. Has hugely contributed to long term
health by having places to run; burn off stress, has helped her appreciate the outdoors.

Outdoors helps keep you fit; helps women because it helps let off stress, and helps her
throughout the day better, and is very helpful

Basically everything we do at Eden's place is fun to do.

Makes me feel better because I am out of my element. Not my first choice. It improved me,
playing garden doing different stuff.

Planting stuff improves your health fruits and vegetables, walking around improves your health.

Lot of outdoor work, sweaty, nasty; arms got big cutting invasive plant species, burns calories by
working outside. Feels good to get outdoors, get exercise.

Once you start walking, you keep moving, nature pushes you

Bing in fresh air helps with the people who have asthma.

Discussion Question 1

Chicago, IL

(cont.)

Portions of foods are important. Choosing healthier alternatives gives you more energy; after eating heavy, greasy foods, your body does not feel as good. Life will kick you in the butt, and you need to think before you do something

SCA intern. Kids did not drink water the first few weeks of the internship, would eat chips, pop. Noticed that after a while, they converted to eating healthier, lighter foods, and drinking a lot more water, because your body does better when you are ac

Offers a program where she takes groups to go hiking to get through stresses; today in talking about programs, have noticed that we haven't discussed what people want to do have fun; when she is with kids on hikes, they go outside & they giggle; we aren

Left Shedd Aquarium after 17 yrs; now starting Youth Muse an organization leveraging museums, etc. to get youth involved in social change; worked with young people at Botanic Garden and Lincoln Park Zoo heard that youth got into programs because they we

Interviews with kids at Botanical Gardens and Brookfield Zoo, I heard that one of the reason that got them into programs focused on outdoors was the bad economy. They saw skill building and job development as an impetus to join these programs.

Have clubs to get kids and parents together show what we can lose from invasive species; show how fun forest preserve is

Getting parents and families involved; not just us

This is not the end initiative has Facebook page and webpage & can still make comments; submit ideas from self, parents, friends

You have experienced stuff and now you can be ambassadors and tell others what you've experienced

Works with volunteers of all ages; own experience as adults working in outdoors began with being taken to parks by parents; challenge is getting parents involved; can't separate youth from adults look at family unit & synergies one gets the other out

Service more kids with trips; just playing basketball, where cool kids want to come.

Get excited about the outdoors, making outdoors appeal to kids. Share stories/great experiences with kids- get anyone who has had good experiences share this so that kids can have a better attitude about outdoors.rves

Chicago established an Outdoor Bill of Rights for children. Also, Chicago had programs in city parks so people don't have to go too far. Can change perception by starting in local park. Then if people have a good time, they might think about going to

Discussion Question 1

Chicago, IL

(cont.)

Sierra club previously dictated how they should get kids outdoors, but then changed their tactics so that they incubate ideas at a local level. This was more beneficial to both parties. He is curious how federal government ideas will be rolled out? How wi

AGO has a wonderful website with 1,000s of ideas, 1000s of comments. University of Arkansas, invested in Army Corps of Engineers for campsites. People recover from mental and physical problems better in the outdoors/ campsites. For example Secretary of De

We can encourage private industry to build their own parks/green spaces. This promotes sustainability, work/life balance.

In CPS, some schools use physical education class as a study hall. When she was a student, they had to go camping. Make PE an advent

City high school has two empty pools that could be put to use. He tracks down trees. At their nature preserve no one fixes downed trees. He organizes volunteers to take away downed trees manually with volunteers.

Encouraging citizen stewardship is very important. Their organization is working well within national trail system.

Baby boomers have an opportunity – retirees have a lot of time and energy to devote to outdoors projects.

Many of the high schools in Wisc

Utilize “place based education.” If one is in formal education or non-formal (e.g. zoos, aquariums) you can better incorporate what is going on in local community.

She has 9,000 volunteers who go out and collect data. Helps make it more interesting by ty

Concerned that children are hearing too much scary information about the environment. All should remain developmentally appropriate when engaging children

David Sobel has done research on what is appropriate. Different levels for 0-3, 7-10, 10-12, 12+. We

Don't think you need a very big space. Their organization gives each kid a plant to plant at home. Garden is less space than the room – has 70 themed gardens. Make it fun – they have “Pizza themed” with basil, tomatoes.

When he talks about pesticide, and

Could have seniors adopt a forest or park and mentor a youth in the process.

Growing Power in Milwaukee is a great organization. Develop gardens at school. Bring the outdoors to the indoors.

Helping with Detroit urban garden. Detroit gave up their park system, and they are working to adopt parks and turn them into urban gardens w

Discussion Question 1

Chicago, IL

(cont.)

Partnerships at local level with after school programs provide outdoor experience for many people. Changing family structures with two working parents there is a need for trusted caretakers (YMCA, after school)
Supports Moving Outdoors and Nature Act legi

Learned that keeping things simple is very important. Groups go to campground property – Joliet housing authority. Kids had never had experiences with outdoors. We had activities and games planned, but kids just wanted to look at acorns and spiders. Don't

Many organizations would like to partner with school systems – make it part of the science program. Field trips are important. They could host and sponsor field trips for schools via money and time.

Its all about partnerships.

In the disadvantaged neighborhoods where my Community Greening program works, it's often not safe to be outdoors, especially for children in unstructured situations. We support situations that bring children and adults together outdoors -- community gardens do this.

As a child my public schools took us on overnight, multi-day camping trips to wilderness areas and day trips to local parks and ponds (where we observed animal life and tested water quality). These kinds of programs really help connect people to nature.

Maybe if people who have resources and the like could come to CS and other university colleges regularly to talk about how to get funding, it would help.

NOAA Community Restoration Program itself and its various regranting and other non-government organization administered partnerships have been potent factors not only in restoring coastal river system and benefiting diadromous fish passage, but in developing environmental stewards among the many volunteers involved in their programs. The impetus for community-driven, small dam and river barrier removal provided by the Open Rivers Initiative lacks only depth and significant, secure and continued funding.

Ensuring adequate stream flows that support fish and other aquatic wildlife is a prerequisite for the health of natural ecosystems. Streams and rivers are the arteries of our natural landscapes.

Discussion Question 1

Chicago, IL

(cont.)

National Fish Habitat Conservation Act (NAHA) is intended to broaden, deepen, and assure federal support for the National Fish Habitat Action Plan (NFHAP) which is the widely supported national coalition of concerned community groups, non-profit organizations, trade associations, local watershed groups, Native American tribes and state and federal agencies comprehensively and strategically addressing the continuing and alarming downward trend in the health of our nation's fish populations resulting from loss in the amount and quality of our country's most important freshwater, estuarine and marine habitats. Trout Unlimited has helped drive the introduction of the Act, the Plan and several of the regional implementation partnerships. The organization has done so because the dramatic decline in the health of the nation's fish populations over the past twenty plus years--leaving some 700 species in an imperiled state--demand urgent, landscape scale attention.

In this region, the Driftless Area Restoration Effort (DARE) partnership operates in the unglaciated areas of Minnesota, Iowa, Wisconsin and Illinois near their common borders on the Mississippi River. For the past five year, under the rubric of TUDARE, Trout Unlimited has mobilized chapters in the four state area to undertake projects with willing landowners--many of whom, as a result, grant recreational access to their properties--to remediate the wholesale sedimentation problems found in this area.

Today TUDARE--just one of the entities implementing DARE projects--annually counts its restored stream lengths in tens of miles. Trout Unlimited see similar progress and similar constituency building successes in other of the regional NFHAP implementation partnerships and considers it to be a model for intelligent, strategic recovery effort in the Twenty-first Century.

Farm Bill funding has become, especially in that legislation's 2008 iteration, a much more active engine of restorative conservation activities. Funding through the Environmental Quality Incentives Program and the Wildlife Habitat Incentive Program, for example, is now a major catalyst uniting the resources of Trout Unlimited Chapters and those of willing landowners in stream habitat restoration projects foestered by the above mentioned DARE Partnership of the National Fish Habitat Action Plan.

Keep doing what you are doing the Chicago Wilderness region

Grand Victoria Foundation launched Vital Lands Illinois -- a statewide collaboration of nonprofit conservation organizations to catalyze land conservation and to provide space for innovation and new means of public engagement. As a private founder, we have invested more than \$6.5 million in land conservation in the first year.

John Rogner described a CW Green Infrastructure Vision that includes 370,000 in the public trust. These lands provide ecological services, support species of regional and global significance. Despite those successes, natural resource managers have learned that you can't put a fence around and protect lands -- they need to be managed. Managed lands better respond to challenges presented by climate change.

Discussion Question 1

Chicago, IL

(cont.)

I am the president of a NW Indiana-based paddling association that is located in the heart of the Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore. We have started in 2008 with 50 members and grown past 300 in less than 1.5 years. Our goal has been to make Northwest Indiana a premier destination for paddling throughout the country. Our group has worked closely with the NPS INDU and the RTCA on developing water trails, paddler education (especially with youth groups), blueways, stewardship, and organizing the NW Indiana paddling community. Since forming, we have developed several community based water rails and are working on nationally designed water trails on Lake Michigan and the Little Calumet River Water Trail.

By connecting conservation lands already protected by the McHenry County Conservation District and the DNRs in both Illinois and Wisconsin, refuge lands would provide strategic landscape linkages necessary to provide wildlife migration corridors. Recognizing the agricultural heritage of the area, integrating federal programs and policies to protect agricultural land which promote local food production and implement the Federal Farm and Ranchlands protection program will be an asset to this proposal.

The Hackmatack refuge will provide educational experiences to children from underserved populations from the urban core as well as Latino populations that represent 30 to 50% of the school districts in Harvard and Woodstock. Unique collaborations with social service agencies, recreation organizations and outdoor businesses are already in place to facilitate development of curriculum, outdoor classroom resources and field trips.

Secondly, people connect with natural areas and open space through recreation. The refuge area sits at a cross roads of an expansive trail network in both states. Recreation such as hunting and fishing and wildlife viewing contributes billions of dollars in expenditures benefitting local economies. Canoeing, kayaking, bicycling, horseback riding, snowmobiling, hiking and picnicking all take place currently on protected land within the refuge study area. Raising the stature of the area to national significance through a refuge designation will increase these recreation activities benefiting the health and wellness of the participants.

Third, the potential refuge can be an economic driver to gateway communities. These communities can create a new vision to grow that integrates natural resource protection and treats it as an amenity. The refuge will help these communities to attract business and economic development while maintaining their unique environment, heritage, culture and identity.

Overall the potential Hackmatack National Wildlife Refuge is "the opportunity many of us have been waiting for" to protect important biodiversity and habitat while providing a significant protected landscape to truly address connecting people from urban, and suburban areas to nature, within an hours drive.(Hopefully also eventually by train.) The federal government can make a significant statement in support of health, education, habitat protection and helping people value and understand the importance of nature by moving forward with a designation and funding appropriation to establish the Hackmatack National Wildlife Refuge.

Discussion Question 1

Chicago, IL

(cont.)

Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) has been a potent factor in both protecting high value aquatic systems nationally and regionally and in securing places where Americans may freely reconnect with their natural heritage. In this region, for example, it has supported the protection of Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore, Picture Rocks National Lakeshore, Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore, Apostle Islands National Lakeshore, St. Croix and Lower St. Croix National Scenic Rivers, Voyageurs National Park, and Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge and Mississippi National River and Recreation Area. It has benefited a multitude of Illinois outdoor recreation facilities as well, among them Illinois Beach State Park. However, it could be a much more potent tool for protecting special places.

Wilderness and other protective designation for important federal lands has been an essential component of securing the integrity of high value aquatic ecosystems in this country.

Enactment of protective designations has been hindered and sometimes stymied by divisive battles among the users of federal land. Many have recognized that, where such controversies rage, local efforts to reach compromise plans are valuable tools to secure more designated protected areas. The effort to end Montana's twenty-seven year hiatus in new Wilderness designations through the Forest Jobs and Recreation Act is a case in point.

Roadless areas on national forests are an important component of protective designation.

Roadless areas are a documented factor in the preservation of native species. Indeed, the vast majority of remaining populations of native trout are found on public lands that have remained free from roads, including our wilderness areas, national parks, and inventoried National Forest roadless areas.

The evidence of habitat recovery resulting from Remediation Initiative projects -- often done in conjunction with volunteers reconnecting with nature in the process of providing jobs for local residents -- is widespread and incontrovertible. Native Brook Trout have benefited from improved passage and improved water quality in multiple streams in Minnesota, Wisconsin, and Michigan.

Youth education is a priority for Trout Unlimited. The organization is as cognizant of the implications for childhood health and development of the direct experience of the natural world as it is of the implications of those experiences for the development of future generation of environmental stewards. The organization understands the significance of just getting outside or of experiencing the occasional opportunity to visit, perhaps even learn something about, a more natural venue.

Discussion Question 1

Chicago, IL

(cont.)

Trout Unlimited is more oriented, however, to providing skills that just may keep youth going back to nature and in providing them with a richer appreciation of natural processes. In Illinois, Trout Unlimited members spend full days teaching fly fishing merit badge classes to a group of Boy Scouts. They sponsor Trout in the classroom projects in which students learn about the juvenile life history phases of fish and the habitat necessary to support them as they hatch and raise those fish before releasing them into the natural world. Trout Unlimited also provides older Illinois youth with the opportunity to attend a week-long camp for an intensive introduction to streams, their aquatic inhabitants, and their condition, even as those young men and women first learn, then practice fly fishing skills. The first of these activities taxes our volunteer capacity, the second taxes our budget, and the third taxes our ability to recruit.

Trout Unlimited chapters and councils around the country offer substantially the same suite of programs and other conservation and environmental groups proffer more or less similar opportunities. Those facts encourage the Illinois Council to suggest three federal agency initiatives for assistance to the grassroots effort to reconnect America's youth to their natural heritage. As Chris Wood, Trout Unlimited's President has observed, the staff of natural resource agencies constitute a tremendous repository of conservation skills.

Chicago's parks, playgrounds, lakefront park system and forest preserves provide spaces for conservation and recreation purposes, where Chicagoans exercise and play for health and fitness

We know that physical activity is an important factor in healthy children and adults. Studies have shown where there are neighborhood parks and trails in close proximity, residents increase their frequency of exercise. Conversely, the same studies show that where there are no parks, residents often go without exercise. In dense urban environments, particularly in low income neighborhoods, parks, playgrounds, greenways and trails are often the only spaces for children and adults to engage in play and fitness activities. In these low-income communities, people do not have access to nor can afford health club memberships.

Unlike many conservation partnerships around the country where federal agencies intentionally and perhaps necessarily stay behind the scenes, federal agencies have been front and center in Chicago Wilderness since its inception. This has been of great benefit to both the federal agencies and to the greater partnership. In the Chicago region, federal agencies have fulfilled several roles and these have been critical to our mutual success. These include roles as landowner, as deliverers of federal programs, and as organizational leaders.

There is great opportunity for leveraging dollars in urban centers and Chicago is no exception. Federal funds have been multiplied five-fold through Chicago Wilderness. Federal agencies have reaped important benefits in return. They have effective outlets for delivering existing programs. In return they get program focus through initiatives like Chicago Wilderness. They are also able to work across federal agencies through common initiatives. And they help develop partnership models that can be exported around the country.

Use light pollution data in studies of nature and wildlife

Discussion Question 1

Chicago, IL

(cont.)

Protect and preserve the right to starlight

Limit the use of lighting that contributes to light pollution

Protect the night sky over national parks

Increase public awareness of light pollution issues

Government and public-owned properties should not contribute to skyglow

Every community should register Star Parks with the Global Star Park Network

It's critical to start where people are when introducing new ideas and going outside can be a new idea to city dwellers. Please don't assume children growing up in Chicago's low income communities have had the same experiences you have had. Find out first what they want, need, and care about and tailor programs to move them from an indoor lifestyle to an outdoor lifestyle.

Place-based education, or the use of local community and environment as the starting point for teaching and learning give students opportunities to get engaged in problem solving in their own backyards through both formal and non-formal education, fund trips (via schools) to natural areas, integrate effective curricula and create meaningful experiences. Repeat it all again kids need multiple opportunities to conduct stewardship in order to develop a sense of ownership for a place.

What I believe is an effective strategy for people to reconnect with the environment is to get the people engaged. For example, my principal planned a surprise visit to the forest preserve. At first, nobody was doing anything but as soon as they saw other people doing it, they got engaged too.

Channeling federal funds to state through EPA, ACE, and USFWS; programs like OSLAD, trail programs and federal fines being channeled back to local projects was effective.

Building multi-use trails through natural areas, community garden plots, pre-school nature education, volunteer projects to help restore natural areas, along with grant funding on a cost-sharing basis.

Volunteer opportunities: we have community gardens. A project started in 2008. Networking with Greentech resources and volunteers have been our biggest help. Partnerships with (non-green) city/state programs have been less than inspirational or no help at all.

Discussion Question 1

Chicago, IL

(cont.)

Hands-on outdoor learning opportunities for kids and adults alike.

With 80% of our population in urban centers, city parks provide access to city citizens. Chicago parks have rich natural areas and creative programs bring people to parks to discover nature.

Leave No Child Inside Outdoor Bill of Rights--Play in the mud, camp under the stars, etc.

Family Adventure Day event based on the Bill of Rights for parents with kids under 6

Adventure Day Camp at Northerly Island--First ever nature camp in downtown Chicago

Urban Campers, Under Illinois Skies, and Nature Oasis--Teaching the basics of camping--a once in a lifetime opportunity to camp in parks

Funding small groups

What is making a difference for the biodiversity of the nation? I say people. Take the success of Chicago Wilderness, Kansas City Wilds and Houston Wilderness. These efforts work because of people. As a land manager and a regional planner with Chicago Wilderness, I speak from personal experience that several factors are issues for biodiversity in this region and they are, in no particular order: invasive species, climate change, the need to acquire more large core preserves, research of restoration efforts, and the inclusion of children and inner city residents.

Family fun outdoors events

I would like to challenge you to focus on a broader landscape level, and transition your efforts on protecting ecosystems and the processes and functions that occur within them. This strategy will help develop resiliency and make the places we care about better able to withstand climate change and other pressures we place upon them.

Here in Illinois, I would like to note two such projects where The Nature Conservancy is working with private landowners and governmental agencies at the federal, state and local levels which demonstrate our commitment to the specific recommendations I will submit in this listening session.

Our work in the Mackinaw River in central Illinois aims to frame conservation science at the watershed scale, protecting biodiversity and clean water supplies. We do this by providing extensive outreach to private landowners and promoting our science based models for improving water quality in a large agricultural landscape.

Discussion Question 1

Chicago, IL

(cont.)

The Emiquon Preserve along the Illinois River in west-central Illinois is focused on restoring floodplains to improve the health of our rivers for people and nature. Working with the Army Corps of Engineers, and the US Fish and Wildlife Service, The Nature Conservancy has been able to establish collaboration on a large-scale project as a private landowner, working tandem with federal partners.

Contribution of \$1 million to date to support Chicago Wilderness initiatives.

Primary Sponsor of the biennial Chicago Wilderness Congress, the 2008 Chicago Wilderness Benefit, and the 2009 Green Infrastructure training program and reception.

Major sponsor of The Conservation Foundation's 2009 & 2010 Beyond the Basics conference series.

Three Day of Service volunteer events have been conducted in 2009 & 2010 at a number of Chicago Wilderness member forest preserve districts and parks within the region, attracting several hundred participants, including several high school groups, to each event.

The first Internship relationship was developed with the University of Chicago Metcalf Fellowship beginning in summer 2010, with the intent to do the same with other Chicago Wilderness academic members to attract and facilitate quality internships for members.

The Corporate Council funded the establishment of the Teaching Academy to aid area high school teachers in teaching regional ecology.

Members serve on the Chicago Wilderness Congress Planning Committee to ensure the inclusion of topics of corporate interest in the November 4th Congress, for which the Council is again the primary sponsor.

Through the efforts of the new officer position, Liaison to Chicago Wilderness, members are kept up to date on activities and opportunities for participation on Chicago Wilderness committees and task forces and Council members are becoming more and more involved.

Presentations at Corporate Council meetings of topics which contribute to the conservation of biodiversity in the region, address an important need or action as stated in the Biodiversity Recovery Plan, and show innovation, member collaboration and transferability of information. Examples in 2010 are the CenterPoint Intermodel Project, Joliet, Marquette Park Greenway, Indiana Dunes, Prairie Crossing Charter School, Grayslake, and the Bartlett Ravine, Fort Sheridan.

Discussion Question 1

Chicago, IL

(cont.)

The Forest Preserve District of DuPage County was established in the spring of 1915 with a mission to "acquire and hold lands containing forests, prairies, wetlands, and associated plant communities or lands capable of being restored to such natural conditions for the purpose of protecting and preserving the flora, fauna and scenic beauty for the education, pleasure and recreation of its citizens." Today, roughly 12 percent of DuPage County's land is preserved at over 60 forest preserves, which greet more than 4 million visitors annually. The District's president, D. "Dewey" Pierotti Jr., and its Board of Commissioners continue to be guided by the belief in the preservation of open space and the availability of lands for outdoor education and recreation for the county's nearly one million residents. Many Forest Preserve District of DuPage County projects and programs receive funding in whole or in part by grants and are backed by the District's AAA bond rating and a corps of volunteers, which provides over \$2 million in in-kind services each year.

Over the course of its 95-year history, the Forest Preserve District has learned the importance of securing lands along waterways and was the first open-space organization in Illinois to implement plans to protect DuPage County's streams and rivers. Forest Preserve District acquisitions have helped to buffer and protect watersheds, which provide habitat, recreational access and flood-water management. Since the late 1980s, when the government distributed the President's Commission on the Americans Outdoors report, the Forest Preserve District has also understood the value of a well-developed trail system, establishing over 145 miles, which hundreds of thousands of visitors use annually for fitness, relaxation, social gatherings and nature observation.

The Washington Park Conservancy (WPC) involves teens and young adults in conservation and park restoration programs, which helps ensure a new generation of park stewards and environmental leaders

Through the Calumet Stewardship Initiative (CSI) network our 39 environmental, cultural, and civic organizations along the 50 or so miles of the Calumet River Watershed in Northwest Indiana and Chicago's Southeast Side, share the membership list, a hard copy newsletter printed 3 times a year, an up-to-date web site and mingle with each other at least twice a year at semi-annual meetings.

These means allow members at no cost to them to: publicize their events; become aware of events sponsored by other member organizations; collaborate with other members on projects on common interest, such as the biennial Calumet Summits, and the Association for the Wolf Lake Initiative fests among others; Participate in relevant projects beyond the CSI sphere, such as the 2009 Burnham Plan Centennial, the 2009 Dunes Bio-Blitz sponsored by National Geographic, the 2010 Chicago Wilderness Leave No Child Inside program, and the annual 10th Ward Green Summits. In addition, our Education team offers area schools a free hands-on 3rd grade through 12th grade environmental curriculum, which we hope to extend to include pre-K through college.

Collectively, environmental members provide free structured activities for volunteers at various fantastically beautiful natural and restored sites in the Calumet throughout the year. Cultural and civic members organizations preserve the historical and industrial past and plan for a sustainable future for the Calumet region.

Discussion Question 1

Chicago, IL

(cont.)

The Greencorps Chicago-Calumet program is funded through a US Forest Service grant given to the Chicago Department of Environment. My crew members and I began three months ago learning ecological restoration techniques, chainsaw operation and safety, seed collection, plant ID, regional ecology, and prescription burn training. We have been restoring sections of local forest preserves and Chicago Park District sites. I think that the work that we do is very important to us and the Calumet region, we have learned so much about the history of the community, the local prairies and wetlands.

After our 19 months training we would love to have an opportunity to work in the green field by educating the community on restoration practices and continuing to preserve our local parks, forest preserves, and wetlands. In our opinion, it is imperative that future generations are given the knowledge it takes to better their immediate environment so that they can then go on to help the environment on a national level and only with the continuing of program such as Green Corps Calumet will this be possible.

The best way to reconnect the community to conservation and recreation is by introducing it to the youth. Children and young adults are seen as naïve, but are very influential. Youth influence over youth and they also influence their family to practice environmentally friendly activities.

Also, being outdoors and enjoying nature by going on walks is a way to help people realize the everyday harm that is created from others' ignorance. Others' passion and enthusiasm helps others believe that they can also make a change for the better.

Local implementation in urban settings is a necessary 21st strategy for conservation action.

Urban settings have so many important partners, and the Chicago Wilderness alliance has shown capacity to engage and inform all partners

The majority of the U.S. population is urban; need to engage people where they are

Reinvestment in impacted sites (ex: vacant land, brownfields) as open space including parks, community gardens and urban agriculture protects

Place-based education, personal fitness, public health and local examples make nature relevant for individuals

Social pressure working through trusted agencies(churches, schools, etc.) engages constituents/participants more effectively than government agencies

Creating open space plans that incorporate the voice and role of members of the local community. Recognizing and valuing cultural diversity, incorporating history, art and local needs into park planning and implementation.

Discussion Question 1

Chicago, IL

(cont.)

Chicago Wilderness represents the best practice for regional coalitions focused on biodiversity and is being replicated across the country.

The model of an alliance of organizations working collaboratively across organizational boundaries.

Setting regional priorities for scientific research, restoration, and public outreach and engagement

Large scale land conservation, both in single sites (example: Midewin National Tallgrass Prairie) and as networks of natural areas (example: the Calumet region and proposed Hackmatack National Wildlife Refuge)

Federal recognition of Green Infrastructure concept as a conservation tool

U.S. FWS initiatives--Landscape Conservation Cooperatives (LCC) and Strategic Habitat Conservation (SHC)

U.S. EPA leadership and tools on green infrastructure such as the Water Quality Scorecard and municipal handbooks

Federal leadership in development of State Wildlife Action Plans

The Chicago Wilderness Green Infrastructure Vision (GIV) has set the stage to begin comprehensive work in our metro region

The Chicago Wilderness Sustainability Team and Green Infrastructure Task force; Chicago Wilderness funding for SWAT--Sustainable Watershed Action Team

Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning's work on its GoTo 2040 Plan, which embraces the green infrastructure concept for the area's future

Illinois EPA 319 funding for site-based best management practices

Illinois EPA funding for watershed planning

1.3 Billion in passed referenda funding the last 15 years through public self-tax for open space

Discussion Question 1

Chicago, IL

(cont.)

Dedication of the local forest preserve districts and other land-owning agencies in assembling landscapes-scale sites

Adaptive management of landscapes is a vital tool to address climate change.

U.S FWS New Initiatives--Landscape Conservation Cooperatives and Strategic Habitat Conservation as possible solutions

State Wildlife Action Plans

The Leave No Child Inside efforts of Chicago Wilderness engage youth and their caregivers in nature, which benefits children's health and fosters the next generation of caring stewards of local nature.

Identify local barriers to outdoor recreation. Focusing on local-level obstacles allows us to devise actions that meet specific needs and make an immediate difference in the lives of families

Offering programs that build up a basic level of comfort among caregivers with taking their children outside.

Enabling parents, teachers, youth ministers, and other trusted figures in the community to bring children to outdoor events in a safe environment

Providing resources that a broad range of organizations can use to raise awareness of the benefits of time spent in nature to children's healthy development. Devising marketing campaigns that target specific segments of the population can be a key strategy

Engaging youth carries the message of nature and well-being to parents and care-givers

Works closely with CAPS and Beat leaders to engage in positive loitering and the formation of walking clubs to clean up surrounding communities. Encourages communities to form a walking club to get more people outside to enjoy the outdoors.

Advocates for innovative use of technology to bring kids and teens outdoors interactively across all generations. It is possible to connect youth to outdoors through encourage integration of parks and technology to improve the health of teens and youth

Intergenerational approach needed to connect the elderly and youth demographics. Create a bond to explore the outdoors, fishing, and recreation and also teach life lessons. Also work on opportunities for team building and problem solving for youth with disabilities like ADD.

Discussion Question 1

Chicago, IL

(cont.)

Coordinates a train-the-trainer program that goes out into diverse communities to train pediatric health care providers to prescribe nature to their patients. Also provides informational brochures to patients on green spaces to enjoy in their area.

Building a Healthier Chicago

Nutrition in inner city

Partner with dr Galloway

Consider safety in underprivileged area – day to day safety is #1 priority

Large open areas/buildings to move freely in urban areas

New innovative ideas need to be promoted more to inner cities –

Working with police dept in inner cities

Opportunity to take advantage of the current schools – as well as not used land – build small parks in communities

Utilize current resources.

Supports no child left inside act – input environmental education in pre k-12 curriculum

Connect youth to nature – continue obama’s initiative

Educate the children on the benefits of outside resources to aid in their development.

Represents 70 million Americans.

Open streets for physical activity for people of all ages

Open streets- modeled off Columbia

Close streets on Sundays to get physically active – million people in Columbia

Part of Chicago culture every 5 yrs

Mix communities share network of street out in front

Invite leaders in US to DC to be a leader in open streets

Utilize community service assignments & projects at parks/forests; Agencies need to find a way to incorporate partnerships into Position Descriptions for all employees to foster volunteerism and partnerships to accomplish goals of parks & forests

Age appropriate learning 7-10 free exploration

Use more social media to reach kids. Kids are not apathetic, but are ignorant about outdoors, Need to use technology to get information and tell story. Loss of storytelling skills, use social media to make issues relevant

Don't need a big space to connect with nature. Have a forest children's garden, or theme gardens that connect kids to their environment. Connections small ideas and scale up to big picture.

Need to bring outdoors to people. Use student volunteers & partnership with girls scouts to simulate an environmental community locally, then can come to the real resource, i.e National Park/Forest. Use cell phones to take picture of resource in the outdoors

Discussion Question 1

Chicago, IL

(cont.)

Partnerships @ local level, provide funding for trusted programs like Corps Network, YMCA. New legislation moving toward outdoor education more funding with partners at state & local level. Funding- 27% increase of science scores with kids have outdoor education. More fed community come together on research

Found keep thing simple works, not so important to schedule formal activities, let them appreciate outdoors, let kids get dirty, experiential learning. Teach importance to giving back to community.

Recognized that membership & support of youth in conservation is low, try to get youth interested in conservation, exposure at young age. Developed program for schools called Project Webfoot, teachers interested, failed due to cost & funding. Conservation needs to be a part of school curriculum. Need to become partners with school systems, conservation organizations & state & Fed need to s

As a child I was exposed to the outdoors through public school athletics. Luckily for me, I could run right in my neighborhood. Safety was a major factor for that. We need to address a proximity barrier. Or even the psychological barrier of thinking that

The key to anything is knowledge and education. I was educated in healthy foods and health. They took out health classes in schools and they need need to go back. And gym class.

Build trails that are shared-use and sustainable. The tension between conservation and allowing uses. Recreation falls into the category of high use. There is a need for science to look at true impacts of recreation on our natural resources.

Physician for 40+ years, and has faced air quality issues the whole time. Everyone should be able to walk 3 miles (roundtrip) for school or work, shopping, or to a bus stop. Do not get in the car when you are going less than 3 miles. They take kids on h

mother of 4 kids, will do outdoor activities with her children at home: COFI/Power-Pac

Discussion Question 1

Chicago, IL

(cont.)

I am Director of the Illinois River Road National Scenic Byway, Designated by the Federal Highway Administration as one of seven in Illinois and one in a collection of 150 of America's Byways throughout the US. These treasured roadways, deserve...We tend to think of Byways as the offspring of the 20th century conservation effort to manage and protect National Forests and Grasslands, National Parks, National Wildlife Refuges, and BLM lands. Byways are the "doorways" to experiences, connecting people...Byways remarkably combine recreation, tourism and quality of life with an emphasis on experiencing each place for its unique intrinsic qualities. While Byways work to attract and educate visitors, Byways also strive to reach those who live in the region... We recommend: 1. A greater emphasis needs to be placed on experience than on place. Outstanding outdoor experiences can be found anywhere if the intrinsic qualities, including history and culture, are well-protected and these stories are well told. 2. Include America's Byways in the federal resource that connect Americans to the outdoorsy. These are local grassroots public and non-profit organizations that rare deeply connected to the people, local, state, and federal governmental agencies. 3. Place the emphasis on "America's Great outdoors" that not only include the treasured outdoor assets that are in federal and state ownership but also those that are in the communities where American's live and receive the most frequent daily use. 4. Much of any outdoor experience is in the journey to and from the destination. Involve the transportation, tourism and attractions sectors in the project. Encourage the road less traveled and remember= the journey is part of the destination. 5. Please keep us involved. Contact us at www.Nsbfoundation.com

Park service program. Rivers and trails conservation assistance works. This program connects with communities and smaller towns to bring park service to the people where you don't have a lot of federal public land and then educate those people about the nps lands further away but still in the area. We are attempting the L. Michigan water trail which will provide safe stopping off points for kayakers and canoeists to circumnavigte L. Michigan. This is a community driven process.

Insert environmental education into K-12 regular curriculum

The 100K + schools in the nation is the prime interface between children and the outdoors. The edible schoolyard in Berkely is the kind of activity that introdces children to the living ecosystem.

Got kids w diabetes in the parks via partnership w Kaiser, 2nd year couldn't get enough kids. Need better communication with health care providers.

Integrated their project into the smaller and medium size communities, went to city boards, had communities volunteer and construct trails, and now working to connect these communities together.

Provide leadership training. Job programs to train and introduce workers to environmental field. Diverse folks participate in this, but need funding. Foundations like to start these programs, but hard to get funding to sustain efforts.

Discussion Question 1

Chicago, IL

(cont.)

Partner and collaborate. Educate inner city parents on programs.

Outdoor living, need to teach what that means. In suburbs how can you increase trails so folks can get around without cars. To combat ecological illiteracy, need to teach with living landscapes in yards and in parks.

Utilize school networks, libraries. Have assignments, e.g. where is the closest park? Provide in multiple languages.

Education! Most kids will never see what IL looked like (the Prairie State), need to manage the land for natural areas. Teach what is special about their own locality.

With obesity rising and disposable resources shrinking, is there any consideration of financial incentives to improve health through promotion of active lifestyles? We have successfully encouraged home ownership, retirement savings, and education via incentives.

Chicago's parks, playgrounds, lakefront park system and forest preserves provide spaces where Chicagoans exercise and play for health and fitness.

We know that physical activity is an important factor in healthy children and adults. Studies have shown where there are neighborhood parks and trails in close proximity, residents increase their frequency of exercise. Conversely, the same studies show that where there are no parks, residents often go without exercise. In dense urban environments, particularly in low income neighborhoods, parks, playgrounds, greenways and trails are often the only spaces for children and adults to engage in play and fitness activities. In these low-income communities, people do not have access to nor can afford health club memberships.

Discussion Question 1

Concord, NH

Our organization has a long term interest in promoting long term sustainable forest industry in the four state region. This includes creating new markets for forests.

Highest value in forest is saw logs and having markets for these is key for keeping forests as forests.

Mr. Rohde supports and works with the Regional Wood Products Consortium that provides specialized innovation workshops and how forest owners can innovative.

Our company has been working with Sustainable Forest futures. SFF has helped us expand from a pure wholesale business to include retail business as well. With SFF's help, the retail business is "going gangbusters".

Maple syrup producer. Local eating movement is growing, how about establishing a local building movement. Establish a movement to buy local wood from local wood producers.

NH has a native lumber law. Most local mills are not even aware of this law. Local sawmills may not be aware that they can sell structural lumber directly to the retail market. BUT building codes prevent the use of non-graded lumber. USDA can help by getting building codes to accept non-graded lumber for structural purposes.

We will not run out of wood in regard to demand for biomass. We no longer have the paper mills to maintain the market for low grade mills, so Biomass is a great use for that. Remember that biomass is mostly tops and leaves. One tree produces sawlogs, then pulp wood for the larger branches and then biomass from the smaller branches and leaves. Biomass does not displace the sawlog or pulp market.

We have learned a lot about forest markets through history. Consistently, forest markets have remained consistent or, as now, seen an incredible increase in market demand, yet our forest inventories have increased.

Biomass markets are generally local. The efficiency is for the local use of biomass for combined heat and power.

Innovation and multi-jurisdictional approach will have best long term effects. We need to look at all Forest resources, including recreation, is essential. Engage the private sector in developing public policy. We need to accelerate our positive efforts - we don't have time to wait.

Market access and market development funding is essential. Can we sell wood at the highest possible price

Discussion Question 1

Concord, NH

(cont.)

In MA, we are working with temporary conservation easements. The farm and forestry viability program helps landowners write a business plan that includes temporary restrictions on the land (10-20 years) and allows the landowner the assurance that the forest will remain and allows a timber purchaser to know that the land will be available for forest management, yet it does not confer permanent easement rights. The program has been successful in MA.

NRCS established the Technical Service Providers program; many foresters tried to become certified, but it was too arduous. Subsequently, several employees of the Vt Dept of Forest and Parks became Technical Service providers. NRCS should recognize the professionalism of consulting foresters so that they can approve forest management plans without going through the arduous task of becoming Technical Service Providers. (The program is changing to reduce some of the requirements to make it somewhat easier, per Rick Ellsmore)

Important: Parents taking kids to the White Mountains, enjoys taking his kids and wants them to want to go back. Should be no barriers no barriers. AMC has huts so minimum of equipment is needed. Federal program not necessary; anything that would facilitate opportunities for kids.

Wetlands conservation, Fish & Wildlife, etc. North American waterfowl recovery. Joint ventures to implement. Has brought together state, private, and federal. Most successful in the world. We should use it as a model for other programs. Preserves habitat and connects people to it. Continue funding. Continue encouraging private landowners. (How adapt to forest concept?) Has already been adapted. Great Bay partnership. Forested land. (was a valuable partner. [submitted statement])

Northern Forest Canoe Trail and CT River Joint Commission. Headwaters subcommittee. Don't know if others are in existence. VT River conservancy establishing campsites on CT River and provide outdoor rec. Ask govt to look at existing organizations because they are working.

Board made up of fed, private, non-profit. Work with teachers to get kids outside and learning about the outdoors. Lot of great pgms (Project Learning Tree). Teachers frustrated with No Child Left Behind – teaching to the tests for fed requirements that don't fit. Would love to see federal mandates that cater to outdoor pursuits addressed.

Oldest interstate hiking trail in Northeast, older than AMC. The 21 mile trail crosses 34 privately owned properties. Two problems with our northern trail terminus: land is designated forever wild, so no cutting or improving trails. Also, MOU with USDA prohibits dogs on trail. A private land owner whose property trail crosses trains dogs and was told that's illegal. Another regulation prohibits jogging. For many years a race on the trail has been allowed once per year. But no parking available at northern terminus. Would like a half-acre for parking there. For first time, a landowner refused to let trail cross property. Had to reroute. Later comment: A unique program is Municipal Trails Act: we fund easement for existing trails and turn over to municipality.

Discussion Question 1

Concord, NH

(cont.)

Paid attention to what was attracting people to northern NE. Read that Forestry association had evidence that proximity to trees actually improved health and quality of life. Even being able to see trees from a hospital room is beneficial! From Emerson and Thoreau to our own experience, trees are important. I propose that there's a real power that has the economic capacity to drive people to do something that is healthy to them. But no one is paying attention to that benefit. That underlies all the conversations we've had today. Why they call it a natural attraction. We need to learn more about it.

No Child Left Behind is a challenge. One of our successes is bringing kids to the outdoors, but need access. We have wonderful places, but schools don't have money to visit these places – busses are obstacle in connecting to tree farmers. Field trips are the first thing taken out when budgets tight. Instead, we have to focus on school yard to learn about habitat. Hard time getting this generation of kids to think critically about things that are complex. We need to get them to look at local issues. What works and barriers go hand in hand.

Reconnecting to outdoors. We have wonderful resources in White Mountains, but we do very little to tell people about the cultural resources. We have historic roads, abandoned homesteads. Need signage to tell people what's there. Signage would be inexpensive. If people know would out they would be more likely to support.

What works. We are nature center and shelter in southwest NH, and a land trust. What works well is that we are in a mosaic of protected lands, created largely by conservation easements and land trusts, and what works is the opportunity to lead programmatic trips to protected lands. A great asset to have these places to show off. Every weekend we have hiking trips with 40-50 people going. Without the mosaic of protected land we wouldn't have this. Need to provide more incentive to landowners for conservation easement, funding to make it possible to donate (many are land rich and cash poor). Also think about ways to connect people and children to outdoors by linking to strategies such as sound health, combating obesity, promoting healthy minds. Target is health and getting people outside.

We are model of grassroots conservation groups. Help six towns talk to each other on shared issues like drinking water protection. Land trust with strong educational component. Ranch and Farmland protection program, along with 600 donors that protect farmland south of the Sandwich range. Hire grad student every summer doing research. Takes us months to get a stipend for them. Need a federal program that would allow us to pay the stipend and ensure we continue the program.

Discussion Question 1

Concord, NH

(cont.)

NH strength: collaborating well; only way to get things done. Challenge is what's happening in school system. Passage of No Child Left Inside act would greatly impact what states can do. Supports teacher professional development, also connecting schools to outdoors and supports field trips. Funding must be appropriate, and more than \$100K/state. We know the benefits of getting kids outdoors – they do better on standardized tests, problem solving, become more holistic citizens. I'm also watchful wildlife coordinator. In 2000 we had funding but those dollars have dried up, and we need a dedicated fund. Look at extension of existing programs. People need to thank their hunters and anglers because they are paying the bill. Later comment: Some places should be left wild, with no human influence. Education is critical; holistic approach needed.

I have 40 acres under conservation easement and am preparing for final 20. Foresters and extension service have been helpful. Keeping connected is to allow people on to see what is going on. But 100 acres abutting has been sub-divided for lots. When I asked for non use of fertilizer, was told OK as long as 50-foot buffer not violated. I'm concerned about what happens to landowner when changes happening around them. Trying to get people to bear the expense is hard. My son doesn't understand the land, wants me to sell to someone who does. Program to match people looking for such an opportunity with people like myself.

Speaking as parent, has two sons who played team sports, but were not interested in outdoors. One went to a college that had a state-funded outdoor program that got him on backpacking trip. It changed his life, and he majored in environmental science. Maybe federal government could force people to go outside.

NH's inclusive nature makes it special, has promoted more harmonious relationships. Work with private landowners to include motorized recreation, often maintaining roads at own expense in exchange for access. Offer donations to landowners for privilege of using land. Often there are restrictions such as prohibiting summer motorized use. Federal government can help by extending RTP (Recreational Trails Program – dollars from gas tax). The greater the amount of motorized trails, the more money received.

This [listening session]series is an example of what works. What works with our organization is recognizing that we don't have all the answers. Knowing we're right divides and creates animosity. Simple act of listening, asking someone for their own story about what's special for a piece of land is important.

Discussion Question 1

Concord, NH

(cont.)

In NH a number of state-specific programs to encourage recreation use on private lands. State has hold-harmless law which encourages landowners because it reduces their liability. If you receive payment, though, this doesn't hold true. Another encouragement of public use of private land is incentives from local property tax – more land, more money. Network of trail clubs (e.g. snowmobile clubs), self policing, helps out. Maybe a model at national level. Challenges: simple economics: if I can't afford to own land, it becomes a liability. Government should support local markets for lumber/timber over imported projects, should also support alternative energy (windmills). Expenses: vandalism, management costs, taxes. Sunsetting of estate tax break will hammer private landowners. Federal government should be an example in the management of their own lands, showing public how active management works.

A unique thing we do is stretch federal and state dollars, as well as funding a lot of volunteer programs (Fish & Game and others do this, too). Volunteer programs get the word out beyond what we can do as staff members. Challenge is how do we fund them /support them (e.g., conservation ed, Urban Forestry). Federal funding should be made available for these efforts.

Wildlife Action Plan, funded through state wildlife grants, is celebrating tenth anniversary. We need to plan for next ten years. The program has allowed our game and wildlife programs to thrive. Specific to working forests: public needs to be educated about term clearcuts, needs to understand that a 5-acre cut is important for wildlife habitat. Planning for future, we need to incorporate that notion and help people understand how important to future to habitat and wildlife in general.

Greatest NH success was establishment of the White Mountain National Forest a hundred yrs ago. It brought more people outdoors than any other single thing. New England is unique and WMNF unique, and forest need to be managed as a NE national forest, not a western forest. Federal government needs to recognize this. Multiple use sets an example (I'm also a tree farmer). Fed should continue and promote WMNF as multiple use, enhancing all aspects including recreation and economic development.

Androscoggin River has gone from industrial sewer to recreational use. It's now possible to swim in it. We take 7th and 8th graders on canoe trips, and they end up wanting to do more. This is a wonderful way to engage kids with nature.

Company manages 3 million acres in New England, New York, and Canada. Education works – get people outside. White Mountain National Forest is good example of management and research. Challenges include committing to education, especially about working forests. Also to help private landowners with the costs of keeping land open and for trail and road maintenance. Incentives, especially tax incentives for landowners to maintain working lands. Win/win situation.

An example of a program that works is the Mahoosic Initiative. Previously, land ownership was in disarray. Land trust and Chamber of Commerce used variety of tools such as forest legacy and landmark conservation fund, state and local partnerships. \$280 million invested over 12 years, most for conservation use, and 2/3s from private sources. Conservation and economic development go hand-in-hand. Federal/local/private form 3-legged stool.

Discussion Question 1

Concord, NH

(cont.)

Important to share respect for outdoors with both veteran and new campers. Explain why important to stay on trail, for example. Educate them on good practices, Leave No Trace, etc.

The poor economy has increased use of state parks; people seeking low cost, nature-based activities. Challenge is how this will play out: private landowners face new expectations from enthusiastic new users who don't want to see cutting, hear chainsaws. Need to educate recreating public on multiple use, working forests.

Bring your children outside. Some places have to be left alone. Environmental education should begin early and continue through high school. As important as 3-Rs.

Property owner who wants to pass on the land and legacy to his family, with the assistance of the government (deduction, etc.) to make an incentive to put land into conservation easement - as opposed to costing money to do so.

Incentives, investments, and partners are about where to conserve lands and whether these tools are applicable in all areas of the country or under all economic situations. Saving special places is not the whole solution to the question of land uses, and the solutions vary from region to region. Market incentives (by policy) are more important thru incentivizing markets - thereby allowing private monies and landowners to work towards this goal. Government funding is not the total answer, leveraging private interests will provide a lot of motivation and results. Easements are not for everywhere, and there is not enough \$\$ to purchase all protections that are needed. Economic incentives and market forces would create the same results for working forests.... The dis-incentivising of private working forests through rules and regulations (of these wood markets in general and the bio-mass market particularly, etc.) would also prevent natural market driven forces from maintaining these working forests.

We have compact lands with multiple ownership in N. E. With 400 land conservation land trusts - each doing their own projects one at a time - is inefficient. A new initiative is proposed, where by in western Mass.... Combining 72 individual projects was combined into one project purchase (needing about 21 Million \$). But the efficiency, synergy and collaboration approach has huge benefits through combining knowledge's, economy of scale, and individual landowners being part of a larger effort. Another ongoing effort combines 120 land trusts and 400 purchases - but requires a large amount of funding and (hopefully) federal assistance to complete the process. Aggregation and bundling saves money on administration. People like that they are part of a large effort, part of a large conservation effort.

Carbon releases from 57 million acres of pvt. Land if turned into developments.... Would kill any change in climate change that other efforts might accomplish. Incentives are needed to maintain these private lands in forest status. They have to be economically feasible for this to occur. The future needs to be conservation - not fragmentation. Reducing development, and the subsequent reduction in carbon sequestration will be detrimental to the environment. Additionally, increasing incentives for wood product heat sources versus continued increases in oil heat would benefit the climate concern scenario as well. Tax incentives for developing markets and providing raw materials for wood markets will be key.

Discussion Question 1

Concord, NH

(cont.)

The federal government can establish new programs or adapt existing programs to aid in the development of wood product energy uses and market place incentives to provide for private forest land management and the continuing development of these alternate energy sources and uses. Wood energy programs need federal funding to develop.

Community Forests - play the same role of providing resources like non-industrial landowners provide where stewardship is a large part of their goal but they do not have the same access to Federal incentive programs. Doing good conservation - resulting in public good - would be more likely if they could tap into some of this federal funding.

The need for more Money and the ability to consolidate purchases of the many smaller parcels at the local level so small towns with limited resources can compete with larger entities and parcels.

New Englanders put in huge effort collaborating during Forest Plan Revision and would like to see the Plan Implementation funded. Funding the WMNF Plan is extremely important to N.E. timber industry and workers and to the larger economy of NH and ME.

LEADS, tree farm, federal forest programs, SFI certifications are resource tools to encourage sound management that could be incorporated into the 'easement'. These are good programs that should be extended and improved

Please incorporate into the final report the " New England Governors conservation report as a useful template or blueprint for the current administration to use.

Tax Credits for Conservation - not just deduction, like the Colorado and Virginia model.

Forest Stewardship Program's work, Tree Farm Programs however need more support. Connecting small tree farm owners with professionals is critical. These programs help small family landowners and are critical to keeping this type of ownership. And States need flexibility from regulations imposed by Federal Regulations on how monies can be spent on Conservation and Legacy Programs.

Link resource professionals to landowners - State and Private Forestry and funding State Forest Resources, so with federal assistance, States and professionals can continue to help implement conservation on the ground and these professionals can often be most knowledgeable with local on the ground conditions and what works.

simplify Land Trust Regulations to allow land trusts to hold easements under federal programs

Make the tax incentives permanent. Fund outreach to landowners who might be considering donating their land for conservation easement is needed.

Discussion Question 1

Concord, NH

(cont.)

Market the fact that many benefits come from pvt. Land owners who allow public access.

Land and water conservation fund has not been funded well yet but needs to be - to bring people together for mutual conservation benefits and economic benefits. Funding for Community and Town Forests, and open space - to be conserved permanently but managed and owned locally, and which provide a working forest with recreation and wildlife benefits - is so valuable (see Errol NH town forest story).

Building markets in this region for combining wood use & wood energy (pellets, wood fired boilers, etc) through energy programs that utilize the raw materials and industry facilities available locally, mostly on private ownership, and thereby develop this regional economic opportunity.

NRCS should focus more on the educational resources that private land can provide for schools, other landowners etc.

Wood heat for New England (including pellet stoves) is very locally efficient. Additional homeowner tax incentives for purchase & installation would benefit Climate Change rather than continued oil burning dependant on imported oil.

Government support (tax breaks etc.) are the only incentive that allows continued ownership and forest retention, and they also provide public and wildlife benefits.. This landowner would not have been able to retain (the land) if it had not been for govt assistance and tax incentives.

The states and pvt. Landowners who provide these benefits to all Americans - could use more help to keep these lands open to public and forested.

Fully funded forest Legacy programs are critical

Collaboration is critical and Land and Conservation and interplay with collaborators is so important. Like the Northern ME and NH initiatives that have conserved so much land,,,, and prioritized lands to be conserved, etc... The main point is that Collaborative, Incentive, and funding is needed to continue accomplishing needed conservation goals. Fully funding LWC is needed.

AT - through the Mahoosuc's, with Dillon CC to the north. But in 30 - 40 years it will be forested again (Town of Success).

1. establish conservation priorities in the NE region with connectivity across these separate land areas.

Keys: Collaboration, incentives, funding

Discussion Question 1

Concord, NH

(cont.)

Priorities need to be evaluated by local and regional groups - collaboratively - and funding sought in a consolidated effort.

Recognized ecosystem services that forested lands and conservation easements provide to the greater public. Regarding Biomass - start with science based lessons.

45 schools in Vermont are now heating with wood chips, offsetting more than 1 million gal of heating oil. They are leveraging more to do the same.

Mud season is longer now and therefore the timber operating season is shorter. They have helped operators convert from old-style harvesting equipment to balloon-tire equipment, which can operate for a longer season and leave less residual stand damage to a forest. There should be incentives for contractors to convert to this type of equipment, which also uses 50% less fuel than old-style equipment.

It has become increasingly apparent that deforestation is big contribution to greenhouse gases and climate change. We can play a critical role in mitigating climate change by protecting forests and getting people out in nature/forest. It needs to be a combination of education and awareness—if you know something you're more likely to care and more likely to protect it.

Their area became an Americorps site for land conservation, protecting 24,000 acres. 7 regional land trusts came together (240 towns) with 20 staff to do conservation and stewardship. There is more of an economy of scale with a larger organization of partners. They want to incorporate strategies in selecting projects to help mitigate/adapt to climate change, but are having difficulty finding direction. There should be more connections between local/regional land trusts and the feds, partnering at the federal level to implement policies. We should also be talking more to the public about how what we do in our daily lives affects climate change.

He expressed a concern about the stated purpose of this meeting. Obama said that ideas from these meetings will help better protect our natural landscape and history in the future. People here have not used "natural landscape", only working landscape. Why are we avoiding using this term? He does not log his land, and is allowing it to return it to "natural landscape". He don't sell woodchips, etc. So we should remove the "working forest" from this discussion—it does not belong in a "natural landscape."

They partnered with Trout Unlimited for climate change and protection of a valued resource—the eastern brook trout. TU figured out where conservation priority areas for the trout are—TPL works to protect the lands and TU works to protect/restore the habitat. They involve other organizations, too, all brought together by the desire to protect this species. Another idea—protect carbon values and create economic incentives for private landowners. For example—the Forest Carbon Incentives Act—Senators Shaheen (NH) and Snowe (ME)—this is an opportunity to create these incentives.

Forests in NH are young in geologic time—we should protect them. Pathways for species migration can successfully build and conserve the landscape.

Discussion Question 1

Concord, NH

(cont.)

Critical to get young people into outdoors; he takes his college students out every week into the forest. Discussed in the morning was the concept of getting carbon credit for using sustainable forestry rather than only for leaving forests alone. Can landowners put their land under conservation easement (with no logging permitted) and also be eligible for carbon credits? This would make it more attractive for folks to get conservation easements.

Concern that there is confusion with the American public about biomass energy and whether it makes sense. There is a public education need. There is a way to do biomass responsibly and well, the government should think strategically about how it is incentivized.

The general public is unaware of the role that forests play in climate change—we need to get the information out. People have heard about climate change but don't know what to do about it; they don't understand that keeping land in forest is key in mitigating climate change. We need to communicate without scaring people away and share that the land conservation we're already doing is making a difference.

During White Mountain NF plan revision in 2004/5, he asked if anyone was considering the effects of climate change on forest composition projections in 100 years? The answer was: well, we don't think that is important. He is happy that we are now recognizing that it is a problem and thanks for thinking about it.

SPNHF believes that sustainable forestry is responsible forest management. A lot of good things have been done in NH in the last 100 years. Our forests take up 50% of the man-made emissions that we generate. You can have healthy forests, healthy economy, and have a net gain on the carbon front. Wood is not a silver bullet, but it fills a role. It may not fill the same role in 100 years as it does today, but it plays a role. Government policies need to pay more attention to what is the most efficient/appropriate use for wood, because there is evidence that what we're doing now is not the most efficient.

FS shows real desire to put all the pieces of the puzzle together—"all lands" model is mission critical for success, especially in New England. Updating to federal grant criteria is taking climate change into account, including LWCF. Any program that isn't already updating their program should be doing so. Forest Legacy program, etc. If it still feels like there is a missing tool it would be that we need forest and agriculture carbon incentives programs. This would maximize carbon benefits on the landscape.

Feels that state and private forestry is an important role that the Forest Service has filled—encourage this program. Within that program, Forest Stewardship Program helps landowners understand their forest, develop objectives and sustainably manage it. This is an appropriate role for the federal government and encourages continuation of that role.

The national partnerships, e.g., Boy Scouts of America sent teams to National Parks for service projects. Would like to see that national partnership model more at the local level. E.g., scouting program to bring NH kids into the WMNF and engage them in their local environment.

Discussion Question 1

Concord, NH

(cont.)

There is new legislation allows groups to engage in service learning projects locally.

A state bank could solve some of these problems.

There is diversity of opinion; there are multiple ideas of the best use of a particular parcel of land. Encourage the President and Fed. initiatives to include the word "sustainability." E.g., don't just talk about growth and jobs for the sake of jobs; need to incorporate "sustainability."

Outdoors is where children learn creativity, risk taking, and responsibility and the those are characteristics that make them strong.

A vision for the future: every citizen has a conservation ethic.

Would remind the president that everything is connected: making environmental stewards of our children-it gets them outside and in touch with their local communities, and increases their health.

Support volunteerism!

Need to make volunteering cool! Volunteers also do that because they are passionate about it. They get paid by the change they make in the world.

Not just about being cool, but also about being practical. It is important to value AmeriCorps, SCA and other programs. They get money for college for this program and that also makes it valuable for them.

Make the SCA and other programs more accessible and do even more recruiting across all communities!

Thanks for this initial step; the dialog on America's Great Outdoors!

Biochar is important and comes from forests.

We need to increase the biological literacy of citizens. Suggest we need to find a way to make parks "destination points" and so individuals can watch them change over time like working forests do, including signage built locally from local materials.

Discussion Question 1

Concord, NH

(cont.)

It is important to educate the voters so educated decisions related to the environment can be made. First we need to protect the land and then build educational trails on protected lands and engage teachers to write a trail guide. Then take the trail guide to the school and encourage kids to share that with their parents. The input from that small effort is what we are all about here: reaching out to the young people that are our future, but we need the connected strings on this violin to make that work (need the land, connect the kids, etc.).

SCA is actively getting youth out, high school and college age, and they realize they can be part of something larger than themselves, especially during the recession when sometimes they can feel powerless. SCA has partnered with AmeriCorps. Liked Gordon's points--it is a matter of connection across the age ranges.

Being in a place like VT, is quite a contrast from DC which is so culturally diverse. At the Marsh-Billings Rockefeller site, they have a 200 year land ethic history and that is part of the mission. There are examples of Hispanics preserving land in the SW or native Americans in other places. These stories often get left out-it is important to keep these stories alive. They recently had a program with urban youth brought to the park to camp and participate in a program (cleaning trails, etc.). Felt this program was a success and really brought a hands on and close connection to the natural environment. How do you replicate these programs and secure the funding to keep them up?

Her group is going into schools in the Manchester, NH area which is a large refugee area. They teach environmental education and engage the kids in a service learning project in the community. E.g., mural on earth stewardship, community gardens.

It is important to be place-based and experiential and get students to participate in a program with environmental themes. It connects kids to their local environment in a meaningful, personal way.

These experiences and place-based education is critical, but is important to not have it be a single time in their school career. It would be better for it to be integrated throughout the students education. E.g., extend through the High School years (from Elementary up throughout H.S.).

Environmental literacy is development and sequential. We often let the bottom numbers dictate what is taught because the teachers may not have passion or education to teach science. "No Child Left Behind" has been detrimental-it has squeezed out science and made it difficult to get kids out for hands on experiences. How do we scale the Manchester SCA program out to other school districts? That works when there is a really interested teacher or an administrator that really understands the importance. We can do huge things to change the experience for kids.

There is a partnership in NH between the state, USFS (WMNF and S&PF), and others that provides a teacher's institute focused on environmental education. They do intensive professional development with teachers and follow-up over with additional workshops. The Federal Government role is to pass the "no child left inside act." If we are serious about this, we need to pony up the funds to support this.

Discussion Question 1

Concord, NH

(cont.)

Finding that it works better to build in short field trips to teach more hands on.

We have a generation of parents that are afraid to take their kids out. Some teachers are just as bad. Need to expose the kids early in school--so they go home and ask their parents to take them out.

Going outside to do something free with your family can be attractive, esp., while we are in a recession.

We need good program evaluation. E.g., they worked with one elementary school for 3 years and they evaluated throughout the effort so they could clearly show how it was successful-for replicating elsewhere. We have a growing base of good evidence of the positive value of environmental. education.

As a parent, there is such pressure to enroll children in structured programs and pressure to do the best by our kids. Richard Lourve's book was monumental in allowing kids to have free time. Another good book is: "The Blessing of a Skinned Knee." Scheduling a safe outside experience for families has to be a first step to allow them to be comfortable to provide kids these experiences (unscheduled) in the future.

In their school system they have a program that involves parents in helping with an environmental education program. Often the parents learn a lot and enjoy it just as much as the kids. In this program the parent chaperones are paid a stipend for helping out.

Great Parks Pursuit-is a state parks program (there is one in CT and NH), whereby families participate by visiting parks around the state. They get points for each park they visit. There are some scheduled events and they also go on their own. They sign up for free and get to explore the parks and can win prizes (there is a celebration at the end of the summer). It would be great to see this in other parts of the country.

Looking at Scout clubs, citizen science clubs, etc.. That can provide connection between historic resources and conservation groups.

In the Epsom town forest, they discovered a number of old sites, e.g., mill house foundation, etc.. Preservation and conservation can go hand in hand in conservation work.

He gave seminars on White Pine and was called to help with planting density for a program. It was successful-the trees are growing a great rate. If they do the right thing, they should be able to generate \$100,000 per acre every year, but they may not be able to keep it up due to lack of funding.

It would be neat if we could find a way to remove the danger of people being responsible for their selves and taking a look at wildlife that moves and trees (that don't move).

Discussion Question 1

Concord, NH

(cont.)

School administration be aware of outdoor opportunities close by and connect that to the required school physical education program.

Don't forget the key to success with young people is their parents and that is a gap that is often left. Parents are often not invited in to participate with the kids. Need to invite parents more. He gave an example of a program he did a trail walk with the kids and invited parents. When is was one of the kid's birthday, that is what she wanted to do with her friends for her birthday (go back up and walk the trail).

In addition to parents, there are other important adults too, such as scout leaders.

Idea of modeling in addition to mentoring. E.g., tremendous example is Michelle Obama's Move It initiative and organic garden. Those are key models that can go back and be replicated in our communities. When kids have experiences with hunting, hiking, fishing, etc., they build strong environmental ethics.

Programs like the Great park Pursuit also have great value. But looking at families, it is also important to have programs that are extracurricular and are not parent let. Kids need to be getting muddy at much younger ages!

SCA has put together some programs with cities-they get kids to participate in programs weekly or bi-weekly and by the end of the program they go out on a week or 2-week trip. Allows them to safely experience the hands-on and experiential learning. It also positions them well for additional opportunities.

Idea of Conservation Leaders is important. For example, how could they take the Environmental Teacher's Institute model they are using in NH to other places to help increase the collaboration.

They emphasized getting kids to do something with their own hands, by their design, for the community. That is so important. They put themselves into the project and can see the results of their efforts over time. It sticks with the kids.

Concord Public School system students choose outside activity (ski, ice skating etc) one afternoon per week.

Walk Talks – several nonprofits lead a walk into the woods (flowers, soils, etc)

Dark Sky initiative in Waterville Valley – surrounded by NF, star gazing in the town square weekly

Health Initiative (community supported agricultures) – some health insurance gives you money. You pay a flat rate then you receive a weekly share of the farmers produce. Several in NH, the Rey Center is one. Includes community gardens.

Discussion Question 1

Concord, NH

(cont.)

Cooperative Extension Service – great programs.

Incentive to get adults outdoors is to give health insurance break – may be hard to monitor

Statewide Archeology program (Scrape program) – survey, catalog historic sites.

Project Archeology for teachers – train the trainer program. (Information on website).

History Underfoot - interesting too all

Using websites for marketing & word of mouth to get folks involved.

Link to other programs/agencies

Hands on programs

LCHiP matching grant program

Land & Water Fund – good for economy, leverages \$,

Discussion Question 1

Concord, NH

(cont.)

Although New Hampshire does not lie within a Priority one region for DU. It is non-the-less important in achieving overall vision and mission for waterfowl, especially for the American black duck, a species of special concern under the Atlantic Coast Joint Venture (JV) of the NAWMP. The JV is a partnership of federal, regional and state agencies and organizations, including DU, focused on the habitat for native bird species in the Atlantic Flyway of the US from Maine to Puerto Rico. NAWCA was enacted by Congress to provide federal match dollars to accomplish habitat goals established under the NAWMP and implemented through the JV. The current JV approach for black ducks is to protect large blocks of relatively undisturbed breeding habitat in the Northeastern U.S. forests. Breeding black ducks are linked to forests in general and beavers in particular and growth in beaver populations throughout northeastern forests has provided an increase in the quantity and quality of breeding habitat for black ducks. Habitat conservation for black ducks and numerous other species of fish and wildlife in NH is experiencing tremendous success through the assistance of JV partners and NAWCA grant funding. Since 1990, sixteen NAWCA grants totaling \$7.9 million have been approved to protect over 125,700 acres of critical wetlands and associated uplands in NH. These grants have been matched by nearly \$27 million in non-federal funds. Many of these properties are now under the management of state and federal agencies and conservation organizations like the Society for the Protection of NH Forests. The Nature Conservancy and others. In all cases, every effort is made to make these properties available to the public for a variety of recreational and educational uses. The NAWMP, and the JV model for implementation, is recognized as one of the most successful conservation initiatives ever undertaken. The American Great Outdoors Initiative should explore ways to replicate this model when and wherever it is appropriate.

Discussion Question 1

Concord, NH

(cont.)

DU was founded 73 years ago by a handful of conservation-minded businessmen/sportsmen concerned about the decline of duck populations and habitat on the prairies during the dust bowl days of the '30's, Today we have over 2,000 members here in New Hampshire, 15,000 in New England and 1 million supporters nationwide. We appreciate this opportunity to listen in and respond to the future of conservation in America and the need to reconnect people to the out-of-doors. I'm pleased to say that an overwhelming number of DU supporters are outdoors enthusiasts and participate on a regular basis in activities that bring them close to nature. Whether it be hunting waterfowl over an early morning marsh, hiking a mountain trail or simply enjoying a peaceful moment in a natural setting, they understand and support with their time and money DU's important habitat work and the relationship between conservation and the added value it brings to their lives. It is that kind of connectivity and passion for all things wild that needs to be generated in greater numbers of people, young and old alike, if we hope to kindle the political and financial support it will take to conserve enough of our natural heritage for the use and enjoyment of generations to come. Those who enjoy sport hunting and fishing know this first hand and have always been at the forefront of conservation efforts in this country and thanks to their financial contributions and strong advocacy efforts, we all have more places to visit and enjoy in America's great outdoors. In addition, sport hunting and fishing generate billions of dollars of revenue across the nation and support hundreds of thousands of jobs in related industries. State, federal and private conservation organizations need to do all they can to promote and support hunting and fishing and other outdoor recreation opportunities on lands that they control and manage.

Discussion Question 1

Concord, NH

(cont.)

DU's conservation programs are science-based meaning we use the latest scientific information learned from research, coupled with cutting edge technology, such as geographic information systems to map, plan, develop and deliver our habitat work where it will be most effective for the resource. Although our work is accomplished one project at a time, it is done in the broader context of vast landscapes necessary to sustain waterfowl through their annual life cycle of breeding, migration and wintering. For example, the prairie pothole region of the United States and Canada remain our number one priority for conservation in North America. It is where 80% of all waterfowl are produced.

Example:

The North American Wild Turkey Management Plan (NA WTMP) is designed to identify wild turkey habitat and potential habitat projects throughout North America, by State and on a regional basis. It incorporates information such as; statewide comprehensive wildlife plans, statewide forestry assessments, and the ability to import other information from cooperating agencies to use in identifying focus areas. The NA WTMP may be sorted by state or by bird conservation region to help integrate actions with other organizations. Once state strategies are in place it saves our members who serve on their respective state board of directors goals and tasks that they may put the state Hunting Heritage Super Fund monies toward fulfilling. The NWTF is a recognized leader and valued partner in efforts to retain working lands and protect open space/green fields. The NWTF is not just about wild turkey habitat, but conserving and maintaining the ecosystems throughout the United States. Sustainable ecosystems lead to stable communities with good jobs and stable outdoor recreation opportunities for current and future residents.

Examples include:

Managing thirteen separate and distinct conservation programs and initiatives providing seed, seedlings, technology transfer and technical assistance to NWTF members and corporate and private landowners involved in habitat enhancement and management projects;

Engaging in habitat projects on 35 National Forests; Partnership results---over 2,000 restoration projects exceeding \$26 million:

Promoting landscape level conservation projects such as riparian restoration throughout the Great Plains and longleaf pine restoration in the Southeast (over 10,000 acres planted).

Discussion Question 1

Concord, NH

(cont.)

Examples of some of the most successful collaborative efforts using the NAWCA/JV model in New Hampshire include:

The Great Bay Resource Protection Partnership: over 8,000 acres protected; rich and diverse habitats; key waterfowl wintering area and migratory bird stopover; state, federal and private partners leveraging a combined total of private public money in excess of \$60 million.

Connecticut River Watershed Project; Largest ever public/private land conservation project in NH- resulted in the creation of a 25,000 acre Natural Area surrounded by 146,400 acres of working forest protected through conservation easement.

Quabbin-to-Cardigan Conservation Initiative; Encompassing nearly 2 million acres. This region is one of the largest remaining areas of intact, interconnected ecologically significant forest in central New England. Nearly 7,000 acres were recently protected using LWCF and Forest Legacy Program and partner funds.

Families Afield

- Getting more youth involved in outdoor recreation remains a key component of the mission of the NWTF. Through the Families Afield Initiative, the NWTF and its partners are taking action that allows more youth the chance to carry on America's time honored hunting traditions. To date, Families Afield has helped bring legislative change to 30 States resulting in 418,000 new hunters.

Good afternoon and thank you for the opportunity to participate in this listening session and to offer a few comments relative to the President's Great American Outdoor initiative. My name is _____ Whittemore and I am here representing Ducks Unlimited. DU is recognized as the world's leading non-profit wetlands and waterfowl conservation organization dedicated to the protection, enhancement and management of wetlands and associated upland habitats necessary to sustain a healthy continental population of waterfowl. What we do for waterfowl also benefits many other fish, wildlife and plant species and people. Wetlands provide numerous ecological services including the purification and recharge of our drinking water, protection of property from storm and flood damage and places for people to go to recreate and enjoy these wonderfully rich and diverse environments.

NWTF programs and activities to reverse the current trends and introduce people of all ages and genders to the outdoors: Inadequate access to land is often cited as a primary reason hunters and anglers stop participating in these traditional sports. Since 1987, the More Places to Hunt Initiative of the NWTF has worked to reverse this trend. To date, the NWTF has spent nearly \$10 million helping to obtain and retain more than 428,000 acres available for hunting and fishing.

Discussion Question 1

Concord, NH

(cont.)

The NWTF hosts approximately 1500 outreach events each year.

Juniors Acquiring Knowledge, Ethics and Sportsmanship (JAKES)

- The NWTF program that introduces young people to conservation and the hunting tradition. Kids under 12 participate in JAKES events; teens 13 to 17 participate in Xtreme JAKES events, and learn about firearms safety, archery, game calling, hunting and conservation in a fun, hands-on way.

Women in the Outdoors (WITO)

- The NWTF program designed to help women over the age of 14 to learn about conservation, hunting and the outdoors through fun activities taught by expert instructors that can be shared with their families, such as archery, outdoor cooking, camping, hunting, hiking, and gardening for wildlife. Wheelin' Sportsmen

- The NWTF program that provides people with disabilities opportunity to hunt, fish, shoot, and participate in other outdoor experiences and enrich their lives in a manner that might otherwise not happen.

Education

_ Since 1999, the NWTF has distributed 30,000 Wild About Turkey environmental education boxes to classrooms and other community educational settings. In some cases, it is the first positive association young impressionable minds have with hunting and of hunters.

Discussion Question 1

Concord, NH

(cont.)

Over our history, DU has raised in excess of \$1 billion dollars and conserved over 12 million acres of wetland and associated habitat in North America. However, this could have never been accomplished without the assistance of numerous state, federal and private partners. Building upon the successful aspects of federal funding programs like the North American Wetland Conservation Act (NAWCA), Partners for Wildlife (PFW), Forest Legacy Program (FLP), the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) and conservation programs of the farm bill like the Wetland Reserve Program (WRP), Conservation Reserve Program (CRP), Wildlife Habitat Incentive Program (WHIP), and the Grassland Reserve Program (GRP), America's Great Outdoors Initiative has the potential to dramatically improve the protection, restoration and enhancement of our nation's natural resources for future generations. These federal programs provide the necessary government incentive to attract private investment and participation that has been key in helping DU and others achieve significant conservation objectives over the past several decades, but much more needs to be done and we encourage this Administration and Congress to continue to support and fully fund these, and other important federal initiatives.

The National Wild Turkey Federation has since our inception been dedicated to the conservation of not only North America's valuable natural resources but also our hunting traditions. The motto of the NWTF, conserve, hunt, and share reflects our commitment to the conservation of the wildlife population of North America, preserving our hunting traditions and sharing our enthusiasm of the outdoors with those willing to listen.

Since 1973, the NWTF has helped to restore wild turkey populations throughout the species' historic range in the United States, Canada, and Mexico. Wild turkey numbers have increased from 1.3 million to 7 million, and the estimated number of wild turkey hunters has increased from 750,000 to over 2.8 million.

The NWTF has been a leader in procuring and allocating resources for the completion of projects on important landscapes. To support its mission, NWTF generates revenue through approximately 3600 banquet auctions and special events conducted annually by 2,272 local chapters, membership dues, merchandise sales, grant awards, donations and advertising income. Since 1955, over \$300 million has been spent to improve 14 million acres of habitat for wild turkeys and other wildlife. Many of our projects are carried out through the joint efforts of NWTF staff, state or federal agency staff, our members and the general public.

Discussion Question 1

Concord, NH

(cont.)

The NWTF also works to increase outdoors interest, bringing new hunters into the fold through its education events and outreach programs. Approximately one-half of the membership of NWTF is comprised of women, children and disabled sportsmen. We have unfortunately watched as fewer Americans participate in their hunting heritage. The dwindling ranks of American hunters will have a profound impact on the operating budgets of state wildlife conservation agencies around the country, many of whom are fee funded through license sales and also receive project funding through the PillmanRobertson Fund. The NWTF has long been an advocate of enhanced opportunity for wildlife dependent recreation and improved access to both public and private lands. Overall hunters contribute 30 billion dollars into the American economy annually. The hunting industry also supports over a million American jobs. Economic projections show that if hunter numbers continue to fall at their current rate by 2025 license dollars for state wildlife agencies may drop by as much as 25 percent. The decline in the number of hunters is also projected to cause a 24 percent decrease in revenues for the hunting industry.

The Oconee Stewardship agreement project is one of 22 stewardship projects NWTF is currently working on. This project started small and over the past 3 years has leveraged forest Service funds (\$60,000) with a Corridor offlight Grant (\$70,000), NWTF Stewardship Agreement (\$200,000) to do;

- Timber Sale (thinning)

- 320 acres of mid story control

- 24 acres of wild life openings

- 16 RCW inserts

- RCW Monitoring

- 2000 acres of prescribed burning

Discussion Question 1

Fort Pierre, SD

I have to compliment the partnerships. The partnerships both in the private and public sectors are the most effective. The development of partnerships has been very good.

Commented on federal legislature, funding and working with partnerships. In South Dakota, the main conservation opportunities exist from the Farm Bill. It's most beneficial to have incentives on the conservation and production side of the Farm Bill for private landowners. The Farm Bill in 1998, actually back to 95 gave conservation organizations land base programs that became available for landowners; providing conservation incentives. Without this possibility a huge opportunity to work with private landowners would be lost. No incentives exist on the conservation side for most people to go out and spray 5 acres of weeds in CRP with the low payments offered. Incentives need to be gained along with reasonable alternatives to cropping lands and turning over grasslands. Private land funds are critical. Proper funding is needed. Angela Ehlers works hard to find money to get projects on the ground. Without the ability to fund projects, conservation programs don't work. Trying to compete for funding is a challenge critical to SD. Look at the land mass in SD: 80% private, 10% tribal, and 10% public. Need to involve all the people to figure out how to do proper incentives.

I have been working with land managers; specifically with a local group in the Black Hills area. Volunteering to help with projects to improve areas is a good way to get people involved. Volunteering works. By employing those tactics people get to continue to use that area, which is incentive for them to help out and maintain that area. It's hard to get people involved by putting up fence and not allowing them to enter back in. By helping people maintain these areas people need to know that there is a benefit in doing such things. Needing a benefit is just human nature; local users need to see a benefit. Volunteering is a good way to do that. Local organizations have come to talk with me about doing projects through volunteering.

Is there any consideration to redo water easement contracts from 20 plus years ago, through the FWS. The reason I bring it up is because a friend bought a quarter of land with a water easement. Originally his friend got \$600 for it, now he can't get anything. The land has been destroyed because of this. It could make very productive land with a very large wetland. I would like to have a contract redone.

I have seen what works as a rancher on my land. I've been involved with EQIP, the old Great Plains, working with NRCS with those programs; also GRP and CRP. Also, through the state connecting people to the outdoors, John Cooper started walk-in-areas. This program paid private landowners to have walk-in areas; which is another way to connect people to what we're (ranchers) doing. Public access is behind it; it goes beyond economics for us. It show off what we have and puts us on the map.

The very important roles of the private sector over last century, such as The Nature Conservancy, has been working with government partners to set aside groups like hunters, ranger ricks, etc., and conservationists in general, to understand the need for habitat protection. These organizations have helped in connecting people to the outdoors.

Discussion Question 1

Fort Pierre, SD

(cont.)

The programs are already there; need time for them to work. BLM people institutionalized and allow off roading to direct it and manage it to be very viable. Dirt biking is a large industry. The Travel Management Plan has done a great deal, and needs to continue to do so.

The Y has traditionally been supportive of outdoor recreation and education. The partnership side is already in place; it can piggy back. Need to get the word out about getting back to nature. The Y has had local partnerships. Last spring with a Pierre school they offered Kindergarten classes during the school schedule. The Y taught water safety lessons; so that the parents could feel comfortable knowing their child could swim safely. Safety is a very important issue. I enjoy what we have and do it safely. We want to do a district wide basis with the Pierre/Ft. Pierre schools. Little things like that work.

An important part of the programs is the benefit they provide for the rural communities. The walk-in program and hunting in general have filled up the motels and restaurants in rural communities and has brought about jobs. These strategies bring about quality of life. They strengthen the community.

Need to recognize that not only the farm bill but the Land and Water Conservation Fund need to be properly funded on both federal and state sides of ledger. It is needed for trails and parks. Another critical need is for the North American Wetland Act. This body works in Canada, the US, and Mexico on large landscape projects; which we would like to see it properly funded at 75 million like last year. We need to continue to have the money come directly to the ground. The increase in the duck stamp price is an option. 1992 was the last year the stamp increased in price. It is critical that the duck stamp be raised. People would step forward and pay the increase. The wetland loan act works, which would allow LWCF or FWS projects to happen, based on project revenue from duck stamps. A batch of revenue comes from people who are paying and dealing with local partnerships, which are all critical.

For those of you that don't know the mission of the SD Grasslands Coalition, it is to teach and educate farmers and ranchers how to properly manage their resources. The Coalition has been highly successful at doing so. The Coalition is in cooperation with several agencies on all levels. It is a voluntary organization for private land owners to properly manage their natural resources.

In my opinion working with kids, they won't value land and nature unless you get out in nature. If you keep kids inside; they will not appreciate what they have outside. There are lots of projects and programs that the Discovery Center uses, like Project Wet, Project Wild, and becoming an outdoor woman and family programs, which have been effective. You let kids and families try a wide variety of things to do in nature, and you teach them how to do it. Some may not want to shoot a turkey, but they still can appreciate nature and sit in a blind and look around at the nature around them. Those kinds of things, and programs that are guided by national high quality resources, can be very effective.

Discussion Question 1

Fort Pierre, SD

(cont.)

On the visible side realize the importance of native grasses. Environmental, clean water, recreation, food security. What works – it could work better. Looking at the programs from the state – there are a variety of them – NRCS programs are great. One concern that some of the programs and demands for the funding for that this year was put in 5 counties and only limited to a number of persons. The statewide interest. Interest in willing landowners to habitat but not because of money. States should have more say to what the money goes into. Not good mgmt of the \$s.

Grassland program – help northern plains – work together!!!

increase the funds. Grassland on the buffalo gap national wilderness – the league supports, grazing would continue. Increase CRP funding.

293 acres out there, 120m bring in to SD and ND for grass easements. Money is hard to raise, grass is working land and others think it is idle. It is cheaper today – put the money into their pockets and do the right things.

Protecting the resources defines – children exposing them to the outdoors. Having another generation following. This is taking our children out of the outdoors – computers etc. They worked on getting their match. 2 things that are unaffected. Funding has diminished about 10 fold. State side represents 10% now. States and locals are left with hardly anything. Do contemporary things to get the kids outdoors. Must get them out or there won't be anyone to enjoy it in the future.

Rotational grazing 6 generation on the ranch – tripled with NRCS and improved the grass. Grazing became very important, birds. Cattle – the best use of resources – grazers are important part of this. Funding programs - graze is the best use. Keep those programs in place. Best is not to kick out to recreate – but to graze. Represents herself and working hard with AG tour and show them what is the right way to use resources – grass is the best product. Some state and fed land. Always consider Private Landowners!!

Parks recreation – 98 have been impacted by land and water. – We really need to have it funded to the max. Everyone has probably been effected by this program LWCF. Not only to maintain but increase. Municipal recreation first responder – they interact with kids and that is where it starts – they need help to interact with them They will help get them interested through parks etc. Not enough mountain bikes – they need equipment, supplies and staff to get the kids out. The parks can do but need help.

Teacher training. Training them help the kids get outdoors.

We need think outside the box. Waterfowl in the spring – people should be staying as they come see this in the spring. The monthly media rule – everyone should see who runs your county paper?

Discussion Question 1

Fort Pierre, SD

(cont.)

Private partnerships – extremely important. Winter wheat initiative. Winter wheat moved into north Dakota – money for resource inform the landowners about the program. The landowner needs the incentive to use - private, connected with other folks, used current funded program. Where we can partner!

Partnering with non-profit who are already concerned about outdoors. Raise funds for it and they will give it there all.

Heritage tourism in our state is very important to draw them outdoors. 1-programs that could compliment historic preservation funds, save America's Treasures grant promote and market them to draw people to them. Examples – dc booth fish hatch. Partners – used many to get that accomplished. Need to fully fund the programs.

The cost share of EQIP that has a funding mechanism is currently working for farmers and ranchers, but the problem is funding. The first CRP had 1,000 applicants and only 10 got funding. There is more demand for grassland easements, but not enough funding available for the demand of landowners that want to enroll in easement programs. There are many landowners that want easements. Just not enough funding. Locals started a Leopold reward to acknowledge local landowners in conservation. The reward is a crystal and \$10,000 for conservation, innovative practices, that recognizes local citizens. The award will announce the winner on Earth Day.

Gardens on the top of roof tops in urban areas is a great thing. Need to promote research on farmers markets and local grown food. Need to expand local food markets. Create local opportunities. Need to tax the X-box, play stations, and other digital technologies to get funding for local recreational programs. Discretionary funding from parents is not going to local parks but to x-box and other digital technologies. Wal-Mart should provide funding to expand opportunities for local recreation (soccer programs), why does it have to come from tax payer money? Private sector has a responsibility.

Multiple use approach works (range, wildlife, recreation) collaborating on decisions. Black Hill National Forest (user groups) gets good direction from the user groups. Federal goals should be from the local users and should have a bigger voice then someone from Washington D.C. Locals should have a bigger say in what happens at local forests. Social and economical sustainability is key. We don't need more wilderness areas or parks. Need to deal with what we got. NPS service is severely underfunded for what we already have. Most people don't understand what wilderness is. Can't just lock up land and set aside without managing. Schools should have more education on how well managed lands should be. There should be more after school programs to encourage kids to get involved in the outdoors. School sports competes with hunting and fishing.

Discussion Question 1

Fort Pierre, SD

(cont.)

It is important to keep native prairies intact. For bird watching and hiking. Birds banded in SD have been found in 30 other states. Need to keep grasslands intact. There is an accelerated loss of grasslands and wetlands from pressures of commodity agriculture. You can't raise nearly as many wildlife on crop land compared to grasslands. Grasslands are some of the most productive ecosystems in the world and we're losing it. Need to support ranchers to keep grasslands and wetlands intact. Need to support ranchers over commodity crop production. Increase funding for beef production on grasslands. Farm bill is critical for funding the Wetland Reserve Program and the CRP program. There is a need to increase funding of CRP acres. EQIP program is important. Use of easements are critical to pay private land owners to keep native grass. Easements are important as it keeps land in private ownership. Not enough easements for the hundreds of ranchers that want it. Need more funding for easements. Increase the value of the Duck stamps and have the duck stamp loan act to pay for easements to meet the demand for easements. Need to protect grasslands through ranchers.

In 2006, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Montana Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program was granted an innovation in American Government Award for community-based conservation in partnership with the Blackfoot Challenge, a watershed group in the Blackfoot watershed of western Montana

The \$100,000 award from Harvard University's John F. Kennedy School of Government was used to transfer the model of cooperative conservation, build trust and partnerships between private landowners and public agency managers, provide consensus-based solutions to natural resource issues and recommend ways to improve cooperative conservation at local, regional and national scales.

In 2008 and 2009, meetings were held in Montana and Colorado with representatives from eleven western states to share information, experiences, challenges and solutions to private land conservation.

Partners for Conservation (PFC) developed from these discussions and represents the private landowners and partners that are practicing innovative, measurable and effective conservation practices on the ground for the long-term health and productivity of working landscapes and rural communities across the United States. Current representatives include landowners from California, Colorado, Idaho, Kansas, Montana, Nebraska, South Dakota and Wyoming. Learn more about PFC and join us in the conversation.

The grassland and wetland easement programs administered by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in cooperation with key partners like Ducks Unlimited has proven to be a resounding success with 880,000 acres perpetually protected to date.

These areas remain in private ownership, remain in cattle production and continue to provide critical breeding habitat for waterfowl, shorebirds, songbirds and raptors.

Many of these landowners enroll in South Dakota's private land access program increasing opportunities for people to get outdoors.

Discussion Question 1

Fort Pierre, SD

(cont.)

The Off-Road Riders Association is a grassroots, not-for-profit organization formed in 1992 to create a positive, long-term future for the Black Hills Off-Road Community. Our primary purpose is to protect the rights of those who enjoy motorized recreation in the Black Hills and Grasslands of western South Dakota. We encourage safe, environmentally sustainable riding practices and cooperation with other motorized and non-motorized users of our public lands.

The Off-Road Riders Association distributes materials and information from: Tread Lightly!; NOHVCC Adventure Trail activity books that teach safety and trail etiquette; the Black Hills National Forest and our own "Recommended Rules of the Trail".

We partner with the managers of the Black Hills National Forest and Nebraska National Forest. We have volunteered thousands of man-hours in development of local trail system, reclamation of damaged areas, clean-up projects, etc..

We host riding events throughout the year, including two major off-road poker runs as well as numerous other rides and get-togethers where we promote rider safety, trail courtesy and responsible riding practices. These efforts encourage people to get out and enjoy our public lands in a responsible and sustainable way.

We stand opposed to any plan or action that limits access by American citizens to any of our public lands. We support instead, a sound multiple-use management strategy that incorporates a cooperative, shared-use philosophy.

Land management decisions should not be made without broad local support. Public land should be protected for the public, not from the public. Multiple-use management uses an adaptive style that allows managers to respond to the dynamic nature of the land using input from all local interest groups.

Motorized and mechanized recreation is the fastest growing segment of outdoor recreation on public lands. We believe that education, cooperation and volunteerism among interest groups and land managers is the key to a successful future for outdoor recreation on our public lands.

Ducks Unlimited has proposed that the portion of the U.S. Prairie Pothole Region (PPR) with significant expanses of native prairie and abundant wetlands - the eastern Dakotas - be designated a "Treasured Landscape". Sometimes called "the duck factory" by waterfowl biologists because of its propensity to produce at least 40 percent of North America's waterfowl population, the prairie pothole region is a national conservation priority.

The goal of the PPR Landscape project is to secure in perpetuity 2.5 million acres of grasslands and associated wetlands, most of which (95%) will be protected through purchased conservation easements. The balance (5%) will be acquired in fee title and added to the existing inventory of National Wildlife Refuge System lands in the Dakotas.

The PPR project would be implemented over 10 years at a total estimated cost of \$1.38 billion. It's anticipated that various partners and existing sources of revenue will finance \$427 million, with the balance of \$956 million coming from a "Treasured Landscape" initiative currently being discussed by the Administration and several Federal Departments.

Discussion Question 1

Fort Pierre, SD

(cont.)

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is the primary federal wildlife landownership agency in the PPR proposal area with the following ownership classifications and acreages: Waterfowl Production Areas and National Wildlife Refuges: 608,000 acres Grassland easements 713,000 acres Wetland easements 1,088,000 acres FHA easements / managed by the USFWS 11,414 acres

The South Dakota Game Fish and Parks and North Dakota Game and Fish Department are the primary state landownership agencies in the proposal area with the following fee title acres: South Dakota Game Fish and Parks 81,873 acres North Dakota Game and Fish Department 156,833 acres

The following conservation organizations are also owners in fee title of the acres listed in the proposed project area: Ducks Unlimited 19,300 acres National Audobon Society 2,250 acres Nature Conservancy 17,000 acres

Over the course of ten years, it's anticipated that the following sources of funds could be used to help accomplish project objectives: Migratory Bird Conservation Funds ("Duck Stamp") \$160 M North American Wetlands Conservation Act \$95 M Ducks Unlimited, Inc. \$50 M Other state, NGO, and corporate partners \$15 M USDA Wetlands Reserve Program ("WRP") \$97 M USDA Grasslands Reserve Program ("GRP") \$10 M

During 2005-09, expenditures on grassland and wetland easements in the project areas were as follows: Migratory Bird Conservation Funds ("Duck Stamp") \$48.2 M North American Wetlands Conservation Act \$9.4 M Ducks Unlimited and other partners \$11.3 M USDA Wetlands Reserve Program ("WRP") \$48.4 M USDA Grasslands Reserve Program ("GRP") \$5.3 M Land and Water Conservation Fund ("WWCF") \$2.1 M

Easements are popular among many landowners, particularly ranchers. Currently, 805 landowners are on a waiting list to be considered for a grassland or wetland easement in the Dakotas. This represents approximately 364,000 acres of habitat that could be secured in perpetuity if funding was available. Since the inception of the easement program, landowners have enrolled 1.8 million acres in the easement program. All easements are secured on a willing seller basis and the land remains in agriculture productions with the basic provision that, under Wetland Easement, they cannot drain, burn, level, or fill in wetlands that are designated within the easement contract. Conservation also provisions apply to lands enrolled in Grassland Easements which pays to keep land permanently in grass.

A 2006 survey conducted by the University of North Dakota found that 89.1% of North Dakota residents thought that landowners should be able to choose whether or not they wish to sell or donate perpetual easements. In that same survey, 75.7% of residents agreed or strongly agreed with the statement "we have an obligation to preserve some natural areas for future generations and perpetual easements are a good way to do that."

Discussion Question 1

Fort Pierre, SD

(cont.)

In South Dakota, because of the current high water and sheet water flooding in the central and northeastern counties, landowners have stepped up their interest in the Wetlands Reserve and Grasslands Reserve Programs offered by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (Farm Bill) and have continued to contact US Fish and Wildlife regarding the selling of USFWS Easements to protect wetlands and Grasslands. In addition to the basic programs mentioned above to improve habitat, both North Dakota and South Dakota Wildlife Agencies have hunting access "Walk-In" programs in which the landowners can earn extra annual payments if his/her private land habitat qualifies for the Walk-In program. These hunting access programs have proven to be very popular with landowners and it adds directly to the economic benefits of having bird and big game populations. Pheasant hunting provides an estimated \$200 million per year to South Dakota's income base.

Discussion Question 1

Godfrey, IL

I'm pleased to say that an overwhelming number of DU supporters are outdoor enthusiasts and participate on a regular basis in activities that bring them close to nature. Whether it be hunting waterfowl over an early morning marsh, boating on the mighty Mississippi or Illinois rivers, or simply enjoying a peaceful moment in a natural setting, they understand and support with their time and money DU's important habitat work and the relationship between conservation and the added value it brings to their lives. It is that kind of connectivity and passion for all things wild that needs to be generated in greater numbers of people, young and old alike, if we hope to kindle the political and financial support it will take to conserve enough of our natural heritage for the use and enjoyment of generations to come.

Those who enjoy sport hunting and fishing know this first hand and have always been at the forefront of conservation efforts in this country and thanks to their financial contributions and strong advocacy efforts, we all have more places to visit and enjoy in America's great outdoors. In addition, sport hunting and fishing generate billions of dollars of revenue across the nation and support hundreds of thousands of jobs in related industries. State, federal and private conservation organizations need to do all they can to promote and support hunting and fishing and other outdoor recreation opportunities on lands that they control and manage.

Our work would have never been accomplished without the assistance of numerous state, federal and private partners. Building upon the successful aspects of federal funding programs like the North American Wetland Conservation Act (NAWCA), Partners for Wildlife (PFW), and the Land and Water Conservation Fund and conservation programs of the Farm Bill like the Wetland Reserve Program (WRP), Conservation Reserve Program (CRP), Wildlife Habitat Incentive Program (WHIP), and the Grassland Reserve Program (GRP), America's Great Outdoors Initiative has the potential dramatically improve the protection, restoration and enhancement of our nation's natural resources for future generations.

These federal programs provide the necessary government incentive to attract private investment and participation that has been key in helping DU and others achieve significant conservation objectives over the past several decades, but much more needs to be done and we encourage this Administration and Congress to continue to support and fully fund these, and other important federal initiatives.

Discussion Question 1

Godfrey, IL

(cont.)

In Missouri, DU has conserved more than 100,000 acres of habitat over the past 25 years. A focal point has been the protection and restoration of wetland habitat near the confluence of the Missouri and Mississippi Rivers. Here, DU has helped build a partnership of federal, state and private organizations that share a common conservation interest in this important confluence region. This partnership has helped support habitat restoration on public sites such as B.K. Leach Memorial Conservation Area. It also is working in cooperation with farmers, duck club owners, and other private landowners to restore and protect wetland habitat on lands subject to natural flooding. So far, DU and its partners have conserved more than 27,000 acres in the floodplain of the Missouri and Mississippi River. Included in this total are conservation easements donated by conservation minded landowners that are protecting 3,772 acres in perpetuity. Even more landowners are lined up to become part of this important conservation effort. This is clear evidence that this private-public partnership is making progress, thanks in part to DU's conservation leadership.

In Illinois, DU also is working with a similar consortium of conservation partners to acquire, restore and protect vital waterfowl habitat along the Mississippi and Illinois Rivers. DU has purchased 2, 211 acres of flood prone land adjacent to existing federal wildlife refuges, state fish and wildlife areas, or national forests. DU's conservation strategy is to restore wetland and bottomland forest habitat on these acquired lands and then transfer title to the adjacent conservation agencies for long term stewardship and public access. DU also uses its local biological and engineering expertise, as well as its privately raised funds, to help its conservation partners restore wetland habitat on existing public lands. In some cases when funds are available specific for that purpose, DU has been able to assist private landowners with multi-purpose wetland projects that conserve soil, water and wildlife resources. More than 50,000 acres of waterfowl habitat has been conserved across Illinois thanks to DU's effort. This is yet another great testimony to the conservation work and the conservation partnerships that DU has developed and that can help provide a foundation for America's Great Outdoor initiative.

America's Great Outdoors will help provide a focus for conservation in several key regions of our great country and will reaffirm the local significance of these regions to fish, wildlife and people.

The America's Great Outdoors Initiative may be the last and best opportunity to preserve the world class resources of the Mississippi, Missouri, and Illinois River watersheds, the Prairie Pothole Region and, of course, the southeastern Gulf Coast where estuarine and freshwater wetlands are not only threatened by the Deep Horizon oil spill disaster, but also by chronic problems associated with nutrient enrichment that causes large hypoxia zones out in the Gulf that are void of fish and other marine life.

Discussion Question 1

Godfrey, IL

(cont.)

North American Wetlands Conservation Act (NAWCA). This federal program administered by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service provides competitive matching grants to federal, state and non-profit conservation organizations for local wetland protection and restoration. DU and its partners have utilized the NAWCA program to conserve thousands of acres of habitat in Illinois and Missouri. Typically, non-federal sponsors provide up to \$2 for every \$1 they receive from NAWCA for local habitat projects. Lands acquired with NAWCA funds are generally open to the public for compatible recreational uses such as hunting, fishing and birdwatching. Federal appropriations for NAWCA are critical to the success of this program. Funding should be maintained or expanded in order to leverage federal funds to the greatest conservation good.

Conservation Reserve Program (CRP). This federal program administered by the Farm Service Agency of the U.S. Department of Agriculture pays farmers to convert environmental sensitive cropland to wildlife habitat and to maintain it as a privately owned conservation area for a period of 10 to 15 years. Populations of grassland nesting birds, including ducks, bobwhite quail, and native songbirds such as the dickcissel, have rebounded thanks to CRP. The program also conserves soil and improves water quality by reducing nutrient run-off. Often, CRP lands are open to sportsmen for hunting with permission from the landowner. CRP caps limit the amount of lands that can be enrolled in this successful and popular program. Acreage levels should be maintained, especially in geographic regions like the Prairie Pothole Region where CRP is providing critical habitat for waterfowl and other wildlife.

Wetlands Reserve Program (WRP). This program administered by the Natural Resources Conservation Service under the U.S. Department of Agriculture is used to restore and protect wetland habitat on private lands. Typically, this involves the acquisition of permanent conservation easements by the federal government on lands that are voluntarily enrolled by private property owners. Such lands are restored to wetlands or planted to trees at no cost to the landowner. In addition to establishing vital habitat for wildlife, WRP lands provide recreational opportunities for landowners and their guests. Authority and funding for WRP is due to expire. This program should be re-authorized in the next Farm Bill with more opportunities to target enrollment and to encourage conservation partnerships.

Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF). This federal program provides funding to federal agencies like the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and U.S. Forest Service to purchase new lands for public stewardship and public access. State conservation organizations also can use LWCF to supplement state funds available for land acquisition and recreational development. Increased appropriations from LWCF are needed for federal agencies to acquire critical lands within existing boundaries of national wildlife refuges and national forests along the Mississippi, Missouri, and Illinois Rivers. To the extent practical, LWCF should provide incentives for states to increase their investment in land acquisition as part of a comprehensive program to expand outdoor recreational opportunities for their citizens.

Discussion Question 1

Godfrey, IL

(cont.)

Navigational and Environmental Sustainability Program (NESP). This program administered by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers is authorized to provide federal cost-share funding for navigation and ecological restoration projects on the Upper Mississippi River, including the Illinois River. Appropriations are needed to implement ecological restoration projects designed to enhance habitat for fish and wildlife species along these important river corridors. Most lands subject to NESP restoration are either owned by a public agency or are considered to be public waters open to public access. Federal funding for NESP project should encourage partnerships with state conservation organizations and with private organizations like DU.

The watershed covers 10% of IL and has multiple partner types. They are concerned about rapid erosion runoff. Erodes banks and the sediment clogs rivers. WRDA 2007 and grants are being used to help with this. We have language to study it, but it needs funding. 3 years have gone by since authorization, but it still has received no funding. Kaskaskia can be a model for similar rivers in the U.S. IDNR is willing to be a cost sharing partner.

AmeriCorps teams have partnered with state, federal and NGO for invasive species removal, cleaning, studies, trail maintenance, etc. AmeriCorps program is extremely cheap and you get a lot from utilization. The program targets youth and directly gets them involved. This program is already in place, it just needs more staff positions funded.

It is my opinion that if the Presidents Initiative is to accomplish great things in our public land, and increase the involvement of youth and the public at large, all while taking into consideration the constraints on our budget, the funding of programs that are already in existence and proven to be effective is imperative. The AmeriCorps program is one such program, designed to be utilized fully in times of economic hardship to revitalize our public lands, provide jobs, and give the younger generations a chance to take direct action for positive change in our environment. Just as its predecessor program the, Civilian Conservation Corps, was utilized during the Great Depression to provide jobs and training while accomplishing great public works, so too should the AmeriCorps program be considered today. The AmeriCorps St. Louis program, as well as NCCC programs throughout the nation are proof enough that the funding works in our region. The labor that they provide can be utilized to cheaply accomplish the reforms that are needed, as well as address the needs that are identified by local land management agencies and conservation groups as a priority. All that is needed is funding and more positions can be filled, providing jobs and training for young adults, opportunities for higher education and debt reversal, and the maintenance and stewardship of our public lands.

I will be out of town and unable to attend the session, but I would like to congratulate the local officials of our area for the tremendous improvements made to our riverfront, especially the cities of Alton and Grafton.

Looking forward to this great opportunity to talk about America's first national park area to protect a wild river system and the gem of our state - Ozark National Scenic Riverways!

Discussion Question 1

Godfrey, IL

(cont.)

One strategy for actually accomplishing maintenance and construction of new trails and management of our natural areas and public land that has worked exceedingly well in Missouri is the utilization of highly trained volunteers, namely AmeriCorps members. AmeriCorps teams in Missouri have partnered with the Missouri Department of Conservation, the Forest Service, Park Service, Department of Natural Resources, as well as many non-profit groups throughout the state. They have completed a variety of tasks ranging from removal of invasive species, maintenance and creation of trails, removal of storm debris, wildfire suppression, assisting in biological studies, stream cleaning, and a host of other valuable conservation tasks.

The benefits of the AmeriCorps program are far reaching, as the cost of maintaining a full time professional, factoring in training, wildfire bonus compensation, the cost of a salaried position with benefits, and overtime, are many times more than the cost of an AmeriCorps volunteer trained to the same level of service. The program targets youth and involves them directly with conservation issues, accomplishing tasks at a price far below what is needed to pay professional workers, and at a level of training you cannot get from a normal volunteer, all while providing jobs for high-school graduates and college age individuals. It also encourages them to continue their experience into college with the Segal education award, and provides them with leadership experience and skills to be applied in the field of conservation if they choose to seek a profession in our great outdoors.

The Ozark Regional Land Trust (ORLT) encourages the administration to support the work of land trusts. There are several ways in which this can be done. First, federal tax policy can be used to encourage landowners to conserve important farmland, forests, and wildlife habitats. ORLT urges the renewal of the enhanced tax incentive for donated conservation easements as well as a renewed estate tax exclusion for land subject to a conservation easement. These policies represent a modest investment for the leveraged conservation gains that are obtained through private landowner generosity. Second, ORLT encourages federal agencies to work with land trusts to further their statutory mandates. For example, much can be done in a cooperative fashion with private landowners to protect endangered species habitats by supporting conservation easement projects. ORLT has a current project in Missouri that is acquiring conservation easements on habitat essential for recovery of the federally threatened Ozark cavefish. This also represents a modest investment with significant long term gains should it continue to be supported. Federal land management agencies can also further their missions in cooperation with land trusts by protecting critical buffers around wildlife refuges, Wilderness areas, or national parks. ORLT thanks the administration for its commitment to conservation and for your consideration of these comments. I look forward to attending the listening session.

Discussion Question 1

Godfrey, IL

(cont.)

The Tourism Bureau Southwestern Illinois supports outdoor recreation in many forms around Carlyle Lake. The visitor market that we look to attract to our region enjoys many activities, including: boating, sailing, fishing, hiking, biking, golf and many other forms of recreation. These visitors spend money in our region. They buy gas, meals, stay in our lodging establishments and entertain their families in our area for much of the spring, summer and fall. Economic development through tourism is a great way to create that highly sought after visitor spending.

Kudos to the City of Carlyle and the US Army Corps of Engineers for their continued support and work in developing permanent and sustainable bike trails in Carlyle and areas around the Lake. It is a great way to attract/retain visitors and create new citizens through relocation. This truly is a great quality of life addition to our community.

This sounds like an admirable initiative, but instead of starting new programs, it would be better to fund those already authorized such as WRDA 2007. The Kaskaskia Watershed Association has been working to get the planning study for this program started since 2007 to no avail to date. I would like to expand on this comment during the 20 August session.

We are trying to deconstruct unused, dangerous low-head dams (also known as "drowning machines") in Jefferson County Missouri and turn them into rapids for kayakers, canoes, fishermen, swimmers, tubers, etc. to enjoy. The website: www.missouriwhitewaterpark.com has a little more information on what we are trying to do. The areas we are interested in are owned by Jefferson County Parks and Recreation. We hope that this meeting will provide us with some insight on how to successfully complete this project and obtain funding for the project.

Youth outdoor activities include gardening, running, fishing, swimming, catching frogs, biking, walking, and hiking.

USACE- Balance being near the river while dealing with the flooding of it. Alton has built an amphitheater and bike trails are being linked in with area facilities

Wilderness isn't cool anymore. Needs more exposure. Need to get people to bring their friends out there. Free stuff to make it cool.

Making outdoors cool: education. News is often negative. Bear mauling in Yellowstone. Educate positive aspects of outdoors and remove fears people may have.

More events held at the riverfronts. i.e. concerts, bike race.

Have outdoor classes and visit the river. There are people who have never been there but lived here their whole life.

More family oriented events in the outdoors.

Discussion Question 1

Godfrey, IL

(cont.)

Boat tours on the river would help develop a connection

Regional planning efforts: The river ring here is a 600-mile web. Parks and conservation are important.

Agencies take what public thinks for granted. 2009 survey- 95% say Missouri outdoors make for happier lives, 90% say parks make people healthy. Parks should be a budget priority.

St. Vincent Greenway connects forest park through the most impoverished areas. Land and water conservation fund will help with this crime ridden, gang controlled park.

We need to connect people to outdoors. This helps health, sustainability, and livability. River ring efforts is a great example. Forest Park is the largest urban park. Forest Park Forever is a non-for profit that takes care of it. Columbia Bottoms was owned by St. Louis. It was sold to state and restored. It's a great example of a successful effort where people in an urban area can enjoy the outdoors.

95% of America lives within 50 miles of a USACE project. This is a unique area. This are best demonstrates partnerships coupled with interests like navigation.

Land & water conservation fund is very important. Legislation is in Congress to make this fund permanent. Language about gulf oil spill will be included. Efforts to revitalize the ARCH have moved amazingly fast. These ideas will really help to focus efforts on regional initiatives, like the river ring on a parallel track with the Arch project. These efforts are equally important. you make believers out of people when you can show results.

We have developed an MOU between 2 regions of both NPS and USFWS. MOU seeks to connect over 50 parks and refuges on the river. We have opportunities for recreation and education that need to be marketed together. It should cover the whole Mississippi River.

Efforts will address access, history, conservation, stewardship, and education.

Riverlands Migratory Bird Sanctuary: Established in 1989 by the Corps of Engineers as the Riverlands Environmental Demonstration Area to showcase low-cost restoration potential of large river floodplains.

Received \$2,999, 891.37 in ARRA funding to replace the access tour control facility with upgraded Class C Visitor Information Center- National Audubon Education Partnership. Riverlands Environmental Education Facility to promote the Corps message and education for the migratory bird sanctuary.

Discussion Question 1

Godfrey, IL

(cont.)

Beginning in 1989 twelve hundred acres of native grasses, aquatic plants and trees have been planted in an attempt to restore the site, the current landscape is representative of the way this confluence floodplain looked over 200 years ago before Europeans settled here.

The benefits of this more than 20-year- old restoration project are evident throughout the seasons. Tens of thousands of people visit the Sanctuary every year to reconnect with the river and enjoy the diversity of wildlife that lives or visits the area.

Partners with the St. Louis Audubon Society and the Webster Groves Nature and Corps biologists have recorded 299 different species of birds at the Sanctuary over the past 20 years. In 2005 the Sanctuary was designated an Important Bird Area by the National Audubon Society for the habitat provided at this crucial resting spot on the Mississippi Flyway.

Outdoor recreation like biking, hiking, paddling and fishing are also popular within the sanctuary and draw a multitude of people to the area.

In 2005 a world record blue catfish was caught on the Mississippi River just on the boundary of the Sanctuary. This catch along with other exciting sport fishing opportunities draw people throughout the year to the Sanctuary targeting river fish like paddlefish and catfish.

With several miles of hiking and biking trails and 100's of acres of paddleable waters the Sanctuary is an ideal outdoor recreation destination within minutes of the large metropolitan St. Louis community.

Management of the Sanctuary's natural assets for the benefit of wildlife in balance with enhanced outdoor recreation opportunities will continue into the future through partnership efforts. In the fall of 2010 the Corps in partnership with the Audubon will open a new sanctuary orientation center that will serve as the Corps hub for environmental education in the Sanctuary and will house the Audubon Center at Riverlands effort for National Audubon's Upper Mississippi River Campaign. This partnership effort will provide one more opportunity for the public to continue reconnecting with their rivers.

Has had more than 500,000 visitors since opening; 65,727 visitors in FY2010 (thru June), 6% increase from FY09

- ARRA projects:
 - The St. Louis District has two task orders that are providing exhibits and exhibit maintenance at the National Great Rivers Museum. We have an indefinite delivery/indefinite quantity (IDIQ) Exhibit contract with Formations, Inc. from Portland Oregon.
 - The total for the two task orders for work at the National Great Rivers Museum is \$183,869.64
 - Both contracts will be completed September 30, 2010

Discussion Question 1

Godfrey, IL

(cont.)

Each year, millions of people travel to the Mississippi River to learn and experience its history and learn about its impact on our Nation. The National Great Rivers Museum at Melvin Price Locks and Dam provides a unique opportunity to tell the river's story in a comprehensive, meaningful and relevant way. The museum is dedicated to telling the story of the Mississippi River – from its grand history and cultural significance to its ecological importance and role as a transportation corridor.

Opened in October of 2003, the museum is a 12,000 square foot facility with a 7,000 square foot exhibit gallery, a multi-purpose classroom and a 110-seat theater. Exhibits and the learning experience continue outside to the river water feature in front of the museum and along the lock tour route and main lock overlook. Free public tours of the Melvin Price Locks and Dam are given daily (weather permitting) at 10 AM, 1 PM and 3 PM.

The National Great Rivers Museum is managed by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers with assistance from the Meeting of the Rivers Foundation, a non-profit friends group that operates a museum store and assists with special events and fund-raising activities

Since its inception, NGRREC has funded more than \$285,000 in research and maintains an expert staff involved in research funded by other sponsors.

Research conducted here will expand our understanding of the structure and function of floodplain-river ecosystems

NGRREC is formed by a unique partnership of the University of Illinois, the Illinois Natural History Survey and Lewis and Clark Community College. In addition to the scientific advances and educational opportunities that NGRREC staff members provide, they also stimulate the local and regional economy by obtaining funding from federal, state and private sources, the majority of which is used to employ people in the area and to purchase equipment and supplies from local vendors. LCCC is a USACE partner

The Field Station, strategically located near the confluence of the Mississippi, Illinois and Missouri rivers, will serve as an international center for science, education and public outreach, related to key issues that will improve sustainable management of large rivers.

The National Great Rivers Research and Education Center hosts international conferences, symposiums and information exchanges aimed at discovering linkages in existing research and acquiring new information to fill knowledge gaps related to large rivers and the human communities that depend on these ecosystems.

The field station will provide researchers with access to the river and the riverine mesocosms and wet lab facilities will allow researchers to conduct unique experiments to expand our understanding of the structure and function of floodplain-river ecosystems, information that is vital to the development of conservation strategies to sustain the natural resources these systems provide and economic benefits derived from these resources.

Discussion Question 1

Godfrey, IL

(cont.)

The Field Station building itself incorporates many green elements, including solar, wind and hydro-kinetic systems, internal and external water recycling systems, a vegetative roof and more. The project's goal is to attain LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) certification at the platinum level, which is the highest rating possible.

Lewis and Clark Community College (LCCC) is one of the founding members of the Illinois Green Economy Network and is a leader in sustainability initiatives and green efforts in the community. The College is currently working to reduce its carbon footprint and encourage recycling. Serves more than 25,000 students annually. Boasts the state's largest Associate Degree Nursing, dual credit and workforce training programs.

The college is dedicated to the environment and creating a green campus, helping the underserved areas of the community get proper healthcare through their Mobile Health Unit and Nurse Managed Center (which is the only one of its kind operated by a community college) and their constant innovation in education.

Obtains most or all of its energy from clean renewable energy systems
Uses eco-friendly substances and materials
Minimizes the use of, and properly disposes of, hazardous materials
Conserves energy and other non-renewable resources

Educates students, employees, local citizens and others on the importance of conservation, recycling and other sustainability practices

Provides training in green-related occupations such as installing and maintaining solar technology, hydro-kinetic turbines and other hydro-powered technologies, wind turbines, geothermal systems, alternative fueled vehicles, wastewater management, pollution and water quality management, carbon / GHG footprint analyses, and energy audits.

Discussion Question 1

Golden, CO

The Suite of Colorado shares your commitment to sustain working ranches, fans and forests. to provide places for outdoor recreation that will leave (he next generation healthier and better connected to the outdoors, to protect land and water for our native wildlife and to revitalize local economies.

Under the leadership of Secretary Salazar and others. Colorado has built a strong foundation for community efforts to conserve and restore natural places. Diverse partnerships that include the Great Outdoors Colorado Trust Fund, landowners, government agencies and land truSIS have come together to conserve river corridors and wetlands in the San Luis Valley, mountain valleys in western Colorado and grasslands on the eastern plains. These projects all work across ownership boundaries to restore and conserve public and private lands and recognize the link between conservation and economies of local communities. With funding from these organizations and individuals, Colorado has now conserved over 1.5 million acres of open space and working lands.

I invite you to bring your Listening tour to Colorado to hear directly from our landowners, conservation practitioners, agency personnel and others about our accomplishments, our lessons learned and our ongoing collaborative projects that seek to accomplish landscape-scale conservation in Colorado's most important places.

Need to create a sense of place, a place where people want to be. Look at the South Plate. Great Outdoor Colorado

Representative as a kid explored the mountains enjoys the mountains. Wants her kids and other kids (Keystone Science School), will have access to the mountains. Wellness issues, kids that are outdoors are healthier, happier and do better in school.

Bark beetle epidemic, what is a healthy forest is bringing together that have not in the past history. What do we want for the next generated. Now we can look forward for the next 50 years, how do we plan for the population growth (human). Access to public lands is crucial. How to balance it? Collaboration and conversation

More and intergraded funding (between departments) for conservation. For getting youth into working, preservation, working with the non-profits, etc.....Do the conservation community know the funding streams? However, a lot of the large groups know the funds available not the small groups. Having technical support would help.

Build upon the waterways in cities. Can transform out cities. It is the backbone. Talk to the kids about the history and conservation. It is our transportation stream. Take those areas back from the industrial waste areas. Salazar: is this (waterways issues) true across the country? Look at Philadelphia, what we have done in Colorado can be done in other cities and around the States. We can protect and focus on the waterways.

Discussion Question 1

Golden, CO

(cont.)

Collaboration is necessary to get things done. We need to talk, look at storm water. Look at the economic development issues. Look how the river improvements have generated economic benefits to the State.

How do we move beyond jurisdictions? it is a challenge, the bark beetle forced summit into crossing the boundary. The lead agency was participating and not leading. It was collaborative. Be in the dialoged with people.

How do we move beyond jurisdictions? Grant programs can hold out a carrot. Rather than funding the individual group provides more strength in the program by collaborating.

Camping, fishing, National parks

Ride bike at Cherry Creek. Playing basketball at rec centers.

Forrest Land, Hiking fishing

Camping, hiking in Rocky Mountain National Park

During the week walk dog in city park, go to mountains at least once a week.

Seeing the different things public lands have to offer encourages more to do more to help and protect the environment.

Camping trips, Grand Canyon, Fishing, Parks, Bike paths, Volleyball

Non-profit mentor, fishing, hiking, Identifying types of insects and trees

Field hockey, hiking, backpacking, camping, environmental education

camping, hiking, biking

racing (?)

Discussion Question 1

Golden, CO

(cont.)

volunteer to clean rivers, keep trash empty

Never went outdoors much until joining ELK, camping

out with family, visit reservoirs, mountain biking, Colorado has made big impact on my outdoor activities

moved from Connecticut to Colorado, complete change in outdoor activities, biking, horseback riding, triathlons.

hatching, shocking fish to measure and weigh them, planting trees

Clearing wetlands

pick up trash to protect wildlife, clean up old/used fishing line because want to leave land as it was for next people,

I go to the park to play sports and take walks

Fishing, hiking, and having fun

I spend time in the Rocky Mountain National Park, and ride bikes

I traveled to Alaska national park for hiking and backpacking

I like to jet ski, plant trees, and maintain trails for the Larimer County Youth Conservation Corp

I plant plants in the National Forest, and repair fences

I went to the Grand Canyon this summer to watch the sunset

I teach kids how to fish

Discussion Question 1

Golden, CO

(cont.)

I trail run in the Fort Collins natural areas, and I like to hike and go backpacking

trail restoration, trail build, hiking and mountain biking

I help out the community by picking up trash

I recycle at school, and plant plants during ecology class

I clean and maintain trails

I recycle and support bicycling and carpooling

I practice Leave No Trace, pick up trash, and am part of the student organization "Society for Conservation Biology"

hiking, skiing, biking, rivers, camping, fishing, snowboarding, skiing

in front of the computer, white water rafting, sand dunes

walks in the neighborhood with dog

trails, camping, fishing, walking

fishing, camping

state parks are great for camping, easy access and great facilities

mountain bike, snowboard, skate, swing, baseball, basketball

went to border of Utah. Loves hiking but it is expensive, loves sand dunes, playing in the sand

Discussion Question 1

Golden, CO

(cont.)

rock climbing

horseback riding, extreme mountain bike

pickup trash

get people to eat less fast food, bad for the environment

pulling weeds, learned about how important it is to keep hiking trails clean

make sculptures, ride bike

group has been sending clean-up supplies to help with the oil spill

Dad uses composter to make fertile dirt and doesn't use water for lawn

trash collection while camping

trash collection while camping, cutting down on car pollution (running cars in idle), conservation of energy

pulling weeds on trails, trail preservation,

trash pickup, park cleanup

lay own eggs, raise animals, conserve resources

hanging murals, helping out homeless shelters, planting gardens at schools, help clean up Denver

Discussion Question 1

Golden, CO

(cont.)

Barbeques, camping, go to the lake, hiking, fishing, snowshoeing, jet skiing, snowboarding, basket ball, football, soccer, pool, hunting and fishing, sleeping, biking, jogging, group fishing, camping - group, boat ridding, amusement parks, go cart racing.

Use renewable water bottle, recycling on campus city, ride bike as much as possible, biggest problem is waste, aluminum cans go right into trash. One of the easiest things to do is recycling

Cut water when teeth brushing. Problem is trash and litter. Help pick up trash

Walk everywhere I can, recycle. One of the biggest problems is neighbors riding atvs, eroding the land

Set example, encourage recycling. Biggest problem is resource use. The way we use the resources, managing waste. Best thing I can do is be an example and a leader and pass on the knowledge

Water conservation, turn off water when teeth brushing, watering timing. Set example for the neighbors, tell people it is better to turn water on at night, outreach

Community compost, one of the problems for community is access to recycling and resource centers and flexibility to help people out.

Fishing clinics, play sports (volleyball, football) - 1.

Snow shoeing and sking, rock climbing, and hiking -1.

Restored a trail, pick up trash - 2.

Hiking after work, walking their dogs - 1.

Teaches youth how to camp, fish, and use the national parks - 1. Recycle things - 2.

Camping, Rock climbing - 1.

Play Basketball in Washington Park

Discussion Question 1

Golden, CO

(cont.)

Bikes the Cherry Creek trail

Outdoor activities at Sloan's Lake

Frequents Montbello Rec. Center, and Utah park near her home

Running in Cheaseman Park

Camping with family in surrounding national forests

Educate and teach others, mentoring

"Leave no trace" ethic, works with Denver water to install high efficiency toilets, energy work with Xcel to promote use of CFL lightbulbs.

Encourage the Hiring of environmentally conscious youth, mentor youth.

Pick-up trash, trail maintenance in the summers, remove fencing at local urban parks.

Pick-up around the lake near his home, watch out for local wildlife.

Be a steward, "Leave no trace" ethic, help communities with bike paths, etc.

Pine Beetle Observation

Sen. Udall committed to environment at the state and local level.

When I go biking, I go on the Cherry Creek Trail.

I go to the Colorado parks, to Golden Gate for hiking and to Castlewood.

Discussion Question 1

Golden, CO

(cont.)

I play basketball at Washington Park, and go to Rocky Mountain National Park.

I go to Montbello Rec Center, and any kind of park or city park.

I recently went camping at National State Park and did lots of work helping around campsites, mulching and cleaning up Lake Agnes.

Help restore and create urban gardens around Denver.

Need to mentor people, intern youth to see how can make living doing things we all love outdoors - create jobs for young people.

Pick up trash, help clean up campsites, go on trips every summer and to Rocky Mountain nearly every year, help redo trails, grab logs and bring them over to the trail to eliminate people from going off the trails, remove fencing so animals (elk, deer) don

I promote biodiversity, learn more about forests, ecosystems, pick up trash; issues - lack of awareness of where products, resources come from, which allows things to get devastated, polluted; need education, be aware of where things come from, help peopl

Recycle as much as possible, CFL lights in house.

Promote and practice Leave No Trace, work with Mile High Youth Corps, phases of conservation (energy work, go into multi-family homes to install lightbulbs; work with Denver Water to install high-efficiency toilets; in Golden Gate State Park chopping tree

Educate kids on environment, how to protect it and yourselves.

Take groups of kids out fishing, teach how to fish and walk around the lake and pick up any trash we see.

Try to practice Leave No Trace ethic, do the best I can every time I'm outside to be a steward of where I am, what's around me, and how I impact it, whether it's community parks, city parks, national forests, etc.

Transportation - access, being more mindful of how we transport ourselves.

Augment what is already happening with more collaboration, I hope to see that. I agree with Brett, LWCF funding, it's important and works well.

Discussion Question 1

Golden, CO

(cont.)

Effective strategies with engaging people, it comes in so many forms in how to engage the community. City of Golden's "Golden Vision 20/30" technique was storytelling; it's a way of having a 2-way communication with people. Part of the outreach was with youth, utilized the technology and provided flip cameras, the Flip Company offers 2 for 1 grants for such projects, and 20 students went to places in Golden and told their story-why they loved those places, highlighting what's important from the youth perspective.

From the home rivers aspect, student aspect, we researched water shed; students were involved in monitoring program and informed management, so they could see the effect of water, and how it changed. GOCO is a good example too, and the aspect that enables large-scale land protection, GOCO public and private lands has been successful, what makes it work is real money, drives partnerships, and can be more visionary. I work in Washington state, it takes those elements of a partnership, public/private, for the Washington Watershed Restoration Initiative, a lot of entities have come together to drive the restoration. Today no more roads and on to healthy rivers and streams.

It's great to have these high level discussions but some mechanism to take this, and have a resource to filter it down so that all the efforts can be put rubber to road, a strategy to take this really good information, and how do you filter all that. I hope someone has an idea about what is necessary to take this info for our own use and even more, funding, grants etc, so we can enhance what we have documented today, how can we do something productive with this info?

We involved the parents in our programs so they can be a part of the process and make for a successful venture. Another key to our success is the matching of programs to our open spaces, on-going activities, facilities. We need to connect these to our schools. As part of this we need to give credit to our schools.

Service learning volunteer opportunities-- youth-- VOC, YCC, SWCC

1. Use Jefferson County open space as a model

1. Open space model (Jefferson County) 2. No sunset on sales tax

1. Volunteerism is working well 2. Keep federal funding coming

1. GOCO as a national model 2. Low maintenance opportunities

1. Seconded GOCO support

Discussion Question 1

Golden, CO

(cont.)

1. GOCO support

1. No fees for land access

ELK program started under Ken Salazar. Connections within families. Older siblings participate then younger siblings want to do it. Making connections with parents. Long term mentoring is important.

Trips on the river include geologist, botanist, astronomer. Working with schools is very difficult. Used to do kids trips with Denver Children's home. Now the logistics (number of staff, managing kids' meds, etc.) make it impossible. Build multi-million dollars sports complexes but no tents, backpacks, etc. to connect kids to the outdoors. Getting kids outside is not viewed as part of the curriculum. Each school has to have a staff person who will lead it.

Colorado just passed "No Child Left Inside" law that is funded by grants, etc. Focus is on teacher training.

Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts have a strong service and leave no trace ethic. Exposure as children is important. These organizations get challenged by bureaucracy. Schools used to sponsor these groups. The Federal government should support these organizations.

Outreach through nature centers has really decreased. Used to be State Parks, National Parks, etc. would visit schools. This increases interest in participation. State and Federal programs could help with this.

Douglas County also has a nature based education school. Federal government could encourage this model. Communicate these successes. Develop common messages.

Part of a group where people can just get together, go do things, it doesn't cost money and they don't have to tell somebody ahead of time if they'll show up. Just come and enjoy the outdoors, feel safe.

Most of our NGO funding comes from grants. We have a program for disadvantaged kids – if can find funding for that kind of a fund, can reach even more kids out to Dinosaur Ridge, which is next step to the wilderness.

Angler education works. Take kids fishing.

Challenges - What obstacles exist that prevent you from achieving your goals for conservation, recreation and reconnecting people to the outdoors that you have used

Discussion Question 1

Golden, CO

(cont.)

"At a time when our natural resources are disappearing at an astonishing rate, the government has an obligation to promote sustainability, biodiversity, and conservation in any way possible: education, regulation, provision for quiet recreation (hiking, biking, fishing, enjoying animals and birds, etc.), discouragement of destructive practices such as off road vehicle use and destructive extraction processes.

School administrators need to be made more accountable for bringing students into the natural environment and promoting the outdoors.

Lack of local green space. Denver currently has programs that we should emulate - Some schools are turning school grounds into native landscape and natural areas that are being used for onsite education. We have a need for more natural areas conservation within the urban environment. Funding - Water conservation act. Lack of initiative. Advocacy - inspiring cooperative action. Lack of protection for natural areas - need to protect - and the resources to support existing legislation.

Examine alternative ways to generate funding for restoration and rehabilitation projects. Examine the renewal of SuperFund money for environmental work. Review of 1872 Mining Act - Are large corporations paying their share of rehabilitation cost?

Through the conservation trust system, _____ has contributed 12K acres of his ranch to study wildlife species, how development was affecting wildlife and other education opportunities - as a private land owner, how can he generate the dollars required to administrate the program through high schools and colleges, and how best can we approach the cooperation of the educators.

2nd question - What are the most effective strategies for conservation, recreation and reconnecting people to the outdoors that you have used?

Model - "Alpino" has a program that trains kids and their families in how to camp and be safe in the outdoors. Hands on outdoor training is available in a group setting so that kids get to recreate and learn about the outdoors with their own family and friends. getting kids up to te city. They are seeing success in partnering with corporations and local businesses. We need to go beyond creating an event, we should be designing the program to work with federal agencies to get more families going outside.

Replicate the model used by the CO Cattleman's land trust - which is a precursor to over 7 land trusts in the west. Provide outreach to constituents who may be averse to the conservation community. Cooperative use of the existing model. After only 3 years Texas is seeing progress in cooperation between stakeholders.

Partner with colleges and retail outlets to endorse sponsorship of outdoor activities for youth.

Discussion Question 1

Golden, CO

(cont.)

Implemented RAW "Ranch and Wildlife" youth program. Science students are responsible for the curriculum - agricultural and habitat based, as well as riparian and watershed, soils, etc. The Instructors noticed how much improvement the hands on participation provided rather than reading text in class. They indicated that the kids were engaged and actually retaining more information.

Use conservation leases to generate funds and initiate local and regional partnerships in education initiatives.

Participates in the TEN "Teaching Environmental Science Naturally" program. Working with school districts to provide teacher training so they can be certified to take students outdoors. Once trained - the instructor can obtain grant and other funding to take the kids outdoors. (This program is currently only available in Loveland) Some of the areas incorporated are wildlife skills days, fishing and hunting outreach and various outdoor clinics.

The Western Energy program participates in the junior ranger program at Nat'l park - The kids receive a badge, passes to parks and education on natural resources. The key to the success of the program is the federal designation and endorsement.

The DOW programs are comendable. The connection with nature creates invaluable influence in the lives of children. Once you make the connection, you are able to establish an interest that they can see and feel themselves. When kids are allowed the opportunity to learn hands on, their research indicates that there is a higher graduation rate, higher math and science test scores, and a higher percentage of college enrollment. Unfortunately, these outdoor programs have been cut from 5 days to 1 - 1 1/2 days to accommodate CSAP requirements.

Incorporate and build programs that re-establish habitats within the urban setting. For example, turning public areas or even your own back yard into a wildlife habitat. Continue to restore urban waterways. Find ways of involving businesses, communities, and governments working collectively on solutions. Addressing the problems with transportation to natural resource and recreation areas. How can we build partnerships between entities to accomplish these goals? The federal government needs to be involved.

Federal Gov't role. Nature close to home and first experiences must begin at a younger age. Large minimally inhabited areas and control and balance of the management of offroad vehicles and RV's.

Discussion and planning across agency and corridor markers to build partnerships in conservation. Using youth programs like alpino or TEN to train children how to be comfortable in the outdoors.. Training outdoors. Design the program to work with federal agencies to get entire families going outside.

Federal funding for Environmental sciences programs for kids and the transportation to get there.

Discussion Question 1

Golden, CO

(cont.)

Travel management, resource management planning and coordination of fee based services to ensure costs are better controlled and agencies align.

Funding for youth programs that encourage development in the sciences and land planning careers. Hands on participation to allow students the opportunity to develop an interest in being a steward of the land.

Partner with groups like the Co Mtn club to generate interest in the management and conservation of the land for future generations. Develop plan for long term costs - Use tools such as the wilderness act, and less stringent oversight. use resource mgmt planning - agencies. Enforcement.

MAPPING - LODGEPOLE PINE - MIGRATORY CORRIDORS - AND GETTING EVERYONE TOGETHER AT THE SAME TIME - Looking at the different mapping layers, agencies could begin to understand the values and resource uses of each group.

Use Forest Service and National Park Svc partnerships to teach urban forest, parks and waterways management, and then relate that education to build respect of our urban parks and waterways...Getting these kids early enough to establish a real connection with the lands or land management.

"Recognize that broad eco-systems are at stake and must be addressed beyond any particular state's preferences. The red rain that falls on the Denver area and covers cars, houses, and my expensive photovoltaic solar panels so that the sun can no longer reach them originates in abusive "historic" land practices---read over-grazing---in the Utah desert. If "scientific management" is the guide, why is this happening? Barren drilling and mining sites likewise destroy the land and water. Have we learned nothing from the Dust Bowl of the 30's?"

Tools*** How much time we are spending developing a state and federal clearing house to get the most out of the grants and money available through various agencies and non-profit organizations? We should be developing ways to share the limited resources we have.

Financial incentives for working lands conservation - clean water, open space habitat, state tax development incentives. *** Tax incentive for conservation easements***is working in Texas.

Initiate a citizen involvement program and incentives to participate in existing programs.

Initiate a public information marketing campaign. One of the most effective campaigns that affected _____ personally was the "Crying Indian" - 1970's?

We need a campaign to address the over-sensationalizing the media does regarding the "danger" of nature. If people are consistently bombarded with the "danger of nature," they will be less apt to seek out recreation outdoors. The media plays an enormous part in the stifling of our children and the decisions parents make regarding the activities their children can participate in.

Discussion Question 1

Golden, CO

(cont.)

Better use of commercial funds for public lands sites that film-makers use for movies. Use this additional funding for recreation and habitat protection. Smarter use of existing resources.

Build urban habitats people can connect to . Forest service needs to retire abandoned roads to restore habitat. Policies on rangelands need to be examined for land leases Land lease costs are consistently low. Initiate subsidies for stewardships of public lands. Climate change - work with states, private land owners and local and state agencies. Citizen stewardship would serve to encourage participation in stewardship and volunteerism.

Winter travel mgmt planning US AG dept. exemption for snowmoibles.

Citizen Stewardship. Better management of volunteer resources. Trail and park programs for restoration and upkeep.

National database to share the names of the people attending today's presentation. (Note*possible FOIA and privacy issues) Provide an easy way to keep track of the sessions and the problems and solutions being discussed. Summary of the sessions on website with contact database.

Youth campaign within the schools to promote "America's Great Outdoors." An outdoor education summit with actors, sports figures and other celebrities to bring youth into the big picture.

Clearinghouse - to consolidate efforts into one place. A large campaign may be overwhelming. Consolidation of efforts seems like the best route.

We have to keep in mind that solutions developed in one state may not be applicable in another. The nineteen western states need to be working together as well as partnering with the Federal government for better land use planning across jurisdictions.

Parting comment* It might be time to reinstate the Civilian Conservation Corp.

Submitted DVD for further review by the committee. The DVD is entitled "Wetlands and Wonder, Reconnecting Children with Nearby Nature." (produced by US EPA)N07

Education of accessibility. Little information saying it's okay to go certain parks, and it's okay to go outside to the parks.

Personal benefits to people from public lands can be made stronger known.

Bark Beetle demonstrates what is important for our forrests. We can't leave our forrests alone.

Discussion Question 1

Golden, CO

(cont.)

look at eco systems more broadly, and don't really recognize the adaptability of eco systems. Working public land managers together.

South Platte River, Grand Junction, Prioritize protecting River for drink and also keep people out and going to these treasured places for camping and swimming. National watertrails or blueways trail --cost effective and connect people to the outdoors and create generation of stewards.

I own stretch of river, beautiful country. Something brought tot my attention, only funded about third of project where we created fish habitat, and five years later have a fabulous patch of river today.

My sisters middle school had a program and I went with her planting plants and it was hot and I hated it, but I looked over and it was a mess before so I thought it looked good. Next time we went camoing. Family started to come and brought friends.

Just turned 21 want to go out and party. 18 can do that too. We go to clubs and it gets tiring and boring, so then we go out and go camping and hiking, and get lost. Remember something we saw that was cool and have to go back a nd find it again.

program at my sisters school, took her and she thought it would be good for us so I went fishing. And we've been out a lot since.

Transportion getting to those places is an issue. Programs (ELK) pick kids up to take them out and make it work. The kids in the program but also friends they want to take. Funding for these programs is very important

As simple as getting kids out fishing. It's huge. Federal government shouldn't forget about the tribes. They get little money, but the eco tourism for the public. Many are intimidated, and the governement is a huge part. Transportation to these reservations is a big part.

Compeling power that water has. We live and eat with it. The successful parts CO has with it. Protecting riverflow is very important.

What the local communities need and want. Important for efforts to be locally and voluntarily driven. 95% of the land is Federal. Ranchers were the first environmentalist, and most are willing to participate, but there's gotta be incentives. Peopl ewant to participate but need the oppurtunities. Wyoming kids grow up hunting and fishing, but as it becomes more urban we face these things too. Local economies and local peices are critically important. Three things in this initiative are Urban, Parks, and Lands.

Kids start having access at very young age through thte school systems, etc.

Strong urban presence -- education, etc. More Local nonprofit groups. Willing to volunteer and get kids out.

Discussion Question 1

Golden, CO

(cont.)

Weekend trips to Mountains are great, but more daily stuff--just going outside and gardening are even better. Drought hinders a lot, but shouldn't stop it forever.//What about school shaving their own gardens? AquaponicsSystems

Draw people from the cityoutside. Some neighborhood associations would help with the kids by showing them insects and other creatures. Leadership in the neighborhoods. I was afraidn of the mountains, but what helped me was trip to the National Parks and meeting up with the rangers

Local community. Some who live in an apartment and don't have the yard to go into and look at nature, need the parks (National and Local) to see.

Becoming part of the comuntiy is imprtant. Being able to talk to thecommunities.

Public transportationis there but can improve greatly. Federal involvement in transportation to get people places more safely.

Keep the federal government out until you need them. Having the fed gov't be the solution shouldn't the primary choice. There' sgotta be a local determination. Not at the first level. They help implement it after.

Convening----bring the local community together to talk about what it is about the future of valley they are concerned about. How do they want th e future to look. Community discusses it and the county is listening. This has done more to help folks see they are a community.

Funding, Creating a national Strategy, having leadership that can help out, and other tangible things.

Partnerships

Method to helping fund equally across the board, communities

National Landscape Conservation would love to see a secretarial order issued to give further guidance

What is working: in boulder a symbol of how you merge the outdoors and the communities. 4.7 million visits to the boulder open space, more than Rocky Mountain National Park. Make it as part of the life style. It is there to use. Sees Boulder being a leader for the country. Overcrowding due to 4.7 million visitors. Accessible open space around the whole town. Making the park become part of the city.

Discussion Question 1

Golden, CO

(cont.)

What is working: Across the country and work with many agencies. It is a unique partnership with volunteers, youths, adults, integrate with local communities to leverage what we can do. Long-distance trail that goes thru 5 states. Work multi-jurisdictionally. Unique partnership consisting of locals and volunteers engaging stewardship. They economic development and leverage with partners. Powerful network.

What is working: Engaging the communities who benefit from lands, grass roots outreach, - Is there a lot of resistance? Have to explain what the land is being designated for to get them to understand what the uses are. Groups educate communities. One-on-one contact. They explain the designation to overcome opposition, repeatedly.

What is working: Cattleman's and the land trust are moving forward in partnership, and stronger organizational structure. Access for the public to the Sangre DeCristos. What is not working the IRS. They have a strong organization regarding access to the Sangre de Cristo Mountains.

What is working: Local open space programs is working well. Every community in Boulder has an open space program over 100,000 acres. Get kids out to the land, buffering, local food production. It is a revolution.

What is working: Connecting kids to the out doors, creative partnerships with organizations they have not worked with in the past. Creative partnerships and thinking outside the box. They're forging new partnerships.

What is working: Land owner driven conservation. Successful around the State. Leadership that is invaluable. Routt County protecting farming ranch properties. Landowner interests.

What is working: Colorado bar associated, holding its CLEs by combining meetings on reservation easements, age law section, cattleman's sections, etc.... Bringing forward the issues throughout the state. Think about professional organizations reaching out to the advisor communities. Looking to professional organizations to help families consider willing their lands.

What is working: Private lands issue and recognize the USDA releasing moneys for land owners to open up areas for outdoor recreationists. USDA funding is for open fields initiative to continue conservation and increase opportunities.

What is working: Reforms for onshore gas - leasing reforms. Need to continue to promote multi-use and restoring balance. Restoring balance to the way public lands are used.

What is working: Concept of the programs farm bill based programs based leveraging private land dollars.. Look toward more programmatic and leveraging the private dollars and lands.

What is working: Colorado is a great example to facilitate all of the groups (environmental groups) and the federal government on working the conservation issues. Seven other states have followed Colorado's lead regarding conservation.

Discussion Question 1

Golden, CO

(cont.)

What is working: Colorado model, seven other states have followed suite and formed cattleman's conservation groups that have replicated what CO has done. SCORP is funded by conservation money. Every five years, all 50 states. Collaborative planning. Federally-funded programs sent to states for implementation. Brings together folks to discuss and build partnerships and vision.

What is working: Collaborative effort across the Nation sent to the State for collaboration. Colorado good model.

Challenges: IRS fraudulent accusations, encourage outdoor use, increases the impacts and waste disposal on the land. Group size damage, impacts to the environment. Need to educate about what the outdoors are about and preservation. Concerns from San Isabel involve the IRS; Crystal Mountains and problems with massive trash, etc. from people who use and damage the area because some people being allowed to do whatever they want when there while others' accessibility is limited. Educating youth on preserving the area. LEGACY FUND.

Good for kids to have experience working with animals. Protecting the wild mustang. Save the native mustang, horses can live in harmony with the cattle.

State 4H. Interest is working with education. Debt relief or college credit. Educating youth via debt relief, etc., (incentivizing secondary education).

What is working: creating small groups of kids and helping them connect to the land.

What is working: Working landscapes are a good way to protect our lands and plants. [*THESE REMARKS CAME AFTER WILL SHAFROTH GAVE PEOPLE AN OPPORTUNITY TO SHARE ANYTHING THEY'D LIKE TO SAY.]

How we utilize private sector partners, ranchers and others. Look at best-case, best practices, GOCO is a good example of an org that understands the big picture, understand locals and engage with local entities, engage those in existence. Affordable housing is a good example to.

Being able to communicate the relationship between outdoors and the health of our communities. Everyone thinks it's nice but not fundamental in tight economic times and they don't get the importance. Tie it to health.

State, federal and local funding, but non-profits are not always an eligible recipient of some programs. Should make non-profits eligible as well, they can take money from more sources, foundations, and give tax credits to the corporations you can't get when donating to county/state.

One program, that may already exist where you could have a self-guided tour that highlight the attributes of natural and cultural resources, maybe telecommunications could get some cell coverage, and combine with an interpretive service, features of the conserved lands and what they have to offer. It's a PR opportunity and educates people about why those areas are special.

Discussion Question 1

Golden, CO

(cont.)

Recognize cultural and historic resources, would like to see a greater voice for that. Obstacle of course is funding.

I echo the remark about funding, barrier is leadership. Another issue in Colorado is it is hard for youth groups to get the permission to be on federal lands.

Opportunities to partner with agencies. Fed government is not the most welcome partner, so utilize the existing programs with federal funds. Water rights in CO are contentious, it's an experiment but we are using a state program that has the resources to protect, and how we can protect using existing infrastructure.

The value of partnerships, GOCO has been enormously effective in this way in Colorado and that has resulted in a # of conservation movements, interest in conservation and has transformed CO vision of how that can happen. It is a model for the rest of the country. Focus on private lands and the general public and conservation groups, it's amazing. Partnership also working Colorado Rare Plant Conservation initiative has brought diverse stakeholders together and gained funding from a variety of sources, it's a good model of a partnership.

Maintaining private lands is important in addition to the public lands we have, we have a dedicated funding source, homegrown partnerships, that are diverse, include local and state governments and non-profits, private, come together to problem solve to protect landscapes. It requires leverage. You have to bring other dollars to the table from other sources. America's Great Outdoors can learn from where we are doing private lands conservation programs, landscape by landscape. Private/public partnership is valuable. Community engagement is necessary, at the local neighborhood level in the urban environment so the community defines what its needs are and the health and the community's access to the outdoors. Make connection between lands, people, outdoors.

A compelling reason to go, a story to tell, which is easily accessible. "Cites in the city" has a cell phone feature to tell you about what is around you. Regarding the Public/private issue, keep your compass straight and do not compromise with private funding.

We're doing it; kids wanted to come here and are genuinely engaged. If we don't reach kids, these are our future supporters of our conservation efforts and that's what works, if they hear about it in school and hear about in science, or archery programs, some will develop a life-long love of outdoors.

Mentoring Academic Program/Educating Families - access to paths via bicycle - have to ride to destination.

Youth activities - mentoring them; need more support w/family programs due to both parents working.

Introduce the good ethics of four wheeling - problems with insurance coverage. Boys N Girls Club participated in four wheeling in mtn's - help kids recreate - educate kids/outreach.

Discussion Question 1

Golden, CO

(cont.)

Lookout Mtn Nature Ctr - funds availability for transportation

Access to websites/communications to find information; create a website consistent with all the agencies and keeping them updated.

Full and dedicated funding for Wildlife. Implementing /wkng with state & local agencies. Living in Boulder and having the rtd, railways

Camping Equipment - It is hard to buy these items when you are living day to day

Appreciates the conditions of campsites in CO area. No outhouses, area in Natl Forest was not kept up; was not clean. Need funding for keeping up the campsites/ toilet/ water will be beneficial for families camping/hiking.

Age limit for younger kids- encouraging Girl Scouts, ELK, finding time/research on outdoor activities. Advertising/encouraging for kids and parents.

Urban Gardens are awesome - in town and keep supporting them. Local/State funding/process.

One strategy that has worked huge network of volunteers. Take care of the people that help agency. Saves \$\$ /County money - They in turn also share their experience to the public.

Environmental Education - there are lots of agencies - no coordinated strategy with those agencies - Envi Literacy in process of creating. Oregon, Maryland have this going on.

What has worked is a coalition put together ie. www.outdoor.net - have great info on website on how to volunteer - whats going on in your neighborhood, trails, etc..

Great Outdoors - Americore important for CO.

Using outdoor classroom time for our kids today - as well is indoors. Educators are doing well on passing info to kids in school.

take a deeper look at recreation plans - take reports, group them together and hilitte accomplishments and collaboration needed on state & fed level.

Program incentives on roads being worked on/Wildlife bridges for animals that need to cross.

Discussion Question 1

Golden, CO

(cont.)

I'm a common man living in Denver. Have lived here over 30 years. I very much hope this policy will integrate the non-profit community, GOCO, etc. into helping non-profits to help kids get outdoors. 2nd - I fully endorse initiatives to get kids outdoors. Growing up, our folks used to kick us outdoors, but that has changed and we need to help get kids outdoors. River programs are a good idea. Mission programs on weekends and off-school days help to get kids out. Lastly, the elk example seen today helps get kids out. We need to train kids to be future environmental educators. We should create a whole new "Force" (both adults and youth) with love for the outdoors.

Preparing for the "Heritage Area" - this pulls the history and land together in South Park, Colorado. There's reality and authenticity. Outside mentoring with kids on the range and Platte River. Heritage Area connects volunteers, grass roots, and others, ranchers, ranch experience, miners panning, miners with engineering thinking, partnering with other groups and offering Heritage Area resources. Include this with what's happening with the land. Visit an old miners cabin, ranch, one room schoolhouse, and see and feel what it would have been like for a kid to live there. We have a museum with 35 buildings in South Park, to visit history. Partnering with other places and other resources. Huge ranches in South Park, but putting in easements for the future. We need to ask ourselves, what can I do, how can people appreciate this as much as I do?

Support leaders of outdoors in kids and others being in even just their backyards. Support initiatives - getting people out, revitalizing cities. North of Denver are working farms - I love to see these. Important to see areas outdoors is not exclusive, and you don't have to travel far. You can even just plant flowers on your doorstep, or you can just stay close to home sitting under a tree. All this is really getting outdoors, too.

Recently, Colorado was awarded for their outdoor rec. plan. This needs to be recognized across the country! We work as 65 people who meet downtown at the REI store monthly, and this successful grassroots volunteer work can be replicated nationally. Available is Water Land and "Conservation funding for staffing, with initiatives, to continue partnering with many non-profits. We have a successful Landscape approach with our recreation issues (Gave out handout).

The outcome of our work should be a reasonable number of visions. We must celebrate or nurture the collaborative successes that have celebrated great outcomes, across multiple jurisdictions, with healthy forest initiatives and youth. Inspiring a new outdoor use paradigm would be a crowning achievement of your administration.

We have a shared vision, a request for administration on how funding can work, with more collaborative partnerships. Dollars follow objectives. Dollars flow to joint contributions.

Example - 750 environmental education teachers who could be empowered by giving them lift tickets. Lots of skiers .

Discussion Question 1

Golden, CO

(cont.)

Challenge cost share - national historic and scenic trails that are funded are important to have. There are over 100 communities with large populations which are encouraged to get out and make use of these. Inner City kids can get on a bus and go there. Costumed trail guides and history are available at several. Walking where their ancestors had walked is an important notion. Trails connect everything. Historic landscapes, land, animals, etc. It's important to get kids out on these. Lewis and Clark Trail System - is a great example of where visually impaired kids are using trails successfully.

We have a great vision - differing habitats to see, and the need to drive special folks to use these.

Parks and recreation are big in the City of Denver and in Lakewood. We should continue to try and reach kids, families, all demographics, and don't need to take kids off on grand adventures, but to give them local outdoor experiences close to home. Important to work into parks programs. Walk a trail.

Psychology of going on a hike diminishes stress, diminishes pain, connects us spiritually. Need to create desire. Look at advertisers and food. Only create a positive vision. How great you feel when you move!

Have the agencies work together. Private land owners and gov't agencies can be helped together with a catalyst agency like Trout Unlimited. Partnerships work with mediator group. Hundreds of successful examples are out there to help more partnerships forward. Keep inspired.

lack of mentoring young people, mentoring provides better education than booked based curriculum, we need to bring kids into environment of learning

more incentives for private land owners to provide conservations easements and other similar private land conservation programs

awareness, where do we target these kids, school, having outdoor youth organizations available in school, mentors, makes it easier to get to the kids

it's equally as important for State Historic Fund to be fully funded, Hisotic Corps, education, mentoring, integrating historic and environmental education is just as important

Outreach in Schools really helps, it started me, raised me to be a role model for younger kid, working for ELK in outreach for young kids

ELK is an inspiration, do you do more outreach in other schools

Plan trails using GIS to make sure they lay lightly on the land, "bundle" trails for different uses but yet separate.

Discussion Question 1

Golden, CO

(cont.)

biking community passionate environment, bundling of trails works well

Scenic Byways a great way to get people out and educate them about the environment

involving the young people today needs to be the trend, because there has been a huge disconnect between young people and the outdoors.

it would be beneficial for us to have programs that don't need people to sign up, and don't cost money, and help people enjoy the outdoors safely. It costs too much money to get into a national park, which excludes a large group of people.

I work for a non-profit, and all of our funding comes from grants. We also have a program for disadvantaged kids, but we don't have funding for it. If there was money, more children would be able to take part in the activities. Funnel the money through the non-profits!

It is important to positively influence people to value public lands and resources. It is our support system! We need to raise awareness about what wilderness is all about, and promote the designation of new wilderness areas.

Has worked for a wheel-chair camp for children; wilderness on wheels

Works with a program that is seeing Federal funds, and feels supported.

Just wanted to point out that there are programs with support.

In Colorado.. had good success building on partnerships.. the focus is on jobs, but also noting that private businesses are evil.. However, it's the partnerships between private business with the non-profits that are making things happen. President needs to embrace every opportunity to get private funding.

Need to focus on undeveloped lands.. ability of President to establish national monuments.. through antiquities act. Govt has ability to protect wildlife, air, water.. more pressure for development.. as energy sources get more scarce.. we need to use this mechanism to take this action

Was on school board, requiring performance bonds along with a permit

We get money from gov to buy on water rights, donate those to state, funded through Federal Dollars, State Dollars and sometimes GOCO, private individuals donate- somewhat of a partnership

Discussion Question 1

Golden, CO

(cont.)

People should be encouraged to write a conservancy trust in their wills; a donation of strategically placed land

And there should be a Federal match.

How much money does this region get. Accountability, for mineral and oil extraction

bring disparate groups together under one umbrella, and let's start working together. We made many recommendations, but there is no way to get those recommendations going because of funding and other challenges. There is a lack of awareness about the benefits of getting outside. The government should provide answers to questions: What is there to do? Where will I find it? And how do I do it?

It is important to have a vision of success from the beginning. It is easy to become overwhelmed with all the details. It is important to conserve the areas that we love. As a population, we will not be comfortable with public lands if we are unfamiliar with them. It is important to get nature areas (parks, rec) close to home so everyone can be involved!

get more kids involved in outdoor programs, like ELK

Mineral impact funds, most distributed to local governments.

It goes to infrastructure, not watershed.

IF there is a way that President can work with admin to give local forest ability to work outside the box.. instead of one big forest policy.. dealing with san juans that your not gonna see somewhere else... put a directive to enforce existing MOUs

Discussion Question 1

Grand Island, NE

I wanted to briefly. Dimensions Educational Research Foundation. Have seen huge success with partnership with them. People's Gardens. They provide research based field tested for providing nature based outdoor spaces. Can be used anywhere a traditional playground. My kids go to public school in Lincoln they go to where a nature playground is being put in. If we can provide a place for kids to go out and play right at the school instead of going somewhere else. Then that starts with curriculum and getting hands on. Fund on average about 6 million trees on public lands. Work with state foresters. I am trying to find a fit with private landowners. How do we make a fit on private lands to fund reforestation on private lands. It's the program I run. I came here today to talk to people about partnership's These forums are great. Continue building partnerships.

One of challenge we've faced is balance between ground water and water resources. One of State's AWEPS in central state has worked very well with money from EQIP, Conservation and urban development program? In case of Platte Basin Habitat this is a challenge .

JAKES State Women's Coordinator. We have programs for women, parents, and kids to get them out doing this. They need to start when they're 4 years old.

Saw the tour this morning, there's an incredible partnership between landowners. 3600 miles, 700 landowners. Missouri River has Wetland Reserve Innovation Program. First state in the nation to have this. Common resources can be targeted to land scale initiatives. Common landscape scale objectives is hugely important. We are lucky in Nebraska to have Steve Chick. He is a good listener. He's open minded enough to listen to ideas from the field. Then he sets that tone with his staff to also be good listeners and try new things. We need that kind of leadership. With 97% of land privately owned you have got to have cooperation. Forcing realization, working partnerships and targeted collaborations that have been very successful.

Working with landowners is key to a lot of what has worked in Nebraska is that in the Natural Resource District System has allowed us to deal with natural resources issues in an integrated and comprehensive way .that a lot of other states have not been able to do. We are now dealing on things on a watershed basis in an integrated sort of way, taxing authority, resources to deal with and the local ownership connection between landowner and... Successful wildlife conservation and habitat relationship between people and land. Ownership that local folks have is a larger part of why things are successful. NRD's are tied closing to folks who own the land and natural resources. That is why Nebraska structurally has a huge advantage and why Nebraska is the only state in the nation that has the kinds and amounts of local funds spent on the land. Looking at it thru the eyes of landowners, incentives work. You can educate all day but if you don't have the carrot/incentives to go with it, if they don't have the money and the where withal then they don't do it. If you do a good job of education and you have the incentives, landowners will do the right thing. Going all the way back to Section 208 (Public Law 92-500, Section 208). If you want to be successful, you have to have the support from the bottom up. That's why we are as successful as we have been. A lot of NRD programs are things that came from the local folks. Folks said we have this resource problem and we solved with ideas that came from the ground up

Discussion Question 1

Grand Island, NE

(cont.)

NACEE is working with Nebraska organizations to create a web site that would provide a web site for someone to go to find out opportunities in the state. Game and Parks, Ducks Unlimited, etc. Include all web sites to a single location. Each organization could have their own password to keep their own dates, etc. updated. Others can sign up to find out what is happening in other parts of the state. Hopefully online by next summer.

Local people find solutions. For every one dollar of federal received, they provide twenty dollars locally.

Handout on North Star Neighbors Farm Tour near Fullerton, Nebraska. Will have demonstration on things they do on a farm - now certified organic, grown natural beef, raise chickens and eggs. Have a field day to help people understand where their food comes from. Work thru food system and educate them on how food is produced. Bought metal canister and split in two. Going to make cabins. People can go out on pasture and rent a cabin. Identify and support these people. A free will basket will be available to cover costs. We undervalue our resources in Nebraska.

Environment and sportsman organization. Nebraska says we take pride in fact that we are 97% private land ownership. Average across US is 70%. Is that the fact that we are the leader? Should others aspire to what we have or should be finding more public lands? As soon as this happens their property taxes goes up. Same thing happens in Sandhills. Ted Turner bought ground and rancher's properties went completely out of reason. Landowners are furious. Is 97% private ownership to crow about or does it need to be fixed Spent a lot of years in education. A year after I retired I was called back for a half year because an auto mechanics instructor retired. Even without knowing how to teach auto mechanics, I could go in office and sleep as long as you let kids get "hands on". I'm an avid fisherman. I raised 3 boys and nothing compares to raising children. I have 9 grandsons and only 4 have any attitude positive toward hunting fishing, etc. It bothers me. Anything we can do to facilities getting those kids out getting hands on.

Mentioned partnerships being key. Takes local initiatives that understand local issues; folks who understand local issues and can deliver. State wildlife grants program works great. Have biologists in local communities who know the folks and find win/win solutions. Go out to all states and have impacted over 200,000 acres. Can find landowners objectives meet wildlife objects. This is working.

Talked about her experiences of mayor of small community and what we face in order to accomplish this great outdoors. My town has parks, ball fields, swimming pool and frisbee golf. We revitalized an old zoo into a park. It is hard to keep all of these going. One thing that has worked well is the RC&D program. They received help from the Department of Economic Development and Tourism. Hall County RC&D program did a presentation and told them they needed one central area to go to get help. From this group we got two scenic byways – Sandhills and Loup City, the Junk Jaunt, and chalk mines—needs to be developed further on. Helped with Spalding Dam and Lake Ericson project. Partnerships that we have with NRD's, Game and Parks, land-grant colleges, and university extension. Family activities. We are a family place to come and visit. Over 100,000 kids go thru program. This works.

Discussion Question 1

Grand Island, NE

(cont.)

The UNL Extension Office uses a facility in Hastings at the old Regional Center. This center for outdoor and agricultural learning, Prairie Loft, is using grant monies and private donations to operate. Most of the work is done by volunteers and privately funded. I want all these agencies to work with schools more.

Historic trails have been a great way to tie kids to the environment. Having the kids walk the ruts of the Oregon Trail gets more across to the kids than just talking about the Oregon Trail.

Free transportation to a park or lake.

How about taking kids who need a job and pairing them up with farmers? Someone else mentioned there are regulations on this, so be careful.

Taking a kid on a field trip, getting the parents involved.

We need to have the parents involved. He was involved with the Boy Scouts as a youth. It got him involved.

How do we reach the parents? Do they care? Can we get the parents to take their kids outdoors? Buses generally do not go to the nature spots. Sometimes the kids need to experience it themselves, and then get their parents involved.

Nebraska NRD's own and operate facilities that are free to the public. It would be nice if we could have access to more federal dollars to promote NE. The gov cannot be everything to everyone. We can be a resource to a volunteer organizations and public schools. I am a farmer, not at it actively. We started a program with Gothenburg High School and worked with FFA/biology/science for outdoor education. We obtained materials from NRCS and NRD. My family ran this program for 20 plus years. We passed the program on to our neighbor and it is still running today. It is a lot easier to run a program like this in a small town. We targeted 4th & 5th grade students and showed them how to husk corn in the fall, milk cows, etc., and exposed them to the environment. It is up to us to take the initiative to expose them locally. Another project one of the NRDs is working on is an educational trail. We are working with the local ag organization to promote the trail and place signs with points of interest, i.e., who it was settled by, heritage, history, culture, etc.

Has been interested in the conservation taking place. He has had school children to his place and taught them to identify different plants, roots, shown them corn, earth worms, bugs, etc. We need to pay farmers not to irrigate. Farmers are using way to much water. Use the water appropriately; they need education on this issue. How do we get the kids to the farm? We need to make the parents be there. We fed the kids by roasting hotdogs on a stick. The kids had never done this before.

Discussion Question 1

Grand Island, NE

(cont.)

We are using less water today than we have in the past.

Why is it so important that we are talking about outdoor activities? Conservation/stewardship (especially in Nebraska) is so much better than 50 years ago when he was a kid. His home county of Saline used to flood every year, but not now because of the improved conservation practices.

He is involved in outdoor education. The kids need repeated exposure to outdoor activities. Education is important and relevant. We are one generation away from the farm. These kids need to be educated about the farm life.

A water park may be their connection to nature. Families need to do things together. We are competing against other activities. We need to get stuff in the urban areas to compete.

There is a club that has purchased canoes to take the kids out for an overnight fishing adventure. She has asked what the kids do when they find out there are no TVs, computer games, etc. The kids are awestruck when they can see the stars. This is a real success story.

That is a good way to get people back to nature. Bonus points for adult. Kids need to climb the tree by themselves. What about back to a heavy duty volunteer program. We have baby boomers who are retiring. Set up volunteer programs for the baby boomers. We could have community gardens in Grand Island. We could teach them to preserve their food, healthy eating, etc.

She would add recipes to her vegetables when she sold produce at the farmers market. There are a lot of things we can share if we could reach individuals? Maybe through churches, help at a community garden, or teach canning?

He grew up on a farm and hunting was something he wanted to do. He recommends using mentor programs from Pheasant Forever. There is a difference between conservation and earth science that is taught in schools. He learned a lot of useful information in FFA, but FFA is not available in urban areas. As kids get older they need to know about conservation issues, i.e., what is a buffer, etc. Project Wild (a conservation and environmental education program) is a program we need to get into our schools. Also need to continue this education at a higher level.

Movement to natural grazing processing. Product all the way to the consumer. People with different ideas are doing some amazing things.

Need to work with urban people. Need to build relations. Fire (prescribed burning) works with Loess Canyon, need to work with urban because of smoke issues. CRP management. PF can be a natural. Look at the bigger picture. Cooperation/coordination.

Grandson likes to learn the different kinds of fields of crops. Would like to ride on a tractor. Great opportunity to work with farmers.

Discussion Question 1

Grand Island, NE

(cont.)

Social support after event, free, family accessibility, community-based projects. Reconnect kids with nature. Will be involved after. PONCA program worked- the community wanted it. Lincoln safari has been very successful to bring people to the city parks. It was representative of the general population. If 10% of population is Hispanic, they had 10% of their participant were Hispanic. Better ways to reconnect. Teach art - bring in environment. Great Park Response has been very successful.

CRP great. CRP is huge and glad there is a signup this year.

Have to go where the students are and provide information. Move programs to venues that are already set up. Public believes that others taking care of issues for them. Water festival over time has become more difficult to get students to come. Have to take it to the kids. After-school programs. Pioneer days . Take programs to new venues. Communities at large are hard to get involved. Think someone else is taking care of the problem. At Wayne at the Chicken Show to present water programs. Festivals -Summer Enrichment Program-Protecting water-media campaigns-Foundation has succeeded (I think).

Stated that she has been a camp counselor. Raised money for scholarship fund by auctioning off quilts that were donated. \$26,000 was the highest bid. Opportunities.

Need to reconnect people via education, access, opportunities. People take part in recreational activities close to home - put parks there. Why reinvent the wheel.

Need Ag in the classroom through regular curriculum. Farm Bureau supports program. Use Ag examples for English paper and math problems. Bigger challenge as people move farther from the farm now - two generations, Grandma and Grandpa, not on the farm.

Kudos to the federal government. CRP great program – conservation benefits. Challenge to continue due to locked-in rates. Value/tax - @ full Ag value.

Need to involve high school students and have them contact younger students rather than having adults contact students. Students will be more perceptive. Benefits high school students too because they realize that younger students are interested in what they say. Especially HS students who are very Ag oriented. Ag days- HS student can realize the impact they can have on other.

Need more free or low-cost opportunities that are family-oriented. Need accessibility. Must market tourism to outsiders. Collaboration works – schools, scouts, museums. Exposure promotes interest. Does not have to be your own resources. Farmers getting interested...

There needs to be a balance, perception, and education. Everything in moderation. Progress hippie gardener or everything - a parking lot or grass. From one extreme to another.

Discussion Question 1

Grand Island, NE

(cont.)

Boys Scouts try to make sure that children are connected to the outdoors. Single contact great – Girl Scouts, 4H, Boy Scouts beneficial. Effective even if a single contact it is a great opportunity. Civic organizations are great at making sure people are still connected to the outdoors. A continuing opportunity is even better.

“Kennedy said we can land a person on the moon – why can’t we land a person in the country”. Society does not understand how we all fit together. If we do not know how to balance things can we fall (like the Roman empire)? Reconnect-peace corp was a great thing. It will be great all around.

Organization’s values need to match people’s values. Reach/target individuals and they can reach their friends, etc, etc.

Youth programs, social media works - connects people across the country. Ag Chat tells rest of the country about Ag. Environthon all work very well. Stick up for geeks who are into technology but it is a way for them to connect. AG chat is a whole opportunity to let people know what is going on on the farm.

Stated he is involved with the Kiwanis which sponsors 100 low-income youngsters to attend Camp OK which is a 4H camp. Eighty percent really want to be there. Some have fear of the outdoors – trees, bugs, animals. Had two extra kids wanting to go to camp - private individual paid the \$700 needed for the two to go. _____, UNL extension, runs it. Most Kids really want to be there. Some just put up with it, but yet they leave with having experienced it.

I hope McKenzie Barry's suggestion to form a Got Nature campaign didn't fly over everyone's head.

I think we need to go back to No child left behind but we need the no child left inside act to be passed to promote environmental education. There are a lot of conservation grants out there that get conservation work done; but allow for those grant programs to do environmental education. Some grants provide the money, but it has to be tied to a big on the ground million dollar projects.

It is being appraised at highest and best use with the easement in place. To the individual landowner, everyone is going to pencil it out. They keep it or sell it.

Some of the more successful conservation planning efforts usually involve accumulating folks that have a lot of buy-in in the area, with much landowner representation.

Every conversation with a landowner has property taxes in it.

Extra curricular activities, in high school especially, it seems like there is some room for environmental education to fit in there.

Discussion Question 1

Grand Island, NE

(cont.)

It's important to maintain the support of the State Wildlife Grant Program.

My organization would like to create a conservation corp, a work corp of interns to do stewardship, prescribed fire, and other management activities. That idea at some point, since it has a historic idea (the conservation corp) may be adapted to different settings.

National Audubon here in Nebraska owns over 2,000 acres. We pay taxes through the good neighbor policy just to keep on the good side of our neighbors.

Nebraska has the Nebraska Recreational Liability Act...as long as the landowner is not taking money he is covered.

Non-financially, if those rules could be loosened just slightly (No Child Left Behind) it would help.

Some of the things we do affect people downstream so landowner buy-in is important.

The reorganization process was actually fallout from my job. We tried to organize some local working groups to get this job done, and a planning process was in place. It took a year of monthly meetings to get a process in place and getting it incorporated under a new name and entity...after that, issues of legalese would pop up and we had to wade through gobs of stuff after 3 years and 5 years. During this time, people started to get pride in what they were doing that hadn't been there before. It is a much more intimate, more local initiative. They needed to support a local idea. We're commodity driven and we don't think of ourselves as park managers. It's a cultural thing. Let's add some new things to the landscape to make us more diverse without hurting everything else.

There's a group of nonprofits and organizations involved in an organization called green infrastructure. It's an idea that green infrastructure is just as important as gray infrastructure. Part of this involves collaboration and a process to talk about how, if something needs rebuilt, that you can incorporate green infrastructure into the mix.

We develop new programs that could have easily been subsets of existing programs. We need input to our senators and representatives constantly as to what the priorities are so that when

We have a variety of programs to assist with the management and payment for access.

We use the Farm and Ranchland Protection Program to protect places we love on the landscape. We also use the Nebraska Environmental Trust to place working lands easements on properties. Our working lands easements are unique and we use these programs to assist in our mission

Discussion Question 1

Grand Island, NE

(cont.)

We've started a master naturalist program. This is a compilation of many, many organizations as another way to reach out to people, helping NGO's and Feds to do conservation service.

When you think about ways to monetize their land, one is leasing land to a rich hunter. A community based recreation program would be another way to provide access through a partnership between the community and the land. The landowners benefit by getting a cut of the income hotels, etc. make.

Discussion Question 1

Grand Junction, CO

disconnect this generation from technology and get that back outside. Kids go through withdrawal when they are away from technology - don't know how to disconnect. Kids will not support public lands unless they experience them - need to overcome apathy

need transportation to get kids outdoors, more partnerships

If people can all work on a project as a group (anglers, motorcyclists, etc) it gives people an idea of what we're trying to protect. Makes people more likely to respect signs, etc.

find a way for all user groups to get along and for continued access to trails while protecting resources

lack of funding is a major challenge. Fiscal partnership tools can be too complicated to figure out - simplify. Use agreements rather than contracts between partners.

Education - biggest obstacle - people do not understand value of large, intact ecosystems. Focus should be on value of intact ecosystems.

People do not see value of natural land/intact ecosystems; public information campaign to connect people with those ideas

emphasize rivers - healthy flows for recreation, health. Extend that emphasis to riparian areas

tourism/recreation are a big part of economy - remind decision makers of that

balancing act relative to multiple uses is a huge challenge, funding is a big challenge, balancing short term desire to use/access lands vs. long-term impacts which present conservation. Conservation ethic held by federal employees is great but challenge

Her students – gives kids opportunity to raise endangered fish - her challenge her kids are raised in the area and some have not seen CO River or Monument – need more than just one field trip to get kids invested.

Funding education

Balance between conservation and recreation, educate public that motorized users are conservationists

Federal government should get out of the way

provide education about what ranchers do as stewards

Discussion Question 1

Grand Junction, CO

(cont.)

Great Outdoors Colorado – put that money into recreation/outdoor education

GOCO education program

DOW environmental education curriculum

Working with local high schools – education, teaching kids to tie flies, fly fish, stream ecology, etc

work with multiple stakeholders to develop protections for lands that everyone agrees on, educate folks on what uses are available in wilderness

public/private partnerships and public/public partnerships

works to have kids work in the outdoors

collaboration works

once people decide to help build trails, etc, they take better care of them

funding - motorized community gives portion of funding for work on ground

lands trusts are working

youth corps working

get up get out and go program works

CDOW 10 program works - all agencies work together to develop kids for teachers to use

more listening tours on a regular basis

Discussion Question 1

Grand Junction, CO

(cont.)

create a new icon like Smokey the Bear for public land conservation, e tc

raise awareness for wildlife corridors/ connectivity

make all agencies accountable to the same regulations

implement best management practices within the O&G industry

support youth conservation education

how do you bridge the gap about which _____ spoke? School attendance is mandatory and the best medium for introducing kids to the outdoors.

Connecting kids to nature is an important goal, but need to direct emphasis to the retention of interest in the outdoors. The regulatory structure provides a strong disincentive to stay away.

need to connect current economic problems with outdoor issues. One way to accomplish this is to connect kids and adults with public service jobs. Energy future job opportunities are another good opportunity.

most recreation activities take place away from metropolitan areas; trail riding is an inherently family-based activity

look across economic sectors for “nontraditional” partners; those we don’t often look to but who do have a vested interest. Such partners have different opportunities to provide resources, tools and funds

state agencies such as State Parks have well funded, well established programs based on user dollars. Meet with agency staff on a regular basis to ensure dollars and efforts are targeted at the priorities. Go and ask. Ask the users, ask the agencies

National Forest Foundation provides grants and support for local efforts and is a good example of how federal program can help

some grant programs are very effective, others less so

support public land managers in their decision making process. They are charged with making good but hard decisions. Community-based decisions are messy, not easy

Discussion Question 1

Grand Junction, CO

(cont.)

Reminded the agencies that access to internet in rural areas is still a challenge for many people. Some programs that have been very successful are the farm-based conservation programs managed through Natural Resources Conservation Service. Need to ensu

Land and Water Conservation Trust should be fully and permanently funded to promote projects at the landscape scale

schools involved starts with parents. Must reach the parents first

doesn't see a national discuss about initiatives like the depression-era Works Project Agency. Why not?

the strings attached with federal grants are too onerous for small organizations. Small orgs ignore federal grants because it's a distraction on their staff resources. It's not worth it.

Great Outdoors Colorado board – helped discuss the issues surrounding federal and state grants and emphasized the need to streamline grant application process

work cooperatively to accommodate what we all value and cherish – health, open spaces. But we need to do it with federal agencies backing up local communities rather than leading the charge.

Conservation corps provide a good vehicle for retaining interest in the outdoors as kids get older (teenage years).

private rancher and member of a land trust. Believes Great Outdoors Colorado is an excellent example of incentivizing partnerships. Enhance conservation tax incentives.

localized neighborhood events at multiple points throughout the year

Obama Campaign put together an excellent grassroots information campaign that was successful at getting information to the kitchen table conversation

Motorcycle trail riders assc – family oriented event. Generations involved together. Teaches kids good outdoor ethics, orienteering, etc

local political and community leaders were involved to help persuade people to be involved

local media involved sooner rather than later is important to success. Focus on educating them on the message. Vital to have a strong internet presence. It is also important to ensure “self education” on the issues and message. Emphasized that there a

Discussion Question 1

Grand Junction, CO

(cont.)

Great Outdoors Colorado money provides a great incentive driving local organizations to collaborate and promote local innovation

Conservation crews are the best way to connect kids with outdoors. Has worked with several urban-based crews on public lands. Currently works with an organization that sponsors twenty-five Americorp Vista volunteers who are very successful at finding op

described his public/private partnership and their efforts to create a continuous greenway along the Colorado River. Has had significant funding from Great Outdoors Colorado but needs more local funding sources. Environmental centers and nature educatio

Riverfront Trail in Grand Junction – biking, walking, fishing, kids with and without parents – a great way to get kids and others outside. Close to home

emphasized Colorado Division of Wildlife programs to promote kids connection with the outdoors such as fishing derbies

his organization gave three \$700 scholarships to kids involved in snowmobiling and trail riding; OHV partnerships with BLM and USFS are good examples of success

affiliated with Trout Unlimited active youth programs in his organization such as fly fishing and tying; aquatic systems program

reiterating Trout Unlimited point; emphasized private/federal Trapper Creek joint partnership on Roan Plateau

local business promotion program called PTAC helps small orgs obtain grants.

has found Recovery Act projects to be of significant value to local public lands.

information dissemination is critical to any effort and the federal agencies rely on internet communication as a key vehicle of information sharing. libraries are a great venue for information outreach

students and teachers should write their own articles, take their own pictures and provide to local media.

II. Land Use Planning is a local responsibility. Need more input from the community in land use hearings. During campaigns, ask local officials where they stand and what you want them to do.
IV. Retain and improv

Discussion Question 1

Grand Junction, CO

(cont.)

A lot of change has occurred over last 5 years. Federal agencies are working much closer with local constituencies in the last 5 years and they should continue to do that. Build on 3 C's from previous administration. We have a lot of infrastructure in t

Colorado State Parks has outstanding relationship with local middle school. They come out and do service projects. Colorado State Parks provides access and fee waiver. Funding for bussing is a problem. Teachers are focused on math and reading. Fed g

Collaboration is important. Congratulate local BLM on everything they've done coming up with creative solutions. They reach out and listen to users. Encourage continuation of looking at Dolores River for possible designation.

Private land conservation in Gunnison has been a great program. GOCO Colorado has been instrumental in funding the program. Successful because it's been a non-federal program. Been hard to get support for conservation on working ranches. Important for

Federal Govt is doing well and should continue to focus on specific areas such as new NLCS units that have been designated. Special interest groups need to work together. Need a structure for folks to work together such as the Dominguez-Escalante Nation

Wildlife is not here. We need to be an advocate for wildlife. We need to get beyond ourselves and promote. Need to address illegal roads and trails. Promote National Parks and Wilderness. They help local economy. Ranchers can use Wilderness Areas. Nee

Got funding from gas companies to take kids on school trips. Would be helpful for fed govt to put together trip ideas on public lands and provide those ideas to schools so teachers can take kids out on public lands.

I. Beware of unintended consequences of NCA designation and Wild and Scenic river designation. D&E NCA designation is causing ranch to need to put more money into maintenance because of regulations.

II. DOW heritage days at Palisade gets kids interested in outdoors. Could be expanded on in other areas. II. GVA also puts on fly tying seminars etc at high schools but exposure is limited.

IV. Other organizations should offer similar experiences wi

I. Either/or mentality - protection or economic development. II. Great collaborative effort now in Mesa County - bringing more kids to outdoors. Fund to help transportation - to get kids outdoors has been great. IV. Must continue to have dialogue a

I. Challenge is gaining acceptance and consensus on conservation. People used to be willing to compromise - less likely now. II. Got past that for D&E designation III. Federal role working with private landowners to allow them to make a living on pr

Signage is really important (either not their or confusing, make all the difference) *** Thinks we need better signs

Discussion Question 1

Grand Junction, CO

(cont.)

Very familiar with being out on public lands and balancing uses. Department of Energy not interacting as much as they should. What happens with energy and environmental protection. Pull all agencies together and discuss impacts on public lands. Slag piles

Need to educate children what happens in their lives and connection to environment, choices in energy use, protecting nature world, having a garden at every school, educate children *** Worries about education, a quote "we conserve what we love, we love w

Conserved about 164 transaction, help leverage local and federal dollars, example on Pinion Mesa Conservation Easement -- utilized USFWS grant thru CDOW and great outdoors stamp money to make easement happen. Abuts FS and BLM land on other side and protec

Beautiful here in Colorado, get involved and fix it yourself, do it yourself, pick up beer cans, quit griping and waiting on government, we can do this because we enjoy the outdoors. *** Been here for 6 years, got here as fast as she could. Wants to be a

Stewards of trails and mentoring kids, success in mentoring and sleeping under stars, access is an issue, voice at table let your voice be heard, great example with working with BLM here in G.J., work in concert with each other. Funding first permission I

Question when report will be available *** This is a great conversation, but it needs to continue and we need to see a response because of it.

BLM book and provide meeting space as needed, Pull together website that lists various groups that could be contacted or interested in a issue. Research group developed to better prepared for clean up oil spills - frac fluids also. *** Friends of Northern

Education is very important, currently studying environmental studies, make it more affordable to go to national parks and experience the outdoors. Making more programs available to students to connect students - education of youth. *** Education of youth

Enhanced -- public right of ways on private lands would be good. Recreation could be enhanced is right of ways. *** A tool that I see missing that would enhance recreation is public rights of way on private land. More and more lands are being isolated by

Working with different organizations is the key. Partnerships work well

Non-profit organizations have really started to pick-up the effort that public land agencies once did. Non-profits are putting forth the initiative to get people involved. Individuals can make a difference. Takes arm twisting sometimes to get things mo

Pairing up with nonprofit groups. Nonprofit groups are working with sportsman's organizations. Nonprofits are valuable.

Discussion Question 1

Grand Junction, CO

(cont.)

Successes come with working with partners and non-profits. His group is working with CDOW, sportsman's groups. When working with school groups, teacher training you need to work up through the channels of the agencies to reach kids.

Industry is the forgotten step-child. Resources are needed to connect people to the land. Industry is in contact with USFS, BLM. Agencies need to sponsor conservation assessment program and help farmers and ranchers obtain conservation easements. Arc

The River Front Commission has a wonderful forum. It is a way to have a free exchange of information, and hear about what other groups are doing. They have regular meetings with a variety of agencies and the public to share ideas, exchange information,

Community involvement is critical for planning, and helps to set rules and parameters for user groups.

The government has to treat all user groups equally, otherwise their efforts are fragmented. If one group is favored, other groups go off on their own. Nothing in the AGO video showed motorized use on public lands. Processes work better when everyone i

Colorado National Monument offers guided walks that aren't too difficult. Organized walks should be offered by agencies. They should be easy enough for everyone and free. Those kind of activities motivate people to get out and enjoy the outdoors.

The Bureau of Land Management's National Landscape Conservation System (NLCS) name is misleading. People don't know what NLCS is or what it represents. NLCS is a way to get folks out in special areas, but is not well known. There is an identity problem.

Wilderness is a very effective strategy for conservation. Advocate Wilderness -need large undisturbed habitat to deal with climate change. Wilderness works well in western Colorado. Keeps large systems intact, hunters come here to hunt, protects watersheds

Reconnecting what works. Organized an event partnering with BLM. We had stations set-up on BLM land. Kids went around from station to station. This was a great way to get kids involved. We are planning to do it again.

Funding: When funding is available, people are more likely to collaborate in working together. Taxes are important to acquire critical linking habitats, protect summer range. Private lands provide winter range. Need to buy property or conservation easements

Encourage land trusts to conserve land because it keeps private land open.

GOCO fund has had a huge impact. It is extremely important recreation. Talk to legislators let them know how important this program is for funding programs.

Discussion Question 1

Grand Junction, CO

(cont.)

Movies can really help to connect people to the outdoors. We should make more movies or nature programs. Look at movies like Crocodile Dundee and what that did for the Outback in Australia.

Why aren't there more ways to share trails? Agencies need to accommodate more than one user group on trails instead of closing access down. Mountain bikers and hikers are losing ground.

Give youth a chance to do something in the outdoors. National Conservation Areas work really well in this regard.

Involve stakeholders: We need more collaborative, science-based decisionmaking and management practices, ways to conserve species, more of a holistic approach for managing lands, utilize best available science, open or close trails-understand impacts, us

GOBW members are going to areas with maps and GPS units documenting where things need to be corrected. They are trying to help managers care of things. They realize managers don't have personnel and funding to take care of things needing to be fixed. Th

Listening sessions are very important, hopes the result of sessions will be a balanced approach. Trout Unlimited's youth effort growing exponentially. Engagement at the elementary and high school levels is critical. Need to start at a young age to get

Motorized user groups pay registration fees to keep up trails and parking areas. All user groups should have fees. OHV registration fees being used to fund other programs. People in other groups should do similarly raise money instead of trying to dive

EISs are overwhelming science based. Most people have no idea that mining is even going on underneath the area they are in. In most cases, recreation is not impacted by mining.

Encourage more management contracts and term easements as opposed to conservation easements. Agreements in perpetuity scare folks who don't want to tie-up the land in future .

Discussion Question 1

Helena, MT

Create more education based programs for young adults. Create opportunity!

Diversity in levels of conservation protection. Increased unbiased federal oversight and regulation of resource development (i.e. coal, oil, gas). We don't need another catastrophe like in the Gulf to realize our Federal Shortcomings. Allow more anonymous volunteerism in policing the lands. Without enough Federal employees to cover every acre have a more open door policy. Example: some of the argument among motorized/nonmotorized traffic is missing/deteriorated signs-allow citizens to return signs to restricted areas to prevent further conflict.

We have the opportunity to use our history to provide the motivation to get people out into the outdoors. By connecting these heritage and natural resources, we can tell a very powerful story-that people must see.

2) Better management or elimination of domestic livestock grazing on public land.

Appoint strong individuals with scientific background and clear sense of history and how our public lands have come to our time. To connect landscapes focus on identifying and protecting linkage corridors for wildlife and ecosystems.

Move as swiftly as possible away from oil and coal use, encourage thoughtful development of renewable energy. Encourage individuals home use do solar and or wind energy. Avoid transporting electricity long distances- use and generate it locally. Focus on healthy wildlife population and distributions- "A healthy environment for man is a livable environment for wildlife" Keep as much wild land WILD as possible- even reclaim areas back to wild state (good wildlife, habitats) truly road less areas don't contribute to water quality problems or habitat fragmentation, or attribute wildlife species or noxious spray. Apply presidential executive orders to maintain and protect soils and vegetation set up to the plate and apply protective measures to assure that we have functional and healthy ecosystems- they must not be compromised for the sake of pushing people into the outdoors. Introducing people to the outdoors must be orderly and educational so the landscape we are introducing people to are not ultimately sacrificed though our use or abuse. Stop "out" sourcing efforts that should be taken care of by dedicating knowledge, federal scientist/ employees. Take pride in the agencies, encourage them to take action to restore watershed and landscapes. Listen to people and communities but when even more importantly, please listen to the earth and its needs.

Empower teachers with conservation materials to connect youth with the outdoors. Support connecting youth with volunteer and non-profit conservation opportunities.

Discussion Question 1

Helena, MT

(cont.)

Supporting the programs that help to serve our youth in areas which will both encourage their development and ability for them to be stewards of their (our) public lands. Conservation Corps and other programs which incorporate national service and an introduction to issues facing public lands are a step in the right direction. Drawing youth and young adults into programs which are supported by federal land management agencies will give them a stronger education and an ability to be more engaged citizens.

What works? The education of our youth. Once our youth get a taste of the outdoors they become passionate, and they get work done. I can't tell you how many young adults have come to work for MCC for a fun summer job and have caught on to the excitement and made careers out of conservation and environmental work and the number of people the impact is amazing.

Redistribute funding to match a sustainable, long term solution to benefit conservation efforts and the sustainable economy that arises from it. Also, increased education. Visibility for unexposed communities can help increase interest for conservation issues and therefore help support funding for the local programs discussed today.

Use the good will, motivation and concern for the environment and our public lands on the part of American citizens, especially youth/ children, to overcome some of the work that they long to do and that needs to be done to protect these resources. National Parks Forest Rangers can help facilitate this by partnering with local, non-profit and other groups to get Americans out in the land. Imagine that you could go to a National Park or forest or state park and on any given day find a program, sanctioned by the park, where you and your family could help preserve the park (e.g. paint a picnic shelter, pick up trash, pull weeds, build a trail, etc). Our parks are underfunded and in need of repair. If we can budget the money to get the work done then ask citizens to help. This will get people involved, give them a sense of ownership and accomplishment and ensure that future generations grow up learning how to care for our national treasures.

1) Please continue to support and fund the AmeriCorps and Conservation Corps programs. It helps connect youth to nature and the outdoors, builds job skills, and supports community service. 2) Please continue to support the national Leave No Trace outdoor ethics program as a means of promoting responsible outdoor recreation and stewardship of public lands. 3) Establish federal and state funding sources and mechanisms to match local money with children and nature initiatives. Improve recreation management funding in agencies and streamline the ability of local, state, and federal agencies to develop programs that effectively bring partners together to protect recreational river corridors and opportunities and other public lands across jurisdictional boundaries.

Incentivizing Private landowners to conserve America's special places.

Make permanent the enhanced tax treatment of private conservation easements. Enhance funding for support programs like FRPP, WREP, LWCF

Discussion Question 1

Helena, MT

(cont.)

Thanks for hearing my comments. Allow private non-governmental non-profits to hold conservation easements with LWCF funds. Remove the private cash match required by the FRPP for conservation easements.

1) Allow private land trusts to hold conservation easements purchased with LWCF funds. 2) Allow donated match for FRPP conservation easements rather than private cash match.

We need a dramatic shift in how we regard our public lands. Unfortunately, our current orientation is to open them to exploitation by private interests for their own, private profit. Instead, we need to regard our public lands as the last remaining natural and wild places, the last places where intact ecosystems continue to function, the last places where people can walk in the quiet and unmechanized natural environment. It is especially important to conserve and protect these lands in our era of climate change, which threatens the plants, animals, and people of these lands.

Use good science to manage our public lands in the ways that best protect their natural ecological character.

Equitable funding of the stateside LWCF program. Declining over the years. Stateside LWCF funds many local community protests that could not be funded locally. Funds from stateside LWCF goes to important heritage state park sites -- bannack, Lewis & Clark Caverns State Parks --> recognized National Heritage Sites.

Thanks to the administration for holding the listening sessions. Open government and transparency are key to solving our environmental programs. Yes we can. Suggestion -- hold an evening listening session so the little guys working stiff can attend.

1) Hold responsible parties responsible -- tougher government regulation 2) Policy change to address climate change ie. Greenhouse gas regulation 3) Transparency, public involvement and government accountability

Thank you for your commitment to conserving open and working lands, wild and agricultural lands. I appreciate your seeking local and fresh ideas. I would encourage you to also recommit to programs and policies that are already proven effective. Voluntary conservation on a local level relies on LWCF funding as an engine to spur local investment like the bond funds in this county. It spurs other private and state funding. Please consider making this permanent. Tax incentives are an essential piece and the third-leg strong partnerships with private conservation groups.

Get programs in the schools, more funding for conservation programs, Government working with grassroots organizations, listening

1) Passing climate/energy legislation and putting a price on carbon. 2) more presidential leadership 3) building on the increases in renewable energy research.

Discussion Question 1

Helena, MT

(cont.)

- A) Noise of motorized vehicles is significant challenge (sic) -- reducing noise should be a priority
- B) Maintain multi-use
- C) Conservation easements

Stop shutting (sic) down roads and putting land into wilderness. Let the people use it. Let them have easy access to it.

Thank you for listening. Stop the Forest Service road closures and wilderness take overs. Make it easy for the public to use our public lands.

1) Crown Managers Partnership: 20 land management agencies in MT, BC, and Atlanta working together to coordinate management of the large complex Northern Crown landscape. 2) Crown of Continent Geotourism Council: collection of hundreds of business people including organizations, local governments in MT, Atlanta, and BC working together to develop sustainable local economies around the Northern Crown: www.crownofthecontinent.net

Big demand, insufficient funding. On the Rocky Mountain front and in the Blackfoot Valley, there is 150,000 acres of "easement demand". Investments in easements on ranches contributes to local agriculture/ rural economics, secures America's beef/food supplies, and keeps wildlife habitat intact.

1) Keep good agency partners in rural communities to facilitate conservation practices and transactions. 2) make conservation funding consistent/dependable/permanent (land& water conservation fund, farm bill programs- GRP, FRPP, WRP, WREP, etc.)

Science education concentrating on data, ecological concepts-not belief systems of parents

This comment is from me as an educated, concerned, owing citizen of this great nation, and of Madison County, Montana. Our environment and our health. Put money into researching all of those points. There is potential for jobs, food, fuel. For clothing, tools, nourishment and it medical properties are proven. Changing this antiqued, racially driven law would allow ranchers to add diversity to their crops for industrial use and would create a cooperatively beneficial situation in so many ways/ Please consider this solution to many problems in our nation.

Modify the budget process. Resource utilization (example logging) and site reclamation (road removal) must be in a single appropriation process.

Confront the budget and planning deception- budget honestly and appropriate accordingly.

Discussion Question 1

Helena, MT

(cont.)

This is an idea on how to connect people to the outdoors. Awareness of outdoor activities is a major problem. It would be great if there was a website for a national calendar of outdoor events. People could search by state/city to find outdoor activities near where they live or where they are visiting. Organizations could submit or post themselves their activity, with the details, why they are having the activity and contact information. This website would have to be greatly advertised so organizations across the country know they can post an event and citizens know they can find information there. It could be similar to an outdoors Craig's List...

The most important thing that the U.S. government could do to help conservation in the West is: raise the monthly grazing charge from \$1.35 to fair market value.

Apply funding to research and qualified staff. Continue working from the ground up- great idea with the look at environmental issues from a watershed session perspective - ridgeline to ridgeline.

A meeting in eastern Montana would have been nice.

Trusting the land managers on the ground or local control to manage and make decisions.

Collaborative grass roots efforts can and do work, especially when awareness, education and outreach accompanies the effort. Fed laws management agencies can assist by providing data and information so groups can make intelligent choices and recommendations.

MT. has enough wilderness area- also against federal ownership. Need our forest "open" and mud "closed" Leave historical buildings and cabins standing on Pouhand. Important to have access to forest service roads and trails- a hiking b. snowmobiling c. 4 wheel divers d. ATV use e. horses f. hunting g. lakes. Recently joined an ATV club and have enjoyed seeing clean up of the trails- keeping the trails open and working with the forest service on hand, it works

Adequate and sustained LWCF funding-community involvement-consensus building-continued investment in involving children in the outdoors thru land management agency programs.

We need a Governors Water Summit in Washington D.C. to address water uses and conservation- best practices for use, limits on distribution if necessary, awards to States with working effective conservation innovations as regards to water.

Discussion Question 1

Helena, MT

(cont.)

Something that worked: Last year, I worked as a volunteer to a 2nd and a 4th grade classroom on a combined outdoor education project. Their teachers read them my manuscript, Wood Lily, throughout the year (the story is about an 11 year old girl living alone in a forest cabin) and we did related art activities from the book. In May, we had a full day of classes at a campground near McDonald Pass just outside of Helena. People from the Helena District Forest Service and two retired Scientists staffed a number of sectionals. The students rotated from station to station and learned about pinebark beetles, timber, geology, anthropology of this area, birds, wild flowers, and insects. The love it! The adults reinforced the "leave no trace" forest use ethic. School administrators sometimes need to be convinced of the value of such a project. Our Principal was not one of those.

UMRBNM nomination process was divisive; however, next week a collaborative effort with the National Riparian Workshop, permittees, conservationists, media, ranchers, Friends of the Monument will look together at riparian areas and endangered species habitat •A free hiking map of 10 hiking areas is available

Block Management is working well [a state-MT FWP and federal program for hunting access whereby MTFWP pays landowners for providing access] •The Iron Mask property is now in the public domain [a BLM LWCF purchase with multiple partners]

Likes block grant matching funds that can be used for open space acquisitions and for preserving farms and ranches

Working with schools to explore off highway vehicles, communication with youth is important...especially since we are so urban... today's kids need special attention to connect up with outdoor situations. •Conservation easements as a tool: example with American Public Land Exchange (APLE) facilitated an easement with the flexibility to allow motorized recreation and successful in maintaining open space

Bottom up and local control works best (eg. Block management program). •Conservation easements should be considered for 90-100 years instead of in perpetuity so as not to dictate to subsequent generations, ability to revisit and possibly tweak at some future point. •Local control in determining types of access: hikers, hunters, horseback, mountain bikes, ATVs, snowmobile [travel management]

The organizational structure of 53 watershed organizations and conservation districts, inviting partners to the table to find solutions

Partnerships between adversaries, break gridlocks. •Stewardship works instead of the timber sale model. •Public land managers contribute to conservation by setting sideboards so recreation is not diminishing the character of the lands, set limits so don't destroy the special places of MT, so can pass on undiminished to the next generation. •Use collaborative processes

Discussion Question 1

Helena, MT

(cont.)

Block management and conservation easements work because of the “localness”. •Local needs, desires, and control; management not dictated from West Coast or Eastern US, the locals know and outsiders don’t have a clue. •Red trees [beetle kill] due to higher management dictates, locals know what the land will support. •Handicapped and aged can’t use lands because roads are being closed on the national forests; keep roads open [travel management]

Red trees not due to mismanagement, due to climate change – winters are not cold enough to kill the beetles, global warming is impacting our environment. •Consider climate change as the number one issue, it impacts people, wildlife, watersheds, native vegetation is dying. •Local control in the abstract is good and is also the “Tragedy of the Commons” from overuse, exploitation by locals, an example is Haiti deforestation. •Get local scientists into the environments for best ways to make functional, on-the-ground, enlightened decisions. •Public lands are owned by all Americans, not just locals. •Protect Montana for all generations, help ecosystems to survive

Partners with USFWS in weed management, wildlife habitat, establishing trust •Grassland reserve is chronically underfunded, the demand is great but only able to work in 3 counties

Voluntary conservation planning and assistance programs work well ... Big Hole CCAA and DNRC HCP. •Need more FWS staff and funding to help foster programs such as Candidate Conservation Agreements with Assurances (CCAA) and Habitat Conservation Plans (HCP) which are US Fish and Wildlife Service programs that issue permits to nonfederal entities (state and private people and organizations) to allow unintended (incidental) take of threatened or endangered species so that normal farming, ranching, silviculture or other business practices can proceed without fear of prosecution. •habitat conservation, state lands habitat conservation plans, federal dollars, staffing and funding

Would like small ranches/farms recognized for their conservation efforts. •Advocate for more wilderness in MT especially along the Rocky Mountain Front, disagrees with those that don’t think we need more wilderness. •Weeds, can’t do enough. •Education is essential for children and grandchildren. •Maintain virtues... honesty, integrity and passion for what we believe. •Government isn’t the enemy, help make it work, be more effective

Block management program (a program whereby Montana Dept. of Fish, wildlife and Parks pays landowners in exchange for providing access for hunting and fishing) works well for wildlife management in Montana

Communication with youth is important...especially since we are so urban...today’s kids needs special attention to connect up with outdoor situations

Bottom up and local control works best...(eg. Block management program)...programs are tailored to local ranch settings expressed concerns about conservation easements into perpetuity..maybe should consider 100 years easements that can be revisited and possibly tweaked at some future point

Discussion Question 1

Helena, MT

(cont.)

Really likes the block management program....because of its "localness" didn't want dictatorships in CA telling Montanans what to do with their conservation dollars... locals always know best.... wants enough roads left open to provide adequate access now that he is older and can't walk as well as he used to

Voluntary conservation planning and assistance programs work well....Big Hole CCAA, and DNRC HCP....need more FWS staff and funding to help foster programs such as these (Candidate Conservation Agreements with Assurances [CCAA] and Habitat Conservation Plans [HCP] are U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service programs that issue permits to nonfederal entities (state and private people and organizations) to allow unintended (incidental) take of a threatened or endangered species so that normal farming, ranching, silviculture or other business practices can proceed without fear of prosecution.

Need to measure conservation restoration work in terms of its value to society....helps set the value of conservation effort for use in planning. A youth restoration partnership is under development to help teachers take kids into the field to conduct conservation work

Discussion Question 1

Hyde Park, NY

I go everywhere outside. I sleep in a hammock in my yard. I love going on the Hudson River. I'm part of a group that takes kids out on the Hudson, finished the Hudson river paddle. I'm always outside; there isn't anything inside that's all that appealing to me.

I work on a reservation in Ossining, NY. It's 900 acres of what was once farmland, now forest. Do lot of hiking there, learn about animals. I try to learn from there. I live a 15 min walk from the Hudson. There are a bunch of parks in Croton. Anywhere there is a park that's free I try to go there.

We just came back from camping a week ago or so. My family and a couple of my family's friends. We do crabbing, mussels. I like to fish. And I also like to canoe. Fascination for me in camping is that I can write and I can draw there and I can feel the atmosphere and write to my heart's content. It usually calms me down.

I live in the city so it's not an outside all the time. We have gone snowboarding with my family in Colorado. There was no outside world influence. In terms of my job, this morning we went to Norrie Point and we were out in the water identifying fish.

I like to be in the water or at the beach or at the pool swimming. Me and my brothers really like to do that. Today we went to Norrie Point in the Hudson River and played with fish. I really like the water.

I do pretty much anything and everything that is outdoors. My family has a farm, we hike a lot in the back country. I sketch outdoors. Whatever I can get into.

When I go outside I like to go hiking, kayaking

I live in Albany. Me and my best friends go bike riding, go swimming in a pool and ride back.

I live in the city. Go to a public pool or go to a park or to the church or something.

I go outdoors I like to play soccer, go swimming, take hikes

Waterski, I like to go swimming. Me and my friends go on the walkway a lot. The railtrail. My family goes camping too in the Adirondacks.

Most of the time, during the summer, I play basketball. During the school year I go to the community center. It kept me out of trouble.

I like to do a lot of things outdoors. Walking dogs, tennis, camping. Enjoying a local stream, park, gardening. Just sitting outside. We have a picnic table outside our house, so eat there.

Discussion Question 1

Hyde Park, NY

(cont.)

a painter and I go outside to paint. I have an outdoor studio, which I prefer. There are places like pavilions where I go to set up and work.

I like to play basketball and volleyball and walk with my friends and talk and relax.

I recycle.

Keep trash picked up.

I go to school up in Ithaca. It's difficult living on a campus still being green. I try to compost and recycle, take buses or walk. Hydro fracking is a big issue. Most of the campus is very against it. I know it has done some terrible damage in W. Virginia and other places. A lot of people at Cornell are against it.

I go to school in Vermont. I'm an eco-rep. I teach kids who live in the dorms to save energy by turning off the lights, keeping showers shorter, reusing a water bottle. I am an environmental engineering major. Sustainability is my life right now. We have all the time in the world, but the earth doesn't. Taking a solid look at everything – food that you waste, raw materials that we can't just be greedy all the time. I spend a lot of time thinking about that.

I like to take materials that people throw away or recycle and turn them into art. Last year I taught an art class at the Beacon Community center and we made masks using recycled newspaper and flour and other resources that we found around the campsite. We also made a huge turtle that represents the creation story from many cultures around the world.

I run a small farm about 30 min north of NYC. We're a small organic farm. Everything we practice is about protecting the environment. Composting, irrigation. We encourage people in the community to bring their compost to us rather than to landfills. Big problem in Rockland county is development. Turned a great deal of land to housing.

In my city in Albany is a lot of garbage. Our summer job is to go around our town and clean up the garbage, the weeds. Make parks.

During the year I live in Houston. In Houston, there is no recycling. In my house, I take little steps. I've changed out all the light bulbs, try to do my laundry in the off-peak hours. I decided to go with an elec company that uses wind power. My apartment complex does recycle. I try to get my children in the habit of taking things to the other dumpster for recycling. When I'm able to use recyclable bags of that sort.

What I personally do is I don't idle my vehicle when I'm driving and I try to remind others. And I also recycle everything that's possibly recyclable and I encourage everyone in my family to be mindful about the environment.

Discussion Question 1

Hyde Park, NY

(cont.)

Beacon resident. I really love to grow food. I love to maintain a garden and I love to buy food from people who live in my area. It's hard to farm. I've learned a great respect for it. I have an honor for that profession now. I know that there is a lot of waste that goes along with industrial farming. I try to use my food wisely. I see a lot of misuse of public lands. Where there is a lot of green space, but people aren't able to use it.

I do recycling and I like to remind the younger youth that we are using 25% of the world's natural resources in the United States but we are only 5% of the world's population and we need to think about the other 95%.

In my school we have a back yard for playing. There are wrappers, straws, everything even though food is not allowed there. Students are supposed to pick up all the stuff, but there is so much trash, even cigarettes. Smoking is a problem.

A lot of schools, my high school, have a national wellness day or week. School or community could have a national "Nature Day or Week" Not everyone would have to take a science course, but a day a month or something, but where the school could go out, take a hike or some place outdoors.

I'm on a sports team, but I see a lot of kids excluded from sports. I think involving everyone, from inner city could be networking with sports.

I think to have some partnerships between schools and non-profits. Maybe there needs to be a contract between people getting recovery act money is to partner with a school by adopting a school. Some of these big companies could pay it back in the form of community service. Giving it back to the community or sponsoring outdoor programs.

I think we need to embed conservation, character education, and environmental standards in new national curriculum.

I came here for one main reason because I used to work for the Beacon Community Center and it closed. Working with kids from 6-12, we provided a lot of those things to kids. We gave them that parent, that attention, we was the reason they might want to do better than that. We provided so many activities for these children that no other center was doing. I also mentored teenagers. What we did was provide things for the kids. I had kids coming outside. We reached out to every teen. The reason I'm here is because my main goal is to search for a helping hand, another organization, that can lend a hand and refer me to somebody because I see the same teenagers that I was mentoring on the streets drunk or high. We opened the doors to the youth and elderly. I recommend to Obama to single out, focus on these organizations that are in the communities by themselves. Between 7-10 towns there was only one community center. It needs enough funding, enough money. We all need to work together. Gave kids a reason to get out of house, off of computer, do outdoor activities. Focus on community organizations, provide resources for community centers to help youth elderly. Things can be done. I came here today to try to find help. I hope somebody is understanding that what I'm trying to say that these people need somebody. We were that somebody and want to branch out.

Discussion Question 1

Hyde Park, NY

(cont.)

The LWCF is important, but there are other funding sources we depend on – recreational trail grants from DOT for example. Are you looking at this at a broad enough scope that includes other departments? Answer: Sometimes it feels like the other departments have a lot more money. DOE is an example – they are interested in these issues. Funding for trails is very helpful. Major initiative in DC along Anacostia River. Takes enormous amounts of funding, but there are examples of agencies and funding sources working together. We're working on a trail system. Thanks for your for comments.

In the Hudson Valley we work in partnerships and we do this with the heritage area and greenway. We need to promote heritage resources for tourism – heritage areas help do this. Funding for national heritage areas was zeroed out in the President's budget for FY 2011 and nine NHAs will go away in 2011 after their authorizations run out. What do you think the long term outcomes are for NHAs? Answer: That's a tough one. Everyone agrees that the national heritage area program and Rivers and Trails program and others like it are centrally important to the mix of activities here. The challenge is the budget situation. The president has said we'll freeze domestic spending for the next 3 years. There's a lot of concern about federal spending. So we are not going to be seeing increases. And we are forced to make choices. Some agencies have lots of grant money. EPA has a lot of grant funding – easier for them to deal with budget cuts by not issuing grants. We face tougher choices at DOI. My advice is to continue to build a constituency for these programs. You need to keep at it. Can't assume that funding will continue. You have champions inside the Department and on the Hill. It's so important that the LWCF is mandatory fully funded.

When we design summer youth programs or youth conservation programs we need to make it worthwhile for kids. Consistency and predictability is important as well as funding. Answer: goal – We had a goal at DOI to increase the number of youth in our summer programs from 8K to 12K. We actually hit 15K thanks largely the NPS and SCA. We are working hard on this. Want to hear about new partnership opportunities. We should have 100K kids

Programs like Rivers and Trails work great and I want to thank Karl Beard for his help with trails. I suggest that all levels of government foster an entrepreneurial spirit among staff to break down barriers among agencies. Answer: We're trying to break down silos among federal agencies. It's hard in government. We're working at it.

Discussion Question 1

Kissimmee, FL

Beach, lakes, white water, likes to be near water

vivid contrasts, horizon with mountains, clouds big view

fishing, off-shore fishing, beach

have more outdoor activities in school....construct more bike trails...learn more about the affects of an industrialized economy/nation

Ocala National Forest, springs, lakes

green, open spaces, wildlife habitat

Biking, Mt. Biking

wildlife

Springs, snorkeling, biking

few people, big open spaces

Bike, hike trails, swim in springs

Ecology and Marine Science is required at his school. More schools need to make it a requirement and/or they need to get the students outside through school curriculum or projects.

Mottled Ducks depend upon many of these wetlands (including the Everglades) more than we thought. If we didn't study these species, we'd have no idea what area is important. DU works in partnership with refuges and other groups to restore wetlands. Power to vote is important to protecting resources. Freshwater areas serve as nurseries for much of the seafood we eat.

If youth get credit for volunteering in school, then working in the environment is a good opportunity.

Discussion Question 1

Kissimmee, FL

(cont.)

The FL Fish and Wildlife Commission manages 5 million acres of Wildlife Management Areas (WMA) in Florida. The state is out of money. Need to work together to save what is left. Next generation needs to be educated about our environment if we are to have it in the future. Recreation is managed very carefully on our areas. Florida Natural Area Inventory (FNAI) inventories each WMA and creates maps of critical areas before roads or firebreaks are built. Need to have people out on the land to learn to love the land and have voices to speak for the land. She invited the YMCA participants in the group to come out to Three Lakes WMA.

Florida Fish and Wildlife Commission, Dept of Environmental Protection, FL Natural Area Inventory biologists work. What they do works. The study and data they get works. She is fearful that the state is not funding these three agencies enough. The state needs to understand how much these agencies support the public and other agencies. These agencies work, but they are endangered due to funding cuts.

With Ducks Unlimited, what works is our partnerships with refuges and landowners. Take DU dollars and write a grant that leverage money to multiple it. That works. North American Wetland Conservation Act works. Involving NGO's, state and federal agencies and private landowners works. Large ranchers don't want their land developed, can put an easement on it to protect it. Partnerships go a long way. They work well.

Citizen Scientist's program works by utilizing technology to engage citizens.

Florida Fish and Wildlife Commission helps us in Palm Beach County with teaching kids how to fish. Kids get to go out for 2 hours in boats and catch fish. Before they go out, they get to see a touch tank, learn how to tie knots, ID fish, learn about tackle, etc to give them knowledge to learn how to fish. This is a great way to get kids involved in the outdoors.

Elect the right people. Check the people out that your vote for and work with friends.

A hotline for the public to report apparent counter-productive efforts by the federal government. We restore part of the watershed with federal money, while spending money to develop land in the watershed. The developers claim that overlays are not a Development of Regional Impact (DRI), but create a sustainable community.

Tools: partnerships work very well. Migratory species – we need tools that work for these species. Prairie potholes is where many of our migratory birds come from. This area is facing a lot of change, especially the changes caused by ethanol use. Ducks Unlimited would like to see more tools like the Federal Duck Stamp to put more land under protection. Since 1932 duck stamps have protected 5.2 million acres. Buy more duck stamps to save more lands. This tool helps this area because it protects the area where ducks breed in the prairie pothole area, consequently, more ducks are protected and return to Florida.

Discussion Question 1

Kissimmee, FL

(cont.)

exposure to the outdoors— personally and professionally is important.

Don't forget about Get Outdoors Florida! Everyone should join.

I have attended FWCC meetings to support youth camp and has worked with scouts to build fences, bird houses, as well as with Boys and Girls Club.

walked into my optometrist's office and he asked me what can I do with my son?Gave him info. On Youth camps. They were able to get involved. He reported that kid enjoyed himself and told his friends and they want to get involved. Here are things in our backyards. Need to educate parents and children.

we have environmental schools – magnet schools – they do a lot of field trips. Use Everglades Youth Camp – now run by FAU and Pine Jog Center. Afraid to come out for overnights. Younger kids – elementary? Transportation hard to line up

to get outdoors, you have to be close to home – there has to be access, land, trails. We have completed 2/3 of Florida Trail – need access from private landowners and to purchase land. The Trail is a facility to get outdoors. For specifics as to what we can do – have Congress fully fund Land & Water Conservation Fund (LWCF). Support existing volunteer efforts.

Has to be fun for the kids. Make it something they want to do. Want to be with their friends.

family dynamics have changed so much. When I grew up, we were always outside. Later, went outside with my kids to National Parks and Forests. Something needs to be done to get today's families outside.

Everyone supports kids getting more education and getting outdoors and land conservation

met with (name deleted) in FWS/WO in July and others and was talking about 600,000 acres coastal conservation areas, which should help save \$. Sell this as an investment. President needs to look at existing programs and look for duplication and not just saying, we need this much more money. Consolidate programs. This should not be partisan. More efficient. Cooked the program down and will partner more with the states, who will partner more with local communities.

Get Dads involved, too.

have to go where kids are – soccer companies, gaming companies and get them thinking of mindset to utilize outdoors – to tease kids to get them outside.

Discussion Question 1

Kissimmee, FL

(cont.)

success story – Circle B Bar Preserve – all 7th graders are bused in during the school year to do hands-on science and really have fun out there. Accessible. So, obstacle is so many of us are urban now and both parents are working, so difficult to get kids outdoors. Need something close.

when you think kids are not paying attention – you may be surprised. Take them outdoors anyway.

several years ago, heard this comment about teachers and their load. The teachers at Circle B Bar have designed a curriculum to fulfill FCAT as well as support outdoor exposure. If people take the time to work this out correctly, should improve. Federal Government maybe needs to help field trip funding.

Get Moms involved.

thinking about high school level, they have clubs. Maybe they could have someone with her (student who spoke) passion start an environmental club and fundraise to do conservation efforts. Getting more people involved. Going camping. Getting more people of that age group excited about the outdoors. That way, starting that effort in the high school – making them take the lead. Doesn't need Fed. Assistance or other \$. Honestly, sometimes you just have to do it on your own. Listening to her speak, really moved me. Just start small and it might get other schools going.

80% of my land is in easements and that works well for them. Currently, we have 8 easements and we are asked what do you want to do and we are willing to work with you. 8th generation of ranching now on this land and it is in my kids blood now. Estate planning devalues your land and we love the land and don't want to see their ranch become a housing development.

Great example of program: Pelican Elem School kids raised money for Florida Scrub Jay habitat and the govt matched. Grant programs to match schools help buy habitat near schools add trails etc.

On coastal trails, paddlers need access to launch boats and primitive campsites. Some in good condition, some are not.

Sustainable recreation not just ball parks, make land accessible.

The City Apoka has 200 acre complex ballfields. Need walking area get people out need to offer multiple things to do.

Occachobee protection act required legislature to reduce TMBL by 60% reduction of phosphorous.

Discussion Question 1

Kissimmee, FL

(cont.)

Natural Resources Conservation Services, conservation grants with the Department of Environmental Protection and Florida Cattleman .

Trail around Lake Occachobee

Expansion of access on storm treatment areas

Providing access in Palm Beach

Partnership for Florida trail

Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation

Passive recreation in Florida

SFWMD Partnership to provide birding on their land.

Florida Master Naturalist VIP program through Institution Food and Agricultural Service.

Partial restoration of Kissimmee River at least the part they filled in.

Best Management Practices using less phosphorous.

Environmental Education is good but need more proactive youth into the environment.

Great system of state parks

Adams State Ranch is a good example of how to keep ranchers on the land.

Discussion Question 1

Kissimmee, FL

(cont.)

Environmental services extensive land holding generation who hold and love the land beginning to find ways to keep land holder on the land we need to figure out ways to keep them on the land.

Generational transfer of land makes it difficult to continue to operate with taxes etc., and the National Resource opportunities to those lands are incredible.

Conservation easements in some cases have proven positive. Conversely the value of the land goes down.

Partnership with Federal government, Work on Everglades' restoration project and the SFWMD.

Educations of the children, anytime you have kids in urban areas that can educate them it makes a big difference. Outreach works field trips work even better.

The Nature Conservancy Florida State touring entity is doing a fine job promoting natural attributes, challenges Federal and State agencies having enough money to manage and resources to provide access, with greater funds and staff they can provide better

I teach college and take them into the field. Don't see what is even close to them. Many get a great experience and lets them see what they are missing

How do you fund this over the long term as a private citizen. Our conservancy founded over 20 years ago. Started pushing eco tourism in Florida, educated tour guides, low impact, horseback rides. Developing a zip line worked. Pulls in people for one thing and then they see everything else and get interested in other Has to be adventurous that grabs your attention and gets you out there. Summer camp with children very successful. things. Turned ranching operation into a heritage project in terms of cattle and horses Spanish brought over in 1500s.

In high school had Ag programs. Funding not available for it. Children who get into FFA is where conservation starts, learning how to care for their land. Gets the kids thinking. Doesn't wipe out economic value of a township or city with conservation. Needs to be a balance. Sometimes this turns people off.

Florida Forever program was working great and now there is no money. Now that land prices are less wish we could have bought more

Louisiana produces fish, etc. more so than Florida. Federal government should connect Red River to basin in southwest LA that would restore it to wetlands and redirect river to wetlands. Value would be much greater than the cost. Salt water intrusion killed rice crop continues to leech because of what we did to wetlands

happy to see the first family is excited about the great outdoors. Publicity is it.

Discussion Question 1

Kissimmee, FL

(cont.)

when Roosevelt said this is an issue and we have a president and first lady they can bring it back in vogue-we need a more out front leader on getting people outdoors. They will encourage others.

Green swale areas-grow native vegetation

Connected to the water through surfing. A lot of development, lot of beach is private and can't access it. Less and less great outdoors.

Great Outdoors lots and lots of untouched land.

large lakes

Until recently never seen commercials that promote getting outdoors or areas.

If you are going to play a game-can't force outdoors on people. Sometimes have to find it on your own.

Parks had a good time and show kids-kids will want to take their parents.

Environmental club at school but don't really go outside that much. Reward schools that go outside and do environmental programs outdoors.

Florida has the best conservation program (Florida Forever Program) in the country. Palm Beach County has 35 sites covering 35,000 acres. Fully fund land and water conservation.

Stewardship Program has been very successful utilizing volunteers to work trails, maintain grounds, etc. Some schools require a certain number of community service hours in order to graduate and this has enabled many high school age kids to participate.

Florida Forever. A variety of people, including elected officials, builders, and conservationists speaking on behalf of the program is effective.

Connected system of public and private lands needs to be accomplished and added to. Expanded National Wildlife Refuges is suggested.

Partner with the Forest Service on National Scenic Trails. Federal money is matched two to three times to provide more trails and greater programs.

Discussion Question 1

Kissimmee, FL

(cont.)

The Sierra Club has organized outings for people and children in urban settings to visit natural areas to enjoy the outdoors. The 16 Sierra Groups in Florida promote these opportunities through groups and organizations from volunteers that also assist the club.

Volunteers in any group that contact those that handle the money often find allies for that group in the future.

People learn by experiencing. Incentive programs that challenge the general public to take part in activities that offer prizes have been effective. The prizes are provided upon receiving a comment card (feedback) from the individual.

The programs that work are WRP, FRPP, HFRP and GRP as administered by USDA-NRCS. The programs work because the incentives are appropriate to landowners to enroll in the programs and provide conservation benefits.

Leveraging funds is the most successful. Also being aware of what other partners are working on so that multiple groups are not working on the same things is highly beneficial.

Worked to move “digital couch potatoes” from the house to the outdoors. The Lighthouse Kids Explorers Club is a two hour session at the lighthouse grounds helps reconnect children to nature and the outdoors.

Partnering is critical in stretching dollars to accomplish goals. Eco-Heritage Tourism has picked up due to the poor economy. Part of the selling point could be that local economies can benefit from this new stream of revenue.

Fund land and water conservation, don't cut challenge cost-share, community festivals (wildlife, endangered species day, etc.). Partnerships among all levels are important. Eco-tours are effective (kayak tours, etc.), school trips to parks, refuges.

Blueways festival is an eco-tour that has been effective in bringing people out and engaging them in future activities.

The Lightsey conservation land program is very good for us, it has been great since in 1981. We now have the 8th generation on the ranch, this is what we want to do. The easements work well. I do not think my grandchildren will one day say “why did you do this easement”. We have 8 easements, each outfit (agency) has been asking us what they can do to help us, and it has worked well.

Discussion Question 1

Kissimmee, FL

(cont.)

I've said it before, the different programs and funds help us get from year to year. Some of these programs have helped, we've received an infusion of capital and to address future needs, but it might not be best for future generations. Ranchers all have different plans, estate taxes. We can't speak for future generations we don't know their destiny and not give them a less than viable ranch for conservation. These priority areas will only work if they are big, if you carve them up into little chunks it's not good. Need some things that are short term. We don't have enough young people that want to continue to do this and it may not be viable in years to come. I have one thing to add, if program is less than fee, my ranch is family owned for generations and I wonder if I am sinking the boat. If we do less than fee, then maybe less than perpetual, say 20 or 30 year easements, would be a good tool that families could look at.

At first blush you may think the military training is not a partner in land conservation, but for many reasons, the Air Force has a vested interest in the surrounding lands. We certainly have an interest in maintaining lands rural, we are also a conservation organization and work with cattle leases and timber leases and that sustains our partnerships. We can develop partnerships for conservation easement and maintain a strong interest in military.

As communities are developed or retrofitted, they need to make bike trails and walking trails so people can see wildlife and where they can safely be outside with their family. If they have it, they will use it. A planned community with trails can work so you don't need to use your cars all the time. In my community, the "Y" is connected with the school when you go by there, bikes are outside. Kids are riding to school instead of taking the bus or being driven

What's happening in Tampa and other communities is urban gardens where families and kids can grow food. Kids are beginning to learn where their vegetables come from

Kids need to make that connection to where their food comes from. Urban gardens are really a good thing.

All of the communities in Tampa Bay are working together to coordinate and connect with the Rails to Trails.

We need to talk to the CRAs (Community Resource Areas) in impoverished areas, they can help rebuild communities, apply for grants from DEP, purchase flooded properties so homeowners could move and go somewhere else. Then they can clean-up areas and turned them into a linear park, clean it up so kids can go swimming.

CRAs are set up by county or state, but not municipalities. Places like Panama City, Fort Lauderdale and other cities have CRAs but they restrict how money can be sent.

Continue to support conservation actions that have a record of success. One of the biggest problems is not having long term funds. Just continue to support long term, continuous funding.

Discussion Question 1

Kissimmee, FL

(cont.)

No one will say were against motherhood, but the earth is our mother and we need to do whatever we can to protect her. Money talks, that's how we can help. The first lady is trying to cut down obesity, maybe there should be a mandate to tie money to education and get kids out. If you want things to happen, you need to do this and that. We need to give school boards the incentives to get kids out.

The DOD is one of the strongest supports of conservation. Avon Park and Pensacola bases are conserving lands and reintroducing endangered species. It's amazing.

We need some sort of website for people to see what's going on..

Disney had a program called "Give a day, get a day" for volunteer work. Volunteers could pick from various organizations, then give a day of service, and get free full day admission to Disney. Is there something like that that the federal government can do?

Bass Pro has something like that where people can look at their website to check out opportunities.

It would be great to have a website that would show what different educational programs are out there. Organizations could send in information of things that work and others could use those plans and not reinvent the wheel each time, basically a success story site.

Do this kind of program again, that's what works. Let us know what is decided.

FWC used to have a one-page info sheet that they handed out with photos and information about the critters. It would be great to have something like that

What we need is to fully fund Florida Forever and LWCF

Audubon offers a curriculum for grade, middle, and high school, but only one school is interested. It is not important to the schools. School administrators are not interested in the environment even after the FCAT tests are over, this could be a good time for environmental education to be implemented. Teachers may be interested but not the administrators.

Our group has a program for disadvantaged youth, they get to go out on field trips and learn. They end the year with a big camping trip. Some kids are in the program year after year so they only reach a small amount of people.

Our boys grew up in Scouts and they got to do lots of stuff outdoors that they probably would not have been able to do. It would be great if more kids could be involved.

Discussion Question 1

Kissimmee, FL

(cont.)

Our organization presented our proposal with the Kiwanis and school board. The board and the community was so eager to be part of our program. Boy Scout memberships were down and they also went for it. Youth Conservation is part of the oath the Boy Scouts take. They can get more membership. Kids need to get connected to nature.

The Youth Program with Florida FWC is really working. Wilderness Park has the ability to provide a place for kids to go. The kids can fish and then keep the fish, it's not catch and release, it's catch and keep. The kids learn to catch the fish, keep them, clean them and them.

Kids like GPS and they can do a sort of geocaching. We should work on an event where kids can get out, and they're working with private land owners, tribes, ranchers to collaborate with everyone. Kids can get things like little geocaching tags. Friends group is working on a fossil pit where kids can find things that they happen upon with the GPS.

Before agencies didn't work together, but now they are starting to. Everyone needs to work together, with private landowners so kids can connect with the ranchers, tribes.

What works well is their county is the association between the Environmental Lands Program and the Homeschoolers.

Homeschoolers and virtual schoolers can be a part of this. They are now doing hunting safety courses online, and then people go outdoors to do the field work. Over 60,000 people now participate in virtual schools.

Federal funding to implement what we know what works – 1) expansion of FL Panther NWR, 2) protect water programs of the Kissimmee Valley and work with cattle ranchers to conserve water. There exists fear on behalf of landowners that by making their property attractive to endangered species that they would be hampering their ranching management. Need to have working partnerships with ranchers and government to conserve wildlife and habitat and restore water for Everglades habitat.

Youth archery programs, shooting, fishing, hiking, bird watching, etc, and they need to get back into the schools.

USDA sponsors 4H program that is federally legislated in every county in the US. The 4H program gives the city kids a chance to get outdoors. There's also a wildlife habitat program that we need to expand and create more networking opportunities (training, webinars) with other programs across the nation. We need to work with other youth programs, creating seamless connections between federal-state-county-local for opportunities for action. For example, "Florida Outdoors" website coordinates all outdoor opportunities.

Operate conservation and private landowners to expand FL Panther NWR. Kissimmee Valley – set up and expand programs to compensate private landowners for what they provide rather than them having to sell their land for development. Develop Cooperative Programs.

Discussion Question 1

Kissimmee, FL

(cont.)

Where are they going to swim, fish, mountain bike? Conflicts exist between preservation and recreation. There are a very small number of zero impact experiences and Florida's environment is harsh in July. Look at things they want to do and participate with them. Fishing and hunting are most important here in Florida.

Partnerships work. Our MOU with USFWS has created the opportunity to bring thousands of people to our refuges. We need to promote those partnerships to get people engaged.

The mentoring program, but needs to expand to cover liability and improved family access. There's no social structure to get the kids outside.

We need to get back to the business model to get kids outside. Interpretive programs are key to create the spark yet we've cut back on them in both federal and state recreation areas. Yet we need to let the youth tell us what gets them excited, don't just decide it for them.

Recreational Boating and Fishing Foundation. We need a national marketing program to increase participation in these activities.

Duck populations (management?) in the prairie pothole region is working.

Estate tax issues in Florida is a inhibitor. Rich 3% is floating the rest of us. This is the time to correct the estate tax on land. Consider a policy that would split land off. Ranch land should be exempt from estate tax.

Public Lands Youth Day – September 25th. National Wildlife Refuge Week – October 11-17.

Being able to talk in this forum.

Our high schools is very focused and does emphasize recycling.

parents gave me controlled, supervised environmental experiences. Helped me become a teacher and lead walks. Parents should feel that there is a safety net.

I like to go kayaking and to the Itchetucknee and Weeki Wachi Rivers - we ride horses on trails, dirt-bikes and 4-wheelers.

I like to go to the beach with my family and I play soccer and swim.

swim in the ocean and walk on trails.

Discussion Question 1

Kissimmee, FL

(cont.)

I enjoy getting outside anywhere – bugs don't seem to like me! – fishing, camping, walking. I lead tours. I have a canoe and like boating, birdwatching.

I have a garden in my backyard and I am out there watering peach trees. I basically hate to go indoors. I planted trees all around the house – now 11 years old. Gives lots of habitat. Just back from Joyce Kilmer NF in NC. Go walking every morning and we do 2-3 miles every morning

I made it my job to be outdoors and guide kayaking, biking. I obviously like to be outside. I grew up in the city and now, I am anxious to be outside.

I used to do trip-leading with schools. I like the different ages on tours. Outdoors – I like to bird by ear. Don't need binoculars. Don't need to see the critters. It's a lot of fun!

asked if anyone born or lived in rural areas. ___ – farm area. ___ considered it rural if lived on 2 acres. But we had a creek and put a small boat in it.

I don't think of my backyard – I think of the Grand Canyon, and paying money to go to a National Park.

meant going to Grandma and Granddaddy's and running out into woods and cow pastures and we found something to do on our own. No Nintendos.

let's take out the "Great" in outdoors.

I remember as a kid, we drove to New Hampshire, we stopped in NC – we went hiking and it was really fun. We went rappelling. They had a little lake there and we went swimming. Seeing everything made it fun.

like trees at Joyce Kilmer that are this big around – you just don't see those.

we drove out to Colorado to look at colleges and it was cool seeing the mountains. I never have hiked in the mountains and I always wanted to rock climb. Seeing hummingbirds by the hundreds in Missouri at a feeder – awesome. I like places that are untouched.

I would like more opportunities for skydiving, scuba diving.

I would like more opportunities for snow-skiing, snorkeling.

I would like more opportunities for snow boarding, haven't seen snow in years.

Discussion Question 1

Kissimmee, FL

(cont.)

I would like more opportunities for hunting.

Always wished we had more biking trails on the east coast like we have in other parts of FL.

when we lived in Illinois next to the cornfields, we didn't have cable or video games, so we were outside every day. I liked to climb trees. When it snowed, we made stuff in the snow. We made playgrounds. Then, we moved to FL and we tend to stay inside.

COMMUNITY CLEANUPS EYES OPEN MORE

HOMEWORK

HOMEWORK, PRESSURE FROM SCHOOL

OPEN FIELD FOR SOCCER

PICK UP LITTER AND TRASH

PICK UP LITTER AND TRASH

RECREATIONAL SPORTS,

RECYCLE

RUNNING, SPORTS

SPORTS

SWIMMING TEAM

Discussion Question 1

Kissimmee, FL

(cont.)

TRIES TO MANAGE SPECIAL TIME TO BE OUTSIDE

Enjoy Wekiva state park with family

Build more fields for the public not for just school.

Family bike rides, kayaks, camping and biking

Crosscountry runner, running through woods best experience, seeing deer, enjoying the peacefulness, before it is disturbed.

Scouting got him interested in outdoors.

Likes camping

in this county limited opportunities for camping, seems like lots of open space but not used for that.

Remember being outside at summer camp all day.

Distractions from technology.

South Fl, loss of wetlands, pushes agriculture out into wildlife, not so much opportunity to get away from urban sprawl.

Like to visit Lake West Toho here in Orlando

Western National Park; Quiet wildlife recreation

Place where I cannot see other people or life

More park area to enjoy; developing nature clubs; better information and advertising; learn about local recreation and parks at school environmental class in school

Discussion Question 1

Kissimmee, FL

(cont.)

restrict development

create wetland around the treatment plants; use of wetland to augment

More volunteer /increase number of student hires; high school or college credit for outdoors contribution)

water farming allows for storage and pays lease or BMP Best Management Practices based on types of use that land area has need funding

backyard farming - give incentive for to encourage it; incorporate organic farming; student could grow food for the school eat and get credit for; youth birding clubs; community gardens; smart grow for urban sprawl; inter cities beautification add trees

youth conservation groups with the everglades area week long stays

youth hunting programs; NRA challenge/competition; Florida Forever Program

work with kids at school with hands on farming –egg hatching

education of parents

incentives for landowner /conservation easement being donate instead provide a dollar for dollar tax credit for the easement

save our Rivers program

Walking the dog outdoors.

Hiking in the mountains.

Enjoys being around water.

Discussion Question 1

Kissimmee, FL

(cont.)

Being in the backyard.

Biking in the woods and state parks.

Rough camping in state/national parks.

High-mountains, canyons, grasslands, rivers and fresh waters, Everglades, Camp Wewa in Apopka.

Fresh and peaceful, mangroves and wading birds.

More secluded areas, not as impacted by people.

Wild areas that are free of development, sand pine scrub; Juniper Run and Alexander Run in the Ocala National Forest.

Forest by a lake, camping, fish moving through the water.

The great plains, mountains, vast open areas.

Incorporating school sponsored trips to state parks and/or natural areas as part of school activities and field trips. Restructure Physical Education to include outdoor activities such as nature walks, planting trees.

Discussion Question 1

Lawrence, KS

"play day" where students don't use technology rot v and instead enjoy their families communities outdoors

Lake, Forest, Trails., Beach

Fishing, Hiking, Biking, Swimming, Hunting, Horseback riding

Enjoying being outside

Pretty scenery

Value you have being outside and your surroundings

A time to travel, or see sights

Discussion Question 1

Los Angeles, CA

We need a national resourced Area designated to include the San Gabriel Mountains URBAN River Corridors. To achieve this, I strongly believe that the Emerald Necklace will be able to transform the densely gray and urbanized San Gabriel Valley Region into a vibrant green landscape. The Interconnectivity of parks and trails have the ability to improve communities and will give residents greater accessibility to local and regional resources. Here are the many benefits the Emerald Necklace can bring to the San Gabriel Valley: it will bring green infrastructure jobs to local communities (water resource protection, urban forestry, sustainable landscaping careers) Emerald Necklace can be a valuable public asset it serves as a public park space and many youth adolescents in the San Gabriel Valley, It will help expand and preserve natural habitats and wildlife, It will also establish a more efficient transportation corridor for humans and native animals. Connecting with the San Gabriel Mtns. to the beach via natural and urbanized waterways. We have the following support: 25 cities, 3 HOAs, 3 school districts, 1 environmental group, 1 trail group, 1 state conservancy group and 1 county board of supervisors

Amigos de Los Rios is a working nonprofit whose mission is to create a San Gabriel Valley Emerald Necklace. What will make our mission possible is fully supported interagency cooperation and collaboration at the local level, in particular between the Department of Transportation, The Army Corps of Engineers, and the Dept. of the Interior. Additionally, we seek designation of the San Gabriel Mountains and Forest and the Urban River Corridors as protected National Recreation Areas, fully funded, staffed supported and maintained. In order to continue our mission, we request that the Federal Clean Air and CWA funding go directly to the creation of multi-benefit community based green infrastructure. Thank you!

Allow the USACE to use credit and funding from different funding sources to be used on the same projects e.g.: Flood control vs. ecosystem restoration. The USACE prioritizes projects in part on a \$ per acre criteria. Due to the cost of urban development this puts urban projects at a disadvantage compared to projects in areas where land is less available. The USACE typically requires a 35% total match which does not allow the match to be met from another federal funding source. This local match requirement should be modified to facilitate collaboration between federal agencies. Funding for land acquisition should be available. Increase funding for the Land Water Conservation Fund for urban projects.

Challenges: Getting all of every group's ideas and efforts coordinated (when possible) and communicated well. The sharing of information is a key! If we can work with other groups that we didn't know about before, we may help each other solve some of our own challenges. Get the kids outside!!! if they are in school all day, they think (are taught) that it is normal existence. What works? Get kids outside!!! Not only will they enjoy it but they will want to return outside. Getting them out and involved also will create a new generation of concerned active citizens. 3) Federal Government Role: Require cooperations that have land leases on public land, to give back in a way that benefits the public (in the long term). Repair the damage caused, not take us out for a latte! 4) Tools: Funding of course!! But getting the funding to each group's pet project isn't feasible so get into the schools to get the kids involved, have them go on field trips and camp outs and "day projects" to work on some of these grass roots organizations. They want to get their hands dirty.

Discussion Question 1

Los Angeles, CA

(cont.)

How can the Feds help??? In CA a landmark environmental legislation, AB 32 & SB375 are in jeopardy of being repealed in November 2010. The senior leadership here today should be more visible in CA and signal to candidates the Administrator support of these initiatives. Support Federal incentives to induce in basin/Urban Solar development to offset out of basin development such as solar feed. Visit website: www.solarfitylad.com to learn about the LA Business Council's campaign to induce urban and in basin solar generation.

Why not have urban naturalist guides like the naturalists in national parks to tell about the urban environmental history and cultural? Why are people allowed to carry guns in the National Parks? To kill animals? To kill people? Grizzly bears should not have been delisted from endangered species list. After study in glacier they were deemed not in danger-well all that would be necessary is one or two years with low berry crop or climate change and how likely is that? What can be done to prevent aerial gunning of wolves? Is that a state right to allow that or could the Federal Government step in and make a law against it? I believe it was allowed in the area just outside Yellowstone or in Utah and Alaska.

Engage the individual: sustainable landscape@home/local activities neighborhood parks 2) Redirect current funding away from "old" thinking projects like expanding mass transit, rail systems. Will work to alleviate port traffic out of the LA urban area. Rail the cargo-expand the metro rail for commuters. Look to other urban areas for creative solutions to urban sprawl and public transportation.

The San Gabriel "Emerald Necklace" is park and trail network that provides multiple benefits we provide green open space, green job opportunities, and community outreach. The Emerald necklace needs to be fully supported by all the departments: Army Corps of Engineers, Transportation and the Interior we have faced many obstacles with funding and government department of the interior and our projects are eligible the obstacle we face are when we move into Army corps territory, our projects are halted. We need inter-agency cooperations in order to make this multi beneficial projects. We provide not only Green open usable space in urban environments training, increased public health, education and conservation we celebrate local natural and cultural history. Creating community investment which will allow successful urban parks and trails

Allow user groups to maintain trails. Contact schools to adopt a trail. Build more trails so it lessens traffic and trail evasion. OHV clubs and Mtn. Bike Clubs can maintain and build trails.

Create funding sources for multi-benefit projects and funding sources for urban parks in low-income urban areas.

Discussion Question 1

Los Angeles, CA

(cont.)

"No Child Left Behind" in taking away opportunities for children to learn in their classrooms about environmental issues. There needs to be a federal mandate that would require students to have environment/conservation training including hands on, field trips, community service, to visit wild spaces, mountains, beaches, deserts, parks. Environmental Science camps should be a regular part of curriculum, once in elementary once in middle school, once in high school. Working on an environmental project and reporting on it should be requirement for graduation. Children need to be educated because they are going to carry on our passion. 2) Federal Government needs to fully fund the land and water conservation fund. Have a common sense, methodical plan for renewable energy that involves a variety of stakeholders. Plan renewable energy closer to urban centers where it is needed most. Get developers to NOT BUILD or develop - give them incentives to develop urban areas already built-rehab houses empty or up for rent. Fund community gardens, school gardens-kids need to know where their food comes from. More collaboration between grass roots agencies to work together-user friendly websites, kids' sites, that they will want to go to learn about environmental issues. More youth involvement.

I would like to see public lands remain open for multi use: Mt. Biking, Hiking, Off Highway Vehicle Use, Legal use of vehicle access to back country. Much of the land is being closed at a high rate. I would like to see that what is available today to remain open for future generations. Also that the federal government would not recognize ignore those who enjoy using motorized travel to explore the public lands...

NPS Service: Fund Urban Park Program, Prioritize low-income areas, land water conservation fund and increase funding for urban projects, school gardens and community gardens. NEPA/CEQA are required allow CEQA to suffice for 2 reports, as CEQA is the more stringent and includes NEPA requirements. Interagency Strategy Coordinate EPA, HUD, USDA, Task Force in LA

Supporting Education to get kids out to the LA River. We need to connect with the communities. More funding for children's program and to focus more community issues.

LA supply of Water: A century of misguidance-regular funding and mandates

As secretary of the Interior Ken Salazar mentioned early this afternoon, "Historic Preservation" is part of telling America's story and getting people into the great outdoors". We need to embrace our national as well as our historic and cultural resources as part of this initiative. A big challenge to conserving our historic and cultural resources is the lack of full funding of the national historic preservation fund, which is the sister fund to the land and water conservation fund this gentleman in the audience just mentioned. The Federal govt can more effective by fully funding the historic preservation fund and increasing the capacity of local agencies to preserve and protect our historic sites through technical assistance and federal incentives

Discussion Question 1

Los Angeles, CA

(cont.)

Work with NGOs, Land Water Conservation Plan we are very interested in what Mr. Salazar is proposing on funding programs. How do we improve effectiveness of fund program. How do we increase ceiling of program fund. Message to Fed Reps: Failure to look at local success stories, Humbolt County resident, phone call to BLM-CA Office to know about successful stories OHV Community, Road decommissioning-not exclude OHV Community.

Challenges-support for responsive renewable energy development in the CA desert. It needs to happen on private disturbed lands closer to urban load centers, NOT in the treasured, pristine, untouched public lands in the core of the Mojave Desert. 2) The Federal Gov't needs to take the pressure off the BLM public lands in the CA Desert for renewable energy development by looking at ways to make it easy for cities and counties to have solar/wind development on private disturbed lands&solar panels on commercial buildings. 3) Fully fund LWCF and AB811 program funding 4) Whats working: Private, local, non-profit land trusts. We are able to purchase & protect & then manage large landscape level chunks of land that the federal gov't doesn't have the tools/resources to save. We (TWC) through private donations and grants are able to save critical habitat "islands" between already protected lands National Parks to protect ecological corridors so we dont end with islands of biodiversity and unhealthy ecosystems. Help us to get funding so we can continue our jobs & mission. (ie: UCF stakeholders in federal process,

In order to ensure that the connections we help people make to the outdoors are lifelong and life-changing education must be a core component of how we make that connection. Getting youth out to our National Parks as part of residential environmental education programs, such as nature bridge field science programs will build a gnerating of enviromental stewards who will make responsible decisions and take actions to protect and preserve our environment. The connections to nature young people make through residential environmental education programs such as NatureBridge Field Science Programs often light a spark in students the aturn inot a lasting love of the outdoors and lifelong stewardship. The Federal Governement should work to spur growth of NatureBridge and similar programs to increase the scale of these programs and number of youth that they reach. Invest dollars and resources. The Federal Govt: could be more effective partner by having more flexibility in the kinds of partners it works with and should work to remove obstacles to partnership or growth or partnership for nonprofit organizations. Provide resources to nonprofit partners to allow them to house and educate students in national parks.

1) Stop closing land to people who wish to use the trails and roads 2) Less Federal involvement 3) Cutting the Fed. Gov't 4) Tools-Chain Gangs use to work Fed trails and lands.

Speaking as an educator, he thinks what works is not having pressure to pass standards. It is important for kids and adults to have fun so they get a "Huck Finn" type experience. Then they are interested in field guides, etc. Students and adults need immersion experiences e.g. getting dirty, hands-on. There is a need to connect people's hearts through direct exposure to the outdoors. Don't get too hung up on meeting curriculum standards. Experiences are the seed to passion for the outdoors. Challenges include too much administrative paperwork.

Discussion Question 1

Los Angeles, CA

(cont.)

For LA, important to focus on spaces in people's backyards. Neighborhood parks. Focus on things like water conservation, community gardens. A small park can demonstrate some of these concepts. Prioritize low income, populations of color

Don't underestimate the influence of parents. Many nonprofit organizations give money for children. He also has issues with power lines in backcountry areas of San Diego area – Cleveland Nat'l Forest, BLM lands.

Look at how indigenous people deal with issues like climate change, mineral extraction. They have stories about desert areas that used to be green and lush. Mining and water extraction are degrading to the landscape. Their ancestors have seen many impacts – talk to indigenous people to learn from past. He gave Yucca Mountain as an example. They look at protecting the land.

It is important to be able to communicate bilingually. Need to reach out to different audiences.

Wants to talk about the importance of rivers. Need to stop building around the Santa Clara River in natural hazard areas.

National parks are a tremendous success. They have a great program for hiring college interns. She has been involved in examining a renewable energy initiative in the Mojave Desert. The desert is a tremendous biodiversity hotspot. Renewable energy could ruin it. Build renewable energy projects in brownfields. Federal gov't intervention is needed.

When people experience gardens and flowers firsthand, they are more likely to appreciate. Good to cross pollinate gardening, recreation

Works with LA Mayor's million tree program. Link kids to nature by turning concrete in front of their homes into trees. She talked about urban forests. She related a story about a young man who didn't conform to neighborhood mores. Neighbors worked together to plant trees. They included the nonconforming young man who became part of neighborhood. The experience changed the dynamic of the neighborhood. Tree planting helps connect and reconnect people. It is good for kids that can't get to parks. They need money for the maintenance of trees. Could employ kids if there is money – from federal gov't? Urban forestry is too expendable in public budgets.

Conservation back bone. Put more lands into conservation to create parks. Availability to students, need idea of making conserved lands and resources available by subsidizing transportation. Need for money and access to outdoors.

Get to something local not just places where you need buses. Create local parks that are close.

Linear parks that connect small parks are needed. Challenge is need incentives for cities to embrace.

Discussion Question 1

Los Angeles, CA

(cont.)

Safe routes to parks not just schools.

Active management and funding in place at local level not federal government. Work's well at El Mirage off road.

Park retrofit Example at Rio Hondo is a good example in LA of what works with working with past heritage and incorporating into park design. Extends into the river.

A river park can have a great impact on a community—e.g. Kernville CA, the river park is a great example. Also, Downtown Reno on the Truckee River is another example.

Met with Senator Feinstein. Was given the opportunity to prove claim and share ideas. CDPA 2010 allowed opportunity for recreation for OHV. Tools: CDPA 2010 Should be used as a national model for collaboration.

Sustained a 25 year organization. Located in a park-poor area. Forming collaborations and getting people excited about Park Plaza. Own two “Wonder Mobiles” for kids that contain pelts, skins and other educational materials etc. for education.

What works: We get kids excited about nature then take kids on field trips.

What Works: Partnering with Sheriffs has worked to help purchase offroad vehicles for them to patrol OHV areas.

Need to use rail from LA to Palm Springs to get kids out to Joshua tree. Rail to Palm Springs not used. A bus takes people from Palm Springs out into the basin.

Converting areas to parks with local, state and federal \$\$.

We look for under-utilized land.

What works: HUD Community Development Block Grant Program (CDBG) money has been useful.

Having appreciation of parks at young age can translate to appreciating trails later on. Cultural and historic preservation of trails are important and they can provide corridors.

Working in collaboration is a difficult challenge. Need a strong focal point, such as the San Gabriel Mountains National Recreation area. Would require the NPS and USFS to work together. USFS could provide technical support to the effort.

Discussion Question 1

Los Angeles, CA

(cont.)

Building parks along the river (i.e. pocket parks), will add more connectivity for young folks to access wilderness.

Identified 7 high priority parks. Flier from Whittier Narrows session shows this. Urban nature in the cities. E.g. Duck Pond near San Gabriel River—90 acres in size. It is also an energy corridor—Southern California Edison (SCE).

Lots of transitioning lands that are along our corridors to provide movement of wildlife of people and nature. How to work with SCE on license lands to promote wildlife and conservation. Need help to smooth through the difficulties with SCE and others.

Schools: lack of green in schools in the inner city. Bring nature to the schools. Onsite water capturing. Gates are closed on weekends. Risk management.

hiking

beach

someplace with a view

camping

hiking through the mountains and forests - Santa Monica Mountains

community parks

Volunteering

being a good example

have fun and show it!

Pasadena is increasing recycling programs

Discussion Question 1

Los Angeles, CA

(cont.)

South Central is planting trees

people are picking up trash and turning them in for cash

Beach

City parks

Lakes

Forest

Picnic tables

Anywhere that is beautiful or quiet

Rivers

Swimming pools

Outdoors is hard to define - its relative to each individual

Jogging

During the spring session: going out to explore the new flowers, animals, vegetation, new sights and smells, and meeting/educating new people about the forest/trails

Soccer

Football

Discussion Question 1

Los Angeles, CA

(cont.)

Frisbee

Relax

Riding bikes on bike paths

BBQ

Hiking

Spending time with family

Mexico

Camping in the mountains

Hiking

Jogging on a trail and JPL

Horseback riding in Pasadena

Bike riding

Hiking at JPL

Angeles Crest and beach

Walking in parks and beach

Discussion Question 1

Los Angeles, CA

(cont.)

Playing sports at the park -- basketball

Soccer and fishing at the park near my house

Canyons (2)

San Gabriel Mountains

Mount Bailey

Park in Westfork/Eastfork

Devil's Gate

Yosemite

Montecito

Canyons

Fresh air

Trees

Nice views

Animals

Fun

Discussion Question 1

Los Angeles, CA

(cont.)

Wildlife

Get away from everything

Peace and quiet

No pollution

Color green

Physical activity and walking

Parks

Hiking

Beach

Camping

Forest

Hiking through the mountains

Santa Monica Mountains

Community Parks

Wilderness

Discussion Question 1

Los Angeles, CA

(cont.)

Trees

Never-ending

Fishing

Grand Canyon

Freedom

Unchained

Personal Challenge

Peaks

Peace

hike in quiet and peace and see wildlife, appreciate silence so you can hear wind in trees and the rattle of grass. LA River is not just concrete-there's water and birds and the garbage people throw-I realize you need to take care of it and teach people not to throw things in. Realize that animals are real, not just cartoons. Spending time in parks with friends 10 years ago all I knew was Pocahontas.

More time to be outdoors. Spend more time with my wife at a park. More time to be able to learn about how many trails are out there to hike and then go hike them. Get out more in the wilderness. I would like to have more places to go to. Help do beach cleanups. Be able to be out in open without a game plan. River cleanups. Trying to get people involved to do river cleanups which helps bring out what the river is supposed to look like. Expand my love for outdoors so I can have more time to be there.

- So Central-doing more tree planting

Discussion Question 1

Los Angeles, CA

(cont.)

- Pasadena-a lot of recycling

- People are picking up cans and turning them in for cash

- Tell people how much fun you had

- Be a good example

lack of transportation to open spaces

lack of outdoors nearby

ignorance to parks

lack of advertisement

trasnalate advertisements for minorities - reachout to those youth

lack of recyling bins

start young

develop programs that continue into college

better access to parks

more information about parks

The park

Discussion Question 1

Los Angeles, CA

(cont.)

the beach

lakes

being able to walk around the neighborhood

road trips

hikes

peaceful places

grassy fields

increase field trips

conserve water

explore nature

get exposure to the elements

hike

protect animals

go to parks

recycle

Discussion Question 1

Los Angeles, CA

(cont.)

don't pollute

protect animals

"Beach bus" for mountains and other places

Implement in the media

Give more tours of canyons

Media -- promote through advertising campaigns

Create more jobs for youth in the outdoors

Hold more environmental classes

Plan for environmental education

After school programs to learn more about the environment

Advertise more for parks and host events

Give more information about where to go

Hold meetings with residents

Encourage use of parks

Describe the dangers of not helping the environment

Discussion Question 1

Los Angeles, CA

(cont.)

Need more parks and open existing parks

Provide more sports and recreation equipment and staff (i.e. coaches)

Promote sustainability in our communities -- reduce pollution, recycle more, advertise solar lamps

Increase volunteerism and stewardship -- incentives to volunteer in the community, develop volunteer awards, contests and tournaments, such as hiking x miles the fastest

Beach

Mountains

Rivers

Anywhere outside of house

Run

Observe wildlife

Explore

Sit on rock

Listen

Clear my mind

Family

Discussion Question 1

Los Angeles, CA

(cont.)

Friend

Work

Self

Outward bound

Far away

National parks

Back country

Lake

Fishing, often and still do

Beach, lots of people.

Rose Bowl

Park

Playground

Lake but too far

More camping

Discussion Question 1

Los Angeles, CA

(cont.)

Wish we knew more of what was available

My parents didn't even know what opportunities

Lack of info. Restoration needs to be looked at from all angles before any work is done. Transportation systems need to be beefed up in restoration process.

More public info on National parks

San Gabriel Mountains

We just worked with what we had.

People organize e.g. SAMO

Recycle

Conserve water

Shorter showers

Turning off lights

Turn off TV

Fluorescent light bulbs

Bring own bags reusable

1st time in mountains was with work

Discussion Question 1

Los Angeles, CA

(cont.)

10 minutes

Around the block

30 minutes

15 minutes but closed down, no park

Only 3 members can bring whole family outdoors

7 cant access

Not enough transportation

Takes too much time

Working / Tired

Provide outdoor jobs (e.g. internship for F.S.)

More programs (outward bound)

Funding for organizations to get more programs and outreach

Restore parks, improve aesthetics

Make parks bigger

More accountability for funds that are available, see that money is put into action

Discussion Question 1

Los Angeles, CA

(cont.)

Maintenance of parks

Money for school outings

Construction at parks should focus on greenery and grass and trees, not half completed buildings

Handicap accessibility

Clean bathrooms

Sport field only available for organized sports, should make open for all

Swimming pool, water features

More info and outreach

School gardens, community gardens, botanical gardens

Funding and accounting

Jobs

Maintenance – keep it clean

Trash – big problems

share the road relationships work if safely administered.

Language in government planning works once people understand it.

Discussion Question 1

Los Angeles, CA

(cont.)

Santa Monica Mountains - residence programs and tools.

Off-highway use, kiosk, maps, and Federal land management works.

Desert Protection Act works; and added other legislation does too.

local community people works, helps get tech assistance with local and federal assistance.

environmental stewardship works.

San Diego Area's desert wilderness designation worked. The Santa Monica Trails is a model for everyone. And the San Elijo designation also worked.

making information on-line easy to get volunteers out to help works.

San Gabriel confluence project worked. DOT/ACOE/DOI worked collaboratively to support that vision. San Gabriel Mountains as a national recreation area worked. EPA's support of the clean water and air acts worked.

what works is all levels of government to protect lands.

language from the people - simple message - works regarding parks, recreation, and open space. Supports economical environmental messages.

BLM Open Space works. Concern with closing some sites.

putting nature in neighborhoods works.

public lands - open them up to make them usable, protect our history, and conserve green space.

open space through a regional approach works. Connect with it.

Discussion Question 1

Los Angeles, CA

(cont.)

teachers outdoor education works. Connects kids with nature, uses community partnerships.

understanding habitats works. Educating children - listening to experts that have passion is powerful. Suggested constitutional amendment could protect our public lands.

children to nature works and so does commitment to nature work.

Off-road vehicle users have rights, too.

Discussion Question 1

Minneapolis, MN

Fishing on the Mississippi River

Walking around area lakes

Parks and fields to play baseball

Backyard – safe feeling

Some place I haven't been, because there is the new feeling of discovery

A lot of trees

Camping out

A place without distractions

Sunshine

Nature and excitement

Biking or hiking

Sleeping under the stars

Fishing

Swimming

Clean up the Mississippi River, so kids can learn to swim somewhere natural, not just a pool.

Discussion Question 1

Minneapolis, MN

(cont.)

More programs, such as sports, ways to volunteer with nature, and other ways to get involved.

More school field trips that allow for hands-on experiences because that is the best way to learn.

Better communication and advertising because there already are great programs out there, people just don't know about them; pass information through the schools and commercials on television and the internet.

Create more camps – "I love camp!"

Create more recreation centers and have transportation to and from these places.

Where do you like to go to be outdoors? Everywhere

Como Parks

Lakes

Places close to bike, be with friends

Sometimes I like to be alone

Univ. of Wisconsin Campus – Japanese Garden. UW Arboretum

Ice Age Trail for day hikes (geology, by self and also with friends)

National Parks
Indiana Dunes
St. Croix National Scenic Riverway (canoeing and camping)
Voyagers
Joshua Tree
Black Hills, Mt Rushmore (camping)
Enjoy the historical/cultural aspect

Discussion Question 1

Minneapolis, MN

(cont.)

Willing to travel for some areas but want close accessibility for running

Open spaces –Indianapolis’ big park/sanctuary in the city. It has a combination of woods/grasslands, gravel trails, a reservoir and also biking

There is a dilemma faced with having to drive a few hours to get to an area so it is nice to find closer alternatives

A view of the wilderness with the trees, etc. but most of the time it is not convenient to get there because of the drive.

Wilderness can be something you can go to in the winter also: Downhill skiing, Sledding, Snowboard, Skating, Hockey, Hunting, Ice Fishing

Sports, basketball courts, going outdoors of an activity instead of being inside

Have more wild/romantic aspects of the wilderness experience

Crowd Control - Visited the Grand Canyon anticipating a wild experience and there were so many people.

Organize shuttles to help get to wilderness areas

Canoeing would be nice to do more often.

There should be more minority representation in parks – lower income people don’t have the opportunity to visit the parks (referring to traditional parks like Yellowstone, Grand Canyon, etc.)

More environmental/conservation classes in school (all ages) to increase awareness

More time to go outside in the school curriculum, not just stay inside

Start more initiatives with youth to encourage them to go outdoors

Would like to see more room for green space in cities – rate of development is crowding it out

Discussion Question 1

Minneapolis, MN

(cont.)

Working jobs

Money, fees at the parks: There is a need to help preserve the parks but they should be free, and they should be free because they are a public park and the fee could stop people from coming

The national park admission fee is not a factor because it seems reasonable for what needs to be provided

Equipment costs – There should be programs that offer rental services at the park, possibly at the visitor center

It helps to have a rental because everything is all set up and not everyone has the items needed to do a sport (example-biking, soccer balls)

Transportation – the more privileged have more access to the areas

The cultural surroundings play a role in who visits – there is a barrier for minorities and often they are working long hours with limited time to drive

Use social media and advertise through these

Provide transportation – especially from metro areas to more wilderness areas

Exposure through friends and other family members

Provide Equipment

Service Learning – educates, brings people together, is hands on

Environmental study classes/awareness – have it mandatory in the curriculum, as kids get older there is less time in the educational system to get outside

More funding – especially for land acquisition to preserve wild spaces. The Ice Age Trail was given as an example of how it costs more now to pay for lands than in the past so more funding is needed.

Discussion Question 1

Minneapolis, MN

(cont.)

Fishing on the Mississippi River

Parks and fields to play baseball

Flowers

Camping out

Sunshine

Biking or hiking

Sleeping under the stars

Fishing

Swimming

Partnerships are important, but are similarly stretched by budget issues.

Need federal grant programs to keep good programs alive because youth and nature programs are viewed by many as non-essential and cut early in the process of budget cutting.

Explore funding from various federal agencies, not just the land agencies, to develop partnership programs on public lands. Education funding, crime prevention, health programs etc.

Continue to grow the Corps Network for youth opportunities and connect these programs up to programs that work with younger students, land management projects, and other partnerships.

Expand service learning opportunities in coordination with the needs of the schools and the needs of land agencies. Start earlier with these kind of programs to get kids invested in a "land ethic"

Discussion Question 1

Minneapolis, MN

(cont.)

Keep the conversation with youth going. Don't let this be a one shot listening effort but an on-going commitment to including the voice of youth.

Expand the scope of what might be included in the services that come from youth jobs corps type programs. Don't just assume that manual labor is the only thing that young people have to offer.

Include more integrated training and educational efforts into the various jobs corps and connect these better to both K-12 and college level educational and training programs.

Include youth representation at the board levels of NGOs and somehow in the decision making bodies at governmental agencies.

Don't just focus on the problems and obstacles, but also on the solutions that seem to be working and models of success. Fund the expansion of successful models, including ways to help people learn more about what works. Include evaluation so we know

Recognize what resources are nearby and develop these local connections as a bridge to engaging youth in caring about the larger system of public lands. You don't need to go far to find a chance to engage with nature.

Don't divide the world so clearly into nature and not-nature as this reinforces the idea that we are able to be separate from the larger systems of nature. People are nature too and we should help youth develop a sense that they are within nature rather

Pay more attention to the connections between experiences with nature and education. Look not just at math and science but also at the social and emotional learning and the sense of self that comes from an awareness of connection to the larger world.

Involve businesses for funding, in-kind resources, mentors, and other help. Understand that because businesses care a lot about having an educated work force that they can be supportive of using experiences with nature to improve education.

Appalachian trail (Kentucky) as a child

How would you push someone who is connected to technology to experience the outdoors... take them out to the middle of nowhere, get them on a river, that's how we did it when I was 15 16 they put me out for 30 days and I went 50 60 miles hiking and down the river, it brings you back to reality.

Advertising to make kids more willing to leave their houses

Be cautious of what you use, what you use on your lawn people need to be a little more conscious of what they are putting into our environment

Discussion Question 1

Minneapolis, MN

(cont.)

Get stronger environmental protection on our resources so that they are actually going to be there when our youth grow up.

Healthy body creates a good brain, promote model for leaders to promote sports and getting people outside. More fun for outside, tell our young people to create running tournaments and biking tournaments

How many people had their parents take them out to a park when they were little? Maybe that's why they were here?

We could identify people in our neighborhoods that like going outside then encourage them to invite people to go out with them, invite their neighbors to go with them. Share the costs as a community

Caterpillars and insects

Eating LOCAL organic food, to prevent fuel and pollution. A change in lifestyle

Education for the youth and building green

Fort Snelling, because I like to throw rocks into the river

If all the kids in his neighborhood went to the parks then they would care about them more. Getting kids out to parks will spark an interest in learning about issues and caring about their resources

Lake Calhoun, the lakes, sailing and biking. I don't use my car anymore, I like to bike on the Greenway.

Living by the greenway, it really encourages people to bicycle and you see all these people biking, they look so free.

Minnehaha falls to walk down the stream and go hiking

Mississippi river to connect with the Native American people

More involvement in schools to get involved with conservation efforts. Have people educate them and have them experience something for one day. Build getting outside into their curriculum, they will bring their knowledge home and share it with their families

Discussion Question 1

Minneapolis, MN

(cont.)

Native American conservation corps, maybe creating a native American specific conservation corps who could be trained to take care of their own lands

Need help to lower prices of local foods, why are local foods more expensive than mass produced foods? I guess it's because small farmers and food producers can't compete with the big corporations.

Need money to start a Native American Conservation Core, to get our kids outdoors. Funding is needed to go on bike rides, snowboarding or canoeing. Conservation Core is good way to teach people how to care for their environment, maintain trails, take away trees in the way, build bridges over swampy areas. It gets people outdoors and teaches them how to care about their land and the history of how our cultures have used the land for centuries

Preventing chemicals from runoff into the river

Ride shares could help everything

Show up to stuff like this, hear people talk, share your voice

Start involvement at the neighborhood level, work with small communities to get people outdoors. Encourage small, local scale efforts to protect the environment and educate youth

Teaching kids. You don't need a huge organization or have to take them way out of the city; we can do it in our own neighborhoods

There needs to be some kind of funding allowed to people who don't have the means to pay for trips to parks or don't have the equipment. It's too expensive to go to a park with seven kids and have to pay to get in.

Traveling in the west, through the US

Working collectively with people to use greener lawn care solutions

Would like to learn to survive outdoors, self sufficiency

You can canoe and camp and hike by valley fair, just thirty minutes away, I just discovered it which shows that advertising might get people out more. I drive there its 30 minutes away

Discussion Question 1

Minneapolis, MN

(cont.)

City park

Lakes

Harriet Island

Back yard – parks nearby but choose to stay home

Rec center

Main activities

Sports - tennis, rugby, biking, rollerblading, kayaking, canoeing

Alone or with friends

With friends or during school

Family

Whoever is available

Sports teams

How much time do you spend outside? 4 times a week – football 3-4 hours at a time

How much time do you spend outside? As much as possible, doesn't like staying inside

Do you like to be outside? Staying home is boring, likes to get out and see the world, found the Mississippi River and waterfall.

Discussion Question 1

Minneapolis, MN

(cont.)

Dance at Lake Phalen at the stage, bring music and practice

Conservation corps, Bruce Vento rehab, rain gardens

Remove invasive species with the school

Part of the adapt a highway program and clean up trash

Why do you like to do this, what keeps you going? Trips on the gun flint trail to plant trees and see progress from year to year, see own impact, reusing bottles,

Are you alone in this or do you have friends or family that help you outside of a group? Easy when in school or job to recruit people with the same interests, but hard to recruit friends.

Are you alone in this or do you have friends or family that help you outside of a group? Triggers for action include teaching them what effect invasive species have and see results of work later.

Do you do anything in your own yard? Vegetable garden, small farm,

Is gardening outdoor recreation? A little

Growing own food is important because the big companies take the environment for granted

BWCA

State and national parks, complete wilderness, no motors, no sound pollution

Big national parks, trees, wilderness, animals (bears, deer, other stuff not usually seen in urban environment)

Flowers

Indoors = artificial light, stuffy

Discussion Question 1

Minneapolis, MN

(cont.)

Outdoors = sunlight, moonlight, fresh air

Preferred way to get outdoors is tennis and biking

Interesting to see what effect is from going out to in, eyes need to adjust, not enough sunlight or fresh air, very confining, many walls, not enjoyable. just the back yard is preferable to indoors.

Being outdoors you feel more free, just being there is better than inside

Would like to spend more time outside in school and try not to be a couch potato

Some schools have taken away outdoor recess, takes convincing at some schools to let students go outside

Seasons because each offers something different. Canoeing , skiing

What you see on a post card from a national park, a grand landscape, untouched places of the country

Are these more satisfying or is the urban outdoors okay?

Depends on what exposure you have had. If you go to BWCA as a child that is what you think of. If you have never left the metro a city park is the great outdoors.

Is there a threshold?

Outside = outside for the most part

Don't know that the great outdoors could mean the Mississippi river or a city park or is close to the city. Have to know about it to want to use it.

More classes outside, field trips to open spaces not buildings, experience wilderness firsthand (3 day canoe trip)

More programs in schools to experience what is out there, skill and orientation, clubs things kids can do

Discussion Question 1

Minneapolis, MN

(cont.)

Trips to state parks and more rural places, overnights = more outdoors and more community in a school, you get closer

More outdoor education and activities

More flexible requirements for outdoor ed classes

Do you feel constrained?

More community programs in the communities, more availability for local outdoors, Organized classes for communities

More advertising for opportunities that already exist

How do you get ads for activities?

Friends, planners, calendars, write on hands

Electronic ads are more important than paper, paper wastes trees

Learn about it in school, do it in school then want to do it on your own, paper you forget about when you set it down, enroll in a reminder

Using technology in the outdoors, geo-caching in state parks is great.

get kids outdoors, not just high students but elementary kids as well

Discussion Question 1

Minneapolis, MN

(cont.)

Outdoor activities help students/kids retain the concepts better and allow them to tie the concept to a memory. If we get kids starting at an early age, teaching them animals and letting them see them, they will start to care more especially about the world they live in instead of western culture. They need to understand and appreciate the intricacy of how it's taken billions of years for atoms to arrange in a certain pattern to create offspring, plants, and fruit. We need to instill a sense of wonder and fascination it would create better world. If we realize the immense odds that brought us to this place we would connect with other people more; we'd have a sense of common understanding.

Use education (especially at a young age) as a tool for change.

Overhaul the education system, it needs a complete 100% overhaul. Kids need to be more enlightened beings.

Keep businesses as usual out of the classroom, especially standardized testing.

Education should be utilized more than it is right now.

Remove the strangle-hold that businesses have on government.

Create more of a connection between students and natural systems instead of our made up systems.

If the President wants to change the direction of the world, he needs to do it through education and start with the youngest generation because his generation is a dud. The President can be the one to create a stable vessel by setting up a better education system.

Increasing incentives for private landowners (private agricultural) to put good practices in place more filter strips along rivers

get the younger generations outdoors

tell the younger generations about it – need to reach the families that didn't do outdoor stuff growing up

greater accesses

provide free programs

more information and training to help people that don't know where to start

canoeing (today), sports, fishing, camping, picnics – bikes and drives to get to some of those places

camp and hikes with his family

canoeing (*note this participant canoed for the first time today as an event leading up to the listening session)

fishing with her family

Discussion Question 1

Minneapolis, MN

(cont.)

meditate in the woods (uses it as a center for spirituality), nature is a perfect example of balance and organized chaos

really likes learning outdoors (in school at Rivers Edge – his high school) because it's hands on, and everything people need to learn can be learned through the outdoors/universe
learn about it as he sees it and have more of an opportunity to see the cause & affect relationship
does things outdoors with school like biodiversity surveys and pollution testing
deeper understanding of the concepts than just learning facts in a book and can see what we are learning is actually happening outside

canoeing (*note this participant canoed for the first time today as an event leading up to the listening session)

family goes fishing a lot

canoeing (*note this participant canoed for the first time today as an event leading up to the listening session)

likes to be outdoors running on trails
access is sometimes available in urban areas and sometimes not
discovered the outdoors on his own and from friends

likes to participate in sports leagues managed by the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board
searches for quiet place in the city
discovered the outdoors on her own (family more likely to rent a boat) by getting into gardening, gardening was her gateway into the outdoors

more programs like Earth Club at school that got her into the Green Team
attracted to the outdoors by flowers which made her interested in earth club
more hands on education - learn about pollution by seeing pollution

thinks of it as some where far away that offers camping, fishing and canoeing

thinks of the Boundary Waters
thinks of it is isolated places
wishes there were more protected places that feel isolated near where we area

thinks of it as a place that is far away with waterfalls, cliffs, and scenic overlooks over natural landscapes and trees

thinks of the Grand Canyon even though he's never been there

not necessarily a place that is far away, he finds places here in the metro that he considers to be the "great outdoors" but he's from the suburbs

Discussion Question 1

Minneapolis, MN

(cont.)

thinks of it as a place that is far away

giving young people jobs in the environment

found out about Green Team from brothers and sisters but otherwise wouldn't have known about such a great program to get involved in

Swimming in lakes and being totally immersed in the wild. Especially swimming in a clean lake, which is an extra special experience.

Minnetonka

Wilderness programs, our latest trip visited Boundary Waters Canoe Area for a week, paddling through the connecting waterways, fishing and enjoying evening campfires

Prairie restoration with local organizations

Skiing in beautiful snowcapped mountains

Exhibition, an elementary school program, is aimed at introducing kids to environmental awareness and displays examples of water pollution, air pollution, etc.

Boys & Girls Club collects trash and has a compost bin.

Boyscouts of America, biannually collects trash along the same stretch of road

Community Design Center of MN is involved in prairie restoration and a rain-water collection/filtration project that prevents erosion by routing rainwater to a collection area.

Chalchiutlicue tribe seeks to reclaim traditions by putting tobacco in waterways to symbolize healthy water/earth. (Danza Mexica Cuauhtémoc Multicultural Indigenous Academy, girls dance group)

Community compost collection for a community garden.

Discussion Question 1

Minneapolis, MN

(cont.)

Monitor energy use and efficiency in living space

Take batteries and cell phones to a recycling center

Ride bike instead of driving car whenever possible

Join clubs such as Boy Scouts and Pheasants Forever

Boys & Girls Club give "Go Green" bags at Cubfoods and distribute flyers that inform people how to reduce their water consumption.

Pheasants Forever Leadership Council designed a youth village aimed at introducing youth to shooting and conservation principles.

Collaborate with friends, neighbors, clubs, cities, states to participate in a "day of service" where people choose a day to do an environmentally friendly activity. Perhaps add friendly competitions to see who can collect the most garbage.

Share with friends and family what is learned in school. Spread the word.

Give tours around the area regarding places of historic, cultural, recreational interest.

At home, turn off lights when not in use; turn off faucets when brushing teeth. Don't overfill the bathtub.

Teach young people the ethos "Leave no trace"

It is easy to find a park in Minnesota. In Minneapolis there are several campsites along the Mississippi River.

There are several small local parks with a swing and playground, but a 20 minute drive to a hiking park is a totally different story. It takes too long to get there, and safety concerns are present. Will I get mugged there?

Hidden Falls is within walking distance of my home, but I need to cross a highway and I am concerned about the suspicious cars in the parking lot.

Discussion Question 1

Minneapolis, MN

(cont.)

A lake is nearby my home and I bike around it.

I don't do much alone, but I do many outdoor activities with my dance club

For the past 10 years a youth dance club has organized an annual family camping trip. Evaluations of the trip uncovered that for 90 percent of participants, it was their first experience camping as a group, and for 75 percent of participants, it was the f

More programs to encourage kids, more parks and zoos

Encourage kids to join a club or organization

Spread a "Go Green" message

Encourage outdoor activities in school. Ski club, camping trips

School student-councils spreading the "green" message, having green parties, using green supplies, playing green games

Get environmental issues into school curriculum. In Madison, WI, teachers take lessons outside. For example, groups of 30-40 students visit the Ice Age National Trail where teachers instruct basic lessons, blended into outdoor activities (i.e., trail dist

More physical education funding is required. Today some 6 year olds have no outside time while obesity is a growing epidemic.

Lessen the bureaucracy for grants, especially physical education grants. The paperwork is overwhelming and a major barrier.

Swimming and canoeing at Welch Hidden Valley.

Hunting and fishing at nearby lakes and wildlife management areas

Cascade Bay waterpark.

Discussion Question 1

Minneapolis, MN

(cont.)

Running at Harriet Island

Canoeing and hiking along city trails and the Ice Age National Trail in Wisconsin.

Baseball, archery, fishing, biking, softball, soccer, volleyball

Sea kayaking at Apostle Islands National Park

Anywhere outdoors I can go (comment by NPS Ranger)

Walking and biking at Sweet Hollow Park near my home.

Minnehaha Falls and natural spring area

Camping and hiking in the mountains with my family. I remember hiking up a mountain. At the top we saw mountains all along the horizon and a lake in a valley far below.

Seeing flowers

Taylor Falls

Being outside and watching clouds

Going to the lake

Allow locally grown food into school cafeterias. Make it a community effort and/or school activity. Local gardening should be encouraged and is a family activity that kids should learn. Moreover local food is more healthful than processed cafeteria food.

Discussion Question 1

Minneapolis, MN

(cont.)

President Obama's America's Great Outdoors initiative to craft a 21st century strategy for our landscapes, our parks, and our wild areas is a bold step toward bringing families together in pursuit of active exploration of this country's wonderful public lands. And what better place to gather input to accomplish the goals of this initiative than in one of America's great urban national parks?

I am pleased to hear that a listening session is scheduled in the Minneapolis-St. Paul area in August and hope that the National Park Service plays a prominent role alongside the Environmental Protection Agency. Here in the Twin Cities -- at the Mississippi National River and Recreation Area (MNRA) - we have shining examples of programs that actively engage young people in their first "national park experience"

The park is home to dozens of partnerships with state and local governments, non-profits, corporations, schools, churches and individuals. For example, the Urban Wilderness Canoe Adventure program provides 10,000 urban youth with an outdoor experience by getting them on the River. This partnership program builds confidence, strengthens outdoor skills, and encourages a healthy, outdoor lifestyle. MNRA is also one of the first 20 national parks in Michelle Obama's Let's Move Outside program because of the park's program impact on urban youth.

The park's many strong partnerships are also put to work protecting the River's resources and the rich cultural history of the Mississippi. The park and its local partners restore wildlife habitat, construct walking and bike trails, and remove invasive plants to restore and protect bluff lands.

General Mills cares about the national parks. Our parks are testaments to our past and our common values. With its corporate roots along the Mississippi, General Mills has enjoyed a long relationship with the River and with this national park. The Mississippi National River and Recreation Area is one of our nation's special places that brings families together for a unique national park experience in the heart of an urban area. please consider "listening" to the people who have helped make strong partnerships at the national park by holding a session with the National Park Service and the EPA at this great park.

The Twin Cities have joined together with a national park - the Mississippi National River and Recreation Area (MNRA) - in many partnerships to protect the riverfront while making it accessible as a recreational resource to thousands of urban dwellers. The park is an exceptional location to showcase innovative partnerships and youth-based outreach.

The Urban Wilderness Canoe Adventure program, implemented by the National Park Service at MNRA, reaches 10,000 urban youth by getting them on the Mississippi River. This model partnership program builds confidence, strengthens outdoor skills, and encourages a healthy, outdoor lifestyle. The partnerships are forged between the national park, its non-profit partners, area public schools, and church and youth groups. MNRA is also one of the prototype parks for the First Lady's "Let's Move Outside" program because of the park program's unique impact on urban youth.

Discussion Question 1

Minneapolis, MN

(cont.)

In addition to the listening session, a canoe field trip with staff from the Urban Wilderness program would highlight the amazing and lasting effect that this innovative partnership has made on so many young people in Minnesota. The success stories at Mississippi River National Recreation Area are many and provide a great opportunity to set a high bar for the partnerships and outreach at our national parks that are embodied in the vision set forth by America's Great Outdoors initiative.

I have been raised knowing the value of the nations nationalparks forest and wildeness areas.. Our parks and wilderness continue to provide an enriching and learning environment for everygeneraion from ttodays citizens all the way back to the grand ladies of the victorian era who used to walk the trails of places like pikes peak in their dresses and heeled shoes.

I am fortunate to live in Minnesota where there are bike trails, bike loan programs and state parks to create an outdoor hardscape for recreation.

Curriculums for schools such as Audubon Adventures (National Audubon Society) and Roots and Shoots (Jane Goodall) exist. Yet it is the citizen who takes time to teach a classroom or after school group that make these lessons come alive. I am thrilled to show my young neighbors how a rain gauge works and point out the brilliant yellow and black of the goldfinch at the birdfeeder. Clearly, the students who are outdoors today are the stakeholders holding the future of our natural resources.

Discussion Question 1

Missoula, MT

With the extreme beetle kill in our forests we need to allow logging and cleanup before the fires. Montanans need to be employed -- keep jobs available for us.

I propose that the National Park Service boost its mass transit initiative to a high profile by taking a few selected parks and making them public transit access only (i.e. no cars). The NPS has an educational function as well as a stewardship/leadership mission and could promote mass transit as a national good. Glacier NP could be a pilot. Railroad connections could be revitalized. A carefree going-to-the-Sub (?) Road could be a new national treasure.

I like the idea of say a spring kick off front page local fair booth weekend where family and friends could attend a buffet of volunteer sessions that are explained (?) and developing.

There is a need to re-staff each Federal agency involved with public lands with Landscape Architects! Our profession can greatly help to connect people and their needs to this great land of ours!

Better Federal agency coordination of these efforts: funding!

The US is headed for difficult times if we continue to abstract natural resource industries from producing these resources. We are at the mercy of other countries for our energy (oil) we will soon be not importers of hard mineral commodities. Why hasn't a meeting planned on the east side of MT, the largest population is not considered in Montana (sic).

Climate change is a challenge on all levels -- environmental, economic, health, social, equity, agriculture, national security, etc.

There must be a way to reduce use of fossil fuels that add greenhouse gases to the atmosphere -- best way is a carbon tax.

1) Protect roadless lands (IRAs) from motorized uses, especially use created routes and conversion of hiking and horseback trails to off-road vehicle uses. Use RARE II inventory of existing routes as only motorized routes to continue as motorized routes. 2) Better enforcement of unauthorized ORV uses including 1) more in-field law enforcement 2) streamline and better communication with Federal court judges on meaningful court actions to deter violations 3) give citizen vehicle identification regulations to aid law enforcement 4) careful selection of routes that discourages illegal uses.

1) Protection of roadless lands from motorized uses permanently 2) Better ORV law enforcement 3) Better coordination on administrative and judicial on ORV law enforcement 4) More use of fire in fire dependent ecosystems

Discussion Question 1

Missoula, MT

(cont.)

1) Fire is fire, and it should only be fought to save structures. 2) Have the flexibility to make common sense regulations that allow everyone to enjoy, use their lands. Regulations for hiking trails/road users do not need to be strong as those for logging, and other activities that can potentially cause more damage.

Our soils, forests, and open lands are places where carbon is fixed and sequestered. Carbon budgets should be studied to encourage sequestration on all open and conservation lands.

Regarding this forum and format: I strongly feel that there is an agenda (and questions that the Fed would like to see addressed by the public); we should stick to it. The Forum should not be a place to air petty grievances about local issues. The forum should be about over-arching issues and values.

Climate change -- lands must be managed to provide resilience and connectivity for threatened and endangered species as their climates change. Impactive human activities should be minimized in order to allow this resilience to expand unhindered.

Remove roads, limit off-highway vehicle use, stronger/enforced travel plans; more/better monitoring. More wilderness.

Place the right people on the ground. Community-led conservation where the people are part of the decision-making and solutions so they feel they have a stake and that their input is valued.

Funding for schools to engage in outdoor education -- equipment (sic), bus money and substitute teachers. Practical programs that help keep working landscapes intact. More local resource (sic) managers. We have unfilled positions in our State, Federal and county positions and the employed are spread too thin.

Recommendations to Federal Govt: 1) (\$) support existing cross-jurisdictional partnerships, such as the crown managers partnerships whose mission is to "achieve/maintain an ecologically healthy crown of the continent." 2) think big about scale of crown of the continent 3) uphold our iconic federal laws --> ESA, Clean Water Act, list new endangered species eg wolverine 4) protect our water quality and riparian areas, use this to prioritize conservation efforts, including headwaters of rivers and streams 5) support local citizen efforts to protect water quality through growth planning and zoning 6) complete Montana and Idaho road less review and designate wilderness 7) (4) support objective science from academic institutions 8) don't be bullied by the loud anti-conservation minority

Fund youth conservation corps, conservation corps for youth. Education changes to prioritize environmental/outdoor education

Discussion Question 1

Missoula, MT

(cont.)

We must look at facilitating outdoor experiences with out schools -- there is a conflict in the current No Child Left Behind legislation and required testing and more testing is preventing and eliminating field trip opportunities for teachers and students. We need to prioritize science, field-based research and other content areas such as language arts (writing), fine arts (painting, ceramics) and music-blended with outdoor experiences.

Stop mining coal and shift to nuclear power. Quit subsidizing cattle raising and emphasize plant foods. Put more lands into national monuments.

Instead of land exchanges between open land parcels look at land exchanges between infill urban parcels or building and undeveloped open space land.

Keeping youth active in programs outdoors is very important, but also having multiple agencies (government and NGOs) collaborate on various outdoor service/recreation projects is important as well. Participating in the residential program with the SCA, AmeriCorps, and the National Forest Service has given us a chance to work on multiple projects and learn a multitude of skills to use for the future. I feel much more connected/responsible to the land from completing the various projects. I live close to SF in California and it is a huge change for me to come out here and experience the outdoors. I am very grateful for the collaboration and enthusiasm from the various agencies in teaching us land stewardship and passion for the environment.

To keep people connected with the Nations natural resources three things must be provided: 1) Access for all -- not only backpackers 2) Ability to do -- work -- have a stake in projects, local natural resources industry -- sawmills that provide more funding for conservation than any other group 3) Liability reform: landowners can not be held liable for everybody that uses their land!

I hope the Federal Government will follow and support John Tester's Forest Bill -- and not follow in the misguided path of the Wolf Reintroduction Program. That last program has been a disaster for ranchers and hunters in Montana!

Funding for LWCF and other programs would help. Transportation Department support for trails needs expansion.

Fragmentation of open space eliminates access and confounds land management without "access" kids can not develop a connection with the outdoors.

As a real American Indian, the real people! Protection of sacred sites has been very difficult to produce real protection. Often government to government consultation fall to the way side, because of miss-directed (sic) policy's (sic) and real decisions get lost to give the grassroots people a chance on the decision-making.

Discussion Question 1

Missoula, MT

(cont.)

American Indians of the Great state of Montana have many significant sites. These sites need continued protection. Many are within Federal lands, MT. St. lands and private lands. Suggested pdnership (sic) is strengthening the present MT St. Antiquities Act of 1903. Agencies loosening contract language, Ex. are of potential effect (APE). This has and is constraining vital information that can be shared by the tribes and the general public.

It is very important to connect people with America's landscapes in order to understand when food and wood fiber comes from, however, the state of MT federal timber lands are so poor that recreation may be hazardous with dead trees falling and wildfire. The forest service must be given the budget, the staff capacity and removal of federal policy barriers in order to manage our natural resources.

Education, land grant and regional food programs that will support a new generation of sustainable family farms which produce food to be consumed locally and regionally. Federal, State, and local initiatives that support clean energy development, efficiency and the reduction of greenhouse gas (sic) emissions. Focus on walking, transit and bicycling and focus on livable communities.

1) Continue to focus on state-based collaborative initiatives such as forest jobs and recreation act. 2) Sustainable energy development that has protective stipulations for fish and wildlife. 3) Manage federal dams with an eye towards sustaining healthy fish populations.

Concern for fish habitat and fish populations should play a role in decision making for fish management.

*Recovery Fund. I would like to see the government take initiatives to change the public views internally, such as reducing, reusing, recycling and sustainable housing. Garden and local food co-ops in the government housing districts; FS, Army, D.C. and AmeriCorps etc. Planting native around government facilities. All done and advertised by, with, for the government.

* We need more funding for leadership, schools, programs, and camps. *Funding for job opportunities, incentives, marketing, soliciting. *See Federal agencies (sic) adopting outdoor education and activities there self (sic).

Federal conservation tax incentives should be made permanent. Continue to adequately fund the farm and ranchland protection program. Fully fund the land and water conservation fund. Increase funding for the forest service state and private land programs. Make acquisition of federal water rights a priority and fund appropriately. Keep a focus on using federal programs and funding to accomplish restoration work. Develop incentives for private land owners to keep their private land healthy. Federal funding needs to be consistent and dependable -- local groups need to have some confidence their work will continue to be supported.

The fundamental issue is to get people to interact in a sustainable way so we have open spaces for future generations. This means long-term educational programs in the formal and non-formal setting that provide awareness, understanding, problem-solving skills and participation (action) and connections with their local place.

Discussion Question 1

Missoula, MT

(cont.)

Environmental education.

What strategies work: dam removal, administrative land management and travel plans, land purchases/acquisition, project partnerships with early collaboration, restoration efforts. What are obstacles: adequate federal funding of agencies, difficulty of removing inappropriate uses such as motorized vehicles, fossil fuel development. the agencies should use the NEPA appeal process more seriously to avoid litigation. Ability to hold polluters accountable.

Agencies need to recognize and plan for the impacts of climate change. Adequate funding of land and wildlife management agencies. Limiting inappropriate uses such as motorized recreation, oil and gas develop.

Protect water quality and quantity and improve it. Limit permitting of fossil fuel extraction from all public lands. Stronger travel and management plans that include better monitoring and enforcement standards and indicator species. Protect old growth forest (sic) for carbon storage and biodiversity. Establish wildlife corridors for movement of wildlife.

The U.S. Bicycle Route System is a project that promotes bicycle travel across America -- partnering grassroots efforts (bike advocacy and trail groups) and transportation to promote tourism and recreation. This is good for communities and promotes an environmentally (sic) friendly, economically beneficial form of tourism. Cyclists stay longer, have no carbon footprint and bring people into a community in a "human" way. I think we need to stop incentivizing things that promote pollution and global warming -- vehicles: emissions, parking lots, distracted driving, built environment.

Unplugging our nation from electronic world (sic) and getting them "replugged" into the public lands/private land -- both engaging them from a recreational perspective (providing physical activity) and in conservation (providing volunteer hands (?) to help). In the words of REI President, Sally Jewell, "Best Buy is one of our biggest competitors."

Trails, school programs which utilize our public agencies -- BLM, FS, DNR, etc. liaison educators. Investment in our wild places -- reclamation, national and state parks etc, incentivize sustainable transportation such as biking/walking, transit, etc. Get airlines and trains to support these.

I think one of the most difficult is convincing conservatives that conservation is NOT a middle step to socialism! As the oil addeon in the Gulf exemplifies we need to place a true value and cost on scarce resources. We need to end corporate welfare first of all. The current subsidies for non-renewable energy are a disgrace! What we need is a surtax on all mineral royalties to be used to place solar/wind/renewable systems on every building in America. Begin with all public buildings followed by private residences and then small business or reverse the order -- just start somewhere! The boost to over economy and National Security would be incalculable. Such distributed generation would insure (sic) no more blow-outs, no Chernobyl's (sic) and no cyber-terrorism, I could go on for pages but this is a good start.

Discussion Question 1

Missoula, MT

(cont.)

America Highway Program: The signs of the adopted sections of the highway that are supposed to be kept clean. I find that they are majorly neglected and wonder who is in charge of any sort of accountability to those groups who have adopted these sections because if they are not held accountable the sections should be given to someone else. Recycling: It should be made one of the easiest processes available in every city/town. In most places the search for a recycling center is long and when found, they tend to have so many restrictions. And although we are making movements to conserve, there is a lot that has been wanted and recycling is the chance to make up for that. Please help make it easier .

The ongoing degradation and fragmentation of biological systems -- ecosystem collapse.

Encourage environmental and conservation cooperation between agencies and citizens -- FUND restoration.

Provide or guide funding resources into stream restoration and watershed conservation, including support for citizen involvement in watershed groups...

To connect kids and people in general to nature adequate access must be present that is easy, marketed, and accessible to diverse groups. This means both urban and rural opportunities. Full funding of the land and water conservation fund will provide both rural and urban opportunities through large scale land conservation, fishing access sites and urban parks. In addition, our first lady has the "bully pulpit" to make getting kids outside a part of our national education curriculum. If we don't connect kids to conservation at a young age, they are less likely to have an affinity (sic) to keep pass along out country either better or the same that they experienced it. Lastly, private land provides some of the best wildlife habitat in this country. Particularly between federal and state governments for access promote opportunities that are win/win for landowners and recreation. MT has the block management (bm) program the (sic) voluntarily enrolls eight million access of private land for hunting. Landowners are paid for impacts to their land. The last farm bill provided additional funds for state programs like (18 million) a larger commitment would gore this program (sic).

Education opportunities in these wild places. Somethings cannot be taught any other way than by getting people outdoors.

Full funding LWCF including state/local set aside policy, incentive, education, research documenting and educating as to the value and importance of the outdoors to our individual, community, environmental, and economic health.

Please consider policy changes that incentivize, regulate, and educate toward goals of preservation, sustainability, healthy built community, education curriculum supportive of the great outdoors, human powered transportation, work programs such as conservation corps for all ages. *Please stop the polarization and negative discourse of recreation is bad. Example -- no stimulus fund for park, recreation facilities.

Discussion Question 1

Missoula, MT

(cont.)

It is fine to hold listening sessions, but where and how will this information be utilized to encourage a grassroots movement to encourage and motivate the public and agencies to focus on the "Great Outdoors"?

Private land incentives so that developers can contribute to providing/maintaining open space/parks and trail that connect with other public lands. Protect and enhance LWCF program for local use. Fund and support federal land agency conservation education programs. Re-organize the Forest Service to provide more organizational focus on recreation.

Thank you for enabling us to voice our concerns/comments about conservation. Please encourage/provide more teach-ins/discussions like this one. Thanks again!

Great idea bringing this to Montana first - we appreciate and support the President's commitment to conserve working lands in a way that preserves the environment and protects local communities. Collaborative approaches work - support Senator Tester and Senator Baucus in their efforts to this idea. Can be win-win situation using existing infrastructure.

Great session. Maybe break into specific subjects next time. Education, recreation, private lands, etc.

1) protect intact habitats and restore degraded habitats on both public and private lands, 2) make the outdoors a more integral part of school curriculum, i.e. No Child Left Inside; Ways Federal Government can help: 1) Foster more cooperative efforts like the Forest Jobs & Recreation Act that bring together diverse interests based on shared common ground, 2) Mining Law Reform that provides opportunity to restore degraded habitats, 3) Fully fund the Land and Water Conservation Fund, 4) Provide better stewardship of public lands; Secretary Salazar's oil and gas leasing reforms are a good start for BLM lands, need something similar for the Forest Service. It is easier not to degrade important habitats than to have to try and restore them after they are degraded.

I suppose a multi-pronged approach with federal agencies, educational systems, non-profits, religious organizations, philanthropists, everyone promoting knowledge and stewardship; My state (Montana) is known for its Great Outdoors. As a young adult, I made a conscious decision to live here, next to nature. Native or transplant, I think a lot of people here appreciate nature, although their ideas of stewardship may vary. In recent years, people with different points of view have gotten together, recognizing their similarities; Good starts are Michelle Obama's war against obesity and White House garden. Promoting the national parks even more (?). Education is huge (the oil spill is one heckuva educational experience.) Encouraging gardening and eating fresh food; Promote local sustainability!! garden plots, small farms who sell locally. Make this a part of every new development. How about walking clubs or routes, with places to stay at night-- a day's walk between them. Thank you!

1) pass laws that encourage and not inhibit cooperation, 2) Provide incentives that reward developers for conservation practices

Discussion Question 1

Missoula, MT

(cont.)

Collaboration is key but the most important thing is creating public awareness of conservation

increased education/information/access/advocacy for conservation; contribute to increased collaboration fed-local; restructure fed agencies; limit (mal)development

Citizen Science Monitoring; User group involvement in monitoring/restoration

1. Educational programs funded; 2. Fund trails (alternate transportation); 3. Subsidize volunteer programs; 4. Support awareness; 5. Provide successful samples (&workshops) for public/private interactions; 6. Continue similar meeting & require political reps to attend!

1. Increase awareness through heavy advertising online and on T.V. Let people know conservation jobs exist and you can help w/things like global climate change. 2. Cut down on car usage in parks by offering shuttle services for tours and transport bicycle rentals. You can charge for them as well to help raise money for parks. For example, a \$2,000 mountain bike rented out at \$25 a day would only take 80 rentals to pay off. Maintenance would run at roughly \$10 per rental, so after the bike is paid off, the parks would make \$15 profit per rental day. This may not be ideal for smaller parks, but Glacier Park and Yellowstone could make lots of money which could help relieve their funding from the Federal gov't and that money could be distributed elsewhere.; 3. The federal government is already doing a good job through AmeriCorps by offering the education award which can be used to pay for part of school or pay off school loans. By offering this to high schoolers, it may entice them to study environmental concepts in post-secondary education.

Engage the community, especially at a young age, in physical, natural recreational activities that are treaded into the urban landscape. Bike path networks that are connected to the most beautiful parts of the city. Alternative physical education for kids like yoga, mountain biking, hiking, skiing, martial arts. School gardening programs.

Reducing our dependence on fossil fuel

I think urban bike access is such a simple but powerful solution to so many of today's problems, obesity, air pollution, the daunting amount of money spew on our over-used road ways. Towns with bike lanes and green belts have an amazing increase in exercise and community in the youth. Give us bike lanes!

Actively managing our federal forest lands at the landscapes level.

Large long term goods for Services Stewardship Contracts available to both BLM and FS which are allowed to be up to 10 years. Streamline NEPA process

Discussion Question 1

Missoula, MT

(cont.)

coordinate

Prioritize educating youth about value of nature to their mental well being

Good way to focus education is start a garden at every school. Everyone has to eat. It's a good way to get everyone involved on many different levels.

Increased funding for FRPP, Land & Water Conservation Program. Maintain/extend laws which provide tax incentives for donation of conservation easements.

Finding a balance between the real conservation of our environment and economic growth in there given areas

Focus on sustainable natural resources and practice safe and reasonable harvesting of said resources. Plan for future of resources, ensure that the land is able to foster economic growth for all generations to come rather than an immediate pay check.

abolish or downsize DOI

Farm to school!! (Thanks to Mrs. Obama efforts) Creating local growth policies that work collaboratively and house growing population and facilitate working farms.

Need permanent extension of Conservation Easement tax incentives to assist in private land conservation. Need full funding for the LWC Fund including a portion dedicated to obtaining access (linear) to land-locked public lands

Finally a collaboration of ideas from multiple agencies. What you need now is more site visits: People on the ground offer realistic solutions that people in offices tend to overlook. People on the ground prescribe better than people in offices. People in offices describe better than people on the ground. too often we play the role of opposite.

One of our largest obstacles to getting kids outside and into their local natural areas (National Forest) is the outfitters permit process, as an educational non profit we are placed into a category with other for profit outfitter groups. However our goal is to connects kids and people with nature, teach stewardship ethics and explore the natural world. the permit process limits our ability to use national forest. Honoraries have to be specific, planned a full year in advance are inflexible (regardless of weather or condition) and limit what we can do. We'd accomplish so much more if we had more specific permit process or new designation.

Discussion Question 1

Missoula, MT

(cont.)

Programs that work- Teachers are the key to increasing kids interest and comfort with the forest - Existing Natural Programs- USFS kids in the forest, Project Learning Tree sponsored by American Forest Foundation. Mt. Natural Resources Youth Camp at U of M school forest can be replicated across the country for 1 week lands exposure to all natural resources discipline, discovery days in Missoula for 5th graders sponsored by Chamber of Commerce.

Programs that work "Connecting Kids to Nature" -Techy go caching/photography- reason to go outside. Volunteer- stewards of land- even as little as litter removal- Does not have to be restoration. Obstacles- forest service- special permits costs.

Engage parents in the outdoors so they can pass it on tot heir kids and create future stewards. Volunteer based groups- citizens science, rehabilitation trail work to engage communities to they experience the value of the lands 1st hand.

Missoula's high schools participate in a joint agricultural program which is unique to the NW. What a great partner for learning about agriculture and how to integrate it with land conservation.

we need to make it as easy for people to get outdoors as it is to turn on the TV. Access and communication is an obstacle. There are several non-profits out there organizing and doing great things, but they have limited funds for advertng or new media communication to get volunteers involved or youth active we need a told for communication and funds to get our message out. Partnerships with the state, local and federal governments could help communication efforts. also partnering with private sectors would be beneficial. How do we connect parents as well? we cant rely on education to do it all.

Although there are a number of challenges facing our culture and world today, a reconnection of children and youth to the outdoors will provide a fundamental change and growth in education among our population. The federal government can provide both financial and political support to outdoor education programs, youth conservation corps, and public school education programs focus on giving children and you an incentive to love the outdoors.

Their company hosts Farm Tours for 3rd and 4th graders from Seeley lake area and Lincoln, MT schools, where they teach about their livelihood: production agriculture, weed mgmt, Water Quality, predator control; Often adults from this effort and the Potomac area attend.

2 pilot projects her organization is involved in: 1 – Access to information on outdoors. One stop shopping where they have partnered w/ State Parks and FS. Focus is on NW MT, providing general recreation information, along with accessibility and other outdoor info resources to the public 2 – Recreation Program focused on wildlife viewing, fishing, and hunting. They offer an equipment loan program, much of which is adaptive equipment designed to facilitate use by people with disabilities. Also provide mentoring and education components. Many partners – FS State parks, private land owners

Discussion Question 1

Missoula, MT

(cont.)

CFAC(?) Works on land use issues. They have been forming committees to bring landowners, user groups, business and others together. Working on policies at local level; smart growth promotion; connect people w/ food source (farmers/public)

Comments related to inner city and getting kids outdoors. Ran a 2004 summit – spin off which was captured by Richard Louve (Last Child in the Woods). A result is the North American Conservation Education Strategy: internet-based clearing house on environmental education opportunities, resources, and events. Partnership of 43 organizations (conservation and education, NGO's, Federal/State Agencies, etc) came together to create the Conservation Education Network, scheduled to launch this fall. Strongly encouraged visiting the website: www.outdoorresource.org Also, national survey key conclusions: 1. Kids better connected through teachers 2. Electronics – computers, etc, are competing with attention of youth -- need to get kids outside! As this (America's Great Outdoors) initiative moves forward, need outreach a major part of effort.

Working on oil and gas issues. Friend has son that was affected by air pollution. Their group has had conversations with over 7500 people across the country. Oil drilling affecting many parks in the NPS; public needs to know this, and we need to pass strong legislation to protect these areas.

Resources for action – there are many foundations and grant sources for available to the community for projects at local to national level. Also at federal level – need more incentives: how to give tax benefits to landowners for supporting this work; also land use planning (e.g. setbacks) important to coordinate federal & State land use management.

Worked as “fish checker” w/ Lolo National Forest, on her recent job, she was not clear on why she was doing this – not connected to objectives. After learning about efforts such as Senator Tester's bill, the Blackfoot Challenge, etc. she feels inspired by this work. If people have a say, and understand more about the projects and restoration, they will feel more empowered. Employees need more info to see the fruit of their efforts. Restoration is important, can bring people together, create jobs, and conserves open spaces. Helpful for honeybee conservation. They need open space. Ties to collaboration.

Need parents and families to be involved – They have a pilot program reconnecting children w/ nature (Park Service) to get adults comfortable in nature. Federal govt can be involved in getting parents connected and over their fear of the outdoors, and enabling them to pass on to children.

Montanans usually think conservation. The Montana Conservation Corp. is alive and well and put hundreds of high school age youth out in the field: performing trail construction, trail maintenance; fuel reduction, other construction projects. Employ high school students throughout the state. Develop and implement education curriculum. Foster stewardship and support for leave no trace ethics. Feedback after term of service term ends: can't retain; no jobs available to go from seasonal to year round employment; chasm from seasonal conservation corps program to permanent employment; no bridge. MCC is committed to young people in outdoor field ranks but no way to get them into system.

Discussion Question 1

Missoula, MT

(cont.)

Accessibility is important. What has worked in childhood - family camped all summer long. Want to promote free camping. In 50 and 60's there were station wagons, coolers, camping tents, and access to camp sites all over. As a citizen in MT – hunting and fishing accessibility was based on an ethic – ethic started with family camping with group of folks that know how to do it right – also had camp fire and girls scouts that re-enforced concept on how to behave – finding a way to bring an ethic training is crucial – maybe no one told them when they were young not to throw trash. Need to educate – this is key. She was lucky to have ecology teachers. We don't have these now because we are teaching to standards and are losing concepts of outdoor field trips and outdoor education. Want to see promotion of education and need to prioritize to educate on the outdoors. Field trips when young and youth conservation core – these put her life on outdoor trajectory. At 15-18 yrs.old, youth were paid you to work in outdoors – plant trees – build trail – and it included environmental education. We should re-instate these nationwide. Need training in classroom and outside classroom. In Missoula, MT flagship outdoor program is funded through mental health program. Want to facility flagship to educate on outdoors – use programs like this in place – e.g. like afterschool programs. Maybe also support teachers in environmental education training. Need to build ethic that grows through youth. Help them be comfortable teaching outdoor education. What Works – rural assistant committee and FS partnered so school can be accessing an outdoor sport – FS folks came into school – they facilitated field trips to the space with the school. Need to fund gas in tank to get them outside.

I'm a rancher – landowner and a neighbor of a forest. I appreciate the USFS. We have the same issues. The MT legislature is working with us. I think they understand the need for a win-win scenario. Family forest owners are all about the outdoors. We promote family forests for a win-win. We work to sustain the forests. There needs to be wood products thinning around communities. We need to keep the timber in America for made in America products. This will sustain wood locally instead of it being shipped elsewhere and overseas. The Montana legislature has a really good policy. In 2007, their proactive approach was needed.

Thinking about sensibilities, there is the Ravalli Rural Assistance Committee. A USFS partnership allows access to the Willoughby area for accessibility. This partnership facilitates field trips to the area. It's a nice 3 prong partnership. There's grant money for transportation. Field trips. Keep tours short on private lands. USFS can provide access without liability.

FRPP – Great farm & ranch land protect/program. Great way for land trusts & USDA to partner to tweak and combine for landowner contributions. It's already realized and recognized. It's an example of what good program already does.

Thank ____ for being here. I'm here representing private land conservation. We partner with landowners to protect farms, ranches, etc; to keep lands intact.

Discussion Question 1

Missoula, MT

(cont.)

We hosted Tuesday's session on the Blackfoot. It was a great day. I focus on the Blackfoot watershed. With regard to the question: what's the role for federal agencies. The best example I can offer: yesterday and today. Provide more of these opportunities. Local community efforts are well grounded. They have good handle on how to address these issues. Seek local group's ideas and council; better to work from locals on up; not top down. Effectiveness of our organization (all partner organizations) is to break down and examine, identify useful tools, find the right people to represent the issues. Agencies need to have right faces/resources available on the ground level such as Tim Love & Amber Camp. They are useful and helpful folks who live in the local community. It's good to have the local staff at the table – they live in the communities.

One of things attempted a decade half ago was Teaming with Wildlife Program – excise tax on backpack and other camping/recreation equip (backpacks, binoculars, birdseed, etc.) – money funneled back to states – instead of pitman robinson tax – the teaming with wildlife tax would be for states for use on nongame programs and other programs that are inadequately funded – there was opposition to that but admin at the time supported it – but has been replaced by state wildlife action plans – but these action plans come with annual congressional appropriations of that money and they decide where money goes. Instead the Teaming with Wildlife would focus on species and wildlife that are currently not addressed. Wildlife draws people to outdoors – not all use on big game – shouldn't put all burdens on hunters and fisherman. The administration supported the legislation, but it met with opposition. Now, programs are not guaranteed. Annual appropriations & allocations are so limited, there needs to be a different way to fund these needs.

If ideas run too far afield, there's always the nuclear family option. There are local, good programs – make it kinetic/physical and it sinks in. Volunteers for preservation. Work, hit liability wall. If ways for Gov't to make easier, would help. Excite them. Parents not much different than kids. Own experience and stories. Best way to convince. Bring down to local level.

Pretty proud of MT headway brni8ging opposing factions together before court. Show examples to court – require sitting down first. Get together before it gets confrontational. Get word out early. Start building local team to hash out. Here's a bizarre post to create: the Czar of Commonsense. As spokesman for local federal agencies, this position would be close and could advocate for it approval process. We live in such a litigious society; this would allow forests and other agencies to deal one on one before an issue heads to court. Find a way within the agencies and offices and overall system to recognize and deal with matters early on. Look to best examples.

projects work well when they have a recreation component. Keeps the community connected; voting for land bonds; helps community support conservation. Don't discourage recreation; it allows for conservation. Question – how do land bonds help? Having a range of tools in the tool box is great.

success story, Restoration of the Clark Fork River

Discussion Question 1

Missoula, MT

(cont.)

Multi ownership land exchanges – had a tremendous positive impact on economy.

local bonds help communities take advantage of federal grants that need matches. Has had recent partnerships with banks – FDIC finding they can partner in ways they hadn't before.

geo tourism – National Geographic led an effort on both sides of the border in the Glacier area (including Canada) that shows how tourism can enhance the natural resources of the place. They pick places that are important with a focus on how the tourists can sustain the economy of the locals, for example by buying from farmers, and going to festivals, instead of going to the box stores. Important to get tourists to understand their role in protecting what is special about their place – a very great process.

DNRC and Blackfoot challenge – successful because it is led from the ground. And then the fed and state have been there to support the efforts. If the agencies had come in and led it – it wouldn't have worked. It's the partnership with locals and fed and state agencies that makes it work.

local bonds are seen as one way to express the community's passion for open space and a way to leverage partnerships with federal and state agencies– a lot of positive feedback. Expanded tax incentive had been extremely successful and there has been an order of magnitude of difference in the amount of acres that have been conserved with this incentive. Room for improvement – land and conservation program –it is real money to the ranchers – the ranchers donated value isn't recognized or valued as great as the cash donation yet it is a real donation and it needs to be better recognized.

people on the ground need to be empowered, if agency personnel are not empowered you run into roadblocks. Agency people need to be supported. Farm and Ranchland Protection Program is an excellent example of a tool that works. Represents the interest on the ground; garners public support.

We are working in a changing landscape. At one time people thought that plum creek land was public – didn't know it was private. As changes in ownership occur – access is changing. He manages over 1000 miles of motorized trails. That infrastructure is greater than a private landowner can support. Liability is very scary – really worried that trees will fall on people or people will get hurt. Important for folks to understand these issues. There are children in Seeley Lake who don't go hiking, fishing, don't go outdoors. His wife created an adventure club and taught them how to go outdoors, ethically, safely, at no cost. It doesn't take a pile of money to get kids outdoors.

the place based community driven efforts have been very successful here. Ground up – local land conservation groups.

Discussion Question 1

Missoula, MT

(cont.)

What makes a local partnership work? Need identified issue with a tangible outcome. Needs to be a desire to improve or rectify the situation with a specific outcome to get the ball rolling. This is the way to attract interest groups.

Regarding his involvement with 4H - it doesn't always take DC to get money – important to realize that the local timber companies have been very generous. As we lose these industries we lose so much money and support. Regarding access: He is a backpacker but when he wants to take out his 90 year old grandparents to hear wolves he used to drive – but now the roads are closed. He heats his house with firewood. Used to go up roads with family to cut firewood– it is a family activity and gets kids outdoors. But now people can't get out as a family to collect firewood. Also lots of families camp in non-designated areas – when the roads are closed they can't do that.

He's 29 and he finds it weird to be called a youth. Since not a govt agency can move quickly and give youth opportunity to make decision and be empowered. They can make decisions that make a difference on the landscape. Changes lifes a lot – getting emotional. Give young people an opportunity a chance to have responsibility. Young folks dug a trail on Mt Sentinal and every day they can look up there and say – wow I did that – and everyone uses it and likes it.

state parks with historical features are a great draw to get folks out. But need to be careful so that you don't hurt the resources.

In the blackfoot challenge the 80/20 rule has worked which means that people knew that we weren't going to agree on everything but were willing to work together if they could get 80% of the way there. The other thing that made it work is that the blackfoot challenge isn't the only thing they do – they work in other places and spread the word. Conservation through our youth and our school boards – get the word out and spread the news. Important even in Missoula to get the kids out, leadership skills, confidence to be in the natural world.

success story, State and local landowner conservation groups

giving young people opportunities to be out in the woods. SCA focuses on kids 15-25 yrs old.

For them – liability issues aren't a big issue.

Farm Bill has been very helpful to help farmers keep their land.

Rode his ATV – trespassed on a lot of Federal land and he had a very good time but there's no way he could walk to the M – because he's beyond that. Need open roads for people to be able to enjoy the outdoors.

Discussion Question 1

Missoula, MT

(cont.)

not associated with a conservation group – born and raised in MT – his parents were homesteaders – issues not being addressed in this session – There is a move in DC to designate lands in MT as national mounument. His Dad couldn't walk but he had a jeep and he could drive all of the FS roads to hunt. Are moving towards roadless areas and access by foot only and that takes a lot of people out of the ability to recreate. Need to make the land better and one of the ways of making it better is to make it accessible. In past FS treated land as a renewable source of energy and products. Letting trees grow old and die is not using them wisely. Also observed that local agencies and local people do a better job of keeping things in perspective then the folks in DC. The bureaucracy of Fed govt keeps things from happening. Things really happen from local knowledge and local funding. The further DC stays out of MT the better.

Boyscouts of America: totally led and funded by local people – no government funding or supported. Boys and Girls club are also funded locally. He wants to put a plug in that there are young people and organizations that go into woods and don't need federal govt to tell people how to do it. He understands why plum creek closes the roads but it didn't use to be that way. Now private and public all close roads. Now if don't backpack 20 miles you can't see the roads. NO MORE roadless areas. Let's log the forests and keep the roads as trails.

MCC incorporates the service work with educational components and encourages members to get out and do more community work. It connects young people to the environment. People in Montana are lucky.

She has some add on to some previous comments. Try to get local organizations to participate or engage; they already exist. Organizations such as YMCA, Flagship, Camp Fire, and other after school programs (don't reinvent the wheel). Also include troubled youth. Expand and fund what we already have. Provide jobs for more youth leaders like MCC. Need people with ideas and what we already have in place. Get the Forest Service or BLM into these organizations speaking, and giving slideshows. Get kids excited about this. She remembers D.A.R.E. – that stuck with her (as an example); an hour with a policeman and getting out of class. Bring the Forest Service in to schools. It comes down to the school systems, advertising, and after school programs.

To find people for programs, try advertising on the internet and spreading by word of mouth. It's just like music: we get it off the internet. Focus on going to websites. Advertising on different media websites would work; pay for advertisements. That's how AmeriCorps found him.

Create social responsibility. The direct way to do this is to teach kids in the third, fourth and fifth grades. He went to the Teton Science School when he was in grade school; he may have drug his feet to go but he's now infinitely grateful he went. This early on interaction with wilderness fosters a great relationship. He doesn't recall much emphasis on natural sciences in high school; thinks having a curriculum that you continue in secondary school would be good in the long run. It will benefit and create a generation of people with social responsibility

Discussion Question 1

Missoula, MT

(cont.)

We achieve higher success by getting people involved on the ground and in partnerships with other agencies. We have good groups like Rocky Mountain Elk, and Blackfoot Foundation. These groups have shown over and over if you engage people on the group level there is great success. Also successful with engaging federal employees.

Madison elk working group; diverse group addressing elk population. Key is to open groups to all people. Forest Jobs & Rec effort was hand-picked & doomed to failure. Groups must include those from the bottom up & not be hand-picked.

Conservation ethic & leadership has brought time for renewal. Need to talk of use of YCC & CCC that were used to implement and expose & carry the ethic forward. This sustains ethics by involvement; particularly in these economic times

National Trust- Problem is shortage of funding in the government. Make the best investments possible. Goal-keep our rural population in place in the sites. The National Trust Main Street program & Preserve America program helps small communities to create livable communities/preserve heritage. These programs bring in a 50:50 match & produce jobs. This is a good long term investment in communities.

Lives in Seeley Lake which is a small community. She and another Mom (Jeannie - sitting next to her) started an Adventure Club at the Elementary School from first grade on where once a month the children go out for an entire day. It has been enormously successful. The program has attracted kids that don't usually do that sort of thing (would usually play video games indoors). It has captured kids. They take them on hikes. They've been amazed at how well the program was received. Five mothers have taken this on and they have a supportive Superintendent. It's at a small school so it's easy to get the word out and there hasn't been much resistance. Another comment about science: she would like to see, as a Mom, more emphasis on science. With reading/math and the standards for "no child left behind" we've dropped the ball on science. Kids want science and they need it but aren't getting it because of the reading/math emphasis. They should focus on science and how it applies to real life. The parent group is toying with the idea of starting a garden and greenhouse on school grounds and implementing some science and connecting kids that way. You have a captive audience at school so give it to them that way. Take advantage of it so the kids can feel a connection to the natural environment.

Comments on Geoff's input: It all starts with bringing this into the schools and creating awareness on a daily basis. If kids have exposure to the land and a connection to the land they will be more likely to care about it. Waiting to deal with people who are abusing the land now is a backwards approach. Many parents do work with their own children (to instill value for land) but we can't count on all parents, as many parents don't work with their children

These organizations & vo ed are often cut when funding is cut. Agricultural funding goes down when environmental funding goes up. Young farmers and ranchers groups help kids get started in ranching. Ranching is interrelated to conservation/hunting. FFA has helped finding jobs & speaking skill.

Discussion Question 1

Missoula, MT

(cont.)

She just moved back to Missoula and can compare it to where she was previously. Bozeman is so incredible and different mainly in their biking, hiking, and cross country trails from town to the outskirts. They are for fun but also for getting to the stores and businesses. People are using these systems a lot more there (than Missoula)

A comment on volunteerism: if there is any way to promote and/or subsidize volunteerism (the government) we should be doing it. There are baby boomers retiring in droves; what will they do after retirement? They have the experience and education (to volunteer), they have 40 years of life left and it would keep them alive longer

Thank you for this meeting; we need more meetings like this. It would be beneficial. We should require our Representatives to be here and involved in process and hear what is being said

The community is like a cell membrane; she compared this to the notion of engagement. Every Forest Service employee should sit on a community board and transfer some of their knowledge – have a flow back and forth. Another idea regarding Heritage Resources: everyone in the community has stories – i.e. the place where someone kissed his wife for the first time. There are tangible values and attachment to place. We're missing the boat by not connecting these stories. Volunteers connect it all. They help us understand the power of community. We need a rubric in the Forest Service volunteer program to put people's skills to work. Some volunteer out of the goodness of their heart s; we need to formalize.

Yellowstone Business Partnership is a success story. Connecting folks. Sustainability is key; establish a long term vision & include the business community. YBP is a model for success. Identify economic models for sustainability. Establish long term vision for economic sustainability. Common values. Sierra Business Partnership is also a model.

By contrast he says he had a great childhood growing up in Montana but his childhood was sterile due to lack of time or access or something (to the outdoors). But when he went to high school he read about the wilderness and realized 'it's out there'. He went on the internet and was lucky to find the Montana Conservation Corps. Now that he's here and going into the wilderness, there will be a satisfaction when he's finished with his term of service; he can talk to others about it. He knows the internet was mentioned as a communication method but thinks word of mouth is the most important. When they're done with their experience, the most important thing is to get the word out and share their experiences with others. He thinks we'll find a lot of volunteers waiting in the wings.

Tree Fight. A response to mountain pine beetle devastation. This group is recruiting volunteers to document what is going on in forests & help with experimental regimes. Have 200-300 volunteers, mostly from Jackson, that will go in Bridger-Tetons & take photos/record data/experimental pouches. Will save trees & do something positive.

We need to establish more of an identity and be carbon neutral. We need to have access to wilderness and public land and have green spaces connected to public lands as the model. He echoes everyone's comments so far; he's heard a lot of support for education

Discussion Question 1

Missoula, MT

(cont.)

She believes Service Learning is the best model at a young age. She suggests using the same method for recruiting used by an organization called "Teach for America". They have recruited huge numbers of youth; their target age is the 22-28 age groups. They use alumni from their organization, who are excited about the program, to go out and get more people involved. If there are alums with our program, you could do this. They (Teach for America) may have incentives. This could apply to high school and middle school. Have alums come talk to schools and say this is what I did and it was cool. Do research on this.

Said he was very fortunate to have grown up in the Five Valleys (Missoula, etc.) because this school system did encourage kids in outdoor activities. They could also go home and climb a tree. They were able to go to Plum Creek Timber Company locally and see how trees are processed into wood products. He knows this works because he has these memories still from back in the fifth grade.

Thank you for holding this session. This agency does a good job when it does educate – i.e. "Leave no Trace" and 'Pack it Out' are so effective; light switches goes off in people's heads "this is not just green clothes people who do this (pack it out/leave no trace) we, the people have responsibilities to do this too". We can do more to give Americans pride in their public lands and define for them the gradations of management. From what the wilderness act calls for in maintaining 110 million acres to recreational areas in National Forests to where ATV's are allowed. We're in a period right now where there's confusion – "where am I entering; what are the other opportunities?" We need national education to develop pride and an owning of their responsibilities

Missoula Open Space Plan passed with 60-70% approval in 1995. Bonds for open space funding have passed with over 70% approval. People in Missoula love our sense of place and being able to look up to the hills and know that they are protected forever. They are willing to pay taxes to support these areas. The partnership that was created in order to leverage that money was with the Five Valley's Land Trust, Rocky Mtn. Elk Foundation, USFS, etc. Funding from Land and Water Conservation Funds were key to leveraging the money and partnership.

We should look at empowering more youth. There are a lot of us who are older (youth) who didn't get an early education in conservation. The Montana Conservation Corps is a way to get us out there connected to the land we cherish. It's about starting a foundation with them too

There do seem to be some successes going on in Montana. It appears to be reflective of a deep desire of the people. There seem to be good bridges built between conservation groups and other locals. Getting together at places like Trixies in Ovando is key to process. There is a deep desire for it to work with communities. People are connected to the land. In Montana bridges have been built between a wide range of users. That is unique when that happens and out of that great things occur.

Discussion Question 1

Missoula, MT

(cont.)

224 Americor members doing service in Montana. Emphasize service as a strategy to bridge education into careers as contributing members of communities. Conservation Corps are tremendous assets. Treated weeds/ build trails. FS has rapidly aging workforce. Cons Corps provide leadership and group management skills. Pipeline to future employees. All agencies are working with these corps & creating opportunities.

Teton Park programs: Friends organization; ensures protection of resources. Started own YCP- kids do trail work, learn skills, transferable skills 16-19 yr olds. Work 10 weeks in the summer. Paid for with private donor money. Also funding multi-cultural program for High School program- Latino- underserved populations. 80 kids in 40 schools in Wyoming. Trying to get kids more interested in great outdoors. 12 day trek is being planned- statewide. Youth in the Parks

Org helps create trails & do conservation projects on private land. Enhanced tax incentives for conservation easements doubles the work they can do. Without the tax incentives, it won't work. These tax incentives expired in 2009 and she would like to see these incentives made permanent. GVLTP preserves working ranches/ wildlife habitat. Keeps ranchers doing the good work.

Strategies that are working are the Extension Program and Institute for Recreation Research. We need to increase collaboration between these programs, do outreach into the community and enhance partnerships. We need more folks in the Forest Service or Park Service to come in and also get different levels of government working together (i.e. county commissioners and go statewide) to build it up. These two programs would work

Invest in America's youth through conservation corps programs This has broad impacts. Many MCC alumni go on to work for federal agencies. Many people come to MCC to serve their country. This opens their eyes to the great landscapes this country has.

He likes what he's hearing today. I think one of the hardest parts of getting youth to the outdoors is to provide a reason to go there. The Education Award is a good thing. He participated in a Career Fair where they got to talk to kids face to face and the kids got excited seeing all the tools they brought with them. Developing leadership skills is important; youth can then carry it on further into their lives. You need to probe what motivates those kids: is it cranking out 10 miles of trail? Or being better speakers? or more engaged in community? Find out what motivates youth. Youth will motivate youth. It's like a baseball team – someone tells a friend, who tells a friend, etc.; the ripple effect. The YCC focuses on leadership – but the Forest Service doesn't do this. It's so important to your community.

Discussion Question 1

Missoula, MT

(cont.)

Northern Great Plains. We have overlooked the grasslands, as evidence by decline in grassland birds & species. We are focusing on North Central area of Montana. CCPI program with farm bill is effective; working with ranchers on conservation measures to protect grassland birds. Need regional NRCS people to deliver these programs on the ground. Meet with ranchers and discuss opportunities. Science based organization that works with BLM/ FWP on research related to grassland birds. Leveraging of public/private dollars is effective. CMR-largest grassland reservation. Better integration between DOI agencies needs to occur. CMR managing for ferret. Not effective. BLM trying to find incentives for landowners to allow ferrets. DOI agencies need to do better at working multi-jurisdictionally.

Stewardship ethic. Connecting kids to outdoors-Fed Gov't can continue with fee free days including in winter. Make the park more accessible by increasing fee free days & public outreach related to those days. Bring the parks to the local communities; bring the resources to the kids to encourage visitation. Resume matching program (like the Centennial Challenge) to incentivize donors. Although the Centennial Challenge was cumbersome, encourage it to resume.

Interagency Bison Plan working group with Federal/ State/Tribal & Private. Wide range of interests & is a work in progress. Looks at wildlife management in a broad context. Through this group & public involvement, there has been some success in managing bison. Works with private landowners- Royal Teton Ranch. Not perfect, but complicated issues & this group is a good example of working together between federal/ tribal & state.

One thing I've seen work in this area is citizen science monitoring; it gives the average citizen a responsibility. Promotion of this kind of program would help connect people to the landscape. How can we have citizens gather information and do effective monitoring? The Audubon Society has done some of this

When open space bonds are used, there should be more allowance of public access on private lands.

Hunters are conservationists & promote through foundations. Hunters brought in \$270 million in Montana. Outfitters brought in \$170 million with \$51 million payroll. Hard dollars. He works with private landowners & brings in hard dollars.

When she was growing up, she was outside all the time even though it was in suburban areas. She and her brother played along a creek bed. Education is the key. She was in the education field and the year she left education she was told to bring the kids inside not go outside. You can educate, mandate, regulate, but at the core you have to have things available. On any developments in the future, housing or commercial, there should be a space there that is nothing but nature. People on their lunch hour can sit outside maybe by a creek. The longer you do that the more you appreciate it. It's the same with agricultural spaces, small spaces, in housing developments; if you take care of it, you'll appreciate it and you'll know that the rain, sun, and soil are important. Kids need to be out there in it – digging, eating worms, and throwing stones - every day. It (nature) needs to be around us

Discussion Question 1

Missoula, MT

(cont.)

Coalition building from the bottom up works. Need consensus from people all over the country. Owners of the public land; locals and all owners. HPBH-Hyalite Porcupine Buffalo Horn WSA example-contentious.

The Federal government could help support bridges by engaging knowledgeable people who know the history and ecology of an area. If we look at a system that already exists we could get people out enjoying what we have. State parks are being threatened by budget cuts, if we don't engage people we will lose these lands.

River protection works in Montana; at all levels. Blackfoot Challenges/ North Fork protection Act/ Forest Jobs & recreation act- Tester. One of the largest river restoration projects- Mill town dam removal in Missoula. Streamside setbacks- riparian corridors are needed to survive. 2 major pieces of legislation to protect rivers-Wy & ID

It is important that in Bozeman; doorstep of 1st National Park; many accomplishments around Yellowstone. GYCC (coordinating committee) promotes collaboration & brings agency managers in to meet on a regular basis; common issues & solutions. Unique structure; functions at the level of people involved. Reconnecting people to outdoors; National Parks plan an important role in this. Almost everyone has a connection to Yellowstone. Important to focus on national parks as a focal point to reconnect people to nature. Also the greater landscapes. Builds future conservation with children and surrounding landscapes.

Gallatin Nat Forest Travel Mgt was a long process. Urges other Forests to pay attention to dispersed camping & the value of dispersed camping in their travel management planning. For many people, this is their first experience of the outdoors. In travel management plans, be sure and include dispersed camping.

Develop trust but get a steady infusion from knowledgeable private land holders and trusted bureaucrats. We need people who know the issues and can give firm direction. How about getting federal agencies to work more effectively at the community level. Local communities need a steady infusion from knowledgeable bureaucrats and knowledgeable local people. Have the agency people get out of the office and really work at the community level to find common ground. Really have them work for the public. Have them help build understanding and support for the agency.

Going off what Jenna just said, when we're working with noxious weeds or building trails, it helps us understand things and makes a connection with community and with government

REI Mission: inspire, educate, .Stewardship component is important. Partners with non-profits/ provides grants. REI targets youth & getting them outdoors; promote volunteerism; work on local trails. Family Adventure Journal At REI stores- take journal outdoors & observe & make notes on plants/tracks/bugs. Gets kids involved in the outdoors.

Curriculum with lesson plans that get kids outdoors. Curriculum supplements what they are doing in classroom; provide materials not available in schools. Takes the resources to schools.

Discussion Question 1

Missoula, MT

(cont.)

The people of communities have come together to create bonds and conservation easements where people can hike and bike, an example near Missoula is the Rattlesnake Recreation Area. Need to look at the big picture: other Montana communities are following examples of protecting lands around cities as has been done in Missoula. We have good leadership to support these efforts in Missoula, but the resources (funding) are stretched.

Every time the government gets active, we have to be reactive/ wolves/ water/ cap & trade. It makes it tough to use resources. MT has a lot of resources. Keep in mind that ideas have to be good for everybody, especially those trying to make a living and not just environmentalists.

Flood plain & wetland conservation. Work in Madison river valley on floodplain restoration. USDA- Conservation Reserve Program & NRCS- wetland program are working. WRP programs in Montana. 2008 Farm bill allow grazing pilot programs. Challenge in conserving these areas with various funding sources –once protected by conservation easements, the wetlands are not restored. Legacy we leave should be the ability of the lands to store water. Restoration projects we need to fund, we have money for easements but not conservation work. No money appropriated. Need funding through agencies to do cooperative restoration projects. Greatest hedge against climate change

We will have lawsuits with streamside setbacks. How will we protect private property rights? We should not take private property rights to protect corridors. Bankrupted due to spotted owl-friend.

Reexamine the role of national parks in this initiative. National Parks drive the State economy. Look at the relationship between national parks and the communities surrounding the parks. Parks are important part of community and have a key role as we think about building relationships with communities. We need to continue to connect youth with parks.

She is originally from Minnesota. She came from the suburb and urban areas. Getting kids outdoors should be emphasized in school programs. They had local people from the State Parks come to her school sometimes; they went to the pond in back of the school yard where they could get in the mud. We should encourage kids to take what they learned back to the classrooms. She had an Arctic Explorer doing programs in her school when she was in the 6th grade; she thought it was very important and sort of unique – others didn't get that experience. Getting kids outside, for half an hour will have a huge impact. They know there's something bigger out there. Also, set up more urban outdoor spaces like community gardens. People can be working in gardens growing things and we can be encouraging parks to outreach to kids in education.

Discussion Question 1

Missoula, MT

(cont.)

Mentioned youth who live in Los Angeles who have never been to the ocean even though it's just a few miles away. He grew up in Boston and there are kids there who haven't been to the woods there, even though they aren't far away. There was a Sierra club program that tried to help with this. His 'in to' working with the Forest Service and was working for the YCC. He really hopes the Obama Administration will establish a national service framework to bring back the CCC – the New Deal. We could reach out to new student high school graduates. Could make parents realize this is a great experience before college – to do work for the government and perhaps get education awards like having tuition waived. This is a huge opportunity in our country.

Regarding the Bob Marshall Wilderness Foundation and other associations who outreach to young people and have partnerships with the Forest Service: I hope agencies will fund these associations more. These are ways to connect youth to ground.

They (youth) are influenced by things like humor – make them laugh and they'll listen to you; if it's boring they will turn it off. Try to draw on their interests or the music they listen to. Advertise through TV shows.

his organization provides workshops on preservation on culture resources. Works with local communities showing them how to restore and preserve the important pieces of their communities. Focus on importance of what these communities have and what they need to do to preserve them.

working with schools curriculum based for kids to experience outdoors. Provide funding for kids to visit park with rangers. Provide Internet activities that link back to the visit. 1/2 day training sessions at the park that focus on loons, mountain goats, pica, clarks nut cracker, and invasive weeds. Enables anyone who's interested to come in and learn more about the park and what's in it.

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Huge movement in corps to provide manpower (supervision) and jobs for youth who want to get out into the woods and nature. Provides education and jobs at the same time. On line connectivity, increase awareness with administration that these groups are out there and if funded more, could very well bring in more youth

economy important. Need to see groups working together, dovetail natural resources and cultural resources together. Tamarak festival held at the same time as the brew fest, provides several types of groups all working together to focus on natural resources and bringing community together to combine all interests. Economic value is brought to the community.

Discussion Question 1

Missoula, MT

(cont.)

public schools play important role in this AGO initiative. Look at teachers as the coordinators to help spread the word. Then call in the other resource specialists to assist in the teaching/learning programs.

NRCS has good incentive programs for private lands. Need to work better on the outreach to those land owners.

water and climate change. Water is a limited and defining feature of our landscape. Attended a river honoring session on the Blackfeet reservation. Elders give history and importance of the river in their lives. Kids gathered to learn about and experience the river. Canada—citizen based groups to become more aware about their watersheds community based activity.

Community is like a membrane of a cell around public land. Everything that enters the public land comes through community. The people in a community know what happens on the federal lands. Forest Service employees should sit in on community meetings to take advantage of the knowledge of the community. Participation helps the knowledge cross the membrane.

Value heritage resources. Community has stories: where they went finishing, where they kissed the first time. These are intrinsic values that get attached to places, heritage resources.

Volunteers connect it all. Need a rubric in the Forest Service to connect volunteers to it all. Need to connect those skills, to harness them. Resources are slim, but people volunteer out of goodness of their heart. Harness them.

The federal land managers have the option to add “caring for” in wilderness there is a lot of caring for. Funds to add to the effort. There is ability for others to add. That’s true of a lot of conservation organizations.

I have a wish list, 1. better planning strategies across the board, 2. Incentive to save conservation areas, 3. More information and advocacy, 4. Increased collaboration between local and federal agencies. More gets done by the locals than the feds.

Thank to Obama for my job. I am funded with stimulus funds.

The biggest obstacle is lack of awareness. It seems reclamation is backburner. It takes one life cycle for a vacant lot to develop an ecosystem. Drive through any town. It probably has a vacant lot. Make an incentive for the owner to donate use of the lot to the community in neighborhood fashion like community gardens. When there is a neighborhood garden you can feel the neighborhood. There is less trash, its cleaner. The people are more neighbors. In my community there is a year long waiting list for the garden. Need many, many, many, many more gardens. The gardens put the conservation effort at the forefront of daily life.

we need expansion of programs like MCC.

Discussion Question 1

Missoula, MT

(cont.)

Create more federal incentives and funds to public schools to implement outdoor learning programs. We do it with reading and math. Like "Project Wild" on a more regular basis. More than bring the trunk to school once or twice a year.

Music is big, radio or festivals. The environmental movement started in 70s. It connected through music. It reaches through generations. Have someone announce or someone at a festival to make music. It's strong no matter how you use it.

Adventure club kids will bring their parents. Some parents have never x-country skied or been on a trail. The knowledge to get there and access the trails is created. Kids can say let's go again and parent will be able to take them.

Empower more youth. People have said educate starting young. Those who are older have missed that bus and need to be empowered too. I didn't get the opportunity when I was a kid. But I got the opportunity. MCC is a way to empower us. Education empowers older kids. We want to help conservation. We have a better understanding of what the agencies do to conserve the resources.

Looking at conservation strategies. 80% of open lands are private. Conservation easements are used to conserve private lands. People donate the conservation easement. The incentive is tax breaks. From personal experience, I entered an easement 13 years ago. I talked to my neighbor about it. When congress passed an increased incentive for easement, spreading tax break over 15 years, then my neighbor also did an easement. Encourage congress to do the incentive again. For some it takes the added incentive. On other hand, there are those who want the land that they lived on and their parents lived on protected for their kids, but they don't make enough money to take advantage of a tax break. A purchased easement would help. Need a federal program to meet this. The video said that private land should be looked at for protection. The Farm and Ranch Protection Program has a minimum size. Congress should look at that to include larger and smaller acreages in the program. But that program needs matching funds, which are hard to come by. One thing that works well is the passage of a law like the Missoula open space law. Bozeman passed a second open space law. The local program provides the local funds to match the federal matching requirement for the easement program.

The important thing for me was summer camp. I went one summer to camp and then I wanted to volunteer. I can't volunteer enough. Camp allowed me access and the gear to get outside. That's what did it for me. More important than education is getting out.

Our organization does well. It gives an opportunity to lead and gives ownership of their experience. The kids come to be outside and work and to not be at school. Participants take ownership over the direction they go. They work in projects in woods and make decisions on how to shape the environment. It creates a sense of self work creates leadership opportunity. It bonds people to woods and creates leaders. I don't want to knock the Forest Service, but some of my friends just sat through the entry training. The Forest Service entry training is horrible. The instructors have 30 years experience or more, but they can't teach how to use a chainsaw or cross cut saw. Its exciting stuff, but they make it dull. Keep the youthful energy going.

Discussion Question 1

Missoula, MT

(cont.)

The agencies are good at inventory and monitoring on public lands. Extend inventory and monitoring onto private lands in the large scale conservation model. With that in mind we need public access. Access is based on consumptive uses. Focus on non consumptive uses. Would be more palatable to public.

With crisis in Gulf it's an opportunity for kids to see how important it is. Here we can see clean water, and then we look at what's there. We need to take care of it.

Get kids outdoors. The book "Kids in the Woods" sets up the problem well. Lewis and Clark Trail teaches kids conservation out on a trail setting. It is an important developmental step to get outdoors, not just in yards, on lawns, but in the wilderness. We are at a time right now, and people say the Lewis and Clark Trail is over. But it's wrong. It's a terrible thing to just drop the ball and not follow up with what they saw at Travelers Rest or wherever. Get them to look where we are and the history that we have here.

Outdoor education— my turning point to conservation was a 21 day experience with backpacking and outdoor education. It was fully funded by a corporation. We probably can't repeat the funding. My point is that the people who had the biggest impact on my development and learning were forced to live like transients. They didn't make enough money so they couldn't rent an apt. Let's fund them. They need to make a living wage. Establish living wage for these teachers.

Collaboration is working great. We have the first chance at creating wilderness in many years. It's a great rallying point for the youth

The 3 predominate means for conserving private lands has been: • Acquisition by public land manager or Conservation organization (e.g. USFS, NPS, BLM purchase of private in-holdings, County or City purchase for open space or park with bond funds and LWCF funds), a private land trust purchase for wildlife habitat using combo of private donations and federal, state, and/or local funds etc). • Conservation easements (again, a mixture of private, state, local & federal funds are often used to purchase easements) • Land use regulations (some states have been much more successful than others with this approach)

couldn't afford to spend time in the outdoors so he took a job that paid him to go in the woods. It's a great organization – everyone comes for a variety of reasons but they all end up working in the outdoors. Some come from an advocacy background. What drew him was the educational component. The incentive for education would be good for other programs too.

took part in a non-profit called Greenbeans who brought the outdoors to the urban setting. That is what led her to Missoula. 80% of Americans live in the cities so it's important to bring the outdoors to the city such as by community gardens.

Discussion Question 1

Missoula, MT

(cont.)

Not every community has access to the forests around them. It's important to bring the outdoors to the communities such as through community gardens. Or take the kids out to the woods – but not every community has a national park so embrace what you do have, such as regional parks.

Use the model of Montana Conservation Corps and build on collaboration at the local level. Partner with successful programs like Knowles (??) or Yellowstone Expeditions which takes city kids out in the Yellowstone ecosystem to learn about the outdoors.

Around Missoula there are a number of outdoor conservation camps are a good way for kids to. Learning adventures for kids in the summer, hiking, biking, rock climbing etc. Need more opportunities like this to expose more people to the outdoors.

people's access to lands is critical – One successful program in MT for private lands is the Block Management program whereby landowners can voluntarily sign up to provide for hunting and access allows for 8 million acres in the program. Landowners are paid per hunter day. We need more new fishing access sites for rivers. For public lands that are land locked the state is pursuing conservation easements for access.

For good access to public lands a good network of trails is valuable and it makes it easy for schools to access it by walking which is cheaper for field trips by students.

access is critical for dirt bikes and mountain bikes. We need to hook people to support conservation by providing access to trails where they can play and that leads to volunteering to help maintain trails. Not lock people out by allow them in and they will partner for many other conservation efforts.

1. aviation acces to wilderness – for disabled folks or older and they can spend a day in the wilderness. Airstrips are maintained by the pilots not the agency. Internal trailheads.

conservation is the responsibility of individuals. Blue Mountain folf course established. Many folks involved and it caused people to come together a way to bring folks of a variety of ages and kids learn from example of their elders. Grandkids taken up with their classmates. It is a cheap way to get people out of doors. Not texting or doing video games. The more they get out. Problem is we need more space for courses to spread people out and available year round. A local person just graduated from law school and he won a national title. He is being an example to other young people.

Moved here less than a yr ago form CA. 90% of people treat the land w/ respect 10% don't. The obstacle is that government's solution is to shut it down and that is the wrong solution. We need to educate the 10% people to proper use and keep it open to folks, that should be the government's role. Girl & Boy Scouts used to be a great training place for youth but they are being destroyed and government needs to correct this. Perception that private landowners are only in it for money, but they are also in it to be good stewards. Government needs to cut down the dead and dying trees and it is spilling over to private lands.

Discussion Question 1

Missoula, MT

(cont.)

Engaging the community, he came from urban setting and the difference here is the ease of access through trails and so folks are more engaged here than in urban settings. Winter skiing programs, gardening programs, etc. the more kids can get engaged early in life the more they care. Expansion of the fossil fuel industry is problematic and we need to keep them out of our wilderness.

People need to leave our preconceived perceptions at home. People need to work together to find common ground to establish a relationship around. On the front noxious weeds has been that point of common ground that has allowed discussion to proceed to deal with other more contentious issues. The common ground allows people to stay connected.

1. young people are intimidated by going camping when they aren't in shape and don't know how to set a tent up, etc. He thinks bikes are a great stepping stone for other activities; people can be in better shape and develop confidence to do other activities. We need more trails and bicycle lanes in cities that people can use on a daily basis.

generation MT grew up in eastern MT. Appreciates this opportunity. Feels it is important to connect kids early in life. GUTS (girls program with YWCA) – girls want to get outdoors and they appreciate the land and they have an innate connection with the land and we need to increase the opportunity for that connection. Through schools, after school activities, etc. Create space for people to help heal the land, volunteer to do trail work or help decide how the land will be used. Sometimes it is hard to find opportunities to do volunteer work on federal lands. Success by engaging girls from cities and bringing them to Missoula and help them connect to the land. It is important for kids to gain self-confidence through outdoor activities.

because of experiences provided to kids on the ground as discussed here this is an important method of connecting people to the land. The challenge of college students to take a summer off from income generating work is very hard, they need to be earning money during the summer to help pay for college. We need to be providing programs that allow college students to do a summer of conservation work that will pay them for the work. On the FS agency side it has been very rewarding to find money to hire interns. It has been good opportunities to help the interns sort out what they want to do with their lives related to the

Lewis and Clark Trail- national historic trails are a great way to get kids outside, learn about history, culture and conservation

300k ac availability -- seely swan program -- availability to log, etc

108k ac Blackfeet challenge

Working landscapes and collaboration are critical

Discussion Question 1

Missoula, MT

(cont.)

Recreation opportunities

Place to leave for our kids and grandkids

Putting differences aside and work together

Grazers, fishers, hunters, etc - came together - no one will remember who's here today, but will be

This effort must be bottom up - far be it from me to think I know better - we need enough flexibility in our programs to work well across all these landscapes and local situations. The focus needs to be on the results. Also creating job opportunities - passionate about rural communities.

Rural America 16% of US population - but 45% of service men/women come from rural areas. Why? Because of values they have learned.

So much of our identity is tied to place.

It's really about individual people more than landscapes - that's what Ken Burns was told

A lot of times we sit around complaining. Going to DC he learned the folks in DC were glad to hear success stories. This is a job we all have to do. We need to help our representatives by doing what we need to do.

It's about how people work together - Partners for Conservation - the 27 LO's have the same issues regardless of where they are. We can help our representatives sell programs if we connect with the folks on the ground - they can look at Jim Stone and what we have done for Blackfeet.

Conservation is important to rural and vice versa - not just because rural people want to use the land/resources, urban-based conservation tend to alienate rural.

Now rurals tapping into love of land and using partnerships.

Local, sustain food, energy, wood, fiber helps blend the urban and rural- collaboration on the forest restoration program - they like that because it helps fund collaboration in a ranked approach.

They're partners in every respect:

Discussion Question 1

Missoula, MT

(cont.)

Need key communication leaders in place

LWCF funding critical to fulfill this mission

Public education works - _____ was a student, someone else too

Swan Ecosystems Center

Grants for National fur program

Pass \$ to LO's so they can d{) forest management plans

1996 tribal conservation districts started - don't care ~ political boundary -looked across landscape to eliminate weeds, etc, took 3 years to do plan, got some \$ to do resource inventory - 5 year effort; worked collaboration with ARS and partnered with 1890 land grants to research a plant the tribe has used for years and learned it's good in treating type 2 diabetes and anti-coagula - this tied into colleges, too.

North Fork Flathead is good opportunity for state and local feds to work together

Working with Salish to land exchange to eliminate checkerboard

Montana legacy, Montana working forestry

Put land in conservation easement at urging of his kids, who wanted the land someday - the federal tax incentives are critical to make this work - a very impOliant tool that needs to stay in place

Baucus said Rock Ringling is the one who came up with the tax incentive concept and

4th generation of a family owned guest ranch and it would not survive without coop conservation that's happening in Blackfeet; folks coming here who have contributed funds, etc, to conservation efforts all because they happened to come here and learned to understand the importance of the conservation issues; have the accessibility to their representatives

Discussion Question 1

Missoula, MT

(cont.)

Rural Initiatives allows people to communicate directly with their commissioners

In Montana, you don't separate nature and culture; deep connection to landscape - open

USFS program allowing partnership agreements with private land if it benefits public lands

Likes when organizations include tribes in the process early - it works well

Guided recreation - watching sense of discovery helps appreciate how special area is

Need to target program so they are hand ups - not hand outs - seed money is what's needed to leverage private funds

Thank you for work protecting cultural resources in the Flathead Region

I.i.Im ac of best fish and wildlife habitat in the Nation

400,000 mile streams

1st tribal wilderness area in the Nation established lots of other amazing

Clean vessel

LCWF

River-honoring on Flathead River

There are successful programs funded by NF to do restoration on public lands. Example Clearwater road decom, fairly effective to get students out to provide realistic orientation toward coursework, to bring relevancy to classroom learning, includes college age kids, rural high schools, city schools - improves connection. Good partnership opportunity.

Discussion Question 1

Missoula, MT

(cont.)

When you talk about programs that are successful in connecting people to outdoors, the MCC has really opened my eyes, from upstate NY. In terms of education support system, getting young people out in the outdoors to understand nature. Especially important that meeting the people and community. Grad from college the way the economy was going, sick of waiting tables, especially wanted to learn how to backpack, opened his eyes, exploded his world to what is important, became of how the outdoors is an integral resource and part of being an American. Being ushered into the wilderness v. just going on own.

MCC works, grew up NE came out to go to school, joined to show he earned his right to enjoy, American monetary incentive draws youth into programs, especially when it is earmarked for education. Working in wilderness, beneficial start off being naïve, re beetle kill and they learn, air strip. discourse between multiple agencies, they want transfer of ideas between agencies. winter work, too many government employees who run out of dignity in season go on unemployment and food stamps - put them to work v. government can provide more winter work. tools needed Idaho residents don't want to work, people who are surrounded by wild lands are not as inspired.

Land and water conservation funding good tools. Advocate for permanent extension to conservation easement incentive tax. Sometimes the public can get access to eas

Connecting people with personal schedule to help open volunteer avenues, affordability for parents, can't afford kids camps. Biggest tool that we can all use, stop bailing out banks, start bailing people out.

Discussion Question 1

Nashville, TN

Tennesseans have always shared a strong commitment to protecting our mountains, open spaces, farms and water and our state would provide a great venue which would engage a full range of interested groups.

Governor Bredesen and Tennessee Commissioner of Environment and Conservation Jim Fyke are very interested in the America's Great Outdoors Initiative and stand ready to assist with the event.

Tennessee Parks and Greenway Foundation success using property transfer funds, used in 4 ways, 16 Million dollars goes back to TN, however those funds can be taken by legislature to balance the budget, it is a fight they will have to fight every year, even though it is dedicated fund, never fully funded, there should be more federal incentive to states to have this type of forward thinking approach to take money when developed and preserve the land, this would be good incentive to state legislatures if the feds would match the money they might set aside. Match all money set aside for conservation.

Poor areas is a problem. Suggest Urban hubs through public transportation. Driving is getting very expensive. Camping equipment is now considered a luxury. Develop a tax incentive for people to donate their camping equipment or canoe to find homes for people that will use them.

What works: Cherokee national forest PolicyPublic and Private funding, Land trust, Land trust easement conservation

What works: Civil war heritage sites

What works: Sierra Club funding land purchase

What works: Mix of easements and land acquisition

What works: Green ways and space working for public use

What works: State Parks and greenways. Simple for scouting and schools. Lots compared to other states. Really works

What works: DU and other org. NWTF Youth orientations with outdoors. Wood Duck Boxes hands on Exp. Gets Kids outdoors

TN Civil War Heritage. Authentic exp. step back in time for the visitor. TN is number 8 for Tourism. Civil war sites has played a great role in that.

Discussion Question 1

Nashville, TN

(cont.)

YMCA every child outdoors. Bredesen working to getting kids outdoors

Historic sites like Hermitage blend historic and outdoor recreation

Volunteer Friend Groups Wheeler Refuge: Listening session and getting needs to the public. Helps lobby btw public and private usage to allow coordination between groups.

DU in Memphis: Public and Private group's work well together.

Warner Park Getting kids outdoor in to parks and so forth works to get kids interested in the outdoors.

MTSU Historic Preservation Public and private funding provides the glue for historical parks across the state.

Sierra Club (Tennessee Chapter) Land purchase ie. Land and Water Conservation Fund State, City and County purchase programs need to be funded.

Linear Greenways (Chat. Area especially)

Rec. Trails program, Local park and rec fund. Continue to utilize these programs to purchase natural areas.

Combine the effects of getting an outdoor experience with attending our historical sites like The Hermitage, Carnton Plantation, etc.

Seek more ways to find funding to preserve natural areas using a combination of public and private groups.

internet marketing for zip code cross reference for natural areas

Talk to Parents about TN history, get parents to take responsibility about history and about how to be good citizens.

Community Activist to grow meadow Best things that have worked is community outreach. Educating officials that make decisions. Cities work with gov and change the way they work green native species and places, going back to nature

Discussion Question 1

Nashville, TN

(cont.)

Focus on specific issue and have partners within issue, take focused voice to decision makers;
Take similar interest groups together, refine messages together with focus.

Conservation easements work to help private landowners use conservation methods. Some programs are not funded well enough to provide local match therefore, need local match requirements lessened or bartered in other ways. Partnering and leveraging

People are looking for ways they can help out with the environment, integrate environment into own local homes move people in closer to city and conserve outside. Work with partners who have opposing ideas. Partner to a common goal.

promoting small sustainable farms to protect private lands. 2007 Organic Bill provided more funds for this type of farming. Small sustainable farms are helped by this funding. EQUIP opened up funds for farmers to get started.

Have a friends group allows you to do things in conjunction with State. Friends are able to do things quickly, write grants, get money from City and can do things more quickly than other agencies.

Works with Media, Team Green, motivates public and benefits all partners.

Success in bridging gap btwn preservation and conservation community. Preservation community is more concerned with buildings and conser. = landscapes. Need to integrate these ideas. TN Civil War Natural Heritage Area administered by University. TN farms that have been in same family for over 100 years These areas are important to many more partners.

children in nature network getting children to the outdoors. Practical ways to get into our backyards. Birdfeeders, mow grass, rake., take dog walk, plant garden. Public announcement campaign, getting families together , Public service announcements to tell family's

parent volunteer- Need Public broadcasting, suggesting parents reading, schools could also promote

take children and work into jobs, projects. Wpa format to give everyone a boost to do.

harder to get out doors. Make a challenge, to stop schools mow the grass, gov to have native gardens in schools, Stop using pesticides.

ntrace pky write your programs on the web

Service corp act, 15 25 full time employment. Enthusiasm is great with children.

Discussion Question 1

Nashville, TN

(cont.)

Climate change- wildlife corridors for animals. Bring people together and provide wildlife viewing, someone to step up to make it work.

bringing together- ducks unlimited and sierra club we are doing the same thing but in a different way, Bringing kids, radio and TV into play with a PSA bring together as one.

TNEC Bill wet weather conv act. Water groups came together. Our planet being threat, env groups recognize what's going on.

Stream line grants process, no mowing hwys, working with farmers

state parks hist preservation natrl res incentive for state to make jobs for conservation.

Release schedules of water levels are controlled by TVA need to be aligned; engage partners and hold stakeholder meetings regardless of controversy or differing users in order to best regulate water levels.

Get kids outdoors- find practical ways to get kids outdoors in backyards. Basic everyday things such as raking and mowing are not done parents overworked. Fontenel Sies with. Integrate nature activity with normal living opportunities such as outdoor concert.

Public announcement campaign connecting w nature is as easy as walking out back door. Broadening PE in schools to things such as rescuing horses.

parent/teacher 'how to' on linking kids w nature in simple ways

connectivity turn social innovation fund into taking kids outside

Help people love something Every child outdoors TN bill of rights for children walk in woods possible because of partnerships subscribing to this bill. School curriculums recesses and outdoor activities are cut and field trips are limited. Challenge is outside activity is limited because of testing requirements.

need alternatives such as native gardens on grounds of school. Re-educating educators, getting them outside. Refocus maintenance of grounds around schools, cities etc.

Natchez trace pkwy matching nature program with curriculums held workshops (timing is important)- teachers hungry for integrating lessons with outdoors.

Discussion Question 1

Nashville, TN

(cont.)

challenge of conserve. Easements 2006 and 2007 enhanced tax incentives caused lots more people to enter into CE program Needs to be permanent part of tax code. Help small scale local farmers farm to school programs where schools purchase foods from local farmers Child nutrition act makes it hard to serve quality food and program specifies exact quantities and lends itself to processed large quantity. More funding for Child Nutrition Act.

Public Lands Service Corp Act for young 15-25 employs them this Act should be funded. Kids Enthusiasm leads to renewal for all.

Pres. Obama commitment to bring together strange bedfellows. Divide between DU and Sierra Club the more we can get together we can understand we are all doing the same thing, just in a different way. Radio and television need to focus on getting kids out in nature, or bring together people who love nature in similar but different ways will soften edge and bring us together. Get beyond misunderstandings and create togetherness to achieve end conservation. Need innovative leaders

Had allied with Hook/bullet crowd with tree huggers strong coalition and affected legislature to get compromised bill. Climate and environmental crisis are bringing people and strange bedfellows together in order to produce unified response.

Works with organizations that volunteers to maintain trails, such as Back Country Horse of America, Leave No Trace program. Want access and open relationship with park rangers, superintendents, etc.—government agencies assist local organizations.

Don't overlook historic landscapes. Increase the idea of what is preservation.?

Partnership incubation hub for encouraging partnerships between organizations.

Discussion Question 1

Nashville, TN

(cont.)

Tennessee Department of Tourist Development—approach to sustainable tourism has been a holistic approach inclusive of business development and communities—sustainable tourism summit was successful because it was designed for those who realize the importance of protecting our destinations while maintaining economic growth through tourism—sustainable tourism sustains the environment, culture and heritage of a region while at the same time sustaining the economic growth through tourism—the tourism industry has the potential of increasing public awareness and appreciation of environmental and sustainability issues—the implementation of sustainable tourism practices can preserve and protect a region’s sense of place for future generations—the states initiative was not a top down program, but a grassroots initiative which has grown from community to community (Must be a regional local based program, i.e., Gatlinburg green, Ripley From Red to Green, Ruby Falls, Chattanooga Green Lodging)—Make sure there is a WIN in the program for all stakeholders including businesses, community leaders, developers, preservationists, and environmentalists—The very same resources you are developing allow citizens, visitors, and children to be involved in sporting events, nature and outdoors, preservation of land, agritourism, development of sustainable cities, and will ultimately lower the state’s obesity rates—to get kids involved it has to be fun!—create sustainable strategies recreational stories that allow kids to learn while experiencing nature, i.e., geocaching which utilizes the latest technology while experiencing the states national parks, battlefields, and recreation areas—Tennessee’s greatest outdoor classrooms, such as the partnership between the Great Smoky Mountains National Park and the Tremont School, provide our children and visitors with opportunities for life-long, place-based sustainable tourism experiences—the economic piece is Key to the success of the program as it will bring additional resources to the table, and for businesses the program has to positively impact their bottom line—create recreation resources at the state and local level to move citizens and visitors to the rural areas of the state—These new tourism based businesses will increase recreation and education opportunities across the state—important to remember and recognize that the groundwork has been laid by many others before us Land Trust of TN, TN Civil War National Heritage Area—These partnerships work because the focus is on conservation, preservation, and education creating a WIN for all stakeholders involved—State and federal agencies can provide resources and best practices, however program must not be top down but local driven in order for stakeholders to embrace all facets of the program (business, schools, churches, communities, environmentalists, preservationists)—Remember the best ideas come from the local communities and businesses—The implementation of sustainable tourism practices allows communities to develop their economic, cultural, and natural resources while at the same time enabling them to keep their natural resources beautiful—sustainable funding opportunities for land conservation—historic hermitage hotel in Nashville encourages visitors to donate \$1.00 per day—They partner with Land Trust of TN and will create \$1 million for land conservation—What would happen if all historic hotels in U.S. did this

Boy Scouts of America works with adult mentors and conscience of outdoors and landscapes are the results

Discussion Question 1

Nashville, TN

(cont.)

4H extension and summer camping programs work—educate in water quality programs—Need more effort to encourage young people to participate in summer camping programs and tying outdoors to their quality of life—need immediate interest for young kids—support new programs and get parent involved

Great Outdoors University focused on bring kids from inner city outdoors—TN clay target program which is a shooting sport introduces kids to the outdoors as well

taking advantage of diverse array communication tools such as facebook and twitter at the sametime maintaining traditional technological tools—Need state and local facilities to take in consideration of communication tools as well—need state and local resources to take advantage of new technology tools

promote mountain bike trails and maintain these trails—get people involved in getting in the woods—mountain biking is a sport that can participate in and get a lot of exercise—needs to be promoted as a family event to include children participation

Conserve at least 5% of TN farms and greenways to set aside—add prime farm lines and working corridors to set aside to protect trees, air quality, etc.—connectivity is key—NEED cash incentives from federal government to support management and maintenance so efforts can continue—the job program produces pay and a good quality of life—support and incentive is crucial to adding more land

Funding for federal agencies with a line item budget dedicated to conservation and recreation—Park flow program in state of TN is needed for land trust foundation to establish additional area for bridge sites—no water trail system—scenic river program can protect the scenic quality and recreational qualities need to be in another category—no sustainable way to protect those rivers and trails

Family education conversation and having access—help maintain OHV trails and putting in water bars and physical labor to make things happen—feedback and communication is necessary to improve maintaining trails—trainers advertise classes to know where to take new jeeps, etc. hiking fishing biking to be able to see things that you cannot see from the interstate—preach and educate the correct way to go into the woods so as to not destroy the resources—need nonprofit help and work together

Urban Park serves 1mill people/year no hunting fishing etc only observation get great funding from private, local city governments. Biggest challenge is raising federal money to buy land Fund LWCF pull out from larger Energy Bill Congressional Decision needs support

Reexamine criteria on grants and further streamline process, look at strategic reduction of mowing money on highways etc and put \$ back into schools; reduce nitrogen and phosphorus and utilize oil spill clean up efforts to publicize nature conservation in farming communities

Youth Conservation Programs provide segue for young people to get into nature positions. Need incentive for States to look to these programs as apprenticeship programs.

Discussion Question 1

Nashville, TN

(cont.)

Not always about money instead educate kids, Last child in the Woods

Core of success is a respectful unified community

Make resources available to local organizations and initiatives

Internet access to let people know of local opportunities.

Meet with community centers, create connections among people, work with organizations to create programs.

Example of Cumberland Trail, extensive new trail system. Success has been funded by grants, now State Park, needs funding to maintain these trails.

Working with schools to promote outdoors education.

Works with programs that get kids outside. Program works with Forest Service. Field trip funding has been cut. Put money into local lands, can do amazing things for the community.

collaborations and partners—emphasis ever child outdoors program—programs that worked—governor summit and outdoor bill of rights—MOU that feds put out with let's get moved outside program needs to involve resource management agencies—Using parks within their local area—Need funds for local parks and programs to stress obesity in children program

service learning works—put things in the hands of children and when you can, tie in environmental education

collaboration with groups focusing on species specific and habitat planning—dedicate funding to program

collaboration with local clubs and organization along with national because people are willing to work hand in hand and need to partner with off road groups—local groups are willing to do the work but they need the guidance of the national groups

Identify particular land resources in TN that need to be protected—working to protect the largest known waterfall—have private organizations identify key resources—need access to sustainable funding to ensure targeted acquisitions are funded—benefit of the knowledge that can identify some of things that federal organization

Discussion Question 1

Nashville, TN

(cont.)

Incentives—one incentive should be that TN does not have a state income tax and is depending upon sales tax—not much funding available for programs—where are additional opportunities—loop holes in guidelines and policies—landholders were overlooked—grant money is being available for these non-profit organization to work with private land owners to help—want to continue making sure all plants are native—dedicated funding needed—look at and review at policy and procedures for funding programs—people are not aware of conservation procedures—need some education and/or incentive to help people understand

areas are closing down due to not having sufficient money to keep the areas trimmed and open—farmers were willing to go in and maintain the park—Need better cooperation from the federal agencies to allow public to help maintain areas—people are willing to follow the law and build necessary items, but federal restrictions on using local people to work on federal land—need some easing up on locals—need more understanding to allow the local community to assist with projects on federal lands—Need more people involved in volunteerism

319 program works because it allows in kind match allowin organizations to use their own resources and community involvement to come up with their portion.

Heritage education encourages land conservation—several historic resources on the land but disappearing because land not being preserve—educate the public on why land is important not to sell—need to educate to help preserve land and motivate preservation—TN land trust is a wonderful organization in TN

partnerships work—enjoy relationships with local parks—DOES NOT WORK—federal partners and federal managers do not work well together—All agencies are not on the same board—more communication between federal agencies

dialogue between two entities works—demographic shifts and demands on the resources—educate county and local planners and decisions on the cost savings by implementing simple solutions like working and developing partnerships to preserve those areas because of the benefits as far as in fracture savings

Discussion Question 1

Nashville, TN

(cont.)

Conservation district and conservation district movements—sole conservation district by state law in TN—works of improvement on privately owned agriculture land—local people or volunteers that are elected to their conservation district that work with the federal entity or state entity to help make the decision on how that money can be spent—involving locals WORKS—lagging support though—increasing the amount of available funds but fewer employees—struggling to get the work done and help from federal agencies lacks—look at better ways for cost share programs—shift some of those cost share funds to the other side—conservation is a conversation—it takes private conversation for the conservation to be preserved—look at rededication to provide assistance to the public in natural resource—farmland protection—how to figure out how we make agriculture profitable?—how do we look at things?—regulations impeded people staying on the lands—the age of farming is becoming a thing of the past—no local mentoring programs—need to look at the inheritance tax so the farmers can pass down to youngsters so they can continue to farm—need farmland protection programs—what are hinders to people staying on the land—person cannot bake biscuit in their home and sale it—hurts helping people stay—younger people are not farming—how can federal help older couples finder a younger helper to farm

Department of defense is one of the largest federal land owners in the country and we need to adopt the green movement—bring DOD into the system such as taking a look at Fort Carson who utilizes the solar panels and utilize the veterans because A. they are returning service men B. they are knowledgeable C. make military bases more user friendly to the community—land is well preserved

Need to have more reward programs for land owners for conserving and preserving land—Ecosystem markets have great potential for influencing things—need to reward land owners to keep forest and family farms and credits that they generate

private enterprise wants to use solar panels which will produce more electricities—town will have benefit through power array—could be replicated—solar arrays on their buildings could power needs of the park and sell into the system

people vote with their pocket books—setup market in a way that provokes people to do things—to bring in a whole new revenue source—setup incentives for programs you want to enhance

TN wilderness act 2010—expansion of wilderness areas in TN and nation—do not exclude mountain biking, etc. for these areas—mountain biking is a new sport and not on the books when laws were passed—government needs to take a look at the law to embrace biking in wilderness

having kids participate in natural resources—schools need gardens for students to participate more in their upbringing—start young to encourage these options in adulthood—put more money into supporting people willing to help—pay into what is being talked about—Do not have field trips to the source but take the children to the outdoors

Discussion Question 1

Nashville, TN

(cont.)

people need to get out there to show the kids they need to be outside—monkey see monkey do—get parents out there to get kids—Educate public in volunteerism

Urbans need to be addressed more—educate getting outdoors and understanding the soil and water—education program would be ideal in TN—success agriculture program to show how much agriculture is important—Farmville benefits more than people in rural TN

Blue way concepts working well. It gives people access. Not a big investment that can make a difference. Misconception about BIG government taking private land. NRCS programs, there's a disconnect. Locals do the paperwork, but the process fails to get the actions/expectations to met. The small grants are not the effort, work and paperwork! Not going to waste time on a small piece of pie. Need a critical mass to make it worthwhile.

Land trust for Tennessee. Joint venture program is working well, set larger picture conservation values for areas. Build on this good thing.

Comment added to (name deleted). Storm water management. Communities have no strategic partnerships that are vested in the water quality goals and help the communities. Need to know the players so communities can partner up. Small communities need to know who to go to for help. Rural communities don't have as much money nor the access to people for help.

Something that works ...building on environmental attributes, i.e. ducks unlimited buys the conservation easements.

2 initiatives that has works. Alliance for the Cumberlands brought a lot of groups and agencies together. Mississippi Corridor Project worked well to help promote and protect these lands. People in rural communities would stay and protect the valued lands if there were job opportunities but they leave. There's a need for a Green Initiative.

We do environmental education. What has helped us as a small non-profit is the TN Wildlife Federation. They helped bring a lot of children outdoors. Army Corp too.

Do we do anything with Geocaching? Take kids to places with a story. There many places with a story in TN, i.e. battlefields. Make it fun, 4-H works well in TN.

Project Learning Tree program helping get youth out and learn how to grow trees.

TN land trust. If we could change the rule to have less than 50% match on purchase of lands? It would greatly grow our success.

Ag tourism program in the state is working well. Forms are complicated and scary even for a government worker. Emphasize soil and water with kids.

Discussion Question 1

Nashville, TN

(cont.)

Land trust TN. Share examples of what's working with groups across the nation.

Cam Sholly, Natchez Trace Superintendent, his leadership as really woken up the trace and getting people involved in partnerships. Leadership helps inspire.

Obesity rates. School field trips are going away. Need to be supported at a national level through education. It is of great value. The costs are making field trips prohibited.

we have teenagers work in the park and sponsor camping trips for inner city kids. A support group is helpful.

Help knit private and public lands together for conservation. No one wants to think all lands will be public lands. This is not a federal land grab.

Great Outdoors University has thousands of kids who have a chance to experience the outdoors that does not normally engage in the outdoors. They are the instructors that partner with groups like Girl Scouts, Boy Scouts, etc. This program facilitates getting these kids partnered up with those to take them hiking, fishing, with community naturalists.

All spoke to the Great Outdoors University. It is an extremely effective program. TWF serve as the partnering organization. They are working with non profits that want to work with the kids, but don't have the people to lead the field trips, or activities. This program supplements with funds to hire people, pay for transportation, etc. Many of these trips go to public outdoor places like National Wildlife Refuges, state parks, national parks or state conservation areas.

Working with Natchez Trace

Best way to get people outside is simple land trust. Land trusted areas have put a big effort to conserve these outdoor places.

Tribes Current generations are not the first generation to loose touch with the outside. The parents that have been disconnected and the ones that vote and take their kids. For some of this, we need to look a little backwards to past generations. Several tribes in NC have been able to collaborate on Center for Cherokee Plants. They bring in kids and parents to show them the plants and showed them traditional uses. They also distribute seeds and plants for tribal communities. Programs like that are successful in many different ways. This program of getting back to tribal traditions is helping to solve many of the problems with in the tribal community. This program can be looked at as an example for getting people outdoors.

Discussion Question 1

Nashville, TN

(cont.)

Historic Nashville - Talk about the other side of the conservation coin is cultural historic and archeological sites. One program is the historic preservation fund, distributed to the historic preservation groups. Other successful program is the Heritage Areas such as the Mussel Shoals area. The Save America's Treasures program is another great program it helped to preserve the Hermitage in Nashville.

Trees Nashville Get kids involved in tree planting is a great way to get them outdoors. Programs like this take public and private partnerships.

watershed NGO they connect people with the resource. They also work to connect private and public people together. The boat day is a great event to get people connected to the resource. They work to educate local governments, and education community about serving their needs but also serving the conservation needs. They work in local communities to be ready for Climate Change. They focus on forest and water conservation in climate change. They work at a local level in communities building conservation teams. The challenge around that is getting grants. She will never do a federal grant again, it was a horrible experience. The administration of the grant is a big job to do. It would be wonderful to have the government to look at foundations and help them because they can distribute the money easier. Give them general support, and expect reports, but don't overdo the administering portion. Non profits can distribute these funds so much better than the federal government.

Stones River Watershed Association boat day where they invite public to river, get together as many boats as they can, and let people try out different boats, up to 450 people in attendance, more appropriate use of the river is the result - also GLOBE (Global learning opportunities to help the environment), use stormwater funds to train teachers and get kids out into the field, teachers need more time to do that.

Mussel Shoals Natural Heritage Area local fisherman with Bass Masters have take kids to fish day, teach kids to cast, etc., focus on kids who have no one else to take them fishing

Tennessee Scenic Rivers Association Involved in access to the rivers and creek, have group working with others (REI, etc.)to build access points so people can get on the river

Friends of TN NWR Discovery series, held monthly, bring in speakers, do hands on stuff, also fund scholarships to fund bringing kids to the NWR (transportation grants), also do service learning projects in invasive control (educate them also), remember young kids don't drive so you will have a captive audience while there.

Lots of tribes trying to bring the youth back to the resources, getting youth out to the wild, not just inner city youth, too many technology uses, too little nature time, Cherokee have been trying

TN NWR North American Conservation model is success, look at Duck Stamp, paid for by hunters and fishermen, problem we are seeing is that it needs help, now the user has changed (more wildlife viewing, more wilderness use), but they aren't paying for their part of the resource use, need to expand the model to include fees/taxes on other users beyond hunters and fishermen.

Discussion Question 1

Philadelphia, PA

Edgar Allan Poe Museum is one of greatest success stories. Museum contains very little, what's important are the stories the rangers tell – “troubadors” – do great job. We need more of this -- CCC type projects -- look for people with this talent, bring places alive again. Set up websites – outdoor enthusiasts; pieces of our heritage out there. Go to the places, the exuberance is there. Need a “processing house.” Help small organizations start websites about tomatoes, wines, saving the foodways of a place. Many disparate pieces that need to be brought together Bring together cultural & environmental history. English do this very well.

developing a private non-profit that covers all 5 aspects of this; historical structures & agriculture; developing an educational research facility and edu-tourism facility for people to visit & have a first-hand, hands-on experience.

Highlands region (NY, NJ, PA) – US Forest Service (USFS) studies link historic & recreational resources. Multi-use trail networks span across Highlands region; there are historic trails. USFS role in identifying where they are -- gives communities strength to enhance, preserve. Get the trails off the road surface.

Concept of touring is really a recreation activity. Tourism = Recreation. International concept of conservation of our patrimony. Also, program in Spain “Workshop Schools”, an intervention program for at-risk students that engages them in historic preservation and develops job skills in craft trades.

shared stewardship, brings Lockheed -Martin and have a number of volunteers working on living history, have many home school children and have an interactive history

Teacher-Ranger-Teacher Program is a great partnership

people are really committed, we have to meet kids at their level, and technology has a role(Especially when little of historic resource/landscape/scene remains intact) , we need to be diverse in how they present material

Philadelphia Zoo developed successful intern program, career ladder

Building on earlier comment that tourism IS recreation, Must look at integrating multimodal transportation - combining regional rail and trail networks (This goes to recreation, sustainability, affordable access – getting urban populations to green places inexpensively)

Discussion Question 1

Philadelphia, PA

(cont.)

Statement read from (not in attendance): As communities across the commonwealth prepare to host you this fall, we've discovered "cultural Erosion". The hallowed grounds where USCT soldiers were laid to rest were vanishing from our Landscapes. Descendants, stewards, and community caretakers of history have decided to help out. This autumn, while you enjoy the riches and splendor of Pennsylvania's fall foliage, pull over, get out, roll your sleeves up and stick your hands in history! Choose from 24 conservation roadtrip weekends along our splendid main streets and elm streets. Plan a few hours of service during a weekend drive or check into a Pa Inn or B&B for a weekend of conservation and voluntourism. For more information - log onto visitpa.com/grandreview On November 14, 1865, citizens from 25 states and the District of Columbia convened in Harrisburg to honor African American Patriots and the Civil War. A Grand Review , parade and reception shaped the day and placed the commonwealth in American history as Harrisburg became crossroads of the nation. On November 14, 2010, Pa will re-enact this great moment in history. 24 communities across the commonwealth will each convene to conduct concurrent commemorations at community USCT grave sites throughout Pa. Stand with us on Hallowed grounds; Claim your legacy, Come help us make history as we prepare for the landmark Civil War 150 experience,. To find a participating site nearest you , contact visitpa.com/grandreview

Our consortium (Historic Germantown, a consortium of 15 cultural and historic sites) works to increase visitation & relevancy. We started by doing a lot of community engagement. Our mission is historic preservation & education. We had to figure out a larger role like safety, improving the community, revitalization; we started to do things we haven't done before & take an active leadership role. We're developing a brand, Historic Germantown (section of northwest Philadelphia, PA). Promoting programs that make sense. NPS can bring a lot to it.

Seed money can bring in outside talent. Very effective way to find movers & shakers in communities.

We conduct tours on specific topics & get 100-150 people. We show silent films to raise money.

At Independence National Historical Park -- volunteer opportunities are great; a friend of mine leads tours. Lots of people are very interested in history. Many more people could be connected to historic sites as volunteers if opportunities were provided and more publicized.

other organizations could develop specific curriculum about core subjects and throw in lessons on math, social studies, history. It would be more beneficial for students to learn local stuff.

NPS has a successful Ranger-Teacher-Ranger program. Invites teachers to come to parks & learn all the resources the park has & take it back & incorporate into their curriculum. Shows them how to use what's right in their backyard. Students will then bring their families to the parks. A great program NPS is doing well.

Discussion Question 1

Philadelphia, PA

(cont.)

Mystic Seaport in CT – interpreters, do a great job. Sea chanties; hear about struggles of whaling; emotional. A good place makes you feel things. Another example – small local museum in central NY – it was run down but you got a feeling for the place & local life. So not very well known places are doing good jobs also.

our organization (AMC) has been very involved in “No Child Left Inside “ program. That should link directly into heritage education. Inner city sites as well. Great Falls in Paterson, NJ. Great opportunity to make community ties. Historic but also a majestic outdoor experience.

Success story: the most popular thing attracting tourism is “Weird NJ” book. Silly book, urban folklore, but people love it. Captures the imagination. Bring back the lost art of story-telling. Special skill set. Gets people in & then sucks them in.

In Germantown (section of Philadelphia) – challenges with blight & crime, getting visitors there is a challenge, so we focus internally & get community involved first. Make the green spaces of cultural sites available, this brings people in. Building affinity groups such as brewers group, jazz concert, through these you build appreciation of the cultural site, people begin to understand it’s important & they come back.

our tax credit program – state & feds cooperate, very successful but being threatened in new budgets; needs to be strengthened.

PA’s Cultural Data project is a good example – a form, you register with them Penn’s Cultural Data Project. Collecting a massive amount of data. Visitors, jobs, etc.

Underground Railroad Network to Freedom was driven by NPS. Bottom-up approach to finding sites, a good model. Seed money from NPS. Today there is a counter-trend to preservation – sagebrush rebellion sort of thing, people who don’t want a single site added. Better if requests come from communities & not from NPCA or NPS.

Sustainability & enlightened historic preservation. – plus green design, opportunity to emphasize how preservation merges with sustainability. NPS visitor centers (Zion a good example), state & local sites can be poster child – tell the story & use energy in a thoughtful way.

Look at regions & landscapes already designated by federal gov’t or that need to be. Prioritize efforts; be strategic, create hot spots for heritage, eco- & agri-tourism & make sure you protect the resources to keep tourism going, will bring money into area. Use regional planning & all 3 -- conservation, recreation & heritage. Not that federal gov’t should manage but it should be a partnership of agencies at all levels & local non-profits. Comprehensive regional plan.

piggyback – don’t re-invent the wheel, partner with state, local, private organizations who are already doing, help accomplish the goals, build on already successful programs.

National Archives does a great job of introducing you to what’s fun via Facebook.

Discussion Question 1

Philadelphia, PA

(cont.)

National Underground RR Network to Freedom program – really neat, still underfunded. Provides expertise & resources to people in communities to help them tell the Underground RR story. NPS was having difficulty engaging African Americans in community. Underground RR Network to Freedom – success story.

Delaware Water Gap – implementing program with Charter School where kids learn history and then teach the history to older/younger peers as well as older adults. ‘Elder Hostel’ is now rebranded as ‘Road Scholar’ program - Stack Service learning and “Voluntourism” and partnership and turn that into funding, service learning is a great way to tap into financial resources.

Save America’s Treasures – community based efforts – a very minor investment from federal government leverages millions of dollars in community investments – communities small & large. To get people outdoors, look at Main Streets too; walkability, downtowns, not just open spaces & rural areas.

Challenge Cost Share Program – a program already in place, highly successful, has been on chopping block, try to build it up & improve or change it rather than invent something new.

Pres. Lincoln’s cottage in Washington, DC. (National Monument) To walk down the stairs & touch the banister that Lincoln touched, sends shivers up your spine. Gives you a tangible connection to leaders who made this country what it is today. Heritage travelers contribute about \$200 billion annually. They travel more often & spend more. More people now travelling locally to see what’s in their own backyard [because of recession].

Angel Island in San Francisco – “the Ellis Island of the west” where many Chinese Americans were detained. It’s a state park & beautiful area. Tourism Cares is one of our partners, we were just there with them. When you see that detainees carved poems in their native language on the walls, it’s so moving. So the natural landscape is really important, but the cultural resources are also.

the Acama Pueblo is a great example – they’re building a wellness center across from school. In addition to the usual health services, they’re addressing recreating within natural context of surroundings. Traditional dry farming methods , organically grown nutritious foods. Blending the historic & natural. Pueblo preserves the way of life; oral history; adobe building practices taught from one generation to the next; lots of ritual in farming, building, basket-weaving, etc. Preserving the traditions.

encourage conservation and heritage and experience it

environmental education programs and works in conjunction with the parks, do very well getting children, teens, college. Challenge getting post-college age adults to 30-somethings is difficult; getting message out is an issue. Youth do not have a place to go to find places where I can information on job opportunities

Discussion Question 1

Philadelphia, PA

(cont.)

we can design almost any tour for a particular group, because of information in our database. We can check our records (of people interred in our graveyard) & find people relating to any special interest group. Tourism is probably going to be our salvation. Looking forward to new Revolutionary War museum (to go in at 3rd and Chestnut Streets).

We have had success in attracting funding because we can say how many jobs Historic Preservation efforts create. We must all be prepared to answer how many jobs will be generated. Tools needed to help Increase information base and connection Historic Preservation efforts and Broad Job Opportunities and what that economic impact is.

business plans are being rewritten to be more reflective of cultural stories/resources. A younger voice should be present in this listening session.

Teachers do sabbatical in National Parks and bring “ranger” experience back to classroom.

People want to know what their parents did, what our tie and our parent’s tie to history is. We need to tell the story of past generations. It is the key to connecting the past to current and future generations. This is a natural connection in the northeast.

Have developed successful local history program for Grade 4. It has expanded to a 5,000 kid program. Our core program has changed as a lot of people moved in and more moved out of the area and the demographics changed. The current communities don’t have an idea of what is in the valley. They are fascinated to hear what was there before them. Big part of the issue: our society is now mobile and that parents don’t know the local history to pass on to their kids.

A lot of historic project sites are owned by non profits that can’t afford to upkeep the site. Various corps programs would be helpful to support the sites – example: a green jobs program, something that would support the aging structures/older cities on the East Coast

Focus on small groups to educate youth and focus on heritage areas.

Ground Work Trust EPA program is a successful program.

New initiative – working with OPM for an easier transition for seasonals or people already working for the NPS or Federal Agency. Historic Corps in Colorado is a great intake program.

The reuse of federal historic resources at national parks & forests. Example: restore cabins & use for public use as camping facilities. Promoting communities that are gateways to cultural & natural areas

Frustration with standards based movement. You can’t grow or teach beyond what’s required by the tests. Bigger part is to convey to powers that be in the world of education that these tests are stymieing.

Discussion Question 1

Philadelphia, PA

(cont.)

Townships determine zoning in PA – not the counties or state. It's difficult because it is a fiefdom and they are run by people who have agendas for what is to happen on the land. Ideally there should be more incentives, financial or other to help with design issues or other issues. Some of this happens at Gettysburg but there is a Historic District that could be expanded. The amount of help; design, technical or financial along with easement programs would greatly help protect the boundaries and growth pressures that so many of the national parks in the eastern area are subjected to.

have federal government work with historic preservation groups. Outstanding opportunities for trails to connect historic and cultural sites as well as open space. Thousands of people volunteer with Appalachian Mountain Club chapters through Memorandum Of Understanding's with local national parks and perform trail work, MOU's with community groups and more that can be done with more agencies

dedicated open space and farmland preservation trust funds, farmland that is preserved also has historic benefits- 45% of PA's communities have benefitted from FPT funds

National Heritage Area model is a great example of Linking Natural, Cultural, Recreational, & Economic Initiatives. Lackawanna area has a strong historic preservation history, coal and industrial history, work through a public and private partnership, partially funded through PA DCNR, monthly roundtable with partners and work together, wish more people use heritage areas, strong ethnic history and support all their festivals...Echo panelist comment that we leverage all public money 5 to 1! Disconnect between Secretaries (Departments) and Administrations. Arts can play an important role, iron program (at-risk youth do an iron-pour), NCCC – 18 and 24 bike tour program Museums as classrooms, teacher mini-grants - \$500 goes a long way in the hands of a creative teacher.

Preserving Civil war battlefields – what has worked is civil war battlefield protection program - \$ provided through Land & water conservation program – free simple or fee easement.

The challenge at Gettysburg & other wilderness battlefields is a problem with local gov't and committees not respecting the power of what they have in their backyard. Is there a way for NPS to have more power within the park boundary or where the park is located? Having a postage stamp of green within a developed landscape doesn't have the same impact that a natural area does. A tax incentive should be created for local gov't or follow a no net loss to preservation areas like wetlands.

Expressed strong support for The Secretary's Standards and recommended they be expanded with new leaflets on specific topics related to greening historic structures. Expressed strong support for the Save America's Treasures grant program. Expressed strong support for the American Battlefield Protection Program, and recommended that its funding be increased and that its authority be expanded to more aggressively protect battlefields. Expressed strong support for the Land and Water Conservation Fund and recommended strengthening its links to cultural resource protection

Discussion Question 1

Philadelphia, PA

(cont.)

Provide education that includes history. For example, the school program called the Jerseyman club in NJ. The program involved getting youth into community as docents – it was a hands on experience. It was a history lesson combined with an environmental education component that got kids into the field to do hands on work and experiments. There is a lack of hands on experience both with history and the environment. There is a lack of what students don't know – what works is education. Connect kids to their ancestry or to a place through immigration. _____ was blown away by her experience at National Parks and how well the NPS rangers teach and conduct programs at the parks.

Engage youth programs to green our cities, do urban youth gardening/agriculture programs.

Student Conservation Corps (SCS)– it's impressive to see what these people are able to achieve. The program should expand to student historic preservation group – trade schools or programs. Expand this new group to a national level to explore the ability of trade groups to train young adults in preservation. Take success of SCS and expand it and include historic preservation. Historic communities that can retrofit themselves and move into the industrial economy. Communities are used to thinking on their own (isolated from adjoining communities) and not planning with one another in mind. Communities need to think about planning on a regional level and how actions in one community affect other communities.

Have 47 min video that was done – 1st as a series of 6 at the Fairmount Waterworks. The organization has connected w other initiatives like the Rochambeau Trail. It's documentation via media presentation. It's worked to reach out to communities, educating children about water and historic preservation. It's a unique situation.

- transportation is an issue at Philadelphia waterworks, so Dept. of water will pay to transport kids from an inner city school to visit the site. EPA & DEP require local municipalities to do some public education about water quality. People don't have any idea where their drinking water came from – it's important to educate where people things come from in their area.

Cultural education; working at a local level with our schools. Leveraging other initiatives from the Federal level to the local level.

Agree with MD on growth mgt on larger scale. Add importance of creating regional identity. Brings together lovers of nature & history into common

historic resources even in a historic place should be reused. In pine lands have some that are not currently actively interpreted or used that could be reused and therefore, preserved. USE is vital to historic preservation.

VAFO YCC program started Energy Conservation Corps which is working – going to NER parks and retrofitting historic buildings – dual benefits for buildings and for youth.

Discussion Question 1

Philadelphia, PA

(cont.)

Best projects are the ones that bring in many different partners. LWCF is great way for people to protect their history, and LWCF money funds many projects at the local level, historical preservation programs.

People become interested in a historic site when they have a personal relationship. Partnerships work. Connecting cultural heritage tourism, preservation, natural landscapes, exceptional stories, education. We worked with a University to hold an archeological field school that revealed important sites.

outreach education to teach communities during projects- got developers interested in history of the land and shared w community

priority has to be riparian buffers. Have historically been railroads. Trails provide connection w environmental, riparian buffers and historic sites along the way

National Heritage Areas work at the grassroots level with communities to help them use the resources that they care about. We find that multiple partnerships are successful, first starting with local citizens to help them connect.

Preservation planning process works. Engaging/educating private landowners on how to protect historic lands that are owned privately. NHA is a model federal gov't can use to work w/ private land owners.

Friends groups have been doing good jobs to fill in when state funding dries up (example – Brandywine Battlefield).

Works in environmental ed. Looking to engage youth as well as public in general. Personal experience: urban Phila. Girls rafting/kayaking down Delaware and historic Lenape sites along the way. Girls transfixed by the story (first person) and created their own poems and stories from it. Engaging youth in ways to understand how they are not that much different from those who came before and connecting youth w nature

people need exemplified in own backyard to connect them w bigger themes & bigger picture ex: rehabbing octagon bldg in Oyster Bay which has involved community and jumpstarted other preservation projects in community. Challenge – act locally and build following for global values

Save America's Treasures and Preserve America Grants were very successful for the SHPO's office to work w/ local communities.

Wheeling NHA is the center of historic preservation in their community as well as education and assistance for historic preservation, jobs. Importance of heritage areas in advancing communities, historic preservation, enriching smaller organizations

The public/private partnerships and the strength that comes from joining with federal agencies that have great strengths, but limitations, and the public, which don't have the same limitations.

Discussion Question 1

Philadelphia, PA

(cont.)

Save America's Treasures, Preserve America, & NHAs work! The metrics might need to be improved but I urge you to continue these programs that work

idea of connection. Trails, water, inextricable link btw land & water. Get people to and in the water. Reclaim some of the riverfront areas and get people to the water. Great way to create stewards of the environment

National Heritage Areas, Save America's Treasures, Preserve America. Colorado's hands-on training for preservation – HistoricCorp (could be replicated in other states or on a national basis). HABS/HAER. Youth Conservation Corp. National Trust's diversity programs. Youth education programs to connect students to historic resources and natural resources. What State and local programs are doing using existing HPF funding. Tax Incentives program and the jobs it has created.

National Heritage Areas use conservation, recreation, culture and education as tools for economic development. Use of an event works, for example, the Schuylkill River Sojourn. People on the sojourn connect with the communities they pass through and the communities have the opportunity to welcome them in. Events are a great way to gather people on a larger scale.

Example - Laurel Highlands in PA – one of our initiatives is a trail that connects towns and which shows an economic benefit. It connects historic preservation (communities) with recreation.

Civil War Battlefields Preservation Fund, Farm and Battlefield Fund grants, Transportation Enhancement funds, Conservation Tax incentives

Partnership w/ INDE has worked. INDE reached out to organization to create a Flag Day Ceremony for park. Other groups participate including student organizations. This event costs little - \$350 to order the flag. NPS reached out – great way to build interest and reciprocal partnerships.

Sagamore Hill nearby. Formative place for Teddy Roosevelt and his conservation ethic so it is a good lesson for others to educate on conservation.

MD is a leader in smart growth. One thing working in MD that feds should pay attention to: smart growth is double edged sword. Impetus comes from high urbanization brought pressure to save as much open space as possible. Decision makers realized can't acquire all open space. Need to change development patterns to existing population centers. Make existing communities places where people want to live. Or people will look to sprawl. Get people to reuse existing infrastructure so don't sprawl and add new. Can't preserve existing open space unless redirect dev to existing urban centers

Discussion Question 1

Philadelphia, PA

(cont.)

Regional tourism marketing works in partnership with conservation groups and historical organizations. Examples using public/private funding – “Boundless Philadelphia” – raise awareness of our outdoor recreational assets. “Quest for Freedom” - UGRR project to create the capacity of UGRR sites to promote themselves and develop cultural tourism programs. “Philly Homegrown” – promoting Philadelphia’s foodshed assets and preserving local farms. These efforts work on a grassroots and regional level to build capacity.

There are mechanisms in place that are in place but could work better. Ex: sect 106. Puts hspv on level playing field w business. But process only as good as people who get involved. Too often people wait until it is too late. The remedy is people taking a more affirmative stance in these actions.

NPs and NPS work! First, parks are incredible infrastructure and ludicrous to not continue to reap benefits. Second; the service itself leads the way in historic preservation, NHAs, outdoor recreation. Continue to lead and grow.

experience of ghost walk tour. Wonderful way to connect people to historic sites in Phila.

building on that. Locals value what others value from the outside. Get the word out so local communities are aware of their own places and what is important to others.

Historic Preservation Act works great. NJ has developed partnerships with private land trusts in the state, we have been working to try and address the issues of cultural resources that exist on every piece of land.

Places don’t exist separate from their surroundings. The preservation of places is connected to the preservation of their surroundings (such as land conservation).

Tax credits are working, but mostly in Manhattan – want it to work other places. National Heritage Area programs are working – they help impoverished communities.

Be hands on especially with history - what happened there? Don't only teach through books and Internet. (service learning).

You have fun in the program you are learning so much about what is going on outside of the city - you forget you are even being paid.

Advertising in print and on tv.

Chaco Canyon, interesting to see something so old in aa country so young.

Discussion Question 1

Philadelphia, PA

(cont.)

People tend to be more aware of large national sites and that promotion on a local level so people know what is in their own backyard.

State park near my house. I walk my dog there. Good scenery, walking trails. I am from Reading, PA. I like it because it gets me away from everything. It is pretty and convenient.

Liberty Bell and Independence Hall. Graffiti in INDE hall from 1776 is a must see.

Blue Ridge Parkway. Worked there last year. Likes big estate overlooking lake, carriage trails, fan of beauty and work that goes into preserving 100 year old manor house and outbuildings, craftsmanship. How it stood up to the test of time.

Important for people in the future to understand where we came from. Seeing the real place makes it tangible.

People have out of sight, out of mind mentality. With historic sites, if you see the real place, it makes it more interesting, and will learn more but will also experience what they experience. Same thing with an environmental site. Helps you to connect

From built up suburb near Monmouth cultural battlefield. Think about how things were before cars, buildings. I go alone because I can't convince my friends to go.

Community organizers that advertise activities for people who are home but might want to go out. Example - community organized walk in central park versus having to go for a walk in central park on your own. City park rangers.

NYC has organization that organizes hiking trips for students and other activities.

Bandelier National Park with his boy scout troop. Likes really well-developed houses carved out of the mountainside and village. Interesting how they lived and defended themselves. Got learn something, see something they wouldn't normally see in Philadelphia.

Hard to connect what's on tv with actually getting outside. The sheer volume of the things that won't help far outweigh the things on tv that inspire you to go outside.

So people can see what happened before. Also, like VAFO, see green open places that you can hike. Not like a city that is entirely paved over. Important to have somewhere natural to go for folks in the city to get away. Fresh air.

Care of artifacts and buildings it is not just the outdoors - there is much more to the park service.

Discussion Question 1

Philadelphia, PA

(cont.)

New Yorker. Fan of Gettysburg - I like the history and graves but also like walking the trails to mix history with the outdoors. See cemetery and hills from walking trails. Nice vistas. A lot do outside in New York as well.

Cape May - Preserving endangered birds (piping plovers). Preserving space and more education will help when species are threatened. Public education is an important issue.

From NY in bayshores different sites preserving nature banding osprey because of the conservation birds are making a comeback. Working with nature conservancy with environmental high school classmates.

More school programs with schools for internships, field trips, volunteer opportunities - reaching out to schools for awareness of programs and opportunities.

American History is our history

Archaeology - documentation doesn't always survive or tell the truth - the artifacts supplement or provide information. Work well with historical studies. If you lose these resources, you don't get the full story about the past.

At least once a week I go hiking in a forest preserve or a park

At lunchtime, I'll go to Washington Square. Does that count? I can't go to a huge park, but I'll go to an urban park quite frequently to relax, take a break from city life, see trees, enjoy looking around.

Balance businesses use with preservation

Better access to information

Better access to transportation

Better information access.

Better promotion and advertising for smaller sites - beyond signage.

Discussion Question 1

Philadelphia, PA

(cont.)

Better than reading in a book. Can read about something and want to go see the real places. If there is no real place, no point in reading the book. History and nature, great to read a book and then go see the real place.

Better to see real things than watch tv. Better than watching National Geographic channel but actually be outdoors. Being outdoors gives you a cleansing feeling. Outdoors is a way to recharge and a way to connect with our natural selves.

Central information - consolidated information resource.

Close to home, a great place to take family and friends

Communication - Get the word out including in mainstream media where people who are not already interested will see and perhaps become inspired. How do you get movie makers to put national parks and historic sites into movies? As a setting. Government sponsor an environmental movie or a substantial documentary in theaters. More casual, constant placement of national parks rather than one big ad campaign. Send mailings to communicate with park information on special events. Look at past successful ad campaigns.

Consistently placing parks and sites in movies.

Create programs and activities that are relevant to youth.

Delaware Bay Shore, New Jersey. A place for connection with natural cycles such as migration. Enjoy hiking and bird watching.

Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area

Depends on which school you go to. Up to grade 12, never once went to a national park, last 6 years, no field trips at all. Felt getting out of the school building was not important anymore. Getting students out of schools to national parks to teach what happened nearby and what is important. Give students exposure to real places.

Discounts for transportation to parks.

Ellis Island

Discussion Question 1

Philadelphia, PA

(cont.)

Encourage / sponsor friendly competition for youth to engage with parks and spark interest in parks. Trash clean ups, hike x# of trails, take a photo of x# of places, visit x# of parks

Encourage universities and businesses to visit / volunteer

Engage the Locals

Essential to the mission of the NPS, future generations

Establish / maintain a community focus and partnership.

Expand funding for youth programs that help them to take steps toward their future. Start targeting younger grades to spark interest at earlier age.

Expand Teacher-Ranger-Teacher program.

Fairmount Park

Field trips. I used to live in New Jersey, but now I'm at Temple and live in Philadelphia. At Temple, every one of my classes has gone on field trips - Elfreth's Alley, etc. I wouldn't know half of Philadelphia area historic sites if it weren't for professors taking us on these trips. Starts with educators knowing about the resources and taking their classes on the trips.

For future generations to enjoy

French Creek State Park

GETT - It appeals to everyone - (battlefield, town's rich history, sense of community). Live close to personal heritage

Getting students out into parks and historic sites every year. Field trips with follow-ups. (Not a great idea to force everyone to do an activity because they may react against. If it is a requirement, will get negative energy. For example, I have to do service hours but it is a requirement so I don't want to do it. Make it positive rather than negative. Give options - natural or historic park or alternate).

Discussion Question 1

Philadelphia, PA

(cont.)

Give a sense of who came before - groundwork sacrifice

Government sponsor documentaries to be in theaters.

Governor's Island

Great place to take family from out of town

Groton State Forest, Vermont. Diverse habitats. Hiking, camping.

Hands on experience is vital to understanding history.

Hands-on programs. Raise the mast and the sail, walk through the salt marshes. More than walking around with a tour guide leading you.

Hands-on.

Have local celebrities talking about local issues / parks / history. (Similar to how musicians native to Philadelphia area featured at the Ben Franklin PW July 4th Celebration each year.)

Hickory Run State Park

HOFU - no one famous worked there, it represents everyday people.

HOFU - We as a nation don't make anything anymore - what and how the U.S. use to make things.

Hopewell

Host events that would attract a portion of the public that would not necessarily otherwise visit

I go about once a month.

Discussion Question 1

Philadelphia, PA

(cont.)

I go about once a week.

If there's a Megabus for \$5 to Buffalo - then why can't you run cheap trips to parks or historic places?

INDE - It's fun and exciting to walk past the liberty bell on the way to work every day.

Instill a sense of pride in the Locals. Create content/ programming that speaks to the Locals and the underserved population

Integrate more environmental education into school curriculums.

It is important to preserve elements of our collective memory, people's ability to interact with our history helps offer an understanding of our shared history.

It's interesting what we choose to preserve, value, give access

John Heinz and Gettysburg enjoyed because of expanse history and country's past with trails has gone with boy scout troops.

John Heinze conservation center city, access to nature outdoors. In SCA, has seen bald eagle on its nest, which would never happen in an urban area. Goes with other students.

Keep the appreciation of nature and history alive

Learn

Learn from other people (our history), more powerful to experience places and spaces than to read about them, tangible, the real thing is better than hearing about or just reading about it. Seeing for yourself gives you connection to your emotions and the complete picture.

Mailings / pamphlets on park special events.

Make going outdoors more part of the classroom, afterschool curriculum or environmental education.

Discussion Question 1

Philadelphia, PA

(cont.)

Make more incentives for families - if Six Flags has family passes so should parks and historic sites.

Make part of curriculum.

Manumuskin River, New Jersey, for the scenery. Canoeing, kayaking, hiking. Picking up trash that others have left gives a sense of pride and ownership.

Market via radio and television

Money and transportation - everyone goes to Europe to backpack - how do you do that in the US? Where do you stay? How do you get around? It's easy in Europe with travel passes on trains and buses,, youth hostels, how-to guides. To travel the US you need to rent a car and figure out where you're going to stay, where to go, how to get there, what there is to do there.

Monocacy National Battlefield, MD for personal reflection. Enjoy visiting a particular hill that provides a view and a quiet retreat.

More access to resources

More advertisements / commercials / marketing

More advertising about what's going on

More internships and college resources

More programs and less expensive programs. Young man hunted the internet - community serve teams for \$4,000 plus \$1,000 for stuff. \$5,000 to go volunteer?

National Geographic - You are already interested in being outside. Video games are more appealing. Integrating parks / nature into popular culture would help. A poor example, when smoking was put into movies, cigarettes became popular. Maybe put parks in movies and people will be more interested. Other than the big parks people already know about. I saw on slideshow parks that I didn't know existed and I live in New York. Not straight advertising but subliminal messaging. Get the message out in mainstream media and other youth-oriented interests.

Discussion Question 1

Philadelphia, PA

(cont.)

Natural Resources

NYC Central Park. Urban refuge, enjoy walking, people watching, personal reflection.

Offer volunteer discounts

Organizations that encourage youth to visit (boy scouts) should be augmented.

Our school is environmental school - get a lot of funding - hiking, etc. All environmental based - beach clean-up, see what it all means.

Park passes are expensive. Is there a youth pass for NPS? What is "youth" cut off? Is it 18 years old adult or youth?

Parks as settings for movies.

Parks should market less as schools / learning, more as recreation and fun, more activities, less passive visiting

Part of history, I guess

Partner with educational facilities

Partner with schools to have a "museum" day where kids are required to go to a museum on a certain day for school credit. Solve problem of time.

Personal enrichment

Preserve the history of it, but also to go see how it happened, where it happened is more profound than reading it in a book or something

Preserve what is tangible to keep it real.

Provide a connection to the outdoors

Discussion Question 1

Philadelphia, PA

(cont.)

Provide funding for you to visit the parks

Provide low cost activities for low income families.

Provide opportunity for community locals to be a leading voice through internships.

Relax

Revamp historic buildings to use for the purposes of today. Is this still preservation? Where do we draw the line?

Schools incorporate outdoors into curriculum - annual field trip.

Sense of what happens, spiritual, entertainment, reenactment

Serve as a reminder

Share our story and identity with the world

Shubal Trail. Opportunities for physical activity and learning about history.

So future generation can enjoy them; deserve to be able to see the greenscapes.

Speaking about Boston and Philadelphia - A sense of what happened

Speaking about Boston and Philadelphia - City of Philadelphia, see the past through layers of history, you don't need to visit a museum to experience it. Everywhere you go you will find historic significance.

Speaking about Boston and Philadelphia - Tangible reminders of our heritage

Discussion Question 1

Philadelphia, PA

(cont.)

Start a remote ranger program where rangers go into the classroom instead of expecting the classroom to go the park.

STEP program into Independence Hall - so maybe I can get into NPS. Temple has a Pro Ranger program - one of only 2 in the whole country. I get to work on Independence Hall bell tower; it makes my work exciting. Should be more of that.

Student Temporary Employment Program (STEP); internship, training, and your application goes to the top of the list as long as there's a position open, but there aren't a lot of jobs. Would be great to see that program for high school kids too.

Sustainability

These are fundamental places we connect to; connection is a good way to say it - we'd lose the connection.

These places are different from Parks & Recreation outdoor spaces, historical sites don't force you to learn, but provide a place to learn and social space - place to communicate, connect, be social.

These places provide recreation opportunities

To preserve our historical past and to show our appreciation for those who made sacrifices before us.

Upenn's historic preservation program is divided in two concentrations: material conservation vs. planning / policy. That doesn't make sense. Planning and historic preservation should go hand in hand. Philly does a pretty good job - Phlash bus and stuff is good to get you to historic places. But I've lived in Seattle and Portland - there it's complicated, not marketed to youth, wasn't incorporated initially in how the city was planned.

Valley Forge

Valley Forge. Streams and water habitats. Enjoy fishing for trout.

Volunteer for a day - insider experience, bond on another level.

Western Mining Towns - It's like visiting a movie set, mystery and ghosts.

Discussion Question 1

Philadelphia, PA

(cont.)

Where I lwork, I go to Washington Square to have lunch, to be outside in a park in the city. Relaxing. A lot of history in Washington Square.

Working at VAFO now but been there more times than could count. Hike Mt. Joy and Misery every 4 days with boy scouts to prepare for a big hike. Knew t he trail by heart, every rock and tree. Fun but eventually too much to see same hills every day so if

Discussion Question 1

Poughkeepsie, NY

WANT TO PREVENT THE LOSS OF FARMLAND. HER FARM IS PROTECTED THROUGH THE STATE PROGRAM. IT WORKS IN PARTNERSHIP WITH THE STATE AND LOCAL LAND TRUST. AGO GOALS CAN BE ACHIEVED THROUGH PROTECTION OF FARMLAND. CHILDREN DO NOT KNOW WHERE FOOD COMES FROM. 400,000 PEOPLE COME TO VISIT HER FARM. THEY ANSWER QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC ABOUT BASIC KNOWLEDGE ABOUT NATURE. 5000 SCHOOL CHILDREN HAVE COME. SOME THOUGHT THEIR BROWN SHEEP WERE BEARS. FARMERS NEED HELP TO HANG ON TO THEIR FARMS.

AS A CHILD HE LEARNED FARMING. HE NOW OWNS BIODYNAMIC FARMS. HE IS VERY SUCCESSFUL IN SWITZERLAND. YOUNG PEOPLE APPRENTICE. THEY WILL KNOW ALL ABOUT FARMING. THIS COULD BE A WONDERFUL PROGRAM TO APPRENTICE CITY KIDS. COULD ALSO BE A HELP TO FARM FAMILIES IF FARM BILL COULD FUND THIS FARM HELP. NYS IS FACING GAS HYDROFRACTOR – SMALL FARMS DO NOT WANT IT BUT NEED THE INCOME.

WORKS TO PRESERVE LOCAL COMMUNITIES AND THE PRESERVATION OF FARMLAND THROUGH LIMITING OF SPRAWL. DO THIS TO CONNECT PEOPLE TO DOWNTOWN THROUGH FARMERS' MARKETS. HPF HELPS BUSINESSES STAY IN BUSINESS. FARMLAND PRESERVATION EASEMENTS HELP.

LOCAL PEOPLE KNOW WHAT THEY WANT PRESERVED. HUDSON VALLEY HERITAGE WORKS TO PLAN CONSISTENTLY FOR SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES. THEY VERTICALLY INTEGRATE LOCAL STATE FEDERAL. OVER 12,000 KIDS HAVE BEEN CONNECTED TO THE HUDSON VALLEY TO HELP FRAME THEIR LARGER EDUCATION. OUR RESOURCES ARE THE BASE FOR THE ECONOMY.

EXPANDING RETAIL OPPORTUNITIES. FARMERS MUST BE VIABLE. GREEN MARKET SYSTEM, CSA. GET PLANNING RESTRICTIONS OUT OF THE WAY TO PROTECT LAND. WHAT IS NOT WORKING – MOST OF FEDERAL PROGRAMS ARE NOT FOR FARMS IN THE NORTH EAST. NEED TO LOOK AT TYPES OF PROGRAMS FOR SMALL FARMS – CONSERVATION AND PRICE SUPPORT. MOST IMPORTANT IS TO MAKE A LIVING. NEXT GENERATION NEEDS TO KNOW THAT FARMLAND WILL BE AFFORDABLE.

THEY USE PDR AND FRPP - AN IMPORTANT TOOL TO KEEP LAND AFFORDABLE. FEDERAL PROGRAM'S REQUIREMENT OF 50% IS TOO STEEP FOR THE LOCAL MATCH. NEEDS TO BE RETOOLED. A DIRECT LAND TRUST UTILIZATION OF FUNDING IS WORKING. MUST HELP MORE WITH FARM VIABILITY.

LESS THAN 10 % OF FARMLAND LEFT. RAISED FUNDS TO BUY EASEMENTS BUT COULD HAVE DONE MORE IF THEY COULD HAVE HAD THE 50% FUNDS. NEED HELP BECAUSE THE STATE DOES NOT HAVE FUNDS ANYMORE.

NEED ECONOMIC INFRASTRUCTURE TO SUPPORT FARMERS MARKETS. HAS IMMIGRANT STUDENTS THAT HAVE A CLOSER CONNECTION TO FOOD. SHE CALLS LACK OF UNDERSTANDING WHERE FOOD COMES FROM THE "BLUE BOX WAR" - KRAFT MAC AND CHEESE. THIS IS AN UNAPPED RESOURCE. INCLUDE AND REACH OUT TO IMMIGRANT COMMUNITY TO GET TO FARMERS MARKET.

Discussion Question 1

Poughkeepsie, NY

(cont.)

SMALL FARMER CAN BENEFIT FROM SMART GROWTH INITIATIVES. AGROTOURISM DOES WORK HERE. ORGANIC FARMS RUNS AGAINST MONSANTO. THEY END UP SUPPORTING MONSANTO. IN EUROPE THEY HAVE GREEN ZONES THAT HELP.

IN HUDSON VALLEY MARTIN VAN BUREN PARK WAS RECENTLY EXPANDED TO INCLUDE AN ORGANIC CSA FARM. FDR NHS HAS OPPORTUNITIES TO PURCHASE LANDS THAT WOULD ENHANCE THE PARK BUT NPS DOES NOT HAVE THE MONEY.

FARMERS ARE ENTREPRENEURS GOING DIRECTLY TO THE CONSUMER. CREATING FOOD SOURCES FOR PEOPLE. URGE FEDERAL GOVT TO INCREASE FUNDS FOR FRPP. RENEW COMMITMENT. THERE IS LIGHT AT THE END OF THE TUNNEL. LOOK AT REGIONAL PROCESSING FOR LOCAL FOOD SOURCES.

NETWORK OF GOVT. IS WORKING. LOCAL BUDGETS ARE LOW. DON'T HAVE MONEY. THE STATE FUNDS CANNOT BE USED TO MATCH. FRPP NEEDS TO BE MORE THAN 50%. FARMERS NEED TO MAKE A LIVING. HUGE POLICY ISSUE TO PURSUE. DON'T NEED IDEAS. DON'T HAVE MONEY TO GET PROGRAMS STARTED. NEED POLICIES TO PROVIDE INFRASTRUCTURE TO SUPPORT

OPERATES A BAKERY ON HIS OWN GRAIN. WHAT WORKS – LOCAL SUSTAINABLE FOOD SYSTEM THAT HAS WORKED FOR THOUSANDS OF YEARS. ONLY IN THE LAST CENTURY HAVE FOOD BECOME CENTRALIZED. WE HAVE BECOME DEPENDENT ON IT. BUT WHAT WILL LAST IS A LOCAL FOOD SYSTEM. HE IS A BUSINESS AND MUST MAKE A PROFIT. FROM HERE TO CANADA THERE AND OTHERS WANTING TO REPLICATE THIS SYSTEM REMOVED FROM THE COMMODITY SYSTEM. LOCAL NETWORK WILL SUPPORT EACH OTHER. FEDERAL GOVT CAN PROVIDE GRANTS TO BUSINESS. MOST GO TO NON-PROFITS. COULD ADAPT DISTRIBUTION FOR FOOD SECURITY. ALSO LOOK AT REGULATIONS TO ADAPT ON IMPORT OF SEEDS. REEVALUATE THE CONTROL OF SEEDS INTO THIS COUNTRY. NEED TO SHARE WITH OTHER YOU HAVE HERITAGE GRAINS. HAVE LOST OUR SEED DIVERSITY. WE NEED TO REBUILD THE SEED BASE IN THIS COUNTRY. SEEDS ARE SELECTED ON FLAVOR AND NUTRITIONAL VALUE. DAUGHTER WENT TO GERMANY – BREAD WAS A DOLLAR A LOAF FOR WHOLE GRAIN. ALLOW SEEDS TO FLOW INTO THIS COUNTRY. IT WILL IMPROVE THE QUALITY OF PRODUCTS.

NEED TO HAVE HELP TO TRANSITION TO LOCAL FOODS. ALSO PLACES IN CITIES AREN'T BEING UTILIZED. NEED TO MAKE PEOPLE AWARE OF RESOURCES LIKE EXTENSION. NEED TO HAVE AWARENESS OF FEDERAL PROGRAMS.

LAND TRUSTS WORK. LOCALS KNOW WHAT WORKS EFFECTIVELY. PARTNERSHIPS WORK. SAVED 6600 ACRES THROUGH EASEMENTS AND FUNDING. WHAT DOES NOT IS THAT THERE IS NO MONEY AVAILABLE AT THE STATE AND LOCAL LEVEL TO HELP. NEED FEDERAL SUPPORT FOR EXTENSION OF TAX BENEFIT.

KNOWS FEDERAL PROGRAMS – NAWPA WORKS. FUNDING HAS BEEN GROWING FOR 20 YEARS. USFWS PARTNERS FOR FISH & WILDLIFE WORKS. NOT A LOT OF PAPERWORK. FLEXIBILITY HELPS. LIKES CONSERVATION IN FARM BILL BUT FIVE YEARS TURNOVER BUILDS UNCERTAINTY. USES WHIP BUT MONEY DIRECTED FROM TOP DOWN LIMITS WHERE MONEY CAN GO. LET LOCALS DECIDE.

Discussion Question 1

Poughkeepsie, NY

(cont.)

COULD NOT FARM IN THE HUDSON VALLEY SO THEY MOVED TO MAKE A LIVING. PRIMARY INDUSTRY IS FARMING. MANUFACTURING IS GONE. SMALL DAIRY IS BIGGEST INDUSTRY. TO MAKE A LIVING IS A NIGHTMARE. SHE WORKS THREE JOBS. LOOKING AT GETTING OUT. RAISES HORSES, CHICKEN, SPECIALTY HORSE HAY. WE NEED BETTER COMMUNICATION TO RURAL AREAS. BY THE TIME THEY CALL THE SERVICE CENTER MONEY IS ALL GONE. ALWAYS BEHIND THE EIGHT BALL. AS DAIRY FARMS GO OUT, MANURE LAGOONS ARE GOING TO BE A HUGE ISSUE TO TAKE THEM OUT ONCE THE FARM IS GONE.

CONCERNED WITH NUTRITION. OPENS FARM TO PEOPLE WHO NEED OPPORTUNITY TO CONNECT TO THE FARM. PEOPLE HELP ON THE FARM. HELPS PEOPLE WITH BACK YARD CHICKENS. WHAT WORKS IS THE CONNECTION TO PEOPLE AND WHEN THEY TASTE GOOD FOOD. NEED REGULATORY RELIEF FROM LOCAL TAX ISSUES, NUISANCE. SMALL FARMS NEED HELP – USE INTERNS. PROMOTE FARM INTERNS FOR SMALL FARMS, INSURE INTERNS. SHOW THAT FOOD IS ALIVE. GET KIDS TO WORK IN THEIR OWN BACKYARD FOR GARDENS. INNOVATIVE ENERGY TECHNIQUES WILL HELP. SMALL GUY NEEDS RELIEF.

FARM WAS CORN AND CATTLE. NOW BRINGING IN CSA TO FARM PORTION OF THE FIELDS. CSA WORKS. BROUGHT VIBRANCY TO AGRICULTURE. EASEMENTS ARE IMPORTANT BUT DEVELOPED AREA DOES NOT WANT VERY SMALL FARMS. NEEDS ACCESS TO NORMAL THINGS FOR BUSINESS.

EASEMENTS ARE GOOD TOOL – IT WORKS. FOREST, FARM, EASEMENTS. HELPS PEOPLE USE THEIR LAND. LAND TRUST HELP WITH VOLUNTEERS FOR MAINTAINENCE. THEY HELP PEOPLE CONNECT. TAX INCENTIVES FOR EASEMENTS WILL HELP. NEED EDUCATION FOR PLANNING BOARDS ON LOCAL SCIENCE AND PROGRAMS. THEY NEED TO KNOW CONSERVATION AND TOOLS. WHAT WORKS IS WHAT THEY BRING TO LANDOWNERS LIKE TAX INCENTIVES. NEED TO RENEW TAX INCENTIVES. FUNDING FOR NY CONSERVATION PARTNERSHIP ALLIANCE TO HELP LAND TRUSTS TO GROW. PDR AND TDR ARE KEY TO PROTECT FARMS.

HELP PRESERVE LAND AND OVER DEVELOPMENT. SUPPORT LOCAL GROUPS. NYS PARK WAS PURCHASED WITH FEDERAL HELP. MINNEWASCA WAS TO BE CLOSED BUT 25,000 FRIENDS ON FACEBOOK HELP TO KEEP IT OPEN. MORE HELP IS NEEDED.

FLOODPLAINS – FEMA SHOULD BE HELD ACCOUNTABLE. ONLY FARMING AND RECREATION SHOULD BE USED IN FLOOD PLAINS. COST TO FARMERS WOULD GO DOWN. ACCESS TO RIVERS IS POOR. OPEN TO FLOOD PLAINS TO PUBLIC.

SEED PROPAGATION PROGRAM. "SEEDS OF SUCCESS" GO OUT WEST – SOME MORE NEEDS TO COME TO THE EAST. HARVEST NATIVE SEEDS TO KEEP IN THE REGION AND TO MAINTAIN THE HABITAT FROM FRAGMENTATION. SUPPORT THE PLANT MATERIALS

ROLE OF FORESTS PLAY A PART. HELP TO PROVIDE SUPPORT TO LOCALS WITH PLANNING. CONSERVATION INNOVATION GRANTS ARE HELPFUL.

Discussion Question 1

Poughkeepsie, NY

(cont.)

SUPPORTS VOLUNTEER EFFORTS TO KEEP RIVERS CLEAN. HELPS PEOPLE GET ON THE WATER. USDA HAS ASSISTED KINGS MARK RC&D TO PAY FOR ACCESS TO THE RIVER. FEDERAL GOVT SHOULD SUPPORT EXCISE TAX. FUND LAND AND WATER CONSERVATION FUNDS. SUPPORTS RIVER ACCESS AT BRIDGES.

What works to engage people are community gardens, school gardens, theme farms, fresh air farms, things to get kids out and experience their environment and to understand the food system. Community gardens are a fabulous way to get people even in small spaces in urban environments to connect with the outdoors, to preserve that land. Tools/resources – public land trusts, protection of land rights for community gardens, assistance of soil remediation in brownfields and urban areas, sites that exist and are neglected, mini-grants, funding to get school gardens going, efforts to bring fresh food to children. Challenges – state and local regulations that are seen as barriers right now. Lack of incentives, short term goals for development that fragments the land and takes land out of production as a green space. Green spaces or community gardens being sold. Maybe if they are sold could have some percentage of the fund be put into a coffer – when public land is sold, to put some of that money into a coffer to use for other public lands, soil remediation, etc. Food modernization act is an opportunity to amend that in certain ways not to overburden small producers. Can't be one size fits all, right now it's five hundred dollar blanket fee for every farmer that participates. We need to mitigate that and make it more flexible for small farmers or a variety of farmers.

I'm here as a private citizen. However, I'm involved in a number of businesses and activities related to the subject. Regarding the two other areas I'm involved in, I'm the designated developer of a project called Longdock Beacon, a collaborative project in Beacon with Scenic Hudson, constructing riverfront land there in the city of Beacon into a tourist destination, a facility that will be developed according to sustainable practices. Connecting to outdoors requires a place to spend the night. That dramatically increases the chances of people spending more time there, because they have the chance to spend a second day and can take advantage of more resources. This gets into the private sector and development. I'm also on the Board of Directors of Hudson Valley Fresh and also interested in economic development to the dairy cooperative. What struck me in my various roles is that I believe that it's a mistake that the U.S Department of Housing and Urban Development is not involved in this initiative. In each of these projects I've been involved in, HUD has been involved as well. Most recently, Hudson Vallley Fresh has been a recipient of HUD funding for job retention at one of the oldest family-owned dairies in the state. HUD plays a very important role and since money is constantly being mentioned as a challenge, those are potential deep sources of financing. HUD loan programs can help finance many projects and any tourist association can be financed in part by HUD 108 loans, do not need congressional appropriation for the full amount of the loan. It's a wide open source of capital.

Discussion Question 1

Poughkeepsie, NY

(cont.)

I work for the NY state office of parks, recreation and historic preservation under _____ as a community liaison. One thing that really does work is to link the many programs out there. Many times we are working in bubbles without connections to others. What we do in the state historic preservation office is provide an awareness and a protection of resources that lead to an incentive for preservation. Farmers have to make money. Money goes where the opportunities are and where the path is clearest. But we have an amazing amount of infrastructure that is already established in historic sites and towns and we need to reinforce what we already have. We have a federal-state program "Certified Local Government" that the federal government stepped up to the plate to provide assistance to communities to incorporate preservation. We provide grant money to those communities to do the preservation work, training, and planning. It needs to be fully funded. if we keep our infrastructure and our historic communities viable, people want to live there and we leave open space alone. Speaking under my parks hat, we have enormous number of parks, we pioneered the CCC effort here in this state. All these things that were built that need cash. Cottages, cabins, admin buildings, that important for families to get out. We are so behind in our capital investment because we can't do it anymore. I see all our historic resources and parks, we have any interesting hinge part between communities and parks that are economically important. It takes funding. It takes cash. Land and Water Conservation Fund has gotten so much attention, trying to keep attention on Historic Preservation Fund.

Discussion Question 1

Poughkeepsie, NY

(cont.)

attorney and involved in Walkway over the Hudson. Most people thought I was nuts to try to turn a railroad bridge into a walkway. It's become the 3rd biggest tourist attraction in NY State. We've had 600,000 visitors. I think it's popular because it's very simple – it's a way to get people outdoors without cars. Shared for bicycles, skaters, runners, walkers, small scooters. It takes about half hour to walk across it. Until you get out there, you can't understand the beauty of it. It's quiet, it's peaceful and people just love it. It's going to connect with 25 miles of traffic-free trails on both sides. I've been pushing for a number of years with the Dept of Transportation not just to concentrate on providing motor vehicles access, but on bikes and pedestrians. Not enough attention to sidewalks and traffic-free lanes. There's no shoulders, sidewalks, traffic free lanes. I think that's the reason for the obesity problem because there isn't a safe way to get out and walk around. We've concentrated on motor vehicles for too long. Dept of Transportation needs to take into account and consideration the impact on bicycling and pedestrian traffic. Maybe some incentives that every project they do, they take into account the impact on biking, walking, take that into consideration. Even with the project we did, we had transportation funding and it took us 3 or 4 years to use that. We had to get most of the money through other means. In the Hudson Valley in general, we are the original great outdoors. It's the most beautiful area in the world and I think the federal government should concentrate on this area by making it accessible to people not just in motor vehicles. Railroad transport—one of the problems we had, csx a new freight line, not really cooperating in helping us use old rail trails. Trying to get commercial interests to buy them, but the federal government could help. The feds could take a role in providing incentives or leaning on CSX. Senator Schumer helped with the walkway. We are working on other things. CSX owns a key piece that we need for the trails. It is all coming into fruition except for the one piece we are trying to buy from CSX. We're within close proximity of 10-15 million people in New York City. Local people can't get out West, but by protecting the Hudson Valley we helping people get outdoors in an area that's close to a concentrated population. We were overwhelmed with the success. By word of mouth we're getting people from all over the world. You just have to go talk to people to see they're coming from everywhere. We're still working on parking issues, an elevator, benches, but it's been a remarkable success. Until you get up there, you can't understand the beauty of it. With those trail connections, we could make a trail from here to NYC, but there is a lot of resistance to it. But if we could get the federal government to help us lean on the railroads.

Discussion Question 1

Poughkeepsie, NY

(cont.)

Great example about the partnerships and working together is the Walkway over the Hudson. It's our newest state park. It was also an historic preservation project as well, it's a community resource, it's sustainable because the iron was forged in the 1880s, we didn't have to mine for it. It was already constructed and we put it back to a new use. It's kept a landmark of the Hudson Valley that's already constructed and in good order and put it back to working order. One point of access to the outdoors is historic urban parks. There was a huge park movement in American city life started in 1860s, too many of those are languishing. They have mature landscapes, beautiful buildings, and the state cannot put money into them. The cities cannot afford to put the money back into the parks and provide the maintenance. So in the urban areas, there experience of nature can be pretty lousy because the parks aren't kept up or aren't safe. We have those parks all across NY State. We're called the Empire State, it's a nice name, but it'd be good if it meant something. We have these great communities, everyone needs help to keep legacy alive.

GIS Director of Highlands Institute. US. What works? The USGS and the USFS. I can't say enough about the scientific work those organizations have done, their diligence in organizing it and their increasing ability to make that publicly available. The Rockland County Water Resources spread new light on the water treatment plant, for example. Getting solid science about how the entire water cycle works allows us to be informed, will have impact on generations. In the U.S. Forest Service, Martina Barns and her colleagues, they have done studies (Forest, Water, and People Study) that analyzed several indicators of water quality so we now have the information and data. With this data set I can help individual municipalities establish targets, impairments, threats to that water and actions. What are the best water sheds, what are the challenges? The work the at the U.S. Forest Service is invaluable. In terms of natural resources, Harriman State Park has a long tradition of group camps for less advantaged children. There is a balancing issue between recreation and biodiversity. Recreation does have a significant impact on biodiversity. In Harriman state parks we have many visitors, but if something isn't done we will have no forest in 40-50 years if we do nothing. The management is the issue. Establishing of base lines and ongoing monitoring. More study and management.

Discussion Question 1

Poughkeepsie, NY

(cont.)

Small grass roots group working in Putnam County. Being an advanced senior, I will read my comments. (Written comments were submitted.) The great swamp of eastern Putnam and Dutchess County is a different type of river system – 20 mile length encompasses two major river systems. The Housatonic and the Hudson. The East branch of the Croton River also is part of the NYC water system. The great swamp is known to supply about 20% of water to the Croton system. The great swamp is the 2nd largest fresh water wetland and the largest red maple swamp in the state. Many thousands of acres are included in this area, fresh water swamp habitat and critical resources that provide areas where children and adults can get out and engage in science in the field by tracking turtles or simply enjoying the joys of being outdoors. Hunting, fishing, kayaking and canoeing are possible. Many species live here, many species of birds, major breeding population of turtles, amphibians, reptiles, etc. Over 25 species of mammals, rare plants are numerous. Eight natural communities support rare plants. Success – the answer is a coalition of partners led by an entirely volunteer organization. Friends of the Great Swamp (FROG) that has been able to obtain Recovery Act funds, with 11 partners as well as local land owners have all come together to preserve over 600 acres in the swamp and more acres in conservation easement. Major challenge – funding. Potential for new homes and development in the great swamp watershed. Demand for open space has driven prices beyond which feds are willing to pay. We need more open space lands in the Hudson Valley. Land prices and taxes are exorbitant here. There are few other grants for open space preservation. What can the federal government do? Now is the time before it's gone to create unique and valuable open space. We support that creation of the Hudson Valley as a National Park. FROG would like to propose that the federal government acquire additional acreage in the Great swamp to create a national wildlife refuge to protect the habitat of the wildlife in the great swamp to protect habitat of waterfowl and songbirds and rare reptiles, amphibians, mammals, and butterflies. This refuge could also act as a biological research station as well as preserving water quality and provide public education. The addition of a north woods element is a thought. The northeast would then have a national refuge and a national forest similar to what is out west. People cannot connect to the wild world, if there is no wild world out there. Preserving the great swamp is an important first step. We look forward to partnering with the federal government.

Discussion Question 1

Poughkeepsie, NY

(cont.)

The Hudson Valley is the birthplace of the modern environmental movement. We have partnerships and incredible collaboration through the government, organizations to help provide food to our incredible farm stands, tourism. Great opportunity to build on what we have here as a great resource and collaboration. One aspect of that collaboration is "Saving the Land that Matters Most" 17 land trusts are working together. 65,000 acres that we estimated cost about \$500 million dollars to implement. There are other estuaries around the country, but the idea that in 5 years we could preserve that green corridor of the Hudson Valley is within our grasp. We think it can be done through a number of exiting funding sources with a collaboration with USDA, DEC, etc. If we all work together to fight for full funding of existing initiatives is what we need. We have the Land Conservation Fund, the Highlands Conservation Act authorized for \$100 million, the National Estuary Program – full funding is essential for these. We've asked Governor Patterson and Mayor Bloomberg for funding. USDA farm and ranch protection program is miniscule amount of funding. I would love to work with the Dept of Ag to identify other funding sources because we have land trusts on the ground, working in our communities with the farmers and land owners. We need a federal partner here. Working with NRCS, USDA, land trust community to protect what is a great source of food for the valley and for NYC. Many of our farmers are trucking their food to NYC. If the land is lost at the rate, Hudson Valley agricultural sector is one of the 10 most threatened nationally. This is a time of real urgency and a great opportunity for collaboration.

I like to garden. I go out and weed, harvest, plant seed. I have a garden in my backyard now, with green beans and beets.

I go to the beach, because it is very environmental because there are lots of creatures and animals. While I like going during the day, I also like going at night because the moon and stars are so bright, and you can't see them in the city. I really appreciate the natural light and stars.

Mountains and forest likes plants and plant biology creates foundation for the environment also like seeing plants here because they are so different from California. You can see the differences in plants at different altitudes.

I like hiking on rail trails in the Mohonk region and preserve (in Hudson Valley NY), swimming in lakes and natural swimming holes. I like biking as well.

I like to hike and I live right next to a trail. I am from Albany but now live in country. Used to be from the city, nice change. Jogs in the mornings. No open spaces in city.

I like to hike in the forest, where you can lose yourself. I like to find areas where you can't find evidence of where humans have been, especially old forests.

I like to go to parks because they have nice scenery. Woodland Park is a nice park. I like to hang out there with friends

Discussion Question 1

Poughkeepsie, NY

(cont.)

Growing up in Brooklyn, you don't see much nature. Here (in mid-Hudson) you have trees makes you feel motivated to think positively.

Feel cramped inside so I like the openness of space outside. I feel a rush of energy when I go outside.

I like to go out with my dogs to walk for 2-3 hours. I live in beacon. I enjoy looking at trees and different paths. This way, I get exercise and they get to see different things.

Likes to observe nature itself it reminds you not to be selfish and reminds that humans are not only thing on the planet

Being indoors can make you feel depressed, but when you breath in fresh air is calms you and gets rid of the toxins.

I feel more relaxed when I am outside.

I detest littering. I tell people to not litter. Trash cans are everywhere. I tell my friends that they shouldn't litter. People shouldn't be disrespectful. We have a beautiful world.

Keep environment clean. Treat it as our room. Recycle. We have a generator (motion sensor) to shut off lights when we're not there.

One of the big things people can do is compost. 40% of what is in landfills is compostable. It's F.B.I. -- fungus, bacteria and invertibrates. Composting is nature's recycling. I have an area on the side of my house which is compost area. It works! You can see it working like a corn cob that I have seen decomposing over weeks. At work we get compost from worm bins that are inside. Compost is an amazing fertilizer.

In high school I worked for student conservation commission and Americorps. This was a huge life changing experience. I now work for Parks Service which has also changed my life. All of this taught me to be a leader. I feel that teaching others is my way of helping . Small organizations are connecting people to the environment and teaching others.

Pay attention to the environment. Notice what changes are happening, so you can respond to them. For example, there are less and less deer from development in my area. If you pay attention, you can find the root of the problem

I work for the Green Team and everything that we do, we learn about the environment. We plant and eat the food and you actually see it (how food is grown). Growing organic is a better way to utilize what is here and we have learned how. We have also learned different ways to recycle.

Discussion Question 1

Poughkeepsie, NY

(cont.)

People, especially in urban areas, should be responsible consumers, know where your food comes from. For instance don't buy bp gas. Start with yourself.

Our group is taking abandoned lots in Albany and cleaning them up. We have planted areas and worked with local churches, etc. We need tools to better this activity. We work with young people like ___ to teach them about these things and we need schools to do better and teach more.

Using less electricity and less water helps the outdoors because it preserves resources.

We waste a lot of energy and water.

The less we use, less we need.

I stopped speeding on freeway because it wastes gas. Now that I don't speed anymore, my car is much more efficient.

In Brooklyn we have tons of cars and I carpool.

Organics grew up on organic farm. Education is needed to tell people how to eat local and support sustainable farms. Need to get it out there. We here are all educated and many people don't know, so we have to educate them. ___ did some teaching and farm work with little kids.

The best thing we can do is to be a good example. I lead interpretive hikes. If the kids see you, they will see you as a role model. It's easy and simple.

We can lead by what we do in our own homes. People get used to certain human comfort and that disconnects people from the outdoors, i.e. it's "hot outside, and not the perfect temperature,

We do need to teach the community what is morally correct letting them know what is good and what is not.

Consumerism always told to buy stuff, and lots of stuff. It is important to get high quality stuff and less of it. Lasts longer. Saves money. Having something last and is high quality.

Discussion Question 1

Poughkeepsie, NY

(cont.)

The best thing to have happened is the “Buy Local” promotion. It has created a greater awareness for the public to purchase from their local farmers where possible. It seems as though the message is finally getting to the consumer.

For example Farm Markets have made it accessible for small farms and the public to have access to each other. With the loss of local auction centers where farmers were able to sell their produce the introduction of farm markets have made it possible for farmers to have direct marketing access

There are so many ways you have all been helpful to the City of Poughkeepsie. As mayor, EPA regulations would hasten our cleanup of toxic wastes leaching into the Hudson on the Southern waterfront. Today, it is the site of a successful restaurant and catering facility and DEC's Brownfield programs provided beneficial assistance as well. Through Interior programs we would re-engage activities in our parks, promote urban tree canopy and creek cleanup.. Along with the DEC and USDA we not only saved a champion Butternut tree, we are not using it to help propagate other tree of this threatened species.

These and other creative programs are not only valuable they are necessary in a very changing environment. Case in point – Upper Landing on the Poughkeepsie waterfront.

Upper Landing is where the Dutch and Huguenot settlers would come ashore in the Poughkeepsie settlement in the late 1690's. Located on the Fall Kill Creek and Hudson River, through time it would become an active trade center with historic names like the Van Kleeck's, Vander Bogarts, Livingston's, Reynolds's and even Madame Brett attached to it. Sloops, such as the Clearwater would dock here to carry cargo north and south on the river. 100 years ago, in 1910, it became part of Central Hudson Gas and Electric until the city acquired it in 2006

There are many positive components about this property – it sits right under the Walkway Over the Hudson, it proves an important Greenway link on the Waterfront, the property was used as a land swap with another park to upgrade our reservoir, it sits strategically on the Fall Kill Creek and the Hudson River and it still has two historic houses the 1717 Hoffman House and 1810 Reynolds House on site.

A citizen group, Friends of Upper Landing, along with other green and planning organizations are looking how to do this. Part of that plan involves history and the Dutch. Last year as part of the Quadricentennial a Dutch architectural group from Freisland, Hans Achterbosch and associates visited Upper Landing and began developing a concept to bridge the Fall Kill with a wooden bridge – the same type of bridge they have successfully completed in Holland. This bridge will help re-connect the greenway and be part of a path to an elevator that will go up to the Walkway Over the Hudson. More, they would use Dutch green technology to help assist the city in upgrading the Dutch built Hoffman House, and connect the Fall Kill Creek as well, with an historic mill.

Imagine what this can do for visitors and residents who use the Walkway, or the riders on nearby train station, or those who walk our waterfront. Providing a new chapter for historic sites through green thinking and it would be a global project.

Discussion Question 1

Poughkeepsie, NY

(cont.)

Nowhere in Poughkeepsie is there an interpretive center that tells our history. This can do more, with new green technologies both from the Netherlands, as well as local companies – we can help provide a new sustainable site for the 21st Century. One that blends both old and new.

How can you help? As you have in the past, your educational programs on estuaries, watersheds, and alternative energy resources, not to mention historic oriented programs and interpretive centers through such programs as Preserve America can be very beneficial. They can provide the educational, creative and financial assistance small cities, like Poughkeepsie, need to retain their historic sites and become models for the 21st century.

Located in the Hudson Valley, Mohonk Preserve is the largest member- and visitor-supported nature preserve in New York State. Managing 7,000 acres of the Shawangunk Ridge, the Preserve works to protect the ridge and to inspire people to care for, enjoy, and explore the natural world.

Economic Impact – Park/preserves are important economic engines. A recent study employing economic impact models used by the National Park Service determined that tourism and operations at Minnewaska State Park Preserve, Mohonk Preserve and Sam's Point Preserve drive 392,695 visitors annually, generating an economic impact on the local area of \$12.3 million and supporting 352 local jobs.

Decisions Based on Sound Science – Mohonk Preserve is one of the nation's premier sites for the long-term collection of scientific data on weather, landscape change, and species. Preserve staff and research associates have continued to add a continuum of over 80 years of natural and cultural history records and 113 years of daily weather data – all collected uninterrupted and with methodological consistency over time. These records make up the oldest and most extensive natural history record in the Hudson Valley region. Because of the Preserve's standardized field methodologies and breadth of information, researchers can compare current and historical data and use it in comparative studies with researchers both on the Preserve and from research sites around the country.

NatureAccess™ – Each year, parks and nature centers are visited by an increasing number of people with a variety of physical, cognitive, and learning disabilities. Taking steps to accommodate people with disabilities improves program effectiveness for all audiences by incorporating a variety of learning styles and supported by appropriate aids and services. Mohonk Preserve's NatureAccess™ program provides outdoor leaders with training in specific strategies and accommodations. A hands-on workshop provides participants with effective educational strategies for adapting and modifying programs, advances planning, and the skills to modify on the fly.

Discussion Question 1

Poughkeepsie, NY

(cont.)

No Child Left Inside – Environmental education can help us understand the connections between economic prosperity, environmental health, and our own well being. However, studies consistently reveal that the U.S. Public suffers from a tremendous environmental literacy gap that appears to be increasing. When integrated into the core curricula or used as an integrating theme across the curriculum, environmental education has a measurably positive impact not only on student achievement in science, but also in reading, math, and social studies. For over two decades, the Preserve has been a leader in environmental education through our partnerships with local school districts and universities. The Preserve strongly encourages passage of the No Child Left Inside Act.

Scenic Byways – An 88-mile byway encircles the northern Shawangunk Mountains and travels through the Rondout and Wallkill valleys, linking communities that have a common relationship to the northern Shawangunks and forming a distinct region of the state with its own special character. An inter-municipal partnership implements a corridor management plan to help improve transportation systems and to advance a mutual goal of gaining economic growth through tourism while preserving the important natural and cultural resources of the region. The Preserve is located in the heart of the Byway.

Hudson River Valley National Heritage Area – The Hudson River Valley National Heritage Area was designated by Congress in 1996 and is one of the forty-nine federally-recognized National Heritage Areas throughout the United States. Through a partnership with the National Park Service, Hudson River Valley National Heritage Area collaborates with residents, government agencies, non-profit groups and private partners to interpret, preserve and celebrate the nationally-significant cultural and natural resources of the Hudson River Valley. In this way, we encourage public stewardship for these resources as well as economic activity at the local and regional level.

NPS Rivers, Trails and Conservation Assistance Program – RTCA helps identify resources, navigate the planning process, and convert ideas into action. Program staff provide technical assistance in conceptual planning, organizational development, and capacity building.

FHWA Recreational Trails Program – The Recreational Trails Program (RTP) provides funds to the states to develop and maintain recreational trails and trail-related facilities for both non-motorized and motorized recreational trail uses. Between 1870 and 1929 Albert, Alfred, and Daniel Smiley build the Mohonk/Minnewaska Carriage Road network, which also served as a model for John D. Rockefeller, Jr. in the development of carriage roads at both Acadia National Park and the Kykuit estate. At Mohonk Preserve, RTP funding will be instrumental in replacing a bridge on Cedar Drive Carriage Road over County Route 6, thus restoring the continuity of the network along the Shawangunk Ridge.

Discussion Question 1

Poughkeepsie, NY

(cont.)

Hudson River Valley Special Study Act – The House approved a bill authored by Congressman Maurice Hinchey (D-NY) that would authorize the National Park Service (NPS) to conduct a study on whether the Hudson River Valley should become a unit of the National Park System. Unlike a traditional National Park, this designation would be founded on close cooperation between the National Park Service, state and local government and private landowners, with federal funding going to support and promote the unique region. The Preserve supports passage of this Act and fast-tracking of the study.

Hudson River Valley Greenway provides a "big tent" where communities can plan for the region's future, and link/promote cultural and heritage destinations.

Shawangunk Ridge Biodiversity Partnership – The Shawangunk Ridge Biodiversity Partnership is composed of non-profit organizations and several New York State agencies, and uses science and land management strategies to preserve the beauty and ecological integrity of over 40,000 protected acres of the Shawangunks, while maintaining high levels of public access and enjoyment. The Partnership has been instrumental in implementing "Green Assets", a project funded by the Emily Hall Tremain Foundation, Hudson River Estuary Program, and others, that has helped communities identify open space assets, provided build-out analyses, improved wildfire preparedness, leveraged funding for land protection and provided information to residents interested in wildlife, habitat change, and land protection.

Industrial Heritage Association, Troy Waterfront Farmers Markets, Farmers Market Pavilion in, distress cities, Capital City Community Garden, Industrial Heritage Site

Public partnerships are working, e.g. NY State Parks & Land Trust, Starting the residence Stable, bidding project

Getting people out to see and learn about these important land vistas, Specific programs like Teaching The Hudson River Valley Programs, Hudson River Ramble (Heritage weekend), The concept of the Hudson River Valley Greenway

I like hands on activities, where I can interact with the environment. For example, Norry Point trail, where I work to restore wetland marshes.

Black Rock Consortium – taking students outdoor or exposing them to the outdoor environment. (Infusing in our curriculum to expose students to all the possible jobs they could be doing in the outdoors).

Infusing local land trust and encouraging them to make or preserve rail trails. Appalachian Trails Society which runs through the NY.

Work of grass roots organization which organize to support parks and public parks, Play Street, CSA and Compost Gardening.

Discussion Question 1

Poughkeepsie, NY

(cont.)

Investing in existing in to historic preservations and providing the tools and funding, Federal Rehabilitation Tax Credit for smaller and building and infrastructures, Emphasis on outdoors and historic preservation.

Coacher Crew – introduce 100's of kids to the outdoors, Rescued race horse, raising awareness, about the Marcellus Shale.

Community Gardens are growing and are working because its raises the awareness among kids and get them outside.

Change all the models and all the rules that provide food and faming in the county, Creating a new model or business model that can promote cost share in sustainable farming, Community involvement and community ownership.

NY Recreational Water Society

Working with the local townships which give the parks money, volunteers, and expertise to do their service, Non-profit partnerships that support these efforts, Working with the great towers – forest services.

People being involve works but the federal government is missing from the table (engaging all the support that the feds can provide).

Teachers needs more profession development about the environment – getting teachers to expose kids to the outdoors more essential in raising a society that is aware and appreciate the outdoors more.

How do we get the people from sustainable transportations to the places that they need to go, shuttles that can get people to these places, support the initiative for local state transportation projects.

Fragmenting out communities with new development, new ways for people to think about the, big picture, centers of green spaces.

Industry has left the county and these needs to be reinvested in, need help with people to help us with revitalizing the outdoors in the Hudson; we need more visionaries to help us see the good in our environment.

Breaking the bond with students with the TV and inside to get them to come back outside; bring back Captain Planet.

The out of doors is a place where children and adults alike develop strong bodies, healthy, vibrant minds and where indomitable spirits are fostered. It is important to recognize that numerous internal and external pressures influence the self-esteem of today's young people.

Discussion Question 1

Poughkeepsie, NY

(cont.)

I support full funding of the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF), and increased funding for the Forest Legacy Program, which encourages public use of working forests and increased advocacy for the funding for programs that get children outdoors, such as the Forest Service's "Forest in Every Classroom." Additionally, I support increased funding incentives for land conservation projects that support children's activities outdoors and reach underserved rural and inner-city youth populations.

Parks and Trails New York wishes to thank President Obama and the federal agency representatives for the opportunity to join in this important conversation. Parks and Trails New York is a statewide not-for-profit organization whose mission is to expand, protect and promote a network of parks, trails, and open spaces throughout New York State for the use and enjoyment by all. For 25 years our focus has been on connecting and reconnecting New Yorkers at the local level to the outdoors through parks and trails because we believe so firmly in the benefits they offer for individual mental and physical health, stimulating tourism and civic engagement, conserving natural resources and open space, and for improving the economy and quality of life.

Through our Healthy Trails, Healthy People program we have lent our expertise to hundreds of rural, suburban, and urban communities seeking to build new multi-use trails or promote and increase the use of existing trails. With our Campaign for Parks we have energized thousands of supporters to speak out for their state parks so these parks can receive the funding they need to continue to remain open, provide the public with multiple recreational experiences, protect unique natural resources, and maintain and rehabilitate the infrastructure which is so essential to a safe and enjoyable outdoor experience.

And, in partnership with the NYS Canal Corporation, Erie Canalway National Heritage Corridor, and Hudson River Valley National Heritage Corridor we work to promote the 524-mile Canalway Trail System and Hudson River Valley Greenway to residents and tourists through publications and events. Each year our Cycling the Erie Canal and Great Hudson Valley bike tours attract hundreds of cyclists from across the nation and the world. Our 136-page guide to cycling the Erie Canal is about to enter its third printing and next year our guide to cycling the Hudson Valley will be published. All of these activities and resources, which received Heritage Corridor support, are designed to encourage more people to get outdoors, visit historic attractions, and engage in a variety of recreational pursuits.

Build upon first lady Michelle Obama's campaign to combat childhood obesity by demonstrating how getting children to engage in outdoor recreational experiences can provide the physical activity they need to control their weight. Use "Madison Avenue" popular marketing techniques that get the attention of and resonate with children and their parents.

Fund programs that offer children and families an opportunity to try out bicycling, canoeing, or other recreational pursuits at no cost as an incentive to experiment with new activities and visit parks and trails and other natural areas.

Emphasize life-long outdoor activities in physical education classes rather than solely focus on team sports.

Discussion Question 1

Poughkeepsie, NY

(cont.)

Raise the importance of parks and trails in the minds of the public and decision makers at the highest levels of government

Integrate programs across agencies, such as health, transportation, conservation, parks, economic development, housing and urban development, agriculture, to provide a more holistic approach and coordinated and reinforcing effort. There is no place for turf wars when trying to address such an important issue.

In NY, and for all states, we advocate undertaking an initiative to plan for and create a statewide, interconnected network of primary, regional and local trails linking communities and parks. This would be established as a high priority coming from the Governor's office in order to include participation of all levels of state government, citizens, and stakeholder groups

Seek to comprehensively identify existing parks and trails and missing links

Prioritize and incentivize recommended actions to fill in gaps in the network with emphasis on underserved areas and major trail corridor links

Use the plan to inform allocation of resources - For example, Parks and Trails New York's Healthy Trails, Healthy People program is funded by the Healthy Heart Program of the NYS Department of Health to specifically provide technical and community organizing support to low-income rural and urban communities to help them develop new trails or promote and increase the use of existing trails because low income rural and urban population have been identified as those who most often fail to meet daily physical activity targets.

Develop user-friendly and standardized processes for data gathering and work with local colleges and universities to undertake surveys that will more accurately determine park and trail usage, visitor dollars spent, issues of safety, and property value impacts.

The report PTNY released last year, *The NYS Park System: An Economic Asset to the Empire State* found that direct spending by the state parks agency and park visitors supports almost \$2 billion in economic stimulus for the state and local economies; 20,000 jobs; and \$5 in benefits for every dollar in costs. This information had a huge impact on lawmakers, the media, and grassroots groups and was central to galvanizing support that prevented the closing of 90 state parks.

PTNY has been conducting user counts on selected sections of Canalway Trail for the last five years. The counts are used to generate estimates of annual number of visits. The National Bicycle and Pedestrian Documentation Project has also developed a template for conducting trail user counts and encourages nationwide trail counts each year on several specific dates.

Distribute the information gained from surveys using communication channels and presentation methods that are popular with the general public as well as decision makers. Facebook played a major role in galvanizing support in our campaign to stop the closing of state parks.

Discussion Question 1

Poughkeepsie, NY

(cont.)

Capacity building grants can provide much needed assistance with activities associated with organizational start-up and development, training, communications, and volunteer recruitment and management - activities often not funded by more program-focused public and private grants. Two examples demonstrate the value of this approach.

In NYS, the New York State Conservation Partnership Program, a public-private partnership involving the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation and the Land Trust Alliance, provides competitive matching grants for qualified NYS land trusts to build organization capacity, strengthen partnerships with state and local government, and support critical program to conserve land across the state. Since 2003, the program has awarded almost \$4 million in grants to 67 land trusts and leveraged more than \$10 million in private funds.

A private donor has made it possible to PTNY to award \$30,000 in capacity building grants to park and trail not for profits in the last two years that has helped 17 organizations grow their membership, develop new promotional materials, and increase public usage of their trail or park. To illustrate the magnitude of the need, we received eight applications for every one that we funded.

During our 25 years of existence, it has been gratifying to note that more and more communities - from the most rural towns and villages to large cities - recognize the value of parks and trails and want to either expand what they have or create new resources. While they are very willing to contribute time and materials from volunteers and/or their work force, rarely do many of these municipalities have sufficient resources to fully undertake these often costly projects. But, this is why the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) stateside program, the transportation enhancements programs, and the Rivers, Trails, and Conservation Assistance (RTCA) Program have been so beneficial as they have helped many communities establish their first-ever park, trail or pedestrian path for their residents.

Continuing and increasing support for the National Heritage Corridor program. The grants, promotional materials, and technical assistance that the Hudson River Valley and Erie Canalway National Heritage Corridors offer to communities have made a huge impact in stimulating regional cooperation and partnerships around a common purpose. With Heritage Corridor assistance, communities are empowered to more fully interpret and promote their history and uniqueness, attract additional visitors, and improve the economy and overall quality of life for their residents.

Discussion Question 1

Poughkeepsie, NY

(cont.)

The Hudson Valley offers unique opportunities to showcase collaborative conservation initiatives poised for higher orbit. If government-NGO-business partnerships can be strengthened. The region's scenic beauty and natural resources, historic and cultural assets, and pivotal role in American history have led to numerous federal accolades. Congress has designated the Hudson Valley a National Heritage Area, while the President has named the Hudson an American Heritage River. NOAA has designated four coastal areas as National Estuarine Research Reserves. The region contains working landscapes with prime agricultural soils, whose farmers represent 80 percent of the vendors selling produce at New York City's GreenMarkets. The region's rich history and natural resources have led the U.S. House of Representatives to approve a bill to study designating the Hudson Valley a unit of the National Park Service. The region's role as an incubator for cutting-edge conservation continues today as a consortium of land trusts implements an ambitious, science-based land and farm preservation initiative known as Saving the Land That Matters Most.

The Hudson River estuary ecosystem is of national importance and offers one of the greatest conservation opportunities in the Northeast. A spectacular biological mixing zone, the estuary and its watershed are home to over 180 rare or threatened species and globally significant freshwater tidal habitats. The Hudson Valley's rich biodiversity is part of American's heritage, linking us to our natural and commercial foundations, and provides recreation for nearly 18 million people.

Hudson Valley residents are reconnecting with nature in record numbers - for solitude, recreation, fitness and companionship. The most direct evidence of their thirst for the great outdoors is the popularity of Walkway Over the Hudson, which has attracted 600,000 visitors since its October 2009 opening. This adaptive reuse of an 1888 railroad bridge and an associated loop trail connects people with spectacular Hudson River views, a forested state park and attractions in downtown Poughkeepsie.

Commuter rail service in Metro-North's Hudson Line and Amtrak connect millions of residents from New York City with the Valley's nine urban centers that serve as departure points for myriad outdoor destinations, cultural and historic sites - many a short walk away. The Hudson River Valley Greenway is linking bicycle, hiking, and water trail routes; the state Hudson River Estuary Program facilitates public access and education at many sites. These efforts support kayak outfitters, bicycle rentals and local accommodations and eaters that contribute to the region's \$4.7-billion tourism economy.

Discussion Question 1

Poughkeepsie, NY

(cont.)

The Hudson Valley is primed to reinvigorate children's connection to nature. The state Department of Environmental Conservation's Hudson River Estuary Program has developed k-6 curriculum that encourages and supports teachers to use the Hudson River as a learning tool. Citizen science projects span the estuary's length, using its ecosystem as a focus of study. Via its Teaching the Hudson Valley program, the National Park Service shares our region's heritage through curriculum development, grants and an annual summer teacher institute that promotes professional development with a place-based approach. Hudson River Sloop Clearwater connects youth with the river through its Next Generation of Environmental Leaders initiative. Scenic Hudson and other land trusts offer place-based, hands-on learning in a variety of urban and rural park settings along the riverfront and throughout the watershed.

The Hudson Valley's world-class natural beauty and historic attractions-linchpins of a \$4.7-billion tourism economy - make the region one of New York's top three tourist destinations. Within an hour's drive of 1 in 12 Americans, the valley is a true gateway. Its landscapes offer renowned rock climbing, hiking, and kayaking, while its heritage sites tell America's story. Cultural opportunities include scenic farms, fine dining and myriad arts venues.

The public has a strong interest in accessing these resources; 2009 festivities marking the 400th anniversary of Henry Hudson's voyage up the river drew crowds to its shores. Destinations such as Olana State Historic Site and Walkway Over the Hudson (which has drawn 600,000 visitors since its October 2009 opening) are major attractions. Regional events like the Great Hudson River Paddle and Hudson River Valley Ramble help sustain our economy. Plans are underway for a 2011 Hudson Valley Heritage Weekend offering education and recreation all along the river.

For over four decades, Hudson River Sloop Clearwater, Riverkeeper and Scenic Hudson have worked together to protect the Hudson River and its shores while enhancing resident's quality of life. All three organizations played important advocacy roles in passage of the federal Clean Air and Clean Water Acts and led the 25-year fight to compel General Electric to clean up the 1.3 million pounds of PCBs in our river. Now, the America's Great Outdoors Initiative presents us with the prime opportunity to spur increased awareness of the Hudson River's importance as a natural resource and a foundation for creation a sustainable economic future for the valley.

Discussion Question 1

Poughkeepsie, NY

(cont.)

This project will contribute to progress in achieving two critical national needs, namely the redesign of buildings to enable much smaller environmental impact, especially regarding energy and water use, and the restoration of dysfunctional urban neighborhoods to become vibrant and efficient centers of human activity. Opening communication channels between academics from several disciplines and the urban community will allow a two-way benefit: students at SU and CMU will experience neighborhoods as complex systems to be understood from several perspectives, while neighborhood residents and students in neighborhood schools will be exposed to research where the findings can have a direct benefit for them. Underrepresented groups are included among both the faculty researchers and the neighborhood residents; members of underrepresented groups will be sought for the graduate and undergraduate research positions in the project. The partnerships developed here are likely to continue well after the project is completed, especially because the final plans for buildings in both neighborhoods are intended to be implemented as public and private funding becomes available. As the project progresses, the findings will be presented at national conferences of professional societies representing the many disciplines included in this work. Undergraduate and graduate students as well as faculty will participate in these conferences .

Green Infrastructure has multiple environmental, economic and social benefits, both for current populations and future generations. Urban forestry, greenways, parks, and urban agriculture: contribute to the cleanliness of water supplies by reducing the amount of stormwater runoff and erosion, as well as the frequency of sewer overflows; thereby reducing the need for costly erosion control structures. improve air quality and reduce greenhouse gas concentrations by decreasing emissions and removing atmospheric pollutants. naturally cool cities and combat the "heat island" effect of dense urban areas by shading streets and rooftops; this also reduces energy costs, pollutants, and UV radiation levels stimulate economic activity by increasing residential and commercial property values and providing short and long-term employment opportunities. increase the aesthetic value of a city. can produce fruits and vegetables within dense urban areas, which provide healthy food choices and educational opportunities in traditionally underserved communities .

Recognizing the importance of regional green infrastructure corridors for water and air quality, aesthetic and economic value, this project will focus on older industrial cities that are spatially situated in linear, corridor-like patterns. Taking a regional-corridor approach, the Institute proposes the development of a series of urban green infrastructure projects (tree canopies, urban gardens, parks, etc) that aim to educate elected officials and the general public about the importance of green infrastructure and significantly increase the percentage of trees in cities linked by common geography and history

Discussion Question 1

Poughkeepsie, NY

(cont.)

Due to the large number of older industrial cities and the scale of this proposal, the Institute would initially identify and work with only one set of cities at a time (as opposed to all older industrial cities). The Institute has identified three different geographic approaches to commence the initial phases of the project. Presumably, only one of the following scenarios would be chosen: One state approach: This approach would concentrate on bolstering the urban green infrastructure of cities that developed along New York's Erie Canal (between the cities of Albany and Buffalo: e.g., Albany, Auburn, Batavia, Buffalo, Rochester, Schenectady, Syracuse, and Utica). Multi-state approach: Transportation corridors played a major role in the development of urban areas. Cities took root along canals, roads and rail lines, ultimately forming spatially linear patterns distributed across multiple state lines. This approach would focus on improving green infrastructure in cities in multiple states. For example, the Baltimore and Ohio Rail Line (B&O) passed through cities in Maryland, Pennsylvania and Ohio— cities like Baltimore, Cumberland, Pittsburgh, Youngstown, and Cleveland. Targeted cities approach: Many older industrial cities have particularly challenging concerns related to clean water, vacancy, and economic disinvestment. With this in mind, the Institute would work with its partners to identify five to eight cities, irrespective of spatial distribution. Future iterations of this project could then expand the green infrastructure goals to the related corridors. For example, the initial set of cities might include Buffalo, NY, Youngstown, OH and Lawrence, MA. Follow-up projects could then concentrate on the Erie Canal, the B&O, and the Merrimack Valley in Massachusetts .

Regardless of the geography, the goal of the project will be to have all of these selected cities sign a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) that would outline a commitment to increasing their use of green infrastructure. For example, the document might stipulate that the cities would increase their tree canopy by XX (TBD) percent by the year 2025 (or TBD). The document might further specify that cities capture a measurable amount (TBD) of rainfall using green infrastructure. To garner support for the MOA, the Institute will directly engage municipal officials and stakeholder groups in each city. Through conference calls, web-based meetings, and site visits, Institute staff will educate officials and stakeholders about federal urban forestry programs available to their municipality and outline the environmental, economic, and social benefits of increased greenspace, tree coverage and small urban farms. To further the outreach needs of the project, the Institute will work with Members of Congress and their staff to educate constituents about the value of green infrastructure and relevant federal programs aimed at "greening" urban areas .

After officials from each of the cities have committed to improving their green infrastructure, the Institute will convene a conference wherein representatives from each municipality will publically sign the Memorandum of Agreement. This document will cite various benefits associated with trees and green infrastructure (water quality, cooling effect, economic value, etc.) and contain a statement of commitment from each official.

Discussion Question 1

Poughkeepsie, NY

(cont.)

The following proposed outcomes are listed in order of significance: “Buy-in” from stakeholders in older industrial cities located along the former Erie Canal about the significance and importance of green infrastructure and a healthy tree canopy, especially as it relates to water quality, air quality, energy benefits, improved economic conditions, and social benefits. Agreement at the local level to increase the use of green infrastructure within the urban area. Agreement at the regional-corridor level to increase the use of green infrastructure and subsequently publically sign a commitment to do so. The use of chosen sites as case studies from which we might learn more about the implementation and enhancement of green infrastructure in older industrial cities. The eventual, long-term goal of this project is to transform cities into greener, cleaner, more economically viable—and thus more livable—places

Because of its unique ties to Congress and because of its success in working on place-based projects that have national significance, the Northeast-Midwest Institute is ideally situated to undertake such a project. The Institute is unique among policy centers because it was formed at the behest of Members of Congress over three decades ago and throughout its history it has incorporated this relationship into developing groundbreaking initiatives that shape federal and regional policy .

The Northeast-Midwest Institute will partner with other organizations in order to achieve project outcomes. Utilizing expertise at the College of Environmental Science and Forestry at the State University of New York (SUNY-ESF) will be essential in determining the necessary percentage of increased green infrastructure and therefore establishing quantifiable goals for each city. Through the use of geographic information systems (GIS) and modern spatial analysis technologies, experts at SUNY-ESF will be able to quantify local-level benefits—such as rainfall capture and runoff control—associated with improved tree canopies, greenways, park space, etc. The mapping of regional scale green infrastructure improvements and analysis of subsequent regional benefits will require the capabilities of an organization like the Regional Planning Authority. Other organizations, such as the New York State’s Department of Environmental Conservation, will be indispensable for their ability to reach out to urban foresters, local stakeholders, and the appropriate state and local agencies .

a. Outreach and Assessment. Identify national partners. Determine city interest and fiscal ability. Identify local partners. Report to USDA and appropriate Members of Congress on progress. Goal Setting and Education (working with national and local partners). Establish overall tree canopy/green infrastructure goals. Develop educational materials and documents. Create training seminars (web- and community-based) and technical assistance workshops explaining federal programs available. Report to USDA and appropriate Members of Congress on progress. Signing of Memorandum of Agreement. Garner local-level agreements to increase tree canopy/green infrastructure. Convene a summit (attended by Members of Congress, stakeholder groups, partner organizations and municipal officials) to publically sign the Memorandum of Agreement. Report to USDA and appropriate Members of Congress on progress

Discussion Question 1

Poughkeepsie, NY

(cont.)

WCS fulfills many of the pillars of the Initiative, including a decade-long commitment to local river restoration. WCS has been engaged in the restoration of the Bronx River since 2001 when WCS joined forces with NOAA to administer the WCS-NOAA Lower Bronx River community partnership grant. The purpose of the grant was to restore the Bronx River, to improve public access to the river, and to engage the community in conservation through outreach and education. Since 2001, WCS and its partners have educated 8,000 students about river restoration, preserved or restored 8 acres of threatened landscape, remediated one brownfield site, and graduated 60 people from a special low-income green collar job program that trains area residents in restoration skills. Based upon its success, the program has been expanded to include sections of the East and Harlem Rivers in the Bronx, so that now the partnership works to restore a large part of the South Bronx waterfront .

In addition, WCS seeks to broaden its commitment to the lower Hudson Valley through its New York Seascape initiative which will study the New York harbor to identify opportunities for conservation. WCS has a long history of working collaboratively with NGO's, governments and community groups throughout the world. As a Bronx-based institution, WCS is uniquely positioned to help preserve the New York environment and to educate the public about the natural resources in this area .

For more than one hundred years, WCS has worked to save wildlife and wild places. As one of the first conservation organizations in the United States, WCS has played a central role in North American conservation by working to save wildlife in some of the most remote and wild places on this diverse continent for more than a century. In 1897, WCS completed the first survey of Alaskan wildlife, leading to the legacy of protecting the National Arctic Wildlife Refuge and informing legislation to limit over-hunting, thereby beginning WCS's campaign for new laws to protect wildlife in the United States as a whole. Less than a decade later, WCS led a drive to save the American bison from extinction when we successfully reintroduced bison back into Yellowstone. Today, WCS conducts an impressive array of more than 500 wildlife research and conservation projects worldwide in 60 countries, and is a leader in identifying effective solutions to wildlife conservation challenges. Headquartered at the Bronx Zoo in New York, WCS manages the world's largest network of urban wildlife parks connecting its flagship the Bronx Zoo to the NY Aquarium, the Central Park Zoo, the Queens Zoo and Prospect Park Zoo receiving more than 4 million visitors annually .

Serving as the headquarters for the Wildlife Conservation Society and our more than 200 PhDs on staff, the Bronx Zoo is the largest metropolitan zoo in the United States sitting on 265 acres of land. From the beginning, this grand addition to New York's cultural institutions included an amazing group of animals from around the world as well as native species such as the American bison. By 1905, uncontrolled hunting had reduced the great herds of bison to fewer than 1,000 animals. Theodore Roosevelt, who helped found WCS, along with William Hornaday, the Bronx Zoo's first director, were founding members of the American Bison Society (ABS), an organization formed at WCS's Bronx Zoo to preserve this icon of America's prairies. In 1907 the Bronx Zoo sent a group of zoo-born bison to Oklahoma to provide the core of a new herd that would help re-establish the species throughout the plains .

Discussion Question 1

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(cont.)

In addition to American Bison, the Bronx Zoo is home to the following species found throughout North America, including: California Sea Lion, Grizzly Bear, Polar Bear, Bald Eagle, American Alligator, Alligator Snapping Turtle, Flamingos, The Bronx Zoo's award-winning Education Department is dedicated to teaching youngsters and adults about wildlife and wild habitats through engaging, interactive zoo programs. Budding zoologists can get an insider's look at the Zoo's animals and exhibits by participating in our interactive children's programs. They'll meet like-minded kids and experts who'll offer a glimpse of what would it be like to work at the Bronx Zoo. In addition, the Bronx Zoo Education Department's Teaching Fellowship program is a unique opportunity for college students, recent graduates, and graduate students to explore conservation education in-depth. Fellows acquire the skills needed to provide a wildlife classroom that invites and fosters student-directed learning, and learn pertinent information about conservation issues with a global impact. Particular emphasis is placed on the Wildlife Conservation Society's efforts to protect wildlife and wild lands .

Congressional District: The South Bronx, represented by Congressman José Serrano and the location of the Bronx Zoo, is one of the five poorest Congressional districts in the U.S. with roughly 42% of its residents living below the poverty line. In addition, this district is the most Hispanic in the State (about 63%) and is one of the youngest (34.5% under the age of 18). Working to engage this community in conservation is of the utmost importance to the Wildlife Conservation Society. WCS is the largest employer of youth in the borough, providing employment opportunity, job skills training, and scholarship opportunities for more than 700 teenagers each

In 2007 the Wildlife Conservation Society founded the Urban Assembly School for Wildlife Conservation (UASWC) in cooperation with the New York City Department of Education, Urban Assembly and the Phipps Community Development Corporation. Based in the Bronx in one of the poorest and most ethnically diverse areas of the country, this public school's mission is to engage underserved middle-and high-school students in a challenging curriculum centered on conservation, to successfully graduate students with Advanced Regents Diplomas, and to cultivate the life skills they will need for success in college and beyond. The Bronx Zoo serves as an extended classroom for students and their families, and its scientists, educators, keepers and other staff serves as mentors, role models and teachers. In 2009, The School for Wildlife Conservation after only two years of operation was given a grade of A, the highest score awarded by New York City's Department of Education, on its first ever progress report. The school began with a sixth grade only (six classes), and has added another grade each year since. The 2010-11 school year will see the addition of a ninth grade. Of note, the School for Wildlife Conservation has a yearly attendance rate of 93.6%, which is higher than that of the Bronx school district at 89percent

Discussion Question 1

Poughkeepsie, NY

(cont.)

The ongoing WCS-NOAA South Bronx Waterfront Partnership began in 2001. The purpose of the grant is tri-fold: 1) to ecologically restore the South Bronx waterfront, 2) to educate the public about the South Bronx waterfront, and 3) to promote public access to the South Bronx waterfront. The program's geographic scope has changed since its inception. From 2001 to 2008, the program focused exclusively on the lower Bronx River. Beginning in 2008, the scope was broadened to include the East and Harlem Rivers in the 16th Congressional District. A new grant round that began in the winter of 2009 has funded East and Harlem River projects for the first time. Below are a few highlights from the project including work of our project partners

In March 2006, NRG reintroduced a species of fish called an alewife to the Bronx River. The alewife is part of larger group known as river herring and is an important food source for multiple species. It is presumed that any native alewife population had been eliminated from the Bronx River in the 1600's because of dam construction. The reintroduction took place after two years of study in which it was determined that the Bronx River could safely support an alewife population. In April, 2009, three-year-old alewives were identified at the base of the 182nd St. dam, the southernmost dam on the Bronx River. It is assumed that these fish are mature offspring from the 2006

The Bronx River Restoration Crew, run by the Bronx River Alliance, is dedicated full-time to restoring the Bronx River. To date, the Crew has removed 77 tons of garbage, 1,050 tires and 13 cars and motorcycles from the river, and they have planted 43,845 trees, shrubs and plants in or near the river. They regularly work with schools and community organizations to teach ecology and to demonstrate river restoration practices. Additionally, the Crew conducts weekly surveys of the River, watching for spills and illegal dumping and monitoring restoration

Sustainable South Bronx's BEST program gives low-income people valuable job skills by training them in environmental-related activities. Most participants come from the South Bronx and are on welfare. Many graduates of the program have been hired by the Bronx River Alliance as members of the Bronx River Restoration Crew, and are currently helping to restore the Bronx River. There have been 60 graduates of the program to date, almost all of whom find employment within months of

WCS has created and launched a Bronx River-based online curriculum, River on the Rise. Dozens of teachers have received training on how to use the site and incorporate it into their classroom instruction. Though based on the Bronx River, the site can be used to discuss topics relevant to any

The positive influence of Heritage Areas and the Scenic By-ways on small municipalities

The positive influence of the Historic Saratoga-Washington on the Hudson Partnership

Discussion Question 1

Poughkeepsie, NY

(cont.)

We would like to commend the Obama Administration for taking on the initiative of reconnecting Americans to the great outdoors. What I would like to focus on today is transportation- how Americans are going to actually get there.

Are there ways that Americans can use public transportation to access our natural resources? Yes, one example in the Hudson Valley is the Metro North railroad, and I believe one of the reasons Walkway over the Hudson has been such a stunning success is because it is accessible by this train. There is a lot of discussion of late about Transit-oriented Development. Perhaps we should coin the term Transit-Oriented Preservation.

We support the initiative's stated effort to promote community-based recreation such as urban parks and local waterfront projects. Local parks, distributed throughout the state, will help cut down on congestion and on vehicle miles traveled.

The New York State Canal Corporation works on long-term planning efforts like the NYS Canal Recreationway Plan, which provided a 15 year blueprint for recreation, development and conservation along the canal system.

Providing recreational access to waterways both on landside and waterside for bicycling, walking, boating, kayaking, canoeing, swimming, and fishing. Recreational access needs to be local and accessible to population centers without requiring long drives to remote access points, but at the same time have a regional, statewide and national appeal to boost tourism and economic development.

Production of hardcopy and electronic guidebooks, maps and interpretive information that provides the link between the user and the resource.

National Park Service Rivers Trails and Conservation Assistance Program (RTCA) technical assistance. The NYS Canal Corporation has worked with the RTCA on successful planning and community engagement initiatives for the Erie and Champlain Canalway Trails. The RTCA assistance has been invaluable in generating public interest and enthusiasm for the projects that has resulted in tangible progress.

Private partners and non-profit advocacy groups like Parks & Trails NY (PTNY) are needed. The Canal Corporation has worked with PTNY on a number of initiatives to promote and enhance the Canalway Trail. PTNY organizes the Cycle the Erie Canal ride that connects hundreds of people each year with the Erie Canalway Trail from Buffalo to Albany.

Dedicated revenue streams like the federal Transportation Enhancement Program through the FHWA have helped fund a number of projects.

In our experience, the most effective strategy for promoting conservation, recreation and connecting the public to the outdoor experiences is building partnerships. We need strong federal support for collaborative efforts between public and private agencies, as well as local, state and federal agencies. This needs to be coupled with consistent, sustainable funding for conservation programs that improve our economy while restoring our environment.

Discussion Question 1

Poughkeepsie, NY

(cont.)

For the past four decades, conservation and service corps have proven that young adults engaged in stewardship projects can make significant contributions to their local communities. Expanded funding of the AmeriCorps program will help ensure completion of a backlog of needed conservation projects as well as help train and support the next generation of environmental leaders.

The idea that students should become involved in natural resource conservation and recreation work on public lands was hatched in the Hudson Valley as part of a Vassar College student's senior thesis. In 1957, Elizabeth Titus Putnam's vision became a reality with the creation of the Student Conservation Association, which proved that young adults could make lasting and significant differences in the stewardship of public land. Now operating in all 50 states, SCA was the forerunner of national state and local youth conservation corps programs, including today's AmeriCorps program.

In the Hudson River Watershed, members of the Student Conservation Association's Hudson Valley AmeriCorps program provide essential education and outreach services to students and area residents. They engage volunteers to restore streams, eradicate invasive species and conduct citizen science activities needed by researchers and biologists. In the Adirondack Park, SCA AmeriCorps members conduct a variety of stewardship projects that enhance the safety and enjoyment of visitors to the area, such as repairing boat launch sites, doing erosion control projects on states, and removal of invasive species.

AmeriCorps members have also been instrumental in launching the After-School Conservation Club (ASCC), a program that engages elementary school children in hands-on environmental education activities and stewardship projects for 10 weeks each fall and spring. The goal is to bring environmental education to and foster a sense of stewardship in inner-city elementary-aged children involved in after-school programs.

Our local estuaries, the Long Island Sound (LIS) and the Peconic Estuary are locally beloved and federally recognized as estuaries of national significance. Suffolk County has been committed to the protection, preservation and restoration of our natural resources including the national estuaries. Since the formation of the Peconic Estuary Program (PEP) in 1993, Suffolk County has been an active partner with the Federal government in matching federal grants awarded to the PEP with in-kind services, non-federally funded PEP projects and through the Suffolk County Water Quality Protection and Restoration Program (WQPRP).

Suffolk County has invested nearly \$6,000,000 in matching grant funds in the form of in-kind staff time as well as a number of surface water quality monitoring programs. In addition, through the WQPRP, over \$10,000,000 has been invested in projects recommended by the USEPA's approved Comprehensive Conservation Management Plan (CCMP) for the PEP. These projects include such activities as aquatic habitat restoration, stormwater remediation, agricultural stewardship, aquaculture, eelgrass restoration, and fertilizer nitrogen reduction initiatives.

Discussion Question 1

Poughkeepsie, NY

(cont.)

The time has come to step up federal commitment to our estuaries as ecosystems, recreational areas, and working waters, and include national estuaries in the next big conservation initiative, America's Great Outdoors, and making NEPs and NERRs eligible for funding through LWCF.

First, the task force asked what is working effectively in our strategies for conservation, recreation and connecting the public to the outdoors. In our experience, the answer is partnerships. We attribute our successes to our full embrace of public and private partnerships, including those with local, state and federal organizations, for conservation activities and initiatives that make sense, improve our economy and protect and restore our environment. Strategies that marry responsible, predictable funding with sound local and grassroots planning with partnerships that engage all levels of government and private organizations are at the heart of our long list of successes.

In describing a recent historic DEC land acquisition funded by New York's Environmental Protection Fund, Rochester Mayor Robert Duffy said of the state's acquisition and commitment to preservation of Canadice and Hemlock Lakes, the only two undeveloped water bodies among the string of Finger Lakes, "This is a deal that represents the best that government has to offer, and its importance and impact on our region's natural resources is something that we all are proud to have played a role in." (Guest Essay, Rochester Democrat and Chronicle, July 31, 2010). As this collaborative effort illustrates, government works best when it works in partnership, in this case with local government and with community organizations.

AmeriCorps (U.S. Corporation for National and Community Service)

For the past four decades, conservation and service corps have demonstrated that young adults engaged in stewardship projects make significant contributions to their local communities and develop crucial skills and attitudes needed to become productive citizens. As pressures on our nation's land and natural resources grows and youth unemployment soars, an enhanced AmeriCorps program provides a holistic approach to addressing challenges faced by communities, natural resource agencies and families alike. Expanded funding of the AmeriCorps program will not only ensure completion of a backlog of needed conservation projects; it will help train and support the next generation of environmental leaders.

In the Hudson River Watershed, members of the Student Conservation Association (SCA) Hudson Valley AmeriCorps program provide essential education and outreach services to students and area residents. Through hands-on, fun activities such as exploring marshes in a canoe, hiking a trail with a trained naturalist or conducting family-oriented programs about New York's wildlife, AmeriCorps members connect New Yorkers to nature and help them understand the ecological concepts needed to make sound environmental decisions. They engage volunteers to restore streams, eradicate invasive species and conduct citizen science activities needed by researchers and biologists. In the Adirondack Park, SCA AmeriCorps members conduct a variety of stewardship projects that enhance the safety and enjoyment of visitors to the area, such as repairing boat launch sites, taking on erosion control projects, and removing invasive species.

Discussion Question 1

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(cont.)

AmeriCorps support has also been provided for crews to complete much needed stewardship projects at DEC environmental education centers and on state lands. Western New York AmeriCorps crews removed invasive species and made trail safety improvements at Reinstein Woods Nature Preserve near Buffalo. The Headwaters Youth Conservation Corps provides trail maintenance and habitat improvement services to Rogers Environmental Education Center and state forests in central New York.

The state's fiscal situation has eliminated funding for these two important partners recently; federal waivers for reduction or elimination of partner matches would help restore these important stewardship collaborations on state lands.

No Child Left Inside Act (U.S. Department of Education)

The Department strongly supports the passage of House Bill 2054 and Senate Bill 866, the No Child Left Inside Act. Provisions from this Act would enable New York to train teachers to deliver high quality environmental education, utilize the local environment as an extension of the classroom and develop State Environmental Literacy Plans to insure that students are prepared to understand and address the environmental challenges of the future. DEC educators stand poised and ready to implement these components in New York State.

Urban and Community Forestry Program

As you know, the US Department of Agriculture's Forest Service has an Urban and Community Forestry (U&CF) program in every state. The majority of New Yorkers live in urban areas. The U&CF program promotes community street tree planting and planting trees in parks and school yards to draw children and adults outside and to improve the quality of life. The benefits of urban trees are well-known - energy savings, clean water and clean air, wildlife habitat and reduction of the urban heat island effect. In addition, urban trees and tree plantings create a strong sense of community.

New York State's U&CF program is a partnership of public, private and volunteer organizations and individuals that fosters comprehensive planning, management and education throughout New York State to increase healthy community tree cover that will enhance quality of life for urban residents. Special attention is paid to support urban forestry efforts in communities that are under-canopied, underserved, have limited access to open space, or bear disproportionate environmental burdens. In short, this important U&CF program supports the on-going effort to make communities better places for people to live. More than 200,000 volunteer hours were logged in 2009 to help plant and care for our urban forests for the residents of New York to enjoy.

Discussion Question 1

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(cont.)

Forest Legacy Program

The Forest Legacy Program (USFS), while currently underfunded, has proven to be an effective tool when resources are available. The Department of Environmental Conservation has used Legacy funding to acquire key working forest conservation easements that have worked extremely well to keep forest land in private ownership with sustainable management requirements and strategic public recreation rights. While New York has developed highly effective conservation easement programs for forest and farm land protection, the current fiscal crisis has diminished the ability of New York's Environmental Protection Fund, to sustain these efforts. Absent scarce state resources there is a great need for federal funding to support these critical state programs.

Community Forest Program

Community Forest Program grants was authorized in the 2008 Farm Bill. If fully funded, the program would directly support local governments' acquisition of community forests, following the extremely successful New England model. The Forest Service is currently developing guidelines for implementation of the program and we have been told expect to release these guidelines for public comment by August 30, 2010. After public comments are considered and any needed revisions, it is expected the program will be ready for consideration of grant applications in the fall of 2010. New York and DEC are looking forward to supporting local governments' participation in this program.

Forest Stewardship Program

There are approximately 14.4 million acres of privately owned forestland in New York State, which represents 76% of the state's forest resource. The USFS' Forest Stewardship Program offers technical assistance, through state forestry agency partners like NYSDEC, to nonindustrial private forest (NIPF) owners to encourage and enable active long-term forest management. A primary focus of the program is the development of comprehensive, multi-resource management plans that provide landowners with the information they need to manage their forests for a variety of products and services. Stewardship plans motivate landowners to become more active in planning and managing their forests, greatly increasing the likelihood that their forests will remain intact, productive and healthy, and that the social, economic and environmental benefits of these lands will be sustained for future generations. New York supports the continuation of the Forest Stewardship Program, which has yielded many benefits to New York's forest landowners as well as all of its citizens.

Farm Bill Conservation Programs

New York has benefited from many of the Farm Bill conservation programs including the Environmental Quality Incentives Program, which provides incentives to farm and forest landowners to implement conservation practices; the Grassland Reserve Program; and the Wetlands Reserve Program. The state supports the full funding of these beneficial programs and looks forward to their reauthorization in the next Farm Bill.

Discussion Question 1

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(cont.)

Wildlife Habitat Incentives Programs (WHIP)

The Wildlife Habitat Incentive Program (WHIP) is a voluntary program for conservation-minded landowners who want to develop and improve wildlife habitat on agricultural land, nonindustrial private forest land and Indian land. WHIP in New York has two focus areas: enhancing early successional wildlife habitat with scrubland and establishing and enhancing grassland habitat for declining bird species, pollinators, and other grassland wildlife species. DEC practices and strongly supports WHIP at its Rogers, Five Rivers and Stony Kill Farm Environmental Education Centers. DEC promotes increasing collaborations across the state that will positively benefit a broad range of New York wildlife species.

Land and Water Conservation Fund

In 1963, President John F. Kennedy made a pledge to the nation that, as this country exploited offshore oil and gas resources, the proceeds would be invested through the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) into the outdoor recreation needs of the states and local communities. It worked, and worked well to re-connect people to the outdoors in their own communities. The state side of the LWCF has been used in the past by virtually every community in New York State to acquire and build local parks and preserves. We are encouraged that legislation is pending in Congress to fully fund the state side of the LWCF; this would address an immediate and pressing need that can quickly help the AGO meet many of its goals to reconnect Americans to nature and promote community based recreation and conservation. In New York, the Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation administers this program in conjunction with funding from the State Environmental Protection Fund. The infusion of new federal funding could re-invigorate this program and stimulate extensive local conservation and recreation projects.

Other Department of Interior programs that need additional funding, as well as a temporary reduction in the state match requirement in light of states' dire fiscal situations, include the North American Wetlands Conservation Act (NAWCA) and the Coastal and Estuarine Land Conservation Program (CELCP). Both programs have been instrumental in conserving valuable wetland and coastal habitats and leveraging private investments and support from not-for-profit partners.

Discussion Question 1

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(cont.)

New York Conservation Partnership Program, a partnership with land trusts
New York is proud of its work with and investment in the state's land trust community. The Conservation Partnership Program (www.dec.ny.gov/lands/48901.html), a partnership between the state and the Land Trust Alliance, is a model not-for-profit capacity building grant program for the country. Development of a nationwide grant program to provide capacity building assistance to local, regional and statewide land trusts and other conservation not-for-profit organizations could leverage substantial private conservation funding and build even more effective networks in communities across the nation. Pairing this concept with the ability of land trusts to access LWCF, NAWCA and CELCP land acquisition funds, similar to the Great Outdoors Colorado model, would yield even greater results and leverage of private conservation dollars. In addition, we support the recommendation to DOI Deputy Secretary David Hayes from Karen Roux of the Orange County Land Trust regarding federal support for establishment of urban community gardens. There is currently no central source of information free of charge to the general public that offers consistent, practical and valuable guidance on establishing and maintaining community gardens in an urban landscape. A federal program which provides technical assistance through regionally based agents specializing in community garden design and implementation would offer valuable assistance for urban communities.

Tax Incentives for Land Conservation

In 2006, New York passed and implemented a state Conservation Easement Tax Credit (CETC), which offers landowners a refundable tax credit up to \$5,000 per year to offset the property tax burden on lands for which a conservation easement was donated to a qualified conservation organization. The CETC has proved to be a benefit to both the public and landowners. Similarly, the federal conservation easement tax incentive enhancements, first enacted in 2006, have increased the rate of land conservation benefiting landowners and the public. The enhancements raise the deduction a donor can take for donating a conservation easement from 30% of their adjusted gross income in any year to 50%; allows qualifying farmers and ranchers to deduct up to 100% of their income; and extends the carry-forward period for a donor to take tax deductions for voluntary conservation agreements from 5 to 15 years. While initially enacted for the period of one year and extended each year, the enhancements expired at the end of the 2009 calendar year. New York enthusiastically supports the renewal of these enhancements and making them permanent.

Highlands Conservation Act

The Highlands Conservation Act, passed in 2004, provides funding to protect the Highlands region, which extends from Pennsylvania through Southeast New York and Northern New Jersey to Northwest Connecticut. In the four states, the Highlands region serves as a critical public drinking water supply. It contains exceptional natural resources including contiguous forests, scenic vistas, wetlands, pristine watersheds and important plant and wildlife species habitats. The region contains many sites of historic significance and provides abundant recreational opportunities for residents and visitors. This area is also one of high population density and development pressure, and is highly susceptible to forest and landscape fragmentation. New York supports full funding under the Highlands Conservation Act.

Discussion Question 1

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(cont.)

National Park Service

The National Park Service contributes to conservation, recreation, and education through programs like Teaching the Hudson River Valley and Saratoga Battlefield. These valuable programs work with NGOs (SaratogaPLAN, Agriculture Stewardship Association) and municipalities along the northern stretches of the Hudson River that are working in partnership with overlapping National Heritage Areas (Erie Canalway, Champlain Partnership). In this way, the Park Service is supporting work to protect the Battlefield's scenic viewshed, revitalize the river communities and generally advance stewardship and outdoor recreation in this upper Hudson River area.

New York State is honored to have four designated national heritage areas that complement and collaborate with more than twenty state heritage areas. A new plan in the report of the National Parks Second Century Commission recommended that a clearly defined system of national heritage areas have base funding and work closely with national parks.

Sustainable Food Sources and Agricultural Education

It is or should be axiomatic that the best way to learn about the environment is to experience it directly. A unique program in New York, Operation Explore, offers New York City public school students in grades four through six the opportunity to link classroom science activities with the outdoors. Three distinct but interrelated environments—aquatic, farm, and forest—are explored through hands-on day and overnight experiences. At Stony Kill Farm, a 1,000 acre environmental education center operated by NYSDEC in Dutchess County, students learn how their food is produced and discover the interdependence of urban and agricultural communities. Everyone gets to see and do things they may have never experienced before: a chance to grind corn, feed cows and chickens, and use their senses to explore plants in the greenhouse, and run or walk around the perimeter of an acre to get a sense of its dimensions. Funding from NPS and partners to continue and expand Operation Explore would enhance our opportunities to inform urban youth about the importance of agriculture and natural resource protection.

Hudson River Estuary Program

New York is proud of the outdoor legacy created through innovative community partnerships like our Hudson River Estuary Program (HREP) related to the New York-New Jersey Harbor Estuary Program. We believe that HREP can serve as national model for protecting watersheds using ecosystem based management and connecting people of all ages to world class outdoor recreational opportunities. HREP protects and improves the natural and scenic Hudson River watershed for all its residents. The program was created in 1987 and extends from the Troy dam to upper New York Harbor. Its core mission is to ensure clean water; protect and restore fish, wildlife and their habitats; provide water recreation and river access; adapt to climate change; and conserve world-famous scenery

The program is guided by the HREP Action Agenda — a forward-looking plan developed with significant community participation up and down the river. Built on sound science and principles of ecosystem-based management, it achieves progress through a collaborative approach that includes: grants and restoration projects; education, research and training; natural resource conservation and protection; and community planning assistance.

Discussion Question 1

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(cont.)

Implementation of the HREP Action Agenda relies on partnerships with federal and state agencies, as well as local municipalities, non-profits, academic and scientific institutions, businesses, trade organizations, landowners and dedicated volunteers. The Hudson River Estuary Management Advisory Committee provides guidance to the program, helps the state define goals and evaluate progress, and provides a communication bridge to a wider group of partners and stakeholders.

DEC would like to replicate this successful model in other key state watersheds, including the Mohawk Valley and the Upper Hudson River, Long Island Sound, the ocean on the south shore of Long Island, and the watersheds of the Great Lakes. Cooperation and financial support from several federal programs including the National Heritage Program, National Estuarine Research Reserve program, and support for water quality monitoring and geographic mapping has made it possible for the HREP to be effective in its mission. Similar partnerships will be integral to the successful replication of the HREP in other areas of the state.

This year, Governor Paterson and Mayor Bloomberg requested a necessary and appropriate increase in federal funds for HREP through the EPA National Estuary Program that would address issues in the Raritan River in New Jersey, the New York/New Jersey Harbor Estuary and the Hudson River Estuary. The request for \$52 million for FFY 2011 (copy of letter attached) would implement the existing, consensus-based plans for the restoration of these estuaries: the Hudson-Raritan Estuary Comprehensive Restoration Plan (prepared by the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey and the Army Corp of Engineers in partnership with the New York-New Jersey HEP) and the related Hudson River Estuary Action Agenda (developed by New York State in conjunction with federal, local, and not-for-profit partners).

The Hudson River Estuary Program is an excellent model that could be replicated in watersheds with additional federal funding.

Environmental Education Grants

The Environmental Education Grants Program provides seed money to support environmental education projects that increase the public's awareness about environmental issues and provides them with the skills to pursue responsible courses of actions. Smaller grants to local schools and communities have supported hands-on education programs on ecological topics and provided teacher trainings to enhance environmental literacy within schools and neighborhoods. Larger grants have fostered the development of programs with wider focus, such as online teacher trainings in environmental education. With additional funding, standards-based national environmental education curriculums such as Project WILD, Project WET (Water Education for Teachers) and Project Learning Tree could be offered to a wider range of audiences, providing educators with both skills and knowledge to infuse environmental education into the broad spectrum of their topics. Continued and enhanced support for these grants would allow states to expand existing partnerships, establish environmental literacy plans and a database of resources for educators and community members.

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The Trust for Public Land (TPL) applauds the administration's leadership in convening a diverse constituency to develop a sound approach to 21st-century land conservation that will protect our natural resources and keep Americans connected to the land. Community-driven conservation is most successful when it engages a wide range of interests, but it needs federal leadership to bring together stakeholders and federal resources to leverage state, local, and private dollars.

Increased and consistent funding to support federal, state, and local conservation, including full funding for the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF). LWCF investments ensure continued protection of America's public lands and enhance public access to recreation through grants to states, counties and cities. Federal funds like the LWCF that leverage state and local investment in outdoor recreation lands are critical to a successful conservation outcome and require active partnerships among federal, state, and local governments. Increased funding for LWCF should include a competitive matching grant component to incentivize state and local investments in conservation.

Here in New York, LWCF has helped protect critical additions to federal public lands across the state including both the Home of Franklin Delano Roosevelt and the Eleanor Roosevelt National Historic Sites in Hyde Park, the Finger Lakes National Forest and Montezuma National Wildlife Refuge, the Long Island National Wildlife Refuge Complex as well as the acquisition of Sterling Forest through the Highlands Conservation Act and the Forest Legacy Programs.

The LWCF state assistance grants have helped protect parks, trails, and playgrounds across the State from the Jones Beach and Niagra Falls State Parks, the the coordinated effort to develop Confluence Park and Chenango River Promenade in Binghamton, to the ongoing effort to extend and protect the Hudson Valley's Long Path. These close-to-home recreation opportunities are essential to the public health and getting our nation's youth outdoors.

Protection of public lands, and the scenic and recreational amenities they provide, supports our local economies. Today, according to the Outdoor Industry Foundation, active outdoor recreation contributes \$11.3 billion to the New York economy and supports 130,000 jobs across the state. The U.S. Census Bureau reports that each year over 4.6 million people enjoy hunting, fishing, and wildlife watching in New York contributing \$3.5 billion to the state economy.

1. Local land trusts are the most effective means for protecting open space and watersheds because they leverage gov't funding with private donations and local partnerships and they privately manage their properties and conservation easement lands cost-effectively. Nonprofit land trusts protect more than 10 million acres of open space and farmland in the US. Land trusts not only protect open space and farmland, they: Build public access trails; Establish parks; Educate planners and communities on conservation issues; Manage community assets like community gardens; Build partnerships with municipalities and other nonprofits

2. Renewal of the extended federal tax incentive for conservation is critical to increasing the pace of land conservation. Congress should make permanent the 2006 extended federal tax incentive for land conservation. When in effect from 2006 through 2009 the pace of land conservation by private landowners increased enormously.

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(cont.)

Purchase of Development Rights funding in New York State. One of the most effective ways to permanently protect farmland.

The USFS works in the research they have done to quantify environmental benefits. Also, in providing grants that are enabling GI implementation, green collar jobs training, etc.

The Great Swamp is the second largest freshwater wetland and the largest red mapleswamp in the state. This wetland encompasses 6000 plus acres with a surrounding watershed of over 60,000 acres. Included in this area is freshwater marsh habitat, shrub scrub swamp, wet meadows and rich calcareous fens. This critical resource also provides education and recreation where children and adults alike can get their hands dirty finding salamanders, engage in science in the field by tracking turtles and banding birds or simply enjoy the mysteries and glories of being out of doors. The traditional values of hunting and fishing is strongly pursued as is canoeing and kayaking the Croton River.

Wildlife is an important component, especially the 92 species of songbirds that breed here, and the 95 other neotropical species that find the Swamp a stopover place to refuel as they migrate in their seasonal migrations. There are major breeding populations of the endangered Bog Turtle, sixteen other amphibian species, 20 species of reptiles, 66 species of butterflies including the recently documented Northern Metalmark and over 25 species of mammals call the Great Swamp home. Rare plants native to calcareous soils are numerous. there are eight significant natural communities supporting 19 rare plants in this relatively undisturbed landscape mostly free of invasive species and pollution.

To answer the first question that was posed, what has created some success in conserving this area as open space? The answer is a coalition of partners, led by an entirely volunteer organization, Friends of the Great Swamp that has been able to obtain North American Wetland Conservation Act funding. FrOGS with its level partners including Bedford Audubon, The Nature Conservancy, Putnam County and Oblong Land Trusts and New York State as well as local land owners wanting to preserve family lands have all come together to preserve over 600 acres in the swamp and protect 100 additional acres through conservation easements.

Zero access to Hudson River in Town of Newburgh. The City of Newburgh has 400 ft of access. Feds bought riverfront years ago and sold it to private business. EPA bought a large parcel recently. Would like to see access to river for community, not condos or restaurants. People and kids don't get out on river and don't know about it.

EPA has control of property. Make it into a park. Don't sell it to developers. Don't understand why that happens.

What works. State has member items to get money to small groups that get things done.

Discussion Question 1

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(cont.)

NY/NJ Trail Conference has dealt with hiking trails for 90 years. Hiking is a low cost part of a healthy lifestyle. Walkway over the Hudson and areas in New Paltz are good examples of access to hiking areas. Public Officials should be seen outside on the trails as examples. Many afraid to go out-doors and parents can't educate when they are afraid or haven't done it. People new to hiking in nature ask us questions like "what do you do about mosquitoes"? Need Education. Urban Parks are a backyard for children. Partnerships are important. Me and my husband are working with bike riders to create trails in our town. We hope the Town will work with this.

35000 acres of Parkland n NYC. It is the backyard to many children. Urban areas need to be included. Problem in urban areas is alienation of parkland. It is too easy for land uses to change and it is not preserved as open space. Urban areas have natural areas too. Our cities and council people are selling our historic and natural areas. Oldest part of Poughkeepsie settled by the Dutch. As mayor I acquired the property to access walkway over the Hudson. Can't make these types of areas inaccessible to people. Friends of the Upper Landing with partners hope to build a bridge (taken from Dutch technology) and help restore old buildings. Need to pursue global projects to boost tourism.

Parks and Trails and Greenways need to be treated as the "main dish" not the side as far as infrastructure. Fully fund the land trusts and heritage area programs. Communities are changing in a tourism economy. NY has a lot of history in the Hudson Valley. Heritage areas need to be connected. Create programs to allow all grass root organizations to have access to funding. River and Trails program thru NPS is only access for tech assistance for many. Needs to have continued funding. The River and Trails program is the only place to preserve, expand and continue the program.

Worked with many different groups to restore watersheds and natural areas. National Estuaries is an organization already in place to restore areas. Incentivize local action such as issuing local bonds for others to match. Many communities are raising their own money. Missing a partner in the Federal government. Federal tax credits are a great option.

Historic Preservation When your restore areas of historic sites you keep open spaces open. Funded from Fossil Fuel Resources. Need full funding for historic preservation as well. Conservation and preservation should work hand in hand.

Many grass roots agencies already work together. Need feds to join. We will have a US travel office thanks to the President. We need Federal partner help with having tourists come up river from city to see the Hudson Valley. We just got a grant but the pre-approval application alone was 115 pages. No public transportation to get from train station to farms and parks and trails. Tourism in HV is \$4.7 billion dollar business.

Making first whisky in NY since prohibition. We are a farm. The biggest disconnect between people and farms is that they don't get there. Tourism helps bring some people to the farms, but we need an education program to get more people to the farm. Farming in NY is a difficult and dangerous job. Feds need to help the state understand the importance of connection.

Discussion Question 1

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(cont.)

Purpose is to connect people to natural resources and history and culture. Please include Americas Byways as equal partners with the park service and others in this initiative. Make sure funding programs are not for just bricks and mortar. Have some for grass root organizations that bring people together. Volunteering is an American activity. These people in these groups can spend funds wisely.

374 acre learning center for arts and nature. Connecting kids to nature by bringing underserved kids into the environment to give them hands on learning. We get kids there for 3-5 days. It is enlightening for them. Kids learn about history and importance of conservation and perform better on testing when outdoors. Need a stronger educational component.

Too much emphasis on testing. College campuses are great resources for local organizations. College kids and help reach out to youth and non-profits.

We just celebrated 400 years of history in NY. We celebrated by making everything sustainable and built 3 big projects. Walkway over Hudson, Crown Point Lighthouse and Governor's Island. We have seen thousands of tourists. We had several events including River Day. We brought together every single constituent. This initiative can build on momentum of this celebration.

We discovered a revolutionary war monument. Had kids who had gotten in trouble with the law restore it and they didn't go away. They kept coming back. Convenience is needed to get people out. As a physician we need to get people out. This is a public health emergency. 40% of sophomore girls were overweight who were going out for sports 5 years ago. We need to work on this.

Environmental movement is future to our society. Yesterday was a great event. We need to pull the youth in. Good diversity in youth. We want to become a model in the nation as we have been in the past. Include young at the table and young people with solutions. Create a CCC but on the level with kids involved.

Have an idea. Raise your hand if you believe that anything is possible. We always hear we need more funding. What if what we do is profitable? All the groups that are here. Small gardens in the Bronx can't produce enough. But if all the groups work together we can produce enough to sell and make our own money. For example Rockin the boat builds boats. They are not for profit but they don't need money. They are making their own. The Carpenter School in Maine only gets a little bit of funding. They sell what the kids make. Think Profit.

Teach the right kind of things to youth. Take kids outdoors. Spiritual growth is more important than physical growth. Spend time with kids outdoors. Parents need to get kids involved in the environment.

70 acres of historical property was going to be developed near a soldiers grave yard. His project would hopefully protect the value of a battlefield. The Hudson Valley grassroot effort is made. funding is needed

Discussion Question 1

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(cont.)

The Conservancy supports this initiative's mission to protect and restore our lands and waters, and connect people with nature.

The Nature Conservancy in New York has three recommendations which can be used to achieve the program's goals, while taking advantage of existing public-private partnerships that have local government and community support and in some cases available matching funding. These programs protect habitat, create and protect jobs and enhance quality of life for millions of people.

3. Investing in programs like Leaders in Environment Action for the Future (LEAF), which provide environmental jobs to urban youth, creating life-long connections to nature and career paths in environmental conservation and stewardship.

These recommendations can be best accomplished by better partnering with local governments and residents, and by investing in protected areas (waters and lands) that provide the public access to natural areas and allow communities to benefit from the value of natural areas, including clean drinking water.

Connecting millions of urban and suburban people to nature with new blueways and greenways;

Protecting jobs by sustaining healthy "working lands" and "working waters" which support local and regional economies;

Creating new jobs for young people in conservation

Improving existing federal programs for national estuaries is a great opportunity, with the potential for significant, achievable conservation victories in the next three to five years. Local collaboration is already in place as a part of the NEP and NERR programs, and an enhanced federal commitment would do much to advance the goals of the President's AGO Initiative

We urge the Administration to continue the Northern Forest's designation as a Treasured Landscape. This will help assure that the Northern Forest receives the federal resources necessary for the region's people, their economy, and the magnificent ecosystem of which they are stewards, and on which they rely, remain truly resilient and sustainable.

The Nature Conservancy's "Leaders in Environmental Action for the Future" (LEAF) program is one model of an existing local program which brings young people to nature with summer jobs in community-based conservation projects. LEAF is in its 16th year, supplies stewards to nature preserves in 11 states, provides jobs, and connects young urban people with nature. To date, hundreds of young people have attributed their first extended time in nature, and their first paid job, to LEAF. These experiences empower youth to protect natural resources, support energy conservation efforts, and become actively engaged in creating a more sustainable future

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(cont.)

By connecting federal resources and career opportunities with private jobs programs like LEAF, AGO will: Advance job and volunteer opportunities related to conservation and outdoor recreation that should be tied in to long-term federal agency career opportunities;

By connecting federal resources and career opportunities with private jobs programs like LEAF, AGO will: Connect urban/suburban youth to local open space and waters, by increasing protection and restoration of New York's lands and waters;

By connecting federal resources and career opportunities with private jobs programs like LEAF, AGO will: Promote community based- recreation and conservation, including local parks, greenways, blueways, beaches and waterways;

By connecting federal resources and career opportunities with private jobs programs like LEAF, AGO will: Create effective public-private partnerships, for job creation and natural resources management.

Millions of local residents make use of our clean and healthy estuaries for boating, swimming, fishing, shellfishing, bird watching, walking the beaches and shore trails - and their economic contribution to the region is significant.

The Hudson Valley offers unique opportunities to showcase collaborative conservation initiatives poised for higher orbit, if government-NGO-business partnerships can be strengthened. The region's scenic beauty and natural resources, historic and cultural assets, and pivotal role in American history have led to numerous federal accolades. Congress has designated the Hudson Valley a National Heritage Area, while the President has named the Hudson an American Heritage River. NOAA has designated four coastal areas as National Estuarine Research Reserves. The region contains working landscapes with prime agricultural soils, whose farmers represent 80 percent of the vendors selling produce at New York City's GreenMarkets. The region's rich history and natural resources have led the U.S. House of Representatives to approve a bill to study designating the Hudson Valley a unit of the National Park service. The region's role as an incubator for cutting edge conservation continues today as a consortium of land trusts implements an ambitious, science-based land and farm preservation initiative known as Saving the Land That Matters Most. We look forward to working with you to shape a broad national initiative, but also in demonstrating early action in a region with a long history that is primed to demonstrate tangible successes under your enlightened leadership.

For over four decades, Hudson River Sloop Clearwater, River keeper and Scenic Hudson have worked together to protect the Hudson River and its shores while enhancing residents' quality of life. All three organizations played important advocacy roles in passage of the federal Clean Air and clean Water Acts and led the 25-year fight to compel General Electric to clean up the 1.3 million pounds of PCB's in our river. Now, the America's Great Outdoors Initiative presents us with the prime opportunity to spur increased awareness of the Hudson River's importance as a natural resource and a foundation for creating a sustainable economic future for the valley.

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(cont.)

The Hudson River plays an essential role in sustaining the region's prosperity and quality of life. Each year, millions of citizens spend time in or on the river, boating, swimming, fishing or simply walking along its banks. Thanks to the hard work of individuals, environmental organizations and governmental agencies, water quality in the Hudson has improved dramatically since passage of the Clean Water Act in 1972.

Working with Hudson River Estuary Mgmt Committee. Connects lots of groups – rec fisherman, industry, gov. Agreeing on overall vision for Hudson and has worked well. What do we really need? Need regional funds. Have been using state money with little fed input and these fed dollars could help. Example of area that feds could play larger role – fisheries that are on the decline. In Hudson, fisheries are important but are on decline. This is first year of moratorium on Shad (fish), river herring, American eel. Other parts of country also having decline. Problems not caused in Hudson River Valley, but other places. Not enough money to monitor. Little fed support. Have plans that work to bring people together, but short on resources.

Modest exception to _____ comment with regard to availability of deductions for conserve easements – major pieces of lands in Hudson valley are farmland. This is land that is not being protected by tax deductions, because help the rich, but not really farmers who don't have enough income. Feds to should support efforts to sustain farmer – even greater as you go throughout state of NY because most of upstate NY is farmland or forest land. Deductibility of land conserve should be continued and strengthened, but major fed effort should be to keep farms in production.

Family owns small 44 acre organic farm in NJ and use FRPP and works full time for NJ Conservation Foundation. Foundation has used FRPP to preserve working lands with impervious land cover in perpetuity with focus on preserving soils. Support FRPP and thanks NRCS for upholding a limit to protect soils and hopes that next farm bill increases funding for FRPP because it keeps farmers on farmland.

Looks to farms as different type of open space. It's an industry and we have to provide availability of lands and create markets. NY has tried an Interstate commerce challenge which failed to do what it needs. It required organizations in state to purchase a certain quantity of local produce. 50% of NY produced items (apple, milk, etc) have failed those attempts and limit to allow farmers to grow more who can't because there isn't a market to support them. Competition is from other states. Feds could get states together to support and encourage local buying. Can have procurement policies to buy NY food, sell it, etc.

In regards to procurement, the last Farm Bill allowed for regulation of regional food procurement in school-based programming, but agencies don't know how to utilize that. Aggressively market this info and have educational opportunities for agencies to know how to use this process. New farmer development programs in New York City is one that should be duplicated– positive signs that there is interest in creating rural and urban linkages. This program provides technical assistance and business assessments to new farms and immigrant farmers. Please USDA look at this model.

Discussion Question 1

Poughkeepsie, NY

(cont.)

Private lands conservation works well in our region because of good collaboration between State and NGO's. Problem is funding. Estuary program is great model of collaboration, but there's lack of funding – NYC is proposing harbor management and how much of that is going to fund estuary restoration? Land and Water Conservation Fund and other funding could go directly to NGO's or Land Trusts which are more nimble than agencies and can respond faster to preserving farm lands.

Target to farms that transition from existing farming families to see specific dollars targeted to national land trusts when those actions go from existing farm families to new generational farmers. More young people interested in farming but even after easements still can't afford to buy farms. Becoming more common than intergenerational farming. Have the know-how and ingenuity to have success. What is working is farm markets. Putting face to product continues to educate public.

TPL is part of large coalition enhancing the Land and Water Conservation Fund which is for conserving critical lands. Hope that one of the outcomes is that LWCF can be funded at \$900 million annually. They hope administration support fully funding LWCF.

Purchasing development rights on farms. Funding is key. When NY state puts program funding in place, 10 out of 20 towns also put in matching funds. If State provides funding, there's opportunity to get more funding. In Hudson River Valley there is architecture to get things done. NY state grant program where money goes to communities do conservation work. Enhance fed tax incentives to broaden ability to conserve by making it available to more people. State tax incentives for maintaining farm land. Transferable tax credit where people can be rewarded if they have ability to take advantage of tax incentives. Need estate tax wiped out for family farms.

There are great partnerships with EPA and NRCS. Specifically for NRCS in this region, an investment in urban conservation issues is needed because these are complicated. Technical assistance needs to return to support locals. Feds could also help in ag environmental management– in NY there is great Ag Environmental Management Program – but what happens is that when fed programs get delivered to state, the state has to override/adjust them instead of working cooperatively because feds don't look at what state/local programs already exist. Feds could look closer at effective state programs and invest in them so fed goals are being accomplished. It takes lots of trouble to get funds for successful programs. EPA in particular looks for “next magic bullet” and thinks there are no successes in this valley and this state. Maybe not so important to find this “bullet”.

One of the things that's shown up from successful value-added producers is to help folks develop strategies for assessing capital. That could be a high leverage use of funds; even those in early stages of development could move to a growth phase.

Allowing coalitions to have direct access because that's how they work when they're pursuing projects. They are small and have to partner with other organizations, including towns, counties, larger land trusts and that's an appropriate avenue for funding because of all the broad support.

Discussion Question 1

Poughkeepsie, NY

(cont.)

Participated in Future Farmers Club when young. That no longer exists so something has to be done to incorporate education in elementary, middle and high school to encourage farming and an understanding of farming. There's big threat to folks in her town from DE aqueduct for water supply and the tiger extraction threat is a real threat. EPA should address this and not allow a big oil company to extract.

I have forest land and rent to another farmer. What works is enhanced conservation easement tax break and it should include rentals. Farmer could get 100% deduction, but renter can only get 30%. Rentals are important because farmers need them, not having enough property on their own. Also, if someone wanted to donate land, you only get tax breaks on the easement, not on donations. Easements don't protect farmland - the tax code protects against ABUSE of the farm land. For forests, NY State has a 488 program. There are 4 ways to account for sale of timber land - why not just make it a fixed stump tax for forestry. Skip income tax on that and do flat stump tax.

Thanks for growing the food upstate and providing water. We want more people to ship upstate ag goods downstate by water and not by road to reduce oil usage and traffic. We need docks and piers. Youth need to be involved and work on ships to develop a sense of community and love for the river.

The Hudson River watershed is a community with many different local governments. What doesn't work is a lot of different parks that charge their own admission and you can get one pass for all the non-state parks for each park in different towns. This discourages recreation. There are great parks, but they Bay way is identifying wonderful spots to kayak and routes. Resources are not available or known to people. Wants a pass that is good for lots of parks.

_____ wants to commend the federal groups for holding this session. Kids need to know how to swim. 69% of African American teens can't swim. 42% of white teens can't swim. We need to do a lot more to teach young people to swim. The CCC provided infrastructure in the 1930s that is still used today. NYS closed parks and the Feds stepped in requiring state to keep open fed. funded parks. Please build in accountability in federal grants. Write in assurance that parks using fed money require that they remain open. Build in enforcement that money is spent in compliance.

Wildlife Conservation Society educates Kids about the river in the Bronx, has had success. Don't forget the urban population! Need to have outdoor experiences in urban centers. So important to inner city youth. CSOs are the biggest threat to the Bronx River and stormwater runoff.

It is important to understand it is the kids that are going to carry this work on, kids need to be involved in river activities and kids love to be on the river. The more they are on the more vested they get. Kids like being on the river with their friends. They are more invested if they are with their friends for longer periods of time. Just need a strip of beach with nothing else on it. Kids don't know you can't be on the river after a hard rain because of CSOs. River keeper is working hard on this issue. There isn't timely knowledge of bacterial levels in the river.

Discussion Question 1

Poughkeepsie, NY

(cont.)

It is worth reminding ourselves that we have globally rare freshwater wetlands in the Hudson Valley, we need to conserve the ecosystem, need big picture plan of attack (this is work here-Greenway program). This would be a great test case. We have the resources, plan and people. We are all invested in this plan and would love a federal partner. Expand NY & NJ harbor Estuary program should expand up the river. \$52 million dollars requested to President to expand funding for EPA. Combine 2 programs to combine the harbor program with the DEC program. Sea level rise will travel up the Hudson. A green ribbon of protected space along rivers is a great idea. Federal government needs to provide more science on sea level rise and more interpretation and outreach about that data.

Use non-profits to bring kids to the outdoors. www.liwatersentinel.org Does water testing with volunteers. Families participate

Discussion Question 1

Prior Lake, MN

Trial Leaders are aware of taking care of the land and the need to discuss what we are doing and how we can do it better.

Representing Assistant Secretary Echohawk, stated that it was unfortunately that the Secretary is not here today. Opening remarks, noted the Executive memo (for the AGO program) was signed by President Obama on April 16th. Mr. Laverdure defined the session, goals and objectives. State, private, tribal and local governments need to continue to improve on partnerships. Indian country has unique challenges. (Fee to Trust Initiative) Mr. Laverdure will be happy to discuss the Fee to Trust initiative after/outside this discussion today. He is here to listen and learn and will now turn it over to tribal leaders. Wants to highlight that the goal is to build on partnership efforts.

Thank you SMSC for hosting and others for their time and participation. The President has made it clear how important this is. Clean and healthy places are important for fishing and hunting in Indian Country and they need to be protected and restored. In the United States people/children are losing connection to the outdoors. Pollution and development is threatening the environment. We need to think of ways to protect and renew. We need new and old solutions to invigorate the effort.

Commented on the fact that this is the first official listening session incorporating the tribes with America's Great Outdoors.

Just got back from Alaska where she spent time with Chief (name deleted) whose father moved around a lot and kept diary of his time. Many diary entries read, "I have no gold today". Then one day an entry read, "I found my gold today". This gold relates to natural resources for Alaska's climate that can help support his family, children, and grandchildren. Today we need to focus on the young people, listen and learn from them, protect the air, water, and get young involved in our future.

The issue in 1969 was the tribe only had 260 (?) acres and not much Natural Resources. Tribal members were jammed into the reservation/community. Now we have about 2000 acres, plenty of walking trails, restored wetlands, recreated meadows and preserves. We have a watershed district, a wind generation plant and utilize recycled water for irrigation of the golf course. We will continue to improve and work on opportunities like these. (name deleted), SMSC Land Manager, works with EPA to obtain grants for these opportunities. We would like to have funding maintained for these purposes. Cooperate with Prior Lake on trails policy and roads. Concern is not to cut current funding.

Discussion Question 1

Prior Lake, MN

(cont.)

Role the agencies play is all hinged on funding. Likes the initiative. He feels that a kindergarten program in Europe where the classes are held outside". He referred to it as "No child left inside" Build on green space, kids outside 365 (no child left inside). Help with language and education component, creating and managing green spaces all play a role. With that comes land management. Ho-Chunk is unique in that they are spread out to 14 counties. This makes it difficult for them to put a management plan together. Joint management, working with department of WI Natural Resources, environmental water management has worked for them. Cooperative Management in (our dispersed land base) (Kickapoo is open to all). How do we protect cultural heritage in those coop areas without funding? How can tribes help? When we create these initiatives, what kinds of impact will that have on the mounds? Yet our laws are not favorable to the tribes. They impact funding, polices are not strong enough to enforce. Ho-Chunk is trying to do organic gardening and composting. He noted the climate change and a story his uncle told of a medicinal plant in Illinois. They were shocked to find this plant was (growing so close) (global warming) to where they reside. How are we enforcing the initiative?

What works? They have a New Director in Natural Resources that is working, a Green Thumb program, elders beautifying the community and they are stocking lakes with fish, they are acquiring GSA surplus equipment and work cooperatively with State and Fish and Game. They are a small reservation with a small land base. They have buildings on dumping grounds. (A Middle school and a former housing unit that was torn down 18 months ago, which is not cleaned up yet.) Since it is not cleaned up people are getting hurt, there is vandalism, and it poses a hazard to the members. There is not enough law enforcement on these sites. They must protect the aquifer on their land. They also have Chippewa Tribal Industries, which is performing home inspections and energy audits. They have Community gardens. Another challenge is they are losing the willows for basket making. Would like to see more tribal, state, governmental teamwork on these issues.

They are moving into a regulatory phase from acquisitions and working with state on wild rice issues. Lake front open space (initiative). They are interdepartmentally moving towards "green building certification" with DNR.

What works? What fits this is CCC. Civilian Conservation Core with youth doing natural resources. (Rails to Trails program, projects such as trails from WI to MI., campsites and deer surveys) This got the young into the outdoors. This all ended when (name deleted) became Governor. They only receive funds to build, not to operate & maintain these parks, ball fields and trails. Doesn't want other programs to be fleeced in the process. Wants them to be 638 so tribes run the program. (MI mine to be destroyed) Get young away from crime and into traditional sites/values. Doesn't want sites open to the public. (Mention of Monuments /site where they collect pipestone where there was graffiti. He wants no graffiti on rocks.) He cited GLIFWC as an example of off reservation cooperation to protect resources. Can we purchase off reservation and close it to the public?

Discussion Question 1

Prior Lake, MN

(cont.)

What works? Culture is Paramount. 1st tribal historic preservation office (THPO) program for inventory of cultural sites, prevented desecration, development. (Brian was previously a tribal preservation officer) Highlighted issue that money for THPO is cut or stays the same as participation increases. Their tribe can't subsidize/fund programs. They lobby for more funding.

Commended other tribes with the management of their lands and does not know how it happens but believes that positive management comes from the heart. Their tribe has the best second-growth forest. A sense of community may have helped. Land into trust is important. Law Enforcement, how do we keep game wardens? There are interaction difficulties with external law enforcement in a PL 280 state. In today's world could kids tell what time of day it was if they were dropped in the woods? We don't cut trees with holes in them; they are homes to small animals. Congratulations to those tribal leaders who have realized success. He felt tribes weren't always invited to the table. Tribal resource management comes "second-nature". Others need to work at it. He applauds having the listening session early in the process. Thinks the government should use the tribes as a role model for management of land resources.

AI is head of Natural Resources. Red Lake sent letter to Secretary Salazar and he won't go into that now. This initiative needs to be funded with new money. They are looking at 7% (BIA/tribe) reduction. The cut doesn't leave room for this. How can we support this? What works? They work with USDA, EPA, MN DNR and the young. They have a Water Fest every year. "They" took it away, the grant for the water Fest? Soil and water shed district, they will have to find the money somewhere else. Tree plantings with the kids/young help give back to mother earth. They are a closed reservation so it is easier for them to do things since all their land is in trust/closed. They have the sixth largest fresh water lake in the United States. Their reservation is like it was way back and people come there to take pictures. They have been bombarded by government on land issues and giving back the Angle. They have diminished land all the way to Canada. Many don't know that Red Lake owns the Northwest Angle in Canada. Red Lake has pre-settlement resources.

They rely on their own tribal capacity to work on natural resource issues. They have good technical advisors on their staff who works on sustainable energy. Work well with EPA in Region 5. "Thank you". They focus on protecting high quality resources instead of saving compromised natural resources. Polymet project was wholly inadequate and the tribe's input into the environmental process was reduced. Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) is a Federal trust responsibility and the hat stays on through the entire process. (GLIFWC helped in this effort.) Their natural resources are integrated with tribal initiatives. Iron range problems result in damage to the Great Lakes. We can't survive cuts. Keep us even. More money would be great. This is a great new initiative. She wants to know "how do tribes initiatives match what the feds are trying to do?" Let us tell you how our priorities match what you are doing.

Discussion Question 1

Prior Lake, MN

(cont.)

The youth focus of America's Great outdoors is great! Our assets are our children. The greatest gift is a world where they can sustain themselves. We are losing our moose population, seeing raccoons and wood ticks, which they have not seen before. Their ceded territory saw their first Turkey hunting season last year. No one knows how to hunt turkeys. Concern: Treaty rights as they relate to subsistence which is important to the tribe. Mining is a big issue for them. Asian Carp & VHS (fish disease) is big problem for them too. Don't do enough implementing; instead they do too much studying. We did the same thing with the lamprey. Now they are managing them. We need quicker action on invasives. Partnerships are important; both sides must have total honesty. Need every one to come to the table with no hidden issues/agenda. We need more direct tribal contracts. Hopes this initiative doesn't stop.

She got a lot of "Food-for-Thought" and ideas on how to make this an important initiative. For her this is a beginning, not an end on the America's Great Outdoors. She will look for opportunities.

Thank you. How do (we) keep tribes input happening? He directed everyone to the web site for continuing to make the issues known. <http://www.doi.gov/americasgreatoutdoors/> He asked, what does the forest of the future look like? Should we be looking to new ways? Liked the second generation forest mentioned by the Stockbridge Munsee tribe. The CCP program and youth can become the new natural resources care giver. Community gardens and USDA can be of help. The Forest Service has learned how to manage forests from studying Native American practices. They are struggling on how to manage forests to anticipate climate change.

The Cultural Resources issues were heard loud and clear. Message received to support THPO offices, Historical Preservation, assistance, partnership and the role that tribes have in overall management of parks and natural resources is the theme they are hearing around the country. Landscape scale management (needed) (park service, us agencies and Canada). Thank you and sorry they couldn't have set aside more time.

Discussion Question 1

Salt Lake City, UT

Public school - soft money - funding in schools goes away year to year

Huge burden on certain fishing rivers. I've seen it degrade as it becomes overused. Economy is dependent on the river. Take a step back and relieve pressure on the river, but the economic situation keeps it going

Reconnecting people with the outdoors is important; satellite TV, generators linked to RV's ~ need to get away from those things. Obstacles to reconnecting are television, satellite, etc., Ideally, make it available by your own power.

User fees are a necessary evil. They theoretically go to support the lands we use. Has problem, as a hiker, paying the same fee as someone with a trailer (and he doesn't need a corral)! The obstacle is that in the Unitas, you have to pay to park your car

Motorized vehicle users pay all kinds of fees, yet there continue to be many problems with the signage of trails; correcting will help people stay on the trails. Negative image of ATV noise. Get trails systems signed.

Associated Press is obstacle. Get down to common sense so we can communicate; effective communication will eliminate barriers. Use common sense instead of polarizing words. Need to come back to the notion of using non-rhetoric, effective communication.

Southern Utah has the most beautiful wild scenic areas! 'Past administration enacted "no more wild policy." That is an obstacle. These are core habitats and core migration corridors. More wild and scenic areas exist than have been identified as wilderness

Great Salt Lake - funding needs to continue to come to wetland areas around the Lake.

Words tend to divide people, and people become distrustful. Collaboration can work. If it's not done in an honest way, breeds distrust. Doing it the right way is better than just saying you're going to do it.

Collaboration is an issue. There are many nonprofit organizations that are trying to do a good job, but people don't know about them. It's a challenge to get programs into the school system and educate adults. There are two sides to an issue.

How to separate the people who enjoy motorized recreation and those who enjoy non-motorized recreation. They don't appreciate the smell, noise, etc., We all enjoy the outdoors, but not all in the same way. Should have separate tent-only campgrounds, campe

We need to see the end and beginning product of what we're talking about. Many children do not go outdoors, even in their own backyards. Cost... transportation and access. Get rid of obstacles. We have to do better in the field of education. Education of th

Discussion Question 1

Salt Lake City, UT

(cont.)

Motorized and non-motorized recreation must be considered. Motorized vehicle operators sometimes don't appreciate or think about how they effect and how lingering their use can be. Don't infringe upon one another.

As a teacher, she is shocked at how many kids have never been out in the areas locally. Most of this comes from funding in the education field. Once it is institutionalized, then it can educate people.

Challenge: BLM - Resource Management Plans

That was a republican initiative; the agency will swing more towards professionalism rather than politics. From my experience as a land management professional: it is appropriate to have more respect for land and science

Today: laudable goals for land management, but we (in Ogden) are not speaking in the same vocabulary. There are too many issues that we have to address with urgency - we are reacting, we don't have time to run programs for youth etc (that's the role of no

For youth: there is a fear of lawsuits for monkey bars at the park, much less climbing in a national park. It is a socio-cultural shift is needed to re-engage the public/youth in the outdoors.

Obstacles & Challenges - are "cooperation" and "reasoning". The special interests of our different groups' conflict, but as human being we probably agree on many of these issues. We need to use more reason in hearing other viewpoints.

As an ATV rider, I want the same things as a hiker - we obey laws and don't wish to take the rights of others who enjoy the public lands. There is a misperception of our uses - though there are differences we neglect the similarities. Fan of user involvem

I've had the opportunity to hike out in the wilderness and to ride an ATV. But the severity of the action should meet the punishment - don't punish everyone. (Set 106 consultation: we're going to discuss it in the committee) Let's not have closed doors, a

It isn't the way it used to be - and it never will be. There are very few places to set up sharing opportunities.

Need education!! Less than 2% of the US population farms for a living. How many of us know how much water is needed to produce a healthy herd? Utah livestock spends their life on Utah's lands, so we need more education for ranchers as well as hikers, bike

100% agreement on using discretion for the local good. We need more sharing. The appreciation of the outdoors is sharing with future generations.

Population growth and climate change are challenges. The way to address it is science-based decision making. E.g., what is the carrying capacity of the land, it may not be suitable to open the area to unrestricted access. And how we co-exist with other sp

Discussion Question 1

Salt Lake City, UT

(cont.)

Incredible treasures above us. #1 challenge is proliferation of inefficient lighting. Need timers and motion sensors in businesses and communities. From Wheeler farms, a few dozen stars are visible, but >8000 stars are visible from Zion's.

Many people young and old are inspired by access to dark night skies. Get the people out to where they can experience the stars.

Four wheeling for 33 yrs and feels challenged by closed roads. Goes back to spots a year or 2 later and then it is closed. He wants "it saved for his grandchildren for four wheeling". Wants balance here.

Funding is lacking need money on ground to make things work. Financial backing is needed. 2nd challenge is related. He loves to hike, four wheel drive, ski, and mountain bike. But also wants pristine quiet places. Needs to find recreation in concert with

Biggest obstacle is that it is hard to have a conversation on this. Not all stakeholders are even heard in San Juan County. International people come to SJ county too and these voices are not heard. He has worked on Factory Butte issues and bringing peopl

Worked with Price FO to make a plan for designated routes, roads, oil & gas issues, etc. All tied in with conservation. Dispersed camping was not defined, however but now within 5 years this will be tackled but in the mean time the resource continues to b

Works on cultural issues. Feels like things are not as smooth as it seems with San Juan county. Voices were heard by Sen. Bennett but county commission has not told their side. Need more healthy dialogue and give people adequate opportunity to present the

She is a youth and thinks youth do not get out there to state their views. Both extremes get heard.. But not the middle minorities.

It is easier to just sit on couch then get out there. Lack of info. On where to hike and access areas outdoors.

There is a fear of feds remaining from original homesteaders

Agrees that there is too much federal control. Does not like money going to feds then state.

Sometimes efforts are not coordinated with the land managers and private lands.

A biggest obstacle for land managers is to not let things go. We do not have enough law enforcement or education out there. Thinks it is best for people to be educated and then self enforce things. Need to tell people the info.

Discussion Question 1

Salt Lake City, UT

(cont.)

_____ said USFS has analysis paralysis. Management decisions are based on making things litigation proof so based on what holds in court but not best on ground. Decisions not made for right reasons.

SUWA has large budget to get word out, but his group does not have a big budget. Feels that is not fair. He takes his time to be heard on 4 wheeling. This should be on a Saturday or Sunday so more people are heard.

SUWA people do not make much money either..

During the week is a bad time to have this session.. People need to work but need to be heard

People can go online to register their comments.

County has conflict w/WSA's and 5K miles of roads and trails. What works is land based, science based decisions rather than political decisions. Get out on the ground for true land based decisions.

How can we get youth back into waterfowl interest. It is access to these areas. Many areas are restricted and inaccessible as a result of encroachment. Being pushed into smaller areas. I'm not encouraging my grandkids to go. I need to change my way of thi

Big problem with water access and wild game. Change in the political front. Tremendous battle because they won't really listen. Access is the key Now a lot of water heads have been privatized. Big challenge and step backwards.

Mining co. traded for land and BLM fenced the WSA. I had been going up there for mining for 50 years and now it is closed. Use common sense. People need to learn to share.

Sufficient funding is big issue and it's hard to go fast enough to get things done.

We focus too much on our differences instead of our commonalities.

Knuckleheads! Some are back in D.C., lobbyists, land managers and local people.

OHV challenges. Everyone who registers their OHV some of the \$\$ goes to enforcement on all land. If there were more funding opportunities, if we could work more with the agencies, it would work better.

Discussion Question 1

Salt Lake City, UT

(cont.)

Burden of proof for closure no quick decision for roads. Difficult for counties to take on. Access to existing roads

Not sure which land is managed by whom. Frustration - Increase knowledge of land boundaries where they can camp and can't

Funding is always a challenge. If we want to encourage local communities to get involved with conservation need to provide communities with tools for education and outreach. Funding for good cooperative programs. Streamline process.

Partnering - and treat partners as real organizations and not separate stakeholders. More fluid running with those groups. There is a disconnect through field and grants and agreement folks. More emphasis on partnerships.

Limit of funding. Bring up incentives, taxes. Disincentives at local level - numerous private lands are important. Property taxes are a disincentive. Green belt if 5 + acres get tax benefit. State tax code on private property of smaller portions of proper

Education panels on rock art. People try to take and destroy. Work on education messages and teach kids what they can do to preserve conservation.

Everything that we are discussing refers to kids, preserving, recreating and getting future generations out to the field. 4th grade students out to experience activities they have never done before. Get kids involved to do outdoor activities. More natural

View land as something we can take away from. Need to learn how to enjoy land and learn how to give back to the land. Problem with narrow mindedness.

Mindset that funding, conservation education are discretionary and we are finding that partnerships are necessary. Health professional communities need to be involved with what we are doing. Get right people to table together for partnerships. Very few sc

How do we implement bill. Working with field office with partnerships. Under staff of agencies. Almost beyond what groups can do alone and with the lack of people. Difficult way to communicate and need to make partnerships easier.

Education is a big part of this. No child left behind is an obstacle for field trip approval. School board has to approve field trips, no trips are being made. When opportunities are available only capturing the higher educated. Missing a wide swath of po

Litigation is major issue when dealing with agencies. Large number of resources being tied up. More mitigation needs to be done. Quit tying up attorneys

So much litigation - creates obstacles to work with communities. People are scared that resources are going to be limited by Washington. Work against communities instead of with. Must find way to make conservation work for local communities.

Discussion Question 1

Salt Lake City, UT

(cont.)

Worried about urban farm land being obsolete in future. Older farmer generation not being able to pass farms on due to pressure of turning farms into resident. Expensive to purchase land. Can't afford to purchase land and support families. Preserve farms

Working with large amount of youth in year round programs. Camping trips try to stress respect land, leave no trace. Biggest conflict. Everyone wants it for different reasons. Quiet vs. OHV. Respect others and their wishes.

Work on public lands changes thoughts on land. Reconnecting young people with land through work.

Intergovernmental Agency will not work. Too expensive. Money could be applied to separate org. One major source of funding to one agency. Potential to be molded and put on paper like health care bill. Not going very far, very fast. Simple solutions and ge

Real disconnect with youth. Only see outdoors as a place to recreate. Actual uses need to be built in. Urban agriculture Centers. Youth and inter cities are disconnected from where their food comes from.

Work with scouts. Kids would never get out if it was not for scouting program. Federal govt. should get out of way and allow local government to make decisions.

Limited funding and litigation. Due to the recession, settle now out of court and deal with at a later point.

Access and leadership to communicate accountability. Very clear and prioritize

Work through school districts. Success with some core curriculum so teachers can work with students and know the programs have relevance for students and fits in their classroom. Students know less and less about their communities.

Local groups take responsibility with different interest groups to come up with solutions to reach processes and fill gap instead of going through litigation.

Information that is given is not going up - now it is coming down. Listening session is good idea.

Went conservation camp and learned more about conservation. Great experience.

Not quite sure who belongs to whom and who is going to take control. Would like to see meeting like this on a quarterly basis - would be able to find better common ground. Want to have it available to us.

Discussion Question 1

Salt Lake City, UT

(cont.)

Can't say federal government needs to get out of the way. Needs to be engaged

Refreshing to hear of education and youth. Field trips and camps are more meaningful to the youth. Business, farms, - has influenced how I live my life. Public schools are the root of getting youth into the outdoors. Funding for education programs.

Challenge-difference between business and recreation. Major change over the past 15 years in appearance of public land and solitude when using it. Views on outdoors of today's younger folks are different than past. Need to talk about consequences of deter

Volunteer groups to help with education and monitoring. Need to make them aware of what is appropriate in the outdoors. Back country horse patrols can help along with the bikers/

Kids oblivious to outdoors. Need to get word out to kids.

Need for consistent rules across agencies. Agencies need to communicate and coordinate. Reactive process is what we have. We need to get ahead of the curve.

Bicyclers need to be out on the trails as volunteers educating folks. Get people excited enough to go out and do it.

As a user we need better maps, consistent from one agencies jurisdiction to another. What is available to the public, and what is off limits?

Need maps, consistent rules across agencies. There is a major PR issue. Mistrust of Fed. Gov't needs more information and effort to bring people together and understand issues and share the land.

Need to identify best places for renewable energy. Better preparation to establish process, not just default for fossil fuels.

Issue that has a lot of synergy with snowmobilers and back country cross-country users. Use outdated all agencies charters. Problem: no one responsible for avalanche forecasters-needs to happen today and be funded by Fed Govt.

Green River is deserving of Wild Scenic Protection. Frustrated that we aren't protecting our most valuable!

Need help with grazing permits. Air quality is an issue. Lack of capacity from oversight agencies for enforcement. Have industry fund oversight person through cooperative agreements with Fed Govt.

Discussion Question 1

Salt Lake City, UT

(cont.)

Lack of understanding between the stakeholders. Inventory of raptor nests -- decline in nests as ATV use has increased. It's because the ATVer's don't understand that they can't be out there in certain months. Need education.

Access is important to involving youth. Invasives restrict access to use for waterfowl areas. Many people pushed into more confined areas because of invasive restrictions.

Restricted water access - water privatized, but water belongs to all the people. Water restrictions should be for the good of our resources first.

Don't have data for other uses of economic impacts, such as outdoor recreation industry impacts from agency decisions.

How do you account for long-range cost revenues, job impacts from restrictions? What are the long-term effects?

Discussion Question 1

Seattle, WA

Strong partnership with NPS very powerful to get work done. Family programs crucial to get kids involved

Working with school system for forest restoration projects. Summer youth employment programs is great for reaching under-served opportunities, requires some funding

Monthly work parties that attract young volunteers, working with private companies for grants to get kids into the field, scholarships for high school students. Build stewardship for the future by working with young people and encouraging their interest, but need more funding

Beneficial to work on global level. Focused user groups to work through multi-user conflicts

science. Have opportunities within schools to experience this first hand. Pursue as a career. Prioritize science within culture and provide opportunities for people to pursue as occupation

Park Rangers are the best to inform & inspire the public – need more interpretive rangers

from Samammish: decommissioning of forest roads is diminishing access;

Public-private partnerships to reach broader audience. Education component is effective

Quality of staff in National Park Service very high. Knowledgeable, professional, a great benefit

LWCF works well. Historic Preservation Fund also works well to support needed preservation work. SHPO, tribal offices supported by this. Full funding is needed

In Cameroon, we visit schools near end of term, give a tree or bird. Follow up in 3 months – how has your bird or tree grown

organization has issue with dams in eastern WA; worked with WSU landscape architecture class and had students envision the town without the dam and see ways that dam removal could play out from urban landscape of Lewiston; exhibited at coffee shop and created conversation in the community about pros and cons of changing landscape

access to wild and scenic and natural areas makes this a great place to live; drives quality of life and economic perspectives; fortunate that we have preserved areas in this region

outdoor events such as concerts are great ideas; Sasquatch music festival at the Gorge gets people outside for many hours; powerful experience with lots of people; should be promoted

Discussion Question 1

Seattle, WA

(cont.)

many organizations involved in stream remediation for salmon streams (govt and ngo ie people for Puget Sound); take a bigger concept such as ecological footprint back to a personal experience

Funding is main barrier. What are some new and innovative ways to obtain funding for interp and outreach programs, to reach out to new groups. Centennial challenge was a means to phil. Donate funds to assist land management projects and programs.

Liability is biggest barrier. Attempts to engage urban youth creates fears of liability. People hesitant to lead, train, create opp. Because of liability fears. Too much red tape, documentation, to obtain liability ins. Hard to get youth involved in canoe club.

following '06/'07 storms at MORA, communities affected were inspired and motivated to get to the park and contributed thousands of hours of volunteer service; good that NPS put out the call for help and good to see people from all around come and help out; get more volunteer opportunities

Difficult to sustain funding for urban youth programs. Big budget cuts ahead for Seattle urban youth programs. Need incentives for private business to fund.

are good programs within city but program can expand – urban agriculture, etc, funding is a huge problem. Next year, city will have 56 million short fall. Link to other outdoor programs

volunteer programs work well. Partnerships work well. There is always work to be done and volunteers become committed to seeing land preserved and maintained. It takes money to run volunteer programs

Coalitions are successful if all partners benefit.

Maintain budget for park maintenance and upkeep

works with youth groups in western US, focus on middle school youth. Cannot get special use permits on public lands. Unable to get access on USFS lands for these groups because can't get permits. What can govt do to help obtain permits to use public lands. These groups are considered commercial under present rules

thing missing in parks is environmental education with local school groups; Indiana Dunes NS had an active school program and included school groups who learned how to do farming; environ ed programs and interaction with school groups is important

Increasing congestion between cities and big parks. Loss of character (ie farmlands, open space) is more difficult to find. Need local rural areas as connection

Discussion Question 1

Seattle, WA

(cont.)

environmental education is best done in situ; can't impart the value of a place by reading it in a book; get them in the moment; however, too much of a good thing can have too great an impact (ie seeing whales); American Camp at SAJH NHP linked to Limekiln State Park, land bank lands and county park – connection of publicly owned land to view whales as opposed to paying for a tour boat;

access is very important to us; local bike parks are a great way to get kids outside and active, provide unstructured recreation; but need more than small local areas...would really like to see top down direction to the local managers to encourage and provide bike access. Importance of bike parks and access acknowledged by several other participants, and need for more access....a big opportunity for USFS to better manage this, and provide more access.

mistake to assume young people are not interested. Lack on information, access (transportation), opportunities in how to get involved in the outdoors. May seem like lack of interest, but really lack of info. Idea-instead of career day, have an "outdoors" day at school. Disconnect between opportunities and info and young people having this info.

Parks are key to people's physical, mental, and emotional health. Esp maintenance of urban parks. Key to getting youth into Great Outdoors is in getting urban youth into urban parks.

bypass 4 snake river dams. Restoration of salmon would help cultural resource Outward bound expeditionary learning – effective in getting students outside and engaged in environment. Emphasis on standardized testing does not allow for these types of programs.

reiterate first-time experience that is safe, simple, engaging. Example – Skagit River – view eagles – all populations – disabled, homeless, non-English speaking, etc. They share story with friends and family

problem that the federal agencies have is the lack of funding to maintain roads/access to safe standards; NW Forest Plan has not meet harvest, and consequently funding goals;

children and grandchildren have same opportunities. Pollution is main barrier, specifically CO2 poll. Econ cost of CO2 \$ 10K per pers per year. Consider economic cost of pollution.

AmeriCorps volunteers provide workforce, trail groups for restoration projects. Land Trusts provide acquisition power

important to get user input into which roads to keep and which roads to close; important to include recreation users in the conservation agenda/AGO initiative;

need to start young with children to get them outdoors. Local opportunities important to make that possible and multiple experiences for adults and youth.

program bringing kids from the cities to work on a ranch; most powerful thing for city kids was the stars/night sky/milky way – need programs for urban youth to experience things like night sky

Discussion Question 1

Seattle, WA

(cont.)

Impressed with process of stakeholder partners working in watersheds (agencies, groups, organizations, etc). Funding is needed. Need to tweak NCRS funding to make it more available to local groups.

from Bellevue: problem with roads that are not maintained; impact streams

many years active in Mountaineers and other groups; problems gaining access because gates are now closed on forest roads, example of gate access to Alpine Lakes Wilderness Area, Middle Fork Snoqualmie Road, formerly open; would cost nothing to unlock the gates; promote LNT; access needed to encourage and promote use; people now crowded into fewer areas

bring the younger generations into the woods. Green City Partnerships. Start where they are and build a portal or bridge through open space. Bring kids and adults to care about their local environment. This will spread to the larger landscape

Need managers for public lands. Assistance of Friends groups are critical to running education programs. When funding for Friends groups dries up, programs and opps are lost also.

LWCF works well. Recreation and Trails program works well to encourage volunteerism and local funds

partnerships to target grants, use science and get land managers on the ground with us. Provide science perspective, get everyone on the same page so that limited funding is spent effectively

National Park Service, USFS, competition, population expanding – Feds need to get on board and have a campaign about how the natural resources are under pressure. Have a policy that addresses this

Nisqually NWR and education program – works to have a strong volunteer program to engage the public; they can lead tours, activities on weekends; also free/inexpensive programs for families/kids on weekends that can also be run by volunteers

from Seattle: resent the NW Forest Pass; eliminate it; nickel and diming people

Lack of time is barrier for people connecting to outdoors. Too many other time drains (school, work, etc). Make sure plenty of family friendly easy activities to get started. More public transportation to outdoor areas.

Discussion Question 1

Seattle, WA

(cont.)

work with various nonprofits working on sustainable agriculture; looking at the overlap between natural places and agriculture that supports nature – ecological approach to farming; conservation reserve program with USDA has been one of few programs in USDA that really applies to farmers trying to do something sustainable; Farming with the Environment profiles creative farms and ranches around the country; in WA state, also Beefing up the Palouse could be a model program, focusing on commodity meat growing and ranchers looking at natural grazing systems and restoring native grasslands on Palouse while also providing a farming opportunity

Buffalo soldiers of Seattle; group struggling to maintain public attention but has been taking kids outdoors and realized the power of making things relevant to the kids – give them an experience; most powerful tool has been the horse with kids – military history story and story of first secretary of DOI was African American makes the story relevant to young kids – connecting with animals and making it relevant to kids – need to get the right way to spark kids attention

collaboration works in conservation. Government needs to be more effective at partnerships and crossing boundaries. Need to help leverage efforts more effectively

the younger people are to get connected to the outdoors, the better. Has “adopt a highway” worked in parks? If so, this is a great way to get adults involved. A multi-stakeholder approach. We must do this for our kids but do not lose the adults. People are more likely to take care of what they love

communicating to young people that opp. Exist. Grants and funds go unused at times., Need for communication and how to communicate to less fortunate people. Y Guides (K-3) is an opportunity

with groups and agencies for planned trail systems. Collaboration of volunteers working with DNR helps create places to play for everyone.

as society becomes increasingly urban, consider green spaces in urban environment, roof top garden, recognize plants, enhance “green” urban environment

Project Learning Tree. Creating partnerships with school districts really works; public instruction in environmental sustainability. Any time you can support these programs with funding is powerful

Allowing private land trust to hold easements and perform monitoring and stewardship. Allow Legacy easements to be held by land trusts rather than state agencies. Use easements where fee acquisition has traditionally been used to decrease costs.

87% chance of fishing on a regular basis whether new at fishing or avid fisherman. To bring new people fishing. Model this program. Word of mouth sales. Good example of success

Girl scouts, conservation message. Advise working with children from a very early age

Discussion Question 1

Seattle, WA

(cont.)

Urban and community forestry provides great benefits to connect urban people with their every day life

Methow Valley Classroom in Bloom program well supported – could be widely adopted

has had success in completing conservation efforts begun many years ago. Completed Wild Sky Wilderness. Protected second growth forest. Working on expanding Alpine Lakes wilderness area. Hoping to move on to North Cascades. Relentlessly framing the issue. Having Congressional delegation that gets it. Spreading message these are works in progress that need to be finished. Setting the goal.

closure of wilderness to bicycles impacting opportunities; multiple access passes from multiple federal and state agencies expensive and aggravating/not user friendly;

neighborhood park has become a teacher; park doesn't operate by itself without a city government; hard to work with city government; mayor, city council, park staff; public trust and even a local park, citizens have expectations for how they can recreate; quality of life and neighborhood parks are really important; government plays a role, but to understand how it works is difficult

Rainier Valley is one of the most diverse in the US. This might be a good place to start.

engage school children. Earth corps. Adjacent to open space area, kids worked activities into science curriculum such as reduce invasive plants, etc. Required reading – Last Child in the Woods. A truck load of dirt costs the same as a video game – one suggestion that help illustrate this. Find influential teachers

increasing scientific literacy and natural history knowledge works. Empower local planners with biodiversity knowledge to do job

healthy partnerships between land trusts, tribes, local governments very effective

Facilitate. making it happen. Find groups of kids who have never been outdoors and get them there. Partnerships can be replicated. Partnerships with land managing agencies is key to helping it happen.

Passages Northwest, inspiring courage and leadership in girls. Very difficult obtaining permits that provide access to public/federal lands/forests; labor intensive reporting; very pleased to see the AGO initiative: challenge to White House, invest in youth education programs that teach youth how to care for the

Discussion Question 1

Seattle, WA

(cont.)

partnerships that allow public agencies to work well. Use those partnerships that get best out of each partner.

Nisqually River Council model for collaboration. Works totally voluntary, non-regulatory approach. Find common ground. Communicate. Find human element. Education program that establishes connections early in kids lives. Finding connections with community and people on the ground. Focus on positive things everyone agrees on. People in power are tired of being sued and resisted; they like people to come in with unified voice. Organizing around watershed is powerful. Having Nisqually Tribe as a partner and leader is also powerful.

juniors and seniors, 3 programs available in Seattle. They are adding sustainability to the curriculum. The normal school curriculum has been altered, and these themes are added to the normal curriculum. These kids graduate with higher GPAs and graduate from college. Part of Seattle Schools technical programs. Sustainability or conservation academies should be considered. Develop scholastic models based on national academies based on conservation

Emphasize match in agreements to get long term investment

Public-Private partnerships are effective for funding streams and capitalizing on opportunities.

grassroots organizing to expand MORA, and info about carbon river corridor; being able to go out and do grassroots organizing has inspired

Connecting inner-city youth to natural environment. Employing youth for summer jobs provides wages and work experience, and changes attitudes. Encourage opportunities for underserved youth to become attached to public lands. Phased approach: 1) expose youth to working outdoors; 2) introduce job opportunities; 3) provide educational requirements for achieving jobs

Ranger programs are useful, but declining. Hands on volunteer work such as tree planting is effective for all ages. Just getting people out on the ground is helpful.

Volunteer trail mntce – WTA (7-70 ages) connects people to outdoors. Finding Urban Nature (Audubon) nature in the play ground and school yard.

Passport in Time – opportunity to be hands on with Archaeology and appreciate land more

Expertise in community to help w/schools. Friday Harbor program – clam project allows students to learn and work with professionals. Also allows them to be part of team in real world setting.

Landscape level thinking – private conservation groups are getting much better at this and agencies could learn from this.

Discussion Question 1

Seattle, WA

(cont.)

Seattle school partnership – Olympic peninsula learning experience; balance connecting students w/nat resources, fun stuff and learning; new kids learning this 1st time. Science class walks to park and works on science project one day a week also did volunteer trail building.

Landscape level (city) successes connecting community.

Endorsement of Saul's point about partnerships. Need to work in sustainable mode; alignment of strategic things (youth initiative, but FS permit system does not align)

Clean ups getting youth outside, but fed permit system does not work.

Diff kids have diff skills – encourage fed gov to support expanding school programs that look at teaching kids diff.

Some schools have intern partnerships w/businesses and nonprofits – encourage/expand this. Expand students boundaries thru partnerships; go beyond local areas; have HS students lead elemn students in enviro projects.

Have to get people from 7-70 out.

Grants to local cities for enviro projects or natural resource/parks projects.

Incentives – free camping, free pass to park, pass to Disneyland,

Volunteerism with 'friends of' groups works. Don't need to wait for agency programs or funding.

Eco-system based land management works

Having private non-profits partner with agencies works (e.g., State Parks and Seattle City Parks). Builds trust among stakeholders. Agencies benefit.

Permitting access – Olympic NP has good permit system. Low beauracracy and protects/manages backcountry. Other agencies could replicate their system.

Sound Experience in Port Townsend operates adventures with sailing on Puget Sound directed towards young people. Learn about maritime history on historic landmark.

Discussion Question 1

Seattle, WA

(cont.)

City parks

Walking around town

Getting food/eating outside

Football field

Parades

BBQ

Festivals

Basketball

Alki Beach

Hiking

Biking

Coulon Beach

Jogging

Kayaking

Camping

Discussion Question 1

Seattle, WA

(cont.)

Soccer

Jobs

Football camps

Forest restoration

Frisbee

Sleeping

Reading

Tanning

Gardening

Rock climbing

Family reunion

Birthday parties

Wild Waves

Fishing

Boats

Discussion Question 1

Seattle, WA

(cont.)

Drive in theater

Mount Rainier

Games

Hiking

Snowshoeing

Golf

Seattle Center

Volleyball

Long boarding

The zoo

Swimming

Bird watching

Pike Place Market

Arboretum

Don't litter

Discussion Question 1

Seattle, WA

(cont.)

Recycle

Buy in bulk

Student Conservation Association (SCA)

Buy second hand clothes

Plant trees

Compost

Take the bus

Carpool

Don't waste electricity/water

Ride a bike instead of driving a car

Unplug electronics when you're not using them

Switch to compact fluorescent bulbs

Solar, wind power

Eat local

Maintain natural habitat for animals

Discussion Question 1

Seattle, WA

(cont.)

Don't build dams

Pull out invasive species

Dirty, not pretty

Parks aren't taken care of

Technology, computers, phones, texting

Transportation

No games, nothing to do

Cold, weather

Homework

Unsafe - Lack of knowledge to be safe, safety education

Crime in parks = creepy people, drug dealing, drug using, robbery

Lacking tools to be active (i.e. no camping gear, no kayak)

Lack of people to go with you

Health, allergies

No social interaction like there is online, no people to meet

Discussion Question 1

Seattle, WA

(cont.)

Everything on the list above, but the opposite

Group of positive youth, peers leading activities & programs (i.e. youth camping groups)

Youth teaching youth outdoor skills

Increase funding for parks and programs that get youth into the outdoors – this year community programs got cut

Don't close parks

Stop cutting down trees

Support partnerships between federal & state agencies & non-profit groups that help groups get into the national parks and share curricula and other resources

Maintain trails, better upkeep, remodel

Increase access – public transportation to parks

Include outdoor education in school curricula

Pick up trash

More activities to do outside (i.e. more basketball courts to reduce crowding, more equipment to go around like basketballs)

Support community events (i.e. basketball tournaments, community BBQ's, parades)

Year round sports instead of just having them for a season

Have more outdoor jobs & access - how to get them

Discussion Question 1

Seattle, WA

(cont.)

More outdoor activities in schools

There should be recess middle school and high school

Access to outdoor equipment (footballs, basketballs, tents, kayaks)

Increase awareness about problems so that community can help get it fixed faster

More community center funding

Tried to provide avalanche training in USFS lands but could not obtain permits to do so. Snowparks are grossly underfunded, everyone is using the same relatively small areas.

does a great job, needs more funding

Looking at innovative ways to bring money for conservation. Transfer of development rights to conserve working lands by giving development rights to builders in urban areas.

helping with grants, volunteer work parties, setup training for users

Youth clubs are a good way to involve youth in long term projects. Working with the same group for several years and having a strong leader

Education & outreach services, working with landowners, providing classes – worked well, but have lost funding

Landscape level conservation with focus on protecting pristine lands. Cascade agenda successful. Private-public partnerships successful for connecting military families to outdoors.

Tenacity in partnerships. Building trust levels with FS to accomplish work to standard. Champions in the agencies

Global warming, increased fire risk on east side of Cascades-what will we do to mitigate effects?, Address climate change locally

___: individual users have a history of volunteering and helping; engage them in helping; not always a question of money.

Discussion Question 1

Seattle, WA

(cont.)

Basketball

Beach

Skateboarding

Woods/camping

Fishing

Mountain biking

Snow boarding

Skateboarding

Recycling

Composting

Plant trees

Clean around the schools and community centers

Community service

Make sure no gun shooting around

Stop gun violence/ gangs

Discussion Question 1

Seattle, WA

(cont.)

Give to parks (dots=6)

Program with education [incentives] (dots=4)

Make parks more fun

More activities

Make the parks look better (dots=6)

Paid to work at the parks (dots=3)

Make parks looks better

Transportation (dots=4)

Obama come and tell them to go to parks (dots=2)

Provide opportunities for kids to get out into woods with parents and connect with nature. Getting families out and have fun in the outdoors makes a huge difference if it is accessible, outdoors, and fun

Volunteer stewardship provides a great savings, and a great way for young people and others to get out into the environment

Dog friendly

Incentivizing land stewardship

Address diversity in marketing outdoors

Discussion Question 1

Seattle, WA

(cont.)

Incentivizing tax credits

Restore rivers, remove dams

Pay a stipend to help disadvantaged youth and get them into the outdoor

Junior Ranger program used by NPS

Incremental training programs for youth

Connecting preservation

Listening to First Nations and tribal communities

Diversity of recreation activities

Access info

Hands-on experiences in education – colleges teaming with local school (stream adoption, etc.) – should require in curriculum at early age

Collaboration between groups – Rainier seeking volunteer help from WTA, SCA, NPCA after floods – finding commonalities

Government agencies acting as resource facilitators to help volunteers with their work

Interagency collaboration – more cost effective and efficient tool to solving conservation challenges

Localizing efforts – collaborating with federal & local agencies

State standards requiring experiential education – but needs improvement

Discussion Question 1

Seattle, WA

(cont.)

Urban students in NYC maintaining parks/gardens – benefit from their own work, excites kids

Leadership is willing to invest in relationships, spend time to work and talk about addressing shared concerns

Working on small projects to accomplish, be proud of and grow

Celebrate successes – lets others know what is successful

Making outdoor experiences fun for children so they want to be outside – need new ways to connect them

Special accommodation for youth & therapeutic riding

How do we merge this with existing programs such as no child left indoors

Break the fear barrier. Help those who can not get to a hiking trail

Engage all recreational groups in volunteer efforts for trail maintenance, etc

Student run – peer program – Garfield HS POST – 20 trips per year. brought diverse groups of kids into the wilderness. Education – effectively connecting to the out of doors. Access to rock climbing. Hands on activities rather than instruction in the classroom. Mentoring programs are constantly part of budget cuts

Partnerships with groups such as REI and outdoor recreational companies

Rx Play – doctor prescribes outdoor recreation specifically target obese children and ensure they have access

We can not underplay the importance of National Park system. We are fortunate to have some in our back yard. The Feds have a key role in NPS – this is a resource that we can use, be vry aware of

Bring more green spaces to urban areas. Emphasize urban parks – to demonstrate ecological principles

Discussion Question 1

Seattle, WA

(cont.)

Beaches

Discovery Park (parks)

Lakes

Neighborhood

North Cascades National Park (mountains, lakes, rivers)

Gold Creek Pond

Basketball court

Pools

Hiking

BBQ

Sailing

Kayaking/Canoeing

Remove invasive plants

Pick up trash

Make duck boxes

Discussion Question 1

Seattle, WA

(cont.)

Buy local

Recycle

Plant trees

Public transportation/carpool/walk/bike

Use less water

Reuse water bottle

Compost

City parks-T.T Minor, Miller Community Center, Garfield Community Center

Sports-softball, swimming

National Parks-Mt. Rainier

Bike/walk/running paths

Greenlake

Downtown

Camping

Madrona Beach

Discussion Question 1

Seattle, WA

(cont.)

University Plazas

Late Night at Greenlake

Coulan Beach

BBQ/Picnics

Concerts

Fireworks

Party

Rock Climbing

Farming/Gardening

Boating

The Bite of Seattle

Recycle/grocery bags

Canteens/re-usable water bottles

Take the bus

Carpool

Discussion Question 1

Seattle, WA

(cont.)

Education

Using energy efficient lighting/appliances

Pick up litter

Ride your bike

Waste minimization

Eco-friendly gardening

Plant trees

Walk

Clean up after your animals

Ride the light rail

Joining the SCA (student conservation association)

Politics (voting)

Provide more outdoor job opportunities

Make service learning requirements for graduation strictly environmental ones

Have a clean environment

Discussion Question 1

Seattle, WA

(cont.)

Provide H.S. classes about environment

Create smaller groups to help environ.

Move events in parks

More school field trips

More diverse leaders in national parks

Build more parks

Strong partnership with FS, DNR staff. Volunteering opportunities to maintain trail systems.

Partnerships are successful if there is a specific, focused goal with committed parties. Partners also bring diverse skill sets to the table.

Professionalism of park rangers are great for engaging public

park

lake

mall

beach

fishing

basketball court

Discussion Question 1

Seattle, WA

(cont.)

football

walks

biking

hiking

camping

boating

swimming

kayaking

BBQ

tennis

golfing

soccer

bowling

backyard

rock climbing

Discussion Question 1

Seattle, WA

(cont.)

water park

dog park

workout

Woodland Park Zoo

backpacking

mountain biking

snowboarding

Seattle Center

dancing in the street

rollerblading

paintball

pick up trash

compost

recycle

use environmentally safe products

Discussion Question 1

Seattle, WA

(cont.)

use public transportation

limit what I buy

biking

dispose of garbage properly

use cloth instead of paper towels

turn off lights when not being used

gardening

remove invasive plants

open window instead of A/C

grow trees

walk to store

save on gas

check car for low emissions

help animals with home

use less paper

Discussion Question 1

Seattle, WA

(cont.)

use water filtration system instead of bottled

buy local

carpool

bike lanes are narrow

video games

punishment

weather

internet

TV

transportation

lack of equipment

safety

not mainstream

lazy

chores

Discussion Question 1

Seattle, WA

(cont.)

lack of experience

school

lack of leadership, direction

homework, studying

make it part of the school curriculum

make students know how they impact the environment and how it impacts us

fund organizations that support youth engagement

create more jobs between high school and college

promote use of local nontoxic products

work study for college

give jobs

advertisement campaigns

create free camps in national parks

add funding to alternative energy

Parks- city parks (Discovery, Alki, Golden gardens, SAM sculpture park)

Discussion Question 1

Seattle, WA

(cont.)

Beaches-City Parks (Discovery, Golden Gardens)

Nearby Wilderness- Steven pass, Snoqualmie Falls, San Juans, Mt. Rainier, North Cascades, Olympic

City Areas- Seattle center, community centers, greenlake, waterfront, walk around the neighborhood, backyard.

Outdoor sports- Basketball and tennis courts, running in city streets, bike trails (Burke-Gilman Trail)

Don't litter, Clean up public spaces

Volunteer (restoration and conservation projects)

Use water responsibly- conserve turn off the faucet, don't water grass

Became a vegetarian

Recycle, compost

Ride bike, longboard, walk, use public transit instead of driving

Bring own bag to grocery store

Plant trees and other plants, vegetables

use gas efficient car and drive in an efficient way

leave nature and wildlife alone- don't feed animals or pick plants

Shop secondhand, donate old belongings, instead of throwing them away

Discussion Question 1

Seattle, WA

(cont.)

Carpool

More events in parks-increase awareness and appeal to kids

Make it easier to get to popular events

make sure programs that get kids outside are well-funded, especially in schools

Increase awareness so kids know that opportunities exist-advertise to kids and families, get them involved in getting other kids out

More funding to parks in general-must be a priority

Create programs that appeal to students, like activities, sports, community events, funthing

Subsidize student admission the outdoor places, like zoos and parks, and outdoor activities,

Create incentive for volunteering to get kids out and involved-even just a t-shirt

Utilize the way kids communicate-advertise and emphasize the importance of getting outside on the internet, on TV, in schools.

Put wifi in parks- draw kids in

Find a way to provide equipment necessary for park enjoyment-provide to public for free (people don't have supplies to play at the beach or bikes for bike parks)

Create playground equivalents for older youth-rock climbing, bike parks, skate parks

Keep parks safe for kids

Make it easier to organize large, fun events like capture the flag, kickball nerf gun fights

Discussion Question 1

Seattle, WA

(cont.)

More boating and fishing opportunities; water parks in general- We don't have any outdoor water access

More programs to get kids out to nearby wilderness

Create interesting parks with cool art and design appeal to kids

More community farms and gardens where people could come work and then take food to connect them to the environment and teach nutrition skills

Free wi-fi in parks

More unstructured opportunities/activities (rock climbing, canoeing, frisbee golf, fishing, kayaking, rafting, mountain biking, etc)

Checkout or rental equipment in parks

the beach

city park

national parks

greenlake park

forest service trails

skateboard park

hiking

movies

Discussion Question 1

Seattle, WA

(cont.)

sport fields

downtown Seattle

the mall

parties

coffee shops

fast food

Pike Place market

swimming

Alki beach/park

picnics/bbq

biking

volunteer

avoid littering

pick up garbage

recycle/composting

Discussion Question 1

Seattle, WA

(cont.)

use reusable bags/water bottles

conserve energy

fundraising

buy local food

increase employment opportunities with organizations dedicated to the outdoors and increase awareness

advertise recreational areas

fund environmental groups

make env. Education programs mandatory

fund field trips to outdoor locations

provide options for all students to go on field trips

highlight benefits of getting into the outdoors

presidential organizations to improve and build outdoor resources. This will also create jobs

lately programs at the MBS district offices have been working closely with communities. Opportunities for the community to engage their local agency staff. Better relationships at the local level.

Let locals manage their land

Discussion Question 1

Seattle, WA

(cont.)

Want jobs on a local level

Lives on Columbia River

Concerns about what happens in NHAs

Lost logging, fishing—no jobs left, do NHAs interfere?

Clean energy isn't always efficient, ? Where can we get information to know how to make that work?

Big problems with water in our WA state rivers, especially on east side of state

ESA has taken hold of state in good and bad ways

Economic opportunities for fishing in small communities is important

Get fish off ESA lists to get sustainable populations

On local efforts: It's also non-profits, conservation districts

In some parts, government is a bad name

Making it local makes it more appealing to citizens

Continue support for federal government to keep funding going

Wildlife recreation coalition started by Republican and Democrat governors, ? Good model for other states, ? Citizen led process

Seeing something bi-partisan would be hopeful

Discussion Question 1

Seattle, WA

(cont.)

Archaeological excavation helps—it gets people involved including adults and kids, o Private property owner herself, supports sharing the land

education is talked about being important, but doesn't get funded as a priority.

Environmental Ed. Programs—are they being able to pay?

Where is Dept. of Education in this discussion?

Education aspect: kids have better connection when they're introduced young

Success in Denver and Boulder with accessibility, • Jump on a bus and get to the outdoors, • That infrastructure should be replicated, • Don't need a car or mode of getting there

Volunteer stewardship—it works, o Youth involved, o Issue sometimes: land manager to help guide

Conservation needs to start young

She graduated in 2003, and it was never part of the curriculum

Youth want to do something about conservation, but don't know how or what

Start in public schools young

incorporate science based, environmental activism, conservation experiences into classroom curriculum. Design ways people can recreate in their communities who cannot or do not want to drive to recreate.

Product of going to outdoor in school in Southern California

Environmental Education programs are important, even if it's just in the neighborhood

Discussion Question 1

Seattle, WA

(cont.)

Funding issues

Property owner, ? Concerned with impact of gov and NHAs may have on her property, ? Is government interfering with her private rights and having too much control over how she uses her property—lives on Columbia River

fully fund Land and Water Conservation Fund— It works. It's 17 Billion in arrears since inception in the 60's. Nature Conservancy in OR land purchasing

Save America's Treasures Program. Provides funding for preserving historic properties, conserving resources, employs more people on a dollar for dollar basis.

Restore LWCF funding, National Park Service system works and is a great model.

Washington Trails Assoc. has an amazing trail database that allows anybody to find trails accessible to them in their community. Model example that helps me, my students and other people access trails and get involved in conservation efforts. The Mountaineers are another example who engage youth.

King County Eco-Net, Puget Sound Partnership, tying funding to the collaborative processes drives people to work together more effectively.

No Child Left Inside initiative has helped to get kids outside. Local learning centers!

Miles of lights in LA means millions of people

Drastic discrepancy between city people and ability to travel to the preserved lands

We need to build connective trails in the inner-city

Issue with people who live on critical lands and want to use land for profit—how do we overcome this thinking

Cons. NW early consultation with tribes, and coordination between agencies and landowners for collaboration.

Helping in the park creates a more profound connection with the outdoors. It creates a sense of stewardship. Need to enhance and encourage volunteerism.

Discussion Question 1

Seattle, WA

(cont.)

landscape project – experience in bringing together, plan the process. Strong leadership, Reaching out to stakeholders, Identify challenges and opportunities, communicative clearly logical projection

The magic of being outdoors. Learning in outdoor environments goes beyond learning about the outdoors. Get kids engaged and find new ways to make that happen.

Water issues—how do we manage water in Region 10?

Sports and recreation also means jobs

Infrastructure to support hatchery fish

let those who pay manage the funding. Allow user groups to be more active in the way fees are spent locally.

Save the Salmon Weekend, ? On Quinault River, salmon get trapped in pools and die, ? Concern with problems facing wild salmon, ? Go to pools and relocate salmon into running areas of the river, ? Not allowed to do that in the national park, so they did it in state waters instead, ? Families and children excited to participate • “When is my salmon coming back?”—little girl

Delighted with commitment that Aramark has made to preservation

Works on Olympic Peninsula doing variety of environmental activities, ? Elk festivals, Mushroom festivals, ? Tribal event , all backed by Aramark

Need corporate buyout on funding outdoor activities

Access to grants, ? Can’t fund programs they want to do without grants, ? Applications are complicated, time-consuming, ? Have smaller grants that are more streamlined for smaller programs

Kesner Homestead Restoration, ? Grants don’t apply to corporations, only non-profits, ? Potential of homestead for school groups, etc. —only remaining one in national forest

Education programs don’t have to happen at school but schools can be a segue to outdoor recreation for youth.

Opportunities for environmental education

Discussion Question 1

Seattle, WA

(cont.)

Worked in Nisqually Wildlife Refuge

Discussions with children, ? Without emotional connection to land, decisions weren't going to be made for the land, ? Decisions based more on own enjoyment, ? As they had more ties to the land, more understanding, the whole attitude expanded about what's important

Need to support more opportunities for kids

Collaboration of school districts with recreation agencies. Afterschool programs for K-12 focusing on environmental education. Family camps in the parks. More time spent making personal connections.

What works is private property ownership where owners are educated about environmental issues and able to be better stewards of their land

Areas in our nation of tragedy of the commons with waterways and public lands

See where private ownership is working with stewardship—PERC.org in Bozeman, MO

Private property is what made this nation wealthy—facing tough economic times, so we have to find ways to do more with less

Elwha salmon recovery—only federal government could have done it

Federal participation needs to be there—it can't just be local

Last year, national parks visits almost doubled, ? Sound investments for local economies, ? Counties with nat'l parks in WA state have lower unemployment

Government can do more to support clean energy, drive these industries

Weekly trips to local parks sponsored by schools or recreation agencies. Need to solve the problem of transportation, but if the kids can get there it is fantastic.

Observe federal-local governments in this up close

Discussion Question 1

Seattle, WA

(cont.)

Served on advisory board to issue grants

Challenge for fed. Government: Coordinating and speaking with one mind, one voice

Disheartened when EPA greenlighted another mountain top removal this week in W. VA

Good strategy for fed gov is to have better grant or revenue sharing program, and pushing implementation to state and local governments.

Grants for acquisition and local development

Grants for maintenance

Federal lands generally inaccessible to general population

State and local parks are easier for people to get to and enjoy

Underinvestment is an issue

Local governments more responsive to citizens

Better participation in decision-making

Better volunteer response—seeing some great volunteering in his community

Area between Eastlake and Capitol Hill under I-5 is mountain bike stunt park with stunts and trails, also another one in suburbs

More coordinated response to trail usage issues

Bottomline: Get grant money to state and local governments for the parks

Discussion Question 1

Seattle, WA

(cont.)

Use of private funds for adult education and other

putting solutions back into local hands

Partnerships are important. They are what works and need to be given a higher priority. Agency staff needs greater latitude and support to form the partnerships that the public wants. More money invested in partnerships = more relationships = more work getting done. Recent partnerships have demonstrated that people with different interests can work together. Take Pride in America authority is a good example of how agencies can work with the community.

Many youth parents have to work and their parents cannot provide recreation activities. Use schools as an outlet to get more kids onto public lands. Partnerships with schools work.

Citizen science works. Audubon's program is a good example. Engaging youth in citizen science encourages conservation practices. Public ROW in Europe is a model we could learn from.

Bring back Youth Conservation Corps.

Paying young people to do conservation work. This initial incentive can be just enough to get them hooked.

Add campaign – media driven society – see themselves in the park (Coming soon!!!!)

- Partnering, networking, collaboration - raise pollution tax above 5% - use for damages when funds weren't there.

Partnerships – can help connect people to the woods – stewardship is happening

Involve local business communities – local organizations, clubs, etc.

- Money

Youth corps groups - and what other gateway opportunities are available or technology to get kids out.

Honor your volunteers – give thought of how to use effectively

Discussion Question 1

Seattle, WA

(cont.)

Get students out in the land. Having the experience in nature is what changes people.

Invasive weed pulling and stewardship in the parks is a great way to get involved.

Washington State has learning standards focused on sustainability, the environment and civic engagement. The standards are integrated into core content. This model should be replicated across the nation.

Using off road vehicles as another experience to get outdoors.

Boy Scouts is 100 years old and they have done more to get kids outdoors than any other organization. We must support organizations like this regardless of politics.

Service hour requirements for graduation.

Jobs for working in the outdoors for youth.

National Wildlife Federation: Outdoor Alliance for Kids

Sierra Club – H2O Sentinels Program – Water Gardens

Conservation Easements to protect working lands

State Citizen Committees to look at applications for projects

Easements on part of the parcel only so the landowner stays actively engaged in the land management – to keep viability of working lands. No total parcel acquisition.

NPCA – working to make Mt St Helens into National Park

Cultural Resources, Section 106, NHPA – ensuring agencies are engaged in cultural resource conservation.

Discussion Question 1

Seattle, WA

(cont.)

Community Service hours for high school graduation, gets youth into community and outdoors. Need more program funding. E.g. Seattle Inner City.

Recreation users too restricted on public lands. Heard that the new administration may restrict or prohibit people's access to public lands.

Mountains to Sound Greenway.

Center for Wooden Boats in Puget Sound

Wilderness Areas, National Parks – purpose includes conservation, environmental protection. Need to look at expanding these areas while also encouraging recreation.

Mountaineers Club – volunteer supported, outdoor recreation courses, education, connecting people to the outdoors.

North Cascades Institute (North Cascades National Park)

World Wildlife Fund – Missouri Breaks area - bison protection

U.S. Fish & Wildlife: Wildlife Corridors Program – scattered among various legislation, hard to track and follow or know what is intended.

Sierra Club – Cascade Snohomish, Earth Day – tree planting on Tulalip Reservation, protecting headwaters, top ten carbon storing forests found here in the Pacific NW.

Partnerships – agencies and tribes

Restoring lands impacted by development – private and public partnership, conservation incentives

Salmon Recovery through watershed-based groups, bottom-up approach

Need more state-run programs, instead of Federal based in Wash. D.C.

No more expansion of federal parks, need to maintain what we already have

Discussion Question 1

Seattle, WA

(cont.)

Focus on youth, the future of our outdoors/conservation

Develop opportunities for communities who have not had experience or access to outdoors

Urban youth need opportunities to join organizations such as Campfire Girls, Boy Scouts to connect to outdoors

Get feedback from rural communities

Continue conservation ethic

Free gas at national parks

Ducks Unlimited – conservations program committee, CRP program

Discussion Question 1

Spokane, WA

The Department is responsible for administering the United States' trust obligations toward tribal nations. These obligations are rooted in the hundreds of treaties executed between the United States and sovereign tribal nations. Each of those treaties acknowledged the importance of lands to tribal nations, and secured perpetual rights of Indians to continue to use reserved and non-reserved lands for cultural and spiritual purposes, as well as for hunting, fishing, and gathering.

Today, the Department of the Interior oversees more than 55 million acres of land that is held in trust by the United States for Indian tribes and individual Indians. These lands constitute "Indian Country" -- the homelands for 565 of federally recognized tribal nations and their citizens. Tribal nations use these, and other public lands, to practice their religions and carry-forward their culture. They also use these lands to exercise treaty-secured hunting and fishing rights. Tribal nations are therefore deeply invested in the conservation and preservation of natural and cultural resources.

The Department is poised to partner with tribal nations to protect vital natural and cultural resources through the America's Great Outdoors Initiative. This partnership is consistent with the longstanding nation-to-nation relationship shared between the United States and each Indian tribe.

President Obama acknowledged the importance of this relationship when he signed the November 5, 2009 Memorandum for the Heads of Executive Departments and Agencies on Tribal Consultation. That Memorandum requires federal agencies to "[engage] in regular and meaningful consultation and collaboration with tribal officials in the development of Federal policies that have tribal implications.

Consistent with the President's directive, senior members of the President's administration met with tribal leaders and Indian Country youth on three occasions to learn about and discuss the unique issues facing Indian Country, in relation to the America's Great Outdoors Initiative. In addition, tribal leaders participated in numerous public listening sessions across the country.

Tribal participation in this initiative will be based upon the President's directive of federal-tribal collaboration, and will draw upon the experience and expertise of tribal citizens and tribal organizations to protect sacred natural and cultural resources.

Federal collaboration with tribal nations in the America's Great Outdoors Initiative will be guided by the following core principles:

Consultation and Collaboration: The President's November 5, 2009 Executive Memorandum, which is rooted in the federal government's trust relationship with tribal nations, mandates federal consultation and collaboration with tribal nations prior to undertaking actions that impact Indian Country. Tribal nations should drive the America's Great Outdoors agenda, where the Initiative impacts tribal cultural and natural resources.

Discussion Question 1

Spokane, WA

(cont.)

Self-Determination: United States policy, with respect to Indian tribes, recognizes that tribal resources are best managed by Indian tribes and Indian people. This Initiative should be based upon this policy of self-determination, and should seek to maximize tribal control over cultural and natural resources important to tribal nations.

Access and Consolidation: The United States should seek to secure and restore access for Indian tribes, and their members, to areas with important cultural and natural resources. Federal protection in this area is paramount where Indian tribes have reserved such resources under a treaty with the United States.

Where practicable, federal agencies should aide tribes in the acquisition of cultural resources and culturally significant sites, as well as the consolidation of existing tribal land-bases. This principle is consistent with the overriding principle of tribal self-determination.

Management: Where tribal acquisition of such resources is not feasible or practicable, agencies should seek to ensure that relevant tribal agencies and intertribal organizations have an opportunity to participate in the management of such resources.

Successful stewardship of the land requires a comprehensive strategy. Ecosystems rarely align perfectly with property boundaries on a map.

Land consolidation and elimination of checkerboard jurisdiction will save tribes millions of dollars in costs associated with determining jurisdiction issues;

An effort to consolidate tribal land bases will save the federal government billions of dollars over the long-term;

Elimination of checkerboard jurisdiction will allow tribal nations to implement comprehensive land use plans and ensure the protection of ecosystems on a "landscape" scale.

Checkerboard and fractionated tribal lands are problems that have vexed the United States and Indian tribes for decades. This objective will require agencies, particularly the Department of the Interior, to work closely with Congress to ensure adequate funds are appropriated for land consolidation. The Department of the Interior will also work closely with tribes to expedite the process of acquiring tribally-owned fee lands within existing reservations in trust for the benefit of tribes.

As one tribal leader noted during a dialogue between senior federal officials and tribal leaders, "[for Indian Country] natural resources are cultural resources." Whether wild rice and buffalo, burial grounds, or sacred mountains, many things and places deemed "natural resources" in the public lexicon hold significant cultural and spiritual value for Indian Country.

The protection of tribal cultural resources is a key component of the United States' trust obligation toward tribal nations.

Discussion Question 1

Spokane, WA

(cont.)

Consistent with our nation-to-nation relationship, tribal nations should exercise control over the management of cultural resources to the greatest extent possible. Stemming from a deep-rooted understanding of the significance of these resources, tribal nations are best-positioned to ensure their preservation and protection.

Lastly, a number of tribal leaders educated federal officials on the importance of tribal languages to efforts to protect natural and cultural resources during the federal-tribal dialogue sessions on the America's Great Outdoors Initiative. Place-names, cultural significance, and resource management practices are best articulated in tribal communities through tribal languages. Language is important to carry-forward longstanding teachings, and to enhance the self-esteem of tribal youth in order to engage them in efforts to connect to the outdoors and protect cultural and natural resources.

3. Tribal management of federal lands

Our nation-to-nation relationship with Indian tribes requires acknowledging the value that tribes can bring to the relationship.

There are a number of existing federal programs, and collaborative partnerships involving tribes and tribal organizations, that would support tribal participation in the America's Great Outdoors Initiative.

The Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) was established in 1965 to secure access to outdoor recreation and to strengthen the health and vitality of U.S. citizens. Since then, LWCF has been the principal fund that federal agencies use to acquire land for outdoor recreation, and to date it has protected millions of acres for future Americans. The Secretary of the Interior has discretionary authority over a large portion of the LWCF, and could potentially allocate funding to tribal governments to acquire land for outdoor recreation in and near tribal communities.

The Indian Land Consolidation Program was created to acquire as many fractionated interests as economically feasible, and to consolidate these land interests into tribal ownership. This is done to enable better tribal utilization and management, and to promote and enhance tribal self-determination, economic, social, and cultural development needs while reducing government administrative costs.

The Tribal Forest Protection Act of 2004 (TFPA) provides a framework for beginning this component of the TTL Initiative. Under the TFPA, tribes may enter into contracts and agreements with the Forest Service (FS) or BLM to reduce fire threats from on Federal lands adjacent to tribal trust lands and Indian communities. Several tribes, including the White Mountain Apache Tribe and Hoopa Valley Tribe, have already entered into agreements under the TFPA.

Discussion Question 1

Spokane, WA

(cont.)

The Department of the Interior Fee-to-Trust Initiative involves the use of existing authority, under which the Department is seeking to expedite tribal applications for the United States to acquire land in trust on behalf of tribes. Secretary of the Interior Ken Salazar issued an internal directive on June 18, 2010 that the Department should "diligently and expeditiously exercise its responsibility and move forward with land into trust decisions." This initiative would complement the America's Great Outdoors Initiative by facilitating the consolidation of tribal landholdings, and easing tribal land management efforts.

Rights Protection Implementation Funding allows tribes to meaningfully exercise their treaty fishing, hunting, and gathering rights. This program supports the exercising of off-reservation hunting, fishing, and gathering rights by 49 tribes located in the Pacific Northwest and Great Lakes regions and their five umbrella inter-tribal fish and wildlife organizations.

In addition to the federal programs and initiatives described above, various federal agencies, states, local governments, and private organizations have undertaken collaborative partnerships with tribal governments to promote resource conservation.

Salish Sea Project. The Project is a USGS partnership with the Coast Salish Western Washington Tribes and British Columbia First Nations. This cooperative effort combines traditional Tribal ecological knowledge and USGS science during the annual Tribal Canoe Journey up the Salish Sea, which includes Puget Sound, Georgia Straits, and Straits of Juan De Fuca. During the Tribal Journey, members of western Washington Tribes and British Columbia First Nations travel in more than 100 canoes from locations throughout Washington and British Columbia to Cowichan First Nation in Duncan, B.C. Five canoes tow state-of-the-art water-quality probes and Global Positioning System units. From north of the Strait of Georgia to southern Puget Sound, canoe families played a very big part in recording the health of the Salish Sea. In all, 607 miles of the Salish Sea was mapped and over 45,000 data points for specific water quality components were recorded including; surface-water temperature, salinity, pH, dissolved oxygen, total dissolved solids, and turbidity. Canoes are ideal because they are slow moving and do not add any toxins to the environment.

Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribe (CSKT) and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) Co-Managing the National Bison Range Complex (NBRC). Since 2008, the CSKT and the FWS have co-managed the NBRC in accordance with the CSKT Annual Funding Agreement, under the Tribal Self-Governance Act. The NBRC is part of the FWS Refuge System and lies in its entirety within the boundaries of the CSKT reservation. Interestingly, the bison on the NBRC are the descendants of a herd of bison owned by CSKT members over a century ago. That herd was started and managed by tribal members at a time when bison were on the verge of extinction due to non-Indian activities.

Discussion Question 1

Spokane, WA

(cont.)

A Cooperative study on climate change effects on moose survival involving the Fon du Lac Tribe, the U.S.G.S. and the Minnesota Dept. of Natural Resources. This collaborative study tests the hypothesis that moose survival rates would be a function of heat stress, defined as the frequency and magnitude that ambient temperatures exceed the thresholds identified in earlier studies. A primary objective is to estimate annual and seasonal survival rates in adult moose in northeastern Minnesota and determine whether heat stress explained variation in these survival rates. Another is to determine the implications on moose population migration in the face of a changing climate.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

Wonderful Outdoor World -- people respect parks; educational programs, campgrounds, no connection with NPS, show people there is a bigger world than immediate residential areas, use urban parks, employees from communities they serve

Working at the right scale is critical in order to create a sense of community and solidarity as people are more likely to feel an emotional connection to projects that directly impact their own communities; larger scale projects can seem impersonal and I

Corporate partnerships with Toyota to create fellowships for the disadvantaged

Support private lands conservation efforts -- some of the most important conservation of land is by the private land owners

Northface Co. (Outdoor industries) Outdoor Nation -- summit in NYC's Central Park -- Activities and youth leaders, want to connect kids

Put rangers in urban areas to form a connection

Social media: Cal State Parks Foundation example -- threatened park closure, drew in members. Way to reach people short on time or out of our loop. Twitter, inexpensive, technology is not the enemy, SCA success with online

Restoration: Tribal/NRCS joint effort, successful stream restoration, BOR;BPA, youth engagement

Landscape conservation: 1976 Chattahoochee Recreation Area, small land access points to H2O, engaged public in forming conservation vision, develop "grand plans", engage communities in planning proves -- deeper "outside the box", find new sources of partn

Transportation: NPS/other agencies could provide buses, require states to create envt. Literacy campaign/curricula; nature bridge -- public/private partnership, 40,000 children/year, continuum of care to involve children in the outdoors, keep listening --

Reinvigorate partnerships with urban parks and local conservation systems -- need fully integrated systems at all levels of government

Dedicated reliable funds outside of appropriated \$ to support partnerships

Need consultation process/infrastructure with DOI.FS for concerns to be aired before decisions are made

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Portion fo land and conservation fund needs to go to urban parks

Ducks Unlimited web site -- youth activities/education. High school sponsored events -- run by kids. College chapters -- raise funds for conservation efforts

Out of work, out of school young people need to be a part of this initiative ages 18-24, and people of color should be at the forefront

We first need to build up urban recreation in cities, where people can have a safe outdoors environment close to home

Long distance scenic trails require interagency cooperation and many partners but they are also great ways to connect communities, habitats, and people

Connect youth to the outdoors through communities

Build trails on abandoned rail corridors

Creating a conservation and preservation ethic in younger generations and with an increasingly diverse society that is not related to traditional American heritage

From a cultural heritage perspective: service learning through public private partnerships. Public lands volunteer stewardship programs. Heritage tourism -- telling America's story through its historic cities, town, landscapes and trails. Look at Colorado Preserve America Youth Summit Program as a model of state-based youth engagement in heritage

Making cities more healthy, affordable, and sustainable for all residents. To conserve open lands, we have to make cities better, so they offer residents what they want and need. From a conservation perspective, investing in urban parks, creating additional parkland, ensuring that pocket parks, schoolyard parks, and neighborhood greening will improve quality of life, health, and environmental function.

I would like to see a multi-agency urban greening imitative with White House leadership and visibility. This could integrate existing work of USDA, USFS, NRCS, EPA, and others. Greening our communities starts on the landscape at home, in our schools, neighborhood streets, and parks. Forestry and park restoration in cities at a greater scale, engaging volunteers, schools and creating jobs. If there is a CCC revival, urban parks and recreation systems have plenty of work to do as well. Last, I hope the administration can shift resources from other areas to use up more budget for conservation programs. We would like to see the US Forest Service Urban and Community Forestry Service Programs & Research increase substantially.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Private working lands protection in face of increasing competition for land and increasing demands to promote food.

Engaging the next generation -- not only children, but the next tier of conservation and public lands professionals, particularly of diverse backgrounds. Ensuring all people understand, enjoy and care for public lands, wildlife and cultural/historic sites.

Work through established community organizations, conservation organizations, park and public land support groups. Outreach, awareness and marketing campaigns. Internships within agencies and partner groups.

This was a wonderful event. I have never seen anything like this kind of commitment to starting a conservation movement since perhaps the first earth day. Please keep this going - talking, listening, inspiring, people to bring their ideas to the table and try harder when they go back home. I will never forget this day. Thank you.

our ability to mobilize America's greatest asset it's people who have invested interest enough the organization missions to support these challenges (Strategic, Plan/Execution)

Thank you for this invitation! It was inspiring and impressive to see the coordination and passion of the Agency secretaries, EPA, CEQ and others. Private land conservation is becoming more cost effective and successfully than ever. We strongly encourage funding and support for more of this landscape protection.

Funding for private land conservation. Estate taxes. Generational succession of landowners.

Collaboration, funding, allowing third parties to hold conservation easements from all funding sources (including LWCP). Incentives for landowners to be part of the solution.

Community Forestry Bands

Recognizing, developing, and mentoring community leaders as role models, school based environmental education, community based projects that are fun.

Urban parks create jobs, spur growth, increase property value, prevent obesity, clear pollution, and build community. Yet they're often dismissed as frivolous in hard times and remain severely underfunded. How can we change the perception that they are not just a "nice thing to have" but an essential part of our urban infrastructure?

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Developing policies that promote cross sector, cross jurisdictional collaboration and partnerships. There are many innovative public and private partnerships that have been developed to create, restore, and maintain urban parks - and that would serve as great models for replication. City Parks Alliance, a national network of urban parks leaders, looks forward to serving as a resource as The America's Great Outdoors program is developed.

Engaging youth through Youth Corps is too late. These are also short term jobs that youth just see as a paycheck. Need to engage and remain engaged with youth from a young age. Need to create in young people (age 6-10) a conservation environmental ethics.

Educating our youth that conservation and preservation is important. Start educating youth at a young age. The need of agencies to see instant gratification. Working with kids is a long term commitment.

100 years ago Teddy Roosevelt initiated the great public lands conservation system. 100 years from now, let them look at on this as the time that our country accelerated a private land conservation system that leverages public resources while also making connections with rural landowners and urban populations, especially kids.

1. Managing future population growth to conserve our most important natural resources 2. Growing the next generation who will know, love and be great stewards of our great natural resources 3. Managing our public lands and resources (including funding) in ways that respect and engage private landowners and communities (including our forests, ranches and farms)

1. Engage private non-profits in conserving our great privately-owned natural resource lands 2. Engage community groups in devising and implementing conservation programs in urban settings 3. fully fund LWCF; implement increased private landowner conservation incentives; authorize tax-exempt community forest bonds

Speak with authenticity to kids. You must engages at a grassroots level. Identify the best and scale! I would be happy to assist

1) connecting young people to beautiful places to learn and love, 2) projection of clean air water topsoil and safe food, 3) the fragmentation of wildlife corridors especially in light of climate change

1) "burrow in" long term, many administration leaders with stable funding 2) fully fund the land and water conservation fund 3) closely study the mono like program and program of tree people in LA 4) permanent protection for the article national wildlife refuge

Balancing conservation and use (recreation, energy, etc.); Connecting conservation to economic development

Invest in science to guide decisions, invest more in private land conservation (easements), promote nature-based tourism

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Great concept-super audience- Outstanding members of the Administration IF the nation can recover financially. The Obama team is the best ever and can change the face of America. I wish them and-collectively-God Speed

Maintaining a critical mass of Americans who are adequately connected to the outdoors in ways that foster a strong appreciation for conservation and active support

1) develop and deploy programs and hubs for connecting communities with outdoor recreation and conservation. Bridge the gaps and rebuild community networks of support. Build Youth Conservation Centers. 2) reach kids and patterns, reach schools, engage private landowners. 3) build programs that will influence large numbers of people

Maintaining nation's memory open landscape lands-recognizing they are privately owned and important economically as "awaking" fauna, forests, etc. Conserving lands for people as well as for wildlife and ecology.

1) conserving watersheds and water resources. Water sustains life. 2)disconnect of Americans to natural resources

1)water should be a pillar of AGO, project reconnect and restore 2 connect Americans to land and water resources through education and recreation

1) Give direct grants to those org. that do the work of reconnecting youth and families to the outdoors.

wilderness bills and W+S river Bills, new monuments and NLCS units, redraw NPS boundaries to reflect geography, fully fund L+WCF

Grass roots partnerships that are inclusive constantly reaching out and finding common ground to tackle issues big and small. These local efforts need to be supported at the Federal Level. Trust, communication and flexibility are the keys. The fundamental question that needs to be answered is what are all parties willing to compromise. Energy policy is also important as conservation and energy are on a collision course.

Sustaining habitat integrity & associated ecological services. Convincing general public & private landowners that habitat integrity is essential

Comprehensive long-term land use planning. Education outreach; increased education of teachers. Challenge: Property rights of private land ownership

Exemplary landscape-scale initiatives such as the Blackfoot Challenge, the Maldai Borderlands, and the Wild lands and Woodlands vision for the forests of New England. Also, promising, are USDOJ landscape conservation collaborative.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Stable conservation program funding; conservation block grants that address the needs not by habitat but address broad needs. Conservation tax incentives. Trails - connecting, and natural - healthy, economic impacts.

Programming educating communities & awareness of issues. Incentive to support all kinds of project.

Community-based visioning of values and collaborative implementation. We need to engineer a social evolution of rewarding private landowners for assurances of providing fish & wildlife habitat in the long term. LCC's are a good start to this foundation.

1) culture of disconnect where families have no history with the land; and the land in the cities does not speak for itself but rather for crime, pollutions and disinvestment 2) dollars

1) elevating the economic importance of our green infrastructure to a value level equal or greater than the level of infrastructure. We are losing out and falling behind 2) Given growing urbanization/suburbanization of country need demographic changes 3) failure to target all conservation organizations that represent the best of all conservation leaders. Continue to compartmentalize fed parks, with working lands 4) the continued march of sprawl development

1) continuing the protection, restoration and enhancement of private lands for conservation purposes 2) targeting public and private lands conservation dollars

1) extensive use of the tax code (i.e. tax credits and estate tax) to further private lands conservation 2) extensive use of land exchanges to increase the amount of high environmental value lands and reduce the amount of low environmental lands with high economic value

While strategies to address this need are evolving, the core of any successful approach lies in understanding the economics of private land ownership and the critical need for viable markets and market incentives that keep working lands economically competitive with alternative land uses. Approaches that add costs to maintaining working lands drive down its economic value relative to other land uses and increase the potential for land use conversion. However, approaches that use markets and market incentives to enhance the economic value of these lands will contribute to their long-term viability and continuation on the landscape.

Regional (landscape level) interagency planning efforts with local, state, and federal participation (use the LWCF SCORP effort to accomplish this)

bring new voices into the conversation, non traditional voices. Consider environmental education a conservation tool.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

1. Helping people who live in rural areas, evaluating farmers and fishers, to make a decent living by receiving fair prices for their product, will help to help them doing what they do best -- making the best use and serving as the best stewards of the land and water resources. (obviously I don't see Dept. of Interior in charge of some prices but USDA is an agency that can help and I hope they are listening to the concerns from family-owned farms and fisheries) 2. CRP and NCRS are great programs -- but is make sure they are properly funded and the program is managed well so that the right people are rewarded, that it's not an easy gift for non-farmers/non-fishers who happen to own a lot of land 3. allowing GMOs (on public lands) is a real concern -- why has the govt. taken this stance, providing one more foothold by Monsanto in agriculture? (Perhaps some of this is state-owned land, but it is still a concern) 4. Local people -- fishers, farmers, teachers, students, etc. -- must be involved at many and different levels to find solutions -- long term and sustainable -- urban and rural must care, young and old, rich and poor -- Pepito's notion of linkage.

Awareness and appreciation; Communication effectively - what needs to be accomplished - How to do it - What's being done in progress already; Education

Think big! Create central website. Let our nation know! Volunteer youth of the great outdoors for each school, college, and university. Coordinate as well with the Dept of Education and private foundations. Promote "town hall meetings" everywhere. Create AGO free membership/media campaign. Engage corporate America. Bipartisan unity on this! Set up mentor program. Cross-agency training.

Encouraging our racial/ethnic families/communities to enjoy the great outdoors - parks, beaches, etc. close to home in their urban areas.

We are interested in helping you to serve as spokesperson/champions in your initiatives as well as the other administration agency initiatives to build healthier communities.

While opening remarks made by Secretary Salazar and The President referenced cultural + historic sites, there was very little mention of these resources during panel presentations. The land includes human stories evidenced by archeological sites, historic farms + ranches

The best way to understand our shared American Experience and identity happens outside of the classroom and in the place. The teaching of American history has taken a back seat to the teaching of math + science. They are all important. America's historic places need more funding to address deterred maintenance, better interpretation, more engagement w/youth. The federal government should play a leadership role in promoting heritage tourism, encouraging more families to visit important places in American history. We need to develop a youth corps to help address the 2 billion in deterred maintenance needed for historic structures in national parks. Provide real experience doing meaningful work in a real place (I wrote this before Secretary Salazar asked his last question and I agree with Bill Cronan's response- human history and natural history are not disconnected and shouldn't be treated as if they are).

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Immediate action to drastically reduce carbon pollution, and a dedicated funding stream for natural resource restoration and adaptation is critical to the future of our lands, waters and wildlife. This will also create American jobs on American lands.

1) DOI + USDA should partner with D of Education and mandate every American child has environmental education as a core class from K-12. These classes should begin by giving children a "wow" moment with wildlife- seeing manatees or fox kits or raptors, or fishing. As children grow, they learn about clean air, clean water + values conserved lands have on ecosystem services and in high school learn about the economic benefits + drivers in communities of conserved lands. 2) DOI should partner w/other federal departments (DoAg, DoEnergy, DoDefense, DoCommerce, etc...), states and all NGO's to create the "United States Conservation Plan" This would incorporate state wildlife action plans, National Wildlife Refuge Comprehensive Conservation Plans, National Parks, BLM, Forests, TNC Ecoregional plans, Conservation easements, etc...it would incorporate everything and create a map of currently protected lands and waters and show the priority opportunities (regardless of current ownership + its political implications) to provide a roadmap of where we as a nation should go. We don't have to protect everything but people should understand the true value of lands + waters in relation to the following: ecosystem services (cleaning the air + water+ providing storm buffers), wildlife corridors, urban refuges and parks (they are different) places to recreate, show where counties + cities should should grow and develop and where they should not. People like plans and they like maps. We need to know where we need to go; only then can we decide if we actually want to go there.

Keeping family farms and ranches viable. Sustainable agriculture is key to good conservation.

Eliminate the Estate Tax for family farms and ranches so they can pass their places on to their kids. Insure that BLM and Forest Grazing permits remain intact

Great regional collaborations act as state jurisdictions as well as the private and philanthropic areas? , in partnership with the Feds in a new model. 2. Collaborative partnerships up the great, historic rivers with the urban populations, along recognized regional pathways.

Funding, Focus, Vision. The problems are many but having 1 funding, focus and vision for the administration across all agencies will ensure success.

Large initiative to create work around forest, range, marine restoration + management

Getting children outdoors into nature, interacting with plants, animals and the natural elements- soil, water, etc.

Federal Estate Tax deferral for working farms and land of conservation value. Permanent Conservation easement tax incentives for farmers

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

1) make sure we have another generation ready for waiting to take over as stewards of our lands
2) making sure we have them natural resources worth inheriting

1) get the next generation involved—listen to them—recruit them and let them lead and be ambassadors. 2) support grassroots efforts and conservation volunteers

Having programs to help urban parks which could be accessed directly by private non-profits which are park-focused. Help is needed for capital repairs as well as programs. Please hold a regional listening session in Pittsburgh.

Local city parks are the first place and least expensive place to connect civilian kids to nature. Stop neglect of urban parks. Great conference.

With respect to educating youth -- focus on the end product. We determined 5 characteristics that a conservation-minded program would instill: 1. A sense of wonder 2. An understanding that everything is connected 3. A realization that nothing is free 4. it's your responsibility to do something (lift a shovel, write a check, plant a tree) 5. Vote (it doesn't matter who -- we advocate only that to vote is an act of conservation -- many land issues are decided by officials of local, state, and federal governments. These 5 concepts can be taught in engaging ways at all levels. Great meeting -- thank you for a terrific START!

The pattern of each successive generation becoming increasingly disconnected from nature. Decreasing modeling by adults, for children, as to the value of learning about and spending time in nature.

Focus all efforts, all strategies, on children. Ongoing PSAs by top govt officials promoting value of nature and in getting outdoors. (Make them creative, hip, youth-oriented). Invite at least 100 people under 20 years old to next year's conference (youth infusion). Engage landscape artist Clyde Aspevig's concept of "land snorkeling" as a new way of enticing kids back to the outdoors/nature.

the creation of parks, tracks and open space in proximity to urban areas. Too many children don't have access to safe places to play to ride their bike or just goof around

shine the spotlight on innovative projects like the Met Branch trail here in DC that seek to provide safe class for children, their parents, and grandparents in urban neighborhoods

Bipartisan efforts that recognize conservation is conservative. Alternative energy/pricing carbon. Full funding for LWCF. Expanded federal agency law enforcement to protect public lands from abuse by OHVs and other illegal activities. New mining technologies and regulations that reduce mining's environmental impact. Particularly important due to demand for rare earth metals for alt. energy. We need to address maintenance costs concerns by increasing wilderness designations, and thus having less infrastructure to maintain. Develop a land acquisition vision that prioritizes areas in greatest need of additional public lands/open space-- with an eye towards keeping development in check

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Urban Parks, greenways, incentive programs at state, local, federal level to connect children + families w/the great outdoors- address park deserts-establish SAFE ROUTES TO PARKS. Funding for programs that connect kids w/outdoors and greening initiatives that green urban areas.

Communities can be a powerful force in implementing environmental and conservation programs. Schools can teach children about these issues through a more intensive curriculum starting in early grades and continuing through college. Dept of Labor can design special training programs that will encourage youth to become stewards of our land. We must go beyond awareness to crafting laws that will support awareness, education, and resources.

1. Allow multi-federal agency grant programs to match each other. For example, why couldn't CELP money (NOAA) be used to match FLP grants to state agencies. 2. Expand the allocation of New Markets Tax Credits for economically distressed rural communities. These tax credits can become a huge incentive for directing private investment to help with landscape scale conservation endeavors. Get the US Treasury into Obama's Green Team.

Team all federal, state, and city agencies with the non-profit, community-based organizations to approach each neighborhood and community one at a time, inviting new and non-traditional partners into the work, celebrating success and sharing elsewhere where there is potential.

To expand support we must maintain the legitimacy of already preserved landscapes. An ongoing program for the acquisition of private holdings from willing sellers within designated protected areas, such as wilderness, is vital to opening legitimacy.

protecting natural and cultural heritage resources for future generations and creating functional human settlement patterns to accommodate population growth

1) public lands acquisition and voluntary perpetual conservation 2) European densities (>10 residential units per acre) with 750% open spaces (high density/high amenity human settlements) 5% of land can accommodate 90% of population

1. Connecting large urban populations to our parks and forests 2. Preserving sufficient buffer areas around our existing parks 3. Stewardship education

1. Expand NRA's urban communities programs such as the NPS River, Trails and Conservation Ass't program. 2. Undertake an extensive assessment and plan to identify critical lands necessary to protect our ecosystems. 3. Establish and enhance programs in our schools, communities re: stewardship

Conservation education will determine the future of our outdoor heritage. We must start young to make the connection to nature. By sparking the natural wonder of the outdoors in our youth we will develop stewardship. We have tools (field guides, lesson plans, etc.) as do others. Inventory and select best tools based on results. Share knowledge. Let the work begin...

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Ensuring a reliable, predictable funding stream for land/water conservation year to year to encourage better planning, public-private partnerships, multi-year projects, and the like. Overcoming the turf battles/fragmentation in Congress, among federal agencies, among state-led jurisdictions the make coordinated planning, priority setting investments on management needs impossible.

Informity and educating a citizenry that values and supports conservation efforts and that experiences our great outdoors.

Connections: Connections of land use to water connection people, children to the land formation of habitat and the need to connect people to landscapes

Thank you Secretary Salazar for your vision of unity within conservation for beginning this conversation about community. May it be extended in the senses to include all life forms, not just humans - plants, animals and rivers - engaging all in this reverence toward life. May you continue to be bold and compassionate, at once.

1) funding for public lands that can restore taff, construction, and maintenance budgets 2) look at policy changes that could make people feel more welcome! (work with private sector)

Will - we have helped restore over 1 million acres of BLM lands, and raised tens of millions of private dollars to restore/transplant herds of elk, mule, bighorn sheep, mtn goats, moose, cougar bear, and wild turkey. Would love to come and meet with you and others in interior. Thanks for this conference.

1)collaboration 2)capacity building 3) innovation incentives 4) dissemination and learning across agencies, the public, and communities through monitoring

The Great American Outdoors Initiative. The LCC effort to provide GIS and science and huge partnerships to leverage \$. You are on the right track. Find money.

In June (19th-25th) we will launch Outdoor Nation in Central Park - the first national youth summit aimed at reconnecting young people and the outdoors. The Central Park summit will kick-off the next American Revolution.

Engaging young people to lead our way back to the outdoors. We need a youth movement that is by and for young people - politically and civically engaged.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Involving you in environmental and conservation issues. The importance of environmental preservation should be infused in our Educational Systems throughout the country. I believe that educators are amount the worst perpetrators of "de-prioritizing" environmental preservation and encouraging conservation. Programs that allow youth and children to explore the outdoors are constantly cut from school budgets. Physical fitness programs are cut and there are little or no opportunities for organizations or schools to engage youth in exciting outdoor activities that could spark their interest in environmental preservation and conservation activities and initiatives. Youth are easily excited by issues of environment but they don't know what to do now - or how they can contribute.

Want to thank _____ for working so hard towards conservation. Take away our gratitude.

Land and water conservation fund needs permanent funding. Better distribution of funding and flexibility to apply the funding better. When energy bills are passed, we need that profit to be reinvested into conservation programs and projects.

We regularly go hiking and fishing around lake berryessa. We want to ensure this remains.

Keep permitting access to public lands and support the multiple-use concept. All public lands should be available to our citizens with no limitations.

Mammoth lakes has a great recreation program and we need more programs like this.

Supports land and water conservation fund. Needs to ensure that it is fully funded. • Establish a national pool for national insurance emergency fund.

Want more advanced mitigation planning by infrastructure agencies – environmental review to access impacts on projects. To buy larger offsets (land acquisition) with more federal support.

I love cash creek river. I appreciate the environment and hope it is maintained into the future.

Stebanzgold canyon. We take kids into the outdoors. We bring story into the outdoors and kids love it. Kids are thrilled to see a natural place with creative stories. W use teens as mentors to engage each other to have a better appreciation of the outdoors. We hope to partnership for funding.

We maintain 65 regional parks. We are working with DOI and NPS on joint venture on concord naval warfare station to be an open public space. Support public access and want more access in the future. We also support more easements throughout CA.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

More easements. Klamath cascade region – we are trying to encourage retention for water production and wood production. Working with forest service, blm and need more collaboration. Forest legacy and land and water conservation fund must allow nonprofits funding.

3M people participate in our group. MOUs with BLM and others allow us to do projects on forest and public lands. We work to build more sustainable trails. We protect wide open spaces. We need more trail upkeep. Increase in mountain biking supports more kids getting out into the outdoors. Need more money for trail upkeep too. King Range supported by Thompson – thanks.

A-Accessibility - people need to be guided to the outdoors at an early age - K-12 schools

I-Promote safer parks with free events and youth programs, have schools partner with the youth programs to get kids outdoors.

G-Having the media promote healthy role models, athletes, real life people. Have these role models speak to youth about Outdoors and being healthy.

E-Create natural play areas in structured environments such as schools.

F-Designate money within Parks & Recreation Agencies to allow for jobs that concentrate on the diverse marketing and promotion of outdoor initiatives and activities.

B-Advertisements that promote the outdoors: newspaper articles, TV commercials, bill boards, in busses and trains, social networking (Facebook), in order to have people interested in getting outdoors.

D-Create a call to action to get into the outdoors with media by showing real time activities and events to inspire action. : TV, radio, newspapers, Facebook, and text messages should broadcast events and causes created by the young generations to get people inspired to go outside.

K-Teach detailed nutritional education in schools.

J-Small competitions in communities based on the outdoor activities that kids already do... for example: kick ball, jump rope, Frisbee. Instead of winning IPOD's and X-Boxes, you win a new jump rope and running shoes to promote outdoor activities.

H-Public awareness and marketing to increase participation with diverse groups by using research, breaking barriers, being aware of language use and association, media logos, and public figures of our era.

C-Bring the technology to the outdoors. Setup days in parks with multiple Wii's to play for the community.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

G-Partner with universities to provide internship credits for students who help educate, provide recreation experiences, and mentor the youth on outdoor issues.

C-Create an outdoor ambassador internship that provides training and encourages teachers to incorporate the outdoors into the curriculum within their school.

H-We must create a social norm that moves away from electronic companionship and moves toward outdoor experiences that inherently fulfill youth's physical, mental, and spiritual needs.

D-Create connections and partnerships with local government departments to use the resources readily available to provide outdoor opportunities. (ie: partnerships between schools and park and recreation departments).

F-Find and foster role-modeling relationships (mentors) that involve the outdoors in communities.

E-Incorporate the outdoors into standard curriculums through field trips & life skills.

G-Advocate with dept of education & bigger organizations to get funding for Environmental and Outdoor Education programs in schools/classes and provide scholarships to get people involved in the programs. (ie: afterschool programs).

B-Establish pilot programs throughout different areas in the country, to test the validity of putting outdoor ed into the schools, then integrate outdoor education & experiences into Urban K-12 schools

F-Informing the Community about what's in the outdoors; getting the information to the schools & parents about breaking the stereotypes that the outdoors is only for privileged people or only for people who can afford to go.

A-Actively outreach and go into All communities & educate people on all the different opportunities (conservation, physical organizations, people documentaries, etc.) and benefits of the outdoors. (goal of leading to ownership of the value of the outdoors)

D-Holding free and safe outdoor events at schools in communities to get neighbors outside.

C-Create safe, green spaces for kids and families to exercise and grow their own food within their communities by inspiring and supporting local outdoor leaders and sustaining those positions by offering internships/jobs/money/support.

G-Safer and easier access to parks, fitness opportunities, and outlets.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

F-Provide exciting incentives and choices for outdoor activities in schools, both for healthy living and exercise.

B-Create outdoor mentorship programs - in neighborhoods and throughout communities.

A-Create incentives to revamp health requirements that encourage healthy lifestyles. Give benefits to people exercising healthy lifestyle components - increase taxes on unhealthy items (remove or reduce taxes, or a tax credit/incentive on healthy items like fruits and vegetables) Purchase something that encourages outdoor recreation: bicycle, youth camp, etc.

E-Identify role models in specific communities and target those individuals for advocating healthy lifestyles.

H-Starting at kindergarten - changing physical education's image to have a choice because it is important to Millennials. Make it club time" instead of PE and give choice between activities like rock climbing yoga reading in the shade. Make it more fun. "

F-Website and cell phone initiatives. Outdoor Volunteer website paired with non profits. Phone - take cell phone pictures of areas that can use a project and send it to local agency that supports the above website.

B-Create an Outdoor Nation mobile national tour; and a mass media activation with a crew of Outdoor Nation representatives from North Face and go City to City and do outdoor service projects and activities. Documentary, Facebook, UTube, Twitter, Blog, big network commercials and promotional websites to promote and follow the event.

A-Create an on-line directory to provide a list of outdoor service projects from local to national - best way is to create a section on Facebook.

E-Provide training for volunteers and find funds for people to get certifications for their projects and training to learn to lead service projects.

C-Creating fun promotional events - that start small (like at school) to motivate others to get involved in service.

D-Establish an informal day, nationally, (Sunday?) or period of time (hour? Half-hour?) where people take the time to help the environment through community service. To build into a routine.

E-Outdoor classes a requirement in schools and make sure that after school programs are funded well enough to be accessible to all kids.

G-Have environmental education part of the curriculum at schools and make outdoor time as well as hands on outdoor classes mandatory.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

N-Outdoor education in schools and outdoor clubs; place based learning youth stewardship programs, subsidized outdoor clubs, summer camps, green civil service opps for kids to go experience the outdoors on trails and camping and recreation.

A-Keep recess in schools as a time to learn more about the outdoors. Let them explore the outside.

L-Supporting public school curricula that take a multidisciplinary approach to outdoor experiences - art, history, sciences, English - such as the mighty acorns program.

K-School sponsored outdoor opportunities - give monetary bonuses to schools/teachers that engage in these activities.

O-Have youth and child tree planting programs in their neighborhoods.

M-Get a program to set the students education about outdoors, educate on issues and introduce outdoor activities outdoor unit in PE classes or science classes.

D-More kid friendly websites about department of interior organizations. Utilize sites that kids already use and advertise in a more relevant way. (Ex. Games relate local parks sites and make them more interesting.) Re-evaluate liability policies in schools and programs to allow kids to have better access to the outdoors and other outdoor organizations.

I-Financial aid programs as incentives to get outdoors.

J-Partnerships; teach for America and boys and girls club, americorps, do something.

B-Employment/HR companies that share millennial experiences for face-to-face hiring at events, shops etc.

K-Bring nature back to the city - urban/nature are two separate things - perception. This creates a problem and nature becomes less accessible for all people and requires resources people don't have and cant afford.

E-Jobs that protect natural places and species like forests, watersheds and fish.

F-Jobs that restore natural places to balance, for example returning brown fields and strip mines to productive land.

G-Jobs that innovate to produce consumer goods that, cradle to grave, create zero carbon.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

H-Most adults who care about conservation and the environment spent a lot of time outdoors as children.

G-I have fond memories of camping, hiking, fishing-being outside-with my family.

C-The outdoor recreation areas (parks, trails, lakes/rivers) are easily accessible in my community

B-There are enough areas designated for outdoor recreation in my community

D-The youth programs in your community are affordable and accessible

E-I prefer to recreate outdoors alone rather than in groups.

B-Jobs in renewable energy like solar or wind

C-Jobs in energy efficiency like energy measurements and insulating buildings.

D-Jobs in manufacturing products for both renewable energy production and efficiency like the caulk, windows and appliances

J-More education - a two-year program.

K-More education - a four year degree

L-More education - a four year degree, plus graduate school.

M-On-the-job training.

N-A great internship with a company that is already doing this kind of work.

O-An apprenticeship in a trade or field that helps me learn all the components of this job.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

P-An internship with a federal agency supporting or doing this kind of job.

E-I believe that we should make the Outdoor Nation Summit an annual event.

F-The interactive technology was helpful and used effectively at our Summit

D-I am excited about bringing this work/these ideas back home to my community/ongoing work

C-We are on the right track

A-We had a successful Outdoor Nation Summit

B-I felt heard

Having an outdoor experience at a young age can make a huge difference in someone's life.

I believe that we can, and will, make a real difference on the issues that we are addressing here at the Outdoor Nation Summit.

Outdoor education in schools and outdoor clubs; place based learning youth stewardship programs, subsidized outdoor clubs, summer camps, green civil service opportunities for kids to go experience the outdoors on trails and camping and recreation.

Lack of exposure, resources, awareness, fun and adventure family and community support to get outdoors.

Accessibility - people need to be guided to the outdoors at an early age - K-12 schools

I believe that we should make the Outdoor Nation Summit an annual event.

The interactive technology was helpful and used effectively at our Summit.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

I am excited about bringing this work/these ideas back home to my community/ongoing work.

We are on the right track.

We had a successful Outdoor Nation Summit.

I felt heard.

Build on what works

Inyo/Mammoth Lakes recreation program partnerships

Call leaders in USFS and BLM before approving national conservation areas

Economically and environmentally sustainable private lands are critical to preserving great outdoors

Open space

View shed

Wildlife habitat

Easements are a minor part of private ownership

Enhancement projects are important through USFWS, NRCS funding

Research show that vernal pools require grazing and animal activity

Estate tax reform bill maintain specific treatment of working lands

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Example of how land can be managed for benefit of community

Outreach to schoolchildren, hunters

Future of Delta is in efforts to manage

Need to be involved in planning

Increase access to parks will help youth escape poverty and violence

Outdoor industry grant making foundation

Ask more of for-profit businesses

Public and private partnerships

Customers play in outdoors

CA school board assoc. develop public/private partnership to connect kids with outdoors

Result of America's Great Outdoors

Thanks for protecting places we care about

Funding of land and water conservation fund- full and permanent funding

Distribution of money flexible to local priorities usable network of accessible lands

Energy bills propose conservation funding mitigation for drilling, need to be fully funded

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Tax incentives need to be preserved

110,000 ac urban parks

Joint venture with NPS on visitor center on Concord Naval Center- open space

Conservation easements should look at park access as a way to gain public support

Trails system needs support, public actively involved

Non conforming uses phased out, full wilderness designation phased in

Designated parks for off-road vehicles to protect habitat

American sportfishing association

fishing licenses sold is declining, programs to increase fishing and boating

Federal support for foundation to improve support for fishing

Angler's legacy- take kids fishing

#1 gateway for kids to outdoor activities is fishing

Publicity will be best help

Partnerships on Mokelumne River watershed

Pay attn to grassroots effort for wild and scenic designation for Moke River

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Amador and Calaveras Counties- this is important recreation area

Cultural sites

Economic resource= recreation

Wildlife and fish habitat

Water goes to east bay

Increase visibility

Recommend issuing directive to create consistent conservation direction

Gets families/children outdoors

Disabled people access outdoors in motorized recreation

Helps rural economies and communities

Gets kids excited about outdoors

Work with motorized rec to be part of solution

Keep trails open

Good MOU's allow projects in national forest and federal lands

Build sustainable trails for people to enjoy

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Engineered trail design for trail surfaces

Want to protect wild spaces

High rate of use outpaces trail building pace

4 years from planning to building

MTN biking is increasing, especially youth

HS mtn bike league- competition

Need more trails streamline process, more money to build trails

In favor of Berryessa Snow Mtn

Expose children to outdoors

Use stories to engage children in outdoors

Plant seeds of stewardship

Ages 4-teens engaged in storytelling and character play

Looking for partnerships

Spread the idea to other areas

Land trusts are important partners for conservation

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Projects are cost efficient

Protect waterways, ag land, rangeland, habitat

Some are open to public for trails

Allow land trusts to hold Federal conservation easements

Partner with local conservation organizations

Need more money for easements

Conservation easements keep areas in ag production and natural resource mgt Klamath cascade region

Retain forests for wood and water production

Collaborate with BLM

Challenge Forest legacy and land and water conservation programs

Lead trips for Golden Gate Audubon bicycle birding trips

Women will bike if route perceived to be safe

Bike access and public transportation access to national park

Amtrak requires boxes for bikes

Need corridors for wildlife

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Health is important

Support Snow Mtn Berryessa national conservation area

Be sure that partnerships on public lands take into consideration putting youth to work

Local projects oak restoration in Central Valley

Take advantage of unused space to creat habitat on roadsides

Advance mitigation planning by agencies transp. Water and power

Environ. Review must happen early and buy larger pieces of mitigation property and integrate into greenprint for community

Fund initial purchase of land for mitigation and land acquisition

Enjoys outdoors

Environmental education is a way to get children outside

Guidance for statewide education standards for teachers and administrators

Transportation for students to outdoor sites- need to fund buses

we live in a world where too many young people often have no opportunity to experience the joys of our natural world. The unfortunate reality is that, for these young people, video games and indoor activities are common practice and there is no bond with the rhythms of nature. The result is a generation that lacks this important connection. Children and families need natural areas within easy reach of our cities. The Rio Grande Nature Center or a neighborhood park, a special place like Tingley Beach or the river or the bosque - some accessible natural environment that provides that crucial connection.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Our collective desire to preserve our states' natural wonders and limited resources for future generations is something I take very seriously. We owe it to our children, and to our children's children.

Activities and youth leaders, want to connect kids

Bring core values to people; motivate through education

in-park science programs, build challenge courses, urban camping programs, canoeing programs, less traditional, training inner city kids in green careers

empowering grass roots organizations that are in communities, fresh air fun -- expose kids to a new world

Tax inducements work great as market transaction for conservation

Meet kids where they are -- do something that is meaningful, they need a job, real skills training, advancement opportunities

Science is important - good data about what is happening to our resources

People connect through local parks - promote more bond initiatives

work with 14-17 year olds -- corporation networks; involve youth -- convert them to stewards

-- people respect parks; educational programs, campgrounds, no connection with NPS, show people there is a bigger world than immediate residential areas, use urban parks, employees from communities they serve

Columbia Land Trust (OR): ways to engage private investors, strictly government route is not always successful. Land trust can build different relationships with private owners

-- youth activities/education. High school sponsored events -- run by kids. College chapters -- raise funds for conservation efforts

Florida Trails Association: Connect via local chapters. Alliance program: allows youth groups to become involved. Gateway program: volunteers, org, and community. Brings economic impacts

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Farm Bill is where we can make most gains for conservation

Need to make conservation relevant to people

Need to bring stakeholders to the table

Meaningful youth programs and jobs

Environmental conservation education

Engaging citizens in conducting localized mapping that are then used by them for conservation decision-making

Early exposure to the outdoors builds life-long appreciation

Best practices for developing metrics about conservation initiatives -- improves chances for knowing audience and developing relevant responses and programs

End goal of education efforts should not be to just to create conservation knowledge and awareness but to change peoples behavior-hospitalized children holding insects had positive experience that were profoundly poignant to those witnessing it

Value of partnering with the travel and tourism industry

Some degree of land restriction is positive -- there can be negative consequences to opening access to all lands

Get kids connected with the land, with being outdoors, with nature at an early age. Teach kids how important conservation is, make it real and doable to kids, make connections between local, small scale activity and the wider good.

Engage young people by giving them concrete tasks, internships and/or jobs. They can do it and will feel accomplished and invested through this direct work. These experiences can also be lifechanging and create powerful stories on an individual level.

Use the political process to build momentum and consensus. For example, put a ballot question on to buy land, levy a tax, direct funds, to preserve open space. This could include ballot questions regarding retrofitting or expanding infrastructure to access green space.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Don't forget private land owners when considering the map of open or green space in the country. Encourage conservation easements or other tool usage to promote preservation by private citizens. These lands can informally be part of migration corridors and could serve as a critical resource to connect important lands.

Good science comes first and then resolve social conflict

LWCF criteria should recognize projects that have partnership components

Partnerships with local governments; organization and planning should occur at a regionalized level with federal support

Redefining what the "great outdoors" means

Service learning: integrate science, conservation, history and cultural values into curriculum, ways to teach math, science, national heritage; example: students at Harper's Ferry used modern media to tell the story of John Brown

Better federal partners: "extending the reach", listen to the people most affected, e.g. monuments, most people consider themselves good stewards, listen to urban America

Private lands conservation: NRCS = assistance only/land owner does conservation, half the land in ag., could use more employees/range conservationists to work with farmers, one place where additional public employees would be welcome, landscape conservation/private lands -- flexibility in funding and programs, need creativity/loosen reg's that stand in the way, success -- FERC and state examples of creative interp. and use of regs., need message from agency that applicants need to work together to develop a creative solution

Add for-profit businesses to listening tour, use business principals -- park fees, increase inside service fees

Rural legacy program -- block grant model -- administered by nonprofits in an area

2008 Farm Bill -- socially disadvantaged farmers formed an alliance and made sure that conservation came back to communities with 30% advanced pay that was advanced to people/groups who could not afford to start conservation efforts on their own

Importance of community gardens

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Urban green spaces reduce crime

Urban farming

National Wildlife Refuge Foundation: People get ownership when there are things to do and use (e.g. bathrooms, shade, programs). Importance of WOW! Movement

Colorado's SCORP Planning efforts and resulting plan are an example of an effective strategy. SCORP implementation is the challenge. There needs to be dedicated support and funding for SCORP implementation and a commitment from the feds and states on this effort. More efforts involving federal and state agencies partnering in schools and establishing effective programs that connect people to the outdoors. Nation-wide marketing and advertising in support of outdoor recreation and conservation initiatives (and the Great Outdoors America initiative, in general).

Dedicate Funding. Fully fund the LWCF program with a 50-50 apportionment b/w the federal and stateside funding. Additional sources of funding may need to be dedicated to conservation, outdoor recreation, and connecting people to the outdoors. SCORP Planning. SCORP planning should be strongly supported, with federal agencies playing a meaningful role in each plan's development. States need to be provided with additional resources and support for plan implementation. Partnerships. Continuing and expanding partnerships with private industry groups, non-profit organizations, state agencies and local governments to leverage support for outdoor recreation initiatives and programs. Standardized Data and Defensible Research. By providing standardized, high quality data (GIS or otherwise) pertaining to land conservation and outdoor recreation (i.e., acres conserved trail mapping, etc), progress in specific areas can be meaningfully measured and contrasted over time and between states. This may be helpful in identifying regional needs as well. In addition, defensible research on the benefits of outdoor recreation and connecting people to the outdoors is critical. Connect the Dots. Land conservation, paired with outdoor recreation, play an integral role in building healthier and more sustainable communities. Continue to expand dialogue and the connection between outdoor recreation, conservation, public health, and overall quality of life.

Agriculture and food generate powerful connections to the land – for some these are life-long connections, for others newly discovered ones. In either case, these connections encourage stewardship of the land - a deep sense of responsibility for careful management and use that respects its environmental importance as well as its economic value

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Glynwood Center is a nonprofit organization located outside Cold Spring in the lower Hudson Valley. A primary focus of Glynwood's work is to help communities save farming, with a special focus on the Hudson Valley and the Northeast. Through our community-based work, we identify other needs that must be addressed at the regional level. We do this through workshops, training programs, studies and reports and, most recently, by taking the lead in the creation of critical infrastructure. Through this work we have developed a deep understanding of the importance of farming to the future of the Hudson Valley and the challenges inherent in retaining agriculture within the sphere of a major metropolis.

The Quadracentennial Visioning Process: As a culminating effort of the Hudson Fulton Champlain Quadracentennial celebration, six Task Forces were created to develop a vision for key elements of the Valley and to make recommendations for how the vision might be achieved. One of the six Task Forces focused on Food and Agriculture. "The Hudson Valley is universally recognized as a world class landscape producing world class food. The Hudson Valley and the Napa Valley are coastal brackets for a country that has rediscovered its respect for food and for the people, water and land that produce it.The importance of agriculture to the region's quality of life – its economic and environmental well-being and the health of its residents – is understood and supported by public officials at every level, as well as residents in the entire metropolitan region....The Valley stands as a national model for how the many and complex components of a major metropolitan region can work together to support a food and agricultural system that benefits all residents."

A primary focus of Glynwood's work is at the community level, where both landowners and local governments make critical land use decisions. Through our community-based programs we have demonstrated that once communities understand the value of agriculture, and develop strong networks of collaboration, they will take sustained action to support its continuation.

For example, our Keep Farming[®] program empowers communities to support farming and conserve farmland. The program engages community members to generate the data they need to assess agricultural resources and the contribution they make to the economy, environment and quality of life, including access to fresh, local food. In so doing new relationships are established among community volunteers, farmers and local officials.

We then assist each community in designing and implementing a strategy based on its unique circumstances. The new constituency developed through the program provides the basis for sustained action in support of agriculture, including enacting policies to create economic opportunity and growing essential infrastructure for local agriculture.

"In the Keep Farming process I was impressed how residents and farmers began having new conversations, developed a better understanding of shared issues and have continued to support agriculture in our community..."

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

As a result of the Keep FarmingÒ program, the town of Chatham completed a comprehensive plan with a strong section on retention of agriculture, which has recently been supplemented with its Agricultural Land Preservation Plan, which has been approved by the Town, County and the Commissioner of New York State Department of Agriculture. The plan includes the Town's vision and goals for preserving farmland and promoting a viable agriculture economy. The organization that developed from the Keep FarmingÒ program continues to promote the importance of farming through activities including an annual farm film festival and production of an agri-tourism brochure. A recent evaluation of the Keep Farming program in Chatham revealed that there has been no net loss of farmland in Chatham in the five years since the conclusion of the program

Keep FarmingÒ is the first cousin of the Countryside Exchange program. The Exchange uses the visit of a team of carefully selected volunteer professionals to catalyze a community to develop new networks of collaboration, define key issues, develop new strategies for the future, and take action. The Countryside Exchange program, which has been conducted in partnership with the National Park Service and US Environmental Protection Agency among others, again reveals the powerful impact of using new incentives for collaboration, development of new information, and "fresh eyes" to encourage community residents to connect to the land and become active and effective stewards of their communities.

In 2008 Glynwood created a Task Force composed of a broad array of stakeholders to develop an effective response to this longstanding bottleneck. In April, Glynwood launched the first mobile slaughterhouse for large animals with a USDA license east of New Mexico. The Modular Harvest System (MHS) is in operation on its first docking site in Delaware County. Now we are beginning to create the network of docking sites through which the MHS will rotate to serve farmers throughout the region. Our goal is to have one or more of the docking sites become the site of a cluster of food related enterprises, ranging from aging and butchering and value-added meat production, to vegetable cooling sheds and community kitchens. This clustering would encourage cooperation and synergy among the businesses and facilitate distribution.

Glynwood is fortunate to have among its programs the operation of a farm and garden, which allows us to demonstrate the type of management practices that we advocate. This also allows us to provide a limited number of young people with the opportunity to work with our highly experienced farmer and head gardener. Many of these young people hope to start farms or garden operations themselves someday and this is a first step toward that career. This growing interest in farming as a career is reflected in the Ag Census data. Despite the fact that the average age of farmers is going up, and over half of the Valley's farmers are 55 or over, between 2002 and 2007 there was a 49% increase in the number of farmers under the age of 2

By developing a corps of new farmers, with some solid experience, a business plan and access to mentoring, we could leverage the investment that the landowners, land trusts and municipalities have already made in protecting farmland while providing new jobs and economic activity

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

The farmland and farmers of the Hudson Valley make an extraordinary contribution to public health and welfare. Agriculture in this region already provides fresh, healthy food to hundreds of thousands of residents of the Valley and New York City. It has the potential to produce a great deal more. If this potential is met, it will help respond to many of the pressing issues of our era – from public health to job creation to climate change to the preservation of a working landscape that is at the heart of one of America’s iconic ‘great outdoors’

The Know Your Farmer Know Your Food initiative and the recognition and assistance it has provided to small and mid-size farmers has been a tremendous boost. This broadening of the USDA’s thinking to reflect the importance of farmer of all sizes should continue. All federal programs (including grant programs) should be reviewed and revamped if necessary to ensure that they are flexible enough to serve the needs of the different types of agriculture and the different scale that characterize the Valley.

Of course, while funding is tight everywhere, there is no end of ways in which federal dollars could leverage the funding that can be raised from both public and private sources within the Valley. Here are a few:

Funds to support creation of a comprehensive new farmer training curriculum and mentoring program that would include a range of new resources and providers, including a farm incubator

Funds to build capacity for development of agriculture- and food-related businesses

Funds to support programs that develop the constituencies needed if agricultural viability and conservation efforts are to be effective over the long-term;

Funds to support voluntary land and easement acquisition programs.

Funds to compensate farmers for ecological services and the many other benefits they provide. (Possibly in conjunction with private carbon sequestration projects.)

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

the Town of Chatham, NY: In 2003 the community was in the process of updating its 30 year old comprehensive plan, a direct result of development pressures and a sincere desire by residents to have input regarding how and where the development would occur. The community was also interested in learning about land preservation tools that could be used to protect their farms. When Chatham began Keep Farming, it was interested in developing a Purchase of Development Rights program. But, an advisor brought in by Glynwood showed that Chatham could not support a PDR program. Glynwood's training helped the town gain a better understanding of other tools and strategies that could be used to support land preservation. Chatham has moved ahead with creating a Community Preservation Fund for farmland preservation that is funded through a 2% real estate transfer fee. Chatham completed its Comprehensive Plan and incorporated the recommendations from Keep Farming into the Plan's section relating to agriculture. In 2007, Chatham was one of the first communities in the state to receive a Municipal Planning Grant from the NYS Department of Agriculture and Markets. The grant was used to review the Town's agriculture and farmland protection efforts. Chatham completed its Agricultural Land Preservation Plan in 2009. The plan includes the Town's vision and goals for preserving farmland and promoting a viable agriculture economy. It has been approved by the Town, County and the Commissioner of New York State Department of Agriculture.

As champions of our regional farmers, we need to have data that helps us to illustrate the state of agriculture in our region – good data that we can hold up to say: “farming isn’t dead!” The Census of Agriculture is an important source of such data, particularly important because it is often the only source of periodic and consistent information on farming at the county level.

The new inclusion in 2007 of farm typologies took a step in the right direction by correlating things like farm sales and the primary occupation of the farmer. It shows us how many farms are being operated by someone with another career, vs. farmers who rely on farming for their livelihood, and their general level of sales. We need to have more information related to this kind of scheme. We need to be able to filter information by typology, but also show what farmers in each typology category are producing, what they're spending, how big their farms are, etc.

Regarding the "Great Outdoors Initiative" itself, I am in favor of prohibiting commercial logging of our National Forests. Timber sales of public forests operate at a financial and ecological loss to the citizens who own these lands and sell out our public treasure for private gain. Many of our National Forests, including the White Mountain National Forest, should be turned over to the National Park Service where they will get the protection they deserve. This is particularly true in the east, where public lands make up such a tiny portion of our landscape and represent the best chance of leaving some intact forest ecosystems for our children.

3. Providing incentives, investments and policies to reconnect Americans, including outdoor recreation and educational experiences to working forests.
 - a. The American Tree Farm System does a great job on this issue. I believe the best way to accomplish this goal is to ensure that forest landowners are ensured freedom from frivolous lawsuits, unnecessary regulatory constraints and ever increasing permitting bureaucracy. Investment only occurs in an environment likely to generate a potential for profit.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

5. Engaging youth to be the future conservation leaders of working forests.
 - a. The easiest way to do this is to ensure that working forest are profitable and thus citizens can see they are worth saving. Otherwise our real estate courses, which teach highest and best use, will continue to emphasize development over protection of working forests. Societal priorities are often at cross purposes of each other and thus America remains a country intent on paving our way to oblivion.

Please do your job for the citizens, not for the logging industry. I hardly need to say that you work for us, not for them.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment

I also believe recreational off-road vehicles should not be allowed in national forests and parks. They often do irreparable damage to the landscape and ruin the outdoor experience for others.

With regards to the "Great Outdoors Initiative," I am in favor of prohibiting commercial logging of our National Forests.

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Many of our National Forests, including the White Mountain National Forest, should be turned over to the National Park Service where they will get the protection they deserve.

This is particularly true in the east, where public lands make up such a tiny portion of our landscape and represent the best chance of leaving some intact forest ecosystems for our children.

Agriculture families, programs and initiatives instill young people with a lifelong connection to the land and its resources, and can serve as a model for reconnecting people to the outdoors. Current youth programs should be engaged such as 4-H, FFA, Extension, and scouts in order to capitalize on existing efforts and infrastructures. Of equal importance is keeping intergenerational ranches and farms in production. Key changes in law must take place to ensure that the next generation returns to our farms and ranches:

As referenced in previous sections of this document, the Land and Water Conservation Fund will be a critical mechanism to ensure greater and more effective conservation and reconnection to the outdoors. CCA and its members will consider full funding support after a clear design is determined of how the fund will be allocated. CCA is not indifferent to most agriculture organizations in that our policies require a clear understanding of how federal funds are to be used prior to requesting additional appropriations.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Thank you for the opportunity to participate in the America's Great Outdoors initiative by attending the listening session in Denver and submitting written comments. America's Great Outdoors is an opportunity to transform conservation for the 21st century, and leave a legacy that future generations can enjoy. The Wilderness Society supports the principles outlined in America's Great Outdoors and hopes the initiative will lead to lasting protections for our treasured public lands while connecting Americans with wilderness. We are greatly encouraged by the Bureau of Land Management's recent decision to protect the spectacular Vermillion Basin from oil and gas leasing in the revised Little Snake Resource Management Plan. We would like to see the administration take more bold actions like this to protect key landscapes on a large scale through America's Great Outdoors.

Effective conservation takes place at landscape scale and is directed by local partners and multiple funders working together in watersheds like the South Platte and Yampa River Valleys and the San Luis Valley. Employing these strategies, Colorado continues to be a national leader in conservation efforts.

Great Outdoors Colorado provides a public funding model for leveraged strategic investments in key landscapes throughout the state that encourages collaborative partnerships between local and state conservation entities, landowners and multiple funding sources.

Colorado Conservation Partnership continues to identify strategic priorities in the state and partner with public, agency and private conservation investors to attract and invest more funds to meet the highest conservation needs. Coordinated conservation planning at the watershed level ensures maximum effectiveness.

Landowners in Colorado are critical to conservation success on the ground having voluntarily conserved over 2 million acres of private lands through protective tools such as easements. Federal and state tax incentives remain critical to this effort.

The idea of a land trust specifically for agricultural landowners was new in 1995, but other states quickly followed in Colorado's footsteps. From Kansas and Texas to Wyoming, Montana, Nevada, California and Oregon, there are now seven rangeland trusts which together have protected more than 1.6 million acres of land across the West. This is clearly an idea that works, both for landowners and conservation.

Directly engaging landowners and federal land permittees will maximize the return on investment made through the America's Great Outdoors initiative. Payment for performance principles should be established to ensure that conservation objectives are being met and that every dollar counts toward a more sustainable environment. For agriculture and the vast majority of landowners, the program must allow the use of our natural resources and lands in order to produce goods and services for our citizenry. History has illustrated that voluntary incentives over mandatory requirements will equal increase participation and effectiveness.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Reach out directly to landowners and organizations that directly represent landowners. Offer an opportunity to partner with these landowners to achieve specific conservation, recreation and reconnection goals. Arrive at mutually-obtainable and beneficial objectives that are rewarded based on performance.

On July 12 just past, the New England Governors received the second report of the Commission on Land Conservation and, by unanimous resolution, endorsed the five, closely-related national demonstration projects the Commission proposed, to: • Keep Farmlands in Farming, • Keep Forests as Forest, • Connect People to the Outdoors, • Protect Wildlife Habitat, and • Safeguard Coastal & Estuarine Lands.

Each of the five initiatives was designed by a working group assembled by our Chief State Officers with appropriate leadership, six-state membership, and senior officials from your own federal agencies. The working groups responded energetically to this opportunity in the belief that effective regional action will add value to their own state's related agenda and goals, especially in a time of severe state budget stringency. At the same time, they believe this a most auspicious time to undertake these initiatives in light of the Obama Administration's express interest in addressing the nation's resource management issues at landscape and regional scales, especially through demonstration projects that link the public, private and philanthropic sectors, and honor the nation's heritage of private land ownership.

Educating the general public to the many public benefits of the landscape and its wise use, and cultivating a conservation ethic as an active duty of citizenship;

Making the landscape with all its benefits more accessible to underserved populations, and our settled places, more livable and healthy;

The overall goal for this effort will be to set in motion a farsighted and far-reaching effort to conserve New England's diverse, iconic landscape, and help ensure that it will remain indefinitely healthy, productive, and accessible to the citizens of New England and the nation.

The outcomes we foresee offer a strong, self-renewing legacy on the New England landscape, including: • Farms and forests - a new, national model to increase reliance on the region's privately-owned farms and forests to grow, produce, and consume more local agricultural and forest products, and to displace building materials with carbon footprints vastly exceeding that of wood;

Climate mitigation and adaptation - more large, contiguous tracts of forest and farmlands that will increase their carbon storage capacity, facilitate their adaptation to climate change, and mitigate their loss with new forest cover in cities, suburbs, and marginal farm land;

Energy - development of greatly increased renewable and sustainable energy resources across the region where consistent with other values;

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Sustainable development - maintenance of a diverse landscape on which economic opportunity, environmental integrity, and community development are effectively linked across the region, in both urban and rural places;

Biodiversity - conservation of the existing natural landscape and effective adaptation of plant and wildlife habitat adversely affected by development, climate change, and invasive species;

Culture and recreation - maintenance and enhancement of the natural landscapes cultural, recreational, and educational opportunities;

Public education - greater opportunity to experience and learn from nature close to home, wherever one may live or visit in New England.

The July 12 resolution of the New England Governors asks that the Congressional delegations of the several states support development of these five national demonstration projects; and that the Obama Administration apply related federal programs, staffing, and funding across departmental lines in new and creative ways to help us achieve their goals.

This summer, we are sending out hundreds of volunteers into the forests of the GYE to document this blight, and also to deploy pheromone pouches on selected stands of trees. This pheromone, verbenone, dissuades beetles from landing on these trees. Grand Teton National Park and the National Forest Service have seen success with this treatment, but its effectiveness is questioned by some scientists. So we are going to be deploying verbenone carefully, to certain stands of trees across the forest, and gathering some environmental data along the way, so we can better understand the pheromone's true efficacy across a spectrum of conditions. This data can actually be gathered by using GPS apps and iPhones, which can also be used to document the volunteers' excursions and efforts in the field. Our plan is to have volunteers upload their data to treefight.org so it can be used in the scientific study of verbenone, and also added to an interactive map on the site and to their own treefight profile pages, which they can then share across their social networks, thus calling attention to the situation.

A regionally groundbreaking effort, TreeFight is using modern digital tools, social media, and grassroots volunteerism to tackle an environmental problem that is rooted in climate change. The idea is to give people a more personal, tangible means of responding to environmental degradation by inviting them to come to one of the most renowned wild areas in the U.S., hike into the forest, staple a pheromone packet to a beautiful old tree (which may save its life), then step back and feel a more intimate connection to that tree, that forest, and this environment, and then go share that experience with the world.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

We hope that the America's Great Outdoors program will take its lead from local conservation efforts that are working like those we have here in Colorado. Based on the name of the program alone, we know that you have been looking at our very successful lottery-funded Great Outdoors Colorado program. Today I urge you to follow the lead of those visionary landowners who created rangeland trusts across the West and support the state and local communities who have found ways to bring conservation funding to the table. These programs work here in Colorado and I invite the Federal government to invest strategically in those programs that have proven a success.

Investing in private land conservation and particularly the agricultural lands that make up the majority of the private lands in the West, is a critical part of achieving our collective vision of intact landscapes across the nation. These lands provide key ecosystem services and natural resource benefits at a low cost to the public as they are managed by private ranchers and farmers. They also provide key human needs, notably the production of food and furthermore agricultural families are the human fabric of our rural communities. Conservation easements are a particularly effective, low cost tool to achieve our collective goals. Lands trusts like the Colorado Cattleman's are particularly well positioned to achieve the most conservation on the ground.

1. Local incentives - We have several very effective sources of funding here in Colorado, including Great Outdoors Colorado, but they alone are not enough to meet the demand for conservation from landowners. CCALT has an immediate backlog of more the \$100 million in high quality projects. Federal investments, particularly in those areas that are not wealthy enough to develop local funding sources are a critical part to being able to protect key ranchlands that buffer National Forests, BLM canyon country, National Wildlife Refuges, and even State and National Parks.

5. Finally, we urge you to make the conservation easement income tax incentive permanent. Nationally, this single incentive nearly doubled the pace of land conservation since it was instituted in 2006. In closing, we have the opportunity to protect the West's iconic working ranch landscapes, but only if we work with private agricultural landowners. Based on our success and the backlog of conservation projects waiting for funding, the landowners are ready and we have the appropriate tools to accomplish this work. We simply lack the funding to allow all of us to accomplish our conservation goals. Thank you again for coming to Colorado to listen to our vision for conservation.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Dr. Fritz Reid did a good job in describing the importance of the Central Valley Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta and the coastal wetland of California from Bay to the Fraser River Delta in terms of their global significance to migratory birds. As you know, significant portions of these habitats are found in your congressional district. Ducks Unlimited is working diligently to restore these critical habitats and we appreciate your continued support as well as that of the agencies of the Obama Administration. In particular we have developed very active partnerships with the National Oceanographic and Atmospheric Administration's (NOAA) Office of Habitat Conservation, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and Natural Resources Conservation Service. The impact of these partnerships has been profound. Together we have restored thousands of acres of freshwater and coastal wetlands, providing habitat not only for migratory waterfowl out for shorebirds, special status species, anadromous fish, and outdoor recreational opportunities that are becoming increasingly scarce. Thank you for your past support of this work and we hope you will continue to be one of the primary advocates of wetland conservation in the House Representatives.

Dr. Reid also reminded the panel of the interrelationship and co-dependence of our California wetlands and wildlife with that of the Alaska's boreal forest and Prairie Pothole Regions to the north which supply the critical breeding grounds for waterfowl of the entire North American continent. Your long-standing support and that of the Obama Administration for the North American Wetland Conservation Act (NAWCA) and its critical role in providing funds for much needed restoration and enhancement work has been vital. We would like to reiterate, as we indicated to Will Shafrath earlier in the day that the Administration has pledged to support funding NAWCA at its fully authorized level of \$75 million, whereas the current year's proposed budget level actually reduced this extremely successful program. We understand the nature of the budget process and the need to reduce the national deficit, yet this program attracts at least a two to one match of non-federal money, many times much more than that, so we urge you to help us in our efforts to maintain and increase funding levels for this critical program.

Another issue we raised with Will Shafrath but were unable to mention to the other members of the panel is our Sea Level Rise Adaptation Initiative (SLRAI). We would you know that Ducks Unlimited is not only interested in maintaining existing programs for wetland conservation, but is pursuing new approaches to deal with the negative impacts of climate change. An important example of this is the SLRAI. We know that sea level rise will continue to squeeze our coastal wetlands and their wildlife into smaller and smaller space. Therefore, Ducks Unlimited is proposing this initiative, in partnership with NOAA to preserve - through the purchase of conservation easements from willing seller -- those existing open spaces that potentially could serve as replacement habitat as the sea floods out the present ones. The initiative also involves a renewed effort to restore wetland that have been degraded. I've attached a copy of this proposal and a summary for your inspection.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

In California, water supply is always an issue with respect to wetland conservation. The Central Valley Project Improvement Act (CVPIA) almost two decades ago held great promise, providing water allocations for both wintering habitat and for summer irrigation that provides the waterfowl food, and mandating the construction of the needed water conveyance facilities. Yet, we have seen a declining amount of summer water and very little activity in construction of conveyance, all the responsibility of the Bureau of Reclamation. We need a commitment from this Administration that the Bureau will make good on its legal obligations.

The way to get people reconnected to the outdoors is to promote recreational activities, not limit access to the place. Promote things like: • Challenging roads and trails • Scenic roads, trails, (including hiking) and areas • Access to wildlife in their habitat • Photography opportunities • Multiple trailheads • Access to water sports (rivers, lakes, streams) • Good camping • Hunting and fishing opportunities People with motorized recreation in mind want a challenge for both their machine and their driving skills. The constantly maintained routes will see minimal use compared to the primitive routes when there is a choice.

Leaving challenging roads and trails open gives the public an outlet for satisfying that pent-up boredom without creating other problems. When they close an area or trail, management often has to react to the actions they have created. This circle of closure/ misuse/ closure due to misuse/ more misuse/ closure due to misuse, is not working and therefore should be re-evaluated. One way to help with this problem would be to have educated user groups police the general public. Arm user groups with the knowledge of how to identify the misuses and the ones doing it so they may be held accountable. Make it relatively easy to have people who misuse public lands to be the ones who must either pay for and/or actually do the reclamation necessary. Confiscation of violator's vehicle(s) up to and including their tow vehicle and trailer should be mandatory as well. If the above proves to not be effective enough, create and implement a mandatory course teaching the proper etiquette and use of public lands. Have a "User License" issued to those who pass this course and have special privileges to holders of the "User License". Those special privileges might include legal use of certain otherwise closed trails, roads, and areas.

A "License Fee" could be charged to those having an interest in access to "special privileges" that would pay for the course and promote better users of public lands. Here again, the holders of such a license have a reason to "police" the roads, trails, and areas. The privileges can be subject to being lost if misused.

On behalf of the residents of North Carolina, I would like to welcome you to our great state. We are pleased you have chosen North Carolina for the location of this listening session of the America's great outdoor initiative. North Carolina is one of our country's great forested states, and it boasts of a strong tradition of conservation and forest product production. We are proud of our working forests, and I am writing today as both a mother and a family forest landowner.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

I also manage a 75 acre tract for my 25 year old daughter, which is within three miles of the national forest boundary. We family forestland owners view the stewardship of our land with the same commitment and have similar inspirations as President Theodore Roosevelt. In order to get back on tract with the earlier goals of Theodore Roosevelt, we must educate our youth about the intrinsic values of our forests. That is why I am happy to be able to teach my daughter about the joys and challenges of managing forestland and hope to be able to pass mine on to her someday. There are a couple of challenges I am particularly concerned about as I seek to manage my land sustainably and pass it on to my daughter.

First, I have enrolled in several Farm Bill Conservation Programs, including the conservation Reserve Program (CRP) and have encountered some unexpected hurdles and challenges with these programs. For instance, CRP helped fund the initial establishment of longleaf pine on my land but offers little assistance for the maintenance costs of this tract, including maintaining roads and controlling invasive species. Additionally, I have run into some challenges with applying prescribed fire to the tract that borders the national forest, the USDA cost-share programs have been extremely helpful in defraying costs of forest management including seedling release, reforestation, pre-commercial thinning, and control of pin beetle infestation.

Bottom line, these programs can be a very helpful tool to family forest owners who want to practice sustainable management, but some tweaks need to be made to make the work better for family forest owners.

I want to thank this Administration for your insight. All ideas begin with education, and it is intuitive to have these listening sessions to gather ideas. I think you'll find that most family forest owners invest in their land because they love their forests. And monetary incentives to outdoors would be paid back exponentially.

I would like to share a couple of specific impressions with you about last Monday's forum that might be helpful. The panel discussion was excellent. The comments made touched on virtually every key issue concerning our New Englanders forestlands. Of all the points that were raised, I think those about the economic challenges forestland owners and the industry face was most important. These directly link to the difficulty landowners have in keeping forest as forests and as such, continuing to provide the environmental benefits we enjoy.

These comments focus on regional factors to bear in mind and a new paradigm for conservation -- called aggregation -- that we believe can be replicated in other parts of the U.S.

In addition to the specific thoughts below, I would like to add my support for existing federal programs and incentives that support the conservation of our working forestland -- specifically funding of the Land and Water Conservation Fund, the Forest Legacy Program, increased funding in the Farm Bill and extension of conservation tax incentives. Consideration also should be given to new federal programs with regional applicability.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Points to bear in mind with respect to New England forests and conservation. Landscape scale is relative. Relative to other parts of the country -- New England is small. Yet, its natural resources are of global significance: the Northern forest represents the largest intact temperate broadleaf forest in the U.S. In contrast to other parts of the U.S., the forestlands in this region are overwhelmingly in private ownerships. Some 80-85% of the forests are privately held. Much of the forestland is in small ownerships. The current economic recession notwithstanding, land holdings continue to be subdivided -- driven by underlying real estate values and the transfer of land to younger generations. New England has a long tradition of conservation. Today, there are some 400 land trusts in the region and many conservation innovations were developed here.

New England Forestry Foundation is the only regional conservation organization focused on conserving forests and actively promoting sustainable forest management. A hallmark of our work has been landscape scale conservation. Our organization has conserved more forestland than any non-profit in the region -- 1.164 million acres, larger than the State of Rhode Island. We hold the largest forestland conservation easement in the United States -- the Pringree Easement which totals 762,000 acres.

We believe that aggregation is the solution to this conservation dilemma. Aggregation bundles individual land trusts' projects into one larger project. As such it: Capitalizes on the local land trust infrastructure, provides access to funding not possible with smaller-sized projects, achieves economies of scale for multiple appraisals, baseline documentation, shared common documentation, etc. It is an initiative where land trusts are fund-raising together! Aggregation prompts land trusts to think beyond their geographic region and as such how their individual projects fit into a larger landscape scale effort that protects watersheds, ridgelines, important species habitats, etc. Aggregation is exciting to landowners who like being a part of a larger innovative effort.

New England Forestry Foundation is moving forward with the first pilot aggregation effort in Western MA. It is comprised of and includes the following: 72 projects totaling 10,344 acres sponsored by seven land trusts, projects are in 32 towns and 5 counties, landowners who have signed options to sell conservation restrictions (CRs) at 75% of the CR value, The project is \$21.3 million of which \$13.5 million remains to be raised.

As the Western Mass pilot effort gets underway, New England Forestry Foundation has identified 14 other targeted conservation areas throughout the region for future aggregation projects. We are reaching out to the land trusts in these areas and have met with representatives in nine of the 15 areas. Our hope is to engage up to 120 regional and local trusts in this expanded aggregation effort resulting in 500 individual projects totaling 120,000 acres.

I am writing to express the support of Pheasants Forever for this project and to note our willingness to become a partner with the Administration, Ducks Unlimited, and other organizations that ultimately we expected to play leading roles in conserving this ecologically important landscape.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Easements are popular among many landowners, particularly ranchers, in the Prairie Pothole Region. In fact there is a long list of landowners representing roughly 300,000 acres of habitat waiting to be considered for a grassland or wetland easement. Since the inception of the easement program, landowners have enrolled 1.8 million acres in the easement program, and it is anticipated that primarily through this mechanism we can conserve an additional 2.5 million acres. By doing so, we can thus ensure that this critically important ecosystem, which provides habitat for so many species of upland birds, waterfowl, and other wildlife, will continue to do so in perpetuity.

We think of byways as the 21st century offspring of the nation's conservation efforts that brought us National Parks, National Forests, and National Wildlife Refuges - all these lands were acquired for Federal agencies to manage and protect for future generation. Byways, on the other hand, are corridors through America's communities that are managed by local grassroots organizations. They often link the State and National Parks, Forests and natural areas, unifying the recreational and educational opportunities of a region. In essence, when the secretary of Transportation designates a route as one of America's Byways, the management organization is committed to working with Federal, State and local communities to protect the unique resources while providing access to the experience.

Byway travelers are encouraged to get out of their cars and experience "recreational travel," connecting with the history, culture and natural resources. In fact, Lakes to Locks Passage travelers walk, bike, hike, boat the byway - and only drive it if they must. We encourage the visitor to connect with the people who live and work in the community they have come to visit; to hear the stories, enjoy the smells, taste the food, sway to the music, and experience the place.

Another key strength America has to offer is a willingness to engage as volunteers - both donated time and money. Organizations that have strong leadership and organizational management will have programs, events and activities that serve the community need and attract volunteers and organizational members. The "cream" of these people will rise to leadership roles and continue the cycle of organizational sustainability and stewardship of precious resources.

I am the Education and Outreach Coordinator for the Peconic Land Trust, located on eastern Long Island, New York, and I create and conduct educational programs that connect many, many children, families and senior adults with a variety of outdoor spaces, including our beaches and bays.

There are growing and exciting efforts here to restore New York - New Jersey Harbor Estuary. It is a partnership that brings together the Army Corps of Engineers, National Park Service, Environmental Protection Agency, and numerous state, local, and civic partners. Its epicenter is Jamaica Bay, approximately 25,000 acres of wetlands that are part of Gateway National Recreation Area and Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge. Several related efforts in and around the Bay provide a model for how local-state-federal cooperation can restore damaged ecosystems, improve public access and quality of life, manage growing, flood hazards, and create jobs and economic opportunities. These are key opportunities in engaging young people in outdoor recreation and stewardship of our natural resources.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

To highlight one project in Georgia, much of the floodplain along a 50 mile stretch of the Ocmulgee River between the cities of Macon and Hawkinsville is already in public ownership, but is managed under a patchwork of federal, state, and local jurisdictions. Because of this fragmented management, recreational access to the river has traditionally been very limited. RTCA is helping to change that by working with the city of Hawkinsville and Bleckley, Houston, Twiggs, and Pulaski Counties to develop and improve public access points along the river, thereby creating a canoe trail, or Ocmulgee Blueway. When the Blueway project is finished, RTCA's partners will be able to promote river events such as festivals, river races, and run/bike/paddle races that can be combined with other eco-tourism promotions in each county. These developments will support local businesses, such as outfitters, restaurants, hotels, and shops, as well as create new constituencies for environmental stewardship.

RTCA is a successful Federal program that helps communities. It should be expanded by Congress and serve as a model for future efforts.

The Georgia Wildlife Federation and the National Parks Conservation Association would like to commend and express our support for efforts by the Greater Macon Chamber of Commerce, the Macon-Bibb County Convention and Visitors Bureau and others, in consultation with the National Park Service to seek to undertake a study of the potential for enlarging the boundary of the Ocmulgee National Monument. Such a study is long overdue. In supporting these efforts., however, we feel that it is critically important for Congress to also examine the conservation and recreation needs of the broader Ocmulgee River corridor south of Macon, as was requested by the Georgia General Assembly in 2004.

It is our belief that a Special Resource Study would recognize significant parts of the river corridor as being worthy of inclusion in the National Park system as a National Preserve, an envisioned by the Georgia General Assembly. A boundary adjustment for the National Monument could be used to protect the archaeological resources and Muscogee Creek historical landscape between the Monument and Bond Swamp. A national Preserve designation could then safeguard in perpetuity public hunting lands and natural areas from Bond Swamp south, incorporating the Oaky Woods and Ocmulgee state Wildlife Management Areas.

An SRS would accomplish a thorough inventory and evaluation of the cultural and natural resources of the corridor. It is the only thing that will adequately fulfill the intent of the Georgia General Assembly resolution by making a determination as to whether these resources are 1) nationally significant, 2) suitable for inclusion in the National Park system, 4) feasible additions to the system, and 4) in need of direct National park Service management expertise, instead of protection by some other federal, state, local, or private sector entity. The SRS would produce a range of options and a recommendation that could then be acted on by Congress.

I want to reiterate our offer to host an America's Great Outdoors Listening session in Chicago at the Brookfield Zoo. Attached is information about out facilities, as well as two recommendation for topics on which to possibly focus the session.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

In addition please know we remain interested in exploring a partnership with the Department to provide quality opportunities for teachers and college-aged participants within the Society education and career ladder programs.

Chicago Zoological Society (CZS) is pleased to offer Brookfield Zoo as a venue for a listening session in the Chicago area. Brookfield Zoo is owned by the Forest Preserve District of Cook County and managed by the Chicago Zoological Society.

A listening session focused on the Great Lakes with emphasis on the local, state, and federal public programs and outdoor recreation opportunities located within the Chicago Wilderness focus area - From southeast Wisconsin to northeast Illinois into northwest Indiana and southwest Michigan is proposed. The boundaries of the Chicago Wilderness "footprint" is based on watersheds, but in this highly populated and developed region there are numerous local, state, and federal resources within less than a day's drive from Milwaukee, Chicago, Indianapolis, and Detroit. Such a session could also include the Zoo and Aquarium Partnership for the Great Lakes, a consortium of over 40 U.S. and Canadian institutions that annually host more than 30 million guests - including millions of school-aged children- and serve more than 1 million member-households.

Prescribed fire. The use of prescribed burning in the Southern Appalachian mountains is misguided. Prescribed fire in this region does not replicate any natural condition, or natural process. Fire in this region would not occur unless ignited by humans. Lightning caused fires are so rare and their impact so small that they have an inconsequential effect. Prescribed fire does far more harm than good. It has the potential to do substantial damage to the forest and plant community. It interferes with the life cycle of ground-nesting birds. It threatens to destroy soil nutrients. In the Southern Appalachian mountains prescribed fire should be prohibited on all lands managed by the National Park Service and on all lands managed by the U.S. Forest Service, except, in the case of the U.S. Forest Service, when used to prepare land for replanting. Please note that this comment applies only to the Southern Appalachian mountain region. I make no comment about use of prescribed fire on public lands elsewhere.

Timber sales. The U.S. forest Service should stop selling timber and other forest products. I am an owner of commercial forest land. The U.S. Forest service competes directly with me in its selling of timber and other forest products. The competition is unfair. The products sold by the U.S. Forest Service are highly subsidized by the U.S. Government. This places me at an unfair disadvantage. The U.S. Forest Service has no place and serves no public good by selling subsidized commodity forest products. Private, unsubsidized producers have adequate capacity to fill the entire demand for timber and other forest products.

Outdoor recreation. The primary mission of the U.S. Forest Service should become one of providing outdoor recreation. The Service should be selecting at least one Ranger District on each National Forest and developing on each a recreation intensive usage. Creative ways must be thought up to help finance such programs. On an experimental basis license fees, analogous to hunting and fishing licenses, should be considered.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

National Parks Work! The National Parks embody America's natural and cultural heritage. They preserve the exemplary places and tell the defining stories of the American character and experience. National parks provide some of the best means of connecting citizens, young and old, to America's Great Outdoors, and preserving the natural and cultural diversity of our nation. They are, in essence, the world's greatest outdoor classrooms and provide opportunities for life-long, place-based and service learning. Consequently, National Parks are the heart of America's Great Outdoors and should have a prominent place in the President's initiative.

We are pleased to hear that there will likely be a Great Outdoors America Initiative listening session in the Los Angeles area, perhaps as soon as July. We believe the Great Outdoor America Initiative will provide an excellent opportunity for the Environmental Protection Agency, the Council on Environmental Quality, the Department of the Interior and other agencies to hear from diverse constituencies about the need for improved access to healthy recreation opportunities on our public lands.

We strongly support the objectives of the Great Outdoors Initiative. In particular, the Conservancy commends the President for recognizing in his memorandum of April 16, 2010, that "communities are uniting to protect the places that they love, and developing new approaches to saving and enjoying the outdoors." That is, indeed exactly the role that the Conservancy aspires to for historic structures, cultural properties, and landscapes in the Apostle Islands region.

We also agree with President Obama that the federal government "must look to the private sector and nonprofit organizations" to carry out the Initiative. The Conservancy stands ready to play that role and encourages the agencies charged with carrying out the Initiative to meet the President's charge of providing "the support of the Federal Government to help [our] community-driven efforts to succeed."

As the federal agencies develop and implement a strategy under the President's directive, the Conservancy asks that recognition be five to the fact that virtually every national conservation system unit has historic and cultural resources. That is certainly the case for the Apostle Islands National Lakeshore, where there are an abundance of cultural and historical resources. It is proven experience that public visitors respond very favorably to interpretative activities that involve stories about the past, especially when presented first-hand by those who have lived through, or are personally connected with, those events. We therefore urge the agencies responsible for the Initiative to make the protection and interpretation of historic and cultural values a top priority.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

This historic legacy of many national parks, especially those like the Apostle Islands, is often defined from the experiences of the people who lived in and used the area. History is not limited to artifacts, old buildings, and cultural landscapes. Highlighting and perpetuating the importance of the human experiences that help define the historic and cultural setting of a conservation system unit should be as much a part of federal management efforts as building restoration, artifact display, and archival preservation. In those areas where historic communities remain present and active, a special effort should be made to maintain the relationship between people and the cultural resources. The Apostle Islands region represents an ideal test case for this proposition, as many of the historic and cultural properties in the area are still linked to the local community which is, in turn, deeply interested in the protection and interpretation of such resources.

The Conservancy itself is engaged in Park Service-approved activities to restore the historic West Bay Club property, currently under a use and occupancy estate. In addition to taking steps to maintain the relationship between people and places, federal agencies should do all they can to meet their own historic preservation duties. Unfortunately, despite the hard work and commendable effort of federal agency staff, funding is not sufficient to carry out his mission.

The Buffalo Gap National Grasslands are for the most part, well maintained and being exceptionally cared for and preserved for the next generation. Allotments are managed as an economic unit with private area ranches in order to fulfill the goals of Title III of the Bankhead-Jones Farm Tenant Act of stabilizing and perpetuating the rural, agricultural economics of the arid plains of the western United States.

Reconnecting people to the outdoors must include proper management of our collective resources and wildlife so people will be able to view aesthetically pleasing vistas without soil erosion and fear of disease. Further, closing existing roads and trails creates obstacles to people enjoying the grasslands. The Interior Department should be facilitating, not discouraging, the public's enjoyment by making it easier, not harder to access public lands.

The Buffalo Gap National Grasslands has traditionally been managed for and achieved: conservation of the land and sustainable use of the resources, provided vehicle use for access to private lands and recreation; and equal opportunities the disabled, aged and/or infirm. Recently, these conservation and recreation achievements have been threatened by ideological management of the National Grasslands.

I strongly support this idea and see this as a great opportunity for the Department of Interior and the other engaged agencies to hear from the public about the on-the-ground needs and opportunities to protect and manage our natural resources across a broader landscape for all Americans.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

We have a number of local initiatives working to keep private forestlands intact as working forests while continuing to provide important ecosystem services rather than be lost permanently to development. I have worked to provide the resources needed to ensure that our federal agencies are able to restore landscapes damaged by poor practices in the past and in the process provide jobs for our communities.

Back to Grayson County and surrounding counties. I mention surround counties because to participate in the contemporary marketplace, a certain volume of product is required. The number of people cooperating together is determined by how many are required to get the job done. To start the ball rolling, to attract investments, businesses, and jobs, Grayson LandCare has taken the lead with livestock and forestry -- steps are being taken to increased farmer incomes and secure investments for locally owned and operated businesses. This past year, the committee has explored with Congressman Boucher's Office, Virginia Tech Colleagues of Natural Resources and Agriculture and Consumer Services, Natural Resources, Forestry, and Resource Conservation and Recreation: Lorenz Meats of Minnesota, USDA Washington, Atlanta and Richmond Staff members, New River soil and Water District, New River Highlands Resource Conservation Council, Mount Rogers, Planning Commission, New River Community Partners, National Committee for New River, Army Corps of Engineers, New River Land Trust, Virginia Outdoors Foundation, Blue Ridge Forest Cooperative, Private investors, local enterprises, Grayson County Board of Supervisors, the creation of a value added livestock industry.

the US Department of Agriculture has awarded Grayson LandCare \$23,000 to create a viable plan for a local meat processing facility. The Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services; the Virginia Farm Bureau; the Virginia Tech College of Agriculture and Life Sciences, Business Technology Center, Land Care Center, and conservation Management Institute; and the USDA Natural Resource Conservation Service are working with Grayson LandCare to design a value-added locally based livestock industry including local processing and distribution. Discussions continue with potential investory and managers who are interested in participating in a branded product based upon the quality forages and water in the upper New River Basin.

The Blue Ridge Forest Cooperative collaborates directly with forestry committee of Grayson LandCare, the Virginia Department of Forestry, New Ruver Highlands Resource Conservation and Development Council, Virginia Tech Department of Forestry, Virginia Tech LandCare Center, Foresters, Inc, and Matthews State Forest to establish an increasingly profitable and sustainable forest management practices which will support local industry while protecting the quality and quantity of water in our streams and rivers. Harvesting starts this year in Grayson County.

Until recently, LandCare has been a relatively small effort of the New River Land Trust supported by the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation. With the amazing response of the people of Grayson County, Virginia Teach and more recently of the US Department of Agriculture, Grayson LandCare has grown in statue and influence both nationally and internationally. Virginia Tech has created the LandCare Center to provide Grayson LandCare with the necessary research and development tools so that decisions can be made on the best possible information. Many USDA agencies are poised to assist.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Grayson LandCare now actively seeks financial support to build upon its accomplishments to date. Increased wealth flowing into an area creates a number of opportunities for investment in local enterprises that will support local families and improve our quality of life.

Charlotte Metz Hanes is president and CEO of River Ridge Cattle and Cattle Co, a 1200 acre farm located along the New River in southwest Virginia Grayson Country specializing in naturally raised beef. The far serves as a demonstration of livestock production for the region's cattle farmers and is an on-going research partner with Virginia Tech. Through Grayson LandCare (www.graysonnatural.org), she and four other cattle producers formed Grayson Natural Foods (www.graysonlandcare.com), a company specializing in naturally raised beef. The company strives to improve the income of local livestock producers by direct marketing a value added product. The farmland also includes a business, River Ridge Outfitters, www.riverridgeoutdoors.com where Hanes serves as the President.

Charlotte is a strong advocate of proper land stewardship and conservation easements. "Easements will conserve the farm way of life and can be part of a landowners' estate planning. The New River is the "Golden Apple" for the 21 counties through which it flows in three states. If you misuse it, you lose it," she said.

Thank you for the opportunity to participate in "A 21" Century Strategy for America's great Outdoors." I applaud the demonstration of national leadership to address this critical issue. Minnesota and specifically, the Minnesota Department of Natural resources (DNR) are advancing the three major goals of America's Great Outdoors Initiative (Initiative). I invite you to conduct a listening and learning session in Minnesota to learn first-hand of our innovative work.

Minnesota is blessed with a wealth of natural resources and heritage of an engaged citizenship support conservation. Because of this, Minnesota continues to be adaptive and innovative in response to 21st century natural resource challenges. On Nov. 4, 2008, 1.6 million voters (56% of Minnesota voters) approved a proposed constitutional amendment to conserve our natural and cultural heritage. It dedicates an increase in the state sales tax of three-eighths of one percent for the next 25 years to protect, enhance, and restore our outdoor heritage, surface and ground water resources, parks and trails and arts and cultural heritage.

The 2008 Legacy Amendment reinforces the state's continuing efforts to conserve the diversity of natural lands, waters, and fish and wildlife that provides the foundation for Minnesota's recreational natural resource-based economies. As the state's lead agency responsible for conserving Minnesota's natural resources, DNR works to integrate and sustain the interdependent values of a healthy environment, a sustainable economy, and livable communities. However, we recognize that to achieve conservation results during these dynamic and changing times, we cannot go it alone.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

DNR's a Strategic Conservation Agenda 2009-2013 highlights critical natural resource trends reshaping Minnesota's natural resources and identifies strategic directions that help move us forward. DNR is engaging citizens and harnessing the energy of partnerships and the power of the market place to build a conservation legacy for tomorrow's generation. Below I highlight Minnesota's efforts to accomplish the goals set forth in America's Great Initiative.

Promote community-based recreation and conservation: DNR Examples: The 10/25 Parks and Trails Legacy Planning: DNR is leading a planning effort in collaboration with other park and trail providers, non-governmental organization, and citizens that will provide guidance on how to spend a portion of the funds generated from the state sales tax increase on state and regional parks and trails. The Park and Trail Legacy Plan will include strategies for addressing the issues, trends, and needs for the state and regional park and trail system. A series of 17 workshops are scheduled across the state in May and are seeking public input on what Minnesotans envisions for our future state and regional park and trail system. This plan will be completed by February 2011.

A 21st Century State Park and Trail System: Promote state parks and trails as gateways to the outdoors by ensuring high quality, easy to access, safe recreational opportunities, especially for families and new participants. A targeted redesign of state parks, focusing on innovative facility design, new technologies, and improvements to existing infrastructure, will attract future generations to the outdoors while improving the economic health of surrounding communities and providing for continued resource protection. For example, Minnesota's state park visitation rates increased by 1 million visitors in 2009 -- in part due to successful new initiatives including the introduction of state caper cabins.

Support existing programs and projects that educate and engage Americans in our natural and cultural heritage: DNR examples: Outreach and education: innovative partnerships enhance DNR's outreach efforts. Best Buy recently sponsored a geoarching history challenge in state parks for Minnesota's sesquicentennial. DNR also partnered with REI to provide "I can camp" programs. DNR outdoor and education programs provide recreational opportunities and promote stewardship outdoor building, and safety. Examples include MinnAqua, Fishing in the Neighborhood, Project Learning Tree, Project WET, project WILD, Project get outdoors, Archery in the schools, and becoming an outdoors woman.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Goal 2: Build upon state, local, private, and tribal priorities for conservation and advance those priorities through public-private partnerships and local conservation strategies. Minnesota Forests for the future program: DNR works with citizens to encourage development that conserves natural resources. This program brings together state, federal and private partners to secure permanent, large-scale conservation easements to help maintain undeveloped forest land as unfragmented wildlife habitat, a sustainable source of timber, and a place for public outdoor recreation. In 2009 the program received Legacy Amendment funding to complete one of the largest conservation projects in the state by protecting 189,000 acres of forest through a "working forest" conservation easement. This easement will protect that private working forest land from development, while continuing to provide public recreational access and produce sustainable forest products.

Forest Certification: ore than 4.8 million acres of DNR-administered forest are dual-certified as "well-managed" under the international standards of the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) and the Sustainable Forestry (SFI). Forest certification ensures sustainable management practices that promote diverse, healthy, and productive forests. Certification is essential to maintaining the competitiveness of the state's forest industry in the face of global competition and markets demanding assurance that wood products come from sustainably managed forests.

Working Lands Initiative: DNR promotes integrated approaches to managing private and public land and water resources. This initiative works to unify, coordinate, and improve conservation investment on public and private lands Minnesota's prairie pothole region. The partnerships leverage state investments with non-state dollar and achieves conservation goals at the lowest possible cost by protecting and managing state lands and by providing technical assistance and cost-share incentives to private landowners. The goals to restore and protect an additional 2 million acres of grasslands and wetlands while maintaining the existing the habitat base.

Wildlife Management Areas (WMAs): DNR manages 1,433 public wildlife areas on 1.3 million acres in 87 counties. They maintain critical fish and wildlife habitat, improve water quality, and provide recreation for hunters, anglers, and wildlife watchers who continue significantly to the state's economy. New biomass harvesting pilot projects on WMAs support development of conservation-based energy sources. to meet landscape-scale goals WMAs are managed in coordination with the Prairie Stewardship Programs, the Scientific and Natural Areas Program, state parks and deferral farm and other essential programs.

Groundwater mapping and monitoring: two thirds of Minnesota's public water supply comes from ground water. Demand for water is increasing at a rate greater than population growth. As demand increases, communities in some areas of the state are now struggling to find an adequate water supply. Minnesota is taking a proactive approach by mapping and monitoring of ground levels with state, local and private partnerships to provide information needed for water supply planning and the long-term protection of the state's most valuable resource -- water. In October 2009, DNR developed a plan with a public and private partners for a comprehensive groundwater monitoring network in the 11 county metropolitan region , an area in which many communities are 100% dependent on groundwater for drinking water supplies.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Minnesota have come together to protect the places they love and develop new approaches to reconnect people to the outdoors, create innovative solutions through broad public-private partnerships, and use science-based management practices to ensure effective results. I look forward to working with you on America's Great Outdoor Initiative.

On behalf of Outdoor Industry Association (OIA) and its member companies. I want to thank you for speaking at OIA's industry breakfast and visiting Outdoor Retailer. The 800 executives who attended the breakfast greatly appreciated your insight into the important role active outdoor recreation plays in fueling the nation's economy, encouraging Americans to engage in healthy lifestyles, and in shaping land conservation policy. Your presence on the tradeshow floor reinforced President Obama's commitment to the America's Great Outdoor Initiative.

I would specifically like to acknowledge your support for fully funding the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF). The outdoor recreation industry depends on healthy natural lands and quality outdoor recreation infrastructure to thrive. We are extremely grateful for your long support of and frequent call for dedicated funding for LWCF, legislation crucial to the success of the outdoor industry. 1

I would also like to take this opportunity to thank you for hosting the America's Great Outdoors Listening session in Salt Lake City. By working to engage the American public in an outdoor recreation and conservation policy discussion you continue to prove the administration's commitment to a 21st century conservation strategy built from the ground up.

OIA looks forward to continuing to work with you and the administration as the America's Great Outdoors Initiative listening session wind down and the president's report is prepared. OIA will be submitting a list of policy recommendations based on our own "homegrown" listening sessions conducted across the country this summer. Thanks again for your time and support.

On behalf of the New State Department of Environmental Conservation, than you for convening the recent America's Great Outdoor Initiative listening session in Poughkeepsie, New York. The historic Hudson River Valley is the birthplace of American traditions of conserving and enjoying the "great outdoors". As you examine how to reconnect Americans with nature and heritage and how to enhance and benefit from America's natural and cultural resources. I appreciate the opportunity to weigh in on the challenge we face and offer suggestions on how 'the federal government could best support state efforts'

In our experience, the most effective strategy for promoting conservation, recreation and connecting the public to outdoor experiences is building partnerships. We need strong federal support for collaborative efforts between public and private agencies, as well as local, state and federal agencies. This needs to be couples with consistent, sustainable funding for conservation programs that improve our economy while restoring our environment

I have included an extensive overview of our federal and state program partnerships in the enclosed statement. However, I would like to highlight two examples of programs that could generate both immediate and longer-term environmental benefits with increased federal investment.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

For the past four decades, conservation and service corps have proven that young adults engaged in stewardship programs can make significant contributions to their local communities. Expanded funding of the AmeriCorps program will help ensure completion of a backlog of needed conservation projects as well as help train and support the next generation of environmental leaders.

The idea that students should become involved in natural resource conservation and recreation work on public lands was hatched in the Hudson Valley as part of a Vassar College student's senior thesis. In 1957, Elizabeth Titus Putnam's vision became a reality with the creation of the student conservation Association, which proved that young adults could make lasting and significant difference in the stewardships of public land. Now operating in all 50 states, SCA was the forerunner of national, state and local, youth conservation corps[s programs, including today's AmeriCorps programs.

In the Hudson River Watershed, members of the Student Conservation Associations Hudson Valley AmeriCorps programs provide essential education and outreach service to students and area residents. They engage volunteers to restore streams, eradicate invasive species and conduct citizen science activities needed by researchers and biologists. In the Adirondack Park, SCA AmeriCorps members conduct a variety of stewardship projects that enhance the safety and enjoyment of visitors to the area, such as repairing boat launch sites, doing erosion control projects on states, and removal of invasive species.

AmeriCorps members have also been instrumental in launching the After-School Conservation Club (ASCC), a program that engages elementary school children in hands-on environmental education activities and stewardship projects for 10 weeks each fall and spring. The goal is to bring environmental education to and foster a sense of stewardship in inner-city elementary-aged children involved in after-school programs.

Conservation Corps and Green Jobs. With funding from the US Department of Labor, our department -- working with partner agencies -- could develop a youth employment program which trains workers in green job skills in conservation and stewardship, energy conservation and green construction technology. Unemployed young adults could be placed at various department facilities such as fish hatcheries and education centers to work on natural resource conservation projects and to assist with education, outreach and environmental studies. Participants would gain not only a great awareness and appreciation for the environmental studies. Participants would gain not only a greater awareness and appreciation for the environment but, as important, on-the-job experience as team members with DEC staff working trail maintenance, campground upgrades, invasive species removal, tree plantings and disability access enhancements. This program would serve as both an investment in meeting current environmental challenges and in creating a skilled workforce for the emerging green economy.

America's Great Outdoors Conservation Initiative is something that I personally would like very much to be involved in. I am a natural, out-of-doors type person being more comfortable in the "wild" than in any city. I know my parents worried about me as a child when I would spend all day in the woods; but they soon knew it was my passion and my life.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

I was delighted to get an invitation to hear Secretary Salazar speak at the American Rivers reception on June 4th. I am representing a grassroots organization called Grayson Land Care www.graysonicare.org that is based in the New River Valley in Virginia.

We feel it is very important to include private landowners of forest and farmland in the new America's Great Outdoors conservation Initiative. You stated on your webpage: "The great outdoors that field the American spirit," and you followed it with: "the American economy is fast disappearing..." LandCare is a grassroots effort of concerned citizens who want to make land profitable so it will continue to be open space and start being sustainable. Most small private landowners are the best conservationist for the land. Please include us in American's Great Outdoor Conservation Initiative!

Some of the projects in our SW Virginia area: Grayson Natural Foods: www.graysonnatural.com, River Ridge Outdoors www.lodgeatriveridge.com, Sustain Floyd www.sustainfloyd.org, Blue Ridge Discovery Center www.blueridgediscoverycenter.org, Blue Ridge Forest Co-Op www.blueridgeforestcoop.com. We have partnered with Virginia Tech as they are the institution of higher learning in the United States which is associated with LandCare. VA Tech is a Land Grant University and has been helping landowners in our area realize the Land Care potential.

It is my intention that you will find LandCare a worthwhile addition the America's Great Outdoors conservation Initiative and that Secretary Salazar will be informed of our organization. Please let me know if you have any question.

Having been asked several times "what is LandCare?" I would like to respond. LandCare is a democratic approach to community development with three goals, 1 increase the incomes of the citizens, 2 improve community services and amenities, and 3 protect the resources upon which our lives depend, our food, water, and air. This is about making sure that our great, great grandchildren have the same quality of food, water, and air as we do while we remain secure with an acceptable lifestyle.

there is also an ethic of civility that requires that we be open and honest in our dealings with each other, willing to listen to other points of view, and, when in doubt, seek expert counsel to guide our decisions. We wish to be as well informed as possible. We wish to understand the cause and consequence of the events in our daily lives. This requires that we listen to others or else we will remain ill-informed. In the end though, we decide and it is up to each one of us to live with our consciences knowing that we have done the best possible for all concerned. 1

LandCare is about feeling good about what we do and where we live. Knowing we can count on our neighbors in a tremendous advantage. LandCare is an ethic that everyone looks after everyone else.

LandCare focuses on ventures involving both local people and local resources.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

LandCare is about building community wealth by establishing locally owned and managed enterprises. LandCare is about local economic cooperation. LandCare is about investment in local enterprises both by locals and by others outside the region aware of the value of our enterprises.

LandCare is about bringing out the best in each of us. The best can only appear if we're willing to pause and consider the consequences of our actions, attend to what others are saying, carefully consider our direction, and be responsible for our actions. In a community, people listen to each other or else there is no community.

LandCare is rooted in the belief that ultimately each community must decide what is best for itself. Experience in Australia over the past 20 years has shown that, with the involvement of the people, communities can better serve themselves. The magic of LandCare is no magic at all. What has made the difference is that when people sit down with enough time to fully weigh their alternatives, community solutions can be found that benefit everyone.

The Australians early on had their scoffers claiming that people cannot work together for the common good or that people WILL refuse to cooperate in order to improve their circumstances. But in the end, when farmers learned that by cooperating with their neighbors and changing management practices, they could maintain a better income, have more control over their water resources, and provide more benefits for themselves; when consumers learned that they could get healthier and safer food and LandCare producers, and when state and federal agencies, universities, financiers, commodity buyers etc, worked together to solve food, fiber, foodler, fuel, and financial problems. LandCare had established itself as a cooperative movement among many communities in Australia. 1

As a member of the Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources, I understand the need to protect our great outdoors while concurrently encouraging their responsible use. Each year, millions of tourists visit our state to enjoy our lakes, mountains, forests, and beaches. As a result, our residents have valuable experience in managing and preserving these natural treasures, and a long tradition of outdoor recreation, exploration, and education. Our treasured landscapes include: Mt. Washington and the Presidential Range, the heavily-visited White Mountain National Forest (which is within a days drive of some 70 million people), the famed Appalachian National Scenic Trail, the Umbagog National Wildlife Refuge, Franconia Notch State Park, and many other iconic outdoor places too numerous to mention. New Hampshire is one of the premier destinations for experiencing America's great outdoors.

It is also important to note the economic benefits of protecting our natural resources. According to the Outdoor Industry Foundation, active outdoor recreation contributes \$730 billion to the U.S. economy. In New Hampshire, outdoor recreation fuels economic growth as well. The same Outdoor Industry Foundation report concluded that active outdoor recreation in New Hampshire generates \$261 million in annual state tax revenue and produces nearly \$4 billion annually in retail sales and services across the state -accounting for 7.8% of gross state product.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

The Piedmont Environmental Council was established in 1972 to promote and protect the natural resources, rural economy, history and beauty of the northern Virginia Piedmont region, an area of approximately square miles, all within the Chesapeake Bay watershed with literally thousands of sites on the National Register of Historic Places, as well as more than a dozen Civil War battlefields, large and small.

We appreciate that President Obama has made the future of the United State's land resources a high priority. We look forward to a continuing discussion with you and the Federal agencies that are partnered on this initiative. We are particularly encouraged that the President seeks to recognize the importance of conservation on private lands and the hard work that local communities have undertaken to establish land conservation priorities. All of these are worthy of expanded funding in recognition that they are investments in the natural infrastructure of the nation, supporting many basic services and economies.

Finally, we would like to recommend that at least one listening session be devoted to the role that motorized recreation can play in connecting more Americans, young and old alike, to our public lands. We all recognize that many of our citizens spend far too much time indoors working or playing in front of a computer screen. While perhaps intellectually stimulating, it certainly does not foster physical fitness so critical to a healthy lifestyle. Responsible motorized recreation can and does connect people to the outdoors and in many cases serves as the prime motivator of connecting our young people to America's Great Outdoors.

I am writing to express the support of Pheasants Forever for this project and to note our willingness to become a partner with the Administration, Ducks Unlimited, and other organizations that ultimately we expected to play leading roles in conserving this ecologically important landscape.

President Obama has launched a national dialogue about conservation in America to learn about some of the smart, creative ways communities are conserving outdoor spaces. The public listening session and discussions are an opportunity for leaders of the America's Great Outdoors Initiative to hear from you about solutions for building a 21 st century conservation and recreation agenda and reconnecting all Americans with the outdoors. We would like to have your thoughts on the questions listed below in addition to any other ideas or stories.

Digital photography

wise, use -- stewardship model

Economy - dollars for restoration and stewardship programs.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Facilitation with NGO's and agencies to help make things happen.

LWCF is critical

Tribal conservation districts. Tribal colleges – education. Collaboration with States.

LWCF needs to be fully funded. Cleaning up abandoned mines. Funds for clean up. Conservation easements and federal tax incentives. Renewable energy and siting is important.

Guest ranches. Rural initiatives. HPF Historic funds combining with conservation funding. Reclaiming mines. Small steps in achieving goals.

AGO= fracture zones, landscape zones for conservation.

To turn the CRP into reality: need programmatic authorities and apropos. For the family of federal agencies participating in CRP. This makes us steady and predictably reliable partners to our state, local, civic area, and NGO partners.

Jamaica bay as a living museum of the region's ecology and the environment geared toward educating students of all ages in the metropolitan area about changes - both historical and about climate change and the future.

Harbor access - ferry and all modes of transportation to national parks of New York Harbor. Harbor experiences - create water as a place-worthy of support, education, and recreation. Harbor treasures - Jamaica Bay as a treasured landscape!

A great jobs program - to build docks, restore lands, river transport, to connect city and beautiful NY state National Park status for HV to Guttruss NP in Harbor

From the perspective of a scientist: integrate geographic unites that are connected by moving water and a related ecosystem. Focus on restoration of "ecosystem engineers," species that provide the matrix for ecosystem function: e.g., marshes, oysters, eel grass, etc. Avoid any organizational structure that defeats pts 1 & 2

What Central Park is to NYC, the Hudson River Estuary will be for the entire region. To get innovative plans, engage the innovators - the civic sector.

Identify, preserve, and protect the remaining natural areas surrounding Jamaica Bay. Promote the significance of the national resources on a national level - not something local. National significance = national decisions.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

For public involvement - find the "big idea" that links all experience - water's role in NY/NJ history. Coordinate partners' efforts consistently.

Need "administration" culture change - that the best investment in environmental restoration and urban park improvement are in a city like NY where we have 400 years of urbanization and deterioration. NYC has lost >75% of its wetlands and struggles in contaminated sites. 26m people need these quality of life improvements. Need to maintain robust federal, state, and local funding in restoration projects.

HRE Comprehensive Restoration Plan (CRP) seeks to fund new restoration projects. Additional needs are maintained and management of CRP projects after they are "built" and maintenance and management of existing resources.

Start with the children in school and create an education program on conservation and scholarship for students that want to work in conservation. Like what NYC does for the teachers program - pay for their masters and they work for the school system. Create parks in every neighborhood and Burroughs in NY.

Dream that every child that goes through our pre-K-16+ system has an experience in a NP. The standards going forward are based in education and required for all.

The nature conservancy (NYC office) has a successful and growing program - LEAF - that places students from 10 environmentally-themed high schools in summer internship projects at nature preserves. 5,000 young people, and 300 teachers are linked with over 700 working scientists in the field. This should serve as a model for AGO's effort to connect young people with nature.

Stewardship and educational opportunities to the community and schools. They are the future. Environmental interns from colleges, HS and other environmental groups. Comprehensive plan that is curriculum based.

Use the Hudson River to build together the region and its resources - think in terms of ecosystems. Get the facts right - base management decisions on science.

Access - all types including water borne; multi-harbor shuttle stop. Park partners - sustainable operations combined with free access.

Teach ethics and conservation in the public and private schools as part of the curriculum.

There are opportunities for public private partnerships in the Floyd Bennett Field. Dilapidated structures should be refurbished or razed.

Canarsie Pier is a model of environmental preservation and education and recreation and concessions in J-Bay.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Given the success of the Ken Burns film, and willingness to support parks, would you ask congress to allow a check off box on 1040 forms to donate \$1 or more to support the many national parks?

Longterm success of marsh restoration in J Bay will depend upon understanding and reversing the causes of marsh loss. Successful partnerships have been forged for restoration. Investment and partnership is also needed to provide the science to ID causes of marsh loss. As the president moves forward with an ocean agenda, the opportunity to engage the public at urban marine interfaces (such as J-Bay) should be maxed. Programs to engage youth are important not only to develop stewardship but to increase diversity in our Fed workforce

For too long we have rested on the laurels of America's greatest conservation leaders, from President Teddy Roosevelt to Secretary Udall to President Carter, who assembled the greatest collection of National Parks, Forests, Monuments, Wildlife Refuges, and Wilderness on earth. Preserving these lands required perseverance and a willingness to override local opposition to land preservation, which had stood in the way of protecting the Grand Canyon, Alaska, and other national treasures. Preserving America's greatest places also required meaningful levels of funding, particularly for the Land and Water Conservation Fund. We must be willing to emulate the leadership of Roosevelt and his successors if we are to provide our constituents with the recreational and wilderness opportunities that distinguish America from all other countries.

Just as we could not have witnessed the unspoiled glory of creation without the leadership of Roosevelt and others, so too generations 100 years from now depend upon us to protect lands and waters that will otherwise be desecrated by the relentless march of development.

As residents of the magnificent Puget Sound region, we can easily recognize the importance of the great outdoors and how critical its preservation is to both our culture and economic livelihood. I applaud the Obama Administration's search for solutions to conserving and increasing access to our public lands, improving outdoor recreational opportunities, and celebrating the role that the environment has played in our rich cultural heritage.

As naturalist John Muir so eloquently told us a hundred years ago, we need places to play and we need places to pray! You cannot do that with an LED screen! The metrics show us that in order to exponentially increase outdoor recreation experiences for children and families we have to figure out ways to teach them and empower them to understand the value of these experiences for their families- the education value, the health and wellness benefits, the inspirational quality and that there is value in learning to embrace and protect public lands for the future because they belong to all Americans.

Created Alpine, advocate for kids in the outdoors. Sit on numerous boards, write about the subject. A significant part of what we do is pure advocacy and going forward, we all need to be more conscious of the need for an ongoing "media component"- which would constantly keep the issue in the public eye.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

National Parks and Forests and BLM sites.

President Obama's family didn't wait for a government program or some non-profit to take him to the mountains. They just did it because they saw value in it for themselves and their grandson! We are here to promote increasing outreach to pre-existing infrastructure/partnerships everywhere that are capable of creating an expanded way to exponentially increase outdoor world experiences for kids and families. I'm talking about outreach to faith based groups, community associations, boy scouts and girl scouts, teachers and most important of all- ordinary families- like my own father and Barack Obama's family who didn't wait for some government program to take them to enjoy the majesty of our national parks. They just did it and empowering these families to take individual responsibility is much like teaching a man to fish as opposed to just feeding him.

We have 750 environmental education teachers -organized under the banner of CAEE (Colorado Alliance for Environmental Education) - who are located throughout the State of Colorado and who could exponentially expand natural world experiences for kids tomorrow through a mini grants system- consider the fact that these teachers are already in the classrooms, have a demonstrated passion for the work, are in touch with kids, active in their communities and can bring economies of scale to creating the experiences! And let me emphasize direct grants to teachers- don't set yourself up to have substantial amounts of your grant dollars lost by filtering through administratively overburdened and expensive school districts or city or state governments. Go directly to the trenches!

Frankly, one of the primary answers can be found in President Obama's own personal experience with our legacy of public lands. At a very early age, the resident's own family obviously saw some VALUE in visiting the outdoors and our national parks so they took him there. That is our fundamental challenge today, "How do we get ordinary families to see value in experiences in the outdoors and on public lands?" We believe our Camp Moreno Project is one of those ways; it empowers ordinary families to create mountain recreation experiences for their children and is absolutely one of the most cost effective ways to make families understand the simplicity, low cost and value of recreation and camping experiences in National Parks and Forests. It represents one of those unique collaborations which by working with the Denver Public Schools Balarat Outdoor Education Center, private sector business partners like REI, North Face, the National Park Service and the Alpino Mountain Sports Foundation we have created a 53 year living history retrospective/campsite which documents one Latino family's half century and five generation association with our National Parks and Forests. It's something for emerging population to identify with and works to inspire families to embrace the outdoor world and public lands. On a per capita basis it's creating mountain recreation enthusiasts with a very minimal cash outlay.

Fully fund the LWCF. In state, the Wyoming Wildlife Natural Resources Trust Fund takes money from the extractive industries and returns it to conservation.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Encourage development of groups of teenagers/youth that would get together go do things outdoors. If it becomes popular, it would spread.

- for example, start a NOLS partnership at the high school, an extra curricular activity with year round outdoor recreation,

- FFA (Future Farmers of America) does organized activities going to the Popo Agie falls, BBQ's and outdoor outings. We could introduce agriculture and NOLS and have the opportunity to get kids to intern and see what's really out there.

We want a community driven outdoor group that goes viral and is cool.

Offer PE credit for students to take a NOLS course (or similar); in order to receive credits you have to have a certified instructor through the board of education.

Apply the secrets of the popularity of youth sports to outdoor pursuits. Organized sports works because it is competitive. Consider outdoor games with prizes; create a competitive aspect with winning involved.

Make access cheaper (fee free days, locals' days).

Consider a "recreation easement" akin to the conservation easement that would provide tax breaks for providing recreation access.

Use the internet to make more info available.

Maintain clear, sensible rules and regulations and then provide the people/resources to understand and enforce them.

Build stronger positive connections between federal agencies and local organizations (e.g. National Park Service RTCA program).

Create incentives/subsidies for schools to increase outdoor education curricula at all grade levels; make conservation/environmental education mandatory in schools; funding is now tied to whether students know facts; the education system must recognize the legitimacy of outdoor education.

Tap into the technology that kids use to get them outside (social media, computers, video, etc.)

Make Physical Education a requirement in all schools again.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Fully fund LWCF. Wyoming gets less of that funding than Puerto Rico. Make sure that there are mechanisms in place that allow us to make that work in Wyoming.

Make a big push to reinvigorate conservation corps.

The Secretary of Transportation could emphasize United States Bicycle Route System to identify routes that are rideable/bike friendly in all states that are connected (e.g., Adventure Cycling model)

Support recreation more as one of the “many uses;” it is a sustainable use that does not go through the boom-bust cycles like the extractive uses do in our region.

Provide federal or private sector funds to buy outdoor gear for schools to start outdoor clubs. Outdoor gear companies could sponsor high school outdoor programs. They do it for youth sports.

It would be cool if Game and Fish provided outreach education to school with science teachers to take students to go bird watching.

Every agency should have a local youth coordinator.

We need to be sure we don't only give this info to the federal government but to the local government and school boards as well.

Family interaction is key- family involvement and tradition.

Youth organizations have traditionally gotten folks outdoors – GSA, GSUSA, church clubs, 4-H, school clubs, etc.

Proximity and access encourage success.

Fun and appropriate levels of fear – meaning that challenge or “edge” is valuable to hooking kids. Risk might be objective or human.

The Outdoor Expo in Casper by Wyoming Game and Fish brings sportsman groups - schools bring their kids, weekend brings families.

Activity clubs encourage recreation, such as jeeps, ATV's, etc.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Interpretive materials that help explain the outdoors. Examples: Self-guided stuff and guided learning combinations.

Interactive outdoor activities in the schools, and classes that get kids outdoors.

Public service ads by game and fish, etc., that keep outdoor thoughts and images in mind, provides background and outdoor affirmation.

Work and community programs, such as trail building, etc.

Taking urban kids into wilderness makes a big impression. It blows their minds because wild places/outdoors are so different. The impact is often life-changing.

Gear access makes the outdoors more accessible, and dulls the hard edges of difficulty - especially for kids.

Protecting places, keep them whole and healthy, and keeping access.

A wide variety of outdoor activities opens the door wider. For example, 85% of Shoshone National Forest is roadless, so only 15% is open to actions that require roads. Cramming all those folks into the limited 15% creates crowding impacts and increases damage, which causes further closures.

Clear rules and regulations with consistent, fair enforcement is a positive

Having safe areas, without bears or grizzlies, enables kids and people to get into the outdoors.

Bear education via hunter safety, for example, makes for more successful experiences.

Lander Parks and Recreation Department has added new outdoor programs, including traditional items like camps.

Recent local flood challenges brought many federal workers to our locale, which built connections and potential partnerships.

If trails are in disrepair or rivers are blown out, you're not going to have repeat customers—ensure access is there.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

We have to potential to love our wilderness ares to death.

We can think about natural systems and social systems—what falls short is the education piece--the connection between the two

Teach more of the tread lightly program, not just in motorized recreation (horses and others as well). Wilderness areas are great, and people need to learn how to act (eat, drink, go to the bathroom) in the wilderness.

Campaign on national level to say getting outdoors is cool, camping is fun, state/national parks are the place to be (analogy to the “Crying Indian” ad from the 80’s for no littering).

We need something emotional to connect with. The public won’t remember who paid for the ad.

Integration of outdoor curriculum into schools. Orientations, gardening. Seeing more of it and want to see more.

Extra-curricular/volunteer activities in school involving kids. Parks. Cody Middle School integrated a curriculum that involved camping outside in teepees with wild game and lit a fire.

When I was in school they used to teach a survival class, and there were ski clubs that took kids out on weekends. We need more of that.

Roadside access points to beautiful places and fishing areas work well. We would like to see more pavilions and picnic tables and more family friendly places that would encourage families to get out.

Education and coverage of existing resources. How many miles of trail people do have access to and what do we already have in our backyards?

Outdoor, hands-on education paired with stewardship and community service

The sense of adventure and the perceived rarity of the experience awakes one’s sense of adventure

Capitalizing on the curiosity of youth

Making outdoor experiences fun and challenging, to compete with video games

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

That sense of accomplishment an outdoor experience provides for someone encourages them to come back

Like sports camps, youth can participate in working situations, building trails and bridges.

Working to improve a place increases your desire to protect it.

Organizations have youth camps that get kids into the outdoors, and NOLS has scholarships

Mentoring programs

Using existing institutions and structures to get kids outside, like doing an outdoor camp as a class group

Wyoming Game and Fish does the BOA program for women (bowhunting clinic)

Informing people of the options in their own community

Boy scouts, and Fathers in the Field, are opportunities for youth whose parents can't take them outside.

Creating a connection between recreation and conservation helps build a conservation ethic in communities. Wind River Alliance takes youth on an annual camping trip, with structured activities, that builds on the values of leadership, communication, and trust.

Limiting youth access to cell phones and TV, as they are a barrier to kids' going outside.

Strategic uses for technology, such as the Ken Burns National Parks PBS TV special

Community youth groups, or summer programs at Lander Parks and Rec. There are only sports teams right now.

FFA does organized activities such as going to the falls, holding BBQ's and outdoor outings. We could introduce agricultural programs.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

NOLS should consider younger interns, to give kids the opportunity to see what possibilities are out there.

The high school could start a NOLS-related extra curricular activity, encouraging year-round outdoor recreation

Community-driven outdoor groups, that grow virally and are cool

Schools could offer PE credit for students to take a NOLS course, but in order to receive credits you have to have a certified instructor through the board of education.

The USFS teamed up with Central Wyoming College and taught an intro class to cross-country skiing.

The USFS helps students apply for USFS jobs, and prefers to hire locally.

Applying the secrets of the popularity of youth sports to outdoor pursuits. Sporting activities are so successful that people volunteer.

Organized sports work because they are competitive. If there are outdoor games with prizes, one can create a competitive event.

Getting popular people to do outdoorsy things.

Even though camping is cool most kids don't like it because it is hard work and they are attached to their phones and technology.

Our community has tried to do a big brother and big sister program, so youth can go with someone who has a little more confidence to take folks out. A lot of people don't know how to go outside, and impoverished people can't go camping because they don't have reliable transportation.

The high school just started a mentoring program where the mentors go on a NOLS course to learn leadership - hopefully they can start an outdoor club. Funding such an initiative is a challenge.

Youth idolize popular athletes, and if they go backpacking and say it is part of their lifestyle it will be more popular.

Youth leaders can inspire their peers to recreate outdoors.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

The high school should start an outdoor club. We have some of the best backpacking in the country but how many backpacks does the school have?

Outdoor gear companies sponsor high schools, they do it for youth sports. They could also sponsor high school outdoor clubs.

Leadership and dedication to conservation initiatives, and perseverance, such as historic conservation leaders demonstrated.

Make a holiday where parents take their kids outside

Using outdoor rewards to motivate students. For example, if you do well we will do a hiking field trip.

Mandatory outdoor field trips would get more kids outdoors. First grade could be fishing, and so on.

Field trips, like going with fish and wildlife to track birds, can be amazing.

Community members are already reaching out to teach students about fly fishing.

Taking students climbing lowers the cost for school board to get more students out in the field.

One strategy is getting more opportunities to get students out for an extended time, and access to affordable outdoor education

Opportunities need to be available to everyone despite cost.

It's important to look for good quality experiences to enjoy time outside; to find programs with a track record, and organizations that have been at it for a while.

Partnerships across diverse organizations provide opportunities. Public land agencies and non-profits, for example, should work together.

Public involvement with land trusts, and with other organization that have land easements, can increase the size of wilderness, conserve wild spaces, protecting important habitat and open spaces.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Working with private landowners, including agricultural operations, to keep open areas open, rather than splitting land into ranchettes or subdivisions.

Focus primarily on conservation of private land, but also on general management of Forest Service and BLM lands.

Incorporate open spaces into the education system, educate kids in wild spaces and teach about ecosystems in schools.

Training teachers to integrate outdoors into everything, and take them out once in a while. In CA, teachers were trained to integrate the outdoors into their teaching topics, and they understood the topic better, and students retained more.

Federal land management agencies don't work, the DEQ and EPA don't function well, because there is no one there with the know-how. Public lands need to be returned to the public, and the public should own and manage public lands, few folks left that know how to run the lands.

Go back to the basics. The state should allow people to access public land, not shut down public lands to the public.

What works now is access and more access.

Someone still needs to be in charge so make it more local.

Emailing information to everybody, and better communication in general, help agencies involve the public in lands decisions.

Connecting youth to local parks.

Supporting all local groups that involve education of youth and of environmental science.

There is an increase in demand. Yellowstone had record numbers.

Yellowstone had record numbers

Getting kids outdoors! You need to get them there. Children age are 8-10 open to the strongest impact. It's a problem that they can't get enough kids to go to the park.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Programs similar to Big Brothers/Big Sisters, where a mentor adopts a kid and takes them outside.

Adventures in Learning (a local youth program) provides outdoor activities for children, whether it's for a day or for an entire weekend. They use facilitators with a great deal of experience who also know how to deal with children.

Scouts do a great job of teaching outdoor skills to the younger population—they aren't scared to go outdoors.

The hunter safety program through Game & Fish works well for adults and children

The Access Program through Game & Fish provides some of the best hunting and fishing opportunities are through private lands—some are open to the public, and others have limits to the number of hunters/fishermen that can access them, but both solve the problem of “I want to hunt/fish, but I just don't have anywhere to go.”

NOLS introduces people to the Wind Rivers but also teaches them to get along with one another.

State Parks are a great resource for learning anything from geology to botany.

The Nature Conservancy had a program that was structured such that kids would progress and gain access to more and more difficult concepts, integrating their previous learning in subsequent years. But there weren't enough people to keep it going. The kids were a vehicle to their parents' involvement too.

The Lander Nordic Ski Association and skiing in the Beaver Creek area.

The Land and Water Conservation Fund - \$900M

The Conservation Corps does high quality conservation trail work in the Lander area, and the Fremont County Youth Camp has had some success in bringing youth outdoors.

The Nature Conservancy grants public access to properties they have conserved, while still leasing them out for ranching.

Conservation funding programs successfully fuel habitat restoration, water projects, etc.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

There is a good program for younger kids at the Summer Parks & Rec. that takes kids to Sinks Canyon.

The High School has an outdoor education class

___ has a 5th grade program that gets kids outdoors. California has a requirement that all 5th graders go to a weeklong outdoor education camp

Teton Science School has a 5th grade weeklong program for ALL kids.

Data indicates that most kids who enjoy the outdoors were introduced by their parents, and opening roads, such as the road to Dickenson Park.

Road easements from private and tribal landowners to allow access to public lands

Wyoming Kids Extreme has been a successful program and cannot accommodate all the kids who are interested. Caving in Sinks Canyon, winter activities near Cody, ATV training, and a helmet distribution program. This invites people to take advantage of our resources. WY Game and Fish also has a great program for kids, and for training public schoolteachers to bring this to their classrooms.

Hunter Education Programs.

Communicate well with people to let them know what is available, make it "less scary" for adults

Riverton and Lander have fishing ponds. Bring the activity closer to the community.

Lander schools take the 6th graders to Yellowstone National Park.

Open field trips to ALL schools. My brother did a field trip at his elementary school, but I didn't get to do that.

Get kids involved through working in agriculture, or 4H. More chores=less plugged-in device dependency.

High School rodeo program, horse shows.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

The CCC created many of the trails and recreation structures we have today.

Use electronic media (Facebook, Twitter) to advertise outdoor recreation opportunities

Wyoming Wildlife Natural Resources Trust Fund takes \$ from the extractive industries and returns it to conservation

Shoshone NF is popular with volunteers nation-wide because they support volunteers with pack teams etc. This encourages partnership.

As a rural mountain area, Lander and Fremont County are unique to other AGO session locations in that we are surrounded by vast areas of federal land, as well as significant state lands. Economically, our communities are highly dependent upon the resources provided by public land. The session was clearly marked by emphasis on the importance of access to land, both to sustain our economies and maintain our active lifestyles and cultural heritage. Regarding federal involvement in land management and formal protection of public land, we heard both ends of the opinion spectrum. Many expressed strong desire for less federal government control and no more additional protection (e.g., Wilderness designation) as a means of improving access. Others supported the concept of additional protection to encourage more recreation access and relieve pressure from extractive uses. A common theme involved the need for more consistent and clear regulations and administrative processes to remove barriers for visiting the outdoors. Differences across agencies and a lack of clear expectations prevents many people from visiting the outdoors, or gives them a bad taste that prevents their return.

There was a great deal of discussion about the importance of private land and the partnerships with landowners that can be effective mechanisms to keep working land working, protect wildlife habitat, and preserve cultural heritage, while also increasing access for public recreation.

The topic of education was dominant in two primary realms: education that facilitates visitation for all people, and school education that exposes children to the outdoors at an early age and provides the tools to become lifelong recreators and appreciators of the land. Attendees consistently expressed the concern that many don't visit the outdoors because they don't know where to go, what programs and resources are available, or feel they don't have the skills to do so safely. People almost unanimously agreed that our existing education system fails to introduce children and youth to the outdoors in a way that connects them for life. The importance of parents in exposing their children to outdoor pursuits is seen as critical, and conversely the role children can play in involving their entire families in the outdoors is also important. Some terrific ideas about how to address these concerns were offered and are outlined in the detail below.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Participants at the session told numerous stories of effective partnerships at a local level that utilize existing resources and organizations to connect people to the outdoors and conserve open spaces. Sadly, many stories ended with reports of partnerships dissolving due to resource scarcity. This region, like others, is blessed with incredible ingenuity, motivation and capability. Coupled with adequate funding and resources, these efforts could be sustained over time to significant long-term positive impact. Many conversations focused on building and sustaining partnerships between federal, state and local agencies and school districts, and also incorporating non-profit groups, local landowners, outdoor education institutions, and local businesses.

In addition to the themes presented above, a number of consistent specific ideas emerged from the small-group conversations. We set these apart as “presidential messages” – ideas we believe warrant special attention based on the frequency with which they were raised and their importance to session attendees.

Create incentives for schools to increase outdoor education curricula at all grade levels; make conservation/environmental education mandatory.

Promote private land/public land partnerships to offer expanded opportunities for access, enhance the protection of wildlife habitat, and discourage urban sprawl.

Explore a “recreation easement” concept to create financial/tax incentives for private landowners to offer access.

Identify effective partnerships at a local level between community organizations, private sector and state and county agencies. Then sustain them with funding and support and enable local control.

Putting goals of individual organizations above those of local government and communities.

Expose children to the outdoors at an early age. Family interaction and involvement are key to this.

Provide more access to public lands (open the door wider to provide more opportunity and less crowding in concentrated areas).

Establish clear rules and regulations with consistent and fair enforcement.

Build and support partnerships between agencies, non-profit groups and private landowners and then give the public access to the land (akin to what The Nature Conservancy does in Wyoming). Conservation easements can be very effective.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Expand the number of roadside access points to beautiful places and fishing areas. Pavilions, picnic tables and more family friendly places would encourage families to get out.

Identify effective programs already working at a local level and keep them going with funding and support: FFA, 4-H, boy scouts, girl scouts, church groups, school groups and youth organizations, hunter safety programs (e.g., Adventures in Learning in Lander).

Increase partnerships between agencies and private landowners to provide access for hunting, fishing, and recreation to increase access potential.

Schools: Promote and support interactive outdoor activities in schools; encourage development of extra-curricular and volunteer activities involving kids.

Establish an outreach campaign on national level to say that getting outdoors is cool, camping is fun, state/national parks are the place to be (analogy to the "Crying Indian" ad from the 80's for no littering).

Expand the use of interpretive materials and programs (e.g., state park talks, public service ads by Game and Fish departments) at a state and local level; teach more of the tread lightly program, not just in motorized recreation.

Use challenge or "edginess" as a useful hook to attract youth; iPhone applications to connect people to outdoor opportunities.

Work programs; revive and expand conservation corps, trail building education and work opportunities.

Create and use local outlets for communication about outdoor opportunities (e.g., LanderTalk community listserve, chambers of commerce, signage on Main St.).

Maintain healthy wildlife populations – this brings people out.

Work with private land owners to keep areas accessible; discourage subdivision and loss of working open space.

Access to gear takes the edge away from getting outdoors; create funding programs geared toward providing gear to schools and community organizations).

I am from northern CALifornia and plan to go into forestry, i hope this helps in any way it can because if we're really a nation under God then we should respect what he's given us.

We love the National Parks today and if this land wasn't protected we wouldn't have been able to enjoy it. Its a great lesson in history. sincerely, .

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Please protect the greatest gift we can give our children.....our Parks, You are all for family time what a better place to do it where there is no cell phone service, no tv's, no computers just each other.

I am a avid outdoors man and my children really enjoy the outdoors. I would love to have these for my children and grandchildren to enjoy. I grew up at sanchris and was there the day I was born. Ever since then I have spent almost all my birthdays have been spent there. We spend lots of time at river and creeks. We always clean up after ourselves and everyone else we leave it better than we found it. I am also an eagale scout and have spent many years trying to help protect please keep this in mind thanks very much.

I lived in Kalispell, Montana for most of my life where I was right next to Glacier National Park and spent many summers hiking and camping up there. I have also been very lucky to find a summer job two summers in a row in Jackson, Wyoming, home of Grand Teton National Park. I have experienced some of the most beautiful parts of nature out here, not only in the park, but also in the National Forest. These are some of the most beautiful places in the country, let's keep it that way!

I'm teaching my grandchildren to cherish this incredible world God made for us and to thank Him for it by doing everything we can to preserve it. If more people were able to get out and enjoy open spaces and forests there would be less violence and upheaval in our society. Please help me and all parents and grandparents by encouraging legislation to protect and conserve our beautiful land. We also need more programs that get families involved in outdoor activities, especially those about conservation. Thank you.

I have hiked miles and miles of this great country - please protect the parks and wilderness areas from exploitation - some of it subtle - some very obvious. Please Please Please.

Partnerships between groups. When multiple organizations come together to work out logistics and then present an agency like the Forest Service with a plan, they are able to address more challenging projects. When groups work together, it can be a way to overcome the staff and resource limitations of an agency.

Private business making room for recreation as well as volunteering. Paid time off to volunteer with an organization and flexible schedules to allow for recreation promote wellness and the desired goals.

Role models in diverse populations. Kids especially can benefit from people they identify with who can advocate for the outdoors, and even lead them on trips. I. For example, this session had only 5 women and was almost entirely Caucasian, unrepresentative of the general population, even in Jackson Hole.

Ambassador programs. These programs, where volunteers organized by local groups make themselves available at trailheads and put-ins, can go a long way towards making public land more welcoming. Additionally, these ambassadors provide a vehicle to rally support from users when lands are threatened.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Groups lobbying together. When groups work together they can identify regulatory obstacles and advocate for policies and regulations that address multi-lateral concerns.

People are looking to be introduced to their public lands, especially if there are not specific maps available. By leading guided hikes we open up the outdoors to everyone.

Treasured landscapes are good, but local and county parks are sometimes the first step that people take into the outdoors. If people never have that individual first step - exploring other areas will never happen.

Get schools involved and engage corporate partnerships, outdoor business employees and help get kids outdoors.

Although the best way is to be a leader and take others with you, internet outreach, public workshop sessions, and books can be useful tools.

Be encouraging, but realize sometimes too much access can be detrimental. Availability may not create the backcountry experience that people expect. What attracts people initially, is the remote feeling of wilderness not a paved road to the trailhead. Undeveloped and dispersed recreation opportunities are important.

Communication with the land managers can be one of the most important things a recreational group can do. Sometimes land managers are surprised by a recreationist's perspective, and are very willing to have conversations.

Creating a common thread with motorized and non-motorized users and creating a sense of community with the people that you work and play with.

Access points are important - especially when crossing private lands.

Understand that trail building brings money and tourism to a community.

Education
o Schools should invest in gear/equipment (e.g. bikes, harnesses, etc.).
o P.E. should include overnights in schools or outdoors.
o Retailers should be engaged (private costs, donating product, etc.).

Mentoring--Boys and Girls Clubs; Boy Scouts; BCM; Camps

Volunteerism--conservation coupled with recreation and education (e.g. adopt a crag).

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Value your health--body images

Creation of trails between national and historical sites; between farms and conservation easements.

LWCF!

Environmental outreach to remind people to protect 'their' land.

Education--how to play/where to play.

Conservation easements.

Partnerships work.

Overpasses for wildlife.

Land exchanges to eliminate in holdings on federal land.

Benefits-based management.

Volunteerism/philanthropy.

Supportive public for more opportunities to provide recreation on public lands.

GOCO

Please commit and follow through on AGO's vision to build a 21st century portfolio of protected land and robust recreation opportunities.

Recreation knowledge within agencies o Better understanding, more pros, better communicators, better facilitators.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Education. Ensuring longevity and excitement around any educational initiative/pursuit, be it for youth, parental, societal initiatives within/out of school, surrounding outdoor recreation and conservation. Effectively tapping onto the existing online infrastructure to promote outdoor endeavors and explain economic, social, and health benefits.

Private-group/organization outreach. Many outdoor retailers initiate or partner with others for outdoor recreation opportunities and/or service projects. Also, a number of successful mentorships and volunteer opportunities exist within the private sector.

Public/private partnerships. Government grants for non-profits and small businesses have proven successful (e.g., Austin Parks Foundation).

Outdoor-related events. Events that cater to entire families are a good foundation for extended use. The Texas Parks and Wildlife Expo is one good example of such an event.

Public lands near urban centers. And the preservation and maintenance of existing natural resources and places to recreate.

Exposure and repetition. Programs and policies that are modeled after successful examples.

Targeting non-traditional methods. Creating a different spin on getting outdoors and providing folks with new ideas about how to connect.

Youth. Catering outdoor educational programs specifically to young kids and families with children. Also, encouraging life-long sports versus short-term sports.

Determination and persistence.

Nurturing programs.

Funds, people and organizations who can sustain longevity.

Proper management of resources.

Exposure and repetition of existing successful policies.

Creating a different spin on "getting outdoors" --giving folks new ideas about how to connect and targeting non-traditional methods.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Successful mentorship.

Catering to whole families (esp. parents) with events--regular, scheduled events.

Volunteerism, empowerment, ownership.

Focus on KIDS (cub and boy scouts).

Retailers reaching out in conjunction with public service projects (e.g. cleaning and building trails).

Austin Parks Foundation--public/private partnerships.

Groups reaching out to have outings and service projects.

Texas Parks and Wildlife Expo--great event for education/connection with the community. This event introduced kids to every activity available in a state park. (The expo was cancelled two years ago due to lack of funding).

Encouraging life-long sports versus short-term sports.

Utilizing the online infrastructure that kids are tapped into to get them outside.

Small-business grant to help outdoor growth within communities (i.e., not just non-profits).

Creating lasting impressions for kids.

Public land near urban areas.

Youth, parental, and familial outdoor recreation, and conservation education.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

The economic impact of recreation on a family-by-family level.

Government funded programs.

Ensuring longevity and excitement around any educational program.

Partner better with non-profits or even advertising agencies.

There should be more evaluation about how better to wed the non-profit world with the business world.

Support non-profits and small businesses with incentives and funding.

Funding recreation infrastructure on the local level--need coordinators to drive non-profits, small businesses, and expend networks. Texas Parks and Wildlife state program is a good example.

Micro-grants.

Provide incentives and tax breaks to tap new/under-tapped resources (e.g., the economic impact of the outdoor industry should itself drive more support from large corporations).

Systems of measurement and accountability for grants.

Volunteer programs and partnerships. Many user groups recognize the limits that resource agencies face and welcome the opportunity to engage in good volunteer projects that address needs and connect people to land and water. Partnerships between outdoor gear companies and non-profit organizations have also been effective in providing opportunities for those who might not otherwise have them.

Connecting spaces within a community and across the landscape. Several projects connect green spaces within urban environment to each other and connect urban areas to backcountry through hiking/biking trails, water trails, and greenways. In the greater Portland Area the Intertwine is an effort to do this. Guides such as Walk There guidebook series identify routes that connect spaces in the greater Portland Area. Friends of the Columbia Gorge is engaged in an effort to provide trail connections through the Columbia River Gorge that connects communities. In addition to these local and regional connections, landscape level connections such as those that are part of the Freedom to Roam Campaign are important.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Events that engage the public as a gateway to experiences in the outdoors. Public land days, free activities, sponsored trips, festivals, and events are all important in introducing the public to the outdoors.

Youth programs. Programs that engage youth as part of a family experience are particularly effective. Outdoor educational opportunities that allow kids to see nature in action are especially valuable such as the Salem BLM District's Cascade Streamwatch Trail at Wildwood Recreation Site. Kids can be effective ambassadors for their family. Exposing kids at a young age also creates the future advocates for wild places.

Personal invitations, safety

Working with business community-getting business community buy in and support

Finding significant projects

Engaging faith community

Focusing on commonalities

Introduce them early

Support outdoor education

Popular spokespeople

Physical Education in school

Peer group education, develop leaders

Advertising (sponsorships, email, competent guides)

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Seek variety of offerings

Indoor programs to promote outdoors

Free activities

Golden Age pass forever

One-on-one conversations-inviting someone to come hiking/camping with you. Getting people outside to share experience

Start with kids-kids can serve as ambassadors to their families

Spirit of volunteerism-e.g. Mazamas as an all volunteer organization

Doing community meetings-church groups, community groups

Federal agencies using "regular language"

African American Outdoors Association helps to encourage black families to get outside-build confidence that "you can do it"

Experiencing things first hand is the way to go

Make it easy-if you want someone to take action, make it simple. Provide lunch on hikes or give people a ride

Clothing exchange for people to acquire outdoor gear

Remind people that it's OK to get dirty. Remind people that it's OK to have fun-redeem your inner child

Make getting outside fun

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Industry brands can help develop loyalty early on that factor into a desire to get outside

Donations from outdoor companies can help aid people with their outdoor experience

Get kids started early

Encourage kids to get outside and hike instead of going to the gym

How can federal agencies and non-profit organizations support community organizations in such a way that there is continuity-leverage these resources by empowering volunteer citizens

The more that people are individually empowered the longer the initiative will last. Avoid having federal resources that trickle down and then dry up.

Create a connection for people by making it relatively ease for people to experience an outdoor experience-like the Sierra Club Owyhee Rendezvous

Kaiser's "Walk There" Guide-map different neighborhoods so that they can get around on foot

Motivation-find what motivates people

Suite/menu of options-make it friendly for a range of people

Accessible funding and partnerships with outdoor recreation businesses

Specific designation of land-setting aside land for conservation, migration corridors-let nature do her thing

Culturally specific approaches to engage communities who have been disconnected-bring scale and connect across states

Freedom to Roam, Yellowstone to Yukon-look at land on a large scale

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Connecting green spaces within urban environment to each other and connecting urban areas to backcountry 1) Metro Portland area Intertwine <<http://theintertwine.org/>>, 2) Congaree Blue Trails in South Carolina connecting urban environment to wilderness in Congaree National Park <<http://www.nps.gov/cong/planyourvisit/bluetrail.htm>>, 3) Mountains to Sound Greenway <<http://mtsgreenway.org/>> connecting Seattle waterfront to backcountry of Alpine Lakes Wilderness as well as communities along the way, 4) Work of Friends of the Columbia Gorge <<http://www.gorgefriends.org>> to connect trails and communities in the Columbia Gorge Scenic Area

Creative Partnerships

Tie in federal transportation dollars with urban parks and natural environment-recreation, conservation, and non-motorized activities.

Involving community

Connecting people

Stewardship

Transportation-sponsored trips

Inviting someone

Community outreach

Connecting with family! And community (community specific days dedicated to wilderness; family-based programs)

Programs that ask for a fee (vs. free) to guarantee attendance

Community-based organizations to translate show trust

Job opportunities in wilderness for young people: outdoor experience to lead to income generator and incentive that offers long-term benefits and educational access

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Tri-Met routes (e.g. new route from PDX to Astoria to PDX)

Inspiration via presentations

L.L. Stubbs State Park (30 minutes outside of town)
<http://www.oregonstateparks.org/park_255.php>

City parks and sidewalks to get there-safety

Safe outdoor city infrastructure

Summer park parties, festivals, and events

City incentive to visit every park in the city

Expose kids at a young age-then its ingrained to love these places and we have future advocates for wild places

Good volunteer work projects-connect people to land and water

Non-profit organizations partnering with the government

Diversity of levels for activities that are accessible

Public days - e.g. National Parks day - free access. Think of these events as a gateway to experiences

National Park Service - community outreach

SCA - non profits / others - collaboration o Introducing and exposing key populations to outdoors
o Recreational experiences with inner city strategies

NBH - programming o New ways to old days o Outside box

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Collaborative programs o School programs o Economies

Network coordination/oversight

NPS RTCA program - collaborative

Grants from Government and foundations

Land protection

Non-profits

Public agency/private advocate role

Environmental Education

Internal Planning, policy, collaboration (Greenway)

Conservation leadership at Student Conservation Association (SCA) experiences for youth outdoors o opens up new possibilities - local > national crew - progressive opportunities o curiosity about the outdoors

Appalachian Mountain Club Youth Opportunities Program - o opportunity for discovery o consistent opportunities

Youth initiatives - Let's Move Outside (SCA)

Youth Summit (OIA)

Youth Camps - exposing kids to the outdoors

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

local stewardship efforts (Friends Groups) o Local ownership/partnerships

Start with neighborhood > State > National

Drive Traffic to Parks

Range of properties and accessibility and proximity

Convenience (ex/recycling)

Place based learning

Structured Activities o Welcoming and engaging o Show (model) ways to have fun o Social norms - learning from family (kids teaching parents) o Trip facilitators - AMC and other non-profits o Family walking groups o Field trips/groups activities - helps spread the word

Summer Jobs

Volunteer Programs

Providing opportunity for intimate relationship with outdoors o educational, experiential, and spiritual - intentionality and reflection opportunities - value in outdoors

Make conservation profession a valued career as it used to be

Conservation = cool so that is working (tipping point)

Raise awareness on importance of getting outdoors as strategy on obesity

Building leaders through youth o Programs need structure and guidance o Building citizen stewards for conservation o Lifestyle shifts

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Partnerships - need to create a chain

Reinforcement of contributions of others

a. Networking interested parties, collaboration 26%, 349

b. Focus on youth, engage next generation of stewards - 25%, 339

c. Convey health, education, economic benefit - 25%, 335

d. Provide structure for facilitate outdoor experiences - 24%, 329

1.) Landscape is a core value so should be preserved. Engage next generation of stewards and users.

2.) Focus on kids and the adults will come. Minimize barriers and provide opportunities (i.e. Maine DOC's first time campers, WinterKids)

3.) Getting people around the table, brining diverse interests together - goal of having all interests represented, focus on shared successes. Landowner liability laws are very protective. Public investment encourages private investment. Scale matters - local, regional, state, national - apply right tools to right scale.

4.) Internal networks that determine limits and strengths of partners (collaboration). Connect with youth through schools. Grassroots bottom up approaches. Reaching out to teachers, offer a "multiplier" effect based on classroom material gathered.

5.) Convey to public the health, education, and economic benefit of land conservation and outdoor recreation. Build on existing organizations/programs and successes. Conveying to outdoor recreation. Build on existing organizations/programs and successes. Conveying to people a sense of ownership (think local land trusts, active members in organizations, environmental education). Provide a quality experience, people will come. We need environmental education in our schools as this would connect almost all youth to the outdoors. Larger scale initiatives and coalitions based on regions - Mahoosuc Initiative in ME and NH. Using technology to your advantage.

6.) Integrate connection to outdoors with healthy lifestyles initiative. Partnerships and community-based orientation. Articulate full range of values of recreation and conservation and reconnection: health, emotional, cognitive, etc.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

7.) Structured access and guided experiences (either people as guides or materials to guide) that are age specific and described for different activities. Good relationships with private landowners as exemplified for instance through conservation easements that ensure public access to private lands. Urban trails in urban areas gives urban areas easy access to the outdoors. New environmental funders network.

There was a great deal of discussion about the importance of private land and the partnerships with landowners that can be effective mechanisms to keep working land working, protect wildlife habitat, preserve cultural heritage, while also increasing access for public recreation.

Identify effective programs already working at a local level and keep them going with funding and support: FFA, 4-H, boy scouts, girl scouts, church groups, school groups and youth organizations, hunter safety programs (e.g., Adventures in Learning in Lander).

Establish an outreach campaign on national level to say that getting outdoors is cool, camping is fun, stat/national parks are the place to be (analogy to the "Crying Indian" ad from the 80's for not littering).

Establish student mentoring programs (e.g., Lander High School) in which older students introduce younger ones to the outdoors and provide training encouragement and inspiration.

Use challenge or "edginess" as a useful hook to attract youth; iPhone applications to connect people to outdoor opportunities.

Create and use outlets for communication about outdoor opportunities (e.g., LanderTalk community listserve, chambers of commerce, signage on Main St.).

Maintain healthy wildlife populations - this brings people out.

Access to gear takes the edge away from getting outdoors; create funding programs geared toward providing gear to schools and community organizations.

Use of federal funds for trail projects (bike paths, multi-use path) is getting more people out on bikes. More extensive trail systems in towns and cities connecting parks to schools will increase opportunity. Safe routes to school will increase safe activity outdoors.

Family interaction is key- family involvement and tradition.

Youth organizations have traditionally gotten folks outdoors – GSA, GSUSA, church clubs, 4- H, school clubs, etc.

Proximity and access encourage success.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Fun and appropriate levels of fear – meaning that challenge or “edge” is valuable to hooking kids. Risk might be objective or human.

The Outdoor Expo in Casper by Wyoming Game and Fish brings sportsman groups - schools bring their kids, weekend brings families.

Activity clubs encourage recreation, such as jeeps, ATV’s, etc.

Interpretive materials that help explain the outdoors. Examples: Self-guided stuff and guided learning combinations.

Interactive outdoor activities in the schools, and classes that get kids outdoors.

Public service ads by game and fish, etc., that keep outdoor thoughts and images in mind, provides background and outdoor affirmation.

Work and community programs, such as trail building, etc.

The Youth Conservation Corps. Years ago, trips had work and conservation – caring for the land combined with work projects.

Taking urban kids into wilderness makes a big impression. It blows their minds because wild places/outdoors are so different. The impact is often life-changing.

Gear access makes the outdoors more accessible, and dulls the hard edges of difficulty - especially for kids.

If trails are in disrepair or rivers are blown out, you’re not going to have repeat customers—ensure access is there.

More public conversation and media coverage of recreation to balance the focus on energy.

Seeing kids and families out on trail is great, but the negative part of that is people who ruin things and tear up the land. So balancing use with preservation.

Affordable hiker/biker campsites at state parks that are cheaper than car/RV camping sites.

More sharing of information about economic impacts and opportunities that exist for individuals to engage with the outdoors.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Tourism doesn't stop in the summer.

Teach more of the tread lightly program, not just in motorized recreation (horses and others as well). Wilderness areas are great, and people need to learn how to act (eat, drink, go to the bathroom) in the wilderness.

We're still getting accumulation of annoying impacts. Firewooding is everywhere. Even though there are fewer people camping, we're leaving a legacy of that everywhere, and that's something we can focus on. We need more education on how to minimize impact.

Campaign on national level to say getting outdoors is cool, camping is fun, state/national parks are the place to be (analogy to the "Crying Indian" ad from the 80's for no littering).

We need something emotional to connect with. The public won't remember who paid for the ad.

Integration of outdoor curriculum into schools. Orientations, gardening. Seeing more of it and want to see more.

Extra-curricular/volunteer activities in school involving kids. Parks. Cody Middle School integrated a curriculum that involved camping outside in teepees with wild game and lit a fire.

When I was in school they used to teach a survival class, and there were ski clubs that took kids out on weekends. We need more of that.

Outdoor, hands-on education paired with stewardship and community service.

Making outdoor experiences fun and challenging, to compete with video games.

That sense of accomplishment an outdoor experience provides for someone encourages them to come back.

Like sports camps, youth can participate in working situations, building trails and bridges.

Working to improve a place increases your desire to protect it.

Organizations have youth camps that get kids into the outdoors, and NOLS has scholarships.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Mentoring programs

Using existing institutions and structures to get kids outside, like doing an outdoor camp as a class group.

Wyoming Game and Fish does the BOA program for women (bow hunting clinic)

Informing people of the options in their own community.

Virtual trail tours

Boy scouts, and Fathers in the Field, are opportunities for youth whose parents can't take them outside.

Creating a connection between recreation and conservation helps build a conservation ethic in communities. Wind River Alliance takes youth on an annual camping trip, with structured activities, that builds on the values of leadership, communication, and trust.

Federal agencies should get together with the local state agencies and the school districts to get together to talk about how to facilitate an outreach program

Taking student climbing lowers the cost for school board to get more students out in the field.

It's important to look for good quality experiences to enjoy time outside; to find programs with a track record, and organizations that have been at it for a while.

Partnerships across diverse organizations provide opportunities. Public land agencies and non-profits, for example, should work together .

Public involvement with land trusts, and with other organization that have land easements, can increase the size of wilderness, conserve wild spaces, protecting important habitat and open spaces.

Working with private landowners, including agricultural operations, to keep open areas open, rather than splitting land into ranchettes or subdivisions.

Training teachers to integrate outdoors into everything, and take them out once in a while. In CA, teachers were trained to integrate the outdoors into their teaching topics, and they understood the topic better, and students retained more.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

What work now is access and more access.

There is an increase in demand. Yellowstone had record numbers.

Yellowstone had record numbers

There is a good program for younger kids at the Summer Parks & Rec. that takes kids to Sinks Canyon.

The High School has an outdoor education class

___ has a 5th grade program that gets kids outdoors. California has a requirement that all 5th graders go to a weeklong outdoor education camp

Teton Science School has a 5th grade weeklong program for ALL kids.

Data indicates that most kids who enjoy the outdoors were introduced by their parents, and opening roads, such as the road to Dickenson Park.

Wyoming Kids Extreme has been a successful program and cannot accommodate all the kids who are interested. Caving in Sinks Canyon, winter activities near Cody, ATV training, and a helmet distribution program. This invites people to take advantage of our resources. WY Game and Fish also has a great program for kids, and for training public schoolteachers to bring this to their classrooms.

Hunter Education Programs.

Lander schools take the 6th graders to Yellowstone National Park.

High School rodeo program, horse shows

The CCC created many of the trails and recreation structures we have today.

Wyoming Wildlife Natural Resources Trust Fund takes \$ from the extractive industries and returns it to conservation

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Shoshone NF is popular with volunteers nation-wide because they support volunteers with pack teams etc. This encourages partnership.

Organizations can work together to better to coordinate their efforts and to communicate. Fremont County ATV Association has to contact many different organizations to find out where they can ride.

Make Physical Education a requirement in all schools

Have more days where fees are waived to enter National Parks

The education system should emphasize high-stakes testing less and encourage outdoor activities and experiential learning more.

Create incentives/subsidies for schools to increase outdoor education curricula at all grade levels; make conservation/environmental education mandatory in schools; funding is now tied to whether students know facts; the education system must recognize the legitimacy of outdoor education.

Field trips, like going with fish and wildlife to track birds, can be amazing.

Strategic uses for technology, such as the Ken Burns National Parks PBS TV special

Community youth groups, or summer programs at Lander Parks and Rec. There are only sports teams right now.

FFA does organized activities such as going to the falls, holding BBQ's and outdoor outings. We could introduce agricultural programs.

NOLS should consider younger interns, to give kids the opportunity to see what possibilities are out there.

The high school could start a NOLS-related extra curricular activity, encouraging year-round outdoor recreation.

The USFS teamed up with Central Wyoming College and taught an intro class to cross-country skiing

The USFS helps students apply for USFS jobs, and prefers to hire locally.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Applying the secrets of the popularity of youth sports to outdoor pursuits. Sporting activities are so successful that people volunteer.

Organized sports work because they are competitive. If there are outdoor games with prizes, one can create a competitive event.

Getting popular people to do outdoorsy things.

Even though camping is cool most kids don't like it because it is hard work and they are attached to their phones and technology.

Our community has tried to do a big brother and big sister program, so youth can go with someone who has a little more confidence to take folks out. A lot of people don't know how to go outside, and impoverished people can't go camping because they don't have reliable transportation.

The high school just started a mentoring program where the mentors go on a NOLS course to learn leadership - hopefully they can start an outdoor club. Funding such an initiative is a challenge.

Youth idolize popular athletes, and if they go backpacking and say it is part of their lifestyle it will be more popular.

Youth leaders can inspire their peers to recreate outdoors.

The high school should start an outdoor club. We have some of the best backpacking in the country but how many backpacks does the school have.

Leadership and dedication to conservation initiative, and perseverance, such as historic conservation leaders demonstrated.

Make a holiday where parents take their kids outside.

Using outdoor rewards to motivate students. For example, if you do well we will do a hiking field trip.

Mandatory outdoor field trips would get more kids outdoors. First grade could be fishing, and so on.

Community members are already reaching out to teach students about fly fishing.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

The session was clearly marked by emphasis on the importance of access to land, both to sustain our economies and maintain our active lifestyles and cultural heritage. Regarding federal involvement in land management and formal protection of public land, we heard both ends of the opinion spectrum. Many expressed strong desire for less federal government control and no more additional protection (e.g., Wilderness designation) as a means of improving access. Others supported the concept of additional protection to encourage more recreation access and relieve pressure from extractive uses. A common theme involved the need for more consistent and clear regulations and administrative processes to remove barriers for visiting the outdoors.

The topic of education was dominant in two primary realms: education that facilitates visitation for all people, and school education that exposes children to the outdoors at an early age and provides the tools to become lifelong recreates and appreciators of the land. Attendees consistently expressed the concern that many don't visit the outdoors because they don't know where to go, what programs and resources are available, or feel they don't have the skills to do so safely. People almost unanimously agreed that our existing education system fails to introduce children and youth to the outdoors in a way that connects them for life. The importance of parents in exposing their children to outdoor pursuits is seen as critical, and conversely the role children can play in involving their entire families in the outdoors is also important.

Participants at the session told numerous stories of effective partnerships at a local level that utilize existing resources and organizations to connect people to the outdoors and conserve open spaces. Sadly, many stories ended with reports of partnerships dissolving due to resource scarcity. This region, like others, is blessed with incredible talent, motivation and capability. Coupled with adequate funding and resources, these efforts could be sustained over time to significant long-term positive impact. Many conversations focused on building and sustaining partnerships between federal agencies and local school districts, and also incorporating non-profit groups, outdoor education institutions, and local businesses.

Open field trips to ALL schools. My brother did a field trip at his elementary school, but I didn't get to do that.

Federal land management agencies don't work, the DEQ and EPA don't function well because there is no one there with the know-how. Public lands need to be returned to the public, and the public should own and manage public lands, few folk left that know how to run the lands.

It is hard to balance our need for industrial development of these lands with my love for these lands. I drive a car. It has an impact. To best address this, we need to be smart with our impact. And balance development with protecting lands.

Getting kids outdoors! You need to get them there. Children age 8-10 open to the strongest impact. It's a problem that they can't get enough kids to go to the park.

No child left behind is forcing teachers to find the most objective parts of education, and forcing them to teach to the test. Funding is tied to whether students know facts. It needs to change. Students love to learn outside.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Communication between public lands folks and the public could be better, and many forms of communication should be used.

The system has rid itself of good teachers that would take them outside. Access to our youth is biggest and school system don't provide funding.

Go back to the basics. The state should allow people to access public land, not shut down public lands to the public.

Communicate well with people to let them know what is available, make it "less scary" for adults

One strategy is getting more opportunities to get students out for an extended time, and access to affordable outdoor education.

Supporting all local groups that involve education of youth and of environmental science

Riverton and Lander have fishing ponds. Bring the activity closer to the community.

Limit cell phone use - it's an obstacle; employ strategic use of technology.

Encourage development of groups of teenagers/youth that would get together go do things outdoors. If it becomes popular, it would spread.

- for example, start a NOLS partnership at the high school, an extra curricular activity with year round outdoor recreation,

- FFA (Future Farmers of America) does organized activities going to the Popo Agie falls, BBQ's and outdoor outings. We could introduce agriculture and NOLS and have the opportunity to get kids to intern and see what's really out there.

Improving communication. This includes two aspects. First, communication between groups and agencies about what is working and what is not. Second, between groups and the public, where better messaging, promotion and advertising can make a give difference. In some cases, opportunities exist for people underrepresented in the outdoors (like inner-city kids) but they do not get the message.

Protecting places, keep them whole and healthy, and keeping access.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

A wide variety of outdoor activities opens the door wider. For example, 85% of Shoshone National Forest is roadless, so only 15% is open to actions that require roads. Cramming all those folks into the limited 15% creates crowding impacts and increases damage, which causes further closures.

Clear rules and regulations with consistent, fair enforcement is a positive. Heavy-handed enforcement turns people off and frustrates them.

Having safe areas, without bears or grizzlies, enables kids and people to get into the outdoors.

Bear education via hunter safety, for example, makes for more successful experiences.

Maintaining healthy wildlife populations brings people into the outdoors.

Game and fish walk-in areas are successful, which are agreements with private landowners to allow people hunting and fishing access.

Lander Parks and Recreation Department has added new outdoor programs, including traditional items like camps.

LA County Fair YouTube videos showing silly LA County behaviors illustrate that urban folks don't have great outdoor connections. Or iPhone apps.

Adventures in Learning (a local youth program) provides outdoor activities for children, whether it's for a day or for an entire weekend. They use facilitators with a great deal of experience who also know how to deal with children.

Scouts do a great job of teaching outdoor skills to the younger population—they aren't scared to go outdoors.

The hunter safety program through Game & Fish works well for adults and children

The Access Program through Game & Fish provides some of the best hunting and fishing opportunities are through private lands—some are open to the public, and others have limits to the number of hunters/fishermen that can access them, but both solve the problem of "I want to hunt/fish, but I just don't have anywhere to go."

NOLS introduces people to the Wind Rivers but also teaches them to get along with one another.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

State Parks are a great resource for learning anything from geology to botany.

The Nature Conservancy had a program that was structured such that kids would progress and gain access to more and more difficult concepts, integrating their previous learning in subsequent years. But there weren't enough people to keep it going. The kids were a vehicle to their parents' involvement too.

The Lander Nordic Ski Association and skiing in the Beaver Creek area.

The Land and Water Conservation Fund - \$900M

The Conservation Corps does high quality conservation trail work in the Lander area, and the Fremont County Youth Camp has had some success in bringing youth outdoors.

The Nature Conservancy grants public access to properties they have conserved, while still leasing them out for ranching.

Conservation funding programs successfully fuel habitat restoration, water projects, etc.

Conservation easements are an effective way to protect land and provide additional public access. And we have a lot of federally protected land.

Lack of a Secure and Fully Funded, Mandatory Land and Water Conservation Fund. The Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) was established in 1965 by Congress as a bipartisan commitment to invest in our natural areas, working lands and historic and cultural heritage, and to increase access to recreational opportunities for all Americans. The LWCF has protected land for our national parks, national wildlife refuges, national forests, national historic and scenic trails, and wild and scenic river corridors. In addition, the LWCF state assistance program has helped develop new state parks, trails, and recreation lands in every state in the nation. The LWCF has also helped farmers and ranchers protect working lands with conservation easements and saved some of America's richest wildlife areas for hunting and fishing.

National Parks Work! The National Parks embody America's natural and cultural heritage. They preserve the exemplary places and tell the defining stories of the American character and experience. National parks provide some of the best means of connecting citizens, young and old, to America's Great Outdoors, and preserving the natural and cultural diversity of our nation. They are, in essence, the world's greatest outdoor classrooms and provide opportunities for life-long, place-based and service learning. Consequently, National Parks are the heart of America's Great Outdoors and should have a prominent place in the President's initiative.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

The National Park Service Works! The National Park Service has become legendary for doing amazing things with few resources. To give one example, the Rivers, Trails, and Conservation Assistance Program (RTCA), which receives less than one percent of the National Park Service budget, is making outstanding contributions to community-based conservation efforts around the southeast. The program offers NPS staff assistance to community partners for planning, organizational development, project coordination, facilitation, and public involvement in achieving locally-defined goals for natural resource conservation and outdoor recreation.

To highlight one project in Georgia, much of the floodplain along a 50 mile stretch of the Ocmulgee River between the cities of Macon and Hawkinsville is already in public ownership, but is managed under a patchwork of federal, state, and local jurisdictions. Because of this fragmented management, recreational access to the river has traditionally been very limited. RTCA is helping to change that by working with the city of Hawkinsville and Bleckley, Houston, Twiggs, and Pulaski Counties to develop and improve public access points along the river, thereby creating a canoe trail, or Ocmulgee Blueway. When the Blueway project is finished, RTCA's partners will be able to promote river events such as festivals, river races, and run/bike/paddle races that can be combined with other eco-tourism promotions in each county. These developments will support local businesses, such as outfitters, restaurants, hotels, and shops, as well as create new constituencies for environmental stewardship.

Ultimately, this project has the potential to link the city of Macon and the Ocmulgee National Monument downstream to the Altamaha River Canoe Trail and the city of Darien on the Georgia coast, over 200 miles away. From Darien it will connect to the SE Coast Saltwater Paddling Trail, running along the coasts of Florida, Georgia, South Carolina, North Carolina, and Virginia. RTCA is a successful Federal program that helps communities. It should be expanded by Congress and serve as a model for future efforts.

Luckily, groups like the Conservation Trust for North Carolina (CTNC) are working hard to encourage natural resource conservation on private lands bordering the Parkway through the use of conservation easements. To date, CTNC has protected over 30,000 acres along the Parkway in 39 locations. The National Park Service is also reaching out to surrounding landowners and communities in an effort to forge closer ties around issues of planning and land management. There is even talk of creating a Regional Institute to formalize these ties and to facilitate stewardship of the Parkway through consultation between Federal, state and local planning jurisdictions.

The National Park Service and the Appalachian Trail Conservancy have a unique management partnership. Serving as a model for landscape conservation, the trail's protected corridor encompasses more than 250,000 acres, making it one of the largest units of the National Park System in the eastern United States. Preservation of historic structures along the trail offer hikers the opportunity to pause and learn something about important people and events in the nation's history.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Currently, the AT provides a venue for state-of-the-art science, with 65 institutions, ranging from National Geographic to NASA to a half dozen universities, conducting research along the trail in a coordinated effort shepherded by NPS and the Appalachian Trail Conservancy. Finally, the AT runs through 14 states and 20-plus congressional districts, providing a great platform for programs that many legislative offices can get behind, such as National Parks as outdoor classrooms where children can learn about and appreciate wildlife, rivers, canyons, mountains, and see history come alive. Once again, the stewardship of these lands requires a fully and permanently funded Land and Water Conservation Fund, able to finance acquisitions and easements that protect the trail's scenic corridor.

The Altamaha River, on the coastal plain of Georgia, is formed by the confluence of the Ocmulgee and Oconee Rivers. The Altamaha represents one of the most ecologically intact rivers remaining in the southeastern United States. It is the site of multiple Georgia state Wildlife Management areas (WMAs). It has also been a major southern conservation focus of The Nature Conservancy since the 1970s.

I appreciate very much the recent introduction In the Senate, of the wilderness bill by Senators Lamar Alexander and Bob Corker that will protect some additional areas of the Cherokee National Forest under the provisions of the 1964 Wilderness Act.

We see it as critically important to nurture a young and diverse constituency and are especially pleased that we have so many young people here tonight speaking out about their views on nature and conservation

While perhaps not unique to urban youngsters, the disconnection from nature is certainly related to the opportunity – or lack of opportunity – to experience nature, which may be more acute in urban areas. Protecting and restoring nature and the opportunity to experience it will be of increasing importance if we hope to develop a citizenry that broadly shares values of a natural world, whether we label it conservation, ecological literacy, or biodiversity. In nature-filled cities may be the preservation of the wild.

These values germinate through the simplest of experiences, like an adult showing a child how to catch a fish. Promoting these experiences is at the heart of the Chicago Wilderness Leave No Child Inside initiative. At stake, quite simply, is the future of conservation.

There is great opportunity for leveraging dollars in urban centers and Chicago is no exception. Federal funds have been multiplied five-fold through Chicago Wilderness. Federal agencies have reaped important benefits in return. They have effective outlets for delivering existing programs. In return they get program focus through initiatives like Chicago Wilderness. They are also able to work across federal agencies through common initiatives. And they help develop partnership models that can be exported around the country.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

There is a need for urban parks to provide a threshold experience for all Americans; we need these places close to home. You here in Chicago have done a terrific job creating an urban park system here. We also need a collaborative approach to conservation to be implemented across the country so that more urban centers can take ideas and inspiration from the leadership that has been demonstrated here.

· A community's economic well-being, the health of its citizens, and their quality of life are inextricably interconnected with responsible stewardship of their natural resources and human capital.

Indiana is part of Chicago Wilderness and the Chicago Wilderness ecosystem along Lake Michigan. One of the things we've done in northwest Indiana is to establish an environmental learning center at the Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore, which is a public-private partnership to provide environmental education to children. We know that access to nature benefits children's health and also improves their academic performance

Recently we did an inventory of restoration projects in 2007 in three counties, identifying 169 projects restoring natural areas in the heavily industrial locations in Indiana. We are now documenting the results of what happens when you restore nature in these types of areas, and that information is being used by the agencies that own and manage those lands to improve their results. This was federally funded through a program that sponsors service learning by college students. The federal government is already doing a lot to support these kinds of efforts, and we need more federal leadership in setting priorities and facilitating local public and private partnerships.

I've worked as a community environmental organizer for a number of years, much as our esteemed President did. I encourage everyone here to speak from the heart to the federal representatives here, because there are so many promising opportunities in Chicago and Illinois for conservation and restoration – so let's get to it!

. In our system of preserves we have captured examples of all the original landscapes. These preserves form the backbone of the region's green infrastructure. Our protected lands are diverse in terms of their setting and function. In our most highly developed settings they are represented by lakefront parks that provide important stopover habitat for migrant songbirds, to diverse, pre-settlement quality prairie and savanna remnants in the suburban fringe and along stream corridors throughout the region.

The entire Chicago region is blessed with this raw material: more than 350,000 acres of protected land set aside, a joint accomplishment of Federal, State, and local governments, open space organizations, and taxpayers who have repeatedly said natural open space is important. Taxpayers in the region have voted for nearly a billion and a half in tax increases during the last 15 years to protect open space.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

To better protect, manage and restore this rich natural heritage, in 1996 a founding group of 34 organizations launched Chicago Wilderness. The purpose was knit together the entire biodiversity conservation community into a single focused initiative. It is inclusive to an extreme: if your organization shares an interest in promoting the goals of Chicago Wilderness you have a seat at the table. You will see here how our membership breaks down. The membership is made up of roughly 2/3 non-governmental organizations to 1/3 government. Over half of the governmental organizations are local governments, including municipal governments who view the conservation of natural areas as contributing to their quality of life.

We have clearly laid out what we stand for. People thrive when ecosystems thrive, people are necessarily the agents of stewardship and science informs our actions, and we will only succeed if we work together across boundaries.

Our vision is articulated in, and robustly described in the Biodiversity Recovery Plan – that describes the status of biodiversity in the region, discusses threats, outlines recovery goals for these species and communities, and recommends specific actions and strategies. Over our 15 year history, members have come together to implement hundreds of projects that further the goals of the plan.

Where we do these things is graphically shown in the Green Infrastructure Vision, which overlays the entire region with Resource Protection Areas (RPAs). These include both protected and developed landscapes.

Within these RPAs, one of our strategies is traditional land protection, perhaps best illustrated by a study underway by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to site a new National Wildlife Refuge in the Chicago region. Again, people have said repeatedly at the ballot box that they want more land protection. These RPAs are also places where we want to re-imagine how we live on the landscape and better harmonize our presence with the natural world, for mutual benefit.

This is where all of the principles of green infrastructure come into play. We're working with our municipal and regional planning members, like the Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning, who you will hear from in a few minutes, to get these ideas into broad circulation.

The alliance has also developed a suite of communication tools that help people become acquainted with the wealth of nature in their backyard and provide guidelines for conserving it on the protected land base and in the developed landscape.

We have also made an initial attempt to assess the health of the region's ecosystems, as a base against which to measure progress. There is a critical federal role in providing assistance in monitoring and assessment.

At its core, Chicago Wilderness is about connecting with and engaging the people of the region in the work of hands-on restoration, citizen science, and advocacy. The long-term health of the region's natural areas will depend on developing in the public a broad and enduring stewardship ethic of concern and personal responsibility for the health of the land.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the America's Great Outdoors Initiative on behalf of the Agricultural Drainage Management Coalition (ADMC.) Upon launching this important initiative, President Barack Obama made clear his Administration's commitment to developing strategies to better protect our nation's natural and historic treasures for generations to come. The ADMC is stepping forward to answer the President's call to action by assisting the Administration in identifying the "best ideas on conservation; how we can pursue innovative ideas that local communities embrace; and how we can be more responsible stewards of tax dollars to promote conservation."

The ADMC welcomes this opportunity to submit comments to help achieve your objectives. Most specifically, we believe tremendous improvements in water quality, reductions in greenhouse gas emissions, reduced flooding and an increase in productivity of American agriculture can be achieved through better water management practices. Attached with this letter are a number of recommendations for achieving our shared goal of expanding and enhancing wildlife habitat, outdoor recreation and the environmental health of our nation in manner that benefits the economic well being of our rural communities. We would be happy to provide you and your staff with additional information related to the recommendations set forth in our attached comments.

Vast portions of the American agricultural landscape have had the hydrology substantially altered to efficiently move water from the land. This can significantly improve agricultural productivity and provide substantial environmental benefits, but can have unintended consequences to downstream water quality and quantity as it relates to volume and velocity. The application of drainage management tools and practices can be utilized to cost effectively manage surface and subsurface water in a manner that results in improved water quality, reduced flooding, added recreational opportunities, enhanced and expanded habitat conservation and, oftentimes, improve agricultural production.

One of the most effective techniques to reliably improve the productivity of row crops is to improve field drainage. Doing so allows earlier access to the field for spring planting and reduces the likelihood of flooding once crops are planted. Unfortunately, improving drainage can facilitate nitrogen loss from the field. This robs crops of essential nutrients for growth and may make excess nitrogen available in undesirable locations like drinking water or marine estuaries. By managing the hydrology of agricultural fields it is possible to retain the positive benefits of drainage while significantly reducing nutrient loss. Production improvements can be supported, nitrogen losses demonstrably reduced and habitat protected.

In addition to enhancing and improving agricultural production, these drainage practices can also be utilized specifically for environmental and conservation applications such as creating and maintaining wetlands and saturated buffers for nitrogen treatment and habitat creation. Importantly, this can be accomplished in a manner that benefits the emergence of market based approaches to achieving watershed-scale goals for habitat conservation and other environmental outcomes such as improved water quality.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

It is important that we work to establish an even greater symbiotic relationship between environmental health, habitat conservation and the continued viability and growth of our agricultural economy. Achievement of these goals requires enhanced partnerships between Federal, state local and tribal government entities, conservation, sportsmen and environmental organizations, agricultural organizations, private landowners and industry. The ADMC believes that the America's Great Outdoor Initiative has the potential to be a powerful mechanism for coalescing these diverse partnerships around common goals and we are committed to ensuring that occurs.

To that end, the ADMC proposes two actions we strongly believe will concurrently result in significant benefits to farms, watersheds, wildlife and outdoor recreation throughout the nation through expanded utilization of hydrology management practices. The practices and tools used to achieve these goals on the ground will: ? Provide the science and education needed to enrich conservation planning, implementation, management decisions, and environmental health. ? Measure, monitor, quantify and utilize project outcomes for the development and enhancement of market based approaches for achieving conservation and environmental goals on a watershed scale

The ADMC commends USDA for recently completing and issuing the "Assessment of the Effects of Conservation Practices on Cultivated Cropland in the Upper Mississippi River Basin," (CEAP.) While we have found CEAP to be a helpful and informative tool, we also believe the potential exists to broaden and expand upon its applications through a new USDA-NRCS led initiative. The initiative would include consist of collaboration between your departments and agencies, the conservation and sportsmen's community and the agricultural sector to identify and pursue opportunities to expand the capacity for actively managing our water resources to provide economic, environmental and societal benefits for generations to come.

Drainage Water Management: Field installed devices that regulate outflows and control surface or subsurface water tables. By managing water flow, major reductions in nitrogen can be achieved while reducing flooding, protecting and even increasing agricultural yield. See:

Bioreactors: Trenches filled with organic matter at the edge of fields to remove nitrates from subsurface drainage systems. These low cost systems can reduce nitrogen loss by as much as 80% without taking land out of production. See:

Saturated Buffers: Thousands of miles of buffers are bypassed by sub-surface tile lines. Tremendous environmental benefits can be achieved by providing for water from these conduits to be connected with buffers such as reduced nutrient loss, improved wildlife habitat, reduced water velocity and reduced flooding and increased biomass production. See:

Wetlands: Properly designed and operated wetlands can be extremely effective at reducing both nitrogen and phosphorous loss to waterways, provide flood storage, provide important wildlife habitat, reduce sediment loss and provide significant recreational potential. Managing the hydrology of a wetland can significantly improve its environmental performance. See:

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Progress in developing and testing ecosystem markets in the United States continues to lag. Selected pilot projects can help overcome some of the impediments to potential innovation. The ADMC recommends establishment of pilots in the Chesapeake Bay, Great Lakes and, subject to funding availability, additional watersheds. The purpose of the pilots would be to demonstrate on operating farms the potential for ecosystem service markets to advance cost effective conservation strategies. As a result, the pilots would provide real world experience to foster environmental improvement within the agricultural sector and between sectors such as point source industrial and municipal facilities and agriculture. Initial pilots could be targeted at the development of a pilot water quality and conservation credit trading. Tools and practices utilized to initiate development of the initial credits could include nitrogen removal, flood and water quality management through temporary restoration of landscape functions and the establishment of wetland and riparian habitat.

Our public lands are among our most important birth rights as Americans, whether we visit them or not. President Obama and the Administration deserve congratulations for undertaking the America's Great Outdoors Initiative (AGOI). The opportunities for ordinary Americans to make their views known at public listening sessions and through the website are invaluable. The Administration needs to continue to be proactive in involving Americans in order to give them a sense of ownership over the program and its results.

Future listening sessions should be announced well in advance so people can plan their calendars and so interested organizations can assist in spreading the word. The website needs to be kept upto-date. It also needs to be kept simple. I have heard some complaints from people who find it hard to navigate. And while I understand and support the need for registration to make comments and to vote, I think it is not a good idea to have one's votes linked to one's personal profile for all other users to see. (I have no problem with the comments themselves being linked, however.) Of course, AGOI does not exist in a vacuum, and there are other issues which affect it, but which were probably beyond the scope of the listening session. But without an examination of these other issues, AGOI cannot be totally successful. Most important is funding, although population (which was mentioned at UCD) needs to be taken into account as well.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

FUNDING

This is a big issue, but the main issue is really one of national priorities. There is money available for programs, but the Administration and Congress need to push much harder to shift spending priorities toward programs that directly benefit Americans and our environment. That might mean, for example, that departments that have huge budgets, like Defense, have funding shifted away from them. Also, the current system of government subsidies needs to be overhauled so that money

is not going to support activities that harm the outdoors, like oil and gas companies (which seem to have no problem being very profitable). Agricultural and transportation subsidies also need to be examined for their environmental impacts.

The Department of Interior needs to undertake a study to determine what would constitute full funding for proper management of our public lands agencies. The Administration should then use this information to request full funding every year. The Administration should support full funding for, and the extension and renewal of, the Land & Water Conservation Fund as well as the Historic Preservation Fund.

INCREASED VACATION TIME

As part of the Initiative, but also as part of broader social policy, the Administration should support initiatives to increase family vacation time, so that Americans can actually plan relaxing trips to our public lands. Other developed (and economically thriving) countries, like Germany, have very liberal mandatory vacation laws. It is time the United States followed their example. The benefits to psychological health (and productivity) are many. Take Back Your Time (www.timeday.org) is one organization promoting these ideas.

USER FEES ON PUBLIC LANDS

Americans should be able to enjoy federal public lands as the citizen-owners they are. That means that in theory, access should be free. Tax revenues should pay for the majority of costs associated with the management of our lands. Entrance fees to national parks are traditional, but should be kept minimal. Fees for camping and the use of other developed sites such as boat launches should also be minimal and affordable. Picnic areas and parking for day use and hiking should be always be free and subsumed into the general budget of the jurisdiction in question.

HISTORICAL RESOURCES

Though not mentioned at the Davis meeting, the Administration should include the preservation of historic and cultural resources in its final proposals. The Historic Preservation Fund should be fully funded.

Parks built around cultural and historic sites provide opportunities for field trips for schoolchildren as well as getting adult citizens outdoors. In fact, historic sites provide a perfect "gateway" for people to get outdoors. If there is a historic trail, then there is an opportunity for exercise. Lands surrounding historic sites can and should be bought for native habitat restoration areas.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

CONCLUSION

Thank you for holding the session in Davis and a subsequent one for youth in Berkeley. Californians for Western Wilderness fully supports the America's Great Outdoors Initiative. We look forward to reading the final report and sincerely hope that the Administration makes its implementation a top priority.

Members and supporters of Ducks Unlimited have taken part in twenty of the Administration's America's Great Outdoors Initiative listening sessions held around the country from June to September. DU is especially interested in seeing this initiative advance conservation of the key wildlife habitats that are at jeopardy across our nation, and has presented recommendations for these regions at the sessions.

In our view, it is critical that important wildlife habitats across the country Wildlife-related recreation, such as hunting and wildlife viewing, are deeply meaningful for those who participate in such activities and important to the nation's economy. We anticipate this aspect of America's Great Outdoors will receive thorough consideration in the crafting of the final report and plan. remain intact and be secured from development or restored. Our national heritage of wildlife and other renewable resources is at risk unless we devote more financial resources to their future.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Ducks Unlimited is especially interested in ensuring the protection of key Great Outdoors and national economic and conservation objectives. However, we are focusing on the Prairie Pothole Region in these remarks as an example of how to be effective in this most endangered habitat. All of these recommendations include programs and initiatives that are both beneficial to waterfowl and will promote, support, and sustain the goals of America's Great Outdoors. These recommendations are:

1. Designate the Prairie Pothole Region as a key part of the AGO initiative;
2. Focus key conservation programs in the Farm Bill on the Prairie Pothole Region;
3. Provide full funding for the North American Wetlands Conservation Act;
4. Increase the price of the Migratory Bird Hunting and Conservation Stamp;
5. Fully fund the Land and Water Conservation Fund; and
6. Create a market mechanism to sequester carbon in ranch lands.

habitats of the Prairie Pothole Region (PPR) in the North Central States. While we are interested in a number of key landscapes across the country, the Prairie Pothole Region is at the greatest risk of loss, and there is a need (and opportunities) for immediate action. The following recommendations relate to the overall policy goal of keeping the PPR's native grasslands and wetlands intact for the benefit of all Americans. Many of the programs and policies that are needed to accomplish this objective will benefit other aspects of America's We look forward to working with your Administration and its agencies on these programs, and offer our assistance and expertise as requested, particularly on waterfowl, wetland and grassland-related projects. Many of these efforts require Congress to take action and we are already working with them to shape and implement appropriate legislation. We hope the Administration will include these legislative efforts in its work with Congress.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

The Prairie Pothole Region as a key part of the AGO initiative

The most important ecosystem in the country for waterfowl and many other migratory bird populations consists of the grasslands, native prairies, and wetlands of the Prairie Pothole Region. PPR grasslands and wetlands provide quality breeding habitat for waterfowl and other wetlands-associated wildlife. Numerous other migratory birds, many of which are in decline, also depend on this critical habitat. Portions of this landscape, stretching from southeastern South Dakota to northeastern Montana, appear much as they did when Lewis and Clark journeyed there two centuries ago. The PPR is the most productive landscape in the world for breeding waterfowl and many other migratory birds due to the unique mixture of native prairie and very high densities of wetlands that remain since the glaciers retreated over 10,000 years ago.

This region is extremely important for sportsmen and women, youth, and other outdoor enthusiasts. The wide-open nature of the landscape is renowned for providing abundant opportunity to be active and get outdoors to hunt and view wildlife such as ducks, geese, pheasants, deer and many other species. The landscape of the PPR supports an outdoors-focused culture with links to the past that have proven to be key elements of mental and physical health, and helping youth grow up to care about nature and all its elements.

Farm Bill priorities

The Farm Bill and waterfowl are inextricably linked. The management of our nation's agricultural lands greatly affects duck populations, particularly in the nesting grounds of the grasslands and wetlands of the PPR. DU's approach to the Farm Bill is pragmatic: we realize that quality cropland should and will be devoted to providing food, fiber, and fuel for our nation. We also realize that not all ground is suitable for crop production. Some of it is too rocky, steep, wet, or dry to reliably produce a crop; hence, DU's commonsense approach of "Farm the Best and Conserve the Rest."

The remaining 22 million acres of native prairie in the U.S. portion of the PPR produce an abundant fall flight of ducks, geese, and many other migratory bird species from this country each year while simultaneously providing the backbone for a robust ranching industry. Unfortunately, this native prairie habitat base is being whittled away, the victim of drought-tolerant crop varieties, high commodity prices, increasing demand for food, and federal policies that encourage farming marginal cropland. The PPR has already lost 70 percent or more of its native grassland, and DU researchers have documented annual loss rates of up to 2 percent of this habitat in the heart of the "duck factory." This loss rate of 2% translates into the loss of 50,000 or more ducks each year, and means that 50% of the remaining prairie will be gone in about 30 years.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

We must remove farm bill policies that subsidize the conversion of native prairie and wetlands, fully enforce swampbuster, make sodsaver mandatory, and take other policy steps to remove all federal incentives that encourage the continued conversion of our native prairies and wetlands.

Through the America's Great Outdoors Initiative, the Obama Administration has the opportunity to influence the impact of Farm Bill programs on critical lands and vital waterfowl habitat in the PPR by increasing funding for these critical conservation programs. Increased funding of these programs will allow the U.S.D.A. to continue to work with landowners to make their working lands beneficial not only for themselves, but also for the numerous species of waterfowl and other migratory birds that rely on them as breeding grounds, and for the many people in the region and throughout the nation who enjoy the outdoors and the birds produced in the PPR.

Increase the cost of the duck stamp to \$25

The Migratory Bird Hunting and Conservation Stamp Program, initially created in 1934, has conserved over 6 million acres of waterfowl habitat in the National Wildlife Refuge System. Since 1991, the price of the duck stamp has remained set at \$15 while land prices have skyrocketed. A recent analysis of land values in South Dakota's Prairie Pothole Region found that land prices have increased sevenfold in the last ten years.

An increase of the price of the federal duck stamp from \$15 to \$25 per stamp would ensure that the buying power of the stamp remains stable. The proceeds from the stamp should continue to go to important waterfowl habitat conservation as directed by the Fish and Wildlife Service. The Obama Administration can assist in this effort by including the needed increase in the price of the duck stamp in their final report on the America's Great Outdoors Initiative and encouraging Congress to take swift action to increase the price. Further, the Fish and Wildlife Service could direct a greater portion of the funds from this program to the PPR.

Full funding of the Land and Water Conservation Fund

Since enactment in 1964, the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) has provided funding through matching grants to acquire land and water resources, easements on land, and recreational lands. These funds have been used for federal land acquisition and a variety of state-based outdoors programs.

Authorized at \$900 million, the program has only been funded at that level a few times. LWCF has the potential to provide additional funding to the PPR for the acquisition of both easements on private lands and additional lands for the National Wildlife Refuge System. The Administration should request full funding of the LWCF through dedicated appropriations above and beyond the Interior Department budget, with significant annual dollars going to the PPR for use by the Fish and Wildlife Service for habitat conservation.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Create a market mechanism for sequestering carbon in managed ranch lands

The Administration should create a market mechanism that allows farmers and ranchers to be rewarded for sequestering carbon dioxide in grasslands and wetlands. Market forces could be created to provide a more stable economic incentive to protect existing grasslands and wetlands or to take marginal cropland out of production to restore them. Ducks Unlimited has shown that such a mechanism works ecologically and helps to cleanse the air of excess carbon, but a stable regulatory framework is needed to provide a foundation for this market. The program could be voluntary and result in significant public benefits from the private market that would be established. We are prepared to assist in outlining this program effort.

The above-described package of initiatives would go a long way to raising the additional revenues needed to protect the great outdoors of the Prairie Pothole Region landscape and all the benefits it provides to the people who live in the area and across the nation.

Need to integrate electronics and technology with outdoors

People in outdoor-related and recreation-related positions need to do what it takes to get youth involved in the outdoors

Safe areas in parks, forests, etc. for youth ("safe nature")

"Natural" playgrounds in city parks

City park district/local youth programs help out parents with little time. Need more similar programs in State/Nat'l Parks, Forests, etc. to get families involved

Need to support farmers/ranchers -- large contributor to conservation of open spaces. Private initiatives for conservation work -- Farm Bill, etc. can be better allocated

Game & Fish depts. opening private land to fishing and hunting works (HMA's, etc.). Keeps pressure off public lands

Programs like Recreation Trails Program and LWCF work. Need more funding and add'l programs (a Recreation Trust Fund)

Nat'l/State Parks work -- need add'l funding to keep operating effectively

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Outdoor recreation is a more economical than many other options

Volunteer programs work -- and don't rely on much funding. Need to form more partnerships to foster volunteering on public and private lands

Mentoring youth works - #'s of youth hunter/fishers/outdoors-people are declining -- mentoring youth will help to increase

Wildlife Trust Fund is an important source of matching funds -- needs to become fully funded to be effective

From the great southern wildlands like Great Smoky Mountains National Park to places like the Ocmulgee National Monumen, which memorializes our continent's Native American history, the national parks provide some of the best means of connecting Americans, young and old, to America's Great Outdoors, and preserving the natural and cultural diversity of our nation.

National Parks Work!

The National Parks embody America's natural and cultural heritage. They preserve the exemplary places and tell the defining stories of the American character and experience. National parks provide some of the best means of connecting citizens, young and old, to America's Great Outdoors, and preserving the natural and cultural diversity of our nation. They are, in essence, the world's greatest outdoor classrooms and provide opportunities for life-long, place-based and service learning. Consequently, National Parks are the heart of America's Great Outdoors and should have a prominent place in the President's initiative.

The National Park Service Works!

The National Park Service has become legendary for doing amazing things with few resources. To give one example, the Rivers, Trails, and Conservation Assistance Program (RTCA), which recieves less than one percent of the National Park Service budget, is making outstandign contributions to community-based conservation efforts around the southeast.

RTCA is a successful Federal program that helps communities. It should be expanded by Congress and serve as a model for future efforts.

The Appalachian National Scenic Trail

The Ocmulgee National Monument

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

The Altamaha River (Georgia)

Opposes LWCF (FED) going to cities, towns, States Should continue to be used to acquire large federal landscapes

Partnerships work, and we need to continue to grow private/public partnerships with Federal assistance. Treasured Landscapes effort should focus on key habitat areas, including the Missouri River, Dakotas, and preserving the Prairie Pothole Region

Prairie Pothole Landscape should be preserved using Grassland Easements. Several hundred thousand acres are now available but not signed up due to lack of program funding. We need better funding for the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP).

Beyond LWCF F&W Conservation PR, DJ, Wallop Breaux, Affinity License Plate revenues, O & G Royalties From FED

Lands should form the nexus to meet the overall needs for managing Fish & Wildlife and habitats.

Full funding for LWCF should not mean \$900 M as specified in the original legislation, but should be adjusted for inflation to \$3.2 B

We should mandate outdoor conservation education in the public school curriculum, to increase awareness and interest in our youth, and to recruit the next generation of conservation advocates

Wildlife for the 21st Century Vol 3, containing 68 Action Items developed by the American Wildlife Conservation Partners, is hereby submitted in its entirety as a comment (subject report attached) <http://www.wildlifepartners.org/files/21century.cfm>

- AGO is a Public Process, and needs to focus on the needs of people for outdoor recreation. Engaging people in hunting and fishing is a tested and proven successful method of getting people outdoors and developing conservation stewards.

Need Access Maps/Info, similar to State of Minnesota on –line Maps of all Public Hunting Areas

Designers and Planners should incorporate “Wild” natural areas as part of school campuses.

Incentives from Dept of Education are needed to help develop Conservation projects and Education curricula.

Parks are very expensive and it is better to subsidize school programs to teach conservation education than build a lot of new parks.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Need to reach out to where People (Kids) are (where they live), and work with NGOs who already have established local connections in Partnership. Outdoor Recreation is the portal to Education, and established programs like "Save Our Streams" should be utilized and supported.

What works for Urban Kids, Easy access is key.

Identify the nexus between nontraditional partners, programs, and funding sources, including the Department of Education, Health and Human Services, and Veteran's Administration.

Administration officials should fully implement Executive Order 13443 - Hunting Heritage, to expand and enhance hunting opportunities.

"Making Public Lands Public" document is hereby submitted as a recommendation

The Stewardship Contracting Authorities of BLM and FS should be re-authorized and made permanent.

Include in FY12 Budget a provision to ensure that at least 1.5% or no less than \$15 Million of LWCF funding is dedicated to hunting, fishing, and shooting access.

Giving a voice to sportsmen at all steps is very important. Special places and treasured land scapes. Energy and mineral extraction should be carefully thought out, especially drilling and extraction. Make sure the industry is held responsible for drilling chemicals, hydraulic fracturing impacts on water quality and quantity, and negative impacts to kids and families enjoying the out of doors.. Connect kids and families is important, priority.

The Eastern Forest Partnership is a coalition of national, regional and local organizations working to advance permanent protection of forests in the Eastern United States. The partnership seeks to raise awareness about the value and importance of these forests and to promote sound public policy in order to conserve these lands.

Our coalition is pleased to support President Obama's America's Great Outdoors Initiative. We are grateful to have been given the opportunity to participate in many of the listening sessions that were held across the country this summer, and applaud the Administration's efforts to involve a diverse constituency in the development of your plan

The vast canopy of eastern forests that stretch from the cool pines of Maine to the rich hardwoods of the Deep South, are a critical natural resource area in America. These forests provide a stunning backdrop to the hundreds of millions of people that live in the densely populated East and are essential as they provide clean and plentiful drinking water, wildlife, timber, and outdoor recreation that meet the needs of local populations and distant cities alike.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Eastern Forests = Economic Growth and Jobs

The Department of the Interior 2009 Report found that annually "federal parks, refuges and monuments generate more than \$24 billion in recreation and tourism."

Active outdoor recreation, including hunting, fishing, camping, bird-watching, climbing, hiking, paddling, backcountry skiing, mountain biking, wildlife viewing, and other activities, drives a total of \$730 billion in annual economic activity, supporting 6.5 million jobs (1 of every 20 jobs in the U.S.), and stimulating 8 percent of all consumer spending, according to the Outdoor Industry Association.

Eastern Forests = Clean Water

According to the U.S. Forest Service "the majority of the U.S. drinking water supplies originate on forested land." As such conservation of forests is essential to maintain clean and plentiful drinking water for all citizens

Studies have also found that protection of water supplies is the most cost efficient way to ensure clean and plentiful drinking water supplies to communities.

The value of water flowing through our national forests alone is worth \$4.3 billion annually.

Numerous polls show that clean water is a top conservation concern for 89 percent of Americans

Eastern Forests = Public Health

Eastern forests provide places close to home for the millions of families living in the densely populated eastern seaboard to enjoy the outdoors, to get exercise and to improve their physical and mental well being

Access to natural areas reduces stress, mitigates obesity and other health issues, connects families and communities, and enhances the quality of life of all Americans

The Eastern Forests are also the "green lungs" of the highly-populated eastern part of the country -- providing fresh air and healthy ecosystems that balance the pollution and overuse that characterize large urbanized areas such as Atlanta or the megalopolis that stretches from Richmond VA to Boston MA.

Eastern Forests = Recreation

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Eastern forests provide abundant recreational opportunities right out America's back door, including the Appalachian Trail, world-class whitewater rafting, and hunting, fishing and wildlife watching close to home. They are located within a day's drive or less for more than 60 percent of Americans living in the most densely populated portion of the country

Established in 1965, the Land and Water Conservation Fund serves the national interest as the primary source of funding for federal land conservation efforts

Through this fund, states throughout the country have preserved critically important lands including national forests, wilderness areas, historic and cultural sites, significant battlefields, trails and recreation areas.

In addition, the stateside portion of this program accounts for the creation of thousands of local recreation projects such as ball fields and community parks

Our protected federal lands and waterways provide an opportunity to address the unprecedented challenges that climate change poses to our forests, fish and wildlife, and riparian resources.

These natural areas also store carbon, buffer flooding, conserve water, and support healthy fisheries and wildlife populations.

Established in the 1990 Farm Bill, the Forest Legacy Program is a partnership program that "protects 'working forests'...those that protect water quality, provide habitat, forest products, opportunities for recreation and other public benefits."

To date, this program has protected over 1.7 million acres in 36 states and Puerto Rico.

Every federal dollar invested in this program is matched 1:1 by private or non-federal government funding, making it a sound use of public resources.

The Highlands Conservation Act became law in 2004 and authorizes \$10 million in land acquisition and \$1 million in technical assistance annually to the states of Pennsylvania, New Jersey, New York and Connecticut.

Traversing over 3 million acres the Highlands provide clean drinking water, local food, and close-to-home recreation to the more than 25 million residents living within an hour's drive of this nationally significant landscape.

The year 2011 marks the 100th Anniversary of the Weeks Act. The Act, which was one of the most notable conservation achievements of the 20th century, authorized the federal purchase of cutover and denuded forestlands in the headwaters of navigable streams and rivers

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

The Act provided the mechanism for the expansion of the National Forest System to the eastern United States, and today 26 eastern States are home to 52 National Forests encompassing over 24 million acres.

With renewed interest in our eastern national forests generated by the celebration of the Weeks Act, we believe there will be an opportunity to identify critical private land-holdings in eastern national forests that should be acquired using LWCF funds to fulfill the vision and goals of the Weeks Act.

As you seek conservation solutions for the 21st Century, we urge you to look to and build upon the success of the Weeks Act in transforming the eastern forests into the asset they are today.

Since 2008, drawn out 20 Year Land Plan proceedings have been taking place to decide permitted uses on the 26,000 acre (40 square mile) federal portion of the former Champion lands known as the Conte Refuge, Nulhegan Basin Division. Heavily funded, well staffed preservationist groups such as the Conservation Law Foundation, Center for Biological Diversity, Siena Club, and Wilderness Society are all pushing to end virtually all of the snowmobile trail network and road network within the Refuge. The road network and snowmobile network each exceed 40 miles. These are the exact amenities that the vast majority of Refuge users rely upon to enjoy the region.

The Vermont Traditions Coalition (VTC) is a coalition of over 20 organizations from the forest product, maple syrup, agriculture, sporting, snowmobiling, outdoor guide, and lake association sectors. We have a daily presence in the Vermont Legislature and play a prominent role in all major public lands issues in Vermont due to the depth and breadth of our statewide network and our knowledge of issues involving Vermont's predominantly rural landscape. VTC believes that a healthy economy, healthy communities and a healthy environment are inextricably linked. VTC works with local and state organizations, state agencies and leaders to protect Vermont's rural traditions, identity and ways of life.

It is our hope that this new Great Outdoors Initiative will truly create new policies dedicated to working better with local communities, landowners and state agencies, discovering new ways to protect traditional values and land use practices that connect a large number of Americans to the great outdoors. Let's cut through the red tape and celebrate Rural America, not work to destroy it. Let's continue to conserve important lands, but allow the people to continue to use it and the natural resources it holds, not lock it up and shut it down.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

Despite the numerous amount of planets suspended within the multiverse, ours is the only with advancing life we are yet aware of, or at least at our rate of development at this time in our history. Thus we need to preserve the planet's beauty, space and virtue; cherish and appreciate the opportunities it provides us, and bestow on it utter respect, which we seem to have lost and must redeem. Our multitude of chance, our fate may be faltering.

The once vast expanse of the historic plains now feeds the entire world from crops grown within its rich soil. Let us reclaim and restore even a portion of these lands to allow prairies a foothold to perpetuate their own legacies. Gazing upon a Grand prairie will enrich and renew the spirits of present and future generations and show our children the role that human beings can have in the stewardship of the land.

As a low-income citizen not currently getting out and traveling the country, I'm lately more concerned about the livability of the city I live in every day. So let's see more porous ground surfaces, less concrete, more nature in the day-to-day. Kudos and thanks to the local heroes who influenced the government to declare the L.A. River a traditional navigable waterway, qualifying it for environmental protection.

History is what makes the present relevant and the future predictable. By saving our battlefields we are providing today's youth a lesson in why we are the nation we are today. By destroying it we say it is not important and then promptly go and create the same tragic mistakes that the Civil War tried to teach us not to make. In addition we are preserving open space for those who follow behind us. I live in the Chicago suburbs. In the last few years of development mania have taught me anything it was that we need to preserve open space where and when we can. The sprawl added to the existing overbuilt environment I live in has few positives to show for its impact on the natural environment. If it wasn't for a few farsighted government officials when the area was less developed there would only be another parking lot where we now have beautiful green space. By combining saving battlefields with the creation of open space we create a win win situation for everyone.

Like many Americans, I am the direct descendant of a Civil War soldier. Preserving Civil War battlefields keeps alive the memory of those soldiers who fought on them and especially those who died on them. Not only that, battlefield preservation helps protect wilderness areas from commercial encroachment, helps conserve watersheds and wildlife habitats, and lets our descendants enjoy their cultural and historic heritage.

A few environmental groups seem to have been hijacked by the corporations they were supposed to watch and help protect the environment against, so being a so-called leader of one of these groups may not be a good litmus test for choosing heads of agencies like the FWS. On the other hand, the environmentalists who have a proven track record of caring about wild places and who have fought in the courts to uphold environmental laws for little or no money; absolutely and of course they should be at the top of FWS, BLM, USFS, etc.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

A panel of biologists needs to be assembled to determine the areas that should be included. The alternative is to allow a huge number of species to become endangered and let the Endangered Species Act and the courts take full control of our economy. Right now, that's where we're headed.

A park like this would be a huge attraction and would create hundreds of good jobs in a area that certainly would be chosen because it had a seriously bad economy. There are large areas where water shortages have held back development or over extraction of groundwater have made development worthless. I am no advocate of forcing unwilling sellers to do anything they don't want to. Please don't put words in my mouth.

Designate 10 million acres surrounding Moab, Utah as a OHV, ORV only National Recreation Area and charge admission to maintain erosion control and for plant restoration

Designate a National Monument along the shores of the Gulf of Mexico where oil is inundating the shoreline and preserve it as a reminder of man's potential to destroy himself by doing something so seemingly innocent as driving an OHV.

I'm disappointed. You're trying to vilify people saying they are anti-human because they think wildlife needs should have precedence over roads. If the environment doesn't get healthy for wildlife, then it's not healthy for humans. People who are trying honestly to solve some of they problems they are studying are pro human because they are trying to maintain diversity and diversity is good for humans. If that means closing some roads, that's not anti-human.

I have never felt locked out of any public land. There are no places barring nuclear test sites that are closed to the public. Park your car and hike anywhere you want to. What you are talking about is not an access issue, but a welfare issue. You want the government to make roads so you can get where you want to go with an OHV. I do not want to pay for those roads and I don't want you ripping up the land and making me pay to fix your damage.

I was at a rally about 25 years ago where we were urging the government to get moving on climate change. One person carried a sign that said "no jobs on a dead planet". The gears of massive change are beginning to turn now at a pace where the average person can see the cumulative effects. Those gears are not going to be stopped easily. Global is BIG.

Idaho and Montana National Forests are some of the most cut over, clearcut forests in the country. In Montana, when I was a kid, I visited mountain areas like this and was amazed at how it connected me to the natural world for the rest of my life. Now, to my surprise, there is almost none of that wild country left. Every inch of what is left should be protected. This is a little island in a big clearcut, but somewhere, sometime, there will be a kid who falls in love with nature because it is protected.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

In order to get kids interested in nature, you have to have natural places for them to grow up near. In the Eastern US there are painfully few opportunities for youth to come in contact with raw nature. This and other National Park proposals for the Eastern USA are contained in the New National Parks organization's list of 100 new NP proposals. Another place that is on the list is the Maine North Woods National Park. It's big and wild and not far from the maddening crowd.

Interesting. There are a lot of people who want to see a suitable wild habitat set aside for pure DNA buffalo. It seems that this species is being ignored as an endangered species. Maybe it is because every one of us imagines the huge stampedes of buffalo of yesteryear, and we can't bring ourselves around to believe that they're down to a very few animals.

It costs nothing to have a designated wilderness area and the set aside does a great deal of good for society in providing clean water, clean air and wildlife habitat. The government could accomplish a lot with zero dollars by just leaving government land wild.

'we are sometimes told that in our few remaining patches of old growth, there are no species which cannot live in hundred year old forests' , There's is one very obvious change that happens in an old growth forest which is not usually in a hundred year old forest. The tops of the trees start to die and some tops break off. This allows for a new habitat high in the forest canopy that is home to many birds and small mammals that probably don't exist in your area of the country anymore. These very old trees are majestic and thought provoking. Where they are near river banks, they usually lean out over the river and provide a great deal of shade for fish and a fishing platform for fish eating raptors.

Let all logged over public land return to natural condition so OHVers will have a place to enjoy wild nature. Let the roads grow over, let the trees grow thick, help the wilderness flourish again, make potholes in the roads, remove culverts, run plows over the road surfaces. Make all those millions of acres accessible to OHVs and ORVs and noone else. Don't ever allow logging or mining in these areas to protect their pristine quality so OHVers can enjoy the solitude and family recreation memorable experience.

Most, by far, of the lower 48 is covered with people. The only places that are not covered are places that are too dry, too cold, too high or too far from a mall. Protecting land is for wildlife, not humans. The areas that are protected already are too small to have thriving, vibrant interactions between life forms that most folks don't care about or understand, even though protecting them may benefit humans in some way.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

My biggest problem with OHVs is the noise, but the biggest problem with trail riders is the damage they do to watersheds and the cost to taxpayers of fixing that. I don't want to spend taxpayer money on this sport. Wilderness doesn't cost taxpayers one thin dime. That's what I like about keeping wild places wild. You get all that clean water and clean air that comes from wilderness and you don't have to spend any money for it. So what if there are no trails and you can't look at it. There are huge economic and health benefits to leaving land alone. You OHVs should quit talking from both sides of your mouths. You hate welfare. You hate spending taxpayer money. But you want to get out there with your federally subsidized sport and rip it up. Pay the full cost of driving an OHV or start walking.

Now, considering the horrible mess that's been made in the Gulf of Mexico, it's not unreasonable to reclassify every single roadless acre into wilderness. You see, even if land is supposed to be preserved, we are still losing it to development. This oil mess is ruining a billion pristine acres of Earth. How can we make up for that legacy? We can't, but we should try. Quit squabbling over individual areas and set it all aside.

People who look at the Bob Marshall Wilderness and see something BIG should think about the coast to coast wilderness we've lost. If you look at my other posts, it will explain the perspective more fully.

Promoting is something that the chamber of commerce can do, but to spend taxpayers money promoting so called "wise use" is exactly the type of welfare government program I've talked about in other posts. The term "wise use" is a loaded slogan for the industries you refer to in your "idea". The really wise thing to do on government owned land may be to leave a lot of it alone.

The NPS is doing a wonderful job of administering the 392 sites (your figure, I didn't verify) and I'm sure they would be glad to administer even more. They provide healthy jobs that are competed for fiercely, which proves that people like working in national parks. Like any other government agency, their budget fluctuates. The thing that is important here; more and more people spend their vacation time in national parks so more and more of them need to be established. And the win win situation: parks are good for wildlife and the environment too, and the economy.

Scenario 3 - People accept responsibility and get educated People conserve energy and resources and pursue the most environmentally friendly technology. They recycle as much as they can and quit digging new holes to find new resources, because there is plenty of scrap metal and paper in the dump. They carefully tear apart old houses to make new ones because they want the clean air and clean water that heavily forested land provides, so they do as little logging as possible. People decide to eat the foods that take the least resources to grow and they grow those foods without chemicals, because they don't want their kids to have cancer and health problems created by chemicals. They use computer technology to commute and visit their distant families instead of driving or flying. They vacation in vehicles that use as little fuel as possible. The economy keeps on chugging along, and some people aren't happy, just like today. But everyone can still breathe relatively clean air most of the time and get a drink of pretty clean water out of the tap.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Siskiyou Crest National Monument Proposal could exclude private land and solve some of the local landowner issues. Private land is not a good reason to can the proposal though. Most of the land in the proposal is USFS and definitely worthy of NM status. Restoring the land there would create forest and heavy equipment jobs for the community, and once the land is restored, it will bring in more recreation jobs. It's a win win situation for the locals and the USA.

The National Park system expansion proposed by www.NewNationalParks.org would join together many of the wildlife areas, roadless and wilderness areas, wild and scenic rivers and other protected land under single NPS management plans. Their list of 100 new National Park proposals is largely designed to end the fragmentation of some key wild areas, including the Klamath-Siskiyou area of California and Oregon. The Ancient Forest National Park proposal is at www.ancientforestnationalpark.org

The new national parks should be huge and not necessarily be for people. Wildlife should be the factor that dictates what new parks are established and where they should be. The new parks will not be "land grabs" but will be just a change of use of already government owned land. As far as I'm concerned, there is no backlog of maintenance that needs to be done in National Parks. If the parks can't accomodate visitors in ways that certain visitors expect, maybe those people should go to Vegas or Disneyworld for their vacations.

The reason our cultural heritage is important is because our distant ancestors were small in number and remnants of their deeds are few and far between. Now that there are 350 million of us in the USA, I wonder how much importance future generations will put on finding one more plastic piece of junk, one more chemical killed landscape. Will archeologists in the future think finding the remnants of one of our billion ugly buildings requires a closer look, or will it be more important for them to study a remnant of wilderness.

There are plenty of clearcuts within close proximity to wilderness areas that the OHV community should restore to natures best condition so you have a place to "explore" outside of designated wilderness. Restore all of the National Forests and all of the BLM lands for OHV use and set aside all of the roadless areas as wilderness. It's a win win situation!

This is National Park quality land, should be added to the Wild Rogue Wilderness and then added to a much larger National Park. This is a tremendously important, nationally significant landscape and the fact that the ground grows trees should not consign it to land use decision making by chainsaw, as has been done with so much of this beautiful canyon in the past. See: www.ancientforestnationalpark.org

Wilderness costs taxpayers not one thin dime. If you are really worried about funding, designate all federal lands as wilderness and dismantle all overseeing agencies. Nature doesn't need your help.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

You can access plenty of remote areas with your ORVs already. Very little of the US is off limits to ORV use. The lower 48 is 1.9 billion acres. About 1.8 billion have no restrictions on ORVing. Go make friends with private land owners and have a blast. Explore to your hearts content in logged over lands. Go find a rock pile and drive straight up it. If you need a wilderness experience, get off your butt and walk.

You say "We are tired of having land set aside and "preserved" by the federal government." You should speak only for yourself. The Cascade-Siskiyou area is a vital biological bridge that needs to be preserved.

You say: "A little or maybe even a lot of human influence needs to be incorporated into our outdoors". Just go outside in your back yard and you can find what you're looking for.

Civil War battlefields must be preserved for their history and significance to our history. One visit to Gettysburg many years ago showed me how important these sites are. How sad it is to go to Manassas or Fredricksburg and have the interpretive signs say "at the stop sign at the bottom of this hill". If they can be preserved while protecting open space, what a win - win.

Government promotion of local environment coops that could unite together for the restoration and maintenance of wild lands within the community. Coop members could buy individual plots of land to care for, which adjoin national or state parks, or just have a lot of wild acreage. This would expand the wild areas locally, land owners would take responsibility for their own areas, decreasing the burden on government agencies. They would live close to the land they buy and have more insight and working knowledge of their own individual land. The privately held lands would be restored and maintained by the individual owners who would utilize the coop to pool wholesale buying power and resources, work as a group with local forestry, fish and wildlife services to make land management plans for the land. Land owners would have pride of ownership and feel responsible for their land, the animals living there. It would give people something tangible that they would want to visit to enjoy, but more importantly, to care for. Coop members could receive financial assistance via government cost sharing programs.

Located less than 100 miles from the Bay area and Sacramento, the region stretching from Lake Berryessa to Snow Mountain is our outdoor wonderland. It gives us clean drinking water, spectacular views, and places to hike, kayak, and more. Local people have come together to support designating the Berryessa Snow Mountain region as a National Conservation Area so future generations can enjoy this natural treasure. The administration should defend this treasured area against threats and protect this landscape for future generations.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

By opening up our parks to horsemen, you have an invaluable source of financial support, volunteers to build and maintain trails. In return, they ask very little.. staging areas for horse trailers, picnic tables and portapotties. Trailriding by families as well as individuals is one of the most healthy and enjoyable activities one can experience. Also, much wildlife is not disturbed by horse visitors and the human visitors have more opportunity to see what you cannot see on foot.
They also can experience in our National Civil War Battlefields a greater appreciation of the brave men and horses who died there in support of their beliefs.

Horsemen can also report any dangerous or illegal activity with greater speed than someone on foot.

Through language and perceptive differences as to what is important, and unclear definitions of cultural and historical value, we frequently end up alienating what we should embrace and demolish what we should develop. As a consequence, individuals, organizations and communities suffer needlessly. Only when we cultivate and actualize more effective communication, embrace with sincerity inclusiveness and establish together across race, ethnic and cultural lines defined cultural principles that allow for the introduction of creative ways of implementing the process of development will success in sustainable cultural development proceed as an enduring public resource.

The US has to change backwards, mistaken, endless-frontier land policies from planning "no more wilderness" which wil ensure that their isn't, to planning for our open spaces and unique places. The endless frontier exists no longer and as individual Americans like myself recognize, our wilderness areas need to be protected from further development in order to ensure the health of our selves, the remaining plants and animals, and the planet.

I have participated in the ELK program for several years, both as a board member and a family participant. My nieces and nephews love the ELK program. My 4-year old nephew was thrilled to catch his first fish at the 2010 Cast-a-Line event. Thanks for a great day and a wonderful memory!

What if the "fee" was a deposit that was returned to the user if they documented positive impact they made on the public space? For instance, I pay \$5 to enter a park and remove a bag-full of trash from a streambed while I am there. If my deposit were refunded, I would be "rewarded" in a monetary way (not just personal fulfillment) for improving the public space. This thought just developed in reading your comments, and I am certain there are stumbling blocks to the idea, but I think any opportunity we have to reward folks for showing respect to the land (or others) is a great one to seize. I also think there is an enormous difference between overuse and misuse. Sadly, I think the latter is often the larger issue. Formal education about proper use is overwhelmingly lacking for the general citizenry...environmental education is a necessity for current and future generations.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Although we certainly need to improve our existing wild places, we desperately need to improve our urban communities, too. The fastest, cheapest, and easiest way to do that is to plant trees. How about a national "One Billion Urban Trees" initiative? Urban trees have been shown to significantly improve the environment and quality of life. Urban Trees: - Reduce air pollution - Add beauty and personal health - Fight the greenhouse effect - Conserve water and reduce soil erosion - Save energy - Reduce the "heat effect" in urban environments - Increase economic stability - Reduce noise pollution - Create wildlife and plant diversity - Increase property values Source: { Link } Urban trees provide other sociological benefits, too. Trees have the potential to reduce social service budgets, decrease police calls for domestic violence, strengthen urban communities, and decrease the incidence of child abuse according to a University of Illinois study. Additionally: - Residents who live near trees have significantly better relations with and stronger ties to their neighbors. - Researchers found fewer reports of physical violence in homes that had trees outside the buildings. Of the residents interviewed, 14% of residents living in barren conditions have threatened to use a knife or gun against their children versus 3% for the residents living in green conditions. - Studies have shown that hospital patients with a view of trees out their windows recover much faster and with fewer complications than similar patients without such views. - A Texas A&M study indicates that trees help create relaxation and well being. Source: { Link }

Definitely promoted this one! I also linked it to the "One Billion Urban Trees" idea. :-) { Link }

While I agree that it's preferable to limit government spending, the positive effects of trees will ultimately save tax dollars by reducing costs of existing tax-dollar-funded programs and services. Over the long term, this would be a net-gain in terms of government cost.

Fully agree. Fund the LWCF!

Funding for LWCF must be increased to the envisioned \$900 million/year. Also important is focusing those funds on areas lacking in public lands and where environmental degradation is hurting our Nation's future the most, particularly the Mississippi and Great Lakes basins. One specific example is targeting LWCF toward the completion of the two Congressionally designated National Scenic Trails in these basins: the Ice Age National Scenic Trail and North Country National Scenic Trail. Completing the Appalachian National Scenic Trail involved the purchase of over 120,000 acres by the National Park Service and U.S. Forest Service. National Scenic Trails are not just quaint places for backpackers, they potentially represent far reaching conservation, recreation and education projects located close to home for tens of millions of Americans.

Greater tax credits for solar power on existing roof-tops is a great idea -- a win-win.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

I could support a program similar to this if the access gained were entirely for wheeled recreation. Remember that the pace of walking/hiking is so much slower than wheeled recreation, walking/hiking for miles under powerlines is mind numbing and uninspiring. I just don't think enough people would walk/hike the powerline corridors to justify the cost. But wheeled recreationists are clamoring for more trails and having wheeled bikes and vehicles riding through these corridors might keep vegetation growth down thus saving the power companies some of the costs of trimming vegetation under the lines.

I have done a lot of camping within the USFS Pacific Region campgrounds, and have found them to be very well managed. Kudos to USFS employees and the concessions which run the campgrounds in the Sierra.

I support Civil War battlefield preservation as a high priority. Preservation is precious to both the history and traditions of America and increasingly to the environment as well. Civil War battlefields should be preserved at all costs.

I'd much prefer to see a tax on something destructive, such as fossil fuels or coal-based electricity (just to name two simple examples; I'm sure there are others we could target), with those revenues going to the same conservation goals you mentioned -- rather than taxing the very items that help people enjoy and experience the outdoors.

In the BLM Ukiah District, Cal DFG and BLM work together to develop cooperative management on adjacent state and federal property. DFG often acquires land adjacent to BLM to allow for better access, which helps hunters and other recreationalists. This works very well, as shown in the Knoxville State Wildlife Area and Cache Creek Natural Area. This kind of state and federal partnership should be encouraged and continued.

Interesting idea. Another downside to Wind Farms is that they kill many unsuspecting birds. I wonder if we might want to go the opposite route (orange?) to help make them more visible to wildlife? Hmm....

It seems that there is a huge divide between those who like OHV use and those who don't. We need to find a way to work together so we can all enjoy our wild spaces. Education, training, and respect are the keys. Towards that end, let's create a new class of driver's license for Off-Road Driving. It could include training in safety, technique and skills, rules of the (off)road, courtesy and respect, and conservation.

I've seen 4x4 off roaders on both sides of this issue -- those that are stewards of the land (myself included), and those that are destructive, both by the way they drive and the wake of trash that they leave behind. I applaud your organization for taking the lead in this respect -- how can we encourage more active "associate land managers" while at the same time discouraging the destructive "users" of the land?

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

My suggestion is a simple vision of having 95% of the population within a 15 minute walk of a natural area or park. We can't reconnect with natural areas if there are none close to where people live. It's as simple as providing access and proximity to clean, safe and attractive natural areas. Granted, this would take money and planning but it is an inspiring vision and one that could be succesful over a multi-year campaign.

Noise pollution is an extreme cause of distress for wildlife and other recreation users. How about strengthening limits on how loud motorized vehicles can be? I think that would go a long way towards improving relations between OHV and non-OHV users.

is wrong; most ORV users are responsible individuals who want these areas available to our kids and their kids. We teach responsibility. Don't spout anti rhetoric without knowing facts please. I ride a great deal of trails in the PNW and they are actively maintained by a large number of volunteers and are in excellent shape. And will remain so as long as they're accessible for maintenance. Remove access and then you see bad things happening.....

On the surface, I love this idea. However, it's just a band-aid. Instead, we need to encourage Congress to act, and to do it in a timely, positive, and non-partisan way. Better that we put the pressure on our representatives to stop bickering and instead take action to preserve our wild spaces.

Perhaps the problem is that 96 dB is actually *very* loud. Wikipedia says that "Traffic on a Busy Roadway at 10 meters" is 80 to 90 decibels, and a jackhammer at a distance of 1 meter is about 100 decibels: { Link } This { Link } says that a "noisy factory floor" is around 90 dB and a "Racing Motorcycle at a distance of 50 feet" is about 95 dB. They also claim an "EPA Legal Street bike, wide open throttle, at 50'" would be about 80 dB. Here's something else to give some perspective: OSHA limits daily exposure of sound levels of 96 dB to no more than about 3.5 hours a day for workers: { Link } I sure don't want my wilderness experience, whether I'm hiking or driving my own snowmobile, to sound like a "Noisy Factory Floor." Perhaps I should edit this idea to read "Reduce maximum allowable noise levels of OHVs."

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

I'd say that if we didn't have driver's licenses, our streets would be significantly more chaotic. Another thing I keep noticing in these conversations is that there's a wide variety of off-road vehicle types, but that's rarely discussed or considered. Mountain Bikes, Dirt Bikes/Motor Cycles, Quads, 4x4 SUVs all have varying degrees of impact on the land, air, and noise -- and it also depends on what kind of terrain they're on. A self-absorbed jerk doing donuts in a meadow with his Suburban of course is going to shred up the land. However, a responsible and respectful driver on a dry dirt "fire road" won't have the same level of impact. As with all things, there are many nuances here, and I think it's helpful if we can all find a way to include those in our discussions.

The AT is wonderful! It is a treasured resource for us all. But some of the ten other National Scenic Trails (NSTs) have hundreds of miles of corridor that needs to be acquired, just as was the case with the AT 35 years ago. The federal government needs to bring to the other NSTs the same commitment that it so successfully brought to the AT before additional NSTs are designated. The NSTs in the Great Lakes area like the NCT and IAT in particular, where there is tremendous public support for increasing the amount of public land, are ready and ripe for the federal government to begin acquiring land from willing sellers.

True, there are more important issues facing our nation than increasing the size of the Wilderness Preservation System. But let's not confuse "users" with "uses". Anyone, any user, is entitled to enjoy any Wilderness Area, state park or public trail. But not all uses can possibly be allowed everywhere. There are good reasons we cannot ride our OHVs into the Capitol, into a museum, into a stadium, into a shopping mall, into a school yard, into a state park, and into a Wilderness Area.

This idea is more like the civilian conservation corps than the peace corps. But it was a good idea and it may be needed again for similar reasons.

ELK is not only a great program that promotes conservation, it is also an educational encirhment programs for youth, many who are at risk, and a vital tool that connects them to nature!!

This is so true we need more tent and Rv spots at alot of places and maybe some new ones to some small some big

Your comments are all right I went to DC May 9-12 for the Audubon part of a National Coalition on Invasive Species.To lobby for a bill Senator Nelson is introducing to the Senate in June to help stop new invasive species to screen them before coming into the USA it is not perfect but it is a start. A previous stronger bill faded. I have lots of info on the costs to control invasives all ready here and types that are here if any one is interested let me know and I will get it to you. I will be at the Helena meeting

Connecting children to nature is important. Here in Southern California we are working to establish more animal corridors with the help of local government agencies and non-profit organizations. These connections will allow more biodiversity and an oppourtiniy for children she see our native wildlife in the outdoors.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

One of the greatest ideas the United States ever had, our National Parks, are falling apart. The State Parks are even worse. We need creative fixes NOW. Let's use the Peace Corps, or the Conservation Corps (from long ago) ideas, and pay people who are out of work to fix the problems in the parks. The money the US government gave to the banks would have been better spent paying people to work in our parks. At least everyone would have benefited. Combine the need for environmental conservation, and the need for people to work. Put in solar panels on the roofs of all buildings in the parks to reduce the need for electric power. That would take care of two important issues at once, reduce the need for electric generating plants, and put people to work.

Such a good idea to have some of the amazing wide horizon of the prairie preserved. Just to go there and breathe in the open space would be a healing experience. I love it!

The sites of critical events in the history of our nation support the continuity of our free society. These include battlefields where men gave their lives in defense of their beliefs. They call people in the present to continue to defend and propagate our freedoms.

I am a so-called treehugger (actually I am more of a bear and deer hugger :P) and I don't really see a problem with this idea. I see more and more that conservation groups are coming to the table, trying to make collaborative agreements that benefit all parties and still manage to help the environment. Sadly, more and more I see every attempt they make is met with stonewalling and refusal to give up a single thing by the off-road community, even when compensated elsewhere to no net loss. It is met with ire and anger instead of an attitude of trying to find solutions. Yes, there are zealots on BOTH sides. Let's just try to figure it out civilly. Look for and support those groups that are making an effort to collaborate. Here in WA, there is a great group, the Northeast WA Forestry Coalition that is making a real effort to bring everyone to the table. Even Sec. Vilsack pointed out how great it is.

I am asking this respectfully, hopefully I sound that way: Why do you think people who want to preserve core wildlife habitat and some small piece of primeval land are "anti-access"? I am not a backcountry hiker, have no need to ever hike wilderness, but am a huge proponent of preserving just a small slice in perpetuity just as it is, like our forefathers found it. Our wildlife and our ecosystems need wilderness. It doesn't have to be all about whether or not we can play in it. There are SO many access points out there for all kinds of rec--I honestly think the OHV community is operating under this scarcity myth (created by hugely profitable lobbyists... like the BRC) that just doesn't equate to reality. Sure, things get closed when they are being abused, but the ORV community should do more to educate people not to abuse trails, not to get trashed and act like jerks. Same with hikers, same with horses. If people treated the land with respect, there would be less push back from other users against ORVers.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Gary has said everything I would want to say. These scenic trails allow us to explore our beautiful country, with its diverse landscapes, from deserts to wetlands, from creeks to rivers, from mountains to valleys; the historic trails tell the stories of this nation, and of its people of many races, creeds, and beliefs, and of the events that inspired them. We must complete these trails, and we must adequately fund the non-profits and volunteers who work so hard to protect these trails and steward the trails' stories. Proceeding on, Barb Kubik

The Land and Water Conservation Fund was established over 40 years ago as a powerful tool to bring recreation access to the great outdoors for millions of Americans by using a portion of fees collected from oil/gas operations. What a great use of a little bit of the money made by these industries to give back to states' conservation needs, reconnect people with wild places, and ensure working lands are not converted to development.

This tool helps states acquire open space or conservation easements, to build recreation areas, and to protect ecosystems by underwriting projects that bring a broad range of people to the outdoors.

From small things like ballparks to wild ecosystems, the Fund gives states the power and leadership role to determine their own healthy future. The Fund has helped create or improve national treasures like Harper's Ferry, the Big Sur Coast, Yellowstone, NYC's Central Park, and San Francisco's Golden Gate Park.

There is just one thing wrong with the Fund: It has only been fully funded twice in 45 years. There is so much more this fund can do to get people outside, get them playing, and get them thinking about wild places.

Fully fund the Land and Water Conservation Fund: Make the powerful tools we already have work to their fullest potential!

This is a wonderful idea. I would only add that in the process of determining "wilderness" areas to preserve for future generations, relatively small parcels should be included for consideration. In places like central Indiana where the European settlers deforested the entire region, the only remnants, and there are thousands of them, are mostly under 100 acres. What I've discovered when walking hundreds of these areas is that a surprising number of them are quite ecologically diverse. They stand as monuments to the majestic temperate, deciduous forest that once stretched from the eastern slopes of the Appalachians to central Illinois. The best of them deserve our attention as much as vast stretches of open space.

Me and my family love the outdoors and nature. We ride and use OHV with no more impact to the environment than a road has. Plus this is our land as US citizens and we have the right to enjoy it and use it!!!!

Historic Preservation is crucial; it preserves our uniquely American identity.

The wildlife are flourishing and God is restoring the prairie with abundant rain. Why take land that is productive and put it back to unproductive land. Do you want to have to depend on other countries for our food also?

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

I also do not feel that cattle grazing should be included as being "damaging" to public lands. History in my area shows that ranchers working with the government programs have actually improved the land and improved the wildlife numbers. On the other hand if they put bison on this land it would totally ruin what these programs and the ranchers have accomplished.

I think that the U.S. Congress has helped to promote land conservation by enacting several incentives for landowners. But the Internal Revenue Service is putting a damper on landowners' interest in giving conservation easements by encouraging certain IRS agents / 'engineers' / 'appraisers' to harass easement donors. I am now in the process of being 'audited' because of a conservation easement that I donated to a local land trust. The claims of the 'engineer' have been petty, often false, and almost always presented antagonistically. I am confident that a reasonable judge will decide in my favor, but the cost to me in time and money will be enormous. It makes little sense to me for Congress, on one hand, to promote conservation easements while the IRS, on the other hand, discourages them.

Saving the battlefields is essential to our understanding of our history. As a teacher I know the power of having the chance to visit and have students visit these historic sites. Please save them for future generations.

The Historic Preservation Fund should be fully funded at the Congressionally authorized level of \$150 million. Give State Historic Preservation Offices and the communities they serve the financial and human resources they need to help ensure that the places that matter are attractive and viable parts of a sustainable future. Also fund Save America's Treasures, which is a critical source of funds for nationally significant properties. Preservation creates jobs, stimulates community development, and promotes sustainability, environmental stewardship, tourism, and our cultural identity.

Almost every suggestion on this site asks for government funds to buy more land or preserve land or to fund education programs. I don't see anything in here that is suggesting that individuals step forward and do their part to contribute money to these projects. How many people participating on this site will die with money in the bank and no will to designate who gets the funds? My suggestion is for more people to donate to the National Park systems or to set up a land trust both during their lifetimes and in their estates. We all have the ability to do our part. The government does not have unlimited funds to keep paying for our recreational areas. { Link }

Although I wasn't really inspired by this idea when I first read the title, it really might be a very good idea. I bet there are already i-phone apps for birders that allow you to search for birds to help ID species while you are out birding. I think the self-guided trail thing is a good idea

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Anyone who saw the WONDERFUL PBS series about our national park system had to have been inspired by the writing of some of our country's more prolific nature writers, such as John Muir. Encouraging our children to READ the words of those inspiring environmentalists and then taking them on field trips where they can pen their own thoughts, is a wonderful way to get them to really take a look at what they are seeing and feeling about nature.

Community gardens are popping up around the country. More emphasis should be put on encouraging butterfly gardens and other wildlife gardens to help connect children with nurturing nature.

Encourage more green building programs to focus on attributes that create environmentally friendly landscapes, and provide tax incentives to builders and/or buyers for these programs. Encouraging homeowners to create and maintaining environmentally friendly landscapes at the own home is a huge step for environmental conservation.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

What's the best way to effect climate change on a broad scale? Bring the problem home and teach each citizen to Take Care of Their Share www.takecareofyourshare.com of the planet. When you try to explain the concepts of global warming or carbon offsets to the average citizen, you can almost see their eyes glaze over and their mind begin to wander. But, show them a butterfly emerging from a chrysalis or a tiny, iridescent hummingbird zipping by and it's easy to get them hooked on the environment – and the steps they need to take to help protect it. One of our primary beliefs is that we should encourage people to go outside and really get to know their own landscapes, and the wildlife that lives there, as a means to get them to accept responsibility for taking care of the planet. We believe that this interaction with one's own personal landscape is one of the best ways to get both children and adults outside, active and involved with protecting the environment. On a global scale, climate change and the environmental health of our planet is an issue that is too huge and abstract for most people to feel a personal attachment to. The depletion of natural resources seems too distant; the ozone layer too far away. People may feel that they should be concerned about these issues, but it is easy for them to see them as someone else's problems – scientists, perhaps, or future generations. By bringing the issues home, into people's own backyards, I believe that we can make much greater strides in encouraging personal responsibility. Since 2003, the Take Care of Your Share initiative (www.takecareofyourshare.com) has been encouraging and educating people to get to know their own share of the planet – the flora and fauna that make up the ecosystems in their own backyards. Our hope was to one day encourage the government to create a national program called Take Care of Your Share which would provide the information and encouragement for every citizen that wanted to learn how to be good environmental stewards. Through websites, articles, programs and books, Take Care of Your Share has been providing the information necessary to encourage good environmental stewards. The Take Care of Your Share tools provide suggested activities and encourage participants to keep a journal as they get up close and personal with the wonders of their landscape. I strongly believe that this personal look at nature provides the tipping point necessary to turn environmental responsibility from an abstract issue into a personal one. We have repeatedly seen how fostering a sense of personal knowledge and protection for local species has resulted in an overall desire to protect the environment on a broader scale. The journal aspect is somewhat unique. It is a great way to get kids and parents outside together, learning about the wonders of nature. In addition, our instructions for keeping an online journal help to appeal to the computer generation as well. Additionally, we provide instructions to use government websites, such as Search.Usa.Gov, NRCS, EPA and others to locate appropriate information for specific areas of the country. People that create and keep a Wildlife Habitat Journal are encouraged to share their findings with others through their journals and online blogs, thus allowing their new environmental enthusiasm to be spread exponentially. Our materials are specifically written for those with little previous knowledge about creating a healthy landscape. They are basic enough to encourage immediate participation, but comprehensive enough to make a huge impact. I would LOVE for organizations involved with America's Great Outdoors Initiative to take over the efforts of the Take Care of Your Share initiative to provide the encouragement and education necessary to help more people on their path to environmental responsibility. For more information about the Take Care of Your Share initiative, visit: { <a href="http://www.takecareofyourshare.com/"

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

rel="nofollow" target="_blank">Link }

You need to re-read this suggestion. It is all about getting people outside. It is just suggesting using an i-phone to view maps and trail guides. I, for one, sure could have used a map on my phone on more than one occasion when I got lost in the woods.

As a Master Naturalist volunteer in Texas I can say that this is the most rewarding "work" that I have ever been involved with. Not only do I have opportunities to teach others but I have opportunities to be the "learner". It is a perfect fit for a retired educator who wants to continue educating others and having fun.

Careless OHV or ORV use has damaged the cryptobiotic crust in many wilderness study, and wilderness areas - a crust that protects the sands and dirt from blowing away, a crust that takes scores of years to rebuild. If the proposed wilderness does gain protection, the vast majority of OHV or ORV trails will still be available. Only about 10% of the 'trails' (which in most cases are not even two-tracks) will be removed from use. Certainly 17,000 miles of vehicle trails should be enough to make anyone happy. Just because the land is pristine, it should not be seen as something to despoil and conquer for a single persons pleasure.

I do believe that our youth will be the basis for a wiser environmentally friendly generation, and these are the types of seeds that need to be planted in their minds.

I just returned from Utah and found that not only do Americans from all over the country come to enjoy the unique rugged beauty and solitude found in the red rock wilderness, as well as the historical cliff dwellings, petroglyphs and pictographs - but so do tourists from all over the world. Wherever we went, we found so many foreign visitors we had difficulty finding lodging. The idea that there should be no more designated wilderness boggles the mind. This is the people's land, the people's treasure, and needs to be preserved as wilderness for the generations to come.

Wow! The lands in question belong to the public. Wilderness designation would not change that. It would protect those wilderness areas for public use in a peaceful protected environment, untouched by the industrial results of man. In 1936 there was a national park proposal that included all of the current protected wilderness in southeastern Utah. It was whittled down to Arches and Canyonlands. The wilderness quality of these lands, including the ancient petroglyphs, pictographs, and dwellings, will be lost if not protected. As for the mining, oil and gas argument - there are stacks of leases that have been issued over the years, that remain undeveloped except for a two track to keep them viable. If the land is so important for oil, etc. why haven't they been used? For the OHV vs ORV debate, in some states ORV is the correct term and refers to Off Road Vehicles; in other states the preferred term is Off Highway Vehicles - same difference.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Considering the cost of the vehicles and the positive economic impact you would think there would be more public land available for OHV use. Most of us are not that picky on the quality of the land, it can easily be developed by the users. I live in Orlando, FL and the nearest public area is over 60 miles away and you have to pay to participate. Most equestrians, mountain bikers, hikers, etc. have more land available and most of the time don't have to pay to use it. I understand the environmental impacts are different but there needs to be places for all American families to enjoy their outdoor recreation. Some areas are closed and protected until someone approves developments to raise their tax base and then cuts every tree down and bulldozes all the land anyway. Happens over and over. I would support legislation that would eliminate liability issues for OHV use on public and private lands. If you are going to participate in something that could get you hurt, don't blame the landowner..

I agree that the government should take a leading role in sustainability. It has taken a back seat for too long. I know that many government agencies are already taking a role in changing their vehicle fleets to improve their sustainability. Of course this is not done overnight. However, they do need to make a transparent plan for leading the effort to reduce pollution from motorized vehicles, including fleet, vessels and OHV vehicles.

I agree that we need more trails of all varieties. These trails need to meet sustainable standards. Users must be taught how to treat their public lands with respect. Hikers and equestrians need to learn not to short cut switchbacks. OHV users need to learn not to go cross-country in sensitive ecosystems and to remain on designated trails.

OHV also refers to really cool things like off road motorcycles that are in fact excellent exercise and super fun.

There should be a place where everyone can do their thing in peace. Hikers, equestrians, bikers, are all welcome on my piece of American as long as they don't try to take over and kick me off of it. I will extend the same courtesies to them, as well as keep my dirt bikes and ATVs off your preservation areas.

This is a noble activity with benefits all Americans. To contemplate the struggles and their motivations in detail is to learn what was and is great about this nation and its people. Giving up these lands to development or other mundane uses is to remove their influence forever. Protect this amazing piece of truly American history.

I have an interest in preserving OHV operations in Utah. Many of my friends are OHV operators and business owners. I am an ATV Rider safety Instructor that not only promotes responsible land use but makes a living in the ATV industry. A race is to be held in Monticello, Utah the weekend of 6/19/10, how do you think 300 families depending on that little town will help the economy there. We buy fuel, food, snacks, supplies, pay for hotel rooms, eat at restaurants, and my family alone expects to put about \$700 into the local economy that weekend. I know for a fact, that no wilderness advocate, SUWA Member, or any other version of a tree hugger will be supporting the families of the region.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

I have been riding OHV's in Utah for over 40 years, getting the opportunity to enjoy many of the wonderful landscapes of the state with my parents and children at all stages of age and physical abilities together as a family. I have NEVER come across a backpacker in the extreme remote areas I am able to get to on an OHV or in a 4WD. I want to experience the state, not observe it on some postcard or calendar image. I also wish to preserve the land for use by future generations, not lock it away. Utah is far too remote to access the vast majority of the state on foot. The only way to experience it is by allowing responsible motorized use.

Over 27 million acres of the most amazing BLM lands are included in the BLM National Landscape Conservation System. The protect biological diversity, offer opportunities for recreation consistent with that goal and help with the economic sustainability of gateway communities. Protecting these lands as part of the NLCS makes sense on many levels. It should be strengthened, the science mission should be expanded, and conservation programs with gateway communities should be encouraged.

The National Trails System ranks right up there with the National Park Service as one of America's great ideas. When Americans hike our trails, they come closer to understanding our natural and cultural heritage than those who do not have such an experience. My major interest in trails has centered on the Lewis and Clark Trail, most of which I have explored, in some sections many times. The story of Lewis and Clark is central to understanding America's past and can open new vistas on our future. During the recent Bicentennial of the Lewis and Clark Expedition (2003-2006), millions of people retraced their route over land and water, and gained a deeper appreciation of our history, our resources, and what we can do to improve our environment in the future. All the trails serve a similar function. I am extremely pleased with recent progress in expanding the system!

Preserving our past protects our future!

These are all great suggestions. All of them should be implemented before there is irreparable damage to our environment and wildlife. The time has come for our government and compassionate caring citizens to take actions such as those voiced here.

Fully funding the HPF will promote sustainable communities through the redevelopment of existing structures and preservation of our neighborhoods. Sustainable communities are communities that work and are places that have jobs and services for residents.

Mountain bike riders should be allowed in USFS designated wilderness areas. They are not motorized and have little impact when operated appropriately. Put in place a system where riders would have to earn a license to access the trails in the Wilderness areas. IMBA could develop training and testing. Riders should also have to perform a number of hours (50?) of trail maintenance within the annually to maintain their license. I believe most serious riders would have no reservations about earning the right to use the Wilderness areas. This would address some of the problems of inappropriate riding practices and provide the USFS with some much needed trail maintenance.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Enjoyable trails have unique characteristics relative to a given activity. ATV trails are not fun for motorcycles, hikers, bikers, horses. Motorcycle trails are OK for hikers and great for bikers and horses. Bike trails are good for bikes, hike and horse. Hike trails for hike and horse.

America and its history - our heritage - is not just important to Americans; it is valued and cherished. Funding of historic preservation resources will be the Administration's acknowledgement of this.

As a Master Naturalist I have particularly liked working side by side with like minded people on conservation and interpretive projects. We have educated, built facilities, interpreted the outdoors and generally added much to the process of connecting people to their natural world. Personally it is the most fulfilling volunteer work I have ever done. The role of citizen scientists is a great fit for leveraging limited federal and state resources. And have fun doing it!

As a responsible motorized recreationist, I fully support this idea. I have taken folks along a designated motorized recreation trail (Snowmobile) to an area preserved for the protection of huge White Pines in northern Mn which includes signage describing the growth of these magnificent trees dating back well before the arrival of Christopher Columbus. The area also includes signs along a small trail describing the fauna lying beneath these trees. Contrary to some beliefs, most motorized recreationists (including ATVers) have a profound love of nature and use this form of transportation to access areas that most folks will never see. I would like to see more signage along motorized vehicle routes to first of all keep us on designated trails, and furthermore, to educate folks about some of the features, both geographical and ecological that we are exploring. Education through signage only enhances the appreciation of the outdoor experience.

I don't see why we can't dedicate an area for motorized use just like they do for Wilderness Areas? Call it a Recreation Area and it can never be changed to anything else just like a Wilderness Area. I also like to backpack, hike so I am a bit of an environmentalist to the fact that I think we ALL need to respect the land. I also love to snowmobile which when not ridden on low snow you don't see any signs but still we get kicked out for BS reasons. It's time to fight fire with fire and dedicate land just for us OHV users just like the tree huggers do for their hiking or skiing which gets labeled a Wilderness Area. Reality is Wilderness Areas just kick out the average American who is not able to hike 10 miles in the high country. Also I noticed a comment that a guy that likes to ride his motorcycle but wants to help protect the earth donates to protection groups. I hope you realize ALL those groups are trying to get you and your bike kicked off ALL public land. I don't care what group it is, they ALL hate motorized users and you should stop donating money to them....their priorities have changed and actually protect squat these days.

I fully support this idea and have made comments similar to this under the "sustainable rural communities" post.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

I have a great idea and that would be to fully fund and manage existing places where people can go to recreate. Land grabs and Wilderness closures seem to be nothing more than efforts by politicians to show their "green" side. America is full of all types of parks that allow or have allowed all different forms of recreation and it should remain this way. Current legislation and local management efforts are already in place. The input of ALL groups must be counted and I have a feeling the polls will begin to reflect this need!

I live in far Northern CA where you can't throw a stone without hitting a park or preserved forest of some kind. I observed this throughout the state as well. I respect the fact that America and its people need places to recreate that are free from mechanised travel, plenty of these places already exist and so do many federal lands where even allowed motorized use is rare. Local control must continue and the current administration wants to end that along with locking up more land from a variety of users. My future votes at all levels of govt. will reflect my opposition to this as I'm tired of knee jerk reactions and politicians that use environmental causes to get into office.

- Preserved Civil War battlefields are tangible links to our country's past.
- The 150th anniversary commemoration is expected to stimulate renewed interest in the conflict and generate unprecedented tourism to Civil War sites.
- Protection of America's remaining Civil War battlefields will leave a lasting legacy of national commitment to preservation and conservation.
- Preserved battlefields revitalize local economies and create jobs by encouraging heritage tourism. The more historic land that is preserved, the longer visitors stay in a community and the more time they spend patronizing local businesses.
- Battlefields are outdoor classrooms for this and future generations. They allow visitors to walk in the footsteps of the Civil War heroes and experience the landscape much as it was during the conflict.
- Preserved battlefields help protect water resources; sustain parks, working farms, forests and ranches; and provide open space for passive outdoor recreation.

This is a great idea. A tribute to America's history and a great step forward for the future. I love the name "Buffalo Commons National Park," but as others have said the name is less important than the idea. This is a great example of how history can be preserved as both a story of our collective past, as well as an on-going testimony to the our current and future values. What more can I do to make this happen? I am prepared to spend my tax dollars!

We often ride quads, I encourage my kids to pick up garbage while riding, Some days we actually make money on cans we pick up. I think all of public lands should be open for riding. We shouldnt let a few carless riders close land for the rest of us.

ELK is an invaluable program that needs as much support as possible in order to help secure our nation's natural resources.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Our nation needs not only ONE solution. As we can see in the "Gulf spill", the demand for oil is becoming a catastrophic disaster. The desire to find more oil is becoming detrimental to those in the drilling areas. Every facet of life in the gulf coast area is being tried beyond what we can imagine - not just for the wildlife but for those who depend on it for their own livelihood (fisherman, restaurant employees, hotels, recreation destinations, etc. from the CEO to the dishwasher). The recovery time is going to be long, the environment will sustain itself but not quickly without the ingenuity and labor from mankind. When we focus on one solution other great ideas are overlooked. We need to not ostracize the "sustainable energy" ideas (wind, solar, water) but use them in conjunction with the nuclear power so that jobs and incomes are created in all areas where the resources are plentiful. You don't need land to put up solar panels. Set up funding to encourage people to use them on their roofs. Office buildings can lease out the space on top of the buildings as well as have their power bill reduced. Be all and End all is not a solution, combining ideas and utilizing both nuclear and nature will benefit all of us.

I am OK with setting this area aside for conservation if we absolutely must, but on one condition: There are designated OHV areas within the boundaries of the proposed Monument, one is Chappie Shasta and the other is Knoxville. When the CWC went to Senator Feinstein they were told they could not propose areas where there was legal OHV activity for wilderness. From what I can tell they have honored this promise, and I certainly hope they will do the same in Snow Mountain-Berryessa. We OHV folks have few areas left and we are not being allowed to have any more. I know, you probably think that is just fine, but thousands of acres are set aside for conservation in one way or another and we get nothing. We got not one dime of ARRA money, it all went for non-OHV projects including hundreds of thousands of dollars for wilderness trails very few people use. I like wilderness trails too, but please don't ask us to give up our legal riding areas. We have to do hour and hours of volunteer work and compete for a few measly dollars to keep out existing areas open in spite of all kinds of hassles a sane person would never endure. Please give us a break on this area. At least let us keep what we have.

If you compare naturally occurring erosion to that caused by ORV's you can easily see that ORV's cause minute damage compared to other causes. But they are visible and an easy political target. You can ban ORV's if you want, but then all the hunters, fisherman, campers and hikers will still have to get to trail heads and destinations somehow and that will defeat exactly what this initiative is trying to do. What needs to be done is to promote responsible ORV use, not target this use for elimination.

It would be surprising if a great nation such as ours did not have many pivotal moments in its history. Having said this, I would like to respectfully suggest, that the four years of the American Civil War represents the most important years in the history of this Republic. All that we have, and are, and believe, today, had its origins in this titanic struggle. The battlefields of that war are not merely parks, or repositories of monuments. They are shrines, bathed in the blood of hundreds of thousands of our ancestors who -- on both sides -- fight and died so we could have the nation, and the life, we share now. Preserving these battlefields offers the best way to help preserve their memories, and in doing so, help keep alive the values that created these United States in the first place.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Last time I checked our public land are managed for multiple use. Mountain Bikes have lots of opportunity and there is also plenty of land for those who think wheeled vehicles have no place - it's called wilderness. Over half of Caalifornia's public land is wilderness. That is more than enough. If you want all wheeled vehicles banned from public land that is pretty extreme. There is plenty for all and there have been major strides toward managing land for different uses so damage is controlled. Lots of people volunteer countless hours to do this, and we would be very disappointed if there was no place for us. Think about a scenario where all land is private and we have just a few parks where people can do only highly regulated managed activity. Sounds like a county without much personal freedom doesn't it? I prefer living in a democracy where everyone has rights, don't you?

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Outdoor Community & Industry Leaders Endorse SCORP – Look to Combat Beetles Destroying Colorado’s Forests “Great Outdoors” Essential to Colorado/USA Future Denver, Colorado, Friday, July 9, 2010 – At REI’s Flagship store in Denver an unprecedented number of outdoor community & industry leaders and advocates throughout Colorado met and joined forces endorsing the national Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP), highlighting Colorado efforts responding to President Obama’s concerns about the future of the Great Outdoors. Support for stopping the Pine-Beetle’s unprecedented killing of Colorado/US Forests was highlighted. The meeting was a direct response to President Obama’s White House Conference on America’s Great Outdoors in May where he challenged Americans to come forward with ideas, recommendations and best practices to better help direct and shape United States outdoor policies. This meeting, held in lieu of the monthly Colorado Outdoor Recreation Resource Project (CORRP), was attended by scores of Colorado’s outdoor recreation industry leaders and focused on those programs, organizations and initiatives addressing SCORP recommendations. The Colorado Alliance for Environmental Education, the Responsible Recreation Foundation and Leave No Trace focused on efforts educating Coloradans on environment stewardship and respectful use of our public lands. Great Outdoors Colorado outlined how Colorado Lottery funds recreation and conservation efforts; Vail Resorts and the National Forest Foundation Skier Conservation Fund highlighted ongoing efforts to fund grassroots organizations through voluntary donations associated with lift tickets and accommodations. the National Ski Areas Association detailed their Sustainable Slopes Environmental Charter as a framework to support greater ski area environmental sustainability; the motorized recreation community detailed their Responsible Recreation Foundation’s efforts to help public agencies to better support growing public outdoor recreation needs. (Colorado SCORP endorsement continued) Additional presentations on Colorado’s commitment to fostering greater environmental stewardship was showcased by Colorado Youth Corps Association’s employing and training youth statewide for a variety of land, water, and energy conservation projects. Captain Zach Taylor, Regional Health Administrator, Department of Health and Human Services spoke on the increasing support for the annual national “Get Outdoors Day” where healthy, active outdoor activities are offered; Denise Escobedo from Safe City Youth Leadership Team spoke about the acclaimed North Face Outdoor Nation and Planet Explore initiatives where US youth commit to bringing their friends and family into outdoor activities making healthy and lasting connection with nature; Seth Winnerman of City Wild addressed initiatives involving more inner city youth in outdoor activities through the SOS Outreach/ City WILD/ Big City Mountaineers curriculum. Sue Anderson, Program Director for Outdoor Colorado Outdoor Stewardship Institute (OSI) described the environmental stewardship training provided to volunteers, land management agencies, and other Colorado and US organizations. GreenWay, a Colorado company salvaging and recycling Rocky Mountain beetle-killed Blue Pine wood, addressed the group about the looming catastrophe for Colorado and the western US from millions of acres of trees killed by Pine beetles. Already nearly 4 million acres in Colorado have been killed; almost 18 million acres of pine are dead in the western US, with millions of additional acres under attack. Before a fire of unprecedented size blackens Colorado and the Western US destroying billions of dollars of infrastructure and risking tens of thousands of lives, attendees pledged to work together to increase awareness and develop programs to help stem this growing

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

crisis and protect forest health and sustainability for future outdoor recreation.

We need more non-motorized pathways especially within urban communities where the use of bikes or walking is more out of necessity as well as for recreation. However it takes people who care to work with the local government to create these systems and watch over them, to be the eyes and ears, to keep the trails clean and safe. There is a large pool of seniors who would be willing to give a few hours of their day to be on the trail checking for problems and assisting other users. Employ these people with minimum wages that will help them to support themselves, will give value to their lives by giving back to the community, and will create additional cash flow within the communities.

I agree with the idea of using land for OHV use, but we shouldn't shut people out. Shutting people out is the problem. Millions of acres of land are being closed to hikers, mountain bikers, hunters, and OHV users because the government is redesignating land as Wilderness. We can all share the millions of acres. One public land area can have an area for hiking, an area for mountain bike trails, a hunting and shooting area, and a trail system for OHV use, all in one park. I'd like to quote a movie, "if you build it, they will come", tourists that is. Build us parks on public land that will accommodate all users and they will come.

I enjoy OHV use, specifically riding dirt bikes, with my family. My wife, son, and I all have dirt bikes and we are very thankful for the open areas we have to ride, although there is only one within a hour drive. Luckily our fee to ride on public land is much cheaper at \$15 and honestly, I don't mind paying to ride. I just don't have time to volunteer to maintain the trails we ride on, I wish I did, but I don't. Paying to ride, as long as it is a reasonable price, is a good way for me to support trail maintenance and improvements. As long as the revenue from the trail fees go back into the trails I don't mind. What I don't like is when I'm charged a fee to take my family to ride and then the trail revenues are used for something totally unrelated to the riding area. OHV use is a great way for families to spend quality family time together, enjoy the outdoors, and stay fit all in one activity.

The Great Plains or the northern United States are a treasured area for those who live there. Farmers and Ranchers. They are the people most closely tied to the land and they are the ones who have managed the resources on a very intimate level. If not for their conservation efforts and management skills there would be no more great plains. The lack of commercialization and government intervention has left the region looking as though it did 200 years ago.

students of all ages can record one site each year, recording all plants and animals seen with a digital camera. with the help of science teachers and avocational enthusiasts, the identification of many organisms can be achieved. Construct a database similar to USDA plant database for all organisms, establish protocols, upload GPS coordinates for each site and all organisms found.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

People who are not experienced in the outdoors will usually choose the easy way to interact with it (ride in a car, see a movie, shop in a store). They need naturalist programs to teach them how to enjoy untamed wildlife and unspoiled landscape. Don't cave in to pressure to Disneyfy our parks. With encouragement and opportunity, people can get beyond golf courses and tennis courts.

I like your idea about nature clubs for families but I think you should make your entry more generic. Rather than just talking about the group started by your family, why not suggest that individuals and families (or churches, scout troops, etc.) should start their own nature clubs. You can certainly still list your club as an example, but you might get more people to promote the idea. I hope you don't mind my suggestion. I like your idea and would like to see it get the votes that it deserves.

It sounds like you are the kind of nature educator that I think is needed. I believe that it is important to share "right-brain" activities rather than just "left-brained". Kids need to feel and touch what they are learning about rather than just hearing some lecturer on a hiking trail.

Homebuilders have long been seen as the bad guys when it comes to harming the environment. This is despite the fact that the majority of current homeowners take no steps to create environmentally friendly landscapes on their own properties. All builders should accept the responsibility of learning the requirements for green building programs. As the construction industry begins to rebuild itself, they should all focus on including environmentally friendly options. Some green building classes should be requirements for receiving a license as a building contractor.

I agree with this, as well. Certainly there are some fishermen (and hunters) that don't respect the great outdoors, but it seems like a majority of them do. I know that it was my husband, an avid fisherman, who helped to teach me the "errors of my ways" when it come to protecting the environment. Between him and my fisherman father, I've turned into quite an environmentalist! { Link }

I am not going to promote or demote. BUT I think that national parks NEED concession areas, rest rooms, restaurants and places to relax and browse. This allows every generation to enjoy the parks more.

I remember travelling out west back in 1984 and seeing wild horses running free. It was one of the most amazing things I've ever seen.

I think all of these comments sum things up pretty well. What we need to teach is a respect and an appreciation for nature. I know people keep demoting a lot of my ideas such as teaching nature writing and teaching people to Take Care of Their Share of the Planet and teaching nature photography in schools. But I really believe that is where everything needs to start. We need teachers that will fill their students with awe over the incredible wonders of nature. We need to inspire people to protect the planet.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

I think it is unpopular because people don't understand it. Some people see all electronic devices as anti-nature when in fact, this idea would help get the electronic generation more interested in nature. I wish I could vote again for it.

I think its an interesting idea to provide park passes to people in exchange for volunteer hours and wouldn't be suprised to find that this idea is already in play. However, I don't see why it should be restricted to government employees. The people with the most time to devote to volunteer are probably retirees or other people that are not employed full-time and these are the same people that would benefit the most from free passes and discounts.

I would love it if all of our parks were free. However, our we certainly do need to pay for the support and upkeep of our parks. I'm not sure who would police them, keep them clean, etc. if there were no entrance fees.

The government has resources that the rest of us do not...scientists, money, and the means to influence, ie. provide inventives for green building, etc. If there are funds associated with the Great Outdoors Initiative, they will be government funds. Organizations such as the EPA and NRDC and National Parks System may be the decision makers on what to do with these funds. My personal opinion is that these organizations are the best ones to educate and encourage our citizens. They are the only groups that don't have any outside agendas. As I said, that's just my opinion.

Just to clear up any confusion, Take Care of Your Share is a not-for-profit endeavor. Materials are always distributed at cost.

Nature photography is an excellent means of getting kids to look closer at nature. Nature photography should be an available class choice in at least junior high and up.

Nature writing or keeping a nature journal would involve taking kids outside in nature and having them write about.

This is a good idea AND could be used as an educational tool to get more kids outside. Kids of high or college age could help create the descriptions for the signs. Scouts could visit parks and help select which items should be labelled, etc.

This is a great grass-roots plan and is similar to another one that is listed on here by someone named _____. Perhaps if you can link this idea to the website of such a club to help encourage others.

Private Property owners are usually better Stewards than the government due to fewer regulations and private interest, so it would be counterproductive to have the government involved in Landscape Wide Planning. This would degrade private property, reduce Landscape Health and infringe on private property rights. Local Stewardship projects are the key to improving forest health. This has been proven time and time again on both private and agency lands where active stewardship has produced better forest health and increased biodiversity over non managed preserves.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

The health of the land is not determined by who recreates there. It is determined by how many people recreate there. In the case of many popular hiking spots the areas are overused and in very poor condition. The same is true where OHV recreation has been forced onto too small a trail system by those who seek to close our public lands to the majority of the public. The reality is every form of recreation has impacts. Water runs down the hill on every trail. How the trail is laid out determines how much erosion takes place, not who uses the trail. Many of the hiking trails I have been on had really bad erosion since hikers are most likely to shortcut switchbacks, which increase the speed of water flow and erosion. Trails that allow OHV use are often better laid out and receive more maintenance due to OHV self funded programs than other non motorized trails. People who enjoy motorized recreation volunteer and provide more trail funding than all other groups combined.

The manufacturers all comply with the 96db limit, so all vehicles come quiet. However people can buy an aftermarket exhaust or modify the existing one. Over time most exhaust systems need to be serviced to remain as quiet as when new, but most people are not aware of that. There are decades of louder is better at work here, so it is taking time to educate people about the benefits of a quiet vehicle, but it is happening. There are companies that make very quiet systems and people are buying them. There are also add on units like the DB Snorkel and DB Dawg that will quiet most existing systems. If you meet people who have loud vehicles you might want to mention it and ask them if they have heard about these add ons. The risk of a \$500 ticket is usually motivation for most folks once they know about it.

The National Landscape Conservation System- our National Conservation Lands, include some of the most spectacular scenic, historic, natural, cultural, and archeological sites in our country. These lands consist of the last places where you can experience the history of the American West. They are home to rare plants and animals, dinosaur fossils, and native American sites. These lands conserve the essential fabric of the West, by playing a role in protecting lands, water, and wildlife for future generations. The National Conservation Lands deserve strong policy guidance from the Department of the Interior that ensures their protection.

The same environmentalists who lobbied government to mandate Solar and Wind Energy are now crying out that paving our deserts and other natural areas with solar panels and wind generators should be stopped. Regardless Solar and Wind cannot reasonably provide for our energy needs and now we are seeing the downside of the land they require. However modern safe nuclear energy plants that use 98% of the radioactive material could provide ALL OUR ENERGY NEEDS FOR 700 YEARS. We have already mined the uranium needed and best of all these new plants would use the waste uranium from old plants. Each radioactive rod would be encapsulated in ceramic material that does not melt even during a radioactive meltdown, so the risk of a nuclear disaster is extremely remote. The final low level waste uranium would be suitable for medical uses. We do not want to see America's Great Outdoors covered with Solar Panels and Wind Generators. The President should shift National Energy Policy to nuclear energy which is the only current true Alternative Energy. He needs to act quickly before we lose the experts in nuclear fields.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

The successful management of OHV can be seen in many designated areas in California. Hollister Hills and the Rock Creek areas are good examples. However, these areas are impacted by the number of visitors due to the lack of other opportunities. We need more places designated for OHV use! The California OHV fund needs to be spent on buying land for OHV parks and managing them and not on EIS studies and the like. OHV commission needs balance representation and should not be staffed by environmental extremists.

The USDA recently released report on Jobs, Economy and Sustainable Communities which identified the following three priorities needed for the survival of rural communities near National Forests: 1. Recreation 2. Resource Harvesting such as timber and mining 3. Renewable Energy The Outdoors Initiative should make these the main priorities. They are the basis for a comprehensive conservation program by encouraging people to get out and recreate in nature people will care more about the environment. Thinning and logging will promote forest health by reducing fuel loads in our overgrown forests and renewable energy can be created using Biomass.

There are converging problems in the nation including weight gain and poor health for school age children, migration to urban environments, destruction of open space, and Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD)-type problems increasing in numbers at an alarming rate. What is needed is to institute outdoor play and educational programs for all school age children throughout their K-12 years. Nature and the outdoors provides an excellent, and mostly free, science lab for schools, which could help with budget constriction problems as well. The children are in need of additional physical exercise in order to reduce body weight and body fat %. Outdoor play also stimulates the brain and reduces the effects of ADD-type symptoms and resulting problems. Outdoor play and outdoor activities including learning and challenge type activities, must be reinstated or expanded at public schools.

This country has millions of abused and neglected children who have lost their ability to trust others. The sport of rock climbing is all about trust. When you are climbing your life is in your climbing partners hands. The Pacific Northwest is ripe full of crags and mountains. Meanwhile our at-risk youth are isolated in the cities and towns. Let's bring the children to the rock, where they can develop that trust in each other

This is more urgent than ever, now that there is an oil spill endangering the great Salt Lake. As a resident of the Florida Keys, I can certainly relate. Perhaps members of both of our states and other affected states should get together on this issue, online. Also, remember that the most powerful voices in government that citizens have are their *congress members*. Keep your congress' feet to the fire. Don't be shy about reminding your congressmen/women that they are representing you and must listen to and abide by the wishes of their constituents!

From the mountains to the sea, this outdoor destination is the backyard for urban L.A. For millions, it's important for recreation, drinking water, clean air, open space, wetlands, historical and cultural significance and habitat. But it needs improved park access for the San Gabriel Valley, more services to link diverse communities, and federal protections for the last wild places.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Protecting working lands and ranches from development ALWAYS provides strong public benefits. That's way states most under threat of development -- New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Maryland, Delaware, Virginia -- are spending hundreds of millions of dollars for agricultural conservation easements from willing landowners. The federal government supports this effort financially through the USDA NRCS Farmland and Ranch Land Protection Program (FRPP). A debt for easement swap would be a great additional way of reaching landowners that might not otherwise consider selling or donating conservation easements. For me, the bottom line is that we need multiple tools in the preservation toolbox to help motivate landowners to conserve America's Great Outdoors.

I am the owner of Honda of Glendale, Motorcycles for over 40 years, I have raised my children with off road riding and now my grandchildren. I contribute them all to growing up to be responsible adults because of the dirt bike riding since they were 5 years old. We need to keep our youngsters busy whether it be hiking, bike riding, and with winter or summer sports. It is all good and we need the public lands for these opportunities for them to experience the out doors and know what a pleasure it can be. Our children need to know there is more to living than in the big cities. I am now in my 70's and still go out with my children and grandchildren. I ride a HONDA Big Red and get to go to places that I never thought I would get to see at my age. Some week ends I will put on 100 miles riding in legal areas in the desert. Here lately those areas seem to be getting smaller and smaller. What ever we can do to preserve these places for our younger generation will be worth it.

I never fully understood Pickett's Charge until I walked that mile and imagined a hundred cannon shooting at me. The clash of ideals at Gettysburg exacted a terrible human toll, and it's difficult to comprehend the cost until you walk that battlefield, and others. These battlefields are part of our national soul. Plus, they create greenspace for wildlife, and also encourage physical fitness, which can reduce Medicare expenses. I have donated money to battlefield preservation since 1993, and it's always been a good investment. People in future generations will benefit from our efforts today.

I think that OHV use is a fantastic use of a family's time. I feel that the process of building a vehicle capable of tackling wilderness terrain is something the whole family can be involved in. They can all be involved in planning and exploring in the wilderness, on trails older then the whole family together! The family experience is undeniable, just as much as it is for travel and tourism! Especially in these remote areas, small business are boosted, if not kept alive by these types of travelers! .

leave public land open to the public. seems so simple.

Many DNR forests in Washington State are working forests, where lumber is cut to fund schools and trails are provided for all recreational users. It is a win win combination for everyone.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

OHV (Off highway vehicle) use is a legitimate, sustainable use of appropriate public lands, particularly on National Forests and Bureau of Land Management Units. Allowing OHV use on logging roads provides great opportunities for families to enjoy a day in the outdoors. Motorized recreation is a healthy family activity and provides a chance for families to “get away from it all,” and to join together as a family. OHVers, like other recreationists, seek opportunities to not only enjoy the riding experience, but also opportunities to learn more about cultural and historical context, take in scenic views, observe wildlife, camp, hunt, fish and other activities such as geocaching. The overwhelming majority of OHVers are conservationists, who seek to preserve the same outdoor experiences they enjoy for children and grandchildren. OHVers are eager to volunteer. OHV clubs and organizations groom and maintain trails, trailheads and other facilities as well as adopt trails and provide the tools and experience needed for constructing and maintaining all sorts of recreational trails; not just OHV opportunities. ATV and off-highway motorcycle riding encourages and promotes physical fitness. OHVs provide the opportunity for Americans of all ages and physical capabilities to enjoy the outdoors. Let's make it easier to get out into the woods by opening our forest roads to responsible OHV use.

Three Rivers Land Conservancy is steward for natural areas in the Portland Metro urban area. Urban land is too expensive for a land trust to acquire. We hold easements and provide stewardship for land that we do not own. Owners of ecologically significant land are more likely to grant a conservation easement if there is a tax incentive to do so.

As a child, I came to love American history more than partly thanks to visits to Revolutionary War and Civil War battlefields in Pennsylvania and Virginia. As an American Soldier I benefited professionally when studying lessons in leadership and maneuver on some of these same battlefields, as well as those in France, Belgium, and Germany. Preserving and improving these battlefields helps to conserve critical open space and resources, creates splendid vacation opportunities for the entire family, contributes to local economies, creates jobs. Even more importantly, money and hard work spent on these battlefields actually invests in the hearts and minds of our children, enabling them to visualize and to an extent experience the triumphs and tragedies of our past, as well as the sacrifices made by so many throughout our nation's history. Encouraging civic spirit is a noble goal enabled by effort put into preserving our national past.

- • • Battlefields are outdoor classrooms for this and future generations. They allow visitors to walk in the footsteps of the Civil War heroes and experience the landscape much as it was during the conflict.
- Preserved battlefields help protect water resources; sustain parks, working farms, forests and ranches; and provide open space for passive outdoor recreation.
- Battlefield preservation in Pennsylvania, Maryland and Virginia, where many significant sites are located, is also vital for protecting the Chesapeake Bay. Parkland created through battlefield preservation near growing population centers like Nashville, Atlanta and elsewhere can benefit quality of life for residents.

As components of the human habitat, cultural resources ARE natural resources.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Hey tree huggers (sorry but if the shoe fits).....guess what.....the trails we (OHV users) often make are the very same trails you then "claim" as yours. How's that for Democracy! We are claiming more land for OHV use? - give me a break....there is virtually no legal places to ride anymore (NJ has zero!) I grew up in the NE. During the 70's & 80's my friends and family built many miles of trails for motorcycle riding. During the 90's the tree hugger movement stepped in and claimed the trails as their own, forcing OHV users off the land. Guess what happened, the trails saw extremely limited use and were virtually non-existent for the past decade. As soon as the next generation of OHV users (local family kids and the OHV parents, like myself) cleared the trails and began using them.....guess what..... the tree huggers started crying again that "their land" was being used by motorcyclist and now they want to claim it all over again (bet they sure enjoy all our work!). I hike, camp, canoe, mountain bike and ride off-road motorcycles. I have a tremendous respect for nature and I do think that certain OHV use does cause excessive damage. STANDARD 2-WHEELED OHV USE DO NOT! For the past 2 years I have monitored the damage caused by hikers, mountain bikers, horses, motorcycles, and quads. The largest damage is clearly from quad users followed by horses. Motorcycles and mountain bikes keep the trails clear and accessible to hikers. They leave a very minimal contact patch on the ground and churn things up just enough to keep from getting overgrown. The path they leave is easy to walk on. Successful off-road use has been done for years in many states and there is more than enough land to accommodate all. Its just a shame that some people feel they are more important and have rights greater than their neighbor. Not very American if you ask me.

I agree off roading is a great way to get the family together, we have enough land that is already locked up in wilderness, we need land to play on, land to grow trees we need access to fishing and hunting, for atv, motorcycle, horses , hiking whatever you like to do. we need land for everyone to enjoy, I do not promote irresponsible or reckless use of our land but conserving and using it, wilderness just takes away the land for most people, so lets use our land together and not bury it in a hole for some future use. we need lumber, we need minning, we all need the land so we need to be responsible and use it wisely and not just take it away from use to use, I support joint use of our land.

I am fortunate enough to belong to a dirt bike club that leases 1800 acres of private property. We have been at our current location since 1972! We maintain a use permit with the county, one of the greenest in Ca, and maintain our trails and property as if it were our own. As the chairman of the trails comitte, I recently met with the rancher next door concerning adding some cattle gaurds to our trail system. He had nothing but nice things to say about our club, and I quote " you guys have been excellent stewards of the land". This is your typical off road rider, not the guy who tears up hillsides etc.

I can't think of a better cause - preserving history, preserving nature, limiting sprawl, encouraging people to spend more time outdoors, all in one!

I do not think we need more conservation areas just more responsible people, we do not need set more land aside for special purosos

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

I think this idea deserves promotion simply because it is a step in the right direction. Do I think mt. bikers should need a license to ride in Wilderness areas, no I do not. Just as equestrians don't need a license to use those areas. But if licensing makes the opposition feel better about sharing the land, then sure, let's do it. The only reason I see for prohibiting mountain bikes in areas which are otherwise open to hiking and equestrian use is when it is a popular area and there are frequent trail conflicts due to overuse. It is sensible to manage and restrict use to specific users in those cases only. But in remote wilderness areas where trail conflicts between different users are extremely rare, it is absolutely ridiculous that mt. bikes are banned yet equestrians are not. Motorized use is a different issue due to the higher environmental impact, however there is no reason why we shouldn't be able to support a reasonable number of managed trails open to them in all these areas as well. The key is "management", as there's plenty of land for us all to be happy!

Shelter, Safety and Good Nutrition come with the JOBS that are generated by Recreation, Resource Harvesting, and Renewable Energy.

The input from ALL groups is what's needed to be fair to all Americans. Furthermore the idea of "Management by Closure" should be eliminated at all levels.

Well said, I personally have donated 1000's of hours to my favorite trail system. I clean up trash and make it sustainable. In my opinion the the people that stereotyped OHV's in a negative way just are not willing to share. There is enough for all!

This would make a great idea so much better -- we need our youth to appreciate all our public spaces, both the Great Outdoors and the "Great Indoors" at so many of our historic places.

"The "No More Wilderness" settlement opened the door for the BLM to essentially give away wilderness-caliber public lands to the oil and gas industry and motorized users in places the BLM itself recognizes as wilderness-quality." Wilderness makes land useless to American citizens. It locks out the handicapped. I am strongly in favor of CITIZENS have access to the PUBLIC lands we own collectively. I am also in favor of utilizing the resources that the land makes available to us. I fully support NO MORE WILDERNESS! Roll it all back!

"The public enjoys motorized access and OHV recreational opportunities on our public lands. It is a very healthy form of recreation and provides a great connection to the out-of-doors. " Absolutely!!!

I couldn't have said it better. Public land for all to enjoy equally. There is room for everyone so enjoy.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Is a lasting windshield vista what a senior citizen wants as their outdoor experience? Is a babbling brook that is cold enough to chill your beverage something a single male wants in his outdoor venture? Is a forest of flowering trees comprised of basswood, locus and fruit trees someplace where adolescence teenage girls would enjoy spending a day? Our western society needs to develop, enhance and offer areas of specific outdoor interest to specific age groups. Our culture has advanced far enough where Henry Ford's comment on you can have any color of car you want, as long as it is black; no longer works. In my observation, the federal government past approach to offering outdoor experiences was almost always only wild and scenic with little or no human development visible to the eye, and this offering is kind of like the same mind set of Henry Ford's comment. The federal approach needed to get everybody outdoors needs to conjure up and incorporate the concept of different strokes for different folks. A little or maybe even a lot of human influence needs to be incorporated into our outdoors, as the majority of US citizens are urban dwellers and most are foreign to the outdoors and have been so for the last 50 years. With the fact that the majority of US citizen have been out of touch with the outdoors for almost 4 generations, we need to entice them back with some human luxuries, such as cell phone guidance instead of reading a compass. I think we need to focus on these types of paths into the future, as we are now dealing with "golf course" mentality.

Not only do they honor the brave men who fought there but also are a living history lesson and another way to encourage outdoor activity.

The preservation of Civil War Battlefields for future generations is the duty of every citizen. These Historic locations represent the full measure given by those who fought for the freedom to express their ideals and beliefs as guaranteed by the Laws established by our Founding Fathers, and MUST be preserved as examples to our desendants of what the cost of freedom for all citizens can be.

The time is NOW to preserve what is left of Civil War Battlefields! Why the urgency? Reflect for a moment what has happened to so many of the Revolutionary War Battlefield sites. So many of them are in the heart of a city and are not preserved. We have an opportunity to save and preserve the remaining Civil War battlefields. Our government and our citizens must act NOW! Battlefields are memorials to those who helped to make our country what it is today. Battlefields are lessons of what has shaped our society. Battlefields are outside in fresh air and not in a room full of electronics or gizmos.

There are several grass roots and regional not for profits dedicated to getting children and families outdoors. As with all worthy causes, funding is a challenge. Federal or state grants could help these organizations reach more children and families in their areas. By getting children and families into nature they develop a respect and appreciation for the wilderness areas. Without this experience this conversation would be very one sided against maintaining wilderness areas.

We should never have any net losses of recreation opportunities. Any time a trail or area is closed, a requirement should be that a replacement is provided before the closure.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Motorized use of public lands MUST be considered. It is a viable form of recreation and one that connects people to their public lands.

I've just completed my 2nd year as a Galveston Bay Master Naturalist in Texas. This is a hands on, community based program that can fit into anyone's schedule. Numerous outdoor opportunities are posted and allow volunteers to make personal connections to improving our environment while also interacting with the public of all ages. Comradeship and respect for our natural environment build a strong community.

Require permits for dispersed site camping with requirements that: 1. people have a system of human waste disposal...be it a porta potty or wag bag 2. people use existing fire rings or a firepan 3. people sign a pledge to follow "leave no trace guidelines"

I'm so excited to be involved in this program. I belong to the El Camino Real MN Chapter in Milam Co, TX and feel like we are making a positive difference in our local community. Although Milam Co. is a rural area, we are definitely on the right track to helping promote awareness & education about nature. We are about to have our 1st Annual Nature Festival in Cameron on June 11&12 and we have some excellent activities & presenters scheduled. So, come & join and learn with us. I am sure that we will learn as we go, & it should be even better each year. We are excited about sharing lots of the things we have learned & are always ready to help others learn about the amazing nature resources to be enjoyed for free that are available to us on a daily basis. So, slow down a bit & come see for yourself why we enjoy being part of such a great organization. And, in answer, the MN organization is another source to contact to get other speakers, ideas & involvement in ecology in the public sch. Cirriculum. That is one of our goals to work together w/ others to promote nature conservation. Personally, I believe that all states should have a program like the one here in TX. And, for the folks who are against this organization, all I can say is make an effort to come see & hear what we are really all about before you decide you disagree w/ what we are doing. I don't think some education about the environment could really hurt anyone.

Invasive species, especially invasive plants, are a top threat to our wildlands. Many local initiatives bring together public and private stakeholders to plan and implement restoration projects. At the same time, more states are organizing inter-agency councils to ensure strategic efficiency. Both local and state efforts show the kind of working together that we need to conserve our great outdoors. Support from the federal government is key. First, leadership from federal land management agencies is vital for supporting state and local efforts. Second, development of biological control agents, our only truly effective tool against many widespread invasive species, needs federal expertise and resources. Finally, small but steady amounts of federal funding can leverage extensive action at the state and local level. Lastly, it's important that all of us who spend time on our public lands learn about how we can prevent the spread of invasive species and protect the places we love. Coordinated education campaigns can aim at this important education.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Let's identify and protect our premier wild country as Wilderness, using the 1964 Wilderness Act. This is the simplest and most durable way to protect wild country for future generations.

Off road vehicles are the best way to explore the great outdoors, particularly, the National Forests. Most OHV enthusiasts are very 'green' and care deeply for our national treasures. Please don't let the actions of some under educated kids pollute your view of OHV. I ride, my kids ride and my wife rides too. We consider ourselves Stewards of the Forests. We will happily 'share our wisdom' with these outlaw personalities when ever we can.

This may apply more to CA State Parks but many of MY CA State Parks simply ban access to certain user groups because of real or perceived incompatibility. For example, many of my favorite trails ban dogs, bikes in favor of equestrian use. I understand that these uses are not very compatible but why not set up time windows to allow for other uses. Maybe people can take their dogs from 7AM to 10AM, the horses can go from 10-3 and the mountain bikers can have it from 3-6 or some such arrangement. At my count over the past 24 months of using Henry Cowell State Park I have counted more than 15 dogs, about the same number of people and maybe 5 horses. Its not fair to favor single use trails in State or Federal managed lands.

Preserving battlefield land is a win on multiple fronts. It saves ground where Americans fought and died, it creates green space for the enjoyment of all, and it presents opportunities for teachers to bring life to the past through the use of outdoor classrooms where citizens can learn about character, perseverance, and what it means to be American.

I grew up around our nation's very first National Military Park-Chickamauga & Chattanooga NMP. I have also visited many other NMP's in TN, GA, MS, VA, PA, MD, NC, SC, etc. Battlefield parks are one of the best places to spend time with your family & friends & help connect you to our nation's past. Future generations need to be reminded of what our ancestors sacrificed to ensure we would have a good life & a great country to live in. Preserved battlefields revitalize local economies and create jobs by encouraging heritage tourism. The more historic land that is preserved, the longer visitors stay in a community and the more time they spend patronizing local businesses. Plus, more battlefield land preserved = more natural, green areas for all of us to enjoy.

Red Clay State Historic Park is located in southeast TN-just east of Chattanooga. Here is a weblink to more info. on it if you are interested.: { Link } Red Clay commemorates an important area associated with Cherokee Native American heritage. As someone who has a strong Cherokee heritage, I highly support any protection possible for Cherokee as well as other Native American related historic/heritage sites. We must do all we can to help preserve & protect historic areas for future generations.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

A lot of the hiking trails in my area (and I've heard similar anecdotes from other regions) are practically destroyed every spring by masses of ATVers (including trails where ATV use is supposed to be restricted). The trails are rendered practically unuseable to anyone but ATVers, making the designation "multi-use trail" a joke. Off-roading is a perfectly legitimate form of outdoor recreation even if not my chosen way and I respect that, but it's clear that offroading in inappropriate settings (non-motorized trails) as well as responsible offroading (tearing up multi-use trails) is a problem. It's my belief that stricter penalties need to be imposed, but more importantly, that enforcement be taken seriously. The non-motorized status of hiking trails is completely unenforced in many areas and as a result no one hits the trails but the ATVers themselves. There are many responsible ATVers and offroaders out there who certainly deserve the right to do so (in fact, perhaps there should be more motorized-specific areas to reduce the wear on multi-use paths). In order to preserve their rights, it's essential to keep the irresponsible users off the public trails. Every ATVer who wants to go mudding has a few acres (or a buddy with a few acres) where they can go do so. Law enforcement needs to get serious about showing that public trails are NOT the place to do so.

The AT, PCT, and CDT are great, and now so are the PNT, NCT and the rest, but the more major trails there are, the better. Each of these trails relies on major community involvement to stay open and well-maintained, and that raises awareness of the need for conservation within the community involved. Right now trails like the Great Eastern Trail and the Great Western Loop are still mainly grassroots movements (as many of the others were when they began) and a little more government recognition would do a lot to help them out.

There is a strong connection between our natural and cultural heritage. While some people visit the great outdoors solely for the solace of nature, others see a link between our present and our past. In a huge number of our parks, historic resources are a vital component to engaging visitors. Despite this fact, funding for our historic resources and related programs via the National Park Service lags so distantly behind what is spent on our natural ones, that many are poorly maintained, poorly documented, and poorly interpreted. They seem to be, in some parks, nothing but an afterthought. Full funding for the Historic Preservation Fund, structured the same as the Land and Water Conservation Fund, will help restore some focus to our cultural heritage and provide resources that will help get people out to connect with their heritage.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

I object to spending over \$2 billion of my tax dollars locking the majority of the public out of more of their public lands through inappropriate Wilderness and Monument designations. Wilderness and Monument are the most restrictive forms of land designation and reduces access to most people. The initial Wilderness Act envisioned about 20 million acres as suitable. Today we have over 120 million acres of Wilderness where public access is restricted. The majority of the public have been forced onto smaller and smaller areas outside of Wilderness. In order to encourage Americans to enjoy the outdoors we do not need more Wilderness areas, we need less. The goal to reconnect Americans especially youth with the outdoors can best be done by providing more places for them to enjoy their favorite forms of outdoor recreation. We need to revert some of these lands back to Multiple Use in order to promote access for urban youth and all Americans. Off Road Vehicle use is by far the most popular form of recreation, followed by Mountain Biking. Multiple Use lands are where the majority of people recreate, as well as where much of our timber and beef products come from, but these lands have been closed at an alarming rate. The President must protect these precious lands by designating them permanently as Multiple Use. The Initiative must preserve Multiple Use lands as Multiple Use for current and future generations to enjoy these and all other forms of recreation. The President is interested in local involvement in his plan, yet no multiple use groups have been included or invited. The initial plan has clearly been created by a small segment of special interest groups who seek to limit access to our public lands. The President needs to include the two largest forms of recreation as a priority in his plan to reconnect Americans with the Outdoors. That would be Off Highway Vehicle recreation and Mountain Biking. More areas need to be opened to people who enjoy these most popular ways to enjoy the outdoors. The proposed Wildlife Corridors along with the proposed Wilderness and Monument designations would harm rural areas, push people out of their homes and force them into cities. This destruction of our Rural Communities, also known as the United Nations Wildlands Project, is detrimental to the interests of all Americans and should not be supported in any way by the Outdoors Initiative.

Reading about history is a good thing. But walking over the same ground after reading about the history that occurred on that ground can give a child an experience that no book alone can.

You don't have to keep everyone out for it to be a wilderness area. A few OHV trails here and there do not destroy the land. Of course there are always a few bad apples tossing out garbage and being irresponsible. But there are clubs and good ol' fashioned "Do-gooders" that build bridges over streams and pick up other people's trash. Trails make up less than 1/2 of 1% of the land. There are many reasons that people do not hike. Handicapped, too fat or too lazy... it's none of anyone's business really. The point is, it can be wilderness and still let people use it. Just don't let people log and develop the land.

I think these areas in Colorado that have been devastated by the mountain beetle should have the standing trees removed for timber or paper and the areas reforested with seedlings. At least we can have some hope that the forest will be returning, rather than allowing invader species taking over.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

A Buffalo Commons National Park with a western Kansas core offers a marvelous 21st-century American opportunity: politically creative, socially pragmatic, economically practical, sensitive to ecological and energy issues, rooted in the past, hopeful for the future. It would be firm sign that America's best days still lie ahead. And the state's two largest papers have already endorsed it! So has a Republican former governor, Mike Hayden, who still serves as secretary of parks and wildlife in a Democratic state administration. A Buffalo Commons National Park offers logic, history, passion, economics, ecology, scenery, poetry and on and on. It should not be a partisan or otherwise divisive issue. It should be an American one.

Agree 100%. Add Big Cypress National Preserve (BCNP) and the Addition Lands, North of BCNP to the list. Problem being that the true legislative intent is not being followed. Example - Senate report says NO construction except for land mg't. needs (equipment shed or pole barn)but yet many visitor support facilities have been planned and built which flies in the face of intent. One more example is that ORV's that provide the only means of accessing many areas of these places have been banned from large areas which goes against the intent which never mentioned bans without scientific justification. One part of the reason is that the NPS says the Senate and House reports are not part of the law. If that is the case someone needs to figure out how to append them to the wigggle room filled enabling acts that get passed by some minimally informed legislators too worried about being re-elected. Cultural tragedies have happened there due to enviro-extremist induced law suits and pressures being applied to an agency and government lacking the funds and expertise to refute their lying junk science. This is a really good idea that could bring folks together and eliminate confusion for visitors, land managers and the courts.

All bicyclists should understand they are not wanted in Wilderness either since they use the mechanical advantage of a basic machine (the wheel). Interesting idea though - 50 hours of slavery for the privelege to ride a bike. I don't think Mr. Obama would support that one if he ever saw it.

As the Federal government begins to connect land to people they need to take into account living cultures (people) such as the Gladesmen Culture in So. Fl. For cultures to survive their cultural community members must be supported by land management entities in accessing very remote areas of public lands in their traditional ways that existed prior to gov't. takeover. The association of place to cultural community members is critical to the cultures survival. Failing to do this will breed very stiff opposition every time to any plans being developed on a public property.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

At first glance this idea seems very positive and harmless. There might be a few unintended consequences associated with this idea. Many power line easements may be private property owned by power companies who own the power transmission systems. They very well may not want the liabilities associated with formally inviting recreation activities onto their property. Unless one has touched a high voltage power transmission tower when it is damp one does not understand how serious an electrical shock one will receive. I have experienced that situation. It wasn't fatal but it might be to someone with a sensitivity to such things (e.g. person w/heart problems, pacemaker etc.). Cost and coordination of such a program in my opinion would be prohibitive during the austere times that taxpayers are and will be facing for decades into the future. Now if the beneficiaries of such a program (hikers and bicyclists could fund it entirely themselves including insurance that problem could be avoided. Possibly a license tag for bicycles and a permit for hiking-who knows. As far as orchards growing food for the homeless goes that cost would also have to be borne by someone (e.g. you and me) or the beneficiaries. I do not think the homeless can afford to pay and I doubt even the beneficiaries would want to. This idea could assist getting folks outdoors but not without a massive coordination and cost. Nice idea but too costly in my humble opinion.

The Federal Highway Administration already diverts vast some of gas tax revenue away from highway upkeep to bicycle pathway programs. Bicyclists are hostile and arrogant to motorists also. I have seen them takeover 4 lane highways as they peddle 8 or 10 abreast through an area with total disregard for anyone but themselves. Possibly bicyclists should begin paying for the infrastructure they demand. License tags for bicycles to pay for their infrastructure is long overdue. That might slow down their outrageous requests. Believe it or not \$28,000,000 dollars was spent to pave the top of the flood control dike that encircles Lake Okeechobee in Florida for a handful of these folks who do not contribute a nickel as far as I know. This is one example of many that should not be allowed.

The reason for the permit being issued could have been because nobody went to the County complaining about the project. In fact everyone in the locale might have been supportive of the project and the jobs it would create. Project mitigation might have produced a net gain for wildlife and habitat. Sometimes the glass is half full but we cannot allow ourselves to realize it.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

The situation is in our Nation's first National Preserve. The problem is in applying adaptive management (am) to an ORV plan Record of Decision signed and adopted nearly 10 years ago. A FACA committee composed of extremely diverse people (some whom were usually diametrically opposed to one another) has been established for about 2 years. Over the last 2 years committee members have grown to understand each other much more than they did at first. The previously opposed factions actually have dinner together with NPS after some meetings. The committee and others all agree that some of the guidance provided by the ORV plan ROD could be modified slightly in order to accomodate some special situations but NPS says that can't be done because there isn't a statement that am applies very near to that particular subject in the ROD. NPS says it would take an EA at minimum or an EIS to accomplish folks desires due to NEPA requirements rather than using the more informal adaptive management process. Some of us suspect that the real reason is the rapidly approaching ORV plan implementation schedule deadline of 2010. I hope I am explaining this so it is understandable. If what NPS says is accurate my suggestion is that NEPA somehow be modified to authorize broad application of adaptive management throughout an ROD so as to provide NPS and FACA committee members the ability to come together on issues that folks have been diametrically opposed to previously. I have witnessed Defenders of Wildlife, NPCA, Fl. Wildl'f. Federation and ORV advocates surprisingly come to agreement on some very tough issues only to have their consensus be prevented by something in the NEPA process. I am not a NEPA specialist but do know it has a lot to do with public input into decision making. Hopefully this further description helps someone more knowledgeable than myself to chime in here with on the ground knowledge.

This idea is perfectly understandable from a wilderness proponent's perspective. It may not be appropriate for the American Great Outdoors Initiative seeking to draw more people to the outdoors so they gain an appreciation of them to support conserving them. Many new outdoorspersons who may not be as physically fit as others and may need the help of some modern amenities in order to develop themselves someday to the point of enjoying and/or supporting the Wilderness Designation concept. I do agree with some facets of this idea such as NO cabins, fancy gov't. campsites, bathrooms or helicopters at low altitude. That being said though I do feel the military (e.g.aircraft) need places to train so they can perform the tasks we assign them to do. If one has ever been buzzed by a buzzard dropping from thousands of feet to pull out of the dive just overhead and heard the roar of the air ripping through its wings one would understand that soundscape is very close to a fighter jet on maneuvers. I have heard both while in extremely remote areas and have had positive feelings towards both. The buzzard gets them from me for his natural abilities and the fighter jet evokes major feelings of pride towards the America that built the aircraft and the pilot America trained to control it. Allowing Jets to train as required where necessary even Wilderness is appropriate in my opinion. That is a small price for us to pay for properly trained defenders of liberty and the security of our Nation enabling a conversation such as we are having here.

This is easy. Whatever percentage of the land value the recipient receives for the easement an equal percentage of the property should be open to the public (e.g. fish, camp, hike, hunt?,bicycles etc.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Those who want to kick the Feds out of their State must do it one step at a time. What lets the Feds into a State is the State itself, otherwise it is treason. States routinely and willingly get into cooperative agreements with the Feds for grant money. One example is Section 6 cooperative agreements set up by the Endangered Species Act. The bait is federal money and States bite on it like starving fish. In the process of swallowing the hook, line, and sinker the State gives the Federal Government the authority specifically reserved for the States in the Constitution. This process in my opinion is legalized treason. Most folks don't have a clue. It is not irreversible though since in these 10 page agreements there is an escape clause for either party to the agreement. All one party has to do is write the other party a letter stating they want out. It is that simple. Sadly there are many of these type agreements allowing the Feds into many areas of our lives. First find out which of your State agencies has entered these type agreements with the Federal gov't. and second attend that agencies meetings repeatedly demanding vociferously for them to withdraw from them until they do it. It shouldn't take too many attempts to succeed since cockroaches run from a bright light quickly as a rule.

We also need a listening session in South Florida. It should be near a population center such as Broward, Miami Dade or Broward county.

What a shame. So much hate exuding from comment 1's sad soul. One should open ones arms to all of our fellow American's to witness Americas Great Outdoors and this initiative, designed to draw more Americans into our wild lands to see, feel, touch, smell and be in awe of them so they will desire to acquire more of them to be similarly enjoyed by all Americans. Some people understand that the more acres we have to enjoy the less the impact any form of enjoyment will have per unit of area. That is why allowing more OHV, hiking and bicycle trails everywhere is a fantastic decision that eliminates the potential of concentrated impact that could be more unsightly. As the Spanish say "Calmate- Tranquillo - Por Favor.

What a wonderfully balanced idea to actually assist Americans of all physical abilities to enjoy and preserve our American legacy. Why is it I sense it will receive many demotes from the regulars here. Come on folks prove me wrong, please.

When one installs a 4 inch Onan generator muffler behind a stock Honda 450 ES muffler on stock ATV the exhaust sound is negligible. The main sound then is the clicking of the valve train which isn't audible at 30 feet. Sound is not the issue some make it out to be. Relegate purposely loud vehicles to race/motocross tracks - problem solved unless you live near the track. Of course next we will have to develop levitation systems to satisfy some commentors here.

You don't need to go racial sir since there are all colors running around America now. A whopping bunch of them have the firepower to prevent any species from running them out or worse. The feral horses don't have guns so they receive what fate hands out. Adoption is better than being dog food.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

The demand for motorized access to diverse outdoor recreation opportunities is rising as opportunities for motorized access on public lands have dramatically decreased in the past two decades. Americans are working longer at more jobs/worker than ever with less leisure time. Retired seniors who must have motorized access to enjoy high quality outdoor experiences comprise an increasing percentage of the US population. Most Americans simply do not have the time or ability to access high quality hunting, fishing, skiing, and hiking on large tracts of public land. They need motorized access to high quality recreation areas. The US Forest Service recreation visitor monitoring studies show that the huge supply of non-motorized trails are under-utilized. Even the majority of visits to designated wilderness areas are day hikes from the trailhead on a road . Existing motorized access points to picnicing, camping, waterbodies, trailheads, and viewing areas are often congested and overused. Motorized opportunities must be expanded.

Animals that walk, fly, or swim to do have national boundaries. We should be looking at connecting several migratory routes in the United States with the nations of Mexico and Canada, for joint International Parks. The Monarch Butterflies of Mexico, feed in Michigan. The birds of Alaska, travel the entire coastal areas to nest and feed. Four International Migratory National Parks should be created in the United States, Mexico and Canada. They should include an area from Quebec to Florida, from Alaska to Mexico, from Alberta, Canada to Mexico along the Rockies, from the Grasslands of Manitoba to the grasslands and deserts of Mexico. Animals, like man, can swim, fly, walk and run. Plants can also. Let's start looking at this magnificent New World of ours and work with our neighbors to create a giant preserve involving all three of our nations. Each segment, can still run its own jurisdiction, just like the State Parks in Redwood National Park in California maintain their jurisdiction, within the greater National Redwood Park. We have national parks and recreation areas, that can be connected with others by trails, states parks, city parks, recreation areas etc. All into a very large idea of what we can do to protect our wonderful heritage given to all of us.

I certainly agree with you, as did John Muir. When Julius Caesar was writing about the Gaelic Wars in what is now France, he asked his generals to find out what and where these Gauls (Celts) worshiped. He wanted to know what they considered sacred, so that they might destroy the places. For the Gauls, their most sacred places were the ancient forests where they connected with their gods on the holiest spots they knew. Caesar ordered that they all be cut down to demoralize the people so that he could defeat them. It worked. England learned this same lesson in the conquering of Ireland with the confiscation of the churches, cathedrals, and all school and monasteries. Take what a cultural and people considers its most holy, and destroy it. This worked and still works to this day in our own country with Native American tribes. Yes, it is in wilderness that we can connect with powers so much greater than we can ever be. Right on! I hope you have been to the Cathedral of Redwoods in John Muir Woods north of San Francisco.

Preserving the sacred grounds of our pass to future generations is a MUST. The educational benefits to our children about these historical sites will increasingly enhance their understanding on what took place. We need to preserve and protect these sites at all cost for the tremendous sacrifice of lives given by those who fought for what they believed in.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

I think the program was a success. It filled an important niche and resulted in improved habitat for at-risk species on private lands. It's unfortunate that funding for the program was eliminated before results could be demonstrated.

The Historic Preservation Fund comes from the licencing of outer continental oil, gas, and mineral explorations. Considering the news from the Gulf this last week, we need full funding for the HP Fund in order just to protect the many thousands of "at risk" cultural properties in the Gulf Coast. These properties promote tourism, better quality of life, and a historical connection between the people of the Gulf and their homeland. People are worried about the loss of their Gulf Coast "Heritage" and this matching fund would greatly help these people.

The Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) is the perfect vehicle for preserving open space, developing parkland and greenway trails. LWCF is a competitive grant program, which one component is a federal, state and local partnership called the State Assistance program. The BP oil spill has degraded some of America's most treasured recreation land and water, which prompts an urgent call to action for Congress to provide full and dedicated funding for the LWCF program. LWCF is a critical part of America's energy and outdoor recreation future.

The National Trail System is a prime and unfilled opportunity to implement place based education in our schools. The Trails System is a way to tie curriculum (State and National Standards) to students own backyards. Trails are natural outdoor history and natural resource laboratories that promote action oriented and participatory learning. Hiking on trails provides physical activity (to address America's obesity issues), opportunities for public service and can connect people of all ages to the natural landscape. We need to reinvent President Kennedy's advocacy of the "50 mile hike" as a way to reconnect American's with the outdoors. The National Trail System provides the framework.

The preservation of Civil War Battlefields is one of the most urgent issues facing the United States today. Once lost, these fields can never be recovered. Not only is this the history of our great nation, but it is truly the blood of it. Fields that knew the intense horror of the war and the intense belief in each individual's cause. Walk the fields of Gettysburg or Antietam and you will never be the same. For our children's sake. So they can learn what so many did a long time ago. So they can walk in their forefathers footsteps. So they can stand where freedom was born and paid for at such an awful cost.

The preservation of Civil War battlefields (and other historic sites) should be of the highest priority. This is one of the ways the Federal Government can work with citizens groups on both the local and national levels to form public/private partnerships that get real results. Saving land from development will encourage future generations to connect with our country's history and develop an appreciation for the enormous sacrifices made by previous generations of Americans. It is refreshing to note that respect for our country's history, particularly the Civil War, is one of the things that helps bring American's together, regardless of their background or political affiliation. Finally it is a proven fact that Civil War battlefield parkland is of tremendous economic benefit to nearby communities.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

There are many thousands of miles of rail corridors across the country that could provide corridors for excellent pedestrian pathways. One benefit of rail corridors over other utility corridors is that they are normally graded at a very reasonable grade, whereas electric transmission lines often navigate very hilly terrain. There is a non-profit organization dedicated to converting rail corridors to pedestrian pathways, please visit and support them at: { Link } One other side note, while not wishing to rain on such a great idea, some individuals have concerns that walking underneath high voltage transmission lines can be a health concern. Before dismissing that idea, try walking underneath a high voltage transmission line at night with a fluorescent light tube in hand. Besides hearing and feeling the crackle of electricity in the air, you will find that the tube will glow.

these threads are informative. there seem to be handful of professional anti-access agitators posting the same crap in every one, and a fairly broad spectrum of sensible and respectful multiple-use advocates that appreciate the need for a variety of recreation.

This is a relatively inexpensive way to spur conservation of private lands.

This is my third year as a Texas Master Naturalist. It's a tremendous program that both educates and connects local residents with their region's ecology.

This our last chance to preserve valuable portions of these battlefields where thousands of men gave their lives in our country greteast crisis. The land required is small when compare to what will be lost if not conserved. Stand up for for American History and preserve these battlefields.

Visiting and camping and recreating in our beautiful public lands is what builds the connection and leads people to value those lands. Whether it's responsible OHV use, bicycling, rock-climbing, hiking, horse-back riding, rafting, hiking, hang-gliding or simply sitting in camp watching the sunset over the mountains with a cocktail, promoting responsible recreation of all sorts is key. We need to get away from separating people into distinct user groups and looking at each other as the enemy. We need to get away from people thinking these resources only exist for them, and that others can/should be excluded. When we camp (20+ times a year), we hike, pedal, motorcycle, and many other diverse activities. We have no trouble finding zillions of non-motorized trails to hike on, and when we choose to hike on motorized trails, we have no problem sharing those trails the motorized users that share our love of the outdoors. We need more trails of all varieties, but especially motorized ones, since those are the ones that seem to be most frequently getting closed or restricted or attacked by intolerant zealots.

We need to be innovative so that "nature activities" can compete with sports and electronics and make the activities convenient for busy parents

We need to make conservation of tallgrass prairie a national priority. It historically was one of the largerst biomes in North America and has been reduced to about 1% today. Prairies played a unique role in our history and is important to many at-risk fish and wildlife species

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Yes we need multiple use areas, but motorized use does not always mix well with hiking and walking trails. However i am all for off road areas for motorized use and we need more not less.
Mark

I think the more varied the medium of communication is the better. Everyone learns and perceives things in different ways. At my company Link } SEO, we often cross-post information. It is the same information, but it is delivered in different formats and in different media outlets to maximize exposure and reach everyone possible.

I have brought my son up in the back seat of our Jeep, and now, he is doing the same with his children. We go out with friends and as a family, promoting respect for the environment and those around us. My grand children are very lucky to get to go out into the back country and have the experience of seeing wildlife and open spaces. 95% of our children in the cities haven't a clue that there IS open space and back country. All they know are video games, and that is a sad commentary of our times.

It would be a wonderful idea to set aside land in Kansas for a national park. The wide open prairie is a treasure that should be preserved.

Many private landowners would like to take advantage of this means of ensuring open space for wildlife, streams, the future.

Methane is a difficult greenhouse gas to control and everyone knows that. Before you can successfully burn it to provide energy, effective equipment and methods must be in place so you are not trading one problem for another. However, we went from cathode tube to transistors to solid state to microchips in short order, and the time between innovations is shortened. Surely we can meet that challenge. We would want to spend the R&D time, energy and money for this reason: Using methane to generate energy is a smart way to go because there is nothing more renewable. Cities, towns, burgs, businesses, and farms all generate many metric tons of sewage, a primary source of methane gas. Let's capture it, refine it, and burn it instead of dump it. Separate out the water for the water reclamation facilities (we have them in Arizona and they are used to water golf courses) and use the resulting matter to generate methane. Once the methane has been processed out, the remaining material has enough safe nutrients to be made into fertilizer. They do that in Pennsylvania now. There may have been an experimental community in Virginia or Maryland years ago that did exactly this. If they are still functioning as a community, let's look at their success. If they are not, then let's examine their failures and learn from them. But, let's do it. It is the ULTIMATE recycling venture!!

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Sustainability requires learning one's environment; it requires learning how to grow or gather food there, create shelter from what occurs there naturally, harvest water, etc. All sustainable systems are local. In traditional societies these skills were part of growing into adulthood, and they should be for our teenagers as well. With that knowledge young people grow into confident adults; without it there is little incentive to be respectful of resources or confident in your own ability to survive. Without it others will always be in charge of your life. For these reasons Sustainability should be the most basic course that should be taught in high school.

We bought our first Jeep back in 1969 and brought our son up in the back seat. He was taught to Tread Lightly, not to litter, stay on existing roads & trails, etc. Now he has his family and we all go out together as a family with friends, and the same values are being taught to my grandchildren. We all love the great outdoors, whether we are exploring what is around the next corner, searching for old mining camps and our history, taking photographs, watching for wildlife, or collecting rocks. It is an important part of who we are and a way to get away from it all and enjoy each other.

Programs that engage volunteers in invasives removal, trail building, erosion control, and the like are a wonderful way to get people of all ages, economic levels, and cultural backgrounds outdoors, offer healthy and fun exercise with a sense of teamwork and accomplishment, showcase the beauty of nature, let folks learn about the fascinating complexity of our environment without preaching, and inculcate a sense of personal responsibility for the Earth.

The Texas Master Naturalist (TMN) program provides key information and access to workshops that help educate young people and adults in regard to challenges, opportunities and overall responsibility we all have to protect our local and regional ecosystems. Hands-on workshops bring people into contact with local natural areas, demonstration projects and other like-minded volunteers which help spark creative and innovative thinking- and most importantly action. Local participation means people taking ownership of their own front yards/ backyards, neighborhood resources and provides them the ability to participate on a community level, and to teach their neighbors by example.

When you think clearly about this - plants do not have the same mobility as humans or animals. Because of that they are much more at risk of being invaded. As to definitions of what "invasive" plants are, we have some excellent regional groups that would be more than willing to use their knowledge and ability to communicate in order to develop some working methodologies. Authentic living, meaning living close to nature and our surroundings, requires specificity. And specificity is lost if all places look alike as certain strong monocultures develop. Florida and California are not alike. Let's love that difference.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

For the second time in five years, investors have applied for a license to operate a casino on the Gettysburg Battlefield's doorstep. In 2006, a local grass roots movement, assisted by a coalition of state and national organizations, defeated the first application. This year, one of those investors, now in league with a former legislator and racetrack operator, has applied for a gambling license once again. While the 2006 casino site was 1 1/2 miles away, this site would be 3000 feet from the southern entrance to the Battlefield, close to where Pickett's charge occurred and right on the Journey Through Hallowed Ground Trail, a National Scenic Byway originating in Monticello and ending in Gettysburg. Incidentally, creators of that Byway rejected Charlestown WVA's request to be included on the Trail despite its historical significance specifically because the gambling venues in Charlestown were considered antithetical to heritage tourism. In 2006, 86% of those who testified during 3 days of public hearings spoke against locating a casino in Gettysburg. Despite that, our state legislators have either been unwilling or have lacked the political courage to protect this national treasure and other precious sites in our Commonwealth from such threats. Now, the future of one of our nation's most significant and consecrated places is now up to the PA Gaming Control Board, a group of seven political appointees with gambling connections, who have the authority to either grant or reject this license application. We are, therefore, beseeching the federal government to enact legislation requiring a buffer zone around Gettysburg National Military Park specifically, and other such historic national parks generally, so that gambling establishments and other incompatible venues will not be permitted to threaten the priceless quality of experiences that these solemn sites provide for all our nation's citizens. If we fail to do this, then look for an amusement park or a miniature golf course near Shanksville after the Flight 93 Memorial is completed. Are there any places left in this country that are so powerful, so meaningful, so intrinsically a part of the American fabric that they are not for sale? If there are, then Gettysburg is one of them. There are thousands of casinos. There is only one Gettysburg. If we can't preserve our history, then shame on us all.

A fine idea. This suggestion is better, in my opinion, than simply extending the enhanced tax incentives for conservation easements, as promoted by the Land Trust Alliance. The difference is that these "targeted" lands potentially would offer greater-than-average public benefits through their protection.

A great idea! There are huge expanses of the high plains in the West where agriculture has not been economically successful. A park of this sort would give an economic boost to its region, as well as provide an anchor for this largely-lost ecosystem. We could see the Great Plains as they appeared 200 years ago to Lewis and Clark.

A great many social and economic problems worldwide, as well as most of our environmental and conservation problems, have roots in human overpopulation. No one denies the right of people to have as many children as they wish. However, for a very long time, businesses and religious groups have effectively blocked our addressing overpopulation as a serious national and worldwide concern. For the sakes of our children, our societies and our fellow creatures, the President of the United States and other world leaders should make a strong case for intelligent family planning.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Access landtrustalliance.org and click on "Find a Land Trust" under the Quick Links. From there you can click on individual states and counties to find the organizations that work in you area.

on most topics I'm with you and I'll promote this one, but entirely too much is made of religious thoughts, things that are sacred to some people, beliefs of various ethnic groups, etc. Fact is, each of us is here for a limited amount of time; and the things that rattle around in our heads are not all that important. We each should strive to be happy and productive without harming others. Where we agree is that "others" includes the rest of our fellow creatures and the ecosystems that gave rise to us. It would be nice if we each could leave this world without trashing it. One of the positive things we can do is protect sufficient wilderness areas where the hundreds of thousands of other species can exist and evolve without our interference. No development, no mining, no forestry, no trails. That doesn't mean there shouldn't also be ample places for motorized recreation, but we have converted entirely too much of this planet to human uses.

Barbara, a good idea, but take a look also at the comments attached to these two ideas: "new national parks" and "Great Plains National Park". They make considerable mention of the Buffalo Commons. Most supporters are advocating western Kansas for greater space.

Environmental organizations usually aren't trying to undermine each other, though at some level they compete for donors just like commercial businesses compete for customers. It's a little like a "survival of the fittest". The groups that are perceived to offer the best "products" for the dollars-spent are the ones that are most likely to thrive. In my opinion, this is not all bad. Just support the ones you think are best.

Few landscapes were more inspiring to view than the vast wind-blown "seas" of grasses and wildflowers that made up our country's native prairies. And very few ecosystems possessed greater biological diversity. Restoring large-scale prairies should be among America's top conservation missions.

For a hundred years, we've had this debate where those of you who want to "use" our public lands for everything from timber harvesting, to mining, to grazing, to OHV riding, will whine and complain about not having access to every single acre. Please allow the rest of the Earth's creatures to have a chance to be left alone somewhere. Thanks!

thanks for replying. I think the Big Cypress National Preserve is wonderful. It put a limit on the sprawl from East Naples. The preserve's visitor center on U.S. 41 is a real treat, alligators and all. Good work on your group's ability to find compromise and friendship. I'm voting against your idea not because I disagree with your group's consensus, but because I don't think it would be a good precedent (assuming it is one) to weaken the NEPA process.

Franklin Roosevelt's CCC left a legacy of park improvements, environmental ethics, Depression-era income for thousands of families, plus physical fitness and confidence for a generation of young men, many of whom went on to serve in WWII. The CCC was a great program and deserves being imitated.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

I think it would be a wonderful idea if our active duty service men and women did not have to pay to enjoy the very national parks they work to protect and defend. My son was a ranger with the National Park Service for 6 years, and it always bothered both of us that our active duty soldiers are required to pay admission to our national parks. They deserve to be treated better than that!

Having been an educator for over 37 years, I have found the Texas Master Naturalist Program my favorite venue for reaching the public, both children and adults, with timely, accurate information about their environment, its resources, and use/conservation of resources. In 2007 I certified with the Lindheimer Chapter of TMN in Comal County north of San Antonio. This year we developed the Lindheimer TMN Travelin' Trunk Show, which is an interactive, hands-on display of some of the activities we are involved in. Children love the ability to touch and ask questions about display objects, as well as dig in a sand bucket for fossils. The adults are amazed when they watch the children, then asking questions of their own. We have had many adults sign up for the Fall training after seeing what the program is all about. Each member that we certify equates to a minimum of 40 volunteer hours a year in local environmental projects and parks. Many of our chapter members already have their 250 volunteer hour pins. The Master Naturalist model is an excellent way to involve the public in the understanding and care of their environment.

I believe that we as a human race need to better understand the value of land that goes beyond the dollar and the wish to use up land that we will never be able to replace. Gone is forever when it comes to species displaced because humans must have access when ever and where ever and by any means they wish to wilderness. I may never hike across some wilderness land in this country. However I understand and appreciate its value - For it is like our lungs - it is our breathing space. My father at 92 did not cry "foul" when he could not access his favorite fishing river or favorite mountain top. He knew the value of wilderness to the world even if some never saw it. Today , for instance , bears have only 2% of their original territory. Land that is thumped by seismic thumpers is solidified beyond life. And the areas that should be set aside as quiet places where every living part of them is understood as valuable to our future health--- If we do not learn to understand that we are connected to them and part of them then we are lost. Wilderness is our source- where things begin - The living beings and water born there cannot be replicated in a test tube or computer screen. It deserves good stewardship, not being left in tatters.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

My husband and I have just returned from Utah - hiked and camped in the San Rafael Swell. Nothing can compare with a night under a star-stuffed sky surrounded by only the sounds of river, wind, and the song that rests in the monumental colored and faceted rock. As our country grows we will need more of this type of land. "No more wilderness" is a bad promise that needs to be repealed. It is in wilderness that we find our source and where the source lies not only for restoration for us but where our lives begin - the water, and all living beings that depend on wilderness for their lives cannot be overlooked. I am happy to drive 2,000 miles to find this kind of beauty - of geology exposed, of stories on rock from thousands of years ago, of the rivers that wind and the wind through the canyons. We will not be given any more Nature - let's take care of what's left

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

The TRACK (Trails, Ridges, & Active, Caring Kids) program provides adventures for children and families of all ages. Whether following the clues from a brochure, an interpretive sign or with a guide, TRACK trails encourage kids of all ages to explore the world, find answers to questions and uncover hidden clues along the trail. Each TRACK trail provides multiple self-guided brochures or adventures at the trailhead and downloadable versions are available on the website (www.kidsinparks.com). Modeled like a motivationally based scavenger hunt, as children search for the 'treasures' along the trail, they are promoted to traverse more of the trail's length. When children successfully complete the trail and register their adventure on the web site, they are sent an 'award' or incentive. With each adventure registered, the prizes get better and better. Overall program success and assessment is built into the delivery of those incentives.

Background There is mounting pressure on our time, pocketbook and physical condition. Park visitation has decreased, our waistlines have increased and our resources to deal with either have dwindled. Our children's preferred setting to play is inside, "where all the electrical outlets are," as one child said. At the Blue Ridge Parkway, only 7-12% of visitors bring children. Statistics show that children spend about 8 hours a day interacting with electronic media. With about one in four children overweight or obese, clearly nutritional and recreational choices are having a detrimental and devastating impact on our youth. Our challenge is to get kids unplugged, outside and onto the trails in our parks and public lands.

From studies that show increased brain activity and higher SAT scores when children play in natural settings, to research that links lower incidences of bullying, ADHD and depression in kids that play outside, there is clear evidence that children benefit from time in nature. Nature has restorative and healing qualities; our public lands are not just places set aside and protected for future generations, but are places that hold both significance and meaning for our lives today. We know that it is through a personal meaningful connection with natural and cultural resources that lasting positive impacts can be achieved both for the children and for the place. Getting visitors outdoors and children moving helps develop healthy stewards connected meaningfully to their heritage and their home. The TRACK program is designed to make hiking and walking more attractive to kids and families in order to increase physical activity and connection to the cultural heritage and natural resources of our local communities.

Kids in Parks is an Initiative of the Blue Ridge Parkway Foundation, the Blue Ridge Parkway and the Blue Cross and Blue Shield of North Carolina Foundation. It represents a unique partnership joining the public and private sectors in one common goal: to promote the health of our kids, our parks and our communities. Partner groups include schools, City and County Parks, State Parks, the National Forest Service, the National Park Service and private foundations throughout North Carolina and Virginia. The mission is to promote children's health, combat childhood obesity and reconnect youth with the outdoors by increasing physical activity, improving nutritional choices and engaging and educating families using outdoor activities along trails that are fun, exciting and promote stewardship.

The TRACK Trail Program The TRACK Trail program is a series of networked TRACK Trails on and in communities along the Blue Ridge Parkway. The idea is to create incremental steps with built in motivational incentives (discoveries made with each step along the trail and prizes sent after completing each trail) that lead families and children into the outdoors where they can have a fun family adventure along a trail in their local National Park. TRACK Trails are networked and linked through the web page www.kidsinparks.com, consistent trailhead signage, unified

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

brochure design and overall theoretical approach. A family could go on a TRACK Trail adventure in their local community park, visit the website to register for the prize and then see the other TRACK Trails. In this manner, we are building in the small steps of change needed to move a family from not even knowing about the possible avenues for recreation in their National Parks and public lands to having hiking on trails become a preferred option or at least a known choice. Our program is available for everyone with no real limits on participants. We have designed a sustainable program that does not require an initial major shift in existing norms, is easy to participate in, provides instant feedback allowing participants to monitor success, has multiple points of entry, utilizes multiple mediums of communication, and is FUN.

This idea has merit - If you do not know a place you will not love it and if you do not love it you will not take care of it. A sense of ownership is needed. Certainly there is more room in our schools for the importance of having a healthy planet while you are doing this

As a certified Texas Master Naturalist, who is concurrently employed at a large plant nursery/greenhouse/grower, I am able to use my passion and training to positively influence retail customers in the business environment. I gently and effectively guide folks in making plant-wise and water-wise decisions/purchases/landscape planning which enhance the environment, Texas natural resources, our watershed, our native plants and wildlife and the quality of life for the community at large. I am fortunate to have an employer who is willing to re-direct his income toward native and sustainable plant choices and practices. I am usually successful in steering customers away from the use and selection of invasive, or potentially invasive, plant species while providing them with solid, pleasurable native alternatives. Our particular area (Hood, Johnson and Somervell counties) holds a population base of large and small ranchers, small farmers, wealthy retirees, stereotypical homeowners and some condo/apartment dwellers. I use my naturalist training to show each one of them how to provide creatively and selectively for the native flora and fauna and for our environmental futures in their home gardens, deck plantings and acreages. The average customer is much more inclined to listen thoughtfully to my suggestions and comments because of my training under the auspices of the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department and the Texas Agriculture Extension Service. This program continues to add to my own base of knowledge with a wealth of opportunities each year as I re-certify annually. Unlike many other-wise worthy programs, the Master Naturalist venue provides a much more broad-based and solid foundation for all other natural science, environmental, agricultural and horticultural disciplines. If anything, this program should not only be retained, but be enlarged. It is a flexible model easily reproduced for every state and territory of these United States of America. The potential for good has not even been fully realized to date. I believe I can confidently declare on behalf of all our naturalists, professional and amateur, that we look forward to an enhanced and expanded program for the benefit of our country's future and the generations to come.

I have been in a ORV ever since I was a baby. I have done this my whole life and now my child loves it. I sure hope her children get to enjoy it. I also hike, snowshoe, ride quads and jeeps. I love all kinds of outdoor activities. Anti-ORV should see that there are many people that love the outdoors and need to share them.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

And we can live off the herbs and berries and lay around in the wilderness smoking natural herbal substances and eating mushrooms and live happily ever after. To get Obama to the forest will take 10 jets, 100 vehicles and 1000 government employees. All so he can listen to the sounds of nature and fulfill his role "one of example". That's what I call a good idea-NOT!!!

If you want to learn about being an environmental steward, hang out with a farmer or rancher who for generations has been taking care of the environment for hundreds of years. Come to NE Utah and see the hundreds of acres excellent wildlife winter grazing area. It is utilized by thousands of elk, deer, moose and other wildlife. This land has been mined and then been reclaimed by the mining company that has managed the property for a half a century. This land was originally barren wasteland (or pristine wilderness as radical environmentalists call it).

Preserving Civil War battlefields is a conscientious way of remembering and honoring the hundreds of thousands of men that fought and died in that devastating war. It is our history and these battlefields ARE hallowed ground. It is absolutely imperative that we do all we can to save ALL of the land fought on during those four horrific years. Please preserve these battlefields for those now long gone, for ourselves, and for future generations to come. I cannot think of any cause more worthy. Let us not forget those who sacrificed the ultimate price...we honor each and every Civil War soldier when we preserve this sacred ground.

_____ is currently under prosecution for assaulting a mountain biker in the Bay Area. His anti-mountain bike activity has risen to a criminal level. The challenge and idea he posted here is being DEMOTED. I wonder whether this website will ultimately delete an idea that is simply not supported by most Americans. Mountain bikers are not advocating for riding in existing wilderness areas. There's vast acreage of congressionally designated wilderness for hikers and equestrians. Nor are mountain bikers promoting the construction of roads in wild space. What mountain bikers can do, is to ally with hikers to protect wild lands using really good protective designations, like National Recreation Areas. Simple. Mountain bikers are very interested in sustainable trails for multiple (non-motorized) use & enjoyment. Trails stewardship is hugely popular in the mountain bike community. Trail volunteerism helps land managers and builds community. Our National Trails Day event at our county park was attended by hikers in their 70ies, families with toddlers, and strong mountain bikers. Awesome.

Mountain biking is a great way to get kids who don't want to hike, involved in the outdoors. They get excited and spread that interest to their parents. Then they all show up for great trail stewardship events, like on National Trails Day every June. Mountain bikers are great volunteers who are interested in working with land managers. It's a win-win for the environment, for the people, and for the great outdoors!

"Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it." --George Santayana
Preserving these battlefields and other historic sites will help remind us of this time in our history and, hopefully, prevent us from another civil war.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

As a life long owner of off highway motorcycles I will agree that it has developed lasting family memories. Starting with exploring the back roads of the national forest and desert roads on the lands managed by the BLM. Off Highway does not mean go anywhere it will go. I am a strong believer in staying on the roads and designated trails. I now have four children who have each learned to properly operate a motorcycle and ATV. We spend 10 or more weekend a year exploring the public lands. Our family is closer and healthier because of the time we have spent together thanks to ATV's and motorcycles.

Great for promotion of the great outdoors but does nothing for actually getting the younger generation off the couch. Stand up walk out the door and go see america.

I can't improve on most of these comments in support of preserving battlefields. If we don't preserve the history of this awful chapter our nation's story, ancestors many centuries from now could repeat them!

i'm an environmentalist AND a motorcyclist (OHV'r). i hike, snowboard, camp, AND ride an off-road motorbike and it allows me to see the wilderness and have fun and connect with my friends and meet new friends. out of all the activities i do, i enjoy motorcycling the most and i ride off road almost every weekend and camp once a month. i am not happy with reckless OHV riding as much as reckless mindless horseback riding, reckless mountain biking, and hikers that drive their Subaru's up the forest roads and park in the road(i am a former Subaru owner). all these arguments come down to one thing..... RESPONSIBILITY! i love the outdoors and i love riding a motorcycle. i am in shape, i love the environment (i've been in protests for the environment), i write letters to the govt, i donate to protection groups. so i hope the people on here complaining about OHV'rs as being the problem look in the mirror. here's a quote from Rodney King ... "can't we all just get along?!?"

Our young people are woefully ignorant of the causes, personalities, and events of the American Civil War, if not of American history in general. Walking the very ground where great events took place and, in this case, where men North and South, bled and died for what they believed, makes history come alive in ways a book or internet site never can. The Civil War was truly the defining event in the history of this country. Many of the issues that led to war still make the news today, such as sharing of authority between individual states and the federal government, equal access to the benefits of citizenship for all of us, and speaking out and "fighting" for one's beliefs as opposed to the apathy and indifference so often surrounding us. Civil War battlefields bring all this to life and preserve forever the sacred ground where young American heroes believed certain truths worthy of fighting and dying for.

we love to go atv riding as a family. were out side, looking at nature explaining things to the kids. n y state dosent give tax payers nothing for atvs but take our money. we ride in pa. other states have it. my family loves riding on the atvs..

Discussion Question 1

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(cont.)

After 40 years of posting "Public Land - Keep Out" signs on the boundaries, it's time for the US Fish and Wildlife Service to allow the public to visit Featherstone NWR on the Potomac River, just downstream from Washington, DC. The Federal officials who recently completed the "Strategy for Protecting and Restoring the Chesapeake Bay Watershed" recognize that the general public will get more engaged in protecting places that they can experience, in person. The vision is "A Chesapeake watershed with ample access to provide for public enjoyment." Blocking public access to land already owned by the Federal government, with a mile of Potomac River water access, is counterproductive. Wildlife-dependent recreation is appropriate for the 325 acres of tidal marsh and riparian wetlands with mature oaks, tulip poplars and red maples. The dramatic population growth in Northern Virginia has made it even more critical to connect people to nature. If no one but Federal biologists are aware of the natural assets, don't be surprised if local officials propose developing the refuge site for commuter ferry landings, school bus parking lots, or other inappropriate uses.

Environmental and outdoor education is the foundation of efforts to reconnect citizens, and particularly our youth, with America's Great Outdoors. It also improves student achievement in STEM and other subjects, provides the knowledge and skills needed for the "green" jobs of the 21st Century and to address the increasingly complex environmental and natural resource challenges facing the nation, and helps contribute to healthy lifestyles. The Obama Administration should support and the Congress should promptly enact the No Child Left Inside Act, sponsored by Senator Jack Reed and Representative John Sarbanes. The NCLI Act provides incentives for states to provide high-quality environmental instruction, outdoor learning activities, and teacher professional development and will help ensure that every student graduates from high school environmentally literate and prepared for real-world challenges and careers.

How can we incent school districts to set aside land on school campuses serving inner city neighborhoods for environmental education and outdoor recreation? Just a patch of woods, prairie or riverfront can provide a tremendous outdoor lab where teachers can augment classroom science and math education with hands-on research. This avoids the time, expense and hassle of transporting kids offsite and enables year-long projects such as CityGreen's GIS forest mapping curriculum, cataloging climate change's impact on native and invasive species, monitoring water quality, geocaching, camping, orientation and other recreation and teambuilding exercises. I currently work with an outdoor club at a Title I middle school adjacent to seven acres of woods, where we have built a fire ring and hope to install a nature trail this year. However, the school district plans to level the woods in coming years to build a new school. Plans have been delayed by the economy and I'm contemplating lobbying the school board to rebuild on the existing site to preserve the woods and develop a neighborhood EE center that could be accessed by two nearby elementary schools and a high school. I can foresee developing a K-12 program that would put some kids in a position to apply for high school internships with federal land management agencies and the Student Conservation Association and other conservation youth corps groups. Has anyone had success persuading their local school districts to preserve natural areas and create neighborhood EE and outdoor recreation centers?

Discussion Question 1

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(cont.)

I'd love to find out if such workshops are available on line, or near Charlotte, NC.

The Texas Master Naturalist program is an outstanding program! Volunteers contribute their talents to help conserve, preserve and educate! The Texas program has served as a model throughout the nation.

Consider starting or joining a nature club for the families around your area. In January of 2008, the _____ family started one and we have enjoyed it very much (www.kidsadventuring.org). Starting this group has given us the opportunity to connect with other families in the area and has encouraged an increase in local volunteering and park use. You can choose the size of the group and invite people from your neighborhood, or you can invite everyone in town. Prepared families are happy families. A Nature Club for Families will encourage others to get out together! Check out Family Nature Clubs at { Link }

I have changed it around a bit. Hope that helps. We are not the only Nature Club for Families. There are now 75 listed on the Children and Nature Network's website.

Actually there already is a 96db limit on Off Road Vehicles. You have probably heard some folks who are running vehicles that exceed that limit. Most Off Road Events on public lands check for compliance and will not allow loud vehicles to participate. Forest Enforcement officers also check vehicles to ensure they are quiet and give a \$500 ticket to those who are not.

Agreed...People don't truly appreciate or value our natural resources unless they have the opportunity to experience them first hand. Introducing people of all ages to recreational fishing provides one of the easiest mechanisms to create that experience and instills a strong conservation ethic. Anglers were among the nation's first and foremost conservationists, and still are today. Somewhere along the line, new anglers need a successful fishing experience to keep them connected for a lifetime. Good fishing is a result of good aquatic habitats. I agree with _____ that the National Fish Habitat Conservation Act should be a cornerstone of America's Great Outdoors Initiative.

All too often special interest groups promote Wilderness areas as a way of excluding the public. Lets keep BLM land open to all, not just a group of backpackers. Spending public money on these projects is not what the public wants now, or any time in the future. These projects are about excluding the public, not preserving public land. If the same money wasted on these projects (taxes and private funding) was used to improve BLM lands and access, we could put thousands of people to work with worthy project. The BLM has a poor record of how it manages it's land. Look at the Wild Horse over population in Nevada. Ever wonder what caused the "over grazing" ?? The BLM caused the problem by leasing the land to ranchers to graze cattle, no feed left for the Wild horses. This is just one small example of their management style, for a price, public land used for special interest groups at the expense of nature and native animals.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Forest Health is important to everyone and President Obama has wisely stated in order to protect and restore Americas Forest that he wants to use science based management practices. Last year the Sierra Nevada Conservancy in partnership with the USDA released their Climate Action Plan which studied our National Forests and scientifically concluded the need to thin and log our overgrown diseased and dying forests to promote forest health and reduce greenhouse gas emissions. As the President noted Conservation is a part of economic growth. The Initiative should encourage resource harvesting as the best way to provide jobs and economic growth for rural communities while promoting forest health, as well as providing products America needs and paying taxes.

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I am a hunter and pro-OHV. Yes there the 1% OHV who are irresponsible just like the 1% of hunters who poach or shoot signs. Deal with the issue and educate. It was education that made hunting/fishing groups ultimately improve wildlife populations and habitat. It is not feasible to hike in 20 miles to hunt and then turn around and pack out a harvested animal. The various hunting and fishing groups have done more to restore the wildlife than any environmental group ever has and for a lot less public money. Although I'm sure the Enviro nuts will be happy to take credit for it. Here in the Republic of Californication there is constant flow new laws coming up in congress to limit hunting. Most recently is one that would outlaw lead for use in all bullets used for hunting despite lack of data showing any issue. Also the registration of long guns which will cost all of us tax dollars to administer and gain nothing except to make it easier when the gov't comes to take all of our firearms. I know tell me "there's no right to own firearms".

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

I happen to live in rural Montana (which is most of Montana) and I find it exceptionally surprising that people believe that open and protected space is disappearing. I work in (oh my God, he's one of them) a natural gas production/gathering company and most of my days is driving on specified trails through the "disappearing" open spaces. Coyotes are increasing this year, snakes are abundant (nice Bull snake in one of my measurement houses just this week!) rabbits and hares galore, deer so abundant I fear they will starve in the winter, antelope (my God, the antelope!) are everywhere. Gophers? More gophers in a square mile than citizens in New York City! The animals here, as well as Wyoming where I lived for 8 years, aren't in any danger. They adapt to us faster than I adapt to them (at least snakes). What we need is actual education on the issue. The issue is these "wildlands" are someone's home, and it is in our best interest to take care of these lands because we live here. We also have to make a living here. If you aren't born into a farming/ranching family it is doubtful you can break into it, and energy is something that we were blessed with by our Creator (to use Thomas Jefferson's language. Please don't think my neighbors and I are eco-terrorists (is there even such a thing), we are American citizens due every right and privelege that is ours by birthright.

I have an idea, let's take land in your home state that is being used to supply the world in beef and wheat and make it a nice tourist stop that the elites can go to after everyone else starves to death. Great thinking, sport.

I strongly support making the tax incentives on conservation easements permanent. Easements are particularly effective in communities that are concerned about having too much tax-exempt land owned by the government or land trusts. Local officials and residents who are concerned about lost revenues are more willing to support this approach when they understand that the private landowner will still pay some taxes, even if the amount of tax on land under easement may decrease.

I take my family camping, exploring, and trail riding on OHVs as much as possible. We try to support the local communities we visit on such trips. I sure hope I can continue this form of recreation with my grandchildren.

I voted "promote" because it can work. Just make sure it managed by neutral, reasonable people and not GREEN extremists. Make sure the use of the budget is for OHV support and not the general fund of the state.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

I'm sorry that have been having such a bad time with federal management. I have found that the partnerships between groups like CAMBA in northern Wisconsin have resulted in amazing opportunities for great mountain biking on federal lands in the Midwest. The partnership between the USDA Forest Service and the mountain biking organization have helped to establish the area as a premier mountain biking destination. This has helped the area to develop and sustain a more diverse economy based on the revenue generated from events like the Fat Tire Festival, which in turn help to develop support for the preservation of these lands. Furthermore, the Ozark Highlands Trail Association does an awesome job maintaining the OHT, a hiking trail running through the Buffalo National River and I believe parts of the Ozark National Forest. Again an organization has partnered with the federal government to provide the rest of us the opportunity to enjoy our public lands. Not sure how you can argue that doesn't work. The challenge is to continue working with those groups and to further develop more such relationships.

Stay in your manicured gated community. That is not Nature.

This is a good idea for a number of reasons: It helps the trails and parks, puts money into peoples pockets, gives retired people a purpose, and gets them active.

Kids who learn about the natural world will grow up to appreciate and protect it.

I have been a Master Naturalist in training for several months and have gained tremendous respect for the program. The program works for me on several levels, connecting with the environment, with people respectful of the environment, learning from experts and understanding the high level of connectedness among species, both flora and fauna. I'm looking forward to many years of continued involvement as part of a movement focused on restoring habitat, educating the general public, and other work required to ensure the ultimate sustainability our small piece of the global environment. Extending the movement nationally makes a lot of sense.

Please visit a wilderness area and see more than just hikers making use of the land. Fishermen, hunters, packers, and equestrians all use the land. So, the hikers are not considering themselves elitists, they are considering keeping the wild wild. I enjoy mountain biking and ohv's, but would never want them in a wilderness area. But, I guess I also enjoy eating elk steak.

I don't think any new trails should be opened in the National Forests. I spend a lot of time in wilderness areas and national forest on backpacking trips and on horseback. Hearing an engine out there takes the wilderness out of it. I would like to see more areas myself made into wilderness areas. If people want to experience the wilderness, as it always has been, they can walk or pack a horse, just as it has always been done. I'd say that the reason you have never seen anyone walking on your loops is because the walkers try to stay away from OHV's when they get outdoors.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

I vote for more wilderness.

I will promote this idea as long as provisions are made to incorporate alternate motorized trail routes into a National Trail System. The vision should be that both motorized and non-motorized users should be able to experience a contiguous trail system.

One other law needs to be followed--the Wilderness Act. If an area is not pristine and untrammled, it should not be considered for Wilderness.

The social/cultural, economic and environmental benefits of historic preservation are becoming more widely known to a wider segment of the population every day. If it were just about saving old buildings, the historic preservation movement would have died a long time ago with the destruction of Penn Station. This goes well beyond sentimentality. Full, permanent funding of the HPF ensures the on-going efforts of our State and Tribal Preservation offices to assist in preserving our cultural identity, preventing the need for new developments on agricultural land or natural areas and creating good paying jobs in the construction trades, among other benefits. The State and Tribal Preservation Offices are often the driving force behind many historic preservation efforts at all levels and, without them, we would have to rely too heavily on grassroots efforts to keep the momentum going.

Great idea! I support multi-user designations (even motorized if/where appropriate). More trails & better inter-connections to existing trails will further enhance outdoor & fitness opportunities for all users.

Sorry to hear about your problems; my experience was very different. The IRS accepted our appraisal, our deduction went through without a problem. I hope this gets resolved in your favor. I too think conservation easements are one of the best hopes to preserving open space in the US. I know several people who would consider granting easements, but don't feel they can afford to reduce the marketability of their property and the tax deduction would be of little benefit because of their tax bracket. I would love to see a fund established so that these people could be paid upfront for the conservation easement.

There is the Great Society's federal Senior Community Service Employment Program which is a training program for people 55+. Seniors are paid minimum wage to train at nonprofits and governmental agencies. This program can be used for trails.

Discussion Question 1

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(cont.)

I agree that preservation of our lands and the history that goes along with them must incorporate more than setting aside places for people to enjoy them. A well rounded approach would be most effective and I think starting with the base of our population, the youth of America, should be a large part of the equation. I propose that we do more to educate our about the land they live in and introduce them to it. Education is often one of the highest on citizens lists of concerns in our country, and America often focuses on Educational reform. In the past, it has been in the form of more money and the issue has been presented to the public in that forum. Instead of simply pushing the money issue, we could introduce programs that educate students about nature as a subject... its upkeep an art, the tools to do so a science, and the enjoyment of Nature's resources a part of well rounded life. Give schools the opportunity to invite children and their parents to the parks and public lands around their communities. I know that improved public transportation is often a local goal in cities. What if their was a bus families could take to go camping? Not simply to the mall. What if the Parks and Forests could be a summer job for teenagers? Instead of McDonald's. What if our children grew up in green cities with grass on the roofs instead of just the city park? All of this is possible if we start by encouraging and educating the children of America about the wonderful world that already exists in their country.

I appreciate the attempt to promote some balance in this debate. Generally speaking most land that is not designated as wilderness remains open for some form of off-road vehicle activity. If all the wilderness eligible public land was so designated it would still leave the majority of public lands open for off-roaders. However, the crux of this debate is not really about access for recreation. It's about whether or not there will be sufficient space left for mother nature to allow her to remain healthy; its about whether or not our natural heritage will remain so that people (and animals) will continue to benefit in the many ways other than recreation that are essential (clean air, clean water, soil creation, etc.). Unfortunately, though nature isn't even attaining 1 for 1, 1 for 1 won't get that job done.

Multiple Use is one of those ideas that sound really good until you take a closer look. The big problem seems to be that allowing one person to do what he or she pleases can pretty much ruin it for another user. An example would be trying to go for a bike ride in an area that is being mined for coal really isn't going to be much fun. Nor is going for a hike with a bunch of ATV's generating so much noise that you think your at a NASCAR rally. Definitely every group should be allowed to have an input(and they do), but we have to realize that opening up every thing to every use is neither realistic or fair, nor good for the land. You notice I talked about regulating use and activities-not "locking people out". You can go any place that you want on public land, but you do have to obey the rules

Discussion Question 1

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(cont.)

One of the biggest threats to Wilderness Areas is the gradual erosion of protection by various user groups such as mountain bikes and ATV's that want access for their use. The big problem with multiple use trails is that they really aren't: the dominant group turns to be the ones with the biggest most intrusive machines and everyone else is relegated to a secondary status and a vastly degraded experience. Certainly everyone has a right to do their thing, but this has to be done by segregating conflicting uses-not by cynically calming to want it for "everybody" when in fact they want it for their own uses. In this increasingly crowded and mechanized world we need places to escape and be in nature without being harassed by machines.

Saving and preserving these battlefields are essential, not only as lasting monuments to the brave men that fought and died there, but as virtual classrooms for all future generations that they may truly understand the great sacrifices made by each and every soldier to help forge and make this country into the truly free and united country it is today. Maintaining these battlefields also protects the environment and they contribute to the economic well-being of the areas surrounding them through tourism.

I wish everyone the opportunity to learn and enjoy nature through a program like the Texas Master Naturalist Program that trains, shapes, and challenges volunteers to take an active role in educating others about our natural resources. As an advisor to the Coastal Prairie Texas Master Naturalist Chapter of Ft. Bend and Waller Counties, I have assisted and encouraged programs from the 2009 Agricultural/ & Household Hazardous Waste Collection event in Waller County that collected 69,000 lbs of waste to educational programs on conserving darkness and light pollution. This chapter's volunteers direct the educational programs and events. Last year's Prairie Heritage Day (PHD) at the wonderful Brazos Bend Texas State Park was a banner type event promoting our most endangered ecosystem (THE PRAIRIE), and enjoyed the participation of over 20 vendors and 1,000 participants.

The Memorandum for a 21st Century Strategy for America's Great Outdoors requested emphasis be placed on involving our youth. So, once again, we must turn to the education system. P.E. instruction in all schools could contain an outdoor education component. This could include field trips to local wilderness and agricultural areas. The emphasis must be on educating youth about our relationship with the earth, how we depend on the earth for our own survival, and how everything we do affects the earth and, ultimately, our own existence. The earth will be a better place if we can put it in the hands of informed people who can be good stewards of our earth, no matter what career path they choose. This education program will require a commitment of funds and adequate resources, but an investment well worth the benefits.

It's about jobs, community development, character, jobs, sustainability, environmental stewardship, jobs, sense of place, tourism, cultural identity, and jobs. The Historic Preservation Fund should be fully funded at the Congressionally authorized level of \$150 million. Give State Historic Preservation Offices and the communities they serve the financial and human resources they need to help ensure that the places that matter are attractive and viable parts of a sustainable future.

Discussion Question 1

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(cont.)

All wilderness quality land should IMMEDIATELY be protected. Period. Including the Arctic National Wildlife refuge. All roadless areas protected under Clinton should be in this category. And finally, all available wilderness areas in the Tongass National Forest in Alaska should be protected. They were left out of the roadless rule in the first place. Even if every bit of wilderness left in this country is protected, it will still leave plenty of room for the off road crowd. Some day, as this country gets more and more overcrowded, our children and grandchildren will thank us.

I like the focus on family activity. I will be definitely checking this out online and seeing how it could be incorporated in our local parks here in Florida. The idea of incremental incentives would help motivate parents and children. As a lover of outdoors and learning, I still treasure my Senior Ranger badge I earned at Fossil Butte! I would like to see programs like yours and theirs more often in our state and national parks!

Service learning projects really helped with our local park. Our students have volunteered over 7 years at a local state park and have a strong connection with it as a result. Two years ago, we reforested an area with long-leaf pine seedlings and students are constantly checking to see how they are doing! Long-term commitment is crucial, as well as recognition for the volunteers work!

We worked closely with a local state park via service learning projects and designed a "Family Activity Guide" for the park. Children and parents learned about the park through activity pages designed for each section of the park. The guide contains historical information, math activities, invasive species identification, puzzles, games, etc. This guide is more requested than the Junior Ranger Guide! Often Ranger led-activities are at a time when parents/children cannot attend. As a result families miss out on these valuable activities. Teachers, working closely with park rangers, could design these guides for use in both national and state parks. The guides need to be designed specifically for each park, not generic like many of the Junior Ranger Guides. Guides could be posted online (pdf) for easy download and would encourage parents/children to visit and learn at local state/national parks. Teachers would love to help work with projects like this!

I understand how, to those of us who recycle and try to do with less disposable materials, this is such common sense. A no-brainer. However, I don't want to see the oversight organization that the feds would put into place to regulate it. It would be repulsively large--it would have to be. When it comes to recycling, this is a MORAL issue. We need to get peoples heads and hearts engaged, so that they WANT to do this, naturally. Legislating morality has never changed behavior. Prohibition is the classic example. MADD and related organizations have done more to reduce irresponsible drinking than that law ever did. Same with smoking. Public education is what will push recycling into the realm of "just do it," not federal laws and federal offices to watch-dog them. But God bless you for your concern for our beautiful world!

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

The role of the Federal government in facilitating the preservation of the sacred ground embodied in the Civil War battlefields through making available matching funds for non-profit organizations is vital to our ability as a nation to the continued recognition of our heritage. Private sector groups have had great success in laying the groundwork and developing the arrangements for critical land acquisitions. These efforts, when parleyed with the ability to show financial leverage through matching gifts from sources with common interests such as governments, individuals, and grass-roots organizations have proven invaluable. These successes can continue if reliable public funding is established/continued.

100 Stories of Youth in the Great Outdoors I see that the fewest contributions thus far are in the area of 'Tools' and that there are very few suggestions that focus on fostering the engagement of youth in the Great Outdoors. Perhaps the expression of the most precious experiences we have had in natural settings can be found in those indelible, unforgettable and absolutely one-of-kind happenings that sometimes occur when a mother or father, grandparent, aunt or uncle or an adult friend takes us out, when we are young, into wild waters and landscapes in a boat, on an ATV, on foot or horseback or bike, and something wonderful, awe-inspiring or amazing touches our hearts in ways that connect us forever afterwards to that place and activity. How we are captivated and captured by such outdoor experiences that are brought to us by a special person who cares for us and for whom we deeply care when we are young are conveyed in the stories we share with one another over a campfire on future journeys with our dearest friends and family in later years. Let us gather together and select 100 stories submitted from youth 8-18, one each from a boy and girl in each of the 50 states, who have had the gift of a special experience in a national park or state natural area with an adult family member or friend, and publish a book with a picture of the place and person accompanying each story, for other youth to read and see what possible and precious gifts might await them if they explore the wild treasures available to each of them across our nation wherever they might live.

Discussion Question 1

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(cont.)

A host of rules and regulations, missions and methods might be more cleanly and clearly organized with more distinct definitions that differentiate the primary concepts employed by departments, agencies and NGO's. I propose the following specifications for the primary constructs of preservation, restoration, conservation and consecration ...

To Protect and Preserve: We work to safeguard the existing integrity, quality and health of the water, its associated diversity of land and wildlife, from further declines and losses (threats) through monitoring (watch and ward) and advocacy (shield and defend) activities with other individuals, families, organizations and communities. [save ... maintain] "A thing is right when it tends to preserve the integrity, stability and beauty of the biotic community. It is wrong when it tends otherwise. A thing is right only when it tends to preserve the integrity, stability, and beauty of the community, and the community includes the soil, waters, fauna, and flora, as well as people." -Aldo Leopold [To Preserve: keep safe from harm or injury; retain (a condition or state of affairs); maintain or keep alive]

To Restore: We seek to improve water quality (recover and reestablish), recognizing its interconnection with land use by humans and wildlife, and seek to restore (rehabilitate and reclaim) important natural and scenic areas along waterways and throughout watersheds and landscapes by partnering with other organizations focused on ecological restoration (repair and reconstitute). [secure ... manage] "Every creature is better alive than dead, men and moose and pine trees, and he who understands it aright will rather preserve its life than destroy it." -Henry David Thoreau "On the mountains mistakes are fatal. In politics, mistakes are wounding emotionally, but you recover. Personally, wilderness helps me get back in touch with natural rhythms, helps me reflect and, in the process, restore my creativity." -Mark Udall [To Restore: bring back (a previous right, practice, custom, or situation); reinstate; return (someone or something) to a former condition, place, or position; repair or renovate (a building, work of art, vehicle, etc.) so as to return it to its original condition; give (something previously stolen, taken away, or lost) back to the original owner or recipient]

To Conserve: We engage people living within the river corridors and habitats, increasing stewardship through educational, recreational and volunteer stewardship activities that give them the understanding and motivation to advocate at the local, state and national levels on behalf of the river's values. We partner with other conservation organizations seeking to insure long-term stability through land purchase (sequester in reserves, parks, and sanctuaries), easements and other mechanisms to sustain (perpetuate) a legacy of high quality land and water ecology into the future. [sustain ... mind] "In the end we will conserve only what we love. We will love only what we understand. We will understand only what we are taught." - Baba Dioum [To Conserve: protect (something, esp. an environmentally or culturally important place or thing) from harm or destruction; prevent the wasteful or harmful overuse of (a resource); maintain; retain]

To Celebrate and Consecrate: This watershed/landscape/habitat is a national treasure. We live, work and play here because we love the place, and we celebrate that love at every opportunity. [serve ... deference and devotion] "O if we but knew what we do when we delve or hew -- hack and rack the growing green! Since country is so tender to touch, her being so slender, that like this sleek and seeing ball but a prick will make no eye at all, where we, even where we mean to mend her we end her, when we hew or delve: after-comers cannot guess the beauty been." -Gerard Manley Hopkins [To Consecrate: declare something sacred; devote (something) exclusively to a particular purpose]

Discussion Question 1

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(cont.)

Rotarians are actively involved in the outdoors and service projects involving positive environmental actions in many, if not most communities, as are Boy Scout troops. These beneficial efforts are typically widely scattered, without sustained focus or coherent, coordinated impact. We are seeking to train paired teams of adult Rotarians and Scout youth in many communities up and down a watershed to take more coordinated action, linking them together for more cohesive, effective and sustained impact. If only a third of such paired and linked teams are initiated of those available in a particular watershed or habitat type (woodland, savanna, prairie, wetlands), very potent effects are possible. Add in other possible pairings of other local adult organizations like Lions, Vets, church adult groups, with local youth organizations like 4-H, Boys and Girls clubs, and school student groups and the impact would be considerable. Pairing and regional linking would promote intergenerational sustainability of effort as well.

America's cultural resources define who we are and are indispensable. HistoriCorps is the future of preserving these resources on public lands. It comes at a critical time when these resources are fading just when budgets are being trimmed to take care of them. It is also important as an opportunity for the participants, primarily young people, to learn more about the resources themselves and the skills needed to preserve them.

For persons who insist on a quiet experience on public land, we invite them to visit Wilderness Areas which are reserved for their exclusive -- repeat exclusive -- use. Wilderness Areas are abundant and readily accessible to most people who require solitude and peaceful experience.

I have grown up riding and have always been respectful towards the environment by staying off closed trails and abiding by the rules. The majority of riders are the same way because they want to be able to continue to ride on the trails they love. Keep public lands open to the public!

I totally disagree with your comment. I am an avid off road user and it's what has brought my family and I to the outdoors and to the wilderness. It's the enjoyment and the ability to take my family into places that we normally wouldn't go that has brought us closer to the outdoors. We have so much fun going off road on our Quads and four wheel drives that it keeps us coming back year after year. We do not tear up the land like you suggest, instead we invest in our off road vehicles and we abide by the tread lightly standards of use, and we enjoy the outdoors. We also enjoy the hiking, fishing, camping that you enjoy but we do it once we've made it to our destination. If you want to protect from the pollution of of the air, rivers and streams that we all love stop targeting the very little OHV use and start looking at the major destruction that comes from daily driving on our roads and highways. People need to get out and enjoy the wilderness so that they can see what is out there to protect, and if they want to bike and backpack to get there great, but it's also great if they want to have some fun and go four wheeling or on a dirt bike ride to get there! Try it once you might just enjoy yourself.

In most cases, user fees are necessary to provide revenue for Land Management Agencies who are broke. Land Management Agencies are broke because we have eliminated revenue-generating activities from Public Lands. There really is no reason the FS and BLM cannot be financially self-sustaining if we would allow responsible, sustainable land uses such as timber harvest, grazing permits, and recreation for everyone.

Discussion Question 1

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(cont.)

It is rare when we have "win/win" opportunities. The multiple use of public lands is such an opportunity. Renewable practices such as timber harvest and grazing have obvious economic benefits (including funding of FS and BLM) but they also have environmental benefits, some of which are pointed out by commenters on this idea. In particular, responsible, selective timber harvests contribute to our local, state, and national economies while at the same time increasing resilience to wildfires and bug infestations, and the resulting modest additions of roads and trails provide improved public access.

Keep the trails open for the public to enjoy and partake in! There are plenty of trails out there where protection steps are being taken to minimize the impact of vehicles off road. Bridges being built and cleaner emissions from automakers keeping the air pollution down. Our major impact on air and water quality comes from our daily drivers not from OHV use which has a very minimal impact. Consider the awareness that OHV use brings towards our environment by simply introducing people to the outdoors and how great it is! My family enjoys the outdoors camping and hiking at least 10 times per year because of our OHV's, and we introduce our friends to the outdoors too! Our country has many beautiful places to see, and the way they will stay that way is to keep people aware. Ride, Hike, Bike, wheel, run, or walk through the outdoors, just be safe, courteous, and respectful and most of all enjoy!

Please consider two things. 1- Requiring the use of a trials tire in designated areas. This virtually removes all destructive effects of ORV use. 2- Consider that in the next year a significant amount of electric ORV two wheel vehicles are going to be sold. Three large companies now produce these vehicles including KTM. thank you.

Speeding up progress on a National Trail System is a good idea -- provided those trails are available for motorized as well as nonmotorized use.

Man is a visitor in America's great outdoors, not the resident. A good visitor respects the wildlife and the wildlife habitat that are an integral part of the great outdoor experience. This means in America's great outdoors natural process control wildlife populations and wildlife habitat. If the presence of wildlife interferes with Man's enjoyment of the great outdoors, Man must yield to the wildlife and the preservation of the wildlife habitat. Man does not choose the wildlife numbers and species. Natural processes control the balance. The only exception is when Man must correct an imbalance greater by their intrusion into the great outdoors or pollution of neighboring spaces. And when making this correction no wildlife should be a loser. The Great Outdoors is first the home of wildlife, free from disturbance of Man. Man must be a benign presence in America's great outdoors. Private lands adjacent to America's great outdoors must be tolerant of the wanderings of wildlife onto their lands as those lands provide the buffer between America's great outdoors and Man's world where wildlife are sometimes the visitors. That is the challenge.

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(cont.)

Preserved Civil War battlefields are some of the last tangible links to our country's past. With the 150th anniversary commemoration beginning next year, there will be renewed interest in the conflict and (hopefully!) unprecedented tourism to Civil War sites, which will help the economies in those areas. Preserved battlefields create jobs by encouraging heritage tourism. The more historic land that is preserved, the longer visitors stay in a community and the more time they spend patronizing local businesses. This is good for America no matter how you look at it! Even more, battlefields are outdoor classrooms for all future generations. They allow visitors to walk in the footsteps of the Civil War heroes and experience the landscape much as it was during the conflict. Even if you are not a history buff, preserved battlefields help protect water resources; sustain parks, working farms, forests and ranches; and provide open space for outdoor recreation. It won't be long before, in many areas, these beautiful preserved battlefields may be the only open spaces in vast seas of development. It is a shame that only a fraction of actual Civil War battlefields have been preserved, and a crime that so much hallowed ground has already been paved over, denied to future generations. The public - private partnership between the federal government and the Civil War Preservation Trust (where the Trust matches private gifts raised from its members dollar-for-dollar with federal grants to help save actual battlefield land) may be the most effective and efficient use of taxpayer dollars in all of the government. If these important places are ever going to be saved, it will likely be during the next 5-year period. We owe this to our children and grandchildren.

The Texas Master Naturalist program is an outstanding education program driven by a dedicated corps of volunteers. I feel the best thing about the program is it gears programs to the volunteers local area. People live in a particular area for a reason, and educating them about conservation and ecology in their region motivates them to improve their local region. There is also excellent state support and interaction to keep people informed of what is going on in other areas of the state. This gives new ideas for individuals to take back to their region and incorporate.

We must have free ranging, wild bison again. A national prairie park is an absolute must!

Exerpts from another comment I posted: When the new technologies are perfected to replace fossil fuels in cars they will eventually be incorporated into all vehicles. The amount of fuel used by OHV recreation is not anywhere near that used for everyday transportation. If anyone thinks banning OHV will solve America's energy problems they are mistaken. This form of recreation has been growing dramatically and at the same time areas to enjoy it have decreased due to pressure from well funded environmental groups and sometimes one single person with a seeming vendetta against OHV use.

Discussion Question 1

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(cont.)

When the new technologies are perfected to replace fossil fuels in cars they will eventually be incorporated into all vehicles. The amount of fuel used by OHV recreation is not anywhere near that used for everyday transportation. If anyone thinks banning OHV will solve America's energy problems they are mistaken. I agree with everything in this idea. Managed OHV parks can be a great way to preserve the land and protect the environment from developers. I know I could not walk very far into a park and responsible OHV use is a great way to enjoy the nature I would not otherwise enjoy. It is also my preferred form of exercise and recreation because I can do both at the same time. Many families enjoy the sport and the environment at the same time. It sure beats computer games for the kids. This form of recreation has been growing dramatically and at the same time areas to enjoy it have decreased due to pressure from well funded environmental groups and sometimes one single person with a seeming vendetta against OHV use. I say expand the number and size of OHV parks and keep them well managed and teach the kids about nature while they enjoy it. More parks closer to home would discourage illegal activity elsewhere. Dirt bikes don't damage a trail much more than horses and as said above, they are maintained by the agency in charge and by volunteers.

I am sharing information from the Active Living Research (ALR) program, a national program of the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation. The chief aim of Active Living Research is to increase knowledge about active living by supporting research to identify environmental factors and policies that can increase physical activity and prevent childhood obesity, particularly among children in low-income and racial or ethnic minority communities. Parks and outdoor recreation can play a significant role in helping kids and adults be more active and healthy. Two research summaries: The Economic Benefits of Open Space, Recreation Facilities and Walkable Community Design Research Synthesis reviews the peer-reviewed and independent reports on the economic value of outdoor recreation facilities, open spaces and walkable community design, and focuses on "private" benefits that accrue to nearby homeowners and to other users of open space. (March 2010) The Parks, Playgrounds and Active Living Research Synthesis summarizes the growing body of evidence concerning the role of parks in shaping active lifestyles across a variety of study populations, including children, seniors, lower-income families, specific racial and ethnic groups and other populations at high risk of being inactive. Areas where additional research is needed are also discussed. (February 2010) To access the above reports, as well as other ALR resources, go here: { Link }

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

-Direct land preservation. Take the example of 2200 acre Chapman Forest, which was purchased in 1998 by the state of Maryland and the Conservation Fund to prevent a huge new development. Now designated Chapman State Park, this site is used for environmental education in an authentic setting that harbors considerable biodiversity, including more than three dozen state-rare species, an old-growth tract, a rare Shell-marl ravine forest, and one of Mattawoman Creek's finest tributaries. Also helped by the purchase was Mattawoman itself, one the Chesapeake Bay's most significant fish nurseries. Also preserved was Mt. Aventine, a remarkable antebellum manor house that housed the Chapman family, whose presence at the site oversaw history from 1750 to the twentieth century. -Past preservation of land works, and continued preservation to thwart degradation by encroaching development. Examples include Chapman Forest in Charles County, Maryland, Piscataway National park that partially preserves the view from Mt. Vernon, and Maryland Natural Environment Areas along Mattawoman Creek, one the Chesapeake Bay's most productive finfish tributaries. Mattawoman is under such concentrated attack by local land use policies that it is now showing the signs of wear predicted twenty years ago by fisheries biologists. Federal investment in land preservation is one of the sure-fire tools known to help. Know that the Mattawoman is to the Chesapeake Bay as a babybottle is to a baby. If the Mattawoman is allowed to degrade, so goes the Chesapeake.

I am a conservationist by trade and actually deal with landowners and conservation easement issues. A conservation easement is placed on private land whose owner has forgone development rights and therefore forfeits any financial gain that might result from the developing of that piece of land. This is PRIVATE land, not public, and most of the time no federal dollars are used (a lot of the time the easement is donated by the landowner). Most land trusts are not-for-profit organizations who hold these easements as a public service to preserve farmland, green space, and wildlife habitat. The general public has no more right to these lands than they do my back yard. Any threat of opening private land up to the public will effectively put an end to conservation easements - that is the first question landowners ask me ("this won't make my land into some kind of park, will it?"). I think the public doesn't truly understand what a conservation easement is.

Youth and adults need social support systems and places in nature that they identify with positive experiences. Urbanizing populations need to experience nature close to home through frequent encounters over extended periods of time with supportive mentors as the major part of their recruitment and retention into nature. Community Conservation Clubs should be formed in every local community for persons to gather, to share programs, to plan, to support each other, and to have fun. Clubs should be supported through joint efforts of local, state, and national nature-based agencies and nongovernmental organizations and businesses. Existing leadership would be central to expanding their memberships and actions and they can add new Community Conservation Clubs locally. Businesses have a role to provide meeting spaces, program support, and participation by their employees.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Support funding for historic preservation and heritage programs like Save America's Treasures, Preserve America, National Heritage Areas, the Historic Preservation Fund, and historic and archeological sites in our National Parks and on public lands. This will ensure that America's Great Outdoors truly preserves our national heritage, including our natural, historic and cultural legacy so that all Americans and especially young people can better understand, learn from and appreciate our rich and diverse past.

As Americans it is incumbent on us to protect the hallowed places where so many of our forefathers gave their lives. The protection of Civil War battlefields provides this opportunity to our current generation. Battlefields are rapidly disappearing because of unwise development that disregards our historic resources. We do not have much time to act. Those of us who share this common interest and sense of responsibility must act now. Our numbers are many, and our will is strong. Our battlefield organizations, National Park Service, and government officials must be strongly encouraged to protect these legacies of our national fabric.

As a member of the Civil War Preservation Trust and Hagerstown (MD) Civil War Roundtable, please allow me to offer my comments on the Administration's America's Great Outdoors initiative. I would like to see some of this money spent on Civil War battlefield preservation. Battlefields are essential for several reasons. Protection of America's remaining Civil War battlefields will leave a lasting legacy of national commitment to preservation and conservation. Preserved battlefields revitalize local economies and create jobs by encouraging heritage tourism. The more historic land that is preserved, the longer visitors stay in a community and the more time they spend patronizing local businesses. Battlefields are outdoor classrooms for this and future generations. Preserved battlefields help protect water resources; sustain parks, working farms, forests and ranches; and provide open space for passive outdoor recreation. Battlefield preservation in Pennsylvania, Maryland and Virginia, where many significant sites are located, is also vital for protecting the Chesapeake Bay. Finally, what better way to observe the 150th anniversary commemoration of the war by preserving battlefields where men fought and died. Thank you.

I was going to comment that "destroy the environment" was a bit alarmist, but then I went back and reread some of the recent literature on predicted changes based on increased heat trapping from carbon dioxide. "Destroy" about sums it up for a lot of wild areas. As for the cost, I recently went from a gasoline-powered car to a turbo-diesel car. Similar size, similar comfort (better actually), better safety due to more modern features. Highway mileage increased from low 30s to near 50. My city/highway commute loop went from upper 20s to 40 mpg. Functionally I didn't notice a difference. Idiotically simple. People who say it can't be done haven't looked very closely.

I would love to live on a golf course for its beauty. The same goes for most of our civil war sites. Most are wonderful places to go to enjoy a few hours in the outdoors...take a lunch and enjoy the scenery as well as the history.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

The sport of hunting and fishing over the last 30 + years has restored more wildlife species in our nation. These sportsman/women are truly concerned about all wildlife and the preservation of it. True conservation groups such as National Wild Turkey Federation, Duck Unlimited and the Quality Deer Management Assoc.(to name a few) have helped restore America's game species to historic levels. Through the preservation of these games species, non game species have benefited greatly. The money these sportsman/women spend helps the local and nation economies. Please consider the preservation of these activities as a benefit to our Nation and not as harmful as some believe.

There is so much land. There is so much beauty. Why can't we all have access. Locking it down prevents access to those who might only access via OHV. The joy that this has brought to my family, especially the kids is beyond question. Come join, with an open mind, and experience what families experience together via responsible OHV living. If hiking were the only way, so few would ever experience our vast, grand outdoors. Live and let live friends.

I suppose it depends on what you mean by "functioning system". A landscape managed for cattle isn't necessarily a better home for wildlife, plant or animal. My admittedly limited experience has been that rangeland is a good place for cattle at the expense of native critters. We have to STOP accessing oil, natural gas, coal, and we have to stop trying to convince ourselves that we need to. As for other minerals, nothing trashes a landscape like mining. Seems like every place I go in Colorado I see ugly-colored water running out of the rock into streams, the leftovers from mining a century ago. Mechanized mining has not improved the impact any. And what about the value of functional watersheds to aid in flood control, forests for wildlife, groundwater recharge, space to find solitude and recreation. These things have value as well. Yes! I've made several trips to Germany in recent years to visit a brother that lives there. Germans love their forests. Love Them! But they waited waay too long to start loving them. German forests are like Disneyland - yes there are trees, but the blocks are too small to really work as a functional forest with wildlife and room to roam in solitude. America IS a special place, the first nation to recognize that undisturbed landscapes had value. I say let's keep those wild landscapes before we look like Europe. No offense intended, but wilderness should be BIG, not a little corner left over from the farms and factories.

When electric power was first developed in the 19th century, production required large machinery. Producing power in large plants and running it to the users over transmission lines really didn't have an alternative. Today it's possible to generate significant electricity in a distributed manner is achievable in many areas. Solar cell arrays, wind turbines, turbines run by burning methane from cow (or human) manure, small hydropower, the list continues to grow. The facilities can be smaller and less burdensome, the losses to transmission are less because the power will travel a shorter distance, and the loss of power to an entire region (due to failure of a production facility or a natural disaster) is much less likely. This idea can work. 'Course it will make some major investments (power plants, large grids of transmission lines) worth a lot less. I personally am unmoved. The writing's been on the wall for at least 5 years, and many of these facilities have been flouting clean air act rules for decades. Time to pay the piper.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

As a backpacker and hiker who's been known to lug a saw himself, I think your last comment is off-base. Hikers can go around and through blowdowns, and some of us at least don't mind doing trail maintenance either.

Most people live in cities; most national parks are outside cities; thus we need national parks in cities, or city parks need to receive a fair share of LWCF funds to that they can be accessible and well maintained, as well as providing quality programming for the public.

Maybe a bunch of your domes could be built, only smaller and less expensively, for hikers, bikers, tree huggers, bird watchers, daisy pickers, and whomever else you wish to control and oppress. I am an avid OHV rider, rancher, equestrian, and hiker. There are several trails in my area that are not accessible by OHV as they are too narrow and rugged to accommodate one. My most frequented OHV area is the Imperial Sand dunes in Southern California. There are several square miles of sand dunes there to enjoy with whatever mode of transportation you may choose. Even this area, unvisited by most hikers, is under attack. Massive closures have been enacted in order to protect an "endangered" weed, that is showing no signs of eradication and also grows unmolested a few feet away from the closed areas, in Mexico. The only hikers we see in this area are illegal immigrants, (or undocumented Democrats as I see it). I don't believe a 1:1 plan would work because the OHV community is typically ignored in most hearings anyway. Just restoring the previously available areas for our recreation would be a great start. If someone wants to hike, bike, camp, ride horses, or perform any other activity in this area, be our guest. Just remember that you had to use a truck, car, trailer, or some other motorized vehicle to arrive there to enjoy your activity as well. Remove the hypocrisy and see where we all end up.

This is a great idea. OHV's are misrepresented in most issues regarding wilderness usage. If the OHV's "tear huge pieces of earth out of dirt roads and trails" and "without monthly maintenance these roads would become impassable to normal car use", then wouldn't this create jobs for the local road maintenance crews, encouraging them to stay in the community as the original idea suggested? Sounds like a win-win situation to me.

I can demote this idea. Since when is CO2 a pollutant? Did you know that the leading cause of the greenhouse effect is clouds and not CO2? But, since the climatologists would get laughed out of existence for trying to abolish clouds, they pick on a, naturally occurring, gas in the earth's atmosphere. Just because a few scientists say something is true, doesn't mean that it is. The same community claimed that the earth was flat centuries ago. Cap and Trade is money redistribution and nothing more. Dennis, nice choice on the new car. I wish more people would look at the turbo diesel's mileage instead of those, ridiculous, hybrids.

I would be happy if the land, previously available for OHV use, was restored to this capacity. More land would not be necessary.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

_____, When running cattle on public lands, the rancher MUST own a percentage of private property before he can do so. It is this type of ignorance that effects laws out of conscience instead of reality. Ranching and mining on public land is also profitable, where wild horses are not. Ranchers in particular are responsible for the water supply, fence upkeep, and road maintenance, which costs the BLM, (and the American taxpayer), nothing. I agree that the BLM is flawed, like most government agencies, but allowing the land to be managed by private businesses, like miners and ranchers, is an improvement.

Where was a dirt bike mentioned in this? If federal land truly belongs to all of us, then why should anyone ride their dirt bike in their own driveway? By reducing the federal government's role in public land use, the federal government wouldn't get to decide who "all of us" are.

Diane Kerr The Texas Master Naturalist program provides an education and training unique to one's local environment. This type of learning promotes better/wiser choices. The learning is hands on and those armed with the knowledge and understanding of their local environment has contributed to informing thousands of local citizens. Private and public entities continue to benefit from having Texas Master Naturalist volunteers carry their land stewardship to others. This can be seen in the better choices that the Houston/Galveston communities are making due to the training from this program. The public at large is learning, private citizens, children/students, and employees all become better citizens through this most valuable knowledge of learning about one's local natural resources, how to conserve those resources as well beneficially manage them.

Hunters and Anglers deserve much credit for their conservation and preservation activities. The money spent on licenses and tags have provided the funds to maintain many of the National Parks and other things we all enjoy freely. These activities should not always be attacked for several reasons. One being a lot of the wild game is a food source and often donated freely to feed the hungry that many people turn their back on. Just because people hunt or fish doesn't mean they hate animals, they just understand the cycle of life and that is why there are small seasons to hunt. If there was no hunting at all there would be an over run of wild animals every where causing people more harm, it is scientific and spiritual. Now the main problem with the Outdoors Industry and Organizations is that they don't embrace Diversity of People, they have just started including women and that was mainly to embrace what they would consider diversity they could digest for now, but with the changing demos and mindset it would behoove them to sincerely reach out a lot better than to their wives and daughters.

The Texas Master Naturalist program provides a community with an educated corp of volunteers that really care about the environment and are willing to work hard to care for the environment and educate the community. I have been a TMN volunteer for 3 years and I am so encouraged by the work this organization does. TMN makes a difference.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

I would have no great argument against OHV designated areas so long as: One, the areas contained sufficient buffer zones surrounding them so the OHV noise could not be heard by persons living in, or using, nearby land, and Two, no taxes be used in their development (we have far greater needs than such areas, i.e., let those who want to use OHVs, and/or those who want to sell OHVs, pay for them.)

It is no secret that Oregon and the Intermountain West have a terrible pine beetle problem and fires are well outside the historic norms. Could it be attributable to federal forest policy? E.g., of Oregon's non-reserved federal forest's annual growth, 8% is harvested while 19% is lost to mortality (i.e., left to rot, feed bugs, and fuel fires). The remaining 73% is left as growing stock. NO piece of ground has the ability to add that much growing stock year after year after year. At some point it no longer has the moisture, nutrients, or sunlight necessary to sustain that increasing amount of vegetation. It becomes susceptible to drought, insects, disease, and fire. This is known as 'carrying capacity', a concept that explains why a farmer can not feed a hundred steers on an acre of pasture, why a wildlife biologist can not sustain a 1000 deer on a section of land, or why the gardener does not plant tomatoes 3 inches apart. It is simple biology. This concept is not politically correct and is not one a politician wants to hear. To ignore the concept is to wear blinders or to keep the head in the sand. Until our politicians in both the Executive and Legislative Branches have the political gumption to put politics aside and base federal forest policy on biology, our federal forests will continue to decline. Though this is a biological given, I am not holding my breath. Politics (i.e., gaining power and getting re-elected) will ALWAYS trump biology.

I fully support this idea and encourage our government to STOP locking OUR public lands up. We have enough public land to share with all.

Motorized recreation is a legitimate use of our public lands

We must preserve & protect our historic sites for future generations so that those generations will know the story of how our country came to be. Future generations need to know the sacrifices our ancestors made so that they could have a better life & a great country to live. Plus, preserved battlefields & historic sites help revitalize local economies and create jobs by encouraging heritage tourism. The more historic land that is preserved, the longer visitors stay in a community and the more time they spend patronizing local businesses.

I agree! A focused effort on the most important lands is the best way to ensure effective conservation versus a scatter shot approach that is used now.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

I don't believe that ORV users are tearing up our land and clogging up our streams and making our wildlife extinct. Every person I know that rides wheelers or sleds are responsible people and are courteous to others. We do not need any more public land taken away from ORV users. There are more areas to hike then to ride a ORV. I hunt and pursue trophy mule deer so I know that there is by far more areas to get off your butt and hike and leave ORV trails open. NO MORE WILDERNESS!!!

I have to argue with comment #4 as it has no credibility. To say that people who ride sleds, waverunners, and ORV should be put in a high fence with a Mountain Dew dispenser so no one has to hear or see them is the dumbest thing I have read on my computer screen. I enjoy all forms of outdoors which include hiking and spending days up in the mountains with nothing but freeze dried food and a water purifier while I pursue trophy mule deer so to tell me that there are other ways to enjoy the outdoors other then on my sled or wheeler is obvious, I don't need a gasoline engine roaring between my legs either to enjoy the outdoors. I hike and scout for big bucks from July to the end of November and then I get on my sled and ride sleds from November to June. It amazes me how only a few want wilderness and no ORV and so many want to have more ORV and less wilderness. Further more sleds are not damaging to anything other then your day dreaming. I know this because I am involved in sledding. Just this past weekend I was up looking for deer where I also sled and guess what I seen on the mountains where I sled?????? nothing but green forage and wildflowers. Amazing how when the snow melts you can't see any tracks from sleds. So tell me how snowmobiles are damaging to our planet, and you can't bring up pollution cause I promise you that your daily commuter car makes thousands more of pollutants then my sleds or wheelers.

There is 900,000 sq miles of desert in the US western states. Currently less than 1/10 of 1 percent of that area is available for any type of OHV use in any form. The arguement that OHV use is making any significant impact on wildlife is like saying that one drop of chorine in a 100,000 gallon water tank makes the water unusable. The are some that would argue that any harm to wildlife no matter how small is unacceptable. This idea of "Zero Tolerance" if applied to any human activity would rule out everything, highway use, farming, mining, any type of military activity, any outdoor activity whatsoever. Sure there is some impact from any outdoor activity, whatever it is and there must be some limits to OHV use, however the reasonable use of our public lands for OHV recreation is just good public policy.

This is such a critical incentive for all farmers and ranchers across the country that are interested in conserving their properties for future generations. It maintains bipartisan support, a rare achievement in modern politics. Making these incentives permanent is critical for the future of private lands conservation.

I agree. Any vet with a disability rating from the VA can get the Access card for all public lands, free entrance and half off camping. My value my Access card as much as I do my GI Bill.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

The Civilian Conservation Corps was one of the most successful government agencies during the depression. The CCC built trails, visitor centers, amphitheaters, campgrounds, roads, and had a hand in about everything you see in a state and national park or forest. Millions of trees were planted by the CCC to combat soil erosion and reforest logged out areas. Corps members had opportunities to learn job skills and further their education. In an era of almost 10% unemployment and near 20% under-employment, a new CCC would provide jobs and skill training while attacking the maintenance backlog on our public lands. A new CCC could help our country deal with the effects of climate change and repair damaged range and forest lands.

Active management of recreational use works. With management (maps, kiosks, partnership agreements, adopt a trail, on the ground signing, etc) land managers increase capacity while decreasing impacts to natural resources. Involvement of federal land managers with local communities works. Community based FACA committees formed from a broad base of stakeholders can well serve as advisory councils to assist the land manager in critical planning and decision-making efforts. Asking for assistance and volunteer hours from local user groups and clubs can do wonders for the management of OUR lands for ALL users. Trail clean ups, trail maintenance and blocking off improper routes and bypasses are but a few of the things that volunteer time can be put to good use.

Have units embrace substantive volunteer programs. Utilize proven management principles such as the Recreational Opportunity Spectrum and ensure that all aspects of ROS are served. EDUCATE YOUR CHILDREN! Practice Tread Lightly! Follow the principle: Pack it in, pack it out with a little extra.

The federal land managing agencies serve a critical role in supplying a diverse range of recreational opportunity to the American public. Recreation is a key multiple use value. The federal agencies should seek to enhance recreational opportunities on lands that they manage. Training for local recreation program managers is essential, especially in the area of developing funding opportunities through private sector and federal grant programs such as the Yamaha OHV Access Initiative GRANT Program or the Recreational Trails Program at the federal/state level. Federal agencies can provide many tools and opportunities for all to enjoy OUR lands. One thing I have seen work well is a federal agency supply dumpsters for trail cleanup while local clubs and local users do the work by volunteering time.

Human access is not "damage". Most people do not and cannot access land through wilderness hiking.

LWCF has been a major source of political privilege for those who want to take over private property through acquisition and land use prohibitions. It should be abolished.

I agree with most of your statements but you need to broaden your description to natural resources agencies in all points and the introductory statements. Most state, regional and local natural resource agencies offer education programs to children and adults. Many of these agencies also manage natural areas and conduct a variety of educational activities on these areas.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Return to a Multiple Use philosophy. Before the great (?) environmental and preservational movements of the '70s, this worked best. We all shared the land with respect for those who recreated on it and for those who produced commodity resources from it. Commodity production creates wealth. If we don't create our commodity resources, we must import them, exporting our wealth in the process. It seems hard for urban America to grasp that land, whether public or private, is the larder from which we derive all our needs to maintain our quality of life, but this we must understand and respect. The chief obstacle now to Multiple Use is the fragmenting of our public lands into special use areas. The Federal Government should cease being intimidated by vocal minorities and return to a Multiple Use philosophy for the common good. Our political leaders can assist in this by de-politicizing our land management agencies. These are staffed by trained professionals that we have hired to manage our lands. Let them do their jobs. One tool that would help in these regards is to allow no more life-time appointments for Federal District judges. Far too often, with no accountability to hinder them, they follow their own agenda, with little regard to the impact their decisions have on those trying to produce raw materials and on the rural communities affected by their decisions. Another tool would be to rescind the Equal Access to Law consideration for all of the professional protesters who seek to inhibit any further meaningful development of our public lands. Our public land management agencies must pay these court costs out of their own budgets. This seriously erodes their ability to meet their more important obligations. A third tool is to amend the NEPA and ESA laws so that only those appeals of public land management programs by folks who have standing and credibility, and whose appeals have substance, will be considered by the agencies. This would do much to inhibit the myriad of appeals filed by bored college students with nothing better to do on Saturday nights. Finally, with regard to public lands conservation, we need no more. We have National Parks, National Monuments, Wilderness Areas, Wildlife Management Areas, and Areas of Critical Environmental Concern, to name the most common. Enough is enough! It is time we start managing our public lands in a more realistic, responsible, and mature manner, and bring an end to the public land wars of the PAST THREE DECADES. Montana

your incorrect best example is yellowstone national park. Snowmobile started being used when there was no wolves and 400 bison. Today there are many packs of wolves and over 6,000 bison. OHV isn't anything different than your Subaru driving down a dirt road. The problem is extreme environmentalist breeding hate towards any user group that doesn't recreate the way they do. The current roads need to remain open for the enjoyment of the majority of people using public lands. With the sierra club having less than a million members and atv sale reaching close to 10 million it is clear to see what the American people want.

In order to insure individual user's access to their expectations without conflict, there needs to be carefully crafted user designation applied to public lands. For example, a non-motorized user's expectation of solitude and peaceful exploration can not be realized if motorized use is allowed in the same area. These designations need to be located on front country as well as back country. Non-motorized users should not have to travel all the way to a Wilderness to experience quiet solitude, free from noisy distractions.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Saving our battlefields helps keep alive the memories of those who fought and died there. It allows us to touch a place where our history was created. Additionally, they are places where families can visit economically which in-turn helps our communities when visitors buy fuel, meals, hotels, etc. These are positive, tangible benefits for everyone.

As an elected municipality official of Washington Township in Franklin County, Pennsylvania I strongly support Civil War battlefield preservation. I would encourage all Municipality, County, State and Federal elected officials to take a strong stand to protect and preserve our heritage. Battlefields are our outdoor classrooms for our and future generations. They allow educators and visitors to walk in the footsteps of our Civil War heroes and ancestors while experiencing the landscape much as it was during the battle. Protection of America's Civil War battlefields as well as protecting areas where smaller and important battles have taken place, but not yet recognized will leave a lasting legacy of our nation's commitment to preservation, and education. I am very proud that Washington Township Supervisors of Franklin County, Pennsylvania has taken the lead to work with The Battle of Monterey Pass Association to raise funds to purchase a plot of land to monument Lee's retreat from Gettysburg. Please visit our web sites to learn more. { Link }

3. What works – We have hundreds of stories and letters acknowledging some of the “life changing” experiences that take place in outdoor education. Here is one of many stories pertinent to environmental stewardship. a. A group of students attended a 5-day backpacking program in Yosemite National Park and at the conclusion of their program they were so inspired by their environmental stewardship calling, they returned to their communities and began a crusade to educate their peers and local residents by providing them with alternative on saving on the cost of electricity, within a short period of time, they reported a total of 200,000 pounds of carbon as a result of a program they have launched called the "pay it forward" project. b. A Salvation Army group of youth based out of Los Angeles and grant funded for a 3-part series of outdoor education combined with leadership, service learning and environmental stewardship taught these “at risk youth” and provided them with the tools necessary from the “Leave No Trace Behind”, what they can do to contribute in their communities, reconnect with the outdoors and understand the importance of conservation. This particular group's last program was in the wilderness backpacking in the San Jacinto Mountains. Upon their return, they exchanged all paper and styrofoam eating/drinking utensils and now bring in their own washable eating utensils, maybe a small contribution but monumental to this group of youth.

I disagree with this idea entirely. There are reasons we have environmental regulations - it's called the Tragedy of the Commons. While reform is a good idea, I think it also needs to be well-thought out. And as for your statement that we don't need land conservation anymore, I wholeheartedly disagree. As the populations of our cities and towns increase, we will need more public land to recreate on/ filter our water and air/produce our timber/protect displaced wildlife/provide ecosystem services. Many places are already overcrowded as it is - even wilderness areas! I can't even get a permit during certain peak times.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

I second this idea. Not only does the enhanced tax deduction make it easier for landowners to work with land trusts, it also enables conservation organizations to keep on doing good work to protect outdoor spaces. Local land trusts provide services to communities by preserving and enhancing water quality, water quantity, wildlife habitat, recreational lands, agricultural lands, open space and scenic vistas. In rural areas, these amenities attract visitors and tourists and bring money to local businesses. It's all connected.

Create programs within Grade and High Schools to immerse children into learning how to care for the public lands and water. The knowledge they take back with them to their classrooms will be invaluable.

Great idea. Yellowstone is a perfect example where the wolf was reintroduced.

Impact studies are the only way land, water, and wildlife will remain sustainable. We are ALL special interests when it comes to wanting a voice for how our Federal, Public, and Private lands are put to use. Sadly, money has been a huge factor. That has to stop. The gulf was the victim in that battle. Please continue to have scientists and conservationists maintain a watchful eye over all the lands. Once they are gone....they are gone forever.

Local residents and groups have a keen eye for watching over nearby Federal, State, and Local lands. Although they may not have the expertise, they have to live with the consequences. So if the land, water, and other natural resources are exploited, they are the ones who suffer. Short sighted profits, land development, and mining operations driven by greed and profit are not viable options anymore. All of our resources are becoming scarce and polluted. I wish we could trust Congress and Administrations, to "do the right thing" but money talks too loudly. Big media backed by our Supreme Court's "human" corporations will distort whatever message is delivered. If this process continues, America has lost its heart and soul - its waters and lands. Open the dialogue for "new" development of any sort to local people's vote as to whether or not they want wells drilled, and water exposed to pollution. As for land subdivision, good luck with that one - We need to build UP not OUT. Once the land and water is GONE, it's GONE.

This is a great idea, but transparency is needed to determine you don't get any wolves in sheeps clothing. As long as the sites are fact checked as to whether they are in the business of protecting instead of exploiting - I'm all for this.

This is merely a suggestion which I am sure has been proposed before and perhaps withdrawn. While visiting Sedona several balloons went over the area, and I could hear the rider's excitement at seeing wild places without noise, impact on that trails, or frightening the wildlife. I'm just posing this idea....maybe it will fly?

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

To repeat what previous posters have said: 1. Battlefield preservation offers tangible links with the past. 2. Battlefield preservation offers needed green spaces in which people are able to exercise through walking, jogging, biking, and hiking. 3. These green spaces are needed barriers to prevent erosion, pollution, and increase oxygen levels. These spaces are also preserves for wildlife, some of which are endangered species and have fewer places to go in a time of increasing suburbanization and urbanization. 4. Preserved battlefields promote heritage tourism which in turn promotes the economic health of many communities in an era of an increasingly service driven economy. 5. These battlefields serve as some of the best spaces to learn about the best and worst in humanity as interpretation allows people to understand slavery and its downfall, patriotism, nationalism, bravery, disloyalty, savagery, horror, and the unfinished work of the post-Civil War Amendments to affirm and solidify the right of all Americans in being treated equally under the law.

Civil War Battlefields were paid for with American blood and are sacred places. We need to be more diligent in preserving and caring for them.

ATV owners can install after market mufflers in addition to the stock muffler on an ATV. Manufacturers could solve a majority of the sound issue by manufacturing much quieter ATV's. There is no excuse for them to let this ongoing issue continue.

Bottom line. There is only one Gettysburg. There are many casinos. Putting it 10 miles down the highway will still supply jobs to the region and allow for those who wish to gamble and see the park to do so. But common sense says that the mix of gambling and history within such a close proximity are a bad mix. Protect the military park by having a reasonable buffer for "adult-only" activities to provide a family-friendly atmosphere. This would be truly sensible planning.

By all means this would be a positive step in reconnecting people to Americas Great Outdoors. It is not done nearly enough in my opinion. Most of all current living cultures such as Native Americans and even newly discovered living cultures such as Gladesmen Culture should be portrayed in a positive and uplifting manner. Often nowadays man within a natural landscape is portrayed in a negative manner by many agenda driven entities to suit their myopic narrow set of goals. That breeds hard feelings and contempt towards those entities and their goals. These backlashes can set conservation back years in attaining justifiable goals. Cultural respect and acknowledgement may well be the missing link in connecting Americans to Americas Great Outdoors. Google Gladesmen Culture to find out more.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Everyone should also know that in order for a highway to be designated the local elected officials with authority over the highway must give their authority to the Scenic Highway oversight group (Corridor Mg't. Entity) or whatever other name they use and adopt the Scenic Highway - Corridor Management Plan - for the highway segment being designated. That is how the Florida program functioned the last time I checked. This looks like a good idea until the bait of Federally funded amenities (boardwalks, scenic overlooks etc.) is swallowed and then the highway is reeled in under the control of the Scenic Highway group in charge. Elected officials in Florida have de-designated at least one National Scenic Byway after 8+ years in development after finding out they were having their authority removed. Suggestion - Be much more up front with elected officials in the beginning of the process and treat regular citizens that become involved with much more respect than what happened on the Tamiami Trail in So. Florida.

Federal and State agencies that provide services (e.g. primitive - RV camping) in locales where those same services are provided by private businesses need to be much more sensitive in seeing to it that their fee structure does not undercut a private business's ability to at least compete with them on a level playing field. I have been witnessing for years a 2 generation family owned small campground in So. Fla. being financially devastated by a Federal agency's regulatory actions and camping operations at the Big Cypress National Preserve. NPS's fee structure is either free or well below cost. How would anyone here deal with that scenario? People need to understand receiving services for free or at below cost from a governmental entity can have some very financially destructive side effects upon their fellow citizens. I do agree that parking one's vehicle along side a road within public land and going on a hike should be not necessarily (free) but knowingly subsidized by other revenue generators so that everyone possible can experience nature thus drawing them possibly into supporting the place they're in or another similar place someday. Some here are concerned about overuse but many of the public feel that if they are taxed to pay for something called "public land" they should be entitled to enter that land. Without solid justification, limiting visitation should not be considered in my opinion.

Federal, Records of Decisions pertaining to National Park Service management plans need to allow adaptive management (am) to be applicable throughout entire ROD's. Currently we are being told am is only applicable to whatever specific topic is near the mention of am in an ROD's text. This situation is preventing folks who are usually diametrically opposed who are wanting to come together on issues from doing so. We are also being told by NPS that the NEPA process causes this. If this is accurate than NEPA should be modified to allow carte blanche use of adaptive management throughout signed ROD's.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Florida and Collier County, Florida in particular is doing a great job of promoting youth hunting, fishing and conservation. At the last minute Collier County actually stopped a plan to turn 2500 acres of conservation land scheduled for only passive use into a hunting area with the help of knowledgeable volunteers, the State wildlife agency and their County Commissioners. It saved the County from having to pay professional USDA hunters to come in and kill feral hogs considered an invasive species there. The whole operation from beginning to end only took a month or so. The Future of Hunting in Florida program is a whopping success with large landowners with large game populations and volunteer hunting mentors for the youth flocking to participate. States and Counties are more appropriate for these type programs though since the Federal government takes years to implement any projects and would inevitably have to overcome HSUS or PETA protests over programs such as these. The other problems would be Federal strings on the money.

Granted our human existence depends to some degree on a healthy environment. In no way though does having healthy environments depend upon the exclusion of human access to them.

Having worked for the USFS for fifteen years in a Timber Department, I can assure you that this idea has been implemented for decades. Trees are climbed each year (when there is a good crop) and the cones are picked and then cataloged as to species, seed zone and elevation, then shipped to the various nurseries where they are stored under exacting conditions. When planting stock is needed, a request is placed to the nursery and the seed planted for the seedlings will consist of the collections from that zone and elevation. In this way, the newly planted seedlings will be acclimated to the site where they are to be grown. There are exceptions - these are generally research projects and are of very small scale and are carefully watched. I've got to tell you - there are few greater feelings than being at the top of a 120ft Sugar Pine and just looking around while you rest up from the climb before you start actually picking the cones. I have been up hundreds of trees through the years, and collecting cones is one of the most enjoyable things I did while in the FS. Sure beats busting your ass planning a quality timber sale only to have a bunch of hypocrites that do not in any way understand the dynamics of the forest sue in order to stop it so they can extort money out of an ill informed public.

Here is where the environmental communities hypocrisy is abundantly clear. Green folks want us off of oil but cry Crocodile tears when it begins to happen. Someone needs to grow up. We will never have our cake and eat it too. Life forms at ground level will adapt although birds may have a few more problems adapting but will over time. In fact cantilevered nesting platforms for threatened bird species might provide environmental mitigation for the windmills.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

I did try to submit an idea on a different topic but the site did not accept it. The administrator said it was a site glitch and to try again. I may at some point but after wasting an hour and losing it I am shy to have a repeat of that. Upon rereading the idea I still see that DOI could determine the priority level and/or the Secretary would decide the targeted lands - that is a lot more power. Easements are not free either and the taxpayer unknowingly foots the bill for paying the landowner. Easements paid for with public funds are not but should be opened to public access proportionally to the easement payments relationship to gross value of the property. I must also admit that I do not accept all of the hoopla over bio-diversity and pending catastrophies predicted by folks like E.O. Wilson and his associates. I believe those involved are in it for money and control of others and I mean total control which I also believe will lead to a revolt in America. The tales of woe from loggers, ranchers and those desiring meaningful access to psuedo-public lands in the West tell that story. Private property rights and many freedoms guaranteed by the Constitution have been infringed upon by those seeking to supposedly protect our habitats. Most citizens outside these groups are not believing a word of that anymore. There is a backlash building within this Nation to what has been and is happening and I hope I am not here when it unloads.

I had to vote to demote this idea mainly because the author could not just promote the idea but was compelled to criticize other users (horses,OHV's). To me that exposes the author as being simply another selfish special interest with no concerns for anyone but himself and his way of having a good time. If this idea had not included negative remarks against other Americans it would have gotten a promote vote from me even though I do not use mountain bikes.

I may have possibly seen that map of which you speak. My main impressions of The Wildlands Project (TWP) came from the Special Issue of Earth First totally devoted to TWP. The land management strategy was written by a fellow named Reed F. Noss or his alias "Diamondback". His out of the box extremism gets unleashed under his alias Diamondback. TWP is without a doubt one of the most anti-human manifestos in print. The map mentioned is small potatoes compared to the TWP copy I have. The black helicopters are not on their way - they have landed in the Special Edition of Earth First.

I think the 100ft. x 4 mile easement is about 48 acres. One should check and see what 48 acres of land in LaHabra, Ca. is worth. If other property in the vicinity goes for around \$20,000 an acre - the \$1,000,000 fee is reasonable. Union Pacific is a private business that apparently owns this property if I am understanding this correctly. Private property owners rarely give away their land. I feel bad to demote but the Constitution is what it is and serves a very important purpose in America.

I thought NEPA was instituted to improve management in general and provide an avenue for input from citizens. NEPA is a somewhat cumbersome and expensive protocol to work within. Once that process is completed it seems as though NPS or other Federal agencies should have some leeway as to how a plan is implemented based upon research results accrued over nearly a decade. Otherwise why do research when the knowledge gained cannot be applied without a 2-3 year million dollar plus NEPA re-run.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

I went to one listening session that was held by the Bush administration. It was full of movers and shakers from the Environmental groups and State and Federal agency officials. They were taken aback quite a bit when they heard from a mere citizen (me). I think we may be misunderstanding who they want to listen to at a listening session. They very possibly may want to hear from bureaucrats and NGO's so as to provide justification for their intentionally incorrect assumption that these preservation agenda driven folks are speaking for everyone else. Then our government uses the record of listening sessions as a foundation to justify the American Outdoor Initiative as developed is supported by all. My suggestion is to keep ones ears open and to the ground (and the Federal Register) to find out when and where these sessions will happen. Attend them and provide a loud voice that conveys your message.

If one pays all should pay to create and maintain the infrastructure required for their play. All play has impact.

In a previous comment I made the concern was about living human cultural community members with strong association with their traditional landscapes being accommodated by land managers so as to sustain the old cultures still remaining in America. I believe this would greatly aid in the acceptance of the Great American Outdoor Initiative. Failing to do so will increase opposition and litigation costs of programs, especially when they do not take a Federal actions impact upon cultural resources and cultures into account during the embrionic stages of planning. That is the law and failure to do so will open the door for ESA style lawsuits that supply plaintiffs with a refund at everyones expense. It is cheaper to do a job correctly the 1st time and have an efficient program.

In case anyone has been subjected to a trail plan lately severely lacking in reasonable ORV access do a little calculation to determine how many miles of trails per square mile were authorized. The Wildlands Project or Network desires no more than 1/2 mile per square mile which is basically a closure for all intents and purposes wherever it is implemented. One area of the US had 22,000 miles of trails in about 900 square miles. Those trails had a total net effect to only 1 1/8% of the almost 600,000 acres involved. NPS by using the TWP formula reduced them to 400 miles which left less than 1/100th of 1% of the area for ORV's. It wasn't technically a closure but it sure as hell felt like one to those effected. TWP is real enough to have folks thinking revolt and doing civil disobedience (Hooray Kane County Utah) etc. Think about it - African Americans had to light up a few major cities to get the attention they sought.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

In Florida first the bicyclists had a strip paved for them all around the approx. 180 mile levee around Lake Okechobbee, then hikers came along and demanded a soft grass strip for their tender feet - at a combined cost of \$28,000,000 dollars to the taxpayer. I ask you - where does the waste of money stop for those who don't chip in but enjoy a free socialist ride off the labor of others. Those who canoe in Florida do not want to pay for a boat sticker as all motorized boats do yet they want specially designed and built canoe ramps. Who do you all think you are - the chosen ones. So called passive use sure as heck is not economically passive. I recommend that so called passive users of our American Great Outdoors begin to pay for what they get and stop being parasites as they currently are from what I've seen. The expenses caused by construction of designated trails is driven by those out to ban the ORV activities. I have never seen ORV or most consumptive users ask the gov't. for anything where I come from - So. Fla. Most if not all of us would prefer the gov't., outsiders and carpetbagging enviro-extremists to just leave us alone. As screwed up as our government is so far they have not caved completely to the enviro-extremists and use their extremism to create blue collar jobs for many that wind up increasing man's carbon footprint. Way to go environmental community and freeloaders.

In pursuit of goals adopted by the Americas Great Outdoors Initiative and to Reconnect Americans with the Great Outdoors, managers of this process should acknowledge and be sensitive especially to all living cultural communities and never support or engage in the removal of (50 year +) old objects (vehicles, shacks, hunt camps, barbed wire fences etc.) still out on the land that easily can evoke emotional impact to an observer that may provide an impetus for them to protect the land or become interested in our diverse heritage. One sight I've seen in a Cypress swamp was amazing and an impetus to my becoming interested in my own heritage and cultural identity associated with the swamp I was in. It was a long run of barbed wire that must have been nailed to the trees 5 or 6 decades ago. I saw trees that were 8 inches in diameter 4 feet off the ground and the wire was running right through the center of the trunk from tree to tree. One would also think that nailing into a tree would harm it but apparently not Cypress trees. Now maybe I am just easily impacted but I was impacted in more than one way by that observation. Shortly after I was culturally sensitized by that and a couple of other experiences I was equally upset to see Students for Conservation of America(SCA) removing old fencelines from within the swamps under the direction of an NPS superintendent that considered them old junk. Intergration of cultural sensitivity into Americas Great Outdoors via an acknowledged intent to respect ethnographic resources and by signage, brochures or other media would increase the AGO project's reach and build loyal support.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

It is always good to be supplied accurate statistics that are understandable by persons of reasonable intellectual capacity. The problem with the data at the link provided by comment 11 is that the actual data gathered was manipulated by weighting in many directions. This weighting process allows those who controlled this study to also control the results of the study. Dropping all the results gathered in the South Appalachian focused study (Version 12 of a 13 version study) was very regrettable. Many of the categories of recreation reported upon overlap heavily and unless the reader of this study has access to the exact questions asked of the interviewees one is not capable of ascertaining the level of bias if any built into the study and its results. People may hike but what they love the most is camping. A person that uses an ATV might only use it to facilitate hunting and game removal post hunt. Depending how and what questions were presented to participants drastically impacts the results. Considering the minimal info available at this link I would recommend the good citizens taking the time to participate here putting little faith in this particular study. It would also be nice to be more precisely directed to the stats referred to by the author of this reasonable and positive idea to attain goals of the Great American Outdoors Initiative. We all must resist allowing personal bias, bigotry or prejudice to cause limitations in our ability of hearing what others are trying to say. I have caught myself in both ends of that spectrum on occasion. Seeing the other persons side is difficult but we must pry our minds open sometimes to really hear others.

It probably died due to the will of local people overpowering a minority group promoting it. Sounds like a very nice trail the way it is. This glass should possibly be considered half or more full.

Looks like y'all have succeeded at running off the regulars who have much disdain for OHV activity. The ideas here are balanced and caring making it hard to understand the sincere regulars avoiding commenting on them.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Many very serious albeit very (hidden)subtle problems are associated with the intermingling of environmental priorities within agencies who's name is indicative of a specific priority such as Transportation. A few worth mentioning here are that dollars collected from motorists through Federal gasoline taxes thought to be for improving Transportation are diverted into many projects having nothing to do with improving the efficiency or maintenance of our Nations transportation system and are spent on items such State Scenic Highway Programs which morph as quickly as their proponents can cause it into Federal scenic Byway programs. The sales pitch to sell these programs to an unsuspecting public are all of the freebies that come with the program (e.g. boardwalks, government visitor centers, wildlife underpasses etc. etc.) that contribute not one iota to the efficiency of getting people or goods from point A to point B. In fact these programs prohibit any of the dollars appropriated from motorist contributed tax dollars from even being spent on pre-existing necessary road repairs. If this isn't enough to bring question to programs such as these here is what happened on one Florida highway designated as a National Scenic Byway due the State's own Program Manual. The manual specified that authority over decision making on that segment of the highway was slated to be taken away from local elected officials and transferred to a group mostly comprised of Federal and State land managers along the highway. This was one of the State mandates controlling their program. Luckily in Florida when local elected officials found out 7 or 8 years late that this theft of their authority was imminent they quickly demanded that both the State and Federal designation be removed from the Tamiami Trail in South Florida. Elected officials were totally unaware of the onerous implications of such a nice sounding program they had supported years before. In the end the unimpeachable grassroots opinion was to retain the elected officials control rather than give it to a bunch of unelected folks in a back room called a Corridor Mg't. Entity (CME) with only environmental goals and looking to spend motorist contributed transportation dollars to attain them. Protecting the environment and bio-diversity is worthwhile but the funds to do that should be raised by up front programs rather than programs containing issues that are subtle to the point of being invisible to average citizens much less elected officials. In this particular locale attaining environmental initiatives was set back decades by the exposure of this programs real intentions in my opinion. From my experience with this intermingling of priorities I have witnessed it causing internal conflict at many levels within Departments of Transportation. What I have seen is that most folks go to work in a Transportation Dept's. to build roads not boardwalks and visitor centers. That is very sad. I don't know how to put a link here but I would suggest participants to google the following topics to gain a better understanding what drives the idea here: The last 2 do not agree with the 1st 3 Agenda 21 Rio Summit The Wildlands Project Freedom 21 Sovereignty International Environmental Perspectives Inc.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Most of my reading centers on land management issues and I don't doubt there are many other anti-human manifestos out there. I choose to care about Noss's venom because it impacts people I care about. I am not out to fix a broken world just a few areas close to home. I do believe it is justifiable to refer to Reed F. Noss as anti-human in view of the following quotes attributable to him. These quotes come from an article titled "The Ecological Effects of Roads" he authored using his alias "Diamondback". "..... the net effect of all roads is nothing short of catastrophic."; in reference to Okefenokee Swamp "...the area is riddled with roads and swarming with gun toting 'Crackers' and their hounds."; "... no new roads should be built and most existing roads - especially on public lands - should be closed and obliterated."; "....nor can we expect the slothful, ignorant populace to give up what they see as the benefits of roads." (easy access to recreational areas). The most telling Reed F. Noss/Diamondback quote "...the collective needs of non-human species must take precedence over the needs and desires of humans...." verifies to my satisfaction that he is most certainly anti-human and a threat to human life everywhere. As far as the black helicopters go, I believe my likening them facetiously to TWP in my 1st post here has been misinterpreted by Mr. Sutherland who seems to know enough about TWP, Biospheres, Bio-Diversity Treaty etc. to be one of their sponsors and ongoing promoters. I do agree at this point that TWP has no regulatory authority but on the other hand those students whose brains have been washed by the TWP philosophy since it was born have infiltrated every land management entity having anything to do with America's Great Outdoors and instituting TWP's principles if not fought vigorously by those who are aware of them.

My experience with Wilderness in So. Fla. has lead me to believe serious harm can be done to natural areas by this designation. The lack of feasible access to Wilderness areas prevents public access except on foot and severely limits agency access for land management activities. The public are the eyes and ears of the environment and without them underfunded agencies don't have a chance of knowing what is taking place within the area as far as illegal activity goes. The lack of rapid access a Wilderness affords to agencies is very detrimental to fire supression as well as myriad other mg't. actions required. Considering that all the areas that truly met Wilderness criteria were designated many years ago, nowadays a new classification should be developed that would authorize off road vehicular access on limited prescribed multi-use trails for the public and land managers. That method would limit outlaw activities. Of course I'm speaking of large, not small land masses. One I know of now being considered as "W" is 147,000 acres. Without meaningful access this piece of land will have next to NO enforcement within its vast area.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

One can demote this idea all day long but if the shoe fits the Feds need to wear them. On the other hand local folks with the most at stake must begin demanding exactly what they want in their comments to management plans - no more whining about how it used to be. That means when necessary the agencies must be supplied detailed maps of where desired trails should be located to facilitate hunting, fishing, OHV's, hiking etc. General statements to management plans do not tell agencies what they are looking for. The extremists know exactly how to work the comment system with precise comments demanding EXACTLY what they want and where they want it - LOCALS must do the same. Oh one more thing - don't waste time fighting the junk BS science citations touted by enviros since honest agency folks know it is BS. What the agencies can't do is give you anything you don't ask for specifically in comments because they can't prove you want it if it is not in their legal record of the NEPA process. Your comments are part of that record. We are doing this in Florida and it works. Good Luck.

One large source of the existing skepticism of myself and others is from witnessing the "precautionary principle" being used as some sort of scientific fact when it is exactly the opposite - the lack of facts. I have seen it used in many instances only to rid wild landscapes of many of the folks who actually fought to have those areas protected in the 1st place. In my mind the psuedo scientists that promoted those actions using spun citation sound-bytes are criminals of the highest order. Any education of impressionable youngsters must be balanced and speak of those who built this Nation utilizing its resources to do so, in a respectful tone at all times. If not the education is nothing more than brain washing propoganda. I did travel to the links above and noticed more of the sky is falling concerns over bio-d. I high school we learned of the Malthus theory claiming that we would all starve because the planet could not feed all that would inhabit the planet soon. In the meantime many very efficient methods of food production were developed so that we now have an overabundance of production capacity. Now getting it to those in need and starving is another problem. We could go on a road building campaign worldwide but Oh MY God that would fragment habitat and probably be prevented by those concerned about bio-d. Balance is what is needed in accessing Americas Great Outdoors and most other issues but bio-d promoters do not want any of that from where I sit. Balance and mutual acceptance of diverse desires could yield REAL hope. It is also maybe the most illusive of goals.

One should be sure to include all land management agencies inanimate objects such as fire fighting equipment, ranger vehicles and their guns, helicopters to patrol the vast Federal holdings etc. etc. Yes, let's keep all that bad anthropocentric junk out. Then the pot growers, poachers, illegal aliens and other outlaws can have the solitude, peace and quiet I am sure they long for. Really good idea. LOL

Perfect alignment with nature brings us full circle to "Survival of the Fittest". Is the author up for that?

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Possibly the author could ponder the concept of people accepting one another rather than supporting the separation of visitors of different persuasions which prevents them from ever understanding each others desires and different physical abilities. Merely a thought to promote everyone being able to at least see all of the wonderful sights our public lands hold in store for us all.

Sadly but truly these animals are regarded probably as invasive exotics. The habitat they use and consume may be caused to become unsuitable for many native species by the horses. That is probably why the government thinks they are doing the right thing. Penning and auctioning them is better than putting them down - the cheapest option. One might want to consider the glass half full and thank the Feds for not simply killing them and/or turning them into dog food.

SCORP data in Florida failed miserably to correctly guide the US Army Corp of Engineers(USACOE) with their development the Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan (CERP)/Master Recreation Plan (MRP). CERP is the \$20,000,000,000 Billion dollar plan to supposedly fix the Everglades or as some claim create a lucrative jobs program. Hopefully the science data for CERP is more accurate and timely than the SCORP data was. I surely hope SCORP data is of higher quality in other areas of the nation than it is in Florida. They need to learn to include active land use not only passive. Excluding active use breeds opposition. Luckily Florida's Gladesmen cultural community members came to the rescue advising them as to the SCORP data integrity defects and how to get in compliance with the Nat Historic Preservation Act as amended 2000 and avoid possible lawsuits. The Corps taking that advise to heart lead to them seeking out more accurate recreation data and conducting a comprehensive ethnographic survey of the Gladesmen Culture and Traditional Cultural Properties related to them in the entire CERP region including at least 14 counties of So. Florida. This is an excellent example of how culture and a governmental entity can respectfully cooperate to address land management issues and at the same time build a coalition of support rather than being the impetus for opposition. I have assumed here that SCORP is a reference to a State's, Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP). Possibly government employees writing here could explain acronyms used here for the benefit of all. Maybe even include the name of the government agency one is employed by if that is the case.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

So mad over so little. Just so you know - I do not carry a gun on my person and do not possess a concealed weapons permit although one can in Florida. I am ignorant in the sense that I have not allowed the cries of eminent catastrophe on all environmental fronts to totally permeate my entire thought process. I apologize to you and others if you don't appreciate my attempts to bring balance or a different perspective (sometimes facetious) to this site. My belief is that in order to improve the environment it will take support from more than those with an extreme eco-centric viewpoint. Being insensitive to the needs and desires of fellow humans breeds opposition to everything that extreme Gaia worshipers desire. Oh by the way the Feds and States have given themselves authority now to declare anything they want to be FERAL. In FL the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission's "Invasive Species Working Group" handles that with 8 other State agencies. They have declared wild hogs as feral. They have been here as long as the horses. Fla's wild hogs are being eradicated by increased hunting opportunity with no size limits and professional trappers that catch them and sell them to hunting leases etc. We have fought the State on this with only minor victories.

Not all environmentalists are or were from large cities and not all environmentalists are against ranching. Sustainable ranching and farming and recreation, using practices that respect the land, water, and other inhabitants of the land are positives for the earth and for the ranchers. Once the bottom line includes more than personal financial gain, things can improve - including long term impacts to the land and the environment in the ranchers' bottom line, changing how ranchers produce their meat in short term for the long term benefit of the land and the environment is a win-win prospect, but one which requires vision.

America's fisheries are not producing fish and fishing opportunities at a rate that is needed to offset development pressures and human needs. There is an initiative that is already started that has shown it can improve fisheries habitat and is "shovel" ready to get fully to work, the National Fish Habitat Action Plan (NFHAP). This voluntary plan is bringing together broad groups of stakeholders to protect intact, rehabilitate degraded, and improve engineered fisheries habitat. The plan is at the edge of full development and only needs to the Administration to: 1) actively support passage of the National Fish Habitat Conservation Act (current support is on the record, but has not been actively pushing passage); 2) put in place an Executive Order that encourages all Federal agencies to participate in NFHAP; and 3) consider NFHAP needs when proposing budgets for enactment by the Congress. This plan has a broad fish habitat assessment system in development that will provide insights into habitat priorities and allow the measure of success of plan projects. It has an administrative structure ready to go and has a fully science and data backbone. It just needs to be formalized with Congressional action and provide some federal funding to allow for the operation of the plan and to attract new partner and foundation funding. The time is now for administration action on this plan that is ready to move fisheries habitat forward that will provide new outdoor opportunities for America.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Congress authorized the creation of a National Trails System in 1968. Since then 11 National Scenic Trails and 19 National Historic Trails have been authorized spanning more than 50,000 miles through 49 states. They touch or go through 100 of the metropolitan areas with 50,000 or more people. These trails are managed through innovative public/private partnerships that rely essentially on the contributions of citizen stewards organized by nonprofit trail organizations. These trails involve all of the Federal land managing agencies and numerous State and local park, recreation, and resource agencies. However, after more than 40 years only one of these 30 trails (the Appalachian National Scenic Trail) is fully open for Americans to use, appreciate and enjoy. We need to hasten the work to complete all of these trails for public benefit by providing more operating funding to the Federal agencies that administer and manage them. We also need substantial annual appropriations from the Land & Water Conservation Fund to purchase land from willing sellers to close the many gaps in the National Scenic Trails and protect critical historic, cultural, and natural resources along the National Historic Trails. Finally, we need to support and assist the nonprofit organizations that are recruiting and training the citizen volunteers that build, protect, interpret, and sustain these trails. In short, we need to complete the National Scenic and Historic Trails as corridors that link together the many parks, wildlife refuges, conservation areas, wildernesses, preserves, and historic landmarks into a network of "green infrastructure" that spans across America.

Full, guaranteed annual appropriation of at least \$900 million from the Land & Water Conservation Fund is absolutely essential to enable long-standing Federal projects, such as the 30 Congressionally authorized National Scenic and Historic Trails, to be completed and fully opened for use, enjoyment, and learning by Americans and our visitors from throughout the world. With the great increase in land values since the 1960s, when the Land & Water Conservation Fund was authorized by Congress, the annual appropriation from the Fund should be increased to at least \$3 billion to maintain the buying power that the authorized \$900 million had then. Preservation and restoration of our natural, cultural, and historical resources by local, State, and Federal governments in partnership with private land trusts and other nonprofit organizations is one of the most magnificent manifestations of American democracy and our culture as a Nation. Our investment in preservation and sensitive stewardship of these lands, waters, and resources will ultimately save our Nation from collapse. Parks, trails, wildlife preserves, conservation lands, etc. are not just nice amenities to enhance our communities. Rather they are critical elements of the "green infrastructure" that sustains our lives and our livelihood. The Land & Water Conservation Fund fully funded and assertively and strategically used is one of our most essential tools for sustaining and enhancing our life sustaining "green infrastructure."

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

I agree, that each area should be looked at by the local forest managers, to designate fragile areas, protecting our environment, with the local knowledge and skill that they have. There is no better manager than one on the ground, not directing from afar and in general terms. Some areas should allow for more freedom, like his "National Protection areas", while others may need the lock down of a Wilderness Area. Could some trails be placed within a corridor, rerouting around protected or environmentally sensitive areas, allowing access to all Americans the Great Outdoors that are currently locked up? As a motorized recreator, I am offended in the extreme to see other motorized users exercise the opposite of Leave No Trace. I too enjoy the outdoors and the relationships it builds. I do invest my time in volunteer work (Way more than just 50 hours) to preserve our public lands. The idea of special restrictions for use of special areas that are currently locked up in Wilderness would be welcomed. Prior to the Wilderness area locking up the trails in my area, volunteer MOTORCYCLE groups did 95% of all trail maintenance on this patch of 300miles of trail. Since then, we can't, and those trails mostly remain closed to everyone, just by the lack of USFS manpower/dollars and volunteers willing to maintain them under the current restrictions.. Mr Barnes may not agree, but limited traffic of motorcycles, has as much impact as Mountain Bikes and far, far less than any level of Horse Traffic (which is currently allowed in most Wilderness Areas). So if the exception with extra training for Bicycles is allowed, lets talk about responsible motorcycle use. Hey, the motorcyclists could open up the Great Outdoors for all Americans in no time.

I've been a Texas Master Naturalist for almost four years and enjoy it more each year. The program will provide the ideal model for training and developing a nationwide corps or highly motivated conservationists and educators. Jump on this bandwagon, it is truly worth it!

Nationwide easements also include buried utilities such as gas pipelines and fiber optic lines. Both offer long corridors that are so hard to put together from scratch for trail development.

Thank you ELK for promoting the importance of the outdoors for kids.

More ELK more often more needs met.

A win-win for America. Preserving civil war battlefields is a win for the environment, and a win for our citizens who cherish our rich history. As we approach the 150th year anniversary of the conflict we also approach the last chance we have in many cases to preserve the land that witnessed the bravery and sacrifice of those who fought during the civil war. Strategies and tactics used during the war are fascinating and nothing compares to actually walking the fields and seeing the terrain that these soldiers fought over. Preserving these fields also provides open space, and a positive return on investment for those communities that benefit from the tourists that visit those sites. Lets preserve more battlefield land, and invest in interpretative signage so as to pass on to future generations the rich history of our Country.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

I often despair of convincing adults, especially politicians and public officials as well as business interests, of the need to protect our environment and to concentrate more on local (rooftop) power generation. HOWEVER, kids are blank slates. Take as many kids as you can into the outdoors and just let them enjoy it. The Sierra Club's Inner City Outings is one such successful endeavor. Kudos.

The Forest Service is doing a far better job of managing the forests now than 40 years ago, with a real appreciation for the multiple resources of the forest and an understanding of the effects of different management actions. Their field staff includes diverse expertise far beyond silviculture and logging, including wildlife and fish biology, watershed management, and soil science. I've been seeing the results in project proposals and environmental documents over the past 10 years.

Wilderness is for everybody. My wife and I are in our 60s, and we don't hike as far as we once did, but we still seek out wilderness areas where no motorized or mechanical vehicles are allowed. We share the trail with visitors of all ages, even down to 1 or 2 years old. We are happy to leave the more remote areas to younger visitors. We were young once and we treasure our memories of those wild mountains. Tomorrow's young people will want them, too.

Both my children participated in the ELK program. They loved it and I loved watching all the kids take ownership of their education by asking environmental questions, presenting possible answers to present conditions and offering ideals for future leadership. Outstanding example of how education can be fun. Cheers.

Many states have Master Naturalist programs similar to the Texas program. This is an excellent way to engage adults. These programs should all be eligible for funding under the State Wildlife Grants program - whether the volunteers are engaged in habitat conservation or education.

California's Central Valley is identified as one of America's most completely altered eco-regions with the fewest remaining natural landscapes. Remarkably, many of its last natural landscapes are still intact near the city of Sacramento. These include riparian forests, fresh water marshes, vernal pools, wildflower prairies, alkaline prairies, oak woodlands, and chaparral. Sacramento is also one of the most underserved of America's great cities for nearby recreational experiences in natural landscapes. Even its one remaining natural park, the American River Parkway, is threatened because of its shattered economy. This situation presents a great opportunity to save the Central Valley, provide recreation for Sacramento, and stimulate its economy through development of a regional park system similar to the one Golden Gate National Recreational area provides for San Francisco. Habitat 2020 of Sacramento has initiated an effort to do this called the California Heartland Project. It is endorsed by the Environmental Council of Sacramento, Sacramento Urban Creeks Council, Save the American River Parkway Association, California Native Plant Society, Sierra Club, Audubon Society, Save Our Sandhill Cranes, and Friends of the Swainson's Hawk. On behalf of these organizations we urge Federal help to implement this project.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Multi-use is probably ok ONLY if it is in areas of the parks that can tolerate it. Not every park is a good place for OHV...physically won't remain healthy or sustainable. I don't like hearing the sound of a machine when I'm trying to get away from my urban life, but the parks belong to everyone. Parks need to be monitored for deterioration both for the beauty of the park and the safety of users.

Urban youth too often don't know WHAT a national park looks like nor do they understand the significance of the DIVERSITY of parks. Perhaps encouraging companies or corporations to fund school field trips to national parks, would show our kids how awesome their 'country' is. The scale of any national park is so impressive...easily rivaling the action films kids see. I imagine these partners would do this out of love of America, not as a way to curry favor with government officials.

In Colorado, the wild Elk population has dramatically increased over the past 50 years. During this same period, OHV use, on public lands has also increased dramatically. In many cases, wildlife adapts faster than the biologist's theories. Will this be taught? Will you be taking the children on a pleasant ride through the forest on ATV's? Let's present all the possibilities.

The Montana hospitality/outdoor recreation industries and land trusts partner to seek small voluntary donations from travelers and tourists to fund private land protection projects. Open land is one of Montana's major assets and this program creates a process for Montana's 10 million tourists to help protect the reasons they travel to Montana in the first place. Travelers for Open Land has 120 participating businesses and in its first year (2009) the program awarded four \$2,500 grants.

The Texas Master Naturalist program has introduced me to a multitude of opportunities for action in conservation projects and teaching situations.

This program is a great way to work with landowners to protect open land and increase private land conservation.

Years ago we agreed that to manage water resources we needed to plan and manage watersheds; that to plan and manage wildlife we needed to manage for their home range; to manage timber we needed to plan and manage ecosystems. Likewise, to manage outdoor recreation, parks and open space we need to plan and manage at a larger regional scale than the boundaries of our agencies. We need cross-cutting planning/collaborative efforts that will build interagency/multi-communities vision and connections. We need federal leadership and support, but not federal planning. Statewide-comprehensive outdoor recreation plans are required by LWCF, and they provide the closest example of regional landscape-scale planning across communities, agencies, partners, etc. This is an existing tool and program that can be valuable with some improvements.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

After many years of maturity, I have come to the conclusion that the CCC's (Civilian Conservation Corps-1934) was an excellent solution to the very large unemployment problem. What I would like to see is a similar program today, but, would include women as well as men that desperately need work. City parks, state parks and national parks are in desperate need of help. Their budgets have been cut, so help from a similar program (CCC'S) would do wonders in the conservation area.

I believe the solution to this problem lies with volunteer service and patrol. In our locality east of Sacramento, we have a volunteer uniformed group working with park rangers at the Auburn State Recreation Area (ASRA). They're called the "ASRA Canyon Keepers". They carry radios with them wherever they go in the ASRA, and call in Rangers whenever there is a problem requiring law enforcement. It works very well, enabling each ranger to enforce the law and promote harmonious use over a much wider area of land. This has helped a lot in lessening conflicts between users.

Save the Wilderness, Va.

Battlefields are a link to who we are as Americans. Preserving them provides us and those following us, a way of walking in the footsteps of our ancestors who played a major part in the development of our country.. a tangible link to our country's past. Letting them be forgotten would be a crime ! greg haugens (9 July 2010)

Our opportunities to preserve the remaining Civil War battlefields diminishes every minute as development encroaches upon the finite number of acres where Civil War soldiers fought. The timeliness of this proposal is critical. If we want Americans to get out into the great outdoors, what better way to do so than to preserve those woods, fields and streams of Civil War battlefields so the public can get outside and make a connection with the most desperate span of our nation's history at the same time?

There are so few original Civil War fields left.....we should protect what we have and save whatever is still intact and save them completely not allowing any development anywhere near them. It is important to keep these vistas pure so that generations of Americans can see the same fields and woodlots that those boys in 1861-65 fought and died on. Greg Youngstrom

With the Civil War Sesquicentennial just around the corner, now is the perfect time to take action to save our nation's treasured Civil War battlegrounds. The 150th anniversary commemoration is expected to stimulate renewed interest in the conflict and generate unprecedented tourism to Civil War sites. The protection of America's remaining Civil War battlefields will leave a legacy of national commitment to preservation and conservation. These lands will be open spaces for the public to enjoy, preserved in their natural and pristine state, allowing visitors to walk in the footsteps of their Civil War ancestors. This experience will be unlike anything they could have read in a book or watched on television about the conflict. Preserved battlefields revitalize local economies and create jobs encouraging heritage tourism. The more historic land that is preserved, the longer visitors stay in a community and the more time they spend patronizing local businesses.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

About time someone suggested this. We should be allowed to hunt more of the buffalo in Yellowstone too. They are way overpopulated, and wolves do NOT control the buffalo population. Humans are the buffalos only predator. So it is natural that we can hunt buffalo. Great idea Brett!

How much buffalo can this area really sustain? The population control would have to be regulated in order to not overgraze the land and damage it. There would need to be buffalo hunting in order to control the population. The only predator of buffalo is the human. So in order to control this herd, hunting would have to be allowed. Otherwise overgrazing would occur and the land would be destroyed. Also what would private land owners do that lived in this area? Would they have to take down their fences? It is not fair for landowners, who have perserved this beautiful land, to sustain the buffalo. This would be equal to putting buffalo in your own backyard. One man's land is not greater than anothers. Thus it would not be fair to push buffalo on another man's land, if you do not put them on your own land.

I disagree with statement about the "200 years of highly subsidized soil exhaustion, human depopulation and economic malaise" as her reason for a park. Today's farming practices work against soil exhaustion and actually work to increase the productivity of the soil. Farmers and ranchers today use agricultural research to guide their production practices. Ranchers actually look to increase the native grasses on their land because native species thrive more in that environment and aid in production. As for human depopulation, agriculture is the main reason why there are people living in Eastern Montana. If it were not for agriculture the small towns there would not exist. Now for the "economic malaise", I do not agree with this statement either because I would not call supporting yourself, your family, and your community off of the land economic malaise. Putting a park in this area will NOT significantly change the economy either. This area is 250 miles from a larger airport, hot and dry during the summer, bitterly cold in the winter, and swarming with mosquitos. I do not see people coming there to visit because of it's very remote location and climate. I do NOT support this proposal.

I do not agree with idea of ranchers needing to pay for resource damages of public lands. Rancher's have to pay yearly to use public lands along with buying the rights to use the land for the set period of time. Also, the gov't sets standards of how much cattle can graze on certain areas, and for what period of time. It's called an AUM (animal unit month), and it differs for different areas in conjunction with the type and productivity of the land. This stops overgrazing and protects the land. It is illegal for ranchers to overgraze public lands. Please do your research before commenting.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

I think you have been misinformed about GMOs and nano technology. I have a cell biology degree and I can tell you that I have never heard of GMOs killing cattle and causing human illness. Producing GMOs requires inserting a new, desirable, piece of DNA into the existing plant. GMO DNA is destroyed by catalyses, enzymes, and acid in the stomach, just like any other DNA. There has been NO RESEARCH supporting claims that GMOs are bad for humans. Also, many scientists that are concerned about supporting the growing number of people on the planet actually stress that we need to use research, GMOs, nanotechnology, and other technologies in order to support the human race. If we do not evolve, use research, and/or our brains, we will cease to exist. We cannot sustain the human race using all organically grown or GMO free food. Eating only organically grown food is actually a selfish act since, many people in this world have nothing to eat. If the organic farm you got your produce from was actually a well managed sustainable farm (your regular farm), it would have produced much higher yields. Thus feeding more people. Also, I did a research project in undergrad on GMOs, and found that many "USDA organic" corn products actually contained GMOs. Most corn grown today are actually GMOs. Food for thought.

I would not call Yellowstone National Park, "returned to it's former ecological functioning". The buffalo population there is around 3300, way OVER POPULATED for that amount of area. In the 1960s, the park had about 300 buffalo, which was what they said the park could sustain. That's a 10x difference. Talk about mismanaging. The elk and deer population in the park is almost nonexistant because of the over population of wolves and the overgrazing from the buffalo. Wolves do not kill buffalo! Humans are the only predators of the buffalo. Not to mention that over 50% of the buffalo in the park have brucellosis. I DO NOT support another park, the feds can't properly manage the parks they already have. The farmers and ranchers in the area are the only reason the land is in the good condition it is in now.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

If you are going to slander ranchers, you better have PROVEN SCIENTIFIC research. It is extremely rude and ignorant to have such hatred and strong opinions toward people or a way of life you know nothing about. The 2006 UN study, "Livestock's Long Shadow" was very POORLY conducted. In the report it read: "The livestock sector is a major player, responsible for 18 percent of greenhouse gas emissions measured in CO₂e (carbon dioxide equivalents). This is a higher share than transport." This is all the study said, but if you look at the methods section of this report you will find HOW THEY ACTUALLY GOT THESE STATISTICS. In order to do a scientific study you must eliminate independent variables, and measure each dependent variable in the same manner. The UN study FAILED to do so, just ask Frank Mitloehner, UC Davis Professor of Animal Science. There is no doubt that livestock are major producers of methane, one of the greenhouse gases. But he faults the methodology of "Livestock's Long Shadow," contending that numbers for the livestock sector were calculated differently from transportation. In the report, the livestock emissions included gases produced by growing animal feed; animals' digestive emissions; and processing meat and milk into foods. But the transportation analysis factored in only emissions from fossil fuels burned while driving and not all other transport lifecycle related factors. This is not how a scientific research is conducted. This study needs to be redone, and should not be referenced by ANYONE because it does not uphold the high standards of scientific research. "This lopsided analysis is a classical apples-and-oranges analogy that truly confused the issue," he said. Also, according to the American Chemical Society, we can do a lot of things to reduce the greenhouse gas emissions often blamed for climate change, but cutting back on consumption of meat and dairy products isn't one of them. Giving cows and pigs a bum rap is not only scientifically inaccurate, but also distracts society from embracing effective solutions to global climate change, says UC Davis Professor of Animal Science Frank Mitloehner. He noted that the notion is becoming deeply rooted in efforts to curb global warming, citing campaigns for "meatless Mondays" and a European campaign, called "Less Meat = Less Heat," launched late last year. "We certainly can reduce our greenhouse-gas production, but not by consuming less meat and milk," said Mitloehner. "Producing less meat and milk will only mean more hunger in poor countries." The focus of confronting climate change, he said, should be on smarter farming, not less farming. "The developed world should focus on increasing efficient meat production in developing countries where growing populations need more nutritious food. In developing countries, we should adopt more efficient, Western-style farming practices to make more food with less greenhouse gas production," Mitloehner said. Developed countries should reduce use of oil and coal for electricity, heating and vehicle fuels. I am done here. I have better things to do than slander the people who produce my food.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

why are you so against private fences? Last time I checked I saw furishing deer, antelope, coyotes, rabbits, and birds on fenced private land. The wildlife there is doing great! Deer can jump over fences, and antelope go under the fences. They are not caged in by any means. Putting up fences on PRIVATE LAND on the grasslands has done NO damage. Also, thanks to area farmers for allowing these wild animals to feed on their crops and grains to increase their populations. Without farms, the wildlife populations wouldn't be as inflated on the grasslands as they are now. The land wouldn't be able to sustain such populations, an winterkill would be outrages. Thank you farmers and ranchers for maintaining and supporting the beautiful grasslands and wildlife.

This is a great idea! It's about time people start thinking about investing in the future: through education. State schools are so poorly funded, and it's a shame since their research is top notch. You really can't buy cheaper research than what comes from State schools. Land grant universities are some of the leaders in agricultural, wildlife, environmental, engineering, and biological research. Increased funding would allow for more research, and also get the next generation interested and involved. There would be so many more research opportunities for undergraduates. BRAVO great idea! Supporting education at any level is good for America, you can't debate that. My money goes to state school.

This is a poorly planned idea. Do you know how many acres it would take to support 1,000,000 buffalo, along with all the elk, and grizzlies you are proposing?! Also, what is your definition of a "seriously bad economy"? Not having large cities and manufacturing close by? I was under the impression that not having a metropolis near by would actually preserve the land. There is no way that you could create this "Mother of all Parks" with out forcing private land owners off.

Wow... that's how I feel after reading some of the comments following this idea. Wow. I think the American people need to start supporting public education again. It's also amazing how people can have such radical views and opinions about something they know nothing about. Patricia, ruminants are not the leading cause of global warming. Where did you find this BLATANT LIE! Seriously?! I am also curious about your statement on how cattle producers destroy the land. How is this done? Why do you assume all cattle producers overgraze the land? This is also a lie. Ranchers work to preserve and enrich the land. If overgrazing was the case, the meat industry would cease to exist. By the way, I eat red meat several times a week and am not obese, do not have heart disease, have low blood pressure, low LDL, and low cholesterol. My great grandparents and grandparents have all lived past the age of 80, eating red meat several times a week. Red meat does not kill. It's the potato chips, fries, candy, and soda people consume, along with the lack of exercise that causes obesity. All NOT meat products. Also, I do not believe cattle growing is the scourage of the earth, it's the lack of education. Do your research, your ignorance is a disgrace to the human race.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Vacationing this summer, I was very disappointed to learn that the location where one of my ancestors lost his life in the Civil War was not protected and in fact was one of the most endangered battlefields - Lovejoy Station in Georgia. I would like to add that in New England, many key sites related to King Phillip's War are also endangered and unprotected. These sites have many fine qualities in addition to their outstanding historic relevance to that time period. Key locations of the conflict include elements of the outdoor landscape that were and are sacred to Native Americans of the Northeast. The full meaning of these sites has long been overlooked in historic accounts and their cultural context is only beginning to be explored and appreciated by professional historians and archeologists. There is no complete, systematic identification of these sites; a coherent regional heritage district linking these significant places would be ideal. In the meantime, sites not already protected for some other reason remain in great danger of destruction. Often located adjacent to wetlands or on overlooks of scenic beauty, these ancient and historic lands deserve protection and full recognition for their past and for our future benefit. Please consider including protection of these Native American landscapes within the scope of our nation's great outdoors.

You can read lots of first hand accounts of civil war battles, look at maps from the time of the war, read present day historians who use the first two sources mentioned above and fill in a graphic image of what the battle was like, but until you walk the ground and study the terrain and measure the steps taken by individual soldiers and officers, you cannot understand a civil war battle. For this reason we must preserve what battlefields we already have and add to them so that when we visit the battlefields our very psyche is filled with the fear, terror, and uncertainty of the soldiers who gave the last full measure to preserve the cause they fought to preserve and some of them died fighting. For this reason the care of civil war battlefields and additional acreage must be not only be encouraged, but demanded.

Battlefield preservation is, at least, a triple win. It protects history, the environment and provides space needed for quiet recreation,

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

The Vanishing America Project is a multi-year journey to promote conservation and raise awareness about what we are losing – our culture, our wildlife, and our landscape – in hopes that some of it will still be around for future generations to enjoy. As I travel the country, I record images, I write articles about what I see, I give presentations to school kids about how they can make a difference, and I donate a portion of my image sales to The Conservation Alliance -- providing real grants to real conservation efforts around the United States. It's a journey that shows America that what is out there, in our own unique country, is as majestic and awesome as anything on the planet. And it's not just a bunch of pretty pictures. It's detail, drama, emotion and excitement all expressed through imagery that not only transports you into its world, but inspires you to look for the beauty in your own backyard. It is designed to serve and be accessible as the unofficial promotional and marketing arm of each and every conservation effort out there. If it raises awareness about endangered areas so the conservation efforts can get more support without having to dip into their limited budgets. It's just getting started, but WOW, what a start! If you like what you see on the website, tell your favorite conservation organization to contact us. Together we can raise awareness and it won't cost them a dime. The website is www.VanishingAmerica.net

Get on a dirt bike. You can ride out to a quiet place in no time.

Get your kid a dirt bike and he/she will thank you for the rest of your life. Kids get bored with nature walks but not with nature rides.

In Lassen National Forest we have a great example of private vs. Gov. forest management practices. We are lucky to have Collins Forest in our area. The Collins forest lands are managed in an exemplary fashion. The difference is plain as night and day where Collins property butts up against Lassen National Forest.

Living free means allowing others to enjoy their freedoms. Sometimes it's a hard pill to swallow but it's what's right for America. Intolerant people don't belong in this country.

Singletrack vehicles like dirt bikes and mountain bikes are a great way to get to remote locations and do minimal damage as they tend to steer around obstacles not run over and destroy them. It kills me that people who have never ridden a dirt bike think they have a legitimate opinion. You have no experience so you just don't know what you are talking about. Singletrack vehicles should be in a different category than Quads and jeeps.

Singletrack vehicles like dirt bikes and mountain bikes should be in the same category as quads and jeeps.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

While I like all of these ideas, some of the best ideas that jump out at me are: - long distance, interlinked OHV-accessible trails similar to the Continental Divide National Scenic trail - trails with minimal technical challenge for beginning OHV users [additionally, I would like to see a greater variety technical challenge levels available and an increased mileage of trails] - sharing single-track trails with mountain bikes and motorcyclists

America's Battlefields have served as critically important outdoor classrooms for generations of military cadets, noncommissioned officers, and officers. The great value of actually standing on ground that was fought for is that the visitor is able to develop an enhanced appreciation for time and distance, for the actual topography of the area, and for the reasons that particular ground was viewed by the men who fought for it as "key terrain." We must save our battlefields!

In the West, there are millions of acres of wilderness-quality, Bureau of Land Management (BLM) public land, including 6 million acres in Utah; 650,000 acres in Colorado; over 5.5 million acres in Arizona and over 2 million acres in New Mexico. The BLM should provide interim protection to the lands it has already identified as having wilderness quality until Congress makes a decision about wilderness designation, as prescribed in the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976 (FLPMA). In addition, the BLM should conduct a new wilderness inventory to identify additional wilderness-quality lands and offer them interim protection as well.

I believe many government agencies are trying to satisfy the public's need for more nature projects. However, I think the government should empower more people and organizations to steward lands beneficial to the public. For example, the BLM governs hundreds of thousands of acres and has little man power to improve these lands. "We the People," need to stop relying on the government to create these projects for our children and force the government to give us back our land. "We the People," can decide how best it should serve the public. We do this by land stewarding and land grants for non profits that benefit our communities. I am tired of seeing the government give more rights to big companies for drilling oil and natural gas, then using public lands for projects that could help our children.

The government should give land grants to organizations that want to increase fisheries. Currently, our fisheries are struggling to keep up with demand on waters. A few causes are habitat destruction, increases in population, diseases like whirling disease, and watershed diversion. Fishing is a great way to get people outdoors, but hard to do without fish. This great outdoor activity produces billions of dollars in revenue from fishing licenses, watercraft fees, tournaments, and countless other retail streams. Fishing also increases the number of trails created for hiking, biking, and horses.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

HistoriCorps is an idea already in action. It's purpose is to save special places on public lands by teaming preservation experts with volunteers to work on the restoration of cabins, ranch houses, and other types buildings on or eligible for the National Register. Participants get to work on historically significant publicly-owned buildings on U.S. Forest Service lands with the purpose to returning them to productive use as rental facilities that can be enjoyed by hikers, equestrians, campers and others. Along the way, participants learn preservation and building trades job skills, get to work in the great outdoors, meet interesting people and have fun while making special places on our public lands more accessible and useful to anyone who wants to experience them. Colorado Preservation, Inc, the U.S. Forest Service and Volunteers for Outdoor Colorado began to pilot this new initiative in the Rocky Mountains in the Fall of 2009 (over one third of Colorado's lands are owned and managed by state and federal agencies). Mandated to preserve the historic resources under their control, our public land managing agencies, like the Forest Service, have core missions that often make it difficult to meet their legal obligation to safeguard our cultural resources. HistoriCorps is a solution to this problem that extends the capacity of our state and federal agencies to preserve historic resources while also reducing the costs, ultimately shouldered by the taxpayers, to get the work done. Although initiated in Colorado, HistoriCorps is an initiative that will work anywhere in the U.S. and with any agency (BLM, DOD, NPS, etc.). You can help by asking your public officials to learn more about HistoriCorps by going to www.historicorps.com and/or contacting Colorado Preservation's HistoriCorp manager, Jonas Landes, at jlandeshistoricorps.org

If public lands are not protected, they will eventually end up being no good for anyone or anything. The nature of the land should determine the nature of the protections. Some lands will be appropriate for development of mining, logging, ranching, hunting, or ORV's, and regulations suitable for each should be adopted accordingly. Other lands will be appropriate for wildlife habitat, sources of drinking water, hiking and camping, aesthetic appreciation, and even solitude, and again regulations should be adopted accordingly. Obviously the many uses will span the spectrum of possibilities with extensive development at one end and National Parks and wilderness at the other. In between, multiple uses will dominate. And this is where regulations will require great judgement. We cannot allow any one use to dominate to the extent that other uses are excluded or degraded to the point they they are essentially eliminated. I definitely believe that when public lands meet the qualifications for wilderness, they should be seriously considered for that purpose, and without limitations.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

No single recreational group has any more right to enjoy public lands than any other. OHV-users are part of an old hobby that has a tradition of exploring remote areas that would be impossible or impractical to reach for the overwhelming majority of Americans without motorized assistance. Many OHV'ers engage in this activity as a family - either riding as a group on quads and motorcycles, or together in 4x4s. The friendships, bonds, and memories formed on these adventures will last a lifetime, and instill values of self-reliance, and resourcefulness, as well as a deep understanding of nature and the outdoors. What is more American than that? Many of the trails in the West that are designated for OHV use were originally mining routes, and are an important part of the history of the settlement of the West. Without question, OHV groups spend more time maintaining these trails than any other recreational user group. Without them, the trails would fall into disrepair and eventually vanish. Think about this the next time you hear the assertion that OHV's constitute the most impact to the environment of all recreational users: What is going to cause greater surface erosion; a pair of rolling large-diameter wheels supporting 500lbs of weight, or a 1,000lb animal exerting force through a few square inches of hoof contact patch? And if it's the burning of fossil fuels that concerns you, I would suggest that you pay attention to how horses are typically transported to trailheads. Public lands belong to the public. All of us.

Nothing can replace the educational and patriotic value of walking the ground over which Civil War soldiers fought. These precious lands must be saved before they are lost.

OHV's allow more of the public to enjoy our public lands by making them accessible to a greater number of citizens. The vast majority of OHV'ers are responsible conservationists.

Restore Long Leaf Pines along their historical range, long leaf pines restoration in Florida, with their low water usage, would mean billions of more gallons of water in the ground for Floridians to have for drinking water. Loblolly planting for timber has consumed huge amounts of water and required government paid fire suppression to protect timber for private companies. Long Leafs thrive if fires are not suppressed. Long Leaf Pine Barrens are the main habitat home for many species such as the Red-Cockaded Woodpecker, the Fox Squirrel, the Gopher Tortoise, and Virginia Pitcher Plants.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Support and promote community-based fishing events. We take an interest in matters that serve our selfish interest. When people are introduced to fishing, the vast majority of us cannot help but take an interest in the habitat that serves the fish we enjoy catching or eating. Suddenly, those of us who previously thought we had no interest in riparian buffers, wetlands protection, pollution prevention and water quality enhancement, stormwater mitigation, aquatic organism passage, and wastewater and drinking water infrastructure find ourselves with a stake in these often overwhelming or not so sexy or inherently complex issues. A child introduced to fishing is quite likely to become an advocate for the environment and the communities that depend on the health of that environment. I don't know a single fellow angler that will tolerate the destruction of their favorite fishing hole or shoreline. If more Americans felt this way, an investment in the environment would always be seen as an investment in our economy, and even ourselves. Consider the following. According to the Outdoor Foundation, "fishing is the most popular gateway activity that often leads to participation in other outdoor activities (77.9% of fishing participants participate in multiple outdoor activities)." Additionally, "nearly half of all youth ages 13 to 17 are influenced by their friends to participate in outdoor activities (46.9%)." Given this data alone, it seems, putting a fishing pole in the hands of every American may very likely be the key to reconnecting our children to America's Great Outdoors and ensuring those outdoors remain great putting us well on the path to accomplishing the President's goals outlined in this admirable and much needed initiative. Thank you for your consideration.

The historic resources of the Copper Country, the U.S.'s first major mining district, are too vast for any single agency to manage with available resources. Thus, when a significant portion of the Copper Country on the Keweenaw Peninsula was designated a national park, Congress utilized a developing model of partnering in national parks, leveraging financial and professional resources of the National Park Service (NPS) through the collaboration of many partners, aiming for a broad, cohesive national park experience and working with a passionate local community in protecting the many hundreds of historic and natural features that communicate the importance of the region's history. This allows for a national park of much greater scope and much broader visitor experiences, requiring significantly smaller Federal investments than those made in the traditional national park model. Though administered by the National Park Service (inside official boundaries) and a permanent, volunteer National Park Advisory Commission (that provides advice to the NPS but also is authorized to operate programs inside and outside official boundaries), many organizations jointly operate this "parknership." These partners bring to the effort their own museums, historic resources, and the enthusiasm of the hundreds of volunteers and volunteer board members. The model does require testing, however, to determine if it is meeting the needs and expectations of park constituents, locally and from afar. More information about the park is available at www.nps.gov/kewe .

The Shenandoah National Park, Jefferson, George Washington, and Pisgah- Nantahala National Forests preserve Drinking water resources for many, provide recreation for many and preserve many species. I have counted the Cerulean Warbler in Shenandoah National Park which needs large tracts of land to breed or it will get displaced by the Brown-Headed Cowbird. Many species depend on these lands for survival. It would be terrible to let them vanish because of logging.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

This is our last chance to give future generations a lasting heritage about the story of our nation's most historic event. I support Civil War battlefield preservation.

Utah's Henry Mountains & Tarantula Mesa were the last mountains to be mapped in the continental United States in 1872. Today they are among the most inaccessible places in Utah. I believe that this, along with the wild beauty of the range should qualify the Henry Mountains for National Monument or Park status. Located in Garfield and Wayne Counties, they symbolize the end of the wild frontier in the continental United States, as all lands were finally surveyed and mapped. The Henry Mountains are made up of almost entirely BLM lands, with some privately held parcels just to the west and south of Mount Ellen, the range's highest point. Additionally, the Henry Mountains National Park/Monument can be easily connected to Capitol Reef National Park through the wild Tarantula Mesa, running west from Mount Pennell. There are already 3 BLM campgrounds in the Henry Mountains, from north to south: Lonesome Beaver, McMillan Springs, and Star Springs. The nearby town of Hanksville, UT stands to benefit economically from the likely increase in tourism that comes with a National Park/Monument in the area. The Henry Mountains and Tarantula Mesa encompass some of the finest history and natural beauty to be found in Utah, and are the best candidate for preservation as a National Park or Monument.

We bike along the San Gabriel Riverbed. There are so many parks along the trail I can't see the need for any additional open space. We bike the whole trail too, from Seal Beach to the Angeles Forest. Would like to see a bike trail on Walnut Creek, that would be nice. We really don't see the need for the Duck Farm property plan, its only a couple miles to Whittier Narrows and Legg Lake parks.

In deciding how to manage public lands, DOI should recognize that not all uses have an equal impact on the land or the resources. Therefore, proposals like 1:1 acres of OHV use or oil and gas use for "wilderness" do not take acknowledge the unique nature of the land and the large impacts of high intensity uses like OHV trails or oil and gas drilling.

Wilderness quality lands are a precious resource and should be treated as such. DOI should protect wilderness quality lands and over turn the "no more wilderness policy." Thoughtfully preserving wilderness quality lands and intact ecosystems is a more responsible way to start thinking about how we are going to manage our public lands to address the challenges of global warming. Allowing rampant oil and gas drilling and unlimited OHV use is managing with a pre-climate change mentality.

Encourage BLM and National FS to support collaboration of diverse interests in development of new NCA and Wilderness Areas. The coalition of interests, such as OHV, Jeeps, hikers, bikers, horse riders, ranchers and cultural, as in the CEC [Colorado Environmental Coalition] works to build support for preservation of our Great Outdoors. Current effort includes planning by FOND [Friends of the Northern Delores].

Use NCA and Wilderness designations to conserve and preserve appropriate areas for our future generations. Excellent example: Dominguez Escalante NCA and Wilderness Area near Grand Junction, Colorado.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

I also agree with _____ and all of the others above that we should preserve the prairies in Western Kansas. The Buffalo Commons National Park is needed now. Restoring a million acres back to its natural habitat will help the environment and allow wildlife to return. Most people do not know what the prairies are supposed to look like. A national park will make Kansas a destination place instead of just a drive through state and will help the economy of not only western Kansas but the entire state.

I would like to promote the idea here of preserving land dedicated to hunting and fishing. NWTF and Ducks Unlimited, Quail Unlimited and such are good helpful programs. I was unable to vote to promote, however.

The Lewis and Clark Trail is officially recognized from St Louis MO west. This trail actually extends from "Sea to Shining Sea" and involves the towns where Lewis & Clark stopped along the Ohio, Mississippi, Missouri and Columbia Rivers and across passes in the Rocky Mountains. Today's "explorers" can enjoy and visit the wonderful sites developed along the above rivers as well as Philadelphia, Washington DC, Harper's Ferry, and of course Monticello, home of President Thomas Jefferson. These modern explorers will increase the tourism all along the trail. Come join us in the excitement!

The non-profit organization, American Forests already plants trees in our country. Perhaps the U&S Gov't could give them a little money instead of having to start a whole new bureaucracy. One dollar plants one tree when you give money to this organization---we do need more trees but let's do it without the gov't having to do one more thing.

Agree -- it struck me as a little odd at first, but that's just because I'm not a gadget person. But this does seem like a way to let the younger crowd bring technology into the woods, without creating any noise or disruption to harass wildlife or other people. So if this would be fun for them and get them out in the woods, then why not?

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Estimates of greenhouse gas production by various sources are just that -- estimates. Should we dismiss them all, or just the ones we don't like? Have you a better estimate? Perhaps someday we will, but until then, I'm going with the one we have. Note that I was referring to conventional farming in general, not specifically to ranching. The tallies of animals killed in the name of livestock protection are staggering and cannot be denied. This information can be easily found online and in books. If livestock producers, or wildlife officials on their behalf, are not controlling "problem" animals as much now as in the past, it is because they have already extirpated, or nearly extirpated them. Land that is used to grow grain for livestock can be used to grow vegetable foods for human consumption. This would result in more food available for people, since only a fraction of the available calories can be converted to edible meat, as explained in my last post. Therefore, if we could reduce our consumption of animal products, we would need less land for agriculture to feed the same number of people. The grazing land that cannot be used to grow crops would not be needed, and those extirpated and nearly extirpated wild animals could return to the landscape in ecologically meaningful numbers. The view that ranching increases biodiversity may be held by ranchers, but not necessarily by the scientific community. There are many articles which explore the subject. Here's one for a start. It is a 2003 article, so some of it might be dated. Search for yourselves for further reading. { Link } Lastly, I had no intention of treating ranchers "like the enemy". I was merely making the argument that we are going to have to make some changes in how we eat and in how we produce food if we are to feed the world sustainably. I apologize if you took it as a personal offense. We are all in this together and all are responsible for the habits we have now and for changing them for the better. Most certainly, ranchers will have some valuable input.

For a long time, I was resistant to using a gps unit for the reason Christiaan describes. However, I finally caved in and now I LOVE it. Where bushwhacking is permitted, I am now perfectly comfortable wandering way off trail in unfamiliar places, deeper and deeper into the woods, because I know I will be able to get back to the trail head without angst. Also, now I use gps mapping software to map my excursions and photos of animal tracks and sign, plants, etc. That's one gadget that has added tremendously to my outdoor enjoyment and learning. Maybe this "app" that describes can do this for other people.

Geocaching is a fabulous way to engage kids with the outdoors. It's great fun, kids love it, and it's inexpensive. One GPS unit per family is enough.

Hi TMNP folks! This looks like a fabulous program! I am thrilled to see so much excitement about something so positive, and I plan to look into getting such a program started in my state, where we don't yet have one. But could you please take a look at another idea which I fear might get buried, amidst this flurry of enthusiasm for the MNP? It's about teaching ecology in school: { Link } Lets teach our kids in PUBLIC schools, in the required core curricula, so virtually ALL will have access to the education that will allow them to make informed decisions about anything impacting our precious outdoors!

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

I agree with public use on public lands. That is what public lands were set aside for in the beginning, to be used and enjoyed by the people of this great country.

I agree. Consumptive use does not equate with better stewardship. Much more effort to teach stewardship should accompany any effort to encourage consumptive use. In my neck of the woods, discarded pieces of fishing line are almost as common as blades of grass around any fishing area. During deer hunting season, you can find trash bags of decapitated deer on the side of the road, punctuating the collections of discarded beer cans. That said, I think encouraging fishing and hunting CAN be a great way to reconnect people with the outdoors.....BUT stewardship does not follow naturally for many people, and needs to be actively taught if the ultimate effects of fishing and hunting are to be positive.

I am sorry to demote this. MNPs are very positive and I have voted to promote it elsewhere. However, repetition of the idea has become distracting, potentially steering attention away from other equally valuable ideas. Since the text of this idea speaks to the importance of teaching sustainability, not specifically to MNPs, perhaps you should consider changing the title to "Teach Sustainability" or something like that. I would certainly promote such an idea.

I believe EVERYONE should be kept out of Wilderness areas IF ANY ARE KEPT OUT. That is the only way that Wilderness can develop it's own system, no interference, for good or bad. Hikers, join the other public land users and share the areas open to use, don't be elitists thinking you do not impact where you go. If everyone is kept out, I bet the wilderness proponents will change their tune, since they are kept out also. Do not restrict the lands just to allow a few to use it. All or none.

I have some experience leading a nature club, and it can be difficult to compete with sports and electronics. After school programs that are too academic or involve too much quiet, sustained activity (such as drawing, writing, nature photography) tend to be unpopular. Those involving more physical activity, such as hiking or animal tracking draw a slightly larger following, but those that attract the greatest number of kids are the consumptive activities. Kids love foraging for wild edibles, for example, and then preparing and sharing a treat or meal with them. Younger kids also like gathering bark, acorns, seed pods, etc. to use for sculptures or "fairy houses", and treasure hunts and geocaching appeal to some. I think the more academic and quieter nature activities should be offered during school hours. They can be worked into other subjects like writing, art, and science, but in my experience cannot compete with organized sports and electronic games. It's the rare kid who chooses to spend his free time birding or photographing flowers.

I think it's a great idea in general to offer many types of outdoor activities to satisfy physical education requirements. To adventure activities, add gardening, foraging, animal tracking, geocaching, and plain old hiking. All of these are great ways of helping students appreciate our interconnectedness with the nature world. And not everyone is interested in soccer.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

I think this is an excellent idea. It will get kids outdoors, improve awareness and attentiveness to the natural world, and improve reading and writing skills. The goal need not be to teach kids any particular philosophy. They can be exposed to a wide range of ideas, opinions, and scientific information in the reading assignments. Not necessarily a particular agenda. The important thing is that it brings nature into the classroom, and the classroom out into the natural world. In less urban settings, the "field trips" can be in or near the school grounds.

I think this is in reference to the 110 million acre National Wilderness Preservation System, not all nature areas. The NWPS was established by congress in 1964 "to assure that an increasing population, accompanied by expanding settlement and growing mechanization, does not occupy and modify all areas within the United States..."

I totally agree that it is not who recreates that impacts the health of the land. It's how they recreate. Of course every form of recreation has impact. But OHV use has a far greater impact than hiking. Erosion is affected not only by how the trail is laid out and how heavily it is used, but also by the type of recreation. Where either OHV or hiking trails show signs of overuse, it may be appropriate to limit use. It does not mean that trail systems should be increased to cover larger and larger expanses. That's like saying that suburban sprawl is a good thing because it spreads habitat degradation over a larger area. For wildlife conservation, it is better to restrict our own impact to smaller, rather than larger, areas, and leave more unfragmented land for wildlife. Species conservation benefits all of us, not just one special interest group. Erosion is but one issue. Let's not forget about air pollution, loud noise, and wildlife collisions, all unique to motorized use. For anyone unfamiliar with the impact on wildlife of ORV use, peruse the following summary and note the long list of references: { <http://www.wildlandscpr.org/biblio-notes/off-road-vehicle-impacts-wildlife> } It is wonderful that motorized users contribute to trail maintenance, given the degree of disturbance caused. I am not opposed to ORV use in general. There is a time and place for everything.

I, too, like to get my information from scientists rather than celebrities, but I think TV and the internet are valuable opportunities to do more than merely present the science. Education is necessary, but often not enough by itself to change behavior. People are more likely to change in response to a story that appeals on an emotional level, involving someone they seek to identify with. It's called Education Entertainment. It works for public health issues. For example, in South Africa, a popular weekly drama ("Tsha-Tsha") in which HIV prevention was addressed, was much more effective in getting people to practice safe sex than education alone ever was. There are other examples of this from around the world. I am not aware of any such thing addressing sustainable behavior, and no specific ideas are jumping out at me now. I think the raw facts are best presented in the classroom, where you have a captive audience of young minds, and more of a focus on ecology is critical. The education will help people understand the consequences of their actions. Some may change in response to that, but while others may strive to change, many are unlikely to do so until the new behaviors seem natural and comfortable. To propel that transition, it helps to appeal on an emotional level. TV and internet could be powerful tools for that.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

In the northeast where I live, we are sometimes told that in our few remaining patches of old growth, there are no species which cannot live in hundred year old forests. I'm not convinced, however, that we can know that with any certainty. Tree bark does continue to change with aging beyond a hundred years, so doesn't a 300 year old tree offer a microhabitat not present on a 100 year old tree? Can we be sure that there are no micro-organisms unique to old growth? I'm all for managing forests, but it would seem prudent to retain some old growth, even if there are no identified endangered species occupying it. At the very least we hold on to the opportunity to study old growth structure and properties.

In general I agree that compassion towards animals should be taught in school, but I am not sure a government agency for that is the right approach. On the one hand, your comment appears off-topic, yet it is probably true that if people were better able to empathize with animals - more able to understand how their own actions impact them - they may be more inclined to tread lightly on the planet. That would be better for animals, and, inasmuch as our own well-being depends on biodiversity, better for us, ultimately. I voted "promote" on this because I support the general idea of humane education and believe it will also promote conservation, not because I agree with a government agency as you describe. For an excellent educational video on compassionate treatment of farm animals, you might want to check out the following link: { Link }

I agree with much of what you say. Thank you for having the courage to say it in this forum. But I think that society as a whole is a long, long way away from seeing animals, wild or domestic, as more than resources which exist merely for our own use. I disagree that "we have become brainwashed to the point that we do not value animals as individuals". I think we, as a species, had that perspective to begin with, out of necessity, when there were no other options but to get our food in whatever way was possible. Failure to do so meant starvation. However, we do have options now, we can do a lot to minimize pain in animals we use for food, we have many other food choices available to us, etc., and we are ever so slowly finding our way to a less abusive relationship with animals. Until we get there, though, I think the way to give more species the chance for continued existence, is to encourage "sustainable behavior". The most effective way to get people to do this, is, as Charlotte suggested to Wilbur about gaining Templeton's cooperation, "appeal to his baser instincts". In this particular case, that means teaching people that our very own continued existence depends on biodiversity. Perhaps few people are motivated to conserve a species for its own intrinsic value. But many will do it out of sheer self interest. And that is certainly a valid reason.

Limiting access to wilderness areas is good for all of us if it benefits wildlife. Species are dropping off the planet at an alarming rate. Ecosystems collapse as species disappear or habitat is degraded, yet our own continued existence depends on a healthy environment. Some forms of recreation cause more disturbance or damage than others, and should be limited. That is not anti-human, and it's not about depriving any specific group of their pleasures. It's about thinking beyond one's own special interest and protecting the environment for all of us, and for generations to come.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Maybe all states should have an equal percentage of lands set aside for wilderness. Take those well populated states in the east and depopulate a percentage of area, remove all human made objects, restore it to the natural state, and save it for posterity. Let those of us in the western US determine the lands use of states in the east. Fair is fair.

Our continued existence depends ENTIRELY on a healthy environment, unless one has plans to colonize another suitable planet. ORV/ATV/OHV use negatively effect air quality, cause soil compaction and create mud holes and gullies that alter hydrologic patterns and intensify erosion. They widen and rut forest roads and increase sediment load to streams that may threaten fisheries. Snowmobiles cause snow compaction impedes subnivan mammal activity. Wildlife are generally negatively impacted by the noise, though some may habituate. All of this is not to mention the conflicts with, and potential displacement of, non-motorized users. Wildlife are under enormous stress with the staggering human population and climate change. The latter is likely to result in major changes in land usage by humans in many areas, further increasing the challenges wildlife face for future survival. All of this is more than enough for me to want to err on the side of caution and think carefully about our impact on the land. Sometimes this will involved restricting some human activities in some areas.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Patricia is mostly correct....though not entirely. A report by the UN Food and Agriculture Association says livestock production is responsible for 18% of the world's total greenhouse gases, more than the emissions of all the world's cars, buses, planes, and trains combined. Look it up yourself. Many studies have evaluated the connection between meat consumption and human health and disease. Results have been inconsistent, but the emerging pattern appears to be the following: 1. Processed meats (hot dogs, some deli meats, etc) are associated with an increased incidence of both heart disease and diabetes, but unprocessed red meats may not be. 2. Animal products from grass fed livestock are significantly higher in omega 3 fats, which probably REDUCE the risk of coronary artery disease, hypertension, and possibly some cancers. Herbivores may have to be grass finished in order for the meat to be significantly higher in omega 3's, while omnivores such as chickens just need meaningful access to grass and bugs. 3. Meat from (at least some) wild game is also higher in omega 3 fats, and therefore probably also confers some protection from CAD and cancer. 4. Products from grass fed animals are not the only source of omega 3 fats. Flax, walnuts, and some algae contain appreciable amounts (Some vegans take algae pills instead of fish oil pills, to boost omega 3's) 5. Very low meat consumption appears to be associated with greater longevity in general. 6. Cholesterol levels, heart disease, hypertension, diabetes, stroke, obesity, some cancers, and many other diseases are also somewhat genetically determined. Diet is just one piece of the puzzle. Some lucky people can eat loads of conventionally produced animal products and still not develop any of those problems. But this does NOT mean that certain dietary habits are not serious risk factors for other people. 7. Soy is an excellent substitute for animal protein. Nutrition summary: A diet much lower in animal products than that of the average American is perfectly healthy, and possibly healthier. Food from animals that are allowed to forage normally are healthier than foods from conventional large scale animal farms. Some people appear to be able to maintain good health on a totally vegetable diet. As far as feeding the world, production of animal protein places far greater demands on land, energy, and water. It would be much more efficient to use cropland to grow food for human consumption. This is because animals use much of the nutrition to move, keep warm, and form inedible body parts. The world's human population could be fed a predominantly plant based diet using much less land, water, and fuel. As for wildlife - yes, there is wildlife everywhere, even in cities. But developed areas and farms, especially conventional large scale farms, generally support diminished biodiversity, for many obvious reasons: Use of pesticides, herbicides, water pollution, large monocultures, "control" of wild animals whose needs conflict with those of humans, fragmentation that prevents animal movement, and reduced space and resources for feeding and reproducing. Note that I am NOT saying that animal agriculture is BAD. It's just that there are an awful lot of us, we use a lot of space and resources, and feeding the world sustainably is going to require some changes, both in diet and in farming practices. Reducing meat consumption in this country creates space and resources for more people and more wildlife (assuming human population stabilizes). What I've said here touches on many different studies. Do your own research, and do it before you accuse others of ignorance. Now, if you'll excuse me, I have to get some work done!

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

I agree that it's time to move away from intensive animal agriculture and reduce per capita consumption of animal products in this country. This would benefit both human and environmental health, and reduce animal suffering as well.....But only if the human population stabilizes. If, on the other hand, we continue to crowd more and more people onto the planet, we could continue to blaze forward wiping out species after species, even if we all become vegans. And, production of vegetable foods still causes animal suffering and death, under the plow, or as a result of competition for space or resources. There simply isn't any way to disentangle the human animal from the food chain. I think it's great idea to reduce our footprint by reducing meat consumption....but it will be of benefit only if we are willing to talk about that other, taboo of a variable in the equation: human population.

I like the idea of telling the human story of the landscape but not exactly in the way you suggest. I think the signs and structures are best left to outdoor museums, and there is some value to helping people feel more comfortable venturing out to the remaining places that don't have those things. Nonetheless, I agree with the need to think in terms of story based education as a way to engage people. Teaching just the facts is necessary but often not sufficient to influence a person's behavior. I can see a couple of ways, other than outdoor museums, to apply your idea: 1. Infuse "the human story of the landscape" into public school social studies curriculum. Educating people about how other cultures have used land and resources, and how that related to their rise and/or decline, would emphasize the importance of sustainable resource use, something of obvious relevance to the present. 2. Hikes guided by people who know how to read the landscape. Some of the most inspiring outdoor experiences for me have been walks led by people who can determine the human land use history by examining the vegetation and various other clues. Developing an awareness of the mark people leave on the land, and, further, how that can influence wildlife use of the land, encourages a sense of connectedness not only with the landscape and with past human cultures, but also with its non-human inhabitants. All good things for instilling the importance of conservation.

Sounds good, Ron, you've won me over. I, too, occasionally lead hikes for kids or adults, and you are right -- there are some who are afraid of the forest, afraid of getting lost or of being attacked by animals they know nothing about. Fear is fear, and cannot be undone by force. Better to meet people where they are before you try to educate them, and this piece of technology seems to do that.

This idea appears to refer to only the 110 million acres within the NWPS, not all public land. Those 110 million acres amount to a bit less than 5% of all the land in the US, and almost half of it is in Alaska. Wilderness areas are potentially core areas of biodiversity. Evidence from around the world has shown that only places with limited human access retain their full complement of species for a long period of time. Understand that ecosystems function best when all or most of their native species are present, and that we ourselves depend upon healthy functioning ecosystems for clean water, clean air, food, flood control, etc. Therefore, strictly protected wilderness areas benefit ALL of us, not just hikers. If you understand that, then 5% of the land in the US, or just 2.5% of the lower 48, does not seem like a heck of a lot.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

To what you've already said, add that land use by humans is likely to change substantially as people adapt to climate change, possibly causing even more fragmentation and barriers to animal movements. And, we need to think in more than just south-north migrations, since temperature change will not be the only issue. Species will not be able to adjust at the same rates and to the same degree (think of the speed with which a moose can migrate, vs. that of a tree species), so significant ecosystem disruption could occur. The more we leave intact and the better the connectivity, the more fully that species and ecosystems will be able to adapt. Although this is a duplication of an idea already posted, it is so important that I am glad to see it expanded and given more tags that will allow people to find it.

True, but if it were not for conservation on the basis of recreation and aesthetics, some of the species that occupy those "rocks and ice" would be in even greater danger than they are today. Protecting land for recreational value and aesthetic appeal is what conservationists have been able to sell to the public. This is selfish interest, as you say, but you cannot change human nature. You won't accomplish much by trying to convince people that other species have any inherent right to occupy space on the planet, or any intrinsic value beyond their use for humans. People will not set aside much land for those reasons. The key for the future is, in my view, to sell the concept of biodiversity. This can be done by once again appealing to the baser instinct of selfishness. That is, by teaching people that our very own continued existence hinges on biodiversity: a diversity of intact habitats which support as many of their native species as possible. This is the urgent truth, not just a marketing tool. Thus, protecting land that is good for other species is also good for people. This is why I posted these non-federal initiative ideas: { Link } { Link } Existing protected areas can be our core areas, our starting point, for rewilding portions of the US.

Yes, I am aware of those changes in architecture as a forest matures, but here in the northeast there are no known species which require that to live, and, as far as we know, there never have been, not even birds and small mammals. However, as I stated above, maybe we cannot know for sure if there are/were invertebrates or microorganisms that require old growth. Those structural changes you mention are beneficial, as you say, but even so, there are ways to manage forest to accelerate development of old growth structural characteristics. By selectively removing trees to release others from competition, maintaining a diversity of tree sizes, creating canopy gaps of various sizes, leaving some standing dead trees and some downed logs, etc., old growth architecture can be replicated (or at least approximated). So, at least here in the northeast, true "old growth" may not be necessary to provide for all of the known flora and fauna. This research on managing for old growth characteristics comes out of the U. of Mass. Dept. of Natural Resources. That said, I was agreeing with you that we should leave what little old growth is left. Destroy it all, and we lose the opportunity to study true old growth for a very long time.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Yes, I think people might think that this is a sort of virtual tour that you can do from the couch (see comment #9). Before demoting, please read the idea carefully, as well as the additional information provided in comment #6.

'Outdoors' is what professional Landscape Architects 'do' for a living. It should be required that we are a member of any team that is assembled to review, consult, design, or manage any 'outdoor' system or idea. Best Management Practices (BMP's), conservation understanding, environmentally sensitive design, creative thinking, and effective communication are what we are trained to do. Professional Landscape Architects are environmental design experts need to be a part of any new public or private initiative that the government creates from now into the future.

Why are these lands in such good condition? Because they are part of someone's ranch. The grazing rights on BLM land were allotted to adjacent ranches under the Taylor Grazing Act. Each ranch coordinates with the BLM to develop a grazing plan that provides habitat for all the species on the range. Each ranch is managed differently, which leads to a diversity of habitat and increased biodiversity. These lands have been managed under this system for over 50 years. Obviously, the grazing is sustainable, else these lands would not still be wilderness-quality. This proposal seems to suggest that we change a functioning system. But you cannot preserve an ecosystem by changing the way it is managed. Protecting these lands from mineral exploitation would be good for them, but anything that threatens the current system of management could destroy them. Wilderness designation is not the right tool. We need a new designation that protects the land by acknowledging and protecting the important role played by the local humans who have historically cared for the land.

These tax incentives are an inexpensive use of federal taxes to promote agriculture production, wildlife habitat and retention of open space. The Montana Land Reliance holds conservation easements protecting nearly 850,000 acres of productive agricultural and timber lands.

This idea is right on in the world of land trusts and private land conservation. The private match requirement should be eliminated altogether or amended to allow donated land value as a match to the FRPP funds. This simple fix doesn't congressional action.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

The local community park, trail or natural open space represents the first and most accessible opportunity for Americans to get outdoors and connect with nature. These local park jurisdictions are the grassroots of great American park endeavors. Without the facilitation and financial support of federal resources, local park providers will continue to struggle as the lowest infrastructure priority, competing with other municipal services for diminishing fiscal resources. For the majority of Americans, their first experiences beyond their backyard (if they have one) will be on an urban trail or in a local park. The urban core has been neglected as a focus for land conservation for decades yet the bulk of humans are exposed to nature in the city as their first steps to recreating in natural landscapes outside the urban area. If this Presidential directive to get Americans outdoors is to be successful, it must help bridge the gap between the urban environments where the bulk of Americans reside and the great outdoors of our national parks, forests and larger landscapes. Financial resources need to pour in to local park jurisdictions where dense populations reside and the first steps to outdoor experiences can be encouraged and enhanced.

We must tie our National Historic, Scenic, Recreational, and Rails-to-Trails trails system to First Lady Michelle Obama's "Let's Go!" campaign. Our national trails link our environment with our shared cultural heritage, and our personal and community health and well-being. Jean Fulton, Executive Director, El Camino Real de Tierra Adentro Trail Association (CARTA) Mesilla, New Mexico.

For me, walking these historic battlefields is a spiritual experience that every American should have the opportunity to partake in. We still have time to preserve these sacred parcels of land for posterity, so our children and generations to come will have the opportunity to learn why brother fought against brother for the ideals which they held sacred and to create the great nation that we have become. It is so easy to take for granted that these battlefields will be with us forever but nothing could be further from the truth. We must act now to preserve this part of our heritage so the memory of the great events that happened there will be remembered forever.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Hello America's Great Outdoors, This message is from a group of history educators in Pennsylvania who have developed a Civil War project that is in the process of raising a modest amount of money to build prototypes for gathering additional partners. Our project, the Civil War Augmented Reality Project, is intended to enhance the experiences of visitors to Civil War sites. It is also intended to increase attendance and revenue for historic sites by offering both "high" and "low" tech experiences to best reach the majority of the population. We feel that our project is fulfilling a need that educators, park workers, technology enthusiasts, and Civil War enthusiasts have discussed in the past: How can historic sites both raise public interest in their institutions through technology, and not alienate the non-technical history fans? We have worked hard on the answer, and are interested in promoting our creative solutions. We would like to make clear that the project is not intended solely for Pennsylvania. It is our hope that the project will expand to other venues, as we feel that we have the ability to use our ideas to enhance the experiences of all Americans at historic sites. If you have a chance, please check out our blog: { Link } And our fun, Civil-War flavored funding campaign on Kickstarter: { Link } If you think that our project has merit, we would be delighted if you could help spread the word, and give us a vote. Here are a few other links of interest regarding our project: A recent newspaper article: { Link } Other recent blog posts: { Link } { Link } { Link } { Link } { Link } Our Facebook page: { Link } Our Twitter account page: { Link } Thanks very much for considering us! The Civil War Augmented Reality Project _____ - Hershey High School and York College of Pennsylvania Art Titzel- Hershey Middle School Jay Vasellas- Red Lion Area High School and York College of Pennsylvania

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Keep designated wilderness, all 110 million acres, as wild as possible. That means keeping the machines out, the cycles, ATVs, cell towers and cell phones, recreational cabins, visitor centers, permanent climbing anchors, motor boats, chainsaws, helicopters, backhoes, and military trainings. Out! We don't want watered down wilderness, or WINO (wilderness in name only). We want the real thing: big bold dangerous get lost in it wilderness. Wilderness is the way the earth really is, without all the "improvements" and distractions. Please don't go there if you want to ride around on your machines or talk to your friends on your cell phone. Don't go there if you can't handle it. Stay away if you want the men and women in uniform to come rescue you. Or if you are afraid of wild animals. Let's stop the slow degradation, a new lookout here, a chainsaw there, a communications tower, an artificial watering hole for the critters, a research project that depends on helicopters, a steel bridge, a four-lane trail, big signs everywhere, permanent outfitters camp . . . Stop! Federal agencies must manage these lands so they are wilder today than they were yesterday. They should have to prove to Congress and the President every year that they are wilder and wilder.

My wife and I enjoy hiking. As a matter of fact, we just got back from a road trip where we did several hikes in National Parks. During the trip, I saw thousand of acres of land that sit empty, unused, lonely and desolate. It's great we have all these National Parks for hiking, but can't we also open a few more places where I can ride my mountain bike and/or ride my dirt bike or take my wife for a drive in the jeep? There really is plenty of land out there and it would be nice if we could access the remoter areas that are inaccessible to hiking. My wife and I drive off road to enjoy nature, camp and see new places. It's just another way we like to recreate, in addition to hiking. And let's face it, hiking can get boring and tiring after a while. It's nice to mix it up with other activities. Our little jeep is perfect for carrying a tent and sleeping bags into the harder to reach areas where we can set up camp and enjoy the wilderness. Let's all support this kind of multiple use! Families and those unable to hike long distances (disabled) shouldn't be discriminated against and need a way to enjoy the outdoors.

Please note that wilderness is clearly defined in the Wilderness Act. It is "an enduring resource" that must be managed "as will leave them unimpaired for future use and enjoyment as wilderness." The driving force of the Act is to preserve their "wilderness character." These are places "where the earth and community of life are untrammled by man, where man is a visitor who does not remain . . . retaining its primal character and influence, without permanent improvements or human habitation . . . with the imprint of man's work substantially unnoticeable." They are places with "outstanding opportunities for solitude or a primitive and unconfined type of recreation." All new wilderness areas must meet these standards. There should be no "wilderness lite" where machines are excused, managers can take short cuts, and commercial interests dominate. Call them natural resource areas, national parks, whatever, but don't call them wilderness.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Thank you, for your thoughtful comment, which brings up the question, who are the absolutists here? It's okay to prefer "settled land" with machines and conveniences, and certainly the vast majority of our public lands already accommodate this preference. My question in starting this discussion is, do all public lands have to be that way? Millions of Americans prefer what the Wilderness Act calls "untrammelled" lands and want to keep them so. While many of us appreciate the benefits of civilization, we want to leave them behind occasionally, to strip away the illusion that we humans control nature rather than the other way around. As Wallace Stegner said, "Something will have gone out of us as a people if we ever let the remaining wilderness be destroyed."

Thank you. Here's a brief attempt. Let me know if I should jump to another idea. "Wilderness is unspoiled wild nature," says wilderness guide Howie Wolke, "with no roads or houses or strip malls, where natural forces rule, often amidst a magnificent physical setting. . . . [B]ecause wilderness designation is our highest form of land protection, wilderness areas are our most special wild landscapes." The idea of saving wildlands, keeping them wild, without developments that make it easy or convenient (yes, even without clean restrooms and phones), is a strong, constant imperative, going all the way back to American writers like Emerson and Thoreau. Some thinkers even express the idea that being savvy and self-confident in wild, dynamic nature is what has formed the American character and deep independence. In any event, Aldo Leopold and Bob Marshall brought the idea of saving wilderness into the 20th century. Their ideas -- that some lands should be "self-willed," that is, managed for their wild qualities separate from national forests or national parks -- took hold and eventually resulted in the Wilderness Act of 1964, which set aside 9 million acres "in contrast with those areas where man and his own works dominate the landscape." With great work by the Wilderness Society under executive director Stewart Brandborg, these 9 million acres have grown to 60 million, then 100 million, and now 110 million acres of federal land. President Obama signed the latest designation of 2.1 million acres of new wilderness just last year. We now have 756 wilderness areas, the smallest being the 5-acre Pelican Island Wilderness in Florida and the largest being the Wrangell St. Elias, almost 10 million acres, in Alaska. Only 6 states are without at least one wilderness area. Wilderness is a tribute to our humility, that we don't know everything, that we are a part of, not in control or dominion over, nature. As we develop other lands and manage nature to suit our preferences or whims, wilderness is where we leave nature alone. It's a baseline on the way nature works, our window on nature's own essential complexity. For me personally, wilderness is where we unplug ourselves, where we experience unadulterated reality, the world as it is. It's only when we silence the machines, use our legs to circumnavigate, our eyes to absorb the splendors of the wild, our ears to listen to its murmuring subtlety, our skin to feel its breath, that we know ourselves and our place in the universe.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

we need to keep the trails open to all the ohv are great for the handicap and just the older people to get out and enjoy the out doors.They also help the hunters get to there spots and its the outdoor people that pay and donate there money and time to help the outdoors weather with trees or animals.hunting clubs acroos this country spend milloins a year on just habit repair.I for one help the wood ducks and we put out over 1000 new nest boxes every year to help the population come back and we are also helping the elk heards grow each year so that our grandkids can enjoy them like we have.

Battlefield preservation isn't just a cause for Civil War buffs. It also appeals to environmentalists and anyone with a love for green space and smart growth policies. I've never forgotten one day driving south from the increasing suburban sprawl around Frederick, which is gobbling up the countryside like a hungry monster, and then suddenly encountering green fields, trees and a peaceful river -- the Monocacy battlefield. Similarly, the Balls Bluff Regional Park is a remarkable oasis of unspoiled forest, riverside cliffs and trails wedged between the sprawl around Leesburg and the Potomac River. And it's amazing to drive west from Washington, through the suburbs of northern Virginia, and suddenly come upon the unspoiled terrain at Manassas, which still shows you something of what nineteenth century America looked like. For those reasons, although I have trouble remembering when I last read a volume of Civil War history, I contribute towards battlefield preservation every year.

Family OHVing is the best quality time that a parent can spend with a teenage child. I was so impressed when I saw a 40 something year old woman and her 15 year old son riding quads at Hollister on the weekends, I remember what I was doing at that age and it wasn't with my parents. OHV is a great sport and I hope that our children will be able to participate in it as we have. Save and preserve our lands for our children. Ride on!!

Really encourage each and every state to adopt our TX Master Naturalist program. Participation in this program has taught me more about plants, animal species, geology, meteorology and much more. I volunteer and enjoy nature. I look forward to sharing the knowledge I have gained with others and hope to foster a love of nature and outdoors with everyone I come into contact with as a Master Naturalist. Outstanding program and saves our State so much money.

We have travelled and toured many Civil War battlefields including just returning from a trip to VA. It is important to preserve these historic spots for the generations to come. Once they are gone, they are gone forever. It is important for children and adults to understand the the history of this great land. Hopefully the next few years with the 150th anniversary will increase interest in these great sites.

Get the kids out into the natural world. let there be an incentive to take more of the classroom outside. Schools should all have gardens, grow vegetables etc.

People are unwilling to curb their use of recreational resources until they are personally and negatively affected (get sick or hurt). It is up to the land managers to have an effective educational message that illustrates our destructive habits and then for the land managers to have a zero tolerance for destructive actions- actions that damage federal lands.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

There is nothing wrong with employing seniors for trail work on both motorized and non-motorized trails. Many seniors already volunteer for such work and/or do it on their own! I don't believe we need more motorized trails, but there is a need for comprehensive maps, signs regarding trail difficulty as well as trail maintenance. There is a greater need for non-motorized trails and trailheads. People need to be able to get out of the vehicle in order to really connect with nature.

There is plenty of access in the lands, including wilderness areas. Very few wilderness areas are inaccessible from a vehicle, since most have a road right up to the boundary, if not many roads and/or a road that circles it! Many wilderness areas can be crossed on foot in a day, others in a few days. Other lands have more vehicle access, more roads; most places where on a day hike across the land you cross many roads open to vehicles. There are other lands where access by motor vehicles is unlimited (Open Off road Vehicle areas) where vehicle play is allowed. My experience with dirt bikes is that they can cause extreme damage to the open trail and then the rider "steers around" the erosion or creates a short cut around it. Very few dirt bike riders recognize the damage that these machines do and many do not follow the "Tread Lightly" ethics.

Our environment would be vastly improved if all adults would become involved in the Master Naturalist program. There simply is no better vehicle to teach citizen scientists to become better stewards of their natural resources. I have been involved in the Texas program for 8 years and continue to be amazed at what can be done when citizens receive the proper training and support in caring for their environment.

This topic could be linked to others such as: Trails, Open Space, Livable Communities

Trails and open space near cities help build a citizenry that uses and supports open space of all kinds. Start where people live and build support for a connected open space network.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

According to the Forest Service's own studies, in the year 2001 only 13% of National Forest receptionists visited current wilderness areas. Why eliminate uses such as mountain bike riding, snowmobiling, automobile camping, motorcycling, 4-wheeling, automobile scenic viewing, group hiking and camping, and many, many other uses for 13% of the forest visitors? If 13% of Wilderness users in the National Forest are to use 42% of the land, then the other 87% of users are squeezed onto 58% of the land. Does this seem logical? Remember, these are all forms of family recreation and as such bring families closer together while allowing for exercise and promoting fitness. OHV use is a legitimate, sustainable use of appropriate public lands, particularly on National Forests and Bureau of Land Management Units.

- Motorized recreation is a healthy family activity and provides a great opportunity for families to "get away from it all," and to experience the great outdoors.
- OHVs, like other recreationists, seek opportunities to not only enjoy the riding experience, but also opportunities to learn more about cultural and historical context, take in scenic views, observe wildlife, camp, hunt, fish and other activities.
- The overwhelming majority of OHVs are conservationists, who seek to preserve the same outdoor experiences they enjoy for children and grandchildren.
- OHVs are volunteers. OHV clubs and organizations groom and maintain trails, trailheads and other facilities as well as adopt trails and provide the tools and experience needed for constructing and maintaining all sorts of recreational trails; not just OHV opportunities.
- ATV and off-highway motorcycle riding encourages and promotes physical fitness
- OHVs provide the opportunity for Americans of all ages and physical capabilities to enjoy the outdoors.

OHV access is the best way to enjoy our public lands responsibly. Let's go ride!

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Keeping public lands open to OHV (Off-Highway Vehicles) will have positive financial, environmental, and social impact. By definition, public lands are to be used to fulfill the needs of the public. To keep lands public, basic yet minimal regulation must occur. The tendency has been over regulation and on some extremes, individuals believe public lands should be closed to humanity, allowing roads to deteriorates and over grow. This extreme thinking is not a responsible use of our lands and resources. On the other side is no regulation, allowing irresponsible pillaging and raping of the land. Often the best response is somewhere in the middle. I am 29 year-old male that enjoys riding dirt bike or taking my jeep into the wilderness. My friends are like me; they enjoy doing the same activities and have the same respect for our environment. In fact, most organizations of people who enjoy OHV recreation have the exact same respect for our lands. Going off trails, littering, harassing wildlife, destroying property are all unacceptable behaviors among the vast majority of OHVers. Why? Because we respect the land and know that this type of behavior only adds to reasons of why the land should be closed. However, anyone that spends a lot of time in our country's great outdoors will know that individuals who behave irresponsibly are rare and often punished. We cannot make decisions that affect the majority based on the poor behavior of a minority. There are by far more positive results that come from allowing our lands to be open to OHVs. The positive financial impact is both public and private. The selling of permits to operate OHVs helps to maintain these government lands. People travel to areas where they can operate their OHV, which brings the sale of food, lodging, and gas to local business. I live in a small community that thrives on the winter tourist season of snowmobilers that travel from a 500-mile radius to enjoy the use of both public and private lands. This has a positive financial impact on our community. If trails are shut down, communities will feel the financial impact. Take the positive example from the state of Michigan. The Upper Peninsula opens much of its public lands to OHV and this is the reason I and a large group of friends travel nearly 500 miles to enjoy time in the Michigan U.P. Michigan takes a proactive approach to making it known that they welcome OHVs and sees a positive financial impact on both the private and public sectors. Allowing our public forest road and trails systems to be closed could have catastrophic affects on the environment. Take for example forest fires. How is one to fight fire with out the use of roads to travel? Our great outdoors is vast and currently as an excellent infrastructure of roads and trails. Hard time and money has been spent making these roads and trails. Let us appreciate the time and money spent as a community of people who enjoy the use of these roads and trails to interact with the great outdoors in different ways. Really that is the bottom line, OHV recreation is a meaningful way for families and friends to spend time together and enjoy our great outdoors.

Incredible opportunity for kids!

The Texas Master Naturalist program has gotten me involved in my community in ways I never would have thought possible. Not only am I learning about native plants and animals; I'm meeting new people as well.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Preserve our history at all costs.

yes you are so correct. I too have lived here surrounded by wilderness all of my life. I take care-tread lightly and protect the environment. I can not see any harm done in the 40 years of me on my dirt bike. I have ridden the same trail for over 30 years and it looks the same as when I first started. The tree huggers are just using the "protect our environment" to get what they want, any excuse they can find. We have Enough closed wilderness areas to last them several generations. I still think the ATV manufactures should help fight the ecofreaks, it is in their best interest.

Deer and Bear huggers hmmm, you know if they all hug a wild bear-problem solved. Come on don't you "huggers" have enough wilderness?? really? Oh wait, we can't ride anywhere, we have to be like you, live like you, dress like you,etc.

I agree! These people are so narrow-minded, they only think of themselves. EVERYONE should be able to enjoy the wilderness. I will continue to fight road closures so my children can enjoy the outdoors just like I have.

I agree, maybe we should take trails away from non-OHV groups and make them for OHV only use! They think that everyone is as fit as them, are not handicapped or elderly. Wake up tree huggers, think you will be able to hike when you are 80? I love the outdoors and have been riding since I was 8. I respect the land, tread lightly, pack out dried food trash (wonder where those came from?), help maintain the trail and report those who abuse the land (including hikers). Can Yamaha, Honda, Kawasaki, etc help us fight these people?

I agree and I fully support Blue Ribbon Coalition for trying to help us so we can ALL share the roads and trails. The 70's were great, we had trails and roads open and you know what? The roads and trails looks the same then as they do now. No further damage-the same, same animals, etc. But, guess we need change huh? I for one don't want to let these narrow minded people dictate how we use the great outdoors.

I am so tired of hearing how OHVs have ruined the environment,etc. I have seen many a hiking trail that was an eyesore. I have been riding the same trail for 30 years and it looks the same as when I first started (I have the pictures to prove it). My bike is not loud as it has a noise dampened muffler, I shut it off when hikers approach and pack out trash. What other areas need protecting, you have closed off millions of acres already!! You just want everyone to act and think the same way you do. I will continue to fight road and trail closures!

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

I am so tired of the "tree huggers" trying to make everyone do as they do by shutting down roads and trails. This is supposed to be a free country. How are the handicapped, elderly and children supposed to enjoy the wilderness without a OHV??? Is the wilderness only available to those who can walk it?? When I ride my dirt bike I do it with respect to others on the trail, pack out trash when I find it and help maintain the trail. I do enjoy nature and my bike is no more noisy than the yelling of the hikers, etc. How many "endangered" species have you stepped on? Don't give me the crap about endangered species that we are destroying. I bet that is what happened to the dinosaurs-it was the OHV users.

I disagree with new parks. The ones we have are not being taking care of already. They are not managed properly and do not create enough jobs and revenue. American farmers and ranchers do a much better job taking care of land and preserving it for the next generation then the government will. Why are you people slapping the hand that feeds you. The farmers and ranchers put food on your table not the government. Remember that some day when your kids are hungry because there is not enough you voted against the farmers and ranchers. Everybody needs to wake up and smell the coffee food is why america is a wealthy nation.

I think hiking around with heavy packs also worsens erosion. I have an idea, lets shut off all wilderness areas to everyone, I am sure we have pictures of wilderness that we can look at and enjoy. It is urgent that we keep our roads open to everyone to enjoy. Erosion is part of the earth, get used to it!!

If I could ride my bike in church that would be awesome! Seriously though, why can't you share the trail? Great that you are able-bodied and can hike, what about those who can not? I guess they are not allowed to enjoy the wilderness-too bad for them huh? Don't give me the sacred ground bull, this country is for everyone, not just you.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

It seems that some people want to shut people out of the forests and other outdoor recreation areas over that last few years. Gates are going up all over. Some companies that own parts of the forest are closing their section off unless you buy a \$35 or \$60 pass to get through their gate to access the forest. Rather than cut a tree up and get it off the road, a gate goes up and the road is closed. These National forests are our National forests; and we should have the right to use them responsibly, not be shut out or have to be rich so that we can pay \$35 or \$60 or what ever the cost is so that your family can go through a forest companies gate or paper companies gate to get to the National forest because they bought up the land around it. My family uses OHV to enjoy the outdoors. We go huckleberry picking. We just go for rides to see new areas of the forest that we have not seen. We check out the wildlife. One summer we rode to every fire look out on the map we had. Our children noticed real fast that they were all different, and that it was because of the surrounding area and the hill they were built on. My parents love to take the grandchildren on rides to show them the beauty of the forests, to see animals, and go berry picking. They have shown them many historical places, and old mining places dating back to the 1860's. They have seen where Wyatt Earp had his White Elephant Salloon and gone through ancient cedar groves. I also use my OHV to get to a base camp. Then go out on foot from there to hunt. I ride responsibly, and teach my kids to do the same. Every spring the OHV shop that I bought my OHV from holds a clean up ride. They make it fun for the whole family while everyone is out riding, cleaning up trails. This is all volunteer work. We should not be shut out of the forests, forest roads should not be closed because some one does not want to remove a fallen tree from the road, and we should not have to be rich to be able to have access to our National Forests and recreation areas. Furthermore, OHV allow people with disabilities to experience the great outdoors. I have a friend who got paralyzed falling off a two step ladder, with an OHV, he can experience more of the forests now rather than see just what he could wheel himself through or we could push him through.

My thoughts exactly. I am tired of being told what I can or can't do by tree huggers. They are the most narrow minded brain washed people I know.

News flash. Research your family tree a bit and I bet you don't have to look back very far to find that your ancestors had to hunt and trap as a way of survival. Hunting still to this day for a lot of folks is a way to feed their children. Not everyone can afford to buy meat to put on the table everynight of the week for their family. We were put on this earth with the animals and they have been used as food since the beginning of time it's the way it was intended. Just recently people like yourself have adopted the idea that its ok to see a wolf eat a deer or a elk but its not ok to see a father put one on the table for his family to eat. Hunters like myself actively support wildlife because we care about them and want to have the wildlife around for the gerations to come. People like Patricia call it "killing" to make it sound bad. Don't get caught up in that talk and remember it is called hunting and it is natural to nature to do so. Something to also remember is we humans are also classified as mammals we to are an animal and it no different for us to hunt our prey then it is an eagle or wolf. I disagree with keeping humans out of the wild and nature because we are a big part of it.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

OHV's do not make species extinct, gosh try to blame everything on us. I am done trying to point out why we enjoy our recreation. You will never understand and I will NEVER understand your point of view. I still think we can share and share alike, isn't that what our parents taught us? I am-Republican, conservative and Patriotic-I will stand next to any soldier to fight for this country. I am an educated college graduate and very common-sense. I eat meat because I like it with my salad. Nuff said, no sense in further discussion. I will continue to fight road closures, but I also would like you to have trails that you can enjoy without OHV's.

If you have your way, we won't be able to ride our Ohv's anyway. You are telling me that the millions of acres that are already off limit are not enough? What about the elderly, handicapped and children that won't be able to enjoy wilderness because they can't hike through it? I guess maybe a picture is good enough for them huh? I am not talking about strip mines, clear cuts, etc, I am talking about keeping existing roads and trails open so we can enjoy them. Believe it or not, I tread lightly, maintain trails, pack out others trash, shut my bike off when people pass, etc. Why can't we share the trails? What if there was a group that wanted to keep YOU off the trails, how would you feel then?

Your head is in the sand-elderly do enjoy 4-wheeling, I have seen it first hand. So I guess no one can enjoy the wilderness because we might harm some creature. How much harm are you doing to the human race? Of course I know a lot of you don't think that humans should even be on this planet. Have you even ridden an OHV? It is fun and to see the smiles on kids as they ride is priceless. Also, if the wilderness can not be maintained because of road closures, wildfires will certainly harm your precious endangered species. What if you are hurt in the wilderness, guess what you will have to wait until someone can "walk" to where you are to help, how much time would that take? All I am saying is why can't we share or do you want it all?

OHV use promotes economic growth and gives the american people a way to see and enjoy our National Forest lands. Wilderness promotes nothing....except the potential for more job lose as more area is locked up.

I am sorry to hear about your wife. This is exactly what I have been saying-what about people who are handicapped, elderly, etc. that can not hike around. I guess they are not allowed to enjoy the wilderness. I can't tell you how many times I have seen hikers chasing deer,etc. and they blame us? We are in and out of an area much quicker than hikers. I feel we have less impact than hikers with their yelling, going off trails, leaving trash. I have packed out lots of "freeze-dried" trash on my bike. Anyway, can't we all enjoy the trails without kicking the other off?

Right now our Public Open spaces are under assault by Big Energy companies looking to keep cheap land for solar and wind. In the meantime, millions of rooftops and other already built environments are being ignored as prime real estate for renewable energy. This is because Big Energy wants full ownership. We need to cover our rooftops with solar panels, before we bulldoze and scrape any open spaces. This is a no- brainer.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Thank you, well stated. A few can ruin it for everyone. When I am on the trail I respect others, when I see horses on the trail, I will shut my bike off until they pass. I do ride slow and the muffler on my bike is quiet. We can all use the trails if we respect one another. Let's keep our trails open so everyone can enjoy them.

The greatest inheritance I can leave my kids is to be able to enjoy the outdoors however they would like. This INCLUDES OHV, not just a narrow view of the wilderness. Stop trying to make everyone think and act like you. What has happened to individuality?? I enjoy riding my bike, it brings joy to me and my family. I am not trying to force my views on you, DON'T force them on me!!

Umm OHV's already pay registration tags that is supposed to help with this. I feel that hikers and bicyclers should also pay for a registration tag. This would bring in more revenue. I, like many OHV people maintain the trail and report those who are damaging it (which includes hikers). Come on people let everyone use the trail, not just those who are able-bodied.

We all pay taxes and have a right to enjoy our OHV. We need to fight the anti-ohv groups every chance we get.

Why can't we have both? For those who want to hike, etc share the trail with the OHV groups. When I was younger, I did alot of backpacking, but I also did alot of dirt bike riding. You have made an excellent point, not everyone is able-bodied to hike or even walk. Why can't they also enjoy our great outdoors? I have friends and family who have never seen the magestic mountain passes because they are elderly or handicapped. To see their joy when they gaze upon a beautiful mountain is so uplifting. When I am riding my bike, I always respect hikers, horse-back riders,etc. I stop, turn off my bike and wait until they pass. I also pack trash out that others have left and maintain the trail. Most of my friends that ride do the same. I hate to see trails closed so that only the young able-bodied can enjoy them-how sad.

Yes,yes. My dad started me out on a mini bike when I was 8 years old. We would ride the trails together and those are some of my best memories. I started my two daughters out on the same mini bike and we rode the same trails. When the stress has got to me, just riding in the mountains makes it all go away. I have taught my kids to respect others on the trail and to pack out trash left by others. We also maintain the trail and report those who do not stay on the path and are being destructive. Please keep our trails open so EVERYONE can enjoy them!!

- I'm not quite sure how using motorized vehicles promotes physical fitness. - Have you ever been x-country skiing in a quiet stretch of trail only to be practically run over by a snow machine blazing around a corner at 25 miles an hour? Not real pleasant and not exactly "compatible." - I have never heard a quiet ATV, dirt bike, jet ski, snow machine, etc... in my life. EVER! They're all obnoxious. That said, I do believe there is room on public lands for ORVs, OHVs, whatever acronym you want to use. Just realize that these uses are in direct contrast to many purposes of public lands - protecting areas from development and noise pollution; preservation of wildlife habitat, water quality, air quality; and for recreation like climbing, hiking, skiing, backpacking, photography, etc.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

The Land and Water Conservation Fund Stateside Assistance program provides matching grants to local and state governments for the acquisition and development of parks that provide outdoor recreation resources. Local and state parks represent one of the best ways to fight obesity, connect children and families to nature and develop future stewards for America's great outdoors.

You should consider connecting the Flint Hills as a unit to the existing Tall Grass Prairie Reserve and bison herd in Oklahoma South of it. That would give a large enough land area to sustain a much larger number of bison and would allow the inclusion of mature bulls in the mix that smaller areas preclude.

As a long time resident of Michigan's Copper Country which is now a part of the Keweenaw National Historical Park I am excited to see the many opportunities there are to share the area I love with so many others. The Keweenaw National Historical Park has provided the open door to share the my Copper Country with the world. It is partnership parks like we have in Michigan's Keweenaw Peninsula that allow so many folks to be involved in enabling others to learn and share in the many cultural and natural resources that exist in our local area.

Corps programs, such as the California Conservation Corps (CCC), are excellent ways to re-engage youth with nature, teach them employable skills while protecting our heritage, and give them the responsibility of civic duty. I was one of the youth that benefitted from the CCC, and now I have the honor of being a crew supervisor in that same program. Everyday I get to be with urban and suburban youth as they make discoveries in nature for the first time. Most recently, several saw their first bear while we were building a trail near the border of the Siskiyou Wilderness. Corps programs instill so many of the values that we as Americans hope our youth receive. Sadly, however, corps programs are always struggling for funding. We can continue to be arm-chair critics of this recent out-of-touch with nature generation or we can support corps programs that develop these youth into the responsible citizens that are necessary for the perpetuity of our nation.

Great comments from all three of you. My point, and I suppose it is skewed because I live in Colorado, is that thinking you need to purchase a \$300 sleeping bag and \$400 tent is the only way you can camp. Yes, a 15 degree sleeping bag is a nice item to have when camping at 10,000 feet elevation, but there are more cost effective ways to getting that \$300 bag and that is renting it. Yard sales and thrift stores are also an excellent option.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

I agree, education is key and it has to be taught in school, not in after school clubs. We must incorporate ecology into all levels of education using the land, ecosystems, and cultural resources that surround us. I just spend 7 days with 14 high school students on a National Forest allotment discussing Rangelands. We put book learning like Carbon Cycling, Nitrogen Cycling, Watersheds, rangeland types, and physical features of a landscape right in front of them. We discussed biotic factors (plants and animals) and abiotic factors (soil, sun and precipitation) and witnessed the affect on soil which affects plants, which are used by herbivores. We discussed Multi-use, recreation, hunting, hiking, off road vehicle use, ranching, fishing and wildlife viewing. We saw the affects of misuse by some of these uses and discussed the need for educating users in how to be responsible. These are things our government is managing through agencies like the Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management. Why not teach citizens what our government is responsible for? Students participated in an ongoing carbon cycle study using state of the art near infrared spectroscopy. Students surveyed a riparian area, sampled and recorded stream bank vegetation, floodplain tree density and performed a substrate count. Using the collected data they evaluated the condition of the stream and then discussed how to preserve or restore this area. Oh and these students received 1/2 credit elective or used it for science credit recovery, in two weeks! Expeditionary Learning is a great direction to move education. { Link } { Link } Look what wonderful people in Idaho have created for teachers in the classroom! { Link }

I agree. { Link } Go to this great Idea and promote it! We need to be teaching ecology and the history, etc of our lands and how science is used to form management decisions. Oh, yea, history, science, reading and Writing, all subjects in school. Why not incorporate field trips that remove the student from the brick and mortar classroom and put them into the land that provides life? Let's develop some lesson plans, learning objectives, etc and share with each other to move this along. K-12 is where to start.

I don't know this area or the art project that the artist Christo is contemplating. But I do live in the area of Tejon Ranch where he had his 1991 "The Umbrella Project". This visual art project had an impact, not negatively on the environment – but positively upon the people who were privileged enough to be there and experience it. When completed the land was restored to its original condition.

I fully agree with this. Public school educators should not have to jump through hoops to use Public Lands as an extension of the classroom. No permit should be required and all rules and regulations need to be followed.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

I have been involved as an instructor in the Texas Master Naturalist Program since its inception and must say that this program is one of the best vehicles to attract citizens, equip them with knowledge about local natural resources, then send them out in partnership with various federal, state, and local agencies to accomplish great things on the land. I am proud to be associated with such a wonderful program designed to connect the public with my agency and the natural resources we all love. I have not only witnessed great conservation being done by these dedicated volunteers, I've also enjoyed great friendships because of my involvement.

It worked for Colorado. Tax and fees are regressive. Citizens in Colorado know that playing the lottery ensures great outdoor facilities. Let's use what we know will work and everyone will understand.

Key is to teach ecology. Each organism affects another. We need to shy away from the conquer kill and take attitude with out tempering it with caring for the land that provides the game or plants that we are there consuming or collecting. And lets not equate conservation with removal of all human activity.

Many school use journaling as a method for students to reaffirm what they have been learning about or observations. I hope it is not new. How is nature writing different than other writing styles? We just need to teach students to research both sides of issues and how to make a fact based decision and form their own opinion.

More field trips linked to the land and ecology of each special area of the United States is what will start the seed to grow in young minds. History of management not just the Native Americans, but early Euro/Americans, what they did right, what they did wrong. How Science is involved in forming management decisions then and now. I don't know why there is not a standard curriculum that encompasses these things into science and history classes at several grades between K-12.

Much of the cause of the increase in damage to public lands caused by reckless and criminal OHV use is due to lack of funds to patrol these areas and prosecute OHV riders who are where they shouldn't be. If we begin to throw some of these criminals behind bars, or take their OHVs away, then perhaps other riders will stop ignoring the law too. And if there is less destruction caused by OHV riders, then the rest of us will have less reason to object to the creation of new OHV routes. OHV users on this site claim that transgressors are a small minority of all users. This idea gives us all an opportunity to see whether they are being honest about that appraisal.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

OHV use is a legitimate, sustainable use of appropriate public lands, particularly on National Forests and Bureau of Land Management Units. Motorized recreation is a healthy family activity and provides a great opportunity for families to “get away from it all,” and to experience the great outdoors. OHVers, like other recreationists, seek opportunities to not only enjoy the riding experience, but also opportunities to learn more about cultural and historical context, take in scenic views, observe wildlife, camp, hunt, fish and other activities. The overwhelming majority of OHVers are conservationists, who seek to preserve the same outdoor experiences they enjoy for children and grandchildren. OHVers are volunteers. OHV clubs and organizations groom and maintain trails, trailheads and other facilities as well as adopt trails and provide the tools and experience needed for constructing and maintaining all sorts of recreational trails; not just OHV opportunities. ATV and off-highway motorcycle riding encourages and promotes physical fitness. OHVs provide the opportunity for Americans of all ages and physical capabilities to enjoy the outdoors.

Once again short sighted greed is at play here instead of thinking beyond ourselves and the Quarter End Statement. Keep the land wild where we can and allow people to enjoy it in a low impact fashion. I ride dirt bikes and mtn bikes, but there are plenty of established areas without having to rip into pristine areas. Let's develop clean energy instead of strip mining our beautiful nation to bits.

Provide federal support for trail associations, without taking them over or mandating how they do things. Federal support could be land management agency collaboration, coordination of training for association managers, coordination of a seasonal volunteer system that combines travel with service learning, or other support that helps the association get their mission accomplished while increasing local ownership of the natural resources.

The Oregon-California trails were the primary routes for populating and connecting the West Coast to America east of the Mississippi River and through development have been effaced by perhaps as much as 90%. Let us act now to preserve these historic arteries of transportation and communication before they disappear completely and in doing so honor the 350,000 plus emigrants who fulfilled the 19th Century American dream of Manifest Destiny.

This is a great need. Education is Key to this an many other ecological concepts. Education people. K-12 lets teach our kids about the land and what needs to be done to manage it.

This is a no-brainer. The battlefields MUST be preserved, they our history, our soul, our reminder. We have lost to many to greed and sprawl and cannot for the memories of who all fought and died on those hallowed grounds afford to lose...anymore.

This is my second year as a Texas Master Naturalist. I especially enjoy programs dealing with elementary schools. I believe they are the hope for conservation and preservation of natural areas and endangered species. The Master Naturalist Program continuing advanced training keeps me learning new things. Volunteering gets me more active in the community. The whole program is very fulfilling while having an impact on conservation.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

We need to educate the population on tools of management. Logging is a tool, grazing is a tool, fire is a tool, so is rest! BLM and Forest Service are managing millions of acres in accordance with federal regulations including EPA guidelines. This could be taught in our public school system so the population is aware of the processes that govern management of public lands. { Link } teach ecology in public schools

We should only add another Federal program if we fund/populate it with folks already on the "dole." CCC should be for folks who would otherwise be on welfare or extended unemployment. Directors and the other staff should be funded from other departments that have been bloated with "jobs" that serve no true function.

With no net loss or gain, trade away or sell small land parcels that are not attached to larger federal lands and acquire acreage adjoining the large tracts. Be strategically smart- don't just add acreage but improve corridors and be habitat-savvy. Think ahead 7 generations and consider the sustainability of both the new wildlands and the new private lands: both systems need to be more economically and environmentally sustainable for this pattern to be mutualistic

Connect conservation districts and local school districts through a sustainable, competitive micro-grant program (\$250) for funding environmental education projects in local elementary schools. Conservation districts in both urban and rural areas are local champions for conservation on public and private lands. They are coordination points for many local, state, and federal initiatives and have well developed communication networks. Elementary schools across the nation have audiences eager to learn about the environment and can be the grass roots for a systemic behavior change towards our environment through knowledge and fun experiences with the outdoors.

Motorized recreation is a healthy family activity and provides a great opportunity for families to "get away from it all," and to experience the great outdoors.

-OHVers are volunteers. OHV clubs and organizations groom and maintain trails, trailheads and other facilities as well as adopt trails and provide the tools and experience needed for constructing and maintaining all sorts of recreational trails; not just OHV opportunities.

-OHVers, like other recreationists, seek opportunities to not only enjoy the riding experience, but also opportunities to learn more about cultural and historical context, take in scenic views, observe wildlife, camp, hunt, fish and other activities.

put your money where your mouth is' is what I say... that's why we pay extra for Green Mountain Power 100% renewable and clean energy... we bought a Neuton* brand electric -battery mower for the yard so we're finished with the smoke, noise, and gasoline for that old style approach... and soon .. we install 5.3 Kw of solar Pv by solarworksny... along with the 2010 hybrid civic.... we are on target for total decline of our energy use (and cost as well) by almost 50%.....

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

sounds like a lot of you folks need to get off your butts and go out for a nice long hike on your own two feet... nothing worse than seeing a bunch of fat and sloppy people who don't apparently give a rat's butt about their health as it is arguing amongst themselves over who needs to do what while no one does anything..... you can leave those obnoxious and noisy, stinky toys in your play pens and shriek horror as I dare you to come out and face the woods and it's creatures on it's terms instead of yours...

Great idea, but I think it needs to be taken a step farther. The federal government should recover land and homes around large urban areas. The houses could then be removed and the land returned back to the way they were before development. This would increase the wilderness areas for those living in major cities and give residents more opportunity to see nature. It would also lessen the massive negative environmental impact large cities have on the land around them. It may result in the removal of a suburb or two, but the environmental gain would be more than worth it.

I completely agree, government has absolutely no place touching private land. My previous comment was an attempt to make those who advocate the federal government requiring the sale of private land for preservation purposes stop and think how it would make them feel if their home was taken from under them. I am quite aware humans and wildlife can coexist in the same area, but many on AGO do not see this. There are numerous ideas on AGO that suggest private rural land be taken for conservation purposes, and I believe if that rural land could be taken, then so too can land in urban areas. Its only fair.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

you make some very good points. It is good to see you have done some research, but a few of your statements are flawed. I am not convinced the UN's studies on carbon emissions are completely accurate. I have had college math and science professors tell me that in order to do a proper study on carbon emissions and global warming, computers significantly more powerful than those that currently exist are needed. There are tens of thousands of variables that need to be taken into consideration, and any study released up to this point has likely omitted many of these in order to reduce computing time. I am not saying some current studies couldn't be correct, but they are likely closer to a guess than a fact given our current technology. Also, livestock like cattle are able to utilize land that can't be used for the production of any other human food (like soybeans). Cattle spend most of their time on land like this and most put on a significant portion of their weight through grazing. By restricting livestock production, there would be literally millions of acres that wouldn't be utilized, making feeding ourselves and the rest of the world that much more difficult. Finally, saying ranchers support diminished biodiversity is blatantly incorrect. What animals do ranchers "control"? Most animals are either protected or regulated by state or federal wildlife organizations, making their "control" not only difficult but illegal. Besides a few flies and other insects, most ranchers make little effort to "control" wildlife population. If anything, ranchers help support increased wildlife biodiversity. Whether it is grabbing a drink at a livestock watering tank or stealing some hay to make it through the winter, many animals benefit from sharing the land with ranchers. Animal movement is also not greatly affected by ranches, as wildlife can move from pasture to pasture with little difficulty. I have yet to witness any wild animal that can't easily go over or under any fence in their path. The average rancher is very concerned about land preservation. Most have families and make it a point to pass land on to their children in better condition than it was when they began. Maybe instead of treating ranchers like an enemy that needs to be removed or altered, they could instead be included in making environmental decisions. After all, they are the ones most familiar with their land and would likely have some valuable input about maintaining its well-being.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

that is quite a bold statement, and one I do not believe you can completely back up. How do you expect to feed the entire world on plants alone? Animals can convert food not fit for human consumption (ex. grass), into food we can consume (unless you plan on grazing the countryside sometime soon). The protein provided by sources such as animal meat is necessary for a healthy body. Blaming the overconsumption of animal meat on ranchers is like blaming a car company for drunk drivers. I think if you were to actually visit a ranch instead of reading about them in a PETA magazine, you would find quite the opposite of what you have described. Wildlife habitat is aided by farmers and ranchers who plant crops and actively monitor prairie conditions. Most ranchers are quite proud of the way they keep up their land, just as those who live in cities are proud of their homes. Ranchers are usually very concerned about water conditions as well, because they are consuming that ground water in their home. I am not telling you to agree with me, but to instead do your research and not make assumptions about a way of life you have never witnessed. Conservation is very important, but it is individuals like you who are absolutely unable to see reality and do more harm than good. (P.S: If you would like to see some proof small mammals such as gophers or prairie dogs are abundant, just give nearly any farmer or rancher a call. They might even give you a couple to keep in your garden)

You are exactly right. What happens when the new horse territory is overrun by horses? Will the government buy more land to put the horses on? At what point will it end? Any wild species without an adequate number of natural predators will overuse the land it lives on until the land is decimated and nearly unable to support them anymore. If land is allowed to be overgrazed, it can take decades for it to recover. This is the reason removing some of a rampantly growing species from time to time is necessary. In the long run, it keeps herd numbers more constant and land quality better, something I think we can all agree is a good thing.

Are you familiar with Nature's Bridge? It was formally known as Yosemite Institute. The program is designed to do just what you are suggesting. It is not just for inner city students, however. It is for any school who want to bring a group of students to the park for exposure, redirecting ideas of what's possible, to learn the interconnectiveness of all nature including humans. It is extraordinary how most students come away changed in some manner; knowing more about themselves, what they are capable of, and how they interact with nature.

Many national parks are threatened by number of visitors traveling in private cars, yet little has been done to encourage use of public transport. National Parks should work with concessionaires within their borders to offer discounts on park lodging (and perhaps other services) to those visitors who show proof of having traveled to the park by bus or train.

Don't forget full funding for historic preservation! Reconnecting to the great outdoors includes reconnecting to the roots of our history and culture, as well as the roots of natural environment. What makes us fully human includes our physical world but also our historical and cultural values.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Funding has been cut so drastically to our National Parks that they in turn have had to reduce their services. Reducing campsites in many places, especially Yosemite, does not promote people to enjoy and recreate in the outdoors. All it really does is make them feel not welcome. We need to increase campsites in our National Parks and Forests, not reduce them. Encouraging people to get out of their cars and walk around, like in Yosemite valley, is another great way to help connect people with the outdoors. The Inyo National Forest is also grossly underfunded, now relying heavily on the non profit group, Friends of the Inyo, for projects and funding. They recently closed almost 100 campsites adjacent to Yosemite national park, at a time when visitation to the Forest and Yosemite is up, mostly due to the economy and the fact that camping is about all many people can afford to do on vacation. This is a prime time to encourage people to get out in the outdoors and camp, but unfortunately, many people returning to their childhood favorite spots find them now closed. Increasing funding to the National Parks and Forests will also produce much needed jobs. As an aside, do we really need the National Forest under the Department of Agriculture anymore? Or would it make more sense to put them under the Department of the Interior?

Yes, a Buffalo Commons National Park is a great idea. Anyone interested in learning the story of the genesis of this idea should read Ann Mathew's Pulitzer Prize finalist book "Where the Buffalo Roam" (1993).

Yvon Chouinard, founder of the clothing company Patagonia, already started a very successful program called "1% for the Planet" which donates 1% of sales revenue to environmental causes. And it's a program open to any organization around the world that wants to join. (see onepercentfortheplanet.org) Rather than forcing consumers to pay a tax, perhaps a better approach is to let responsible organizations have the option to donate some of their proceeds to environmental causes? Of course consumers can voluntarily donate as well, which "feels" much better than paying a tax.

I think that large wilderness areas are a good thing but I also think that there is enough room in the national forests and BLM lands for trails accomodating different modes of transportation. If the needs of those preferring silent soltitude are so insatiable that all of the public land is to be made roadless then I would say that they are a too one sided and selfish. Hiking creates damage to the environment as do other forms of transportation if not managed properly.

But this is about protecting all land. I live in Ohio where, due to cutbacks, all trash receptacles have been removed from state run parks. The idea is "carry in, carry out", but no one wants to. The land is being damaged and no one wants to go to a park. The latrines are full of fast food packages and the ground is decorated in cellophane. Who wants to hike ten miles to see an old sandwich wrapper in a tree? Mandatory trash and recycling containers should be in every state park. It seems so simple....

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

I live in the Eastern Panhandle of Wild, Wonderful WV, and there are four National Parks within half hour, to hour and half, from me. Harper's Ferry, Antietam, Shenandoah and Gettysburg National Parks. My son also works for a National Park, altho not one of these. One of my Great-Granddads was a Rebel, two were Yankees, so I am very much for preserving these National Parks/Civil War Battlefield sites. I agree with the first two posts, that these sites are Hallowed grounds and very patriotic and educational for our Children, Grand-Children, etc;. May God Bless our Troops and America..

I stopped eating beef about 10 years ago. Factory farming gives me the willies. Bring back the small farms! Small crops and ranches are more Earth friendly!

Land is not just for people. We need to share the land with a host of other species. We are all part of a web and need to live together. If we upset the balance beyond return, there is no planet B. I do not think it is most important for people to be amused at such a great expense to habitat. This habitat is where our water comes from, and plants that produce our air.

Preserved Civil War battlefields are tangible links to our country's past.

These are great ideas! The sooner they are implemented the better for all of us, human and animal. Action must be taken before it is too late. We are fast approaching that time.

Yippy! California is on the verge of banning plastic bags! Consumers for canvas unite! We need rid of unnecessary plastics and Styrofoam. Styrofoam you are next, here I come!

These outdoor products are already expensive. Hunters take away "product" from their environment, so naturally the product has to be replenished. A hiker/camper is only taking away memories (hopefully!). Additionally, most "green" products, such as organic, energy efficient and sustainable are already significantly more expensive than standard products. I am afraid that taxing products that are used in "green" recreation will not encourage the people that have not discovered the outdoors and discourage current users. The small tax is a good idea, but it needs to encourage people to make "green" choices such as taxing fertilizers and insecticides. People toss these chemicals on their lawns and gardens. Both insecticides and fertilizers are bad for the environment by adding chemicals that pollute our waters and kill wildlife. Let's tax the stuff that destroys our environment.

Preserving battlefields means preserving history as well as the environment. Battlefields offer opportunities for learning, communing with nature and exercise. It's a win-win for everyone-- including wildlife.

Currently H.B. 4318 in the Congress is proposing to recreate the CCC. The Corps Network website has much good info on current efforts at state and local levels, but a new federal Corps can do much needed conservation work and benefit the youth. The alumni of the New Deal CCC are now part of an organization "CCC Legacy." There are statues in many parks built by the CCC.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

My experience with the Texas Master Naturalist has been a great opportunity to learn about the ecosystems where we live and to see places that are not usually open to the public. It has also been an introduction to the sustained work that goes in our parks and wildlife refuges.

America is a very special place in that we actually have some undeveloped land to support our native wildlife, provide solace, quiet and exercise for the people that work in cities. We must do all we can to make more wilderness and protect the wild lands that we have. Thank you.

I will never forget walking the battlefields of Gettysburg and Antietam with my family. It was awe inspiring to realize that not only was I on the very spot where so many had fought and died, but that I was even able to be there! It was amazing that these places hadn't been turned into strip malls or parking lots. They were being saved so that every American could experience our history. Seeing a movie can be great. But actually being on site is incomparable. But preserving our Civil War Battlefields does more than just save our history. It also preserves nature, promotes conservation of resources and encourages us to get outdoors. The parkland created near so many urban population centers enhances the quality of life for those residents. Local economies are stimulated by the tourism created. The upcoming 150th anniversary commemoration will surely generate even more interest in visiting the battlefields. It would be difficult if not impossible to find a downside to supporting Civil War Battlefield Preservation. With the Sesquicentennial (2011–2015) on the horizon, it is a perfect opportunity to recommit ourselves to our history.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

As a non-OHV user, this has been quite an interesting discussion to follow. There are a number of really great topics in here, and I've learned a lot scrolling down this page. I'm a hiker, backpacker and a climber, and all of these outdoor pursuits have access issues. It's impossible, and wrong, to blame one group for the destruction of trails and adverse impacts on public lands. There will always be hikers who don't pack out their trash, but closing trails to hiking as a result isn't the way to combat the problem. It's with education and organizations like Leave No Trace. My first issue with OHVs as a non-user is, as is commonly mentioned above, the noise. I go out into nature to experience peace, quiet, and to listen to the way places sound without all of our machines. Even a quiet engine, one that sounds like a lawnmower, makes me feel as though I'm back in the places I'm trying to escape from. The problem is, everyone escapes to the wilderness in their own way, and finding a balance is important. However, it seems OHVs and other off-road vehicles cause the largest impact, noise-wise, of most outdoor pursuits. My second issue is the fact that OHVs by nature are not sustainable, and in general, the less we depend on machines powered by fossil fuels for any purpose, the better. So, I'm looking forward to whomever comes up with an electric OHV! Even so, OHVs impact air quality in other ways, spewing dust and combustion by products all over vegetation. Finally, there have been studies done that describe adverse impacts of off-road vehicles on vegetation - { Link } - { Link } - { Link } - but the key seems to be finding best management practices and making sure people use them. Also, a long, yet incredibly interesting read about the ecological impacts of mountain bikes on public lands, a lot of which can apply to OHVs as well - { Link }

I think one of the hardest parts about that is it's hard to get people to conserve and protect what they don't understand and can't touch. If you don't give people a chance to connect with a place, they might be less likely to want to protect it. That being said, I definitely think there are ways to manage access and use of lands, but it seems to be an interesting problem.

Much work has already been done to create national trails that celebrate the parks, wildlife, and historical landmarks that make our country great. We need to continue this work so that the rich history and natural variety that exists in the United States can be appreciated by as many Americans as possible.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

The creation of a nutrient reduction credit market would take bold steps in monetizing and quantifying the amount of non-point run-off that destroys the water quality of the nation's waters, specifically the Chesapeake Bay. Nitrogen, phosphorous and sediment discharges from agricultural land in the Bay watershed have a dramatic influence on the biological diversity of ecosystems and the attractiveness of the Bay's water to local citizens. Assigning credits to a certain amount of nutrient reduction from restructured agricultural land has the potential to effectively decrease hazardous nutrient levels as well as support the future of those local communities. A system requiring credit purchase and rationing creates an efficient market of exchange. The newly created Chesapeake Ecofinance Company LLC (CEFC) of Annapolis, MD, focuses on implementing ecologically sound restoration and conservation practices on agricultural lands to create improved farm economies that also clean the waters of the Chesapeake Bay. It operates by purchasing, restoring, and reselling farm properties. It improves the land by restoring wetlands, installing riparian and vegetative buffers, restoring natural hydrology, and increasing biodiversity, instituting best management practices (BMPs), and selling conservation easement and ecosystem services credits. Government support, on all levels, could encourage nutrient reduction markets, successfully preserving ecosystems and reconnecting individuals with their natural surroundings.

I agree that learning the human cultural element adds meaning to the landscapes and natural areas we visit. It helps us to appreciate the history as well as the geology of a place, and to imagine ourselves in its context. Effective interpretation of human history is an important component of this understanding. For example, knowing how fast a wagon train could travel or how a team of oxen and horses forded a river adds a deep level of connection to a place. Knowing that a hiking path was originally a tribal hunting trail gives us a new appreciation for its twists and turns. These and many more stories can be told by trained, professional interpretive guides and by well-thought out signage, exhibits and materials in our National Parks and other wild places.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

You said it perfect! My family has been riding and camping in Washington State for 15+ years. I LOVE the wilderness. Riding is an amazing FAMILY activity. I know that I am fed up with the bad rap that us ORV'ers have gotten because of a few bad apples. My husband is a double amputee. he's 30. HE has missed out on being able to see a lot of our lands because of the restrictions of motorized use. I think that there are places that should not be accessed by bike, horse or foot. I think that four strokes should be the norm and that the race bike belong on the track or at organized events. There are those that think you should haul ass through the wood, I don't . Don't get me wrong I love speed. But when you get a young hot rodder headed right at you 3 or 4th gear it is scary. We've had a few close calls with guys like that but thats why I think most of our trails should run one loops, and possibly a speed limit . But you have to remember that the majority of us LOVE the outdoors. I live in a area that used to have legal riding...not anymore, we've been chased out by Down hill MT bikers, Horseman and Hikers. Why should we be banned from the PUBLIC lands? I've seen the destruction the mt. Bikers cause with thier ramps and bridges, Pulling bark from the tree's ,chasing off wildlife and leaving their garbage on the side of the road. Horse's are hard on the enviroment as well, Ever had to walk around hors shit near a creek? or seen the hoof marks on the river banks because they didn't want to dismount a walk the bridge provided? or how about the the lead line strung between the trees the ruin the bark because a horseman was to lazy to use a tree saver? All you hikers that claim we are ruining the trails.... We buildt most of those trails you took them from us. without the clubs to maintain those trails where would you hike? I have seen back country hiker leave garbage and take veggitation. You could argue all day about who does the most damage or who works the hardest but the fact is that PUBLIC lands are just that, PUBLIC lands and should be open to us all. We all have a duty to protect them and use them responsibly. The land does not belong to any one group no matter how much they think they deserve it. The extemist eco people that are in the pockets of our elected officals seem to be stoking this firey debate. they are pitting all outdoor lovers against each other. Instead of these groups coming together and working out a mutual plan we've spent the 1st 10 years fighting each other. While we've all been fighting over who can use the lands those extremist had swooped in and closed many trails and camping area that will never be opened to the Public Again. How about we just stop arguring about it and get out side fix the trails and share!

I think you should spend some time exploring us ORV's point of view. I am the wife of a Above knee double amputee... the only way he has seen much of Washington's forest if by a 4x4 ATV. I understand that there are lots of Yahoo's out there that do ruin the trails but the MAJORITY of us want to preserve and protect these lands. Those guys with the race bikes and loud pipes belong on the track. and most do. Our NMA clubs work year round to restore trails and build bridges so that we don't ruin our lands. ORVing is a great family event. It get's kids outdoors and away from the TV. It gives them something to keep them out of trouble. I Know many kids who If it weren't for the threat of losing their bikes/quad would have been into some trouble. Dirtbike events bring familys together. Most of us dirtbikers want to get along and share the area's with the horseman, MT.bikers ect.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

France, Denmark, Britain, Germany, Spain, Sweden, Belgium, Hungary, Lithuania, Slovakia, South Korea, Brazil, India, China, Russia - all and more have nuclear power stations. Chernobyl was a poorly managed and outdated design even at the time of the accident, which has been surpassed by a factor of ten today. Three Mile Island was a big scare but nothing happened other than hype and fear-mongering. Wind turbines are insufficient and momentary producers, kill birds by the thousands, and raise the temperature of the surrounding grounds - AND they kill the people who work on them - there is no set-and-forget operation for power. Hydroelectric is the cleanest form of power generation, but many environmentalists oppose and want to dismantle existing dams.

I cannot say it better than many of these people before me. However, I believe as an American and a member of the human race, that we have to maintain this history for ourselves, our children, and theirs. Our ancestors fought in these battles for ideals that they believed in. We need to understand what they fought for, and what they were willing to do for their ideals. We need to remember what has passed before so we are not doomed to repeat our mistakes again. I have found that visits to these battlefields, and the wonderful museums and visitor centers that have been created for them, are wonderful places to learn and remember. The dollars that we spend are small but can have a huge impact. Please support this effort and work to maintain and expand the preservation of our history.

OHV access means those with disabilities won't be denied!

ORV is good family fun, and good for you. Stop being so selfish with "your" activity. I maintain trails at Gifford in Washington state. See hikers up there using the ORV trail all the time. about half are cool and thank us, the other half try to get us kicked out of the area we built and maintain and they hike!!!! The roads you take up to hike do WAY more damage than the 6 inch wide trail that we make and will disappear in a year if left alone. We are a small group, hurting nothing and promoting good family fun and bring our spending to many small towns out in the middle of no where. Leave us alone. Recently a very popular ride area near Seattle was closed. several months later several places (food, gas etc) went out of biz. How is this good for anyone? Share the trail, we do, even the one we build for you.

Strongly support idea of Civil War Battlefield Preservation as a terrific means of conserving open space, particularly in the highly populated states of Virginia, Maryland and Pennsylvania. This will help preserve and hopefully improve the Chesapeake Bay watershed, which has suffered enormous degradation over the past several years, and help provide opportunities to teach and educate everyone on the incredibly important history of our Civil War, whose 150th anniversary will be upon us next year.

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(cont.)

Land acquisition funding is critical to close gaps in the Florida National Scenic Trail. To date, the USDA Forest Service has acquired 41 separate tracts (4,625 acres) protecting 28 miles of the FNST. In FY11, \$5,427,000 is needed for an eighth year of funding to protect 15 critical segments (3 miles on 347.7 acres) of FNST, including one tract in Lake County that will protect one mile and 125 acres at an estimated cost of \$2,500,000. The acquisition of these strategically located tracts will close gaps in the trail along the Yellow, Choctawhatchee and Suwannee rivers, and along Blackwater Creek in Lake County.

Nearly all of the National Scenic and Historic Trails within the National Trails System have significant gaps in each of these trails. There are multiple existing opportunities for obtaining properties that are strategically located to close gaps in these trails while providing for the greatest recreational opportunity. Some of these properties are facing immediate threat from rural residential and industrial development. The Nation's economy has been harshly affected by the current recession and the rapid rate of land development in many parts of the country has sharply decreased. With this slowdown in growth comes a rare opportunity to acquire essential parcels for national scenic and historic trails if money is appropriated. Now that the cost of land has decreased, it is a "buyer's market" and landowners have renewed motivation to sell lands for conservation and recreation. Unfortunately, land acquisition funds for these trails are not sufficient to take advantage of these motivated sellers. In the absence of Federal funding, the trail program managers and non-profit organizations work with state and local government land acquisition programs to protect these trails. However, these partnership approach is now constrained by decreases in state and local revenue and sharp cutbacks in state funding for land acquisition. Because of: 1) the USDA Forest Service's and the National Park's great success in spending the Land and Water Conservation appropriations to protect the route of these trails, 2) the willingness of landowners to consider a government offer in today's real estate market, and 3) the real-world limitations on protecting these trails through state and local funded programs, Congress is strongly encouraged to appropriate supplemental land and water conservation funding for the FNST. The window of opportunity is open; the time to protect segments of the national scenic and historic trails is now.

NO MORE WILDERNESS. A beautiful forest with one trail through it is not begging for protection-- it is begging to be visited and enjoyed.

The 1 to1 idea is fair taking into account that we are the only group that pay for the right to ride the trails through the green sticker program. Would it be beneficial to see who is really using the wilderness area through a sign in program? That way you would see who it really is impacting.

This idea has merit, but perhaps should be re-framed: Areas should be designated and mapped as 4x4, ATV or single-track trail (they already are in many places). It is important to provide quality single-track, and just as important to provide quality 4x4 and ATV trails. Users should not widen trails.

After reading the editorial in 6/6/2010 Kansas City Star, I enthusiastically support the creation of a national park in Kansas. Great Plains National Park, or Buffalo Commons, or whatever you wish to call it, I would make it a priority to visit.

Discussion Question 1

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(cont.)

I moved to Texas from Colorado many years ago and knew nothing about the landscape of Texas. Then in 2005 I heard about Texas Master Naturalist. I was one of the 10 founding members to start the South Plains Chapter. Every year I learn something new. I love the fact that I get to do my part when it comes to the environment. A few years ago we did a project at the Lubbock Lake Landmark. It was to show visitors what flowers and native plants grew on the south plains. In 3 years it went from being a showcase of flora to a habitat for a cottontail and her bunnies. A bull snake also moved in. It showed me that in 3 years we could take a dirt pile and turn it into a habitat for the wildlife that roam the Landmark. So now I can make a difference in my environment and make it better.

My family uses both OHV's & horses to get out into nature. Yes there are those who are not respectful of nature (both on OHV & on foot). To the statement about 3% of the population riding OHV's on public lands, I'm sure most people on foot never actually hike out into the vast acres of wilderness that are set aside - they stick to places near the parking lots. Not to mention that OHV's offer those with disabilities the opportunity to really get out into the wilderness.

While the AGO initiative places much greater emphasis on the preservation of and access to natural landscapes and features than it does to cultural sites, a small number of national historical parks (NHP) provide examples of the type of partnerships described in the President's letter launching this initiative. Keweenaw NHP is a partnership park that is aiming at providing a cohesive national park experience where the National Park Service owns and operates only a very small number of resources and facilities, but collaborates with more than 20 local and state organizations and sites, plus many private landowners, to preserve and interpret a vast cultural landscape running the 100-mile length of the Keweenaw Peninsula. The park was created through local efforts. Focused on the history of the country's first major mining effort, the national park incorporates NPS technical and financial assistance, minimal NPS facilities, two state parks, a community-based Advisory Commission, a National Scenic Byway, locally owned museums and historic sites, a Main Street and other locally organized historic districts, and, potentially, many related natural and recreational resources. This nascent partnership arrangement is on the verge of creating a more cohesive visitor experience, but still struggles with issues of cross-community recognition and buy-in, fostering preservation in a severely depressed post-mining economy, and funding the Federal assistance programs sufficiently to promote a successful partner-wide resource conservation program. The Keweenaw NHP (and other similar models at Dayton Aviation NHP, Lowell NHP, and natural park partnerships such as the Mississippi National River and Recreation Area) should be analyzed to determine how well this model is working and how to amend the model to better meet AGO objectives.

Discussion Question 1

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(cont.)

Conservation Subdivisions, also called "conservation development", are a better way for every beautiful place in America slated for development. I founded the national nonprofit LandChoices (www.LandChoices.org) to promote conservation subdivisions and make them the standard neighborhood method across America to preserve water, natural areas, wildlife and working farmland that otherwise will be needlessly destroyed by conventional subdivision development. Conservation subdivisions preserve 50% - 70% or more of the buildable land, plus unbuildable wetlands, steep slopes and floodplains. They can be 10 acres like Trim's Ridge, 177 acres like Sugar Creek Preserve or 2,300 acres like Bundoran Farm. Conservation subdivisions preserve 40% to 70% or more of the buildable land, in addition to unbuidable wetlands, steep slopes and floodplains. In urban, sewerred, high density areas zoned at 2-3-4 units per acre, preserving 40% open space, in addition to the unbuildable wetlands, floodplains, and steep slopes, is the norm. In rural, suburban edge areas at densities of 5 and 10 acres per dwelling, easily 70% or more of the land can be preserved. The same number of homes can be built as allowed in conventional "cookie-cutter" subdivisions. Conservation subdivisions greatly reduce or eliminate stormwater run-off due to large tracts of natural areas that absorb and filter water. Narrower, shorter streets reduce impervious areas while swales instead of curb and gutters absorb stormwater instead of polluting lakes, rivers and streams. Conservation subdivisions connect children with nature and help reduce obesity levels as families are often outside enjoying the nature trails. Conservation subdivison are proven more profitable, faster selling and less costly for the developer and landowner compared to a conventional "cookie-cutter" subdivision. From "The Economics of Conservation Subdivisions", a study done by Wayne State University (MI): "The results show that lots in conservation subdivisions carry a premium, are less expensive to build, and sell more quickly than lots in conventional subdivisions." "Together, the results show that conservation subdivisions are more profitable to developers than conventional subdivisions." "That lots in conservation subdivisions sold in about half the time as lots in conventional subdivisions must be advantageous to the cash flow of developers." "These numbers translate into premiums for lots in conservation subdivisions ranging from \$13,000 to \$18,000 per acre over lots in conventional subdivisions." Big Builder magazine on conservation subdivisions: "Leaving land in its natural state or building trails through it is cheaper than building infrastructure or golf courses." Big Builder magazine (May 1, 2006). Similar to lake or golf course developments, conservation subdivisions consist of lots that tend to appreciate faster than lots those in conventional subdivisions. One study on appreciation rates compared two subdivisions in Amherst, Massachusetts. Homes in the conservation subdivision sold on average for \$17,000 (13%) more than homes in the conventional subdivision where lots were twice as large. From "Growing Greener", by Randall Arendt. It works! Hamburg Township in Livingston County, Michigan implemented conservation subdivision design and has protected nearly 2,000 acres at no cost to the community, representing a land value of \$40 million. Applied on a county-wide basis, Hanover County, Virginia has protected over 5,000 acres through conservation design at no cost to the community. Communities that adopt these standards (conservation subdivisions) are preserving an average of 62% of land each time a property is developed, according to the Natural Lands Trust, in Media, PA. LandChoices has launched the press release "Top 10 Ways to Preserve Land and Water in Your Community" which focuses on helping communities and volunteer and professional planners update outdated ordinances to implement conservation subdivisions to

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(cont.)

preserve their communities. One note: Conservation subdivisions are NOT the same as outdated and failed "clustering". Clustering normally only preserves 25% to 30% of the land and this protected land often includes land that could not be built on, i.e. unbuildable wetlands, steep slopes and floodplains. (A blanket statement used in outdated "clustering" stating a percentage, say 60% for example, of the GROSS land preserved as open space is problematic considering the variation in the amount of land on a given tract with environmental constraints - wetlands, floodplains, steep slopes - already restricting the buildability of the site.)

All of the land management agencies receive appropriated funding from Congress, and a portion of that is for managing recreation. These budgets have gone up steadily, the Forest Service for instance over 60% since 2000. There is plenty of funding to manage recreation. The problem is getting it to the ground. Far too much is sucked up into administrative overhead. The agencies have legal authority to charge for camping in developed campgrounds and for use of specialized and highly developed facilities and they can retain that revenue to manage the site where it was collected. I think those kinds of fees are appropriate. But to say, as one commenter did, "If you can't pay \$3-\$5 to spend a few hours outdoors, then your [sic] not really serious about it" that is so arrogant and elitist it just takes my breath away. There are plenty of people in this country who have to watch their pennies never mind their 5 dollar bills. You would deny them the chance to take a walk in the woods? If the agencies put half as much effort into enforcing the laws about trash, vandalism, and other misuse as they now dedicate to catching people who don't have the right "pass" to be there (Achtung! Papers please!), those problems would go away. In southern California they issue so many "Notices of Non-Compliance" to people without an Adventure Pass that they have had to set up a special website and contract with a private company to collect all the fines. This is a waste of effort that would be much better invested in education and resource protection.

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(cont.)

Entrance fees (modest ones) for National Parks, or fees for use of specialized facilities like developed campgrounds, are reasonable and have never been controversial. But charging a fee merely for access to the outdoors was a new idea first tried as a demo program beginning in 1996, during one of the most prosperous economic periods in American history. Fees are not an economic necessity, they are the manifestation of the philosophy that everything is a commodity and should have a price tag. If we want people to love and care for our public lands, they have to experience them. If we want people to engage in healthy active outdoor recreation, it has to be accessible to them. Placing financial barriers in the way works against these worthy and important goals. Several studies have shown that even a small fee deters half of low-income people, and a third of people at all income levels from visiting a National Forest. Yes, managing these lands costs money, and that is why we pay taxes. The Forest Service, and even the National Parks, did not charge access fees through two World Wars or the Great Depression. The federal land management agencies get ever-increasing appropriations from Congress (Forest Service appropriation up over 60% since 2000), but too much of that gets spent on administrative overhead and never makes it to the ground. In regards to the Forest Service for example, the GAO said in 2009, "Regarding its performance, the agency has not always been able to provide Congress and the public with a clear understanding of what its 30,000 employees accomplish with the approximately \$5 billion the agency receives every year." People who want to enjoy some time in the Great Outdoors should not have to buy a pass just to be there.

Many popular areas have used permit systems since the 1970s to limit use to what the resource can support, and I am all in favor of that. However since 1997 almost all of these permits cost money, and I think that is wrong. Also permit systems are being put in place where they are not really needed, just to generate revenue. (Example: Cedar Mesa Utah, less than 10,000 visitors per year - brand new visitor center in the middle of the desert built with permit fee money they couldn't find any other use for since the actual land is managed for primitive recreation which doesn't cost much.) As to BWCA, you failed to mention the \$12 reservation fee to reserve a permit, which is for all practical purposes required because you won't get one without a reservation. The fee started out at \$10 but was raised to \$16 (60%) in 2007. If fees are the tool to be used to limit use, then we can expect the most popular places to soon become affordable only to the wealthy. Is that what we really want our public lands to be? The lands belong to all of us and we should all have reasonable access. Limiting use to what the resource can support is one thing, but using money to determine who gets to go and who doesn't is something else entirely. It's not whether any particular fee is "debilitating" or not, it's the basic idea of selling access to nature. If we want our young people to truly learn to love their public lands, we cannot allow them to be commercialized and privatized just like any other market commodity. It's like the difference between sex for love and sex for money. Do we really want our public lands to be whores?

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(cont.)

One barrier to getting people outdoors is the requirement in many places that they purchase a pass just to go for a walk in the woods. Fees for basic access to undeveloped federal lands, such as National Forest hiking trails, lakes, and streams, as well as backcountry fees in National Parks, should be eliminated. All citizens should have access to nature without regard to their financial resources. Private entities should not be operating recreation on public lands as a for-profit venture.

My idea is "Trails for America" - a program where people volunteer to live in a camper at a trailhead (like a "campground host" in the park system) during the summer months. They would act as volunteer backcountry rangers/ naturalists for the drainage or ecosystem they are located in, and would supplement the capacity of the public land management agency responsible for the area. They would be expected to hike the trails and do cleanup, upkeep and maintenance while also educating users about best practices and outdoor recreation etiquette. The individuals would also be expected to be able to act as local naturalists, as well, providing ecological and historical information about the area to visitors. The program would be akin to the "Teach for America" program, with tuition and student loan benefits and/or other benefits similar to those in the TfA program, the VISTA program and SeniorCorps, etc. There would also be a rigorous application process and there would be ample oversight, training and accountability built into the program. The end result being that our nation's trails and natural areas stay clean and safe, visitors enjoy their experiences more and feel more connected to the landscape, and individuals are given the opportunity to serve their country through caring for our iconic natural landscapes. This idea has similarities to the Texas Naturalist program that others have mentioned in this forum.

Kieran, Historic Preservation is about the Great Outdoors. The "great outdoors" is walking around neighborhoods and communities, it's about urban parks and landscapes. The "great outdoors" begins when you step outside your front door. Historic preservation is about viewsheds, cultural landscapes, protecting archaeological sites and battlefields. We work to protect the places which have been formative to the human experience and to the creation of our country, which is far more than just downtowns and urban sites. Additionally, by working to protect and revitalize existing infrastructure, and livable, walkable communities, we are combating the rampant development that threatens the wilderness and natural environment. The Historic Preservation Fund is an absolutely essential part of the effort to protect and enhance the Great Outdoors.

The Historic Preservation Fund is a key component to successful Smart Growth, by promoting through financial incentives for private investors to rehabilitate existing infrastructure in downtown commercial districts and neighborhoods. Consider promoting the idea of fully funding the Historic Preservation Fund as a way to reinforce the idea of encouraging Smart Growth.

The HPF also supports Tribal Historic Preservation Offices.

Preserving Civil War Battlefields promotes tourism first and tourism results in economic activity. Young minds touring battlefields eventually begin thinking about our countrys struggles. This eventually leads to a better understanding of our history.

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(cont.)

Active management of recreational use works. With management (maps, kiosks, partnership agreements, adopt a trail, on the ground signing, etc) land managers increase capacity while decreasing impacts to natural resources. Involvement of federal land managers with local communities works. Community based FACA committees formed from a broad base of stakeholders can well serve as advisory councils to assist the land manager in critical planning and decision-making efforts.

I've been recreation dirt biking in our wonderful public lands for over thirty years. Riding dirt bikes with my father on public BLM land has made our lives richer and our family bonds stronger. It is a great stress reliever to get out in the forest and ride responsibly with quite mufflers and staying on designated trails. I hope in the future to enjoy the great outdoors with my two young sons like I have with my father. Please recognize this when planning the future of our forests and wilderness. Please don't shut us out of OUR land. It is public land, and should be open to the public. We should be able to recreate responsibly on OUR LAND. Closing it down and forcing people into the suburbs is a disaster. We need to get out and enjoy the great doors more, not be shut out. Our kids are obese and obsessed with T.V. and video games. Let's give them opportunities to enjoy the great outdoors and get exercise and create friendships and bonds with family members. Off Highway Vehicles (OHV) are a wonderful way to get exercise and enjoy the great outdoors. Please don't close down our forest and wilderness from the off road enthusiasts. I recognize not everybody wants to enjoy the outdoors like we do, but there are places already designated to enjoy the outdoors that way. Fourteen percent of the population of California has registered OHV's. We are a sizable group, so please listen to us. It is not fair what you are planning on doing. This is OUR land, not YOUR land. Sincerely, Off Road Enthusiast Mountain Biker Concerned father of two future dirt bikers

OHV is a great way to experience the great outdoors with your family. I ride with my father, and plan to ride with my two young sons. Riding dirt bikes has kept me fit, has expanded to other exercises like mountain biking and wait training so I can keep on riding well into middle age and beyond. Because of this, I've kept my wait down, lowered my LDL cholesterol and raised my HDL cholesterol, and lowered my blood glucose level. I believe this will lower the burden on our health care system because I choose to live a healthier life style. I owe all of this to riding dirt bikes on OUR PUBLIC Land.

ELK Is ABSOLUTELY AWESOME!!!

The Lewis and Clark story, including the tribes they met, continues to capture America's imagination. Where else can you find a more comprehensive analogy to the life journeys we all make? Because we have a written record of that particular exploration from the east coast to the west, let's also "complete the Trail" by including eastern states which were also vital in the saga.

In California, we have the California Conservation Corps. This version of the CCC gets young people outdoors conserving land. It is a fantastic program. Their website is { Link }

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(cont.)

Most of the trail work is done by volunteers. The Government role to to design where the trail would work best and then assist wit the purchase of the land from willing sellers. It seems to me that this is one of the finest examples of our citizens being involved with a parternship with government. I would ask our legislators to continue to support and fully fund this recreational opportunity to buy land from willing sellers.

That is a great idea! A version of it is already in practice. Check out the Americorps service program. Americorps provides internships at public lands units and nonprofits that promote environmental stewardship. College students participate in Americorps internships through the Student Conservation Association (www.thesca.org). I did two SCA internships during my college career at Great Smoky Mountains National Park and Sequoia National Forest. These internships prepared me for a career in land conservation and helped support these public lands units. College graduates may participate in Americorps through programs such as the Sierra Nevada Alliance Program (SNAP) in California. SNAP interns work at nonprofits and public lands units, providing these organizations with affordable help and preparing the interns to take leadership roles in the conservation field. I suggest looking into these two programs. They are really fantastic, well-run, and are making a huge difference in our public lands. It is one of my favorite federal programs, certainly.

The Minnesota School Forest program helps schools establish long-term outdoor classrooms at any educational facility in Minnesota. The best way to cultivate environmentally literate citizens is to provide frequent exposure to nearby nature. Since children spend so much time at school, why not use the nearby nature of the school yard? Benefits: no or reduced transportation costs, academic subjects can be taught outdoors just as well (or better) than indoors, students and teachers cultivate a "sense of place," and outdoor classrooms build visibilty and community pride. Many teachers have attended "How to Teach in Your School Forest" workshops. It must be working... there are more than 100 school forests in Minnesota, and more are lining up! www.mndnr.gov/schoolforest

There has to be a middleground. As with fishing, and hunting,we are all one people, and in my opinion I think there is a place for ORV use. As with people collecting rocks as a "hobby", there are more laws governing us. My main question is "Why can't we just all get along?".

This is a fantastic idea and should offer opportunities for the preservation of wildlife, the ranching way of life, soil conservation, native flora...and would do justice to the people who were the original managers of the Plains (and who did a much better job than the intervening 200 years of highly subsidized of soil exhaustion, human depopulation and economic malaise).

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(cont.)

I am a Director of the National Scenic Byway Foundation. The National Scenic Byway Foundation is the not-for-profit partner of the federal National Scenic Byway Program that was created in 1991 under the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act. The program now encompasses 150 of America's most treasured routes that have been designated by the Secretary of Transportation as "America's Byways®." The Foundation would like to call your attention to these byways and urge their inclusion in the resources associated with the America's Great Outdoors initiative and to make a few suggestions. First, the byways: To be eligible for designation by the Secretary of Transportation a byway must contain and commit to the preservation of at least one of six intrinsic qualities. The qualities are: • Scenic • Natural • Historic • Cultural • Archeological • Recreational We think of byways as the 21st century offspring of the nation's 20th century conservation efforts. In the 20th century; National Forests and Grasslands, National Parks, National Wildlife Refuges and BLM lands were acquired and federal agencies created to manage and protect them. Byways, on the other hand, are treasured places that remain in current ownership and are managed by local grassroots public or not-for-profit organizations. In essence, when the Secretary designates a route as one of America's Byways® a franchise is awarded and support provided with the expectation that the organization receiving the designation will protect, maintain operate, interpret and market the byway to accepted standards. Byways place great emphasis on experiencing rather than traveling or visiting unique places. While the program operates within the US and state departments of transportation where the major focus is on safe and efficient movement of goods and people, byways are as much about stopping as they are about going. Byway travelers are provided with information and opportunities to pause, get out of their cars and sense the qualities of the place. They are offered opportunities and are encouraged to connect with the intrinsic qualities and the people who live and work or who once lived and worked along the byway; to hear the stories, smell the smells, taste the food, dance the dance and to sense the wonder of the place. In many cases, these experiences are delivered by public and not-for-profit organizations but a distinguishing feature of the byway program is that the for-profit sector is also a full partner. We hope you will examine America's Byways® and include them as equal partners with National Parks, National Forests and Grasslands, National Wildlife Refuges and BLM lands in your deliberations. Now our suggestions: • Place more emphasis on experience than on place. Outstanding outdoor experiences can be found anywhere if the intrinsic qualities including history and culture are well protected and the stories well told. • Be inclusive. The title "America's Great Outdoors" suggests a federal effort to market outdoor assets of national significance. Although many of our most treasured outdoor assets are in federal and state ownership, those that receive the most and most frequent use are in neighborhoods where American's live. • Provide a place at the America's Great Outdoors table for national not-for-profit partners. Government cannot and should not try to do it all. • Remember, much of any outdoor experience is in the journey to and from the destination. Involve the transportation, tourism and attractions sectors in the project. Encourage the road less traveled. • Please keep us involved.

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(cont.)

OHV use is a legitimate, sustainable use of appropriate public lands, particularly on National Forests and Bureau of Land Management Units. Motorized recreation is a healthy family activity and provides a great opportunity for families to “get away from it all,” and to experience the great outdoors. OHV'ers, like other recreationists, seek opportunities to not only enjoy the riding experience, but also opportunities to learn more about cultural and historical context, take in scenic views, observe wildlife, camp, hunt, fish and other activities. The overwhelming majority of OHV'ers are conservationists, who seek to preserve the same outdoor experiences they enjoy for children and grandchildren. OHV'ers are volunteers. OHV clubs and organizations groom and maintain trails, trailheads and other facilities as well as adopt trails and provide the tools and experience needed for constructing and maintaining all sorts of recreational trails; not just OHV opportunities. ATV and off-highway motorcycle riding encourages and promotes physical fitness. OHV's provide the opportunity for Americans of all ages and physical capabilities to enjoy the outdoors.

There are valuable cultural resources on federal land throughout southern Utah, especially in San Juan County. These "Treasured Landscapes" require preservation and protection from encroachment. In these cases, facts must trump local public and private interest; no new roads, no improved roads, no grazing, no minerals exploration. And in most cases, at least until stabilization funding improves, even visiting should be restricted.

Nature is perfect within itself..why must mankind inflict their unnatural conditions? Look at Yosemite and the Grand Canyon,,they are perfection

I agree 100%. For some of us older folks, the only way to access the back country is on an OHV. I am no longer capable of hiking 20 miles into the mountains to enjoy the beautiful scenery. If areas are closed to motorized recreation they are closed to me and many other tax paying citizens like me. We need to promote responsible motorized recreation and educate the morons who ride around tearing up stuff and riding where they shouldn't. Stay on the trail or road! If you are not already a member, I encourage you to join the Blue Ribbon Coalition and your state OHV association. United we stand!

I am part of the 95% who don't kill wildlife. But I am smart enough to realize that without some sort of regulated hunting, wildlife populations grow so large that the environment can no longer support the large population. Then the animals starve and suffer. It's better to let hunters have some venison in their freezer versus a bunch of rotting corpses in the forest. Elk and deer are not in danger of extinction.

By a contract finalized on 6 February 2010 the Department of the Interior, TVA, the State of North Carolina and Swain County, North Carolina agreed to a monetary settlement of the North shore Road Controversy. The agreement calls for the Department of the Interior to pay Swain County \$52 million in lieu of building a road in the Great Smoky Mountains National Park. Of the promised amount, \$12.8 million has been paid. The contract contemplates payment of the balance in installments. Care must be taken to make sure this agreement is not forgotten, or the payments becoming intermittent. The Department of the Interior should have its budget preparation process programmed to provide for appropriation of an annual installment on this debt.

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(cont.)

We need better coordination, collaboration and cooperation between TVA, NC Wildlife Commission and local people on the management and improvement of the fisheries. With resources limited more can be accomplished with less if all could and would work together managing WNC lakes. Fontana Lake is bordered by the Great Smoky Mountains National Park and the U.S. Forest Service along the major portion of it. They too should cooperate and help with the needed funding of this resource.

I admit I have a preference for folks to keep to the general discussion rather than use this forum to bicker with or insult each other. Having said that, I think there should probably be a place for everything as well as designated wild areas in EACH state. And (this is important) wild areas should be connected along migration pathways/corridors without any major interruption. After that, keep specified areas for folks to ride what they will and keep building in "brown" areas (footprint with pre-existing development) as much as possible. As much as I HATE irresponsible riders who create their own trails through untrod soil over and over again, construction sprawl does more to kill habitat than bicycles.

I agree there's problems but I'm already subsidizing the financial institutions and the car manufacturers, helping their CEO's take home bonuses that are more than I'll probably see in a lifetime - not sure I can add to the long list of subsidies I'm already supporting with my tax dollars (I won't even talk about the public school system) so I would like more clarity on what or how you propose the government should regulate the large scale farmers et al.

I agree with the idea that controlling invasive species is imperative if we are to keep our native species thriving. I would also like to extend the definition of "invasive" to include rogue GMO seeds that wind up where they are not intended (usually carried by the wind or on tires, etc.), resulting in theft lawsuits against the property owner (who had no idea they were even there) by the seed company.

I agree with the lack of real oversight where the Dept. of Interior is concerned. I do think certain areas need more funding and they would have to be held accountable with full transparency or give the land back to the states so we can attend hearings in person and have a voice. Otherwise, can we make the financial institutions and the car manufacturers pay back the money and funnel some into the DOI? Sorry, I'm bitter.

I take exception to #5- banning ranching on public land. Here in New Mexico, ranchers have used what are now "federal" lands since long before this was even a U.S. territory. I know many seventh and eighth generation ranchers with small herds who, for them, this is a way of life. They are the ones who, year after year preserve the land so it can sustain them. If they couldn't ranch on public land, their way of life would end. They do more to take care of the forest, even to the extent of putting out other people's campfires on a weekly basis, than anyone I know. I suggest we not paint everyone with such a broad brush that we miss the people that we would like to hold up as good examples of responsible stewardship.

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(cont.)

Riders might need to take responsibility for their image here. Manufacturers love to advertise their vehicles mudbogging, riding through streams, spraying dirt, etc. Riders could stop other rogue riders by agreeing to licenses that are readable from a distance, making sure they and their friends register each vehicle (with \$\$ going to repair trails and enforcement), and finally, holding those accountable who ride off the trail or misbehave. If you don't want the black eye, you will have to do more to prevent it. Meanwhile, I guess it just doesn't make sense for the Forest Service or BLM or any land mgt. agency to dedicate more trails than they can maintain or enforce.

This sounds like a worthwhile program that should be expanded to include more than just one day a year. People learn through repetition and reinforcement and overcoming screen entertainment dependency (SED), will take quite an effort but I applaud the idea!

Wilderness is important. No, imperative. However, I suggest that if you agree with ranching locally (and considering the income that small scale ranchers make, permitted ranching on public land is sometimes the only option) and if you disagree with large food factory ranching and keeping animals contained under inhumane conditions, you might (unless you convince a great majority of the population to go vegan) want to consider that responsible ranching is a useful and desirable thing, providing local food source. Balance is key.

Federal and state governments should be promoting wise use of public natural resources to help create jobs in private sector resource extraction businesses. Careers in forestry, logging, oil & gas extraction, and mining are all outdoor careers. These are the true green jobs. By allowing resource extraction, albeit carefully and in accordance with NEPA regulations and BMPs, we can grow a class of professionals that is intimately connected to the outdoors. By promoting resource extraction, thereby promoting outdoor work, we can reconnect more people to the outdoors. It is one thing to spend a few days camping and hiking in the woods. It is quite another to get up every morning and go work there. As the Ben Meadows people say, "the outdoors is [their] office."

Since man began sharing carefully remembered stories of their forebearers around the clan fires, the importance of remembering history and understanding how places and sites figured into the development of that history, civilization has treasured the tangible reminders of where we come from, where we are going and what we have learned from our ancestors' experiences. Historic places and landscapes still resonate with people today - hence the rise of heritage tourism. Fully funding the Historic Preservation Fund will not only save important buildings and sites, but with that preservation, promote economic development through continued use of historic buildings, providing income for preservation workers during rehabilitation, and also regenerate local business and attract heritage travelers. The newly designated South Park National Heritage Area can build on the strong preservation ethic already in place and preserve the natural and cultural resources that are so abundant in the area, improving lifestyle and increasing the economic health of the residents while helping visitors to enjoy and understand the legacy of this unique area. Fully funding the Historic Preservation Fund can trigger a wave of repetitions of this pattern all across the nation, thus promoting economic health while preserving the stories and lessons of the past.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Texas Master Naturalist program is awesome!!! What better way to provide education, promote volunteering and promoting conservation, etc.... It gets people back outside and enjoying nature.

The Lewis and Clark Trail needs to be preserved in its entirety for future generations. To let our national parks and trails suffer to budget cuts is cutting our national treasures and forgetting our nation's history.

The Texas Master Naturalist program is an excellent way to match volunteers with organizations needing help. There are opportunities for any nature lover, no matter what one's special interests. Help create butterfly gardens, work with youth groups, participate in bird studies, patrol for sea turtle nests, write articles for local newspapers...the list goes on and on. There is truly something for everyone. It's a win-win situation: I keep learning more all the time, & I get to give back by helping to make things a bit better. When we work together as a group, we can achieve more than we could as individuals, & we have a lot of fun doing it.

The Texas Master Naturalist program is awesome!!! Provides education, activities to get people volunteering and outdoors. I have been very impressed with the professionalism and resources available to this program. It brings the best resources together for common goals.

These battlefields help us learn about history, while at the same time providing a chance to experience the sort of landscape that our ancestors saw. In many areas they provide a buffer against urban sprawl and a habitat for birds and wild animals.

Reconnecting with our local food system is an important aspect of conservation and education. I am also curious what sorts of efforts are being made by local and national governmental agencies to engage youth in this area? I am aware of countless non-profit and school/college-based local food programs around the country (to answer your question), but not government-based. These programs are making huge impacts on their local communities. If we were to initiate government programs, the Department of Agriculture would be the logical source, however, more urban parks and recreation areas (i.e. NPS, FWS, BLM, etc) could expand their education programs to include local food systems. The idea of planting fruit trees is a great idea. City parks could involve youth in transforming their water-intensive lawns into more productive and/or natural landscapes of edible and native plant landscapes.

Having lived and worked in Alaska for 30 years and seen ANWR, its need for protection is not overstated. As a retired oil company employee, I support the idea that not all areas need to be drilled and produced. I would challenge the "small footprint" idea the industry likes to promote because from my experience I don't see it happening that way. Whatever is done, don't let BP there.

Discussion Question 1

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(cont.)

I would like to suggest that anyone who is making this suggestion come out to Montana and learn what you're talking about. Just drive the 150 miles between Roundup and Malta and see what it's like to go past one town -- Grass Range that has maybe 25 homes there and then not be able to see more than 10 houses in that drive. Look out and realize that in some places for 70-100 miles on either side of the road, there is nothing but open landscape to the casual observer, but actually know that there are ranches producing beef and farmers producing wheat that may have been part of your meal this last week. You don't need to waste government money taking our ranches to "preserve it" -- we've done it for a 100 years already. Years ago, when I was living in Missoula I had a roommate who was working on a masters in wildlife management. She was from New Jersey and her boyfriend was from back east. She was a nice girl but she got her masters by doing a study on what kind of animals are predators of duck eggs. When she told me she was going to do a study like that I asked her what it was going to prove. "Everyone knows what kind of animals eat duck eggs -- racoons, skunks, coyotes... And what will you do with that -- you can't teach ducks to build their nests in different places?" I asked her. I wasn't upset, but I just thought that if you were at a masters level program that you should be working on figuring out something new not just coming up with something that a 5th grader could tell you. Well, she blew out the insides of 144 eggs, filled them with wax and even "duck scent" to make them real. She thought that when the animal bit into the egg, it would leave a tooth mark and from the tooth mark she would know what animal was preying on the nests. See anything wrong with that idea? Think you're going to learn something that most native Montanans who lived on a ranch didn't already know? Well, first of all those of us who know animal behavior know that if you've got a mouth full of wax, you're not going to carefully extract the wax egg from your teeth and gently set it back in the nest. Nope - you're going to break it up and do whatever you can to get rid of the wax. I asked her what her results were after she had carefully planted these nests of fake eggs all over the state in a variety of reseviors (using grant money of course). The answer: She couldn't get any valid results because the wax was too broken up to tell what it was. (My suggestion would have been to look at the tracks of the animals but that evidently didn't occur to her) . But she's now probably one of these idealistic geniuses who want to play in someone else's backyard and take over their ranch and do nothing more productive than sit on a ranger station with a nice salary and benefits to "watch over the buffalo". Her boyfriend's study was about some kind of ferret that he wanted to transplant to Montana. So he went out to MN, spent 3 mos. living in a cabin and cross country skiing and finally came up with 6 little critters to bring out to the Yaak. Well, he got to stay in a beautiful 3 story cabin and outfitted them with radio collars to see how they'd do. Do you think a radio collar slows down a little animal? Well, one by one in short order they were all eaten before spring -- but he still got a masters degree out of it and is now qualified to make decisions like this. I asked her one time if any of the wildlife majors were Native Montanans and she thought about it and said no. It explained everything to me then -- and it explains why we're having this conversation today. People from back east come from places where development is guaranteed -- populations grow and stay there. But in a ranching area, most ranches don't support more than 2 families. They support the family who started it -- and then the one son or daughter who's going to take it over in the next generation. Those people don't get it -- our growth is limited by the ability of a ranch to sustain a family. And as for wanting to come enjoy it -- well come out during hunting season and you can enjoy our

Discussion Question 1

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(cont.)

hospitality. I doubt any of them would let strangers onto their land to walk around fairly freely for hours on end. So here are my questions when you're examining feasibility. 1. Exactly how many people do you think are really going to come out here to watch these buffalo? And how long would you actually spend watching these herds? 5 minutes, 10 minutes, maybe 20? My cousin had buffalo on his farm in Illinois for years -- right next to a highway with 10,000 cars a day going by. Less than 10 cars a year ever pulled in to simply watch the buffalo. 2. Did you know that some of the Indian reservations have buffalo herds. Why not offer your money to those tribes to develop and increase their herds. Wouldn't it be nice to give them back the staple of their diet that was taken away when the white man came? I think it'd be cool to see them use a buffalo jump the way they did a couple hundred years ago -- if they wanted to. If the tribes were open to it and were allowed to hunt them and money was given to them to vaccinate them, build fences, even process the meat -- this would become a win/win/win situation. Frankly, I think this is an idea that's used to con people out of their money and then scam our government out of more money. It makes a really cushy job for someone to sit on a foundation, pull down a good salary and benefits and work people up into a lather about a romantic idea of buffalo running on the plains. But if you took those same people out to a buffalo herd, I doubt they'd stay entertained for more than half an hour -- and maybe 3-4 hours for the truly hardcore -- provided they were sitting on the back of their camper, or maybe hiking on a groomed trail looking at some of the great scenery in Yellowstone Park. You can't justify destroying an entire county or two for that.

The Town of Gilbert, Arizona partners with the non-profit Riparian Institute (www.riparianinstitute.org) to utilize a passive water reclamation site for wildlife habitat, outdoor recreation, volunteer projects, public events, and environmental education programs, connecting 10,000 schoolchildren and 80,000 public participants with nature each year. The urban location of the property, along with the innovative design of passive water collection basins surrounded by native habitat and un-intrusive trails invite diverse wildlife and diverse people to share the land together.

I moved to Texas from North Carolina in the summer of 2008, discovered the existence of the Texas Master Naturalist program in September, enrolled in a class in January, was certified in May, 2009. I brought some knowledge of flora and fauna with me but the TMN classes and field trips have brought me up to speed on central Texas. This education program is never over - we just keep on learning and passing on what we have learned. The program has terrific sponsors and interacts with other groups for advanced training and volunteer programs. TMN is absolutely outstanding.

Keeping grazing leases available benefits wildlife when a grazing lease maintains watering facilities and grazing reduces fire hazards. Keep roads in National Parks and Forests for access especially for fighting fire access and for easier access for exploration via horses, hikers and search and rescue personnel.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

In addition to the non-profits listed above, I would recommend also consulting with non-profits that are not exclusionary in their thinking and in their "scientific analysis". NOHVCC, American Trails, American Motorcyclists Association, and any number of State and Local non-profit organizations that have been involved in trail work and conservation/preservation of sustainable multi use trail systems in various locations across the nation.

The Texas Master Naturalist program is an outstanding model of nature-oriented outreach to communities. Our volunteers, well-trained and prepared, share their time and talents by working with school groups, improving trails, leading hikes in public areas, educating children and their parents in wildlife education, fishing regulations, historical perspectives, and much more. I was delighted to find the program in my community when I moved to Texas from California; what a wonderful way to learn about the local ecoregions and share my love for the outdoors in concrete ways!

"We have met the enemy and he is us." This popular quote came from the comic strip "Pogo" by Walt Kelly published on Earth Day in 1971. Since then this comic has been quoted and misquoted by many a teacher, politician, and cocktail party comedian. I remember hearing the Pogo quote in an environmental studies class in the seventies. It was a time of great environmental concern; a discouraging time of burning rivers, oil spills, and an unpopular war. It is hard for me to believe that was 40 years ago. As we look ahead to the next 40 years, I would like to propose a new quote to guide our efforts to get along on this earth: "We have found the solution and it is us."

asks us to live within our limits. I agree with this idea. The less we "need", the more we can focus on the basics of life: plentiful healthy food, clean water, clean air, shelter. I believe public lands can help us meet our basic human needs. Not many of us live within a "space" that can support us completely. This fact will only become more true as our population increases. I believe that all people on this planet are much more interdependent than we care to admit. It's just easier to ignore that interdependence when our "neighbors" are far away, whether they are in another country, or in the rural American West. Most of the ranchers I know have plenty of experience living within limits. Maybe that means living in a 1,000 square-foot house or looking after their animals and families in a spring blizzard. I hope I can learn to live more simply myself, but I will still eat, drink, breathe, and seek shelter from the blizzards.

I believe this country's public lands can be used to produce the food that people need, as well as providing wildlife habitat and watershed protection. Beef production can be balanced with other goals for public lands. I would like us to manage our public lands in a way that allows for food production and also protects the natural resources on which we all depend. Recreation is another use of the public land that can be very valuable, but it is also not without impacts. Let's look at the long-term health of the land and work to balance the human uses of the land. I don't want to destroy the mother who provides us with food and shelter.

Discussion Question 1

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(cont.)

I think we need to acknowledge that we are all on this earth together. We "inhabitants of this small planet" share many of the same needs and desires, and we need to think of the solutions in that way. I think the Great Outdoors Initiative is on the right track! I know my comment is philosophical and not a precise suggestion for the Great Outdoors Initiative, but I would hate to see us get back into some of the guilt and hopelessness that was part of the seventies. Especially now when times are feeling so tough. I'm glad this initiative is focusing on solutions!

If states truly want to work with ranchers and farmers on private land conservation, which can also benefit wildlife, states need to implement programs that work for the farmers and ranchers. These landowners need to be able to continue to make a living from their property by producing food for our country. If the programs are not tailored to the needs of working ranches and farms, I foresee two outcomes. Either the "protected" lands will no longer be available for food production, or the only landowners who will participate will be wealthy individuals who do not earn a living from agricultural production. I believe it is possible to design such a program, but farmers and ranchers need to be involved in the design and the details of each project.

lucy coward (24may 2010) I have been with the Texas Master Naturalist and really enjoy getting out in the community along with other Texas Master Naturalists and learning about our plants, wildlife. It's a wonderful program that more people should get involved in.

Awesome idea! America has (had) the greatest prairie on earth. Let's save a piece of it.

Please, preserve our battlefields, civil AND revolutionary war. They are tangible links to our past, and it is one of the best ways to honor those who fought, and to teach those we hope never have to fight.

I agree. There is no better education on nature and life than to be where it is. Place-based environmental education should be in every school for every child. There are several good studies on the valuable effect on behavior and learning in children when they have access to the outdoors. Roger Tory Peterson Institute has a great place-based environmental education program on their website.

Please also see a very similar idea: [Expand Use of LWCF for Private Lands Conservation and Third-party Administration](#) by Pam Dewell

Discussion Question 1

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(cont.)

A couple thoughts come to mind some of these thoughts may have been mentioned in one manner or another... • Education and Re education - I believe the future of conservation will rely within the will of the people, but unfortunately large aspects of our society are disconnected from the land value of open space/wilderness. There needs to be constant/consistent reminders about the positive values of land/open space/wilderness. People need to understand the linkage between riparian buffers and water quality. I would think that the government could partner with the talent of colleges and university programs to educate the masses. There needs to be a more organized/aggressive effort to encourage people to embrace the outdoors and to support the land/sustainability of the land. • Government organizations/restructuring/promoting cohesiveness – I think there should be some heart to heart discussion about creating teamwork/vision between the Forest Service, the Park Services, the Land Management Bureau, and Fish and Wildlife Services. If there is going to be a national dialogue about conservation in America, the individuals within these departments need to be willing to work together. It seems that the visions of the Forest Service could sometimes go against visions of the Fish and Wildlife Services. One groups “vision/role” could hamper/take away from another departments. If these groups are unable to work together in a fruitful manner, why have these discussions? • Continue to Reward individuals/companies who choose easements. We face the reality that in order to encourage conservation - the private landowner plays an enormous role. I think that greater opportunities/creative economic & tax incentives should be given for small farmers, companies, individuals willing to put their land into an easement. With this said, I believe the government should make sure that organizations caring for easements meet national/state regulations. I would even suggest that open space easements should be encouraged within urbanized regions/near wilderness & national/state parks. Easements provide a great opportunity to buffer between open space and developed regions. • I would encourage the president to expand the national parks and designated wilderness areas. • Eco regionalism and wilderness corridors should be a priority within the focus of conservation/wilderness expansion. Within this topic, I would even suggest finding ways to create conservation routes to link different areas nationally. This will require compromise and willingness to work together. If government organizations are willing to work together, if easements are encouraged, if there are aggressive education efforts, and a variety of organizations like The Nature Conservancy can assist with data...I think there can be great progress towards conservation within America.

Could someone explain the negatives (Not that I'll agree philosophically, but I would appreciate the perspective) of ... 1. Educating the public about the positives that land and open space provide society 2. Encouraging different branches of government to work together in national parks and wilderness 3. The development of easements for private landowners 4. The expansion of national parks/wilderness 5. Developing wilderness corridors and an eco regionalism perspective to preserve wildlife. ex. The recently discovered Jaguar population in Arizona

Discussion Question 1

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(cont.)

The Siskiyou County Board of Supervisors is opposed to the proposed Siskiyou Crest National Monument and the proposed expansion of the Cascade Siskiyou National Monument on most of the area in California north of the Klamath River. { Link } Hearings were held and hundreds of people expressed strong opposition to this proposal. Only one person expressed support. -

Siskiyou_Crest_Monument_Proposal_05-18-10_1pm_Part_TwoSecretary" rel="nofollow" target="_blank">Link } At Congressional hearings, Secretary Salazar stated that they would not declare monuments against the will of the people. If he is true to his word, then these two proposed National Monuments are off the table for further consideration. Local residents are getting very angry and upset that this is being proposed. Klamath River communities down to Happy Camp are wallpapered with signs against the Siskiyou Crest monument. I am the Supervisor from this district so I can tell you that this designation is definitely not wanted.

Forests are one of our greatest natural assets. They help clean the air, naturally filter the water that millions of Americans drink, provide ample opportunities for recreation, and protect fish and wildlife habitat. Working forests are also an integral part of the economic vitality of many local economies. Substantial funding for the Forest Legacy Program to meet needs across every state and territory will assist private forest owners to keep forests intact, healthy, and resilient, ensuring they continue to provide multiple natural resource benefits. This idea was originally posted in the Private Lands Conservation category where it had a total of 50 votes.

Our nation's heritage of public lands is a national treasure. Ample funding to acquire and protect key inholdings and expansion areas throughout our national parks, forests, trails, refuges, wilderness and BLM areas as well as grant funding for state and local parks is necessary to protect the integrity of these special places. Funding for this purpose comes from the Land and Water Conservation Fund and has been low and inconsistent for many years. The solution is full and dedicated funding of the Land and Water Conservation Fund. This will ensure that Americans will have greater opportunities to enjoy outdoor recreation, wildlife, natural settings, and historical and cultural sites. Consistent and reliable full funding of at least \$900 million annually, as authorized by Congress, would fulfill the goals of the program and protect the American outdoors for future generations.

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(cont.)

Once these historic sites are gone, they cannot be replaced. Battlefields and other Historic Sites are a part of everyone's Heritage. The preservation of these sites also supports the environment as in most cases the land is kept as it was or restored to its historical date.

If there is one thing that our government deserves credit for in the past, it is creating (in 2006) the enhanced tax incentives package for conservation easement donations. These incentives have greatly accelerated the win-win movement to place family farms and natural lands under the protection of a conservation easement. These incentives have provided landowners with moderate or low incomes an opportunity to reap some financial benefit from giving up their development rights in order to save the conservation values. But the real winners are the public and the federal government because the cost to protect natural lands is negligible and there is no on-going cost to keep it protected -- the privately funded land trusts perform this stewardship in perpetuity. I fervently implore Congress to extend, and make permanent, the enhanced tax incentives package.

I support having multiple venues for serving our country. I'm familiar with Americorps serving nonprofits, but didn't realize they also benefit public lands. At this time in our history, we need to place more emphasis on serving a common good -- that concept is all but lost. I'd love to see that effort directed to environmental stewardship.

has proposed a way of implementing this idea that will directly help public parks. I believe, though, that bringing recycling into our public life is necessary to promote cleaner water, air and land. Reusing resources (by recycling) reduces our need for natural resources -- this will indirectly benefit our public lands. All our environmental issues are interrelated. I'm astonished by how much we throw away (and waste) in our workplaces, restaurants, and other public areas. Recycling in these settings will increase household recycling as well.

Ohio tax forms already have a provision for donating all/part of a refund for conservation and wildlife protection. I like this idea and am voting to promote it.

I agree; supporting the American Family Farm and Ranchland Protection Act, H.R. 3050, is of paramount importance.

Bring back the Landowner Incentive Program that was started during the last administration. The program provided funding to states to build technical provider expertise and financial incentives to private landowners who voluntarily restore habitat for priority at-risk fish, wildlife and plants.

Build and promote an after school program in schools that involve school-aged children in active learning about nature and the outdoors. Partner with and provide subsidies for underserved children to attend local nature centers, natural areas, etc. and bring in experts to the school to lead activities that encourage inquiry-based learning about wildlife and the outdoors.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

I think your view of these plans is in the minority. Are State Wildlife Action Plans perfect? No. Will they get better during the revision process? Absolutely. To have a comprehensive wildlife plan in every state and territory is a giant leap forward. I suggest you stay engaged in the process and work to make Florida's plan better. I know the staff that were involved in developing the Florida Wildlife Action Plan and they are hard working, have high integrity and would be responsive to your concerns.

the State and Tribal Wildlife Grants Program provided the funding to develop state wildlife action plans and now to implement those same plans.

Get those kids out on some bikes, they will love it. It's a great way to spend quality time together for families as well as learn about how to enjoy the outdoors and be responsible for your foot print. Great OHV communities out there to help the little ones learn to enjoy and be responsible

Hunters and shooters pay an 11% excise tax on guns and ammunition (anglers also pay a fee). These revenues are collected by the federal government and used as a dedicated source of funding (trust fund) to support the management of game species. How about expanding this fee (but smaller) to other outdoor recreation products such as tents, hiking shoes, bird seed, bikes, binoculars, snowboards, etc. and then using it to support conservation of all wildlife.

I like the idea of assessing a fee for developing undeveloped lands - a development impact fee. A parks and green infrastructure bank could be established.

In 2005 Congress required each state and territory to develop a comprehensive wildlife conservation strategy (state wildlife action plan). These plans identify at-risk fish and wildlife and their threats and the conservation actions needed to conserve species that may be headed towards future endangered species listing. The plans were a collaboration of state, federal and private conservation interests and each plan was designed to meet each state's specific needs. Dedicated funding is needed to implementation and revision of the plans and to help ensure they can be used in a regional contexts (e.g. landscape conservation cooperatives). More than 6,200 organizations that are part of the Teaming With Wildlife coalition support dedicated funding to implement these plans.

I don't think a small user tax would deter most who buy outdoor products. The return on the investment would be substantial. I think the tax could be on a sliding scale so the more expensive products would have the lowest percentage tax.

Lest we forget: The ground on these battlefields was soaked with American blood!!! Would you build a McDonalds on the cliffs overlooking Omaha Beach??? How about a Walmart??? What kind of American would even propose developing land on which American soldiers and civilians fought and died??? It is unfathomable! Yet it is happening now. Please protect this hallowed ground.

Discussion Question 1

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(cont.)

the beauty of state wildlife action plans is that most states collaborated closely with private landowners such as farmers and ranchers to create their plan. We can not sustainably conserve wildlife on public lands alone, we need incentives that help private landowners meet their business and conservation objectives.

Multi use trails can work. All parties must realize that they have enjoyment of the forests as their goal. If everyone behaves responsibly, hikers realize that they do not own the trail, bikers need to slow down when encountering other users and , motorcycles and 4 wheelers be aware of everyone else. The system can work. More mountain biking/ multi use trails are a benefit.

The creation of a Buffalo Commons National Park is such an obviously sensible idea that it deserves the backing of everyone who sees what has been happening to the mid-section of the country and its people. There are more who do see and understand because of the Poppers.

As a current student of the TMNP I am impressed with the varied curriculum, knowledgeable speakers and compassionate team of instructors. If more adults were aware of the opportunity awaiting them through this program they would be just as inspired to volunteer their time and efforts to the natural wonders in this state.

America's Great Outdoors should place a high priority on protecting, reconnecting, and restoring aquatic systems. Collaborative efforts and partnerships with state and local agencies can produce valuable tools to protect our streams and rivers. We must fully understand the impacts of oil shale exploitation to our water and agriculture before we even begin to consider commercial oil shale leasing. Oil shale is a fuel of the past, and is a dirty fuel with serious impacts to water and wildlife.

BLM should implement its authority to establish Wilderness Study Areas (WSAs). The Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976 directs the BLM to inventory and study its roadless areas for wilderness characteristics. Since 1980, Congress has reviewed some of these areas and has designated some as wilderness, and released others for non-wilderness uses. This effort should include giving the BLM authority to establish new WSAs and to protect the wilderness characteristics of all WSAs. Hundreds of thousands of acres identified by the public and the BLM as worthy of wilderness designation have been leased for oil and gas development, and they deserve meaningful protection.

I don't see how a business being able to claim equipment purchases and capital improvements is a subsidy. This is one way that the federal government can actually help by rewarding the creation of economic development by reducing the amount of money it confiscates from businesses and individuals. As for roads and trails: Fine, don't maintain them. There are plenty of us involved with off road groups, hiking clubs and others that have been maintaining the trails and roads that we use for many years. Projects like this usually end up being a lot of fun for everyone involved and they provide the users of these areas with a real sense of ownership and responsibility. As long as the Park Service wishes to have visitors, they will accommodate those who visit.

Discussion Question 1

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(cont.)

OHV recreation is a family oriented activity that allows for father/son, mother/daughter, husband/wife to spend quality time outdoors. Too often OHV recreation is defined by the renegade few who behave irresponsibly. The reality is, every group, be they OHV or Environmentalists have that "5%" that causes problems. We should not all be punished for the actions of the few, this has gone on too long. Millions of Americans responsibly enjoy motorized recreation on public lands and this right and privilege needs to be continued and enhanced. OHV use is a legitimate, sustainable use of appropriate public lands, particularly on National Forests and Bureau of Land Management Units. It is a healthy family activity and provides a great opportunity for families to "get away from it all," and to experience the great outdoors together, away from cell phones and television sets. We, like other recreationists, seek opportunities to not only enjoy the riding experience, but also opportunities to learn more about cultural and historical context, take in scenic views, observe wildlife, camp, hunt, fish and other activities. The overwhelming majority of OHVers are conservationists, who seek to preserve the same outdoor experiences they enjoy for children and grandchildren. There's not a time we go out that we don't bring back more trash than we generate ourselves. We are constantly maintaining the areas we ride in. OHVers are volunteers. OHV clubs and organizations groom and maintain trails, trailheads and other facilities as well as adopt trails and provide the tools and experience needed for constructing and maintaining all sorts of recreational trails; not just OHV opportunities. ATV and off-highway motorcycle riding encourages and promotes physical fitness, as does mountain biking. OHVs provide the opportunity for Americans of all ages and physical capabilities to enjoy the outdoors. This is of particular importance to us so that our parents and grandparents are able to go out and see these lands as well, they cannot hike in and can't ride horses/don't own them. Please make sure that any and all future legislation regarding conservation of land takes into full account and involves the OHV community to ensure that our rights are considered and enhanced, not trampled upon.

The outdoors are a great classroom for young people to learn not only about the natural world around them, but also leadership skills, integrity and personal responsibility. There are many organizations, like 4H, Scouting and the YMCA that offer programs of this nature. Definitely worthy of support.

There are two ideas here and they should probably be separated. The scientifically managed harvest of timber is something that is both needed and sustainable. The ESA is a different issue. While the goal is laudable, it needs significant reforms that protect private property rights and prevent the abuse of the law.

This should be expanded to include cultural sites, as well. Things such as historic buildings, bridges, etc. It's relatively easy to geotag photos and a program like this would be a good way to introduce students to arts, as well as the use of GPS and computer technology.

Discussion Question 1

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(cont.)

This sounds like a great program and one worthy of being promoted. Getting young people out and into the backcountry is something that always has lasting positive effects. It's unfortunate, however, that there are those who would use this as a means of promoting their narrow-minded, one size fits all version of public land management. This sounds like something that would be a lot of fun to do and would encourage families to spend time together in an outdoor setting.

(Note, I do not proclaim to be an "official spokesman" for RMSSN). Thank you for your thoughtful questions back and sounding interest in the work of RMSSN. As for our broader mission in collaboration with the National Science Foundation, we are the pilot program for what aims to be a 21st century response to increasing calls for ecological literacy, especially amongst a burgeoning youth population. Over the course of the week, we learned about how to deliver effective policy addresses that unite rather than divide demographics, how to accurately chronicle and observe changes in natural environments from systemic forces including but not limited to climate change, human disturbances, insect infestations, etc. However, the most organic lesson gained from the five days of the actual Summer Academy and of RMSSN over the coming weeks and months would have to be the passion, the immediacy, and the stirring of an ecosystem almost wholly based on environmental leaders. Our ranks did include the likes of wildlife management and conservation biology majors, but also included fine arts and environmental studies-English majors such as myself. As for the focus of accomplishments in the Rocky Mountain region, yes we aim to confront and resolve the issues of pine bark beetle infestation, near-epidemics of forest fires, related climate-change induced developments, and human development disturbances through a broader leadership and knowledge base. However, our Academy has a range of students from California all the way East to New Hampshire and including four Mexican students to form a truly international delegation. One of the goals of RMSSN is to begin confronting and tackling environmental issues on a more national and international level, too, so we could become ultimately a global "human ecosystem." If you are finding yourself with more questions or curious about more of the plans and goals of RMSSN, feel free to check out our main website at { Link } Thanks for your comments and I look forward to more commentary in the future.

This might seem too obvious, but need to be said. Money used for the preservation of wild lands and wild water resources can not be better spent. They become, over time what people and wild life together seek out.

I would like to see the mineral development restrictions addressed so that oil & gas development and ranch protection can coexist thru this program.

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Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

The Texas Master Naturalist Program: A program model for developing a corps of natural resource volunteers aiding in the conservation, education, management and research of our local public lands. The short supply of dedicated and well-informed citizens and volunteers is often cited as a limiting factor for community-based conservation efforts. The Texas Master Naturalist™ program works to address this need by developing local corps of “master volunteers” to provide service dedicated to the beneficial management of natural resources and natural areas within the volunteers' own communities for the State." Communities and organizations across the state rely on these skilled volunteers for implementing youth outreach programs; for operating parks, nature centers, and natural areas; and for providing leadership in local natural resource conservation efforts. In addition, private landowners depend on the expertise of these volunteers to help them gain a broader scientific understanding of the ecology and management of their biological resources. This partnership among the Texas Parks & Wildlife Department, Texas AgriLife Extension Service and over 300 local partners has resulted in a unique master volunteer organization. At the state level, the organization is directed by two program coordinators and a steering committee responsible for providing training guidelines, program marketing and promotion, curriculum resources, and advanced training opportunities for the chapters and their volunteers. At the local level, chapters consist of our trained volunteers aided by personnel from the partnering agencies as advisors and partnerships with additional community organizations sharing our mission. For an individual to gain the certification and designation as a “Texas Master Naturalist,” he or she must participate in an approved training program with a minimum of 40 hours of combined field and classroom instruction, obtain 8 contact hours of approved advanced training, and complete 40 hours of natural resource-related volunteer service—all of which is provided through local Master Naturalist chapters using guidelines of the state program. Upon enrollment into the initial training program, trainees have a maximum of one year in which to complete their 40 hours of volunteer service and 8 hours of advanced training. To retain the Texas Master Naturalist title during each subsequent year, volunteers must complete 8 additional hours of advanced training and provide an additional 40 hours of volunteer service coordinated through their local chapter. Founded with the first Master Naturalist chapter in 1997 and officially established as a statewide program in 1998, the Texas Master Naturalist™ program was the first of its kind. Since then, the program has grown from just four chapters and 150 volunteers in 1998 to 42 chapters and over 6,300 volunteers serving Texas' diverse communities across the state. To date, Texas Master Naturalist Volunteers have provided over 1.22 Million hours of service valued at more than \$25.6 Million. TMN volunteers have impacted more than 135,000 acres of habitat; developed and/or maintained some 1,100 miles of trails; and reach more than 200,000 youth adults and private landowners annually with outreach and education efforts. The Texas Master Natrualist Program has become a model program by which 25 other states have come to develop. Just think of the national impacts if agencies had the ability to implement these programs in every state of the nation!

Battlefields are outdoor classrooms for this and future generations. They allow visitors to walk in the footsteps of the Civil War heroes and experience the landscape much as it was during the conflict.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

How about if we look for people to head our agencies who have character and are not out to promote an agenda. I don't want a leader of either the Sierra Club or Weyerhaeuser Corp placed in an agency to promote an agenda.

I agree, wonderful idea. Lots of current and proposed management policy denigrates massive expanses of wonderful land into lands that few will be able see or enjoy. Most of these areas should be open to mechanized recreation, such as OHVs and mountain bikes. Where I live, the trails created and used by OHV users are almost always also used by other groups as means to access otherwise inaccessible wild lands.

I agree. Don't spend money you don't have to buy new properties. I have another scandalous idea. Go back to cutting timber. Use that money to pay for federal programs. Did you know that when National Forests were set aside, they were expected to pay for themselves?

I concur. Having and keeping and improving places to learn about nature close to home (i.e. easy access) is critical. Our national parks just don't serve that role in most urban areas. Urban park systems and natural areas and nature centers need help to keep the majority of our public connected and benefiting from contact in nature.

I have a family of 5, my wife and I and 3 kids. We very much enjoy the outdoors, America is a great country and to really appreciate it you need to get out and explore it. We just visited Yellowstone, Mt Rushmore and Zion as part of our summer vacation. In addition we love to ATV in the Glamis area with other families. This is a chance for us to stay close to our kids as they get older and to keep them interested in family activities. Taking away this great family fun would leave us city bound. I agree with balance and love the environment that we live in, but a very few individuals should not be commanding the rights of many many more..

I like this idea. This could also serve as a type of apprenticeship / job training activity for anyone interested in pursuing a career in Conservation. Do you envision this program to be a sort of twenty-first century version of the Civilian Conservation Corps or something else?

I would like to get everyone to encourage the "TREAD LIGHTLY" . This would help immensely. When we are on the trail I encourage my family to pick up trash others have left.

Lots of other people enjoy (or should enjoy) the outdoor opportunities that logging areas provide. Anyone who has actually visited and spent time in a well-managed forest through the various stages of cutting and regrowth should know the great bounty of nature. Throughout the stages there are fantastic opportunities for wildlife observers, hikers, hunters, botanists, ecologists, OHVs, and myriad other groups. Literally a perpetual wealth of natural, recreational, and economic potential. Read between the lines, here. Again is proposing shutting huge groups of people out of public land, and denigrating huge tracts of valuable natural resource to narrow or non use. Again, the goal of this initiative is to connect people to the outdoors. We need constructive ideas in that vein, not counterproductive drivel.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Somebody explain these subsidies. I've never heard of them. Recycled paper costs more to make. There would be more on the market if people would pay for it.

Teachers interested in a balance approach to environmental education should research a program called "Project Learning Tree".

These battlefields are hallowed ground where many Americans fell. If these spaces were in a foreign country, no one would argue the need to preserve them. Preserving CW battlefields not only reserves this sacred space, but also preserves wetlands, forests, and open space, which is an environmental benefit.

This might be a good approach, but I believe it would be over used by the ultra greens to remove lands from public use. Wise use, (Conservation), is a superior concept to no use, (Preservation).

We have a moral responsibility and duty to preserve the battlefields of the Civil War. This war more than any other conflict defined us a people and a nation. We owe it to all who fought in this conflict, no matter which side, to preserve these hallowed grounds and the memory of the sacrifices made by all. Too many children find history a boring subject to read about. I know my kids did, but not long ago I took my oldest and her kids to Gettysburg, and the reaction emotionally was unbelievable. I've heard many stories like mine and they almost always end with the kids, and adults, eager to learn more about the Civil War. What a waste if we loose these great places of conflict and history. It must also be remembered that these great historical parks are also a place for fanmilies to spend time together, of financial benefit to the local towns around them. We must move to save these historical sites as soon as possible. They are good for the economy, preservation of land/nature, and a promise that our history will live on.

Whatever means are used to educate the public, we must avoid the desire to use it for propaganda. Let people hear both sides of issues, without name calling. Then let them decide for themselves. It is clear I very much disagree with the two previous commenters, but I won't help anything by calling them names.

Absolutely! there are Master Naturalist programs that exist in other states. The Texas Program presents good statistics on what each and every state could be doing to conserve natural reoursces while reconnecting people with the land and their natural resources in their local communities. To find a Master Naturalist program in your local state check out ANROSP.org for member programs. Just think of what could happen when program adoption takes place in every state of the nation!

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

The Texas Master Naturalist Program: A modern day volunteer naturalist and citizen science program model for any state of the nation. The short supply of dedicated and well-informed citizens and volunteers is often cited as a limiting factor for community-based conservation efforts. The Texas Master Naturalist™ program works to address this need by developing local corps of “master volunteers” to provide service dedicated to the beneficial management of natural resources and natural areas within the volunteers' own communities for the State of Texas. Communities and organizations across the state rely on these skilled volunteers for implementing youth outreach programs; for operating parks, nature centers, and natural areas; and for providing leadership in local natural resource conservation efforts. In addition, private landowners depend on the expertise of these volunteers to help them gain a broader scientific understanding of the ecology and management of their biological resources. This partnership among the Texas Parks & Wildlife Department, Texas AgriLife Extension Service and over 300 local partners has resulted in a unique master volunteer organization. At the state level, the organization is directed by two program coordinators and a steering committee responsible for providing training guidelines, program marketing and promotion, curriculum resources, and advanced training opportunities for the chapters and their volunteers. At the local level, chapters consist of our trained volunteers aided by personnel from the partnering agencies as advisors and partnerships with additional community organizations sharing our mission. For an individual to gain the certification and designation as a “Texas Master Naturalist,” he or she must participate in an approved training program with a minimum of 40 hours of combined field and classroom instruction, obtain 8 contact hours of approved advanced training, and complete 40 hours of natural resource-related volunteer service—all of which is provided through local Master Naturalist chapters using guidelines of the state program. Upon enrollment into the initial training program, trainees have a maximum of one year in which to complete their 40 hours of volunteer service and 8 hours of advanced training. To retain the Texas Master Naturalist title during each subsequent year, volunteers must complete 8 additional hours of advanced training and provide an additional 40 hours of volunteer service coordinated through their local chapter. Founded with the first Master Naturalist chapter in 1997 and officially established as a statewide program in 1998, the Texas Master Naturalist™ program was the first of its kind. Since then, the program has grown from just four chapters and 150 volunteers in 1998 to 42 chapters and over 6,300 volunteers serving Texas' diverse communities across the state. To date, Texas Master Naturalist Volunteers have provided over 1.22 Million hours of service valued at more than \$25.6 Million. TMN volunteers have impacted more than 135,000 acres of habitat; developed and/or maintained some 1,100 miles of trails; and reach more than 200,000 youth adults and private landowners annually with outreach and education efforts. The Texas Master Natrualist Program has become a model program by which 25 other states have come to develop. Just think of the national impacts if agencies implemented these programs in every state of the nation!

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

The Texas Master Naturalist Program: A program model for developing a corps of natural resource volunteers aiding in the conservation, education, management and research of our local public lands. The short supply of dedicated and well-informed citizens and volunteers is often cited as a limiting factor for community-based conservation efforts. The Texas Master Naturalist™ program works to address this need by developing local corps of “master volunteers” to provide service dedicated to the beneficial management of natural resources and natural areas within the volunteers' own communities for the State." Communities and organizations across the state rely on these skilled volunteers for implementing youth outreach programs; for operating parks, nature centers, and natural areas; and for providing leadership in local natural resource conservation efforts. In addition, private landowners depend on the expertise of these volunteers to help them gain a broader scientific understanding of the ecology and management of their biological resources. This partnership among the Texas Parks & Wildlife Department, Texas AgriLife Extension Service and over 300 local partners has resulted in a unique master volunteer organization. At the state level, the organization is directed by two program coordinators and a steering committee responsible for providing training guidelines, program marketing and promotion, curriculum resources, and advanced training opportunities for the chapters and their volunteers. At the local level, chapters consist of our trained volunteers aided by personnel from the partnering agencies as advisors and partnerships with additional community organizations sharing our mission. For an individual to gain the certification and designation as a “Texas Master Naturalist,” he or she must participate in an approved training program with a minimum of 40 hours of combined field and classroom instruction, obtain 8 contact hours of approved advanced training, and complete 40 hours of natural resource-related volunteer service—all of which is provided through local Master Naturalist chapters using guidelines of the state program. Upon enrollment into the initial training program, trainees have a maximum of one year in which to complete their 40 hours of volunteer service and 8 hours of advanced training. To retain the Texas Master Naturalist title during each subsequent year, volunteers must complete 8 additional hours of advanced training and provide an additional 40 hours of volunteer service coordinated through their local chapter. Founded with the first Master Naturalist chapter in 1997 and officially established as a statewide program in 1998, the Texas Master Naturalist™ program was the first of its kind. Since then, the program has grown from just four chapters and 150 volunteers in 1998 to 42 chapters and over 6,300 volunteers serving Texas' diverse communities across the state. To date, Texas Master Naturalist Volunteers have provided over 1.22 Million hours of service valued at more than \$25.6 Million. TMN volunteers have impacted more than 135,000 acres of habitat; developed and/or maintained some 1,100 miles of trails; and reach more than 200,000 youth adults and private landowners annually with outreach and education efforts. The Texas Master Natrualist Program has become a model program by which 25 other states have come to develop. Just think of the national impacts if agencies had the ability to implement these programs in every state of the nation!

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

ATVs, 4x4s, dirt-bikes, Mtn-bikes horses and hikers, snowmobilers, x-country skiing and snow shoes etc.etc all need a trail network Most of these activities would prefer trails be designed for their purpose and visitor conflict between activity types are common place. Land managers just need to become more transparent with their decisions regarding access, restrictions and limits. Ratios showing comparing recreational opportunities available within each planning area to participation rate demographics for each activity would provide a helpful tool for planners and highlight the available trails for visitors. Rivers should be treated the same as trails. Motorized watercraft, paddlers, anglers and swimmers all desire to recreate and travel in these waterways causing obvious potential conflict.

I am also in agreement that OHVs are too loud for many trails...but the idea of making them more quiet, and more stealthy, will also make them more dangerous for bikes, Horse, and hikers. I would rather know if an OHV is about to round a blind corner when I am hiking with my kids or biking with friends. OHV riders deserve opportunities to enjoy the outdoors, just not everywhere and separated from hikers.

Please look at the commodity prices for Timber over the past few decades. Prices for timber have not kept pace with inflation even during the building boom. The Timber industry is still viable, but harvesting more trees on public land will not help timber prices during a building slump or be necessary as we move toward a paperless society. Some sections of our forests should be dedicated to non-use values while others should be open to varied types, and amounts, of recreation while other areas should provide for sustainable forestry.

Protecting the 'surroundings of preserved assets' is simply asking the agencies to dictate use on the private land surrounding the parks. NEPA should include how agency planning will impact (directly and indirectly) the landowners as well as how local land development might impact the resource. The expansion of NEPA beyond the boundaries of the park should look both ways; NEPA should include the impact the park has on local landowners as well as what local landowners might have on the park.

Turning wildlife conservation areas into free-for-all zoos, is not the answer. I am comfortable with being limited from wildlife conservation areas, so long as the reason provided for this conservation is transparent to the public. If wildlife-dependent recreation demand is pent-up in this area, registered tours conducted by the fish and wildlife service at the appropriate times and in the appropriate places, should minimize wildlife disturbances while offering those eager to visit this area the desired opportunity.

Agencies should only be involved with Access to public lands should when access is a necessity ,not simply a "convenience". The inability of easy access to every square inch of National park has more often been a benefit to the resource.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Agree, there are a few areas in my neck of the woods (NW Montana & N Idaho) that have been proposed to be wilderness and are managed as potential wilderness, such as the Mallard-Larkins (Idaho Panhandle and Clearwater NF) and Scotchman Peak (Idaho Panhandle and Kootenai NF)- I think most people support Wilderness designation of these areas and its a known fact that Wilderness designation would increase awairness and recreational use - many people love being in a wild & primitive area - they would come & local economies would benefit.

Allowing easy public access to every corner of public land from every direction is not an agency directive. Often the difficult to access areas are the best conserved sites within a park. Reducing access routes to every site within a park might be the best way to conserve these areas from recreational overuse.

As a biker, I think access to Wilderness is a bad idea. Having areas with no bikes is just like having some Mt.bike trails without ORVs. HOWEVER, Wilderness designation should consider the impact designation has on bikes and fish stocking. Wilderness (and Wild and Scenic)designation should be forced to consider the negative consequences of designation under a public NEPA process. Designation is often marketed to the public as a 'positive', while the downside of designation is too often ignored and not considered during public and congressional reviews. Public agencies should be mandated to consider and publicize the negative consequences of special area designation.

Bicycles should not be allowed in any natural area. They are inanimate objects and have no rights. There is also no right to mountain bike. That was settled in federal court in 1994: { Link } . It's dishonest of mountain bikers to say that they don't have access to trails closed to bikes. They have EXACTLY the same access as everyone else -- ON FOOT! Why isn't that good enough for mountain bikers? They are all capable of walking.... A favorite myth of mountain bikers is that mountain biking is no more harmful to wildlife, people, and the environment than hiking, and that science supports that view. Of course, it's not true. To settle the matter once and for all, I read all of the research they cited, and wrote a review of the research on mountain biking impacts (see { Link }). I found that of the seven studies they cited, (1) all were written by mountain bikers, and (2) in every case, the authors misinterpreted their own data, in order to come to the conclusion that they favored. They also studiously avoided mentioning another scientific study (Wisdom et al) which did not favor mountain biking, and came to the opposite conclusions. Those were all experimental studies. Two other studies used a survey design, which is inherently incapable of answering that question (comparing hiking with mountain biking). I only mention them because mountain bikers often cite them, but scientifically, they are worthless. Mountain biking accelerates erosion, creates V-shaped ruts, kills small animals and plants on and next to the trail, drives wildlife and other trail users out of the area, and, worst of all, teaches kids that the rough treatment of nature is okay (it's NOT!). What's good about THAT? For more information: { Link } .

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

By claiming "They know better than anyone" is why this idea is ridiculous. Environmentalists groups are also lobbyists like the OVH access groups seeking to force their agenda on how public lands are managed. Although I agree with many of their proposals, the balance required between use and conservation is best handled through an objective coordination of the needs and values associated with all sides of each argument. In place of embedding lobbyists inside of an agency, consider a more transparent land management agency that has open accountability.

By increasing the 'productivity of the parks' through better management of the resources, agencies (like farmers and everyone else) can supply more output (conservation, types of recreation) with less. There exists a mathematical optimum balance between recreational use and preservation. In place of seeking a political solution for every management plan, agencies should be looking to maximize public benefit by zoning public resources to provide the optimum balance of visitor use and preservation. For instance, providing public access to delicate headwater streams is not a 'too many people problem' it is a poor management problem.

For those urban dwellers...this seems like a good idea. HOWEVER, If you are at a parking lot with 20 visitors a week in a rural area, the idea of a few different types of bins is absurd. What will happen is that no trash can, or pick-up, will be provided making the trash problem far worst. Instead of a LAW, the idea should be a goal or recommendation, not a mandate.

Full, permanent funding of the the HPF would cement a linkage between conservation of both natural and constructed resources which have major implications for reduction of energy use and decreasing negative impacts on the environment. Re-use of all existing buildings, and specifically historic ones, garners their embodied energy while reducing landfill, and construction-produced greenhouse gas emissions. The America's Great Outdoors initiative would do well to partner these allied interests to the betterment of our holistic environment!

Here I am, the future generation for which parks have been designated. Since these are My parks, Only My conservation desires and My selected activities should be considered when establishing management policy. It might be easiest to have all land managing agencies report directly to Me in order to maximize the benefit to Me. MY parks should be protected and conserved for My benefit by keeping everyone else out. No one should be granted access unless they are fixing My trails and My waterways, or protecting wildlife for MY benefit. Trails and waterways should be designated specifically for MY activity, and access to all others should be prohibited until I arrive to enjoy My park. More taxes should be collected from all others so that My parks remain in good shape for My purposes.

I agree that moving productive lands into non-productive(non-taxable parks) is often detrimental to the tax base of local communities. A county should prioritize maintenance of primary roads over access roads to federal lands; there is nothing wrong with this. If access roads are only critical for access to Federal parks, the road maintenance should be turned over to the federal agencies by withdrawing local funding.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

I am for multi-use, but not for multi-use of every inch of public land. Certainly we do not want boats in swimming areas or ORVs in playgrounds. Agencies should provide a diversity of opportunities by varying access limitations by area and types of activity. A diversified approach to management policy can provide something for everyone. The demographics of an area - along with available inventory- should provide the legal basis for access limitations and recreational zoning.

I don't think an aggressive approach is going to get the desired result. By far, the majority of off-road people are very conscious of maintaining responsible forest use and are aware of keeping the environment safe and not damaging it. There are a few though that don't follow the rules. One of the most effective ways to maintain responsible use of public lands is to continue to post the rules and laws on the public land signage as you enter the public lands and at trail heads. The presence of rangers always helps keep people in line, but an over abundance of rangers, in my opinion, would be very costly and be applied only to a small minority of abusers. When the Forest Service OHV co-ordinators establish contact with local 4x4 clubs and get them involved with trail maintenance and volunteer work and forest maintenance, then the clubs themselves teach their members to tread lightly and be responsible users of public lands. This has been very successful in many areas of the country. You would be surprised how many people volunteer to help keep their public lands open and cared for.

I explored the great outdoors with my father and grandfather while learning to hunt and fish. My daughters and now my grand kids explored and appreciate the great outdoors while riding a motorcycle on U.S. and WA state public property. The enthusiasm and enjoyment experienced by our kids could never be matched by a more sedate and conservative adult activity like just walking around. Kids need to be excited about getting out and doing something and orv use gets them out there and away from Madison Avenue things like Wii and game boys. How many families can enjoy a long weekend doing the same activity together week after week for minimal cost close to home and not see or hear a TV or monitor of some type? Share the great outdoors, that's what we do while also being good stewards of public property at the same time.

I think this is a very reasonable request. Most all green sticker and street legal vehicles are required to come with a approved spark arrester and should be made quiet enough to not be a nuisance.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

In response to comment #8: I agree that hikers are responsible for some of the multi-use trail problems. I am a hiker, x-country biker that spent years riding a dirt-bike. I think each activity has its place and because of the variation in speeds at which they travel are better suited to designated single-purpose trails. This will likely result in fewer hike, bike and Off-road trails, but a safer and better experience for each user type. I do not agree that because an activity moves more quickly, it deserves a larger area. Numerous ways Off-roaders and mountain bikers can improve trail use is by improving the traffic on existing trails. A: One-way trails (especially down hills single track) would greatly limit trail near-misses. B: Maximum speed areas and unlimited speed areas could improve multi-use trails, especially near access areas. C: Trail design associated with curves, steps and banks can physically limit access for some activities; these are most effective when located near the trail head. Each activity should have a place in the outdoors, but only by limiting access to foot-travel only areas. Less controversial to those on this sight is the idea that water trails require limitations. Certainly limiting PWCs from fishing areas would benefit fishing. Also keeping paddlers from swimming areas might be less dangerous to those using a rope swing. This all comes back to allocation of use for various uses. From timber harvests to nature preserves, the agency is mandated to provide recreation, conservation and sustainable natural resources. These multi-uses can only be provided by allocating the resources to a variety of uses with a variety of use patterns.

It always surprises me how little people know about the Civil War, how little it is really taught, how it is really easy to forget about our country's past. The same is true of the Revolutionary War. I visit CW battlefields and have an emotional response at each one. They need preservation!

Mr. Moffatt: Overuse of riparian areas is an ongoing problem. here are some links for the 'showmez' { Link } { Link } { Link }

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Natural areas are wildlife's home. Wildlife should be given our top priority, because they can't protect themselves from us. In particular: Bicycles should not be allowed in any natural area. They are inanimate objects and have no rights. There is also no right to mountain bike. That was settled in federal court in 1994: { Link }. It's dishonest of mountain bikers to say that they don't have access to trails closed to bikes. They have EXACTLY the same access as everyone else -- ON FOOT! Why isn't that good enough for mountain bikers? They are all capable of walking.... A favorite myth of mountain bikers is that mountain biking is no more harmful to wildlife, people, and the environment than hiking, and that science supports that view. Of course, it's not true. To settle the matter once and for all, I read all of the research they cited, and wrote a review of the research on mountain biking impacts (see { Link }). I found that of the seven studies they cited, (1) all were written by mountain bikers, and (2) in every case, the authors misinterpreted their own data, in order to come to the conclusion that they favored. They also studiously avoided mentioning another scientific study (Wisdom et al) which did not favor mountain biking, and came to the opposite conclusions. Those were all experimental studies. Two other studies (by White et al and by Jeff Marion) used a survey design, which is inherently incapable of answering that question (comparing hiking with mountain biking). I only mention them because mountain bikers often cite them, but scientifically, they are worthless. Mountain biking accelerates erosion, creates V-shaped ruts, kills small animals and plants on and next to the trail, drives wildlife and other trail users out of the area, and, worst of all, teaches kids that the rough treatment of nature is okay (it's NOT!). What's good about THAT? For more information: { Link } .

YOU are not welcome in MY Park, and congratulations on you 1,340th post to this site! Public land agencies are mandated with the dual mission of proving land USE and PRESERVATION of resources. Since their governing statutes are in conflict, the conflicting opinions on this site should be of no surprise. The 'public' consists of everyone from mining companies to conservationists , or from snowmobilers to birders; there is no singular solution that will satisfy ALL citizens. Those uninterested in hearing solutions involving limiting their own use, or providing varied levels of impacts for different areas, are just as self-centered and closed minded as those asking to strip-mine the parks to supply cement or those spiking trees to protect old growth. The point of this post was to mimics most peoples 'ideas' on this site. Most posts argue for more land management under their own values and less under the values of 'others'. Just like YOUR 1,340 posts.

One great way to improve water quality within the parks is to limit recreational access to headwater streams and small tributaries. Creeks and tidal marshes are being overused by paddlers who create erosion on the riverbanks and crush tidal marshes. Overuse of the gravel riverbeds destroys the spawning habitat critical to fish regeneration. Increased recreational access to these areas does not benefit the downstream water quality nor the fisheries. Here is a great place for agencies to start protecting water quality.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Providing an atmosphere at home, school, and in the community that fosters a connection to the outdoors is a place to begin. Supporting existing youth groups such as scouting and wilderness 4-H, and church programs with a bent towards back country experiences, is a place to begin. People are so busy making ends meet the necessary adult leadership to actualize the experiences is getting fewer and further apart. If the federal and state government would implement volunteer tax incentives (beyond the current mileage and expense deductions), more people could afford to not work second jobs or cut back on overtime motivations, or even take time off.

comment # 4. As genius as you sound, could you tell me and others here, people who have limitations how without ATV we could go and enjoy the outdoors? I as example have broke my spine and both legs on car accident years ago (lucky me I still walk with my own feet but can't hike nor practice martial arts etc I used to) and so ATV have been my way to up to mountains to enjoy same nature I used with mountain bike and with hiking. It seems this is another good example how the bad apples damage the reputation of good ones as there is more riders with common courtesy than the huligans / racers with loud pipes. If the trails are closed, then close them from all, no hikers, no bicycles nothing that involves human being.

Some bikers do travel too quickly and some trail systems would be better to remain foot-travel only due to trail design, soil conditions and heavy use. However their is a place for bikes on dirt roads and on single tracks. With off-road bikers near 20% of the overall population and hikers at 50% of the population, it would seam that around 40% of all the public trail systems should be open to off-road cyclists.

SOME trails should be open to bikes, but not ALL trails. Visitor conflict as well as ecological damage is sufficient to LIMIT access to some trails and some areas, but bike should be allowed on many trails including single track. Those who argue that bikes no more damage than hikers, have not biked on steep trails, or during wet conditions (which ar both loads of fun). Agencies must balance access with conservation and all visitor interactions. Agencies should use demographic data to insure sufficient trails are open to accommodate mt. bikers as well as hikers, horses,OHVs and wildlife.

The Clean Water Act considers siltation a pollutant and therefore the legal argument to minimize erosion by stopping recreation in sensitive areas already exists. Recreation has been documented to cause significant amounts of erosion at access sites, destabilized banks and trampling/hardening of the vegetative buffers along headwater streams and wetlands. Many land managers turn a blind eye to recreational impacts instead of closing down some streams to access, or having to build excessive crossings. Often a simple solution might be to just closing down sensitive areas after periods of heavy rainfall.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

The idea of providing access to let everyone enjoy the outdoors should be available to everyone. Whether it be hiking, mountain biking, bird watching, horse back riding, flower gazing, rock climbing, ohv use....Why should someone be excluding the other? I am for responsible land management for ohv use. Many many families use the great outdoors to promote healthy family ties. Not everyone is a 'mad max' outdoors terrorist like what is portrayed by the close everything everywhere minded folks. Unfortunately areas are being closed down for ohv recreation in an alarming rate. The idea of 1 for 1 might seem drastic to some but consider what has been lost in the past couple decades. There is a green sticker program in California that pays for ohv opportunities to be opened and maintained. Responsible use means providing for and keeping areas open to the enjoyment of the masses not only for a few elitist who want to close/shut down opportunities for the average citizen. Thank you.

The long-term cost associated with managing public lands is not considered when new land is proposed as parks or forests. These costs should be presented to congress before any proposed designation becomes approved; the necessary funding should be approved and allocated up front. .

The non-profit, all volunteer, Arlington Outdoor Education Association owns and maintains the "Arlington Outdoor Lab" --- a 210 acre natural area in Broad Run Virginia that is used by 9,000 Arlington County public school children each year for their outdoor education and science classes. The 40 year public-private partnership has a long track record of success in getting urban and suburban children outside and connecting them to the natural world. Just google "arlington outdoor lab" or visit { Link } to learn more about this innovative concept.

The shoes, clothes, backpack, tent, and everything else you pack into nature is unnatural....so if you are really a naturalist go hiking naked and we will see how far you get and how much you enjoy it. As with most of these issues there are plenty of designated hiking only trails out there they just aren't the easiest to get to. You only want the ones you have to share for some reason. If you want to hike where you won't see any mountain bikes or OHVs I am sure you can find hundreds maybe thousands of places where you won't. Just step on those boots and start putting in the miles!!! After all that's what hiking is all about right???

The vast majority of National Parks, National Forests and wilderness lands are already closed to mechanized travel, thus leaving ample areas for hikers to have serenity without the noise of OHV's. In the National Forests, mechanized travel is limited to numbered established routes designated by the National Forest managers, and most of the hiking trails are distanced from the vehicle routes. I enjoy it very much to drive through the backcountry in a 4x4 vehicle and enjoy the wonderful forests we now have, and would like to see the mechanized routes stay open. I think multi-use of the forests are in the best interest of the public. Not everyone has the ability to hike and walk long distances to view our wonderful forests. The majority of the forest routes allow only street legal vehicles as it is, and must have DOT approved spark arrester mufflers. The OHV routes also require DOT approved spark arrester mufflers.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

The Wilderness Act of 1964 is a wonderful tool for people to use to protect their very special places for them to enjoy today and for our children to enjoy tomorrow. President Obama signed the Omnibus Public Lands Management Act to protect 2.1 million acres across nine states and helped citizens to save wilderness for them to hike, hunt, fish, and enjoy America's Great Outdoors. More can and should be done. The President can ask land managing agencies for their wilderness recommendations, and pass those ideas along to Congress to act. Acting expeditiously will help stem the tide of loss -- 6,000 acres a day of open space disappears, according to Secretary Salazar. We need to pass along the gift of wilderness to future generations.

This is an excellent idea, and is an extension of the great work done by the Civilian Conservation Corps many years ago. The idea can be extended to the stabilization or scientific excavation of archaeological sites as well.

Wilderness appreciation should be taught in schools - there are so many who simply don't have a clue!

With all the laws protecting sensitive water areas, the BLM, NPS and USFS appear oblivious to the impact recreational overuse has on these sensitive areas. Landowners are asked to 'protect riparian buffers', while the federal agencies promote and encourage use of these areas by recreationalists (paddlers, anglers, hunters, bikers and hikers). Although OVH and bike use is prohibited in some areas due to water-quality concerns, the impact scouting paddlers and hunters have along steep-creeks and tidal marshes remain undocumented and ignored. Limitations on access to headwaters streams and tidal marshes would not only create more consistency in public land management, but would also end the hypocrisy that conservation over land-use is critical for wildlife habitat ...except when the special-interest access-groups wish to recreate.

Without spending a dime, Consolidation of the BLM, USFS and NPS bureaucracies would help get more rangers in the park and away from the desk jobs. Certainly by designation of an area as 'forest' v. 'park' would be sufficient in determining if the area could be timbered, set aside for wildlife or become an OHV park. The overlap in laws, rules and overhead associated with these departments is extremely wasteful and no longer necessary. Like our public schools need more teachers and less administrators, our public parks could be much improved by investing more money in up-keep of the resource with fewer rangers sitting behind a desk. We do not need more parks, they just should be managed more productively.

Individual must have the opportunity to personally experience and appreciate the natural landscape in their local community before they can become stewards and advocates of our nation's natural resources and parks at the larger scale.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

I have been with the Master Naturalist program for 5 years now. We are constantly learning about the environment around us and passing on what we have learned. This is an excellent way to reach the public and especially school children. Raising awareness in our youth directs the future of this planet. If you come to appreciate your role in the environment, you will better protect that environment for the future.

Thanks for visiting the Tx Master Naturalist site! We all agree that education is the key. It is very important to make sure our children understand their role in the environment. The TMNP gives us a great way to educate both children and adults and I encourage you to get a program started in your state. Just last week I took 120 3rd graders on a nature trail and taught ecology. We make our school programs very hands on learning. We do the same with adults. We participated in an Earth Festival for Earth Day and are planning another for next year. We had 900 students from 2nd to 5th grade attend. Education, education, education!

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

A growing body of rigorous scientific research demonstrates positive effects of nature and outdoor activity on individual health and development (cognitive, social, emotional). At the sociopolitical level, Peace Parks are a successful global model for promoting conservation while resolving intergroup conflict abound (Ali, 2007, MIT Press). Scholars and their scholarly organizations can be key allies in this initiative. PLAN 1 -- INTERAGENCY COORDINATION: The Dept of Interior is to be congratulated for efforts thus far on the Great Outdoors Initiative. However, coordination with other agencies -- in particular, Dept of Education, NIH (NIMH, NIA, NICHD, NIDA), and NSF -- is critical to advancing this agenda. PLAN 2 -- PARTNER WITH SCHOLARLY ORGANIZATIONS: Govt agencies should support and consult with scholarly organizations (e.g. APA, ASA, NCA, APSA -- all in DC) that can (1) link govt officials to the experts who do vital basic, translational, and applied research and (2) work together to facilitate interdisciplinary research and its application. Examples of research to be used and scaled up include: attitudes and behavior change related to conservation, recycling, etc.; the restorative effects of nature, e.g. on attention, emotion, among the elderly, etc.; developmental impacts of exercise, interaction with nonhuman animals, etc.; organizational effectiveness of community groups; the Nature Divide" (socioeconomic disparities in nature access, environmental racism); strategies for reconciling conflicts among groups such as the "Wise Use" and "Green" crowds; and so on). PLAN 3 -- NEW, COORDINATED FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES: Interior and other agencies need to creatively pool, or at least link, funding opportunities for Great-Outdoors-relevant research, so that the overarching rubric is clear and efforts are coordinated and efficient (e.g. issue new multi-agency Requests for Proposals). Create an online clearinghouse for research related to this initiative so that the public, policy makers, educators, and researchers can find information and see novel connections among diverse research activities that all relate in some way to preserving and engaging the Great Outdoors. PLAN 4 -- SIGNAL LEADERSHIP FOR A NEW ERA: President Obama hopes this initiative ultimately will be regarded as comparable to Teddy Roosevelt's historic environmental policies 100 years ago. A few bold, unequivocating moves are necessary for him to own and lead real change. Without some clear, targeted, symbolic, binding action from the top, all of the above -- all sustained, intelligent, complex efforts -- will be for naught. The moratorium on off-shore drilling -- and re-assertion after the adverse ruling on it -- are a great example. A ban on wolf-killing would be another. Compensation is reasonable -- but efforts to eradicate one of the few remaining large predators that are grounded in 18th century mentalities and unsustainable lifestyles have no place in a 21st century conservation movement. President Obama, it's great that you have opened this discussion to all. But everyone can't get everything they want. Lead. Leave no doubt that we have turned a corner, we're going ahead, not back, and tell everyone who isn't on board get out of the way because whether we should ensure a sustainable future is not on the table.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Check out what the Bureau of Land Management has done to our supposed public lands. They were mandated to protect wild horses and they are demolishing them in favor of cattle. Our public lands are full of toxic mines that compromise our underground water systems. The land is leased out so cheaply that cattle ranchers and miners use our land instead of their own. In the meantime, despite laws already on the books, the BLM cruelly rounds up the horses by helicopter, running some until they drop--all at the taxpayers expense. The entire BLM should be closed.

I agree. The technology we have moves fast, and the government should keep up with it. The use of our public lands under the BLM is so badly managed its a disgrace. They need to look at input from independent, qualified individuals and they don't. Look at the horrible mess they have made out of the Wild Horse and Burro Act as they try to manage based on outdated, incorrect and sometimes purposely misconstrued facts to appease cattle ranchers.

I am going through the Texas Master Naturalist training and it is an excellent program. I am learning lots of information that I once knew and forgot as well as new information. I believe that every state should have such a program and the Texas program is a great model.

I think the system used on this website should be required for all elected officials so their constituency can vote per issue. In that way our elected officials will know exactly what their constituency wants and should vote in that manner on the hill. How the representative votes should also be obvious on their website so the people can choose the candidate that votes with and for the people instead of for campaign dollars.

It is impossible to understand the significance of the Civil War in our current time without preserving these historical sites for our children and grandchildren to visit. This portion of American History is barely glossed over in our schools today. The understanding and appreciation of the sacrifices that these men and women made for their freedoms are lost on today's youth. Preserving these sacred sites will not only demonstrate respect for their heritage but also provide them with the opportunity to touch, see and feel the past.

The enhanced tax incentive can make all the difference in the world. It represents significant tax savings, thus significant incentive for a landowner to donate a conservation easement. As a land trust we could be buying easements but donated easements make our budgets and thus our impact go farther. In general we try to appeal to landowners interested in conservation as their first priority. With the additional incentive offered by the enhanced tax incentive I can also pull in landowners who are somewhat committed to conservation to whom the tax savings appeals. I think this is a good move for us collectively to make as a conservation community as, I believe, a large part of the future for all of us involves doing conservation work on private lands in lieu of public land management. Northern Prairies Land Trust

like the old CCC

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Subsidize Scouting !!!!!!!

Those "dead sticks" 1. provide shade and housing for new growth 2. prevent against erosion 3. will NOT start another fire

We can't just let fire burn wherever it wants. I think it IS being managed responsibly.

What a great idea! I recently visited the National Heritage Museum, in Lexington, Massachusetts, which is showcasing exquisite photos of the 58 national parks taken by Quand-Tuan Luong, who traversed the country to get to all of them. The photos are simply breathtaking and give all who view them a sense of pause about our national parks and, by extension, all our public lands. Indeed, the photos serve as a reminder to us about what our national patrimony really is. More exhibits like this one are just what we need.

I find the fact that bicycles are lumped in with OHV users a bit misguided. I think that bicycles should be allowed into 100% of the places a horse is allowed. Bicycles have a considerably lower impact on the environment and the trail systems than horses or OHVs. To directly compare them to a horse bicycles weigh in at about 10 to 75lbs depending on the bike compared to a horse weighing in at around 1,000lbs. Bicycles use rubber tires to contact the ground, horses usually have ridged steel shoes to put considerably more weight down. When was the last time you had to step over or around bicycle poop? I think that in many cases bicycles should be allowed into the same areas as hikers. Not all hiking trails can facilitate bicycles but there should be an easy way for bicyclists to request access to a particular trail, possibly by submitting a video of them hiking the length of the trail, or a forest service employee should hike the trail. These should be processed in a timely fashion, ruled upon, and the signs should be updated. I would think that a trail designation could easily be changed in a 1-2 month period. To overview I think that bicycles should be removed for the mechanized travel restriction list and allowed anywhere that horses are allowed as well as being allowed on the hiking trails they make sense to be allowed on.

I agree, why do people who have never been and will never bother to even set foot on our forests, lakes, and streams get more input if any on the way they are used. I spend a lot of time in the woods near my home, I don't make any money off those natural resources but I greatly enjoy my time in them. There are also two things that often happen that really bother me. There has been a recent push to shut bicyclists out of the woods, many miles of trail that were previously open have been closed for no apparent reason. Secondly I also ride motorized dirt bikes which have also been getting shut out of the woods, I have no problem with these being managed. Montana had a great plan that allowed us to ride on certain days of the week and only during the dry season.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Under Section 319 of the Clean Water Act, states have access to Clean Water State Revolving Funds (CWSRF's) that may be used to upgrade local water systems but also to reduce nonpoint source (NPS) pollution. Low-interest loans are available to local governments, water systems, and qualified nonprofit borrowers such as land trusts. In some cases there have been 0% loans, and in other cases state agencies have obligations to provide "additionally subsidized" loans; this means that some portion of the loan is, in effect, a grant. For example, in Maryland loan applicants "undertaking an eligible non-point source, green infrastructure, water or energy efficiency improvement or environmental innovation project that does not have a dedicated source of revenue, such as a user charge system to repay a loan are eligible to receive up to 50% of the project costs as grant." (MDE) In other states, the rules may be different (?) Data on this is hard to come by, but it would appear that very little of the CWSRF funds are being spent on land conservation and restoration projects to reduce or prevent NPS pollution. On the front end, private entities, such as land trusts and watershed organizations, do not receive a formal mail solicitation to apply for CWSRF loans - as local governments do. In Maryland a few such loan transactions have been successfully completed, helping to protect the waters of the Chesapeake Bay and restore wildlife habitat lands, but such projects are little known. State agencies need to hear from land trusts and other conservation groups who can bring project proposals to their doors. We need to demonstrate demand for NPS project funding, shine a light on this resource, sit down with the agencies that have the Section 319 money, and work out some land conservation deals.

Battlefield land is the most valuable artifact of the American Civil War. Civil War Battlefields tell the story of the war: from the way people fought, to where they fought, and why they fought. Walking a battlefield where men fought and died defending what they believed in is an emotionally engaging experience, one that will cause people to find a personal connection and interest in the past.

We as Americans need to preserve Civil War Battlefields. It is important that future generations know about the struggle and the horrible cost of this war. They need to know that people of this time held their beliefs so high that they fought in war to defend them. I believe that most Americans don't know their own Nation's history. This is a very sad thing, we as Americans come from a long line of hardworking pioneers and trail-blazers. Some of these people were the first Americans to go somewhere or to accomplish something. Think of Lewis & Clark, Daniel Boone, Jedidiah Smith, and Samuel Morse. How can we know as a country where we are going if we don't know where we've been? We need to know the past in order to understand the future.

The 'NATURE' is now becoming aggressive than ever by showing her anger to us in her way of Cyclones, Tornadoes, Floods, etc. The first reason for this situation is global warming which is mainly caused by great reduction of green shade through out the world day by day by human being. The time has come to improve the green shade by at least doubling the shade. Every possible single square inch of the earth has to be covered by green ... BECAUSE ONLY GREEN CAN CONVERT THE ENERGY OF SUN IN TO A DIFFERENT MEDIA AND THEN CAN REDUCE THE NATURAL DISASTERS BY REDUCING THE NATURAL HEATING BY THE POWER OF SUN. So the green the global airconditioning is the only answer for the global worming

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

ELK blends science and leadership in a way no other organization does! The program is extraordinary as are the outcomes.

Large animals such as elk, bears, antelope, and bison generally have natural ranges larger than the protected area in which they may be located. We need to provide corridors between natural areas to permit large animals to migrate between such areas without crossing highways or disrupting or endangering human activities. Solutions such as passages over or under highways and keeping natural migration routes free from obstacles are available. We just need to make the effort before too many obstacles are erected.

Access during the school day is really not a problem. When I was in school some 25-35 years ago teachers would take us field trips to forested areas near the school to teach us about nature. It cost nothing and it was the best days of my school life and along with my parents love of the outdoors set me forth on lifetime of loving and protecting the forests and the wildlife. There is no reason why practices like this cannot continue.

The reason you do not see hikers or horsemen on ohv trails is because we avoid them as much as possible. Your machines scare the horses and they ruin the outdoor experience for hikers so we do our best to stay on non motorized trails which is not always easy given the amount of ohv access today. Maybe if you got off your butt and actually walked around on a non motorized trail you would see hikers and horsemen.

Amen, Amen! I applaud environmental groups for being the watchdogs they are and not only doing such a good job of keeping land owners and governments honest but in safeguarding our public lands, wilderness and wildlife!

So what if they turn them in or someone else turns them in? Either way they do not end up in our waterways or our oceans. Much like a bottle tax charging and extra 3 cents per cigarette and then refunding it when returned would work. This is a great idea and I am shocked it is not getting a better response.

Excellent idea. I support this 100%. I would even take it one step further and impose higher donations depending on how destructive that companies practices are. For example a drilling company drilling for oil or natural gas is much more damaging than say a logging company that follows environmental laws to the t and does everything possible to minimize their impact on the forest and wildlife.

Good idea. I believe China has already begun doing something just like this correct? I read about a year ago they had plans to plant about 1 billion trees in an area the size of Ireland. I have heard nothing more about it since. Seems like a great idea and maybe it will help the bird population regain some of the catastrophic losses they have suffered. PS- I am fine with it if my tax dollars go to something this worthwhile.

Great comment and I agree 100%. We DO NOT need more ORV access in this country. It has already done tremendous damage to what little wild land remains. I say curtail ORV use and return the land to the people that actually enjoy it and the animals that need it for survival.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Great idea and I fully support the idea of cutting down on the use of motorized vehicles of all kinds on public lands. They scare wildlife and the damage they cause to the land injures and kills animals. Leave wild lands for foot use only!

Great idea. Not one the OHV lobbyists enjoy but a great idea all the same. I was hoping Obama would grant permanent protections for ALL of ANWR but as of yet that has not happened, hopefully it will along with the Tongass. These areas are too important to give in to the oil, mining and logging companies.

Great idea. With wilderness areas disappearing at such a rapid rate we need to protect as much land as possible. Not for human use either but for the preservation of animal and plant species so future generations can enjoy all that nature offers.

Do you have nothing better to do than bash everyone's ideas on how to conserve land and promote a greater bio diversity of wildlife? The only ideas you support are ones that either kill animals or destroy our public lands. Here is an idea, since you are so concerned how about putting in an idea of your own. Try not to include the killing of Buffalo (what is it you have against buffalo anyway?) and other endangered species please. I support any conservation of public lands and I would love to visit another national park and having never been to Kansas I can think of no better way to get me there than to preserve the 300,000 acres and repopulate it with wild buffalo, elk, deer and grizzlies!

Here we go, I almost thought you were going to pull out the constitution card on me. I suppose you think the science behind climate change is unscientific too? You have only yourself and your fellow OHVs to blame for the reason why access to land is being taken away (if indeed that is the case because that is not the case here and I think you just want more and more and more and you do not care the consequences) because you are ruining the land with your destructive vehicles and the science is finally catching up with you. You are not nature lovers, you are not the lovers of the outdoors and you deserve no more access than you have already been given because you do not respect either or care what condition you leave the land when you are done with it! Nobody is denying the right to private land or even land designated to you. What the argument here is the ORVs non stop lust for more and more access to remote wild areas where endangered species live and access to national parks and wildlife refuges where there presence would be detrimental to the land, the animals and the visitors of those parks and refuges who really do enjoy nature and the outdoors.

I already do these things so nothing would change for me but I am all for a leave no trace guideline as it would virtually eliminate all ORV use which would be wonderful!

I just recently planted several butterfly bushes and other flowers that attract butterfly's and hummingbirds. I cannot wait for them to flower and for the birds and butterfly's to arrive!

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

I love idea of using volunteers to clean and maintain a park in exchange for a free yearly pass. I would take it one step further and say that take one week a year and do this gathering volunteers and assigning them a specific duty such as trail maintenance, rubbish removal, roadside maintenance, etc, etc, This would be a great way for people with a love for the parks to not only enjoy the beauty of it but to relish in the knowledge they are taking care of something they love and will be rewarded for such. In my town we had a very nice park right on the river and it was free but teenagers and adults alike ruined it by leaving their trash behind from their picnics and beer parties. The loud noises from their radios and drunken mouth's scared both the animals and hikers away. At first I would take a bag and pick up cans and rubbish but over time there became so much litter it was useless. Even the trails I loved to walk with my dog became treacherous from all the broken glass and with no money to fund clean up the mess remained and I left to find another park to enjoy. Because of things like this I hope there is always a fee to use the parks. Those who love the outdoors will gladly pay the small cost to enjoy it because they know it takes money to maintain such beauty while those who only want to use the park with little to no regard to its natural beauty will just have to fork over the fees or find someplace else to ruin. To just let anyone in without paying will lead to overuse and in time the park will become destroyed by those who do not love the land as we do.

I promoted the idea but I agree here. You do not need to shop at expensive chain stores for name brands to enjoy the outdoors. All you need is the love of nature to enjoy yourself. A little training can teach you how to build a shelter from sticks and leaves and how to find food in the wild which will cost you nothing. For those of you not wanting to "rough it" second hand sporting goods stores are a great way to find items at reduced cost.

I totally agree. Some areas need to be off limits to ALL HUMAN CONTACT!! That includes hikers, backpackers, campers, ohvs, mountain bikes and anyone else. Rangers can be allowed in to monitor for poachers and biologists can be allowed in to monitor wildlife and of course in case of emergencies like wildfires or plane crashes exceptions would have to be made but otherwise no human contact at all. You missed the entire point of this idea. The importance of nature is not to "bring in \$\$" but to be preserved for future generations at all cost. A very daunting task considering the rampant, needless and senseless amount of development going on. Nature does not need our help to sustain it with logging and burnings, it survived and flourished very well without mans help for millions of years but it does need man to stop destroying it if it is to survive.

I was going to demote this idea but after reading the comments I have a better understanding of what this proposal is and I now recommend it. While I would not use it myself and I hate cell phones with a passion I can see how the younger generation would use it and how it would hopefully get them outside and into nature more.

I would much rather see predators reintroduced to wild areas that have hunting escalated. On top of having a rare opportunity to view these wonderful animals in their habitat it would greatly help the eco system of the parks and forests and would bring a greater number of visitors to the parks as well.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

As far as I know I am not doing much damage to the human race, certainly less than most but maybe I am. Lets see, I drive a high millage vehicle with low emissions so I pollute the air as little as possible. I recycle everything so my garbage does not end up in some landfill, ocean or incinerator further polluting the environment which would cause even more harm to mankind, I have high efficiency products in my home and regulate my energy consumption plus have signed up to get my energy from wind and solar even though it costs more so my carbon foot print is much smaller than most which again will cause less air pollution which will decrease lung disease, I am a vegetarian/vegan so I do not promote further green house gas buildup from factory farms. I could go on but that seems like enough for now, is that enough for you? Please though tell me how you help mankind since you are such an upstanding and obviously intelligent member of society. As far as me being injured in a wilderness area, if the area is off limits to everyone how would I be there to get injured in the first place unless I were an irresponsible person going where I was to supposed to be? Plus I never said emergency vehicles should not be allowed into wilderness areas, of course they should. I would venture to guess more animals are harmed and killed by habitat degradation caused by ohv use than wildfires but I would have to look that up to confirm it. The goal for everyone here who claims to be a "responsible" person who enjoys the outdoors no matter what their choice of recreation is, is to enjoy the outdoors WITHOUT DOING ANY HARM TO CREATURES otherwise it pretty much makes your argument of being "responsible" moot! I have seen many a child smile at the sight of an owl in a tree, turtle in a pond or rabbit in a meadow, all things that are pretty tough to do on a noisy, speeding ohv. But maybe those smiles are not as important since they come from kids who walk to enjoy nature? No I have never ridden a ohv nor do I want to. My enjoyment of the outdoors is to hear the wind in the trees or the babbling of brook, the call of a bird or elk, the sound of a moose or buck cleaning his rack on a shrub or tree or the noise a black bear makes as he eats blueberries. All things I could not do from a noisy ohv. Who exactly is "a lot of you" anyway? What group do you want to label me in? I will make multiple choice since I know you must be busy. A)environmentalist B)animal lover C)democrat D)educated and intelligent american E)all of thee above Why is it you ohv people come up with the same ludicrous arguments? Is it really all you can come up with or do you get it from the same book? I never said we should ban ohv use altogether, go ahead and look up my comments before putting words in my mouth. You have your areas so enjoy them but you, nor anyone else, deserves to go into wilderness lands, disrupt and possibly end the lives of endangered species. If that is too much for you to give up then it is you that is self centered, greedy and just plain stupid. PS-the answer is E, cannot get any easier than that for you

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Leaders of non profit environmental groups are brilliant people. They are not radicals or extremists and do not oppose all development like some believe. Instead they are people who have dedicated their lives to a cause, saving wilderness and wildlife. They know better than anyone what areas are okay to develop on and what areas should be off limits at all costs. They are great motivators as well using the power of persuasion to win cases over the big money of the oil, gas, coal, logging and ohv industry. This is a fact that has not gone unnoticed by our President who appointed the head of the NRDC to the council investigating the deepwater horizon disaster and suggesting new and improved regulations for the oil industry. With that being said I propose putting a lead figure in a non profit in high level positions within the MMS, BLM, and Fish and Wildlife services. With their love of nature they will be much less likely to take bribes or trade off land rights for drugs and prostitutes. They will help restore some of the balance that is so badly needed in these organizations who have such a long and storied history of abuse and corruption. In a country that more and more looks like it is being taken over by the corporations (see the supreme court decision to grant corporations the rights of people) and where it is harder and harder to find a honest judge (see the case against deepwater drilling moratorium) and politicians (need I say more) there is an ever increasing need for balance and this would help establish some.

Nature has plenty to see and enjoy, all you need do is look around. If you cannot enjoy what nature has to offer then nature and the outdoors are not for you, and this includes the OHV crowd who wants to build roads over and through everything!

regardless of whether they can get in for free everyone, soldiers included, should WANT to pay to get in because the money is used to preserve the parks and their upkeep which is greatly needed!

Seems to me there are a few farms in my area that still grow organic produce and we have an organic dairy farm nearby as well. I shop at these places every week for my supplies so how exactly is what says uneducated?

Set up camps for inner city youth to explore and enjoy the outdoors. This will not only get the kids away from the crime, drugs and poverty they are exposed to everyday but it will teach them the benefits of nature and expose them to the all the beauty that nature provides.

Some of my favorite memories of school were when the teacher would take us on a nature hike to see birds, frogs, turtles and even the occasional deer. Since I highly doubt you were suggesting bringing a group of school children into the woods to shoot defenseless animals, as suggests, I support your idea . It really seems strange to me that some people think enjoying nature is killing it or destroying it.

Some things are much more important than money. Building a road through the most popular National Park in the country and a place of tremendous beauty is just plain stupid and irresponsible even for america.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Sorry but they do know better than anyone. They have had years of study, research and dedicated their lives to this cause. I trust if you had heart problems you would see a cardiologist and not a podiatrist right? They are not lobbyists whose only gift is that of a silver tongue, a high tolerance to alcohol and low moral standards. They are people who have an extreme love of nature and the animals that live there. You say you are against embedding "lobbyists" inside an agency but how do you feel about embedding ex ceos of logging, oil and coal companies in agencies that are supposed to oversee those operations and keep them honest like we have had in the past? I am not proposing these people be put in charge but be part of a panel that all have equal say in decisions. At the very least the environmental leader would be the watchdog and whistle blower giving you the transparency, accountability and balance of voices we all want!

That is true, our industrial military complex is by and far the largest use of tax dollars in the world. How about cutting out the tax breaks to oil companies, coal mining operations, logging companies and mega corporations and using that money to help fund the national parks and forests? They have been damaging and destroying the environment for a long time how, I think its about time they started to give back don't you?

The erosion issue is a very big hurdle for you. I like the idea of electric ohvs as they will cut back on our dependence of gas and reduce pollution plus noise but as long as trails, streams and meadows continue to be ruined you ohv users will continue to take heat. It is a good starting point for you though. Maybe something can be done about the weight?

The value of nature cannot be measured in dollars and cents. My time with my wife hiking on trails, watching wildlife, listening to the birds and sitting by a stream, lake or pond enjoying the quiet, peacefulness of nature (when it is not spoiled by the noise of a dirtbike, atv or ohv) is the only time in my life that I am truly happy.

There are already millions of acres of what once were wild lands that have been ruined by clear cutting, oil and natural gas drilling and coal extraction. Turn those acres into playgrounds for ORV users but save what little wild land that remains for wildlife and the people that enjoy the peace and quiet that nature brings. I would say considering americas over consumption and runaway destruction of our public lands that would more than make your 1 for 1 plan.

There are already several excellent organizations devoted to getting young people into the outdoors, and they are providing outdoor and environmental education without dipping into the public purse. While there are many others, Scouting, Campfire, 4-H, and YMCA spring immediately to mind as organizations that operate programs year-round. One of the problems with recruitment into these programs, though, is the peer pressure coming from the cool kids deriding them as being so totally uncool. We would have a lot more of our youth in these programs if there was a concerted effort toward dealing with that peer pressure element. How about we work harder on what we've already got in place before we go running around inventing new programs that are beholden to the public purse and all of the strings that come firmly attached?

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

This is a great idea as is any idea promoting protections for our wildlife. Our wildlife services which were organized to protect species has proven to do anything but and we need a new organization run by conservationists and environmentalists to insure that wildlife species will continue to survive in this country. I completely disagree with you that hunting should be allowed in refuges. Refuges were set up to protect species from extinction and to provide them with habitat so they can reproduce but instead refuges have been turned into areas where so called "sportsmen" can get their jollies shooting defenseless animals. They (and several national parks as well) have also been opened to logging, oil drilling, mining, ohv use and trapping. We need to restore the protections these places once had to insure they perform the necessary duty they were made to do. I also totally disagree that nature needs any hand from humans in regulating the wildlife population. Nature seemed to do very well before the white man showed up and started destroying everything. As usual the OHV crowd is killing another good idea. It is a true shame that such a good idea as this forum is being ruined by right wing loons and organized OHV groups.

This is a very good idea and I would actually like to expand on it by suggesting you build natural areas in abandoned industrial areas. In the town I live in large areas of former industrial parks like empty and in different stages of deterioration. They are a blight on the community and benefit no one other than a handful of drug users who use the buildings for shelter and hideaways from the police. With millions of americans out of work and construction companies going out of business it would not be hard to find people who would do the demolition relatively cheaply and then hire a modern day conservation crew to go around planting trees and shrubs. By doing this it would benefit many by providing jobs, getting rid of and eyesore and a magnet for crime and drugs and providing a great number of people with easy access to a natural area for exercise and enjoyment.

This is actually the best idea I have read so far. If we did follow the laws as they are now and tweaked a few that need changing we would not need more national parks or more government funding to save land and wildlife because the laws exist to do so we just need a government that has the backbone to follow them and the morals to reject the bribes the cause them to overlook them!

This is not a bad idea but I worry about the same things as that this might make people stop buying items and more businesses would go under. ___'s response does have merit as I buy products that I know use environmentally friendly practices or donate a percentage of their profits to organizations that help forests and animals. jI would say have those businesses that do that advertise the fact so people can make their own decision. I think most nature lovers and environmentalists would gladly pay a few extra cents to help the thing they love most. The question is how do you get to the crowd that does not love nature and constantly abuses it? The one area that would be nice to see get heavily taxed is the OHV industry. You could tax them and earn much more dollars since their products are so expensive. That money could be used to restore the wilderness areas their machines have damaged or destroyed and if it causes people to stop driving their SUVs, pick up trucks and atvs through forests that is all the better.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

This is one of the best ideas on this forum. Let the ORV user have their area but make them pay for the destruction they cause and the upkeep of those areas. As you can tell the McDonalds eating ORV crowd that is too lazy to get off their butt does not like that idea. They are fine destroying trails, ruining wildlife habitat and ruining the enjoyment hikers and backpackers have for the outdoors but make them pay for it? No way, we cannot have that now can we.

Very well said by both of you. While Obama got off to a good start permanently protecting nearly 3 million acres of forest and open space and reinstating the ESA that the Bush administration gutted on their way out he has dropped off substantially since. I was hoping for so much more in the way of further protections for threatened and endangered species, more funding for national parks and further restrictions on oil, gas and coal extraction but so far I have seen no initiative for him to do so. As you said we are much better off than we were 2 years ago but there is a long way to go before we reach anything even close to a balance between man and nature. Fully funding national parks and endangered species would be a nice start though.

We have enough Wilderness let us enjoy what is left and if it wasn't for ATVing my father who was hadicaped would never been able to enjoy the back woods. We explored old mines, old railroads and many more while all the time he had to be on oxygen for cancer. Please keep our forest open!

Well said for both of you! It is about time we stop the stupidity and stop the move to drill on every last inch of americas public land and protected wilderness areas. It mean nothing at the pump and does not provide the jobs the right want us to believe. Haven't we destroyed the beauty and tranquility of america enough?

While federal programs do a good job, at times, protecting large tracts of land local land trusts are invaluable in protecting local wild lands that would otherwise be developed. Along with private donations they work as a go to source for grants from state and local government and can even attain federal grants to save forest, farms and wildlife habitat. In my town the local land trust has saved nearly 4000 acres since it was founded in 1976. Of that total several farms have been saved as has a vital wildlife corridor that bridges a state forest to a wildlife sanctuary to more sate forest land and now stretches nearly 23 miles of protected land. These lands provide many hiking trails and an abundance of area for wildlife and plant life. Local land trusts also clear, mark and provide upkeep of trails with the help of volunteers and run education programs for the young and old alike. So support your local land trust, it may be the best chance for your town to retain some of it's disappearing forests, farms and open space.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Yes things are being done globally to combat climate change/global warming but sadly in america little is being done. President Obama has taken some bold moves to get the country moving but with the republicans obstructing everything and still throwing out the same old arguments that are so false and ludicrous but believed by the idiot sector or our country baby steps are the best we ever do and then when republicans take charge they move the country 10 years behind again. WE need to do more and we need to start now! Remember when this country actually used to lead the world in things like this? Now we are nothing more than a laughing stock to the rest of the world and a scourge to those that do not think our over consumption of everything and wanton destruction of the environment is funny.

You are riding low there and your tea bags are showing. Just to let you know, this is a forum on how to reconnect people to nature not destroy what little is left.

You people should consult not only scientists but non profits such as the Sierra Club, NRDC and WWF before implementing any plans dealing with our national forests. These people have been working tirelessly for many years protecting our forests and wildlife from bad ideas and development so they know best what should or should not be done. By including them in the planning stages you will avoid costly legal battles and time delays that would further hinder any forward progress in saving what little open space that still remains.

As a Texas Master Naturalist for the past 10 years, I am deeply involved in the study of bats and the bats in bridges program of batcon.org & Texas Parks & Wildlife. My wife & I conduct surveys of the mexican free-tail bats at Houston's Waugh Drive bridge and give presentations to the public and at nature centers. As webmaster of the Waugh Bat Monitor, the public can learn the latest information about spread of the White-nose syndrome which has decimated 90% of NY & CN hibernating bats. we also give rainwater harvesting to nature centers & garden clubs. We collect milkweed seed to enhance the recovery of the Monarch larva & butterflies. We also conduct bird and butterfly counts throughout the year. We maintain a certified front yard wildscape and tag monarchs all year. And as the webmaster of NPSOT-Houston chapter, I keep current volunteer and educational events for master gardeners, master naturalists and Native Plant society members. There is not a day in which we are not involved in sustaining nature. GET INVOLVED!

The Virginia Living Museum is one of many private nature centers in the country educating children and families about natural resources in their own backyards. Our science educators lead school field experiences, teach Master Naturalist courses and train volunteers, lead public eco-tours and design and teach K-12 classes correlated to national standards. However, most organizations have seen decreases in local government funding that cannot be replaced with earned income and giving alone and limit our schools ability to participate. Targeting multi-year Federal support to nature centers (and similar local conservation organizations) will enable existing successful programs that connect people to nature to continue grow. By making these programs easily accessible to smaller organizations would engage whole communities, especially at-risk populations, in effective conservation education.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

A far better bang for limited conservation bucks – and greater support for fully funding the Land and Water Conservation Fund – could be had if we allowed its dollars to be used for private land conservation through qualified conservation organizations. Four reasons why:

- The cost of a permanent conservation easement is about a third of the cost of outright acquisition and is often less, particularly when negotiated by a community-based, local land trust.
- Management of conserved lands would continue at the expense of the private landowner, not the federal government, which struggles to maintain lands they already own. In the western states, we see the management and habitat improvement of federal lands increasingly reliant on state and private funds to provide necessary services.
- Assurance of the terms of the easement overseen by – and at the expense of – qualified conservation organizations avoids added burden and expense to federal agencies. Local land trusts are comprised of staff and volunteer boards familiar with the customs and needs of their communities. Allow such groups to serve as grantees of easements funded with these dollars.
- More private land conservation opportunities would be available. Working family ranchers and farmers are more likely to consider working with local organizations. While coastal states with more urban populations may feel the need to expand their federal land base, most of us in the west do not! Nor do we believe that the purchase of additional federal lands is the best use of tax dollars at this time of unprecedented national debt escalation. Utilizing LWCF more efficiently and allowing participation by local, community-based organizations would gain expanded support from a broader base of constituencies. It would also increase conserved acres of wildlife habitat, continued delivery of ecosystem services and the protection the working lands which produce food and fiber – and, the security of producing American needs within our borders.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

The 2012 Farm Bill will be challenged to continue funding at current levels, especially for private lands conservation programs like FRPP and GRP. These programs provide excellent return on federal investment through private and state match. • Private lands are the most productive throughout the US - agriculturally as well as from a broader biological perspective as they typically encompass riparian areas, migration corridors and provide winter range and breeding grounds for many species. For these same reasons, they are also highly sought after for development. • Ranchers and farmers are hit hard with regulatory programs – voluntary, incentive programs like FRPP and GRP have the potential to do far more good in the long run, at less cost. • These programs ensure unfragmented landscapes into the future, at a one-time cost to the tax-payer. • Purchased conservation easements provide landowners with capital without liquidating acreage and keep ranches and farms intact, and at ag values, for future generations of producers. These dollars get turned into local economies, too, as willing landowners use funding to pay down bank notes, purchase additional acreage, improve breeding stock, develop water supplies, or improve infrastructure. • FRPP and GRP funds help private land trusts ensure that community needs and values are also conserved. The cost of conserving private lands costs taxpayers just a fraction of the cost of federal land purchase and administration. How we can make these funds go even further: 1. Allow for an increased percentage of landowners' contribution of value. Many landowners are willing to increase their in-kind contribution of 25% of the value of an easement or more. Cash match is much harder to come by. 2. Consider funding the transaction costs for donated easements. Many landowners would be in the position of donating a conservation easement to a qualified organization if the cost of the appraisal, minerals report, attorney fees and stewardship contribution could be covered. Local land trusts would be able to make dollars go even further if this opportunity could be realized. Every minute, two acres of farm and ranch land are lost to development. The average age of American farmers and ranchers continues to increase, leaving many working lands open to fragmentation and uncertainty. FRPP and GRP help conserve our working farms and ranches and the food, fiber and natural resources for the stewardship of future ranchers and farmers -- and the benefit of us all.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Keep the killing OUT also. 95% of us do not kill wildlife, but the 5 % who do control wildlife for killing through our state agencies and federal agencies. Wildlife WATCHING has doubled in the past ten years as the most popular outdoors activity. While wildlife watching is growing at 8% a year, the government agencies at the state level are frantically trying to enroll younger and younger children into killing our wildlife - more species in more ways with more weapons. Yet hunter numbers have been declining about 1%/year for the past decade. While killing licenses as the main funding mechanism internal to the state Departments of Natural Resources ("RESOURCES" says it all - as though nature were just a big department store for humans to exploit), wildlife watchers bring TEN times the revenue to state and local tax coffers as hunters and trappers and have had ZERO say in what happens to our wildlife. In fact, in Wisconsin, the DNR boldly states itself to be a "killing business". At a time of massive human overpopulation and take, loss and fragmentation of habitat, human caused destruction of species equalling the sixth great extinction (first extinction entirely caused by one species), we continue to have a heads on wall, trophy, recreational killing focus of wildlife as just living targets for an organized special interest, hunters and trappers. They can pay a few dollars and kill our commonwealth, but wild LIFE appreciators have no venue to pay a few dollars and save any wildlife. It is anti-democratic and totally unfair. If I try to protect any wildlife, I am fined for "hunter harassment". Hunters are the elite NRA protected destroyers of wildlife, and it is orchestrated by our DNR which has a mission statement to "protect and preserve our nature for all citizens". Aldo Leopold, himself an avid hunter, 70 years ago, warned that wildlife and nature should be managed with "GENERAL PUBLIC FUNDS" (NOT special interest killing licenses). Follow the money. With killing licenses funding our state and federal agencies, the killers of wildlife are the ONLY clientele. If we all kicked in ten dollars a year, we could all decide what happens to our wildlife and preserve much more habitat and safeguard our wildlife from the most egregious abuses - captive hounding in fenced enclosures, wild hounding, trapping, and trophy/sport killing (which is 99% of the killing going on now.) Leopold also warned that the environmentalist and landowner should be as much a part of the decision process as the hunter and trapper. I see people across the entire country trying to break into making policy, but they have not been able to break the killing stranglehold. So leave the man-made weapons and guns, night sights, and tree stands and lures and scents and camouflage, packs of dogs and ATVs out of our public lands. Period. Save our wildlife while there is some to save. What we know is that we need: 1. Large Core Areas left WILD and without man's biases to let nature work naturally - the larger the core area, the more biodiversity saved, and 2. Connect those wild areas by corridors for migration of larger mammals, and, 3. Return large natural predators to the environment in NATURAL NUMBERS - they are the guardians of biodiversity. Reverence for all life is key. Please view the Declaration of the Rights of Mother Earth and ALL BEINGS, drafted with indigenous people and with input from all over the world in Cochabamba, Bolivia, two months ago. It is revolutionary, and set out to balance the Human Rights Declaration. It gives all beings the right to exist, not to be harmed, and to fulfill their natural role in the ecosystem. Common sense. LINK: { Link }

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

As one of the largest employers of people, the Federal Government could give incentives to workers for volunteering at parks. Individual or groups of workers could volunteer to help with existing conservation projects, suggest new ideas for local recreation areas or lead local weekend activities in science education at parks. Such incentives could be yearly park passes or discounts on passes.

I spent over a week at Gettysburg and did not see it all. I felt like I was on hallowed ground and had to see every inch. Battlefields are our last tangible link with the past that we can actually touch and walk on. There is nothing like exploring these battlefields. I can actually see the battles raging out on the fields, I can feel the pain, the horror - this helps us to understand the past. We must preserve these battlefields so future generations can also FEEL the past. When the battlefields go, so do the links to future generations. Patricia Seivert

ELK provides amazing opportunities to educate the next generation!

Land grant universities are usually designated with a "State" following the universities' name (ex. North Carolina State, Ohio State, Oregon State, etc...). Land grant universities are often at the cutting edge of research in agriculture and have provided many modern farming and ranching practices. Land grant universities also offer many other degrees in areas such as engineering, business, and natural sciences. A list of the top universities in the United States always includes many land grant universities. Funding education is always a great idea and there is no better way to invest in the future. Public universities are drastically underfunded as it is and often look to students to make up for rising costs and lagging funding. Funding state schools would be a very beneficial use for public dollars.

Historic preservation funding has been key to the economic recovery in our area promoting tourism, retaining population, rehabilitating neighborhoods, downtowns and open spaces. Adequate funding would have an exponential benefit to the economy.

I find this idea one of the most exciting on the board so far. I study and work with the restoration of old growth woods harvested during the 18th-20th centuries. Because of old growth woods' exceedingly better properties as a building material than new wood and its' modern scarcity, we recycle and restore it where it has been used as a building material. Our nation lost one of our greatest resources when we allowed our old growth forests to be used up. I don't mean simply that we should grow them back to cut them down, rather it's amazing to learn that old growth forests looked as different under a microscope as they do on a hike and most of our generation has been robbed of seeing it. Old growth/ancient forests should be on an extinction list and be actively nurtured back just like any species of animal would be. I think we'll find that this is the way to restore our ecosystem allowing us to not have to constantly try to repair symptoms of a failing ecosystem.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

OHV recreational use of public lands should be preserved for the benefit of current and future American families. OHV use is a legitimate, sustainable use of appropriate public lands, particularly on National Forests and Bureau of Land Management Units. Motorized recreation is a healthy family activity and provides a great opportunity for families to “get away from it all,” and to experience the great outdoors. OHVers, like other recreationists, seek opportunities to not only enjoy the riding experience, but also opportunities to learn more about cultural and historical context, take in scenic views, observe wildlife, camp, hunt, fish and other activities. The overwhelming majority of OHVers are conservationists, who seek to preserve the same outdoor experiences they enjoy for children and grandchildren. ATV and off-highway motorcycle riding encourages and promotes physical fitness. OHVs provide the opportunity for Americans of all ages and physical capabilities to enjoy the outdoors.

Presently, federal funds from the Land and Water Conservation Fund supply the money to federal and state agencies to acquire land (and at the state level create recreation facilities). Fully funding LWCF to its \$900 million authorization is a first priority, but LWCF should also be opened up to qualified conservation organizations (land trusts) to fund projects that achieve the mission of LWCF. Land trusts have a proven track record of protecting important lands, and a grant program similar to the current Stateside LWCF program (that funds municipal, county and state projects) should be established for competitive grants to land trusts. These could be matching grants that would encourage land trusts to leverage private and non-federal funds toward the protection of critical wetland, riparian, agricultural, forest and recreational resources.

President Clinton put together a new National Park in Colorado and created a wildlife reserve in New Mexico. The BLM administers some outstanding wilderness areas in many places in the west such as Nevada. A new National Park could be created without having any roads. The United States invented the National Park, why not be the first country to have a Park without roads? A lodge could be built in the center and it could be accessed with a monorail similar to what is in Disneyworld, Orlando, Florida. The animal migration would be left intact and the area could still be considered roadless. The lodge could offer camping, fishing and horseback riding. Access to the monorail could be connected to Amtrak routes so that people could access our parks without having to rent or drive a car.

Providing income tax deductions for land owners donating conservation easements or land for conservation has been a key element of private land conservation for many years. But if we are to accelerate the pace of land conservation to address the urgent need to secure the carbon sequestration provided by forests and farms, we must do more. Congress should provide a tax CREDIT to landowners donating easements or land. Like renewable energy credits, these should be based on the value of the donated easement or land, and be an alternative for landowners to selecting a tax deduction. This would encourage owners who have limited income, but who own important lands, to make donations. We give tax credits to people for buying new windows, why not one for protecting the lands that protect our water, air and wildlife?

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Similar to Great Outdoors Colorado Lottery revenue generation and Jefferson Counties' tax levy for conservation, a sustainable revenue source must be created to support programming. The contemporary business model of an L3C could provide Leadership and Wellness training/programs to the industries directly related to this effort (Natural Resource, Healthcare, Education, Outdoor, Tourism/Hospitality) as a revenue stream. Profits from these efforts would subsidize youth programming in schools. Agencies/Organizations receive training and healthcare cost reductions while creating a sustainable revenue stream for youth programs. A cyclical systematic solution to the ever present need for funding.

This incentive is important to many landowners who are giving up substantial value by donating conservation easements. It's a much less expensive way (to the overall taxpayers of the nation) to conserve essential natural resources than would be the purchase of easements or land at fair market value using public dollars.

Most conservation easements should provide for at least pedestrian public access. State and local governments should be encouraged to review new easements and easement amendments.

Roughly 60 miles south of Canada, the 88,000 acre Scotchman Peaks roadless area spans the Idaho-Montana border. Since the 1970s, when the U.S. Forest Service carried out extensive evaluations of lands suitable for wilderness, this rugged, scenic and biologically diverse portion of the Cabinet Mountains has been managed for its wilderness potential. The Friends of Scotchman Peaks Wilderness believe now is the time to preserve the Scotchmans, one of the last, and largest, wild areas in our region.

Instead of having all wind turbine towers white, paint them a color to match the surrounding landscape.

I believe that ATV's and hikers both have claims to the use of outdoor trails, but if the trail was built for hiking than hiking is what it should be used for. ATV users should have their own trail systems.

Why doesn't the federal government require any company that wants to use America's natural resources to donate 5% of their profits directly to supporting the National Park System? That way the parks always have a source of income, regardless of attendance or congressional funding. This would solve the budgeting problems for the parks and force the exploiters of our resources to give something back for being allowed to us them.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Now is the time to complete the national trails that resulted from conservation efforts from the 1960s and to reaffirm our nation's commitment to our national heritage and cultural resources. In fact, one of these trails, The Lewis and Clark National Historic Trail, is being studied now due to Public Law 110-229, Sec. 343. It became law on 5/8/2008. The law states that a study is to be conducted and the results with recommendations are submitted to the Committee on Natural Resources of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources of the Senate. This is an effort to complete the Lewis and Clark National Historic Trail from "sea to shining sea" with the sites associated with the preparation or return phases of the Lewis and Clark expedition, commonly known as the "Eastern Legacy". The potential impact that inclusion of the Eastern Legacy sites is likely to have on tourism visitation to the western portion of the trail will be weighed. My personal experience tells me that once those in the Eastern Legacy get out on the trails in their area, they are anxious to travel west and enjoy the entire trail. What a marvelous way the trails provide in reconnecting us to America's culture and heritage and keeping Americans fit at the same time! Let's use this time of difficulty in our nation to complete these national trails to fully realize the promise of the National Trails System

We have opened our small city's first historic museum this year with enthusiastic community support. We now have plans to produce a small farm museum and operating ranch to document the importance of small family chicken ranches in our area's history. Any financial help we might obtain would be put to good use to help our children understand their heritage.

Let's protect Wild Country as Wild Country which means keep the air pure, the animals natural and air pure. Also, keep the land natural. No ORV use. Use it for recreation and to educate other generations about our planet. How do I vote for this idea?

Our Civil War Battle sites should be preserved. I have visited numerous sites and always find myself taking way more time than I plan exploring these places. I know that, like myself, there are many people who have direct ties to these hallowed places via ancestors that fought there. What is my connection? _____ Battle of Champion Hill Siege and Battle of Vicksburg (surrendered and parolled) Chattanooga Campaign (Battle of Missionary Ridge) Captured shortly after, parolled again in Jan., 1864, no further participation.

I finally agree with you- if you shop around, you can find great gear cheap. Ebay, craigslist, walmart, amazon, homemade - lots of ways to get and keep the gear you need. Last time I looked at renting, it was more expensive than going to the local surplus store, and buying an overstock tent in a weird color. If you own your own gear, you will go more often.

Over the last decade or so, national park units have developed records on the maintenance they do not have the funding to complete but which should be finished to prevent even more damage to built features of the parks. A few years ago, the amount of the deferred maintenance totaled to about \$6 billion for all the 400-ish units in the NPS system. Working with the Facility Management Division, which generates and maintains these records, let's put folks back to work fixing the problems in parks that have already been identified and that need to be addressed to further preserve our parks.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

The Problem: Federal agency officials continue to resist the idea that easements and other alternatives are effective cost-saving alternatives to fee acquisition of lands. They talk about using alternatives but rarely try to implement them. The Solution: Incentives need to be established for officials to use easements and other cost-saving alternatives. Penalties need to be created for buying more than the interest necessary to achieve project objectives. Federal officials have often, and inaccurately, misrepresented the cost of easements. A popular notion is that easements cost 80% or more of fee title. The key is to buy easements early when development is far away. Easements increase in cost as development gets closer. However, officials have made little or no attempt to use easements or other alternatives, and instead go to great lengths to avoid them. Inholders have actually been scared out of using easements because of very restrictive terms and negative statements from federal officials. For example, the State of Minnesota successfully used easements on a cost effective basis on the Kettle River. The Park Service was unable or unwilling to use easements on the nearby St. Croix to the degree suggested by Congress. The result was costs much higher than necessary on the St. Croix and poor landowner relations. The Fish and Wildlife Service has also successfully used easements to protect wildlife habitat at costs approximately 40% or less of what the fee title would have cost. The inability of the federal agencies to use alternatives to fee title has actually slowed the protection of some areas and wasted funds. The result is that there is now a huge backlog of unprotected lands. Some landowners want to sell but can't because of the shortage of money. In addition, relocation and human costs associated with fee acquisition are not considered by agency officials. Nor do they consider the project benefits when inholder communities are left intact. There may, in fact, be lower long term management and maintenance cost, especially when landowners remain in areas where significant cultural and historical values exist. An example is the Buffalo River. Local landowners were so mad at the Park Service that they would not even show the agency how to run a historic grist mill. How much better it would have been to have kept the grist mill in the hands of the original owners so visitors could have seen living history. There needs to be better training of land managers and acquisition officers and more information for landowners, so that all parties can understand the benefits of using reasonable alternatives and avoiding unnecessary conflict. The bottom line from the federal agency viewpoint must be to acquire only the interest in land necessary to meet the intent of Congress. This issue was developed in cooperation with the American Land Rights Association www.landrights.org

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Both the Forest Service and Park Service have ignored the intent of Congress while implementing new park and recreation areas. While Congress intended more public use in some areas, the Park Service manages all areas the same way. The results have been: far more land acquisition than anticipated by Congress; greater cost; and almost no use of alternative means of land protection. As a result, local land owners and communities have turned against federal recreation schemes. The Solution: A clear understanding of the intent of Congress by the federal agency before it begins to develop new parks and recreation areas. Require all land planning, acquisition and management personnel to read and be familiar with all legislative histories for their areas. Require land protection plans in each area before acquisition begins. The Government Accountability Office (GAO) (formerly the General Accounting Office), the investigative arm of Congress, has been extremely critical of federal land acquisition programs, particularly those of the Park Service. It suggested in a series of reports that the Park Service had gone so far beyond congressional intent, that it should sell much of the land it purchased back to the original owners because it was not needed to meet the requirements of Congress. The GAO suggested that the Park Service managed most of its areas the same way, regardless of congressional priorities. Examples:

- Lake Chelan National Recreation Area – GAO said that Park Service land acquisition had actually cut overnight lodging in half. Other Park Service actions cut available recreation activities. Far more land was acquired than was intended by Congress. This turning point report recommended that the agency sell the land back to private owners.
- Buffalo River – Land acquisition destroyed the unique farming culture that existed along the river. It was so special it was featured in National Geographic. Almost no easements were used, although they were recommended by Congress. The Park Service is now trying to re-establish the culture and rent the farms back to private owners, yet is continuing to make the same mistakes in other areas.
- St. Croix River – GAO found in 1978 that the Park Service had purchased over 21,000 acres when they were only supposed to buy 1,000. Again, in 1979, GAO found more people facing condemnation than the agency was legally able to condemn. The State of Minnesota was able to protect as much land as the Park Service, but for far less cost, using easements.
- Mt. Rogers NRA – In 1980 the Forest Service published a master plan indicating many more condemnations. A review of the legislative history showed that Congress specified 39,500 acres as the amount of land to purchase, 40% in scenic easements. At that time the agency had purchased 26,000 acres in fee with no easements. After intervention by the local congressman and American Land Rights, the Forest Service curtailed their plans.
- Many other examples exist. In one report, the GAO only found one area out of 21 examined where the agency was managing it consistent with the intent of Congress. Each agency should be required to have a complete copy of the legislative history, including congressional debates, House and Senate Committee Reports, Conference Reports and other important documents in the park or recreation area available for inspection. All personnel associated with management, planning, and land acquisition should be required to be familiar with this information. Other oversight procedures should be set up to make sure the agency is obeying the law... and the intent of Congress. Part of the problem is that the Park Service rotates its personnel often. As a result, Park Service personnel begin to manage all areas the same regardless of what Congress intended. This issue was developed in cooperation with the American Land Rights Association www.landrights.org

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Federal agencies and Congress have at various times and in different ways attempted to extend federal authority outside the boundaries of the area itself using buffer zones and perceived threats to the park as a tool to control land outside the park boundary. The Solution: Federal agencies should focus their efforts and attention on the management of the area within authorized boundaries and on cooperative management with other agencies and landowners outside their boundaries. Attempts at extending federal authority outside area boundaries raises suspicions as to motives and intentions of the federal government, causes conflict and tension with nearby communities, and undermines local and state zoning authority and private property rights. Where federal lands are concerned, buffer zone initiatives tend to cause unnecessary interagency feuding by making the interests of one agency subservient to another. Forcing buffer zones through legislation that has been proposed in Congress at various times, or by national directives, also preempts the proper methods of dealing with common resource concerns, methods based on cooperation and good will among neighbors. Similar buffer zone legislation passed the House of Representatives at various times and caused great controversy and negative feelings from local government, commercial recreation interests and private rights owners in areas adjacent to national parks. This type of legislation raises fears about the long term goals of the National Park Service regarding its neighbors. It turns local communities against the potential for new National Parks because the agency does not have the reputation of being a good neighbor. In the long run, this prevents the creation of parks and other conservation areas and exacerbates exist fears in landowners and user groups. This idea was submitted on behalf of the American Land Rights Association www.landrights.org

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Grazing rights are threatened. Grazing is a long-term, legally established economic use of the federal lands. Grazing rights and water rights are privately owned property rights established in a recent Hage Case in the US Court of Claims. Agencies and some special interest groups are attempting to take these rights or legislate grazing out of existence. The resulting threat is causing ranchers, normally friends of recreation, to close access to private land, as well as public land where access requires going through private land for recreational purposes. The Solution: Grazing must be recognized as an activity that subsidizes recreation. The investments by ranchers in grazing permits, roads, water development and range improvements on federal land help wildlife and subsidize recreation. These investments must be recognized and compensated, or traded for, when a conflict over recreation develops. Continuous attempts have been made to eliminate grazing from federal areas with the idea that it is an activity that conflicts with public purposes and diminishes recreational opportunities. In reality, ranchers invest large sums of money in roads, fences, and water improvements that enhance wildlife propagation. Wildlife often feed on private land at lower elevations in the Winter as well as Summer. This advances and subsidizes such recreation as fishing and hunting. Failure to acknowledge the existence of privately held water, grazing, and range rights, and the possessory interest in federal land they generate, has led to unending conflict. The solution is to recognize grazing and water rights as private property rights. In addition, we should acknowledge the economic benefits other segments of society receive from privately funded range improvements. Grazing on public lands lowers the overall cost of food for America, and increases the economic activity of local communities. Efforts have been made by the federal agencies, as well as special interest groups, to regulate out of existence, or legislate the removal, of grazing without recognition of or compensation for the huge investment by most stockmen in range improvements. These activities are gradually turning stockmen away from their traditional support for recreation activities. In large areas of grazing land managed by the Bureau of Land Management and Forest Service, there is so much private investment and so many private rights, that the area is actually not public land, but split estate land, with the stockmen owning a significant percentage of the bundle of rights to the land. In some cases, the percentage owned by the stockmen is so large, and the government's percentage so small, that the land title should be conveyed to cut management costs and get land on the tax rolls. Recreation conflict resolution and allocation of recreation resources would be easier if the investments by stockmen were recognized and they were compensated for their economic loss in the event of a conflict over a recreation use. Grazing should be recognized as a positive contribution to recreation. This issue was developed in cooperation with the American Land Rights Association www.landrights.org.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Planning, acquisition and management costs of new park and recreation proposals need more careful scrutiny. Present methods result in huge costs overruns, angry landowners, and high overhead while taking funds away from other important agency needs. The Solution: Require a thorough study of each proposed area with carefully developed cost estimates for planning, acquisition, and life costs of management. An economic impact study should be completed with a full cost-benefit analysis. Recent proposals for new parks and recreation areas have underestimated the costs for acquisition, planning and management. The result is higher than expected costs taking funds away from other projects and priorities. According to a recent Interior Department Inspector General's investigation (E-FW-NPS-5-81-A), when Santa Monica Mountains NRA was created, Congress was told the cost would be \$155 million. The Inspector General found that the Park Service had eight estimates in hand, when the bill passed, ranging from a low of \$242 million, to a high of \$675 million. None of these figures were ever shared with Congress. In the case of Redwood National Park, estimates were about \$250 million. The final cost is not known, but it's presently over \$2 billion and growing, causing a great strain on acquisition funding nationwide. Former Assistant Secretary of Interior Robert Herbst estimated the acquisition backlog was approximately \$3 billion in October 1980. Some estimate that the figure may now be as high as \$10 billion. With complete estimates and proper implementation this did not have to happen. The Columbia Gorge National Scenic Area passed Congress in 1986. \$35 million was the cost allocated to the bill, yet it was common knowledge in the area, and even among some members of Congress that the cost could exceed half a billion dollars. No quality cost estimate has been completed. Costs are not just the funds to acquire interests in land, but in losses incurred to local businesses, local government in lost taxes and in social and welfare costs associated with the lost jobs and economic activity. The Tall Grass Prairie Preserve in Oklahoma was another example. Cost estimates were \$70 million with no plan for the possibility of having to purchase the oil rights of the Osage Tribe underlying the entire area. Those costs could have been in the hundreds of millions. Congress chose not to go forward with the proposal in 1986. While most landowners do not wish to sell, some are forced to by hardship, change in circumstances, or deteriorating living conditions due to ongoing acquisition programs. Poor initial planning and understated costs often leave landowners in limbo, ultimately turning them into angry enemies of the acquisition agency. Before Congress passes legislation, and prior to endorsement by the Administration, a thorough study of each proposed area should be made showing the economic impact and costs related to the project. A clear understanding must be developed between proponents, the agency, and the Congress about expectations for the future project. Without such an understanding, many parks and recreation areas suffer from creeping size, expenditures, and expectations far beyond what was envisioned by Congress. This issue was developed in cooperation with the American Land Rights Association www.landrights.org

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

The Department of Interior created the Land Protection Planning Process for the purpose of protecting more land at less cost, but plans have not been effectively implemented to meet that purpose. The intent was to prioritize the lands that needed conservation the most and acquire the appropriate interest in those lands. The Solution: Land Protection Plans should be rewritten where Department purpose and intent has not been achieved. They should be updated with public involvement every two years. The Land Protection Planning process is one of the most innovative and necessary programs to be initiated in the conservation process. It is a logical approach to the broad question of “what are we buying, why are we buying it, and at what cost?” Land Protection Plans both identify the land and degrees of title to the land needed by the federal government to protect the resource and designate cost-effective alternatives to full federal purchase, such as easements and cooperative agreements. Local government officials need to be part of the public involvement process because of the potential of long term damage to the tax base and development planning options. During times of severe fiscal constraints, this approach is even more valid. Aside from the issue of social and cultural disruption associated with large-scale acquisition of lands, our government can no longer afford to buy lands at the same rate as in past years. We must begin to determine how much is enough. The general Accounting Office, now called the Government Accountability Office, in their report GAO/RCED-86-16 dated October 31, 1985, “New Rules For Protecting Land In the National Park System – Consistent Compliance Needed,” “ found that 25 of 38 Land Protection Plans it reviewed did not implement Interior policy or comply with National Park Service rules.” “If the Park Service implements the plans’ recommendations that do not comply with its rules, it could acquire more interest in land than it needs, incur unnecessary acquisition costs, and deplete the limited funds available for land protection.” The Land Protection concept should be revived with the idea of achieving the purpose for which it was intended. This issue was developed in cooperation with the American Land Rights Association www.landrights.org

Benefits of the original CCCs: They constructed cabins, shelters, etc. on public lands that are still used today, e.g. in NJ, in Stokes State Forest: the current School of Conservation and the State 4-H Camp were both CCC Camps, as were many lean -tos and cabins. But this happened in just about every state. Today, those facilities, most of which still survive, I suspect (they were built to last) provide inexpensive places for people to stay! Young people from cities got experience in the Great Outdoors, and learned to love it. Years later, they took their families camping, hiking, etc. in the Great Outdoors, based on their happy memories of their CCC days. They also learned teamwork, discipline, practical skills and had fun! They sent most of their money home, to support their families. Since maintenance is one of the first budget items to be cut, most parks in the country have a long list of maintenance projects that could be started quickly. Many are labor intensive.

I think this is a great idea. The OHVers could have their own 'natural' parks after the other environmentally warped have left the area. Keep the fuels contained. Where and how do the OHVers plan to refuel their vehicles in our national forests, by the way?

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Well, I appreciate your position however, if one wants to 'recreate' Disney style and wants that incorporated into nature - it simply will not work. If you want Disney - go to Disney. If you want bike trails - go to bike trails. If you want nature - go to nature. Bikers can exist and disrupt nature. Nature doesn't disrupt bikers but it sure can't exist long with them. I don't think any of us want a huge police force trampling the woods either.

The American Discovery Trail (ADT) is a new trail idea that connects America's metropolitan areas with our great outdoors. The ADT stretches from California to Delaware crossing 15 states, passing through several large cities, more than 10,000 historical, cultural and natural sites of significance. It is America's first coast-to-coast non-motorized recreational trail. The ADT was named a National Millennium Trail in 2000. Legislation is pending in the House of Representatives (HR4671) to have the ADT added to the National Trails System. More information can be found at www.discoverytrail.org

People are hungry for the truth in history, properly interpreted battlefields provide the truth. People are on the spot listening or reading and have a feel for being there. As a Civil War living historian I go to schools, museums, battlefields and give presentations on America's history. Preserving the land without modern obstructions blocking the view, give Americans pride of what it took to mold our nation and leave a lasting legacy of the men that did it. The battlefields provide outdoor classrooms for this and future generations. Protecting battlefields, create jobs by encouraging heritage tourism. To understand America you need to understand the Civil War and to understand the Civil War you need the battlefields to tell the soldiers stories.

I hiked and backpacked for many years, and thoroughly enjoyed it. Now I'm older and my knees and back can't take the long hikes anymore, but I still really look forward to trips into the back country for camping and enjoying scenery with friends and family, I just do it in my Jeep. We need to preserve all of the off road trails that we currently have and build more. While backpacking I could never come close to hiking all of the available trails in my area, but in my 4x4 I drive the same routes over and over. Nearly all off road enthusiasts are very careful with our resources, and clubs are willing and able to work to help preserve and maintain trails. Let's work together to provide the most opportunity for the most people.

I recently lost my wife. She suffered from Huntington's Disease. She could no more walk around the block, let alone backpack far into a "Wilderness". I am amazed and saddened by those who believe that our Public Lands are only meant for the most physically fit. I am and we were responsible "off roaders". We were able to visit some spectacular places when I loaded her into the Jeep. Mostly all the trails we ventured on were created nearly a hundred or more years ago by our forefathers. These are trails made by loggers, miners, pioneers, and the people who made this country. Many of these are now closed to our children and grandchildren. Why are these to be considered the sole property of a very few? Our founders are turning in their graves.

Let's not only establish new trails but also consider linking old trails to new ones. We also need to maintain the trails we currently use.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

My knees are in lousy shape. I can't hike more than a few miles, but I can bike many more. Bicycles do not pollute like OHVs, and their impact is not necessarily greater than a hiker.

Nuclear energy has not proven itself safe until a safe repository has been established for spent fuel, and the Yucca Mountain depository is not safe. We have enough energy to supply the world through solar, but this person does not seem to know this.

Preserving the battlefields achieves two goals: 1. protecting sacred ground in the history of our nation and 2. maintaining open space. It's a win-win. We can't talk about recognizing the efforts of our soldiers and at the same time put strip-malls on top of the historic locations where they fought.

Shut off the engines and take a walk. My daughter, at age 4, was able to spot the wild strawberries along the trails and the fossil fragments in the limestone gravel on the narrow lane leading to our pond. She relished being out front and finding the next blaze marking the trail in the wilds of New York state (Adirondacks.) Later in life as a teenager, she was roped behind the lead climber when she summited Mt. Rainier in Washington. As our nation gets more obese, we must encourage physical recreation and satisfaction from our natural surroundings.

The quality waters of the San Juan River over the past ten years has been an important place to spend time in the outdoors. The river meets many needs which includes quality fly fishing, water for local communities, the safeguard of endangered species, and future long range Native American needs. A study revealed that the Quality Waters brings in an annual revenue of \$40 million dollars, primarily to the hospitality industry as 64% of the fishers are from out of state. Regretably, today the river's health has deteriorated and now requires dynamic stewardship to return it to its "crown jewel status" days. River silting and inappropriate water releases create endless harm. Cooperation between BOR/BLM and New Mexico state agencies for a comprehensive study and long range plan is crucial for its health.

There are many, many examples of multiple-use groups cooperating/collaborating with government agencies (such as the BLM) to maintain and even restore public land with great success. Unfortunately, these stories are generally ignored by the mainstream media. It's a shame, because the public needs to see the positive results of government agencies working hand in hand with recreational vehicle enthusiasts, mountain bikers, hunting and fishing enthusiasts, and even loggers. Bringing together representatives from all stakeholder groups is a common sense approach that balances access and responsible land use with conservation and sustainable land management. These interests are not mutually exclusive. I'm very concerned with this administration's land management approach as detailed in the Great Outdoors initiative. There is something intrinsically wrong with a government arbitrarily restricting access to our public lands without listening to the voice of the users of that land. If President Obama truly wants a long-term solution, then each stakeholder group must be invited to the table with an equal share in the decision making process.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

We need more opportunity, not continually less opportunity. Politicians need to become much more familiar with the real issues, conditions, and needs of recreationists and not just support those ideas that cater to the outspoken few. The 14 ideas listed here all have good merit and should be considered.

I am a very fortunate individual who can take my children to American Civil War battlefields and show them where their ancestors stood and fought for what they believed in. Some very smart individuals had the presence of mind to save hallowed ground permanently at Chickamauga, Georgia and Shiloh, Tennessee and as a result i can walk some very meaningful ground for my family. Others should also have that right/chance and that is why battlefield preservation has always been a priority in my life. Gift matching programs offered by the Federal Government have helped to reduce the cost of land acquisition and is a necessary ingredient for future preservation opportunities.

Incorporate green infrastructure into comprehensive plans at the local, regional, and state levels. Not green infrastructure in the sense of stormwater infrastructure, but rather linked networks of natural and working lands intended primarily to allow native biodiversity to flourish in a human-dominated landscape. The nonprofit Green Infrastructure Center, Inc. (www.gicinc.org) has successfully developed methods and a process for green infrastructure planning and has piloted them at the local and regional levels. Lots of great material on the website. Highly recommended. Federal role: Indirect: funding and encouragement. Mostly the action is at the state and local level.

This idea works. It is funded by those who use this program via a fee paid per vehicle for off-road use. The fund is administered by the coalition and used to supplement Federal Funds for multiple uses: Education, Responsible Off-Highway usage, trail maintenance, etc. Other states should consider similar programs. Visit { [Link](http://www.cohvco.org/) } for additional information.

Save our civil war battlefields

I've been involved in battlefield preservation for many years. I also understand the myriad of issues confronting the government today and I understand that somethings must be pushed to the back to allow for more pressing matters to be dealt with. Having said that, I would add that our history is the single thing that defines us as a nation and to allow the second most important era (the period of the revolution being the most important) of our history to fade in obscurity would be a crime against our descendents. How can we ever hope to know where we are going as a nation if we do not know where we have been? As Americans we all owe so much to the men and women who gave so much during the era of the civil war. Everything we are today can be linked back to the people who survived the fires of the war. The civil war was both our greatest tragedy and our supreme triumph as a nation.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

We have a moral duty to preserve Civil War battlefields. The benefits to the nation are innumerable. One benefit that they offer is uniquely powerful: Civil War battlefields are perfect places for intensely engaging project-based learning for school kids. Many kids, unfortunately, find history, as taught in the classroom, uninteresting. But most kids get engaged when presented with projects. The more battlefields we preserve the better, and the more of each that is preserved the better, for this will offer stimulating environments and endless opportunities for learning projects. The United States will become a more rational and healthy nation in direct proportion to the depth of understanding our future generations gain of the lessons of our Civil War.

BATTLEFIELD PRESERVATION OFFERS A MEANS TO MEMORIALIZE OUR ANCESTORS AND PRESENT CLASSROOMS FOR FUTURE GENERATIONS TO UNDERSTAND A PART OF OUR HISTORY •

Preserved Civil War battlefields are tangible links to our country's past. • The 150th anniversary commemoration is expected to stimulate renewed interest in the conflict and generate unprecedented tourism to Civil War sites. • Protection of America's remaining Civil War battlefields will leave a lasting legacy of national commitment to preservation and conservation. • Preserved battlefields revitalize local economies and create jobs by encouraging heritage tourism. The more historic land that is preserved, the longer visitors stay in a community and the more time they spend patronizing local businesses. • Battlefields are outdoor classrooms for this and future generations. They allow visitors to walk in the footsteps of the Civil War heroes and experience the landscape much as it was during the conflict. • Preserved battlefields help protect water resources; sustain parks, working farms, forests and ranches; and provide open space for passive outdoor recreation. • Battlefield preservation in Pennsylvania, Maryland and Virginia, where many significant sites are located, is also vital for protecting the Chesapeake Bay. Parkland created through battlefield preservation near growing population centers like Nashville, Atlanta and elsewhere can benefit quality of life for residents.

Responsible HV use should be encouraged and promoted on public land especially on land that may have been mined. This would bring in much needed revenue to rural communities that otherwise would not have any type of external revenue source. Many groups could volunteer their time and resources to help keep build & maintain trails thus creating a beneficial relationship with the surrounding communities. The groups could also help with the restoration of surround land.

As an American History teacher in Arizona for 35 years, I wove my wilderness experiences (rowing the Grand Canyon, being a whitewater river guide and avid backpacker and adventures -- near death experiences in Alaska, etc) into all my teaching and story-telling combined with taking students on backpack trips into the Superstition and Chihuahu mountains plus some trips down the Upper Salt River. We studied units on early Native-American relationships to the land, the degradation of the environment, activism and forging a personal relationship to the wilds. At 79, I'm still in touch with perhaps 1,000 former students, their adventures and their lives. Along with the other excellent ideas presented here, the encouragement of individual educators to add their own expertise to creating a love and respect for nature would be an added touch in all the disciplines.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

I grew up in York, PA, approximately 22 miles east of Gettysburg, PA and I have visited the battlefield over 100 times. In addition, my great-great grandfather fought at the South Mountain and Antietam, Maryland battlefields. If he had died, I would not have been born. I cannot imagine what my life would be like now if these American Civil War Battlefields had not been preserved during the time of my youth. Learning and studying these battles helped to lead me to my current teaching job and involvement with the Civil War Preservation Trust. As Americans, we need to understand how lucky we are to be alive and out of respect for our ancestors, we need to do everything within our power to preserve the "Hallowed Ground" of America's Civil War Battlefields!

My Family goes OHVing about everyother weekend we enjoy being able to see all the wonderful things nature has to offer and we ALWAYS stay on the Trails.

Preserve our use of OHV's on public lands. Like other recreationists, we seek opportunities to not only enjoy the riding experience, but also opportunities to learn more about cultural and historical context, take in scenic views, observe wildlife, camp, hunt, fish and other activities. OHV's allow my family to ride places that we would not be able to get to otherwise.

Railroad Trail Proposal. Active Union Pacific Railroad. Prohibitive Access Easement Right-of-Way Fee by railroad. Railtrail on active UP line, 1 train per day. 100 ft. easement. Included on county & city's Trail Plan. \$1million fee request by UP for 4 miles in our town alone. Proposed trail through downtown La Habra, CA is a missing regional link to connect Los Angeles National Forest to Cleveland National Forest by way of 39 mile San Gabriel River Trail, PioPico State Park, east to Chino Hills State Park, Santa Ana River Trail to Cleveland National forest or Newport Beach, CA completing a potential 100 mile loop.

Something for everyone to keep in mind when preserving the great outdoors, wilderness is fine and I don't have a problem with a few wilderness areas. The problem is who can realistically access wilderness? The young and fit or those who can afford to hire a packer. Our wild lands are for all of us to enjoy not just a select few. Therefore all future lands that are to be set aside for the public's use must be motor vehicle accessible, the old and handicap have just as much right to enjoy our wild lands as the rest of us.

The ability for families to play together is becoming harder. Having more recreation areas increases this ability. It also increases fitness for children, one of Michelle Obama's prime goals. There is thousands of acres that could be accessed and if worked together with authorities could be a win win situation for the environment

The President's Great Outdoor Initiative is a great idea. It's as American as apple pie. It's about the spiritual and therapeutic value of a weekend or better camped in the desert or a mountain meadow, family values and good times with family and friends, healthy physically fit activities, and the unfortunate diminishing opportunities due to development and bad land use policy. The Initiative should be as much about motorized off-highway vehicle users as any other user group. Off-highway vehicle travel is a sustainable and appropriate use of public lands and can be done in harmony with Mother Nature.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

There is nothing more important than the preservation of our battlefield sites for future generations as well as our own.

Those families that recreate together build far more responsible adults than those that don't. We have three great kids that have all grown into responsible, productive citizens, two of which are employed in to recreation industry that helps drive the economies of untold thousands of communities. Our grandkids will grow up in the ways that we taught our kids and I'll do everything possible to insure that they're given that opportunity.

Preserving civil war battlefield land and view sheds before urban sprawl or industrial use, such as strip mining, destroys historic land is an important priority in 2010 - 15. Land adjacent to battlefield parks provides important open space which is available to the general public for hiking, picnicking, and bicycling. The need to provide for historic intrepreataton employs local historians, and sees infrastructure such as signage, and restroom construction materials purchased from the local community. Construction services, such as maintenance, grading/paving of parking lots contribute further. Tourists visiting these points of interests purchase gasoline locally, and either dine at local establishments, or purchase drinks and picnic food. Charter bus companies and hotel benefit from larger groups. There is a huge positive and dignified impact on a community with open space historic site preservation. Beyond the dollars and cents impacts, these civil and revolutionary war battles shaped this nation and made us who we are today. Many of our neighbors, and ourselves, have relatives who fought in a given battle, and visiting that battlefield is the single most tangible way of touching their personal past, and passing on the tradition to the youngest generation. I urge President Obama to front load battlefield land acquisition into any 5 year budget plan, with more funds available sooner, to purchase land threatened by urban sprawl. This issue is important enough to deficit fund.

Elk is educating children on important environmental issues for their future and getting them outside where they need to be instead of inside on the computer or in front of the TV.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

I have been an 'Outdoor Enthusiast' for 43 years - my entire life. When I was 6 months old, my parents took me on the Rubicon 4x4 trail in California in their Jeep. When I was 8 years old, my dad used to take me for rides on his motorcycle in the hills around Palm Springs, CA. When I was eleven, I have a fond memory of Jeeping with my dad and coming upon a herd of Bighorn Sheep in the mountains above Cathedral City (near Palm Springs). The biggest male stood just 20 feet away from me while the rest of the herd moved slowly away up the hill. I was a Scout from age 8 to 18 and hiked the northern and southern sierras, all around Big Bear Lake, CA and Tahoe. I've ridden snowmobiles and cross country skied in the winter, water skied and fished mountain lakes and rivers in the summer, and used OHV's and my own two feet to see as much back country as I could. It does not matter what way you use to get into the outdoors - what matters is how you care for the environment and instill that desire to maintain it for future generations. Making public lands into designated 'Wilderness' will only prevent people from accessing them at all. We need to stop closing areas and reduce the impact by concentration of use in limited areas. Once land is closed - it is nearly impossible to get it open again. I've seen so many of the areas I visited as a youth closed to access now. Some areas should be designated for hikers, bird/nature watchers so they aren't impacted by noise. Other areas need to be accessible to those using OHV's as not everyone can physically hike into the outdoors. It's time to start working together to shape the future of land use for our current and future generations. Tread lightly - Pack it out - and be respectful to nature and each other!

Require that all new roads or road improvements that use federal funding include pedestrian and bicycle friendly facilities (bike lanes, side walks, or separated paths from streets). And to get federal highway funds, states/cities must have included pedestrian and cycling in their transportation plans. The benefits are multifold. Decreased air pollution from reduced car use. Better health of the population with increased walking and biking. People that are walking and biking are connecting to their community and to the outdoors in a different way than people driving in cars. Urban green belts are very popular and help to start the process of connecting to natural spaces. Some additional ideas: Currently many urban areas have sidewalks but don't provide sufficient space for bike use. There are too many bike-car fatalities and there is actual hostility on the part of motorists toward bicyclists. Many suburban and rural areas don't provide for either pedestrian or bicycle use. No sidewalks means walking and riding on the shoulder of busy roads. The Great Outdoors is not just the wilderness, the desert or the forest. It is also our neighborhood parks, and our county and regional parks. We need connections (physical and mental) to these local areas. These parks and paths are where we can provide for the first taste of enjoying the outdoors and improving our nation's health.

(As you mention, the NPS does this with VIP (Volunteers-In-Parks) program { <http://www.nps.gov/gettinginvolved/volunteer/opportunities.htm> } although housing is usually in a ranger station or platform tent, not a trailer. Many state parks follow this model, as do some USFS campgrounds.) Extending this to trailheads in USFS, BLM and other areas would be a vast, but worthy, undertaking! It's a lot to ask of one person, but perhaps local groups of volunteers could do this, on a one or two week rotation?

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Can Earth feed and clothe 10 billion people sustainably? We shall find out in this century. Part of the answer must lie with genetically modified crops. They hold the promise of substantially increased yields, reduced demand to convert natural areas to agricultural use, reduced pesticide use, and improved nutrition. Bt cotton naturally resists reduces pesticide use. Vitamin A enriched golden rice improves nutrition. The list will explode as China and India gain expertise in GM tech. As in other areas of technology, US may choose to either lead or become irrelevant, but this is scarcely an issue for this forum.

Many successful programs of precisely this type have existed for decades, and deserve our support: Yosemite Institute, Olympic Park Institute, Glacier Institute, Great Smoky Mountains Institute, the Desert Institute at Joshua Tree NP, Independence Park Institute, Grand Canyon Field Institute, Yellowstone Association Institute, Isle Royale Institute, North Cascades Institute, Outward Bound, Americorps... and some of the best and longest established aren't directly associated with national parks: the Adirondack Park Institute, Hawk Ridge in Duluth... .. to mention only a few. They are an excellent fit with the NPS mission, and with the renewed education and research initiatives called for by the Second Century Commission { [Link](http://www.npca.org/commission/) } Expanding these programs is a worthy idea. Two thoughts: I doubt that volunteers could supply most of the staffing needs (the successful institutes have professional environmental education staffs with deep expertise), and Park visitor fees are an inadequate funding base.

More domestic natural gas = less imported oil.

Perhaps the best idea offered in this entire forum! According to the GAO, the NPS deferred maintenance backlog is now \$9.6 billion { [Link](http://www.gao.gov/highrisk/agency/doi/reducing-interiors-deferred-maintenance-backlog.php) } (the NPS has an excellent system for ranking maintenance needs; for an overview, see the Facilities Maintenance section of the NPS Greenbook { [Link](http://home.nps.gov/applications/budget2/fy10toc.htm) })

The Nature Conservancy, a truly science-based conservation organization, has studied thinning in depth, and is putting it into practice on their own forest reserves: { [Link](http://www.nature.org/wherewework/northamerica/states/washington/misc/art31226.html) } }

Discussion Question 1

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(cont.)

This a complex set of topics. I will comment only on one. NEPA, despite its many compromises and flaws, is in balance a very helpful process which ties together dozens of Federal environmental laws and leads to complete, open and factual analyses. The key to making it work is the ability of agencies to train and retain NEPA expertise, at which it appears to me they are overall doing steadily better. NEPA appeals are (under 36CFR §215.14) limited to procedural issues. Courts have not always felt confined by that stricture, however. That is a flaw. NEPA can lead to "paralysis by analysis" if categorical exclusion is not appropriately utilized. NEPA is often used as a public comment mechanism, for which it is useful but not intended. Perhaps a less cumbersome, expensive and time-consuming procedure should be used for proposed actions having no significant environmental impact?

Historic preservation is not just about the designation and or nominating to the National Register of Historic Places. It is also about community revitalization. Properties listed on the National Register of Historic Places qualify for state and federal income tax credits after they are rehabilitated. The income tax credits programs for the rehabilitation of our irreplaceable cultural structural resources produce over a 3 to 1 expenditure to incentive, thereby generating revenues to state and local governments and increasing the property tax base for local governments. The full funding of the HPF will enable our understaffed SHPO offices in the states to add badly needed staff and survey documentation programs that will then result in more historic structures being identified and then made eligible for rehabilitation financial incentives. Most of our oldest parts of American communities are loaded with historic structures and their rehabilitation passes that legacy on to our children and theirs too.

I recently hiked the Tallgrass Prairie National Preserve on the Flint Hills of Kansas. Needs a lot of work (still mainly a working cattle ranch with a few bison) but suggests what a vastly larger national park might do for the Great Plains by way of conservation and tourism. Bring back the bison...and the elk and the wolves...

Overuse of recreational facilities can degrade water quality, but our overall outdoor policy should encourage increased outdoor recreation more than limiting it. On the one hand we need to outlaw the most damaging uses, such as off-road vehicle mudding and camping too close of our waters, but at the same time enhance low impact recreation. We need to act to minimize erosion by limiting riparian development and harmful logging practices, improving and stabilizing river road crossings and boating access points, and developing low-impact campsites back from but with access to our waters. Increasing the number of outdoor recreators increases the overall health of the nation and creates more champions of good waer quality and conversation. But we do need to make certain that the recreation we encourage has low negtive impact

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Access to public lands for OHV and other recreation opportunities means a lot to myself as well as my family and friends. Please consider the following information when making decisions regarding access and closures. • OHV use is a legitimate, sustainable use of appropriate public lands, particularly on National Forests and Bureau of Land Management Units. • Motorized recreation is a healthy family activity and provides a great opportunity for families to “get away from it all,” and to experience the great outdoors. • OHVs, like other recreationists, seek opportunities to not only enjoy the riding experience, but also opportunities to learn more about cultural and historical context, take in scenic views, observe wildlife, camp, hunt, fish and other activities. • The overwhelming majority of OHVs are conservationists, who seek to preserve the same outdoor experiences they enjoy for children and grandchildren. • OHVs are volunteers. OHV clubs and organizations groom and maintain trails, trailheads and other facilities as well as adopt trails and provide the tools and experience needed for constructing and maintaining all sorts of recreational trails; not just OHV opportunities. • ATV and off-highway motorcycle riding encourages and promotes physical fitness • OHVs provide the opportunity for Americans of all ages and physical capabilities to enjoy the outdoors.

Agree with Jean Fulton (comment #7) about the obvious tie-in with First Lady Michelle Obama's Let's Move campaign. The National Trails system could benefit from more accessible connections to urban population centers and state or local trails.

I agree that we should tax destructive activities as well. The Land and Water Conservation Fund, for example, is supposed to have been providing billions of dollars per year in offshore oil drilling royalties to pay for conservation. After a few wonderful years during the Carter administration, Reagan gutted the fund and it hasn't recovered since. There is a bill in congress now to reinstate the fund and make it permanently dedicated to its original purpose, so that congress can't divert the money each year to pay for other budget items like wars Those of us who like parks need to push for this bill very hard. That said, even the modest amount of money that could be raised through a gear tax could go a long way towards buying key parcels of land for wildlife and public recreation. In the end, enjoying nature is about the experience, not about the gear, and I would gladly make the trade-off to have 5% less camping toys and 20% more places to camp.

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As a Texas Master Naturalist, I volunteer as a trail guide for 3-6 th grade youth at nature centers in North Texas. Our experience is that both teachers and kids are afraid of nature. We have found that printed information sent to the schools in advance about the trails, does little to help them feel more comfortable about nature. Amazingly, we found that many of the kids (even low income kids) had smart phones and were excited about using a new trail navigation system. They love to learn from technology they are comfortable with, in this case the Iphone. I have been working as a volunteer on the design of this application to let visitors to the great outdoors focus on the world around them and not the mobile device. The application uses GPS in the Iphone to show them where they are on the trail and automatically displays educational interpretive sign information (points of interest) as they approach. The key is a very low cost application (\$2.99) and no additional costs for the self-guided tour content that can be created by volunteers. An existing Iphone application called EasyTrails can create the trail with geo-coded photos that are exported in standard gpx format. Existing nature center content can also be added to the self-guided tour if desired. It was also important that no WiFi or cell service is needed since you are often far from wireless services. This self-guided tour is a new capability for the Great Outdoors. It allows cities, state parks, nature centers, and historic sites to offer extended hours with no additional staff or cost. We hope to attract tourists from around the world and local residents to enjoy the unique beauty around them. The "app" should be available in the Apple app store around the end of June. We are working hard to create iTours of our local trails, parks, and nature centers in North Texas. I hope that others will join us in this exciting opportunity to get everyone outdoors!

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you haven't been reading much if you think that Reed Noss's long-term vision statement for restoring 50% of the country to natural habitat is one of the most anti-human manifestos in print. There are plenty of non-environmentalist wackos out there promoting actual violent destruction of society, whereas under Noss's scenario we would have civilization and plenty of clean drinking water, scenic beauty, and wildlife to boot. Plus I dare say the Pentagon has produced a few anti-human manifestos of their own when they write glossy reports about minimizing collateral damage from nuclear or biological warfare. Earth First Magazine, for all of its zealous spunk and anarchist energy, could never be deemed to have been influential on the recent course of human affairs over the last 20 years. (and I really don't think they have any helicopters!) . The pace of urban development since 1980 in the US is proof enough of that. If there are any similarities between the core-buffer systems the Wildlands Project proposed for North America, and what the UN Biosphere Reserve program envisioned for sites around the world, that because cores and multiple-use buffers are a textbook way of trying to protect biodiversity. Look it up in any book on the subject. the UN doesn't actually have any power to implement the land-use concepts of the biosphere reserve system. In the end all it amounts to is a recognition program - a pat on the back for doing something good to protect nature. The Wildlands Project, now the Wildlands Network, likewise does not have any land-use or regulatory authority to implement their scientifically-derived plans for large-scale conservation. (I agree completely that our elected officials don't always have our national interests at heart) . Which brings us back to the Coffman map, which seems quite familiar with but isn't willing to admit to the fact that Mr. Coffman apparently drew that map with the express intent of misleading people. Let's be clear about that - apparently the Wildlands Projects own maps weren't shocking enough, so Mr. Coffman drew a fake map "simulating" what he thought the group had in mind, and then spent a great deal of time and money over the last few years promoting his paranoid vision that the Wildlands Project and the UN are in cahoots to take your land and OHV trails. Many of the versions of the fake map I've seen in fact are titled "UN Wildlands Project", a label which would surprise both organizations since it has no basis in reality whatsoever. So Coffman and other "freedom advocates" have been whipping up a frenzy of opposition to proposed wildlife corridors and other conservation projects. The really interesting question is why? I suggest that their industrial sponsors stand to gain when OHV-drivers and property-rights advocates come out in droves to fight wilderness proposals and park acquisitions. That keeps the land open to drill for oil or mine for uranium or log for old-growth timber. That's big money in exchange for a few stump speeches and alarmist pdf's by pseudo-experts like Mr. Coffman. My advice if you've been brainwashed by one of these reactionary groups is to ask the freedom think tanks where they get their money. Also ask them for hard, concrete evidence that there is any truth to their conspiracy theories about the UN, sustainable development, black helicopters, etc, etc. If you need a really interesting conspiracy to sink your teeth into, try googling the connection between the Bush family and the Reverend Sun Myung Moon (e.g. the Moonies). Its scary stuff! Plus Ron Arnold, one of the leaders of the anti-environmental front, also was apparently employed by Moon. So there is a good chance if you've been out fighting against extremist environmental groups to save your freedom and liberate America, instead you've been unwittingly doing the bidding of a deranged international cult leader! And keep in mind that converting the last few major roadless areas to wilderness status does not have anywhere near the impact on the

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availability of OHV trails as people seem to think. Even though the Wise-Use/Sage Brush rebellion leaders urge OHV drivers to illegally build new roads through proposed wilderness areas, the truth is that most of these areas are in fact officially roadless - that is what conservationists like about them! Instead of being paranoid and gullible at the same time, OHV drivers should work with conservation groups and national forest managers to iron out good plans for keeping official trails (not the ones that someone cut illegally with a chain saw) open for use via effective management of the well-known impacts of their sport. From what I've heard from some OHV users on this site, such plans are already in the works in numerous areas, and I applaud them.

Full, permanent funding of the the HPF would strengthen the relationship between conservation of natural and built resources. This will have major implications for reduction of energy use and decreasing negative impacts on the environment. Re-use of historic buildings captures their embodied energy while reducing landfill and construction-produced greenhouse gas emissions.

I also oppose the hunting of endangered animals, but clearly most of the game species in the US are not threatened (e.g. deer, mourning doves, gray squirrels). The exceptions are mostly large carnivores like wolves and bear. I agree that state DNR's and Wildlife Departments should diversify their funding streams so that they don't only focus on the needs of game animals. A federal tax on general outdoor gear could provide the needed money.

I am pro-hunting, pro-fishing, and pro-top predator, and I definitely appreciate the contributions hunters and fishermen have made to habitat conservation and wildlife restoration. I do think more hunters and fishermen should consider non-motorized transport to get to their favorite spots. If you enjoy the woods or the lake, why not spend more time out there by hiking, riding a horse, or canoeing in? I blame the big outdoor magazines and TV shows with their focus on gear and trophies at the expense of quality of experience. Turns out you really don't need an ATV to hunt whitetail deer, nor do you need a bass boat to catch bass.

I enjoy walking the battlefields. It sometimes gives me an eerie feeling to know I am standing where so many soldiers fought and died. The battelfields need to be preserved.

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Interestingly those 52 open-minded individuals all logged on and voted in a two hour stretch! Someone must have sent out a call to arms to the OHV crowd. I am pro-wilderness and I don't want to box you up like a slave in the city, nor do I want to rip up your power grid or tear down your house. What I want is for there to be small parts of the country where people can go to relax in the peace and quiet and take in beautiful natural scenery without listening to noisy machines and breathing in smog and pollution. These same areas can also serve as safe havens for wildlife, where the animals don't face the constant threat of being run over (though I don't mind hunting in wilderness areas, just do it on foot or on horseback and eat the animals you shoot). I also want OHV users to stick to defined, well-maintained roads that are managed to prevent noise and water pollution from negatively impacting the resource base on our federal lands. This means quieter, cleaner machines, bridges over stream crossings, and drivers who are willing to listen to the rule of law. If all you know about wildlife corridors comes from some black-helicopter-private-property-rights-UN-conspiracy type web forum, you might want to check some of those "facts" before you make this kind of argument again. As for doing what you want on public lands, the odds of future generations being allowed that privilege are inversely proportional to the size and density of our human population. If you want freedom in the backcountry and room to roam around on your ATV, start fighting against national and global overpopulation.

Not sure if there is any connection, but the beautiful and spring-fed Metolius River in Oregon was given that name because it meant "stinking fish" in the local native dialect - as in, "stinking with fish", each year after the salmon did their thing. Let's remove more dams and restore natural flow regimes so that the Klamath and Metolius rivers can once again be full of migrating fish!

Only in a very marginal way - the tax could be 5% or less and still be effective. And the enhanced opportunities for outdoor recreation that would result from the conservation fund would tend to increase, not decrease, America's appetite for outdoor gear.

Reducing the amount of roads and OHV trails through the national forests will be a good thing, ecologically speaking. The things that appeal the most to OHV drivers, such as high speed, noise, splattering water, churning mud, unrestrained access, etc etc- these are the impacts that are least compatible with other uses of the national forests for recreation, water quality, and wildlife conservation. Would OHV users still like their hobby if there was a bridge at every creek crossing, the trails were closed after every rain, and their machines were retrofitted with noise and air pollution reducing technologies?

Saving our battlefields is essential for our history and makes good economic sense.

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The idea is to get people out of the house and into nature. It is your personal tour guide. It is NOT a virtual tour. While it is possible to "preview" the trail and the "points of interest", this approach really comes to life when you venture out on the trail. * Viewing the trail map with your actual location on the trail is a FIRST. * The built-in compass shows direction and distance to any point. * A full screen picture and interpretive text about each point of interest displays automatically when you are within 100 feet. * It also offers full GPS navigation from where you are to the trailhead. Admittedly - This is a totally new approach. It is a new tool to attract adults and kids to nature. Please give it a chance.

The line between the natural and the cultural environment, and between the natural landscape and the cultural landscape, is often blurred. There are few places in the United States that have not felt the hand of man, that have not been explored, affected, settled, used, and exploited by people in some way, shape, or form. In many parts of the country native peoples have lived and worked for thousands of years, and later settlement goes back centuries. If one of the objectives of the America's Great Outdoors Initiative is to help people "reconnect with the great outdoors," one of the ways this can be done is by making these places more personal to more people. In helping people to find their own connection, explain to them other persons' connections by finding better ways to interpret the cultural history associated with special places and sharing and interpreting the compelling stories of these places in ways that all people can understand and appreciate. For example, it may be easier for some people to relate to a wild coastal region when there is a lighthouse accessible to the public--a destination at the end of the trail--and a story associated with that lighthouse of "the lonely keeper's life" that can be conveyed and that can become a cultural touchstone for people. Such a place may help convey the sense of people in the "wild natural coast" context and reinforce the sense of place and human scale in an otherwise pristine natural environment. There is similar value in conveying compelling information about significant events or prominent individuals of the past.

The median cigarette tax across US states is already over \$1/pack. I'm not a smoker, but I think that works out to close to a 25% tax rate, with some states closer to 50%. I agree that a hefty tax on a product that you have to buy a lot of every day can reduce sales, and in the case of cigarettes that's certainly a good thing. I don't think a nationwide 1-5% tax on outdoor products would drive anyone out of business. Are you really not going to buy a \$30 headlamp at REI if it suddenly costs \$31.50? Hunters are proud of the way their excise tax on guns and ammo goes to support wildlife conservation. This Pittman Robertson tax is charged at a rate of 11%, and it was enacted back in 1937, without driving hunters out of the woods or ammunition makers out of business. Other nature lovers need to step up and shoulder some of the burden too - and a 5% tax spread over a wide range of outdoor products would generate a huge amount of funds for buying new parkland, building trails, and rescuing endangered species. I applaud Patagonia's voluntary effort, but its too small to supply the amount of funds we need for conservation to keep up with the pace of urban development in recent decades. Those of us who drive pay a gas tax to build and maintain roads, and there is no reason why those of us who hit the trails shouldn't pay a gear tax to build and maintain new parks and nature preserves.

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Public Statement for “America’s Great Outdoors Initiative” Good morning, my name is Rosalyn LaPier. I am an enrolled member of the Blackfeet tribe. I came here today to offer my voice to the discussion regarding public land use in the United States. I come with a unique perspective and background. I grew up in a family that gathered plants on a seasonal basis for medicinal and edible purposes. Until this past year when my grandmother passed away at the age of 95, she oversaw our family’s efforts to gather and process plants. My grandmother was taught by her grandmother, Mary Spotted Bear, about the use of native plants. For the Blackfeet, plant knowledge was taught through the generations from woman to woman, usually from grandmother to granddaughter. Not only was the knowledge of gathering plants taught, but also how to process, preserve and prepare plants for future use. Archaeological evidence suggests that humans have lived on the northern Great Plains for at least 10,000 years. And that throughout that time humans have used the numerous rich natural resources found on the landscape. The Blackfeet used at least 200 different plants from a variety of habitats. The Blackfeet collected these plants all over what is now the State of Montana and the Province of Alberta. The Blackfeet went to specific places each season to gather and collect specific plants. Despite the stereotype that the Blackfeet “followed” the bison, the Blackfeet strategically traveled to certain places at certain times of the year specifically to gather plants or other natural resources and to also hunt animals. My family has gathered plants on the northern Great Plains and on what is now Montana for generations. I have spent my entire life helping my grandmother gather plants. It is something I continue to do (even after her passing) and that my family continues to do. However, I have found that we are an invisible presence on the land. Even though we continue to go to certain places to collect plants during certain times of the year, just as our ancestors did before us, no one recognizes that we have been there. This is in part because we do not harm the land or over-harvest it. Because of this we are often overlooked as a stakeholder in the discussion of public land use. And we are rarely, if ever, asked our opinion of issues related to public land use. Today, I would like to make you aware of a few of the challenges we face and the obligations that we believe the federal government has toward traditional cultural resource use. Challenges to traditional gatherers: 1) Each year it seems that there is more public land that is being leased for natural resource development, logging or for livestock use. Because of this there seem to be more roads, more ATV’s and more erosion on public lands. 2) Each year it seems that there are more pesticides and herbicides being used on public lands and that I have to ask where and when they are being used. We try to avoid places that are being sprayed but sometimes it is difficult, especially for older or elderly gatherers who cannot walk far from roads or far away from the car to gather plants. 3) Each year it seems that there are more noxious weeds on public lands. These seem to be near roads or development and they greatly impact the growth of native plant species. Sometimes it seems that we have to travel farther and into more remote places to avoid noxious weeds. 4) Each year it seems that there are more commercial harvesters on public lands. I have seen areas where commercial harvesters have over-harvested and have literally stripped a site of all natural resources, leaving nothing for either animals or other humans to share. 5) Finally, it seems that whenever there is a discussion of conserving land in Montana that it is said that the land needs to be restored to the way it was when Lewis and Clark arrived. People forget that when Lewis and Clark arrived there were numerous tribal groups in the region who had lived here for thousands of years and who

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utilized the land. There seems to be a perception that “no one was using the land”, when in fact, people did use the land and continue to use the land every season and rely on that land for their health. America’s Great Outdoors Initiative should work toward: 1) Increasing and protecting access to traditional cultural resources on public lands for traditional gatherers. 2) Limiting development, the creation of roads, leasing for livestock use, and controlling erosion on public lands. 3) Limiting the use of pesticides and herbicides on public lands. 4) Restoring natural areas impacted by noxious weeds or erosion. 5) Protecting traditional cultural resources from over-harvesting by commercial harvesters. 6) Ending using the language of “restoring the land to they way it was when Lewis and Clark arrived” as if no one was here and no one was utilizing its natural resources. 7) Asking if traditional gatherers use public lands before allowing projects or leasing to occur. 8) Promoting the perpetual use of traditional cultural resources on public lands by traditional gatherers. For years my grandmother helped people on the reservation by providing medicinal plants for their illnesses and for their health. On Memorial Day I was on the Blackfeet reservation decorating graves. While there an elder (who is a veteran) came up to me and asked that now that my grandmother was gone, if I could make some medicine for him. Gathering and using plants has been a vital part of my life and the life of my family for many generations. We collect plants in a wide range of habitats – both on the reservation and off the reservation and both on private and public lands. I hope that I can continue this practice and so can the rest of my family. However, unlike commercial harvesters, we do not gather plants to sell them, we use them for our own family use and also for members of the community. I hope that my public statement will provide some awareness of how these issues impact individuals, like that tribal elder. Although this man does not gather the plants himself, he relies on others so that he can continue to live a healthy life. Ultimately though, he relies on the federal government to provide protection of public lands so that he can continue to benefit from that land. Just as his ancestors did for thousands of years. Even though our presence on the landscape is invisible I hope that my voice is heard today. Thank you for your time.

We have MORE than enough laws and regulations protecting our forests. We love this beautiful land we live in and care about it more than you who propose this monument can imagine. I'm willing to bet the vast majority of people who are for this proposed monument don't live here. We need solid answers that have not been forthcoming regarding this issue. As a taxpayer, registered voter, landowner, and business owner within the proposed Pacific Crest Monument, I say NO to your monument!

I have been involved with the stateside of the LWCF program for more than 20 years. I have seen the difference this program has made to a wide range of communities. For many, local parks are their only link to the outdoors. Many small communities only have a single park -- that is their pride and joy. The permanent dedication continues to ensure that these parks are available, but the continuation of the program is vital to insuring this heritage.

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Rebecca - My bike pollutes less than your subaru does. Why would I spend thousands of dollars on a bike and equipment only to use it to destroy the wilderness I love. You liberals have it all wrong. I pay dues and fees to make and maintain trails that you like to hike on. It's our forest as well as yours, who died and told you you have more control over the forest than I do. I don't try to force you to ride a dirt bike stop trying to force us to not be able to ride ours. Hey ____, if your trying to get in shape try maneuvering a 300 lb motorcycle through a single track trail for a while.

What a ridiculous bunch of tripe! We have plenty of oil right here in this country but our enviros and government wont let us pump it. We wouldn't even be in the gulf if we could pump on land without all the laws. Do you really believe oil companies would rather drill 50 miles out to sea and two miles deep when they can do it at 800 ft. in Texas. When the well leaks in Texas you walk over to it and slap a cap on it. 10 minutes, done not 80 days. Come on people wake up. I don't know about you but I have never met anybody that has been employed by a poor person. I want the owner of the company I work for to be the richest son of a gun on the planet so he keeps passing more and more of it down to me. "socialism is great until you run out of other peoples money" Margrett Thatcher.

With a name like, it's got to be wrong Smarten up use this to your advantage Google then follow him around the web and vote on everything he has issues with, he speeds up the process of finding public voting, its just as efficient as joining the Serra Club to have a inside view on current trends.

People who just take your distorted vision of the world as reality are going to be very disappointed when they try to find these huge open spaces you claim to know about. I have driven this country from coast to coast border to border, you can drive at 70 mph for hours and hours and find nothing but wide open spaces. No disappointments here, I get out Google earth and scroll around all the areas of Alaska I cant see when I drove on the roads in that great state. Saving lands so our kids cant use them either is just plain dumb.

I hate to say it but look at France and its nuclear programs including reusing spent fuel that we DONT reuse or recycle into more energy because of current laws. They can make the spent fuel problem pretty much go away or become a non issue... France and many other countries already has.

If you think about it off roading on a OHV teaches our youth everything that exploring the great outdoors does on foot, survival, navigation etc. it also teaches them responsibility of owning a OHV, making money to buy one, making money to maintain and repair one, maintenance, they learn how to respect and care for their OHV by cleaning, polishing, their minds are always deep into the OHV one way or another.

The good lord gave us these lands to use so lets use them and get the most out of them, their is no such thing as permanent damage to this earth, given enough time any damage will be fixed, look at the earths 5 billion year history every time something bad has happen to the earth its always repaired itself to be better..

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There are 1.9 billion acres in the lower 48 states. Less than 1 percent of that has wilderness potential. Go tell your problem to Lewis and Clark. You're fighting for the right to cut the last tree. Then what? Then what? Exactly then what? Come back in 1000 years and take a look if you study earths more than 5 billion year history the earth has always healed ALL wounds, fixed everything BAD that has happen to it and its always ended up being better than before. Your end of the world and "last tree" idea is plain silly.

You need to lobby in your area to properly maintain and manage your local forest lands, many are reversing their policy's on putting out fires and are letting them burn themselves out, their is a good reason for this, in areas where the fire is a problem the forest needs to be harvested and replanted (maintained and managed) sounds like someone is not doing their job as well as it could be done.

As a division of the City of Chattanooga's Parks and Recreation Department, Outdoor Chattanooga has served to promote and protect a "signature outdoor lifestyle" in and around Chattanooga, Tennessee since 2003. We act as a central information resource for connecting people to the outdoors by hosting activities, events and programs that actively engage the public and we work with outdoor businesses and non-profit conservation organizations to advocate for our natural and built outdoor resources. Our program has been hugely successful for the region both economically and socially, and we would encourage other municipalities to follow suit. Our Website is, www.outdoorchattanooga.com.

Our children and future generations need the opportunity to experience our nation's history in ways other than computers or books, this being by actually visiting the battlefields. Seeing where these battles were fought help us to understand the struggles of those who fought to preserve this nation. The Civil War was an unparalleled episode for these United States, and must be fully understood by future generations. It has only been through visiting many of these battlefields that I have come to more fully appreciate the struggles of my ancestors and others who fought and gave their lives for this country. It is my hope that my descendants will also have these opportunities.

Thank you ELK for providing outdoor education and field experiences for young people, especially in communities of color. When young people are exposed to the rich beauty of our national parks it helps instill a wonderful caretaker attitude. One where our children will take ownership in protecting our natural resources.

All I can say is "amen." People go to the parks to visit nature. Leave what is man-made at home (other than your transportation in/out of the park).

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Designating wilderness areas and protecting those we already have are critical to helping future generations appreciate our public lands. Wilderness does not exclude anyone but rather prevents certain forms of recreation that does not fit with the definition of wilderness as defined in the Wilderness Act. Historically, settlers dominated the landscape in order to survive and progress but today with all of this nation developed we have become humble enough to accept that there should be places set aside to protect ecological biodiversity. Wilderness areas serve as repositories for wildlife, water quality, and ecological processes that can provide educational and scientific opportunities. Wilderness areas will never restrict human use because today it is generally accepted that we are a part of the ecosystem. The Wilderness Act allows managing agencies to use mechanized and motorized use for specific uses such as medical emergencies, fire, insects, and disease. Therefore, the concept of an "absolutist" wilderness will never happen. BUT just because a trail become impassable does not mean we use chainsaws to clear them. Wilderness should provide opportunities for challenge as well as simple recreation and solitude.

How about adding wilderness corridors open to OHV in order to access the millions of acres of wilderness.

I will be working in Utah over the next several years to develop an Environmental Literacy Plan and a Green School Awards Program. Many states are developing these place that bridge the gap between formal and non-formal education stakeholders. I will be using my learning in MD over the last couple years and encourage you to do the same in your states. If you want to or are willing to dialogue about this please contact me. Here are two videos that express my recent work - Green Schools in MD and Environmental Justice in Salt Lake City: { Link } - MD { Link } - SLC UT

The National Fish Habitat Conservation Act - S.1214, H.R. 2565 is a critical piece of legislation that will conserve fish habitats which will produce positive results for fisheries for years to come. The National Fish Habitat Conservation Act also has significant bi-partisan support in both the House and Senate.

I grew up in Chicago, a big city, so it was hard to get out into the great outdoors. I get outside a lot now that I live in New England, but it would have been so helpful to have field trips from school go to state parks or other areas besides museums - or have after-school programs about nature. The only way I got to get outside was in day camp.

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Today life is filled with noise, distractions and stress; all leading to reoccurring health problems. People have forgotten how to "detoxify" their life by living within their means, conserving and most importantly reconnecting to nature and outdoor recreation. As life gets more complicated, it becomes absolutely important to protect our remaining wilderness through the Omnibus Land package (H.R. 146) for generations today and in the future. If "lasting effects" is what President Obama is seeking, then passage of the Omnibus bill is the way to go first; this is what would work!!! It's the concrete foundation needed to administer the President's declaration of creating strategies and programs to reconnect people to our earth! As a representative and future educator (currently an education student at New Mexico State University) of the newly organizing "Friends of the Organ Mountains-Desert Peaks Wilderness," I am in support of proposed bill S.1689 which would protect our sacred Organ Mountains and surrounding desert wilderness areas. Our groups goals and mission are to reach our community about the importance of protecting our wilderness through education, awareness, advocacy and youth wilderness or nature programs. Our biggest challenges are creating knowledge, understanding, and support in the community. But it's the Understanding that's important to get across; that the effect of protection is great!!! Continued Life!!! As you can tell, My love is Nature, the Great Outdoors; the master works of God. I enjoy taking my family hiking and exploring into the Organ Mountains and surrounding areas every Spring and Fall and times in between for tranquility and harmony with the lands of my ancestors. My Apache (and Special Forces) father gave me a love of the wild-lands and what the lands can teach us by studying it. Exploring the lands of the Organ Mountains-Desert Peaks Wilderness and seeing its beauty gives me a longing to deepen the roots of my Apache heritage and needing to share it with my children and future students. I'm a new grandmother and I want the opportunity to be able to share with my grandson the legacy of beauty, wildlife and history of our lands & wilderness; the same that my father shared with me. Many people come to our southwestern lands (Las Cruces & Dona Ana) because of the beauty and tranquil air it brings. If our remaining wilderness is left open for developments, etc.; Where shall our future generation go? Will they walk the sands of a beauty forgotten as the Sahara? Our natural beauty will no longer be, and we will no longer have the attraction and breath-taking valley of green. When the air is no more, our Mountains and indigenous wildlife will die. We need to protect as much of the wild as possible for future generations. If our remaining Wilderness is left unprotected, what is affected is our ecological systems that sustain us and give us life. Our wilderness carries many values. There is a high diversity of plant and animal life as well as a diversity of geographical lands and rock formations. It carries historic values of prehistoric markings and cave dwellings; footprints of our past. So Not only does our wilderness preserve our very Life, Protection of our remaining wilderness aides in physical, emotional and mental well-being as well as aiding in our children's educational studies; giving us our future generation geologists, doctors, environmentalist or physicists and allows them to dream of possibilities for a better future. It is imperative that we protect our remaining wilderness, such as our Organ Mountains and surrounding desert areas (Bill S.1689) through the passage of the Omnibus Land package (H.R. 146) so that our future generations may have continued life and continue to enjoy the Great Outdoors!!! Thank you very Much

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(cont.)

Information signs are a common feature of local, state and national parks. I propose that a new series of signs should be installed, where appropriate, containing the following three pieces of information about a given natural feature: 1) Information about the role of the feature in its natural setting (this information is already provided on many signs); 2) Information about the human uses for this natural feature; and 3) Information on sustainable alternatives that fulfill the same human use. Following is a rough, non-scientific example of what I am describing: Red Pine: Red pines are valuable components of ecosystems in the northern Midwest and Northeastern United States. These trees provide carbon sequestration, control erosion and provide shade for their distinctive understory ecosystems. Human uses for red pine include timber and paper pulp. Conservation of red pine stands can be aided by use of alternate timber and paper products: bamboo is a fast-regenerating strong plant that is increasingly being used as timber, and 100% recycled paper products are available in most places. By strategically placing signs throughout our parks, we can effectively illustrate what is lost through over-consumption of natural resources. Additionally, we can educate the public to preserve those features illustrated by the signs and, more broadly, to think critically about the impact of resource consumption in general.

The idea is a simple one: plant fruit trees in urban public places. I worked with urban youth through an urban conservation corps and found that most of them had little personal connection to the outdoors. This was in part because they were not exposed to many natural areas. More important, however, was the fact that they did not feel any reason to care about the natural features they did encounter. The time I saw the most appreciation for the natural world was when we had the opportunity to visit a community garden that contained apple trees and raspberry bushes. The kids were able to eat both the apples and raspberries and saw lettuce and cucumbers growing in the soil. This visit created a vastly increased personal connection with nature as they suddenly could see familiar food in its natural state. It put these few natural features into a value system with which they were already familiar. This experience became a lesson about the value of many other parts of the great outdoors and, subsequently, a lesson about the importance of environmental stewardship. Planting fruit trees and other familiar edible plants in cities and towns will increase awareness of the value of nature and subsequently increase a general ethic of stewardship.

We should create a national program that could give college and/or high school credit for a semester of service in our national/state/municipal outdoor areas. This new program could be a logical extension to the Americorps program. Americorps is a pure service program that directly and indirectly, through partnership with conservation corps, sends young people into our parks and forests to work with local rangers, NPS personnel, etc. In exchange, these workers receive a stipend and federal education grants. Why not provide these federal grants to people actively in school and include a strong education component to the programs? This would effectively be a blend of the existing Americorps program and a program modeled after the programs such as those provided by NOLS, which gives college credit for a learning-based outdoor adventure. An Americorps-education program could give credit for management degrees and could include a variety of programs focused on different natural science areas (geology, ecology, forestry. . .). Additionally, not only would we be acquiring affordable and eager help protecting our Great Outdoor areas, we would be educating younger generations in stewardship and science.

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(cont.)

ELK is one of the few programs that truly works. Their success rate with high school and college graduation as well as kids getting science degrees is a role model for others. The kids in the program not only learn valuable environmental skills, they also learn team building skills, leadership and practice diversity and inclusion --- all of which are invaluable in their adult lives. I sure wish I could have had this type of experience when I was young!! We need to find a way to share ELK as a role model across the US to impact even more kids.

The Galveston Bay Area Chapter of Texas Master Naturalists offers me endless opportunities to give back to my local ecosystems with prairie and wetland restoration and teaching others about our natural resources - all flavored with fun, food, and friendship.

Here in Hawaii we have a very successful program called the Hawaii Association of Watershed Partnerships (www.hawp.org). Local, state and federal landowners sign a memorandum of understanding to protect the forested lands that are the source of our water. This means providing habitat for rare and listed species, managing invasive plants and animals and providing educational stewardship opportunities for local residents in the watershed lands. The best part is that conservation happens across ownership boundaries, and the newest partnerships are forming with the idea of the Hawaiian ahupuaa in mind - meaning that conservation happens in the ENTIRE watershed, not just parts of it - from the mountains to the sea - because what happens upland will affect the lowlands. Look to watershed partnerships as a successful cooperative agreement between all types of landowners, private and public, and that are supported by all levels of government and private granting organizations and as a way to include local residents in the everyday tasks that are necessary for successful conservation.

An accredited Outdoor Adventures Education course for physical education is available with an approved curriculum. The P.E. students at the high school and middle school level are taught wildlife conservation and introduced to outdoor skills. 8000 students in 80 schools will be taught archery, orienteering, survival skills, angler education, backpacking, camping, hunter and boat safety courses and cpr/first aid. Many schools report a waiting list for students wanting the Outdoor Adventure class. It is obvious; students want to learn more about the great outdoors. A required course like P.E. is a great way to start the connection with the outdoors. The P.E. Outdoor Adventures course is aligned with the National Physical Education Standards: NPE K-12.1-7. Any secondary school in the U.S. can teach this course. All teacher training for the course is available through individual state agencies. The course will be taught in Texas and Wyoming for the 2010-11 school year. More information is available at www.dallasecologicalfoundation.org.

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(cont.)

Any plan that does not give as much control as possible to the real people, "on the ground", who are living there (within an area reasonably described as local)--is just another special interest agenda getting played out; some of which are good--some are not. The real priorities for rural or urban communities is to recognize that their best interests are served by becoming sustainable. (Sustainable living is visibly discernible from non-sustainable attempts to get ahead in life, damn the consequences.) Moving 350 million acre feet into the desert does not sound sustainable. Lets just be sure all pertinent information about every proposal is wholly and accurately depicted and thoroughly disseminated to everyone whose lifestyle or livelihood may be affected. (Thank goodness we live in the information age. This would not have been so possible 5 or ten years ago, but it is now, even in rural areas) Let it suffice to say that every federally produced improvement program should be implemented by and for, (and be somewhat self-regulated by), the people who have the most "priority" vested in the outcome, because it affects them locally.

As much as we need continued access to oil and gas to power 99% of our modern conveniences, it is only a matter of time before tragic accidents (don't forget 11 workers and their families paid the ultimate price for this explosion and spill) like the BP spill in the gulf devastate a large percentage of our coastlines and wetlands. Like nuclear power, no matter how safe and regulated offshore drilling may be, the effects of accidents--no matter the cause--can be catastrophic. Renewable energy may still be in the idealistic phase and is yet to be economically viable, but it is our best bet. The true cost of oil, including air pollution and health problems for those living near refineries, is far more un-economic in the long run. I can say this for I have worked in the oil industry and know that despite the many honest people who make their livings providing oil and gas to the world, we would all be better off without it.

Free is nice, but the probability of overuse/misuse of public lands goes up if no one pays to use the area. There are a number of trails and areas nearby where I live, but I don't use them because I don't want to pay either. Luckily I can just go further out; no every one else can. To the point, nothing is free; open spaces require money for cleaning, patrolling, and upgrades to roads, restrooms, signage, etc. If you can't pay \$3-\$5 to spend a few hours outdoors, then your not really serious about it. What if the NPS had a lottery system where every 100th user got in without charge?

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(cont.)

Gentlemen, thank you for maintaining your integrity when responding to my comments. If multi-use recreation means expanding existing OHV areas and trail systems then I'm all for it. (It's no use hiking around these areas anyway :0) The area of Deckers, CO is a good example of regulated OHV use, it is maintained and has abundant signage. Good signage informs users of the bigger environmental picture, which hopefully they are there to learn from while recreating, and is only possible with government funding. Funded areas should have the highest standards for use. Local businesses could benefit from increased traffic. Private land owners who want to invite recreational traffic should regulate themselves SIMILARLY, with respect to the principles of conservation. Remember, the land you own will belong to someone else after you pass on, so treat it well. Wilderness area recreation should continue to be prohibited periodically and during "sensitive" times like mating season for various keystone species, and in spring when roads are muddy. If recreational areas were open year round they would fail to operate as a corridor for wildlife, and lead to ecological imbalances. (Which should be treated at the root of the cause: too much human activity causes nature to cease functioning properly; and not be an excuse to condone other unwise practices like clear cutting, bio-cide applications, or dumping.) ... This is NOT a vote to say: all OHV, all the time, everywhere and anywhere. No way no how.

Good information is key--even if it is debatable. Sustainability is becoming more and more prescient all over the world--but it is hotly contested--for anyone who gets in the way of big money is automatically labeled a radical fanatic and an enemy of capitalism; even if they are only pointing out obvious flaws with how things are done and suggesting alternatives. A national conservation effort would need good consistent signage, with science that stands on its own and advocates with enough capital to stand up to all the special interest money that will flood in to dispute, defame or obscure that good science. It would be nice if the USDA or other Govt. organizations who serve the interests of average Americans could be funded as well as the charlatans on Wall street. Imagine a \$500 billion project to disperse and defend accurate information!

Greater care for the aesthetics and, more importantly, the effects of building and habitation should be considered. We don't need more beige, stucco 2 car garages with living space attached--or more lawns in drought afflicted areas. We do need conscientious, sustainable, community oriented living spaces that blend in harmoniously with their surroundings and do not use up too many resources. This may never be resolved though, for aesthetics and personal preferences may make it difficult to standardize what constitutes "green" building, planning and landscaping sufficiently enough for the government to get behind it.

I agree wholeheartedly. Anglers are often the first to speak up when protecting water quality and fish habitats. The Administration should actively support the National Fish Habitat Conservation Act as part of the America's Great Outdoors Initiative.

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(cont.)

I don't think we are talking about another study here - I believe what is proposed at top was an annual national report that identifies national priorities that can be shared in state SCORP plans, in addition to state issues. SCORPS are a useful tool, as they can reflect broad consensus on statewide recommendations related to outdoor recreation. The above recommendation would merely emphasize that each state integrate "common threads" w/in each SCORP that are of national interest/concern (i.e. childhood obesity, etc).

I've just gone through the Texas Master Naturalist training and it is an excellent experience. The exposure you are given to so many areas of the natural world around us practically guarantees that you will find something (or many things) that will grab your interest. Geology, soil, plants, birds, flowers, meadow ecology, trees, insects, water, weather, land management, amphibians, mammals, etc, etc, etc. You're sure to find an area and projects that meet your interests. The other members of your chapter will probably be the nicest folks you've met in a long time and will share their enthusiasm fo the great outdoors with you. The volunteer projects become a social outing to meet your friends and do things that will educate and benefit the natural environment. It's a great program.

Keep in mind this debate is about conservation of nature, sustainable practices and making healthy changes in regards to how we treat wilderness and open spaces; running over them with gas powered vehicles may be fun, (and admittedly it does have its place in this debate), but it is not a practice with the best interest of nature and most people in mind. One hiker and one ATV rider do not use space the same way; ATVs take up much more space(by covering more ground), and just one can destroy the serene atmosphere other recreationalists go to enjoy, not to mention resident wildlife. I do have friends who ride and I wish you all the best, but don't call recreational vehicles a sustainable conservation activity that has benefits apart from being a thrill ride.

Lets: Give communities the tools they need to reclaim power over the surrounding landscape, particularly where water or mineral rights are concerned. Support Organic Farm science and promote rural regeneration by aiding new and transitioning farmers to supply healthy food and jobs to communities. Give incentive to young, (-45) skilled and educated applicants to relocate and function as entrepreneurs and consumers of diverse service and goods in rural communities. Re-test aquifers and publish an official US water report. Call out Polluters; be clear about the spirit and letter of the law, and let good science and public conscience serve as judge. Be sure culpable entities pay for clean-up and submit to regulation. Protect peoples' right to choice and increase their access to fair and accurate information. Eliminate the power of misinformation campaigns regarding harmful products, by-products, and practices. Allow consumers the right to examine and compare true and full costs to decide what stays, what changes, and what goes.

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(cont.)

Preservation of cultural history is important, and should be considered a sensitive issue when deciding what to preserve and what to raze. It may, however, be beyond the scope of environmental conservation in this context. Lets be sure living things are protected so they can flourish into the future, and not spend too much time and money worrying about human artifacts that are not of obvious historic importance. This would be a great project for private or non-profit organizations and volunteer preservationists.

Ranching yes. Meat is important, Pastured meat is best. Over-grazing-No. As much as govt should respect private landowners rights it has an equal obligation to protect the public and preserve the heritage of the landscape. Since their are viable economic alternatives to overgrazing and CAFOs there should be incentive to move away from un-sustainable methods of food production.

Remember Public Service Announcements on TV and radio? What if 20-30second spots were created to inform about key components of ecology and conservation, like: the role of microorganisms in soil fertility, and what happens to them when chemical fertilizers or pesticides are applied. working definitions of "local" (+/- 100 mile radius), "Organic", and "natural" (which doesn't mean anything) how soil, water and air patterns shift and affect various populations, i.e. what you put on your lawn eventually travels to many other places, and responsibility for clean water, soil, and air starts at home. also, statistics on recycling, landfills, and the options around what to do with consumer waste. If the public were armed with a better understanding of these key topics, they could ask better questions, make better decisions, and get involved in the process of conservation.

So long as their are nationally recognized standards for and oversight--not necessarily regulation--for private conservation efforts, then this is a good idea. Local groups should control and maintain the quality of local lands, the way only caring, locally involved people can. it would be a good use of "limited conservation bucks" to assist and protect the rights of local conservation efforts.

There have been numerous cartoon-ish spokes-animals used to convey pro-environmental messages through the decades; some effective, some not. Make sure the message is on target before spending any federal aid on a new smokey.

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(cont.)

There is so much more to communities: Shelter, safety, and good nutrition (which can and should be abundant) Education for children, work for grown-ups Goods and services that are easily available and equitably distributed with minimal violence Health care and information providers Areas to recreate in and out of doors and enough time to enjoy it These are the priorities for communities; any other initiatives labeled as "sustainable, community ..." have to be able to reflect the attitudes and preferences of actual communities of real people. Any plan that does not give as much control as possible to the real people, "on the ground", who are living there (within an area reasonably described as local)--is just another special interest agenda getting played out; some of which are good--some are not. I am not inferring anything about this or any other idea submitted here I am just clarifying what the real priorities are for rural or urban communities, whose best interests are served by becoming sustainable. (Sustainable living is visibly discernible from non-sustainable attempts to get ahead in life, damn the consequences.) The only way to do this is be sure all pertinent information is wholly and accurately depicted and thoroughly disseminated to everyone whose lifestyle or livelihood may be affected. (Thank goodness we live in the information age. This would not have been possible 5 or ten years ago, but it is now, even in rural areas) Let it suffice to say that every federally produced improvement program should be implemented by and for, (and be somewhat self-regulated by), the people who have the most "priority" vested in the outcome, because it affects them locally.

This is a good idea so long as it does not open loopholes for estate tax evaders to invest in farm properties solely to protect their wealth. On the surface estate taxes seem crude and unnecessary, especially for the average American; but when you consider the vast difference between the rich and poor nowadays, and you recall why the founders of this country despised landed, multi-generational wealth and the entitlement and undue influence in politics and business it affords you can see why all the implications of any changes in estate taxes laws should be well spelled out and transparent for all to understand. Yes farmers and holders of open space should be allowed to keep these things in the family, so long as it is not just a tax-evasion strategy for those unconcerned with conservation or sustainable agriculture.

This kind of synergistic thinking, where wholesome food is grown by a variety of small scale local growers who supply rural and urban populations is key to both rural economic recovery and food security issues. At this time, thousands of young "rock star farmers" who have degrees in everything from soil science to business management are preparing to make this happen; just like the thousands of market farmers and other sustainability minded agriculturalists who already are making it happen. This would be a great way for the DOI, USDA and other NGOs like ATTRA to organize and support local conservation advocates to do what they love, and help more people understand the simple, beautiful, and necessary link between the land and themselves--by eating it. Local food movements are gaining momentum around the world; better to be apart of it than opposed to it.

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(cont.)

This the kind of thinking that will be the downfall of our entire way of life. I don't like THOSE people so I will work to get them banned. Why so narcissistic? Share the trails folks! Where possible, multiple use is a much better solution for everyone. OHV, mountain bikers, horseback riders and hikers can all use the same trails, provided we all don't get jammed onto the few trail systems that remain open. When you are on the trails...be courteous out there people. We need to get together on this and not fragment trail systems into single use or completely deny access to user groups that we don't like, then no one will be happy. I ride a dirt bike. I sometimes ride a mountain bike. I would ride a horse, if I had room for one. I also like to go hiking.

I take exception to being accused, as a full sized OHV enthusiast, of not being environmentally conscious. There are the typical "one percenters" in all forms of outdoor recreationists that do not care about thier impact to the environment. I have seen just as many on motorcycles as on ATVs. In fact, I tend to clean up the messes they leave behind. This kind of attitude, that one group is inherently better than another, is detrimental to our shared cause.

Since 2006, an enhanced tax deduction for donations of development rights has helped farmers, ranchers and other modest-income landowners work with land trusts to increase the pace of conservation by about 250,000 acres a year. Despite support from 265 Representatives, 41 Senators and President Obama's campaign pledge to sportsmen, that incentive was allowed to expire on December 31st of last year. Now is the time to make it permanent! Tax incentives for conservation easement donations have helped America's land trusts conserve millions of acres of important wildlife habitat, productive working lands and scenic open space. By leveraging the generosity of America's farmers, ranchers and forest owners, such donations and bargain sales can preserve working landscapes for a fraction of the cost of federal acquisition. By allowing modest income landowners to deduct more of their income over more years, the enhanced easement incentive simply provides them the same benefits they would have been entitled to had their incomes been larger. For more information, please visit www.lta.org/easementincentive.

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(cont.)

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(cont.)

another side to this coin. Other tax payers must make up the difference for every tax exemption including a conservation easement. The President may be hearing from many tax payers that do not want to foot the higher bill put on them due to these type easements. He is probably trying to be sensitive to all sides or possibly just believes the government needs every dime it can get because of our wrecked economy. Many amenities available in good economic times are impossible during times such as the these. 9) This incentive is important to many landowners who are giving up substantial value by donating conservation easements. It's a much less expensive way (to the overall taxpayers of the nation) to conserve essential natural resources than would be the purchase of easements or land at fair market value using public dollars. 10) The enhanced tax incentive can make all the difference in the world. It represents significant tax savings, thus significant incentive for a landowner to donate a conservation easement. As a land trust we could be buying easements but donated easements make our budgets and thus our impact go farther. In general we try to appeal to landowners interested in conservation as their first priority. With the additional incentive offered by the enhanced tax incentive I can also pull in landowners who are somewhat committed to conservation to whom the tax savings appeals. I think this is a good move for us collectively to make as a conservation community as, I believe, a large part of the future for all of us involves doing conservation work on private lands in lieu of public land management. (13 May 2010) All sportsmen should know our outdoor pursuits depend on maintaining viable fish and wildlife habitat. Unless tools like conservation easements that help groups like Ducks Unlimited and the landowners we work with are in place our lifestyle will continue to be at risk. More than 70 percent of wildlife gets food and shelter from our working farm, ranch and forest lands, but we're losing these habitats to development at the alarming rate of 5,000 acres each day. This legislation encourages voluntary, incentive-based donations of future development rights to ensure that farm and ranch families can continue to work their land, sell hunting leases and provide wildlife habitat for future generations. Ducks Unlimited has had great success using this incentive to accelerate the pace of waterfowl habitat conservation. This incentive helps Ducks Unlimited leverage Farm Bill and North American Wetlands Conservation Act funding. Landowners considering a perpetual commitment to conservation should not be pressured by an artificial deadline, and many will never begin the lengthy process without the reassurance of a permanent incentive. 12) I am opposed to Federal subsidies for nonprofit Land Trusts to purchase land. If Land Trusts want to purchase land, they should use their own money -- not mine. 13) Comment #12 is not pertinent to what is being discussed. The suggestion is to make the tax incentives permanent. 14) This is such a critical incentive for all farmers and ranchers across the country that are interested in conserving their properties for future generations. It maintains bipartisan support, a rare achievement in modern politics. Making these incentives permanent is critical for the future of private lands conservation. For the original list of votes see the archived idea here: { Link }

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(cont.)

Today's 143 conservation corps (www.corpsnetwork.org) operating in 44 states build upon the proud tradition of the Civilian Conservation Corps of the 1930's while being flexible, fluid partners with many public and private conservation organizations throughout the country. These conservation corps employ thousands of youth and young adults, giving them vital career skills, on-the-job training, and education. Today's corpsmembers will be instrumental in filling public land management positions that are being vacated as baby boomers retire. Conservation corps also have the flexibility to incorporate diverse populations in their crew-based model. Many corps have programs that harness the energy of senior citizens, persons with disabilities, veterans, and minority youth. Conservation corps are capable of tremendous conservation outcomes throughout the country because they are nimble enough to leverage multiple funding sources from federal, state, local, and private entities. What are the challenges for conservation corps in protecting places that Americans love? At a time when more people are being called to serve, conservation corps need to have access to cooperative agreements, not cumbersome contracts, while working with federal agencies. Conservation corps benefit from legislation that seeks to involve more youth in the outdoors such as the Public Lands Service Corps Act and Youth Corps Act of 2010. Increased and sustained funding for programs like the AmeriCorps, Lands and Water Conservation Fund, and Rivers, Trails, and Conservation Assistance Program, will continue to connect people with the outdoors through service opportunities. Most of all, conservation corps need public support to keep alive a strong tradition dating back to the depression of combining service with protection of America's natural wonders.

We need more access to public lands for all types of recreational activity, to include full sized motorized vehicle access. There are many areas in this great nation that can only be fully accessed by 4 wheel drive vehicles, particularly for those who are disabled. It is important to keep in mind that all who enjoy our great outdoors need to work together to support this access. Cooperative effort is needed.

The Civil War was one of the most defining periods of time in this country's history and without a doubt has molded us in countless ways into the nation we are today. Battlefields possess an aura that cannot be experienced in any other way than to walk where our ancestors' blood once soaked the ground, where men fought and died for what they believed in. No teacher or text book can convey the sacredness one feels when surrounded by the now peaceful open spaces that once were the backdrop to the most horrific carnage as well as some of the bravest moments in American history. Preserving these battlefields now is more important than ever as we Americans are losing a little bit of our heritage with each passing day, and once these great links to our past are paved over, they are gone forever. We must never forget the events that transpired on these lands, and their preservation should never be compromised.

Expand the Wild Rogue Wilderness to include the 58,000 acre Zane Grey roadless area, and add the tributary streams in the area to the National Wild and Scenic Rogue River designation.

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(cont.)

The Civil War has to be one of the most important and significant times of our countries history. We MUST protect and honor these battlefields and the blood of those fallen americans who fought so bravely at these sites. To visit these Battlefields makes the novice history individual feel the presence of what ocured there and to be at awe .

This is a major part of this country's history. The Battlefields MUST be preserved and honored. If not for us let it be for the hundred of thousands of americans who fought and died for what they believed to be right. To me this is a question that should never be debated.

We were told that the local rural community could turn to tourism and recreation for alternate economic base when the current forest plan eliminated logging. Wilderness does NOT bring in recreation \$\$\$. Wilderness is "not untrammeled" by man. The native americans used every part of our mtns. They burned areas on a regular basis to maintain berry fields and wildlife areas. Wilderness was NOT a 400 yr old forest of "old growth" but a mosaic of forest types and openings across the landscape. We have so much blow down trees in out forests today it is very difficult to walk cross country. We have observed the wildlife prefer an open corridor or trail. In Enumclaw, WA the FS is now trying to clear a 400 acre area for the elk. Young successional forest whether by logging or fire is necessary part of the landscape. The forests and mtns have been my backyard where I have lived for 60 yrs. I have observed a lot. I also have an oldtimers wildlife diaries from 1949 to 1990 sharing where wildlife flourished after a burn or clearcut with abundant feed.

Goshen Farm Preservation Society is a group of dedicated people who have been trying to preseve 22 acres of land and a historic home in a heavily developed area near Annapolis MD. The property is owned by the Anne Arundel County Public Schools. It was purchased through eminent domaine in the 1970's in order to build an elementary school and middle school. The elementary school was built and the middle school was deemed not needed. The house was built in the 1780's and there are 22 acres of forest and meadows left in the original homestead. Our group was formed when a few residents found out the the Board of Ed was about to demolish the house(which was on the MD Historic Register). These residents testified at the next BOE hearing and the demolition was stopped. Goshen Farm Preservation Society has spent the last 5 years trying to gain a lease from the BOE to rennovate the House, create communtiy gardens and a historic community preserve. Each time this organization feels close to achieving a lease, new roadblocks are created by the BOE. As a member of this group, my philosophy is that environmental protection is achieved in large (lobbying by the League of Conservation Voters) and small (saving 22 acres near the Chesapeake Bay) efforts. Both are critical. Our group is to speak at a hearing on August 18th of the Anne Arundel County Board of Education concerning the feasiblity of our lease request. Our group has been busy over the last 5 years - getting non-profit status, a \$150,000 matching grant from the state of Maryland, fundraising, and much more. This lease hearing is our greatest hurdle. If you want more information, please go to our website www.goshenfarm.org .

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(cont.)

I have visited many civil war battlefields in Virginia, Pennsylvania, Maryland, Kentucky, Tennessee, Georgia and Mississippi. It is important to protect and preserve these battlegrounds and cemeteries where our forefathers fought and died for a cause in which they believed so our children can understand and appreciate one of the most traumatic episodes in American History. Never have so many owed so much to so few.

The national trail system is a national resource. One must only look at the level of esteem and publicity the one complete trail (the Appalachian trail) receives. Completing the national trail system would create a wilderness legacy that would be a valuable learning and teaching tool for years to come.

You are absolutely right about brownfields within the built environment, but please consider using rooftops and parking lots also within the built environment instead of healthy, fragile desert ecosystems, which deserve protection as much as rainforests, coral reefs, mangroves, redwoods, and other healthy intentional ecosystems... There are a number of advantages (including democratic ownership, lower costs, less eminent domain, fewer GHGs, etc.) to local efficiency and solar, and a huge number of disadvantages to remote Big Solar (water waste, high prices, monopoly power, instability of centralized power/long transmission, etc.).

When the original CCC operated the laws pertaining to employee safety and health standards were minimal. You ate what they gave you, (no gluten free vegetarians), you slept on the ground where you worked, and you may or may not have had safety equipment. The cost of this program was minimal, no civil rights training or sexual harassment training, or blah, blah, blah training was required. To implement a program like the CCC today would cost the government a large fortune, because so many laws apply to both the private and federal workforce. About the first time someone stubbed their toe and sued the program for not providing proper footwear....the judge would put it out of business. 50 people died while fighting fire and several others were killed in work related duties. The Student Conservation Association and several other youth organizations are loosely based on the model of the early CCC program. Support for these organizations would be a more efficient use of money and workforce.

Expand the Wild Rogue Wilderness to include the 58,000 acre Zane Grey roadless area, and add the tributary streams in the area to the National Wild and Scenic Rogue River designation. The Rogue River is an iconic natural treasure providing vibrant wild salmon and steelhead fisheries, recreation, clean water, solitude and a high quality of life to the citizens of Southwestern Oregon, and indeed the nation. The Rogue River and its abundant renewable natural resources provide a sustainable economic base for many Josephine County businesses. The Wild and Scenic and Hellgate Recreation sections of the Rogue have provided \$30 million in economic benefits to the state of Oregon annually, including 445 jobs. The Wild and Scenic and Hellgate Recreation sections of the Rogue River provides Josephine County with \$14 million in benefits annually. A proposal to expand the Wild Rogue Wilderness by approximately 58,350 acres, and adding approximately 93 miles of tributary streams to the existing National Wild and Scenic Rogue River is in the best long term social, economic and ecological interests of Josephine County.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Throughout Britain and Europe people hike and walk on public pathways situated on private lands. These are ancient in origin, to be sure, but the impact is that communities have the infrastructure to encourage people to walk through field and forest to recreate or to go about their daily business. These public pathways encourage being outside. In Mill Valley, CA, a community built on a mountainside, a series of public steps lead down in terrace-like fashion between private properties, to the town itself in "the valley", making it possible for citizens to shop, recreate, and stay out of their cars for daily errands - while getting some great exercise!

Outstanding program! ELK has enriched the lives of many families in the community through educational nature and science programs. Some of these families would never be able to experience and appreciate the beauty of the great outdoors if it were not for the programs offered through ELK. Through the years, many of the ELK kids and their families have become stewards in the fight to preserve nature and our natural resources. I commend the ELK Board of Directors and staff on the excellent work that have done over the years.

thanks for your quote "You also cannot argue the fact that while driving a motor bike or OHV across a trail it is hard to enjoy the surrounding area" By riding a dirtbike it is proof that I love nature more. On my bike I get to see more of it in a days ride that you do. Mabey it is my better developed mind that can take in more of the beauty as I am "racing down the trail oblivious to surroundings". In all actuality I and all who I know who ride vary the speed of the ride greatly depending on the terrain in order to take in what is around. I have been able to take my children to numerous spectacular vistas and panoramas that most eyes never see. I rarely ride more than a couple miles without stopping in a opportune site to take off my helmet and look around and who knows I may even put the kickstand down and take a walk around to look at the beauty I am around. We take a snack and sit back miles from everyone else and enjoy the world. This stereotypical propaganda you spread about what of off-roaders are is absolutely wrong. 99% of off roaders use the trails as a means to spend time with family, friends, and most of all a vehicle to see nature and wildlife.

"nature lovers" must conform to your idea of what that is? As a responsible OHV sigletrack off road motorcyclist my love of the outdoors and enjoyment of nature is every bit as intense or valueble as yours. Groups like the Blue ribbon coalition and other local off road groups provide countless hours of service and improvements to public lands. The arrogance of the statement OHV supporters are any less outdoors people is ignorant.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Environmental Learning for Kids (ELK) - Put a Little Wildlife in a Child's Life! We as a nation, must make sure that ALL people have the education and experiences to connect with nature and science. ELK focuses on making sure everyone, especially communities of color all exercise their right to experience the great outdoors, graduate from high school and are college-ready, with a strong knowledge of science and natural resource career options. ELK alumni will be part of the next generation of Department of Interior employees and will help diversify the natural resource workforce. ELK's mission is to cultivate a passion in science, leadership, and service in a diverse community of learners. Through year-long and multiple-year educational experiences, ELK kids (ages 6-24) and their families develop a strong knowledge of science, natural resources, and various careers that are available in the field. Research has proven that to have success in connecting kids to nature, you must start working with them when they are young (ages 6-12) and include their families in the activities. ELK teaches kids and their families that careers in science are a viable option for youth to pursue and provides them with the resources and support network needed to achieve the same. Empowering youth to succeed also means educating their families that college is a viable option. ELK's Proven History of Success • 98% high school graduation rate for ELK students; • Secured more than \$160,000 in college scholarships for ELK youth; • Forty-five ELK alumni are either in college or gainfully employed, 72% are either studying or have graduated from college in a science major; • Families and youth are introduced to fishing, hunting, and outdoor experiences, thereby ensuring new generations become part of the American Legacy and stewards of the environment. • Successfully completed government grant projects through the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (both environmental education and environmental justice), U.S. Forest Service (More Kids in the Woods), U.S. Fish & Wildlife; National Park Service, National Park Foundation, and Great Outdoors Colorado Our students and families have the knowledge to make informed decisions regarding important issues that will have to be voted on in the future, i.e., conservation, protection, and recreation. ELK is a replicable model that has the potential to expand nationally.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

The positive side of our economy is that people return to places where memories were once created, places that are familiar, places that are affordable, and places that offer true intrinsic benefits that are not tied to anything that is man-made, material-oriented, and/or technologically 'advanced'. I believe that all federal agencies that manage public land need to review their mission and values, develop clear goals and objectives for future management and then be given the resources to be able to implement management strategies that will protect our lands while allowing access to the land. We need more professional federal (non contracted) staff to enforce laws, implement interpretive programs, oversee use, limit use (many of our parks allow WAY too many visitors in a given time frame) and manage land systems. Further (random), commercial concessionaire agreements need to be terminated; professional federal staff should be managing gift shops (with original, local and US made gifts), lodges, and everything commercial in parks, forests, and other federally 'owned' lands. I'd like to see partnerships for land conservation and preservation however would appreciate close monitoring for there affectiveness. I feel too much money is given to non-profits and it is then poorly managed. Several NP's do amazing things but there are some bad apples out there. More money for parks, recreation and open space, period - however that money needs to be managed from within by creating more jobs to protect and educate the public.

Volunteers in the San Bernardino National Forest Adopt A Trail program volunteered over 13,000 hours in 2009 maintaining the OHV route network. I believe we have "paid" enough.

The preservation of the sites which are inextricably linked to the seminal event of 19th century American history is a priority that cannot be deferred. In ten to 15 years the most important remaining unspoiled tracts will either be preserved or will have fallen to the developers' bulldozers. These are the places where the nation fought for and won a "new birth of freedom" in Lincoln's words. The core values that underlie our form of government and our way of life were established and re-established on these fields of honor. And on this hallowed ground as nowhere else can each succeeding generation learn to appreciate what those values mean and what price our forebearers paid to preserve them.

Many grassroots and smaller organizations have ideas and projects to share, that could benefit from the synergy of other projects in their areas, or of similar size and scope in other areas. The technology exists to create mapping tools and portals that will allow such sharing, however it can be out of the reach of the budgets or in-house technical capacity for some organizations. Create and support tools such as one I learned about today -- www.conservationregistry.org-- that will facilitate synergy and win-win collaboration and learning opportunities.

Without the on the ground information about where the critical wildlife and plant connectivity and habitat areas are, conservation planning efforts are hindered. This type of information can be used across jurisdictions in collaborative efforts to plan at regional scales that will be effective in protecting America's Great Outdoors, while helping planners and developers make smart choices about where and how to build and grow.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Preservation of Civil War battlefields -- and of the open spaces surrounding them -- is the most thoughtful, most powerful, most tangible way to honor those who fought on those battlefields. That should go without saying. Just as important, preservation is critical to imparting to young people the causes and costs of the war that gave shape to the country they live in today. The existence of the places upon which this awful conflict was carried out can serve as a springboard for educational programs to ensure that the reasons for the war, and the way in which the war was waged, are thoroughly understood and never forgotten. Schools should be urged, if not required outright, to make study of the Civil War a major part, if not the focal point, of their U.S. history curricula. Students, along with their parents, should be encouraged to visit battlefields. Surveys have shown that young people are woefully ignorant of American history. Preservation and promotion of Civil War battlefields can be used to rectify this national embarrassment.

Charge small federal and/or state fees for high impact users of public lands. Fees could be charged often through the licensing process for hunting, fishing, orv, etc. These fees would be optional in license purchasing by state -- i.e. huntings accessing state game lands would pay a small fee, maybe \$10 a year for that priviledge. Fees could be higher for extra high impact uses such as off-road vehicle access. The funds would go toward additional land purchases and for conservation projects, including trail building and maintenance, road maintenance, wildlife management, proscribed burns, etc.

As an added note ... all the Federal Government needs to do on this is follow and support the excellent lead of the Civil War Preservation Trust (CWPT) in the area of battlefield preservation.

As I stated in another comment, Native American people managed their lands for 10,000 years before Europeans arrived. They were the first multiple use advocates. They knew every plant, tree or rock and what it was useful for. Allowing land to be placed in multiple use does not mean that it will be developed. Wilderness is lack of management which does the land no good.

There is no downside to supporting battlefield preservation in the United States. Preserving history, nature, wildlife ... there is nothing not to like. Imagine the northern Virginia triangle between Richmond, Virginia, Warrenton, Virginia and Washington, D.C. WITHOUT the battlefields that are preserved there. Wall-to-wall development ... with Walmarts and Malls and highways the only monotony breakers. And yet, that is what we would have there now if not for the efforts of preservationists over the last twenty years. The alternative is too awful to contemplate. The only losers when such sites are preserved (and expanded) are greedy developers and unscrupulous retailers. The future applauds those who preserve what remains NOW.

We need full and dedicated and permanent funding for land and water conservation easements. Also, permanent protection for the tax deductibility of easements and protection from estate taxes on easements. Finally, effective support of organizations who's job it is to monitor and enforce easements.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

While I support efforts to expand employment opportunities, only state parks should be considered for work programs. The National Parks were intended to be more wilderness in character than amusement park. The Wilderness Act has been misused for years to include lands that do not fit the definition of wilderness. These areas should be untrammelled by man.

Outdoor Chattanooga is doing great work. It is a model for other Cities!

Civil War battlefields should be preserved not only for their historical, educational and cultural benefits, but for their economic contributions to the local areas.

From CEFC's website, it appears that it and the closely-related Biophilia Foundation are doing good work. I can't pretend to know if a nutrient reduction credit market is practical, even within a single region; but I'm giving you a "promote" vote for your good intentions.

I agree with about duplications. We even have one idea that appears twice ("Watershed..."). It's time for the administrator to step in and do some housekeeping. As for you Texas Master Naturalist folks, you've done a great job of rallying your member to stuff the ballot box, but please consider voting to support other good ideas as well, for instance Tallgrass Prairie Conservation. Thanks!

I agree with the last seven of your suggestions. Regarding suggestions #1 and #2, conservation would not succeed without support from hunters and fishers. Thanks for bringing up Wildlife Services, an organization with a terrible history.

I don't disagree with hunting and fishing; but we don't need to be hunting and fishing everywhere. I'd prefer to see isolated parcels remain isolated.

I have no problem with paying modest, user fees that help support maintenance.

I would gladly pay my share of the expense involved in creating highway overpasses and underpasses for wildlife the way Canada did in Alberta.

If you search for an estimate of the number of cities, towns and villages in the United States, you'll find various figures, typically in the ballpark of 20,000 to 30,000. While I support the creation and maintenance of urban parks and trails for the reasons you've mentioned, I don't believe it is practical for the federal government to participate. These projects are best coordinated and funded by state and local agencies and non-profit organizations.

I'm in favor of designating additional wilderness areas, and I promoted this idea. However, it is the same as the one submitted by ____ on May 7. This website has an abundance of duplications.

My family started using reusable bags for grocery shopping. They work very well. A closely related issue concerns the mess that has been made from plastic trash in the oceans.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Not every place needs to be accessible for recreation.

Protecting working lands and ranches from development doesn't always provide strong public benefits. The protection should serve important conservation purposes, for instance to save high-quality natural characteristics or to buffer existing conservation lands. I don't think it matters whether some or all of the debts are federally held; and I don't think the agencies that hold the debts may always be qualified to say what lands are worth protecting or to actually monitor the conservation easements in perpetuity. For me, the bottom line is that while things like cash payments, tax deductions and debt reductions help to motivate landowners, we already have in this country an effective network of federal, state and non-profit organizations leveraging these and other methods while making good conservation decisions.

The BLM should be run by people who are motivated to protect, restore and connect their land's diverse ecosystems.

The places where most of us live are troubled either by noise pollution or by light pollution at night. Having wild places where we can truly get away from these disturbances is very important for us and for many of our fellow creatures. This is what wilderness is all about. Thanks for your idea.

These parks could use wolf packs.

To all: It would be great to have a Buffalo Commons National Park in western Kansas. Those of you who are residents of that region should contact your local politicians regarding it. Please also be sure to "promote" this idea and the other ideas in this website that are closely related to it, like the "Great Plains National Park" and "Tallgrass Prairie Conservation". With your determined efforts, we can make this happen.

Well said. Having a full suite of large carnivores is essential to healthy ecosystems for the reasons you have mentioned. Reintroductions would be helped by restorations of larger natural areas and, of course, by the public's willingness to again share our landscapes with these creatures. (PS: Leopold died in 1948, though works like A Sand County Almanac were published after that.)

School yards are in every community and should serve students and the broader community as centers for conservation and environmental education and recreation. School yards are an excellent - yet underutilized - resource especially in urban areas such as Los Angeles where they are currently paved. Students and community can be engaged through service to restore habitat and redress park inequities by greening their local school campus. Greening school yards will also improve air quality, recharge ground water and reduce temperatures. In Los Angeles where the school district is the largest landowner (more than 5,000 acres and 700,000 students) - there is an enormous opportunity to grow the next generation of environmental stewards in their own communities, and to educate them about the history of conservation and the role they must play in protecting wilderness and conserving agricultural land.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Not completing the national trail would do a disservice to the Lewis and Clark expedition. They need to be appreciated for all that was discovered, and completing the trail will bring the history of the Lewis and Clark expedition alive! If the trail is completed, many more people will be educated about the westward expedition.

The completion of the national trail system incorporates the protection of the environment, United States history and diversity within the nation. Connecting the national trail from the east coast to the west encourages, invigorates and brings to life a deeper understanding of OUR national history and heritage. The trail signifies the ingenuity of the peoples of this great land. The National Trail System must be completed.

What better place to beginning to appreciate the great outdoors than in your own back yard! They say that "charity begins at home". Well, so can a respect and understanding of nature and all of it's beauty. It's a great place to teach and learn and is right out the door!

I like your idea. The problem is that the National Forest Service has shown it's propensity to close the areas in which you refer. Just last year (or was it two years ago now?) the Eldorado National Forest closed over 1,000 miles of roads and trails that were built to service the loggers and were still used by OHV'ers and others. Why? Many of the other National Forests are closing whole tracts of roads and trails that are still in use under their new "travel management plan." The real name should be the "travel prevention plan", since as far as I can tell, that is what they're planning and implementing. I went to a couple of the "travel management plan" town hall meetings. 99% of the people present were from the OHV crowd. That either means the other "interest groups" weren't interested or they didn't care as far as I'm concerned. Many good ideas were proposed, including volunteer trail maintenance programs run by the OHV clubs, FREE grading services by persons who owned and operated graders in the area and a whole slew of other useful suggestions. Pretty much it was a room full of people who were willing to do what it takes to keep the existing roads and trails open. Everything said in those rooms was completely ignored by the Forest Service Administration when the final plan came out. 1 for 1 will work. It will force those who want to close recreational sites forever to choose wisely as they will also be forced to give up like tracts of land elsewhere forever.

Preserving Civil War Battlefields is very important!! We must never forget our history or we are destined to repeat it.

Reconnecting Citizens & Natural resoures through Master Naturalist Program like the Tx Master Naturalist Program.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

The nation's outdoor interests are growing increasingly competitive. On one side there are those who would like to protect and preserve things as if no human had ever set foot there. On the other, there are those who would like to travel some of the vast open spaces on an ATV. Somewhere in the middle is the correct solution. I propose the federal government recognize that our public lands have many uses and interests. In an effort to reduce the "I win, you lose" mentality of modern politics, the government should not consider setting aside any new wilderness without setting aside an equal amount of dedicated OHV area within a reasonable proximity.

This is an example of the kind of great and innovative approach the MOU seeks to identify as stated in Section 2(c)(i) "It should recommend efficient and effective use of existing resources, as well as opportunities to leverage nonfederal public and private resources and nontraditional conservation programs."

Great idea, Mr. Evans. I believe off highway family recreation is a wonderful thing that brings families together without harming the environment.

It'd be nice to also include domesticated animals used for commercial purposes in that program (cows, chickens, etc.). Agree that animal welfare and conservation often go hand-in-hand.

In Nebraska we have a large number of minimum maintenance roads that are all ready developed. They network with a vast number of small villages, rural communities and state parks. If utilized with the approach of tourism as OHV trails for ATV riders this use could help revive these small communities with new revenue. With exposure to small farm town rural living and friendly hospitality it could inspire people to move here to raise their families. With this kind of tourism it would help promote jobs, new businesses and opportunities locally for our youth who are currently finding it difficult to find work without commuting a great distance. With OHV recreation interest on the rise I would like to see our small local communities, our county dept. of road and the state of Nebraska utilize this gem of a jewel that is all ready of existence but needs a strong foundation developed to build and map out these deserted roads to bring about this exuberant idea. As people have expressed, it is a recreational sport that brings family together to explore the great outdoors to experience a lifetime of precious memories with family and friends. Need I say more. Who do I go to next with this plan? What is the next step that needs to be taken? Where do I go for funding this plan? Where do I find these tools?

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Civil War battlefields are tangible links to our country's past. • The 150th anniversary commemoration is expected to stimulate renewed interest in the conflict and generate unprecedented tourism to Civil War sites. • Protection of America's remaining Civil War battlefields will leave a lasting legacy of national commitment to preservation and conservation. • Preserved battlefields revitalize local economies and create jobs by encouraging heritage tourism. The more historic land that is preserved, the longer visitors stay in a community and the more time they spend patronizing local businesses. • Battlefields are outdoor classrooms for this and future generations. They allow visitors to walk in the footsteps of the Civil War heroes and experience the landscape much as it was during the conflict. • Preserved battlefields help protect water resources; sustain parks, working farms, forests and ranches; and provide open space for passive outdoor recreation. • Battlefield preservation in Pennsylvania, Maryland and Virginia, where many significant sites are located, is also vital for protecting the Chesapeake Bay. Parkland created through battlefield preservation near growing population centers like Nashville, Atlanta and elsewhere can benefit quality of life for residents.

Great concept for the plains economy, conservation, climate, wildlife, and history. What is the downside? The costs would quickly be recouped with tourism dollars, not to mention the simple fact that this is the right and best thing to do when it comes to our devastated prairie history. A win-win for everyone and everything.

The preservation of Civil War and other historical sites should absolutely be of the highest priority. They are the places that shaped this nation...men and women served and died on these battlefields. We owe it to those whose spirits still walk these lands, to our children so they may learn what events happened to bring them to where they are today, and to ourselves...as our duty to both.

I am all for education, but it depends on the source and it needs to be all encompassing. So many of these educational programs are politically driven, it is agenda driven. It sounds good on the surface, the devil is in the details. I think a good environmental program should start and look at what these kids are doing now and how they are affecting their environment. Every time they turn on their computer, video game, tv, and buying all these things, they are supporting the destruction of land. These companies use tremendous amounts of energy and these factories and stores are built on land that was once occupied by wildlife. These education agendas fail to mention all of this. They just talk about saving land far far away from where they live. The wilderness was once right under their feet. Each new house, each new shopping mall, each new car dealership destroys the land. Not only that but it reduces the nations capabilities to provide the food and fibre they need to live on.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

I just retired after teaching 42 years. Some of my greatest satisfaction comes from the awareness that my students exhibited after studying about the Civil War and then going to the Gettysburg Battlefield. They would write essays on their return explaining what it was like to be on "a great field" (Col. Joshua Chamberlain). If our ancestors hadn't the foresight to save that field, we would not have been able to walk Pickett's Charge or take in the strategic views from Little Round Top. Thank goodness for those who saved Monocacy, Antietam, Ft. Stevens, etc.! Just last month, one of my eighthh graders took 2nd place in the Civil War Preservation Trust's essay contest entitled "Take Action: Save Civil War Battlefields". Did that make me feel proud? Certainly! But not as proud as I am of the fact that she is donating her \$100 prize BACK to the CWPT! So when we Americans look at our priorities, we must remember that our youth are our future and we must serve our future by preserving the opportunity to walk those fields. P.S. In the fall, I will accompany the Class of 2011 on their Gettysburg trip as a retiree in Union uniform.

I think this is a much better idea than wasting funds trying to save lands that don't need saved hundreds of miles from the populations and development. People need to have land preserved close to where they live so they can enjoy them on a daily basis if they wish. This would also help control urban sprawl. Good idea

Instead of subsidies, encourage free-market practices through tax breaks for the formation of a cooperative as mentioned above. If there is a need, and there is an incentive thru a tax break, an entrepreneurially minded effort will get started. This is the core of American job creation.

It is a good idea. It should also include a trip to a farm, to show how agriculture and nature can and does co-exist.

Much of the public, their jobs and their investments are the one destroying the land with constant development. Yet they fail to do anything about it. They are only focused on saving public land. Much of which is already saved and since its public it can't be destroyed. Look at what you have and what you continue to support with your purchases and investments. You are your own worst enemy. You state 6,000 acres are lost per day. Do something about it. If you are serious about this loss, you would ask for an wilderness area perimeter around every city in the United States. But don't stop there, check you investments and see what you are destroying overseas by investing in those companies.

OHV use is already restricted to designated OHV trails and roads. Thousands of miles of designated trails and roads have been closed to OHV use. Millions of square miles of public land has been restricted to foot traffic only. I like this idea.

Smoking has been detemined to be unhealthy, so why even mess with the filter on cigarettes. Maybe it should be illegal to make cigarettes with filters. What ever is left when your lips start to burn should be biodegradeable. Butts are a problem

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Some of the "monsanto" thing has been blown out of proportion. A person needs to go back and do more research to find out what put us in this situation. Much leads us right back to much pressure by environmental groups forcing new government regulations on agriculture, such as tillage as bad and led to more erosion. This forced the use of more chemicals. At the same time governmental spending cuts for agriculture research such as that of Montana State University, a land grant university. When the funding is cut to these land grant universities, who does agriculture turn to? Private companies such as Monsanto. Funding to Montana State Agriculture is always subjected to large budget cuts while other departments see an increase. Agriculture people care about the land and are much better at it than the government will ever be.

SOME of this is a fantastic idea! After an area has been logged, nobody (else) wants to go there to recreate. I'd stop short of locking out other users though. Some of the other users aren't very good at sharing, but we'll never get anywhere as a people by acting just like the selfish users. If OHV riders want to go to LOGGED out forests, and be active, get exercise, and even create trails for the future, ENCOURAGE THEM! Providing a place for OHV recreationists to go, will reduce the user load in other areas. And user conflict is lessened too, in a very natural way, for many years. No signs, no meetings, no protests.

The San Bernardino National Forest OHV Volunteer and OHV Club Adopt-a-Trail programs are an outstanding example for the rest of the nation. Over 30 OHV clubs volunteer their time to help the Forest Service with F.S. road maintenance and reforestation.

This is an idea that needs to go national in scope and expand to cover buildings and structures owned by state, local and non-profit agencies as well. An ideal opportunity to engage our youth in history and historic preservation and provide hands-on experience in the skilled construction trades. Also want to second ___'s idea about the stabilization and scientific investigation of archeological sites.

You can't off-road in wilderness. I drive a street legal Jeep on designated Forest Service and BLM roads. I am not interfering with anyone's "wilderness experience". There are massive amounts of public land set aside as wilderness. Use it and leave OHV people alone.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

I have raised two Children and now have two Grand Children and I have taken all of them to visit Battlefield's and to try and teach them the importance of the Civil War. I have traced my Great,Great Grandfather's on both my mother and father's side of our family. I live just outside of Nashville, Tennessee and it makes me sick that we have to follow a guide book that takes you from Marker to Marker to read and try to understand when and how this battle was fought. We have visited other Battlefield's like Shiloh and it is beautiful. The Stones River Battlefield just had a shopping center built there on Hallowed Ground and this is wrong. This was and is a very important time in all of everyone's lifes because President Linclon kept this Great Country of our's held together and freed mem, women and children from one of the great's sin ever committed by man and that is to think that you can own another person. There is enough land that people doesn't have to build there building's on top of peoples grave's (Hallowed Ground). My wife and I are both on a fixed income from being disabled but we still give every dollar that we can to the CIVIL WAT PRESERVATION TRUST to save this land where your family died also. Please think about this and just think it hasn't been that long ago. Think of your loved ones from then and now. Thank you for you time.

Thanks for your work. I wish the FS and BLM would recognize all the hard volunteer work the off-road communities do to keep the trails maintained for everyone's use. Multi-use trails are the only way everyone can enjoy the outdoors in their own way and an overhauled wilderness designation needs to include this.

I agree. We have effectively closed 60+% of our publicly owned land in "Wilderness Areas". A small percentage of the public can benefit from these vast acres by hiking and backpacking. Currently, the public is loosing access to thousands of acres of public land that used to be called, "The Land of Many Uses". Disabled Americans are being excluded from going to many beautiful areas because access trails are being closed. I believe the country should be looking a "multiple use" model. We have enormous challenges when it comes to saving our "environment" (overpopulation, pollution, water resource management, clean and efficient food production, etc), but locking up all of our public lands is not the answer. The government is placating a few minority political groups by doing what is cheap and easy to manage, establishing "Wilderness" areas. Trying to stop multinational corporations from polluting our Country is hard and sometimes political suicide. American families enjoy the freedom of hunting, fishing, getting firewood, driving off of the highway to get to their favorite camping spot, mountain biking, and riding ATVs to get to their favorite vistas. We want sustainable multiple-use trail systems, sustainable logging and mining that keeps our families employed, sustainable camping, hunting and fishing areas, etc. The knowledge to successfully run all those systems already exists, and in some cases, have been working for many years. But, these systems are being bled to death through budget cuts, closures, and poor management.

Reach people where they are - on the couch! Raise public awareness with a Get Out! campaign that would encourage people to get outdoors to explore and enjoy nature.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Work with existing organizations that already have volunteers and staff to teach environmental education. National Audubon Society has a network of nature centers across America; Teach for America add environmental curriculum, AmeriCorps, Keep America Beautiful and many more. Check out Great Outdoors Colorado grant program. { Link }

The Lopez Canyon Restoration Project site, located on the former landfill at 11950 Lopez Canyon Rd., Lake View Terrace, CA 91342, is within the northeast San Fernando Valley section of the San Gabriel Mountain range nearest the Pacoima Wash Greenway and the Tujunga Wash Watershed. The Lopez Canyon Restoration Project site is zoned Open Space, thus its inclusion as a Rim of the Valley entry/access point would be apropos. Moreover, because this area is zoned Open Space, its inclusion in a San Gabriel Mountains National Recreation Area would be ideal.

Set up location that have self serve credit card operated bike racks like the ones in the city of Denver but with mountain bikes to rent. You rent based on time and if not returned your charged for the cost of the bike. This gets more people out becuase tourist can't fly in their bikes and it's difficult to haul bikes for some. This also brings in revenue to preserve the wildlife areas.

my family has been off roading for over 30 years. we are responsible off roaders. Last week I took my 70 year old mother in law out in my 4X4 and she had the time of her life. If it weren't for the 4X4 (OHV) she would not have been able to enjoy the forrest with us that day. My hope is that when I am no longer able to hike or get around very well my kids will be able to take me out in their OHV to enjoy the outdoors with them.

Thank God for ELK

This is one of those trick questions touching on strongly felt political differences. We need to stay out of the political quagmire. What I think people agree on is more open space everywhere. Who owns, manages and maintains depends on more than your political perspective and the parks visitors. Many parks are truly international gems typically visited by more outsiders than locals, e.g. Grand Canyon or Yellowstone. All levels of government have problems supporting the purchase and management. We need to work on stable funding at all levels.

I agree. My many trips to wild places always leaves me refreshed and invigorated. I just choose to get there on a dirt bike.

The "sense of wonder" you speak of may be found in over 120 MILLION acres of public land. These are our designated wilderness areas, both federally mandated and by de facto agency rule. You could spend a lifetime and not come close to exploring all that these wilderness areas have to offer. Your chance of finding places "untrammled by humans" is greatest within the boundaries of these areas. The vast majority of these areas are in the West. There are maps available.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

The only practical and timely way to preserve our Nation's Civil War Battlefields (and Revolutionary War) before land development makes them unavailable is to establish a process by which small and large volunteer private groups attempting to purchase actual land parcels and/or the scenic non-development rights to adjoining land. We must foster Federal, State and local cooperative grants to enable private citizen groups to marshal individual contributions from those citizens who wish to preserve our national heritage. Preserving battlefields from physical and visual encroachment is an ever increasing costly endeavor. Only by consolidating individual contributions and gaining governmental participation can we hope to be successful. The Civil War Preservation Trust, one of the largest of the preservation groups, has participated in the preservation of some 30,000 acres of hallowed ground by working with and providing support to smaller local groups engaged in this effort. Government (Federal and State) entities have established grants for the same purpose, but these must be embedded deeply into the legislative process to provide momentum and stability. Our generations to come must have the opportunity to see what our predecessors have given their lives and loyalties to preserve. We must keep our ideals and principles of a free and prosperous democratic republic alive. We must do this in a practical moderate way - compromising where we are able - to ensure future national growth along with meaningful preservation of the past. This effort must involve all of our individuals and our national economic growth. We can preserve the future by preserving the past sacrifices of our citizens.

I feel that trails should be single use only, thereby doing away with the accidents and such caused by having horses spooked on bike trails, hikers getting scared on ATV trails, etc.. That way, were a trail to be destroyed or an ecosystem damaged, one would know which group of users to blame for the damages and the extents to go to to prevent an occurrence in the future. Also, trail building should be done by groups of that recreation usage. For example, mountain biking trails should be built by active cycling groups such as SORBA or avid bikers only, and for different levels of experience, or at least not by someone that has no desire to bike or knows what kinds of things bikers like. The governing agency, be it NPS or just a state park would then only have to fund these groups and provide the technical and environmental impact support when planning out where these trails would go.

More and more, children's learning comes from more of what school and media teaches them than from what they are taught by their parents. Many parents work multiple jobs trying to provide for families and plan for their kids' education and their own retirement. Therefore, our concentration needs to be on providing enough education about the environment and what makes our outdoors so "great" all around the country. A lot of kids nowadays have been conditioned to be afraid of the outdoors because parents and educators have never really taken the time to connect them to it, effectively barricading them from it by means of video games, TV, etc. If organizations, colleges of agriculture, forestry, the media, etc., would take the time to reach out to kids, and in return the school systems would work closely together with these groups, kids could take what they learn back to their households and encourage their parents to do things to help out such as donating to outdoor organizations their time and money in helping maintain the world around us.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Partnerships are critical for trail maintenance. In an area of diminishing federal agency budgets and dwindling staff, the federal government has reached out to non-profit organizations like Washington Trails Association (www.wta.org) to fill the financial gap. It's those partnerships that have sustained trail maintenance in our region for the past several years.

Volunteer work connects people with their public lands. When a hiker, equestrian or mountain biker picks up a shovel or Pulaski and works for a day maintaining a trail, they make an investment. They can see what they've accomplished at the end of the day. They can also see the scope of what remains to be done. Most importantly, they discover that they can make an individual difference by getting their hands dirty. Empowering people to care for the places they love inspires long-lasting stewardship, and that's the most important quality we can pass down to the next generation of hikers.

i raised my 2 girls off roading. now there adults and still love it and the desert.we have a strong family and good old friends made in the wild.at 52 ive seen alot of my land taken from us.we also hike,fish,shoot,mountain bike.public lands are for all of us.not just a few purests. theres room for all americans.the future of u.s.a.are in the kids,we know what the inner city does to them.keep the waters, land open for my grandson and all. please thanks for your time.

I am a Texas Master Naturalist and I think the program is outstanding. If it will work in Texas, it will work anywhere!

As a 30 year Park Ranger I have found the Texas Master Naturalist's Program to provide a tremendous boost within our communities in working to reconnect our kids and adults to the outdoors. Plus, this growing trained volunteer base has helped increase the number of outdoor programs that can be offered in our park settings, and helped keep programs going as our budgets have shrunk. I feel it would be a great program to replicate across the US to get our citizens actively involved in the outdoors again, a return to our "Roots".

I hope they call it the Land of Oz National Park. And I hope at least two parks are created for the tall grass prairie and the short grass prairie. Naturalist Marty Stouffer has been suggesting these parks be created for many years,now. Also the Poppers have provided so much to this inspiration that I hope they will be included, too. "Home on the Range" is as american as you can get.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

I worked as a biologist conserving wildlife habitat around development in Maryland. The Chesapeake Bat Critical Area Law had advanced land use planning ideas contained therein. The Federal government should use incentives to have governments at all levels do proper land use planning. An example would be to direct development away from ideal conservation lands which could be identified by conservation agencies, non-governmental organizations, and others. A simple example is directing roads away from these areas since roads attract secondary development. The processes to accomplish this are well known and will conserve important natural areas, provide sites for public use, promote health of our citizens, and provide many other benefits. We need to use federal incentives, such as providing some money or restricting monies to localities, to make this type of land use conservation possible at a significant landscape scale instead of piecemeal attempts by those few separate municipalities that are interested in doing this on their own.

Let's not spend any more tax payer dollars to set aside any further land; more than originally planned or envisioned has been named monuments, wilderness or corridors or the like. Let's protect the rural land owner and farmer from government take over by eminent domain. Let's protect and allow rural communities to thrive by allowing multiple usages of existing BLM and National Forest Lands. Let's not create future mandated allocations of tax payer dollars for automatic purchase of land to be set aside as Wilderness or the like. Let's make every tax payer dollar which is targeted towards protecting the environment be decided in a lawful manner through congress, no more hidden allocations.

Regrettably, no other stakeholders you mention are actively, formally involved in the Cibola National Forest, as far as I know. The CNF is primarily a low-impact recreation region and, as I understand, has few leases with timber, minerals, and sportsmen interests. There is an off-road vehicle plan, primarily for Cedro Peak, following an extensive two-year hearing process with local residents. As for Indian tribes, the Navajo and Zuni have formal contacts near the Continental Divide, Mt. Taylor and Chaco Canyon southern outlier areas for archeological and cultural resources. In the other major National Forests of New Mexico, especially Gila, Santa Fe, and Carson National Forests, there are significant leases and other activities with all stakeholders.

Our country is fortunate that we still have some lands of wilderness quality that are not now protected. We should protect these lands while they are still undeveloped.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

The Savory Method also known as integrated resource management has been incorporated with great success with the Colorado Division of Wildlife. This system, developed by Alan Savory based in Santa Fe, NM is an economic model to better utilize natural resources. On my farm, I planted a variety of grasses as recommended by the then Soil Conservation Service, now Natural Resource Conservation Service of the USDA and allowed the cattle to harvest thier own feed rather than mechanically harvesting crops to feed them. This is a complex concept based upon leaving mono-cultures (row crops) and utilizing diverse mixes of local grasses to capture seasons and differing feed stocks. A basic premise is diversity builds density. The Sierra Club and the Nature Conservancy has utilized this in the Malpais region of Arizona with great success, partnering with private landowners. My system was on irrigated land in Colorado and was considered to be non-brittle vs the AZ experience of a brittle environment. My proposal is to get USDA/NRCS to work with dairy farmers in the Susquehanna drainage basin (MD, PA, Ny, etc.) to incpororate this method to reduce non-point source pollution. Recent article in the paper describes how the Amish are contributing to the demise of the Chesapeake Bay and this system would greater reduce, if not eliminate this problem. The financial discipline imposed by this system would assist the private landowner to be successful while reducing non-point source pollution, a major impact to the Chesapeake Bay.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

The public enjoys motorized access and OHV recreational opportunities on our public lands. It is a very healthy form of recreation and provides a great connection to the out-of-doors. There are many opportunities to enhance motorized access and OHV recreation on our public lands that could be undertaken by the Great Outdoors Initiative including: 1. Long-distance OHV trails systems comparable to non-motorized trail systems including the Continental Divide National Scenic Trail and Pacific Crest Trail Systems and motorized programs comparable to the National Recreation Trails. 2. Enhanced motorized trailheads with loading ramps, toilet, information kiosks, and maps. 3. Designation of an adequate number of OHV trail systems. 4. Enhancement of OHV trail systems similar to the Danskin Mountain in the Boise National Forest, South Fork Boise River in the Boise and Sawtooth National Forests, Winom-Frazier in the Umatilla/Whitman National Forest, Prospect OHV area in the Rogue River National Forest, Paiute OHV System in the Fishlake National Forest, East Fork Rock system in the Deschutes National Forest, Stonyford system Mendocino National Forest, and High Lakes and Blue Lake Trail System in the Gifford Pinchot National Forest. 5. Enhanced motorized recreational opportunities with a variety of trails for different skill levels and types of vehicles. 6. Motorized routes with minimal challenge and traffic as practice routes for beginning riders. 7. Single-track challenge trails are needed for expert motorcycle riders and trials type motorcycles. 8. National Forests in Idaho have a long and successful history of sharing single-track trails with motorcycles and we request that this strategy be incorporated in the plan. 9. Opportunities similar to the Route of the Olympian Recreation Project undertaken by the Lolo National Forest. 10. Partnership with motorized groups and clubs to implement enhancement program. 11. Enhanced use of OHV gas tax revenue to fund projects and programs. 12. Enhanced maintenance programs for OHV routes using OHV gas tax revenue. 13. To enhance youth involvement, provide more motorized access and recreational opportunities in close proximity to communities. 14. Set up a program similar to the Trails Unlimited program in each national forest. {{ Link } } . AmeriCorps forces could also be used as part of this program.

Release the captive Mexican wolf family of eight into Arizona as soon as possible. New releases of Mexican wolves will increase wolf numbers and strengthen the wild population's genetic viability. A healthy, captive Mexican wolf family is ready to be released into the wild. This release has been held up by foot-dragging among higher-ups in the Arizona Game and Fish Department. It's time that the Fish and Wildlife Service re-asserts its authority and stops allowing itself to be held hostage to the whims of Arizona officials.

If this has been addressed already, forgive me! A National "highway" of preserved habitat. This was mentioned in the Nature Conservancy magazine "Nature" last year. Incorporate rare/endangered habitat and species, wildlife migratory paths. Use overpasses, consider this "highway" a priority before building the ever increasing network of High Voltage Transmission Lines and wind farms, community planning and urban sprawl, commercial/residential development, etc, etc, etc....

Please see my idea "protect animals on our highways" This is the same concept only I would advocate extending the concept beyond only designated highways to all new highways with retrofitting where possible.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Resources should be defined in an expansive manner. Example: land should be valued not only for its spacial content, but also as watershed for both direct use and recharging of aquifers, as a repository for vegetation and wildlife indigenous to it, and as a source of passive, i.e. non-destructive, enjoyment and study, among many other amenities. If extraction is to be allowed, it must be demonstrated to be at least as valuable as those goods and services destroyed during the extraction. Note that off-road vehicular recreation, as currently practiced, is certainly extractive, since it tends, in some appreciable measure, to destroy all the above-mentioned amenities.

More areas should be preserved that don't allow extraction.

Your proposal confuses and conflates too many issues. Yes the grazing program gives away too much for too little, and damages the environment. And while wild horses and burros may not cause exactly the same problems as domestic livestock, they are nevertheless having a negative impact on public lands. The BLM wild horse policy IS a disaster, because it spends a lot of money for a very debatable purpose: treating horses and burros as wildlife deserving of protection when in fact: 1) many of these animals (burros especially) are feral, not wild. 2) if we do classify them as wild, they have overpopulated their habitat, just like deer, in many areas, and need to have their numbers managed HUMANELY. I agree that the federal land agencies must stop causing these animals to suffer, starve, die of thirst. We need to change the policy to allow the BLM & other managers to control equine populations humanely, rather than adhering to a sentimental idea about horses which ties the land managers' hands, and leads to the use of cruel techniques like stampedes and roundups. Sorry I have to demote your idea, even though I COMPLETELY AGREE that livestock grazing and timber production policies and mining law are all badly in need of reform.

With the help of a toolkit (Leader's Handbook, Activity Backpacks, DVD Training Video, and Equipment Trunks), Project GO programs are currently offered in 10 communities in Se Minnesota and will be expanding to 50 communities across the southern portion of the state over the coming two years. Programs are offered for free or very low cost and are held once per week all year round. Children in grades K-8 are invited to participate. Program activities include outdoor exploration and nature activities utilizing public lands (parks, trails, refuges, and other green spaces within 30 miles of each community). Early evaluation data is showing these programs are motivating children to play outdoors during the out-of-school hours; helping kids understand what opportunities are available to them at our public lands; and helping children to feel safe outside so that they may relax and observe the natural world around them.
www.mnprojectgetoutdoors.org

In the near future people in general will lose touch with the earth, the world of nature, the understanding of its importance if we fail to entrust this to the children. This type of program would be a great help in doing this. On another level this type of program would help the health and stature of our children.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

I love this on so many levels! Our culture has changed so much since I was a kid. Things are moving so fast and even one income families have gotten too busy to share nature with their kids. This will help kids learn conservation, appreciation for nature and wildlife, empathy, how important it is to be a part of their community, and so much more. Time spent outside getting exercise is the icing on the cake!

I think that any group that does not support maintaining our environment should be questioned about their motives. The environment is all we have in a quickly changing world. If we destroy it, we are eventually destroying ourselves. This has been played out through the history of mankind. Much of this history is not being taught in schools today, so people are not aware of it. We need to set aside places to preserve what we had and have regardless of the people who are elected to office. Unfortunately, too many of these elected officials seem to be "bought off" by big business or corporations for that corporation's agendas. They get into office and change the laws we have had for their own political purposes.

1) Restore lobo the federal protection that Interior Secretary Salazar removed as one of his first implementations. 2) Use volunteers to remove & prevent invasive species from getting a toe hold. A stitch in time saves 9. 3) Eliminate ORV/ATV from the majority of wild spaces. Noisy, polluting, degrading of the eco system. There is NO place for them in wild places. They must be confined to restricted areas of private operations or designated areas. They also introduce invasives on their tires. 4) Encourage folks to pick up one piece of litter. After all these lands are the face of our nation. Cigarette butts do not belong here. Or anywhere actually. 5) Enforce quiet in the campgrounds. No music or radios etc. without headphones. The wilderness experience should not include the media without headphones. 6) Keep it dark. That we may see the Milky Way once in a while. 7) The National Parks are in disrepair. I saw sewage running from the bathrooms, thru the parking lot, into the earth, in Sequoia National Park. Fund our national jewels appropriately. 8) Pursue poaching avidly. 9) Promote catch & release programs in fishing. 10) Promote quiet sports such as bird watching & identification. 11) Protect the bio crust by insisting people remain on the trail. I saw German tourists running all over off of the trails in Arches National Park. 12) Encourage loud mouths to tone it down & listen. We are not in the city any longer. 13) Prominent recycle bins which can be removed upon bear sitings. 14) No food or cosmetic products such as toothpaste in camping tents. Bears have enough trouble keeping away from humans without scent enticements. 15) No feeding of the wildlife. Keep 'em WILD! 16) QUIET!

The ideas was to establish wild areas to save or preserve the natural vegetation and animal life. If you allow these areas to be altered, the vegetation and wildlife will be altered. Perhaps setting aside marginal areas for recreational uses would be an option and keep wild areas as wild. We should put aside more lands for wild and recreational use. With our increase in population, we are putting more stress on our lands. Who knows, but if the population keeps growing these areas may be the only wild places left on the earth.

Keep the new areas as wilderness and there are minimal costs.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Add the long-term cost of land management with every proposed acquisition .

I agree that Federal Land Management Agencies routinely exceed their Congressional authorities. However, I doubt that requiring managers to read the legislation will fix the problem. Here are a couple of suggestions: Just as the MMS is "too cozy" with Big Oil, the FS and BLM are far too cozy with wealthy, influential conservation organizations. Effectively, this relationship has resulted in top-down, "one size fits all" policies that reflect the agendas of a few wealthy special interests. The AGO initiative is a prime example. All Federal Agencies need to have an "arm's length" relationship with wealthy Beltway special interest groups, and should be required to do so. Revise the Equal Access to Justice Act (EAJE). The original intent of this Act was to provide a means for individuals who cannot afford lawsuits to redress their legitimate grievances against Federal Agencies. Exceedingly wealthy conservation organizations should not qualify. Organizations like the Wilderness Society and Sierra Club have more money than God and their frequent lawsuits should not be supported by public funds. Doing so simply invites more lawsuits. Revise the Appeals process for USDA and DOI. Currently, the Appeals process for these Agencies is dysfunctional. Appeals are virtually never granted or upheld, and individuals and organizations only appeal in order to preserve their opportunities for litigation. Establish an independent, non-partisan Appeals Board composed of real experts in environmental law.

For regular volunteers, the NPS should test chainsaw skills, and then allow volunteers who pass the test to use chainsaws for removing down wood from trails.

Update and strengthen the technical guidance for preserving cultural heritage. Create market research that identifies the top ten issues that property owners and contractors have regarding work on historic properties and create best practices documents. Think outside the Sec. 106 box to actual tools needed to implement the Secretary's standards. Get more specific.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Multi-use trails! While most everyone would like to see trail designations for just their user groups, we need to be more open minded where ever possible to multi user type trails. I have to admit that when I am in the back country I would MUCH prefer to NOT SEE ANYONE AT ALL! But I realize that this county and access to the back country is a privilege for EVERYONE that are responsible and wish to be there. I am not suggesting opening all trails up to multi-use, but many trails can be adapted or new ones made for multi-use and enjoyed in an environmentally safe way by so many more people rather than single use users. With a greater number of properly made and maintained Multi-use trails it will help to limit trail degradation from overuse of single type trails. Hiking is still popular, but I believe it reached its peak back in the 60's- 70's. Equestrian usage is somewhat limited, but the need is there. Mountain Bike usage is on the rise. Single track motorcycle use is a very high usage. ATV (50 inch and greater for side by side UTV's) is a high and gaining usage. Snowmobile use is on the rise. Cross country skiing small group but the need is there. Full size 4x4 vehicles are steady and gaining usage as well. All of these groups can and do use some of the same trails. Would it be better to have eight separate different single use trails, one for each user group, all going from one trailhead to a destination point! In a world of unlimited space, money and resources it would – but that's not what we have or is available these days! Or when possible does it make more since to have one environmentally sensitive Multi-use trail serving the same purpose of the eight trails? The trail care and maintenance through the various user groups, (club's - trail associations) along with the "Adopt –a-Trail Program" would be easier to accomplish with more groups accessing the area on the same Multi-use trail. Monitoring of trails for misuse or the possible environmental damage could be more effectively accomplished and fixed. In these days with limited funding and land availability, more trails would be available to more people for the resources used. Share the trail! It takes educating the user public to make it and keep it effective. Yes there are always going the small few that are irresponsible and don't care about the other users. And the "finger pointers" that plain just don't care about anything except what they want. But it is the responsibility for every user to respect ALL others and the environment. Sharing Trails - Many people with different interests may be enjoying an area at the same time. Trail and camping courtesy are essential for everyone to have an enjoyable experience. Be a good neighbor and extend the same courtesy and consideration to those around you as you expect from them. • Motorized vehicles (Motorcycles, ATV's, 4X4) Yield to All • Bicycles Yield to Equestrians and Hikers • Hikers Yield to Equestrians Stay On The Trail & Tread Lightly to help keep your trails open Daniel Boone National Forest has a great "Safety: Share The Trail" page { Link }

Well said. Let's put the days of discrimination behind us and try to get along so that everyone can enjoy our Public lands. Share the trail and tread lightly while you are at it.

Another way to look at this is that some trails can be managed by the day, or by time of day.. think of a hockey rink. Many hockey rinks have time for free skating, while other times are reserved for hockey games and practice or for classes and competitive skaters. Chugach State Park has been doing that -- managing winter use by type of use -- for thirty years successfully.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

So often in life I see people who create problems as that is what they are best at. There is no perfect answer and no perfect world. But there are those that make an effort to try creating a better place for all and those that create animosity and anger where ever they can. You may actually frequent areas that the things you describe may happen to you. The multi-use trails I enjoy I stop and talk with hikers on their way to access the PCT, horseback riders on their way into The Golden Trout Wilderness area, mountain bikers and fishermen in 4X4's going to the South Fork of the Kern River to fly fish, cowboys moving grazing range cattle from one meadow to another. Yea, the motorcycle trail riders do buzz by at a faster rate than most sometimes, but I guess the people (riders) are more courteous out this way. A couple of years ago I noticed the signs marking this same trail for snowmobile use in the winter. I am not sure how I have offended you so much as to state "You OHV people like to blame everyone else and call everyone else greedy ..." as I don't think that is what I posted at all. I was not intending to "Finger Point", "blame everyone else", or be "greedy". It was merely a concept that I see - that works! I did not even suggest that OHV users be "...rewarded by destroying what hikers and equestrians like to do ...", far from it. But you did help to press my point by stating "OHV use is up ...", for whatever the true reason is, it is a fact that it is up – way up! And because this usage is up the recreational need should be addressed in an environmentally acceptable way. I'll give you an example of adapting a current single use type trail to a Multi-use trail in the area I greatly enjoy. There are (I think) well over 150 miles of single track motorcycle trails and maybe 20 miles of Multi-use trails. I really don't want to take trails away from any group of users, but sometimes the needs are there for more different interest. Rather than being VERY RESTRICTIVE and just motorcycles allowed to use these trails, some could be safely redesigned, cross country skiing and snowmobile use in the winter, ATV's, mountain bikes and maybe even full size 4X4 the other months. Yes even hiking and equestrian can use the trails if they choose, with the current trail design they cannot. Would I change all of the single track trails to multi-use – absolutely not. These trails make this area a great recreational area that it is for that purpose. Would I change any of hundreds of miles of existing hiking/equestrian trails - absolutely not! They have a purpose that they serve. If there was funding and it is environmental sound are to create a new trail for an area – it would be prudent to explore the possibility of a Multi-use trail to serve the needs of not just a select few but the need of many. I do try to learn from various view points. I did learn from your view to not frequent the area that you chose to do your hiking, as it appears there maybe some uncaring people. But then again you are very quick to judge me by stating "...quit lying about your true motives" – maybe you embellished what happens to you out there on the trail as fast as you make judgments!

All trails should be designed, constructed, and used for their intended purpose, otherwise we encounter distractions that diminish the enjoyment of our outdoor interests. Bike trails for bikers, horse trails for horses, hiking trails for hikers. Different use, different construction, different upkeep, for total enjoyment of our favorite leisure activities.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Well when and if this ever happens to you, " who is going to help me out the first time some drunken moron in a 4wd nearly runs me over or I have mud splashed all over me when he goes by?" I suggest you help yourself my being a respectful and polite human being, even if the offender is not. Wave at the offender and offer a conversation with the individual to impart your knowledge of conserving the environment so that all users can continue to use this beautiful land for generations to come. Be friendly and tolerant and you may get the same in return. You might even discover that the OHVer is a nice guy and you may have some common interests. If the alcohol in the individuals system prevents him or her from seeing your point of view, then find the nearest law enforcement officer to enforce the law. I have only had to use the latter strategy once in all my time in the forest. But it was quite effective as the ranger handed the offenders rakes and shovels from his truck and made them repair all the damage they were doing by disrespecting our public lands. I believe a hefty fine was awarded as well. If we work together, we can teach the 1 who needs some guidance while allowing the 99 stewards of our lands to enjoy them. Earlier in the month I was down in stopping grounds in the Sequoia NF and had a nice conversation with a group of Hikers using the OHV trails while I was sitting on my motorcycle. They were quite pleasant and it was a joy to talk with other users of the forest. The following day I was fortunate enough not to collide with a group of mountain bikers. As the lead cyclist was waiting for his friends, we exchanged pleasantries and remarked on what a great day each of us was having. Only an hour later I came to a historic Forest Service building where a lone volunteer was spending his time maintaining the facility. We conversed for 30 to 45 minutes as he relayed the history of the facility and showed me around. 30 minutes later I came across a horse camp. As I slowly rode through the camp, just to see the beautiful meadow that it bordered, I exchanged friendly waves to its occupants. Courtesy and respect goes a long ways. Please give it a try.

Expand programs like Teacher-Ranger-Teacher and leverage the educational power of National Parks. TRT connects teachers from Title 1 school districts, where at least 30% of students are on free or reduced cost lunch, to national parks. Teacher Rangers spend a summer working as uniformed park rangers, often living in the park. During the school year, these Teacher Rangers bring the park resources "into the classroom" by developing and presenting curriculum-based lesson plans that draw on their summer's experience.

Instead of limiting the Teacher-Ranger to Title I schools, school districts could designate one or more science teachers to become Teacher-Rangers, and they could present programs in all the junior/senior high schools in the district. Or small districts could band together to have one designee. All children could benefit from this kind of instruction.

I support setting aside wilderness and making soime adjustment to the states if there is an economic cost to the state. We need some protection or it will be over-utilized and destroyed.

Good idea, well said. It might really put some bite in the enforcement if the penalty were 'on the spot' so that an illegal ATVer might have to walk back to town to call his lawyer...and the walk might do him some good.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Make the fines high enough to cover enforcement costs.

Because Acadia National Park and many other parks were able to add staff when park operations funding was increased, they have been able to add interpretive programs with an emphasis on reaching young people, increase maintenance of visitor facilities, and add resource protection rangers who conduct search and rescue operations and provide emergency medical services. If we want to connect kids to these inspirational places, we need rangers to be there to tell the stories. If we want to provide for a positive visitor experience and ensure the safety of the visitor we need rangers in the parks.

American Journal of Public Health Explores New Role for Rangers In the future, park rangers may educate visitors about not only canyons and Civil War battles, but also infectious diseases, long-term wellness, and other health-related topics. In "Park Rangers as Public Health Educators," an article in the August issue of the American Journal of Public Health, David Wong and Charles L. Higgins of the National Park Service report on a project that tested the viability of national parks as settings for health education. The Public Health in the Parks grants initiative funded outreach programs in parks throughout the country. In one program, Native American children engaged in actual exercise, which they translated into a "virtual walk" of the 74-mile length of Badlands National Park. In another program, visitors to Lowell National Historical Park in Massachusetts learned about a typhoid epidemic, the transformation of a local river into an agent of death, and the ensuing epidemiologic investigation. "Further exploration of national parks as nontraditional and underutilized venues for health education is warranted," Wong and Higgins conclude.

I'll fund it if I'm allowed to use it with my OHV.

Some harvesting of trees would be acceptable if: 1. It does not involve corporate welfare and subsidies 2. Roads are kept to a minimum, financed by the timber companies and constructed in an ecologically responsible way 3. No clearcutting !!!! 4. Cutting of trees would be confined largely to dead or diseased trees, or to reduce fire danger

Picking a mushroom does not harm the living organism that produced it, mushrooms are not plants, by the time that they are big enough to be picked, they have already spread their spores (seeds) and fulfilled their ecological function. Most mushroom hunters and mycologists are nature lover and are very respectful of the environment in which they pick their mushroom (it's the best way to guaranty that the same mushroom will be found there the following years). There are very few places were mushroom hunters and amateur mycologists can enjoy their favorite past time. Mushroom hunting is a healthy and educational activity that can be enjoyed by the whole family, it stimulates transmission of knowledge from the elders to the youngsters. Allowing a reasonable quantity of mushrooms to be picked, say 1 gallon or 5lbs + 1 per person per day, as is done in some parks would have no ill impact on the fungi population nor on the environment in which they grow.

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(cont.)

Although restricting offroad traffic to designated areas is important, there are also other ways of making offroading less environmentally destructive. The new E-Range is the world's first fully electric 4x4. For more information go to THE GREEN MARKET { Link }

There is certainly a need for some land to be designated for OHV use. The people who participate in this activity pay their taxes and deserve to have some access to Federal lands. However, allowing only electric vehicles has some very attractive positives. First, they would obviously be much quieter than I/C OHV's. Second, there would be practically no fuel and oil spillage.

Yes, this worked during the Dust Bowl and Great Depression. The CCC accomplished amazing things. It could work now.

And part of the goal of the CCC during the Depression was employment -- certainly a concern for many citizens today.

I completely agree with the idea of something like the CCC. If the Federal government is either unwilling or cannot afford what it takes to keep our National Parks and other federally managed land in good order, we must find an alternative. Something like the CCC could fill this need. I would certainly be interested in volunteering if such an organization was put in place.

For those unemployed and unable to find work, this could be an answer and would squelch the GOP's harangues about 'lazy' 'hobos' who prefer to be on the dole.

I completely agree with the idea of something like the CCC. If the Federal government is either unwilling or cannot afford what it takes to keep our National Parks and other federally managed land in good order, we must find an alternative. I agree !! An alternative would be to use folks that have been on unemployment for over 26 weeks , dope addicts , and other non violent criminals .

wonderful idea! It would be nice if we could fund something similar in other countries as well to help fix up their infrastructure as a great way to help people stay in their homelands and make a living.

In KS students are required to take physical science, biology and two other sciences. At our high school Ecology is a regents approved class to take for one of the two sciences in order to graduate and attend a 4-yr state university/college. This provides an option for students to select from Physics, Chemistry, Anatomy and Ecology to complete the two additional years of science. For those students not wishing to attend a 4-year college Life Science and Applied Biology and Chemistry are offered to graduate with the number of science credits required.

Environmental Education is a truly powerful way to enhance the connection between people and place. With this enhanced connection, the citizens of our country will be able to make informed choices regarding the effect they have on the environment. Supporting quality environmental education is supporting a quality future for the USA.

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(cont.)

We should change the status of all public lands to preserves and put up razorwire fences. Keep all people out. let it burn, let nature take its course, no management. We can look in through the razor wire at pristine nature.

With population growth, rural America will disappear, anyway. I'm in favor of federally protected wild lands.

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NOTE: The following are taken from four volumes of research developed by the Children & Nature Network (C&NN) and available at www.childrenandnature.org. These C&NN Annotated Bibliographies of Research and Studies were written by Cheryl Charles, Ph.D., President, Children & Nature Network and Alicia Senauer, Yale University. Greenspace supports children's quality of life Bell and colleagues critically review the last 10 years of research that has examined relationships between greenspace and quality of life. Major areas reviewed in this report are: health and well-being, social and community value, economic value/impacts, environmental value, and planning and design. Research related to children is one of the main topics highlighted in the various sections of this report. In their review, Bell and colleagues also discuss their criteria for article inclusion, highlight methodological limitations of studies conducted to date, and identify key research gaps. Author Affiliation: The authors are with the OPENSspace research center in the UK. Bell, S., Hamilton, V., Montarzano, A., Rothnie, H., Travlou, P., & Alves, S. (2008). Greenspace and quality of life: a critical literature review. Greenspace Scotland. This report is available online at: { Link } Time spent outdoors supports many aspects of children's health In this report, Muñoz reviews literature concerning the linkage between spending time outdoors and health, with a primary emphasis on research related to children. She reviews research and policy related to outdoor use and health more generally and then takes an in-depth look at topics related to children's use of the outdoors and relationships to their health. Specific topics Muñoz examines include research linking children's time spent outdoors to increased physical activity, healthy development, and overall well-being. She also examines research related to the design of children's play spaces, access to natural spaces, the use of outdoors in children's education, and research related to people and factors that constrain and enable children's outdoor play. Finally, in concluding her literature review, Muñoz identifies methodological considerations, research gaps, and provides suggestions for advancing knowledge in this area. Author Affiliation: Muñoz is with the Sustainable Development Research Centre in Scotland. Muñoz, S. A. (2009). Children in the outdoors: a literature review. Sustainable Development Research Centre. This report is available online at: { Link } Readers may also be interested in the following related report: Scottish Natural Heritage. (2009). Health and the natural heritage-the evidence base. Retrieved September 7, 2009, from { Link } Contact with nature provides a variety of health benefits In this report, C. Maller and colleagues reviewed published literature demonstrating health and wellbeing benefits from contact with nature, with an emphasis on park settings. Particularly in urban areas, parks play an important role in providing people with access to nature. The authors encourage a reframing of our traditional view of parks as places for leisure and sport towards one that emphasizes a full range of physical, mental, and social health benefits. Maller and colleagues provide valuable background material on the concept of health and the connection between nature and health. The authors then review evidence of the health benefits of various forms of contact with nature, including viewing nature, being in nature, contact with plants, and contact with animals. Maller and colleagues provide a number of recommendations, including the need for additional research, the repositioning of parks, and the

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integration of parks and nature into public health strategies and management actions. The authors present a number of useful summary tables, which provide quick access to major findings about the health benefits of contact with nature. Maller, C., Townsend, M., St.Leger, L., Henderson-Wilson, C., Pryor, A., Prosser, L., and Moore, M. (2008). "The health benefits of contact with nature in a park context: A review of relevant literature." Deakin University and Parks Victoria. The original 2002 review and annotated bibliography are available online at: { Link } The updated 2008 review is available for a nominal fee by contacting ____ Readers may also be interested in the following documents: A fact sheet on the health benefits of the natural environment by the National Environmental Education Foundation. This fact sheet is available online at: { Link } An article by Howard Frumkin and Richard Louv about the important role natural landscapes play in protecting public health. This article is available online at: { Link } Children's play in natural settings provides a suite of benefits In this report, Stuart Lester and Martin Maudsley provide an extensive review of the literature related to children's natural play. The authors begin by examining the human relationship with the natural world and the importance of play and direct interaction with the physical environment to children. Lester and Maudsley then review the important opportunities that natural play provides, such as the creation of special places, and the numerous documented and potential benefits of children's play in natural settings, including the development of a sense of self and independence. The authors discuss evidence demonstrating a decline in children's access and opportunities to play in natural spaces and provide a range of suggestions to support children's opportunities to play in natural settings, such as through the design of effective playgrounds, school grounds, and environmental play projects, as well as ensuring adequate access to parks and nature reserves. Lester, S., & Maudsley, M. (2006). "Play, naturally: A review of children's natural play." Children's Play Council. This report is available online at: { Link } The importance of designing spaces that support children's contact with nature In this book chapter, Robin Moore and Clare Cooper Marcus review health threats that face many of today's children, including sedentary behavior and attention deficit disorder; the benefits that contact with nature provides to children's mental, social, and physical health; and current barriers limiting children's access to nature. The authors provide examples of designed environments, specifically in urban areas, that support children's contact with nature, including examples of innovative childcare centers and preschools, school grounds, neighborhood parks, and community institutions. Moore and Marcus emphasize the importance of the residential environment and the need to understand and incorporate children's ideas and preferences into the planning and design of spaces. The authors discuss four models of child-friendly residential neighborhood layouts with specific national and international case studies, including clustered housing and shared outdoor space, cul-de-sacs and greenways, alleys, and home zones. Moore and Marcus conclude by providing a number of key recommendations to help ensure children's access to nature in residential environments. Moore, R. C., & Cooper Marcus, C. (2008).

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“Healthy planet, healthy children: Designing nature into the daily spaces of childhood.” In S. Kellert, J. Heerwagen & M. Mador (Eds.), *Biophilic design: Theory, science and practice*. Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons, Inc. This book chapter is available online at: { Link } Direct experience in nature is critical and diminishing. Nature is important to children’s development in every major way — intellectually, emotionally, socially, spiritually, and physically. In one of his newest books, *Building for Life: Designing and Understanding the Human-Nature Connection* (Island Press, 2005), Dr. Stephen R. Kellert of Yale University devotes a chapter to the subject of “Nature and Childhood Development.” Combining his original research with well-documented references to the research of others, this chapter is a powerful synthesis of what we know, and what we do not know, about the importance of nature to children’s healthy development. Kellert states, “Play in nature, particularly during the critical period of middle childhood, appears to be an especially important time for developing the capacities for creativity, problem-solving, and emotional and intellectual development.” He includes research to indicate optimal learning opportunities at age-appropriate times and differentiates between indirect, vicarious, and direct experiences with nature — with the latter less and less available to children. He urges designers, developers, educators, political leaders and citizens throughout society to make changes in our modern built environments to provide children with positive contact with nature — where children live, play, and learn. (Original Research and Synthesis) Kellert, Stephen R. “Nature and Childhood Development.” In *Building for Life: Designing and Understanding the Human-Nature Connection*. Washington, D.C.: Island Press, 2005. Full book available via Amazon.com and other commercial sources. { Link } Unstructured free play brings cognitive, social and health benefits to children. Unstructured free play in the out-of-doors brings a host of benefits to children — from being smarter to more cooperative to healthier overall. This well-documented article by two physicians builds a strong case for the importance of unstructured free play in the out-of-doors for all age groups, and especially young children. While concerned about the “obesity epidemic” in young children, the authors say that the health benefits from outdoor play are only one aspect of the overall benefits. They suggest that the concept of “play” is more compelling and inviting to most adult caregivers, parents and guardians than “exercise.” The authors cite cognitive benefits from play in nature, including creativity, problem-solving, focus and self-discipline. Social benefits include cooperation, flexibility, and self-awareness. Emotional benefits include stress reduction, reduced aggression and increased happiness. Children will be smarter, better able to get along with others, healthier and happier when they have regular opportunities for free and unstructured play in the out-of-doors. Burdette, Hillary L., M.D., M.S.; and Robert C. Whitaker, M.D., M.P.H. “Resurrecting Free Play in Young Children: Looking Beyond Fitness and Fatness to Attention, Affiliation and Affect.” © 2005 American Medical Association. { Link } Contact with nature is important for children. Andrea Faber Taylor and Frances E. Kuo have contributed important research to the understanding of the impact of nature on people’s lives, and specifically to the well-being of children. This particular article is a recent review of the literature and establishes what is known, and what is still missing,

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about the effects of contact with nature on children's lives. While the evidence is growing, this article is an important call to action for further research. Taylor, Andrea Faber; and Frances E. Kuo. "Is Contact with Nature Important for Healthy Child Development? State of the Evidence." In Spencer, C. & Blades, M. (Eds.), *Children and Their Environments: Learning, Using and Designing Spaces*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2006. { Link } City parks bring social, community health and economic benefits

The Trust for Public Land (TPL) is a premier conservation organization, responsible for protection of special public lands throughout several generations. Today TPL is concerned not just about setting lands aside for future generations, but making sure that young people and families enjoy them today. TPL recognizes that to connect with nature is to appreciate nature, now and for the long term. This comprehensive report, "The Benefits of Parks: Why America Needs More City Parks and Open Space," offers a clear look at socioeconomic factors affecting the availability of parks, the history of city parks, and the hopes for a revival of commitment to city parks. The report outlines benefits in a number of areas: physical, including remedies for inactivity and obesity; economic, with increased property values; environmental, with pollution abatement; and social, from crime reduction to strengthening communities. Add this report to your collection of those that serve to document how safe places for children to play contribute to everyone's health and well being. { Link }

Children with ADHD concentrate better after walking in a park

Building off of their recent work related to children with Attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) and different types of activity settings, in this study, Andrea Faber Taylor and Frances Kuo investigate the impacts of three different outdoor environments on the attention of seventeen 7- to 12-year-old children diagnosed with ADHD. After completing a series of puzzles that required focused attention, each child, over the course of three different weeks, participated in a 20 minute guided walk in three different outdoor settings (an urban park, a downtown area, and a residential area). After each guided walk, children completed a concentration test and answered several questions about their walking experience. Importantly, the authors controlled for a number of potential confounding factors, including the order of environments experienced, the time of day and day of week, terrain, and season. In analyzing the data, Faber Taylor and Kuo found that children concentrated better after walking in a park setting as compared to either a downtown or residential setting and that the effect of walking in a park on concentration helped close the gap between children with ADHD and those without ADHD with regard to the concentration measure used and that the effect was similar to that of two common types of ADHD medication. In addition, the authors found that children rated their experiences more positively in the park setting than in the other two settings. Faber Taylor and Kuo discuss these findings in light of Attention Restoration Theory and their previous studies related to different environments and children with ADHD and suggest additional avenues for research and the potential of using nature in the treatment of ADHD. Faber Taylor, A., & Kuo, F. E. (2008). Children with attention deficits concentrate better after walk in the park. *Journal of Attention Disorders OnlineFirst*. This article will be published in print in 2009 and may be available in a library near you or can be purchased online at: {

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rel="nofollow" target="_blank">Link } Natural settings provide psychological benefits “Coping with ADD: The Surprising Connection to Green Play Settings,” by Andrea Faber Taylor; Frances E. Kuo; and William C. Sullivan (2001) is one of the earliest studies to explore the potential for contact with nature to have a positive effect in reducing the impact of attention deficit disorder in children. The study was designed to test two hypotheses: 1) Attention deficit symptoms will be more manageable after activities in green settings than after activities in other settings; and 2) The greener a child’s everyday environment, the more manageable their attention deficit symptoms will be in general. The results were positive. Taylor, Andrea Faber; Frances E. Kuo; and William C. Sullivan. In *Environment and Behavior*, Vol. 33, No. 1, January 2001. © 2001 Sage Publications, Inc. Available on the web site of the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign. { Link } Nature activities soothe ADD symptoms Contact with the natural world can significantly reduce symptoms of attention deficit disorder in children as young as five. Here is another important study that supports this finding. In addition to access to reports of the primary research, the scholars provide a Power Point presentation that may be used in communities to disseminate this positive information based on sound research. Kuo, Frances E.; and Andrea Faber Taylor. “A Potential Natural Treatment for Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder: Evidence from a National Study.” In *American Journal of Public Health*, Vol 94, No. 9, September 2004. © American Public Health Association. The study and the educational Power Point are available on the web site of the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign. { Link } Nearby nature reduces stress in children This study, reported in 2003, by Cornell assistant professor Nancy Wells, focuses on rural children and finds that even a view of nature — green plants and vistas — helps reduce stress among highly stressed children. Further, the more plants, green views and access to natural play areas, the more positive the results. Wells, N.M., and Evans, G.W. “Nearby Nature: A Buffer of Life Stress Among Rural Children.” *Environment and Behavior*. Vol. 35:3, 311-330. This study is not available online without purchase; { Link } Nearby nature boosts children’s cognitive functioning A precursor to Nancy Wells’ study reported above, this research, reported in 2000, shows that proximity to, views of, and daily exposure to natural settings increases children’s ability to focus and therefore enhances cognitive abilities. Wells, N.M. “At Home with Nature: Effects of ‘Greenness’ on Children’s Cognitive Functioning.” *Environment and Behavior*. Vol. 32, No. 6, 775-795. This study is not available online without purchase; { Link } Older children who spend more time outside tend to be more physically active and are less likely to be overweight Cleland and colleagues investigated whether the amount of time children spend outdoors is related to their physical activity levels and being overweight. About 200 five- to six-year-old and 350 ten- to twelve-year-old children from 19 randomly selected elementary schools in Melbourne, Australia participated in this study. In 2001 and 2004, parents reported the amount of time their children spent outdoors and researchers recorded children’s physical activity levels using an accelerometer and measured children’s weight and height. In their paper, Cleland and colleagues report many findings, some of which

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are discussed below. The researchers found, for example, that children spent significantly more time outdoors during warmer months as compared to cooler months; boys had significantly higher levels of moderate and vigorous physical activity (MVPA) on weekdays than girls; the prevalence of overweight increased significantly between 2001 and 2004 for both younger and older children, as well as boys and girls; and among the older children, boys generally spent significantly more time outside than girls. Cleland and colleagues also found that older children who spent more time outside were generally more physically active and had a lower prevalence of overweight than children who spent less time outside. For example, the researchers found that each additional hour older girls spent outside during the cooler months was associated with an extra 26.5 minutes per week of MVPA and that each additional hour older boys spent outside during the cooler months was associated with an extra 21 minutes of MVPA. When examining changes over the three-year period, Cleland and colleagues found that the more time older girls and boys spent outside on weekends at baseline (2001), the higher their MVPA on weekends at follow-up (2004). In addition, the researchers found that in 2004, the prevalence of overweight among older children was 27-41% lower for those children who spent more time outside in 2001. With regard to younger children, Cleland and colleagues found few associations between time spent outdoors, physical activity, and overweight. While this study may be limited due to its reliance on parental self-report of children's time spent outside, the cross-sectional and longitudinal nature of this study and objective measurement of physical activity provide an important contribution to the literature. The results of this study suggest that encouraging 10- to 12-year-old children to spend more time outdoors may help increase physical activity levels and reduce the prevalence of overweight. Author Affiliation: Cleland, Crawford, Hume, Timperio, and Salmon are with Deakin University in Australia. Baur is with the University of Sydney in Australia. Cleland, V., Crawford, D., Baur, L. A., Hume, C., Timperio, A., & Salmon, J. (2008). A prospective examination of children's time spent outdoors, objectively measured physical activity and overweight. *International Journal of Obesity*, 32(11), 1685-1693. This study may be available in a library near you or can be purchased online through the publisher at: { Link } Green school grounds improve quantity and quality of elementary school children's physical activity In recent years, there has been increasing interest in greening school grounds to diversify children's play experiences, such as through the planting of trees, building of ponds, and development of vegetable gardens. Dymont and Bell investigated how green school grounds affect the physical activity of elementary school children by sending questionnaires to a diversity of Canadian schools that had greened their school grounds. Questionnaires were completed by 105 individuals from 59 schools who had been involved in their school's greening project. In analyzing the study data, Dymont and Bell found that green areas were an important place for physical activity: respondents reported that 66% of students use green areas for active play. Interestingly, the researchers found that green areas tended to support more moderate and light activity as opposed to the more vigorous activity that generally takes place in traditional turf and asphalt areas. Dymont and Bell found that nearly 50% of the respondents reported that their school ground promotes more vigorous activity after greening, while about 70% reported more moderate and/or light physical activity taking place after greening. In addition, the researchers found that 90% of respondents reported that their school ground appeals to a wider variety of

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student interests after greening; 85% reported that their school ground now supports a wider variety of play activities; and 84% reported that since greening, their school ground encourages more exploration of the natural world. While this study may be limited due to its reliance on retrospective self-report, it provides important insight into the benefits of green school grounds and their potentially significant role in complementing more traditional school ground areas and improving the quality and quantity of elementary school children's physical activity. Author Affiliation: Dymont is with the University of Tasmania in Australia. Bell is with Evergreen in Canada. Dymont, J. E., & Bell, A. C. (2008). Grounds for movement: green school grounds as sites for promoting physical activity. *Health Education Research*, 23(6), 952-962. This study may be available in a library near you or can be purchased online through the publisher at: { Link } Schoolyard size and landscape quality influence children's satisfaction and weight Outdoor school grounds are an important environment to consider when striving to promote children's physical activity and reduce childhood obesity. In this study, Ozdemir and Yilmaz investigate linkages between the physical characteristics of children's schoolyard environments and their attitudes, physical activity, and body mass index (BMI). The researchers interviewed nearly 300 3rd and 4th grade students, as well as teachers, and administrators in five public schools in Ankara, Turkey. Ozdemir and Yilmaz also measured students' weight and height, and had professionals assess the schoolyard environment based on factors such as size, material, vegetation cover, and maintenance. Although schoolyards differed, the researchers found that students generally had no direct contact with vegetation and that the amount of outdoor space was limited given the number of students using the space. While most students were satisfied with their schoolyard, which the researchers speculate may be due to acclimation, unsatisfied students highlighted the lack of trees and greenery as the primary reason for their dissatisfaction. Among their many findings, Ozdemir and Yilmaz report that the size of the schoolyard was significantly related to students' BMI, with students in larger yards having lower BMI values than students in smaller yards. The researchers also found that yard landscape characteristics were significantly associated with children's BMI values, but in the opposite direction than expected: students from schools with "advanced" landscape features had higher BMI values than students from schools with "low" landscape features, although BMI values were still in the normal range. While this study may be limited due to its relatively small sample size and reliance on self-report measures, it highlights the importance of participatory and well-thought-out school landscape design, as well as the need for adequate financing and maintenance of schoolyards. Author Affiliation: The authors are with Ankara University in Turkey. Ozdemir, A., & Yilmaz, O. (2008). Assessment of outdoor school environments and physical activity in Ankara's primary schools. *Journal of Environmental Psychology*, 28(3), 287-300. This study may be available in a library near you or can be purchased online through the publisher at: { Link } Children in greener neighborhoods have lower body weight changes Bell and colleagues examined the medical records of 4,000 three- to sixteen-year-old children that lived in Marion County, Indiana, received care from a particular clinic network between 1996 and 2002, had height and weight measurements for two consecutive years, and lived at the same residential address for at least two years. The majority

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of participants in this study were non-Hispanic black and enrolled in Medicaid (an indicator of socioeconomic status). Bell and colleagues geocoded each participant's address using a Geographic Information System and measured greenness at these locations using satellite images and a vegetation index. The researchers speculated that neighborhood greenness might serve as an indicator of children's access to spaces that promote physical activity or increased time outside. In analyzing the study data, Bell and colleagues found that the amount of vegetation in a child's neighborhood was inversely correlated with their Body Mass Index (BMI) score at the year two measurement. That is, in general, the more vegetation a child had in their neighborhood, the lower their body weight changes. The researchers also found that children in more vegetated settings were less likely to have a higher BMI over 2 years as compared to children in less vegetated settings. Importantly, Bell and colleagues controlled for a number of other factors in their analyses, such as residential density. While the study is observational and thus cannot causally link neighborhood greenness and body weight changes, this research highlights the role that neighborhood vegetation could play in policies and programs aimed at preventing childhood obesity. Author Affiliation: Bell is with the University of Washington. Wilson is with Indiana University-Purdue University. Liu is with Indiana University. Bell, J. F., Wilson, J. S., & Liu, G. C. (2008). Neighborhood greenness and 2-year changes in Body Mass Index of children and youth. *American Journal of Preventive Medicine*, 35(6), 547-553. This study may be available in a library near you or can be purchased online through the publisher at: { Link } Community design can promote and support children's physical activity This article is a policy statement by the American Academy of Pediatrics' Committee on Environmental Health regarding the influence that community design has on children's opportunities to be physically active. The Committee highlights the role of neighborhood design in promoting recreational and incidental or "utilitarian" physical activity, such as the availability of parks and recreational facilities, as well as children's ability to walk to school. The Committee also highlights important factors influencing children's physical activity, including traffic danger, the presence of sidewalks, and perception and fear of crime. Finally, the Committee provides a number of specific recommendations for pediatricians and government to promote children's physical activity in the built environment and support more active lifestyles. Binns, H. J., Forman, J. A., Karr, C. J., Osterhoudt, K., Paulson, J. A., Roberts, J. R., et al. (2009). The built environment: designing communities to promote physical activity in children. *Pediatrics*, 123(6), 1591-1598. This study may be available in a library near you or can be purchased online through the publisher at: { Link } Children with a park playground near their home are more likely to be of a healthy weight Physical activity is thought to play an important role in childhood obesity. While research results to date are somewhat mixed, parks can provide important opportunities for children to be physically active. In this study, Potwarka and colleagues examine whether children's weight is related to park space and the availability of specific park facilities within 1km of children's homes. Researchers collected information on 108 two- to seventeen-year-old children from four neighborhoods in a mid-sized city in Ontario, Canada. Parents reported their child's height and weight, while researchers used a Geographic Information System to assess park space for each child and a database and trained observers to assess park facilities. In analyzing the study data, Potwarka and colleagues found

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that proximity to park space was not significantly related to children's weight status. The researchers did find, however, that when examini

To protect wildlife across the landscape the Administration should adopt a comprehensive framework for a coordinated national response to address the impacts of global warming on wildlife, such as set forth in The Global Warming Wildlife Survival Act of 2009 (H.R.2338) and The Natural Resources Climate Adaptation Act of 2009 (S. 1933). Millions of people each year travel to our national parks to see the wildlife and other natural wonders. Canyonlands, Arches, and Capitol Reef National Parks provide critical habitat for desert bighorn sheep, a species once feared to be nearing extinction. But their recovery is threatened anew by drought that is increasing across their range. Because the sheep, like many species, depend on a patchwork of lands managed by multiple federal, state, and private entities, collaboration is essential to ensure their survival. Additionally the Administration should engage private land owners in collaborative wildlife management, and explore the use of financial incentives, voluntary conservation assistance, and other means of helping private land owners protect America's wildlife.

Regarding your comment: "Former meadows are now so choked with brush that it is impossible to walk or ride through. Instead of fodder for wildlife, these "pristine areas" have become fuel for devastating fires," is it not true that such areas need to go through a succession of plant life to get back to where they once were before the grazing? And what is the natural role of fire by lightning strikes in the area? Is fire a natural part of the ecosystem there? It seems extra time and attention might be needed. Such was the case with some National Parks, which were set up by the Government, but then left without support, which had to come from foundations and interested individuals. Are there any such entities forthcoming?

On the other hand, all my family and friends in southern Oregon think the monument is an excellent idea and is badly needed to protect an beautiful mountain area with outstanding ecological values.

I'm glad that concealed carry was legalized in our national parks. I travel and camp alone and this will allow me to adequately defend myself if the need arises.

Thank you for proposing this idea! I've been browsing the Dark Sky site and could not agree with you more.

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Fifty-six percent of all forestland in the United States is in private ownership, and in the Northeast and Midwest that percentage is an even higher 77%. Private forest owners are critical partners in addressing climate change, managing development pressure, and keeping water clean. Currently, federal programs aimed at assisting private forest owners are falling short in terms of acres affected, landowners assisted, and general awareness of the role that private forests play in providing public benefits. As a way to increase the impact that federal programs have on assisting private forest owners, a landscape-scale approach should be adopted for forest stewardship planning and assistance. Landscape planning means: 1. Investing in priority areas at a watershed or regional scale rather than the traditional model of serving individual forest owners on a first-come first serve basis. 2. Building a collaborative network of local clubs, municipal & state government, and NGOs to encourage better forest stewardship. 3. Seamless government interaction, particularly between Forest Service and NRCS Farm Bill programs 4. Finding new funding sources to increase the financial viability for owning and maintaining private forest land. This might include ecosystem service markets, corporate partnerships, and other new conservation finance tools. Ultimately, this will help to slow the rate of conversion of private forestland and increase sustainable management of private forestland.

Wow! You made me go back and re-read comment. I thought that I had missed something that she may have written that made her "racism shines right through"! I guess I still am just missing it, as what I see in is a person expressing thoughts in her own way. I do not agree with everything she wrote, but I welcome her opinions and respect the right that she has to say them. And in reading your comments directed at her I see a very SLANDEROUS outrageous statement directed in a personal attack at someone that has a different point of view from your own. I think it would be best if you reviewed the "Standards of Conduct" section for this website. As far as "big brother is watching" - if you get the time please read my second comment for that included "My apology for my miss interpretation of your idea." that I gave to him. Because of my comment to him was then able to express how he best thought his original idea could best be implemented and it made the whole idea have a completely different concept to me. I think others may have taken it the wrong way as much as I did by the statement of the government REQUIRING physical exercise. That requiring part just sent me off in a different direction than he intended. Parts of his idea I now feel have merit (parking lot location, transportation) while I still do not agree with other parts, it did open my eyes and got me thinking about it. In this case, the idea of this forum, to open up a dialogue to share and learn with others in a respectful manner - worked! Thank you for your statement of "Everyone has the right to access to public lands and they should continue to have it as long as it does not destroy habitat or cause harm to wildlife..." I really like the part of "EVERYONE"

What animals are being destroyed? I live in the forest and I have deer everywhere. They do not care about noise and ATVs neither do the other animals I have seen in the forest. Where are your studies on this. I see the forest dep studying the animals all the time that's all they do is do studies and I have yet to see them release any report that says anything but we have to many deer. I see no harm coming to animals from people being in the forest.

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(cont.)

The feds should have to start paying both state and local property taxes on all wilderness and other lands that they are refusing to allow ATV/UTV access to. If we can not have access then the exemption of property taxes should be ended. We grant this exemption because this is property that we share in common and can use. If we are no longer going to be able to use it then this is a violation of the agreement and they should start paying taxes. I would also include all land they do not allow OIL and GAS drilling on. If they are going to lock it up then they get no exemption. I think this would be a good policy that would allow some land to be locked up but prevent too much of it from being locked up because it would cost too much.

I'm not sure. There are places in Alaska, for example, that you probably should have some sort of protection in bear country.

Wow. I see had nothing to add after that. You really know your scientific studies, even references. I'm impressed.

It sounds like a good idea. Keep them as wilderness and there is no upkeep.

With the large amount of population growth and the pressures for development of our last wild lands increasing, I say more protected land is a good thing.

I have snowmobiled for years and I agree with (comment 1). In Michigan, snowmobilers pay for a trail sticker. The DNR use some of this money to pay private landowners to have snowmobile trails on private property. This sounds like a good solution to me because OHVs can be ridden anywhere (farmland, non wilderness, etc.). Do we need access to every bit of land for development (roads, drilling, mining)? More land should be set aside as wilderness, not only for people to use but to protect plants and animals. It seems selfish to me to hear people want to use up all the land. We should learn to respect the Earth. Most of these activities involving OHVs and development can be done in almost every area, not only the last remaining wilderness areas. It is also baffling to me that still, after all this time, some people would want to destroy the last of our wild areas for the quick buck.

"Conserve" means to preserve, to save in this case to prevent destruction of the land through over grazing, farming, clear cut logging, development of commercial buildings, paved roads, billboards, or housing developments. The government should not subsidize farmers except in exceptional cases of loss due to drought, floods, theft and pests. The land should remain in its natural state or restored to its natural state when it has been degraded due to over grazing, logging, fire and poor farming practices that resulted in soil loss, erosion and degrading/pollution of the water table, ponds, lakes, streams and rivers. We must conserve/protect and restore what's left of our wild lands and restore its native plants and animals, at least those that are not already extinct.

Okay, as long as the snow mobiles are kept out of Yellowstone, where their impacts are unacceptable.

Discussion Question 1

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(cont.)

"The rest of us deserve compensation." Compensation for what? For allowing people to mine on PUBLIC LAND. You could mine on public land too.

So you're saying my grandmother and grandfather should ride their mountain bikes to their camp and sleep in a tent? Remember "Recreation means different things to different people." By the way OHV riding, particularly off-road motorcycling, burns more calories and gets the athlete's heart rate up higher than any other sport except soccer and it's a tie.

Great idea, just NOT using BSA. I like the Junior Sierra Club idea.

Would it be possible to post the title page of the study so we can see who produced it. I am thinking EPA but not sure. Just curious - not a big deal. Enforcing OHV trail routes is a large seemingly impossible challenge. Cultures CAN change over time as is happening where I am from. It is extremely painful and difficult for those making the transition but it can and is happening in So Fla. Others must be patient enough to allow this to happen and get to a point where the OHV community itself will apply the peer pressure necessary for the transition from going where you want to staying on designated routes. A lot of ORV use in So Fla is related to hunting and getting from point A to point B to hunt. We mainly require designated route systems that get people within reasonable walking distance to places trails don't lead to. Even though I can be antagonistic at times myself and others in (ORV/ hunting/consvt'n.) groups are working some pretty extreme enviro group members to get things right in our area and have come to agreement on some issues we never thought we could agree on without selling either side out. That is not easy but we have done it and will continue to do so. Others can do this also but not without all parties opening their minds to at least HEAR and honestly evaluate what the OTHER side says. Could promote idea except that it relegates ATV's to race style tracks. Fortunately we still are authorized to visit public land on them in my opinion because we are engaged in a meaningful manner to develop a viable system here.

Your statement about restricting public access is completely untrue! Wyoming Stock Growers Land Trust and WY Game and Fish Department just completed a project with two different landowners who chose to convey permanent public access to four contiguous miles of the Green River in Sublette County, WY -- along with the permanent conservation of 19,000 acres of extremely productive rangeland. Providing public access is always the right of a private landowner, whether or not there is a conservation easement restricting development on their land. It is important to realize that public access can also be incompatible with certain wildlife needs -- parturition areas, migration corridors and fragile habitats which can be damaged by the well-meaning as well as those unconcerned with the footprint they leave. Here in Wyoming, our most critical wildlife habitat is on private land; keeping these lands unfragmented is key to the provision of winter range, migration corridors and breeding grounds. Conserving these lands also conserves our defining viewsheds, historic and cultural artifacts, and a way of life.

Discussion Question 1

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(cont.)

The 2012 Farm Bill will be challenged to continue funding at current levels, especially for private lands conservation programs like FRPP and GRP. These programs provide excellent return on federal investment through private and state match.

- Private lands are the most productive throughout the US - agriculturally as well as from a broader biological perspective as they typically encompass riparian areas, migration corridors and provide winter range and breeding grounds for many species. For these same reasons, they are also highly sought after for development.

- Ranchers and farmers are hit hard with regulatory programs – voluntary, incentive programs like FRPP and GRP have the potential to do far more good in the long run, at less cost.

- These programs ensure unfragmented landscapes into the future, at a one-time cost to the tax-payer.

- Purchased conservation easements provide landowners with capital without liquidating acreage and keep ranches and farms intact, and at ag values, for future generations of producers. These dollars get turned into local economies, too, as willing landowners use funding to pay down bank notes, purchase additional acreage, improve breeding stock, develop water supplies, or improve infrastructure.

- FRPP and GRP funds help private land trusts ensure that community needs and values are also conserved. The cost of conserving private lands costs taxpayers just a fraction of the cost of federal land purchase and administration.

How we can make these funds go even further:

1. Allow for an increased percentage of landowners' contribution of value. Many landowners are willing to increase their in-kind contribution of 25% of the value of an easement or more. Cash match is much harder to come by.

2. Consider funding the transaction costs for donated easements. Many landowners would be in the position of donating a conservation easement to a qualified organization if the cost of the appraisal, minerals report, attorney fees and stewardship contribution could be covered. Local land trusts would be able to make dollars go even further if this opportunity could be realized.

Every minute, two acres of farm and ranch land are lost to development. The average age of American farmers and ranchers continues to increase, leaving many working lands open to fragmentation and uncertainty.

FRPP and GRP help conserve our working farms and ranches and the food, fiber and natural resources for the stewardship of future ranchers and farmers -- and the benefit of us all.

My father was employed in the CCCs. He learned many skills that did him well during his life. Except for the surveying, he passed them on to me and my brothers. Doing the same thing for the unemployed now would be a wonderful opportunity for those that would be employed and our nation. Most of the roads, trails and parks need to be brought back to the condition when they were created.

Remove the subsidies we give oil and coal production and give it to home owners, office building owners and apartment complex owners to install solar power and water harvesting installations. Greater energy efficiency, cleaner air, money saved.

Discussion Question 1

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(cont.)

O.K. I'm going to talk to my tax preparer and have him withhold money for any public land not within driving distance. If I can't use it, why should I pay? So maybe my taxes would have been used to add armor to a Hummer in Afghanistan. Tough. If I can't use ALL the benefits of my government, I shouldn't pay the taxes. I don't get Food Stamps; no taxes. I don't break the law; no taxes for police. I think ____ drank too much at the Tea Party.....

My idea is to invest money into the Boy Scout after school programs that teach both young elementary age boys and girls life skills that they might not receive in school or at home. This is an opportunity for them to understand what the outdoors are like as we bring in opportunities for them to learn about fishing, wildlife, archery, camping, etc. The Boy Scouts of America works hard to raise money in order to do these after school programs, but if there would be a grant in place for these types of programs we might be able to improve our programs. I would love for kids to be able to come out to camp for the weekend and experience the great outdoors, but for some of these kids, they come from at-risk families that can't provide the support to give these kids this opportunity. So my proposal would be for grant money to be given to improve our afterschool programs in order to provide the experience at a deeper level than our once a week opportunity we have at the school.

In addition to the other good uses of a fully funded Land and Water Conservation Fund, expanding the program to allow 3rd party entities, like land trusts, as defined by the IRC section 170h, to access LWCF funds to complete, hold and administer conservation easements on private lands is vitally important. Private land conservation is essential to protecting America's natural heritage, rural cultures and agrarian livelihoods. Hundreds of thousands of acres of privately-owned lands, especially in the Western United States, abut national parks. Allowing LWCF funds to be used by local land trusts in concert with generous and willing landowners to preserve their privately owned lands through conservation easements makes a world of common sense. The lands, if agriculturally productive, remain so; the lands remain privately owned, often with families who have owned these lands for decades if not generations; and stewardship of these lands is vested with the landowner and the land trust, not the federal government. Allowing America's 1700 and growing local land trusts to utilize LWCF funds for private land conservation would enhance the program goals for the LWCF in a highly cost-effective, locally-supported and efficient manner. This is an idea whose time has come!

Please visit the Land Trust Alliance (www.lta.org) to learn more about private land conservation and the use of the conservation easement. A conservation easement is a legal agreement that permanently transfers the development rights on privately-owned lands with conservation values to a 3rd party (e.g., non-profit land trust). The IRS allows this through IRC section 170(h). So far, more than 37 million acres have been conserved using the conservation easement tool. This is "additive" to government owned, public-lands conserved for national parks, wildlife refuges and other uses. If the lands being conserved are ranchlands and grasslands - such as millions of acres of privately owned lands throughout the American west, the easement would allow the lands to continue to be used as ranchlands. However, the lands could never be developed for a shopping mall, residential development, etc. This rea

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(cont.)

After school education for all!! I did not realize so many people are of the opinion that the boy scouts are discriminatory. I have had two daughters and both were members of the girl scouts till they were graduating High School, and my younger daughter went on to be a counselor after High School. The programs provided were wonderful, and they had funding available for low income families also. We desperately need more education about the environment and wildlife and it should start in the elementary schools. Children need to be taught respect for life, all life! The food served in our schools needs to be more healthy foods. Children need more classes on healthy living....eating healthy engenders self respect.

I think this is the best idea that has been submitted. We need to create jobs. This program could be used to both employ and educate people about the Great Outdoors. This program would be a direct addition to jobs as opposed to many Stimulus proposals that create wealth for a small few and jobs for an even smaller few.

When I'm OHV traveling legally , because I can no longer hike, snowshoe, or cross country ski I hope you will tolerate me. Neither of us has exclusive use of an area.

Similarly, the need for qualified building tradespeople could fit with this model to provide jobs in the protection of our cultural landscape, which helps to revitalize our city and boost economic development. The Michigan Preservation Network ran an extraordinary series of workshops on restoring wooden windows, which has in turn put people back to work and spun out several new small and successful businesses in an economically devastated state. In considering the great outdoors, we need to remember that the outdoors begins when we open our front doors and step outside. The Great Outdoors includes our neighborhoods, downtowns, waterfronts, urban parks. By encouraging and promoting historic preservation and sustainable, livable, walkable communities, we encourage people to get outdoors and build community relationships. More people walking around in our neighborhoods and communities means "eyes on the street" which leads to safer streets. Teach our citizens - of all ages - how to be stewards of their own communities and they will carry that forward to the stewardship of their natural environment beyond their home.

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(cont.)

In addition to working on public lands, parks and forests, a modern day CCC or WPA could provide job training in the building arts which would help to rebuild our cities and communities, protecting our cultural landscape as well as our natural landscape. The Great Outdoors begins when we open our doors. Federal incentives could help statewide and local governments and nonprofits provide job training that would protect our historic communities and promote sustainable, livable, walkable communities. The question of how to pay for such a program is important, however there is an answer. Every year for thirty years, \$150,000,000 has been deposited into the Historic Preservation Fund out of the Off Shore Oil and Gas Lease revenues, on the principle that the profits come from destroying one non-renewable resources should go to protect another non-renewable resource: our country's cultural heritage and historic buildings. Funds are distributed through State and Tribal Historic Preservation Offices, which fulfill the mandate set by the National Historic Preservation Act, but they have never received full funding. If the Historic Preservation Fund were fully funded, \$65 million would go directly to Certified Local Governments, and \$35 million would go to competitive grants for States who could provide funding for projects such as this.

1) We want wilderness designations for all qualified lands on National Forests in Utah, specifically in areas currently under consideration like the La Sal Mountains, Elk Ridge, and Abajo Mountains in San Juan County and the Marysville Peak and Tibadore Canyon proposed Wilderness areas on Monroe Mountain on the Fishlake National Forest.

Absolutely, the Parks should be left in the same state without any changes other than the basic creature comforts...no timber cutting even around them, no exploration for oil, shale, etc as was proposed in Colorado, no off-road vehicles, etc...leave these few precious jewels in as pure a natural state as possible...quite a feat considering the consumptive and egotistical nature of humans!!

Well said. I always wondered when I see one of those huge rvs go by me or parked in a national park with the satellite dish on the top and all the trimmings what kind of enjoyment do they get from what they call camping? I get it at a nascar event or a football game but if your idea of enjoying nature is to drive a huge rv to a national park, consuming mega gallons of gas further promoting our dependence on fossil fuels, and then going inside to watch tv (fox news no doubt) when the sun goes down you are missing the best part of nature because anyone who has spent time in a forest at night knows that that is when the forest really comes alive. Another thing I find pretty comical is the ohv crowd saying it promotes physical fitness. I never realized that sitting in or on a vehicle was such good exercise. And to think of all the time I have been wasting in the gym lifting weights and doing cardio when all I had to do was buy a 4wd or atv and destroy a forest or 2 by driving over it. Heck I could have been Mr. Olympia by now if I had only known. That does explain on thing though, after all that "exercise" they must be severely carb depleted so no wonder why they drink mass quantities of beer and consume junk food then discard the cans, bottles and wrappers all over the forest. Not exactly sure why they feel the need to smash the bottles on rocks and trees but maybe that is a manly thing to do?

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(cont.)

Were you opposed to the hiring of Arnold Schwarzenegger by the president to promote exercise back in the 80's? Was that "big brother is watching" as well? Where were your objections to GW allowing wire taps and screening of our emails? Was that not "big brother is watching"? The reason I took offense to remarks is because President Obama, or "O" as liked to call him, has not tried to pass any legislation on what people watch on tv like she tried to say. Republicans, and especially teabaggers, love to make Obama the 2nd coming of Hitler and I think it is ridiculous. The guy is not even a far left liberal to tell you the truth. Obviously she hates our President for reasons she has made up in her own mind and the fear seems racially motivated. Everyone has the right to access to public lands and they should continue to have it as long as it does not destroy habitat or cause harm to wildlife but lies should be pointed out.

There are a buch of wack job running around out there with guns disregarding the law. I am not prey, I am a patriot and I am packing.

I visited Mesa Verde this summer. No national park has a more loving or thoughtful visitor center than what the CCC did eighty year ago

This program while not ideal is essential to protect critical lands like those inside established wilderness areas. I would generally oppose any lands going back to development interests, but since Congress and the Admin won't step up to the plate to do the job that needs doing, this is a workable alternative.

the vast majority of bikes are on city streets which are not paid for by gas taxes but by local sales and property taxes. In fact, since bicycles cause much less wear and tear on the roads than cars, and need much less space than cars, it is bicyclists who subsidize car drivers, not the other way around.

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This is not only a great idea, but it is also totally feasible. The National Park System has almost 400 units. Full "National Parks" -- like Yellowstone and Grand Canyon -- are only a small portion of the total system, which includes national preserves, seashores, recreation areas, historical parks, etc. But this system is far from complete. There are vast regions of the country with few or no national parks. This includes most of the country east of the Rocky Mountains. People who live in the East deserve national parks as much as people in the West. And having more parks in the East will save energy and resources, allowing people to visit parks without traveling so far. There are hundreds of potential new national park areas that are waiting to be designated. Most of them are threatened by resource extraction and development. We need to do it now, before it is too late. Concerns about the cost are misguided. We can afford the parks we have. All federal land agencies have had budget cuts, but the National Park Service is in better shape than the others. Plus, because 98 percent of national park lands are undeveloped wildlands, those lands are very cheap to manage -- they are basically left alone. In fact, the American taxpayer would save money by creating new parks. Most potential parks are already public lands -- mostly national forests or BLM lands. We are spending millions and millions of dollars each year to subsidize logging, livestock grazing, roadbuilding, and other destructive activities on these lands. These programs are costing us money and trashing our public lands. Shifting these lands -- which we already own -- to the National Park Service would not only stop these destructive activities, but it would also save us money. It is also incorrect that we cannot afford to create new national parks that require land acquisition. This is nothing new. Almost all of the eastern national parks were acquired from private owners. Lands to create some of our most important national parks were acquired in even tougher economic times -- during the Great Depression. This includes Great Smoky Mountain and Shenandoah national parks. Moreover, it is well documented that national parks bring major economic benefits to local communities. Teton County, Wyoming is the most prosperous in the state -- because it includes part of Grand Teton National Park and is next to Yellowstone National Park. Regarding the protection of entire ecosystems, this is a critical issue. National parks have the capability to not only preserve pristine wilderness areas, but also to connect them by restoring lands that have been degraded by past industrial activities. It is no coincidence that the most intact ecosystem in the lower 48 states is centered on Yellowstone National Park. There is growing public support for a new generation of national parks across the country. Now is the time. We can do this. We owe it, not only to future generations, but also to ourselves.

Look all you ATV/OHV dittoheads, McCulloch v. Maryland was decided in 1819. The Constitution doesn't allow states to tax federal property. Go back to school and study civics 101 and then come back and makes some suggestions.

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a few bad apple "off roaders" do not represent the masses. I am a responsible, stay on the trails "thread lightly" off roader, and a "leave no trace" Hiker. Many of my friends are to, and I assure we police our own, and shun those who would destroy the land, or in any way jeopardize our access to it. used properly, there is little difference between a single track and a double track trail. Severe punishment/fines for off trail land damaging travel by vehicle, as well as severe fines/punishment for littering, campsite destruction, creating your own camp site fire rings, as well as other offenses committed by hikers and horse travelers, seems much more fair to all. I am sure you would not agree with me that all hikers leave trash and destroy flora, even though many of you do. remember, generalizing all people in to a category is about as fair as racism and sexism.

Please clarify your position. Either you are for funding the parks (which means exactly what?) or you are for leaving the parks alone. If you "fund" a park, that means you are expending cash for its cleanup, its preservation, its fire suppression, its wildlife management, etc etc. Therefore, "funding" implies the government is not "leaving the parks alone." What do you seek? Funded parks, or unfunded parks? Please clarify.

Hey, you hit something right on the head "Recreation means different things to different people" Please allow those people to recreate in our PUBLIC lands also. Why should everyone conform to your definition of recreation? And if you had ever ridden any OHV before you would know that nothing gets your heart rate up and your muscles a work out like riding an OHV. And I for one think that people who drive large vehicles into campsites should be rewarded, because my 15 passenger van full of boy scouts gets better gas mileage per forest visitor than your 2 passenger hybrid everytime.

Just a reminder that a good portion of the trails that are in our "wild" areas were made by miners, Ohvers and other users of the forest. Funny how you all now claim them as your own and now they aren't "trashed wasteland" or "us(ed) up". Interesting how that works

I agree with others--it's a great idea if done through an organization that doesn't discriminate. We do need outdoor education in our schools. School trips to the Adirondack Mountains when I was in junior high changed my life.

Work to remove barriers to relocalized, distributed, decentralized renewable power generation (DG) and energy efficiency/conservation in urban load centers. The more DG is in place, the less need there will be to finance and build large, industrial-scale, centralized, transmission-intensive, slow-to-completion, over-costly renewable power installations in wild lands and remote places. Put the generation near where consumption is; protect the desert and parks. DG can go up faster, has countless community benefits (jobs, business where people are) and is becoming increasingly economically competitive with utility-scale renewables and fossil-fuel alternatives. We can save wildlands and the climate all at once.

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(cont.)

Better would be a graduated fee for use for areas open for multiple use. Hiking is pretty environment-friendly, so it would have a lower fee, and motorized all terrain vehicles would have to pay the highest fee since their use degrades the environment and precludes use by anyone else. Also, use of all-terrain vehicles should be limited to specific areas, since they do so much damage to the paths and the wildlife.

I LOVE this Idea and am hopeful that we all can improve our view of the night sky. It sounds simple enough and what a great contribution it could be to the future generations .

I am truly sorry that you are disabled. My idea is to keep as many people as possible healthy so they don't have special needs. I think your special need can and will be accommodated, but in some places the government can design trails, roads and facilities so that people get more exercise, not less.

Create 100 new national parks for the 100th anniversary of the National Park Service. Create new parks encompassing landscapes not represented by the current park system, including the Great Plains, Ancient Forest and the restoration of Maine North Woods, landscapes that connect wilderness areas into biologically complete ecosystems, and that connect present national parks with their surroundings.

People who say this idea will cost too much: there will be almost no difference in funding between the cost to BLM and USFS and to the NPS when the land is transfered to that agency. If you think there will be increased funding needs, well, you expect a lot of visitor centers and bells and whistles that I don't need from the park service. Besides, the NPS can charge an entry fee for various services. The USFS presently does not charge entry fees except to campgrounds and sometimes a parking pass. Please read comment above. People who think small only get small things. Think BIG. This is what the New National Parks Project is doing. Get on board!

This is a no brainer but seems to be getting almost no attention from the government. That's because BP is in charge. Big oil is trying to make solar look like an environmental nightmare so we will all reject it and keep buying oil.

The Yurok Tribe is a great asset to the Klamath River. An Ancient Forest National Park (www.ancientforestnationalpark.org) that would protect most of the Klamath River watershed and still allow Native American traditional uses would seriously help the tribe's above stated goals.

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(cont.)

Chis's comment reminded me of a comment I saw on New West in response to the idea of creating a National Monument in North Central Montana. "The comment that we want this area "just for me" is mistaken. You are, like anyone else, perfectly welcome to come out and hunt, hike, or camp. If you need to go to the bathroom, we maintain an outhouse and keep it supplied with paper. If, like a few, you have trouble figuring out how it works, we can get our shovels and bury your streamers of TP hanging off the sagebrush. If you need a telephone, you'll have to come into our house, because there is no cell phone service. If you want to get off the main roads, we maintain the prairie trails that you will use. If you get lost or stuck, we'll rescue you. If you have trash, you can drop it in the garbage can we've set out for visitors, and we'll haul it out for you. If you want to camp, we've never turned anyone down for as long as they wish to stay (unlike the land that we only own grazing rights on, where the feds limit camping stays). We keep favorite camping spots mowed to reduce fire danger, and when that isn't enough, we put out the fires. If you bring in noxious weeds on your vehicle or clothing, we'll pull them so that if you decide to visit the area more than once in your lifetime, there will still be native prairie when you get back. If you want to help pull weeds, when the work is done, I'll make you a buttermilk cake. With this grass, the cow gives so much cream that we have to churn a lot of butter. We can swap stories about getting our Ph.D.'s. Mine is in botany. (Speaking of return visits, these comments certainly give the impression that the pro-monument crowd has never been here, whereas the non-Eastern Montanans objecting to rural ethnic cleansing have visited long enough or often enough to learn something about the land and people. Words cannot convey our gratitude for your kind support.) We volunteer many hours every year to keep this area clean and accessible to visitors and pour a yearly fee into the US General Fund for the privilege of assisting you. It is amusing to hear someone that wants to drive my children off their great great great grandmother's range accuse us of wanting this area "just for me"!"

"we need legislation that puts into action long range plans that put the health of the environment first." We need to start cutting down and removing all the pine beetle killed trees then. Extreme fire hazard.

If you want people to get out and visit the parks, talk about how CHEAP camping can be!! you don't have to spend a million dollars at Disney to have a great family vacation!! It is amazing what the kids learn being away from the TV and their toys. They have such great imaginations and will be totally stimulated by nature once they arrive at the campsite!! They will find a million things to do they never even knew they loved!! In today's economy, people need some help finding ways to escape the stress of life and camping is almost as cheap as staying home!!! Pack your food, go somewhere close by and pay less than \$20 per night for the whole family!!

Snowmobiling, for example I believe can be enjoyed without too much impact on the environment if limited to certain areas, away from known wildlife wintering areas. ATV should be limited to ATV tracks that cost money to use, on public lands. Random use of these machines should be limited.

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(cont.)

This initiative seeks to promote everyone's involvement with and access to the natural world. One of our most important, most threatened, and often most overlooked natural and cultural treasures is the night sky. As urban centers grow and our cities sprawl, the proliferation of inefficient lighting has made it increasingly difficult for Americans to walk outside and get a good view of the stars. In Utah, we are fortunate to have a few of our National and State parks actively supporting astronomy and other dark sky programs, but the wonders of the heavens should and can be made more readily available to all regardless of location. Three years ago I was driving home from work in Sandy and passed a Harmon's Grocery where a huge array of telescopes had been set up. Out of pure curiosity I pulled in "Is there an eclipse or something?" I wondered. One of the telescope operators invited me over to take a peek at Jupiter. "Really, you can see Jupiter?" I asked, and sure enough, there it was, plus four of its moons! I was stunned...and instantly hooked! During the two years since I officially joined the Salt Lake Astronomical Society I've volunteered at many public and school star parties. It's thrilling to give people young and old their first telescopic glimpses of the planets, star clusters, galaxies, and even "just" the moon. Reactions range from "Wow! It looks so real!" to simple exclamations of wordless awe. Everyone is amazed that these cosmic sights can be viewed from a grocery store parking lot in the middle of the city...and they all want to know more. Away from the city's glare, one does not need a telescope to be enthralled by the sight of the brilliant Milky Way galaxy stretching across the sky. It is a great blessing to have many of the world's most pristine refuges of darkness within easy driving distance of Salt Lake. During my time spent as an astronomy volunteer at Bryce Canyon, I've talked with people from across the globe who have come specifically to view the night sky. Even at Bryce, however, a distant city glow can be seen on the horizon and the park's dark rangers work tirelessly to spread the word about the numerous costs of bad lighting. The effects of light pollution can persist over 120 miles from its source and hugely affect the behavior and life cycles of wildlife and the health and safety of humans. Possible fixes are not difficult or costly. When I was a kid and would leave a door open in the summertime, my parents would yell, "We don't need to be air conditioning the whole neighborhood!" It's the same with lights. A fixture that is poorly designed and allows light to glare upwards is wasting half its luminosity...and we certainly don't need to be lighting up the whole galactic neighborhood! Fixtures that are shielded and direct light down to the ground (where we need it in the first place), use much less energy and illuminate an area better. When timers and motion sensors are installed around businesses and residences, safety is actually improved and owners save on their power bills. The International Dark Sky Association estimates that 2.2 billion dollars are wasted annually in the U.S. on inefficient lighting. Calgary Alberta recently switched to shielded lighting and has reported a yearly savings of 1.7 million dollars. On top of the financial savings we'd gain from smarter lighting, we'd also be opening up the wonders of the universe to everyone in the nation. One of the initiative's main objectives is to get people, especially children, interested in recreating outside. Additionally, there is a continuing need to inspire more of our youth to maintain their natural interest in science and mathematics in hopes that they may one day pursue that interest as a career. Improving our view of the night sky addresses both these desires. Star gazing is the perfect "gateway drug" to further interest in the "hard sciences", mathematics, and engineering. Astronomy is an accessible science. It does not discriminate based on race, gender, income, or even technical ability (to which I can personally attest)...all are

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(cont.)

equal under a dark sky. It is one of the rare disciplines that still benefits significantly from the contributions of amateurs. The stars have fascinated humanity for millennia, and going outside to hunt for planets, nebulae, and distant galaxies is just plain fun! Carl Sagan famously, and truthfully, said that we are all "Star Stuff" and that it is humanity's "birthright" to be able to look up with wonder into the cosmos. From the beginning of recorded history, and undoubtedly before, humans have worshiped, marveled at, and explored the mysteries that beckon from the heavens. It would be a shame if all this were permanently hidden behind the glare of a street light. The country is speckled with excellent astronomy clubs and star gazing groups whose members already donate countless hours sharing their love of the night sky with the community--the infrastructure is ready and eagerly waiting! Members of the Salt Lake Astronomical society have access to a variety of free telescopes available on loan with zero liability. I am a poor musician and haven't spent a dime on equipment, but have still been able to explore the hidden treats in the night sky and share my newfound love of the stars with others. Club members also have access (after a few special training courses) to use some of Utah's largest telescopes at the Stansbury Park Observatory Complex. For a tiny annual fee, one can operate any of the 3 giant telescopes on their own time. What an incredible benefit! Talk about "what works"! We would all love to see the skies darken so the experience we're able to give to curious newcomers would be even more astounding than it already is. Though the star parties we host in the city are always enjoyable, it is disappointing when many of the best sights are consistently veiled in a wash of orange glow. It would be heartbreaking if a whole generation grew up without ever seeing a sky shimmering with thousands (not just dozens) of stars. Alongside the Grand Canyon, Zion, Yosemite, Bryce, and other areas set aside for public use and enjoyment, we should protect and celebrate the splendor of our own Milky Way and the vast universe beyond that spans the cosmic ceiling from horizon to horizon, With smart planning we could conceivably bring this natural wonder to our very backyards.

I'm afraid you are mistaken. Some easements do allow public access, and in fact, public recreation is one of four conservation purposes in the tax code for which an easement can be considered tax deductible. There are organizations whose entire mission is the acquisition of conservation easements for equestrian trails, hunting access, etc... That said, public access is incompatible with many kinds of agricultural operations and creates an enormous liability for landowners. If access were a requirement, far fewer landowners would consider easements and the wildlife habitat and other conservation values provided by their land would be vulnerable to development. The appraised value of an easement takes many factors, including public access, into account when considering the genuine diminution in property value due to the easement restrictions. The recent reforms of easement appraisals ensure that nobody gets to "sell their land twice."

Good. Private citizens are holding a great responsibility to steward the forests. Most often, on their own, and with their own \$\$\$\$\$. It is difficult when the monetary return is greater to sell the land to developers.

one more time, gee obesity versus walking, obesity versus walking maybe not that many people want to get off- or out of - their misery making vehicles

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

I agree with pretty much everyone here - good idea without BSA. Maybe school outdoors clubs could be founded?

I strongly urge those who cannot handle a science-based world to read up on the pre-renaissance era. You can enjoy persecuting Galileo and Copernicus and fight off the plague. I support science-based environmental policy.

Use the vast number of unemployed youth and adults in programs like the Civilian Conservation Corps or Americorp to carry out environmental projects. Much of the infrastructure is already in place to set these programs up as well as some of the funding. (ARRA, Unemployment Benefits, Workforce Investment Act) The Department of Labor operates youth programs that could easily be tailored to projects that focus on the outdoors. In cities, have participants create community gardens and other green space. Just one benefit of community gardens in cities is that the gardens will provide food in the event of an emergency and reduce our carbon footprint as we look to wean ourselves off fossil fuel. Open programs up to all interested youth rather than basing entry on income qualifications. Including a broad economic background of participants creates a program for all Americans not just "the poor" thereby engaging many more youth in the great outdoors. Require long term unemployed (12 months plus) to volunteer in some capacity. (Might also include TANF recipients) This will enhance self esteem and future employability while at the same time utilizing the extraordinary talent pool of our fellow citizens. Finally, if the troops come home they will be looking for jobs. Retain troops in the military and have them use their leadership training in coordinating the effort at home. Imagine what we could achieve in terms of improving our world and ourselves.

I'm against all off road vehicles on public lands (this includes snowmobiles). These destructive devices should be available only to park rangers for emergency use only.

I've been wondering why we haven't started doing this already. It is the one thing that really makes sense. I believe that both unemployment and other benefits might be used for such a program. If they could manage it in the midst of the earlier depression, surely we can work it out now. People could go to work, learn skills, and earn their money in an honorable way.

A National Monument will hinder nothing except continued abuse. In fact, it will ENHANCE recreational opps, diminish wildfire risks, enhance local economies, and help wildlife.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Many Native American Tribes are committed to restoration and protection of natural resources that have always supported their people. These efforts complement Department of the Interior and other federal agency goals articulated in “America’s Great Outdoors.” The Department of the Interior and other federal agencies should use existing programs to leverage the contribution of Tribes toward the protection of wilderness, endangered and threatened species, at-risk ecosystems, and other priorities. Recent agreements to remove the Klamath River dams provide one of many examples where Federal agencies have worked with Tribes to achieve mutual objectives. One of the key contributors to dam removal negotiations, the Yurok Tribe of Northwest California, is engaged in a related land acquisition effort on the lower Klamath River. The acquisition provides another example where principles articulated in “America’s Great Outdoors” coincide with Native American priorities. The Yurok Tribe subsisted on fish runs and other forest wildlife on the lower Klamath for centuries prior to the arrival of European settlers in the late 19th Century. In the decades that ensued, however, intensive timber harvest drastically altered the landscape. Like much of the California Coast, harvesting practices threatened endemic species, old growth forest and water quality. Consequently, many of the natural resources that the Department of the Interior now seeks to restore (resources once, and still, essential to the Yurok People’s healthy and prosperous way of life) disappeared. When the Federal Government recognized the Yurok Tribe in the early 90’s, the Yurok Tribe established a constitution that requires tribal government to establish policies intended to “restore, enhance, and manage the tribal fishery, tribal water rights, tribal forests, and all other natural resources” and “provide for the health, education, economy, and social wellbeing of our members and future members.” To help achieve these ends, the Yurok Tribe and Western Rivers Conservancy are in contract with Green Diamond Resource Company to purchase ~47,000 acres within the Yurok Tribe’s Ancestral Boundary. The acquisition would increase protections on approximately 29.3 miles on the eastern watershed of the lower Klamath River, and four important tributaries: Blue Creek (24,861 acres), Pecwan Creek (16,719 acres), Ke’pel Creek (1,015 acres) and Weitchpec Creek (4,503 acres). The Yurok Tribe has published a Yurok Tribal Park Plan which lays out the general objectives for management of these properties. More specific management will focus on cultural resources, and the recovery of endangered, threatened and at-risk fish and wildlife species. The Tribe is in, or seeking, partnerships with: the United States Department of the Interior, the State of California Water Resources Control Board, the North Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board, the US EPA, the California Department of Fish and Game, the State of California Department of Forestry, NOAA Fisheries, the Climate Action Reserve, Western Rivers Conservancy, Green Diamond Resource Company and others. Of most importance to the Yurok Tribe and its many of its partner federal and state natural resource agencies, the acquisition boundary includes the remaining unprotected portions of the Blue Creek watershed. As the westernmost cold- water tributary to the Klamath River, the perennial Blue Creek is one of the best salmon streams remaining in the Klamath Basin. It is also likely to remain cool in the face of climate change, as upstream tributaries become increasingly too warm for salmon and steelhead. The Tribe will manage Blue Creek primarily as a preserve for the benefit of endangered fish species that have traditionally provided a staple for the Yurok People (including the Southern Oregon / Northern California Coho, and California Coastal Chinook). Through this management -- which will complement US Forest Service Management in the adjacent Siskyou

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Wilderness -- the Tribe hopes to restore historic salmon runs to Blue Creek and maintain the watershed as the most reliable cold-water source for anadromous fish species in the Klamath Basin. The Lower Klamath Restoration Plan – a document itself resulting from broad local input -- addresses means of restoring riparian and instream habitat for fish protection. The vision for properties outside of the Blue Creek watershed includes sustainable harvest. Specifically, the Tribe will manage Phase 1 lands according to longer rotations that reflect Yurok cultural and Constitutional priorities. Among other actions, the Tribe will initiate an uneven-aged management regime that increases species diversity, extends riparian zone restrictions, sets aside late seral carbon reserves (enhancing marbled murrelet, spotted owl, and other endangered, threatened and at risk species habitat), and restores grasslands. The Regional and State Waterboards are key partners in this effort, as is the U.S. EPA. Throughout the property, the Tribe will also restore historical meadows to invigorate populations of elk and deer for hunting purposes and to restore natural forest complexity. The restoration of grasslands will revitalize possibilities for traditional practices like gathering and basket weaving. The Tribe also seeks to reclaim and protect important culturally important sites, allow for public trail access, and improve regional management with adjacent publicly managed lands. Western Rivers Conservancy, a 501(c) (3) dedicated to protection of outstanding river ecosystems in the western United States, is working with the Yurok Tribe to acquire the property. In the course of our dealings with them, we have discovered several useful tools, but have two recommendations: • Expansion of the USEPA's State Revolving Fund to include more loans and grants dedicated to the reduction of non-point source pollution. Currently, the State of California dedicates 5% of its State Revolving Funds to Non-Point Source projects, and a few other states have similar efforts in place. The initiative taken by these states is commendable, and effective. More can be done with a small increase in resources, and duplication in other states. • Use of Land and Water Conservation Fund, and other conservation land acquisition programs, for acquisitions within and adjacent to protected Tribal lands, and management agreements that help ensure protections in cooperation with Tribes.

Why on earth would someone want to go to a place where they are not trusted to look after their own security? Maybe I've missed it, but I haven't seen any mass murders since the NPS recognized peoples' right to be armed.

I'm promoting this, even though it's really a local issue. There are easily 3 or 4 times as many street lights in most major cities than are really needed. Last I checked, vehicles are required to have headlights and tail lights. Think about the cost savings and other benefits if even half of the lights currently in use were not used. In the area I live there are no street lights and anyone leaving their outside lights on when they aren't using them is considered the neighborhood ingrate. And no, we don't have crime issues due to the dark.

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(cont.)

This is an excellent suggestion. Although nearly 80 years have passed since the CCC forces went out into the countryside to create parks, trails and protected areas for outdoor enjoyment of Americans, their achievements still stand, still are used, still contribute to the betterment of our lives. We have millions of long-term unemployed. Let them earn a decent living by building a new infrastructure of wilderness, parks, preserves and the like -- new places where children can experience nature, raw, undisturbed and beautiful.

Although I think this idea has a good deal of merit, I'm also hesitant to ask the government to create another bureaucracy. If one has to be created or enhanced, I would agree, let's give more money to an existing organization already serving the purpose (and perhaps expand them to the mass scale mentioned), and also dramatically increase protections for existing forests and habitats.

this is a great idea, and it would create jobs. if they had dithered about the EPA, we'd have a much worse scenario to face today...

I like it. This concept is already in use at Cape Hatteras National Seashore to support ORV closures for bird and sea turtle nesting sites, under a court-ordered consent decree. A closed area expands 50 meters for the first violation, 100 meters for the second, and 500 meters or more for the third. Violations are subject to as much as a \$5,000 fine and/or imprisonment up to 6 months.

Some states have adopted standards for environmental education curricula, including outdoor activities. Maryland is considering one right now, with the support of Governor Martin O'Malley. If it's adopted, all school systems in Maryland will teach environmental ed, including outdoor projects. They will be able to draw on the expertise of watershed districts and other environmental agencies.

I am in favor of this idea generally, but will not vote to promote it because I am also in favor of creating more wilderness designations. I feel that multiple land use areas should also be increased.

So often people only think of hikers when they think of public lands, but ALL people should be considered. Not everyone is able to hike. Not everyone wants to hike. People should have the ability to take their camper, their bicycle, their OHV, their horses, whatever they choose to visit and enjoy their lands. People need to spend more time outside and by closing it off to all but a small minority less and less people will get to enjoy what this country's public lands have to offer. Keep the trails/roads open to be shared by all.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

As an education coordinator for a watershed district in MN, I provide many education activities for K12 students. However, it has been increasingly difficult to get teachers to participate in these programs. These programs are often completely free and do not require anything of the teacher but to show up. However, I've noticed teachers do not have the flexibility in their curriculum or the time to participate in valuable outdoors education programs. It's a shame because so many important experiences cannot be shared in a classroom setting. I would love to see the federal gov. back a program that at least encourages, if not requires, teachers to take classes on env. field trips, to nature centers, water festivals, conservation days, and many of the other programs that are available. to them. Make it easy for teachers to participate, not more difficult. I don't know much about the educational policies regarding testing kids so I won't bother going in to that, but I think that is part of the problem.

Indeed, multi-use trails that include mountain biking work very well. This posted idea does not include anything about restricting the trails to only mountain bikes. What we do want to avoid is trails that are accessible by motorized vehicles. Single-track trails are not usable by ATVs, and thus help to protect natural areas from the misuse and noise of motorized vehicles. Trails must of course be properly constructed to avoid erosion. Studies show that mountain biking has similar or less erosion impact compared to hiking, and far less impact than horseback riding. The IMBA (Int'l Mountain Biking Assoc.) publishes a detailed document describing good trail building technique (the same principles apply to all types of trails). Trail grade and trail grade reversals are the most important factors in allowing water to flow off the trails instead of along the trails, thus preventing erosion.

In Hawaii, homeowners install solar cells on their roofs and sell electricity to the power company. In the US, Big Oil managers are the biggest spender on influencing the legislature and the administration. Three out of four of the energy lobbyists are former government employees. The Big Oil managers are among the 1/100th of one percent of Americans who take more than five percent of the national income. That is, the people who are paid an average \$25,000,000 per year. They are not the founders of the companies. They are not inventors. They are the survivors of office politics -- bureaucrats, if you will. They have effectively sold doubt about global warming for 35 years.

Also, use the open spaces in our communities to grow trees as alternative energy source burned in engineered furnaces.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Let's celebrate our diversity and history by expanding some national parks and designating new ones! America is home to so many cultures and a rich history. In the last ten years, not enough has been done to protect places that more fully represent our cultural diversity and better tell America's evolving story. We should expand existing parks like the San Antonio Missions National Historic Site in Texas and Petersburg National Battlefield in Virginia so that the system can better protect irreplaceable artifacts of catholic settlement and battlefields connected to the longest siege in American military history. We should also add units such as Heart Mountain Internment Camp in Wyoming that tells the story of Japanese-American internment during World War II, sites dedicated to Harriet Tubman's early life in Maryland and her later years in Auburn, New York, and Fort Monroe in Virginia, dubbed "Freedom's Fortress" for its role in liberating enslaved African Americans during the Civil War. There are more stories to tell and places to preserve, including those that celebrate the contributions of women. We want to ensure that we don't forget our important past and celebrate our diversity as a growing country. The National Park Service is the right agency to manage these areas.

Good idea as long as the working conservation easement and management plan are required to qualify.

It would be great to see a high school volunteer requirement based on outdoor projects. For example, require 20 volunteer hours per school year. Many of the Missouri schools require these volunteer hours already, however they are not "outdoor specific". Great idea!

I personally enjoy the public lands for hiking, camping, viewing wildlife and tranquility...However there are many responsible families that also enjoy outdoor recreation with there children that involves recreational vehicles....These families can have this oppourtunities also on designated public lands set aside for that purpose...

Create a dedicated national funding source for private land conservation that is patterned after Colorado's Great Outdoors Colorado, a program authored by Secretary Salazar during his time as Colorado's Attorney General. GOCO has successfully protected farm and ranchland, wildlife habitat/corridors, natural areas, open space and riparian areas; all of which foster recreational opportunities, scenic vistas and other economic opportunities that directly infuse cash into rural economies. Agricultural landowners successfully steward these important natural resources. Partnering with them in the protection of these important working landscapes would provide an significant financial tool helping them to pass their properties onto the next generation. This type of federal program would also provide critical match for local and state conservation funding sources and leverage millions of dollars of matching funds across the country. As an example, my organization, the Rio Grande Headwaters Land Trust (RiGHT) has been working on a special initiative to protect private land along the headwaters of the iconic Rio Grande river. Since 2007, we have worked collaboratively with other organizations to protect 7,500 acres that is beautiful, outstanding wildlife habitat and is agriculturally productive. Out of nearly \$23 million dollars worth of conservation value, less than \$2 million came from federal sources: that's leveraging those funds more than 11 to 1!

Discussion Question 1

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(cont.)

Existing public school system community and adult education programs are proliferating across the country. Take advantage of the resource by offering federal grants for these programs to take people outdoors. In the Community Ed program in the Hilton Central School District outside Rochester, NY, 'active adult fitness' includes "Outdoor Fitness Walking," "Nature Writing/Journaling," "Fly-Casting," "Tai Chi," "Active Yoga," "Aquafit," and "Active Adult Getaways" to NY's Finger Lakes region. All classes are discounted for adults age 55+. Many classes are only \$25 and are close to home. The real world nearby is the environment you care about.

I agree with setting aside 1 for 1. Keep in mind there is little wilderness left and once it is gone it is gone. ATVs can be ridden anywhere, including farmland or any area. Maybe ATV groups should pay private landowners to have access to rideable land, like snowmobile groups do, which connects useable trails.

Also, 1 for 1 is an excellent idea as long as it doesn't lessen the amount of land that would be set aside as wilderness.

I voted to promote this, but I am more in favor of preserving areas that are still wilderness (such as in Alaska, etc.), because there would be less land disputes and most of the land is still in it's natural state. I think creating a recreational public land system in a state with such a large population would be costly and quite an undertaking. The area would probably get alot of use, more like an amusement park (for lack of a better description). I don't think there could be much wilderness, either. That said, if it can be done, I'm in favor.

I might not get to visit wilderness areas because of the cost for me to travel to them. There are not any anywhere near my home. Just knowing that they exist gives me piece of mind. I think more wilderness should be saved. There should also be more multiple use federal land set aside.

Discussion Question 1

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(cont.)

A Framework for Conserving and Enhancing the Benefits from Private Working Forests in the Western US - This Western Forestry Leadership Coalition report represents months of stakeholder workshops investigating the suite of issues hindering private forest landowners' ability to keep and sustainably manage their land and presents the following recommendations: • Reward landowners for their stewardship of ecosystem services • Promote diverse forest products markets and the utilization of woody biomass • Facilitate action through cross-ownership management and partnerships While only a fraction of the western forested landscape, private working forests provide critical ecosystem services to their owners and to the public. They also create important linkages that facilitate the production of ecosystem services on public lands. However, we are in danger of losing the benefits provided by private working forests owing to such forces as changing climate, economic conditions, demographics, and competing social values. To explore these issues, the Western Forestry Leadership Coalition brought together family and large-scale forest landowners, county commissioners, local and regional planning agencies, state forestry and wildlife agencies, federal land managers, tribes, universities, conservation districts, and nonprofit organizations. From this, a drafting committee synthesized workshop input and developed the report. The goal is to facilitate the creation of a new policy framework and new business model that, together, address the needs of private forest landowners; local, state and federal agencies; conservation organizations; and other stakeholders in the western U.S. The report's recommendations are meant to foster solutions at a meaningful scale. Policy, program, and on-the-ground actions by a multitude of partners can contribute to a future where sustainable forest management is an economic reality, a recognized social benefit, and a significant contributor to forest health and long-term climate change mitigation and adaptation goals. { Link }

I like the idea, but I feel attention and expenditures should be focused first on the ancient forests of the Alaska panhandle. Maurine, yes -- where necessary and possible, private landholders should be brought into management decisions and plans.

Federal land agencies should implement a system where designated routes are monitored for ORV user violations. They should then close routes where there are violations beyond a set standard (say for example, two violations a month). This system is already in place on USFS land in the cottonwood canyons above SLC for dog use. This would give users an incentive to police their own, and compensate for the agency's lack of enforcement capability.

Drill baby Drill,when ever ,where ever,we need the oil,and have more than anybody else in the world, on our own land,but environmental wacko's stop us from using our own,get over it,get a life,enjoy it,and quit telling every one else how to live.

Make sure to have them hike a minimum of 5 miles with a 25 pound back pack on a 90 degree day in a Wolderness so they can appreciate Wilderness rules.

See "Ptotect Wilderness b4 it's too late.." comment 1

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

To all the regular working folks of which I am also one I will share what I have learned after 12 years of fighting for access of all sorts. The government works like everyone else Mon thru Friday for the most part. If we really value what might be lost WE better be ready to take days off and plan vacation days to attend meetings and produce informed comments (not whining how it was in grandpa's days) or suffer the consequences. It is that simple. Those who attend the meetings and do informed written comments stand a chance of getting what they want. Those who don't - DO NOT stand a chance.

The federal government should financially support and encourage the development of quiet off-road vehicles (SUV's, trucks, 3 and 4 wheelers, snowmobiles, jet skis, etc). These could be dual powered, gasoline/diesel and electric. They would be certified for off-road use in specifically designated sensitive areas. Since the majority of people objecting to OHV's is due to the noise that they create, this would satisfy both groups for the most part.

For the past 50 years most timber sales on public lands have been based on large volumes and large acreage. This has benefited large timber companies and loggers. Over the past ten years fuel reduction projects have likewise been based on having enough commercial timber to make it worthwhile for the contractor. The result has been continuous litigation and a stalemate in the woods that costs the government money and takes away from healthy forest management. Prior to the growth of the large timber and logging companies, there were "gyppo" operators in the woods. These were small, two- to four-man operations. Their cut-and-run approach, however, soon made "gyppo" synonymous with bad. The better small operators, however, continue to exist as contractors to small woodland owners, the largest segment of forestry owners in the country. I suggest we take a smaller look at our public lands, particularly in the West. The emerging growth of small diameter utilization presents an opportunity for public forestry agencies (primarily BLM and USFS) to present more focused, smaller operations. (@ 200 acres) Contracting with an independent, two- to four-man crew that utilizes smaller equipment (e.g., UTVs) would produce less controversy, more jobs, and better management practices across the landscape. One of the big problems with public land management is the proliferation of roads. Smaller equipment and smaller operating areas would require fewer roads and have less impact on the operation area. Large sales will continue to be controversial, particularly in the West, for the next few decades at least. By implementing a program of smaller scale, local workers would gain employment, overstocked lands could be thinned with less impact, and a more progressive and sustainable management of public forest lands could occur.

Require public land units to set aside a parcel of accessible land for public gardening or farming activity. Demonstrate- urban gardening; organic, sustainable gardening and farming practices; healthy eating and cooking; soil, water and clean air conservation; etc.

Yes, enlightened private stewards need to be encouraged and helped.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Thanks so much for the input, this is what I was hoping people would do - comment about balloons after having had an experience in one. I too do not want commercialization of the parks, but if we could come up with some ideas like these - a quiet way to see the animals and terrain, - I'd love to have this as an option.

Establishment of the BWCA is one of the most important environmental achievements of the 20th century; we need to protect it and ensure strong wilderness management.

Lovely idea - don't think it should be mandatory, but aggressively promoted with incentives, etc. - CCC is good model...

I learned how to be an environmental leader in Yosemite National Park at age 13. I was a participant in an educational backpacking program and my hiking group took a wrong turn down a trail. As darkness fell we realized that we weren't going to make it back to our adult leaders before the night's end. We were cold and fearful. We set up camp, fished for food, told stories for entertainment, and built a fire for warmth. When we finally reconnected with our group and adult leaders we had grown in our confidence and self-sufficiency. We felt connected to the earth and to each other. I went on to teach science education and I remain passionate about connecting youth to powerful outdoor experiences like the one I had in Yosemite as an early teen. I agree that government and nonprofit organizations should work together to create synergistic partnerships that promote outdoor education, especially in America's National Parks. We have the most tremendous classrooms at our fingertips and we owe it to future generations to utilize these magical places to create the next generation of environmental stewards.

It worked for cans. How about five bucks a tire? Save our rivers and forests the mess.

Let's protect Old Growth Forests in their Entirety, not just specific old trees within them. Old growth forests are unfortunately rare ecosystems that depend on all elements within them remaining in relative balance. Recent forest management proposals ignore this, supposedly in an attempt to move beyond forest management controversies of the past. The new argument is that by focusing on saving old trees, instead of designating entire forests as old growth, then both environmental priorities and monetary desires would be solved. The proposed logging of young trees in Old Growth Forests, however, would impact the ancient balance that nature has so well maintained. Nesting habitat for Spotted Owls and other threatened and endangered species would clearly be disturbed. Any young trees removed would remove vital nutrients from the forest life cycle. Activity of machinery would subject fragile forest topsoils to erosion. Let's protect what little we have left of these Old Growth Forest Ecosystems. Let's protect entire Old Growth Forests, not just old trees within them.

With more protection of our wild lands we increase our native flora and fauna. The benefit is to all who inhabit this great nation and all who visit. The importance of maintaining our wild places is paramount to keeping our lands healthy and our people healthy! Biodiversity is what sustains us! Let's keep our wild lands wild!

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Always good to point out the economic BENEFITS of preserving forests to the anti environmental crowd that roams this site. They still think nature is only good for being logged, drilled, mined or driven over.

Good idea but I do know that President Obama has taken his family to Yellowstone, it was last summer I believe, so he has already done a bit of what you propose.

Good idea. I see this so much. Housing developmetns absolutely empty but right in the same town another forest is being clear cut for another housing development. Meanwhile an industrial park sits empty and decaying but another forest is clear cut for development of yet another industrial park. It is so needless. Use the existing homes, industrial parks and buildings first before destroying what little forest is left.

I am promoting your idea since Devons is incomplete. I agree though that everything should be done to preserve wild horses and wild horse habitat and I proposed an idea a few weeks back to do just that. To vote on it just click my name on the top then "ideas" and it is about 2/3rds down the list.

In African parks balloons are used to view wildlife. They do not disturb the wildlife as much as vehicles and it gives the rider an unique chance to see wildlife that otherwise would not be seen. I would not like to see balloons used in national parks as I think those should be left as pristine as possible with as little commercialization as possible and of course wilderness areas should be off limits to all but otherwise with the proper regulations I think balloons would be a wonderful way for people to experience our public lands, national forests and wildlife.

I grew up visiting the majestic Grand Canyon National Park with my family as a vacation destination. Hiking the Grand Canyon with my family was one of the most impressionable experiences of my childhood which taught me about conservation, history, self-esteem, environmental stewardship, and the awe of nature. Outdoor environmental education is more important now than ever. As urban density threatens our experience and connection to nature, particularly for our youth, strategic government and nonprofit partners can greatly further the National Park Service's mission. These partnerships will ensure that more urban youth experience life-changing connections to nature that will inspire them to protect and conserve our national parks for generations to come.

An excellent idea, long needed. I would only add that the West is not the only area in need of such discussion and planning. There are areas of the upper Midwest that would benefit (northern Minnesota, UP of Michigan, northern Wisconsin) as well.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Educational initiatives that promote the concept of low-impact park use are necessary to inform the public about the need to maintain a balance between the two mutually inconsistent objectives of park resource management: preservation and access. Posters at access points and trail signs can be used effectively to emphasize the balancing objective of low-impact access and to promote such low-impact activities as hiking, cross-country skiing, Nature study, and photography while discouraging or prohibiting such high-impact activities as trail biking, ATV use, and snowmobiling. Educational outreach efforts to high schools and civic organizations can also be very effective in promoting the objective of low-impact access to parks.

National Parks are the perfect place to learn about our natural environment. All children deserve an opportunity to learn in nature's classroom, see up close what they are being asked to preserve and protect, and understand the connections these wild places have to their communities back home. We cannot create a sustainable future without education. People don't care about what they don't know. The government can help make this possible by collaborating with strategic partners that have proven success, streamlining processes to encourage these partners to grow and serve more youth in more national parks, and actively working with states, counties, and local school boards and communities to find ways to fund participation in these experiences for all students. What do you think?

In reviewing my posts with my wife, she made a good point. Instead of the different forest user groups fighting with each other, why don't those that consider themselves stewards of the land work together to educate the bad apples that exist in every user group to be respectful of our public lands? That way we could teach conservation while still allowing everyone to enjoy the beauty of our natural lands. I thought it was a productive comment so I told her I would post it on the forum.

To me, one of the best things we can do regarding transportation is to get people out of their vehicles. Places like Zion National Park have successfully converted to a system where people ride public transportation into the park and leave their cars behind. This kind of system reduces motorized impact, enhances the visitor's experience, and even enables people to meet other travelers. This can and does work!

With today's seemingly growing environmental calamities, it is ever more apparent that our youth today will be the guiding force for the preservation of our environment. To help facilitate their actions, it is imperative for them to experience nature first-hand through an educational lens. National Parks is a prime location for learning and observing pristine nature sites. It behooves the government to partner with educational providers and be a part of the movement for a sustainable future.

Establish a "no-strings attached" rewards program to highlight the delivered results of local communities' plans to achieve a favorable balance between private land developers and public outdoors advocates.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Soil and Water Conservation Districts (SWCDs) should be more fully utilized in the effort to connect the American Public with the outdoors. SWCDs have existed for over 70 years and have well established partnerships between private entities (businesses, community organizations, clubs, etc.), the Federal Government, state governments, and local governments. They provide local leadership to address many natural resource concerns and have staff that are trained and ready to implement the ideas that the local citizenry place the highest priority on. One of the main advantages of utilizing SWCDs is that they can provide the grassroots connections and leadership that are essential to the success of a program to connect the people of the United States with the natural world that surrounds them. SWCDs have proven to be a successful and efficient way to deliver many different programs to the people. In a country that has diverse natural resources and a diverse population, having a locally led program is the best way to achieve success.

I was wondering when you were going to bring this up. Of course, Mount St. Helens is already protected as a National Monument, and it has strong local support to be expanded to include five nearby lakes. However, to maintain local support, recreational access, and funding and management efficiency, it should remain under Forest Service management, but with direct line-item funding.

The President and Mrs. Obama should go camping in National Forests and National Parks. Look what Teddy Roosevelt did by camping with John Muir, even Jimmy Carter floated the Snake River. Give up the Ritzy hotels get those kids in the woods. What a boost that would bring to the "get outdoors" initiatives and "child in the woods" type initiatives in the great outdoors of the USA.

Establish an Ancient Forest National Park that connects over 100 wilderness and roadless areas into one manageable whole forest for the protection of wildlife migrations, and mitigation of climate change. The park would provide a solid block of ancient forest habitat stretching from the Yolla Bolly Wilderness in California to the Rogue and Elk Rivers in Oregon. It would also include all of the proposed Siskiyou Crest National Monument and Cascade Siskiyou National Monument, the Smith River NRA and the Oregon Redwoods. This is the forest where the myth of Bigfoot began. It's wild, wooley and outstanding, renowned for its biodiversity.

www.ancientforestnationalpark.org

www.ancientforestnationalpark.org Ancient Forest National Park is the only way this is going to happen.

The New National Parks Project is working on a list of 100 additions to the National Park system including those mentioned here. I strongly support their effort. www.newnationalparks.org

I keep hearing that the fed has no right to own land, bla bla bla. The legal system in this country relies on precedence. Over the years, the lay of the land and rights of ownership have changed. Get over it. When the constitution was written, there we're almost no people in the US and not nearly as much land. It's a different country now and to try to reduce everything to the original definition is absurd. The fed obviously has a right to own land because..WE DO!

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Many communities have national parks in their backyards; we must expand opportunities for all Americans, especially young people, to learn from and be inspired by these places that hold our natural and cultural heritage. For example, at Santa Monica Mountains, the National Park Service has partnered with the Los Angeles Unified School District to bring 10,000 students to participate in one or more of the park's five curriculum-based programs. The students learn about water quality testing and restoring sites with native vegetation through firsthand experience; for the majority of students it is their first experience in nature. These types of educational programs should be scaled at existing sites and replicated and funded at other national park sites across the country.

"p.s. I'm not a mountain biker. But when a helping hand is needed on trail work, I find they are far more likely to pitch in than my fellow hikers are!" Glad I'm not the only one to notice that.

And let's also protect them from light pollution.

This is similar to the Americorps program - students trade time for a small (very small) stipend and tuition reimbursement - what about an expansion of the Americorps program? I believe the 'Teacher-Ranger-Teacher' program could also fit with this idea.

I agree and believe that environmental education, and getting kids outdoors is the key to lasting change for both our environment and the human spirit. My exposure to the National Parks and access to open lands as a child had a profound effect on how I view my planet and how I view my fellow man. Currently as a mom I can see the difference it makes in my kids when they are outdoors in nature. My son learns & enjoys his science studies more and is eager to see first hand what he has only read in books or been lectured on in class. We need more organizations that provide environmental education to ensure more youth from all walks of life make life-changing connections to nature that will inspire them to protect and conserve our natural spaces.

Creating and preserving more wilderness is the best thing we can do for our present and future citizens. A chance to experience nature in its pristine glory will not be possible if resource exploitation and road building continue at their present pace. Wilderness experienced on foot is the best antidote to the stresses of modern life.

There will always be disagreements over whose ideas are right and whose are wrong. At the end of the day the best idea is the one that people are out doing. We can talk things to death and generally do. Maybe we should run our mouths less and simply do more. It is easy to sit around a table or on the couch and pick other people's ideas and efforts apart. Each and every person has the ability to do something to help. We are very good at making excuses for ourselves. Expect less, Do more. Turn off the noise, go outside and look around. Can you find one simple thing you can do right now? Do it! Don't wait for someone else to do it. Everybody is someone else to someone.

Educate the offenders a simple article in the local news paper and a 5 min segment on the news will go a long way. Its usually a local problem and should be dealt with that way.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Our National Parks have a long history of providing education and naturalist programs for visitors and organized group outings from schools to hiking clubs to senior groups. Building on this history, I urge this Administration to expand programs that reach today's youth so that we are building the next generation of supporters for our great American outdoors. Environment education for our youth is more important than ever as we grapple with pressing environmental issues like global climate change and understanding the impacts of events like the recent Gulf oil disaster.

There are several places-- especially out West that deserve to be a national park and others that should be expanded. Here are some great examples: we should expand existing parks like Canyonlands National Park in Utah, San Gabriel Mountains National Recreation Area in California, and Oregon Caves National Monument in Oregon so that the system encompasses more of the Southwest's last unspoiled wildlife migration routes; intact ecosystems near a major metropolitan area; and matchless limestone caverns. We should also add new units like Mount St. Helens in Washington and Valles Caldera in New Mexico to represent ecosystem types such as the upper montane grassland and recovering cascade mixed forests. These sites are simply examples of the possibilities that can and should be added to the system. Not all public lands should be national parks, but there are certainly some places that deserve the highest level of protection and are nationally significant to all Americans.

Tie preservation trades to redevelopment of run down neighborhoods. Use structures to teach about wood window rehabilitation, masonry repointing, carpentry, plastering, decorative finishes. Teach young craftsmen about sustainability issues. Demonstrate the value of conserving historic fabric rather than replacing. Instruct on true energy efficiency upgrades that don't compromise the historic integrity of a structure. Teach sound maintenance skills, showing that "an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure." Team with cities and states to revitalize regions.

This has implications for more than feel good community gardens. Community gardens could serve as the insurance we will need if there is a national emergency--particularly one related to fuel shortages which could result in our not being able to ship food where it needs to go. This is also a powerful tool to teach children about life, where their food comes from and good habits for a lifetime. I believe this is the future and one that can support many new jobs--especially for women.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Decisions Based on Sound Science – Mohonk Preserve is one of the nation’s premier sites for the long-term collection of scientific data on weather, landscape change, and species. Preserve staff and research associates have continued to add to what is now a continuum of over 80 years of natural and cultural history records and 113 years of daily weather data—all collected uninterrupted and with methodological consistency over time. These records make up the oldest and most extensive natural history record in the Hudson Valley region. Because of the Preserve’s standardized field methodologies and breadth of information, researchers can compare current and historical data and use it in comparative studies with researchers both on the Preserve and from research sites around the country. Climate scientists, such as our partners at the Lamont Doherty Earth Observatory and the Goddard Institute for Space Studies, are examining phenological trends and long-term weather data to identify impacts of climate change on the flowering of plants and the range and arrival dates of neo-tropical migratory birds.

Complete Streets – Communities across the country are asking their planners and engineers to build road networks that are safer, more livable, and welcoming to everyone. Instituting a complete streets policy ensures that transportation planners and engineers consistently design and operate roadways with all users in mind –including bicyclists and pedestrians of all ages and abilities. As Transportation Secretary Ray LaHood has said, “Our goals are to provide cleaner, safer, and more efficient ways to get around. This investment by the Obama Administration in our nation’s communities will create jobs, boost economic development and recovery, and further reduce our dependence on oil.” Connectivity between parks, preserves, and communities must be high priority. DOI should be working closely with DOT.

FHWA Recreational Trails Program – The Recreational Trails Program (RTP) provides funds to the States to develop and maintain recreational trails and trail-related facilities for both non-motorized and motorized recreational trail uses. The RTP is an assistance program of the Department of Transportation's Federal Highway Administration (FHWA). Federal transportation funds benefit recreation including hiking, bicycling, in-line skating, equestrian use, cross-country skiing, snowmobiling, off-road motorcycling, all-terrain vehicle riding, four-wheel driving, or using other off-road motorized vehicles. Between 1870 and 1929 Albert, Alfred, and Daniel Smiley built the Mohonk/Minnewaska Carriage Road network to provide guests easy access to the majestic scenery that surrounded Lake Mohonk and Lake Minnewaska. The road network served as a model for John D. Rockefeller, Jr. in the development of carriage roads at both Acadia National Park and his Kykuit estate. At Mohonk Preserve his funding will be instrumental in replacing a bridge on Cedar Drive Carriage Road over County Route 6 thus restoring the continuity of the network along the Shawangunk Ridge.

Transportation Enhancements – Federal support for transportation initiatives that link destinations with each other and major transportation hubs are needed while ensuring access for all ages and abilities including:

- physical trail connections that link urban areas with nearby open spaces and waterfronts;
- transportation programs to support pedestrians and bicycles;
- funding to inventory and convert abandoned rail beds into trails, and improve existing trails for pedestrians and bicycles;
- increase flexibility in highway design to better accommodate bicyclists and pedestrians.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Can you all imagine how pleasant life would be if electric vehicles were on the roads instead of the noisy gas guzzling machines we now have? We could solve the noise pollution pretty swiftly if we all - Off Road Vehicles users, boat users, car drivers - bought into the electric engine idea. And hey, it would be good for the air, for the wildlife and for our security too.

Some of the arguments in favor of "managing" forests seem to be conveniently forgetting that natural ecosystems do a fine job of managing -- without human intervention. These arguments may be instead promoting logging. Fire has been proven to be a natural benefit to western forests. Go to Yellowstone NP & see for yourself how the fire of '88 has improved the ecosystem. Some plant species need fire to open their seed pods, such as the Lodgepole Pine.

Nobody except willing sellers. No eminent domain. Check out a non-profit that does this. www.wildernesslandtrust.org If you like them, join up, send a few bucks to protect what we love and what our kids will NEED!

Hey here I am. I live about as close to fed lands and the Crest as peopel in Siskiyou County. I WANT A MONUMENT.

"recognize all the hard volunteer work the off-road communities do to keep the trails maintained for everyone's use" Nothing that one does in furtherance of ones benefit is "volunteer" -- to volunteer is to work selflessly for the benefit of others. And nothing else can use the areas that allow motorized vehicles -- certainly not plants and animals. The noise pollution, the vibrations, the oil and gas pollution destroy wild areas, and ensure they will have no future.

There is no such thing as a "wealthy conservation group" -- most of the funds collected by the Sierra Club come in the form of a \$25/year membership donation. I've been to some of these meetings representing a conservation group -- on my own dollar, as are most such representatives. And I live in Los Angeles off \$20,000 a year. So stop with the uninformed and ridiculous characterization of those committed to the future of the planet as wealthy. Our true wealth is in our love of the natural beauty God gave us. Not like the wealth of stakeholders like ranchers and mining companies and fisheries and logging companies, etc.

I agree with the compromise in general; however, 1:1 is not really a "fair" exchange when you consider the impact of OHV use on the environment. I am not sure what the best exchange rate would be, but how about 10:1 - e.g. for every 10 acres designated as protected wilderness area, there would be 1 acre of "vehicle use" area.

Fantastic idea! What if every student in America, from every walk of life, every cultural and economic background, and every part of the country, got to spend a week on a National Park learning about its history, finding out how what happens in nature impacts what happens in their communities back home, and falling in love with our National Parks. A generation from now we'd have an unstoppable army of environmental stewards working to safeguard the future of our parks and our planet.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

A worthwhile idea. Pro-health and pro-environment.

We subsidize driving, but pedestrians and bicyclists are underserved. This idea promotes healthy lifestyles and is environmentally-friendly.

It certainly does and would work, especially if there are sufficient stops with access to trailheads

Horse trails would allow families with young children explore the wonders of our parks. These trails could coexist with hiking trails and have a relativ minor impact on the land

I would rather see OHVs limited to maintained forest service roads. Let's not be quite so extreme!

I say let them on national parks when they make as little noise as a hiker or a horse rider. Until them, keep them out.

Glacier NP does it, too, but with a cool twist- all the busses are 1930's era, converted to CNG fuel. As for a fee for drivers, I would support that, too- if there is anywhere one should let go of one's attachment to a personal vehicle, perhaps it would be in a National park.

Irv, you are joking right? When I get off my dirt bike, I can feel every muscle in my body. You don't just sit, but use your whole body when riding. Of course you would know this if you ever tried it. Don't spout off on what you know nothing about. If foreigners invade, I will gladly stand next to our troops to defend this country-what about you?

Riding my dirtbike is quite a work out believe me, so yes it is heathy! My bike is quiet and I have see lots of wildlife!!

Lets make all Federal land preserves and keep everyone out. No one goes in no research no management. we can just look in through the fence.

Some of this may work in some areas. We have many areas in this country that people uses are everywhere. I think more should be set aside in a natural state, especially in areas that are not used presently by people and are still wild. Wilderness is not only set aside for people, but for survival of plants and animals, some that are already endangered. Most human activities can take place anywhere; farmland, parks, private property, etc.

Enjoying OHVs is great. There should be enouph space for this activity. But try taking your helmat off in an isolated area and listen to the sounds of the forest. Enjoy the solitude and regenerate. Maybe there is more to life than rip roaring around, which can be done anywhere, not only in wild places. Some areas should be left wild.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Off road vehicles have their place but their proponents seem unwilling to really see the damage they do. It is true that in relatively lush areas damage is quickly grown over--unless it's in a place where water concentrates and erodes it into a gully. But in the desert it not only can take centuries for a trail created by an ORV to disappear, but because it's often pretty flat with sparse vegetation, riders very often go off on their own, leaving tracks that'll be there for a very long time. I have yet to hear of a quad or ATV that has differentials for its driven wheels. This means that every time the vehicle turns, one or both of its driven wheels must skid--and if you'll take the time to look closely at the tracks left by one, you'll see that every turn will have some degree of damage because of that skidding. In the desert where my wife and I spend the winter there are ATV trails everywhere. You can still see the tracks made by army vehicles training during World War II--and the new trails will last at least as long. In addition, the dust kicked up by these machines literally clouds the air--it often looks hazy even when the air is very dry, and you can see the dust rising in the distance every time one goes by, and the noise at the peak of the winter season is almost continuous and is audible for miles. So. While I can empathize with ORV lovers, and when I was younger did my share of dirt bike riding, It seems to me that proponents of these machines need to set their emotions aside and take a serious interest in seeing just what the real affects on the earth their machines have--and with that knowledge in mind make proposals that genuinely take these affects into account. You might encourage manufacturers to create machines with differentials, for example, as that would significantly reduce the impact those machines make. And seek to design trails that minimize impacts. And acknowledge that there are impacts on wildlife that may be very hard to see, on nature in general, and on people that need to be taken into account.

And I hope that when your children are of age, you can still walk to see these lands. I too believe that setting aside lands as Wilderness are needed. But when do you think we will have enough that actually meet the criteria set in the 1964 Act? I believe we are there now.

At the Grand Canyon, I was delighted to find that the western arm of the rim road had been closed to private cars. This allowed visitors to escape the crowds around the South Rim commercial establishments. Can something similar be done in other parks? Decades ago, Yosemite proposed closing out all cars except for overnight visitors. Instead, why not block cars from the roads that reach into the valley beyond the lodges?

I was a tour guide for an atv company on the island of Kauai. We had trails that we would use that were placed to show the tourists the area, the native plants, the local historical spots, the swimming pool. All of this was on well thought out trails that would have a minimal impact on the local environment. There was NO going off the trails. This was both to protect the area and the tourists.

What was the deer doing? Was it a buck, a doe, a fawn? Was it a blacktail, whitetail or mule? How about the other animals? What were they doing? How long did you watch them? Did you learn anything from them? See how easy it is to "love the outdoors" at 40mph?

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

I don't like to hear my neighbors come home via their radios blaring. I have never done anything at home or camping to bother my neighbors. I go to sit and be a part of the forest, watching the trees, clouds, sky, birds, deer, elk, plants--the eco system. I listen to Indian flute music quietly. When I leave, no one can tell I've been there. I grew up camping and fishing. My daughter grew up in camping in Washington. She is in the motorcycle business. Neither of us expects to hear the roar of engines while camping. No one ever had to teach me not to litter. I have always respected the environment. Camping has exposed me to other people's ideas of camping. TV's, music, pot, litter, and the roar of engines. Quiet, please. Listen to the forest, the water, the birds, the fog, even the heat. Do not bring the city with you and thrust it on your camping neighbors and creatures of the forest. Leave it like you found it OR better.

Since OHV's damage the landscape much more than other methods of recreational enjoyment, charge them appropriate fees. Given the revenue needs of the park and forrest system, a seasonal fee of \$1,000. per OHV used in each land unit is a good start.

Public lands should be open for ALL users! Not just those who claim to have a better appreciation of nature and the outdoors because they're anti-OHV. My 4x4 vehicle gets me to remote and beautiful areas that are rarely, if ever seen and enjoyed by many of these so called nature lovers.

Yes, thank you Mathew. Let's hear it for my wilderness designation. Open spaces are necessary for life to grow as it was intended. So much natural habitat for animals, native plants, and birds is destroyed by what--malls, and more houses? We need to be stewards of life.

I've always wondered about a country who bases its economy on building buildings. That's why basing the economy on conservation and clean energy is a much better idea. Yes, some areas will have to be destroyed for that as well, hopefully with much study by scientists concerning the impact of alternative energy sites, but why is "development" even necessary. We have put under concrete some of our very best farmland, which a lot of times exists right outside of cities. Support local food production and organic farming. Get rid of the 50 little townships in a county, each one's hands being greased by the local contractor, and have real county and state planning about what to do with existing farm and wilderness areas. Start teaching our children about our connection to nature.

Keep America free. By limiting ORV use, we will also limit imported oil use, thereby stopping the terrorists who threaten our freedom. We are the only society who use massive amounts of fossil fuel to "recreate". Stop ORV use --- stop terrorism --- keep America strong and not dependent on terrorist regimes.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

The wilderness belongs to the plants and animals who take refuge from our lifestyles in protected areas. We have an obligation to keep them protected. Compared to what we have destroyed these are precious acres of natural habitat. ORV's or careless campers and hikers damage wilderness areas. To respect the land we must keep our footprints small and our responsibilities to the wilderness always in mind. I have always believed that we are obligated to encourage that small footprint and keep out motor vehicles of any sort. Let us also ask campers sign on to pack out what they bring in. I camp. I'd be glad to sign on to that. This is our only planet. The interdependence of species is remarkable. Alas too few of us search to understand it. Our species cannot exist if we keep destroying the natural areas we have left.

In a world of roads, our national parks are about the only place I can go to get away from the noise of our times. I used to walk in the Ocala National Forest and nearly be run over by motor bikes that were so fast they seemed to appear through the brush before I could even hear them. I would dive to the side as they whizzed by. Naturally I could never ride my horse in these areas as the scare of a rapidly approaching bike would scare my horse and have me killed. I think the woods is all about the quiet use of the land. Leave the motors out. This is a opportunity for motor bike enthusiasts to buy their own land and whiz around all they want on it. It is no place for conservation and national pride in wild lands. This is about preserving for our grandchildren, as our grandparents preserved for us. This isn't about racing or bringing motorized vehicles in to the woods. I am so grateful my Great Smoky Mountains National Park does not even allow the rangers to use chain saws except for one week a year to preserve the silence and the peace for the animals.

Giving humans more access has never been a good thing for animals or forests. Leave Wilderness lands wild and free of humans. We have so much area yet animals have so little.

G G OHV already pays to ride on the land. We pay with our offroad registration. We also dont go out of our way to kill all the wildlife we see. It would not be fair to have unlimited access to the land in an OHV but we still have the right to some of the land and right now the ratio is of balance. G G you are wrong

Logging crews are kind and gentle lets invite them all in. After the current administration is through I guess we can sell our natural resources to pay our outstanding debts.

I'm sorry I was wrong. I think I'll buy an ATV so I can see much more of the great outdoors.

Please research Interlake Offroad Park in Lynnville, Indiana It is a multiuse park where motorized and equestrian are all in the same park and share alot of the same trails. My wife and daughter have horses and I ride them alot myself. telling people thaty horses and motorized vehicles cannot coexist has already been disproven.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Wilderness areas provide recreational opportunities that other public lands do not. Perhaps this is not apparent in all areas of the United States, where public lands are plentiful, but in Minnesota, the Boundary Waters provides a unique opportunity to enjoy recreation in a different way. I can't get the same experience anywhere else in the state. I recognize that this is not a true wilderness, being managed by man, but it is the closest we can get, and for that reason it is valuable. Motorized boats and vehicles have opportunities to recreate in other parts of the state, but to canoe in total isolation without the hum of a motor is something difficult to obtain elsewhere than in the wilderness. In addition, the Boundary Waters Wilderness is currently threatened by a mining project as well as cell phone towers within its sightline. I respect ATVers having areas for their recreation, but they are plentiful in the state of Minnesota. I hope they can respect my desire for an area for those who enjoy as close of a wilderness experience in the Midwest as possible.

Glen, actually national forests can be open for logging, building roads, etc. Wilderness areas get special protection. Put poetically in the Wilderness Act of 1964: "A wilderness, in contrast with those areas where man and his own works dominate the landscape, is hereby recognized as an area where the earth and community of life are untrammelled by man, where man himself is a visitor who does not remain." It recognizes the limits of man's ability to manage things and that some areas should be left to be as God and nature will have them.

OHV use is absolutely sustainable. Here in Colorado we have many OHV groups which self police. We maintain and actually care about our trails. I myself have spent countless weekends on service projects working with the Forest Service to repair damage and prevent erosion. There is room for us all.

The park buses were great in Yosemite. I would like to see that system in Yellowstone.

Edward Abbey wrote along these lines in one of his books. He took it even further and suggested that we allow paved roadways in national parks to deteriorate without being repaired or replaced. Only shuttles for those unable to hike to landmarks would be allowed inside. There is no place inside our most precious places for asphalt and exhaust!

Public lands are there for the public to have access to, but not to abuse or destroy. If you want a place to tear up with your ATV, then "pool your cash, find a piece of land that's for sale and buy it" and then you can do whatever you want. No one is shutting you out, we are just asking you to respect the land and the people who are enjoying it. These lands aren't worth designating as public if we aren't protecting them from destruction. Lets just sell them to Disney and let them put in an off-road theme park.

I think the Denali bus system is a very good model. There seem to be plenty of busses and the drivers expertise and commentary make the experience more rewarding. I also like the ability to get off to take a picture or a stroll and get back on the next bus. I think if you try this system you will find it is much better than driving yourself around.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

The places you describe already exist. It is called the national forest. No further designation is needed. Man and wildlife coexist all through our national forests.

I agree "A wilderness, in contrast with those areas where man and his own works dominate the landscape, is hereby recognized as an area where the earth and community of life are untrammelled by man, where man himself is a visitor who does not remain." So lets please stop designating lands that don't meet the stated criteria as "wilderness"

Yes wouldn't it be nice if we all had access to the our national lands and we didn't try to exclude each other.

The President used to have the role of providing to Congress the findings of agency experts and field personnel, so that wilderness recommendations didn't just sit on agency shelves in the land management plans, but actually were delivered to those who make the decisions on what public lands to include in the National Wilderness Preservation System: members of Congress. Wilderness is the gold standard for land protection and recommendations by the various agencies ought not to simply gather dust, requiring land managers to protect the land in the interim. Presidential leadership is necessary.

OHV/Multiple use in our forests helps reduce illegal drug operations and therefore is safer for my family to visit. We don't want more land. Just give us back what was taken away and let us build more trails on what we have! We will even do the work! Oh and Irv G. You have no clue the physical and mental ability it takes to learn how to ride an OHV well. Walking a kid through a forest where he/she can be attacked by a bear or mountain lion or fall from a cliff or lost may be child abuse as well. Yet it is worth the risk isn't it?

Wilderness is essential for the future; I hope that my grandchildren can see the beauty of our natural environment as I have been privileged to see it.

OHV is not unlike any other recreational adjunct and can find their own land to play on. We don't allow mountain bikes nor monster trucks on National Parks lands; There is no good reason; reason means : consecutive logical thought; to allow OHV on or in our National Parks.

I give nothing but the most respect to our public lands and I'm pretty sure I'd be safe by betting the next ten years of paychecks that the OHV crowd have picked up more trash left behind behind all users than any tree hugger group.

We have enough Wilderness. Creating more just confines all of the other outdoor recreation not allowed in Wilderness into smaller sections of land, and becomes over crowded, and overused.

Wilderness is a "one size" fits all approach to conserving land. It needs to come in many "sizes". What works well in one part of the country does not work well everywhere. Some areas would be perfectly suited to OHV use, while others might not. To me, the key to conserving land, means having as many people with a vested interest as possible, and the best way to do that is to have all user groups come together and compromise.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

I have a jeep that I like to ride trails with. I stay on designated trails and drive respectfully to nature and other users of trails. Tread lightly as they say. But being partially disabled, I would not otherwise be able to enjoy these beautiful lands we have. There is a middle ground here. Both sides can enjoy with some rule enforcements. Hikers too cause damage, just look at all the wildfires that are caused by irresponsible people. We ALL have to act responsibly.

5 My feet get MUCH better gas mileage than your motorcycle. Motorcycles and Prusus are not elements that occur naturally in nature, feet are...

Not all Public Lands are appropriate for all the used you listed. For example, Acadia National Park has facilities for tents and campers, carriage roads for walking, running and biking, horse trails, and an auto/motorcycle/bicycle road. Many of the Nat. Parks in the south west have four wheel drive vehicle roads and hiking/walking trails in addition to the regular auto roads. But, there are some places where the terrain and/or the wildlife are intolerant of anything more than the auto road and the hiking trails and walking paths. It seems that each public land entity should be studied separately to determine what is the "wisest long term use" of the land.

Zion and Acadia do it - why not more? The buses I've taken have all been clean and the drivers friendly. And the greatest part of this idea is you don't have to find a parking spot - or maybe not stop where you want because there isn't a space left.

This has already been implemented in Zion National Park and works perfectly.

Limit, yes. Completely restrict, no. Good points.

I have mobility issues, but I still don't want any more OHV/ORV access in our park lands and wild lands than is already there and would actually prefer that most of the existing access be revoked. The erosion, noise, pollution and disruption of wildlife are not worth it! Wow I think that its great you have a choice to make all on your own and nobody is making the choice for you,your living proof this is what America is all about, does everybody remember the song this land is your land this land is my land....

Noise is stress: for animals, hikers and campers. Seek peace, leave your internal combustion transportation home and walk or bicycle.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Your statement: "My daughters and now my grand kids explored and appreciate the great outdoors while riding a motorcycle on U.S. and WA state public property. The enthusiasm and enjoyment experienced by our kids could never be matched by a more sedate and conservative adult activity like just walking around. Kids need to be excited about getting out and doing something and orv use gets them out there and away from Madison Avenue things like Wii and game boys."shows you are still promoting manmade concepts over nature. Do you honestly think your children and grandchildren can not be excited by nature? If that IS the case then you are at fault, at least for the perpetration of the concept to your daughters that excitement can only be accomplished by speed and or machines. Getting kids away from machines (wiis, computers, motorcycles, ATVs, dirt bikes, and even SPORTS) is a way to enjoy things as a family. How can you even remotely suggest that using motorcycles is a 'cheap' way to entertain your family? Obviously you have no concept of environmental pollution. Pollution involves more than just the emissions of gasses or garbage. Pollution also pertains to noise! Getting away to a forest for a weekend of camping (free of MP3 players, music, TVs, etc.) provides MANY INEXPENSIVE ways to entertain a family. You are showing a very narrow mind set and you are cheating your family of many things of the so called 'slow life' you mention in writing about walking/hiking/camping, etc. My daughter went camping/hiking with me from the time she was a preteen. Today we still go, but not as often as before because she now has a family, I'm involved in caring for aging/ill parents so it's just that time isn't as available for the two of us as it once was. BUT I am thrilled to say, even in my absence, my daughter is taking her daughters camping/hiking and teaching them to enjoy things away from TV/MP3/wii/computer, etc. They are just as excited when they see birds or other creatures they don't get to see in their suburban neighborhood as they are when they get a new game or see a new movie. Probably more so because they realize this isn't something that comes to your door and knocks. You have and are short changing your children and grandchildren if you are teaching them that excitement/relaxation/family fun can only be obtained by speed or motorized vehicles of any type. The very fact that you haven't even considered taking them camping while on those motorcycles shows your narrow minded concept/idea of recreation/relaxation/enjoyment. I know people who have motorcycles and they pack them (they can travel further on a tank of gas than even I can with a small vehicle which gets 32 mpg), travel along scenic routes enjoying the sites and then settle in an area for camping/hiking where they enjoy nature for several days. They go as a family and have a wonderful time. No, they don't use them on the trails. They hike and walk. Great exercise, great learning, and enough new experiences to keep all of them excited by nature. I know they enjoy their motorcycles, but they also enjoy nature and show respect for the land as those who do travel at a leisurely pace because they know the BENEFITS/ENJOYMENT/EXCITEMENT of NATURE as well. With your views, I feel greatly sorry and sad for your daughters and grandchildren. It's obvious they will miss so much this world has to offer. MY DEEPEST SYMPATHY AND CONDOLENCES TO YOUR FAMILY FOR THEIR LOSS.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

For those riders who say they like to hike, I want to laugh. I've seen NO ATV or DIRT BIKER hiking anywhere and I do know some who use these vehicles as 'entertainment and competition. THEY DON'T HIKE AND FOR THE MOST PART DON'T CAMP. It's become a personal joke between us. So it's laughable when I read responses that say they like to hike. While we're on the subject of impact on the forest trails from hikers, I'm one of those who pick up after those who have gone before. I'm one of those who DOES NOT LEAVE THE TRAIL! I'm one of those who believe that every trail should, for the benefit of Mother Nature to healshould be shutdown for at least one year. It would not hurt any of us to have the areas rotated and specific trails, hiking area and camping areas closed for one year in order to allow nature to 'heal' from what impact we do have on her. So far, my feelings on that subject have not been listened to. The only time a campground is closed is because it was damaged by severe weather over the winter and they are clearing it, but this doesn't allow sufficient time for nature to heal itself. The same goes for camp grounds. The only time I've seen one closed was because that specific campground decided it was time for an upgrade of features, resetting tent pad sites, doing some repairs where rain water run offs was causing erosion, etc. It wasn't just closed to give 'Mother Nature' a year off to heal. As for fees and costs. I've have maintained that fees should be raised. Not only would it help the parks and trail systems, but the increased fees might make those who are not dedicated to nature out of the environment. Easier to find a free or cheap man made 'water park' or other 'entertainment' area to have a little fun. Those of us who travel (and I have to travel a pretty good distance to get to a 'nature area free of motorized vehicles' (other than one government military facility which excludes all motorized vehicles from trails other than parking two small parking areas. The road (much larger than a trail in some areas) is full of runners/joggers/walkers and ALL are on their own two feet. They allow horses which are kept on the grounds, but in all my years of visiting this area on a military base, the only place I've seen the horses was on the grounds where they are kept which. There are riding rings etc. They are allowed on the trails, but I've never seen anything to indicate they have been there. Maybe that is because they are not there in great numbers. But I certainly don't see any 'impact' from them. If I have to travel for more than an hour to find a nature trail where I can spend time walking, hiking and just enjoying what 'Mother Nature' put there, I certainly don't want to hear the buzz of a motorized vehicle. **MOTORIZED BIKES, ALL TERRAIN VEHICLES, AND THE LIKE ALREADY HAVE PLACES WHERE THEY CAN CREATE MAYHEM ON THE EARTH. KEEP THEM IN THOSE AREAS AND OUT OF OUR PARKS, OFF OUR HIKING TRAILS AND OUT OF OUR PUBLIC OWNED FORESTS!** I do my part to keep any place I visit cleaner than it was when I arrived. I hike out more than I ever carry in and I consider myself very environmentally aware of what I do to the forest. I still remember a friend who went hiking with me years ago telling me "When you have to step on a root of a tree while hiking, ask the tree for forgiveness." That particular friend is almost a 'woodsmen'. That friend could survive in a forest with nothing more than the bare essentials. They taught me a lot. I'm aware that every time I use a trail, I do make an impact. I travel light, light footed and I stay on the trails. Perhaps the answer it to alter the trails in some areas at times. That would decrease the 'foot fall damage' of our feet, but again, that is the same as my original suggestion of closing down areas for a year to give 'Mother Nature' time to heal from the impact we do place upon her in designated areas.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

i am off road and love the outdoor,nat forest are pubic land

ohv uses is not change climates ,off road for environment more wilderness group

we ride on trail not off trail, also call pubic land

ohv Great for Family get out in to outdoor

OMG - don't you guys have anything else to do? Post your idea, vote on someones, and then go out and do something positive for the environment, before we lose it to pollution and plastic bags.

my motorcycle gets better gas mileage then you prius. I ride right past deer and other animals all the time they don't seem to be bothered by my motorized vehicle. I ride my motorcycle on trails that have been planned out, careful consideration is payed to issues like erosion and sediment pollution because of water crossings and all sorts of other things... MY motorcycle is safe for our trails, we have spark arresters, and decibel level requirements, i'm way safer then your coleman grill.

Someone suggested user fees for equestrians. That's something that many horse owners do thru local riding club memberships. Trail maintenance and improvements come from that funding mechanism, supplemented by club fundraising efforts. Many have spoken well here on behalf of keeping motorized vehicles off of federal hiking paths and I support that. This is an either/or thing: pedestrians and horses can not coexist safely with motorized vehicles, no matter how responsibly the machines are handled. By having a motorized vehicle there, that does not give someone the right to infringe on another's enjoyment of that area, but that's what occurs. Noise, fumes, and risk of bodily harm are accepted by the OHV user. Non-OHV users do not accept those negatives, but have those forced upon them. These two user groups must remain separate.

I think this is such a great idea. I would have LOVED to not have to drive everywhere when I was in Yellowstone. You could get to know other campers and save so much trouble! Not all the parks have enough people to justify this - but many of the bigger ones really do.

I think there is plenty of land available that some areas can be used for ORV recreation. Just because it is not a recreation that appeals to me does not mean it should not be available. ORV enthusiasts deserve a place to enjoy their recreation, too.

I am not an ORV enthusiast but I know several who are. These folks are very respectful of the environment. The statement that "People who drive off road vehicles have no respect for nature or the rights of others" is a gross generalization. I think there is plenty of land available where some areas can be open for ORV traffic.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

The Trust for Public Land and The Nature Conservancy are outstanding examples of cooperation -- public and private -- as well as with landowners, State Departments of Conservation, etc. who work together to manage/preserve/conservate critical habitat and other areas in conjunction with existing state and federal agencies. The Internet has only served to increase awareness and participation in the effort as well as offer more hiking, kayaking, etc. in obscure, remote places. The President can visit one of these areas and encourage Federal agencies to increase cooperative efforts.

"Leave No Trace" website: { Link } Plus restoration of land, water, and air for the intended purpose of sustaining life. Develop specific areas where the intended use is proven to have zero impact on the biological life cycle.

"Our future generations need the opportunity to enjoy this place in the same way we do today." Exactly. Leave it just the way it is. No wilderness designation.

A proven model with a solid track record of success - absolutely, more can and should be done on the federal level to strengthen and extend this method of achieving several positive outcomes.

I am a HUGH supporter of having as many opportunities as possible for everyone to enjoy their passion. A HUGH supporter of Multi-use trails. I understand and share your frustration and animosity that comes from that frustration. But I have a problem with part of your idea – “All recreational trails should be opened...”! That word “All” is so inclusive that I take it as meaning to open designated wilderness area trails, The Pacific Crest hiking Trail, and every hiking trail that there is. Not sure that is the best for all aspects. Do we need more single track and/or Multi-use trails – ABSOLUTELY. Do we need to prevent any further closures of what is now open and available – YES! But to flat out make every trail there is in this country in to a motorcycle trail is not a viable solution. I have a tendency to read into some people’s ideas and take them out of context – am I wrong with what you are trying to achieve here?

An amazing and expansive area worthy of permanent protection. A great place to remember how big and beautiful this country is.

Both TPL and TNC are getting public funding. They are endowed with millions and work with land transfer/stewardship/easements, etc. for critical habitat.

Can anyone tell me specifically where they are closing all these OHV trails? I was just out in Moab and it doesn't seem that there is a loss for OHV trails. There are numerous Federal, State, Local, and private trails in that area. Why doesn't the OHV crowd come up with some real tangible ideas rather than just say there needs to be more trails and less wilderness.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Here's an idea that is actually working in northern Minnesota and the Border Lakes Region. The Heart of the Continent region: Spanning the international border between northeastern Minnesota and northwestern Ontario lies an natural treasure: the largest expanse of public greenspace in the heart of North America. This 5.5 million acre (2.2 million hectares) landscape comprises a blend of working forest, rugged scenery, pristine watersheds, abundant wildlife and outstanding biodiversity. Several separately managed natural areas are encompassed by this ecosystem at the "heart of the continent," including Quetico Provincial Park, Superior National Forest (including the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness), Voyageurs National Park, Grand Portage National Monument and numerous Minnesota state forest lands and parks and Ontario provincial parks. (See map.) The Heart of the Continent Partnership: The Heart of the Continent Partnership is a Canadian/American coalition of land managers and local stakeholders working together on cross-border projects that promote the economic, cultural and natural health of the lakes, forests and communities on the Ontario/Minnesota border. From out of a broad collection of separate entities, the Partnership is seeking to develop a common identity and sense of belonging to the larger cross-border area. HOCP Mission: The Heart of the Continent Partnership seeks to sustain and celebrate the health, beauty, diversity and productivity of the natural and cultural resources of the border lakes region through collaboration to meet the needs of present and future generations. Benefits of collaboration: The most important benefit of this four year effort is that groups that traditionally have not worked together, many of whom have been actively antagonistic, are getting to know each other, build trust, and find ways to work together for everyone's benefit. As the stakeholders in this Heart of the Continent region collaborate, there are many benefits for land management, conservation, science research and the local communities. Within the HOCP collaborative, groups are meeting to talk about a shared vision for the larger landscape. Through this dialogue, groups are finding ways to reach across the organizational and international boundaries and work together on common goals and cross-border projects. In addition, public land managers at the federal, state, provincial, and county levels are starting to coordinate their efforts in ways that improve the land and connect with local communities.

Humans NEED a healthy natural ecosystem to purify the mess we make. Nature recycles our water and air, and even sets the tone for our climate. Without nature humans DIE. Therefore the needs of nature ARE human needs.

I agree!!! In addition to comments about the benefits, I think they would also gain a very positive feeling from working in the outdoors which could have such a great effect on all areas of their lives - from prisoners to the short-term unemployed. A good dose of nature can yield wonderful things!

I also hunt in southeast Oregon, regularly, and fully support protecting the wonderful hunting opportunities in southeast Oregon by permanently protecting this magnificent landscape.

I also hunt, and I also support setting aside protected areas for the animals and ecosystems I hunt near to be preserved. Everyone wins when we preserve wilderness. And when I'm not hunting, I can go to these places and get away from 4-wheelers and .306's. That's more choice, not less.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

I am in favor of more federally preserved land.

I figured that. I think most people who care about the environment would be pleased to have more protected wild land.

I have been seeing many responses that decry "wilderness" designations as detrimental to people using the land, but as finally noted, we need to allow space for all the flora and fauna to live without disturbance. We don't truly "own" this land anyway--it was here long before we were, and hopefully will recover once we are gone.

I love this land. Among other things, it brings back memories of fabulous keg parties in my younger days. :-) The landscape is incredible, especially along the Idaho/Oregon border. That 100 miles south of Burns Junction .. not so much. I also remember thousands of jackrabbits out there. Used to be impossible not hitting them on Hwy 95. Now I don't see any.

I strongly agree. Wolves are an integral part of the animal and plant habitat. Studies have shown how elk and deer herds have devastated watersheds when their populations are not controlled through natural predation. Hunters don't fill the same role as wolves.

If the river corridor and adjoining sage lands are protected, then hunters can be assured that the game remain connected to the ecosystem and will likely remain in healthy populations. The whole notion of protection there can be understood as game management.

If we can wean ourselves of motorized entertainment the world will be a much better place for everyone .

In my city the parks and recreation department is well diversified and includes managing outdoor spaces for public use, regular outdoor performances of our municipal band in the many parks around town, and just for fun courses like figure skating, dance, sewing, cake decorating, composting, organic gardening, golf, tennis, creative writing, painting, photography and so much more. Not all are free but most are more accessible with low cost for introductory level courses through parks and rec. Most of the courses are privately administered but connected to parks and rec because it gets them a way of finding new students. I found many of my lifelong passions in some of those classes. And yes they do make this a much better place to live so they are worth having. The public skate parks for skate boarders saves us money on damage to our infrastructure because the skaters have a real place just for them. Rather than damaging every low wall or stair rail skateboarding all over town. So it is worth having. The bike trails reduce the need for EMT's to take care of cyclist who got hit by cars so they are worth it. Nice well maintained recreation areas are easy for police to keep free of thieves. When the local law abiding citizens are using recreation areas as intended the drug dealers have a harder time setting up shop. But who wants to use them when they are not well maintained? Answer: drug addicts and dealers.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

In New York, the Conservation Partnership Program is a pioneering initiative that really works. This program helps landowners leverage public funds for land protection while supporting local, community-based land trusts. Through the Partnership Program, New York is building strong local land trust organizations that can implement best practices and effectively conserve farmland, working forests, community gardens, recreational areas, important wildlife habitat, and watershed lands that provide drinking water to millions. The genius of this program is that it invests in local land trusts, which helps these organizations better serve their community. To date the Partnership Program has invested \$4.5 million in 67 local New York land trusts, leveraging more than \$10 million in additional funding for community-based conservation from Long Island and New York City to the Hudson Valley, Finger Lakes, and Adirondacks. This program is both effective and politically popular because its impacts are local and tangible - it creates jobs and supports the economy by supporting farmers, tourism, outdoor recreation, and smart growth. The Partnership Program should be considered a national model. It is a successful way to invest in community-supported land trusts and local efforts to conserve special places and the natural resources that are vital to our public health, and our economy. The New York State Conservation Partnership Program is administered by the Land Trust Alliance in coordination with the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation. For information, go to: { Link }

It is often assumed that the Great Outdoors refers to the exceptional nature preserves of our nation. Yet more than 80% of US citizens live in urbanized areas. Comprehensive planning and management of urban greening is also needed. Nearby nature - including parks, urban farms, street trees, the urban forest, green belts, and gardens - generate many human health and well-being benefits. 40 years of studies provide evidence about why nature in cities is also "great." A web site at the University of Washington shares this knowledge: { Link }

I've seen the Imperial Valley before the ATV craze began and since. It is not in a better state since. Nature there was fragile before and wherever ATV's have been is mostly gone now.

Please stay on topic and try to limit the political crap. I think this is a great idea with multiple benefits. 1. restored national lands free of litter. 2. pride of usefulness and accomplishment of participants 3. Cost effectiveness. 4. exposure to the forest for those that don't have the means to get there "reconnecting people to the outdoors" 5. educational aspects of service from our communities Thank you for a great out of the box idea.

The Forest Service is doing a better job of multiple-use management now than anytime in the past, because they are giving more emphasis to ecosystems and sustainable public uses such as recreation. Let's not return to the "multiple use" of the 1950s, when logging was the only priority.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

The national park experience is a reflection of the original idea for the creation of the national park system. These places signify tranquility, beauty. If one is not capable physically or mentally to enjoy these places in a tranquil manner, then zipping through on a four-stroke will not provide enhanced enlightenment. Muscle power all the way! Allowing off-road vehicles will recruit alternative personalities and mentalities to the park system. Over population is a bane on the Earth's natural resource which the NPS represents a last bastion. The park system should also reflect the nations resolve to evolve beyond fossil fuels. Lets keep our foot-prints small within and outside the National Park System.

The Owyhee is an extraordinary gem. Wilderness protection would be a superb legacy we could leave for future generations.

The Owyhee region of southeastern Oregon IS one of those places well worth preserving. As wilderness, hunting rights are protected. As the land is preserved (i.e. no new roads are built, soil erosion is virtually eliminated), hunting improves. Just because some will not be able to access hunting grounds via their truck or quad, does not mean that there will be no access; just no mechanized access. As such, the area will be improved for all who use it.

The Owyhee sounds like a place well worth preserving. I hope to visit there some day, but if not, at least it will be around for future generations to enjoy if it is made a National Monument.

There are too few places left in the US that are truly wild and remote... this is one of them. Oregon's percent of wilderness is woefully small. This area deserves more and better protection.

This area is already being conserved. It is national forest. It does not need any further designation. It works exceptionally well just the way it is. Please conserve the way it is and let us enjoy the benefits of this great area by allowing us to go there and be part of it.

Turn off your television, shut down your computer, leave your cell phone and iPod at home. Take a trip to some remote landscape and spend some time listening to the nothingness until you start to hear everything; you will find more you're more alive than you ever thought.

We have a similar Watershed stewardship program where I live. It's funded mainly by donations and grants and staffed predominantly by volunteers who work with dedicated paid professionals. It's fun, educational and effective.

What wilderness is left does take precedence over human uses. There are plenty of areas outside of our little remaining wilderness for human uses. I totally agree with Aron.

Work together, work local. Sounds like a good idea to me. There is no one size fits all in our diverse national lands.

Yes please complete the trail and allow it to be open for multiple uses. Share the Trails and tread lightly.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Mother Teresa said, "It is necessary that we find God, and God cannot be found in noise and unpeace.... See how Nature--trees, flowers and grass--grow in stillness; how stars, moon and sun run their course in silence. The more we receive through quiet prayer, the more we can give in the activity of our daily lives.

"ATVs...are here to stay?" We pray not. 150 years ago people said "slavery is here to stay." OHVing is unalterably destructive to the planet. Eventually, saner and ethical heads will prevail. Managing OHV trail system is best done by eliminating them.

Absolutely, anyone who shows a lack of respect and a lack of love for nature has no business being there. Nice try but this still does not mean ohv users should be given access to national parks and wilderness areas.

Agreed! And how about helping decrease our dependence on foreign oil!

America's public lands are meant for the American people--not special interests like mining, drilling and logging companies. Therefore, the government should promote recreational uses of public lands, and should give priority to the American people whenever there is a conflict.

Are you honestly comparing Slavery to ATVs...?

As much as I enjoy going out and visiting nature and wildlife, I agree with you. Some of our wild lands need to be completely protected from human use, with the exception of research and stewardship to maintain and protect said wild lands.

Comment 5 is a really awesome idea. If there was a trail such as that one could spend a lifetime seeing the wonders that are out there coast to coast. It should be put up as an idea if it hasn't been already.

Control use of our national parks and wilderness areas to provide a true wilderness experience. Some areas should be set aside for mass use via vehicle access. The vast majority of the land should be set aside to provide a true wilderness experience minus any motorized vehicles or equipment. Studies should be done to evaluate what level of use is acceptable and then control access via a permit/ day use system. this way the level of experience can be controlled to provide the most natural experience possible.

Count me in as supporting muscle-power only in our parks and recreation areas. If we really must have motor-driven vehicles, please keep them in designated areas.

Designate certain days of the week as non OHV days. That way hikers and backpackers seeking the sounds of the wilderness and encounters with wildlife won't be frustrated by listening to motorized vehicles and raised voices. You're not gonna see many animals with that racket. Hopefully this would reduce the antagonism between the two groups

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Do us hikers not drive to trailheads? Do we not live longer if we are healthier? I think instead of alienating the OHVers, who will never completely go away, we can increase public OHV education regarding personal safety and local environmental safety. We can remove OHV trails that cross back and forth over stream bed and riparian habitat, as they recently did in Georgia. We minimize greed by recognizing the number of existing miles of ATV trails and the number of existing areas of Wilderness, Wilderness Study Area, and wilderness-character lands and try to keep them balanced. There are many more ways we can deal with climate change because the ATV-guzzlers are not the ONLY ones to blame, even though they do use a lot of gasoline. How about a hybrid ATV? Solar panels and local noise factor! That would be a great way to improve the industry.

Does anyone know what wilderness designated lands are out there. I have to admit, before this I didn't know how many there were myself. I think we have adequately set aside important lands. So why do so many what to keep everyone else out of the forest. We should all be allowed to visit the forest and enjoy its beauty and natural wonders in a variety of venues. Everyone finds renewal through the forest in different ways. One of the biggest obstacles to "reconnecting people to the outdoors" is restricting access to those outdoors. It is really hard to reconnect people to the outdoors when access to those outdoors is so restricted.

I agree with the original intent of the post, about sharing the parks. It's definitely not a good backpacking/hiking experience to be nearly run over by an OHV, and those driving OHV would probably rather not worry about backpackers on the same trails. The two groups could have different areas (sufficiently far apart) or different days designated so that they can share the parks more peaceably.

I agree with this poster with the proviso that shared trails be wide enough to safely allow hikers, bikers, horse back riders, and motorcyclists to share the trail, and that the trails not go to locations where people might be camping to avoid noise pollution.

I am asking for OHV use at the National Park level.

I can appreciate the want and need for OHV use. However, we need to take into consideration the damage to the land they cause. There should also be limits on the decibels that any particular machine can put out and limit where they are allowed by determining places where there is the least impact on the environment. Allowing them in back country where they can create washout causing erosion and water and noise pollution should be a first consideration

I don't think anyone who is concerned about the environment would argue with you. I would say people would have to be able to visit the area (possibly hunting, fishing, low impact camping). I like the wilderness designation that is currently in use. More land should be designated as wilderness.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

I know this area -it's an ecotone where the humid maritime coastal, semi-desert upper Sonoran, and Cascade ecosystems mesh. It was the deciding factor in my locating close by to do my graduate work, and though I lived there for 13 years, I haven't been back for almost two decades. It's truly unique and worthy of designation. BTW, Glen, I get your sense of irony (poor) and I suggest you get OFF your motorcycle before you venture into the wild areas. Some of the locals are noted for their intolerance of those who would disrespect the Siskiyou, and you really don't want to get on the wrong side of some of these folks.

I need to better understand what OHV trails are available and where, but bottom line, I'd like to see balance. I hike and snowshoe, but also snowmobile. We only ride on designated trails which are often bike trails unusable to them in winter, logging roads, frozen waterways, and edges of farm properties. Snowmobile clubs that maintain the trails constantly post reminders to stay on the trail or go home. It is possible to have responsible use of OHVs. My sled takes me to beautiful places I can't get to on foot, just like my car can in the summer, but even more so. What I don't understand in the OHV world are the people who go out on rip new trails through forests and meadows. The trucks with the giant tires completely baffle me. A dirt bike or small ATV can be confined to a pretty narrow existing trail. The bigger ATVs and trucks are hard to see as anything other than pure destruction and wasted fuel.

I think that people that don't like OHV riders are concerned for the environment. My personal opinion is land should be set aside to preserve nature, we are not the only creature dependent on nature. There should be areas that allow OHVs that is away from wilderness and national parks, etc. I agree that hunting groups have done a great deal for the environment. In Michigan, for example, a lot of land was preserved using proceeds from hunting and fishing licenses. I think most sportman are usually advocates of wild places.

I think that there should be dedicated ATV trails and areas; I don't believe ATVs should be given free reign over our public lands. And I do believe in wildlife preservation, but my point is that when recreation and industrial uses are incompatible, recreational uses should have priority over industrial uses.

I think they should be banned from most parks at all times. We must have some parks that can be used for the ohv's though.

Is this suggestion serious or was it made by an ORV enthusiast? It's difficult to imagine that such a trivial and inane suggestion could be posted on a forum created for discussing REAL problems and suggestions regarding outdoor use. Many of us who have actually been out there hiking for DECADES would not be able to safely do so without our poles. Even if this thoughtless suggestion were made a policy it wouldn't hold up to an ADA court battle anyway. Get a clue: it's not the poles making impact in the wilderness - it's us.

It would be far better to require recycling of the old tires when new tires are purchased and placed on a vehicle and not allow the old tires to be removed from the premises. If someone wants to use those tires on another vehicle, they can bring said vehicle in and have the old tires mounted. A deposit is not the way to go.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

It's important to realize that it's not sensible to make all areas of our nation wilderness access to various vehicles. Motorize vehicles compact soils, destroy plant life and pollute natural resources far faster than humans on 2 feet. The rules and decisions on land use should try to protect as much areas, while balancing the public's use as much as possible. With the right vehicle I been able to car camp at the Jackass Dike camp ground in the Sierra National Forest, taking the Con Ed jeep access roads, when the Kaiser pass was open, in our Datsun 240. One just had to plan for the weather and make sure to bring medical supplies in case of an emergency, since it was a 3 hour drive to the nearest ranger station. I also suggest book for Wilderness medicine for anyone who may be visiting an area away from phone lines.

Lots of comments but I think what a lot of people are missing is that these lands are called WILDERNESS. It's called the Wilderness Protection Act, NOT Acres for Human Sport/Recreational Use Act. The laws are in effect to protect the NATURAL WILDLIFE from humans. So here's an idea that would cease the bickering. Why not ban all human interaction on the land and then no one will fight over who USES it better-hikers/otv users. Quarantine it from humanity. Does that solve your problem children? Geez!

there is a focus group working this site now with 60 + people involved. Don't look for much support while they are spending time here. Your idea is a very valid one though. Have faith it is being done elsewhere and working.

Maybe ATV's will be outlawed at some time in the future, but they are here today, so I believe we would be better served by working together to manage them as best we can. Provide limited designated spaces for them, pass legislation requiring emission controls and noise controls. Lets try and fight winnable battles to protect the environment, not battles doomed to failure.

Motorized recreation has a place in our society and certainly does provide more economic flow into our small communities than most other users. I support motorized wise use and do not support those selfish ideas that exclude any user group from enjoying our public lands.

you echo my exact feelings and I being a responsible off road enthusiast do not wish to see the lands destroyed. The fact of the matter is, most, I repeat, most OHV's are not looking for the opportunity to go rip up the forests, in spite of what ignorant people say! All were asking for is that the areas that have been designated as OHV for the past 30 years, remain OHV and the money that is supposed to go to maintaining those areas, does in fact go towards the maintenance of those trails. This includes enforcement and erosion control. The OHV community is not stupid. We understand that if we are not responsible, the land and nature that we too love will be come a thing of the past. As you said, responsible OHV's have just as much right to enjoy our lands as do the eco Nazis like Skinner, who drive their polluting cars to take in nature but want to exclude everyone else who has a different point of view. Thank you for your reasonable approach to this topic.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

My family owns, and uses (camping, hiking, hunting, fishing, etc) nearly 300 acres in on the Wisconsin shores of Lake Superior. Our land was once open to OHV/ATV and Snowmobile access, but is now closed to the former. This closure was prompted by the abuse and misuse by a majority of the OHV/ATV operators "borrowing" our land. We would often see new "trails" tearing through the woods, vandalism to our established camp sites, litter, and excessive erosion on and around the established trails. About five years ago we closed the land to the OHV/ATV traffic and have seen most of this go away. Despite our efforts to maintain OUR space, we have found evidence where OHV/ATV operators have "broke brush" to circumvent our gate and posted "No ATV" signs, along with vandalism to said gates and signs. I fully understand that it is not the entirety of OHV/ATV operators that disrespect private property and land-owner wishes, but there are always those bad apples that ruin it for everyone else. Yes, it is a slippery slope, but if the OHV/ATV community can not police their own actions, and respect private property, how on earth are we supposed to trust them on public lands? There are numerous public OHV/ATV trail networks throughout Minnesota and Wisconsin open for their use, yet are closed to those of us who ride slower, and lower impact, trail motorcycles. The lobby is strong, but time and again local communities come together to prevent or further limit OHV/ATV trails in their areas. The local populace are the ones that have to clean up the messes left behind by the trail abusers, and are frankly becoming tired of it. I say, maintain the amount of public lands these users have already, and leave the pristine wilderness devoid from this misuse and abuse.

My idea of Cap and trade is to tax heavily all offroad vehicles as well as speedboats , motorhomes , giant pickups and suv's , Also houses over 200 Sq ft but that is another subject .

My suggestion is to reinstate the Roadless Rule to protect National Forests (and Parks) from new road construction. This rule should also limit the deforestation and poisoning of our waterways that result from unnecessary road construction in our parks and forests.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Name-calling doesn't cut it, gang. There are just as many "extreme" off-roaders as there are environmentalists. I notice the off-roaders continually refer to their "rights" to use public land. Too often they forget that the right to swing your arm ends when it connects with someone's face. Public lands mean just that.....they belong to ALL the public and should be managed in balance for ALL the public. So if any one form of activity takes a disproportionate amount of the public space, it is out of balance. That is what has happened with off-road vehicles. Because they can cover 90 miles in one day, their impact is far larger than almost any other form of recreation. And let's not forget this is recreation we are talking about. Optional activity. Swimming, bowling, skateboarding and other forms of recreation all have appropriate places for their activity, yet off-roaders want full access to all public lands. It is out of balance. I live in the backcountry. 40 years experience with off-roaders tell me they are selfish, disrespectful and terribly ignorant about nature. Their noise reaches me from as far away as two miles. Their stench lingers on the mountain long after they are gone. Their trails have resulted in high sedimentation in local creeks. And, in my area, their local enthusiasts' group is constantly trying to expand their riding areas. Relying on history to support more riding is ridiculous. The few dirt-bike trespassers I had to contend with 40 years ago are nowhere near the numbers causing trouble today. That they have been allowed to expand their unrestricted riding across public lands is the fault of a government that has not followed the law. (Executive Orders 11644 and 11989) Just because you have "taken" something does not give you a "right" to it, particularly when that supposed "right" takes away from society at large. Two more points. Calling the Blue Ribbon Coalition a "multiple use" advocate is like calling Osama Bin Laden a great religious leader. And, for those of you who brag on riding 90 miles in one day, I would ask how many wildflowers you identified across that terrain, how many game trails did you see, how many different types of vegetation did you encounter, how many mice or snakes or bugs did you watch, how much windsong did you hear, how many bears did you hear grubbing, and how many hawks did you watch ride a thermal? You do not see these things are 30-, 40- or 50mph. What else will the children do? Why, explore the outdoors on their feet and actually learn about nature.

No, I'm sorry but we Americans as a group have rights too. What do you mean by full usage? We don't have "full usage" on most all public property. No ORVs in grave yards, no boom boxes in concert halls. No camera's in area's of national security. No mining for copper at the Statue of Liberty. Use must be compatible with the mission for the public ownership of the property. Government acts as our representative to do the jobs that no one else will or can do. One of those jobs is preserving some of our land as God created it.

Not everyone is seeking God in nature all the time. However those who use atvs etc. are often campers, hunters, hikers and fishermen as well. In all of these roles they too appreciate the quiet and peace. The trick assuring there is a time and a PLACE for everyone and everything. Consider for instance the high deserts of Idaho. Long expanses of flat land used for open range cattle and atvs. This land is pretty useless for all else. When you think of those times you were disturbed by an off-road vehicle where you even on federal land? Most of the time it is state or county parks and forests where you run into this trouble. Swaths of federal land are usually big enough and have enough variety of trails for everyone.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

OHV trails are an excellent use for abandoned strip mines, clear-cut areas, and other sites of environmental disasters. If they're willing to use those places, and we designate those places as public parks, I'm fine with that. Just keep the machines (but not necessarily their owners) out of the as yet undamaged areas, or those areas on their way to some kind of recovery.

OHV use is a legitimate use of public lands, but due to its impact on soils, water, wildlife and other users OHV use does need management. Trails are great for OHVs, but some riders choose to ride off trail. The default management of BLM lands in the west is that land is open to cross country travel unless designated otherwise. While this designation made sense when user numbers were small, with growing popularity of recreational OHV use, management needs to keep pace with usage. A portion of BLM lands should be designated for cross country travel. If land is not designated for cross country travel, it is not open for cross country travel. Designating lands as open to cross country travel should remove much of the confusion that results in riders leaving the trail when they are supposed to stay on the trail.

OHVs cause noise pollution. OHVing is an expensive sport - like golfing. Why don't OHVers do what golfers do and create their own "parks"? They can charge admission to pay for maintenance and they won't have to deal with people who don't want the noise or OHVers interfering with the peace and QUIET of the few remaining quiet spaces in America.

OHVs have no place in our outdoors. They are noisy, polluting and belong in cities, but not destroying our wild places.

One of the worst problems any generation will ever face is the one we face now - global climate change. All forestry policy and wilderness policy should be shaped to protect the planet from further global climate change and the destruction that will come from it. We need to get OUT of our vehicles and we certainly do NOT need to be driving all sorts of little personal gas guzzlers all over what wilderness and wildlife habitat we have left. We need to guard against more pollution and more greenhouse gases - and most especially this is so in sensitive lands.

Our Parks are there to preserve the land AND its wildlife. To do that, some parts of that land must remain free of human interference. Wildlife needs places of quiet and safety to reproduce and protect their young. Even us humans need a place that is not overrun with other humans, we too need places that are quiet, unpolluted and intact so we can view from a distance wildlife undisturbed by our presence. The best views I have had of wildlife was through a spotting scope, the animals or birds went about with their normal activities without them fleeing at the sight or smell of a dreaded human! Wild land MUST REMAIN WILD! No roads, no ORV/ATV's, no "development", no resource extraction and only limited hunting and fishing. We also need to restore native predators to cull diseased, old and weak young herbivores. Hunters select the best of the herd, not the old, diseased, weak and injured. Save our wild lands, leave it free from the human herds, limit human access, wildlife first.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Protect animals on our highways. I am sickened every time I see another healthy but dead animal on the side of the road. Motorists usually can not prevent killing animals with their cars, but the number of deaths could be significantly reduced with animal bridges and tunnels built into our highway systems. This is actually already being done in Europe and to some extent in the USA. However, we need to increase these projects to protect animals from one of their major predators—our cars. What does it tell our children when the roads are littered with dead animals? It suggests animals are expendable and irrelevant compared to our own needs to get where we are going. Animals need to move across highways in search of food, to procreate and in some cases migrate. The problem is particularly distressing in developing suburban areas where animals are being pushed out of their habitat. We can not contain animal movements, so lets give them a little help. Here's another project for the CCC.

Protect Wildlands for the Benefit of Wildlife. Many of the comments on this forum talk about how we manage our public lands for different public values, whether it be for OHV use or experiencing the solitude that wilderness avails. Even things like watershed and habitat protection are often mentioned as a value for PEOPLE to have clean water and see wildlife... One of the challenges we face in land management decisions is to adjust our collective outlook to also value watersheds and habitat simply for other living things besides us. It is a valid "use" of some small amount of our landscape to simply protect it from human use, not just abuse or over-use, but any use.

hikers who misuse public lands should be banned from our national and state parks. Why should the taxpayers continue to pay for damage deliberately caused by those who break the rules? Responsible hikers should not pay for the crimes of bad hikers, either. Licenses of all hikers vehicles should be checked at the gate, so we can keep the bad guys out of our parks.

OHV users who misuse public lands should be banned from our national and state parks. Why should the taxpayers continue to pay for damage deliberately caused by those who break the rules? Responsible offroaders should not pay for the crimes of bad riders, either. Licenses of all offroad vehicles should be checked at the gate, so we can keep the bad guys out of our parks.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Since this is a comment from a New York State resident, I assume the comment was directed at the New York State Forest Preserve (Adirondack Park and Catskill Park). These areas were set aside as a wilderness preserve whose usage requires the vote of the full voting population of NY State to alter. For instance, when the NY State Northway (I-87) was proposed, it had to go through the entire length of the Adirondack Park's eastern region. Since the Adirondack Park is NYS Forest Preserve, the only way to allow this non-wilderness use was to have the entire state of New York vote on an amendment to the state constitution that would allow it. The idea was extremely controversial (conservationists did not approve), but the citizenry spoke, and the amendment was passed by the vote of the people. Every time you drive the Thruway from Lake George to Plattsburgh on the way from Albany to Montreal, you're getting full use of the land as defined by the will of the people of NY State. However, those large areas that are classified as Wilderness or Wild Forest are preserved and protected by law, as outlined in the constitution of NY State. No trees may be cut, no roads may be built, no trails may be cut or blazed unless they are approved by the APA and DEC, which is as it should be (in my opinion). No development may occur, no electrical lines strung, no pipelines dug, no structures built, unless an exemption is voted upon and approved by the people of the state as an amendment to the NYS constitution. People complain about it, but the results speak for themselves -- the Adirondack Park is a world class wilderness preserve in the most densely populated part of our nation. Individuals own about half of the Park, while the other half is owned by the state and is kept as Forest Preserve. The state also helps purchase conservation easements where the original owner can use the land for forestry or mining, but agrees to prevent development (sprawl, subdivision) of the land. I see that as a model the federal government would do well to imitate. If by "full usage" you mean the right to take your SUV out into the woods and dig ruts in old woods roads, then I do not agree. If you mean the right to take off-road vehicles of any kind into a wilderness area, then I do not agree. If by full usage you mean that you should be able to go cut down a tree to build your garage or remove some rocks for your back yard (as in our National Forests, the "land of many uses") then I do not agree. Wilderness in the vicinity of NY City, Boston, Montreal and Toronto needs to be protected, both for the people and for the natural resources.

Sounds like a great place. I'd love to go see some of that country. As a matter of fact I'll be up there in the area next weekend. I may have to swing by on my motorcycle and go see the area myself. Thank you for the information.

State and nation parks are refuges for the wildlife and make available for people to enjoy nature in its natural state. ATVs, snow mobile, and mountain bikes are an invasion of these areas and an attack on nature. These vehicles despoil the peace and tranquility to both the nature lovers and the wildlife that lives there. The least offensive are mountain bikers, most of which I meet are more respectful of nature. These parks must be kept as a sanctuary for nature and all wildlife. ATVs and snow mobiles are environmental nightmares and they must be banned from every local, state and national park and recreational area. Mankind does not own this planet, we share it with many other species and mankind must respect these species and safeguard them from those who do not.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

The ATV off-road people can have Utah! Let's protect the other areas for all of those Americans who do not want to pollute and ruin the environment.

The federal government could encourage states to place a five dollar deposit on tires. This would ensure tires are brought to recyclers and lead to less people dumping their tires in the woods. When you buy new tires your old tires would cover the deposit so there would be little or no added expense for the average citizen, but people who have been saving tires, unable to afford to recycle so many at once, would be able to receive a little financial boost which they would put back into the economy instead of the forests, streams, and trails.

The reason that government gets involved because people tend to do what is most economically beneficial to them, not what is most beneficial to the environment. Look at the damage that mining and logging have done to the environment over the years when there was little or no regulation. That being said, I am more in favor of the government purchasing easements and giving tax breaks rather than purchasing land outright. That way, the money can go a lot further. My parents sold the development rights to our 400 acre farm for a lot less than what it would have cost someone to buy it. I would rather have 1000 acres with conservation easements than 100 acres that is owned and controlled by the government.

There are plenty of trails open to atv's and motos and jeeps and smellmobiles. definitely no more are necessary, I agree with that. I do see people on OHV's using them responsibly, passing courteously, staying on trail etc. and that goes a long way toward peace out there. I think the out of control high speed use and aggression has created much of the anger towards them.

There is in central Utah a motorized trail system (Paiute ATV Trail) that provides a great example of positive resource management. ATV's, motorcycles, UTV's, jeeps, etc. are here to stay. The manufacture and sale of these units is a multi-billion dollar business. People who purchase these units are looking to their public lands for a place to ride. They are looking for a place to fulfill their need for "fun". If these owners are provided a place to ride that meets their quantity and quality needs, they will ride on them. Otherwise, they will ride anyway and maybe not in right places. Bottom line is they are not going to go away, and making them illegal on public lands won't stop them from coming. so, best management tool is to provide a quantity and quality place to ride on a managed and maintained system. Managers can stop the riding in delicate environments by providing riding opportunities where the terrain and resources can sustain the use. Such a system also bring significant economic benefits to strained rural economies that surround these riding systems. Again, the Paiute is a perfect example of where and how this approach can and does work. It's been in place for 20 years and so the approach is proven. This approach can and should be mirrored in other regions where it can be supported and where it makes sense.

There should be very steep fines to support the parks, and suspensions from parks, and required park and conservation classes and community services.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

These are public lands, and as such, need to be available to all RESPONSIBLE usage. My biggest fear of off road usage is, probably, the same as most people's - We don't want to see the destructive side that can be brought out. After fighting for decades to keep loggers, miners, etc out of these areas, to see another group come in and "dog out" the areas that were meant to be protected, that is just as horrifying. All this being said, these are public lands and, as such, need to be available to those who will be responsible to the "nature"(pun intended) of the land and keep it for those others wanting to come in and enjoy it, study it, etc. Find a way to provide the balance so that everyone can enjoy them, e.g. unendangered areas that won't be affected by the bikes, atvs, etc.

They need to fine them heavily or have them do service work on the trails.

Uhhhhh, this idea seems like satirical backlash. A response to an equally "excessive" idea to outlaw ATVs/OHVs? Trekking pole vs. ATV tire? Please. If this is indeed trolling, I would like to agree with you. ATVs and OHVs should not be outlawed, but their use on public lands should be restricted, at a minimum. As an OHVer, you may not be capable of caring that the noise and tracks detract from how other people enjoy the outdoors - in near silence. Said silence has no effect on OHVer recreation, but if it did, maybe OHVers would get it. OHV should not have the ability to detract from non OHV enjoyment on PUBLIC lands. On private land, tear up trail, scream and yell, down a twelver and shoot your pistol in the sky with at least my blessing.

Are you aware that it is ILLEGAL to in anyway harass a hunter in ALL 50 STATES. This includes your attempts to "scare off" game animals. While I don't agree with shooting at you, I have zero sympathy for you due to your participation in illegal activity. I have just as much a right to ride my motorcycle in the woods as you do to walk in them. As it turns out, I am an accomplished offroad motorcycle racer who also happens to have hiked a substantial portion of the Appalachian Trail and am currently planning to thru hike the pacific crest trail. Lose your narrow minded nature.

your suggestion is too emotional and not specific enough. As offensive as it seems that humans urinate in water, so do the critters. Your offense (and well taken) about the dirty diapers (does anyone ever leave the clean ones) would be better suited under the campaign of "leave no trace." I've been hiking and backpacking for over 40 years in remote and not-so-remote areas, and although I've seen many folks swimming (and some folks really SHOULD wear trunks), I've never seen streams dammed up as a result. Where are you hiking? You're suggesting that people are "drying up our natural resources" by swimming in them? Not sure I concur.

What works where you live, might not work where I live. Here ATV's are good stewards to the land. I don't use them, but without them, here, many trails would go unmaintained.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Yes, I reviewed the voting window on a recent idea - not this one. It was clear that 68 or so promote votes were cast over a 2 hour period for the idea. I could not consider that a mere coincidence especially since other ideas have similar voting pattern today. It is amazing that so many folks are that active today. It is not exactly the norm here to see 60+ votes whether promote or demote cast in such a systematic manner.

Yes, the roadless rule should be enacted for the remaining roadless areas that are left in our national foests, which are really few and far between. This rule should also apply to The Tongass National Forest in Alaska, which was the only national forest left out of the original rule. The Tongass is one of the last wild places left. There has already been a large amount of roads constructed in the Tongass and there is alot of pressure for more development. The roadless rule would keep mining and logging in areas that are already developed and have road access. This would also preserve habitat not only for wilderness recreation for humans, but also habitat for the rest of the creatures that depend on wild places for survival.

PLEASE provide photos of your own, not from a website of these 300-400 pound motorcycle riders??? I am 47 years young and when I ride my quad/atv for an hour, I will get more excersise than you would get in a week... And I don't ride fast... LOL I don't bounce like I used to so I aint going fast like the younger crowd!!! Surely the people who are collecting data can see all your foolish bias post as jibberish... Show us what you do in the wilderness... Once a year hike at the local state park? once a month???

We have valid concerns about hundreds of thousand of acres of public land being completely closed to any form of transportation and that includes mountain bikes. Mountain bikes! Too many great places have been closed. So now huge numbers of people are forced into smaller and smaller areas, where a few bad apples get all the focus. If people would get out of the parking lot and ride the single track out in the hills, they would see that it's pretty much pristine out there. Single track, animals, trees, flowers. I saw a bobcat, wild turkeys, deer, grouse, wild pigs last week during a 3 hour ride at a local OHV park (not to mention all the vegetation). Animals THRIVE out there! They're not being hunted and they know it as they wait until the last moment to walk away from my dirt bike!

Doesn't all this really come down to "different strokes for different folks"? Have we forgotten to celebrate our differences? Its not right or wrong, us against them - its about choices and preferences. There is enough land and space in this country for all of us. Let's share!

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

I too ride a licensed motorcycle on the Forest Service trails and road in East Tennessee. Tennessee, which has millions of acres of National Forests, is a leader in designated trail systems and our local off-road club works with the local Forest Service official in keeping all the trails in good shape and clear of obstruction like fallen trees that force everyone off the trail, horses and hikers included. By taking their 'Chain Saw Safety Course' we are even covered by their liability insurance. The trails are long and narrow and because of the hills and trees, nearly impossible to stray from. They are used seldom enough that we almost never encounter other people on the hundreds of miles of cross country routes. Every state should follow Tennessee's philosophy that there are many ways to enjoy wilderness areas. All it takes is a little cooperation between all groups involved.

If a hikers need to know they are the only people on the trails to have a safe adventure, perhaps they should consider purchasing a beautiful piece of private land. There should be regulations for those who choose to run faster than the allowed 3.5 mph and shoes should be limited to registered shoes to ensure regulation and minimize erosion, bad foot smells and athletes foot. Perhaps you see the utter ridiculousness of my rant? Furthermore, if you have neglected to look into organizations that promote sustainable use of all public trail such Blue Ribbon Coalition, Rubicon trail Foundation, Friends of The Rubicon, Friends of Fordyce, etc etc. You have probably neglected to realize that there is a better means to successful, shared use trails than simply banning all ohv users from public lands. Believe it or not, (I'm betting not) we as OHV users, care as much for public lands as you and do not feel the need to ban you from the land to prove it. If you were to witness some of the success we have had, educating and leading by example, you may choose a different, fair access standpoint.

I have enjoyed OHVing as a family for the past 10 years and hope to continue for many decades. If you are an avid hiker good for you. If you hike and have a problem hiking where ATV are legal to operate get a map and go on a different route or trail designated closed to ATV's. Not every person is the same so we do not all share the same opinion of a proper family activity. We need to all learn to get along and use reasonable management strategies on OUR PUBLIC LANDS.

public lands are just that public lands, remember this land is your land this land is our land.... Your talking about them like its your land. There is already millions of non OHV lands for you to enjoy PLEASE don't go to the lands where OHV's are then complain about their existence there is NON OHV areas setup just for this reason I doubt you have been to all of them there is no shortage and they are not over crowded. You remind me of the person that goes to the mall shopping on black Friday then complains about the traffic and how crowded the mall is. I do appreciate your betterment for mankind thanks.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Federal control; is exactly the opposite of what is needed. The federal government should relinquish control to state governments. Rather than restricting use, the public should be facilitated. All Federally owned and managed land should be open to public access except where there is a compelling national interest, Exceptions should be made to limit access to military installations or nuclear power sites. Access should include balanced opportunities for use on foot, equestrian and motorized off road vehicles. Hunting should be permitted in accordance with state and federal hunting seasons and regulations. The carry and use of firearms should be permitted in accordance with state regulation.

Are you nuts? Have you ever seen a kid ride an ATV??? Pull their helmet off and you see nothing but SMILES! The physical conditioning developed while riding a ATV is what keeps me in shape at 47 years old!!!

It is rather entertaining watching which direction the mud is flying and how irrational and discourteous the self-proclaimed nature lovers, icons of grace and intellectual forward thinking, really are. It's the oldest story in the book: the mudslingers (self-proclaimed nature lovers) don't understand multi-use. They want to lock up everything for their use only. Great post Rachel. These goody-two-shoes are the same whether on the dirt or on the asphalt.

A problem I have experienced in my few times of riding dirt bikes is how tempting people are for challenges that lead them off trail...up steep hillsides, etc. This really tears up the land. And this was with friends who I know are otherwise nature lovers and always very respectful of wildlife land. Once one person goes off trail, others see their path and take it also. I think there should be some designated places where OHV's are allowed, but mostly should not be allowed on public lands. Even if 90 % stay on the trail, the few who go off still cause too much destruction.

I feel dirtbikers and ATV's should ride on private land with the owners permission only. Protected areas should be left in their natural state, except for a trail. Noise and other pollution should be kept out of these areas. It only takes a few, ATV, Bud lite beer can litters to ruin a otherwise beautiful location. My comment is " Hike and you can drink a real beer, once your home!"

Allowing any motorized vehicle would be subjecting all visitors to more noise and pollution. Might as well hike along a highway. Lets allow more air traffic so we can all experience the joy of jogging beside an airport

Thank you for telling of your experience with ATV and motorcyclist on the trail. I always do what I can to share the trail with everybody and give the right of way to someone with animals. I also acknowledge the fact that there are a lot of jerks out there on these vehicles, which is why it's so frustrating to see our OHV dollars taken away from things like enforcement! You are absolutely correct in your assesment of the high emotion and there's always a middle ground. Some just don't appear to want to have a decent civilized dialouge though.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

I am 100% against ANY OHV activity in the National Parks. This is not what the parks are for!! They are for walking the trails and observing the natural beauty of the lands, fauna and small plants that you can't possibly see from OHV's. These motorized vehicles not only disturb the wildlife but they disturb the people that are trying to be one with the land as the early settlers and Indians were. These OHV 's destroy the small little plants that you can hardly see that are naturally part of the floor of the parks but people on OHV's don't even know this.

you post as if the OHV crowd would run free and wild through the whole park. The OHV groups have designated trails we stay on. We not only try to be stewards of the land but we bring money to the parks and local business. Having designated OHV use is good for everyone including the local wildlife. Think of what the park could do with increased funds.

So I guess what you're saying is that you feel that only your wants & desires should be respected and you somehow float just above the ground so you don't effect anything from a insect to a wildflower to a micro organism! If your really honest with yourself, something I doubt, you will admit that the national parks are not actually for you, but are for everyone. Boy, and I'm not saying this to be mean, but I'd hate to be your husband or partner or whatever because it's clear, again, that only your wants & desires are important. I also wonder how you and all the other people who don't wish to share "your lands" with anyone, who enjoys it in a different way than you, expect your kids to learn to share. Something, we as a society, are constantly preaching but rarely practice!

Obviously has never looked at a photo album of a dirt biker! I know it's hard to imagine a bunch of rough and tough dirt bikers taking pics of flowers, fauna, and wildlife, but that's what I see all the time. Your ignorance is laughable. Despite what is being said on here, there are quite a few of us who love to hike, rock climb etc. Personally, my group of friends always leave after a week or weekend of camping/ohv use with way more trash than we brought in. We shut down our bikes and wait for equestrians to pass. We slow to a crawl around hikers so as not to dust 'em out. So basically, we share the forest and respect other users as we would have them do to us. The forest is not exclusive to anyone, it is there for ALL Americans, and visitors to our country too. As a Marine, I find this selfish mentality really disturbing. This is the land of the free. We have to work TOGETHER or we risk losing all our forefathers have worked and died for. The answer is simple really, education on both sides is what is needed. We need to crush the stereotypes and work together for the benefit of all.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

"Wildlife running from the sound" of an OHV? Or from a hiker, or from another animal, or... The human race affects the environment by being IN it. Just like all the animals do. Do you think only hikers and bikers make trails? Cows make trails. Goats do. All animals do. OMG, they're affecting the plant life, we need to close down access to deer! Why do supposed naturalists and environmentalists fail to understand the environment at a basic level? We should not allow free access to ALL land. Wildlife needs it's place to thrive. But there's plenty of land. 95 out of 100 places have signs denying access to motorized vehicles, but allowing hiking, so I really don't see any validity to the claim that hikers need more land. Seems to me the OHV is constantly getting access closed down, rather than provided fair access. There's billions of acres of land. We can share. Sure, there are irresponsible OHV riders. I'm proud NOT to be one of those. And I work towards educating riders about being responsible and respectful of others and the environment as all those that go out and explore and enjoy nature should. Schroedinger's Cat tells us that we cannot examine something without changing it. So we have to accept that. By just existing we change our environment, even without technology. But we can be responsible. Riders can stay on established trails. Hikers can pack out their trash. Mountain Bikers can be respectful of equestrians. And so on. And remember, that ranger that arrives to help a lost, injured or fallen person often arrives on an OHV.

Please consider the low response of OHV/ATV users as not a lack of interest, but a fact that we are in the great outdoors enjoying our lives and unable to spend all day on the internet complaining about other people enjoying life!!! Being from Texas, I have seen the same type of "trails" everyone is worried about being created by cattle & deer! The trails that OHV use are already in existance, and quite honestly someone walking causes just a big of a footprint as an OHV if they are off the trail! In Texas we have little to no public land available to enjoy! 99% of the land is privately owned, and unavailable, unless for a large fee! Unless you have actually ridden an OHV You are unqualified to determine how much excersize you get! I am 47 years young and Walk daily! When I ride my ATV/Quad my upper body and my legs get such a workout that I am pleasantly sore for days afterwards! The terrain/miles we can cover in a days ride is all the proof I need to prove I am a nature lover! I have seen things you will never have the pleasure to see because of the remoteness of the site! The Family attomsphere is so much greater than you could imagine! Several days of camping with NO TV's, cell phones or computers! I bet your day trips you are so proud of are spent driving, with the children in the back seat watching a DVD! You then spend a few hours walking a trail, until your fast food addicted children start to get tired, or better yet BORED and start to whine about going home so they can get back on there cell phone and start Texting there friends! As a nation we should all enjoy the freedom to do what we chose to enjoy our national parks, (that we Stole from the Native Americans) Please consider the low response of OHV/ATV users as not a lack of interest, but a fact that we are in the great outdoors enjoying our lives and unable to spend all day on the internet complaining about other people enjoying life!!!

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Your personal vehicle you drove to your hiking area polutes just as much if not more than My ATV! Noise wise and exhaust wise... How many gallons did you burn to get to your "quite place" Did your car scare a rabbit eating grass along the paved highway you drove up on? The hum of your rubber tires at 70 mph is as load as my exhaust... We could go on like this but this is not the point... The point is as Americans we should be equally able to access the great outdoors!!!

Everyone has the right to enjoy the outdoors in their own way, all of you keep claiming its wilderness and should not be used by offrarders, guess what, where your home sits was once wilderness also, does this mean you should be removed from it, by your logic' you had better pack up and leave

You're welcome Well I have read about the top 80 comments... I see a lot of hate and anger from the ANTI-ATV/OHV crowd? This in itself makes me very nervous... Just look at the comments in CAPLOCKS (shouting) Why is that? I see some hypocrisy also... They complain about "wasting gas" but yet they will drive there luxury cars out to the "wilderness" and only spend a day to de-stress? I read the "horsemen" and "horsewomen" claim the atv's ohv spook there horses... Take your horses back to your trainer, or to your own round pen... Your horse isn't finished if he spooks... (I am a retired Saddle Maker, so I know horses) I have never seen a OHV blaze by another ohv'er much less a hiker or equestrian... Yes I am sure there are some who come up on some fast, but maybe if you wore bright colors we would see you sooner? Hunters had to shoot other hunters before they realized the orange vest was a good idea!!! Maybe you could take a clue too! Let me touch on hypocrisy, from my own rural neighborhood! Cyclist from the San Antonio area come and ride there street bikes on my small county roads. They Mark there race course with spray paint on every corner, just like graffitti! They leave their signs out in my neighborhood, they leave their water/gatorade red bull bottles all over the place... Are these are the same ANGRY people posting above?

I just spent a week at Island Park, on the Henry's Fork in Idaho. Fortunately, there were a number of trails which did not allow off road vehicles, and I was able to enjoy the peace of the woods, meadows, and the river. However, in many places, the noise, smell and dust from the off-rovers made the experience less than enjoyable. I am happy that there are places where those who prefer to ride can do so, but do not think there needs to be any more wilderness set off for them.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

As far as your comments go. Asking if a machine qualifies as a person is the most illogical argument I've heard in at least 20 posts. Heck, Do your shoes, or clothing or walking poles qualify as a "American Citizen"? How about your horse? Even though I have an intimate relationship with my motorcycles, and I do refer to each one as her, It's not like I'm asking for the right for them to vote or something along those lines. I and most other rational OHVs are only asking for the right to access the public lands that have already been designated as OHV lands. "I was raised in a culture where consideration of others - of not imposing yourself on others - was a highly regarded personal duty." This is still a value to me and one I try to instill every day in my daughter. That said, I do not see that in most of the anti OHVs responses on this and other sites. As far as your comment "I am always thrilled to find myself in a place where there are no sounds of engines or machinery. It's pretty rare these days.", where do you seek these places? New York City. I can guarantee you that I could easily show you at least a thousand times as many places to go enjoy the solitude & tranquility of the forest, where the only engine noise you will hear is an occasional jet passing overhead, and hell, according to people like ____, I must not have to look very hard, because after all, I never practice such activities! Sorry, I have no control over the jet thing.

when these hate mongers (sorry couldn't resist lol) are done complaining about us OHV'ers then they will soon set there sites on the Airplanes... Really people, you who have never been on or near an OHV should hold your hate and discontent until you are able to better educate yourself! Your reply is what I was referring to when I mentioned hateful... I can sit on my front porch and listen to the great outdoors, but every day I hear more and more cars driving down my country road! People want to live in the country out here. I deal with people who don't have the first clue how do live in the country, but they have every issue of Country Living! My point is I believe many of the Anti-ATV/OHV crowd here are simply repeating what they are reading elsewhere and are being re-directed here to spew these hateful in rants... Lets Hope our gov't officials can see the difference in the tone of the responses

I'm one of the envirofreaks. If you look at peoples valid point of view, the one not supporting your point of view, as hateful, that is the problem between us. You use that as an excuse to tune us out, so you don't try to understand any of the points we try to make to you. I have said that ohv use is small potatoes in the realm of environmental destruction. It is the fact that you tune us out that frustrates us and we respond with more vigor. This is a downward spiral. We should all lighten up. Speaking of airplanes, they are a much more important environmental modifier. Contrails are changing the worlds weather, clouding skies that would be clear, all over the world. That is a much, much bigger issue than ohvs.

I was referring to ONLY the ones who were unprofessional and claiming false or exaggerated facts, or the ones who sounded almost militant! Our world has been adapting and changing for milliniums... Conetails and OHV's will not be or cause the End of Times! Have more faith in Gods Plan! Do we complain about Horses or Hikers on our trails/roads? No, we adapt! God Gave us this beautiful landscape to enjoy in our own special way, and gave us the choices to enjoy it as we please! We are just asking you to SHARE What he has blessed us with!

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

I am an off-road motorcycle enthusiast and enjoy riding OHVs in the great state of Utah. I'm offended when people claim I am damaging the environment. This is nonsense. Not only do I stay on marked and legal OHV trails, but I routinely see deer, moose, elk, and black bears ... which aren't in the least bit afraid of me or my bike. As far as noise goes, the great outdoors in Utah is so big that there are hundreds of miles of solitary quiet trails far away from OHV trails that I just don't see the issue. I'm calling BS on all this yacking. I think most Americans who live in the west would say the same.

I can see some of you are grasping at straws...The 5 gallons of gas used in a few weeks of OHV motorcycle use is now contributing directly to terrorism? The 25 gallons of gas you use a week in your commute to and from work is fine though, right? How about all of the petroleum based products you use on a daily basis? Have you started eliminating plastics from your household? Have you started walking/biking/carpooling to work? Please, tell me you don't drive to the locations you so like to hike? With your SUV packed up with stuff? Burning at 15mpg... You guys need to grow up and realize that your efforts are selfish, you simply view us as a threat because we are one of the biggest groups that you can find to point a finger at. I try to get out on the trails as often as possible, I take the family with me as they enjoy it as well. I pick up trash along trails, I stay on marked paths. I'm not driving a loud obnoxious 2-stroke vehicle either. If I was driving along a trail within a half-mile, you wouldn't even know I was there. I try to leave my surroundings better than I found them. TREAD Lightly.

Areas commonly used by hikers, climbers, mountaineers, should stay that way. Areas commonly used by OHV riders should also stay that way. For most people I know, simply driving a vehicle down a smooth dirt road is not their idea of wheeling. Sure a large group certainly do that, but others like to go further, and push the limits of our vehicles. It's not the destination, but rather the adventure there. And yes, if you look hard enough, you will find areas excessively damaged by people that don't respect the land. Hikers, rock climbers, and mountain bikers can also use this same example. I mountain bike and rock climb. Have been for years. I could hike down a flat path or climb up a steep trail, but I look for the harder, more challenging areas. Again, it's not the destination, but the effort and adventure to get there that we love. And again, if you look around, you will see evidence of damage from this group too. Neither group can say they don't have an impact, and for one to say the other is worse is ridiculous. Both groups have people that don't respect land, leave trash, pollute, etc. We both need to become more responsible in our use of land.

If you don't believe OHVs cause impact, just Google "Upper Tellico OHV Area" and take a look at the photos. The trails were so badly eroded, the Forest Service shut down the trails and has undertaken a restoration of the damaged area. Of course, OHV groups have sued to keep it open. That doesn't say much for their understanding of environmental impacts.

get your facts straight about Tellico. They shut it down and now they are logging the property and building houses up there. I am sure logging and construction have way less of an impact on the land.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

This is a perfect example of doom and gloom at its greatest absolutely NO facts from the leftest anti OHV group just a lot of talk trying to play on the emotions of people who are concerned for the environment, the picture these people paint does not match any of the off road environment I have have seen in the past 40+ years of using it. I suspect the majority that has demoted here is also the same group that follows Al Gore and his global warming farce hide the decline ----> { Link } <---- funny but also very factual.

I just spent the last 12 days camping and riding OHV 4 Wheelers and off hwy motorcycles in central Utah. I rode 488 miles on the 4 Wheeler and 180 miles on the motorcycles (all on legal trails). I seen 55 elk, a dozen deer and a fox. The forest was awesome. I didnt see one hiker until I drove my SUV to a popular rock climbing canyon. Every Climber and Hiker I met had also driven to the canyon trail head parking area. The hike was rewarding and enjoyable. But not all areas need to be locked up to only foot traffic as well as not all areas are suitable for OHV use. We need to all get along and use resonable management principals to utalize OUR PUBLIC LANDS.

Public lands need to remain open to the public as long as responsibility and preservation are paramount. OHV users are responsible and have and will continue to have trail clean up days.

Certainly no MORE OHV use should be permitted. However much OHV users may love the outdoors, their vehicles pollute it and scare wildlife. Perhaps a small bit of OHV use is possible without creating problems. But it should remain very small.

I didn't have time to read all these comments so I hope this doesn't duplicate someone else's comments. My property abuts a forest made up of private parcels that has an OHV trail running through it. I have no objection to the use of these vehicles per se, but some users of them have come onto my property despite my putting up barriers, and their engines have killed some tree saplings I planted, and throughout the forest their sheer noise sends wildlife fleeing. Even if expansion of OHV use is seriously considered, the noise pollution is at least as big an issue as the two-stroke engine issue. Why do all these machines have to sound like Harleys? Why are there not thousands of electric OHVs out there? I doubt many would object to them.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

My 2 stroke OHV does no more polutting than your 2 stroke weedeater... Or your zero turn riding mower for that matter... I can tell the folks who worry about the noise scaring the critters have never spent anytime in the great outdoors and are simply regurgitating what someone else is asking them to say!!! How many deer have you seen on the side of the Interstate system that continue to graze after an 18 wheeler passes by at 70 mph??? I can say from experience thousands!!! I drive an 18 wheeler and have seen thousands of deer grazing on the roadside and never even look up... Now, riddle me this... How many deer have you walked up on, that didn't jump and run the other way??? Not including the Bambi movie you watched as a child... Now I would like to ask our moderators to require a National Parks and Wildlife membership from those of you who constantly come to this Blog to bash OHV or "stand up" for the critters... In other words show us some credentials to back up your ideas or concerns... From the amount of post made by some of the "top innovators" Look to (the columns on the right) I would say it is a safe bet that you NEVER have time to visit the great outdoors, because of the shear amount of Post here.... You must be tied to the internet at work, or maybe unemployed with nothing better to do??? You have proven your ignorance on this matter... Not calling you ignorant, but a Harley Davidson sounds nothing like A 2 stroke motorcycle or ATV... Heck they don't even sound like a 4 stroke atv... So go back and edit the online site you are getting your propaganda from!!!

{ Link } Comment number 5 says it all... The OHV crowd is not the only group Polluting our parks... So one must realize that there are going to be bad apples in every bunch, and we must educate and yes even sometimes clean up after these bad seeds... but that we are not all bad people! After all this is America, and we ALL Should share in it EQUALLY!!!

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

This idea is actually workable. Unlike the other OHV idea, in which the original poster made a ridiculous, self-righteous, and polarizing suggestion about how taxpayers should buy his special interest group a bunch of land so he can ride anywhere he wants, this idea is looking for a sustainable solution that meets the needs of varied interests including other outdoor recreation and conservation. As an outdoor sports enthusiast myself (albeit non-motorized), I have been through a lot of BLM land out West and I could see how it would be entirely possible to create a sustainable multi-use trail system out there. Sustainable trails, be they for hiking, biking, or off-roading, require engineering, and engineering requires funding, as does the ongoing maintenance of the trail system, even if staffed by volunteers. BLM land presents a number of challenges (flash flooding, sand, rocks, delicate flora, rattlesnakes) but I appreciate that some people are still willing to address a problem with the ingenuity and inventiveness that made this country great -- instead of just wanting to haphazardly run right over it. Sustainability also relies on the rider to behave responsibly. If mountain bikers or hikers start cutting trails and destroying vegetation, they close the trail. If your kid makes a mess in the pool, they close the pool to everyone. If you cheat in a sport, they kick you off the team. While every sport has its bad apples, nearly everyone accepts that these are the consequences for breaking the rules. Would OHV riders be willing to accept that? Unfortunately -- and I hope my experience is not representative of the entire OHV community -- the evidence I've seen demonstrates that they would not stick to the rules and would not accept responsibility for their actions. That makes education a necessary part of sustainability as well. The riders need to be educated on their responsibility as well as the laws governing OHVs and land use wherever they are riding. As for the noise and pollution, fixing that problem with the machines would probably go a very long way towards coexistence with people and wildlife.

I don't think you may be misinformed. While there are a very few exceptions, motorized vehicles are NOT allowed within Wilderness Areas at all - already. I wish they would do your suggestion at a faster rate! There are many re-routes, bridges and armoring (use of granite rocks on the trail) in most of the areas I travel.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

This is a very nice well written emotional rant. Please before you try to take away my freedom and my access to public lands I need to to back up what you have said here with verifiable facts showing the damage, giving directions so what your saying can be verified interdependently, have some scientific data to back up your position, maybe you have some tadpole carcass to show us and scientific data backing up a decline in frogs, salamander nymphs, and other aquatic life in this area, I am sure its as easily documented as your emotions that have been documented here. I am sure you also can show us the media glorifying I dont know about others but I would love to see this, their is no doubt a recording of this some place. I am sorry if I sound skeptical but I have been lied to by the best of them, Al Gore for example with his cast of players trying to sell the global warming thing. I agree that EVERYBODY needs to be educated about ORV's but lets educate them with hard undeniable pure facts and NO emotions like you have tried to educate the world with here. I am glad we have people passionate about the environment like you but I am sad when they try to control the majority with their emotions, repercussions from doing something like this is not going to be pretty, it might seem like a good idea today or a quick fix, short cut but it will be very regrettable in the end just ask Al Gore and his global warming gang, do a search for "hide the decline" . Thanks

And you have written a very measured and reasonable SOUNDING rant. It is typical of many who when presented with fact and documentation dismiss it with "yes buts" or total denial. Case in point is your reference to the "lies" you've been told about the overwhelming and irrefutable evidence of global climate change. Is it too much to ask that we believe we can always find ways to treat the earth better, and that in respecting the land we also respect our fellow human beings? There are too many of us on this earth to refuse to compromise; it can't be an "it's all about me" stance. And for the record, limiting how you use public lands is NOT limiting your freedom or access to these lands. You still have feet right? Try taking a stroll, hear the birds sing and the leaves of trees rustle; work off some of that anger. The heart you save may be your own.

Many of you have just pointed out the fact that we are seeing problems due to over crowding at the few OHV areas left. Thank You for that. I get the impression many of you are young and naive, highly impressionable. But try to keep an open mind and don't fall into the hyperbole and propaganda onslaught being forced upon the public by special interest groups. If you want to preserve nature, be a part of the solution. Let's get more places Re-Opened and take good care of them. If there's a little erosion and dust, well... so what! It's dirt after all.

I find it ironic that the idea author finds it appropriate to rant about the impact to watersheds by a relatively small group of people - OHV enthusiasts. Yet he chooses to ignore those groups who have the most significant impact to watershed quality. How about all those power boat users whose engines pump exhaust into the water they use? How about all those farmers who generate all that soil and chemical runoff? How about all those cattlemen whose cattle are polluting watersheds? How about the timbermen floating logs down rivers and generating runoff from cut areas? How about all those home builders building new homes in increasingly remote locations? How about all those people buying those new homes? Oh, wait - he doesn't have an axe to grind with them.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Where is this "Roadless Rule to protect National Forests" I am surprised nobody has asked to see it I want to read this, I am not like our current country's administration that will sign anything without reading it, we have these fools that will vote on things without reading them because we have fools that dont know who they are voting for voting for them, its like a endless cycle of stupid, an exercise in confusion at its absolute best. How about some honesty here how many of the 575 people that has currently voted on this has read the "Roadless Rule to protect National Forests" are you like congress and want to vote it in then read it? I am honest I have not read it, I am voting against this until I do read it, I cant blindly vote into law something I have not read, the emotional feelings expressed here simply dont tell me what this new law is and they certainty do not convince me to for it at this time. Thanks

It stops new road construction in national forests in areas that don't already have roads. There are already way too many roads in national forsests. More than can be maintained.

I just got bake from hiking Rock City @ Mt. Diablo park in California, and yes I'm a dirt biker. The amount of trash we picked up off the trails completely filled the small packs we were carrying! The erosion of the sandstone let alone the dirt trails was enormous from all the foot traffic. The amount of graffiti carved into the rocks was simply saddening. My 8yr. old daughter, a dirt bike racer herself, was really taken aback by all the vandalism and garbage we saw on the hiking trails. How do I answer her question, "Why do people think we (dirt bikers) are the bad guys dad?" I chose the high road and explained that all different types of people enjoy all different kinds of recreation and that we can't blame "hikers" for this mess. If we do that we're no better than the people trying to stop us from enjoying public lands. Granted we do sometimes find a small amount of trash at the campsites at the head of our OHV trails, which we pick up as a pre ride ritual. But NEVER do we find trash on the trails. Ok, maybe a fender here and there, we ride some really tough trails. ;o) My point is, please don't generalize us by a bad experience you may of had or "heard" from others. The OHV'rs I know are the best stewards of the land I have ever met and I am very proud to be raising my daughter with the same values.

So a broad generalization, poorly reasoned and without a hint of rational thought gets a 600 vote edge within days? Who are the environmental elitists that are responsible for rigging these votes?

Did you even try? I know there are a lot of shallow closed minded individuals on this site but at least try and hide your discrimination? As if the BS isnt thick enough. You only hurt your cause and give it worse name. The Sierra Club Has been noted by the majority as an environazi organization with too much money. The intention behind it has always been clear, but jeebus, are you guys even trying anymore? lol

You don't even know me, yet have all ready decided that because I have a vehicle that doesn't suite your personal taste, that I am disrespectful and want to ban or restrict my access to "public places". Seriously?!? Is this what our country has become? Whats next people.... Restricting access to those who wear off trend clothes?

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

People are people. Rude, uncaring, self-centered, and arrogant people populate just about any and all demographic groups that can be envisioned or defined. This idea author proves that themselves. We don't see Off-Road enthusiasts encouraging elimination or restriction of access to public lands for hikers, farmers, cattlemen, timber, or other interests. Yet this idea author is so certain of the superiority of their imperatives that they promote restriction of public lands access for many based upon the behaviors of the few. Such attitudes and behavior, in extreme form, is known as tyranny. More commonly, it is known simply as hypocrisy.

A small correction is in order. The Global Warming Wildlife Survival Act (110th Congress - H.R. 2338) is from the last congress (2007-2008) so would be more aptly put as The Global Warming Wildlife Survival Act of 2007. I say this because in the current congress (111th), H.R. 2338 is the No Welfare for Terrorist Act of 2009. S1993 is correctly identified in the current congress (111th) as the Natural Resource Climate Adaptation Act. My added comment would be that there are already many states working with the federal government on wildlife migration in the face of global warming. This include the Western Governors Association. They are doing this in a cooperative forum that includes citizen and resident stakeholders who are critical to the success of any broad landscape goal. I fear these bills which create hefty federal oversight may get more into federal-states rights squabbles and will undoubtedly end in push back from residents. While it may be appealing to try to force federal policies on states, even if viewed as benevolent causes, it is probably a doomed strategy.

Global warming, habitat protection, and preservation of species are related concerns that need to be at the center of planning decisions. Humans are but one species, we need to share and protect our environment--lest we end up in a world that resembles The Matrix.

Public lands should be quiet harmonious places, where people can experience nature at its best and see sites they have never seen before, take pictures and bring those pictures to all who have never been to the public lands. The recent PBS special by Ken Burns on the public lands did us a great service, by showing all that watched what there is to see in our great and beautiful country. The spiritual feeling I felt when at Muir Woods several years ago, would be destroyed by the roar of recreational engines. Muir Woods just as an example by being a quiet and reflective place should be preserved to allow nature to give us the connection to the spirit. It is told that when a President, I think it was Theodore Roosevelt or it could have been Woodrow Wilson, wanted to bring to life the League of Nations, which then became the United Nations, he brought the delegation that was influential in deciding the fate of the League of Nations to Muir Woods and the deed was done. Muir Woods influenced all that gathered to bring all the nations together in a League of Nations. These quiet reflective places that stir the soul, should be preserved for all generations to experience.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

I couldn't agree more! These wildlife habitat areas need to be protected from being sold off for housing developments, strip malls, mining, excessive drilling, factories, etc.. What is left needs protection. I also fully support areas that people can still enjoy wildlife without creating disturbances- Rails to Trails is one project I love- converting old railroad track areas into trails for the public to bike and hike-- this teaches our children to connect with the wilderness and learn to value wildland areas. I see a need for this, and I also feel that wildlife Estuaries and protected roadless areas also need to be protected as well for the sake of the wild animals, marine animals and migratory birds we share this planet with. There are ways we can compromise and still provide public access without disturbing wildlife too- ATV's are fun, but a little commonsense and sensitivity goes a long way in where you choose to ride one of them. There are areas you can ride these vehicles where you are not bothering wildlife and still having a good time. A lot of former coal mining areas have good trails for this. I would choose those open areas over quiet woodland areas.

there is more than enough wilderness area around the entire country. Mankind first needs to meet the mantra here. When are you goofballs going to wake up. If you want to keep all mankind off of the land, I suggest you buy it yourself and stop making all of us pay for it.

And some people want to preserve land, but not with the restrictive nature of Wilderness. I'm lucky enough to live where you can drive for hours and see hardly any development, with both Wilderness and non-Wilderness public lands, a mix that lets everyone enjoy the outdoors while doing a variety of recreational activities.

Multiple use does work.

Use of public land should not include destroying it with OHV play. Play on OHVs can be fun but destructive. This activity belongs on land that is dedicated to this sort of degradation. Public land needs to be preserved for all that want to use it. If it is destroyed that can't happen. Put OHV play in private parks. Yamaha, Honda, etc. are making lots of money on the vehicles, as well as distributors, accessory providers, etc. They should be making places for their vehicles to be used. The only vehicles that belong on public land are those that give us access and touring opportunities on designated roads. Street legal vehicles give us that kind of opportunity and can be regulated to keep us all safe and keep the land intact.

I have to argue with post number 5. I must admit for a nature lover I can't believe how wrong you are... Do you have any idea what a reclaimed coal mine is? Or abandoned rock quarry? If you leave the trees to grow and water to flow through anyplace long enough it creates a habitat for wildlife. At the private OHV park I visit quite often which was formerly a 400 acre strip mine we now have a dense forest with steep hills to enjoy with OHVs and water holes for wildlife and it is quite common to see deer in the distance or fox or unfortunately a few rattlesnakes from time to time. Yet on this small piece of ground the OHV club maintains we hold large events with up to 200 trucks and it doesn't bother the wildlife and with regular maintenance the footprint is at a standstill with 250 acres of trails to admire the wildlife.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

I propose that OHV area is measured by length of designated trails, not by acreage. Maintained and cared for OHV trails are a lot more compactable and open to compromise than areas in which OHVs cover every square foot. I concede that there should be SOME areas like that, but for most non-wilderness areas, I think it is more important to designate and maintain trails than to use acreage as a measurement.

are you saying just because we like to go offroad that we are uneducated? Wow are we resorting to 5th grade name calling? Why do we have to be jerks? Do you know all of us or is this just a general stereotype?

you're overeager to start an argument. "Jeeps and OHVs are the rule." I explore our local deserts in a Jeep myself. Sorry, Jeepers and OHVers who damage the environment are jerks. Even jerks have rights in a free society. The solution to the problem is education, not closing roads and limiting access to responsible Jeepers and OHVers.

Over a decade ago, we bought a small chunk of land close to a state forest. Several years ago, I moved out here on what would at best be called a mud road. It is illegal in our county to drive ATVs on public roads, however they come roaring down the road, leaving a trail of fumes too often. They also rip through our woods, and they do cause damage. Ruts remain where they drove on soft ground or made trips up slopes. I hate the things. They are worse than the hunters that trespass to shoot game or dig ginseng. That said, I am in favor of designated places on public land for people to ride them. Like horse trails, they would provide recreational opportunities for a specific population. Anytime we humans invade the wilderness, on foot, on horse, by canoe, or on some motorized vehicle, we change the balance of nature. The noise, the fumes, the trash, our scent, the changes to the soil, all have an impact on the ecosystem. What we must insure is that some land remains pristine, closed to invaders.

I agree. The job of National Parks is to preserve the natural beauty of these places, not destroy it. The gasoline engine is not a part of this natural world and its use should be severely limited on lands that have been set apart as parkland.

There's quite a bit of cherry picking of information and a slanted perspective in many of the "anti-access" responses. Absolutely, we need more enforcement of rules and rangers need to work with us, NOT against us. Again, a few dumb people doing a few dumb things. Why do you insist on pointing out the few isolated cases of irresponsibility? I see many people picking up trash and enjoying nature out on the trails. So many smiling faces and happy people. I've NEVER seen many of the abuses claimed by the Anti-Access folks, during my in 30 years of riding. Unfortunately, for many of the Zealots, the end justifies the means.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

"Bad enough already that we get shot at by hunters if you happen to get in the way or scare off what they were trying to shoot just for sport" Total bull, hunters do not shoot at people. You are just an anti-hunter trying to use scare tactics, and fear in your attempts to discredit the over 14 million hunters who hunt responsibly, and who have paid money for licenses, tags, federal stamps for some species, land use permits, and on top of that we pay an extra 11% tax on firearms and ammunition. Hunters, fishermen/women, and the many groups started by them have paid billions upon billions of dollars for land and wildlife conservation, far more than any of the so-called environmental groups, who use all the funds they get donated to them for salaries, attorneys, and a never ending stream of absurd lawsuits to try and stop hunting, and in some cases, fishing.

how many times have you went into the woods on a OHV trip with your family? With the sheer numbers of families that enjoy the same recreation as I do there must be something to it. btw I bet you kids(if you have any) spend all day playing a video game. My daughter has horses, fourwheelers and she goes in my wife's jeep often on the trails. No video games for her she doesnt have time she is busy OUTSIDE.

I have every right to drive my Jeep on public land. Suck a duck if you don't agree.

ok heres the thing first of all my "gas hogging ohv" gets 26 mpg and its a jeep wrangler so thats off the list of negatives. second of all my jeep can take me places your boots need 3 days to get to. now i dont know about you but i dont have 3 days and i want to see as much of this country as i can. oh and by the way i pay taxes just like you, therefore its my land too, hate to tell you but welcome to America its called a free country for a reason.

I am prepping my Jeep right now for a weekend trip with my family. I cant wait to get out in the woods and enjoy nature! I am so thankfull to have the opprotunity to enjoy my hobby.

How is getting on a smelly ORV family time. Family time is doing something where you actually spend time talking to your kids and having some quality time with them. Sitting on an ORV which could cripple or put your kid in the hospital does not seem to fit that parameter what does you Minivan smell like? My Jeep smells like the airfreshner I display on the mirror. Also, my Jeep is not all that loud either and only produces the same carbon footprint it would if I was driving it down I-80. My family's chances of being crippled while riding on land open to OHV use is very unlikely. We enjoy the scenery that some parks around the nation provide us. I have seen hikers permanently injured in accidents...what makes you any different?

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Sorry, my Jeep has all the emissions equipment it left the factory with. I tread lightly and enjoy the outdoors, as is my right. It's the obligation of the Forest Service to provide for diversity among outdoors users. Your comments smack of elitism and seems to encourage exclusionary practices based on some nebulous "pollution" metric. By your logic do you endorse yourself driving to the public lands? How do you get to work? MaryRose: You'll need to keep every human being out of the forest to meet your artificial standard of "wilderness". Does that include firefighters during massive wildfires? You do know that the OHV trails are highly useful as fire breaks and for getting emergency crews in and out safely.

To everyone who says quit being lazy. I have a question. What am I supposed to do. I have a bad back, and premature arthritis in my ankle. I got these problems while I was in the army. I served my country, and fought to keep America free TO ALL. Not just the elitists who want everyone to be like them. I can't hike anymore, but I still deserve the right to public lands! To the people complaining about the trash. I have been on many trails in CO, and UT from easy to hard. The most trash I have ever picked up is a wal-mart bags worth. Please back up your claims with links to pictures of this trash. To the people who claim OHVs have no right to be in "your" area. I live at the foot of a very popular mountain for climbers. Every year there are dozens of hikers rescued by our local S&R. The S&R team has a group of very well built "Jeeps", and use them to rescue lost, stranded, or injures hikers. Without our local trails these VOULENTEERS would not build their rigs, and there would only be S&R on foot possibly costing people their lives. How would you rescue these people? It seems to me that the people complaining about the noise are either being hyper-critical, or frequent areas that are overcrowded(probably because there are not enough OHV trails).

Also I can't stand people stating things without proof. Without proof you have no case. Just opinions. These FACTS are taken Directly from the Forrest Service. Off-Highway Vehicle Recreation in the United States, Regions and States: A National Report from the National Survey on Recreation and the Environment (NSRE) US Population aged 16 and older that participated OHV recreation from 1999-2004 214,022,200 people According to a table in that document, it works out to 18.6% of the total population of the US. We are not a small segment of society. 26.4 percent people above the age of 16 have participated in off highway recreation in Colorado (one in four people are considered overweight, and that is called an epidemic) 31.1 percent for Utah 20.7 percent in North Carolina Wyoming has the lead with 33.8 percent. I collected these FACTS during the closure of Tellico For the local economy in the long-term • USFS statistics indicate that OHV enthusiasts spend 4 times more money on lodging, food, and gas than other outdoor sportsmen. • Within the 3 county area encompassing the OHV trail system: • \$4.8 million in tourism revenues is generated annually by OHV users. This was for ONE trail system. • A repair solution would generate between \$1.5 and \$2.6 million in OHV revenue annually. • A closure solution would generate ZERO dollars in tourism revenue.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Very good facts. But facts dont matter just opinions and the hiking land closure community does not care what it cost a community if they can "win" and close trail systems. Hope you noted the sarcasim. As i was the first to post on this topic. The 60% to 80% of the population who do not participate in OHV use still do not recognize the family building experiences such as a sunset ride and seeing the large herd of elk grazing the medow at sundown. I still stand by my statement that my family is closer because of ATV adventures. I know people like "have no sympathy for me and my family memories" can continue to devalue my choices in life but no matter what they are still my family memories and you cant take them away from me no matter how hard you try they are in my familys minds not yours.

as the owner of a small chunk of land used for ohv/ 4x4 rec. I've never in my 7 years of running this land found trash on my trails. we are only open to motorized rec and primitive camping so I'd say it's representative of average ohv and 4x4 use. Another point I'd like to address is the noise complaints, in the state of Wisconsin, state 4x4 trails are designated as "unmaintained roads" and as such are subject to all the same laws as paved roads. Speed limits, vehicle noise, and blood alcohol laws still apply. designate forest trails as such and ticket or tow any vehicle or user that breaks the law. as an outdoors enthusiast I have a passion for camping and paddling. however, back injuries (broken vertebrae and nerve damage) have made it imposable for me to carry enough gear to even spend a night more than a mile from my vehicle and has kept me away from all but the most over crowded waterways. To help me get back to nature in responsible way, I've built a vehicle with low impact travel in mind. There is no way to convince me that my 2500 pound 60hp Suzuki Samurai on 29" all purpose tires could do irreparable damage to the forest land I would love to explore. As a 4 wheel enthusiast, I live in fear of the fact that my every move is watched by someone hell bent on kicking me off public land. every piece of trash must be picked up, every mark erased, every consideration given regardless of who's mess it was. If theres trash in the woods , a wheeler left it, if there is washout, A wheeler caused it, if a tree dies, a wheeler killed it, this kind of persecution is senseless. Because of this negative light we live under most 4 wheel drive clubs promote voluntary clean-up days and most individuals practice a "Pack out MORE than you packed in" policy. I believe that todays off-road enthusiast is unfairly lumped together with every idiot with a 4x4. It's like saying that every desert raver and drunk in a tent is a camper or a hiker and every beer can, wrapper, glow stick and water bottle they leave behind reflects on you. when someone drives a mile into a county forest and dumps a pick-up truck full of drywall scraps, he wasn't on a drive with his family to their favorite place to camp in the woods and thought, "this looks like a good place to clean out my truck." These people are knowingly committing a crime and would do so whether the land was open or closed to trucks.

Working on reforestation in the US and helping other nations to reforest is a great start. Working on clean energy sources. Working on protecting and saving wildlife in case of natural disasters. Just look what is happening in Russia - animals are loosing their homes and their lives along with ot. It's a tragedy and animals should be helped because they suffer too.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Here in the SE Utah, there are similar trail restriction due to the delicate nature of the cryptobiotic soil crust that is critical to ensuring ongoing health of the desert ecology. Unfortunately, in neighboring BLM land there are no such specific restrictions; only conservation guidelines to avoid further depletion of precious resources. I know that we want "kids to be kids", but why not take the opportunity to actually give our kids the education that our parks also want to give about protection? I'm sorry your nearby park limits your child's enjoyment, but clearly there are balances that must be achieved. There are plenty of other ways in which parents can let their kids go hog wild without throwing the rules out the door and the future of our environment...which is supposed to be there for your kids as well.

Totally agree with #11. Implement the ideas of the National Parks 2nd century commission.

Implement most of the ideas for the National Parks 2nd Century commission including more funding for upkeep, maintenance, new purchases, conservation corps funding as a green jobs and economic stimulus, paying more attention to migration corridors and staffing. The only worry I have are off road motor vehicle use by visitors, including but not limited to snowmobiles and ATV's. These should not be used in pristine wilderness areas. Part of the pristine nature of these places is the lack of noise as well as undevelopment of the land.

As an outdoor person, I see the value and quality of life when shared with others, everyone is a different person when involved with nature, we must implement the best recommendations provided by the National Parks 2nd Century commission.

the commission has reviewed and made the recommendations. it's time to implement them to maintain and enjoy our unique natural resources/sites.

We have to be mindful of the future, not just today, what is destroyed today and made into concrete jungles will not sustain us tomorrow. Please expand the green spaces.

Simply stated, we must protect our beautiful, yet fragile ecosystems, parks, wild lands, etc.

Quite honestly, I would rather my taxes be increased if it meant better environmental protection.

Thanks! Informative and helpful. With what you posted I went on line and answered my own underlying question. For some reason I was incorrectly under the opinion that the National Park Service was the agency responsible for all National Monuments. There are six different agencies that manage or co-manage the various National Monuments. I now see where the co-management might have implications for the Mount St. Helens area you make reference to.

The San Gabriel mountains are a fantastic resource for hikers. Making it part of the National Parks would provide the resources it needs to accomodate the millions of people who visit each year.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

This is an area to logically put more funding. With the economy down many more people are spending their vacations in their own areas and national parks instead of flying somewhere. Spending for national parks benefits the parks, many of which are in dire need, as well as the economy with local jobs and local materials etc.

totally agree w/ full funding as well as promotion of parks to our population. so many people have never visited and enjoyed them. once you see them and learn the history, feel the nature, you will forever remember them as a high point of our country.

Ban plastic bottled water in national and state parks.

I grew up in Florida. Year after year I watched motor boats speed down the Intracoastal Waterway. Year after year I read newspaper accounts of the manatees and turtles that had been chopped up by boat propellers. I remember when Florida had Dusky Seaside Sparrows; it was declared extinct in 1990. This is an outrage. We need to stop the housing encroachment. Boats that dump their sewage into the water further damage the ecological balance; they should not be permitted to dump in our waterways. When we put the environment and animals first, we are actually putting ourselves first. When we put housing, factories, yachts, boats, and motorized land vehicles above the needs of our environment and the animals it sustains, then we are choosing our own eventual destruction along with the destruction of this planet, its flora, fauna, and marine life. Sooner or later we need to say, "enough". I am shocked by the number of adults in their 20s and 30s who do not believe the land is worth saving. We have generations who have never known pristine land and who have never learned its value. We need to educate the younger members of our society before our nation's heritage is permanently lost.

Wildlife includes a variety of fish that also need access to spawning grounds and obstruction free corridors for their migration. Promote catch and release and a return to restoring wild populations. Barbless hooks save fish from mortality. Lower the daily catch limit to one or two fish. Fish as well as bison need to be able to roam free and reproduce.

It is easy to say "let's stop the housing development and residential growth near our national parks". People will go somewhere else and destroy more habitats that are not protected by the national park status. Animals and their habitats exist everywhere, and it should be recognized. I think that this mentality should change. A lot of people don't see the problem with having a huge house in the suburbs and driving miles to work. Maybe they sense that such environment affords them freedom and privacy. People should learn how to live close to each other in apartments and in densely populated urban areas. We cannot grow our communities forever, one day we need to stop, look around us, realize that with our houses we are ruining animals' houses and create cities, not never-ending suburbs. New York City is a great example of this lifestyle. 10 million people can't be wrong when they choose to live close to each other and enjoy conveniences that only the life in a big city can provide. The size of Manhattan is finite and buildings grow up, not out.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

In Wisconsin, we depend on large areas of bird friendly habitat for the annual migrations. Our state and its values protect that habitat against intrusion when it can but we need a coordinated effort of the States and the National Parks to see the larger picture and have a national policy of habitat protection.

No guns, no ATV's. Hiking and exploration on designated trails only. Penalties for failure to use trash receptacles and the removal of Park property. No alcoholic beverages, zero tolerance on these.

Enhance activities for children in National Parks. Have videos about National Parks been made available for schools?

Our National Parks allow all of us to escape from our modern urban environments and offer a haven for wildlife from development. Wildlife corridors help maintain biodiversity and are needed to link parks, Federal and State.

Protect our National Parks and their surrounding environment and don't allow any more homes to be built in our parks. I enjoy our National and State Parks. If you have more homes than you are just putting yourself in harm's way of any wildlife you may encounter and so we don't need to build homes on their land, because they were there first.

Sustainable forest management is a good plan to have, but it should not ban other activities, hiking, fishing, hunting, boating where there are waterways all should be open for all to use. Some ATV areas should also be made available. Clearcutting should be used very rarely, but there are cases where it is the best plan, it allows new growth, and as long as the area is replanted with the type of trees that were cut, it works out to benefit wildlife. It also provides a fire break, since forest fires used to do that, but now we put out the fires. I have seen in person the vast improvement in wildlife populations after a clearcutting operation. This was in two areas in WV, in the George Washington, and the Monongahela National forests. The numbers of deer, rabbits, grouse, songbirds, foxes, hawks, Black bears, and what I think were bobcat tracks. We also saw tracks that we think were from a cougar, but they were not verified, though some sightings were noted in the state. This site was replanted with pines, and after the clearcut in the mid 70's the pines are ready for logging again.

The only incentive is to keep routes open to roads and trails and not perverting the wilderness designation. When this happens and the public is not allowed in you start pushing more people into other smaller areas with decreasing safety and over-use. OHV is here to stay in one form or another. Learn to coexist on public lands

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

The Owyhee Canyonlands are indeed a special place. I have been fortunate to travel much of their length in Oregon either by car along the rim, hiking, or rafting the lower canyon. I just returned from spending two nights in Hole in the Ground and hiking the canyon bottom. The canyon is a rare combination of geologic majesty, diverse and fragile flora and fauna, recreational opportunity (including but hardly limited to hunting), Native American archeological sites, and stockman history. Properly protecting and preserving all of these treasures will require an integrated approach involving a range of stakeholders and concerned parties. I'm not certain that a national monument is the best way to achieve this, but I would prefer it to doing nothing.

Such a natural treasure needs permanent protection.

It is a genuine wilderness, and it deserves protection.

The Owyhee Canyonlands area is a secret national treasure. I enthusiastically agree that it deserves permanent protection as a National Monument so that future generations may enjoy the combination of beauty, solitude and wilderness activities that it has to offer. I spent a week rafting, camping and hiking through the canyon -- it truly is the "Grand Canyon" of Oregon.

I agree! Connecting the next generation to America's Great Outdoors is critically important and urgent. As global climate change becomes the defining environmental issue of our time, we must engage youth directly to begin solving this issue and stem this tide. Walt Whitman pointed out that "a child becomes all that he experiences." I am privileged to have had experiences America's Great Outdoors as a child. It was through spending meaningful time in nature that I learned the importance of creating and maintaining sustainable relationships with people and the land. I call on this Administration to invest in public / private partnerships that deliver environmental education programs to the youth of today in America's best classroom, our National Parks!

There is a very simple solution for both of you. Get out of the areas where OHV's are allowed and get into a Wilderness Area where they are not allowed! Its really not that hard!

I believe roads and sustainability go hand in hand. We need to be environmental stewards while allowing social and economic activity. We need them all in a fair balance.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

If the Open Trails program were approved and funding as proposed, it would provide funds to the states and tribes to develop and maintain recreational trails and trail-related facilities across private land to isolated parcels of federal public land. When the federal government provides this type of access across private land, by law it must secure permanent easements. These type of easements are not always attractive to private landowners, and therefore, these easements are not accepted by landowners. Besides that fact, many landowners do not want to enter into any leases, easements or agreements with the federal government concerning their lands. State and tribal governments, on the other hand, frequently secure access on or across private land through short-term agreements, contracts, leases or easements, and are not required in all cases to secure only perpetual or permanent access arrangements with private landowners. This situation often is more agreeable to the private landowner.

Mandatory deposits would help. I spent my childhood collecting and working for 10 cent bottle deposits. We have low income adults collecting plastic bottles here in CA. This would help them too.

Please check out the idea I've posted. It's inspired by ecologist Dennis Martinez. I think you might like it. { Link }

Search "public native plant gardens" on this site for a complementary idea...and thank you for yours.

Thanks for the website resource, and "green infrastructure" sounds like a helpful term for weighing in with developers and city planners. I love it, keep up the good work.

This type of idea has popped up a lot over the last few pages I've looked at. I've done a lot of volunteering for various things and know the satisfaction of a job well done even if there's no monetary gain, but I also think we need to be careful not to abuse the generosity of the seniors and others who are already volunteering or may in the future. It would be nice if they could actually get paid for their time, at least to cover gas and other possible expenses. Perhaps this could be done through grants? Much of my own volunteering over the years has partly been because I didn't have money to donate, so I donated my time. Organizations have plenty of work but no funds to pay someone to do it, so volunteers are vital. The satisfaction of volunteering is often payment enough, but after decades of dedicated volunteering, I'm starting to feel a little overused. I'm guessing I'm not the only one.

This is a good idea as long as the historic roots are truly recognized. Most of this country was discovered on horseback, and the historic and cultural role of the horse should be recognized and included on Scenic & Historic Trails.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

And in return for this fantastic volunteer help, off-road recreationists are first at the table when decisions about where to ride are made. When I hear the off-road vehicle groups have given a million dollars to the Susan G. Komen Foundation (breast cancer), then I'll have my first example that they act in anybody's interests but their own.

For anyone with experience working with many govt agencies and doing grant writing, bringing these resources together makes a lot of sense. A clear well-defined mission and stable funding are critical to long term success.

We shape the land, and, in turn, the land shapes us. Telling the story of how this happens is extremely important.

Well all I know is we are having fund raisers, car washes, bake sales, contests, etc in order to pay for maintenance of our local parks.

Well said. I work as a Garden Instructor at an elementary school and all that you have said reiterates what our program does for the students, school community and the community as a whole. Not only does it connect them to the outdoors, it enables them to grow from seed the food that they eat throughout the year and involves them in every step of the process. For many of them, they find the connection they have been missing. If we want kids who are involved in all aspects of life, then school gardens are a great place to start.

I visit the Smokey Mountains every year. I am all for a limited (controlled) amount of traffic in the park area. I am also in favor of a fee (\$5) per vehicle to help support the park maintenance. Whenever I visit the park, I always place a donation in the collection box at the end of the Cades Cove road, but unfortunately the vast majority of the vehicles going through the park simply drive on by without a second thought of helping to preserve this wonderful area. If we were to incorporate these two ideas, I believe it would benefit the park in several ways. One, the amount of air pollution could be greatly reduced. Two, the direct impact on the natural wildlife would be reduced, thus allowing nature to recover from the damage we have already done. Three, the overall cost incurred by the Forrest service in maintaining the park would be reduced by having this fee used for just this park. I am sure there are many other ideas that others can come up with to help in this area.

Interesting, when I was thinking about outdoor spaces, I was thinking parks, forests, trails, etc., not water and oceans. Does America have areas of the ocean that are considered parks or protected spaces? If so, I agree with this comment. If not, although I am in agreement with the concept, I'm not sure that this is the appropriate place to post it. But I am going to "Promote" this idea with the understanding that if we don't have designated ocean parks, that will be something to implement in the future...including banning shark finning in said ocean parks.

To encourage camping, provide classes/workshops in "how to camp" - camping etiquette, how to set up a tent, how to start a fire, what to be scared of and not scared of, how to deal with toilet matters if not near a bathroom/outhouse, etc. Perhaps find ways to pool people who are interested but unable to afford or set up facilities alone.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

i LOVE this idea. zion this year was super easy to see and get around in w/ the shuttle service. glacier and yellowstone would also benefit. an 11 mile line of cars in great smokeys was horrid and really turned that whole park off to me. haven't been to yosemite to comment, but believe that environmentally the shuttles /other transportation will help w/ visits to many of our parks as they won't be crowded w/ cars; parking and air quality won't be as huge an issue. plus visitors will actually meet and talk to others - something we cannot do crammed into our own cars.

Grand Canyon has a nice public transport system there too that we used quite a bit. I think \$25 bucks to access the Grand Canyon by car was already a pretty hefty fee, though. Let's make it a no-brainer to use it, though, not a punishment if it doesn't happen to work out for the individual. Catch more flies with honey perhaps?

One of the best ideas I've seen here. The legacy of the CCC is still with us today making it easy and pleasant to enjoy our parks. This program should be open to all the unemployed, not just disadvantaged or at-risk youth as I've seen remarked in another idea. Having people of varying ages, experiences, and socio-economic status would greatly benefit all of these groups through working together and sharing their experiences.

Put community gardens in your search engine. There are many resources available telling you how to go about organizing this as well as support. Good luck. "A small group of thoughtful people could change the world. Indeed, it's the only thing that ever has."

Way to go, These are some of the best ideas I have heard in awhile. I have thought about this time and time again. The CCC was one of the best things that happened to this country. I'm in my 50s and have been in the infrastructure building business for 35 years. Due to this economy and the US not investing in infrastructure projects I have been out of work for over one year. I would be MORE then happy to sign up and be a part of a movement such as the CCC. It actually looks like employment is not a priority to the feds.

Fully staffing our national parks protects them, and ensures a better experience for all visitors.

Our National Parks must be fully funded. They are a precious and irreplaceable part of our legacy as Americans.

Funding Americas parks is best for America

Our National Parks are a precious and irreplaceable part of our legacy as Americans. They must be fully funded.

These National treasures need to be properly cared for, preserved and staffed.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

I think entry fees should be reasonable to allow all people access to our lands. I think infrastructure money should be appropriated to repair the damage done for years when the parks were left to deteriorate under the "You have seen one, you have seen them all" philosophy. This would make access to the public lands more available. I think handicapped access should be part of the public lands improvement for those of us that love to visit the public lands, but are handicapped. I think that the government should have a plan to encourage visitation to the public lands. Yellowstone's roads are being refurbished as we speak. This is good. I wonder what else needs to be done to Yellowstone and the other public lands to make projects long ignored come to fruition. I do not agree that foreigners should be financially punished for wanting to come here. Their tourist dollars all make up for any real or imagined money lost by their visits. They should be welcomed as we are a nation of immigrants and how better to show foreigners our country that allowing them access to our beautiful public lands without any penalty. Imagine the pictures they take home to show to others about what a great and beautiful country we have,

My family supports increased funding for our national parks.. Funding is needed to build and maintain the boardwalks and paths that protect the environment and take visitors to great places like up Logan Pass in Glacier National Park and through the geyser basins in Yellowstone National Park. Funding supports our Rangers who tell us about the carriage roads and bridges in Acadia and explain to our kids how the Condors flying over the Grand Canyon almost died out. Funding is used for new visitor centers that orient us to the scenic wonders, wildlife, and history we are about to experience. For as many times as my family's experience in the national parks was enriched because funding provided Rangers and facilities, it's sad to say we can list just as many where trails were poorly maintained and where there were no Rangers to tell these stories.

I recently briefly met a ranger who had been coming to Yellowstone in the summer for 40 years and as his children grew up they worked at Yellowstone. His father preceded him to Yellowstone, although I do not know in what capacity he came. His visit profoundly influenced his son and then the son influenced his family, The knowledge that this ranger gave to us tourists was gleaned from all those years at Yellowstone. He mentioned geological and other disciplines doing research in the park. This research can only benefit us and should continue.

America holds the greatest natural treasures on earth. It is vital to fully fund our national parks, which are trustees of many of these treasures! Protect, conserve, educate.....these are the noble purposes of America's national parks.

This strikes me as a no-brainer. Our National Parks are an integral part of our national identity. I meet people from all over the world in my local National Parks. That's good for our local economies as well as our international image. Supporting our National Parks is a must.

Our National Parks serve a two-fold purpose in giving us a place to enjoy nature and a place to learn about our history as a nation. It is very important to preserve both the natural parks and the historical parks for the future.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Making sure our national parks are fully funded should come before the funding of foreign interests. Our national parks ARE jewels for the citizens of this country to enjoy and share with others. Without these parks the quality of life for everyone in this country is diminished. We have a duty to future generations of Americans to protect our parks and see that they flourish.

Please Increase Funding to Fully Staff National Parks!

Our national parks are truly our national treasures. Some of my dearest memories of childhood come from visiting the parks of the West with my family. Now, when the parks partner with organizations such as NatureBridge, student groups can come to our parks for educational experiences that inspire personal connections to the natural world. These field science programs in outdoor classrooms can be life-changing and affect myriad diverse student groups. Our national parks exist for educational as well as aesthetic experiences. They need our support. Full funding is critical.

Some of our best family vacations have been in our National Parks--Acadia, Bryce Canyon, Yosemite and Zion are our favorites, and we would like to see them all fully staffed and funded!

Funding must be increased by significant amounts

All National parks are important, they are part of our history and the parks need to be staffed properly, so everyone who visits gets the importance of saving this vital resource. We can't thank our presidents who have had this vision, such as President Theodore Roosevelt, to save this for our future generations. Iris

Our National Parks should be fully funded. National Park Service rangers offer dedication to a wonderful outdoor resource that gives us the best bang for the buck in this country. In tough economic times a fully funded NPS represents wisdom. We need more and more wisdom ! Disappear the privatization.

Our National Parks should be fully funded. This is a sound investment for the future. The returns for tourism alone would make it so.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Definitely fun National Parks! One of the good things about Public Parks is that they serve a dual benefit.-- not only do they benefit the public recreation wise- and serve as a means for environmental appreciation and education for our young, but these parks also serve as a protection for many wildlife species and habitat as well as being accessible to the public. In a National Park, wildlife habitat can be protected while still providing access to public camping, hiking, and recreation. National and State Parks are the tools needed in our ever growing populations to encourage the public to actually appreciate our Environment and wildlife- and to provide sanity in the place of urban chaos. Without public parks, a disconnect from Creation results. Public parks also provide enough foliage and trees to combat industrial air pollution that the rest of our Nation and World faces on a daily basis. We need the natural areas to counter the un-natural areas in an ever growing population.

Let's fund our parks!

yes...fund the national parks.

Since their creations, our national parks have served to show its citizens as well as the world the need to protect and revere historical areas as well as areas of wilderness and pristine beauty, and the wildlife contained within its boundaries. These parks must be fully funded in order to provide adequate staffing, equipment and updating/preservation, so that future generations of the country can experience the many wonders of the United States. Fully fund our parks!!!

Yes.... Our national parks need to be properly funded and protected from the greed of corporate America. These parks should be preserved for us and for all future generations. SAVE OUR PARKS!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

If we want future generations to be able to enjoy our national parks as we have, we must give them a high enough priority in the budget to bring them back to a fully maintained condition. For future generations to get the same value from a park visit the staff of rangers must be brought back up to a level to provide the ranger lead hikes and evening programs that we took our children to when they were young. Some fees for ranger walks might be an answer. The burden of a few dollars per person would only be a fraction of the cost of getting to the park and would greatly improve the value received for that cost of getting there.

Absolutely I am for funding!! My family has spent many enjoyable days and weeks at National Parks across out country. They have been some of our most fun vacations and children love them, to be outside and run and romp and be a part of nature. The traditions have continued with grandchildren from a very young age and their parents now take them. What an awesome country we have and it would be so sad not to see the Parks continue forever.

Saving the natural places and wildlife of our country should absolutely be a top priority. Without these places, humans will not survive.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

National Parks and wilderness areas are a "must" for all Americans and mankind. Future generations must be able to enjoy these areas just as we have been able to enjoy them. Funding needs to be adequate to maintain facilities and trails due to use, as well as, to acquire new areas. Once gone to development or misuse, these parks and areas will be lost forever.

Save our parks before Monsanto turns them all into hog farm CAFO's, with Clarence Thomas' blessings.

I fully support better funding for our National Parks. These are treasured resources that ALL can enjoy. They need to be maintained and their rules for use need to be enforced so that they can thrive for years to come.

Full funding for the National Parks and all our wilderness areas along with continued funding for green technology.

Do not privatize park services, as we need trained park servicers with genuine care for the parks.....the love enhances the park experience. FULLY fund the parks including educational programs. Keep the noise and light pollution out. Keep OHV out....I hate what they stand for, a mentality that predates our awareness of our being as PART of the envoinment, and not stuck in a role as a permanent-adolescent dominator of a percieved other.

It's STILL America's Best Idea and deserves full funding. It could be some of the best monetary investment in all government. The payback is huge.

Protect, defend, sustain our lands, our wildlife, our waters

Our National Parks need to be fully funded with permanent staff and services as well as keeping them in the public domain.

Parks are a nice refuge for both people and wildlife. We'll be missing an important, original part of America without them. We need to preserve land that has been there since the colonists arrived in America.

I frequent Shenandoah National Park and think it would be a travesty if the park service were forced to close areas of the park due to inadequate staff. Please fully staff the NPS!

Our National Parks are treasures and should be treated as such. They are irreplaceable. If we fully funded them, we would create thousands of jobs.

Fully funded national parks are easily one of the best investments we can support as taxpayers and citizens. If only the rest of our money was as well managed and well spent. Increase the NPS budget!

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Yes, please fully fund our National Parks and Monuments, etc., both for staffing and for maintenance. It's way overdue.

Our national parks are truly a national treasure worth preserving and enhancing. Adequate staffing with trained and knowledgeable rangers is very important both for increased public enjoyment of the parks as well as for the protection of park lands. Neglect will only lead to more money needed later--it's always better to maintain than to have to repair--and if eco systems are not preserved they may never be able to be restored. Please increase the funding for our national parks so that they will be available and beautiful for us as well as for future generations!

I think that it is important that the national parks be fully funded and staffed. For some this is the only place they have to go and experience wilderness and animals and mountains etc. The beauty of our parks needs to be preserved for the mental well being of the citizens of this country, who need to have these places to retreat to for relaxation and restoration of calm that can't be found in our cities.

Some of my best times have been in visits to National Parks, from the Smokey Mountains to Acadia to the Badlands to Yosemite to possibly the best, Denali. Please fully fund them.

I am so grateful that the National Parks exist for so many reasons... for the wildlife, for us to reconnect with the glories of this world, for us to be reminded of what we have to lose. Please please continue to fully fund the parks.

I just returned from Glacier National Park. I took advantage of the ranger-led activities and they were all very well done. My enjoyment of this great park was enhanced, and I appreciate the teaching and leadership they provided. In addition, the shuttle services help reduce traffic in the parks and should be expanded further.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Our family just spent three weeks this summer in Yellowstone and we were very aware of how much the full time park staff needs bolstered. They need to add full time rangers, naturalists, interpreters, fly-fishing guides, and signage. They also need to boost their educational programs for the public, as we observed some incredibly naive human behavior, such as getting much too close to wild and dangerous bears and bison for that "special photo," especially since they all had calves and cubs at their sides. Since our tax dollars cannot be designated, the federal government has a deep and ecological obligation to ensure that Yellowstone and ALL national parks be well funded. Don't cut funding--add funding for our national park systems! The new gold Leeds Educational Center at Old Faithful is gorgeous and energy efficient (It was not open yet though). We should support and nationally PUBLICIZE not only more of these types of energy efficient developments in our parks (and all over our nation--in cities and residences), but also consider putting more staff on full-time employment in those parks. We also must step up and speed up our recycling efforts tenfold in our parks and our country overall. Passenger trains should be reintroduced to Bozeman or to Livingston for those people who wish to visit Yellowstone. We took the train from Toledo through Chicago to Havre, Montana and absolutely loved it as part of our travel experience, but speaking to folks on the train and all around the areas we traveled out west, they bemoan the sad fact that passenger trains do not run into southern Montana where they are needed, and reintroducing passenger rail trains to this southern Montana area would greatly reduce our energy reliance on petrol and increase the joy of traveling long distances across our nation. We need to invest in more, not less, train travel--within states and across them.

I agree that funding should be increased to fully staff the national parks. Upon my visits to national parks, I found that many park rangers are seasonal and not full time employees of the Park Service. Many seasonal rangers are not as knowledgeable about the parks as the full time rangers. Many national parks are understaffed and hours of operation reduced. The national parks are very educational in their culture, geology and history. National Parks have to be preserved for future generations.

I very, very much agree. Our parks have such a wide draw from our overseas visitors, that these folks should also share in the cost of our efforts to keep our national parks and vistas clean, clear and available to all. We have millions and millions of visitors from outside our borders, let's engage their financial resources with a small departure tax. Great idea! I sure wish the powers that be would pick up on this idea.

I do believe we should charge foreign visitors a fee to enter our parks...that could be millions of dollars for parks and preservation. Let's be smart about our country and finances.

I support funding our National Parks by user fees and through our governmental bodies.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Becoming negative and calling our President names does nothing to solve the problems we as a nation are facing. To think positively when the situation appears negative takes vision and an enduring optimism. We need to focus on solutions more than the problems, on what will benefit the future generations of our children and their children...to the seventh generation as the Native Americans say. Once wilderness area is stripped of its trees for the lumber companies, it is of no value to us, or the flora and fauna that lived there. Once the mining roads have been cut into total wilderness areas, they are no longer wilderness. These are treasures for us to care for and keep in their pristine state...such as that is in these days. So much has already been lost, so many new building developments are threatening even the Civil War battlefield areas. There is plenty in this land for jobs to keep these as they are. If the parks were maintained, if they were fully staffed think of all the jobs that would be right there.

Sell the land. The government is out of money. We can only survive if individuals own property not the government.

Funding our National Parks should be a top priority. As troops are brought home from the Middle East, some funds could be allocated to saving our parks.

FUND OUR PARKS!!! Keep trails open and supervised!

How about we privatize the maintenance of the parks much like Obama has privatized Nasa? The government already charges enough fees as it is, and this should provide plenty of the funding needed. Any ways Obama has stolen funding for the constellation project that would have finally eliminated our dependence of foreign oil by finally being able to get power from a functionally fusion reactor. Clean, safe, and abundant power that would have been fueled by He3 mined from the moon. Just one shuttle load would have had the energy equivalent of billions of barrels of oil. This would have made electric/hybrid cars actually green instead of the toxic battery "garbage-mobiles" that they are now because they are charged by oil fueled generators. This was Bush's idea too, and the liberal "green" Obama cancelled it along with thousands of important jobs with it. Open your eyes people! Stop voting for the lying, cheating, greedy, corporate/union pawns and instead vote for the conservatives that are working for you! Get the facts, and quit listening to the sleazy lies the Libs have fed you with. Just look at the economy for an example, it started to falter when the Libs took over congress and started making bad laws. Not when Bush took office like they would like you to believe.

I'm sure funding is probably a problem (even though it's only minimum wage). But using volunteers instead of employees would make this is a great idea. Perhaps there could be discounts or a number of free entrances per month/year as an incentive/show of gratitude.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

I think reviving the Civilian Conservation Corps is a great idea, but agree that paying for it is another issue. We certainly can't force people who are on unemployment to do this work, but with proper incentives, maybe we could motivate them to do it. Also, a program like this, which could provide our young people with another opportunity to serve our country, rather than joining the armed services and going off to war, would be very valuable. The work skills they would develop, not just learning how to build trails, maintain buildings, etc, but learning how to work with other people and function as a member of a team, would be valuable in whatever career they choose. This would also give people a chance to see parts of the country they might never get to visit, and could generate enthusiasm in preserving our great natural places, which is certainly not a bad thing. We might even be able to convince some of our youth to put aside their cell phones and video games and go out and enjoy some fresh air in a National Park.

Why is it that a certain segment of our society has a feeling of entitlement is due them from the government? Where they feel the government should supply them with everything! To my knowledge you have equal access to everything if you make the decision to use that, it is up to you! There are multi-use trails I use that are available and used by hikers/backpackers, equestrians, mountain bikes, motorcycles, ATV, 4X4's, snowmobiles and X-country skiers in the winter all on the same trail – everyone has equal access. Its not limiting the enjoyment of those that choose to access the area.

I support the idea and use of public land for all of our public interests. We " Off Roaders" have a strong commitment to protecting our environment for ourselves and future generations. Joe, a Southern California off roader, hiker, boater and camper.

I agree that a breadth of recreational activities should be supported. But all uses must be sustainable and compatible with the other uses in a particular area. For example, if a park wants to offer nature as a primary attraction, it should be quiet and low-impact so there will be some nature left to enjoy. If a park's primary purpose is recreation, it might be a little noisier and there might not be so much wildlife. Start with a funding basis that covers the park's most basic and popular activities that the most people can and will participate in. Usually that's walking/hiking, camping, a tram system like they have at Bryce and Zion, a lodge, concessions, ranger tours, swimming if appropriate, etc. Anything whose useage incurs significantly greater cost to the park and impact to the other visitors, environment, trails, and facilities (OHV, horses) should charge an additional usage fee proportionate to the impact, and that activity and all its maintenance and engineering should be supported by the usage fees. Lots of people coming and paying a usage fee for that activity? The usage fees left over from maintenance can go to plan, engineer, build, and maintain more trails, parking, noise and pollution mitigation, and facilities. Usage fees not covering the extra cost of that activity? Sounds like visitors to that park aren't interested enough in that activity to continue offering it and incurring the unnecessary expense. logically all activities will not be appropriate in all parks. No off-roading on the National Mall, no snowskiing in Dry Tortugas N.P., etc.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

I heartily agree with the concept of multi-use of ALL public lands. In another post I recommended a trip to Avery Island, Louisiana. Home of Tabasco products, a beautiful park, a wild bird sanctuary and OIL WELLS. There is enough oil in the USA to eliminate imports, if desired. However, most of it is "off-limits" because of Federal Land restrictions. Second, hunting is banned on these Federal lands. What is more basic to the concept of a "Wilderness Area" than hunting. That was one of the primary uses for ALL of these lands before they became Federal property. Now the hunter and trapper is excluded. Does that sound like rational thinking? My ancestors did not travel the Cumberland trail and then west to the Mississippi and beyond, on foot, horseback, in wagons by choice. I am sure they would have loved to use an ATV and a 4-wheel drive truck. So do not permit one group of citizens to exclude another group just because they are predigest toward the other's chosen form of recreation.

Increasing access to OHV only benefits a small subset of the population with the economic resources to purchase OHVs. If an OHV owner is willing to pay a much larger share of the cost to support the parks, perhaps there is rational to increasing the use. An argument to state that greater OHV access equates to greater park visitation and therefore revenues is very difficult to substantiate.

To say "...OHV .. (is) ...a small subset of the population" is incorrect. Studies have shown that far more people take advantage of OHV use than those that hike. For some OHV's they pay fuel taxes that go to funding many projects, we are talking millions of dollars already. California alone, it gave out grants of over 27 million dollars - that did not include operating cost of CA OHV parks. If it were that hikers/backpackers were the dominate users would you expect the same from them? –“ ... to pay a much larger share of the cost to support the parks”?

Wow...no way to put OHV and hiking on equal footing no matter how you slice it. But, if it could be remotely shown that hikers/backpackers create a greater than their share of impact on the environment, than hell yes...let them pay commensurately. I'm glad we agree.

With 50 % of national forests available for logging (plus private and state land) and enough roads in national forests to go around the Earth 17 times, I doubt opening every bit of the remaining national forest land to logging would make a bit of difference. Some areas could be left without roads and logging. It would not be responsible to log every area. The logging industry now depends on market conditions more than anything. Sustainable logging should be able to be accomplished on the existing areas open to logging.

In order to preserve fund integrity, allow the landowners donating part of the value of their easement to be included (sign on) the Cooperative Agreement.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

The LWCF is also key in funding the acquisition of wilderness inholdings from willing private sellers. This avoids needless and harmful development inside our prized wilderness areas. It makes possible the work of the Wilderness Land Trust (www.wildernesslandtrust.org) that actively works to carry out such transactions that benefit future Americans. Please see and vote to promote related idea: LET'S FILL IN THE EXISTING WILDERNESS HOLES! { Link }

I know home owners who: 1. Garden with native plants; 2. Heat water with a solar heater; 3. Generate more electricity with rooftop solar cells than they use and sell electricity to the power company; 4. Have ordered an electric car that will be charged from their roof; 5. In the garage, have bicycles and kayaks, not motorcycles; 6. Bike to work; 7. Compost their garbage.

I have been an ATV rider for over the last 30 years and have been a responsible person. When ever I see damage to public lands I try to do what I can to keep it clean such as picking up crap people leave behind. As far as intruding on or disturbing wildlife, the ATV trails are a very small fraction of the overall landscape. The wildlife in these already established areas tends to stay away from these areas. The way some people talk about this, they act like every acre of wilderness has an ATV trail on it and that every available off roading waco is out there tearing it up.....not true! Closing ATV trails that have existed for the last 30 years is going to do nothing. These trails even if not used will exist for decades to come. It's all about everyone being responsible. Not just ATV riders! I have witnessed so called environmentally aware hikers that leave a mark on the land by throwing trash wherever they damn well please. None of us are perfect....we all need to be responsible!

All national parks need our help, everywhere.

We have a narrow window of opportunity to restore the Everglades. Working with Federal, State and private land owners, let's finally restore the River of Grass

With the caveat that such legislation needs to include a complete analysis of the situation at the landscape level. If the legislation strictly prohibits siting utilities, this could cause more damage as the siting would be relocated to a more sensitive area and damage more resources. For example, a federally held conservation easement in Colorado did not allow expansion of an already existing utility right of way. This eliminated the most ecologically feasible option and resiting tore open untouched lands and damaged habitat. Suggest that when utilities are being sited on conservation lands that the legislation require full disclosure of the environmental impact at the cost of the utility company and be publicly reviewed.

I've made this comment on other topics. OHVs should have access on roads and designate trails. That would seem reasonable.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

I think this is a good idea. But to be fair, it should include allowing the use of electric wheelchairs and scooters where possible. Better, make rental of scooters available for those who aren't strong enough to walk very far. They're entitled to see the views they help pay for, too.

I too have traveled many parks and as a spouse of a disabled veteran must use a vehicle. I believe wilderness may be found around buses and vehicles. Do not land lock us out !!!

Urban Parks to allow the public on various Federal/State/Local funds to be used to allow visitors to learn, touch and see water and history is needed.

Electric and hybrid vehicles SEEM environmentally friendly because we're a step removed from the damage, but a great deal of our electricity still comes from COAL - one of the most environmentally hurtful fuels there is. Nevertheless, public transportation could be more fuel-&-emissions-efficient than individual vehicles, and it could cut down on damage done by careless drivers.

This is an excellent idea, how would it be funded is the problem. Then tie it to welfare is not practical, as most on public assistance are from urban areas, most of the parks are in rural areas. The idea is great, just need some more input, and more ideas about how to make this practical, so it can work, and not cost much money from the parks budget.

Wonderful idea. I will also post a sister-idea about noise pollution as well to potentially control flight paths over selected parks. As a current SE Utah resident, you really appreciate the dark skies around Monticello, UT (for example).

When the criminals stop roaming around at night, I will stop leaving outside lights on. The idea of dark skies is a good idea, but it just is not something that will happen. There are some areas with minimal light pollution, and these areas could possibly be used to make a few select areas, that no more lights can be added. The biggest light polluters that I see, and I have travelled the country extensively, are the neon signs that are advertising for businesses. Maybe attempt to enact laws that limit the time these can be on, turn them all off, by 10pm on weeknights, midnight on weekends? I can remember seeing large areas of the Rockies with little to no lights visible at night, and huge areas on the coasts, the best was the Outer banks of NC, years ago, about 80 miles of beach, no city lights visible at all, now you can see maybe half of the stars that you could see back in the late 60's early 70's. While I do somewhat agree with your idea, it just is not very practical.

Our national parks truly are America's great idea. They need to be more than an after thought when it comes to funding. Please work to seek a permanent and sufficient source of funding so that these great treasures will not become 'poor cousins' or an embarrassment. The fact that the American people are loving them to death is a solid sign that they are worth the effort to preserve them and expand them before it's too late. My family and I visit some units every summer. No matter where they are located, coast to coast, they show signs of need for better financial support. Our gallant rangers are doing a great job, but they need more personnel and better funding.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

I think they have done better than the previous administration regarding the environment. The first thing the previous Administration did was try to dismantle the Roadless Rule. There is no doubt more protection is better than less. Allowing big business access to every natural resource is a huge money maker for the select few. It does nothing to benefit average people. I agree, be VERY careful with what you wish for.

The federal tax deduction for conservation easements has helped protect thousands of acres of private land from development and it certainly needs to be made permanent.

Absolutely protect the corridors!

I agree with the most natural experience possible. If an area is wilderness and you want to see it, you go in naked without food or water or gear. That would protect the wilderness.

Having worked as a naturalist at an outdoor school for several seasons, I can't say enough how needed these programs are across the country. Getting youth out of their "comfort zone" of school lets them experience nature - and science - in a whole new way. I've seen strong connections with wilderness form for some students in just a few days - my favorite moments are when a child comes in thinking he "knows it all" and leaves excited and wanting to learn more about geology or animal adaptations. Students become more interested in what they learn or have learned already in the classroom, are willing to share their what they've learned about conservation with others, and realize that anyone can enjoy the outdoors, even if they live in a city. Almost all of my students are surprised by something, and many are changed by the experience. We always end our 2-3 day sessions with a discussion on the importance of preserving these open spaces, and little things that each student can do to start the process. Not only is this an amazing experience, but our school - and almost all that I've heard of - use lesson plans that adhere to California and Nevada state standards for 6th and 7th grade science and language arts. We use Project Learning Tree, Project Wet and Project Wild to build our programming.

"We simply need that wild country available to us, even if we never do more than drive to its edge and look in. For it can be a means of reassuring ourselves of our sanity as creatures, a part of the geography of hope." Wallace Stegner

It makes me happy to read comments like the previous few defending wildlife. It's good to know there are so many like minded people out there.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

"I am anti hunting of struggling, threatened, and endangered animals." Much like said, there is no state that allows any endangered species that legally open to be killed. Trophy hunting is huge money in this country. As long as the rules and regulations are followed there is nothing wrong with this practice. I myself have killed multiple trophy bucks, but at the same time I have harvested those animals for food. The public and our government should be supportive of all fishing and hunting as it a money maker for our economy across the United States every year. Even through the economic lows of our country in the last few years the amount spent on hunting and fishing is still on the increase. With increase in funding to our state agencies there would be a greater chance to help protect these beautiful landscapes and animals that are in our great country.

Didn't read all the other comments, but even better would be laws requiring trash companies and/or landfills to go through trash and recycle what can be recycled. It would make sure **everything** gets recycled, would make separation unnecessary, and would provide jobs.

There should be plenty of space for OHVers and everyone else. We're not running out of land, we're just all congregating in the same areas, so they are crowded. We need to make better (more) use of the land we have. Then there will be enough natural areas for no one to feel crowded.

Sure people should be responsible about how many kids they have, but that is a personal issue not exactly the same as the world issue you are bringing up. The fact is the world is not overpopulated; people just all live in cities these days so resources can not be distributed evenly. There is way more space than we'd need to give everyone land on which to live. Have you never driven through Kansas or Nebraska before? I'm not saying urban sprawl is the answer, though responsible development has its place. We need more rural communities now that farming has been left to the mega-farmers.

Let's protect the land, but keep the existing roads open. Closing roads, especially in the desert, makes many areas impossible to visit by anyone. Let us give ourselves the opportunity to visit and appreciate our natural wonders, by keeping them accessible.

Think Globally Act Locally!

support non-profit volunteer groups that engage citizens to restore and enhance their communities. Check out www.solv.org, which is an unique Oregon non-profit that has been successfully working with volunteers for over 40 years, to clean up and restore watersheds across Oregon. People are personally engaged and passionate about their communities, plus kids are learning early on what it means to volunteer and to take care of the environment.

{ [Link](http://www.nps.gov/pwro/rimofthevalley/studyprocess.htm) } Study underway of Los Angeles remnant natural habitat areas for possible creation of a new National Park. Rim of the Valley.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Yes, kids sit around in after-school programs, bored and not doing much, when they could spend an hour or more a day cleaning or clearing a nearby trail, hiking to a pretty lake, taking a class with a Project Learning Tree, Project Wet and Project Wild course teacher (or other volunteer or paid person), and discovering their local parks and green spaces. If kids only knew what was in these green spaces, they would love them and preserve them. Kids grow up in apartments or subdivisions so often, with very uninteresting yards, and after reading *The Last Child in the Woods*, I know they (and I) need to be in nature and they need to see it with "all its parts", not just a corner garden with flowers planted.

the animals are first

While preservation in general is good, this seems to be like another subsidy for private land owners to do what they should be doing already. I would rather see federal funds going to better manage federally-owned lands.

I totally support having our National Parks fully funded.

I favor more trails for multiple use: mountain bikes, horses, motorcycles, hikers can all coexist. Horses cause as much trail damage as motorcycles, more than MTBs. We should allow mountain bike, equestrian and motorcycle clubs to participate in building the new trail network. There is lots of room for MORE TRAILS. If you limit the # of trails it just increases the erosion on existing trails.

Can you say "c-o-n-s-e-r-v-a-t-i-o-n"?

TRT is an amazing opportunity to bring the National Parks to life for students who might not otherwise get the opportunity to learn about their powerful messages. This is also an incredible reward for teachers who are willing to make the sacrifices to remain in the poorer school districts for their careers. This allows them to enrich their teaching and their own life experiences as well. And what could be more renewing to the spirit than a summer in a National Park environment. This teacher will return to the classroom refreshed and ready to tackle challenges in a new way! As a former teacher, I'm quite envious!

This is an excellent use of funds, to educate young people in our most beautiful classrooms. All across the country schools are building outdoor classrooms. For some fortunate students, they are only a bus ride away from incredible vistas and learning experiences.

Public lands are for all the public. Management (balance) is the key.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Absolutely a win-win. We need to create jobs, and making that investment one that maintains and upgrades our state and national parks and preserves is a no-brainer. I have also admired the work done by CCC in the '30's. Bring it back!

AS A MEMBER OF THE DOMICAN SISTERS OF PEACE, WE HAVE SEVERAL PLACES THAT WE CONSERVE, LIKE CROWN POINT ECOLOGY CENTER, BATH, OHIO;HEARTLAND CENTER FOR WHOLELISTIC HEALTH, GREAT BEND, KS; HEARTLAND FARM, PAWNEE ROCK, KS;CRYSTAL SPRING CENTER FOR ECOLOGY, SPIRITUALITY, AND EARTH EDUCATION. PARKS ARE AN ESSENTIAL PART OF THE CITIES IN OUR COUNTRY.

I also totally support funding our State and National parks, and am very willing to pay higher taxes for that--if need be. State and National parks are the only places left in our Country where one can connect with Nature, and where trees, lakes, creeks, woodlands ,e tc, still remain intact for wild animals. There are some things worth paying higher taxes for- and that is definitely on the top of the list--- even over education as far as I'm concerned, because going to a National or State Park is an education in itself- as well as a tool to educate citizens in respecting the Environment and wildlife.

I agree. There is so much to be gained from time spent outside exploring. National Parks provide exceptional classrooms for learning and developing lifelong appreciation for our environment. Every young person should have the opportunity to spend time in our parks discovering the natural world and their role within it.

I'm for All ATVs for the reason that it is good clean family fun. I have 3 ATVs myself and I have seen alot of wildlife, we came upon a mother bear and her cubs, a coyote, deer, frog, butterflies, beetles and birds and none of them ran from the sound of a ATV. It's nice to ride in the middle of no where and see the beauty that you can't see from your car. I don't understand why some people want to take all family fun and enjoyment away. What, do you expect everybody to stay home and not have a life? I don't impose on what you like to do, so stop imposing on other's that like to have good clean family fun.I guess you want ppl to have candles in their house for electric, and out house and horse and buggy to get around too huh?

This program has created some incredible results -- from supporting community gardens in NYC, to supporting a partnership between a local municipality, county and three land trusts in upstate NY to maintain the farming economy of Red Hook, Dutchess County. It fosters the kind of innovation and efficiencies that seem to be core values of the AGO initiative.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

This is a very good idea that could directly impact millions of Americans in the course of their daily lives. In New York State, we are seeing the direct affect of projects like this in our newly-created Walkway Over the Hudson state park. This adaptive reuse of an 1888 railroad bridge and an associated loop trail connects people with spectacular Hudson River views, a forested state park and attractions in downtown Poughkeepsie. Commuter rail service on Metro-North's Hudson Line and Amtrak connect millions of residents from New York City with the valley's nine urban centers that serve as departure points for myriad outdoor destinations, cultural and historic sites— many a short walk away. 600,000 people have traversed the bridge -- including many commuters, families with young children, and seniors -- in its first 10 months of being open. The bridge has also become a destination for school groups wishing to learn about the region's heritage.

The CCC made some great contributions. Today we have similar efforts in the federally-sponsored AmeriCorps program, and the private Student Conservationist Association. I have worked with young people engaged with both of these programs on projects that create outdoor experiences for the public and steward our natural resources through litter cleanups and trail building. The results were really great and had a big impact not just on the young people involved, but on the communities in which they served.

Having managed an award-winning environmental education program for four years of my career, I can say that making teacher's access to partnerships with program providers is of the utmost importance. One way that not-for-profit program providers can provide this is by linking their programs with state learning standards and having a dialouge with teachers about their needs. Likewise, teachers need to know the resources that are available to them. In the Hudson Valley region of New York State, we have a fabulous federally-sponsored effort that provides guidance and resources to teachers and program providers looking to connect to outdoor resources, historic sites and lession plans to educate their students. It is called Teaching The Hudson Valley (THV) and it is funded through the National Heritage Area Program and administered by a public corporation -- the Hudson River Valley Greenway, whose board consists of state employees and representatives from our communities. THV is a model that should be considered for replication elsewhere. visit www.teachingthehudsonvalley.org for more information.

I've spent the summer exploring Glacier National Park - before all the glaciers are dead! There can be no better place than a park for children to learn about so many different things in one location - the impact we have on our environment, conservation, forestry, geology, history. love of the outdoors.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

This is a great idea! There currently is a network of 140+ Conservation Corps across the Country currently engaging over 30,000 young people per year. Combined with the great work of the Student Conservation Association, these organizations are operating in all 50 states. The Administration should expand these efforts to a much greater scale. In many cases the funding comes from maintenance funds already allocated, but using young people to complete the projects (e.g. trail maintenance & construction, habitat improvement, fuels mitigation, campground improvements, etc.). Also, the Public Lands Service Corps Act should be passed and allocated resources.

Urban parks would be an ideal opportunity to provide school students with an opportunity to experience nature first hand. Programs can teach them about conservation, restoration projects, wildlife, and recycling. This may be the only avenue for innercity kids to explore, enjoy and participate in nature. This experience can only grow and develop with the years. The federal government's role is to provide for experienced park rangers, equipping them with the necessary tools to run the parks and to provide educational programs. Urban parks must be protected from builders or those who want to encroach upon this land by official designation from the Park Service (e.g., National Wilderness Area). For those like me with physical disabilities, urban parks would help us to get outdoors and walk or ride wheelchairs if pathways can be developed that would be wheel-friendly.

Education is the answer for the world's ills. Hands-on education is the best way to learn about the environment, the importance of saving it for future generations, care of plants and wildlife, and the list goes on. National Park rangers do a wonderful job, just ask anyone who has experienced one of their classes. The Park Service needs to be fully staffed and fully funded so that they can continue their outreach programs. Schools, non-profits geared to children and youth should be partnered with the NPS so that all children have the experience of visiting one of our great national parks.

On comment #3, I meant to say, these organizations are NOT directly publically-funded. That's the beauty of their mission.

I'm not against OHV use at all. I still snowmobile and grew up riding dirt bikes and three wheelers. There should be areas for OHV use. The vast majority of public lands in my area are open to OHVs. The concern I have is there are enough roads in our national forests to go around the Earth 17 times and 50% of the national forests are currently open to development. How is only 1% of national forests open to OHVs? There seems to be plenty of areas open to OHVs. Some areas should not be open to OHVs. Most reasonable people would agree OHV use should be preserved for families. The only reason I demoted this idea is because it seems alot of OHV users are against wilderness designation and keep posting ideas implying they are being locked out. I say there is room for wilderness and non wilderness. Alot of people on this site probably have alot more in common than they think. To _____, if you advocate less wilderness, then you should have to visit every existing city prior to asserting we need less wilderness. What's good for the goose is good for the gander.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

The forest roads in national forests are a lot of times old or current logging roads. These are very good places to ride OHVs. I'm not talking about the wide logging truck roads where large vehicles speed by kicking up dust. I was referring to small two track roads, a lot of which are not even accessible unless you have four wheel drive or an OHV. There is access to at least 50 % of national forests via roads. I'm not for building more and more roads. Some areas should stay roadless. If you're talking about trails built exclusively for OHVs, I would imagine that would add more area for OHV access to the 50% that already has roads. I'm not against OHV trails, I just think there should be areas without OHVs, also. One national forest we have visited in the past had large roads for logging and many, many trails for OHVs, etc. The area felt more like an urban park or tree farm than a wild area. This is fine in some areas, some areas should remain wild.

So many close to home open spaces are simply invisible. Lots of ways to change this. Better emphasize linkages through trails -- the charms on the bracelet concept. Even better -- use Google maps and other ways to highlight local parks -- parallel to the way Google maps helps you walk to a destination like a store, let it have the dataset to allow us to walk to parks within a mile of your location.

Great idea -- but we also have to make sure park management is responsive to our needs of the 21st Century. highlighting links to education, health and more!

Thank you. Remember, everyone, that this was reporting on a medical journal article regarding actual efforts in national parks with real live rangers who happily incorporated health info into their presentations. Maybe the same adverse reaction would be evoked by the idea that rangers talk about climate change, or endangered species, or economic stability of gateway communities -- but it surprises me that there is this level of resistance to being connected to a high-salience public policy issue!

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Getting kids out into urban parks is a great idea. For those kids lucky enough to live close to an existing park, class field trips work well. And it would be great if those field trips could occur often, perhaps monthly. For those kids who don't live near urban parks, let's create some. One way to create urban parks is to purchase private property either with federal and/or private funds and turn it into an urban park. The private property could be a few city blocks in need of improvement, perhaps an abandoned factory, a lifeless downtown with empty storefronts, or an area in a redevelopment district. Buying quasi-distressed property would presumably both keep purchase costs down and improve the neighborhood. And while we're creating parks, why not set aside some of that property for an urban garden? This way kids can work in the environment while studying it. Perhaps a few schools could share the responsibilities of one park/garden, which would also teach the value of personal responsibility. Caveat: I've seen urban parks turn into hangouts for gang members and other people whose presence is incompatible with classroom parks/gardens. A barrier should be considered. I hate to recommend a fence with a locked gate since this keeps kids and their families out during non-school hours. Anyone with ideas on how to handle this issue? Another method of creating urban parks/gardens is to locate it on the school grounds, either on existing school property or acquiring adjoining property to build a park. Then funds could be gotten through a local bond measure, which would presumably give schools more control over the park/garden. This solves the 'hangout problem' since schools would be allowed to fence their own property. BTW, thanks to NPCA for creating this website and making it so user-friendly!

I second with two changes. First, I recommend expanding the program to include all K-12 students (not just junior/high school) since younger students are often more enthusiastic about new experiences than their older counterparts. Also, teen-age students may find the information alien and uninteresting if this is their first introduction to the parks. I also recommend encouraging all interested teachers to participate, not just the science teachers. While park information includes science, it is so much more than that and I suspect history and math teachers, among others, can present the information from unique angles. I don't know the current compensation paid to teacher-rangers, but they should be paid for their time. If public funding isn't available, perhaps private or non-profit funding could be used.

Nature exists in urban areas. It only makes sense that we connect children intentionally to it.

National parks are more than a historical legacy. How is that we debate educational responsibilities and needs? In an ever threatening environmental world, we must educate all our citizens of our impact, commitments and needs.

Community support is vital for lasting productive and meaningful citizenship.

Nature needs to move beyond the limited definitions of a commodity. Education is imperative

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

I am all for better funding, and fully staffed NPS.

It is difficult to get people to preserve and protect what they do not know. Encouraging people in urban areas to explore and appreciate the public lands, will lead to greater protection for these public resources.

For a terrific example of this idea see SERC (Schoodic Education and Research Center) at Acadia National Park in Maine. For years they have been holding a 2-1/2 day educational session for grade 5 school kids called SEA (Schoodic Education Adventure) in which the children do actual research (for real) and learn doing it, of course. It's a roaring success and constantly expanding. There's much more and it's replicable in other parks with volunteer help.

My chosen "home" National Park is Glacier NP, even though there are a few that are closer (Crater Lake, Rainier, Olympic and North Cascades) to our home in Oregon. Over several years, beginning with my first stay in Glacier in 2002, I've watched the transformation of many new visitors, myself included, from wide-eyed tourists, often focused on the potential danger from the 500 or so grizzly bears (and about 1,000 black bears) that live within the Park boundaries into firm supporters of education on Park issues, including co-existing with the bears and increased Park funding. Another factor with Glacier is the excellent quality of services provided by Glacier Park, Inc. This organization is an example of a fully-functioning public/private partnership at its best. 'Customers' are happy with the services provided, and GPI employees all love working for the organization. Getting folks out to the Parks in the first place is important, but education and well run facilities are the "closer."

Once again, as long as these programs promote empathy for wildlife and nature as well as critical thinking skills by examining how our daily choices impact wildlife and nature, I am all for it!

As long as the program promotes empathy for wildlife and nature as well as critical thinking skills by examining the impact of our daily choices on wildlife and nature, I am all for it!

Learning about the outdoors, and the environment is a good thing, as long as the things that are taught to children in these programs are not the ideas of environmental extremists.

This could be a good idea, as long as there is nothing negative taught about hunting, fishing, and OHV use.

I also think shouldn't be limited to just Title 1 schools & agree that would be good to offer to all grades & not just having science teachers involved. Perhaps think of class field trips.

Thinning diseased trees to provide local jobs should be a good idea, as long as the logging is restricted to dead and diseased trees.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

As someone who has been blessed with opportunities to explore the relationships between place and culture across this country, expanding the opportunities for American students and young people to both experience and understand their National Parks is an absolute must. We need to put aside our financial perspectives and remember that the possibilities of our future depend on those now in schools across this land. May it be so.

I agree and I am completely for full, if not additional, funding for NPS. If you look at NPS funding over the last 10 years, it hasn't even kept up with inflation, while the agency finds itself facing a growing \$8 BILLION in maintenance backlogs. However, I would point out that in addition to NPS, even more importantly is funding and support for state and local parks. Accessibility to outdoor recreation areas is a top factor in addressing issues such as obesity, stress, depression, ADHD, and living active lives. Simply put, people get out in the outdoors more often and experience related incredible health benefits - when and if access is nearby. Unfortunately, national parks are not a 10-20 minute drive for most people. Local, county and state parks need more funding, as quite honestly, they serve more people, more often, and likely have greater impacts than NPS (although I would never want to lessen the impacts of national parks - they need our support too).

I agree, especially after just returning from Rocky Mountain National Park in CO. However, I would also add and argue that local and state parks and nature centers are even more so the perfect place to learn about the environment, local ecosystems, issues, and experience the joy and numerous benefits of outdoor recreation and education. This is simply a matter of accessibility, which is proven to be a major factor in how much people get outdoors (and exercise, experience nature, etc.). Access is critical, and local/county/state parks are simply closer. There just aren't that many people that live within 10-20 minutes of a national park. So while they are one of the best places to learn about the natural environment, I would add that local parks/nature preserves/open spaces are even better.

This idea of providing people places to visit "in their backyards" is a good one. Young people who have transformative experiences visiting parks, will be more likely to visit parks throughout their lives and advocate for their responsible management.

Some of the most promising work being done right now is at the regional level, recognizing that parks are part of complex interconnected social, economic, and environmental systems. So local action, yes, but with an understanding of the context within which that action is being taken.

Protection of ecosystems is indeed an important goal.

Battlefields provide the added benefit of protecting open spaces and natural resources, while also preserving places that embody our heritage in a way that preserving historic buildings alone does not.

This strategy of using cultural resources to help promote natural resources is very smart. More initiatives like this would be welcome.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

A twist on this idea is if businesses voluntarily offered to give a certain amount to preservation and maintenance of natural areas. Corporate giving programs are becoming more and more common. These programs are an excellent way to build public awareness support for the businesses which sponsor them while also creating benefit for the public.

I had not heard of this program before, but this sounds like a nice balance of protection AND public use.

Creating a "toolbox" to assist with preserving cultural heritage would indeed be very helpful. Oftentimes people at the local level in the field are well intending, though do not necessarily have the resources, time, or patience to be fully effective. The Preservation Briefs and NPS Bulletins are helpful to a certain extent, though what you are suggesting would be far more specific and provide assistance at the level of needs. One community might not have undertaken a cultural resource survey, for instance, so guidance on how this might be started would be helpful. Likewise, when working on a specific type of property like a bungalow, it would be really helpful to know more about this building type, its structure, and qualities of craftsmanship, so maintenance and preservation work may be done in the most responsible manner.

The Partnership for Sustainable Communities, an intra-agency federal initiative with officials from HUD, DOT, and the EPA working together also holds great potential for creating "complete streets."

This local action in the place where people live and work, will help to build an appreciation for protection of cultural and natural resources in other places throughout the US, even if many of these places are never visited in person.

thank you, its refreshing to hear someone in your position willing to work with people wanting to use trails for other uses thank you too! atvs, 4x4s, chainsaws etc are the equipement used to build and maintain many of the trails hikers like to use and that never gets recognized, and many hikers never want to recognize trail development, maintenance, cleaning etc done by the people that enjoy uses to the trails alternative to their own when I drive my 4x4 on the trails I often end up bringing bags of other peoples trash out with me and we often patch destroyed sections of trail. _____, we aren't asking for exclusive use. we tend to be the ones happy to share the trail with people and not the people being rude and scowling at other users. we deserve the same rights to be there as you regardless of method of transportation. Yes, there are irresponsible users in our field of recreation but it isn't all of us and I've seen plenty of hikers drop thier trash on the ground and leave it there and vandalize scenic areas. And for the record your 'personal gas guzzlers' are pretty efficient now and motors create very little pollution when running correctly so you should really do some research before bashing other groups of people.

As a teaching artist (writing/theatre/storytelling), I know nothing is better for education and enrichment than hands-on learning. Once you engage a child, you have him/her forever.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

I was looking into what I could do to help with CWPT, an organization which I have belonged for almost 20 years. I have participated in every possible way because I believe in my Legacy to the future of this country. I have served in the military for over 25 years, i have been a re-enactor and living historian for over 17. I have been in a combat zone, I have walked the fields of Malvern Hill, Gettysburg, and Antietam. When people like _____ can desecrate the Hallowed Ground that may well still contain the bones of our Honored Dead, without even TRYING to see what he is about to defile, it makes my blood boil. The greatest LEGACY we can pass on is the very fabric of our land, our history, our national past. Through efforts such as those of the CWPT, Historic Trust, and our National Parks System, we can provide this legacy to our children' children, and their progeny. What makes us the greatest country in the history of the modern world is remembering our true heroes and heroines. The greatest respect we can bestow upon their memories is to do EVERYTHING in our collective power to sustain and protect, preserve and renew the hollowed ground which is the very fabric of our history. No company can impact the country for the span on history that the Civil War has. Jobs come and go in a generation or two, the land exists forever. By supporting the Civil War Preservation Trust, National Parks System, and providing for their continued success; you and I can save the priceless legacy of our children's understanding, education, discovery of what has made, and still makes our country what it is, and can be. If you forget the past, you are doomed to repeat the errors of the past. Here is the perspective I use to explain this to the children I see in the classrooms here: The population of the US can be represented by the entire population of Texas. The number of people involved in the war is about equal to the size of the city of Houston. The number of casualties (including a sizable chunk of the civilians) equals the entire city of Fort Worth. Think about it. We can either let developers, casino owners, and greedy businesses devour this hallowed, sacred ground by an acre per hour, or we can unite to preserve and protect it forever with support to the CWPT, Historic Trust, and National Parks. MY great idea, Mr. President, Distinguished people in my Government, is to save our battlefields, our history, and our children's Legacy. Or, should we point across the black-topped parking lots of the near future to the Mega-Mall, or Discount store and say, "That is where your great-great grandfather helped stop a charge of two thousand men, and that's why the USA is great? What say you?"

Our national parks - and other parks - as classrooms is one of the best ideas educators and the park service have ever come up with. Our parks are great places to reconnect with nature, with history, and with plain old downtime. Learning from our experiences in the parks is a natural progression of things. It just makes sense. I'd like to see more schools and districts collaborate with area national and state parks on education programs that get youngsters at all grade levels out into the parks as part of the curriculum. It's healthy. It's fun. And - it's an educational experience that can't - CAN'T - be replicated in the classroom, no matter how much technology one has.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

The opening of a new education center at Yellowstone National Park sends a strong message that our national parks are more than just getaway spots. They are classrooms! We need to be doing more to utilize them for their educational content: their scenery, their science, their history, and their culture. While a good number of our parks have either established or begun the process of establishing an education center within their boundaries, it would be the right thing if more would do so. In this technological age where many youngsters believe they don't need to go any further than their iphone (?) to access information, a national park education center can serve as a springboard to the real world that kids can learn about and enjoy in real time. And, in turn, that enjoyable learning experience becomes a catalyst for ensuring the next generations appreciate the national parks and their purpose as much as we do today.

While I agree with the notion that TRT ought to be available to all districts, regardless of demographics, I work in a rural district that happens to have a national park unit in within its boundaries (and eight more within an hour's drive) - and that can more easily afford to get kids out and about - and does! So, I don't begrudge the urban districts getting more of a break than the rest of us. Sure, there are disadvantaged kids in every district; my experience has been that districts like mine tend to do more to take care of those kids because they can. Urban districts - and their teachers - tend to be more overwhelmed. That said if the opportunity to expand is there, by all means, let's work to expand the program to more districts, regardless of demographics.

Unlike some who rail against big government, it is only with government funded employment that people will get put back to work. Big corporations have been totally let off the hook regarding labor which leaves people in the street. The CCC and WPA projects did some phenomenal work and got people working. We need to see decent salaries provided, though, along with standard benefits. Maintaining the natural environment will/ can provide ongoing work for many thousands of people. Also, jobs can be created in the arena of education in the parks as well as the physical maintenance required.

The wonderful thing about revitalizing the CCC is that America already has a robust network of 140 conservation and service corps serving every state in the nation. These 21st century Conservation Corps are primed for an investment of public and private dollars to engage young Americans of all backgrounds and communities to provide hands-on service on public lands. Let's not reinvent the wheel or duplicate services, but instead invest in the existing infrastructure of these modern day CCC programs. Nonprofit organizations, and state and local governments have picked up the baton from the CCC - and of the YCC and YACC - to create effective and efficient organizations that are engaging youth and young adults in service to our public lands. Many have been around doing fabulous work for youth and Americas great outdoors for decades. These 21st century conservation corps are funded through a mix of federal, state, local, and private dollars. Undoubtedly, an increase in the federal investment in todays conservation corps will reap great benefits for our parks and national forests while preparing a new generation of young people with job and life skills, and a commitment to caring for America's Great Outdoors.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Conservation Corps are a terrific pipeline to prepare a new generation of public lands servants. Corpsmembers (30,000/year) serving with any of the 140 conservation and service corps that are in existence across the country, are learning job skills and work values, gaining leadership and technical job skills, and working toward a college education to support their careers. Today's Corps have picked up the baton of the CCC. By increasing federal and local investments in conservation corps, we are priming the pump for a 21st century workforce for our public lands. Federal investments for increased staffing in our national parks and forests creates a place for these young corpsmembers to move into professional careers as assets to our economies and lands.

How wonderful it would be to visit one of the national treasures that are our parks, and to see the beauty of that place as people did from the dawn of human existence until just few decades ago... lit at night only by the glow of a half a universe of stars, clusters, galaxies, and nebulae. We may never be able to adequately protect the night sky in more densely populated areas, but we need to protect it somewhere. Let's protect the night sky at our national and local parks just as we protect the parks themselves.

I have worked in urban schools (Houston, TX) for over 10 years. Many of the underprivileged students I have served have never experienced the great outdoors. Please, make urban parks more accessible for all!

I don't think that scientists who study primate social systems in the Congo and compare the highly organized knowledge sharing of those primates in undisturbed areas with the less organized and less well versed in survival strategies of those in highly human impacted areas are trying to bring down the economy of the people in the Congo. Seriously, scientists are simply looking to understand what they are studying and how it is impacted by all kinds of external variables. If I am just an avid reader of wildlife books and I don't even belong to any organization (which I don't), then why do I agree that we should share our planet and designate areas for wildlife protection in every country in the world. The United States should care about its own ecosystems as much as about those in other countries, and I can't say i blame scientists in other countries for looking at our environmental practices as many of us look at theirs. It hurts to think that more oil has been spilled in wilderness areas of Uganda than anywhere else. It hurts to think that happens anywhere on Earth. i may not be in favor of expansion of many government programs and I may agree with the conservative fiscal responsibility viewpoint, but not where environmental matters are at stake. I agree when it comes to people taking responsibility for their own personal needs, but we all breathe the same oxygen, and can you find one politician anywhere who can explain how oxygen is generated? Probably not on the Right or on the Left. Politicians, from Socialists to Republicans tend to understand very little about any aspect of science, and if it costs them money, they are going to understand it even less.

I live a half mile from a park. I love to walk to it and through it. I monitor Western Bluebird boxes in this park so Bluebirds have a place to nest. They will only nest in a cavity space. Fortunately the city I live in (Pasadena, Ca) has many parks. However I know this is not true in many cities.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

We need to reach Americans when they are young so they can appreciate the environment and be motivated to take action and act in a way to protect it.

While volunteering with an inner city school group outing at a state park, I learned that one of the 5th graders had never seen an aspen tree and another didn't know that the yellow dandelion flower comes before the fluffy seed head. But they enjoyed learning about them. Connecting kids to nature is absolutely critical to creating future stewards for the parks. But, equally important, I think it helps kids blossom. Urban parks that are easily accessible would be an invaluable resource for urban families.

People should be introduced to more sustainable forms of recreation at an early age. When one grows up riding an ATV that is what they will tend to want to do. when one grows up riding a bike, that is what they will tend to want to do. It all begins with education. The two experiences are similar except one is far less impactfull on the environment and a much more healthy choice for the rider. where is the debate?

It would be great if all the lights in all state parks pointed downwards. And all the lights within 10 miles. Why not the whole country? Many states already have laws for public lighting (streetlights). These states have found it saves money, reduces oil dependency. But most importantly it reduces accidents caused by glare. People with cataracts (mostly seniors) have this problem. It's like having a dirty windshield. During the day - no big deal. At night every glaring light lights up the dirt on the windshield/cataracts and makes it hard to see.

There is an organization called the North American Association for Environmental Education (www.naaee.org). Perhaps we can push it to be more activist toward using national parks for educational purposes.

In a consistent, principled effort for more than 50 years – long before climate change was a key policy issue – Koch companies and Koch foundations have worked to advance economic freedom and market-based policy solutions to challenges faced by society. These efforts are about creating more opportunity and prosperity for all, as it's a historical fact that economic freedom best fosters innovation, environmental protection and improved quality of life in a society. The Greenpeace report mischaracterizes these efforts and distorts the environmental record of our companies. Koch companies have long supported science-based inquiry and dialogue about climate change and proposed responses to it. Koch companies have put tremendous effort into discovering and adopting innovative practices that reduce energy use and emissions in the manufacture and distribution of our products. We believe the political response to climate issues should be based on sound science. Both a free society and the scientific method require an open and honest airing of all sides, not demonizing and silencing those with whom you disagree. We've strived to encourage an intellectually honest debate on the scientific basis for claims of harm from greenhouse gases. We have tried to help bring out the facts of the potential effectiveness and costs of policies proposed to deal with climate, as it's crucial to understand whether proposed initiatives to reduce greenhouse gases will achieve desired environmental goals and what effects they would likely have on the global economy.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Urban parks are important, all the more so in large cities where they provide what I think of as breathing room. They also keep us in touch with change of seasons. They should be supplemented by plantings of trees and sometimes shrubs on some streets where possible.

Just as with exercise, the earlier children are exposed to and encouraged to participate in an activity, the greater is the likelihood they'll stay with it and that they'll encourage their parents to participate as well. Make opportunities inexpensive and you've got a program with staying power.

I strongly support and applaud this idea. The Arctic National Wildlife Refuge should be designated wilderness, including its coastal plain.

This program is critical, strengthening land trusts in the Upper Hudson Valley and throughout NYS - it supports transaction costs, building capacity for land trusts and vastly increasing the ability of government to assist and support property owners.

Somehow the previous Commentators missed the gist of your Idea that discussion of health issues specifically related to individual Parks can be another useful way for Park Rangers to engage with visitors to those individual Parks. The Park Ranger who lead our tour at Historic Jamestown earlier this year discussed several health issues faced by the English Settlers and Native Americans in the early 1600's (among many other topics), which brought home a number of historical lessons that we've continued to discuss long after our visit.

Although this suggestion focuses on a specific project, the bigger theme is that successful cooperative and collaborative efforts reap extremely valuable benefits, even if they are very hard to accomplish, and take a lot of time. My experience has been that proactive outreach by organizational and agency leaders to each other to propose interagency connections is what it takes to get started, and then there will be plenty of support from organizational/agency members and volunteers. Since "all politics is local," the focus should be on the community project/s, with federal folks aiding and supporting, for mutual benefit.

I believe I ran into one of these Teacher Rangers at Great Sand Dunes National Park this summer, and she was absolutely fabulous as an interpretive ranger. There are clearly great benefits for the Parks and for the teachers and their subsequent students. Funding for expansion beyond Title 1 schools would be even better.

Great idea! I wholly support full funding for staff and services at our National Parks.

Community support is critical. Without it, it is illogical to move forward on the issue of park service preservation.

Fully agree. Fund the LWCF

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

This is a great idea! I saw a documentary on the CCC and was amazed we haven't repeated this wonderful program at a time when our young people need natural surroundings more than ever and need jobs too. Young people will learn how to protect this beautiful land and its waters and take ownership and really be a hands-on part of their own country. Maybe tax cuts and alcohol and soft drinks and junk food and yachts a little more--that'd probably more than bring in the money that's needed.

New York State has long worked cooperatively with the State and Private Cooperative Forestry Program of the United States Forest Service on the conservation and sustainable management of New York's 14.4 million acres of private forest land, held by approximately 687,000 private landowners.

In the past 15 years, every large forest product company operating in our Northern Forest region of the Tug Hill and Adirondacks has sold off large tracts of their land-holdings to private timber investment companies. Fortunately, our State was prepared to work with the companies and spent more than \$100 million in State funding to acquire more than 600,000 acres of new working forest easements. Assistance from the Forest Legacy program of the USFS also provided critical funding that leveraged the State's investment.

Private forestry is essential to the future of our State. It is a practice that remains one of our State's long running, traditional, natural resource based industries, and is now beginning to play an increasingly important ecosystem role in the face of global climate change.

Three elements that have become important to every working forest easement are: Sustainable forestry, which can be achieved through a requirement for forest certification through one of several approved certification programs

[Three elements that have become important to every working forest easement are:] Public recreation rights including hiking, camping, hunting, canoeing and snowmobiling, in balance with private recreation activities where they exist prior to the easement

[Three elements that have become important to every working forest easement are:] Extinguishment of residential or non-forestry commercial development rights to ensure the lands will be protected in perpetuity from residential and commercial development.

The objective of the working conservation easement program is to allow the purchase of easements over productive forest land so that landowners are paid to limit their right to develop their land, while retaining it as private property dedicated to resource use. To be most effective, expenditures for protection of these landscapes should take place on blocks of land so that the resource uses, such as forestry and recreation can continue over the long run without interference from other land uses.

Protecting working forests and other important habitats through conservation easements can also be a viable solution to the problems of rising property taxes, suburban and recreational development, high inheritance taxes, shortsighted forest management and a lack of management information.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

The Legacy program works well with the States to leverage state and private resources for sustainable private forestry conservation easement programs, but is underfunded.

Forestry incentive programs have been used in New York to promote and facilitate preparation of Forest Stewardship Plans for private forest owners, and implement various forest and environmental improvement practices including timber stand thinning, invasive species removal, reforestation, riparian buffer establishment, wildlife habitat improvement, forest road stabilization and water quality protection. Demand for these practices from NY forest owners and managers has always well exceeded available funding, indicating a far greater potential for applying conservation practices on the ground.

Implementation assistance for forest landowners is also available through the Environmental Quality Improvement Program (EQIP) administered by the Natural Resource Conservation Service of the United States Department of Agriculture.

For States like New York with very little National Forests, the support of the USFS's State and Private Forestry program is critical to our overall ability to assist our private forest landowners and to maintain and expand diverse markets for forest products. Both traditional and emerging markets for forest products are a critical requirement for most forest management activities.

Also, the 2008 Farm Bill authorized the creation of a Community Forestry program to assist local governments and Indian Nations across the country to acquire community forests for the myriad of benefits such forest provide. Based on the successful model of community forests that began in the Northern Forest areas of New England more than 200 years ago, this program could greatly enhance the creation of community forests throughout the country.

The listening session in Concord took place against a backdrop of global climate change and the urgent need to wean our country off of imported sources of fossil fuels. Forests and sustainable forestry are keys to helping us reduce our carbon footprint and improving our domestic energy capabilities.

Funding and technical assistance from both the Animal Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) and the US FS, both agencies of the United States Department of Agriculture, has been absolutely critical to the states' efforts to deal with the increasing frequency of such infestations, fueled by global trade, of which New York State is at the epicenter.

Supporting the Northern Forest's forest-based economic development activities offers additional opportunities for promoting sustainable forest management and long-term retention of forested open space, particularly in large tracts that have significant ecological benefits.

Additionally, working forests have long been used for hunting, trapping, fishing and other forms of recreation while protecting water and air quality.

Markets for wood products provide direct economic returns and incentives to landowners and encourage the practice of sustainable forestry.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Viable and diverse markets for a broad range of forest products allows managers and landowners to do a better job of silviculture - managing the establishment, composition, growth and regeneration of forest stands - by providing returns from a variety of timber products, not just the biggest and best trees of a few species.

The region's forests, both public and private, are the back bone of the economy of the Northern Forest. They represent a tremendous asset, when wisely managed that can sustain the economy and the culture of this beautiful area far into the future.

The States have developed many innovative conservation tools with our many partners. Perhaps chief among our partners has been the steady and reliable support of the USFS's State and Private Cooperative Forestry program. The continued and expanded support for the USFS State and Private Cooperative Forestry program is critical to the ability of New York and other Northern Forest states to extend our conservation activities on the region's forest lands. A modest federal investment in the program will leverage considerable state and private conservation investments, and help secure the future of the Northern Forest. At the same time, it will build constituencies and connections to our great outdoors and create the next generation of advocates for our forests.

Good afternoon and thank you for the opportunity to participate in this Listening Session and to offer a few comments relative to the President's Great American Outdoor initiative. My name is _____ and I am here representing Ducks Unlimited. DU is recognized as the world's leading non-profit wetlands and waterfowl conservation organization dedicated to the protection, enhancement and management of wetlands and associated upland habitats necessary to sustain a healthy continental population of waterfowl.

What we do for waterfowl also benefits many other fish, wildlife and plant species and people. Wetlands provide numerous ecological services including the purification and recharge of our drinking water, protection of property from storm and flood damage and places for people to go to recreate and enjoy these wonderfully rich and diverse environments.

I'm pleased to say that an overwhelming number of DU supporters are outdoor enthusiasts and participate on a regular basis in activities that bring them close to nature. Whether it be hunting waterfowl over an early morning marsh, hiking a mountain trail or simply enjoying a peaceful moment in a natural setting, they understand and support with their time and money DU's important habitat work and the relationship between conservation and the added value it brings to their lives. It is that kind of connectivity and passion for all things wild that needs to be generated in greater numbers of people, young and old alike, if we hope to kindle the political and financial support it will take to conserve enough of our natural heritage for the use and enjoyment of generations to come. Those who enjoy sport hunting and fishing know this first hand and have always been at the forefront of conservation efforts in this country and thanks to their financial contributions and strong advocacy efforts, we all have more places to visit and enjoy in America's great outdoors.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

In addition, sport hunting and fishing generate billions of dollars of revenue across the nation and support hundreds of thousands of jobs in related industries.

Building upon the successful aspects of federal funding programs like the North American Wetland Conservation Act (NAWCA), Partners for Wildlife (PFW), Forest Legacy Program (FLP) the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) and conservation programs of the farm bill like the Wetland Reserve Program (WRP), Conservation Reserve Program (CRP), Wildlife Habitat Incentive Program (WHIP), and the Grassland Reserve Program (GRP), America's Great Outdoors Initiative has the potential to dramatically improve the protection, restoration and enhancement of our nation's natural resources for future generations.

These federal programs provide the necessary government incentive to attract private investment and participation that has been key in helping DU and others achieve significant conservation objectives over the past several decades, but much more needs to be done and we encourage this Administration and Congress to continue to support and fully fund these, and other important federal initiatives.

Farm Bill programs such as Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) and Sodbuster have thus far played a critical role in preserving millions of acres of prairie grassland that benefit many species of wildlife. We strongly urge that they continue and expand.

Given the topic of discussion today, it is appropriate that this Listening Session be held in NH where approximately 84% of the state landscape is covered in forest. Historically, the vast majority of forestland has been owned by timber companies and thus managed for forest products. At the same time there has been a long-standing tradition to keep these lands open to the public for hunting, fishing, hiking and other forms of compatible public use recreation.

A Governors Task Force on Northern Forest Lands some time ago warned that changes in land ownership from the timber industry to property development for second homes and the like, would likely have an adverse impact on open space, forestry, farming and recreational uses on private lands. As downturns in the economy of the forests industry occurs, millions of acres of timber company lands are often offered for sale. When this occurs at time of a strong regional economy, working forest land is at risk to developers and prospectors interested in recreational developments.

In the face of growing development pressures, we believe the need to preserve the landscapes that shape New Hampshire's quality of life has never been greater and programs such as the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF), NAWCA and Forest Legacy Program (FLP) grants mentioned above, provide federal dollars to assist state and local conservation organizations in protecting the economical, social, cultural and environmental values these lands for all Americans.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Although New Hampshire does not lie within a Priority one region for DU, it is non-the-less important in achieving our overall vision and mission for waterfowl, especially for the American black duck, a species of special concern under the Atlantic Coast Joint Venture(JV) of the NAWMP. The JV is a partnership of federal, regional and state agencies and organizations, including DU, focused on the habitat for native bird species in the Atlantic Flyway of the US from Maine to Puerto Rico. NAWCA was enacted by Congress to provide federal match dollars to accomplish habitat goals established under the NAWMP and implemented through the JV.

The current JV approach for black ducks is to protect large blocks of relatively undisturbed breeding habitat in the Northeastern U.S. forests. Breeding black ducks are linked to forests in general and beavers in particular and growth in beaver populations throughout northeastern forests has provided an increase in the quantity and quality of breeding habitat for black ducks. Habitat conservation for black ducks and numerous other species of fish and wildlife in NH is experiencing tremendous success through the assistance of JV partners and NAWCA grant funding.

Since 1990, sixteen NAWCA grants totaling \$7.9 million have been approved to protect over 125,700 acres of critical wetlands and associated uplands in NH. These grants have been matched by nearly \$27 million in non-federal funds. Many of these properties are now under the management of state and federal agencies and conservation organizations like the Society for the Protection of NH Forests, The Nature Conservancy and others. In all cases, every effort is made to make these properties available to the public for a variety of recreational and educational uses. The NAWMP, and the JV model for implementation, is recognized as one of the most successful conservation initiatives ever undertaken. The American Great Outdoors Initiative should explore ways to replicate this model when and wherever it is appropriate.

The Great Bay Resource Protection Partnership: over 8,000 acres protected; rich and diverse habitats; key waterfowl wintering area and migratory bird stopover; state, federal and private partners leveraging a combined total of private public money in exce

Connecticut River Watershed Project: Largest ever public/private land conservation project in NH—resulted in the creation of a 25,000 acre Natural Area surrounded by 146,400 acres of working forest protected through conservation easement.

Quabbin-to-Cardigan Conservation Initiative: Encompassing nearly 2 million acres, this region is one of the largest remaining areas of intact, interconnected ecologically significant forest in central New England. Nearly 7,000 acres were recently protected using LWCF and Forest Legacy Program and partner funds.

Although much has been accomplished, more work remains and more collaboration is needed. In order to build upon this success it will take increased funding to meet the backlog of interest.

America's Great Outdoors Initiative will bring much needed attention, funding and cooperation to help protect and restore the important natural resources in New Hampshire, and most importantly, yield critical benefits to its citizens

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

The America's Great Outdoors Initiative may be the last and best opportunity to preserve the world class resources of the Northeast's vast working forest, the mid-west Prairie Pothole Region and the southeastern Gulf Coast estuarine and freshwater wetlands recently threatened by the Deep Horizon oil spill disaster, among others .

As we have done for the past 73 years, Ducks Unlimited stands willing and anxious to work with our many partners -- and private landowners -- so that the resources and wildlife that call these areas home will continue to flourish and nurture American's love of the outdoors.

We appreciate the Administration's effort to reach out to all stakeholders to bring new ideas, perspectives and concerns to the table as we look for ways to collectively formulate policies and legislation that will have positive impacts how we manage, protect and restore and enjoy our Nations rich natural diversity and beauty by this generation and all generations that follow.

Thank you on behalf of the Land Trust Alliance, the 1,600 land trusts in America, and their 2.5 million supporters, for your leadership in launching the 21st Century Strategy for Conservation in America Initiative. I was thrilled and proud to hear the President feature land trusts and their work in his remarks - thank you for your help in calling attention to the unsung heroes working to protect lands in their local communities. Land trusts have been working with private landowners to conserve important lands for over one hundred years, and we appreciate your support for this non-controversial approach to protecting America's Great Outdoors.

It was heartening to see you and the Secretary of Agriculture, the Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency, and the Chair of the Council on Environmental Quality working together to lead this initiative. We look forward to working with you in a spirit of collaboration on a 21st Century approach to conservation that includes the public and private sectors, businesses and nonprofits, academia and citizens.

Land trusts have a proven record of working with diverse stakeholders to protect lands that are important to their communities, whether they are farm and ranch lands, natural habitat, scenic views or places to recreate. Operating in every state and at every scale, land trusts are conserving landscapes that provide clean water; fresh air; safe, local food; and places to connect with nature for urban and rural residents alike. Land trusts have the tools, the knowledge, the connections, and most of all the passion to help make this initiative a resounding success.

Houston Wilderness is a metropolitan conservation alliance serving Houston, Galveston, and the 24-county southeast Texas region. It is comprised of more than 60 member organizations including private non-profit, corporate, and government sectors. We are similar to Chicago Wilderness but unique in that here we achieve our conservation goals largely through the partnership and support of the private sector. Our board members illustrate our balance of diverse interest groups and include the directors of Texas Parks and Wildlife Department and the City of Houston's Parks and Recreation Department, representatives of major corporations such as KBR and Conoco Phillips, educational institutions such as Texas A&M and the Houston Museum of Natural Science, and local and national conservation organizations such as The Conservation Fund and the Galveston Bay Foundation.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

While our partners work to conserve and restore land, preserve wildlife populations, protect water, and provide access to the great outdoors for children and adults, Houston Wilderness works to facilitate and support their efforts. For instance, Houston Wilderness's Wilderness Passport Program links 200,000 children to 40 partner-operated outdoor learning destinations and delivers a science-based curriculum in English and Spanish to all 4th-graders at Houston Independent School District. Houston Wilderness also facilitates the assembly of the Same Houston Trail and Wilderness Preserve, a 650-mile, continuous green corridor to encircle the greater Houston metropolitan region and link our most important national, state, and local parks and preserves. Houston Wilderness also produced the Atlas of Biodiversity, an important corporate recruitment and retention tool, printed by Conoco Phillips and distributed by Texas A&M Press. Information about these projects is enclosed in this letter.

Due to the importance of our habitat, hundreds of local and national organizations are actively engaged in innovative conservation projects here - more than in any other part of Texas. Together over 1 million acres have been protected.

Our heritage of ranching and farming, hunting and fishing, and timber harvesting bring a practical perspective to conservation of open space.

It is well established that metropolitan economies, collectively, are the primary provider of jobs and the driver of the national economy. Thus, it is vitally important to preserve and support healthy cities. One way to help this effort is with parks – from New York’s Central Park down to thousands of small, beloved neighborhood greens – which can play a huge role in urban livability and desirability. On a local level the value provided by parks can include cleaner air, cleaner water, more tourism, the benefits from direct use, improved public health, increased property values, and enhanced community cohesion. On a national level, parks can help cities spur economic development, reduce climate change, foster a healthier population, and support disadvantaged communities of color.

While city parks have traditionally been considered purely local amenities, it is now recognized that this attitude has been wrong and has severely harmed the nation’s interests for many reasons – health, water quality, connectivity, economic development and social equality. What follows are five major categories of city parks and what they do for the nation as a whole. For each, we provide a specific example of success and an example of potential:

Success: The Tennessee Riverwalk, Chattanooga, Tenn Chattanooga, the “Cinderella of the South,” has risen from the most polluted city in the nation in 1969 to one of the most attractive today, thanks in part to revitalization based on its riverfront park system. Beginning in the early 1980s the city began developing a 12-mile linear Riverwalk along the Tennessee River, focusing on leveraging the city’s core asset and reconnecting it to the community. The creations included the Tennessee Riverpark, a revamped Coolidge Park, a series of trails, and the preserved the Walnut Street Bridge (an abandoned railroad viaduct) as a pedestrian-only link between downtown and North Chattanooga. The \$50-million public-private effort (funded largely through a hotel tax) has generated more than \$350 million in private investment, and the Tennessee Riverwalk has indisputably become the city’s “living room.”

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Success: South Platte River Greenway and Commons Park, Denver, Colo. From Chatfield State Park on the south to the confluence with Clear Creek 30 miles downstream, the South Platte River runs through Greater Denver and represents one of the nation's greatest urban park success stories. Converting the former industrial backwater into a trail-based, facility-studded showpiece took nearly 30 years to implement, but its 15 interconnected parks and 100 miles of adjoining greenways attract hundreds of thousands of users (and uncounted birds and other wildlife). Public and private funding, totaling about \$70 million (including Great Outdoors Colorado lottery money), has fueled as much as \$2.5 billion in residential, commercial, retail, sports and entertainment projects along the corridor. The centerpiece is 22-acre Commons Park, constructed as part of a new, walkable neighborhood on a former railyard on the edge of downtown. The \$21-million park has helped to stimulate the construction of 1,500 new housing units – whose residents now call Commons Park their back yard.

Success: Railyard Park in Santa Fe, N.M. A new 12-acre park in Santa Fe is revitalizing a bypassed part of the city's core, igniting economic development, invigorating a major transportation hub and providing a natural amenity to improve the quality of life. Part of a long-neglected 50-acre site that now holds retail and residences and the Rail Runner Express commuter train, \$13.5-million Railyard Park features outdoor performance space, a children's play area, a farmer's market, community cultural center, a walk-bike trail, a labyrinth and an innovate water harvesting system for irrigation. Railyard Park received funding from private, local and state sources, as well as federal transportation funds.

Success: Hunts Point Riverside Park, Bronx, N.Y. Surrounded by water but with almost no access to it, and little parkland, Hunts Point is one of the most environmentally degraded parts of New York City. It has some of city's highest rates of asthma and diabetes, and the larger South Bronx area contains 40 percent of New York City's waste facilities, four electric power plants and multiple sewage treatment centers. Because of these conditions, a local organization, Sustainable South Bronx, identified as a park site a trash-strewn, abandoned 1.5-acre plot of land on the Bronx River. Beginning with a \$10,000 seed grant, Hunts Point Riverside Park was eventually created through \$3 million in city funds. The popular park today has a fishing and recreation pier with a floating dock, a water-themed playground, a central oval lawn and a riverside amphitheater with stone seating and lawn panels. As part of a larger Bronx River effort, the initiative has led to new green jobs, restored natural areas, youth environmental education, and improved water and air quality.

Success: The Bruce Vento Nature Sanctuary, St. Paul, Minn. Preserving nature in the heart of a 3.3-million-person metropolitan area, the Bruce Vento Nature Sanctuary contains historic caves, natural springs and remnants of the area's industrial past. Protection of the 27-acre marsh has helped increase habitat in a critical urban stretch of the Mississippi River flyway, a corridor used by 40 percent of the continent's migrating birds. The nature sanctuary also links two regional trails, and an interpretive center educates city dwellers about the nature around them. Owned by St. Paul, the site is within the Mississippi National River Recreation Area. Funds came from city, regional, state, national and private sources.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

North Carolina has four conservation trust funds (Clean Water Management Trust Fund, Natural Heritage Trust Fund, Parks and Recreation Trust Fund, Agricultural Development and Farmland Preservation Trust Fund) that over the years have spent hundreds of millions of dollars to purchase land and easements for conservation purposes. They have been used as match for a variety of DOI, USDA, DOT and NOAA programs. Two of them are funded from general appropriations provided by the legislature, but the real innovation is that NHTF and PRTF receive their funding from a dedicated funding source - a percentage of the deed stamp tax - so we don't have to fight for their budgets each year at the legislature. To encourage other states to create and expand such trust funds, the Administration could place a higher priority on funding projects with greater non-federal match.

North Carolina was the first state to create a conservation tax credit for donated conservation easements. Two years ago, the state passed a law and is implementing a "Wildlife Use Value" property tax category so that farmers or forest owners who want to preserve their land as wildlife habitat rather than as a working farm or forest can continue to have the same low property tax rate as before.

North Carolina is a leader in targeting high priority lands for conservation purposes. Through a state contract for preservation mitigation six years ago (more details below), many of the state's land trusts were provided with GIS mapping software. Concurrently, the NC Department of Environment and Natural Resources was putting together its "One North Carolina Naturally" plan, which targets areas of the state that DENR agencies are interested in. Today, between 15 and 20 land trusts have the staff and technology to create their own digitized conservation plans, by parcel, based on their organization's conservation priorities.

Six years ago, the state was way behind in producing wetlands and stream mitigation credits for roads and other projects to move forward. The state DOT, DENR and the Army Corps, with EPA's blessing, created the Ecosystem Enhancement Program to accelerate the process of securing mitigation credits. The creative stroke was developing a contract with the Conservation Trust for North Carolina to provide preservation properties as mitigation, on a 10:1 ratio as compared to restoration. CTNC then subcontracted with land trusts in the parts of the state that needed mitigation. The land trusts in turn worked with landowners to place conservation easements on nearly 100 properties, which had both important water quality attributes and imminent threat of development. The state was able to catch up on its credit needs quickly. The money came from DOT, which paid for acquisition and transaction costs, and for staffing and other administrative costs at the land trusts. This contract proved hugely important to land trusts' ability to increase their capacity. EPA's wetlands guidelines still allow preservation as mitigation, so the Administration could encourage other states to use preservation as a mitigation strategy.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

North Carolina land trusts are pursuing a number of avenues to diversify who we are and who we work with, so that we better represent and serve all North Carolinians. Initiatives include: land trusts working with community development corporations to create site plans for conservation-based affordable housing (clustering housing units and preserving open space and stream banks); a summer internship program at land trusts for students from Historically Black Colleges and Universities (stipends provided by foundation grant funds we raised); increased outreach to minority farmers regarding their conservation options; passage of a law on heirs property issues that makes it easier for families to hold on to their land; and creation of a community garden in the middle of a Hope 6 housing development.

Second, in terms of what Interior is thinking of as components of America's Great Outdoors in the NY Harbor area and, beyond that, the NY metropolitan area, I could name five that have been part of my EDF work over the last 35 plus years: The NY Harbor/Lower Hudson Raritan Estuary waterfront and natural resource region; The NJ Pinelands; The four-state (PA, NJ, NY and northwestern Conn) Mid-Atlantic Highlands; The Long Island Pine Barrens; Fire Island National Seashore.

Because of my involvement through EDF and various coalitions with all of these landscapes, I could tell you about their special attributes in detail. It would be great to show you around these landscapes. These landscape not only have magnificent land, water and cultural resources, but they are in or along the periphery of a vast metropolitan area that stretches from Philadelphia, through northern NJ, NYC and the Lower Hudson Valley and northwestern Connecticut to Hartford. Some 25 million people live within 40 miles of the four-state Highlands Region, for example. My hope is that, as you develop your overall vision and plans for the America's Great Outdoors initiative, these vital landscape, integral to the health and well-being of the largest metropolitan area in the country, will be included

The Chesapeake Conservancy shares your view and has, as a principal mission, "ensuring the conservation, stewardship, access and enjoyment of the Chesapeake's iconic landscapes and waterways and its cultural and historic assets highlighted by the Captain John Smith Chesapeake National Historic Trail and the Chesapeake Gateways and Water trails Network."

Participants would also gain jobs skills training in key construction trades such as carpentry, plumbing, electric, masonry and painting, with an emphasis on developing skills in weatherization and energy efficiency. The training would include both classroom-based and on-the-job skills development.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

The benefits of urban trees are well-known—energy savings, clean water and clean air, wildlife habitat and reduction of the urban heat island effect. In addition, urban trees and tree plantings create a strong sense of community. New York State's U&CF program is a partnership of public, private and volunteer organizations and individuals that fosters comprehensive planning, management and education throughout New York State to increase healthy community tree cover that will enhance quality of life for urban residents. Special attention is paid to support urban forestry efforts in communities that are under-canopied, underserved, have limited access to open space, or bear disproportionate environmental burdens. In short, this important U&CF program supports the on-going effort to make communities better places for people to live. More than 200,000 volunteer hours were logged in 2009 to help plant and care for our urban forests for the residents of New York to enjoy.

The Forest Legacy Program (USFS), while currently underfunded, has proven to be an effective tool when resources are available. The Department of Environmental Conservation has used Legacy funding to acquire key working forest conservation easements that have worked extremely well to keep forest land in private ownership with sustainable management requirements and strategic public recreation rights. While New York has developed highly effective conservation easement programs for forest and farm land protection, the current fiscal crisis has diminished the ability of New York's Environmental Protection Fund, to sustain these efforts. Absent scarce state resources there is a great need for federal funding to support these critical state programs.

Community Forest program grants were authorized in the 2008 Farm Bill. If fully funded, the program would directly support local governments' acquisition of community forests, following the extremely successful New England model. The Forest Service is currently developing guidelines for implementation of the program and we have been told expect to release these guidelines for public comment by August 30, 2010. After public comments are considered and any needed revisions, it is expected the program will be ready for consideration of grant applications in the fall of 2010. New York and DEC are looking forward to supporting local governments' participation in this program.

There are approximately 14.4 million acres of privately owned forestland in New York State, which represents 76% of the state's forest resource. The USFS' Forest Stewardship Program offers technical assistance, through state forestry agency partners like NYSDEC, to nonindustrial private forest (NIPF) owners to encourage and enable active long-term forest management. A primary focus of the program is the development of comprehensive, multi-resource management plans that provide landowners with the information they need to manage their forests for a variety of products and services. Stewardship plans motivate landowners to become more active in planning and managing their forests, greatly increasing the likelihood that their forests will remain intact, productive and healthy, and that the social, economic and environmental benefits of these lands will be sustained for future generations. New York supports the continuation of the Forest Stewardship Program, which has yielded many benefits to New York's forest landowners as well as all of its citizens.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

New York has benefited from many of the Farm Bill conservation programs including the Environmental Quality Incentives Program, which provides incentives to farm and forest landowners to implement conservation practices; the Grassland Reserve Program; and the Wetlands Reserve Program. The state supports the full funding of these beneficial programs and looks forward to their reauthorization in the next Farm Bill.

The Wildlife Habitat Incentive Program (WHIP) is a voluntary program for conservation-minded landowners who want to develop and improve wildlife habitat on agricultural land, nonindustrial private forest land and Indian land. WHIP in new York has to focus areas: enhancing early succession wildlife habitat with scrubland and establishing and enhancing grassland habitat for declining bird species, pollinators, and other grassland wildlife species. DEC practices and strongly supports WHIP at its Rogers, Five Rivers and Stony Kill Farm Environmental Education Centers. DEC promotes increasing collaborations across that state that will positively benefit a broad range of New York wildlife species.

New York is proud of its work with and investment in the state's land trust community. The Conservation Partnership Program (www.dec.ny.gov/lands/48901.html), a partnership between the state and the Land Trust Alliance, is a model not-for-profit capacity building grant program for the country. Development of a nationwide grant program to provide capacity building assistance to local, regional and statewide land trusts and other conservation non-for-profit organizations could leverage substantial private conservation funding and build even more effective networks in communities across the nation. Pairing this concept with the ability of land trusts to access LOCF, NAWCA and CELCP land acquisition funds, similar to the Great Outdoors Colorado model, would yield even greater results and leverage of private conservation dollars.

In 2006, New York passed and implemented a state Conservation Easement Tax Credit (CETC), which offers landowners a refundable tax credit up to \$5,000 per year to offset the property tax burden on lands for which a conservation easement was donated to a qualified conservation organization. the CETC has proved to be a benefit to both the public and landowners. Similarly, the federal conservation easement tax incentive enhancements, first enacted in 2006, have increased the rate of land conservation benefiting landowners and the public. The enhancements raise the deduction a donor can take for donating a conservation easement from 30% of their adjusted gross income in any year to 50%; allows qualifying farmers and ranchers to deduct up to 100% of their income; and extends the carry-forward period for a donor to take tax deductions for voluntary conservation agreements from 5 to 15 years. While initially enacted for the period of one year and extended each year, the enhancements expired at the end of the 2009 calendar year. New York enthusiastically supports the renewal of these enhancements and making them permanent.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

The Highlands Conservation Act, passed in 2004, provides funding to protect the Highlands region, which extends from Pennsylvania through Southeast New York and Northern New Jersey to Northwest Connecticut. In the four states, the Highlands region serves as a critical public drinking water supply. It contains exceptional natural resources including contiguous forests, scenic vistas, wetlands, pristine watersheds and important plant and wildlife species habitats. The region contains many sites of historic significance and provides abundant recreational opportunities for residents and visitors. This area is also one of high population density and development pressure, and is highly susceptible to forest and landscape fragmentation. New York supports full funding under the Highlands Conservation Act.

The National Park Service contributes to conservation, recreation, and education through programs like Teaching the Hudson River Valley and Saratoga Battlefield. These valuable programs work with NGOs (Saratoga PLAN, Agriculture Stewardship Association) and municipalities along the northern stretches of the Hudson River that are working in partnership with overlapping National Heritage Areas (Erie Canalway, Champlain Partnership). In this way, the Park Service is supporting work to protect the Battlefields's scenic viewshed, revitalize the river communities and generally advance stewardship and outdoor recreation in this upper Hudson River area. New York State is honored to have four designated national heritage areas that complement and collaborate with more than twenty state heritage areas. A new plan in the report of the National Parks Second Century Commission recommended that a clearly defined system of national heritage areas have base funding and work closely with national parks.

It is or should be axiomatic that the best way to learn about the environment is to experience it directly. A unique program in New York, Operation Explore, offers New York City public school students in grades four through six the opportunity to link classroom science activities with the outdoors. Three distinct but interrelated environments - aquatic, farm, and forest - are explored through hands-on day and overnight experiences. At Stony Kill Farm, a 1,000 acre environmental education center operated by NYSDEC in Dutchess County, students learn how their food is produced and discover the interdependence of urban and agricultural communities. Everyone gets to see and do things they may have never experienced before: a chance to grind corn, feed cows and chickens, and use their senses to explore plants in the greenhouse, and run or walk around the perimeter of an acre to get a sense of its dimensions. Funding from NPS and partners to continue and expand Operation Explore would enhance our opportunities to inform urban youth about the importance of agriculture and natural resource protection.

New York is proud of the outdoor legacy created through innovative community partnerships like our Hudson River Estuary Program (HREP) related to the New York-New Jersey Harbor Estuary Program. We believe that HREP can serve as a national model for protecting watersheds using ecosystem based management and connecting people of all ages to world class outdoor recreation opportunities. HREP protects and improves the natural and scenic Hudson River watershed for all its residents. The program was created in 1987 and extends from the Troy dam to upper New York Harbor. Its core mission is to ensure clean water; protect and restore fish, wildlife and their habitats; provide water recreation and river access; adapt to climate change; and conserve world-famous scenery.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

The program is guided by the HREP Action Agenda - a forward-looking plan developed with significant community participation up and down the river. Built on sound science and principles of ecosystem-based management, it achieves progress through a collaborative approach that includes: grants and restoration projects; education, research and training; natural resource conservation and protection; and community planning assistance. Implementation of the HREP Action Agenda relies on partnerships with federal and state agencies, as well as local municipalities, non-profits, academic and scientific institutions, businesses, trade organizations, landowners and dedicated volunteers. The Hudson River Estuary Management Advisory Committee provides guidance to the program, helps the state define goals and evaluate progress, and provides a communication bridge to a wider group of partners and stakeholders.

On the first point, DEC and the state's water financing Environmental Facilities Corporation have been working to ensure that projects funded through the SRF do not promote sprawling, unsustainable growth, setting priorities instead on repairs and enhancements of existing infrastructure and support for downtowns and historic town centers. The SRF can be an effective tool for promoting wise local land use planning, and to the extent feasible, finance projects that are consistent with existing land use plans. It also can and should promote wastewater treatment facilities that maximize energy efficiency.

New York State has encouraged the wider use of the Clean Water State Revolving Loan Fund provide financial support to local governments to implement comprehensive green infrastructure programs. NYSDEC's vision of an enhanced green infrastructure program includes assistance to local governments and NGO's to identify and incorporate green approaches into plans to address water infrastructure needs and to develop local programs to protect resources through landowner incentive programs, sensible land use regulations, conservation easements and best management practices. The requirement in ARRA and Federal Fiscal year 2010 appropriation that 20% of the Clean Water State Revolving Loan Fund appropriations be used for the green project should become the norm in future SRF funding determinations.

The Environmental Education Grants Program provides seed money to support environmental education projects that increase the public's awareness about environmental issues and provides them with the skills to pursue responsible courses of actions. Smaller grants to local schools and communities have supported hands-on education programs on ecological topics and provided teacher trainings to enhance environmental literacy within schools and neighborhoods. Larger grants have fostered the development of programs with wider focus such as online teacher trainings in environmental education. With additional funding, standards-based national environmental education curriculums such as Project WILD, Project WET (Water Education for Teachers) and Project Learning Tree could be offered to a wider range of audiences, providing educators with both skills and knowledge to infuse environmental education into the broad spectrum of their topics. Continued and enhanced support for these grants would allow states to expand existing partnerships, establish environmental literacy plans and a database of resources for educators and community members.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

It is both the home of the Industrial Revolution in America, home to some of the most productive shell fishing waters in the north east, and home to a thriving recreational fishery. Protecting and restoring the health of Narragansett Bay and other estuaries in Southern New England directly benefits millions of Americans.

I'm writing to suggest that work authorized by the San Joaquin River Restoration Program provides an ideal opportunity to advance the Initiative's goals. As I read the Initiative, the river's restoration effort jumps out as a poster child example that can come from inter-agency and community cooperation. It is possible to reconnect Americans to the San Joaquin River just as directly as we reconnect the river to the bay.

The San Joaquin River Partnership stands ready to assist the Department of Interior and other agencies on this. We will welcome the opportunity to sit down with your staff and discuss what we can achieve together for the river, the economy, and our way of life. Please pass this on to the appropriate individuals as we make this request to arrange a meeting; we stand ready to help.

Consider my experience; as a long-time rock-hound who has forty years of experience exploring the California desert areas, I: was there in the 1970's when the first Desert Protection Act was passed. My club members spent hours working on workbooks for the BLM to decide what area of concern to "protect" and what areas should be available to the public as multiple-use.

New York is blessed with more than 80 private non-profit land trusts that work cooperatively with the state and local communities to conserve our outdoor heritage. The world's largest conservation organization, The Nature Conservancy, was founded in Westchester County more than fifty years ago. The Hudson River Valley proudly hosts several trusts that have made significant contributions to the conservation of the valley's historic landscape, including Scenic Hudson and the Open Space Institute.

In 1957, Elizabeth Titus Putnam's vision became a reality with the creation of the Student Conservation Association (SCA), through which generations of young adults have made lasting and significant differences in the stewardship of public land. Now operating in all fifty states, SCA was the forerunner of national, state and local youth conservation corps programs, including today's AmeriCorps program.

In 1977, the mayors and town supervisors of six neighboring communities at the confluence of the Hudson and Mohawk Rivers, where waterfalls and river flows ignited the industrial revolution in the 19th century, designated their communities to be the State's first heritage area. Called River Spark, this framework became a model for a state heritage area system that now has more than twenty heritage areas complementing and collaborating with four national heritage areas including the Hudson River National Heritage Area.

One of my key priorities as commissioner has been to reconnect New Yorkers, especially children, with nature. So I was particularly pleased that President Obama identified fostering "a new generation of community and urban parks" for children and families as one of his goals in the America's Great Outdoors Initiative. We in New York look forward to an enhanced state-federal partnership to achieve this and other goals related to children and nature.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

The lessons we have learned from our great conservation tradition make the Great Outdoor Initiative's listening sessions in New York particularly relevant. We know what has worked to conserve our open space and natural and cultural resources, and we know that engaging the public and nonprofit and volunteer organizations and our local government partners in the great mission is even more important today than in the past as we cope with issues of urban sprawl, the lure of passive technology-driven recreational opportunities and increasingly scarce financial resources.

Second, you ask what challenges or obstacles we face. While I wish I could provide a more expansive answer, the most common denominator is the need for consistent, adequate and predictable funding. We certainly need strong planning and coordination, but we have many excellent structures in place to meet these needs (as described in more detail below). What has been missing is a revenue stream that can be counted on in good times and bad. As the President well knows in setting out the agenda for his AGO initiative, our local, state and national natural resources are vital to the health and prosperity of our citizens; protecting them costs money. We ignore this fact at the peril of our children, our economy, and our quality of life.

New York is highly appreciative of the federal government's commitment to the restoration of the Great Lakes through the President Obama's Great Lakes Restoration Initiative. By improving the health of the Great Lakes Basin's ecosystem, the federal government is investing in the long-term vitality of the region. Continued full appropriation for the GLRI is imperative to the full recovery of the health of the Great Lakes ecosystem, watershed and economy.

For the past four decades, conservation and service corps have demonstrated that young adults engaged in stewardship projects make significant contributions to their local communities and develop crucial skills and attitudes needed to become productive citizens. As pressures on our nation's land and natural resources grows and youth unemployment soars, an enhanced AmeriCorps program provides a holistic approach to addressing challenges faced by communities, natural resource agencies and families alike. Expanded funding of the AmeriCorps program will not only ensure completion of a backlog of needed conservation projects; it will help train and support the next generation of environmental leaders.

AmeriCorps members have also been instrumental in launching the After-School Conservation Club (ASCC), a program that engages elementary school children in hands-on environmental education activities and stewardship projects. The goal is to bring environmental education to and foster a sense of stewardship among inner-city elementary-aged children involved in after-school programs. DEC environmental education staff train and support site coordinators and youth counselors and lessons are taught by DEC environmental education staff and AmeriCorps members from the Student Conservation Association Hudson Valley Conservation corps and Western New York AmeriCorps programs. ASCC project sites create or enhance wildlife habitat, such as building butterfly gardens. ASCC programs are currently offered in underserved and Environmental Justice communities in Beacon, Albany and Buffalo and throughout the five boroughs of New York City.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

AmeriCorps support has also been provided for crews to complete much needed stewardship projects at DEC environmental education centers on state lands. Western New York AmeriCorps crews removed invasive species and made trail safety improvements at Reinstein Woods Nature Preserve near Buffalo. The Headwaters Environmental Education Center and state forests in central New York.

Our public lands are among our most important birthrights as Americans, whether we visit them or not

President Obama and the Administration deserve congratulations for undertaking the America's Great Outdoor Initiative (AGOI). The opportunities for ordinary Americans to make their views known at public listening sessions and through the website are invaluable. The Administration needs to continue to be proactive in involving Americans in order to give them a sense of ownership over the program and its results.

The history of land conservation issues repeatedly shows that in the long term local citizens see the benefit if conservation initiatives even if they initially opposed a park or monument designation. For example, Utah's national parks are now among the crown jewels of the National Park System, even though most of them faced vehement local opposition initially.

Americans should be able to enjoy federal public lands as the citizen-owners they are. That means that in theory, access should be free

Entrance fees to national parks are traditional , but should be kept minimal. Fees for camping and the use of other developed sites such as boat launches should also be minimal and affordable.

Picnic areas and parking for day use and hiking should be always be free and subsumed into the general budget of the jurisdiction in question.

The idea behind getting children outdoors rests on at least two propositions. The first is that exposure to Nature is beneficial for children (and adults, too, for that matter). Nature is a wonderful way to learn about science, and increasingly, exposure to Nature is linked to mental health benefits as well. The second proposition is that getting children outdoors increases their physical activity, leading to physical health benefits.

Parks built around cultural and historic sites provide opportunities for field trips for schoolchildren as well as getting adult citizens outdoors. In fact, historic sites provide a perfect "gateway" for people to get outdoors. If there is a historic trail, then there is an opportunity for exercise. Lands surrounding historic sites can and should be bought for native habitat restoration areas.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

As you reminded everyone in your speech at the conference, at times of great difficulty for our nation, our leaders have taken bold action to protect the grandeur of Yosemite, put Americans to work through the Civilian Conservation Corps, and built a lasting legacy for future generations. We greatly appreciate your leadership in speaking out so articulately on behalf of conservation and our mutual obligation "to take the long view to preserve our national heritage".

Further, we strongly endorse your Administration's effort to reach out to people across the country to learn more about how we can best accomplish tangible and lasting conservation results, and connect the next generation of leaders to the outdoors. It is our clear perception that a new generation of conservation is taking shape in America characterized by government agencies, private landowners and non-profit organizations working together at the grassroots level to conserve whole, functioning ecosystems, watersheds, and recreational corridors for their many benefits. We believe that through such partnerships and with coordinated, additional support for essential funding sources like Farm Bill programs, the Land and Water Conservation Fund, agency budgets, and other innovative approaches, we can successfully live up to our responsibilities to future generations of Americans.

As part of the America's Great Outdoors Initiative you have solicited effective strategies for reconnection people, particularly youth, to the outdoors. I would like to make you aware of our community-based program, Off-Highway PAL (OHPAL) coordinated by California State Parks, Off-Highway Motor Vehicle Recreation (OHMVR) Division. This program has been successfully implemented throughout California's bioregions such as the coastal dunes, beautiful deserts, majestic oak woodlands, and the scenic Sierra Nevada. I hope that a glimpse at our program may encourage you to develop similar opportunities across America.

OHPAL is a youth-mentoring program operated in partnership with the OHMVR Division and California Police Activities League. OHPAL capitalizes on the attraction of young people to off-highway vehicle (OHV) activities to forge positive relationships between youth and law enforcement, while at the same time teaching kids to appreciate public lands. Incentive-based OHPAL is available to youth twelve to seventeen years-of-age who are willing to dedicate time to their academics and model responsible behavior in the communities where they live .

As young people are increasingly losing touch with the natural world, it is critical that public agencies promote healthy recreation and the responsible use of public lands. OHPAL is a fun, physical program encouraging safe and responsible operation of dirt bikes, snowmobiles, and all-terrain vehicles (ATVs). Partnering organizations, including the ATV Safety Institute, the Motorcycle Safety Foundation and the California-Nevada Snowmobile Association, provide rider education curricula and expertly trained OHPAL instructors and coaches. OHPAL also incorporates a variety of educational activities created by California State Parks Staff and Tread Lightly! To promote positive land stewardship ethics.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

OHPAL program sites are located throughout California. The proximity of program sites to large urban centers increased program accessibility and the opportunity to reach youth who otherwise may not be able to participate in OHV recreation. The unique riding terrain specific to these regions provide rich opportunities to promote an environmental ethic relevant to each youth participant.

OHPAL is a successful State-coordinated program that could be applied nationally by partnering with the BLM and the USFS. Please contact me for more information about OHPAL and the opportunity to build on its success. OHPAL can lead America's youth to stimulating outdoor activities through the gateway of OHV recreation.

I applaud the America's Great Outdoors Initiative. It's about time your administration turned its attention to our conservation needs! In particular, I would like to see more money allocated for conservation efforts fuller funding for the national parks

Reauthorization of the Endangered Species Act (without watering it down!)

More curbs on mountain-top removal in Appalachia

More protection for migratory birds and butterflies (many migratory species are in number).

And above all, the acquisition and protection of more land (particularly where endangered species exist) and coral reefs

Today, the Freedom Center sits at the very heart of an enormous riverfront development project, called the Banks, which includes a new, 45-acre urban park that will open in 2011. The Riverfront Park is being developed with funding from the Army Corps of Engineers, the Cincinnati Park Board, and the State of Ohio. The new park is the latest manifestation of a century-long commitment by the Cincinnati community to develop and maintain one of the nation's most impressive urban park networks.

The Cincinnati Park system has been rated as one of the top urban park systems in the country, and in 2010 our parks were rated as the best kept entertainment secret in the region. The management and overall beauty of our parks has allowed us to leverage over 90,000 volunteer hours, which equates to 2.4 million dollars in return to the greater Cincinnati area. So from enhancing the city's property value, and from the economic impact our park system is making, it would be well worth your time to see how our parks are so thoroughly integrated within the overall community,

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

I, along with the Amigos de los Rios, Los Angeles County Supervisor Gloria Molina, and San Gabriel Rivers and Mountains Conservancy would like to introduce you the "Emerald Necklace" and to the area currently being considered as the San Gabriel Watershed National recreation Area under the National Park Service's San Gabriel Watershed and Mountain Resource Study.

The Emerald Necklace is a 68 mile green infrastructure connecting the San Gabriel Mountains to the Pacific Ocean, serving 4 million people. The project is a direct response to public health challenges, and opportunities to restore acres of blighted urban land. With these spaces, we will be able to restore and create habitat opportunities for outdoor education, an active transportation corridor, protect water and air resources, increase access to recreation for residents suffering from chronic health issues, and curtain urban heat island phenomenon.

We have developed a regional scale model for an Urban Park Trail and Green Infrastructure Network, and would appreciate the opportunity to share this with you. The work we are doing is a representative of the challenges and opportunities people face in metropolitan areas across the country. We would like to share our best practices and aspirations with you to create a world class urban park network, despite challenges of pollution, high costs and lack of available land, and fiscal realities we face today.

Thank you for taking the time to meet with the Outdoor Alliance last week to discuss the America's Great Outdoors (AGO) initiative. As you know, Outdoor Alliance is a coalition of six national, member-based human powered outdoor recreation organizations and includes, Access Fund, American Canoe Association, American Hiking Society American Whitewater, International Mountain Bicycling Association, and Winter Wildlands Alliance. We are, in other words, the nation's climbers, paddlers, hikers, mountain bikers and backcountry skiers.

Outdoor Alliance was honored to attend the White House's AGO conference on April 16th and as discussed, we have great enthusiasm to assist the Obama Administration in its effort to conduct a series of listening sessions this summer that will inform a new conservation and stewardship paradigm for the nation.

We are delighted that there is an express role for outdoor recreation in the AGO initiative, and stand ready to contribute to this historic endeavor. With respect to the listening sessions, consider our community a resource not only in terms of promoting the sessions, but also in terms of contributing to the sessions by identifying local individuals that can personally attest to how conservation and stewardship goals can be pursued through sustainable recreation.

Over the last century, society has transformed in many ways. Our ever-changing culture has even affected the environmental opportunities made available for children. As evident in the article "Going Truant: The Initiation of Young Naturalists " and "The New Relationship Between Children and Nature", the authors Gary Paul Nabhan, Stephan Trimble (1994) and Richard Louv (2005) discuss environmental opportunities and how they have shifted over the last century. The authors emphasize the positive influence of environmental opportunities and how they impact society.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

In the article titled "The New Relationship Between Children and Nature" Richard Louv (2005) describes "nature deficit disorder" as a problem that involves children who have little to no desire to play in nature. Louv (2005) believes that this can be detrimental to the development of a youth's childhood. The author states that being outdoors can stimulate children's curiosity and imagination; essentially nature can calm, focus and excite their emotions (Louv,2005). Within both of the articles Nabhan, Trimble (1994) and Louv (2005) agree that being outdoors is beneficial. In many ways, solitude in nature "enhances children's creative play and encourages the presence of adult supervision" (Louv, 2005).

In agreement with Louv, the authors Nabhan and Trimble (1994) are convinced that children who are involved with nature eventually make it a part of their lifestyles. For example, Nabhan and Trimble (1994) discussed a coming of age ritual rite of a tribe near Abidjan, where young adolescents are required to live in nature under the supervision of an elder for several months before they may return to their village. It is proposed that children who are involved with nature can "instill instincial confidence" (Louv, 2005). It is therefore beneficial for children to be outdoors.

In response, K-12 students who are associated with the Bosque Ecosystem Monitoring Program (BEMP) develop a meaningful relationship with the Bosque. The incorporation of BEMP inspires children to play with nature while learning about the landscape that nurtures them. Environmental opportunities like these help students learn from being in the field instead of learning from the comfort of a classroom. The children are encouraged to "explore the Bosque and make personal discoveries" (Madden,2003). Daniel Shaw (2003) the author of "Flying Doughnuts and Hoped-for Eagles" has partnered with BEMP to give his students the opportunity to not only monitor the sites, but also build "visceral connections with the place that sustains them".

Recognizing that with privilege comes responsibility, the mission of The Sportfishing Conservancy is to inspire and empower sportsmen to fulfill and celebrate their commitment to their sport and real world conservation. As recreational fishermen we recognize the need to conserve and take care of the outdoors because we are active in it and want to pass this opportunity on to future generations.

One easy answer to the question how the federal government can help conservation, recreation or reconnecting people to the outdoors is to go back to your own agencies and make public recreational access a part of their mission.

Access is not the answer to every question. Access must be balanced with other needs. Some places should remain wild. Resource managers have found that allowing public access gives them "eyes" on the ground to better protect what needs protecting.

On behalf of the oldest sportsmen's and conservation organization in the country, I write to express the Boone and Crockett Club's support for your effort to establish an eco-system method of approaching conservation in America's Great Outdoors. In particular, we would like for this program to focus on the Prairie Pothole Region of the Great Plans (PPR).

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Established in 1887 by Theodore Roosevelt, the Boone and Crockett Club's commitment to conservation has always been thoughtful and measured. It is a commitment that balances human needs with wildlife needs; a commitment that sees deep value in preserving the hunting tradition, as well as in conserving wildlands and wildlife, but that is also shaped by a common-sense, business-like approach to managing natural resources. The National Forests, the National Parks, and the National Wildlife Refuge Systems exist today in large part because of the extensive efforts of the Club and its dedicated membership.

The prairie pothole region is the most important waterfowl producing region on the continent, generating more than half of North America's ducks. Of the 800 migratory bird species in North America, more than 300 rely on this region - 177 species for breeding and nesting habitat and another 130 for feeding and resting during spring and fall migrations.

In addition, this region is extremely important for ranching, and Theodore Roosevelt ranched in the area in the late 1800's. The PPR is one of the areas that Theodore Roosevelt wished to conserve back at the turn of the century, eventually leading to the creation of the Theodore Roosevelt National Park in 1978 in western North Dakota. Historically, bison once roamed the grasslands of North America in massive herds, and while their numbers have decreased, the tradition of raising these animals continues to this day. These traditions have been conserved over the years, and we strongly support your effort to conserve this land for future generations.

Given the Boone and Crockett Club's long history of land conservation, we believe the future for wildlife and natural resource conservation rests with private citizens who own and work the land. The threats to wildlife habitats we see today: increased human population, diversion of large ranches into "ranchettes" with no conservation considerations, intense demands on resources, the growing recreational demands of a society craving the "outdoor experience", and government policies that at times appear to be in conflict, will cause our conservation system to break down unless action is taken.

The Boone and Crockett Club strongly supports the Obama Administration and the Department of the Interior in the effort to promote conservation on a landscape scale through America's Great Outdoors. Setting aside lands for conservation, a cutting edge practice in the 1800's, served a critical role in securing a future for wildlife in this country. Continuing this practice in the Prairie Pothole region of the Great Plains will create a legacy of conservation for this Administration that cannot be ignored.

I suggest you proclaim a "Free Family Day at America's National Parks and monuments to encourage families to connect with the outdoors

Encourage with money, tax credits, etc land trust conservation easement for private landowners. Consider partnering with state and local entities.

Pass Legislation, such as the Utah Red Rocks Wilderness Act, to preserve valuable open space on public lands

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

The goal to reconnect Americans -- especially youth -- with the outdoors can best be done by providing more places for them to enjoy their favorite form of recreation followed by Mountain Biking, yet the Initiative seeks to create Wilderness and Monument areas closing another 13,000,000 acres to people who enjoy those most popular forms of recreation

Wilderness and Monument designations are the most restrictive forms of land designation and reduce access. We need to revert some of these lands back to Multiple-Use in order to promote access for urban youth and all Americans. The President needs to include the two largest forms of recreation as a priority in his plan to reconnect Americans with the Outdoors: Off Highway Vehicle recreation and Mountain Biking. More areas need to be opened to people who enjoy these most popular ways to enjoy the outdoors. The Back Country Designation championed by the Blue Ribbon Coalition is vastly superior to Wilderness Designation because it provides the same environmental protection without locking up the land from public access. please take the time to learn more about this alternative a land protection plan:

<http://www.sharetrails.org/backcountry>

The coalition sponsors of the San Gabriel Mountains and Watershed Community Forum on America's Great Outdoors (AGO) wish to extend their deep appreciation for your visit to our region on July 7, 2010 at Whittier Narrows. As the first "home grown" event of this type regarding the President's AGO Initiative we take great pride in the fact that 400+ attendees from our local communities were able to voice their ideas about how federal agencies can assist with improving access to the San Gabriel Mountains, parks, rivers, natural areas and recreational resources in our region and providing better stewardship of our natural resources.

Further, we would like to acknowledge The America's Great Outdoors Campaign staff and the critical financial support provided for this effort through The Partnership Project. This financial assistance facilitated the participation of local community members in addition to providing essential logistical support. Many of the participating community members were Spanish speaking only and these funds will allow us to continue the dialogue and civic engagement on the AGO Initiative with this underrepresented constituency.

Over the coming weeks the coalition team will provide a detailed report incorporating the comments made by the attendees along with recommendations that will address the critical questions raised by our President as to what can be done by federal agencies along with local partners to protect our water, wild lands, trails, green spaces, wildlife, working farms, ranches and forest lands. This coalition group is excited to continue working on these issues with you, our federal partners and the Obama administration. Our overall goal is to insure that a holistic, forward looking, 21st Century conservation and recreation agenda will include elements which we believe are critical to the citizens of this region such as parity in access to National Parks, local stewardship programs, wilderness, and wild and scenic rivers protections.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

We are delighted to hear of your America's Great Outdoors/Treasured Landscapes Initiative and that you are holding a number of listening sessions around the country after your formal launch in Washington, D.C. on April 16th. This will be a great opportunity for the Department of Interior and the other engaged agencies to hear from the public about the on-the-ground needs and opportunities to protect and manage our natural resources across a broader landscape for all Americans. And the importance of these lands provide for recreation and the need to connect, and reconnect, our citizens, and communities with our outdoor heritage

There are a number of local initiatives working to keep these private forestlands intact, and continue as working forests providing important ecosystem services rather than be lost permanently to development. And, Washington State and local county and city governments are making major commitments to protect and restore Puget Sound - creating a working plan and strategy under the direction of the Puget Sound Partnership. However, all these efforts from further protection of the upper watersheds, to the better coordination and funding of management plans in the lower watersheds, forests, and Puget Sound would benefit from a higher level of integration and attention. We believe the mountains, watersheds, forests, and Puget Sound provide an ideal place for realizing the full potential of the America's Great Outdoors Initiative.

Developing partnerships to preserve and protect Tennessee's incredible natural beauty and ecological resources for current and future generation has been an important priority of my Administration. Department of Environment and Conservation Commissioner in Fyke and I served as part of the Outdoor resources Review Group, and I applaud the America's Great Outdoors Initiative as a mechanism to seek public and stakeholder input with which to form a national strategic conservation agenda. Tennessee would be a proud session host.

The Freedom Center's importance to our country's history and heritage cannot be understated. Its exhibitions and programs define, in dramatic fashion, America's struggle to achieve freedom, and how that struggle continues today around the world. This theme is brought to life in the dramatic story of the escape of untold numbers of slaves in ante-bellum America on a secret network of safe houses and routes that came to be called the Underground Railroad. With the Ohio River just outside the Freedom Center's main entrance, visitors to the museum -well over 1,000,000 since its opening -are able to see this history where it happened. Many escaping slaves passed through Cincinnati on their way to freedom; many were secretly hidden in cellars and attics of sympathetic citizens. Harriet Beecher Stowe spent some of her childhood in Cincinnati. Her history-changing book, Uncle Tom's Cabin, takes place in an around this region.

Today, the Freedom Center sits at the very heart of an enormous riverfront development project, called the Banks, which includes a new, 45-acre urban park that will open in 2011. The Riverfront Park is being developed with funding from the Army Corps of Engineers, the Cincinnati Park Board, and the State of Ohio. The new park is the latest manifestation of a century-long commitment by the Cincinnati to develop and maintain one of the nation's most impressive urban park networks. It would well be worth your time to see how our parks are so thoroughly integrated with the overall community.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

I would like to thank you for your support of Mrs. Obama's campaign to lure America's children away from their computers and to get them outside ... and moving

I also want to thank you for your excellent presentation in Annapolis on America's Great Outdoors. Clearly, when headed outdoors, we all appreciate an awesome destination. Best are our local, natural, less manicured parklands -- trails for walking, rivers for kayaking, bays for sailing. Please help us preserve them as our legacy for future generations. Don't let fast-talking developers bulldoze these prime locations as they are attempting to do in my district.

Recipe for Preserving Children: 1 large green field, 1/2 dozen children, 2 or 3 small dogs, 1 pinch of brook and some pebbles. Mix the children and dogs well together. Put them in the field, stirring constantly. Pour brook over the pebbles and sprinkle the field with flowers. Bake in hot sunshine and when browned remove to hot bathtub.

Please accept this letter as a symbol of our support for the challenge put forth at the recent America's Great Outdoors Initiative Great Rivers Listening Session conducted on August 20, 2010 in Alton, Illinois. While we fully support the efforts of the National Park Service and it's the City The Arch + The River 2010 International Design Competition, the challenge to undertake an additional, parallel effort focused on the Confluence reach of the Mississippi River is one that has the support of communities and leaders throughout the region.

USACE Master Plans and USFWS Comprehensive Conservation Plans are practical operational example of Adaptive Management, and they can be integrated with efforts on private lands that the U.S. Department of Agriculture (through the U.S. Forest Service and Natural Resource Conservation Service) administers in order to provide the seamless integrated landscape outcomes.

Water Quality is key. All agencies should be more aggressive when dealing with Water Quality. USACE personnel monitor water quality of Corps' [rejects and works. Those same personnel need to collaborate with operational staff to look for creative ways to steward and address water quality needs. there exists a need to move past compliance and look for ways to add value. conservation easements on adjoining off project land pursued to protect project water quality could serve an incentives for local landowners to be proactive on water quality. Thoughtful consideration should be given to re-authorization of the Corps' single purpose Nine Foot Navigation Project to add Water Quality as a congressionally authorized project purpose.

All land management agencies should search for ways to assist waterside communities in their destination marketing efforts. The Mississippi River is an international travel destination, but gateway communities along the river need assistance and support in promoting the Mississippi River Band and presenting that experience to international and domestic leisure travelers.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

The Department of Interior through the National Park Service needs to lead an effort to launch a regional "Take Pride in America" campaign focused on "America's River: The Mississippi." This effort could galvanize and reflect a U.S. assertion that we are dedicated to celebrating and protecting our most iconic natural resources and that the Mississippi is prepared to receive international visitors. International visits to the Midwest are not only good for the regional economy but it also exposes U.S. values to the rest of the world. In this regard, tourism serves as a great form of diplomacy.

River themed attractions, like museums, visitor centers, refuges, and preserves, which are federally managed can become outreach hubs where watershed and water awareness can be addressed through public education. Federal visitor centers and public access points along the river can function as learning responsibility for protecting our nation's water resources and our common water future. Interpretive messaging and presentations should promote water resource awareness. Currently, water availability and quality is a compelling regional issue; therefore bringing more informed Americans into the water conservation is timely. Public lands can create an important context for learning experiences. we have 500,000 K-12 students in the greater St. Louis area, and much of this student population is located within 30 minutes of the river. Our public lands along the river can provide an important classroom and public venue for improving water resource literacy.

Water-based recreation service levels should be sustained, and in many places improved, but with a smaller more sustainable footprint. A heavy investment in intensive infrastructure is not sustainable. Innovations like the Corps led Mississippi River Water Trail, the Great Rivers Greenway Trails, and trails developed by the Metro East park and Recreation District are models of low impact, small footprint infrastructure that leverage federal and regional investment and capable of driving a significant return and high levels of customer satisfaction. Innovative practices like this that stretch tax dollars while building service levels should be incentivized.

Recreational uses that are sought out by leisure travelers need to be supportable with minimal footprint of flood-proof infrastructure and complimented with improved access. Trails, overlooks, and interpretive kiosks can make an important contribution to reconnection Americans with our natural heritage, while promoting an active, well-informed America. When properly marked and marketed, these areas provide the perfect natural venues for heart-healthy experiential activities such as hiking, biking, paddling, and bird watching.

Too much emphasis in restoration is being placed on individual project design and delivery, while too little overarching consideration is given to creating a platform for long-term system stewardship. Too much rehabilitation and restoration is driven by compliance and is therefore reactive. We need to move toward best management practices in flood protection and navigation that reduce compliance costs and allow us to drive-up investment in proactive stewardships that is informed by science, performance measurement, and based on principles of adaptive management (National Research Council, "Adaptive Management for Water Resource Planning: 2004. 1

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Throughout consideration should be given to building on past experiences with resource leveraging and capacity building via partnering and collaboration. Partnering mechanisms employed by Federal resource management agencies should be streamlined and incentivized.

Scope: Upper Mississippi River Headwaters Reach, Upper Mississippi Confluence Reach, Lower Mississippi River Reach, Mississippi Delta coastal Reach

Public Lands Stewardship

Water quality-civic leadership initiative

Public Access, wayfinding, interpretation, and public safety

Experiential and Outreach Program Development

Public-Private lands conservation integration

Nature-based tourism community assistance

Destination marketing community assistance

Youth Service Opportunities

Livable communities/community college support

Green obs

Civic Engagement Platform for Raising Resource Awareness

The great Rivers Stewardship Community of Practice is built upon a proactive integrate approach that aligns institutions and communities around sustaining the natural capital of the river and its floodplain in order to enrich rural and urban landscapes, achieve more livable communities, and emphasize the river as a destination for natural and cultural tourism

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Informed by science and civic engagement, and practical knowledge of seasoned practitioners, the Stewardship community of practice will endeavor to put forth a leveraged and integrated adaptive management approach to celebrating and sustaining our connection to and appreciation of America's River, the Mississippi.

This effort will build a greater awareness of the significance of the Mississippi River, and its incredible natural resources, encourage civic responsibility toward system resilience and optimize the use and enjoyment of this internationally iconic

Many riverside communities are making a significant investment of local resources to reconnect to the river. At the same time, more people are recognizing the importance of sustaining the river's natural capital for present and future generations. Thoughtful leadership by Federal sector land management agencies is seen as crucial to ensure that local, NGO, state, and federal investments in the restoration of the river are protected through long-term interjurisdictional.

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service actively manage a core footprint in the river's floodplain exceeding 300,000 acres. This already integrated land management effort involving both Agencies could provide the administrative starting point for incorporating private lands programs administered by the River Forest Partnership and the NRCS Healthy Watershed Initiative. In fact, there is already a coordinate systemic forest management plan being worked out.

Similarly, the Department of Interior's Landscape Conservation Cooperatives hold great potential for complimenting existing local and regional collaborative efforts towards establishing a regionally networked resource stewardship system. Other Federal programs and tools like the farm bill program, the Corps' Navigation and Environmental Sustainability Program (NESP), as well as the Great Rivers cooperative Ecosystem studies Unit (CESU) are tools that could build capacity to better inform, monitor, and measure outputs to ensure their predicted contributions toward achieving desired outcomes.

The initial effort will focus on the Confluence Reach of the Mississippi River. An informal, community-based scoping team, consisting of experienced practitioners from the following organizations, will convene on a recurring basis for the purpose of providing ongoing assistance and support to the efforts of interior secretary Ken Salazar, assistant secretary of the army for civil works O-Allen Darcy, Secretary of Agriculture Tom Vilsack, Secretary of Transportation Ray LaHood, Secretary of Commerce Gary Locke, and White House Council on Environmental Quality Chair Nancy Sutley.

Scenic Hudson is very excited about the initiative and grateful that the administration and the Department of the Interior are moving forward with this. We appreciate how much you and your staff at the Department of the Interior and the other agencies still have to do to plan, the listening tours and then design and implement new strategies that result.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Within a few decades, 85% of America will be living in urban areas. To engage America's next generation, and through education and empowerment build a lifelong connection to our great landscape and recreational opportunities, there is no more cost effective place to start than in the nation's cities. In turn, by building such bonds between communities and their parks and places, we will build support for the agencies and initiatives that protect them. This session would focus on place-based education programs, engaging new audiences, and the collaborative partnerships necessary to accomplish these goals, all through the lens of urban parks and natural areas.

Gateway National Recreation Area, the nation's first urban national park, offers an opportunity for the National Park Service to deliver a National Park experience to millions of New York and New Jersey residents who might not otherwise be afforded an opportunity. As part of the new General Management Plan now being prepared, Senator Schumer and Congressman Weiner have convened a Task Force of a number of City, State, and Federal agencies that have a stake in the future of the Park. This effort builds on work by NPCA, Van Alen Institute, Columbia University, and the Regional Plan Association in defining a new role for what should be an iconic urban national park. Senator Schumer has said "National Parks are America's most precious treasures and Gateway National Recreation Area is New York City's crown jewel," and "Gateway holds attractions that promise to spark adventure and stir the imagination."

A great partnership between federal, state and local authorities presents a new model of collaboration. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, National Park Service, EPA's Harbor Estuary Program, NY/NJ Port Authority, and hundreds of local groups and agencies are dramatically expanding their efforts to restore hundreds of sites in the NY/NJ Harbor under the guidance of a Comprehensive Restoration Plan (the CRP) to restore tidal wetlands, oyster reefs, eelgrass beds, colonial bird breeding sites, maritime forests, and other ecotypes to the area, as well as increase public access. At the same time, New York City is investing tens of millions of dollars in a series of investments to improve public access, improve water quality and address flooding issues throughout the Harbor as part of the Mayor's Plan NYC 2030 sustainability efforts. The National Parks of New York Harbor is knitting together its offerings, from Federal Hall to the Statue of Liberty and Governors Island, into new visitor experiences. It offers a terrific lesson on how government can work together to address a common agenda, restoring environmental quality and creating jobs and lasting economic value in our cities.

June 2010 will be the most exciting and important Great Outdoors Months yet, in large measure because of the President's America's Great Outdoors Initiative and his commitment to both protection of our outdoors legacy and strengthened connections between all Americans and the Great Outdoors. Last year, you played a key role in Great Outdoors Month and we invite you to play a still more important role in the month's many activities.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

On Monday, June 7, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and many partners, including ARC, will join in a celebration of National Fishing and Boating Week in Washington: the NFBW Youth Fishing Event at Constitution Gardens, just one block from the U.S. Department of the Interior. Hundreds of DC area youth, including a substantial number of physically challenged youth, will have instruction on casting and fishing and then have a chance to fish for free. You participated in this event last year, and then used the event to launch the Youth in Natural Resources effort. This year, we invite you to use this event to showcase for the media the impressive array of proclamations from across the nation celebrating the importance of the Great Outdoors in America - including the anticipated 2010 proclamation by President Obama. Last year, 46 governors took action on the month, and we believe the total this year will be still higher. This event can be used to link the Great Outdoors to health, to conservation and to personal actions to protect our environment and more.

Later that same day, several hundred recreation and conservation community leaders will depart Washington for the National Wildlife Visitor Center at Patuxent Research Refuge - an area set aside by President Franklin D. Roosevelt in 1936 - for the opening reception of Great Outdoors Week and for the presentation of the Beacon Awards: awards presented to federal agencies and employees for initiatives that utilize new technologies to enhance visitor experiences on public lands and/or to better manage recreational use of public lands. We invite you to help us recognize these exceptional achievements while also showcasing this wonderful facility - and, of course, kicking off our celebration of Great Outdoors Week.

On Tuesday, we invite you to meet with a remarkable group of physicians and allies who are working on use of the Great Outdoors to improve the health of Americans. More than two dozen leading physicians have joined together to form Physicians for Healthier Americans Through Fun Outdoors (PHATFOs) - and they hope to enlist your personal support in a multi-faceted campaign to prescribe parks for illnesses ranging from stress to obesity, hypertension to diabetes. Important pilots are underway, with support from major healthcare organizations and the federal Office of Personnel Management. The new healthcare reform legislation enacted earlier this year places more emphasis on prevention and promotion of healthy lifestyles, and a remarkable group led by Dr. Michael Suk, Dr. Daphne Miller, Dr. Stephen Lockhart and others will explain their ideas for incentives ranging from "frequent walker miles" to availability of the America the Beautiful Pass as a health benefit - and a source of new financial support for park and public lands operational programs. The doctors also plan to meet with Secretaries Sebelius and Vilsack and OPM Director John Berry. Among the ideas the group would share with you is an America's Great Outdoors Initiative Town Hall, organized by PHATFOs and allied groups ranging from ARC to the National Wildlife Federation to the Boy Scouts of America.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

On Thursday, we invite you to join Secretary Vilsack at the Department of Agriculture beginning at 1:00 PM to present Legends awards to remarkable individuals within several of your bureaus (National Park Service, Fish and Wildlife Service and Bureau of Land Management) for lifetime contributions to connecting Americans to the Great Outdoors, and then to lead a Healthy Measures/Let's Move Walk on the Mall from 2:15 PM to 3:00 PM. The walk will feature briefings on ARRA investments on the Mall and planned further investments to ready the area for the 2016 100th anniversary of the National Park Service as well as a stop at the Office of Personnel Management and a briefing on its new OPM/GSA/Interior Campus Wellness Initiative, designed to assist employees of these agencies to choose healthier lifestyles, and especially lifestyles with more physical activity. We plan to arrange participation in this walk by 25-50 urban youth, a group very likely to demonstrate the importance of the efforts of the White House Task Force on Childhood Obesity and the report it issued yesterday. And the walk will end with an event you helped highlight last year: the Great Outdoors Week Ice Cream Social with a focus on National Get Outdoors Day, June 12. Co hosted by ARC and Unilever, the event will feature both traditional ice cream favorites like Good Humor bars, Ben and Jerry treats and more, as well as delicious and healthier treats now replacing ice cream in the nation's schools. Again this year, novelties will be handed out from two coolers by VIPs, including agency leaders and recreation industry executives. You will recall that the 2009 event on the rooftop of Interior drew some 500 people, and you were the chief VIP "scooper."

We applaud your leadership together with that of CEQ Chair Sutley, Agriculture Secretary Vilsack, and EPA Administrator Jackson in bringing about the White House Conference. It was one option we recommend in our report to build momentum for land and water conservation, and we were pleased to attend and imprint on the initiative and his Administration squarely behind landscape-scale conservation. Our report, too, put a priority on landscape level conservation to keep viable ecosystems intact, productive and functioning, to protect and manage resource lands and waters for these ends, and to expand opportunities for outdoor recreation and its many associated benefits in obs, health, education and more.

Pursue greater funding and more effective spending of available dollars.

Create a new structure within Interior to revitalize the Land and Water conservation fund and to take the lead role in the Department in implementing America's Great Outdoors and propose and advocate an inter-departmental council for America's Great Outdoors;

Greater funding and more effective spending of available dollars are both needed to advance landscape-scale conservation

There is no escaping the hard fact that more money is needed. ORRG recommended full funding for the Land and Water conservation Fund (LWCF) at its authorized level of \$900 million annually, rising to \$3.2 billion a year to reflect inflation and population growth since the original authorization. Essential to any funding allocation is an equitable share for the states. We appreciate that the Administration's budget request has made a good start.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Yet as the President said in his remarks at the White House conference, invoking the vision and leadership of Teddy Roosevelt and other Presidents, even in difficult times, we cannot neglect conservation. In a time of great difficulty, when we are recovering from the worst recession in generations, and waging two wars abroad, some may ask whether now is the time to reaffirm our commitment to our national heritage.... Even in times of crisis, we're called to take the long view to preserve our national heritage -- because in doing so we fulfill one of the responsibilities that falls to all of us as Americans...

Improve administration and coordination of land and water conservation programs

Earlier, we provided you a memorandum outlining your authority as Secretary to coordinate outdoor recreation and resource conservation programs within the Department. You could create now within Interior a new structure or organization that both pulls together functions and programs once under the auspices of the Old Bureau of Outdoor Recreation and also looks ahead to take the lead for Interior in planning for and implementing America's Great Outdoors

The consolidation of authorities and budgets for greater coordination and effectiveness was a valid vision 40 years ago that led to creation of BOR> The need now is even more compelling to promote the cause of land and water conservation and outdoor recreation. Of particular importance, is the LWCF, federal and stateside, including the State comprehensive Outdoor Recreation plans (SCORPs). ORRG concluded that stateside LWCF is not a priority for the National Park Service (NPS) and is unlikely to become one. We offered a strong recommendation that it needed attention and new resources. Other programs could be added later.

Task the new organization with looking across the Department to answer the President's call for nonfederal conservation models. We can think of no better network of people, organizations, and efforts nationwide than what you can tap through the NPS, the Bureau of Land Management, The Fish and Wildlife Service, and others and through their partner organizations, state liaisons, and like. This network can be scoured to identify examples to showcase during the listening session.

The new office can be tasked, too, with identifying and analyzing the programs of Interior's various bureaus for their suitability and potential for furthering America's Great Outdoors, especially ones that already operate with landscape-scale and corridor conservation as objectives, such as the National Heritage and National Trails programs.

Exploring what authority interior may have to mandate that a portion of stateside funds be passed through to communities pursuant to state comprehensive outdoor recreation plans that recognize urban needs. Your policy and legal teams could help ensure that full advantage is taken of any flexibility in Lwoff's enabling statute.

Considering larger incentives and tax credits for qualified gifts to secure significant in-holdings for national parks and other public land resource systems.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Creating a new entity would be no easy take. It would require dedicated funding, amalgamating existing authorities, realigning jurisdictional issues, surrendering appropriations levers, and more -- all likely to be a heavy lift at this point. As a first step, you could commission a study to develop a proposal through consultations with affected interest, especially Members of Congress, so when the time is right, it could receive serious consideration.

By creating a new structure within interior, you not only could revitalize the LWCF, but also integrate the Department capabilities to further landscape-scale conservation, providing leadership, input, and even staff to America's Great Outdoors.

To assure coordination and collaboration in implementing America's Great Outdoors, we urge you to propose an inter-departmental council or board. Our report, Great Outdoors America, recommends considering an interagency coordinating mechanism, a federal council to coordinating existing land and water conservation programs. the White House Conference underscored this key them: given the substantial role of several agencies in America's Great outdoors -- especially CEQ, EPA, USDA, DOT, DOD, NOAA, and others -- such a function is Presidential support, able leadership, a collaborative mission and working style and adequate staff and funding. The opportunity exists during the planning and consultation phase for America's Great outdoor to explore the functions of a new-inter departmental mechanism, which could be created by executive order or statute. Such a council functioned well in the Kennedy/Johnson Administrations.

Accelerate the application of geo-spatial technology as a requisite for improved planning and more effective spending. For landscape scale conservation to succeed, a much improved resource inventory and planning process is needed. New sophisticated tools offer new capabilities, namely state of the art geo-spatial technologies that can create integrate and update inventories, and maps of protected lands and waters, vulnerable resources, and related information. This tool should be craft their resource, open space, and recreation plans and make investments consistent with national and state priorities.

One incentive for states and communities to compete for designing special landscapes under America's Great Outdoors might be the promise of planning funds from the stateside share of LWCF. States have a substantial responsibility for land use and development decisions, transportation planning, economic development strategies, infrastructure financing, all of which can have a great impact on resource lands and waters. ORRG viewed greater stateside funding variation is seen among the states, with some taking the responsibility seriously while others see little value in updating plans since minimal funding has been available. It is our understanding that the state side provisions of the LWCF allow for state planning grants after allocating some portion of available funding to the states by formula. planning grants would drive state and regional planning efforts for designated landscapes with some portion of the funding shared with participating communities.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Maryland's GreenPrint initiative, under governor O'Malley's leadership, and national Geographic's FieldScope provide instructive examples of how states might integrate all the pieces relevant to conservation planning, education, and civic engagement through coordinated geo-spatial

The success and enduring power of America's Great Outdoors depends in large measure on building a constituency across the country and in Congress. The size and geographic diversity of the audience for the April 16th even suggests there is receptivity. The nation's governors, country executives, mayors, and tribal leaders -- alongside conservation groups, land trusts, at the outdoor recreation industry, and others -- would seem to offer the makings of a strong nationwide constituency if they can come together around the initiative's goals and strategies. The listening sessions called for by the President should test the thesis, help build support, and identify prospective landscapes to recognize in the initiative.

America's Great Outdoors holds potential to change the way stakeholders interact to build cooperation, collaboration, and trust. We believe it will lead to a more effective stateside collaborative program under LWCF. We believe it can change the way we think about conservation. No longer would it be about setting aside land or putting a fence around resources part and parcel to integrated, functioning eco-systems that interweave public and private holdings. This would constitute a lasting contribution to conservation and a legacy in which the President and his administrations could take great pride

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the America's Great Outdoor Initiative (AGO) if vegald of Resources First Foundation (RFF). Upon launching this important initiative, President Barack Obama made clear his Administration's commitment to developing strategies to better protect our nation's natural and historic treasures for generations to come. RFF is stepping forward to answer the President's call to action by assisting the Admnistration to identifying the "best ideas on conservation how we can pursue innovative ideas that local communitites embrace; and how we can be more responsible stewards of tax dollars to promote conservation."

REF welcomes this opportunity to submit comments to help achieve your objectives and believes the AGO is ideal forum for exploring innovative new approaches to enhaving wildlife habitat, outdoor recreation and the enviornmental health of our nation through expanded access to conservation information, contacts, and programs for private landowners. RFF has built the largest, online conservation database specifically addressing the needs of the private landowners and the symbolic businesses dependent on this market. Private lands represent the next generation of conservation with over 70% of the continental U.S. in private ownership. RFF's websites represent the ideal platform for promoting ecosysem service to privat landowners as well as new market oppourtunities for carbon sequestrian and greenhouse gas reduction.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

We have had some trouble here in Utah seeing the value of protection. In the past, there was fierce local opposition to establishing Canyonlands, Capitol Reef, Dinosaur and even the reservation of National Forests here in Utah, but few would still argue that protecting these national treasures was a bad idea. We still have landscapes here worthy of that kind of protection - The San Rafael Swell, Cedar Mesa and its irreplaceable cultural resources – one of the seven wonders of the ancient world – national treasures like these need national guidance to make sure they are preserved for generations to come. We at the Trust advocate for more and better cooperation on public lands issues on the Colorado Plateau, better incentives for locals to participate to find constructive solutions together. It is important to bring all stakeholders to the table, tribal leaders, hunters, anglers, conservationists, hikers, landowners, land managers, wildlife managers, environmentalists, land users, faith leaders and local and national officials all need to be present to make meaningful change happen, and to make it stick on-the-ground on a day-to-day basis. We need the power of your Administration to help collaboration along.

We have a once in a lifetime opportunity in San Juan County in the southeast part of the state, and we have a chance to do it right. We need to expand Canyonlands National Park and Hovenweep National Monument so that their conservation vision can be realized. We need to protect BLM and Forest Service Wilderness on Cedar Mesa, on Elk Ridge, near Natural Bridges and in the Glen Canyon region; we need to protect the wild and scenic Colorado and San Juan rivers. Cultural resources deserve protection too. Southeastern Utah is unique in that a longer slice of human history is better preserved there than anywhere else in the world. We need to make sure that these internationally significant cultural resources are not lost forever due to either malice or neglect.

We have made great progress and have had success here too; we have been part of a landscape approach to conservation that Secretaries Salazar and Vilsack envision.

Things here are coming together on multiple fronts that work as a part of a landscape approach. The Trust has been part of getting the tailings pile in Moab moved from the banks of the Colorado; part of the Utah Recreational Land Exchange Act of 2009, consolidating SITLA (state land) holdings while preserving recreational lands along the Colorado River. The Trust was involved in the expansion of Arches and few years ago, and we continue to work for new BLM and Forest Service wilderness on the Colorado Plateau. We support the work of our conservation partner, the Southern Utah Wilderness Alliance, in brokering a deal with the Bill Barret Corporation on the West Tavaputs and in Nine Mile Canyon in Carbon County. We'd like to see more of that kind of effort. announced last Friday to resolve RS2477 roads issues, and we look forward to being more involved.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

One of the most important goals of this Initiative is to reconnect Americans with their public lands. In order to best get communities engaged in public lands issues, we need more places protected. If folks are to reconnect to their lands, they will do so in places that are pristine, places where they can get away from the rigors of modern life and rejuvenate their spirits. We are blessed to have many such places left here in Utah, but they are threatened by non-renewable resource development, by short term greed, and by unmanaged and irresponsible off roading. We have the opportunity to do great things – and when local efforts are driven with national goals and the national interest in mind, we all benefit. We ask today for your leadership, and I thank you for your time.

Given the SCOPE of your outreach, I'm going to limit this to the National Parks even though the GREAT OUTDOORS covers BLM land, farms, ranches, the Gulf, and much much more. I was a conservation chair, and I was always brought back to the same cause and effect. People. Too many people. You can't protect the land when there are too many stresses on the resources. Over use, development, pollution. You NEED to include the Department of Education in this endeavor. Kids are our future. You can reach them through the schools.

I don't see a lot of young people in the parks. I do however, see lots of Europeans. They LOVE our parks which I'm sure you are aware.

1. The monthly potlucks which we move around each month (LA, Orange County, Long Beach) – strong involvement

Outreach to other sections – 100 Peaks, WTC (Wilderness Training course)

1. Outreach with schools

1. Outreach with REI and other outfitters

1. Banquet with a rock climber / Mountaineering presentation (K2, Aconcagua, Eiger)

1. Ability for members to speak with an expert – Q & A

1. Web links to other groups

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

1. Hold an event at all of the National Parks JUST LIKE THIS ONE YOU JUST HAD at this Occidental College event. Which by the way, I think you need a follow up event to give us feedback from our feedback – just my two cents. I’m curious what you have come up with and what you intend to do going forward.

1. Hold an outreach program for a week of fixing up the Lodges at the various parks. I was just at Bryce and that lodge looked like it could use some “barn raising”. You’d be surprised how many people would show up. Many would even be willing to b

1. Have University summits and invite all the various college kids to come and make the event like a TED event. <http://www.ted.com/> In my opinion, the reason many kids and young people are not getting involved with the Great Outdoors is because you need more “techy” and tech savvy involvement at the lodges. Kids love the National Geographic stuff, and you could easily do the same.

a. Kids need more exercise which lowers obesity

a. For kids, the Ranger Programs are old and out of date. They want something new. They want what they get at Disneyland and Sea World. Although they want to touch the animals I strongly am opposed to this, you end up caging the animals in zoos, and that is not a good thing. Instead, offer video showing where the animals live and why we should protect them. Many will never (and this is a good thing) hike the wilderness and experience firsthand, to see or touch these animal’s habitats. Too many people in the wilderness is not a good thing for the plants or the animals. But with the video, it would be a way to help get the kids connected.

· Offer balloon rides over the areas. They are quiet and unobtrusive AND eco friendly.

The National Wild Turkey Federation has since our inception been dedicated to the conservation of not only North America’s valuable natural resources but also our hunting traditions. The motto of the NWTF, conserve, hunt, and share reflects our commitment to the conservation of the wildlife populations of North America, preserving our hunting traditions and sharing our enthusiasm of the outdoors with those willing to listen.

Since 1973, the NWTF has helped to restore wild turkey populations throughout the species’ historic range in the United States, Canada, and Mexico. Wild turkey numbers have increased from 1.3 million to 7 million, and the estimated number of wild turkey

The NWTF has been a leader in procuring and allocating resources for the completion of projects on important landscapes. To support its mission, NWTF generates revenue through approximately 3600 banquet auctions and special events conducted annually by 2

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

· The North American Wild Turkey Management Plan (NAWTMP) is designed to identify wild turkey habitat and potential habitat projects throughout North America, by State and on a regional basis. It incorporates information such as; statewide comprehensive wildlife plans, statewide forestry assessments, and the ability to import other information from cooperating agencies to use in identifying focus areas. The NAWTMP may be sorted by state or by bird conservation region to help integrate actions with other organizations. Once state strategies are in place it gives our members who serve on their respective state board of directors goals and tasks that they may put the state Hunting Heritage Super Fund monies toward fulfilling.

The NWTF is a recognized leader and valued partner in efforts to retain working lands and protect open space/green fields. The NWTF is not just about wild turkey habitat, but conserving and maintaining the ecosystems throughout the United States. Sustainable ecosystems lead to stable communities with good jobs and stable outdoor recreation opportunities for current and future residents.

Managing thirteen separate and distinct conservation programs and initiatives providing seed, seedlings, technology transfer and technical assistance to NWTF members and corporate and private landowners involved in habitat enhancement/land management projects;

Engaging in habitat projects on 35 National Forests; Partnership results—over 2,000 restoration projects exceeding \$26 million;

Promoting landscape level conservation projects such as riparian restoration throughout the Great Plains and longleaf pine restoration in the Southeast (over 10,000 acres planted).

The NWTF also works to increase outdoors interest, bringing new hunters into the fold through its education events and outreach programs. Approximately one-half of the membership of NWTF is comprised of women, children and disabled sportsmen. We have unfortunately watched as fewer Americans participate in their hunting heritage. The dwindling ranks of American hunters will have a profound impact on the operating budgets of state wildlife conservation agencies around the country, many of whom are fee funded through license sales and also receive project funding through the Pittman-Robertson Fund. The NWTF has long been an advocate of enhanced opportunity for wildlife dependent recreation and improved access to both public and private lands. Overall hunters contribute 30 billion dollars into the American economy annually. The hunting industry also supports over a million American jobs. Economic projections show that if hunter numbers continue to fall at their current rate by 2025 license dollars for state wildlife agencies may drop by as much as 25 percent. The decline in the number of hunters is also projected to cause a 24 percent decrease in revenues for the hunting industry.

- Inadequate access to land is often cited as a primary reason hunters and anglers stop participating in these traditional sports. Since 1987, the More Places to Hunt Initiative of the NWTF has worked to reverse this trend. To date, the NWTF has spent nearly \$10 million helping to obtain and retain more than 428,000 acres available for hunting and fishing.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

A 2004 report to the House Appropriations Committee concluded that more than 35 million acres of Bureau of Land Management (BLM) and Forest Service (USFS) land have inadequate access. The Federal Lands Hunting and Shooting Sports Roundtable was created to improve partnership efforts between the BLM, USFS, and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and 40 national hunting, fishing and shooting sports organizations to address access to federal lands for hunting and shooting sports activities. Roundtable efforts are coordinated with the Wildlife and Hunting Heritage Conservation Council and the Sport Fishing and Boating Partnership Council. Roundtable projects found that access to federal lands could be improved considerably through an average investment of less than \$10 per acre

The NWTF, in support of its State fish and wildlife agencies and other partners, works to improve access to private lands as well. Private lands are critical to walk-in access hunting programs of many western States. Through such programs, States lease private land from willing owners and open it to public hunting. Implementation of the USDA Voluntary Public Access and Habitat Improvement Program administered by the Farm Service Agency would greatly aid State and tribal government abilities to build upon this success and open additional private land to public access in the future.

Getting more youth involved in outdoor recreation remains a key component of the mission of the NWTF. Through the Families Afield Initiative, the NWTF and its partners are taking action that allows more youth the chance to carry on America's time honored hunting traditions. To date, Families Afield has helped bring legislative change to 30 States resulting in 418,000 new hunters.

§ The NWTF hosts approximately 1500 outreach events each year.

§ Juniors Acquiring Knowledge, Ethics and Sportsmanship (JAKES) - The NWTF program that introduces young people to conservation and the hunting tradition. Kids under 12

- The NWTF program designed to help women over the age of 14 to learn about conservation, hunting and the outdoors through fun activities taught by expert instructors that can be shared with their families, such as archery, outdoor cooking, camping, hunting, hiking, and gardening for wildlife.

- The NWTF program that provides people with disabilities opportunity to hunt, fish, shoot, and participate in other outdoor experiences and enrich their lives in a manner that might otherwise not happen.

Since 1999, the NWTF has distributed 30,000 Wild About Turkey environmental education boxes to classrooms and other community educational settings. In some cases, it is the first positive association young impressionable minds have with hunting and of hunters.

1. Building awareness of the importance of private lands in advancing landscape scale conservation

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

1. Building local constituencies with landowners and supporters

1. Local land trusts have the relationships with property owners of significant private conservation lands

1. The nexus between private land conservation and public lands

1. Leveraging foundation and local grants with state or federal funds

1. Keep programs and goals broad and flexible to meet local and regional priorities

Help your Eastern program officers, attorneys, and reviewers understand Western issues and land owning and management issues

1. Allow land trusts to hold Forest Legacy easements

Kaskaskia Watershed Association is a stakeholder group representing the entirety of the Kaskaskia River Watershed, which comprises a major portion of central and southern Illinois. We represent recreation, conservation, agriculture and business interests; all dedicated to the preservation and improvement of the Kaskaskia River System. Our area of interest contains four major recreational/conservation areas; Carlyle Lake, Lake Shelbyville, Carlyle Wildlife Management Area, and the Lower Kaskaskia Navigation Channel. KWA was cited at the 2004 White House Conservation Congress as a model of how private organizations should partner with government agencies.

KWA has been successful in getting language into WRDA for conservation activities on the Kaskaskia, but after more than three years, the first step in this process a \$400,000 planning study, has not been funded. We feel that the best and quickest way to move the goals of the AGO initiative forward in this part of Illinois is to fund the WRDA study and get the process of preserving the Kaskaskia River System started. KWA continues to offer its volunteer efforts to assist this process in any way possible (including field work, data collection, and report writing), and has obtained the documented support of the Illinois Department of Natural Resources as a cost sharing partner in the WRDA program. Because of its size, containment within a single state, and KWAs good relations with private land owners, the Kaskaskia would make an excellent model for developing solutions for such problems that could be applied nationwide.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

KWA would like to thank you for your interest in our area, and request your support of our goal of preserving and improving the Kaskaskia River System and its recreational areas. Also, we wish to recognize the Army Corps of Engineers, St. Louis District, for their open communication and support of our efforts.

DU is recognized as the world's leading non-profit wetlands and waterfowl conservation organization dedicated to the protection, enhancement and management of wetlands and associated upland habitats necessary to sustain a healthy continental population of waterfowl. What we do for waterfowl also benefits many other fish, wildlife and plant species and people. Wetlands provide numerous ecological services including the purification and recharge of our drinking water, protection of property from storm and flood damage and places for people to go to recreate and enjoy these wonderfully rich and diverse environments.

DU was founded 73 years ago by a handful of conservation-minded businessmen/sportsmen concerned about the decline of duck populations and habitat on the prairies during the dust bowl days of the '30's. Today we have over 2,000 members here in New Hampshire, 15,000 in New England and 1 million supporters nationwide. We appreciate this opportunity to listen in and respond to the future of conservation in America and the need to reconnect people to the outdoors. I'm pleased to say that an overwhelming number of DU supporters are outdoor enthusiasts and participate on a regular basis in activities that bring them close to nature. Whether it be hunting waterfowl over an early morning marsh, hiking a mountain trail or simply enjoying a peaceful moment in a natural setting, they understand and support with their time and money DU's important habitat work and the relationship between conservation and the added value it brings to their lives. It is that kind of connectivity and passion for all things wild that needs to be generated in greater numbers of people, young and old alike, if we hope to kindle the political and financial support it will take to conserve enough of our natural heritage for the use and enjoyment of generations to come. Those who enjoy sport hunting and fishing know this first hand and have always been at the forefront of conservation efforts in this country and thanks to their financial contributions and strong advocacy efforts, we all have more places to visit and enjoy in America's great outdoors. In addition, sport hunting and fishing generate billions of dollars of revenue across the nation and support hundreds of thousands of jobs in related industries. State, federal and private conservation organizations need to do all they can to promote and support hunting and fishing and other outdoor recreation opportunities on lands that they control and manage.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Over our history, DU has raised in excess of \$1 billion dollars and conserved over 12 million acres of wetland and associated habitat in North America. However, this could have never been accomplished without the assistance of numerous state, federal and private partners. Building upon the successful aspects of federal funding programs like the North American Wetland Conservation Act (NAWCA), Partners for Wildlife (PFW), Forest Legacy Program (FLP) the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) and conservation programs of the farm bill like the Wetland Reserve Program (WRP), Conservation Reserve Program (CRP), Wildlife Habitat Incentive Program (WHIP), and the Grassland Reserve Program (GRP), America's Great Outdoors Initiative has the potential to dramatically improve the protection, restoration and enhancement of our nation's natural resources for future generations. These federal programs provide the necessary government incentive to attract private investment and participation that has been key in helping DU and others achieve significant conservation objectives over the past several decades, but much more needs to be done and we encourage this Administration and Congress to continue to support and fully fund these, and other important federal initiatives.

DU's conservation programs are science-based meaning we use the latest scientific information learned from research, coupled with cutting edge technology, such as geographic information systems to map, plan, develop and deliver our habitat work where it will be most effective for the resource. Although our work is accomplished one project at a time, it is done in the broader context of vast landscapes necessary to sustain waterfowl through their annual life cycle of breeding, migration and wintering. For example, the prairie pothole region of the United States and Canada remain our number one priority for conservation in North America. It is where 80% of all waterfowl are produced. Tragically, native grasslands and wetlands – the natural resources that make the Prairie Pothole Region a national treasure – are disappearing at an alarming rate. It is imperative that we conserve enough of this unique grass-wetland landscape to secure a viable future for waterfowl. If we fail here, it is unlikely that we be able to meet the population goals established by the North American Waterfowl Management Plan-an international effort set forth in 1985 between the US, Canada and Mexico, that provides a blueprint for the recovery and long-term sustainability of the continent's waterfowl. Farm Bill programs such as Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) and Sodbuster have thus far played a critical role in preserving millions of acres of prairie grassland that benefit many species of wildlife. We strongly urge that they continue and expand.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Although New Hampshire does not lie within a Priority one region for DU, it is non-the-less important in achieving our overall vision and mission for waterfowl, especially for the American black duck, a species of special concern under the Atlantic Coast Joint Venture(JV) of the NAWMP. The JV is a partnership of federal, regional and state agencies and organizations, including DU, focused on the habitat for native bird species in the Atlantic Flyway of the US from Maine to Puerto Rico. NAWCA was enacted by Congress to provide federal match dollars to accomplish habitat goals established under the NAWMP and implemented through the JV. The current JV approach for black ducks is to protect large blocks of relatively undisturbed breeding habitat in the Northeastern U.S. forests. Breeding black ducks are linked to forests in general and beavers in particular and growth in beaver populations throughout northeastern forests has provided an increase in the quantity and quality of breeding habitat for black ducks. Habitat conservation for black ducks and numerous other species of fish and wildlife in NH is experiencing tremendous success through the assistance of JV partners and NAWCA grant funding. Since 1990, sixteen NAWCA grants totaling \$7.9 million have been approved to protect over 125,700 acres of critical wetlands and associated uplands in NH. These grants have been matched by nearly \$27 million in non-federal funds. Many of these properties are now under the management of state and federal agencies and conservation organizations like the Society for the Protection of NH Forests, The Nature Conservancy and others. In all cases, every effort is made to make these properties available to the public for a variety of recreational and educational uses. The NAWMP, and the JV model for implementation, is recognized as one of the most successful conservation initiatives ever undertaken. The American Great Outdoors Initiative should explore ways to replicate this model when and wherever it is appropriate.

- The Great Bay Resource Protection Partnership: over 8,000 acres protected; rich and diverse habitats; key waterfowl wintering area and migratory bird stopover; state, federal and private partners leveraging a combined total of private public money in excess of \$60 million.
- Connecticut River Watershed Project: Largest ever public/private land conservation project in NH—resulted in the creation of a 25,000 acre Natural Area surrounded by 146,400 acres of working forest protected through conservation easement.
- Quabbin-to-Cardigan Conservation Initiative: Encompassing nearly 2 million acres, this region is one of the largest remaining areas of intact, interconnected ecologically significant forest in central New England. Nearly 7,000 acres were recently protected using LWCF and Forest Legacy Program and partner funds.

Millinocket has a paper mill that is currently on indefinite shutdown and the community has been working hard to develop new economic development opportunities and jobs in the area. Our current growth industry is outdoor tourism, although we also are maintaining a solid forest products industry in our geographic area.

Discussion Question 1

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(cont.)

People come from great distances to snowmobile, white water raft, sky dive, hunt, fish, camp, and hike. They also come to see wildlife and the beautiful scenery. We are currently trying to develop an all-terrain vehicle component through the construction of multi-use trails that will bring a huge increase in outdoor tourism and boost our economy. The success we are having in these areas is due primarily to one major factor: our major private landowners. What works for Maine? Its working forests.

Given these major challenges that face us, taxpayers would be much better served by a program that enhances the various uses of the Maine forests. Recreational activities continue to be a major part of our economic base. Federal monies used to enhance these opportunities through grants for things such as publicly funded multi-use trail development can help Maine, especially when done in working partnership with Maine's private sector. Conservation easements that impose a status quo and stop any consideration of growth take us in exactly the opposite direction of where Maine needs to be. While there may be specific, limited land parcels that are worthy of purchase, landscape scale conservation easements are simply not necessary and are, in fact, a direct threat to our economic well-being and future.

Most importantly, TPL urges the Administration to immediately complete the rulemaking process for the Community Forest and Open Space Conservation Program (CFOSCP) which was authorized in the 2008 Farm Bill but has been mired in administrative delays. This program offers local communities and tribes the opportunity to purchase important forestlands for public use and enjoyment. This program will be particularly meaningful to urban areas and connecting underserved populations to forests and natural systems. The CFOSCP is well-designed to help implement the goals of the America's Great Outdoors Initiative if the rulemaking were completed, and if funding of \$10 million or more were allocated in FY12 for a first round of grants from the Community Forest and Open Space Conservation Program.

Transportation. Since 1991, DOT's trail, transportation enhancements and non-motorized programs have exemplified how federal agencies can work cooperatively with state and local governments. We support the continuation and expansion of these programs that have created and improved many urban trail and park systems for purposeful and recreational transportation.

There are a host of federal matching grant programs that leverage state and local investment in outdoor recreation lands and are critical to a successful conservation outcome and require active partnerships among federal, state, and local governments. These programs complement existing federal investments such as the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative and/or meet federally-required state resource plans, such as the State Wildlife Action Plans and State Forest Resource Assessments. These programs also help address the AGO Initiative's focus on private land conservation by providing permanent conservation easement protection of private working farms, ranches and forests. TPL strongly recommends that the Administration recognize this suite of programs as essential to the successful outcome of the AGO Initiative, and provide full support to them in budget proposals and future legislative re-authorizations such as the Farm Bill.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

This suite of programs includes:

USDA/US Forest Service: Forest Legacy Program, Community Forest and Open Space Conservation Program

USDA/NRCS: Farm and Ranchland Protection Program, Grasslands Reserve Program, Wetlands Reserve Program

DOI/USFWS: Cooperative Endangered Species Fund, National Coastal Wetlands Grant Program, North American Wetlands Conservation Act

NOAA: Coastal Estuarine Land Conservation Program

DOD: Readiness and Environment Initiative

TPL believes that multi-partner initiatives to advance conservation across all ownership types within large priority landscapes are a highly effective strategy for conservation delivery. This type of landscape conservation will be particularly important to achieve higher level conservation outcomes, such as watershed protection, climate mitigation and climate adaptation, where isolated conservation actions will not be sufficient to achieve these larger goals.

Landscape conservation also creates a framework for collaboration, and reliably increases the leverage and integration of conservation actions. It supports integrated conservation planning, so that multiple actors can work from coordinated strategies, often based on GIS mapping and other tools.

Landscape conservation can also be particularly useful to break down silos in conservation approaches, linking public land managers and private landowners, and getting experts in conservation, restoration, and stewardship to deploy their skills and resources in an integrated approach.

Finally, landscape conservation can create leverage for implementation synergistic use of public funding source--federal, state, and local--and private match funding.

TPL has already been working with multiple federal agencies, states and private supporters to protect lands within some of our nation's most important and threatened landscapes. Over the past year, we have provided greater scrutiny and focus to these efforts, identifying those areas whose protection will bring enormous benefits to wildlife habitat protection, natural resource adaptation and mitigation efforts in the face of climate change stressors, and provide opportunities for restoration of critical lands. TPL's seven landscape focus areas are the Northern Forests of Maine, New Hampshire and Vermont, the Great Lakes Forests of Minnesota, Wisconsin and Michigan, the Connecticut River watershed of Vermont, New Hampshire, Massachusetts and Connecticut, the Crown of the Continent/Northern Rockies of Montana and Idaho, the Northern and Eastern Cascades of Washington, the Northern Sierras of California and the Chattahoochee River watershed of Georgia, Alabama and Florida.

TPL applauds the Administration for its efforts to implement multi-agency, cross-boundary, public/private leveraged landscape focus areas, as evidenced by DOI's Landscape Conservation Cooperatives and the USDA's All Lands efforts.

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The Trust for Public Land launched a Climate Conservation Program in 2009 to focus organizational resources on project work that can support climate mitigation (carbon sequestration and storage in forests, farms, and other natural systems) and climate adaptation. TPL greatly appreciates the many strong efforts already underway through the Departments of Interior, Agriculture, HUD, US EPA, and many others to help achieve these same objectives.

U.S. farms and forests now sequester almost 15 percent of annual U.S. carbon emissions. This is a critical piece of climate mitigation that can be expanded with conservation of these carbon absorbing lands and enhanced management of these systems, including restoration, to increase their rate of sequestration.

TPL has been an active participant in development of carbon-focused project work for regional, state and voluntary carbon markets. This includes project work under Memorandum of Understanding with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. TPL's a forestation project work with Tensas National Wildlife Refuge in Louisiana will generate cumulative carbon dioxide equivalent reductions of three million tons over the next 100 years. This will be the equivalent of removing 60,000 cars from the road for one year.

Description: Scientific research strongly suggests that the Northern Forest will be uniquely situated as a climate refuge for water, coldwater fisheries like the eastern brook trout, and temperature-sensitive forest types that will be heavily impacted by pests and invasive species farther to the south. TPL has been an original partner with the State of Maine, the Sierra Club, The Nature Conservancy, and other partners working to gain federal support for a USDA "All Lands" conservation push across this large forested landscape along the Canadian border. Within this broad collaboration, TPL is providing particular leadership for integrated conservation of the Western Mountains portion of the Maine Woods (including the High Peaks region and the Mahoosuc Range that actually spills into New Hampshire). Over the past five years, TPL has collaborated with local business interests and citizen groups through the Mahoosuc Initiative, an effort designed to conserve the key working lands and recreation assets in the region.

Recent conservation successes include multiple additions to the Umbagog NWR, Appalachian National Scenic Trail, White Mountain National Forest, and three Forest Legacy projects.

Now TPL and our partners are focusing new attention on conservation, restoration, and stewardship of the region's unique refugia for climate-threatened forests, fish, and wildlife. TPL currently has two complementary projects around Lake Umbagog NWRa LWCF project to add lands to the refuge, and the adjacent Androscoggin River Headwaters Forest Legacy Program project that contains the highest quality eastern brook trout habitat in the State of New Hampshire. Trout Unlimited research suggests that this habitat will withstand even a three-degree rise in average summer temperatures, making it an essential refuge for New England's only native trout. Given the continued turnover of large-scale forest blocks in the region, there are long-term opportunities to conserve this critical climate adaptation stronghold.

Discussion Question 1

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(cont.)

Non-Federal Partners: TPL is a key player within a broad coalition of public and private partners that includes the State of Maine and forest industry, landowner, and conservation interests. This group is leading coordinated efforts to engage with DOI and USDA to develop a model landscape conservation effort. TPL is also facilitating the coordinated engagement of partners in New Hampshire, including New Hampshire Fish and Game, through longstanding public and private partnership efforts to conserve the cross-border Mahoosuc Range. TPL partner the American Forest Foundation will play a particularly important role working through the Small Woodland Owners of Maine and New Hampshire Timberland Owners Association to coordinate a comprehensive private landowner engagement campaign. Trout Unlimited can provide assistance in conservation planning, restoration and stewardship oriented to the region's unique coldwater fisheries. In particular, TU has developed eastern brook trout vulnerability data that can target key refugia and has developed a new set of fisheries habitat restoration and stewardship protocols specific to the Maine Woods.

Description: The Northwoods region of MN, WI, and MI contains the headwaters for the Great Lakes and the Mississippi River, and boasts America's foremost stronghold of Laurentian forest. Building from conservation of more than 125,000 acres in the region over the last decade, largely in partnership with USDA and DOI, TPL is now working with USFS Region 9 to develop new landscape conservation initiatives to address watershed adaptation and carbon mitigation in high priority watersheds across the Northwoods. This will build out at the regional scale from existing USFS climate conservation efforts through the Chequamegon-Nicolet Climate Change Response Framework.

Priority objectives identified in TPL's MOU with U.S. Forest Service are: 1) Carbon Mitigation Deployment of TPL's Carbon Conservation Mapping Facility to develop a regional carbon sequestration inventory and parcel-level priorities, leading to development of USFS-TPL carbon sequestration pilot projects as a model for this work at scale across the Northwoods;

and 2) Climate Adaptation Development of an adaptation plan for high priority watersheds within the Northwoods region, and implementation of those plans through integrated conservation, restoration, and stewardship projects to protect key resources. There is also a robust role for DOI in these efforts, including strategic additions to refuge lands in priority areas like the Upper Mississippi and DOI-led efforts on fish passage and other habitat improvements. These combined USDA and DOI efforts will help to sustain Laurentian forest ecosystem services ranging from carbon sequestration to forest products, maintain water quality in the Great Lakes and important tributaries, and provide future security for native coldwater fisheries and sensitive wildlife threatened by climate change.

Discussion Question 1

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Non-Federal Partners: States of Minnesota, Wisconsin, and Michigan, including the forestry agencies in each state. The Great Lakes Forest Alliance (GLFA), American Forest Foundation (AFF), and National Wildlife Federation (NWF) will be co-lead private partners with TPL in this effort. GLFA, AFF and NWF will coordinate a comprehensive private landowner engagement campaign across the Northwoods to deliver integrated conservation activities on private lands and coordination of these actions across public and private boundaries. Trout Unlimited can provide assistance for planning through its fisheries vulnerability data and implementation assistance through its expertise on habitat restoration.

Description: The Northern Rockies contain America's most intact natural systems, such as the Crown of the Continent. As evidence of this unique ecological integrity, the Crown is the only ecological system in the nation that still has its full complement of native species. Building on past successes across this important area, TPL is leading new landscape conservation efforts to support watershed adaptation across the Northern Rockies. This work is designed to achieve future security for public water supplies and coldwater fisheries in the Northern Rockies through scientifically targeted projects featuring integrated conservation, restoration, and stewardship actions. TPL is initially focused on watershed adaptation in three priority areas within the Northern Rockies the Salmon-Selway (ID), Crown of the Continent (MT), and Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem (WY). TPL is building a model initiative around the highest value watershed for adaptation within each of these three areas, thereby providing a roadmap to future watershed adaptation work at scale.

TPL has begun preliminary watershed adaptation assessment in the Salmon-Selway using aquifer data to map public water supply interests, synthesized with Trout Unlimited's Conservation Success Index data on west slope cutthroat trout. This assessment is helping TPL to identify watershed adaptation priorities down to parcel level, and guide outreach to specific landowners. Once TPL has developed landowner agreements and conservation projects are under way, TPL will seek to engage the USDA, USFWS, state agency partners, Trout Unlimited, and other partners in developing and implementing complementary restoration and stewardship strategies that can enhance the resilience of these watershed lands. TPL has completed recent watershed projects in the region that model this integrated conservation-restoration approach, such as the award-winning O'Dell Creek (MT) project this project models that work that TPL hopes to advance across the Northern Rockies.

Non-Federal Partners: TPL will partner with the States of Montana, Idaho, and Wyoming, including state forestry agencies and fish and wildlife agencies. Trout Unlimited has also provided assistance for planning through its fisheries vulnerability data, and will be a key implementation partner through its expertise on fisheries habitat restoration. Carpe Diem, a new western water collaborative of public water supply managers, is providing assistance in identifying and mapping public water supply considerations. TPL will also collaborate in these efforts with other longstanding private partners in the region, including The Nature Conservancy, The Wilderness Society, and a range of local governments and non-profits.

Discussion Question 1

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(cont.)

Description: The 7.2 million-acre Connecticut River watershed is a critical source of clean drinking water, serving cities such as Springfield, MA and Hartford, CT, and contains some of the East's most important coldwater fisheries habitat. In 1992, Congress established the Silvio O. Conte NFWR with a project boundary covering the entire watershed a new model for federally-led conservation that includes authorization for federal acquisition along with outreach and technical assistance to support coordinated conservation actions on non-federal lands. The Conte NFWR consistently ranks in the top five nationally in the federal Land Acquisition Priority System, reflecting its unique diversity of habitat types, elevations, and latitudinal diversity. The watershed and the refuge are ideally positioned to advance a climate adaptation response at scale across this important landscape.

Based on Trout Unlimited research, it is clear that this region will provide a significant percentage of the habitat refugia for species such as the eastern brook trout in a warming climate. To help advance climate adaptation in the watershed, TPL has partnered with the Conte NFWR and Trout Unlimited (TU) and the Connecticut River Watershed Council (CRWC) to achieve "watershed adaptation" for public water supplies and coldwater fisheries in this four-state watershed. The private partners are integrating complementary skills including TU fisheries vulnerability assessment, TPL GIS, TPL conservation transactions, and TU and CRWC restoration and stewardship to create truly resilient watershed resources across the Connecticut River basin. Implementation is achieved through integrated conservation and restoration projects to conserve and restore critical watershed lands developed in partnership with the Conte NFWR, the U.S. Forest Service, and state forestry and fish and wildlife agencies.

As a model for future efforts, TU has a dedicated "Home Rivers" coordinator leading efforts to restoring eastern brook trout habitat on a 171,000-acre tract in this watershed that was conserved by TPL a strategically situated parcel that contains the largest block of projected habitat refugia for eastern brook trout in the region.

Looking forward, TPL, TU, and CRWC seek to a deepened partnership with USDA, DOI, and state agency partners to achieve watershed adaptation at scale.

Private Partners: In addition to those named above, The American Forest Foundation and the National Wildlife Federation will develop efforts to engage private landowners in this effort. AFF has developed an ecosystem services project funded through a Conservation Innovation Grant that is helping private landowners to sell ecosystem services, including watershed services that can support the initiative's larger objectives. NWF is leading adaptation efforts in partnership with state government, local land trusts, and local governments, working with these partners to conserve key habitat linkages at the local level that can support a larger "Staying Connected" campaign aimed at connectivity across the entire region.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Description: Washington State's Northern and Central Cascades are critical to the well being of Washington residents and the sustainability of nationally significant natural resources, including native salmon. The Cascades form the backyard for the major population centers on Puget Sound, and provide water to residents of Seattle, Tacoma, and other major population centers. The Cascades also provide important working lands for the more rural communities on the eastern side of the range. TPL has a long history of conservation partnership in the Cascades with the USDA and DOI, having facilitated many important USFS and NPS acquisitions and private working lands easements in the last decade.

TPL and the western water collaborative Carpe Diem now seek to partner with DOI and USDA to develop a comprehensive new collaboration that can address the growing challenges of watershed adaptation and working lands conservation in this region. Climate change projections show major potential impacts, including loss of snowpack and major forest health challenges for the region's forests that would impact forest products and habitat values alike. TPL will synthesize a range of vulnerability assessment from public water supplies to coldwater fisheries to forests and then seek to work with DOI, USDA, the Washington State Department of Forestry, Washington State Department of Ecology, municipal water utilities, and a range of other partners to design integrated land conservation, restoration, and stewardship response. This will include actions such as continued consolidation of federal holdings in checkerboard lands where that ownership pattern impedes effective watershed management, and conservation of impaired watershed lands to gain site control so that restoration actions can be initiated. This will also include collaboration with private landowners to support easement conservation of important working lands that can be managed for climate resilience using DOI and USDA incentive funding.

Non-Federal Partners: TPL and Carpe Diem envision robust leadership and participation from the Washington State Department of Forestry and Washington State Department of Ecology, both of which have been leaders in assessing the impact of climate change on the Cascades. Other private partners will include municipal water utilities in Seattle and Tacoma, the University of Washington, and a wide range of local government and private partners.

Further, TPL believes that existing landowner incentive programs should be modified, or new programs created through the next Farm Bill if more practicable, to incentive landowner actions that will protect and enhance carbon stores and sequestration. A program modeled on the Carbon Conservation Program contained in S. 2724 would be an excellent approach. This would establish a set of approved carbon activities for each land type, activities that would include permanent conservation through easements, and would pay landowners on a per-acre basis for undertaking the specified practices. The program would be run through USDA with forest elements administered by the US Forest Service.

Discussion Question 1

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(cont.)

The federal government is to be commended for its natural resource adaptation response. Already the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is leading efforts through its new strategic plan and the Department of the Interior's Landscape Conservation Cooperatives (LCC) to create a science-driven response to adaptation that integrates land conservation, habitat restoration, and stewardship strategies. The U.S. Forest Service has produced a new "roadmap" and "scorecard" to guide its climate change response, from land managers to state and private forestry and research.

TPL is deeply engaged in these important efforts, and believes that they must be continued.

TPL is on the steering committee of most LCCs and is attempting to develop science based adaptation plans to guide TPL projects to conserve parcels that contain habitat refuge and offer connectivity benefits, both important elements of adaptation. TPL encourages that the LCCs be provided adequate resources to support adaptation research, but also to help support on the ground implementation through collaborative conservation.

TPL is also deeply engaged with the U.S. Forest Service in an "all lands" approach to climate change response, and believes that these efforts should also be given the needed resources to thrive.

Most notably, TPL is now working under an MOU with USFS Region 9, Northeastern Area, state foresters, Great Lakes Forest Alliance, American Forest Foundation, and National Wildlife Federation to develop a Northwoods Climate Change Response Framework covering the 63 million acres of forests in Ecological Province 212 that surround the Great Lakes and the headwaters of the Mississippi River. TPL's interest in this region builds from TPL-led conservation of more than 125,000 acres in the Great Lakes Forests--Northwoods over the last decade, and the potential for 250,000 acres or more of additional conservation in this region based on active conversations with large landowners. The Northwoods Climate Change Response Framework will guide this TPL project work and other landscape conservation efforts toward science-based conservation actions and management strategies that can best achieve climate adaptation and carbon mitigation in the unique forest types in this region. The Northwoods Climate Change Response Framework will build out to the three-state regional scale from the USFS-led Chequamegon-Nicolet National Forest Climate Change Response Framework and related "Shared Lands" activities on surrounding state and private lands.

Potentially relevant programs for TPL's land conservation project work include the Land and Water Conservation Fund, Forest Legacy Program, Coastal and Estuarine Lands Conservation Program, among others.

Accordingly, all federal land conservation programs with potential application to climate change adaptation should contain some clearly written criteria reflecting this priority. This will enable federal land managers, program staff, and private partners alike to have clear guidance as to how projects will be measured against adaptation objectives. Already, the U.S. Forest Service has integrated such criteria into its Strategic Land Acquisition Ranking System, providing a strong model of how this can be accomplished.

Discussion Question 1

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Again, TPL is grateful for the very strong movement already underway in these directions through federal agency leadership.

Description: The Northern Sierra has been identified as one of the nation's most promising sites to support climate adaptation it offers both sky islands of diverse habitat and a key site for securing water supplies in this increasingly arid region. Working through the Northern Sierra Partnership, a powerful business-environment coalition that TPL helped to create, TPL will pursue targeted conservation in support of these unique values. This will include permanent protection of key watershed lands, including acquisition of checkerboard lands for addition to the national forest units in the region integrated with restoration of impaired tracts to restore watershed function. DOI and USDA will play a critical role in acquiring and managing key tracts, implementing restoration actions that enhance the adaptation value of any impaired properties, and working with adjacent private landowners to support complementary actions.

Beyond adaptation, TPL will utilize the Northern Sierra to demonstrate two potential approaches to employing carbon finance as a conservation tool. TPL is working with USFS Region 5 Climate Director, Bruce Goines, to develop carbon demonstration projects for the Northern Sierra.

Specifically, TPL envisions two model projects with great promise for replication: 1) A USFS LWCF project whereby TPL will convey lands to the USFS subject to reserved carbon rights, and will sell the subject carbon to help cover its project costs and facilitate below market conveyance to the agency;

and 2) An easement project under the Forest Legacy Program, Healthy Forest Reserve Program, or a DOI easement program where the easement terms will be shaped around carbon goals, management, and monitoring. This easement project will be used to establish a data base and model for private lands carbon easement and associated management protocols for Northern Sierra forest. This latter project will have unique importance in developing data and methodologies for working with private forest owners under a USDA "supplemental" carbon incentives program, as envisioned by current proposals for federal climate legislation.

Non-Federal Partners: TPL has a rich baseline of existing state, local, business, and NGO allies through the Northern Sierra Partnership. Furthermore, TPL has secured interest from a range of carbon investors in prospectively participating in any projects involving sale of credits on lands that will be conveyed to the USFS or through a carbon easement on private lands.

Description: The Chattahoochee River watershed is one of America's most important water supply areas, serving millions of residents in three states, including the City of Atlanta. TPL has a long history of partnership with the USFS and NPS in the Chattahoochee River watershed. TPL was a founder of the Chattahoochee Campaign that raised \$170 million of state, local, and private funds to conserve more than 30,000 acres across the watershed, including important additions to the Chattahoochee National Forest and Chattahoochee National Recreation Area. Now this area needs focused attention to lead integrated efforts in watershed conservation and longleaf restoration that can address escalating climate change impacts on the region, including the extremes of drought and flood that have plagued the region in the last decade.

Discussion Question 1

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TPL, the American Forest Foundation, and the National Wildlife Federation seek to partner with USDA and DOI in integrated landscape conservation in the watershed that can deliver future security for public water supplies, economic opportunities and recreation access for local communities, forest carbon sequestration, and adaptation for fish and wildlife. This project is linking together in new and innovative ways permanent conservation strategies, such as federal acquisitions in the Chattahoochee River headwaters region, with efforts to reach unengaged private landowners and to facilitate their participation in helping to achieve landscape conservation goals. This project will focus on developing synergies between public lands and private lands initiatives, including coordinated management activities across public-private boundaries.

Non-Federal Partners: The States of Georgia, Alabama, and Florida will be important partners in this effort, particularly state forestry agencies working through the framework of each state's State Forest Resource Assessment and Strategy. The American Forest Foundation (AFF) and National Wildlife Federation (NWF) will be co-lead partners with TPL on the private side of this effort. AFF and NWF will coordinate a comprehensive private landowner engagement campaign across the watershed to deliver integrated conservation activities across public and private boundaries. The TPL-led Chattahoochee Campaign will provide additional engagement from state, local, and private entities.

It is well established that metropolitan economies, collectively, are the primary provider of jobs and the driver of the national economy. Thus, it is vitally important to preserve and support healthy cities. One way to help this effort is with parks from New York's Central Park down to thousands of small, beloved neighborhood greens which can play a huge role in urban livability and desirability. On a local level the value provided by parks can include cleaner air, cleaner water, more tourism, the benefits from direct use, improved public health, increased property values, and enhanced community cohesion. On a national level, parks can help cities spur economic development, reduce climate change, foster a healthier population, and support disadvantaged communities of color.

The Forest Legacy Program was established in 1990 to provide federal funding to states to assist in securing conservation easements on forestlands threatened with conversion to nonforest uses. Over the past 20 years, the Forest Legacy Program has prevented the loss of almost 2 million acres of forestland in 42 states and Puerto Rico and has leveraged an equal amount of state, local, and private funding for every federal dollar spent. In FY 2011, 39 states submitted proposals for 60 FLP projects and a robust President's budget of \$100 million will provide full funding for only a portion of these identified projects, leaving thousands of acres of important forests in many parts of the country at risk. TPL urges the Administration to increase its investment in this program in order to ensure the permanent protection of the myriad benefits provided by our nation's private forests.

Discussion Question 1

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USDA/USFS/Community Forest and Open Space Program

The new Community Forest and Open Space Conservation Program (CFOSCP) provides another means for individual communities and tribes to address threats to the forests that sustain them. CFOSCP is a 50-50 matching grant program established in the 2008 Farm Bill to give communities, tribes and non-profits funding to take a leading role in local forest protection by purchasing economically, ecologically and culturally important forestlands for community and tribal owned forests. The program also funds technical assistance through state forestry agencies to help interested grantees to plan for and implement outstanding forest management. Despite the urgent need on the ground and broad support for the program, it has not yet gotten off the ground due to administrative delays.

USDA/NRCS/Farm and Ranchland Protection Program

Congress originally authorized the USDA Farmland Protection Program in 1996 as a means of protecting the nation's prime agricultural land from being lost to development. The 2008 Farm Bill authorized the program for another five years and doubled the authorized funding level for the program, to over \$1 billion over the FY 08-FY 12 timeframe. Working in cooperation with landowners, state, tribal and local governments, and private organizations, FRPP has helped to preserve more than 475,000 acres of farm and ranch land across the country, leveraging more than \$1 for every \$1 of federal funds provided.

FRPP is a vital tool in helping landowners and communities protect agricultural land that is being lost to development and fragmented at an alarming rate. FRPP helps ensure the food security of the nation, stabilizes rural communities, promotes regional food production, saves critical wildlife habitat, protects our water quality and assists family farmers and ranchers in passing their land on to future generations of producers. Since its inception in 1996, FRPP has been enormously successful and remarkably beneficial to the agricultural community. For example, 97% of land under FRPP is still in agricultural production and 22% of FRPP farmers market locally in comparison to the national average of 5%.

This program so critical to keeping farmers and ranchers on the land in a productive way was proposed to be capped in FY 2011 at \$160 m -- \$10 m more than last year but a \$15 m cut from the level provided in the Farm Bill. TPL urges the Administration to maintain the Farm Bill authorized funding level for this program in FY 12.

The Trust for Public Land (TPL) is very pleased to support President Obama's America's Great Outdoors Initiative. We applaud this administration's leadership in convening a diverse constituency to develop a sound approach to 21st-century land conservation that will protect our natural resources and keep Americans connected to the land.

Community-driven conservation is most successful when it engages a wide range of interests, but it needs federal leadership to bring together stakeholders and federal resources to leverage state, local, and private dollars.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

As a land conservation organization working in landscapes as different as playgrounds and parks in Los Angeles and the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem in Wyoming and Montana, TPL knows well the importance of public recreation opportunities and greenspace protection that serves a diverse constituency of Americans. We stand very ready to assist President Obama implement the goals of the America's Great Outdoors Initiative and believe through our nearly 40 years of on-the-ground experience we can offer substantive help as the initiative moves forward. Thank you for that opportunity.

As the Administration evaluates the input of millions of Americans who support the AGO Initiative, TPL is pleased to have the opportunity to provide specific suggestions and supporting material that we hope are useful to you.

The Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) balances the extraction and sale of federal natural resources - offshore oil and gas - with the permanent protection of important lands and waters and access to recreation for all Americans. Authorized in 1965, LWCF is an enduring conservation legacy that makes even greater sense today in the face of what could be the greatest environmental disaster of our time.

LWCF is authorized to receive a very small percentage of OCS revenue - up to \$900 million a year from revenues that have averaged \$6 billion a year over the past 5 years. Today, the LWCF has an authorized balance of more than \$17 billion. Over the years, however, Congress and various Administrations have diverted these funds from their intended purpose. TPL is very grateful for the Obama Administration's leadership in working towards full funding of LWCF as reflected in its budget proposals to date. This action has reversed years of funding declines that slowed the protection of critical lands throughout the nation and undermined state and local efforts to ensure recreation opportunities at the local level.

As you well know, LWCF investments ensure continued protection of America's public lands and enhance public recreation opportunities through grants to states, counties, and cities. The impact of LWCF on the American landscape throughout its history can be felt widely across this nation -- LWCF funds have gone to support land protection in over 750 federal units located in all 50 states as well as the District of Columbia, Guam, Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands. LWCF funds have also gone to almost every county in the nation to support over 41,000 state and local recreation projects.

LWCF projects also relate directly to President Obama's stated objectives for the AGO initiative. National parks, forests, wildlife refuges and other federal public lands are located in every state in the nation providing public access to recreation in urban areas such as Atlanta, Tucson and Los Angeles as well as in rural areas as diverse as New Mexico and New Hampshire.

The stateside program of LWCF has distributed funds for projects including parks, sports fields, swimming pools, playgrounds, and trails. Local parks and playgrounds can connect children to nature and foster a lifetime of active and healthful outdoor activity.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Over the past three decades, childhood obesity rates in America have tripled, and today, nearly one in three children in America are overweight or obese. One third of all children born in 2000 or later will suffer from diabetes at some point in their lives; many others will face chronic obesity-related health problems like heart disease, high blood pressure, cancer, and asthma. In order for children to live a healthy lifestyle and become connected to the outdoors for its myriad benefits, they must have access to places to play, hike, bike and run. LWCF provides a direct means to that end perhaps more than any other single federal program.

The conservation outcomes made possible through LWCF funding are also closely linked to a sound economy. The Outdoor Industry Association (OIA) reports that recreation contributes \$730 billion annually to the U.S. economy, supports nearly 6.5 million jobs across the U.S, touches over 8 percent of America's personal consumption expenditures more than 1 in every 12 dollars circulating in the economy, and generates \$88 billion in annual state and national tax revenue. The 2009 National Parks Second Century Commission estimated that every \$1 in taxpayer money spent on National Parks returned a \$4 economic benefit through tourism and private sector spending. In the West, OIA reported that more than 43 million people participate in hunting, fishing, and wildlife viewing each year, spending over \$33 billion annually. Maintaining healthy wildlife populations and providing access for recreation on public lands is a key component to maintaining these economic benefits.

Over the past five years, voters approved 428 state, county, and city conservation finance ballot measures generating more than \$18 billion for the protection of forests, farms and ranches, city parks, trails, wildlife habitat, beaches and waterfronts along rivers, lakes, and streams. Seven out of ten measures placed before the voters were approved. This state and local funding provides significant leveraging opportunities for an LWCF state grants program.

A competitive matching grants program within stateside LWCF has the potential to dramatically increase the conservation impact of federal spending by providing matching grants that promote the continued creation of new state and local funding. Such a grant program with criteria that encourage and reward state and local conservation funding and support effective conservation programs and partnerships could leverage federal funds with state and local funds to achieve important federal conservation objectives.

TPL applauds the Administration's focus on sustainable communities, emphasis on connecting children to parks and open space and recognition that we need to reinvest in places where people live, work and play.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Traditionally, urban parks have been considered purely facilities of local interest --in contrast to urban roads, for instance, or urban wastewater facilities. Today, however, it is recognized that there is a considerable federal interest in high quality city parks. For one thing, city parks are the principal place where urban residents can exercise, and exercise is key to reducing the nationwide obesity crisis and related health problems and expenses. For another, city parks allow denser urban growth and infill surrounding them, reducing edge sprawl and ever more exurban automobile use, congestion and pollution and when connected create systems of parks linked to each other and to their communities allowing greater access and mobility which encourages increased use. There is therefore a great need for federal leadership and resources to expand and better shape our rebounding urban parks movement.

Including city parks and open space in a major new outdoors initiative could encourage cities to engage in long term planning and analysis.

TPL's Center for City Park Excellence has identified five major categories of city parks that relate most closely to federal interests and meaningful outcomes: waterfronts, connectors, anchor parks, environmental justice parks and threatened ecosystems.

The Department's many urban units provide millions of Americans with outstanding recreational opportunities in their own backyard and should remain a departmental focus.

USDA/US Forest Service: We recommend investment in US Forest Service programs and activities that help connect Americans in urban areas to forests. These programs include the Urban and Community Forestry program and the Kids in the Woods program.

The work of The Trust for Public Land-- from the urban core to wilderness, on public and private lands alike - allows us to witness every day the transformative impact of nature and green space for a child of the city, the deep-rooted conservation values of farmers, ranchers and forest owners, and the important American values reflected in the diversity of our publicly protected places like Yellowstone National Park and the Brown vs. Board of Education National Historic Site.

In particular we appreciate the Administration's recognition and leadership when it comes to nature and recreation in our cities. President Obama's vision is clear: America's great outdoors begins when we open our doors. Connecting with nature and safe places to recreate is just as important in our inner cities as it is in our wilderness, We at TPL agree and we believe that no child in America should be more than a to-minute walk from a park, garden or safe place to play. Without that close-to-home access we have "endangered children's habitat".

We stand ready to work with you to ensure that every American can connect in a meaningful way to our lands and waters. We are thrilled with the call for a national conversation that engages a more diverse public in the work of land conservation and we look forward to the listening sessions. In many cities, towns and rural landscapes across the country, TPL is working with numerous organizations, private landowners and local citizens to think about their local green space needs as well as those that address a greater good. We believe they are ready to meet President Obama's call to action and help implement the America's Great Outdoors initiative.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Most young children find real joy in nature when introduced in a fun way and when they see role models, especially high school and college students, enjoying the outdoors.

Children connect with and learn more from nature when they are engaged in hands-on activities to protect the land rather than simply being in the outdoors. This can always be done in age appropriate and fun ways.

Teens and young adults are a valuable asset to land managers by getting actual work done while serving as examples for younger children.

Non-profit organizations that focus on youth and conservation provide essential complementary capabilities for federal agencies when they are embraced as full partners.

When young people are actively engaged in giving back to the land they leave the environment healthier, realize more of their personal potential and develop the ethics and commitment to become engaged citizens, proponents for protecting our public lands and conservation voters.

Getting actual work done through conservation service gets young people moving outdoors in a way that forms healthy, lifelong connections to the land.

Once engaged through conservation service, many young people actively seek careers working for public land management agencies and in environmental fields.

SCA's community programs reach over 1100 at risk young people age 15-24, placing them in paid summer jobs on federal and community public lands each year. Typically, many of these young people have never experienced a connection to the outdoors before their summer jobs. Yet, SCA is able to get them outdoors, keep them through the summer, and engage many of them throughout the year and subsequent summers. SCA's retention rate in these programs is over 95 percent. Our high-touch continuum of service approach is a powerful model that can change a young person's life, while also instilling an ethic of stewardship and connection to the outdoors. We recommend scaling these types of proven community conservation summer jobs program across the country.

SCA has had success engaging diverse young people at the college level as well as high school-aged youth. Currently, most of the federal public land management agencies lack a diverse workforce. For example, 5.5 percent of the current National Park Service staffing is Hispanic, 9 percent is black, and 1.8 percent is Asian. Through our programs and targeted diversity initiatives, SCA recruits diverse young people from over 300 majority-serving and minority colleges, including HBCU, HACU, AAPI, and AIHEC colleges, to serve as interns with federal land management agencies. For example, SCA has been able to reach over 90 percent diversity intern placement levels for several federal partners in such targeted initiatives. More importantly, many of our diverse young people end up in environmental careers, including in the federal government. As discussed more fully below, we recommend that the government create a direct pipeline to careers with noncompetitive hiring status for young people who participate in SCA and Corps programs.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Conservation service can be a strategy to address youth unemployment. Young people (age 16-24) face the highest youth unemployment rate -- 19.6 percent -- since the Labor Department began compiling the data in 1948. For low-income and minority youth, the job prospects are worse. By providing paid and stipended service positions, young people are able to receive hands-on training and life skills to help prepare them for careers in conservation. Again, we recommend scaling community conservation summer jobs program across the country.

Youth conservation service also can connect the outdoors, businesses, and community development. For example, in an economic development initiative along the Great Allegheny Passage, SCA interns are working collaboratively with community stakeholders to help (i) retain existing businesses; (ii) expand and increase revenues of existing businesses; (iii) recruit sustainable new businesses; and (iv) renew trailside communities through trail-based tourism and recreation as part of a regional economic development initiative. The potential for programs like this is enormous, particularly in rural, economically depressed areas with underused trail and recreation resources. We recommend piloting similar youth conservation components of public private partnerships with conservation-based economic development initiatives across the country.

Public land management agencies need to build and invest in a future workforce that reflects America. Currently, thirty-eight percent of the workforce in the Department of Interior and 35 percent in the Department of Agriculture will be eligible for retirement in 2012. SCA and Corps programs already provide a diverse pipeline that federal land managers can tap to create their next generation of employees. Yet, land management agencies have not taken advantage of these pipelines. We recommend creating intentional links from SCA and Corps programs directly to professional, technical, and vocational jobs in the agencies through noncompetitive permanent job conversion status.

Childhood and adolescence obesity have reached epidemic proportions in the U.S. More than one-third of children and adolescents are estimated to be overweight or obese. Obesity is a key predictor for many future health problems, including diabetes. Youth conservation service can help tackle this epidemic. Indeed, many existing conservation programs by SCA and the Corps already get young people moving outdoors by, among other things, building trails, restoring habitats, and building boardwalks. In addition, many of SCA's programs, particularly residential programs, help young people make informed choices about nutrition and how healthy food connects to the land. We recommend piloting initiatives as part of SCA and Corps programs that incorporate nutrition education for participants, provide healthy meals for economically disadvantaged youth, and allow nonprofits to develop or use tools to measure and evaluate the exercise, nutrition, and recreation components of such initiatives.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Youth nonprofit partnerships are indispensable to public land management agencies. For more than 50 years, these agencies and nonprofits have created mutually beneficial partnerships to implement youth public policy objectives that neither party alone could achieve. Youth-serving nonprofits are able to help public land management agencies reach these goals by: supplementing government resources with nonfederal cash and in-kind resources; ; reaching and engaging more diverse young people in different and innovative ways; providing holistic services, including wrap-around support services; dedicating trained staff (e.g., youth development, recruitment, and administration); providing existing program infrastructure and capacity in each of the 50 states; and engaging young people in a continuum of outdoor experiences and connections that instill a lifelong connection to the land.

We, therefore, strongly recommend strengthening public land management partnerships with nonprofits by: (i) investing in youth conservation service; (ii) focusing on the collaborative nature of the partnerships through the use of cooperative agreements; and (iii) implementing youth programs through youth-serving nonprofits rather than through the agencies or individual land management units.

Thank you for opening the dialogue on this important topic. We appreciate President Obama and his administration's sincere interest and initiative in hosting these listening sessions on America's most valuable asset – our treasured outdoors.

Initiated through a directive by Governor Schweitzer, our tourism industry underwent a brand discovery process to determine the essence of the Montana brand. This process identified Montana's key attribute, our core strength, as having the most spectacular unspoiled nature than anywhere else in the lower 48.

This process confirmed that Montana's unspoiled nature, spectacular landscapes, vast open spaces and abundant outdoor recreation are all paramount to our \$3 billion tourism industry but equally paramount to our exceptional quality of life as Montana residents.

Montana's outdoor attributes consistently rate as the top reasons visitors select Montana as a vacation destination. Mountains and forests rank as our number one attraction for those visiting Montana. With uncrowded open space, rivers, and Yellowstone and Glacier National Parks rounding out the top five.

Preserving and responsibly managing these assets will help ensure that tourism remains one of Montana's leading industries. An industry that supports over 42,000 Montana jobs and brings in over \$228 million in tax revenue. <http://www.travelmontana.mt.gov/branding/>

In an effort to advocate and promote sustainable and responsible tourism practices, the Governor's appointed Tourism Advisory Council created and adopted the Montana Tourism and Recreation Charter. This Charter provides a set of guiding principles for our tourism industry to follow to ensure that we protect the unique and authentic resources, businesses and places that are essential to Montana's experiences and sense-of-place. <http://www.travelmontana.org/charter/>

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

The Montana Office of Tourism has identified the geotraveler as a target market. Geotourism is defined as tourism that sustains or enhances the geographical character of a place – its environment, culture, aesthetics, heritage, and the well-being of its residents. Geotourism strategies provide products, services and visitor experiences that maintain a destination’s sense of place and complement rather than compete with the needs of the local residents. This type of visitor helps to sustain and enhance our regional assets and deeply enriches their travel experience by directing them to that which is unique and distinctive to our areas. It connects the traveler to the community and vice versa.

The Montana Office of Tourism is in strong support of initiatives that protect our open space and natural landscapes such as the innovative Travelers for Open Land. TFOL is a state-wide program that seeks voluntary contributions from travelers for private land conservation when they stay at participating lodging properties throughout Montana. The funds are then awarded as grants to non-profit land trusts to protect valuable open lands throughout the state and to maintain a vibrant hospitality industry. We've supported Travelers from the start and we salute the individuals and organizations that have taken a unique idea and developed it into a national model of land protection and tourism promotion. We encourage other states to follow this lead and develop programs like this that help protect, preserve and sustain their destinations for future generations. <http://travelersforopenland.org/index.php>

The Montana Office of Tourism is very interested in reconnecting children and young families to the outdoors. While Montana’s national parks have been doing well, overall our U.S. national parks have in fact been losing visitation over the years and our youth are becoming more and more disengaged with the natural world. If we don’t engage our young families and children now, thus creating a future of passionate, dedicated advocates, who will be the voice of our parks into the future – whether it’s promoting the benefits of outdoor recreation or maintaining and enhancing funding for operations and sustainability? We would welcome more opportunities to work with our public and private partners in ensuring our youth experience the sheer magnitude of outdoor activities and learning available to them.

The Montana Office of Tourism is very interested in supporting and assisting with the America’s Great Outdoors Initiative.

Founded in 1924, the AMA is the premier advocate of the motorcycling community, and it represents the interests of millions of on- and off-highway motorcyclists. Our mission is to promote the motorcycle lifestyle and protect the future of motorcycling.

As we discussed when I was in Washington in March, the Greenway Foundation is offering to host and help organize one of the listening sessions you will hold in the West (hopefully in Denver) as you launch this program. We believe the venue should be close to the South Platte River. The Greenway Foundation has been building more and more public participation in parks, recreation and open space planning efforts in the Denver area over the past several years. We have continued to build our strong relationship with Great Outdoors Colorado. We have also been instrumental in coalition building for a major water supply project in the area as well as in launching a new, aggressive water quality effort.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

We know that Secretary Salazar's leadership will go a long way toward building support for GO America, but we believe a true outpouring of enthusiasm from Colorado citizens will help him get congressional approval of funding in a shorter time frame.

In his announcement, the President talked about reconnecting Americans - especially children - with the outdoors. To meet his deadline of November 15, 2010, for a report on successful efforts around the country, new ideas for innovative approaches to funding and an action plan for the next year, there is a great deal to be done in a short time. We would be honored to help you get started here at home.

I think hiking off trail should be addressed too..... That clearly has a impact on sensitive ecosystems. Additionally, breathing while in natural areas increases green house gases, not to mention all the energy consumed to build holier than thou hiking products. The sooner people realize the world is not going to crumble to a a end if they enjoy it, the better off we will all be. The planet has made it this far folks, come on!

For 25 years I have been riding in our National Forests through out California (where I live), Idaho, Oregon, Washington, Nevada, Arizona, Montana, Utah, New Mexico and Texas. I enjoy riding with my children in places off the beaten path...single track in our forests...designated and open trails. I rarely and I mean rarely, see another biker, hiker, equestrian or other dirt biker. There are no homes to bother and no pollution to speak of relative to all other forms of pollution. There is more dust and noise around my home from freeways, garbage trucks, leaf blowers, weed whackers, lawn mowers and boom boxes. There are billions of homes in the world displacing sewer, garbage causing carbon dioxide affecting the planet in such a far greater way than OHV use that it is almost laughable anyone would think OHV use contributes anything at all...comparatively. I had to be crude but humans and animals who breath, fart and excrete bodily "stuff" create more carbon dioxide and pollution in such extreme amounts that point a finger at OHV use defies rationale thinking. Look...billions of homes on the earth have dug foundations...displacing insects, rodents and other animals, not to mention the erosion issues! OHV users use such a minute portion of public land in usually remote places, it is hard to understand the opposition other than the environment is a religion in and of itself!

You are spewing complete and utter BS. A lot of unquantifiable opinion based purely on your assumptions, zero fact and all rhetoric. But thanks for playing. Most OHV'ers would simply be happy to protect and maintain what they have - nothing more. Nobody actually wants to harm the environment and is demanding to have new areas to ride in sensitive wilderness areas.

Common sense must prevail. Protecting habitat can be balanced with protecting access to public lands for all! Hikers, Bikers, OHV,s, Horses all can and should be managed to maximize public access. How better to foster appreciation of our public lands

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

"Strenuous, perhaps, but very dangerous for children under age 16. Nothing so dangerous (killing or injuring over 40,000 children every year) deserves the "family friendly" label." - S PIn 1992, 722 bicyclists were killed in the United States in collisions with motor vehicles¹, and an estimated 650,000 people were treated in emergency rooms for bicycle-relatedWe now need to ban bicycles... And cars...

Data for #80 can be found atU.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission, National Injury Information Clearinghouse. National Electronic Injury Surveillance System Product Summary Report, Estimates for Calendar Year 1992. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission, July 1993: 9.

You got to be kidding me! Look...I'm a chaplain...a pastor of large church...I preach God's creation to be taken care of. We love the earth. I represent many OHV users who totally respect the environment we use. I mean come on. You live in a house that uses sewer...you fill the land with your garbage...you have wood in your framing...you dig into the earth to have a foundation for your home...your home displaced a certain number of animals or insects...there has to be some erosion issues with your home. Why do you and many like you have no problem being one of billions who impact the earth with a home and just plain old living....giving off carbon dioxide with your breathing, farting and excrement (sorry for the crass but brutal reality here) but then have a problem with managed OHV use? Are you kidding me? Look, I've been riding with friends and family for 25 years in our National Forest throughout California and 99% of the time I never see a home, hiker, biker or other OHV user. Get rid of humans and their homes if you want to make a real difference!

There is space for all on our public lands. Education and enforcement of rules to stay on established roads and trails is the answer not banning. Cows and clearcutting do more damage to water resources than any ORV could think of! If you have a problem with irresponsible users of any resource, educate and if they won't respect the land fine and ban them and not all those that do.

Some of my favorite memories visiting parks in my childhood were the "nature walks" and "fireside chats" we attended with the park rangers. Park rangers are the stewards and teachers of our invaluable national parks - we need to fully fund and staff the parks to ensure we get the most out of them!

The national parks have been a wonderful instrument of environmental education. Exhibits, campfire talks and nature walks have introduced many adults and children to the ecosystem concept. Growing environmental literacy in our country has contributed to better environmental legislation at the state and federal levels.

How about National Parks being staffed by volunteers and those who have a passion for introducing our young people to our national treasures. This would not impact the budget and would give college students and high school graduates a fun way to spend their summers.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

in that case then, the government should not support democrates because they are the most intolerant descriminatory group out there. The Boyscouts, on the otherhand, have made positive impacts on thousands of lives while teaching conservation and environmental responsibility. They have connected more kids to the great outdoors than any other organization I know of.

Again, if you do not like OHV/ATV then partake in the millions of designated wilderness acres. You won't find us there. Who has made the biggest footprint on our beautiful national forests? What about all that fossil fueled asphalt or concrete to build all those roads, you travel on. Wind and time will take thousands of years to cover (not restore) that. But look at the wagon trail ruts left on the Oregon trail, you can hardly find them. The only ones I have seen where on protected farm ground, that the farmer has diligently protected and preserved and that was only a couple hundred years ago. I am all for government policing of OHV recreation. Please donate your tax dollars to any anti-anti-access organization. Or just write a check to the US Treasury and in the memo, write to help police our national OHV areas and to help keep those dirt roads open.

The more trails that remain open for use, the less impact each of us will have upon the forest. We should be opening more routes, not closing them, to promote more dispersed use. Public Lands are for Public Use.

I always pick up trash on the trails or in the woods; I stop my atv, get off, pick it up and carry it out; it is just the way I was brought up; thanks mom and dad. I don't need any national clean up day organized or any special funding to buy protective gloves. Been doing it for 50 years, because it's the right thing to do. 50% of it is clear plastic water bottles.

I am not anti-hunting, but the facts are that most state fish and wildlife agencies depend on consumptive user (hunting, fishing, trapping) fees to provide a large majority of their budgets. As in politics, follow the money. These agencies obviously give most of their attention to managing for optimal hunting, fishing, and trapping because that is where their monetary bread is buttered. The only way to change this is to broaden and diversity how these state agencies are funded. For example, voluntary nongame tax checkoffs, and proposed excise taxes on bird seed or outdoor gear, are ways to broaden the public constituency that these agencies would want to represent. Hunters and other consumptive users have paid for many positive conservation programs and projects over many decades. It is time for the non-consumptive users to pay more of their fair share. After all, strong and effective conservation programs and projects are in everyone's interest, and generally provide benefits to both consumptive and non-consumptive users.

Thank you for your first-hand testimonial about the many benefits and successes of the California Conservation Corps -- may similar programs be extended across the nation!

Even local parks provide positive economic benefits. A study conducted by Parks and Trails NY shows that for each dollar invested in parks, five dollars in economic benefits are recieved by the community.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Another application of science is in setting land preservation priorities. Each region of the country is unique and has different natural assets that define its character, create opportunities for reconnecting with the outdoors for residents, and define its ecological health. Priorities for protection can be set by defining these values and mapping resource areas where funding should be targeted.

Anyone who has spent any time in the wilderness will recognize that any traffic wild or domestic has an impact. What is a game trail? I have run cattle in the mountains and they follow game trails that were already established from wildlife. The key is to desegregate trails and keep the impact to those specific areas and then you can maintain them and control the impact. There is no way to exist and not have an impact in some way, we just need to be realistic and responsible. I am not sure why you don't hear about the environmental impact the hurricanes, volcanos, earthquakes have. The impact of these things make our impact as humans look insignificant.

Great idea! Public Access to Public Land... who would have thought that a concept so simple would be so difficult to keep. I advocate Training for local recreation program managers as well. SP: The concerned families for ATV safety has a platform that is partly based upon figures from{ Link }a report titled ATV Injuries and Deaths Among Children Decrease. This report states the following in part: "According to data released by the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission, child deaths and serious injuries caused by all-terrain vehicles appear to have decreased in 2008. Tragically, however, at least 74 children lost their lives and more than 37,000 were injured seriously enough to require treatment in a hospital emergency department." The deaths as one poster already tallied in this forum reflects less than .04% of OHV users in the same group in 2008. I take issue with the 37,000 kids under the age of 16 who were injured seriously enough to require hospital treatment. In 2008, while on a Off Roding / Camping trip, I took my son to a near-by Emergency Room for stitches. At the end of the visit, the nurse confirmed that his visit would be counted as an OHV related treatment, as we were coming from Glamis, Ca. I took issue with this, as he was in the ER for splitting his chin open while playing in camp after dark with his cousins. It had nothing to do with an Off Road Vehicle!!! Knowing that my son is one of those 37,000, I seriously question the validity of the other 36,999 visits for Hospital Treatment in 2008.

this is a great idea. I have been a geocacher on and off for a few years. It's a great way to get outside and have a reason to explore some new areas. It gave me a reason to explore some public areas near me that I didn't know existed.

I agree, thank you for putting that so well. Most Jeeps are not OHV (off hwy vehicle) they are ATV (all terrain vehicle); I thought I should explain that. And no, my 05 Grand Cherokee is not keeping me fit, but my Polaris RZR side by side is and I ride it all over Oregon, Washington, Idaho, and Montana (not all over; because of all the anti-access opinions) Oh, and we are four generations of OHV users. :)

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Establishing an Ancient Forest National Park is simply a matter of re-designating the land. The vast majority of the proposed park is already established wilderness. What would be needed? Some infrastructure in the front country? Environmentalists need to have a higher consciousness of the rural poverty that is endemic in many of these areas. A national park designation immediately raises the stature of the land, it brings significantly more tourists, and allows for some benign economic development in these rural enclaves. The National Park System needs to be significantly expanded. The excuse that other units in the system are underfunded therefore we should not add more is fallacious. Many of these potential national parks are under constant development pressures, national monument status still allows many of them to be exploited by timber, oil and gas, grazing, mining and agricultural interests. If you want more money for conservation, parks, and environmental initiatives then it will be imperative to re-task money already in the budget, 52% of which goes to "national security" in the form of the budgets for DoD, DHS, and various intelligence agencies. That's an abomination, we spend more on "national defense" than the next 30 countries combined! As for the notion that ranchers are responsible stewards of the land, that is a dubious statement at best. Most ranchers are a subsidiary of Big Agra, they exploit federal lands, exhaust the resources, socialize all external costs, then internalize the profits. I dare anyone survey a grassland after it's been invaded by tens of thousands of cattle. The evidence just doesn't support the notion that ranchers are responsible stewards of the public commons, they may be better at caring for their own parcels of land where they cannot pass off the external costs to taxpayers, but I've seen what's happened to grasslands in Oregon after grazing interests ripped the hell out of the place, and it wasn't responsible stewardship. Ranchers masquerade as free marketeers, but in reality they're just free loaders.

My OHV group just did a "clean up day" on BLM land. We filled 5 giant dumpsters full of trash. Including garbage from a Sierra Club camp-out. Whens the last time you saw a Sierra Club "clean up day". I've looked in my area and found none. I'd love to participate!

your approach to this issue is all wrong. As I have already proven in this forum, I do have the ability to see both sides of the road despite being seated squarely on the seat of my quad in the middle of it. However, your efforts to ram your ideologies down my throat will result in no concessions from me. Good luck in your efforts!

It was, indeed, my privilege to attend this conference and I found it extremely beneficial. The wide-ranging experiences and backgrounds of the participants provided an excellent opportunity to learn others' perspectives and desires. Conversation and information flowed freely in the comfortable atmosphere of the conference.

The introduction and passage of an Omnibus Public Lands Bill like the one passed in the Spring of 2009.

Make permanent protection of Oteco Mesa as a National Monument.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Protect the wilderness in the Organ monuments thru a National Conservation area

Cut out the Red tape for getting matching Fed + State Funds. It slows everything down.

President Obama's America's Great Outdoors initiative to craft a 21st century strategy for our landscapes, our parks, and our wild areas is a bold step toward bringing families together in pursuit of active exploration of this country's wonderful public lands. And what better place to gather input to accomplish the goals of this initiative than in one of America's great urban national parks?

I am pleased to hear that a listening session is scheduled in the Minneapolis-St. Paul area in August and hope that the National Park Service plays a prominent role alongside the Environmental Protection Agency. Here in the Twin Cities - at the Mississippi National River and Recreation Area (MNRA) - we have shining examples of programs that actively engage young people in their first "national park experience."

The park is home to dozens of partnerships with state and local governments, non-profits, corporations, schools, churches and individuals. For example, the Urban Wilderness Canoe Adventure program provides 10,000 urban youth with an outdoor experience by getting them on the River. This partnership program builds confidence, strengthens outdoor skills, and encourages a healthy, outdoor lifestyle. MNRA is also one of the first 20 national parks in Michelle Obama's Let's Move Outside program because of the park's program impact on urban youth.

The park's many strong partnerships are also put to work protecting the River's resources and the rich cultural history of the Mississippi. The park and its local partners restore wildlife habitat, construct walking and bike trails, and remove invasive plants to restore and protect bluff lands.

General Mills care about the national parks. Our parks are testaments to our past and our common values. With its corporate roots along the Mississippi, General Mills has enjoyed a long relationship with the River and with this national park. The Mississippi National River and Recreation Area is one of our nation's special places that brings families together for a unique national park experience in the heart of an urban area. Please consider "listening" to the people who have helped make strong partnerships at this national park by holding a session with the National Park Service and the EPA at this great park.

Our San Francisco Bay Area hosts unique public lands of incredible beauty and wildness close to large population centers. Our public lands belong to Americans of all ages and provide us with clean supplies of drinking water, healthy air, and an opportunity to experience wildlife and nature.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Enhancing sustainable economic development opportunities through tourism and recreation will benefit local communities. Communities can diversify their economies by expanding tourism-related industries and boost ecotourism in their region and thereby increasing demand for food and lodging services.

Stewardship and conservation of our outdoor recreation lands, important watersheds and valued private lands works when we come together around our shared common values. Everyday across our state concerned citizens, tribal leaders, conservation groups, recreation businesses, and local elected officials join together to enhance and preserve their treasured special places.

Protecting these public lands will provide our best hope for addressing loss of species and open space, preserving water quality and adapting to climate change while preserving the wildlife and lands we enjoy today. This will give us the opportunity to actively reconnect our children to their incredible natural heritage.

Just recently, there was a huge success for wildlands protection in the magnificent Vermillion Basin, which the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) announced it will close to future oil and gas leasing. We need more bold actions like this to protect large, unfragmented and treasured landscapes.

Large natural areas, such as Cedar Mesa, the San Rafael Swell, Wasatch Mountains, Beaver Dam Wash and Red Cliffs -- provide our best hope for addressing loss of species and open space, preserving water quality and adapting to climate change while preserving the wildlife, recreation and lands we enjoy today. Protecting these lands will give us the opportunity to actively reconnect our children to their incredible natural heritage.

The Washington County Growth and Conservation Act created the 62,000-acre Red Cliffs National Conservation Area and 78,000-acre Beaver Dam Wash National Conservation Area and newly-designated Wilderness areas around the growing community of St. George. Management for all of the public lands in Washington County is currently being developed. This is a real chance to showcase all of the benefits highlighted in the public lands bill that came from the combined vision of county commissioners, conservation organizations, and local citizens.

Private Property owners are usually better Stewards than the government due to fewer regulations and private interest, so it would be counter productive to have the government involved in Landscape Wide Planning. This would degrade private property, reduce Landscape Health and infringe on private property rights.

Local Stewardship projects are the key to improving forest health. This has been proven time and time again on both private and agency lands where active stewardship has produced better forest health and increased biodiversity over non managed preserves.

Address Conservation at a Large Scale

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Protect our wilderness

Improve Watersheds and Wildlife Habitat

Connect people with Nature

Provide Increased Access and Recreational Opportunities

Fully Fund the Land and Water Conservation Fund

The Prairie Pothole Region supports outdoor recreational activities for millions of Americans, providing opportunities for both adults and youth to connect to our natural heritage. Migratory birds produced in the region support or enhance the outdoor experiences of waterfowl hunters, bird watchers, boaters and many other outdoor enthusiasts in nearly every state. Waterfowl hunters alone generate \$2.3 billion in local economic value annually and support more than 21,000 jobs throughout the country-revenue and jobs that are vital to local economies.

I am writing as a member of Trout Unlimited (TU) to offer suggestions from our experiences regarding strategies and activities that can help make America's Great Outdoors (AGO) Initiative a success. TU's mission is to conserve, protect and restore North America's trout and salmon fisheries and their watersheds. Since 1959, our approach to our mission has been rooted in community-based partnerships and using fishing as a way to connect with the outdoors and conservation efforts. We were glad to see these themes echoed in the President's memo on the AGO Initiative.

Our organization's mission is focused on trout and salmon, but achieving this mission requires healthy watersheds and a landscape-scale approach to conservation. Our strategy is to protect intact habitats, reconnect them to surrounding areas, and restore degraded habitats so that they again support healthy populations of fish and wildlife. It is also essential that we sustain today's conservation gains by engaging the next generation of environmental stewards through educational programs and outdoor activities.

For example, protecting valuable habitats like Bristol Bay, Alaska, which is currently threatened by the proposed Pebble mine, and roadless lands on national forests, we can ensure that these special places continue to serve as strongholds for trout, salmon, and other species. The Land and Water Conservation Fund has been one particularly effective tool for habitat protection.

It is not enough to protect individual blocks of habitat; we must reconnect them to surrounding areas. For example, dam removal on the Penobscot River in Maine will reconnect hundreds of miles of habitat.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Where habitat is impaired, we must restore it. For example, TU works with programs like Cooperative Watershed Restoration, National Fish Habitat Action Plan and the Farm Bill to improve in-stream and riparian habitats.

To engage the next generation of environmental stewards and sustain our conservation legacy, TU operates youth programs like Trout in the Classroom and service learning. For example, TU has worked with the EPA to educate students about water quality and freshwater ecology by raising trout in classroom tanks and taking field trips to release them into the wild.

By employing a landscape-scale approach to protect, reconnect and restore habitats and sustaining our conservation legacy through youth engagement, we can develop a strategy that achieves the goals of the AGO Initiative. Building on the projects and programs mentioned above will help implement the activities to make the initiative a success.

Earlier this month, Tennessee's U.S. Senators Corker and Alexander introduced the Tennessee Wilderness Act of 2010, which could protect nearly 20,000 acres of wilderness in the Cherokee National Forest. It would specifically designate six areas of wilderness, adding acreage to the beloved Big and Little Frog, Sampson Mountain, Big Laurel Branch and Joyce Kilmer-Slickrock wilderness areas, while creating more than 9,000 acres of Upper Bald River Wilderness. The Tennessee Wilderness Act represents the opportunities that exist within America's Great Outdoors to change conservation for the 21st century. This historic bipartisan push to expand Tennessee's wilderness is long overdue. However, the true victory will be seeing Congressional approval of the bill, providing everlasting protection for eastern Tennessee's land and wildlife.

Protect our Wilderness and the Cherokee National Forest in Tennessee. We are working with Government leaders to protect wilderness and wild and scenic rivers in the Cherokee National Forest. Your support of these proposals can preserve our wildest lands for future generations.

Please support conservation of large landscapes that include pristine wildlands, working forest and ranch lands, private parcels and connections across large areas. This provides us with the best hope for addressing loss of species and open space, preserving water quality and climate change adaptation while preserving the wildlife and lands we enjoy today.

Restoring our public lands helps protect clean water supplies and adapt to the effects of climate change. The Obama administration should prioritize collaborative restoration projects on public lands, making restoration a national priority.

When I think of America's Great Outdoors, I think of our national parks. National parks play a tremendous role in connecting people, young and old, to the outdoors, preserving the natural and cultural diversity of our nation, and contributing to the health of our people. National parks provide some of America's finest outdoor classrooms and serve as a basis for conservation, history, and civics education for millions of people each year.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Seize the opportunity that the upcoming Park Service centennial provides to renew our national parks. The administration should apply the lessons that were learned from the Centennial Initiative to developing a new public-private partnership to prepare our parks for their next century. We need a new national campaign that will involve people in communities throughout the country in protecting our parks for the next generation.

Do more to use national parks to inspire and educate young people. Our national parks are classrooms for discovery and learning for students and teachers. Programs like Teacher to Ranger to Teacher (TRT) allows teachers from low income school districts to spend the summer working as park rangers where they develop and present interpretive programs, staff visitor centers, and develop curriculum-based materials which they bring back to the classroom. This program should be expanded. And the Department of Education should work with the Park Service to excite kids with hands-on learning experiences.

Build on programs that work. The National Park Service has tremendous technical expertise and know-how that can help communities preserve their special places and provide recreational and educational opportunities for people. The Park Service's Rivers and Trails Conservation Assistance program has a long history of working with cities, suburbs, and small communities across the country on conservation efforts and providing expertise to help conserve rivers, preserve open space, and develop trails and greenways. You already have a great program, but it's under resourced. There's no need to reinvent the wheel. Invest in a model that is working in communities across the country.

A recent study commissioned by the National Parks Conservation Association found that every federal dollar invested in national parks generates at least four dollars of economic value to the public. In 2009, as the recession took its toll on Americans' pocketbooks, national park visitation increased on average by nearly 4 percent, demonstrating the enhanced value of our national parks to our people in difficult economic times.

The Los Angeles region, specifically the Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area (SMMNRA), is an exceptional area for showcasing best practices and innovative partnerships towards reaching these goals. We urge you to consider holding a listening session and field trip to the SMMNRA.

The programs implemented by the National Park Service at the SMMNRA reach thousands of inner-city youth from underserved communities and in many cases, provide their first encounter with nature.

The partnership established between the schools and the park provide transportation, supplies, and staff that engage youth in hands-on science education, service and recreation, fostering deep connections to nature and service.

Additionally, in partnership with school districts, colleges and universities, the National Park Service has created innovative employment programs that hire a diverse group of young people from underserved communities and provide a "stepping-stone" towards a full-time career with public land management agencies.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Starting with internships and ending with full-time positions, numerous youth now hold employment positions across California. We believe that learning about these success stories would add great value to the America's Great Outdoors initiative.

The National Park Service is currently conducting a special resources study of the Rim of the Valley Corridor that may lead to enhanced recreation and educational opportunities for communities challenged with the lack of open space. The administration can glean best practices from the SMMNRA's programs that will shape how our land management agencies better connect to urban communities.

As you continue to plan and develop America's Great Outdoors program, we hope you will consider visiting the Hudson Valley region to conduct a listening session and learn about innovative strategies at work to conserve our lands and waters for public benefit.

The Hudson River Valley is one of the most significant river corridors in the country. The historical, natural, cultural, commercial, scenic, and recreational resources spread throughout the region are unparalleled. Our region is home to a wealth of history and beautiful landscapes that inspire a school of art and fostered innovation that drove our nation's early economy. Today the region is a model for the green job movement, with an emerging solar energy industry and a \$4.7 billion tourism economy that is closely linked with conservation and outdoor recreation industries.

Currently, the Hudson River Valley is designated as a National Heritage Area, National Estuarine Research Reserve and a New York State Greenway. In addition, the House of Representatives recently passed legislation authorizing a National Park Service special resource study of the Hudson River Valley.

We applaud your effort to promote and support innovative community-level efforts to conserve outdoor spaces and to reconnect Americans to the outdoors. Stakeholders from across our region have been involved in exactly these types of efforts for many years. Whether it is connecting residents of the New York City metropolitan area to one of our country's greatest landscapes or working on regional-level through the Greenway to conserve our historic, cultural and natural resources in the face of persistent population growth, the Hudson River Valley has been at the forefront of promoting innovative and cooperative solutions to our challenges.

There are a number of local initiatives working to keep these private forestlands intact before they are lost permanently to development. Washington State and local county and city governments are making major commitments to protect and restore the Puget Sound – creating a working plan and strategy under the direction of the Puget Sound Partnership.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

We are writing to encourage you to schedule an America's Great Outdoors listening session in our home state of New Jersey, also known as the Garden State. We believe that the America's Great Outdoors Initiative will provide an opportunity for the Environmental Protection Agency, the Council on Environmental Quality, the Department of Interior and the other agencies to hear from the diverse audiences who often live in densely populated cities and face significant obstacles when searching for healthy recreation opportunities.

New Jersey is home to a myriad of unique natural landscapes, from the Pine Barrens and Barnegat Bay in the south to the Harbor Estuary and the New Jersey Highlands in the north. New Jersey also hosts many state parks and forests, five national wildlife refuges, Morristown National Historical Park and portions of the Gateway National Recreation Area. Even with these natural and recreation areas, however, it is important to note that New Jersey is the nation's most densely populated state, where more than 40 acres of open spaces are lost each day to development.

In our country, only one in five homes have a park within a half-mile and this number is even higher for New Jersey's cities, which are some of the country's most densely populated. All Americans are adversely affected by limited green spaces, deteriorating community facilities, health problems, and juvenile delinquency. Research shows that healthy and vibrant urban areas play key roles in improving the economy, health, and quality of life in our communities. Urban parks are instrumental in helping our nation achieve important national goals of increasing exercise, providing safe, healthy alternatives for at-risk youth, and spurring local economic development. Providing cities with outdoor resources is a necessity and will reconnect people to the great outdoors.

The Hackensack Meadowlands is a beautiful, natural wetlands area. In this 8,400 acre area just minutes outside Manhattan, there are more than 50 species of fish and shellfish. Two-hundred fifty species of birds can be seen in the Meadowlands, and more than 65 species of birds nest there. Migratory birds come to the Meadowlands during their migration cycle in growing numbers, which has made the area an important part of the North American ecosystem. This area will provide this and future generations with unparalleled opportunities for eco-canoe trips, nature walks, bird watching, other appropriate recreational activities, and an environmental educational center for students. All of these activities will be in the midst of what was once deemed to be a poisoned marshland that was considered forever irreclaimable.

The Highlands comprise 800,000 acres of mostly forested land in New Jersey's seven northern counties. The region's forested watersheds supply clean drinking water to more than half of New Jersey's residents, and also provide carbon sequestration for the densely populated Mid-Atlantic States, wildlife corridors and abundant natural areas within close proximity to millions of Americans in the Ramapo Mountains, the Fanny Highlands, Wallkill River National Refuge and Sterling Forest.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Currently, there are America's Great Outdoors listening sessions that have taken place in Los Angeles and other areas. Currently, there are America's Great Outdoors listening sessions that have taken place in Los Angeles and other areas in the South and West. We believe that the challenges that New Jersey faces in regards to the need for urban parks and access to quality recreation opportunities in densely populated cities and suburbs is unique and should be part of our national public lands agenda and the discussion should take place in New Jersey.

We appreciate your efforts in this regard and agree that new conservation initiatives should be based on the input from local citizens and landowners who will be most directly affected by them. In that spirit, we are writing to ask you to consider holding a listening session in Pierre, South Dakota, this summer to allow the citizens of our state to express their views on potential future AGO initiatives to conserve South Dakota's natural resources.

From the Black Hills to the Missouri River to the Prairie Pothole Region, South Dakotans take seriously their roles as stewards of natural resources. Moreover, numerous South Dakotans take full advantage of conserved lands through such pursuits as hunting, fishing, hiking, biking, camping, and snowmobiling. In fact, South Dakota's land and water resources draw thousands of visitors to the state each year, who make substantial contributions to our economy. Pheasant hunting alone provides an estimated \$200 million per year to South Dakota's income base.

South Dakota's economy also depends on a thriving agricultural sector, and conservation initiatives need to be designed with our working lands in mind. Historically, some of the most successful and well-accepted conservation efforts have been voluntary programs like the Department of Agriculture's Conservation Reserve Program (CRP), Wetlands Reserve Program (WRP) and Grasslands Preserve Program, and the Department of the Interior's wetlands and grasslands easement programs. These programs have allowed farmers and ranchers to decide if, when, and to what extent they want to participate, and to schedule their enrolment in ways that complement their ongoing grazing and crop production operations.

In addition to the basic Federal Programs mentioned above to improve habitat stewardship, our State wildlife agency has hunting access "Walk-In" programs in which the landowners can earn extra annual payments if his/her private land improvement programs have proved to be very popular with sportsmen and landowners and it adds directly to the economic benefits of having healthy bird and big game populations.

One potential initiative that we would like to explore through this listening session is how we can more effectively meet the existing unmet demand for grassland and wetland easements, which are particularly popular with our agriculture producers in the Prairie Pothole Region. This area includes significant expanses of native prairie upland grasslands and abundant wetlands, and provides habitat for hundreds of species of upland birds, waterfowl, and other wildlife. There are currently over 800 interested landowners representing roughly 360,000 acres of habitat waiting to be considered for a grassland or wetland easement on their property. Since its inception, landowners have enrolled 1.8 million acres in the easement program, and it is anticipated that demand for easements is sufficient to enable conservation of many additional acres of this unique habitat in the future.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Well-regarded national conservation organizations, led by Ducks Unlimited, and including Pheasants Forever and the Boone and Crockett Club, as well as the U. S. Fish & Wildlife Service, have expressed support for additional efforts to conserve the Prairie Pothole Region.

Generally speaking, federal ownership of large swaths of land in Maine is not politically viable, due to our long standing tradition of private land ownership, established before there even was a federal government to own land. Maine has developed a system of private land trusts that work with landowners to protect their land for public benefit. The State of Maine, with a small population and one of the most important forest areas in the country, does the best it possibly can to protect the forest resource with very limited funds.

Congratulations on a successful launch of the America's Great Outdoor Initiative! The United States is blessed with so many wonderful outdoor spaces that enrich the human experience, support our economy, and sustain critical ecosystems. I commend you for jump-starting a welcome conversation regarding how to get Americans - and particularly our young people - out the door and experiencing the natural world. I am convinced that spending time in our great outdoors will improve our health and happiness and will instill a commitment to conserve these wonderful, restorative places. Thank you, too, for including Washingtonians at the launch to include Billy Frank, Jr., Chairman, Northwest Indian Fisheries Commission, and Sally Jewell, President and CEO, REI.

The Washington State ethos is one that values our environment in its tremendous diversity. The rivers and streams, lakes, mountains, gorges, farmlands, forests, the Palouse, Puget Sound, the Pacific Ocean - and the many species that inhabit these places - have left, and continue to leave, an indelible mark on our collective psyche. The respect for the environment is not new. The earliest people of the northwest region lived in harmony with the land and water and bestowed this depth of connection to their descendents who, today, make up twenty-nine federally recognized tribes.

Also, in 1913, not long after statehood, Washington State legislatively institutionalized a state park system - three years before President Wilson signed a bill to create the National Park Service as a separate bureau within the U.S. Department of the Interior. We continue to take our stewardship responsibilities seriously and, working across jurisdictions and among numerous interests, we are ensuring a balance of conservation and preservation with recreational, educational, and economic opportunities.

Again, I congratulate you on the America's Great Outdoors Initiative. My administration stands ready to serve as a resource to you and your team. Know, too, that the people of Washington State welcome the opportunity to share their collective efforts to preserve and protect - and delight in - the majesty of the natural world around them.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

In addition to the natural benefits, our local economy has come to depend on the many natural benefits of the Adirondack Region. Tourists who come to ski, fish, hike and enjoy other outdoor activities are critical to the many small businesses in our region. In a 2008 report, the New York State Department of Labor estimated tourism is the number one industry in New York's North County region. With this in mind, it is important we do all we can to help draw attention to the great value of resources like the Adirondacks.

We applaud your effort to promote and support innovative community-level efforts to conserve outdoor spaces and to reconnect Americans to the outdoors. Stakeholders from across our region have been involved in exactly these types of efforts for many years. Whether it is protecting waters like the St. Lawrence River and Lake Champlain or promoting the many historic landmarks throughout the state, the Adirondack Region has been at the forefront of promoting innovative and cooperative solutions to our challenges.

We are confident that you will find many projects and partnerships that exemplify the America's Great Outdoors agenda in the Adirondack Region and we hope that you, or another senior representative from one of the other federal agencies involved in this endeavor, will be able to include our region in your upcoming tour of the country.

This was a wonderful event! It brought so many people who care about the same things we do together to help us solve some of our most vexing problems related to protecting and preserving our country's rich outdoor heritage.

I would like to offer hosting a follow-up event in my district in Napa, CA so many of the people that work in the West, who for one reason or another couldn't to travel to Washington this week, will have the opportunity to meet the leaders in the Administration who are doing such important work and build upon this week's momentum. If this is of interest, please let me know so I can help set up the venue and also tours of some of the great on-the-ground work currently being done. Again, thank you for all you do and if I can be of any assistance, please contact me.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide our comments on the America's Great Outdoors Initiative (Initiative) and to provide information on the efforts Vail Resorts has undertaken related to the important goals of the Initiative. In our comments below we describe the highlights of our work to get kids recreating outdoors, engage the public in conservation and restoration projects, and contribute to our local communities as a sustainable economic resource. Much of this work is the result of vibrant public-private partnerships and we encourage the Initiative to explore this model for future partnerships. Please do not hesitate to contact us if you would like additional information on any of our efforts.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Vail Resorts is the world's premier mountain resort company operating five of the most popular ski resorts in the United States: • Vail, Beaver Creek, Breckenridge, and Keystone located entirely or partially on the White River National Forest in Colorado; and • Heavenly Mountain Resort in the Lake Tahoe Basin Management Unit in California & Nevada. Vail Resorts operates its resorts on National Forest System lands under special use permits from the United States Forest Service (USFS). Our resorts work in partnership with the USFS to deliver an outdoor recreation experience unmatched in the world.

The longstanding public-private partnership greatly benefits the American public by: providing recreation opportunities; boosting rural economies; improving the health and fitness of millions of Americans; providing kids great outdoor experiences; and promoting support for public lands and programs that protect our natural environment.

Over the past five years, U.S. ski areas have averaged 57.8 million skier/snowboarder visits annually, and about 60% of those visits occurred on public land. During the recent 2009/2010 season Vail Resorts' five resorts drew over 6 million skier visits (approximately 10% of skier visits in the United States.) In addition to the ski season, thousands of people visit the communities in which we operate to enjoy the beautiful summer weather and multitude of activities including recreating in the woods. This year-round visitation at ski areas makes up 20% of all recreation visits to the National Forest, yet ski areas occupy less than one-tenth of one percent of USFS lands.

This activity yields tremendous conservation benefits - providing recreation opportunities to millions of visitors in a mitigated environment and helping alleviate undesirable recreation impacts elsewhere on the forest.

These tourism/recreation based activities also represent a significant sustainable economic resource that employs tens of thousands of people and represents an important economic base for many mountain communities and states. In Colorado, tourism is the state's 2nd largest industry with over 143,000 employees and \$15 billion in annual travel spending.

Vail Resorts was excited to learn of the America's Great Outdoors Initiative (Initiative) as many of its goals relate to activities that Vail Resorts is involved with through our corporate stewardship program, Vail Resorts Echo (VR Echo).

Hayman Fire Restoration: In 2002 the Hayman Fire raged through the Pike National Forest, as well as state, county and private lands, burning a total of 137,760 acres. The fire destroyed 600 structures, including 133 homes, jeopardized habitat for numerous threatened or endangered species, and severely impacted the water source for more than 75% of Colorado's 4.3 million residents as well as downstream states. VR Echo has joined with the National Forest Foundation and the United States Forest Service on the Hayman Restoration Project to help bring back the areas destroyed by the Hayman fire. The effort will include riparian restoration to help reduce sediment loads, enhancement and relocation of trails, reforestation, noxious weed eradication, native plant and wildlife habitat restoration, and climate change mitigation and adaptation strategies.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

As the private funding catalyst for the restoration project, VR Echo pledged \$750,000 and 1,500 employee volunteer hours over the next three years. The total area covered by the restoration project exceeds 115,000 acres with the majority taking place on 45,000 acres most affected by the fire. The goal is to complete the project by 2012, the 10th anniversary of the Hayman fire, with the objective of planting more than 200,000 Ponderosa pine, Douglas fir and other native trees on over 1,700 acres and additional native vegetation on 115 acres and across 13 miles. Through the project, jobs have been created for Colorado youth, and communities have been engaged through volunteer opportunities.

As mentioned earlier, tourism and recreation represent a significant sustainable economic resource that, in many regions and states, represents a core economic activity. Vail Resorts employs up to 15,000 employees during the height of the snow sports season, but also employs a significant number of people during the non-winter months. We are currently working with the National Ski Areas Association and Congress to create a national approach to growing seasonal and year-round recreation opportunities at public land ski areas via the Ski Area Recreational Opportunity Enhancement Act (S. 607/H.R. 2476). Enhanced year-round recreation opportunities and visitation as it relates to mountain communities increases year round employment opportunities stabilizing local economies and workforces.

The preservation of unique and beautiful tracts of land as National Parks is often called "America's Best Idea." Present generations are profoundly grateful for the foresight and effort that went into setting aside the parks that we enjoy today. Now it is our turn to do what we can for those who will come after us. I propose that our gift to the future to be a network of old-growth (or future old-growth) forests across the U.S. - one in every county. In these forests visitors will be able to experience our native forests in their mature diversity and complexity; children will be able to connect with the land that sustains them. Below I explain the benefits of this network, and a possible scenario for its structure.

Forests grow in most of the U.S., but they do not grow everywhere. Figure 1 shows how forests, and forest types, are distributed in the continental states. For the old-growth network to be truly effective, and to be within reach of all school children, there should be one forest identified which will be left forever wild within each county where forest naturally grows. Figure 2 shows the distribution of the 3,140 counties. It is estimated that forests will not grow naturally in 770 counties of these counties; therefore the remaining 2,370 counties could be part of the network.

Although this figure may seem daunting at first, many of the counties already contain public forests and a single one merely needs to be chosen and officially recognized as part of the network. In many counties it will be existing protected Federal land which becomes recognized in the network, such as National Forest, or Fish and Wildlife land. In other places, such as in the northern counties of New York, it will likely be a State Forest that is recognized.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Building the old-growth network in this way will take very little financial investment. The result will be a gift for all generations to come. A gift that will get more beautiful, and more filled with life, as time passes. A place which will never be sold or placed off-limits, and can therefore be the cornerstone of curriculum lessons. Over two thousand unlogged, accessible forests which will have a positive effect on both the humans and the wildlife in our nation.

Although forest benefits have not been specifically tied to the age of the forests, we do know that forests provide health benefits and psychological benefits. Perhaps the most recognized, but least studied, attribute of older forests is their beauty. This element of beauty brings a mixture of joy and respect to almost everyone who experiences and old-growth forest.

The National Parks began as places for human recreation and spiritual refreshment, and the ecological benefits were recognized later. In our establishment of an old-growth network we acknowledge both the cultural and the ecological benefits as equally desirable.

All forest stages have an important ecological role to play. The old-growth stage is especially important because of its unique structure. Various canopy layers and berry-producing plants are beneficial for many animal species, especially birds. In a forest that has not been disturbed for hundreds of years some trees develop hollow cavities, and these cavities become important nesting places for animals. In an undisturbed forest some large trees die and fall, creating yet more habitat: numerous insects, fungi, reptiles and amphibians benefit from the fallen trees.

The moisture retained within an old-growth forest benefits lichen and mosses, and the species that live among the mosses and lichen. Old-growth forests are one of the few land uses where topsoil is created instead of destroyed. More carbon and nitrogen is retained in an old-growth forest than in forests of other age classes. For improving water quality an air quality there is nothing better than an old-growth forest.

Old-growth forests are also recognized as important reservoirs of genetic diversity. Moreover, the old stands can serve as controls for comparing the effects of various ongoing forestry management practices.

If an old-growth forest already exists in a county it would be the ideal forest to add to the network. If there is currently no old-growth forest remaining (the more usual situation) then the ideal forest for the network would be an older, intact forest. If no older forest exist then any piece of land can be considered "future old-growth" and added to the network. Forests in the later category will be especially interesting subjects for studying old-growth characteristics as they develop.

Forests of any size will be considered, but in situations where a number of possible forests exist the largest one will be preferred. A small old forest is better than no old forest, but as the acreage of a forest increases the ecological functioning becomes more complex and more species are capable of existing there. Some species do not breed well in forests that are less than 250 acres.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Forests in the network will remain forever wild with no logging, no spraying of insecticides or herbicides, and no removal of plants or animals. Forest will remain open to hikers during all daylight hours free of charge. Properties may change ownership, but the deed restrictions will remain.

The old-growth network is a place where nature rules and humans only visit, therefore very little infrastructure is necessary, or desired. A parking and turnaround area for school buses and a marked trail are all that is necessary. Some counties may choose to install trash facilities and/or restrooms. These decisions will be made on a case by case basis.

In every state and county of the nation there are laws relating to acceptable behavior. Those laws will apply in the forest the same as they would on a public street.

Just because a forest is part of the old-growth network does not mean that it will stay one hundred percent healthy. Disasters and invasive species and storms are all part of nature's cycles. There is something to be learned from how a forest, left alone, responds to these challenges. Of course there are many forest types, and every situation is different, but generally non-management will be the rule.

The Old-Growth Network is being organized by _____. Please contact her to be placed on the interest list.

As you tour the nation this summer, allow me to invite you to hold one of your listening sessions in my congressional district in Cincinnati at the National Underground Railroad Freedom Center. Ideally, you could fit a trip here sometime between Aug. 20th and the 31st. The Freedom Center, which is located downtown steps from the Ohio River, would be an ideal venue for your meeting. Its 300-seat Harriet Tubman Theater is both spacious and intimate - a perfect setting for a dialogue with local citizens. I also understand that Valerie Jarrett has requested that you to speak with the Freedom Center's leadership about a proposal they would like for you to consider.

The Freedom Center's importance to our country's history and heritage cannot be understated. Its exhibitions and the programs define, in dramatic fashion, America's struggle to achieve freedom, and how that struggle continues today around the world. This theme is brought to life in the dramatic story of the escape of untold numbers of slaves in ante-bellum America on a secret network of safe houses and routes that came to be called the Underground Railroad. With the Ohio River just outside the Freedom Center's main entrance, visitors to the museum (well over 1,000,000 since its opening) are able to see this history where it happened. Many escaping slaves passed through Cincinnati on their way to freedom; many were secretly hidden in cellars and attics of sympathetic citizens. Harriet Beecher Stowe spent some of her childhood in Cincinnati. Her history-changing book, *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, takes place in an area around this region.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Today, the Freedom Center sits at the very heart of an enormous riverfront development project, called the Banks, which includes a new 45-acre urban park that will open in 2011. The Riverfront Park is being developed with funding from the Army Corps of engineers, the Cincinnati Park Board, and the State of Ohio. The new park is the latest manifestation of a century-long commitment by the City of Cincinnati to develop and maintain one of the nation's most-impressive urban park networks. It would well be worth your time to see how our parks are so thoroughly integrated with the overall community. My staff is ready and prepared to work with your office to coordinate a visit and a listening session, and I look forward to having you in Cincinnati.

We created VR Echo to nurture and enliven social responsibility in our company and to connect stakeholders in a new way to the diverse and growing elements that make up our stewardship efforts. VR Echo consists of three main efforts: environmental stewardship, charitable giving and community engagement which each intersect with the goals of the Initiative. For more information about VR Echo, including some of our success stories, please visit www.VailResortsEcho.com

In addition to the public lands visitation ski areas facilitate, much of our work through VR Echo intersects the goal of reconnecting Americans, especially children, to the outdoors in some of the country's most iconic locations.

Charitable Giving: VR Echo contributes significant resources to help provide access to outdoor recreation for kids who would otherwise not have the opportunity. VR Echo partners with community non-profits to sponsor education and recreation activities through direct financial contributions and a variety of in-kind donations of Vail Resorts company resources.

Some of our key non-profit partnerships work to connect Colorado's kids to the great outdoors by providing access, as well as the skills and tools, to enjoy the state's vast forests. These organizations, including SOS Outreach, Walking Mountains (formerly Gore Range Natural Science School), Keystone Science School and the Breckenridge Outdoor Education Center not only provide children the opportunity to experience the great outdoors, but also teach critical leadership skills and environmental education to encourage support for public lands among future generations.

School of Shred - 5th & 6th Grade Ski Pass Program: Vail Resorts offers every Colorado 5th and 6th grade child the opportunity to register to receive a "School of Shred" pass that provides 4 days of free skiing/riding at each of our Colorado resorts as well as a free ski lesson and equipment rental for new skiers/riders.

Volunteerism: VR Echo strives to provide our employees and their families with opportunities to volunteer in their communities with a focus on environmental stewardship. In the last year, Vail Resorts employees donated more than 2000 hours of company sponsored volunteer time to projects such as the Hayman Restoration Project and forest restoration projects in each of the communities in which our resorts operate. Across the company, our employees are making a tangible difference in their local communities.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

National Get Outdoors Day: VR Echo is a committed partner to National Get Outdoors Day (NGOD), a collaborative effort led by the United States Forest Service and the American Recreation Coalition to get kids outside. In the planning stages for its fourth year, NGOD brings together more than 100 non-profits that are working to provide kids of all ages more access and better education about Colorado's natural playground. NGOD provides an opportunity for kids and their families to learn more about the outdoors and the non-profits that promote and encourage outdoor activities.

EpicMix: Vail Resorts recently announced EpicMix, an online application that will allow guests to automatically track their skiing days and accomplishments on the mountain. These experiences can then be shared with guests' social networks via Facebook and Twitter. Kids will also be able to access this feature via a kids-only application under the supervision of their parents or guardians. EpicMix will effortlessly utilize technology to digitally capture ski and ride experiences and, with the permission of the guest, share it with their friends and family enhancing the connection to the outdoors and recreation. Please see www.epicmix.com for more information on this exciting innovation.

In addition to the public-private partnership that is the basis for public lands ski areas, VR Echo partners with many community non-profits to support conservation and restoration efforts:

National Forest Foundation Ski Area Conservation Fund: VR Echo partners with the National Forest Foundation (NFF) on an ongoing program of forest conservation and restoration. The program raises funds through a voluntary guest donation program. Everytime a guest purchases a ski season pass, an on-line lift ticket, a round of golf or a hotel room at our lodging properties, they are asked to contribute \$1 to the NFF program which is matched with \$.50 by NFF.

Since its inception in 2006, the program has raised nearly \$1.7 million for on-the-ground conservation efforts such as trail restoration and reforestation. Funds raised have gone towards work in forests in Colorado, California and Nevada. Nearly 40 individual projects have received funding through this program, including the Colorado Fourteeners Initiative, the Eagle County Youth Conservation Corps and Friends of the Eagles Nest Wilderness.

The Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies was established in 1902 to support state fish and wildlife agency conservation authority and to advance sound and sustainable management of fish and wildlife and their habitats in the public interest. State fish and wildlife agencies play a unique and critical role in conserving our nation's fish and wildlife and will be vital to the success of an initiative to conserve outdoor spaces on this people and fish and wildlife depend. We appreciate the opportunity to be a part of this much-needed dialogue about America's Great Outdoors and look forward to seeing the report to President Obama. On behalf of the Association's member agencies, we encourage you to consider including the following priorities in the final report.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Support Implementation of State Wildlife Action Plans The development of wildlife Action Plans in every U.S. state and territory over the past five years is a significant conservation milestone. These congressionally mandated plans were developed collaboratively by fish and wildlife managers, scientists, conservation organizations and private citizens with the goal of preventing future endangered species listings and to keep common species common. The plans identify more than 12,000 species that are at-risk; their threats; and the habitats and landscapes needed to safeguard rare an abundant fish and wildlife. Full implementation of these plans would meet priorities shared by federal and state agencies and private conservation organizations and is supported by more than 6,300 organizations and businesses that are part of the Teaming With Wildlife coalition.

The Appalachian National Scenic Trail (A.T.) in Maine traverses a rich and diverse landscape and is widely recognized as one of the wildest and most spectacular sections of the Appalachian Trail. The trail travels 281 miles across the state from the summit of Katahdin southwesterly to the Maine-New Hampshire border. The trail lands encompass varied ecosystems from sub-alpine forests and alpine plant communities to large tracts of northern hardwood and spruce-fir forests to extensive wetlands and important aquatic environments. Much of the A.T. in Maine travels through private land, protected by only a narrow corridor. Private and state efforts have protected land surrounding some important sections of the A.T. in Maine. But much more needs to be done. Additional efforts involving a variety of landowners, conservation and recreation interests are currently in progress or being worked on. But there is a limit to what we can do on our own, without additional federal funding, especially when many tens of thousands of acres are in need of varying levels of conservation.

In the United States, there are wildlife corridor efforts in all 50 states and every congressional district. These corridors are important for the sustainability of every major wildlife group from the monarch butterfly to the pronghorn antelope to the California grey whale -- and are found in urban, rural and wild natural areas. Indeed, because corridors connect core natural areas they epitomize the need for landscape-scale conservation approaches that make our lands and waters permeable for wildlife movement and climate change resiliency. Wildlife corridors are one of a handful of conservation issues that connect all Americans.

The Freedom to Roam Coalition of business, non-profit and governmental leaders believe that the concept of wildlife corridors is an idea that captures people's imaginations and are vital elements in developing a conservation agenda for the 21st Century. We see America's Great Outdoors as a special moment in our nation's conservation history with the opportunity to affirm wildlife corridor protection and as such offer these recommendations:

The Obama Administration has graciously put forth the American Great Outdoors program and has solicited comments from the general public and those concerned about our natural resources, wildlife and their respective futures. The following are a few of my comments, mirrored by many, based on a lifetime of experience and more importantly on the last 11 years of mountain lion advocacy here in South Dakota.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Historically, following the ruling in *Martin v. Waddell*, the wildlife and our natural resources 'belong not to anyone in particular', but rather are a public entity, for all of us citizens to experience and enjoy. As you know, the hunting community was, and many still proclaim to be, the first conservationists. Hunters were instrumental in leading the way to landmark decisions that resulted in the end of 'market hunting' and a more stable view of and programs for wildlife and natural resources. In time, such thinking led to the adoption of the North American Model of Wildlife Conservation.

Finally, if you truly want to make 'Change WE can believe in' and not just give lip service to the issues, please consider the following. These are earth shaking ideas, yet they would result in a much better overall wildlife and natural resources state of affairs for our country. I know most entrenched politicians and agencies will consider my thoughts laughable and unthinkable, but if you just allow your minds to open, you might like what you hear.

Such restrictions would be of untold value to the conservation efforts for 'Change'. I realize it would take real intestinal fortitude to put this in place, running counter to decades of abuse, but you asked for ideas and this would revolutionize a pro environmental approach to our shared wild lands.

As you can see, I have little to gain but if you in positions of authority would just heed some of these thoughts, much good could come. I close with my Agenda for my Mountain Cats Trust [Google me to see who I really am]..."To assure that the Future for Your Grandchildren is full of the Wonders and the Mysteries that You and I have had the Privilege to experience".

The private ownership of nearly all of the forestland in this state has afforded us the very unique, longtime tradition of open access to these lands since the first settlers in Maine. Our forest industries, the commercial users such as sporting camps, guides, and rafting companies, and local residents and tourists all benefit from a system that drives a major part of our state's economy. This is what works. It's what maintains our rural economy along with the taxes paid on this privately owned land.

People in Maine are connected to the outdoors - the people who live here and those who come to visit. It's a connection that has existed for hundreds of years. People who come here to recreate in the Maine woods, camping, hiking, fishing, hunting, and appreciate the natural beauty, use the system of private woods roads maintained by the landowners in northern Maine. Without this access a large part of our tourism industry would be lost which would have a huge impact on our state's economy. There is no need to change this. This system works.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

This fact is no better exemplified than in an email sent by the former executive director of the Natural Resources Council of Maine, Brownie Carson, to a deputy assistant in the Dept. of the Interior on August 25, 2009, one year ago. It reads in part - "We (NRCM) are working on a fabulous project in Maine, the object of which is to protect 4.5 million acres of Maine's northern forest in the Moosehead Lake- Baxter Park-Allagash Wilderness Waterway region..... When Secretary. Salazar was here in July for a tour of Acadia, a small group of colleagues (including our board chair) met briefly with him to discuss this northern forest initiative. My understanding is that he was very enthusiastic about it, and suggested that it may be a good fit for the Treasured Landscapes program. I'd like to talk with you about how best to follow up, find out who is staffing the program (with focus on our area), and get your thoughts about timing, process, etc.This is landscape that the people should own!"

The Wildlife Society appreciates this opportunity to submit comments on President Obama's America's Great Outdoors initiative to encourage conservation and connect people to natural places. The Wildlife Society was founded in 1937 and is a non-profit scientific and educational association of over 9,100 professional wildlife biologists and managers, dedicated to excellence in wildlife stewardship through science and education. Our mission is to represent and serve wildlife professionals - the scientists, technicians, and practitioners actively working to study, manage, and conserve native and desired non-native wildlife and their habitats worldwide.

We appreciate the efforts of Interior staff to hold a listening session at the recent American Wildlife Conservation Partners meeting in Fall River, Kansas. Below, please find TWS's comments on what works in conservation, the challenges that we face, the role of the federal government, and the tools we need to make our efforts more successful, as requested during that listening session.

Hunting is a key component of the North American Model of Wildlife Conservation, which was developed in the U.S. and Canada. Through license fees, excise taxes on equipment, and other related spending, hunters, trappers, and anglers provide the primary source of funding for wildlife and habitat conservation. The regulated and ethical hunting heritage of this country should be sustained through access programs that provide places for the public to hunt, trap, and fish; educational programs to attract and retain hunters, trappers, and anglers; and continued legal access to sporting arms and ammunition.

Conservation programs in the Farm Bill connect farmers and ranchers to the land while allowing them to continue to work and live on it. At the same time, they protect habitat for a myriad of wildlife species and safeguard clean air and water; as such, DOI should work with USDA to promote and support Farm Bill programs.

Five years ago, each state and territorial fish and wildlife agency in collaboration with their partners and the public developed a State Wildlife Action Plan that identified thousands of conservation actions that are needed to keep common species common and prevent future endangered species listings. These plans provide blueprint for conservation success across the country. However, as noted below, state still lack the funded needed to implement these plans.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

American Trails would first like to acknowledge all the great leaders of our past who had the foresight to set aside some of our Country's greatest natural resources. Today, it is estimated there are over 600 million acres of federal land alone, not to mention state and local public lands, which represents over one-third of our country's land mass. Vital to the access and enjoyment of this vast acreage of natural resources is the enormous trail system that enables all Americans the opportunity to experience America's Great Outdoors. Our thanks to the many who strive to conserve and protect our natural resources.

Leaders across the country are beginning to acknowledge the critical role(s) trails can play in the health of their communities. First and foremost, we have seen firsthand the power of trail projects that transform communities and people through investments in vital infrastructure to promote healthy communities and more importantly, healthy people.

Probably the next most effective strategy comes from the vast array of scientific studies that have positively linked trails with healthy individuals and healthy communities. These empirical findings are the result of purposive planning where by communities have been strategically placing trails as a major component of their redevelopment concept both in terms of recreational use and transportation needs.

Additional studies have shown that trails helping youth discover nature, and that young people across America are building a better future by learning skills for trails and natural resource work. Trails teach creativity and problem solving, and help bring our classrooms outdoors. By providing places for environmental education, trails help everyone learn to value our natural world and become better land stewards.

The American Horse Council is pleased that President Obama has launched the America's Great Outdoors Initiative. We applaud President Obama's effort to highlight conservation and outdoor recreation. The American Horse Council (AHC) is a Washington-based association that represents the equestrian community. The AHC includes individual members and over 160 equine organizations that represent virtually every facet of the equestrian community, including horse owners, recreational riders, competitive associations, breeders, veterinarians, race tracks, horse shows, trainers, rodeos, farriers, breed registries, horsemen's associations, state horse councils and commercial suppliers.

The conservation, management and use of America's public and private lands are extremely important to the equestrian community. The entire equestrian community is dependent on America's public and private lands. America's horses are bred, boarded and trained on private horse farms all over the country. Every horse relies on grain and hay produced on America's farmland. Recreational riders need access to public lands and well maintained trails, trailheads for horses, and facilities to make use of our nation's public lands.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

The equestrian community and horse industry is extremely diverse. It includes the family that goes trail riding on public and private trails near their home, as well as the family or hunter who takes a two week pack trip in the west. It includes young Americans who participate in pony club, high school rodeo, or vaulting and individuals who compete in Three Day Eventing, Dressage, and Jumping events on weekends as recreation as well as the Olympic and professional athletes who compete in these events. The breeders, trainers, owners, and even spectators of America's horse racing industry are all part of the equestrian community.

The equestrian community is demographically diverse. Ownership of horses and participation is spread across the range of American household incomes. Contrary to popular perception, most horse owners are middle class. 23% of horse owners' have household incomes between \$25,000 and \$50,000 while another 22% of horse owners have household incomes between \$50,000 and \$75,000. The equestrian community is geographically diverse. It has participants in every state. Almost 40 states have horse populations over 100,000 some many times that. It also includes individuals who live in our nation's largest metropolitan areas in addition to rural communities. It is worth noting that the horse industry involves 9 million horses, has an economic impact of \$102 billion on the U.S. Economy and supports 1.4 million full-time jobs.

The common trait of all parts of the equestrian community share is the horse, and American's horses are linked to its land. It is not a stretch to state that every segment of the equestrian community is inexorably tied to America's private and public lands. The relationship between the equestrian community and the preservation of America's working lands is a direct one. According to the Equine Land Conservation Resource "a minimum of 36 million acres (4 acres per horse, conservatively) is needed to support the 9 million horses in the US." This figure is the farmland required just to feed our horses, it does not include the pasture and open space needed to raise, breed, and board horses.

The AHC also hopes the Administration will recognize the contribution horse farms and facilities make to preserving open green space, stream buffers, wild life habitat, forests and pasture. We believe horse farms are and should be considered working lands and need to be protected from urban development like any other working lands.

America's public lands are very important to the equestrian community. Hundreds of thousands of Americans of all ages use horses and pack stock to enjoy America's great outdoors each year. Riding provides Americans with a link to the past and a chance to see and experience America's great public lands from horseback just as early explorers and settlers did.

The equestrian community recognizes its responsibility to treat our nation's public lands with respect. This community has a deep commitment to outdoor recreation and believes that recreation is a fundamental and legitimate use of our country's public lands. Whether they are trail riders, competitive riders, packers, outfitters or saddle-stock users, they recognize the overriding need for the responsible use and wise management of our natural resources.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Furthermore, thousands of equestrians and members of various equestrian organizations, state horse councils, and trail riding clubs are involved in volunteer projects each year building and maintaining trails for all users of public lands. For example, the Backcountry Horsemen of American (BCHA) estimate that in 2009 alone their members contributed 345,690 volunteer hours, for a value of \$7,490,864 on federal land. In fact, many trail projects in wilderness would not be possible if it were not for horsemen packing in supplies, tools, and building materials.

The AHC believes the volunteer contribution and potential of equestrians should be recognized. We hope the Administration will work with the equestrian community to expand its volunteer efforts.

Our land managers have a very difficult job to do, often with limited resources and competing interests. The equestrian community is thankful for the hard work of so many of these individuals in the National Forest Service, National Park Service, Bureau of Land Management, Corp. of Engineers, and U.S. Fish and Wildlife service as well as state and local land managers.

The AHC also believes equestrian activities can play an important role in reconnecting our young people with the outdoors. Today a great many individuals who are involved in equestrian activities are young people. Riding can play an important part in getting our nations children off the couch and away from the computer. Riding can be a great outlet for young people to develop physical strength and coordination. Additionally, by its very nature riding, even though some events take place indoors, is an outdoor pursuit and most equestrians trail ride at some point.

In fact, there are many equestrian organizations specifically geared toward youth such as the United States Pony Club, the American Youth Horse Council, and the National High School Rodeo Association. Additionally, most equestrian organizations have youth programs like the United States Equestrian Federation's "High School Equestrian Athlete" program or the American Quarter Horse Youth Association.

A Pennsylvania State University 2006 study, *Impact of Equine Activities on Youth Development*, found that over 450,000 youth participated in the American Quarter Horse Youth Association, the 4-H house program, United States Pony Club, and the National High School Rodeo Association alone.

That same Pennsylvania State study found that once children became involved in a youth horse program that 90.8% stayed involved for more than four years and 58% stayed involved for more than 8 years. It should be noted that individuals do not have to have their own horse to participate in many equestrian youth programs.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Currently, childhood obesity is cause for great concern around the country. Besides getting our children outdoors, riding can be a great physical activity for young Americans. Competing on horseback is a complex and demanding physical sport and riding for pleasure on a regular basis has many of the same benefits. Riders must develop muscular strength, endurance, flexibility, coordination, balance, and fine motor skills. Riding can also improve posture and cardiovascular health. Though there is often the perception that the horse is doing all the work, riding requires athletic skills and activity from the rider that develops muscle and burns calories. Dr. Robert Leavitt, who has a PhD in sports medicine, has confirmed that horse related activities can burn as many calories as many other physical activities. For example, riding a horse at various gaits can burn as many calories as walking, riding a bicycle, or playing a game of basketball. Additionally, the daily care of a horse such as mucking out stalls, stacking hay, grooming, etc. promotes physical fitness also. According to Dr. Leavitt, grooming a horse can be equivalent to playing doubles tennis in the number of calories burned.

The AHC hopes the Administration will make equestrian activities, an integral part of its effort to reconnect our nation's youth with the outdoors. The AHC believes that any national policy should recognize the role equestrian activities can play in getting kids outside and improve their physical health.

Many American's with these various physical impairments regularly visit trails and the backcountry on horseback. Indeed, more and more such trail users with these conditions are using horses as a means of access. The horse is a common and environmentally friendly means to not only access wilderness but also many other outdoor areas for physically challenged individuals. We believe it is essential to include the role horses, mules, and burros can play in allowing access to the outdoors for physically-challenged Americans in any discussion of America's outdoors.

The horse has played a distinctive role in the history and culture of America. The horse has been transport, tool, athlete, and companion for every generation of Americans. It played an important role in the exploration and settlement of the continent. The image of the cowboy on his horse is iconically American. Horse racing is one of America's oldest sports and the Kentucky Derby is known as uniquely American around the world. The horse was and is an integral part of the culture and everyday lives of Native American tribes in the west.

The abundance of open space and vast natural resources of our country has played a central role in shaping our history and national character. The horse has always been part of that special American connection to the land. We hope the historical and cultural relationship American's have with the horse will not be forgotten as the Administration contemplates our great outdoors.

The AHC and the equestrian community looks forward to working with President Obama, Congress, the federal land management agencies and all stakeholders to preserve our great outdoors and ensure their enjoyment by future generations of Americans.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

In meetings during November of last year, you challenged those of us in Maine to develop a broadly supported pilot project for your consideration on how to keep forests as forests and strengthen the rural economies that depend on forests. Enclosed, please find proposals in both of these regards. These have both been developed by broadly representative coalitions of the interests who care about the Maine woods - land and mill owners to ENGO's.

The proposals present a vision for the future of the Maine woods and Maine's forest-based economies that will be tested with the Maine public at large and piloted to refine our thinking. Central to achieving these visions is a more robust, creative and flexible federal / state / tribal / private partnership to both keeping forests as forests and strengthening rural economies, both consumptive and non-consumptive.

A number of specific suggestions are contained in the proposals. For example, why not financially reward forest landowners as we do farmers for promoting public values on their lands, and why not make strengthening forest-based economies and agency-wide priority and a joint effort among, not only the US Forest Service, but USDA Rural Development, Natural Resources Conservation Service and the Farm Service Agency?

These are extraordinary proposals in a number of regards: • First, they form an integrated whole, recognizing that forests are valuable both for their functions as ecosystems and the base for rural economies.

- Secondly, they represent an unprecedented level of agreement among a very diverse set of constituents, ranging from land and mill owners to forest conservation interests.

- Third, they present a number of creative ideas, both for keeping forests as forests and strengthening rural economies that we believe are innovative and expect will prove effective.

- Fourth, they provide a model for forest conservation, not only in Maine, but around the country.

We are anxious to meet with you in person to explain the power of these ideas and the coalition that is supporting them. In this regard, we would respectfully request that you come to Maine so that we can present our thoughts to you, and perhaps more importantly show you the great Maine Woods and the vibrant economy that depends upon it - one day would suffice and we specifically suggest a date either in September or October. Please let us know a date that would work for you.

Studies show outdoor time helps children stay healthier, enhances their imaginations and attention spans, decreases aggression, boosts classroom performance, and fosters a lifelong appreciation of the environment.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Thank you for your leadership in bringing the recent America's Great Outdoors listening session to New Hampshire. As you know, the Northern Forest Region - 26 million forested acres across Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont and New York - is dominated by private forest ownership and yet has a long history of public-private partnerships to achieve significant conservation objectives. This session focused on private working forests could not have been in a better spot.

Secretary Tom Vilsack, Senator Jeanne Shaheen, Governor John Lynch and others at the forum spoke accurately to the critical role that private working forests play in the economic and ecological fabric of our nation, and also the pressing need to keep these forests as forests. While funding for easements and other conservation tools contributes greatly to this objective, we also heard that for many private landowners it is markets that drive their land management and use decisions.

As we look forward to this generation's legacy of conservation, the Northern Forest region can and should be a national model for innovative, market-based approaches for the conservation of private working forests. Many of the approaches suggested at the listening session are already being tested in this region by the Northern Forest Center and a broad, four-state network of private, public, and business partners.

Together we are developing 21st century opportunities for landowners, forest-based businesses and forest-reliant communities that create jobs and grow economic returns from sustainably managed forests:

Job retention and creation in the wood products manufacturing sector;

Community-scale wood energy systems for residents and businesses;

Payments to forest landowners from forest carbon and watershed services markets;

Aggregation and coordination of tourism providers to provide world-class experiences;

New financing options for forest-based entrepreneurs; and

Enhanced sustainable development capacity for forest-reliant communities

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

With the support and partnership of USDA Rural Development and the U.S. Forest Service the Northern Forest region has the ability to provide a market-driven, all-lands conservation model led by private landowners and strong community involvement and engagement. Building on the strong legacy of conservation in the region, this "third generation" of conservation tools is poised to provide great returns.

Thank you again for your commitment to building a vibrant and sustainable future for the Northern Forest and all of America's great working and wild landscapes. I hope you have a wonderful rest of your summer.

Undeniably, what sets Maine apart from the rest of the country - and the major reasons that Maine's forests remain largely intact and healthy - are the diversity of markets that Maine's forestland owners have and the ability of forest-based industries to adapt, strengthen and diversify those markets.

For today's forest-based economy the challenges are immense, but so are the opportunities. Some of the ways we use the forest are new, like Old Town Fuel and Fiber's innovative process to turn woody biomass into both jet fuel and pulp for paper. Others are modern variations centuries-old commodity products, like high-tech niche paper products or composite building materials.

Forest-based experiential tourism, which began with visitors arriving by train and horse in the mid to late 19th century, is growing and changing too. Today there are 30+ million people that live within a day's drive of Maine's exceptional recreational opportunities.

To keep forests - in Maine and elsewhere - and the economic and social benefits they have provided for centuries, particularly in rural communities, requires bold and creative action. It requires not just forest conservation efforts as proposed in the companion Keeping Maine's Forests Proposal, but also a diverse, robust forest-based economy with markets for a wide variety of forest-based products, including tourism. These products and markets provide a revenue stream for forest landowners and therefore a strong economic reason for keeping forests as forests.

This proposal offers seven recommendations to connect forest conservation with economic opportunity that, taken together, will serve as a national demonstration project for realizing the greater public benefits of privately-owned and managed forestlands.

A New Model of Collaboration to Fortify the Forest-based Economy At the request of the secretaries of the U.S. Departments of Agriculture (USDA) and the Interior (USDI), with the encouragement of Governor Baldacci, the Keeping Maine's Forest-based Economy (KMFE) Steering Committee set out to identify how USDA and USDI programs could help keep Maine's forests as forests, strengthen the forest-based economy, and provide jobs and income for rural communities. This effort complements the work of the Keeping Maine's Forests (KMF) Steering Committee, which stated as its first objective for keeping forests as forests: "Maintaining the most diverse, robust and economically beneficial forest products industry possible and the jobs that this industry provides..."

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

The KMFE Steering Committee, which shares several members with the KMF Steering Committee, is diverse. It includes representatives of the forest products and forest-based tourism industries, large and small forest landowners, economic development agencies, academia, and government. One of the strengths of this proposal lies in the consensus formed by a collaborative partnership of many different stakeholders on the Committee and our thorough consultation with subject matter experts across the state.

In broad terms, the KMFE Steering Committee is asking the USDA and USDI to consider using Maine as a national demonstration project for a new type of federal, state, and private partnership that prizes collaborative delivery of services and creative ways to realize economic value from forestland. Our proposal builds seven specific recommendations on three broad, thematic ideas;

Also important, they will demonstrate the ability of the federal government to adapt its programs to solve problems, meet changing local needs and capitalize on unique local abilities. The ongoing success of this national demonstration project will be evaluated regularly by tracking economic conditions (like jobs and income) over time and comparing the expected results of these recommendations with actual outcomes.

Remaining competitive in an ever-changing global marketplace is a constant challenge for the US forest products industry - a challenge that can only be met through strong public/private partnerships. To this end, a pilot program in Maine, created in 2007 with an ad hoc patchwork of funding from several different state sources, created a Senior Forest Products Advisor to the Governor.

Maintaining an affordable, accessible wood supply is critical to Maine's forest products industry. Family forest owners - often in rural communities in the southern half of the state and in relatively close proximity to mills - must be encouraged and supported to manage their land actively for sustainable timber production and other values. Research has consistently shown that the best way to do this is through a combination of technical assistance, cost sharing, and one-on-one access to a forester to walk the land with them and discuss management alternatives.

The WoodsWISE program has a strong record of success connecting family forest owners with a state forester who visits their land, explains their management options, and provides the opportunity for the owner to develop a working relationship with a private consulting forester. Unfortunately, the USFS has sharply reduced WoodsWISE funding in recent years.

Maine NRCS has made admirable progress in increasing funding devoted to forestry over the last few years. NRCS could further its conservation goals by capitalizing on the relationship that MFS has built with family forest owners, who own their land for purposes of privacy on their own recreational pursuits, rather than actively managing it for revenue. Engaging these landowners presents a special challenge. MFS has decades of experience engaging family forest owners to promote improved stewardship of their forest resources, so it makes sense to build on this expertise and design a collaborative effort between Maine NRCS and MFS.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

This proposal is an opportunity to demonstrate how public and private interests can collaborate on issues of massive public and private importance. The specific, actionable steps offered here are in some cases small, but collectively they provide a replicable model that, if adopted, could transform our Nation's natural resources and rural economies.

At a time when our nation is facing new environmental threats and budget constraints, it is crucial that we establish a conservation policy that is better suited to our current needs and helps maintain our environmental legacy. Fortunately, communities across the nation are developing new and innovative approaches to conservation.

We are pleased that North Carolina has established four conservation trust funds in recent years to fund conservation activities in the areas of clean water management, natural heritage, parks and recreation, and farmland preservation. North Carolina was also the first state to create a Conservation Tax Credit program, which has been used to protect over 180,000 acres, and legislation to protect conservation easements has been approved by the General Assembly. In addition, twenty-four local land trusts, along with state chapters of The Nature Conservancy, Trust for Public Land, and The Conservation Fund, have a history of close partnership with the state's trust funds as well as federal agencies.

It is our understanding that you will be conducting a number of "listening sessions" around the country as you develop ideas for the America's Great Outdoors initiative, and we encourage you to consider making North Carolina one of the stops on your tour. Our state offers both impressive geographic and ecological diversity - from the Blue Ridge Mountains to the Outer Banks - and a microcosm of the challenges posed by rapid urbanization and development. Moreover, the conservation efforts already underway in North Carolina reflect many of the attributes that the Initiative is looking to advance: innovation, creativity, diversity and leverage put to work to conserve natural areas, preserve family farms, reconnect families and children with the outdoors, and create urban parks.

Continue and Enhance Farm and Ranchland Protection Program and Grasslands Reserve Program (FRPP and GRP)

Preserve OHV Access

Preserve OHV Recreation Use

Preserve OHV Recreation Use for Families

Preserve OHV use for future generations

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

(Colorado) Off-Highway Vehicle Coalition

A diversified society means diversified outdoor attractions

A Partnership Park

ADULT/YOUTH Water, Land and Wildlife Resource TEAMS linking local communities

Adults Must be Good Role Models For Kids

All Sixth Graders Spend a Week at a Local Outdoor School

America's Scenic Byways

Balance density

Ban Mindless TV and Video Games

Ban rule-breaking Hikers from all National and State Parks

Ban rule-breaking offroaders from all national and state parks.

Ban the sale and use of all Trekking Poles

Boy Scouts of America afterschool programs for boys and girls

Camps for inner city youth

Conservation Benefits

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Conservation Subdivisions

Conserve and Preserve AGO

Conserving Natural Areas at Public Schools

Decisions Based on Sound Science

Designate non-OHV days in parks

Double the Fees for RVs!

Education For Low-Impact Park Use

Employ seniors to help with trail systems.

Ensure Synergy with Complete Streets Initiative

Environmental cooperatives

Expand Opportunities to Enjoy America's Great Outdoors Through Urban Parks

Expanding the National Park System Is Necessary to Fully Represent America's Cultural Diversity

Family Activity Guide

FHWA Recreational Trails Program

Fully Electric Offroad Vehicles

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Fund AGO with a National Lottery

funding for state parks and naturalists

Get Back to What Worked Before

Give environmental non profits a voice

Great Outdoors Colorado—A National Model for Supporting Private Lands Conservation.

Green Infrastructure

harvesting seeds prior to logging trees

HEALTH BENEFITS TO CHILDREN FROM CONTACT WITH THE OUTDOORS & NATURE

Heart of the Continent Partnership

Historic Preservation is about a lot more than National Parks

HistoriCorps - The Workforce for Saving Places

Improve Environmental Education so that we understand our impact regardless of use choice.

incentives for landowners to work together for habitat protection

Internships for Grade School / High School Children to learn Forestry, Water, and Land Management

Introduce nature to our youth

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

It All Starts With Education

Keep Public Land open to the Public!!!

Keep public lands open for ALL citizens

Kids in Parks-TRACK Trails-A Partnership for Health

Kids Outdoors

Land Use Management

Leave No Trace "Plus"

let's share!!!

Livable Communities

Local involvement works best, volunteers protect parks in their backyard

Local, State and National Parks

Make the Earth just like Venus

Manage by ecosystem and use; not political boundaries

Managed Motorized Trail Systems help protect resources

Mechanized Pacific trail

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

More opportunities for all recreational trail users, while having acceptance and collaboration from those that use the trail. Multi-use trails. Share the trails.

Move Forest Service from Dept of Ag to Dept of Interior

Multiple Use Management Should be "Rediscovered"

Multiple Use, Sustained Yield

Municipalities sharing natural sites for public education and involvement

Muscle power!

My wife says land stewards of all groups should work together to educate the bad apples of all user groups

National Forest

Natural areas within 15 minutes walk

New York's Conservation Partnership Program—A National Model for Building Local Capacity

Non-Motorized = Best Wilderness Experience

NPCA Talking Points are Good

Off-road motorcycles: good place for all ages

One Billion Urban Trees

Open Season

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Outdoor Education

Outdoor Education Programs Promoting Environmental Stewardship

Pair outdoor-active adult and youth community organizations and link them regionally along watersheds or across habitat types

Park Rangers Seen as Educators About Health and Wellness

Partner with Existing Organizations

Partner with Tribes to achieve Conservation Goals

Partnerships

Partnerships are Critical for Trail Maintenance

Pay youth and unemployed to carry out conservation projects like the CCC

Personal Responsibility

physical activity and health benefits of parks and outdoor recreation

Plains and Wood Bison as a game species

Point of Use Solar can spare our fragile public lands

Preserve Civil War Battlefields

Private Property Owners are Often Better Stewards

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Project Get Outdoors After School Programs

Promote ALL forms of recreation

Promoting Forest Health through Active Management

Proper Land Use Planning

Protect animals on our highways.

Public school yards as centers for conservation and environmental education

Public Service Announcements

Public-Private Matching Grants for Civil War Battlefield Preservation

Quality Family OHV Time in the Forest

Reduce cost of getting outdoors - Rent your gear!

Require and promote public gardening/farming areas in public land

restore top carnivores to the southeast

Restore wildlife areas, wildlife populations and reintroduce species

Retired Americans are a huge asset

Rural Communities Require Jobs, Recreation and Resource Harvesting

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Save Remote Areas from Undue Industrial-Scale Renewable Plants

Scenic Byways bring communities together

School Clean Up Days

School Forests as outdoor classrooms

Sierra forest campgrounds are well managed

Size matters; connectedness matters

Slow and quiet motorized access to designated wilderness.

Stop the spread of invasive species

Studies that delineate the location of connectivity corridors for wildlife

Support local land trust.

Support Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Planning

Take Advantage of Public School Community Ed Programs

Tax write off initiative for trail up keep

The Civil War Augmented Reality Project

The conservation of land

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

The Experience

The Federal Government Needs to Recognize, Fund, and Build on Important Community-Support Programs.

The goal to reconnect American youth to the great outdoors can best be done by providing more places for them to enjoy their favorite forms of outdoor recreation.

The Preservation of Public and Private Hunting/Fishing

The San Gabriel Mountains and River – Connecting Communities

The Shawangunk Ridge Biodiversity Partnership works

Tiered pricing

Tire deposit

University and College partnerships

Urban Nearby Nature provides many benefits

USACE and University of Arkansas Team Up to Provide Cancer Patients Healthy Surroundings

Usage windows for multi use parks

Using Existing Minimum Maintenance Roads in NE for ATV trails

Utilize Soil and Water Conservation Districts

Utilize Zoos, Aquariums and others to connect kids to wildlife and the outdoors

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Volunteer work connects people with their public lands

Watershed Partnership

What Worked

Wild Ways and Freedom to Roam

Working in Partnership with Schools -- ED OUT

Yes to quiet enjoyment, no to noise

Young people growing through School Gardens

Youth Education

balance recreation use based on what's best for the environment

Balancing multi use on lakes and rivers

Balancing Preservation and Use

Biodiversity and Harmony with Environment

collaborate on a regional scale

Connecting with nature

Connection Between Cultural/Historic Resources and Natural Ones

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Engage stakeholders

Expand Adaptive Management Applicability

Families and Friends actively together in the Great Outdoors

National Parks help protect Wildlife Corridors

Off Road Vehicle and Mountain Biking Most Popular Forms of Recreation

Preserve Soft trails

Using methane as one alternative fuel

Wild Horse sanctuary

Wilderness policy should address global warming/and so should we all

Wilderness Stewardship Plans

Wildlands for Wildlife's Sake

Wildlife have first use of America's Great Outdoors

Working Together - Multiple use is the only solution

define recreation to exclude fat behavior

Fish and Game revenue

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Focus on Most Important Places

Improve pedestrian and bicycle facilities in urban, suburban and rural areas.

Leverage User Groups for Expertise and Skills to Avoid Reinventing Wheels

Promoting Wise Use of Natural Resources - Creates Outdoor Jobs

Promotion of orienteering

Work locally to engage volunteers and local governments in conservation efforts

Expand Programs Like Teacher-Ranger-Teacher and Leverage the Educational Power of National Parks.

Local Wildlife Education for Young Students

Mojave Environmental Educational Consortium

Support TPL, TNC and other Land Trust Organizations

OHV: Keep public land open to the public

Conserve nature-Control urban sprawl

Public Access

Savory Method

Trails for America

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Travelers for Open Land

Watershed Stock Exchange

Access

American as apple pie

American Discovery Trail

atv.....

Connecting Urban and Rural for long-term sustainability

Enhance motorized access and OHV recreational opportunities

Expanding the Seven State Compact

Fishing Creates Stewards and Stakeholders

Forest Recreation & Urban Youth in the Forest

Great Geocaching!

Historical and environmental education are natural allies in discovering the "joy, excitement and mystery of the world we live in." (Louv-13, 164)

Incorporate ecology into public school core science curricula

Individual Experiential Education

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Keep the Killing OUT!

Learn and teach WHY biodiversity is important

Master Naturalist Programs

Master Naturalist programs like the one in Texas

Nature-based after school program (i.e. nature clubs)

OHV -- A GREAT family activity

OHV Fun

OHV is a responsible, environmentally friendly, family-oriented activity.

OHVs can be a great way to explore

Outdoor Adventures Education curriculum in 80 schools in Texas

Pedestrian Network

photodocumentation

Physical and Cultural Environment as Partners for a Better America

Privatization and Commercialization of public lands

Provide Attractive Opportunities

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Provide kids (and adults) ACTIVE things to do in the outdoors

Reconnect with culture and history

Reconnecting Citizens & Natural Resources through Master Naturalist Programs

Reconnecting Citizens & Natural resources through Master Naturalist Programs like the TX Master Naturalist Program

Regional Interagency Landscape-level Planning is Necessary

rural community renewal

School programs or field trips to the outdoors

Self-Guided Tours of the Great Outdoors on the iPhone

Support Conservation Education to Connect More Americans to Nature

Support local nature centers!

support public transport to parks

Teach At-Risk How to Rock Climb, Experience Nature, and Learn to Trust Again.

Teach Everyone to Take Care of Their Share of the Planet

Teach Nature Photography in Schools

Teach Nature Writing / Journaling in the schools

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Teach the importance of Nature and wild and quiet spaces

Tell the human story of a landscape

Town Hall Meetings and Listening Sessions

Youth summer program in the Parks

Adapting to Climate Change on Public Lands

Balance in all you do

Buffalo Commons in Kansas

Cease or Phase Out Offshore Drilling

Conservation -- not Exclusion

Designated user space

Encourage more cooperation between environmental groups

Informational Signs

Invite Multiple-Use Groups To The Table

Keep It Wild

KEEP IT WILD!

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Land grants to increase fisheries

Link land use, transportation and conservation planning

OHV Recreation is a great way to get outside, and you do it without knowing!

Preserve environmental quality of dispersed site recreation

Promote light pollution reduction and best outdoor lighting practices

Promoting Forest Health

Put History back in the conversation about our national heritage.

Rogue River Wilderness

Save Gettysburg National Military Park from a casino located 1/2 mile away

Sustainable Rural Communities

Texas Master Gardners and Texas Master Naturalist

Traditional Gatherers and Harvesters

Wilderness is my Church, Respect It

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Since its launch in 2006, ORI has opened 2.630 stream miles for fish passage, and has received 200 requests from communities across the country to support the removal of small, obsolete dams and fish passage barriers. However, NOAA has only had the resources to address 81 projects so far. Even with the current limited funding, TU has worked with NOAA using ORI grants to open up 232 miles of new river habitats. Thanks to a combination of good project development and ideal environmental conditions, we have seen immediate recolonization of Coho salmon, steelhead, and river herring to nine watershed areas where they had been extirpated.

USDA Forest Service Legacy Roads and Trails Initiative. The vast networks of old forest roads and trails throughout our nation's forests have become an unmanageable maintenance burden and ecological barrier for the health, recover and, in many cases, survival of hundreds of individual populations of trout and salmon. Some 380,000 miles of these roads run through National Forest lands, leaving a maintenance backlog estimated between \$5 billion to \$10 billion. This backlog grows steadily with each heavy rain, spring thaw, runoff and slide, all of which, collectively, continuously deposit tons of fine sediments and surface pollution into nearby trout and salmon streams.

The National Forests received \$40 million in 2008, \$50 million in 2009, and a record \$90 million in fiscal year 2010 for Legacy Roads work. The Forest Service FY2011 budget request for Legacy Roads and Trails was \$50 million. TU recommends funding Legacy Roads and Trails at \$120 million, with an additional \$30 million dedicated to the national, regional and forest-level planning required determine minimum road systems.

Only with a manageable network of roads can we seriously regain control of its maintenance burden, and in turn effectively manage their ecological effects on coldwater fish and hundreds of other species.

USFWS Partners for Fish and Wildlife. Trout Unlimited strongly supports the Partners for Fish and Wildlife program. We work in partnership with private landowners and the FWS throughout the country to complete collaborative restoration projects, such as streamback fencing and riparian revegetation in the headwaters of the Potomac River in West Virginia. Together with the Partners for Fish and Wildlife program and others, Trout Unlimited has been able to install between 100,000 and 120,000 feet of livestock exclusion fencing annually over the past several years. This has helped create habitat for native brook trout, along with other species such as endangered bats. The role of the Partners for Fish and Wildlife program is critical to leveraging resources from Farm Bill programs and other sources to accomplish this work and restore important habitats.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

NOAA Community-Based Restoration. Trout Unlimited has worked with NOAA through its Community-Based Restoration program to open up miles of spawning and rearing habitat for salmon the coast of California and Alaska. Trout Unlimited and NOAA are currently working together to expand this partnership to restore habitat for herring and sea-run brook trout in the Northeast and salmon and steelhead on the West Coast. This program has provided critical funding for the Penobscho River Restoration project in Maine, one of the Nation's best fisheries restoration projects. By the time the latest TU-NOAA partnership is completed in 2010, TU and the Community-Based Restoration program will have completed at least 67 habitat projects in 11 coastal states.

Beyond the small habitat improvement projects that are traditionally conducted by local TU chapters and community-based partners, the TU_NOAA partnership has put an extra emphasis on mid-scale watershed based restoration involving non-traditional partners such as dam owners and timber companies. This combination of watershed and small habitat improvement activities involving fish passage, channels restoration, road retirement/obliteration, bank stabilization and planting of riparian forest buffers has led to the development of permanent conservation programs in over 3,100 square miles of drainage basins.

USDA Farm Bill Programs. Trout Unlimited works closely with the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) on a number of its watershed restoration programs around the nation, including the Potomac Headwaters (WV) and Driftless Area (WI/IA/MN/IL) restoration initiatives. Farm Bill conservation programs, including the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP), Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program (WHIP), Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP), Agricultural Water Enhancement Program (AWEP) and Chesapeake Bay Watershed programs, are very effective tools for restoring habitat.

The trout and salmon habitat needs are as urgent as they have ever been. New state/federal/NGO partnerships, such as the Driftless Area Restoration Effort, Eastern Brook Trout Joint Venture, and others yielded by the national Fish habitat Action Plan, provide outstanding restoration opportunities financed by increasingly leveraged private sector funds.

Environmental Quality Incentives Program. The EQIP program has enabled Trout Unlimited to complete mutually beneficial projects with agricultural landowners, such as modifications to irrigation diversions that improve water supply reliability and fish habitat. In Montana, Trout Unlimited has worked with producers to install more efficient irrigation systems and designate the "saved" water to instream flows to improve fish habitat.

Agricultural Water Enhancement Program. Trout Unlimited strongly supports the Agricultural Water Enhancement Program (AWEP), and believes that it has the potential to result in substantial water savings and environmental improvement if properly implemented.

The National Fish Habitat Action Plan (NFHAP) is a partnership-driven initiative that addresses important fishery issues facing the United States. In short, the goal of the NFHAP is to conserve, restore, protect, and enhance aquatic habitats. This work will be based on the best science available and is non-regulatory in nature.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

There are currently seventeen officially recognized Fish Habitat Partnerships. Three of the 17 partnerships (the Eastern Brook Trout Joint Venture, the Driftless Area Restoration Effort, and the Western Native Trout Initiative) have been particular focuses of the work of Trout Unlimited in recent years. A good example of all of the partnerships, the Western Native Trout Initiative is a collaborative effort working to stop the declines and improve the status of fifteen trout species across the West. Its cost-effective, on-the-ground projects address habitat and distribution issues and span across federal, state and tribal boundaries.

The eastern brook trout provides a good illustration of the importance of looking at the bigger picture. Several years ago, the Eastern Brook Trout Joint Venture (EBTJV) was formed to conduct an assessment of trout population and habitat condition across 17 eastern states stretching from Maine to Georgia. The assessment was able to identify the most significant problems for brook trout and suggest strategies that the EBTJV has employed to the fish's advantage. In addition, the EBTJV provides a forum to understand emerging issues and concerns, such as climate change.

The EBTJV is an unprecedented effort to focus and leverage the resources of state/federal agencies and conservation groups on protecting and restoring the habitat of a species that is not threatened or endangered. It has served as a model for other partnerships that have arisen through the National Fish Habitat Action Plan and has helped guide the development of the National Fish Habitat Conservation Act.

We have made good progress in partnering with EPA to develop new policy guidance on CERCLA liability that will help us move more quickly, and hopefully the pace of our progress will continue. For example, in our American Fork project, we reached an agreement with EPA on CERCLA liability that can serve as a model for other cleanups across the country.

Trout Unlimited has worked to address this need by partnering with colleges and universities to run service learning projects that enable students to participate in established stream restoration projects and learn from professionals in the environmental field. Studies have found that grounding environmental education within a community will help enhance the educational experience and incline the learner toward stewardship.

Bay Watershed Education and Training Program. Trout Unlimited has long worked to engage students in educational programs through its Trout in the Classroom program and hands-on field activities. In 2008, Trout Unlimited entered into a partnership with the NOAA Bay Watershed Education and Training Program to expand its outdoor education efforts in the Potomac River headwaters of West Virginia. The Potomac Headwaters youth education program has brought hundreds of students into the field to conduct stream health assessments and plant trees along brook trout streams as part of habitat restoration projects. These outdoor learning experiences complement in-class math and science lessons and help students develop an understanding of natural processes. Partnership with the NOAA Bay Watershed Education and Training Program enables us to increase the number of students that benefit from hands-on learning experiences.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Partnering with College Mentoring and Service Learning Programs. Through its 5 Rivers College Outreach program, Trout Unlimited has worked with colleges to organize "alternative spring breaks" so that groups of students can gain hands-on experience in hydrology, aquatic ecology, and habitat restoration. TU has also partnered with college mentoring programs to create opportunities for mentors to bring children on fishing trips to local waters. Linking passionate anglers and conservationists through TU's grassroots network with existing college mentoring programs results in multi-generational connections with the outdoors. TU is also in the process of creating college and university sub-chapters across the country. These groups would familiarize young adults in TU's mission and enable the next generation of conservationists to get involved and volunteer at watershed restoration projects in their local communities.

Trout in the Classroom. Trout in the Classroom is an environmental educational program in which participating classes raise trout in a classroom tank throughout the school year and then release them into a stream in the spring. The presence of trout in the classroom enhances students' learning environment and provides unique opportunities for engaging inquiry-based and interdisciplinary projects, including work in science, math, language arts, fine arts, and social studies.

Due to crowded schools and overloaded schedules, teachers lack the time and resources necessary to run classroom programs that go beyond required curricula. Truly engaging science and nature study have particularly fallen by the wayside. Meanwhile, most kids have become disconnected from nature, with little or no free time experiences in natural settings. In his book, *Last Child in the Woods: Saving Our Children From Nature Deficit Disorder*, Richard Louv cites numerous scientific studies which document the academic, social psychological, and physical benefits of increased access to nature (Louv also devotes two pages to Trout in the Classroom). Even something as simple as a fish tank can have profound benefits for those who observe it. Students in an urban area such as New York City are particularly susceptible to a nature deficit, many of them lacking the financial means to access public lands, especially those which are remote from the metropolis. Through Trout in the Classroom, TU works with teachers and partners to bring nature to the students in an inexpensive and widely beneficial manner.

Trout Unlimited's mission is to conserve, protect and restore North America's trout and salmon fisheries and their watersheds. Since 1959, our approach to our mission has been rooted in community-based partnerships and the use of fishing as a way to connect with the outdoors and conservation efforts. We were glad to see these themes echoed in the President's memo on the America's Great Outdoors Initiative.

America's wild, unroaded backcountry is perhaps our greatest natural asset. These lands were recognized by past generations of conservationists, notably President Theodore Roosevelt, as representing a lasting American frontier where fish and wildlife can thrive and hunters, anglers and other adventurous souls can experience the outdoors in a wild, natural state.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Today we have come to realize not only the social and recreational importance of the backcountry, but also the tremendous contributions these lands make to biodiversity and watershed health. Roadless areas serve as the last refuge for imperiled species like native cutthroat trout, and offer hope for recovery. The protection of backcountry lands, such as inventoried roadless areas, should be a central component of the America's Great Outdoors Initiative for the role they play in providing unparalleled outdoor recreation, healthy watersheds, and robust populations of fish and wildlife.

While the protection of unroaded backcountry habitat is essential to the success of the AGO Initiative, alone it is not sufficient to provide recreational access and healthy habitats. Voluntary habitat protection and public access on private lands through Farm Bill conservation programs are also essential. The Land and Water Conservation Fund is another effective tool for protecting habitat and securing public access.

It is also important to protect fish and wildlife and their habitats by enforcing environmental laws and preventing the spread of invasive species. The Clean Water Act has resulted in significant gains in water quality, but numerous challenges remain. Addressing growing problems like stormwater runoff will help achieve the next generation of water quality improvements. Fixing the fundamental problem created by two recent harmful Supreme court decisions which vastly undercut Clean Water Act jurisdictional coverage for "isolated" wetlands and headwater streams is essential.

Extraction of natural resources must be conducted responsibly in order to avoid harm to fish, wildlife and water resources. This will require reforms in the management of oil and gas development on public lands and careful consideration of potential impacts from proposed mines such as the Pebble Mine in Alaska. Finally, the threats from invasive and aquatic nuisance species like "didymo" or Asian carp call for a strong commitment to preventing their movement to new habitats.

The NOAA Open Rivers Initiative (ORI) and Fish and Wildlife Service's Fish Passage Program are very effective in promoting habitat connectivity. Two prominent examples are found in Maine, where the completed Kennebec River dam removal project and the ongoing work to reopen the Penobscot River illustrate the effectiveness of these programs and the benefits of reconnection. The removal of the Edwards Dam on the Kennebec River resulted in (1) Alewife run of over 1 million fish restored, including a town-managed commercial fishery; (2) Recreational shad fishery, non-existent before removal, is restored; (3) Spawning shortnose (endangered) and Atlantic sturgeon spawning restored; and (4) Small run of Atlantic salmon restored, in large part through a streamside incubation program that was a Kennebec Valley TU/Maine Dept. of Marine Resources partnership. Benefits on a larger scale will be realized with the completion of dam removal projects on the Penobscot River.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

One hundred years ago, the United States initiated a marvelous cultural achievement and what may be one of our greatest gifts to the world – stewardship of public lands through a system of National Parks. Again in 1965, the idea of combining conservation of cultural sites with natural sites on public lands came from a White House Conference and was presented to the United Nations to encourage international cooperation to protect “the world’s superb natural and scenic areas with historic sites for the present and future of the world citizenry.” The 23 World Heritage Sites in the United States, most of which are National Parks, provide nationally and internationally recognized examples of natural and cultural sites. They also provide a basis for cultural diplomacy as worldwide many national parks are inscribed as world heritage sites and recognized for their outstanding universal value. Because the US World Heritage Sites (list at end) are of international importance and value, they can serve as the crown jewels of America’s Great Outdoors program and stimulate Americans to experience, learn from, and care for the nation’s natural and cultural properties and landscapes.

Use the US World Heritage sites to display that heritage is cultural, natural and mixed as people and place are intertwined and coexist. As cultural and natural resources are place-based, this is an opportunity to explain the imperative of respecting cultural and natural resources and balancing societal influence, uses and impacts based on respect and values.

a. Develop a multi-national program at World Heritage Sites with emerging and experienced professionals to encourage an international cadre of managers and stewards sharing knowledge and best practices across the world.

a. Convene World Heritage site managers to discuss best practices, international relations, and assistance to tentative site managers.

a. Develop national recognition and awareness programs to highlight the experience of US World Heritage sites, beginning with public lands in the America’s Great Outdoors program bearing the world heritage title visibly and proudly.

a. Promote public education about US World Heritage sites and the role of the US in the global community

a. Encourage school curricula and teaching tools that use World Heritage sites to teach about nature and culture and the connection to the global environment and culture

a. Build partnerships for media exposure at all levels for broad public access. This could be a marvelous means of expressing the diversity of our public lands as different national and international personalities can speak about the importance of these places at each of the sites.

· Partner with NPS to develop a stronger presence for world heritage site with an attractive, attention grabbing logo on opening page of federal/NPS websites

· Partner with media sources to broadcast to the widest public, not focused on heritage conservation community as its audience

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

- Partner with Dept of Commerce to integrate into US tourism publicity overseas
- Partner with NPS to develop program-focused articles on each site into airline magazines
- Partner with NPS to develop appropriate literature (brochures, posters) for distribution to the travel industry, school systems, etc
- Partner with National Geographic, American Express, VISA, ASTA, and others to assist in creating visibility
- Partner with media - Expedia, History Channel, PBS, etc. to make the program known

Partner with media to develop short public service announcements for commercial media

- a. America's Great Outdoors showcase for Americans and all the world our US treasured landscapes and the intersection between culture and nature
- b. Promote better use, enjoyment and stewardship of public lands
- c. Make the US contribution to the world's heritage known
- d. Develop multi-disciplinary interpretation programs and visitation options on the many facets of the sites' significance to promote public understanding and appreciation for natural and cultural values.
- e. Publicize sustained excellence in the conservation and protection of the World Heritage sites
- f. Through historic public appreciation and long-time use, connect the concept of that natural landscapes are also cultural landscapes. Use it to publicize the concept
 - a. Emphasize the international importance of World Heritage sites, a shared global heritage, connected to the importance of our diverse national heritage.

Promote cultural diplomacy and long-term awareness and appreciation for these places nationally and internationally

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Institute a Patron's Program for the public to participate in specific ways and that give patrons a presence at sites and foster public stewardship and wise use of the place by the general population, private corporations, schools, non-governmental organizations, local governments

Work with local communities to develop sister WH sites, akin to the sister cities concept: • Develop awareness; • Foster local civic pride; • Promote public engagement and use

The founders of the national park system showed great foresight and great wisdom in recognizing the importance of preserving of open spaces for future generations. We urge the federal government to now do the same by greatly increasing the federal government's attention to and funding of open space protection. Demographic forecasts predict a continual increase in population growth. The consequence of will be a continual increase in sprawl and a continual erosion of open space.

Recreation is important to the health and well being of all humans and outdoor recreation has been proved to be the most beneficial of all. As the population constantly increases so will the demand for outdoor recreation. Land must be set aside now so that future generations have sufficient space for outdoor recreation

Open space is required to support the local farmers who supply us with fresh, healthy food. The role of governments in preserving open space has always been important, but there has never been a time when it is more important.

The Westchester Land Trust has helped protect more than 6,600 acres and the lion's share was done through partnerships with the state, the county, and the towns and with New York City. Right now those partnerships are impossible to replicate because there's virtually no government money anywhere for land acquisition. Therefore there is a great need for more land acquisition money not just from the federal government, but also from the state, the county, the towns, and New York City.

Provide funding to state and local governments and to land trusts to preserve the land that they know is the most important land in their area.

Increase its direct role in acquiring land for open space protection;

Provide the funding required to make viable the programs established by Congress for land preservation

Insure open space protection is a consideration required in all federal policies, rules and regulations affecting land use.

Shift national farm policies from their heavy bias towards factory farms and increase support for individual farmers.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Promote the health and environmental benefits of locally grown food.

you have a clear misunderstanding about what most OHV operators do, apparently. Both of my mac being street legal are required to undergo an emissions test every year and are subject to the same emissions and sound requirements as any other vehicle operated on a public road. In my state an operator of a vehicle can be arrested for criminal damage for driving on a wet road and can face similar criminal and civil sanctions for any activity that damages roads, water cings, as well as speeding, etc. (yes, traffic laws apply on many FRs) , Wilderness Areas, by their very definitions are not supposed to contain roads, nor are motor vehicles permitted within them. You have created a straw-man. I also defy you to do 200+ miles off-road on a motorcycle or ATV or even in a buggy for that er, and claim laziness. I typically find myself more physically and mentally tired after a 150-200 mile ride than I do after a 2 day, 30 mile hike. Again, you guys seem to be missing the point. We're merely asking that areas that have historical use of a certain type be ald to continue to be used in the same manner. That's all. Nowhere is anyone advocating opening up wilderness and previously roadless areas to new roads and trails. The fix is in and everyone knows it is, but only some are willing to admit it. The time has come for honesty, openness and reasonableness in the TMP process.

I think you should spend some time exploring us ORV's point of view. I am the wife of a Above knee double amputee... the only way he has seen much of Washington's forest if by a 4x4 ATV. I understand that there are lots of Yahoo's out there that do ruin the trails but the MAJORITY of us want to preserve and protect these lands. Those guys with the race bikes and loud pipes belong on the track. and most do. Our NMA clubs work year round to restore trails and build bridges so that we don't ruin our lands. ORVing is a great family event. It get's kids outdoors and away from the TV. It gives them something to keep them out of trouble. I Know many kids who If it wern't for the threat of losing their bikes/quad would have been into some trouble. Dirtbike events bring familys together. Most of us dirtbikers want to get along and share the area's with the horseman, MT.bikers ect.

This idea is not about motorized travel in wilderness, it is promoting all forms of recreation – in and out of wilderness areas. Wilderness Areas by definition do not allow motorized travel. Your statement “Go enjoy some back roads somewhere, but not on public wilderness land” is off. If you are in a Wilderness Area they would not be there with you for any type of back road use. And they could not “... ruin the experience for the rest of us.” By not being there!

Scenic and Historic Trails provide a wonderful outdoor experience by allowing people to experience and learn about our land, our history and cultures, and our enviment. We should support completion, preservation and protection of the designated national trails throughout the country, and improve access to the trails.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

So many folks are out of work and are not being hired. Why not train and hire these folks to repair and enhance our parks much like was done by the CCC. Schools are not providing these skills as it seems trade skills are not so important as academic ones. Not all people do well academically but can earn a decent living in the trades. Somehow the government needs to help in this department and help the parks as well.

So, OHV clubs maintain the trails. Sierra Clubs are eco-maniacs, terrorists. Hmmm! You are right? Everyone else is wg. Do you really think that OHV clubs do more than the Sierra Clubs? I think there is a place for OHV, but not on designated Wilderness areas. How about private property? A farm. A ranch.

Stimulus \$\$ should go to parks, creating jobs for rangers, maintenance and vendors. FREE use to our military veterans, fire fighters and their families. Our national parks and forests are this country's greatest natural resource. Continue to preserve the peace, quiet and natural state by restricting ORV use and automotive access.

Stgly support the modification of the Tamiami Trail to restore the water flow to its original ways of the River of Grass.

Thank you for such educated comments. While I knew Alaska had alot of wilderness I had no idea that most of our designated wilderness was there. I live in Tree outside the Tree National Park and I love the ability to hike there whenever I can. The speed limit on the roads is usually 35mph which is great and so far no off road vehicles!! The air quality is not good though....we did manage to keep the Eagle Mountain Dump site from opening which would have further degraded not only the air quality but provided for more ravens which decimate the young tortoise, an endangered species. I am thankful that although we are very near a military base I only see their helicopters on a regular basis. The military are also helpful in fighting for envimental preservation in this area. Military reps speak up at community meetings for preservation rather than desecration of our natural desert area.

Thanks for the info , good stuff. Yes you are correct , the only way we can see where we need to improve is go out and see for ourselves. Nothing enlightens one more than exploring the great outdoors and seeing things that you wouldn't otherwise see.

Thanks for the website resource, , and "green infrastructure" sounds like a helpful term for weighing in with developers and city planners. I love it, keep up the good work.

That is a better idea than just closing them off. Around here OHV's do the lions share of trail maintenance. If they were shut out, it probably wouldn't get done.

That is fantastic being 72 and in exct shape. Hopefully you are staying in locally owned campgrounds if you camp so as to support the local community.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

The "sense of wonder" you speak of may be found in over 120 MILLION acres of public land. These are our designated wilderness areas, both federally mandated and by de facto agency rule. You could spend a lifetime and not come close to exploring all that these wilderness areas have to offer. Your chance of finding places "untrammelled by humans" is greatest within the boundaries of these areas. The vast majority of these areas are in the West. There are maps available. Reports show that people only use 5 % of these designated wilderness areas. Therefore 120 million acres is more than enough.

The CCC idea has merit and can help us on many different levels...

The definition of an ATV should include a width limit and low pressure tire requirements -- not how the operator sits on the machine.

The first WPA created some wonderful infrastructure on our public lands that has beautifully weathered the test of time. What's more it taught skills and put food on the table to people who really needed it and those same dollars enriched the merchants and shopkeepers who provided goods and services to the workers. In Depression-era America, it was money well spent. We can do this again and address the maintenance backlog troubling America's land use agencies.

The greater the visitor draw, the greater the need for protection, but since those states where the sites are located are the biggest recipient of the travellers dollars, there is an appearance of 'double dipping' if those state getting most tourist money are also getting the greatest Federal assistance. Perhaps the U. S. government should match the state contribution to these areas. The visitor should have to support the site in some small way, also.

The Historic Preservation Fund should be fully funded at \$150 million. In addition, the President's proposal to eliminate funding for Save America's Treasures and Preserve America should be tossed out. These are the only two federal bs and mortar preservation programs in existance. They are very effective in leveraging federal money to create jobs, preserve historic resources, and support local economies over the long-term through cultural tourism and the revitalization of traditional communities and business districts.

The idea of 'hiking in nature" and 'driving' anything are mutally exclusive. Yes, there should be areas where driving is a set-aside. these areas should not have wildlife or be fragile. and they won't have people walking, hunting or fishing. they will be driving areas only. Now, you can't have hiking, picnicing or any other activity safely where there is driving. I have tried to see a solution and a way to share. Noise and danger of being injured prevents sharing the same area or trail. There is a need for areas, not close to wildlife areas, for driving and all the drivers should help keep those areas fit for their use But you can't drive anything in a hiking area and keep it fit for quiet, safe, peaceful 'getting away from it all' use. I've read all the attempts to work it out, the haters on both sides ideas. It requires seation. Don't hike on OHV areas and keep the noise and danger out of the hiking areas. In the meantime, try to be considerate and not run me over or shout into your cell phone or throw anything on the ground. See you out there.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

The idea that creating a national monument "makes things worse" is just absurd, also, there has never been impact on current property owners land when a monument is established. Take the Cascade Siskiyou Wilderness as an example. Some people volunteered to sell their lands and were given market value for these purchases. The protection of remaining wild places is vital to continued viability of diverse species, which is vital to the human species survival. Why are humans so afraid of setting aside areas for their future offspring and grandchildren to enjoy? They too deserve the chance to experience nature in all it's bliss.

The national parks are an incredible gift that this country offers to its citizens that must be preserved and improved for future generations. The Centennial is the best opportunity to bring awareness to all Americans. The parks also serve as a model to states in their development of their own state-owned spaces, and that cannot be underestimated.

The National Parks are the birthright of the American people. We must protect these last outposts of nature. To open areas up for snowmobiles, offroad vehicles and dirt bikes is to invite destruction of the environment and a more loss of habitat to an already overstressed wildlife community. I live in a rural area (surrounded by fir and pine trees) service by gravel roads, and I know first hand how off road vehicles, dirt bike and quad runners treat nature. We should leave the trails open to hikers and horse trails, I mean can you imagine dirt bikes on the Muir Trail in Yosemite? We need funding to protect our national treasures

The National Parks are truly one of America's "best ideas". We should be proud of the parks and celebrate 100 years in grandeur.

The number one best thing we can do to protect endangered species and wildlife in general is to preserve more land from development.

The Oak Openings Region in NW Ohio is protected through a series of public/private partnerships and landowners who want to preserve natural areas in an area with more rare species than anywhere else in Ohio. The Green Ribbon Campaign is the latest iteration of partnerships to maintain, educate and restore the Oak Openings. This concept dates back to the 1990's and involves local land trusts, park systems, The Nature Conservancy, volunteers and even local governments.

The only problem with multi-use trails is that they do not work. In reality the user with the biggest, fastest machine winds up with the trail and everyone else is either driven off or reduced to a secondary status. To be fair you have to have separate trails for conflicting user groups: single-track trails for the mountain bikers who want to get their adrenaline rush and hiking and equestrian trails for those who want a peaceful interaction with nature without the fear of being ran down.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

The slow and quiet part I agree with but if the wilderness area is home to a species that is threatened or endangered nobody, no er how quiet their vehicle or soft their shoe, should be ald in those areas. Wilderness areas are safe havens for animal species that have already been terribly impacted by man and should remain off limits. As someone else said you cannot regulate stupid and man has proven to have a detrimental impact wherever he goes.By all means though make ohvs quieter, lighter and sr and some of the problems they now face will go away.

The sound of the internal combustion engines of OHVs is a sound that is distinct to humans, our technology, and our civilization. If the goal of conservation of wilderness and outdoor places is to preserve portions of the planet in a more pristine and natural state, allowing greater OHV use is counter productive. A hiker's footprint is as big as his or her foot and radiates a sound that travels a few feet. A motorized vehicle's footprint is much deeper and more severe than the mark of a human foot and radiates loud and unnatural noise which can travel for miles and disturb nearby humans as well as the other animal species living in the enviment. If the purpose of open space is for entertaining a few people who enjoy the power of their engines, OHV use may be suitable. But if the purpose of open space is to give many more people and animals a place to be away from the noise and impact of civilization, then open spaces without motorized vehicle access are much more conducive to this goal.

The time has come to repeal the multiple-use mandate for National Forests and establish a new management policy that favors preservation over exploitation. Since the passing of the Multiple-Use Sustained Yield Act of 1960, the guiding principle behind National Forest policy has been “to achieve quality land management under the sustainable multiple-use management concept to meet the diverse needs of people.” This includes grazing, timber production, hydroelectric dams, landfills, utility corridors, and other invasive activities. While the multiple-use doctrine may be a workable management strategy in some National Forests far from major cities, it is becoming an increasingly unsuccessful and contentious model for National Forests near population centers. The four National Forests in Southern California (Cleveland, San Bernardino, Angeles, Los Padres) are a prime example. These "forests" are different from all the others in the National Forest System because they are almost exclusively used for recreation by a growing population. In addition, these lands are not typically covered by forests at all but by unique shrubland ecosystems, especially chaparral. These shrubland dominated landscapes need to be viewed and managed for what they are: urban parks that provide citizens opportunities to renew their enthusiasm for life as well as land preserves that protect the valuable wildlands found within. By continuing the current forest management model of multiple-use there is a significant danger these lands will be lost by multiple-degradation as they are exploited for a wide range of consumptive uses. We offer an alternative approach in our California Chaparral Preservation Plan. A copy of the Plan can be downloaded here: { Link }

The wheels of progress are often slow, but they do roll along. I think the Hatfield – McCoy trail system within the last year opened up to UVT’s. Others will as well. Support Multi-use trails so everyone has more access.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

There is already a senior one time fare that gives seniors unlimited access

There is nothing about owning a gun that makes a person crazy. People own firearms for a variety of reasons. The main reason to carry a firearm in a park is for protection from wild animals. I think too many of you greenies have watch a lot of Disney movies and think bears and cougars are cute talkative creatures that really just want to be friends.

There will be different needs - so I believe the best use of the land by those who own the land = legacy homesteads, private lands and legal rights for plants, animals and government to develop if they choose to - in the public good energy, water and clean air can be combined.

this area is already protected as a national forest - for it to be designated as a national monument would mean the thousands of people who live here would lose their property and lifestyles which would be devastating, especially in this economy, despite that KSWild says this will not happen - it has always happened! I am 69 years old and have worked very hard for many years for my home and 1 acre. I have spent many wonderful years making it as self-sufficient as possible with fruit trees, berries, vegetable garden, chickens, rabbits etc that gives me a great quality of life in my retirement years. There are many retired people here enjoying the same quality of life which would be destroyed, the people who live here love and care for the land - WHICH IS ALREADY PROTECTED! please do not support this proposal. visitors can freely come and go now as it is with camp grounds and motels which is much better to visit than highly regulated places. Please don't let this go through, please, please, please.

This idea is not unreasonable and may enlighten some trail users about the problems of over population, urban sprawl, heavily logged land, polluted water from grazing, global smog, and the high price of keeping the trail passable.

This is just another effort to stuff the ballot box in favor of OHVs. There are already plenty of places where bikes, OHVs, horses, and campers can go, and there are programs to make especially beautiful and significant areas accessible to disabled persons. Until the Supreme Court rules that OHVs are speech, let's keep things the way they are.

This is similar to the Great Western Trail which uses a combination of existing routes for both motorized and non-motorized users. Once fully designated the route will run from the Arizona-Mexico border to the Montana-Canada border. { Link } Both great ideas that should be fully implemented as originally intended.

This is THE BEST form of Education ! In Monterey, CA we have a Historic Path which everyone going on it enjoys !

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

This is the problem with environmental extremist, there can never be a middle ground with this group. There is plenty of open space that can be preserved as well as respectfully recreated on by multiple user groups, including OHV's. EVERYBODY deserves access to our PUBLIC LANDS (public, as in shared taxes and access). OHV recreation engages a large contingent of the US population. Without this access to enjoy our nations open spaces, peoples appreciation of it will diminish and along with the desire to protect and preserve our open space. OHV's provide recreational access for handicapped people who may never have access otherwise to some of our open space beauty. It also provides quality time for families together. The key is quiet and respectful riding through education and preserving enough open space for multi-user groups including OHV's to prevent over-use issues.

This sounds excellent, . I am a snowmobiler and I agree that snowmobiles and OHVs should only be used in areas or trails designated for them. Preserving the last of our wild areas is the most important priority. I believe this would benefit everyone.

to 4) I'll keep to the roads when you keep to the sidewalk. the tread on my tires is rubber, just like the tread of your shoes.

Us hunters already contribute an 11% tax on firearms and ammunition, you want us to pay even more? We pay our share, besides the tax, we pay for licenses, tags, land use fees, etc. Hunters, fishermen/women and all the hunting and fishing groups like Ducks Unlimited, Whittails Unlimited, Pheasants Forever, Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation, National Wild Turkey Federation, Trout Unlimited, and on and on. These groups, and hunters/fishermen have done more for wildlife conservation than any other group has. Tax the rest of the people who use the land.

Visits to the National Parks and participating in ranger lead activities such as the Junior Ranger program have been a wonderful experience for our family. Also, as a teacher, I have benefited from such valuable initiatives by the parks, as allowing visitors to participate in fossil digs at Fossil Butte National Monument and using their paleontology education kits in my classroom. As a teacher, I also have taken my students on regular camping trips in the National Parks, and made plans to use all available educational resources offered by the rangers.

We have tens of thousands of road miles in public lands already - the last thing we need is more motorized access. If motorized vehicles want a route from Washington to California, they can choose from Highway 1, 101, 395, I-5, etc...

We, as a Nation, have so many unemployed people. They would be proud to serve their Country! DO give them a job.

Well maintained parks with organized educational programs are an uplifting, educational vacation experience which makes us proud of our country.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Well said . I work as a Garden Instructor at an elementary school and all that you have said reiterates what our program does for the students, school community and the community as a whole. Not only does it connect them to the outdoors, it enables them to grow from seed the food that they eat throughout the year and involves them in every step of the process. For many of them, they find the connection they have been missing. If we want kids who are involved in all aspects of life, then school gardens are a great place to start.

Well ther is alot of people out of work now. Lets bring back the ccc Camps. It worked back during the great depression. Which we are in now.

Well, first I had to look up UTV on Google. I guess using these vehicles on already established trails for other motorized vehicles would be OK. I obviously haven't seen the ads noted by A Ralston, but roll cages could just be a safety feature. Just don't expand access for motorized vehicles to additional lands.

Well-designed multi-use trails can work well for everyone. There are two keys--trails should be well-designed to reduce erosion and people should be respectful of one another (and of the trails). I love running into people using trails in different ways. I love using trails in different ways.

Are you aware that it is ILLEGAL to in anyway harass a hunter in ALL 50 STATES. This includes your attempts to "scare off" game animals. While I don't agree with shooting at you, I have zero sympathy for you due to your participation in illegal activity.I have just as much a right to ride my motorcycle in the woods as you do to walk in them. As it turns out, I am an accomplished offroad motorcycle racer who also happens to have hiked a substantial portion of the Appalachian Trail and am currently planning to thru hike the pacific crest trail. Lose your narrow minded nature.

What better investment can we make in the physical and mental health of our citizens that will provide jobs and economic stimulus than our national parks? None

When adults take their kids outdoors, and enjoy the outdoors with them, there is a greater chance the kids will learn to love the outdoors. When you take a kid to a park and say "Go Play" while the adults sit on the sidelines, the kids are less likely to develop a lifelong love of the outdoors.

When I was visited Death Valley National Park, I visited a remote campground. There were recycle bins. I talked to the host. He would pick up the recyclables and store them in a shed. Every week, a volunteer would drive something like 80 miles from the park headquarters, then drive them to the nearest recycle center over a hundred miles away each way. I have to say they were trying hard, but I also wonder about how much gas they were using to get the stuff recycled, when visitors were going home anyway. I am all for very tough litter laws. I sometimes think Mylar balloon manufacturers should contribute to a clean-up fund- I'm always finding them out in the woods.

Where in this country are there too many places funded by the state that OHVs can use? Could you tell me where they are?

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Where is the family togetherness as you race along on the OHV. You can't talk with one another. Since OHV's damage the landscape much more than other methods of recreational enjoyment, charge them appropriate fees. Given the revenue needs of the park and forrest system, a seasonal fee of \$1,000. per OHV used in each land unit is a good start.

Whether a majority, or 50/50 (which is highly doubtful), the people who enjoy the outdoors for the scenery and stillness will lose that if more intrusive activities are ald in a wilderness. In protected, or wild, natural areas, only natural activities should be ald, walking, running (although, not competitive), camping and fishing (in a regulated manner), hunting (where it is deemed necessary for game control and not preclusive for other recreaters), photography, and, maybe, some limited bicycling routes. All of the more intrusive events, e.g.; bicycling, camping, fishing, hunting; that don't already, should bear a fee because of the overhead required to support them and the damage that they, inevitably, cause. Nature is usually quiet and beautiful, anything besides natural acts will destroy this, if you want to do noisy things that tear up the planet, there are too many places to do it where Mother Nature's sounds and sights have already been exiled.

While I am a "Dirt" tent camper by choice my parents need to be in an RV due to age and physical limitations. I know for a fact that where I often drive and set their RV up for them they pay a MUCH higher (sometimes 3-4 or even more) higher price for their camping spot than anyone who does not use the services that they require. Maybe its not the same all over and some RVer's do use more services than others and don't pay for it, but I have never seen it. A lot of RVer's are on fixed income and struggling with the cost of life already. The dump facility they use is supplied by the place where they purchase fuel as an enticement for their business. Not sure what electric pumps you are referring that they would need charge extra for, if it's a water pump, they are the same pumps that supply the campers (non-RV users) with their water. If they are paying (in some cases) four times more now to camp and you double it, that would be eight times as much as I would pay with my tent in the next camp site over!

Why do we need a new agency to plant trees for us? Nearly every home built blankets land that once supported oxygen producing trees. Every American should be encouraged by the government (possibly by tax breaks)to plant clusters of trees to reverse the damage where it was done. Lets put 350 million Americans to work on this and not create a new expensive government agency.

Why not take a walk?

Wilderness and ORVs do mix. Its the two user groups that cant seem to get along. If a trail is going to devastate an animals habitat then how can they survive in developed communities? The subdivision that I lived in had deer and other animals coexisting just fine. It is your agenda that gets in the way.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Wow that is great . Thank you for the link. That is exactly what I am proposing only in the west coast states. Yesterday I was up in the Tahoe Donner area with my Dad and we took the backroads in my truck through the Tahoe NF. It was a beautiful day and the views of the Royal Gorge on the North fork of the American River was amazing. We encountered a large brown black bear and watched him for a few minutes until he turned and walked away. It was great. Just getting out there in the forest is a blessing in itself, no er how you get there.

Yea who drives 30 MPH on a ATV trail? We have had our horses ride with us and we go the same speed as the horses. And our UTV is so quite most people do not hear us until we get up on them. We drive right by the horses with no problems.

YES ! it seems OBVIOUS ! Do Not remove any of the Old Groves

Yes, for that part of the country, it sounds reasonable. There should be land set aside for all uses.

You know, that would be a time-honoured help for our national forests and it will spell considerable relief from this recession that we are in. Yes we will fully approve this dual purpose approach, which will give a growing number of unemployed people a chance to do something for themselves and our country. So, let us bring back The Civilian Conservation Corps, and many Americans will be happy and pleased as punch to welcome it back, and it will bring well-deserve relief from this recession. Now let us all get The Civilian Conservation Corps ready for it's comeback so we can be well-prepared for it's arrival.

do you know how they come up with the number of tags they issue the hunters? Overhunting is not a problem. Are you pulling these comments out of a hat or what?

Your opinion is just that an opinion. Calling hunters cowards is childish, and shows that you have no knowledge of the sport of hunting whatsoever. There are over 14 million hunters in the US who add Billions of dollars to state and local economies every year. We pay an extra 11% tax on firearms and ammunition which goes to state fish and game agencies. the money from all the licenses, tags, and use permits we have to purchase also go to wildlife conservation, hunters have done far more for wildlife conservation than any other group.

- how did I blame them? When my grandfather was out of work during the depression, the government helped him out by giving him a job. the job was shoveling dirt by hand. Eventually he started his own construction firm, but lost it because he volunteered to join the seebees during world war II. No one in our family blamed him for either situation. When I was out of a job as a youngster, my family helped me out, but I also did things for them like cook dinner, mow lawn etc. How is this different? You jump to lots of conclusions. Maybe you need to calm down and listen. giving people work is NOT a bad thing. Most people WANT to help. Why not let them?

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Not all National Parks are geographically large and support camping. There are many smaller parks with important stories to tell. Two of my favorites are the Marsh-Billings-Rockefeller site in Vermont and the Henry Longfellow House site in Cambridge, MA. These parks have important lessons to teach about stewardship of the land and the development of our cultural history as a country. All of the National Parks need an increase in staffing and funding in order to continue their important role in providing education and recreation to the people who visit them.

Not all recreation is appropriate for a National Park, just like not all recreation is appropriate for a gymnasium, a swimming pool, a race track, etc. Our parks are unique ecosystems and must be managed as such to remain for what they were intended, to be passed on to future generations intact.

Not sure where these facts that OHV vehicles destroy trails is coming from? Please show me statistics or facts rather than just your opinion. The fact we must all understand is this is public land and it is to be shared by all of us. You will find bad seeds in all groups regardless of the recreation at hand. A hiker is just as capable of destroying a growing plant, removing signs, etc. as is a OHV rider. Registration fees on OHV vehicles and wilderness passes help maintain these trails. In addition we have many OHV groups/clubs that give back to the community by volunteering time and/or donating to help clean/maintain.

O.K. This thread is all over the Map, so I'll go off on my tangent.... Bottom Line is: Too Many Humans. If birth control requirements to limit over-population, globally, is not established, we are doomed to "destroy the earth" whether from over use, depletion of resources, war over natural resources (Can you spell "Afghanistan" ?) etc. There will NEVER be enough cheap energy. Boy, this is off on a tangent, I know ----- and has 'nothing to do with the subject' Riiiiight.

OHV recreational use of public lands should be preserved for the benefit of current and future American families. OHV use is a legitimate, sustainable use of appropriate public lands, particularly on National Forests and Bureau of Land Management Units. Motorized recreation is a healthy family activity and provides a great opportunity for families to "get away from it all," and to experience the great outdoors. OHVs, like other recreationists, seek opportunities to not only enjoy the riding experience, but also opportunities to learn more about cultural and historical context, take in scenic views, observe wildlife, camp, hunt, fish and other activities. The overwhelming majority of OHVs are conservationists, who seek to preserve the same outdoor experiences they enjoy for children and grandchildren. ATV and off-highway motorcycle riding encourages and promotes physical fitness. OHVs provide the opportunity for Americans of all ages and physical capabilities to enjoy the outdoors.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

OHV use is a legitimate, sustainable use of appropriate public lands, particularly on National Forests and Bureau of Land Management Units. Motorized recreation is a healthy family activity and provides a great opportunity for families to “get away from it all,” and to experience the great outdoors. OHVs, like other recreationists, seek opportunities to not only enjoy the riding experience, but also opportunities to learn more about cultural and historical context, take in scenic views, observe wildlife, camp, hunt, fish and other activities. The overwhelming majority of OHVs are conservationists, who seek to preserve the same outdoor experiences they enjoy for children and grandchildren. OHVs are volunteers. OHV clubs and organizations groom and maintain trails, trailheads and other facilities as well as adopt trails and provide the tools and experience needed for constructing and maintaining all sorts of recreational trails; not just OHV opportunities. ATV and off-highway motorcycle riding encourages and promotes physical fitness. OHVs provide the opportunity for Americans of all ages and physical capabilities to enjoy the outdoors.

OHV use is good clean family fun. They have a place as viable recreation. Set aside property designated for motorized recreation.

On a cost basis alone, it makes much more sense to fully protect & manage these precious resources than dealing with the exponentially greater cost of repairs to infrastructure & the actual ecosystems from years of neglect & damage. These parks are all undeniably unique gems of this country. No question, we have the most beautifully eclectic collection of parks in the world - let's keep it that way!

Once again, motorized vehicles DO NOT destroy trails, cause erosion or noise pollution. Get your facts straight.

Only activities that do not degrade the environment should be permitted. We have to think out to the Seventh Generation. Period.

Our daughter and son-in-law LOVE snow-mobiling and do a lot in Canada. Let's look at what laws Canada has! They are satisfying everyone: land owners, state Parks as well as snow-mobilers who are very respectful of these laws! Marie-France

Our national parks are a critical part of our nation's heritage and must be supported and preserved for future generations. We should reallocate 10% of the military budget for preserving and protecting our national parks.

Our national parks are a living part of both nature and the past, as nature used to be. They deserve protection and nurturance so that they can continue to be the examples of what our ecosystems can be if given a chance to be under the management of Nature.

Our National Parks are a visible and hands on way for our children, and their children, to experience many of our national resources. We need to preserve our parks, and continue to protect them from encroachment. Enjoy and appreciate our parks. Increase full funding to the National Park System.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Our national parks are an amazing treasure and deserve FULL funding. I was lucky enough to visit Arches National Park, Mount Rushmore, and Badlands National Park in May and I can't wait to visit more parks.

Our national parks are an important part of our lives and our country. It shows a civilized culture resides here.

Our National Parks are an incredible legacy that deserve to ALWAYS be fully funded. We have created a unique and admirable system in the National Park Service where we show that we value our natural and historic areas so much that we have an entire government agency mandated to protect them. But, our system goes beyond protection, we teach thousands of kids and adults annually about these amazing places and encourage future generations to be responsible stewards. Very few countries in the world compare to the education and outreach programs we have in our National Parks. This is something to be proud of, that we actually have pristine areas that we haven't destroyed yet..yet. We need to keep this responsible stewardship message stg and fully fund our national parks!!! It is important to remember that we can love these places to death, the more we love them, the more support they need. Full funding to national parks, please!

Our National Parks are our greatest legacy. Pleaae fund them to show we truly believe in what has been started.

Our national parks are our national treasure and should be available to visitors. It is true that we need to have a job corps to maintain them which is perfect for this time with so many unemployed.

Our national parks are places of refuge, beauty, education, and of healing for the soul for those who have lost a connection with our wild spaces due to spending all their time in an urban/sub-urban enviment. By fully funding our national parks, we can then take steps to restore them to their previous greatness through the return of educational programs, maintenance and other public-facing resources. With so much of our beautiful landscape lost to development, it is imperative we preserve and maintain our national parks as part of the heritage we leave to those who come after us. Thank you.

Our National Parks are utterly precious, invaluable pieces of the American heritage and irreplaceable sources of true re-creation for the human spirit. There is nothing whatsoever that replaces what they have to offer and our treatment of them is a direct reflection on the respect and appreciation we place in ourselves as people and a country. They are gifts to all of the highest magnitude and we owe it to ourselves and the future to protect them with all we've got.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Our National Parks could be the perfect showcase for green energy. Local clean energy sources could solve many of the problems our park service is facing - pollution, congestion and maintenance - while supplying local and green jobs. Many parks, notably Yellowstone and Yosemite, suffer from automobile pollution and congestion. The Park Service already offers bus tours. All gas powered busses should be phased out. Tour programs should be expanded as well as bicycle rentals. Some time in the not too distant future, perhaps a fleet of small electric vehicles to rent might be practical. A simple change in park use regulations could go a long way toward conservation without costing a dime. What if some routes are closed on certain days/hours to fossil fueled vehicles? Days reserved for bicyclists? Reduced park fees for hybrid cars? Another challenge remotely located parks have faced from their beginnings is accessible electricity. Miles of power lines distract from the views and are inefficient and expensive to maintain. Parks that utilize the most practical local clean energy (wind, solar, geothermal, hydro) are great examples for their communities and our nation. Those that already use green energy should tout themselves, publicize! Money used to maintain on-grid energy use might be better used to upgrade to a more sustainable system. And there is no reason why new facilities, particularly in remote areas, should not use self-sufficient energy sources. For the last two decades the model of Park income has been the use of private concessions. Concessions to sell gifts, food, lodging and recreation. How about private GREEN concessions? So many small, mid-size businesses and larger companies are struggling to make sustainable energy viable. A contract with the Park Service would help these businesses gain exposure. Investment in park infrastructure of this kind helps local economies by providing jobs and training workers in the fledgling green industry. In some states these initiatives are in action in state parks. But more funding is needed for both national and state parks to make them a reality.

Our National Parks provide a crucial opportunity for citizens and visitors to experience the brilliance of the natural environment. Full funding for the National parks!

Our national parks serve to educate and to provide opportunity for healthy exercise. Both of those commodities are worthy and needed goals. Full funding is a good investment in the future and in the present.

Our rangers have a huge impact on children as they expertly teach about the importance of preserving our open spaces and National Parks.

Owyhee is real wilderness. It truly merits protection.

- green stickers are a fee that is to pay for access on public land - trail maintenance, parking etc. if ATVs are run only on private land they do not need to get green stickers. If ATV owners get nothing for their money they will not pay for stickers. I am not an ATV rider, but I can see their point. I just don't want to hear them.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Peer pressure does work as has been demonstrated in So Fla swamps w/ORV's. It is much easier for folks to listen to their own rather than those they perceive to be outsiders telling them how to act. Spread of invasives however is another story unless all the critters quit going #2. Very large bear scat, bird and other animal droppings combined with slow moving water (sheet flow) cause many more of those problems in So Fla than ORV's. Until the animal scat ceases the problem is impossible to totally cure. Enviro groups are actually lightening up on that issue in Fla. I don't know if the problem is identical in Utah but suspect it might be. The Clinton move in Utah, I do believe though would have irritated the Pope.

Perhaps raising the rates, but letting people do volunteer work to build up state park 'credits' or earn a reduced rate, if they feel that they can't afford the higher rates. Both of these, in conjunction, will ease the flow from state coffers, bringing in higher rates from those who can, and helping ease labor costs. I know in my state, Oregon, we do a lot of volunteer work just to help keep the state beautiful, through our employers and other groups, if this were extended to include state parks then these credits could be given to volunteers to use later at state parks of their choice, and perhaps make them feel more responsible for those parks that they are enjoying.

Perhaps RV fees should be tied to the use requirements of the RVer. My rig uses 30 amp hookups, the big rigs generally use 50 amp service. Set fees on a scale related to power and facilities consumption. When I RV camp, I frequently hook up to electric & water only, sometimes only electric, and try scout a place to dump down the road. I appreciate being able to use a camp ground dump station since fewer truck stops are offering that service now. I could dry camp, but would rather not disturb a campground by running a generator, since I have not outfitted my rig with solar panels (yet).

Please fully fund the National Parks and get the invasive off road vehicles and guns out of the parks. There is no place for either. Furthermore, no more selling of federal lands for pennies on the dollar to mining and oil interests.

Please preserve our National Parks and the dark night skies within them and around them. I want the childrens children to be able to see the milky way when they look up at night. I don't want the great grand kids telling their children stories of what used to be great by starting out saying... Once upon a time..... Natures gifts should not be squandered. scdva.org

Please stay on topic and try to limit the political crap. I think this is a great idea with multiple efits. 1. resored national lands free of litter. 2. pride of usefullness and accomplishment of participants 3. Cost effectiveness. 4. exposure to the forest for those that don't have the means to get there "reconnecting people to the outdoors" 5. educational aspects of service from our communities Thank you for a great out of the box idea

Promote all forms of recreation.... Let's add hatchet throwing at random trees as a fun sport. Since OHV's damage the landscape much more than other methods of recreational enjoyment, charge them appropriate fees. Given the revenue needs of the park and forrest system, a seasonal fee of \$1,000. per OHV used in each land unit is a good start.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

the government will spend several million dollars to build roads so lumber companies can log in an area that will produce \$100,000.00 worth of lumber. Your point is it would be too expensive to pay someone for their property if the land was turned into a national park? I say it would be a worthwhile expense. What I was talking about was not every area needs facilities (park store, full time employees, new roads, etc.). What I've seen in my state is when the federal government creates a national park or forest, the people who have property there stay until they want to sell, then the federal government is given the first shot at buying the property.

Really. Having grown up when they did have grazing. It was banned here in the 70s. I can now see the damage that was done to the forest by banning grazing. The forest are now so thick that you can not walk through them. Grazing did no damage to the forest it cleared out the underbrush making it so you could walk through it and made it less of a fire hazard. I dont know where this culvert deal comes from I have never seen any stream with fish in it that had a culvert culverts are only used is small drainage ares that have no fish because they do not have standing water. Logging must be done to get rid of the bettles and to control files. Also the looking rev was shared with local govns for schools in exchange for the feds not paying taxes on the land. If the feds are no longer going to pay the rev sharing then they should pay the state taxes on the land.

Reauthorize FLTFA, a "land for land" conservation program that generates revenue through the sale of BLM lands identified for disposal to help federal agencies purchase critically important tracts of land from private willing sellers for fish and wildlife conservation, cultural and historic preservation and outdoor recreation in the 11 western states and Alaska, including BLM designated areas, National Forests, National Parks, Wildlife Refuges, Wild and Scenic Rivers, the National Trails System and other priority areas. Since enactment in 2000, FLTFA has generated over \$113 million and the FLTFA account has provided funding for over 18,000 acres of strategic conservation projects, often complementing Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) support. See www.fltfa.org for a brochure, maps, and more details.

Retired Americans have the time, ability, knowledge, experience and the desire to assist the USFS in many areas of our National Parks. Be it manning entry booths, book stores, answering questions, Just about anything that pulls some of the load off of Park Rangers. I am 72, in exct health and still have a functioning brain. Give us a little training, some sort of uniform and get us out there. I just got back from the Eastern Sierra, love those mountains.

Right on GOD gave us these great lands lets use them.

"The NPS proposed wilderness areas have already been administratively protected for many years" If it is working fine the way it is, lets stop wasting money studing something that is already protected and spend our money on maintaining what we already have.

: "why should that "management" include logging and grazing? How does that serve us or the land?"It creates jobs for the people who live closest to the federal land, whose families lived there before it even became federal land.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Promote tent camping the only true camping experience. RV's are not camping!

The Problem: Federal agency officials continue to resist the idea that easements and other alternatives are effective cost-saving alternatives to fee acquisition of lands. They talk about using alternatives but rarely try to implement them. The Solution: Incentives need to be established for officials to use easements and other cost-saving alternatives. Penalties need to be created for buying more than the interest necessary to achieve project objectives. Federal officials have often, and inaccurately, misrepresented the cost of easements. A popular notion is that easements cost 80% or more of fee title. The key is to buy easements early when development is far away. Easements increase in cost as development gets closer. However, officials have made little or no attempt to use easements or other alternatives, and instead go to great lengths to avoid them. Inholders have actually been scared out of using easements because of very restrictive terms and negative statements from federal officials. For example, the State of Minnesota successfully used easements on a cost effective basis on the Kettle River. The Park Service was unable or unwilling to use easements on the nearby St. Croix to the degree suggested by Congress. The result was costs much higher than necessary on the St. Croix and poor landowner relations. The Fish and Wildlife Service has also successfully used easements to protect wildlife habitat at costs approximately 40% or less of what the fee title would have cost. The inability of the federal agencies to use alternatives to fee title has actually led to the protection of some areas and wasted funds. The result is that there is now a huge backlog of unprotected lands. Some landowners want to sell but can't because of the shortage of money. In addition, relocation and human costs associated with fee acquisition are not considered by agency officials. Nor do they consider the project effects when inholder communities are left intact. There may, in fact, be a long term management and maintenance cost, especially when landowners remain in areas where significant cultural and historical values exist. An example is the Buffalo River. Local landowners were so mad at the Park Service that they would not even show the agency how to run a historic grist mill. How much better it would have been to have kept the grist mill in the hands of the original owners so visitors could have seen living history. There needs to be better training of land managers and acquisition officers and more information for landowners, so that all parties can understand the benefits of using reasonable alternatives and avoiding unnecessary conflict. The bottom line from the federal agency viewpoint must be to acquire only the interest in land necessary to meet the intent of Congress. This issue was developed in cooperation with the American Land Rights Association www.landrights.org

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

• Preserved Civil War battlefields are tangible links to our country's past. • The 150th anniversary commemoration is expected to stimulate renewed interest in the conflict and generate unprecedented tourism to Civil War sites. • Protection of America's remaining Civil War battlefields will leave a lasting legacy of national commitment to preservation and conservation. • Preserved battlefields revitalize local economies and create jobs by encouraging heritage tourism. The more historic land that is preserved, the longer visitors stay in a community and the more time they spend patizing local businesses. • Battlefields are outdoor classrooms for this and future generations. They allow visitors to walk in the footsteps of the Civil War heroes and experience the landscape much as it was during the conflict. • Preserved battlefields help protect water resources; sustain parks, working farms, forests and ranches; and provide open space for passive outdoor recreation. • Battlefield preservation in Pennsylvania, Maryland and Virginia, where many significant sites are located, is also vital for protecting the Chesapeake Bay. Parkland created through battlefield preservation near growing population centers like Nashville, Atlanta and elsewhere can efit quality of life for residents.

I am in favor of funding our National and State Parks so that they will be preserved and maintained for all to enjoy. We are the stewarts of this earth and need to take responsibility for safe keeping.

Active management of recreational use works. With management (maps, kiosks, partnership agreements, adopt a trail, on the ground signing, etc) land managers increase capacity while decreasing impacts to natural resources. Involvement of federal land managers with local communities works. Community based FACA committees formed from a broad base of stakeholders can well serve as advisory councils to assist the land manager in critical planning and decision-making efforts. Asking for assistance and volunteer hours from local user groups and clubs can do wonders for the management of OUR lands for ALL users. Trail clean ups, trail maintenance and blocking off improper routes and bypasses are but a few of the things that volunteer time can be put to good use.

Adventure Cycling has already created maps that provide a route for the Pacific Coast trail. This is similar to their maps for the Continental Divide trail. They by pass Wilderness Areas and use mostly Forest Service roads. The maps are very good. See AdventureCycling.org

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

may I commend to your attention the "Sustainable Funding" section of the executive summary of the NPS Second Century Commission report? At this link { Link } (3 MB pdf) scroll down to PDF page 40 (text page 38) for an overview. To me, one sentence best summarizes it "Our financial commitment to the parks matches neither their importance to society nor the enormous franchise they have with the American people." I volunteer in a Park which loses, on average, one structure listed on the National Register of Historic Places every year. The current NPS annual operating deficit is ~\$750 million/year. This shows up directly as a growing deferred maintenance backlog and loss of staff. The distinction between expanding vs diluting the NPS mission is to first secure adequate funding for its current mission, before expanding its mission. That's why I feel you have put the cart before the horse, .

America is a very special place in that we actually have some undeveloped land to support our native wildlife, provide solace, quiet and exercise for the people that work in cities. We must do all we can to make more wilderness and protect the wild lands that we have. Thank you.

An example of using sound science would be to conduct unbiased/objective recreational carrying capacity studies for all federally managed land.

An outstanding idea! The CCC would allow improvements as well as basic maintenance of park facilities. The concept could also be used in our National Forests. Young folks would be able to learn a variety of skills that could be useful in finding construction jobs in the private sector.

Any kind of motorized access does not belong in a wilderness. If it has motors, quiet or not (and who is judging? and on what standards?), it obviates the meaning of the term. On the other hand, I would support the idea of access for those with physical challenges. That means access, it does not mean that the wilderness should be changed to accommodate motors.

As a citizen of one of the most diverse nations in the world, I see the value and the strength of that diversity. There is no reason we cannot expand that strength and depth of character.

As a diverse culture, we all have the opportunity to learn about different cultures and historic events which already took place and the ones being made today. Let us recognize the contributions made by individuals who led the way, pioneers if you will, and those who are still making a difference. The legacy of oral history is rich. You have only to ask the elders who lived through changing times to find progress is not a static thing. By going back in time, you can go forward with a rich foundation of roots bound in tradition.

As above comments have already stated, our public lands are already federally owned. Wanting to turn them over to despoilers for private monetary gain is the very reason the government needs to keep tight control, and add to the wilderness system, create more National Monuments and pull the National Forests out of the timber sales business.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

As long as wilderness land is also set aside and protected!

As new land becomes available, it should be grasped at that chance opportunity, so the overdeveloped places don't take over all the earth. As humans, we all need the place to relax, reflect and redirect our thoughts and that doesn't happen so often when there's no "green" space. Setting aside space is how our parks came into being; let's spread the preserve.

As our world changes with global warming, our children need to know how the physical world has existed, exists now, and is changing.

As with all public lands, wilderness is the cheapest way to manage a park, and because the NPS doesn't ever have enough money, wilderness designation is the most prudent thing to do with park land.

At present (August 2010) corporations have a great deal of capital but are hesitating to invest in new ventures, which may well not have buyers due to an unstable world economy. The result is excess money is available, unspent, and no improved employment outlook. Why not encourage the Boards of large corporations to invest a new Civilian Conservation Corp, thus increasing employment opportunities and improvement our public lands? How to do this? How about a plaque on each project such as "This Bridge/lodge/trail/canal/renewal built by ABC corp 2010" This is not a new idea. Throughout the world we can see public schools with "Supported by CocaCola" (phrasing may not be exact)

-So what if they turn them in or someone else turns them in? Either way they do not end up in our waterways or our oceans. Much like a bottle tax charging and extra 3 cents per cigarette and then refunding it when returned would work. This is a great idea and I am shocked it is not getting a better response.

-If that is true about The Nature Conservancy then I am glad I give them so much money through my worker donation program and will make sure to up that amount next year.

Check into what happened in CO along the ft range and specifically in Boulder county over this issue. In the 1990s USFS/BLM took exception and told the folks either quit or pay because building a house on an old mining claim is not the intent of the law. Those that chose to pay had to pay current market value for the land they had essentially "squatted" on. Those that quit had to tear down the residence and put it back to original condition.

Conducting and taking surveys on any controversial topic is very difficult. Desired results can be obtained by phrasing the questions in a biased manner. When the surveys are filled out voluntarily they will not provide a true picture of how the people filling out the surveys feel about the topics. Random sampling and random interviews may be a way to obtain meaningful surveys. However, doing this will involve more personnel and expense than having people fill out a form; but it would be more meaningful.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Contrary to what some people claim, there is no discrimination going on. No one wants to restrict anyone from Wilderness areas, everyone is free to go there. You are however not free to do whatever you want, because that's the whole point of Wilderness areas. Read the Wilderness act: "A wilderness, in contrast with those areas where man and his own works dominate the landscape, is hereby recognized as an area where the earth and its community of life are untrammelled by man, where man himself is a visitor who does not remain." People have to have some perspective. The main point of the Wilderness areas is to leave areas "untrammelled by man". It's not a conspiracy by hikers to exclude everyone else. There are plenty of non-wilderness areas that are meant to support "multiple use".

Currently OG forest loss is mostly due to wildfire because we have suppressed fire for so long--native Americans used fire to clear out fuels and produce useful plants. I would suggest you read up on actual ancient forests. Start with Agee, Pyne or Bonnicksen, who all have written excellent books. Simply standing back and "protecting" will not produce large OG trees. Native Americans actively managed the land. However, there are many counties that Native American management techniques would no longer be appropriate for due to danger to existing homes from fire. A sample of the original forest or vegetation in each county would be a good thing, but not easy to do, since wildfire and managed fire created most of the vegetation types in North America.

:Exotic invasive plant species are able to displace native plants only because those factors that control their spread in their original locales were not transported here with them. The serious problems caused by exotic invasive plants -- well noted in several other previous comments -- need practical, sustainable solutions...not bizarre hypothetical distractions such as your Comment #5.

Definitely, full funding.

Denali in Alaska does not allow most private vehicles into the gorgeous park. They have only a 90 mile highway that accommodates buses run by the park service. You can get off the bus and hike and camp or just walk, then get another bus back, or simply stay on the bus the whole time. The wildlife to be seen as a result is beyond fabulous. On a recent trip we saw wolves, lynx, caribou, moose, grizzlies & their cubs, coyotes, eagles, horseshoe hares, ptarmigan, dall sheep, and marmots--all on one 8-hour bus trip. The animals are more visible because there aren't cars and ATVs and people racing around scaring them.

Don't forget to write to your representatives in Congress and your Senators and let them know your feelings on this issue!

Due to the lack of land that actually meets the original honest Wilderness criteria, advocates had the law changed to allow substantially sub-standard lands to qualify. A classic example can be viewed under Challenges - "Protect Wilderness b4 it is too late...." at comment 1.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Education is KEY to Preservation !

Education is the key to the preservation of our National Parks. Instilling an appreciation of our natural heritage is vital. Preserving our National Parks for the enjoyment of future generations is a real challenge.

In African parks balloons are used to view wildlife. They do not disturb the wildlife as much as vehicles and it gives the rider an unique chance to see wildlife that otherwise would not be seen. I would not like to see balloons used in national parks as I think those should be left as pristine as possible with as little commercialization as possible and of course wilderness areas should be off limits to all but otherwise with the proper regulations I think balloons would be a wonderful way for people to experience our public lands, national forests and wildlife.

Even though I haven't seen them all (yet), I love our national parks. We need to increase funding to preserve these places for us forever. Increased funding is very much needed to continue ranger activities, facility, trail and road maintenance, and enforcement. National parks are our sanctuary from all that's wg in the world; we need to keep our connection with nature and wildlife. The National Park System is the best idea America ever had and we need increased funding to keep it so.

Everyone who visits this site is painfully aware of the historical and cultural importance of our National Park System. However, "Starve the beast" conservatives must continually be reminded of this notion even if it has to be put into the context that we humans are "God's stewards of nature." Conservatives are hell-t on letting our national infrastructure and the economy rot. They would love to use this as an excuse to privatize every one of our National Parks so that their corporate masters can profit from it, just as they are content to let corporations exploit every other inch of land in America to the detriment of society in general and for nobody's efit but their own. At the very least, additional funding for National Parks would create jobs, something that today's conservatives have proven over and over that they are loathe to do. I recoment that everybody get and out vote this November and remember that conservative politicians are not interested the public welfare and care nothing about our National Parks other than their usefulness as corporate giveaways.

Exct proposition !DO involve the local population for planting and transplanting !

Federal land agencies should implement a system where designated routes are monitored for ORV user violations. They should then close routes where there are violations beyond a set standard (say for example, two violations a month). This system is already in place on USFS land in the cottonwood canyons above SLC for dog use. This would give users an incentive to police their own, and compensate for the agency's lack of enforcement capability.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Financial focus needs to be place on restoring and improving the National Park system. These parks are one of the unique aspects of America. They represent our heritage and are the only large spaces left for wildlife to live freely.

Full funding for the National Parks is the only way to protect these great treasures for current - and future - generations of Americans to enjoy.

Full funding of our National Parks should be a top priority in the next Congress.

Full Funding!

FULL funding, no question.

Full funding.

Fully fund, fully staff. Expand and fully train volunteers, too.

Fully funds the parks and properly staff them as well!

Fund them.

Funding for our National Parks should never be a question. Our parks are beautiful because of what our government do (funding) - why would anyone want funding to stop? I support our National Parks by going on vacation to one of them each year. In the near future I will also want to be a volunteer.

Funding for the National Parks needs to be increased so we can have them in the future.

Given the incredible pressure exerted by the OHV lobby and the mining and drilling proponents, giving these areas permanent protection as wilderness might help insure that the generations that come after us will actually have a few pristine places left that can connect them to the vast natural heritage we once had in this country. I certainly want that for my children and grandchildren.

Good idea. In Michigan, the DNR uses money it receives from snowmobile trail permits to pay private land owners for access to private land.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Great idea but lets use private funds pay for this idea I would think a GREEN mfg would want to be involved so they can promote their products, their is enough burden on the tax payers.

I agree . But there should be areas set aside for OHVs. It doesn't even have to be federal land. For example, in Michigan, snowmobiles pay for a trail permit. The DNR use some of this money to pay private landowners to have snowmobile trails access private property. This sounds like a good alternative to me. OHVs can be ridden anywhere. More land should be set as that is free of human development (roads, mining, drilling, etc).

I agree that people who clearly love the wilderness and treat it with the utmost respect and intelligence, and who know this land like the back of their hands, should be taking the LEAD role in the area's management. In these cases, the local people are far more expert than the "experts" -- and neglecting to solicit and heed their input and advice would be a huge misstep on the government's part. The local experts have their whole lives invested in maintaining the beauty and overall health of the Siskiyou Crest area. Their voices should be heard.

Our National Parks which are a treasure should be fully funded. And, I see no reason for anyone to have a loaded gun in the park. But, I guess when the first child is killed accidentally, that subject will be dealt with. Off road vehicles and snow mobiles do tend to tear up wild space. Maybe they should be restricted to roads only. Just saying...

I agree. National Parks provide a prime backdrop for quality education and partner organizations can be entrepreneurial and ensure that parks are accessible to youth from ac the demographic spectrum.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

I am the executive director of Western Wildlife Conservancy in Salt Lake City, Utah. WWC is a non-profit wildlife conservation organization with approximately 300 members, most of whom live in Utah and recreate in the American West. I am also a member of the Western Governors Association Wildlife Council Stakeholder Advisory Group. Our specific charge is to aid the WGA Wildlife Council in implementing the WGA Wildlife Corridor and Crucial Habitat Initiative. Additionally, I am a member of the "Spine of the Continent" Wildway steering committee under the aegis of Wildlands Network (formerly The Wildlands Project). We seek to create a "mega-corridor" of functionally connected wildlife linkages up and down the Rockies, from the Brooks Range in Alaska to the Sierra Madre Mountains in Mexico. I have read the full draft BLM discussion paper on Treasured Landscapes. I find the vision embodied in that document bold and exciting and believe that it is urgently needed. Moreover, as a member of the WGA WC SAG, I know that it is exactly what is needed in order for the WGA Wildlife Corridor and Crucial Habitat Initiative to be successfully implemented in concert with another WGA initiative, the Renewable Energy Zone Initiative. I believe that the most important thing the Obama administration can do for public lands in the United States, is to protect their ecological integrity and resiliency. Therein lies our future. We must protect, and where necessary restore, our beautiful iconic landscapes, our watersheds, and the resiliency of our ecosystems. This will provide us with clean air, clean water, abundant wildlife, and a variety of types of outdoor recreation into the foreseeable future. It will preserve and enhance the possibilities for horsepacking and backpacking adventures. Combined with swift but prudent implementation of the WGA Renewable Energy Zone Initiative it will also enable us to move toward a clean energy future, which in turn will provide new jobs for our citizens and help preserve the quality of our environment. For all these reasons, I urge the Administration to set its sights on protecting connected landscapes and ecosystems. Protection of our ecosystems, watersheds and iconic landscapes will not only require that the protected landscapes be functionally connected to serve the needs of wildlife, it will require that we limit access to much of it. So be it. OHVs, ATVs, snowmobiles, and the like must be restricted to areas where they will do the least harm. In addition, livestock grazing must be curtailed in many areas where it is inflicting severe damage on watersheds and wildlife. Energy development, including renewable energy zones and transmission corridors, as well as other types of development, must be located outside the most ecologically sensitive areas. Finally, but not least in importance, it requires wolf recovery and healthy populations of all native large carnivores.

I believe it is incredibly important to our future to support and fund our national parks.

I believe that exposure to the national park system is the key to meeting the challenges and the way to expose the parks is to institute a partnership with the youth of America beyond the conventional; boy scouts, cub scouts, etc.. utilizing programs such as educational, penal, religious as sources of recruitment for the youth and subsequently the recruitment of the parents in a volunteer partnership that can expose many people to the wonders of the system and encourage good stewardship to a portion of the population that otherwise would not have this opportunity

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

I believe what makes America a stg and vibrant place to live is our diversity. To the extent that our National Park System represents who we are through our heritage and history I think it should be representative of the broad spectrum of that diversity. As we make our story more broad we will enhance the ability of citizens to connect to that story and possibly enhance support of the system through visitation and funding.

I fully agree that the naional Parks should be more inclusive.

We view the America's Great Outdoors initiative an ideal opportunity to safeguard wildlife and wild places in the face of a changing climate. Thank you for considering our input during this critical process.

The New Hampshire Division of Historical Resources is pleased to be part of the historic preservation and heritage community participating in today's listening session. I am Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer.

Each state has a preservation program based on the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, amended (16 U.C.C. 470f), but tailored to its own needs and organizational structure. The New Hampshire Division of Historical Resources/State Historic Preservation Office (DHR) manages the state and federal historic preservation programs in our state. The DHR is supported by the State of New Hampshire, by the federal Historic Preservation Fund, through a matching grant administered by the National Park Service, and by donated fudns and services. In addition to its state functions, the DHR is also responsible for administering the federal preservation program in New Hampshire. The DHR is part of many public/private partnerships focused on historic preservation and maintaining New Hampshire's heritage. We have an especially strong and productive working relationship with the New Hampshire Preservation Alliance, the nonprofit statewide organization which is dedicated to the preservation of the state's historic buildings, landscapes and communities through leadership, advocacy and education.

Together, we want to highlight our deep, shared concern for full, permanent funding of the federal Historic Preservation Find as an integral part of the "America's Great Outdoors" initiative.

The National Nistoric Preservation Act directs State Historic Preservation Officers (SHPOs) to provide financial and technical assistance to preserve the places that are important to telling America's story.

The Historic Preservation Fund (HPF) was created to supply the financial resources to SHPOs and Tribal Historic Preservation Officers (THPOs) to implement the National Historic Preservation Act.

The Historic Preservation Fund is NOT supported by federal income taxes. Instead, Congress designed the HPF to receive its funding from offshore oil and gas revenues - using the consumption of one non-renewable natural resource (oil and gas) to preserve another non-renewable cultural resource - our Nation's history.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Every year, \$150 million is deposited into the HPF, but Congress has never come close to appropriating the full amount, leaving SHPOs without the ability to provide grants and other financial and technical resources to preserve the special places that embody and convey our history.

The good news is that there is an unprecedented opportunity to provide full and guaranteed funding for the HPF so that sites like Tuttle Farm can be preserved for future generations.

H.R.3534, the Consolidated Land, Energy and Aquatic Resources Act (CLEAR Act) would provide full and guaranteed funding for the HPF and for the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF).

The National Conference of State Historic Preservation Officers and all SHPOs around the country, the National Trust for Historic Preservation, Preservation Action, the National Association of Tribal Historic Preservation Officers, the National Alliance of Preservation Commissions and the Coalition for Fully Funding the HPF all stand ready to assist efforts in the Senate to fully fund the HPF.

The Nebraska Game Parks Commission feels the America's Great Outdoors initiative is a timely and ground breaking effort

Our agency and our community partners have long been seeking ways to connect children with the outdoors. We are currently implementing innovative programs reconnecting Nebraska citizens with outdoor recreation, conservation and stewardship.

Our 20-year plan to increase participation in outdoor pursuits, our science-based conservation programs, and our elaborate State Parks system are just a few ways we have been successful in these efforts. Attached you will find some ideas on how we can work together to accomplish this important initiative.

We are excited about the opportunity for a greater collaborative effort between state, federal and community partners in implementing efforts that will support America's Great Outdoor Initiative and we are poised and ready to move forward.

Below you will find ideas on how Nebraska Game and Parks Commission can work together with the Federal Government on furthering the America's Great Outdoors Initiative:

Connect our Nebraska Environmental Literacy Plan to the federal "No Child Left Inside" initiative with funding and support through federal agencies.

Resurrect the Landowner Incentive Program as a way to restore and protect our private lands in Nebraska. This program was key in providing on-the-ground funding for our State Wildlife Action Plan through community based conservation with out private landowners across the state.

Resurrect the EPA Section 314 program or increase Section 319 funding for in-lake enhancements and restoration efforts

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Along with the more traditional reasons to hunt and fish, there is a worldwide movement that is emphasizes the mental and physical benefits of being in the outdoors (Louv 2005). There has been a link to stress reduction after being in a natural environment (Wells and Evans 2003). Dr. Paul Quinette preaches that the act of fishing is something that helps to instill and maintain hope and relieve stress, which leads to a lower incident of suicide by participants (Quinnett 1994). Still other studies promote unstructured "play" in the outdoors for children as a way to battle obesity, Attention Deficit Disorder, and depression (Taylor et al 2001). Studies also show that outdoor "play" adds to cognitive and intellectual abilities (Wells 2000). While outdoor activities such as soccer and golf are positive, activities such as hunting, fishing, and camping, promote stronger relationships to adult environment attitudes (Wells, N.M. and K.S. Lekies, 2006). These studies all point to the greater benefits of hunting and fishing.

This plan lends emphasis to those actions that will or can impact a broad range of outdoor enthusiasts and is designed to develop new user as well as maintain existing. This plan also suggests actions that allow for added value impacts of utilizing agency venues, personnel and resources where appropriate.

This plan lends represents a base of 38 ideas, that have been further development with partners and appropriate personnel for implementation.

There are five main goals that best reflect the recruitment, development and retention direction of this agency:

Goal 1 Recruitment and Development of YOUTH Hunters/Anglers

Goal 2 Recruitment of New Adult Hunters/Anglers

Goal 3 Recruitment of Lapsed Anglers/Hunters

Goal 4 Development and Retention of Existing Hunters/Anglers

Goal 5 Maintain and Support of Hunting and Fishing in Nebraska by all stakeholders

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

The Chicago Wilderness (CW) Coalition is a regional alliance of 254 members. CW is seeking to protect and preserve the rich biodiversity of the southern Lake Michigan region, spanning from southeast Wisconsin, through northeast Illinois into northwest Indiana and southwest Michigan, through promotion of the Green Infrastructure Vision (GIV), which can be implemented on a regional, neighborhood, or site scale. Implementation funding for all scales is vital. The GIV identifies 1.8 million acres of prospective protection and restoration areas, of which 370,000 acres are already protected. The GIV serves as a guide to creating a region where healthy ecosystems contribute to economic vitality and a high quality of life for all residents.

US EPA Clean Water funding through State EPAs (319 funds) is providing \$7,348,000 to 20 projects across the state of Illinois in 2010 and will continue to be a critical funding source in implementing GIV on the site scale. Additional directives to State EPAs from US EPA are promoting green infrastructure funding. This, and other US EPA programs – such as the Water Quality Scorecard and Municipal Handbooks – provide much needed guidance for local jurisdictions and the State of Illinois, Wisconsin, Indiana and Michigan.

Creation of a National Wildlife Refuge, Hackmatack, now under study by FWS, would establish the first NWR in this urban metropolitan area. No NWR currently exists within 140 miles of the Chicago Metro region. Establishment of Hackmatack NWR would help fulfill the Fish and Wildlife Service's directive to establish "Urban Refuges" near population centers, helping to connect city and suburban residents with nature.

In Illinois and Indiana the Land and Water Conservation Fund helped to acquire and develop new parks of statewide or national significance by funding Illinois Beach State Park (Chicago) and expanding Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore, Indiana (Lake Michigan) - places of unique natural landscape and astounding biodiversity that provide close-to-home recreation opportunities readily accessible to the public.

Realizing the impacts of rapidly unmanaged growth, local residents in the Chicago metropolitan region have passed \$1.3 Billion in Open Space referenda since 1995. Fully funded LWCF would provide an additional source for land preservation in urbanizing areas of significant biodiversity. In addition, Wisconsin and Indiana lack the statutory authority to conduct locally driven referenda, and would benefit from this federal source.

The Urban Park and Recreation Recovery has provided over \$18 million in direct assistance to economically distressed urban communities in the Chicago Wilderness region, providing Federal assistance to urban localities for rehabilitation of critically needed recreation facilities and encouraging systematic local planning and commitment to continuing operation and maintenance of recreation programs, sites, and facilities in Chicago, Oak Park, Evanston, Kankakee, Milwaukee, Milwaukee County, Gary, East Chicago, and Hammond.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

The Fishin' Buddies! Program exposes children to the outdoors through fishing and conservation programs. Its mission is "to instill an immutable concern for the air, land and waters of our planet, and a desire to nurture the soul through communion with the outdoors. Fishin' Buddies! believes in the emotional and psychological restorative powers of the outdoors and that it is important to expose this philosophy to children who's ideal of the "Great Outdoors" as being the grassless, glass strewn, debris filled, concrete and steel playgrounds of urban America." Fishin' Buddies Youth Conservation Corps partners have included US Fish & Wildlife Service, Chicago Wilderness, Illinois Dept of Natural Resources, US Forest Service, Chicago State University, Field Museum, and the Chicago Park District, and the Forest Preserve District of Cook County. The Fishin' Buddies Youth Conservation Corps is funded by a grant from the Gaylord and Dorothy Donnelley Foundation as part of the Chicago Wilderness Leave No Child Inside initiative.

Youth Conservation Corps Waukegan, a 501 (c)(3), is devoted to the development of youth and young adults in Lake County, IL, and sponsors two main programs: the YCC Summer Program, in partnership with the Lake County Forest Preserves, engages high school students in outdoor restoration projects designed to teach about the environment and conservation of natural resources; and the YCC Youth Build Program, a ten month community development program that engages at-risk, low-income, out-of-school youth ages 16-24 by helping them obtain their GED and providing on-the-job training in construction and carpentry skills, and natural area restoration activities. YCC employs a full-time staff of dedicated professionals, some of who are serving as AmeriCorps VISTA's.

Chicago Wilderness is the best model for regional coalitions focused on biodiversity and is being replicated across the country. It is a model alliance of 254 organizations working collaboratively across organizational and geopolitical boundaries, setting regional priorities for scientific research, restoration, and public outreach and engagement. Federal support through partnerships with regional conservation alliances is incredibly effective because the federal investment is leveraged by multiple organizations working at the local level. Federal support through programs such as the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative is effective at landscape scale across a complex, multi-jurisdictional metropolitan area where there are vital natural resources and 10 million residents. It is critical that the federal government continue to support large-scale land conservation, especially in metropolitan areas where networks of natural areas are fragmented and natural systems threatened.

o The best way to save entire forests, mountain ranges or rivers is through regional planning for conservation that connects large natural areas and through partnerships across all levels of government, and with land, farm and historic trusts and other nonprofit groups and private landowners.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Chicago Metropolitan Planning Agency (CMAP) has just completed the GoTo 2040 Plan. Based upon three years of research, deliberation, and public input, the plan recommends action in four themes: Livable Communities, Regional Mobility, Human Capital, and Efficient Governance. By implementing GO TO 2040, our region will: emphasize support for existing communities; encourage more compact, sustainable development patterns; increase the efficiency and transparency of government through better decision making; reduce congestion by emphasizing modernization (rather than expansion) of the current transportation system; give residents more options for getting around, including transit, walking, and bicycling; improve parks and preserve open space; and reduce consumption of energy and water. Federal support and funding for Metropolitan Planning Organizations and for implementation of regional planning efforts is vital to sustainable land use planning, especially in resource rich areas. GoTo 2040 Plan implementation through HUD funding is particularly important now.

On June 25, 2010, the Chicago Wilderness alliance released its Climate Action Plan for Nature, the first to address issues of biodiversity conservation and climate change in the greater Chicago region. The plan was developed with the leadership of The Nature Conservancy in Illinois and a number of partners within the alliance. It identifies actions related to mitigation, adaptation and increased public awareness as key strategies in fighting climate change, and addresses the significant role of, and threats to, natural area conservation in the face of this phenomenon. This supports and complements the US FWS Five Year Action Plan for Climate Change. Federal collaboration with CW, through the initiatives of Landscape Conservation Cooperatives (LCC) and Strategic Habitat Conservation (SHC), will be extremely important in the coming years.

Protection of public lands, and the scenic and recreational amenities they provide, supports our local economies. In total, active outdoor recreation generates over \$4 billion in revenues annually to Illinois' economy and supports 30,000 jobs. The National Survey of Fishing, Hunting and Wildlife-associated Recreation data from 2006 showed 3.7 million people in Illinois and 4.1 million people in Wisconsin participated in fishing, hunting and wildlife watching contributing \$2.3 billion in expenditures in Illinois and \$3.7 billion in Wisconsin. In the Chicago region alone the birding community generates more than \$356 million for local economies.

Landscape scale conservation offers communities an alternative vision for development which incorporates the value of natural areas and open space as an economic driver. Conservation initiatives which capitalize on a mix of public and private landowners create a market identity that attracts visitors and helps communities maintain their unique environment, heritage, culture and identity.

National Parks are our nation's most beloved places. The parks are anchors that protect the nation's treasured landscapes, and are integral to landscape-scale efforts merging protection, public access, and sustainable economies. There is an opportunity to leverage existing public enthusiasm for parks to do much more to connect youth, families, schools and communities to the great outdoors. The tremendous experience of the National Park Service can help Americans access healthy outdoor activities and the natural world, both close to home and across the country, and help nurture lifelong relationships with our Great Outdoors.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Through the America's Great Outdoors listening sessions, the recent Ken Burns documentary, the National Parks Second Century Commission report and in your own personal lives, you have seen the important role that national parks have played in forming our nation's outdoor legacy. In fact, polling conducted by Hart Research Associations shows that national parks are inherently linked to America's Great Outdoors in the minds of the voting public. Most voters, when they hear the phrase America's Great Outdoors, think first of national parks, and eighty percent of voters say national parks should be a centerpiece (forty-three percent) or important focus (thirty-seven percent) of the administration's initiative.

We represent a broad range of interests, from tourism to education, philanthropy to recreation. We learned from the last Administration's Centennial Challenge (an experiment in public-private partnerships for parks), and we want to translate those lessons to a new grassroots campaign for our national parks. Our organizations contributed some of the \$32 million from the private sector that was matched with \$25 million from the public sector in 2008 and 2009 to complete projects and fund programs in the national parks. We know what worked, what didn't and how to improve public-private partnerships that will be the centerpiece of our nation's new conservation strategy.

In the words of retired Associate Justice of the Supreme Court and National Parks Second Century Commissioner Sandra Day O'Connor, There's no better route to civic understanding than visiting our national parks. They're who we are and where we've been. Public lands in this country are owned by its citizens; national parks are a reservoir of opportunity to help Americans experience this sense of ownership, to enhance quality of life and to help communities foster healthier recreational access to the outdoors. Your administration has the opportunity to frame and solidify the National Park System's legacy for the next hundred years.

A truly historic America's Great Outdoors initiative must have a prominent place for our national parks. We look forward to helping the Obama administration develop and implement an initiative that provides a lasting legacy for our children and grandchildren.

It is appropriate since this "America's Great Outdoors Listening Session" is being held in the longleaf pine ecosystem of South Carolina that a longleaf restoration story be shared. Saloom Properties, LLC is a 1762 acre Tree Farm in the coastal plains of south Alabama - an area naturally in the longleaf range. Historically the longleaf pine was the dominant species of tree on an estimated 60 million acres. This has been reduced to its existing 3 million acres. We have seen a resurgence of restoration of the longleaf back to its natural ecosystem. Each year more acres are being planted and managed by private family forest owners.

In 2004 Hurricane Ivan wreaked havoc with its destruction to South Alabama. The day after the storm the stumpage price for our wood products were more than laved. After 5 months of logging clean-up and recouping only pennies on the dollar for salvaged timber, we decided to turn adversity into opportunity. Over the next 4 years we planted 450 acres of longleaf, and now we manage this ecosystem with prescribe burning, herbicide site prep and release and spraying for control and eradication of invasive species.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

It was through incentive cost-share programs for replanting, control of invasive species, education for certified burn manager, wildlife habitat improvement programs, land recovery program that we were able to reinvest, replant and manage for sustainable forestry.

The results --- and ecosystem that is thriving with wildlife including turkey and quail and the threatened gopher tortoise.

It has become our responsibility as family forest owners to manage our forest for improvement and sustainability.

We share and promote good forest management for future generations. We are actively involved in education through personal contacts, seminars, field days and programs such as Classroom in the Forest/Forest in the Classroom with school children on an annual basis. In May we had 500 people visiting our farm on two separate field days. One of these field days was titled "Longleaf Restoration and Wildlife Management."

The management guidelines published in 2006 by the National Off-Highway Vehicle Conservation Council contain this guidance on page 35: "Water Control and Stream Crossings. Water control structures should be incorporated into the trail grade. Stream crossings should be located where the stream bottom is solid, stable or modified to support the expected uses. Stream banks should be hardened or stabilized, if necessary, to prevent unacceptable erosion or sediment delivery into the stream. When local regulations require and when crossings cannot be stabilized, streams should be bridged."

The National Trails are treasures which provide recreational and educational opportunities to millions of people. Many times the trails are located surprisingly close to urban areas. Completion of the trails would enable many more people, particularly young people, grow closer to the land and learn more about the natural world.

So then why even make it wilderness if it is already untouched? Just for the sake of wilderness. So I say make it NF and not lock everyone out.

Actually Wilderness is not decreasing it is increasing, and we need less wilderness and More NF, it's a much better solution and everyone gets to play on public lands.

we need more off road ways and less wilderness. Everyone wins with NF

Fires are a positive thing and completely natural. Deer and Elk tell you this just simply by the next year after a big fire guess what moves in???? Deer and Elk to eat off of the fresh grass that comes up the next year. Fire suppression hurts our critters way to much and we should let more forest burn, sure it looks like crap for some years but there is new growth on the way and it is 100% healthy. I know your going to say the deer and elk were already there which is true but the numbers of animals that move in on these burns tell you that they are a positive thing, we need more fires to clean up the old and get with the new.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

I first saw this magnificent canyonlands 55 years ago as a boy of 13 on a family trip. I can still vividly recall the experience of camping and hiking in the canyonlands. This is one of the remaining national treasures that we absolutely should protect for the enjoyment of future generations. If we don't it will soon be gone forever!

Use of Chainsaws in the forest ARE permitted with the approval of the Ranger in charge. Certified Chainsaw Operators go through a 8 hour class and a 6 hour field time before being certified. This gives the operator the use of the USFS Insurance if the need prevails for them. Plus, the Person is well aware of what to cut, look out for widow makers, and stay with in a 2 foot range of the trails they are working on. Not every one MUST be certified through USFS, but their Insurance is better than ours for sure. I know.....I am certified.....and I am a Trail Advocate and member of Blue Ribbon Coalition.

Well . . . just discovered that six years ago: "In May 2004 President Bush issued an Executive Order, which recognized the Great Lakes as a "national treasure" and created a federal Great Lakes Interagency Task Force to improve federal coordination on the Great Lakes. The Order also directed the U.S. EPA Administrator to convene a "regional collaboration of national significance for the Great Lakes." This collaboration process was needed to develop, by consensus, the national restoration and protection action plan for the Great Lakes." ---- { Link }

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Here was the official statement: Great Lakes Declaration Protecting and Restoring the Great Lakes through a Regional Collaboration of National Significance We, the Conveners of the Great Lakes Regional Collaboration, established on December 3, 2004, in Chicago, Illinois, in acknowledgement of Executive Order 13340 signed by President George W. Bush on May 18, 2004: 1. Recognize that the Great Lakes are an international treasure which contain about 20 percent of the earth's fresh surface water, support the culture and life ways of native communities, provide drinking water to millions of people, and form the backbone for billions of dollars in shipping, trade, fishing and recreation; 2. Recognize that the Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement of 1978, as amended by protocol signed November 18, 1987, the Convention on Great Lakes Fisheries of 1954, and other regional multi-jurisdictional agreements with Canada, commit the United States and Canada to restore and maintain the chemical, physical and biological integrity of the Great Lakes ecosystem, including the adoption of common objectives and cooperative programs; 3. Recognize that while there has been progress in restoring and improving the health of the Great Lakes ecosystem, there are still tremendous threats to the physical, biological and chemical integrity of the ecosystem; 4. Note that citizens, as well as many federal, state, and local agencies, Tribes, elected officials, and stakeholder groups, including the environmental nongovernmental organizations, industry groups, and the agricultural community, serve a vital role in protecting the Great Lakes ecosystem; 5. Acknowledge that numerous multi-governmental and non-governmental stakeholder networks have demonstrated a long history of effectively collaborating on a variety of complex regional and local ecosystem protection and restoration efforts; and 6. Affirm the need for leaders in the region, including Great Lakes Governors, federal agency heads, Members of the Great Lakes Congressional Delegation, Great Lakes mayors and Tribal leaders, building upon the extensive regional efforts to date, to collaboratively work together and with the Great Lakes community toward a common goal of protecting and restoring the Great Lakes ecosystem in order to address the new and continuing challenges and ensure a healthy ecosystem for future generations. Hereby, consistent with the laws applicable to our respective jurisdictions, pledge our support for the development of a widely understood and broadly supported strategy including actions to further protect and restore the Great Lakes ecosystem through the Great Lakes Regional Collaboration process.

Responsible motorized recreation is key. Promote awareness of the lowest impact possible by motorized vehicles and let them have access.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Every young person should have the opportunity to spend time in a beautiful natural setting. Many kids will never have the opportunity to experience extended time in a natural setting without support from parents, teachers, schools, government, or community organizations. Every person needs to find something that sparks their imagination and spirit, and nature does this for many people. Kids need the opportunity to discover this. The opportunity for a young person to spend multiple days in an educational program in a National Park combines this experience in nature, with a beautiful lesson in civics. Being in a National Park helps them realize that enjoying this protected, beautiful land is a gift given to him/her from previous generations. With luck and effective teachers, they will also learn that active participation in our democratic system is the only way to protect the parks for future generations.

Open use of motorized vehicles on public lands must be observed. It can be a responsible form of recreation and one that connects so many people to so many places.

How do we insure our national parks are relevant to future generations? How do we promote a connection between the natural world and our youth? It seems one of the best ways to address both of these issues is to increase opportunities for students across the country to access their parks. Increasing the opportunities for schools to engage educationally with our parks and for students to connect with the natural world seems essential for the future health of our parks and our children. Developing and maintaining partnerships with schools and existing park partners seems a critical piece in hopefully ensuring connections to our natural world and helping to create a sustainable future for all.

Our public lands need to stay open so all can enjoy their beauty. Me and my family currently enjoy our public lands through camping, backpacking, horseback riding, snowmobiling and quad riding. If everyone would be polite no matter what they are doing, to others using the same public lands than we can all enjoy it.

Until a few years ago, USFS and BLM lands are "open unless marked closed" for OHV. The Forest Service is just now working on transportation plans that take a more deliberate approach to where trails should be located. BLM only closes lands where there is resource damage. If the OHV crowd were truly interested in having appropriate places to ride, they'd get behind this kind of planning and quit whining about "losing" trails that were created without restriction.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

In the ATV clubs I am involved with, I see operators ranging in age from about 10 to the late 70s, perhaps into the 80s. The young riders are always (within club activities where I have seen them) closely supervised by adults, wearing protective equipment and riding machines sized appropriately to their age levels. ATV use allows people of all age levels to get out and enjoy the backcountry and experience views that a large portion of the public never sees. As to hiking instead of riding...most places OHV users are looking to get to are 10-50 miles from a paved area where most would choose to leave a vehicle. I don't know any hikers that can do double that (round trip) in a day, but based on all the posts on here, it sure sounds like some posters are just supermen and could easily do so. This sport has allowed me to meet and enjoy the company of a great number of people of all age groups. These people have all been great and a joy to be around, making me realize that the stereotype of rebellious teens and grouchy old guys seems to go away once you get a few miles into the mountains. Or perhaps this sport just attracts some special people. I don't see nearly the amount of bitter people involved that seem to be common in the hiking community. Though I'll admit, as someone who has done so, humping a pack 15-20 miles a day through the mountains doesn't do the best things for my attitude either. We OHV riders do have to do some work to get other people exposed to our sport. I didn't own a quad until relatively late in life and spent most of my time exploring just a few miles a day hiking, usually on the crowded trails nearest town. I felt some animosity towards ATV and dirt bike riders that would pass me. Not because of noise or fumes, but simply because they were doing something different, and honestly, they seemed to be having a lot more fun than I was. I was fortunate enough to meet some friendly riders that allowed me to borrow a machine for a day and was quickly hooked. The quads have allowed my wife and myself to see country that only a tiny portion of the population of even this area get to enjoy. And I have yet to meet a hiker on an OHV trail around here.

OHV usage has been a great family event for us, we get to spend quality time with our children away from the distractions of modern life (T.V.'s -video games - etc.) please don't take anymore of it away from us. We have already lost enough. We have to drive for 3 hours to go somewhere legal to ride.

Riding OHVs, riding mountain bikes, and hiking are not mutually exclusive. My wife, boys, and I have enjoyed all of these activities as a family. Over the years we've spent roughly as much time hiking as we have riding. Having some areas where OHVs and bikes are not allowed makes sense, and we already have millions of acres all across this country set aside for non-mechanized recreation; wilderness areas and national parks fit this bill. Having areas allowing OHV use and mountain bike use also makes sense, but unfortunately these areas keep getting made smaller and smaller, or are closed outright. This results in the remaining areas being more heavily used and makes accidents more likely. There's room enough for all of us to enjoy our family recreational activities in this great country if we'll just use some common sense in our land management decisions.

Anything that the Government is involved in, is a MESS. We need more Public involvement with user groups of all types involved. Get the Government out of our business. Also, make the sue happy enviro's pay for all the lawsuits that they file.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

I love the great outdoors and have all my life. My dad taught me to respect the land and the cub scouts and than the boy scouts solidifide my respect. I now have two bad knees due to football injuries. Off-roading is the only way I can get back and enjoy the wonders of the lands. If we keep restricting where we can go by putting us into a small box, we will have more injuries due to congestion. That only hurts us all. Please lets keep the back country for us all so we can use them.

I also agree if you add National Wildlife Refuges!

The question is, how far can anyone walk? OHV and ORV areas are of littlr use to would be back packers due to a lack of ineresting features and more importantly a complete lack of surface water. There IS plenty of land for all if we just consider what exists on said land. Way back at the age of 34 I ran my last 5K foot race in 17:34 Even at 24 I would not have attempted to carry three days worth of water to enjoy lands without historic or geological attributes. I've never seen a soul on foot or bicycle in some of my former favorite off road motorcycle riding areas that are now wilderness. Those areas are too far to walk or peddle, even if there was a reason.

all uses are appropriate if done with respect for the land.

My family uses our public lands for mulitple uses. We hike, we bike, we ride off hwy motorcycles, and we maintain all trails in our forest, working together with our local forest service on all trails. Our local OHV club maintains equestrian trails, the mountain bike trails, and the motorcycle trails. We all work together to keep all trails open. Most of these are not multiple use trails, but we have trails in our forest that we all want to keep. When a mountain bike trail, or an equestrian trail needs repair from winter erosion, or even a weekend equestrian or mountain bike event, the Forest Service calls our OHV club to get a work party together to fix the trails. At a work party last year to relocate, and build a new mountain bike trail, 60 motorcyclist showed up and only 4 mountain bikers. This was a trail that was not to be used for motorized recreation, and still it was the motorized users that came to build the trail. We can do amazing things when we all work together. If you want to know how it is done, contact the Tahoe National Forest in Nevada City. All Forest Departments can learn to use ALL lands publicly. I hope my kids and my grandkids all have the right to use their public lands to enjoy, just the way we have (until recently).

I was fortunate as a child to spend time in nature: camping, hiking, identifying species along the trailside. My mother was a biologist and working environmental educator, so I had experiences many youth in my community never had access to, and these experiences shaped my life and my choices decades later. It is essential for all youth to experience nature in all its glory, to look up and see stars at night, to breathe fresh air and learn about the flora and fauna that surround them, and then learn how our choices impact this environment. Please support environmental education programs in our national parks. Support the growth of nonprofit partners so one day every child in America can have a life-changing experience in a national park.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

We the people are in charge of our lands not some wacked out group that gives animals more rights than humans, listen to the off-road community and you will find they love nature and many go far beyond the "groups" to preserve it and to also promote its use for future generations. Keep America free and the great outdoors open to be enjoyed.

I fully agree. Restoring the Klamath river would be a good thing to do and could also bring back means for subsistence to the Klamath people. Dams are the cause of blocking salmon migration, not the native people (or did anyone ever think salmon can climb dams?).

Don't you think the wilderness attributes will be destroyed if the wilderness is not protected? You will not be locked out, you'll just have to treat the place with the respect it deserves.

I hope this will serve as a way for OHV enthusiasts to be heard. We need a place to to get away from the cities & enjoy camping/riding. If we shut ourselves in on the cities it just means that there is no way out. I believe that there is a responsible way to enjoy an area w/o a negative impact IF that area is not so small that it is being over used.

I'd be glad to share with you a video tape I made while atving in northern Minnesota where a cow moose entered the trail only a couple yards ahead of me, moved to the other side of the trail, and began browsing on the fauna. I taped the cow for nearly twenty minutes, only 30 feet or so away while (for the most part) my atv sat idling on the trail. Only after this period of time of enjoying her non-reaction to me and my machine did I slowly move forward past her. I realize this is not the norm, but I have had similar experiences with a bull moose in rut and most recently two eagles. One mature bald eagle and one huge golden eagle who circled above me before landing less than 20 yards away on the ground! It was only after moving forward towards their general direction did they take flight. Beautiful sight. I had not seen them actually land among the maples and brush ahead of me while I was stopped or I would have had my camera ready. I'm not saying that we don't startle wildlife while on a motorized machine, but then again, I'm not saying we don't startle them while walking, either.

Climate change ... has been happening long before the likes of Gaylords have been crawling the Earth.

Not everything can or should be a national park. If you truly want to preserve national parks then do not allow any human access.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Just fyi to the OP. Your prius has more carbon emissions than my dirt bike. Also, what are you using to get to your hiking spot? A carbon free piece of equipment? Perhaps we should look at limiting urban sprawl and continued construction. How much emissions are created by the multitude of construction vehicles? How much intrusion into native habitats have been done in the name of convenience, so you can have your walmart closer to home? That clearly exceeds any impact that OHV use has on the environment. There can be responsible and irresponsible use of any piece of equipment or activity, so should we ban everything? No, obviously not. Most of my fellow riders and my family are actually conservationists, because we want to retain wilderness areas for our chosen manner of enjoyment. Don't profile based a certain vehicle. Judge the driver if there actions warrant it.

"This is the best idea I have seen!" I agree! And I'm pleasantly surprized to see the vote currently promoted by 465! Why? Because it's a compromise on both parts. I'll even add responsibility to it, wherein I mean following rules, laws and etchics... "Promote ALL forms of responsible recreation"

who wrote: "We can do amazing things when we all work together." THAT'S what I'm Talkin' about!!! Nevada City eh? I grew up in Grass Valley and I still have family up there.

wrote in the OP: "Please ban or restrict their access to public places. " In "Public Places" OHV access is already restricted and limited. What is your idea here?

This is a great idea! It reflects a balance of acces levels for a diverse Public. I believe that this is kind of what we have (in my area) at the present.

wrote in the OP: "These noisy vehicles ...<SNIP!>... should only be allowed in limited areas that do not have ecological significance. Even I, an avid OHV user and Tread Lightly advocate can tell you that all places on our wonderful planet have 'ecological significance'. So, as a result, you are calling for an outright OHV BAN on Public Land. DEMOTE. This idea does not include any provisions for OHV access over waterways. However, since it does not, it would substantially reduce OHV access in current OHV use areas. DEMOTE.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Lets not forget about Quality Family OHV Time in the Desert! ;) As I kind of posted elsewhere... The only time of the year that my wife and I (residents of Calif) get to see our family from Nv & Az, is when we meet in the Calif Desert for our OHV trips. Our camp is conveniently located half way between our far away homes. We will circle our RVs together and dry camp. Some times as many as 25 family members! In addition, OHV has become the glue that keep my kids involved and interested in their family as many things (friends, video games, hanging out, etc) have become cooler than 'parents'. My kids will proudly BRAG to their friends about their OHV trips. Via radio communications my family converses while riding, as if we were all sitting on the couch together. I will frequently point out a Hawk or a cool Slip-Face to my kids, or vice-versa. Regardless of who's on the ride, we will stop atop a big dune for a ride-break and take in the views that can only be seen from either the seat of an OHV, or a very low flying airplane. Back at our OHV Camp, we have camp-wide community dinners with family and friends, horseshoes tournaments, camp fires, smores and competitions for the kids (glow-stick prizes). After the kids go to bed, the adults party it up a bit (with the OHV's locked up for the night) around the camp fire. We are doing this an average of 50 nights a year, in the Desert, on BLM Land. So, yes, I would certainly say our OHV trips are all about Quality Family Time in the Desert for my camp. And that, is a fact!

As an avid OHV user and 'tread lightly' advocate, I strongly agree that OHV groups and riders need to do more to cultivate a responsible environmental ethic among all OHV users. I would think that this is what every OHV user would want. Now, this said, your OP attempts to walk the fence between two parties, but it really comes close to (or maybe does) offend an OHV community causing them to demote the idea on this forum, I only hope that they haven't done so in their heads!!! In general OHV groups do preach the 'Tread Lightly' concepts. One of the largest in your area is the American Sand Association. Check it out. Beyond that, where the rubber hits the dirt, 'my camp' passes along this ethic at every opportunity. In your OP, you wrote: "I've watched as these illegal OHV routes greatly facilitated the colonization and spread of several invasive and noxious weed species, especially cheatgrass and Sahara mustard." Can you provide any science to support this statement? Because I question how you think an OHV in the dry desert is facilitating this process? After riding my quad literally thousands of miles in the California Desert, I can state as a matter of fact that I've never brought it home with invasive and noxious weed species seeds on it. It's not like OHV's in the Calif Desert carry seed born mud and drop it off in other areas. 99% of the year, there is no mud, as it's a desert. If so, I would have invasive and noxious weed species growing in my lawn, where I wash my quad off after every trip. It's nothing less than unfortunate that the Mojave desert tortoise population is declining (and I thank you for not blaming that on OHV as there is science to the contrary), but I will not let you place blame of a fire killing more tortoise on OHV if your link is to an OHV transporting a seed. The whole concept is kind of a stretch to begin with. Other 'elements' transport seed much more efficiently than a machine that is not designed to do so. Wind. Birds Animals Flowing water I am receptive to your idea that OHV groups and riders need to do more to cultivate a responsible environmental ethic among all OHV users. But you lost my vote in your OP. If you would like to revise it to something that is not blaming OHV for "greatly facilitating the colonization and spread of several invasive and noxious weed species", I will change my vote.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

"Common sense must prevail. Protecting habitat can be balanced with protecting access to public lands for all! Hikers, Bikers, OHV,s, Horses all can and should be managed to maximize public access. How better to foster appreciation of our public lands." As a avid OHV user and 'tread lightly' advocate, I 100% agree with you! "It is ridiculous to think of restricting motorcycles from public lands." What you are talking about is a complete ban of OHV use on public lands and this, to me, is nothing short of unacceptable. The OHV community has suffered restrictions and closures for decades. We stood by and watched our old riding areas become congress designated Wilderness Areas and we've seen the result of the Endangered Species Act closing swath of land after swath of land. In the same breath that I tell you that I do not advocate OHV use on ALL Federally Managed Lands, I will tell you that an outright ban of OHV use on Public Land is not acceptable. There is a balance!

Every trail user leaves behind some form of pollution and creates some form of erosion, it is the uneducated user that are the worst of us all. Those trails that every one wants to ban motorized users from need to realize that we OHV users are the ones that fund said trail maintenance and other state and national wilderness areas and education through a program called the recreational trails program or RTP. The rtp is funded by a gas tax on fuel used in OHV's. The state of Rhode Island (to the best of my knowledge) has an excess of 4 million dollars in unused rtp funds. We also have no public place for ohv's to recreate (with the exception of trials bikes and minimal "dirt" roads for enduro's and 4x4's. Now even mtn bikes are loosing there places to ride.

I love to be out in the woods with my kids, & friends, at 33 my joints are starting to go the way of the dodo so biking and hiking are pretty much out of the question. but i can drop my jeep in to 4low and enjoy my low speed thrill ride at a top speed of 5mph. plus it is difficult to lug a 1/2 ton of tools and trail maintenance supply's via hikeing

OHV ers in California alone contribute 40 million dollars a year to land stewardship through the OHV Green Sticker program. This money goes to trail maintenance, restoration, and many non-OHV programs. What have you done?

There's room for all kinds of recreation for families. Hikers have their's and off-roaders need theirs too. People evolve in different ways and all people deserve the opportunity to see nature. Quadraplegics need a way to see wilderness in 4X4 vehicles (driven by family of course) as well as my 84yr old dad who can't hike anymore. Anyone that thinks it's good to shut down off-roading opportunities is simply self centered, thinking only of themselves. There is plenty of land today that is reserved for hikers only, and the land for off-roaders today is adequate for those recreational methods. There's no reason to convert one to the other. Everyone needs to chill out and let all walks of life enjoy nature. Why is it that Sierra Club hikers are always trying to steal and convert it to their type of land? Is that fair to the majority that are off-road enthusiasts? Is it fair to the unfortunate that cannot hike because of age or disability? What makes them so deserving? Leave the land open for access by all, it would descriminate against the majority and disabled if you don't.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

An old route to the west has a unique designation a State park with one tree and one of the largest living American Elm planted by a pioneer. The landscape also changed after the near extinction of the Bison by the railroads and the new access for easy hunting. Human beings naturally change the landscape by travel. The best way to keep a natural ecosystem is without human occupation in wilderness. Birds and other animals are more limited by range or habitual patterns of travel.

There can be a balance between usage and preservation. I find it troublesome that we have lands that are being managed by people who are not open to any of the recreation that is allowed. Then when a problem arises and the reaction is to shut everything down. We need responsible management as well as responsible usage of the land. Is it possible? Yed, but it takes work, and there is plenty of it to be done. Lets keep OHV recreation available for the families and for future generations.

This is an emotional topic, but we can't let emotions create the laws. The facts have to drive this argument or nothing good will come. When it comes to damage to the land, traffic causes the damage; foot, hoof, wheel it doesn't matter. The more a trail is used the more damage it has done to it. That damage can be mitigated with a little education, and rectified with some volunteer labor. (Increase the number of trails, build volunteer groups, educate) When it comes to noise complain about noise, but do not eliminate the users. Noise can be controlled take a Harley and a BMW motorcycle for example. (Educate, pass noise laws) When it comes to smell and or air pollution the argument does not stand up either. I'm not saying that air pollution does not occur but it does occur with all user groups and modern OHVs are extremely clean. I love to hear how XC skiing is so clean, do you realize that the money you paid for a pass goes to buy diesel for the groomer. (Educate) OHV use is a very family oriented activity. I feel that any activity that brings the family together should be encouraged. Not enough family time is one of the things wrong with this country. (Encourage family activities) The people that claim OHV use is not physically demanding are simply showing how ignorant they are. I challenge the most fit of your kind to ride a motorcycle or snowmobile for say 2 hours it should be easy right. I live in Idaho, I will make sure you are well equipped and we will ride. I hike, hunt, backcountry ski, mountain bike, off road motorcycle, snowmobile, skate ski, alpine ski, and do trail maintenance on a regular basis. So when I am doing a 100 mile ride in the backcountry and you are sitting at your computer or having dinner at the restaurant, how could I not agree with you logic of close everything for the time you might come and visit, and it should be as you wanted it, waiting for you.

"You are right and right now most areas are available to everyone but sadly ORV users are not happy with that. They want access to protected wilderness areas, land set aside for endangered species, national parks, trails set aside for hikers and everywhere else for that matter. Wow, that's just a bald-faced false statement.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

i would much rather actively participate in an outdoor activity than sit and watch tv and NOT communicate with my family and friends. i would much rather meet new friends than stay locked indoors. i would much rather lend someone a helping hand than watch them struggle thru a closed window i would much rather show and teach my kids and grand kids how to enjoy and respect the environment than to just show them a picture of what it looks like. i would much rather spend my time with those who appreciate their freedoms than with those that try to steal them from me by locking me out from my own country. keep America open and free for all to enjoy!

as a doctor who has a son as a doctor.. we ride with our families. we teach them safety and how to respect the environment. we clean up after ourselves and enjoy natures beauties as well as each others company keep our public lands open and let us ride, hike, camp and recreate

it is man with nature and the great outdoors for me and my family. dont lock me in the house with a tv. outside with my family and friends outside with the wonders of the earth keep the trails and public lands open to and for all

The forest doesn't need "wilderness" designation to be conserved. The National Forests are managed for sustainability and recreation both and therefore benefit the most people while preserving them for future generations.

The best experiences of my life have been camping and dirt biking with my family in Mendocino National Forest. The place is beautiful, quiet and wildlife is abundant. I hope that those that follow us will be able to have experiences like I have had. Management of trails and vehicles has greatly diminished some of the reported negatives.

I don't think that Wilderness designation is necessary to protect the forests. I think that the BLM and National Forest system do a good job of protecting the forests while making them available and pleasant for all who wish to visit them.

Anyone who has explored the western states knows that there is room for all out there. Trail mangement, noise restrictions and education have greatly reduced the negatives of OHV. The dirt bike is the horse of the middle class and sightseeing on these modern horses is a wonderful experience.

Finally, we would like to acknowledge how important NRCS and Farm Bill programs like GRP, FRPP, WHIP, and others have been for land conservation and stewardship in the Crown, and we would encourage the Administration to support and enhance the delivery of those programs to rural landowners.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

We are landowners and residents of major landscapes within the Crown of the Continent (the Seeley-Swan, the Blackfoot Valley, and the Rocky Mountain Front). While our communities are quite different from one another, what we share is extraordinary. We make our living from the land – from ranching and forestry to outfitting and outdoor education. We share a common love for the land and a strong desire to make a difference by tending to our families, community, and the wonderful landscapes we call home. We live in working landscapes that drive the economy of our communities. Maintaining the livelihoods of the people who live here and steward these lands is the key to protecting the conservation values that are so important to our community and the American people. To do this, we have come to realize we must build bridges with our neighbors, public land agencies, conservation groups, and others through proactive, local partnerships that can achieve real and lasting results.

Over the last 30 years, our collaborative efforts have made a major difference for maintaining the rural and natural values of our lands because we worked on real solutions that we could all agree on. Known as the 80/20 rule, we have worked on the 80 percent we have in common and left the 20 percent of differences at the door. Moreover, we have all come to the table with a long-term view and a commitment to work together as a way of business, not as a one-time event. While our initial results were small in scale, over time we realized we really could make a big difference if we took a landscape view. Our landscapes are made up of extensive public and private lands that are interwoven in very important ways, so we have focused on true watershed and landscape-level solutions that integrate “all lands”. Most of all, we have come to realize we share this great place known as the Crown of the Continent in common and that to be ultimately successful we must connect with each other across this larger region to realize our collective potential and responsibility to steward what has been given to us.

We believe that the primary challenge for conservation in the 21st Century -- and therefore the focus of America’s Great Outdoors -- is how to sustain working landscapes, working communities, and working people. And while no single approach is appropriate in all situations to achieve this mix of objectives, we believe that one of the most important building blocks in any region is strong, inclusive, and locally-driven partnerships -- such as the Blackfoot Challenge, Rocky Mountain Front Advisory Committee, Coalition to Protect the Rocky Mountain Front, Swan Lands Coordinating Committee, and the Southwest Crown of the Continent Project.

While these community-based partnerships have been the stronghold of conservation success in the Crown, we also recognize that we need to organize on a more regional scale across the whole Crown of the Continent to address larger scale challenges such as climate change, ecological integrity, wildlife corridors, land-use and energy development, and forest and rangeland management. To this end, we are fortunate to have several “ecosystem-wide” initiatives underway here in the Crown, including the Crown Manager’s Partnership, Crown of the Continent Ecosystem Education Consortium, and the Crown of the Continent Geotourism Project – to name just a few. These regional efforts complement the work of community-based partnerships.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

During the past couple years, we have started experimenting with the idea of a Roundtable on the Crown of the Continent – an ongoing forum to bring together currently independent initiatives, share information, and explore opportunities to work together. This process of connecting community-based partnerships across a larger landscape is very much a work in progress, but is essential to meet the conservation challenges we face in the 21st century.

Collaboration alone will not result in sustaining large landscapes. What we have found absolutely critical to our efforts has been accessing voluntary incentives and capital resources to protect open, working lands and public lands from fragmentation. Tax incentives for donating conservation easements over private lands and funding for agencies and land trusts to purchase easements have made a huge difference in the Crown. Private landowners in the Crown have placed more than 260,000 acres of working ranchlands into conservation easements through this effective tool.

The Land and Water Conservation Fund has been especially useful for this purpose as well as helping us secure large-scale industrial timberlands that could have been subdivided and sold for development.

Maintaining and restoring a healthy landscape over the long term also requires transforming the old economies of extraction into new economies of stewardship. In the Crown, rural communities want to reap tangible benefits from conservation including family wage jobs, new business opportunities and an increased ability to retain private forests and ranchlands for sustainable production. Over the past 30 years, we have had some success in the Crown creating new economic opportunities related to land stewardship. We have restored more than 60 streams, opened 250 miles of fish passage, restored over 3,000 acres of wetlands, restored 3,000 acres of private forests, and treated noxious weeds through watershed-wide programs. In order to assure that our conservation successes endure, we are looking for new strategic investments in restoration and stewardship.

I have been involved in local park commissions in my local community, which happens to be in Eastern Pennsylvania. I can attest that ATV's and snowmobiles are, in balance, a plague on natural areas. While the idea of "responsible use" has its appeal, and I'm sure many ATV owners and enthusiasts enjoy their sport in a responsible manner, there are too many who don't, and the wanton destruction of trails, slopes and woodlands is an ongoing headache in our area. The problem is that it's almost impossible to enforce restrictions on where and how these vehicles can be used. Advertising in the mass media reinforce the "go anywhere, anytime" attitude that is too prevalent in the ATV subculture. ATV's and the like should be banned in our National Parks, except where their use can be tightly controlled.

I have been privileged to tour three Civil War battlefields, lin in Tennessee, Vicksburg in Mississippi and Perryville in Kentucky. All three contributed greatly to my understanding of the Civil War. Without these sites being preserved, future generations will not be able to understand physically what happened in those four momentous years. I am stgly in favor of battlefield preservation so that they can trully have something more than books to understand the past history of the United States.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

I have lots of fond memories of family experiences in nature with my father and none of them include being on a ohv. Quit being lazy and take your kid to enjoy nature as it is instead of letting him see it as a blur and the whine of very loud motor.

I have no idea what I could have said that could be skewed into what the other " " refers to me as. I very much enjoy being outdoors. I hunt, fish, hike, rock climb, camp and go offroading. I can appreciate the need to preserve our nations wilderness and I dont want it harmed. What I am after is the preservation of the land already designated to OHV use. Why are we losing ground every year? What I said in reference to wildlife viewing while jeeping needs to be clarified. When I am in my jeep I am not looking for wildlife. I am concentrating on the trails and very little else. Compare that to your daily commute. Do you look at wildlife while you are driving your car? If you do I dont want to be on the road with you!

I have no problem with a motorized trails, but please don't sell it as "multiple-use" when it would in reality be only for the motorized community.

I have some experience leading a nature club, and it can be difficult to compete with sports and electics. After school programs that are too academic or involve too much quiet, sustained activity (such as drawing, writing, nature photography) tend to be unpopular. Those involving more physical activity, such as hiking or animal tracking draw a slightly larger following, but those that attract the greatest number of kids are the consumptive activities. Kids love foraging for wild edibles, for example, and then preparing and sharing a treat or meal with them. Younger kids also like gathering bark, acorns, seed pods, etc. to use for sculptures or "fairy houses", and treasure hunts and geocaching appeal to some. I think the more academic and quieter nature activities should be offered during school hours. They can be worked into other subjects like writing, art, and science, but in my experience cannot compete with organized sports and electric games. It's the rare kid who chooses to spend his free time birding or photographing frs.

I have visited Yosemite NP, Grand Canyon NP, Muir Woods National Monument and other Redwood parks in California, and the Indiana Dunes, Sleeping Bear Dunes and Pictured Rocks National Lakeshores. I was thrilled with the natural beauty of these, and I hope to be able to visit other national parks and sites in the future. We need to preserve and protect these sites.

I just don't know why there is such a rush to promote off road motorized access to the great outdoors. I realize that it promotes the economy with it's specialized industry, but it is impossible to see all there is to see at 30+ mph. We need to have areas for there use the noise is offensive to those of us who walk, snowshoe, c country ski and row or paddle. To me you need to go slowly and quietly through the great outdoors.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

I just got back from hiking Rock City Mt. Diablo park in California, and yes I'm a dirt biker. The amount of trash we picked up off the trails completely filled the small packs we were carrying! The erosion of the sandstone let alone the dirt trails was enormous from all the foot traffic. The amount of graffiti carved into the rocks was simply saddening. My 8yr. old daughter, a dirt bike racer herself, was really taken aback by all the vandalism and garbage we saw on the hiking trails. How do I answer her question, "Why do people think we (dirt bikers) are the bad guys dad?" I chose the high road and explained that all different types of people enjoy all different kinds of recreation and that we can't blame "hikers" for this mess. If we do that we're no better than the people trying to stop us from enjoying public lands. Granted we do sometimes find a small amount of trash at the campsites at the head of our OHV trails, which we pick up as a pre ride ritual. But NEVER do we find trash on the trails. Ok, maybe a fender here and there, we ride some really tough trails. ;o)My point is, please don't generalize us by a bad experience you may of had or "heard" from others. The OHV'rs I know are the best stewards of the land I have ever met and I am very proud to be raising my daughter with the same values.

I just recently planted several butterfly bushes and other frs that attract butterfly's and hummingbirds. I cannot wait for them to fr and for the birds and butterfly's to arrive!

I like horses, but their hooves and weight tear up trails. Their feces also has seeds in it that spread non-native plants and weeds. Sorry. Not ecologically friendly.

I like the dual purpose approach - give unemployed people a chance to do something for themselves and our country, and help the national parks!

I live near Glacier National Park. I would like to see it fully staffed & funded, adding more interpretive programs and events for children, so they can develop an early appreciation for our protected lands. I would also like to see Waterton-Glacier International Park expanded on the Canadian side of the border into the North Fork of the Flathead, to protect this vital watershed for future generations.

I propose the creation of a new National Scenic multi use single-track trail. The trail would go through Washington, Oregon and California. This trail would be similar in nature to the Pacific Crest Trail, but would be entirely separate. The trail would avoid all wilderness-designated areas and be open to multiple uses including motorcycles, mountain bikes, hikers, horses, etc. Existing trails would be connected together with existing forest roads, two track trails and new trails studied and developed as necessary. This would provide a seamless trail from Canada to Mexico through the Cascade and Sierra Nevada Mountains. Local trail club organizations could be solicited to adopt portions of the trail in their areas to provide maintenance and stewardship.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

I say the land that is targeted for new parks should be left as wilderness. What upkeep is there for that? There is plenty of land left for development. Most of the country is in private hands. What would be wrong with these large companies that want to develop land doing so on private property. Is the reason they want to do it on federal land because it's a lot cheaper for them or because the land that was protected long ago now has the only resources left. Either way, it's a good argument for preserving the last of our wild lands for the environment, people, and the other creatures that depend on non-developed land to survive.

I see the extremist voters think of this as a pro-OHV idea. It's not. It's a diverse recreation idea. If you don't think there is enough room for diverse recreation activities on public lands, then well, you're an extremist. A few highlights from my weekend enjoying the great outdoors. A downhill mountain bike race, where many hikers were sharing the other trails (open to bikes) without complaint. A trip to a public park with a skatepark and dirt jumps. A scenic drive through a National Park, which despite the road, and traffic is one of the most beautiful places I've been. The bottom line is there are many kinds of "public land". It's not all Wilderness worthy. There is more than enough to spread the wealth among all the recreation activities be it hiking, biking, skateboarding, driving, OHVing, bird watching. Of course we could needlessly restrict everything and make it so boring to get outdoors, that no one would want to, but isn't the point of this to reconnect people to the outdoors?

I spent over a week at Gettysburg and did not see it all. I felt like I was on hallowed ground and had to see every inch. Battlefields are our last tangible link with the past that we can actually touch and walk on. There is nothing like exploring these battlefields. I can actually see the battles raging out on the fields, I can feel the pain, the horror - this helps us to understand the past. We must preserve these battlefields so future generations can also FEEL the past. When the battlefields go, so do the links to future generations. Seivert

I think a Siskiyou Crest National Monument is a great idea for an area that is an important biological stronghold and migration corridor. For the people that want local control I would let you know I am a native Oregonian and tax paying citizen who recognizes that "federal" land belongs to the citizens of the United States, not the folks that happen to live directly adjacent to such land. The majority of forested lands in Oregon are in fact open to logging and/or have been logged. The proportion of our lands "protected" by some kind of federal designation such as National Monuments and Parks or wilderness areas do not come anywhere close to approaching the amount imagined by some respondents, and in fact such protections constitute some low single digit percentage if you do minimal research. I do not need places like the Siskiyou protected for me. I want them protected for the health and diversity of other living creatures. Not all land has to be harvested or managed for us to use, whether it be recreation or extraction.

I think that this would help with jobs, both short term and long term.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

I think the idea is reasonable, if you assume that federal wilderness and parks are the areas where this gear gets used. Is this true though? Outdoor recreational gear also gets used on private land as well as state and county land, perhaps even more than on federal lands. How about a modification of the idea: implement a small federal excise/luxury tax on outdoor gear, with the proceeds on a per-item-category basis shared **only** between government lands allowing the use of those items in them? So: taxes on OHVs could only go to areas allowing them, taxes on tents could only be shared among lands allowing overnight camping, and so forth. Would you still support a tax if it were implemented this way?

I think viewsheds should be protected from smog, as much as from new buildings.

I thought the CCC was what President O'Bama meant when he talked about funding jobs programs. The money goes to the people doing the work; helping them, their families, and our park system. Absolutely bring this back!

I was born in a farm surrounded by all the beauty the mother earth can offer to us; those were amazing times for me and taught me the love and respect I have for our nature. It is really a shame how the children today love more their computers and game systems than been enjoying the outdoor activities, so I support 100% this initiative that will help back to the nature our future generations

I wasn't alive during the depression of 1930's but as a Baby Boomer I've had ample opportunity to marvel at the fine craftsmanship and trailbuilding skills of the wonderful men and women who were part of the Civilian Conservation Corps during the 30's. I've camped at many a structure built by them, stayed in the lodges they built, and hiked the many spectacular mountain and woodland trails they created. With so many people out of work today, it seems to me that there could be no nobler effort than to bring back this amazingly successful institution. It would be a WIN-WIN scenario for all of us!

I would love to see an idea like the WPA be rehashed. Put some folks to work on meaningful conservation projects around the country.

I would say we actively manage most of the land in this country. I think what people are saying is to try to preserve what little is left, before everything is developed. Looking ahead, most people would realize that with population growth and the pressure for development (drilling, mining, logging, urban sprawl, etc.), that even the large amount of wild areas that you may be lucky enough to live near may be impacted. By the way, Native Americans had a great respect for the land.

If the Land and Water Conservation Fund was restored to full funding and distributed at the local level more parkland could be purchased, habitats restored and facilities improved....making the federal impact felt at the local level.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

If the Open Trails program were approved and funding as proposed, it would provide funds to the states and tribes to develop and maintain recreational trails and trail-related facilities on private land to isolated parcels of federal public land. When the federal government provides this type of access on private land, by law it must secure permanent easements. These type of easements are not always attractive to private landowners, and therefore, these easements are not accepted by landowners. Besides that fact, many landowners do not want to enter into any leases, easements or agreements with the federal government concerning their lands. State and tribal governments, on the other hand, frequently secure access on or on private land through short-term agreements, contracts, leases or easements, and are not required in all cases to secure only perpetual or permanent access arrangements with private landowners. This situation often is more agreeable to the private landowner.

If there's "more than enough," then why is it that people in many states are asking Congress to protect more lands as wilderness? At the grassroots, people know their favorite places are at risk from logging, offroad vehicles, oil drilling, and other forms of development. I'm in favor of weighing the pros and cons of each area, and different alternatives for management. Every wilderness proposal gets that consideration before Congress takes action.

If wilderness goes, so goes any real idea of what freedom means. Go climb a mountain in the wilderness and tell me you don't understand the true grit of freedom. Freedom requires hard work. Freedom is self reliance. How can you see that if all that you know is done for you, made by other people and sold to you. How can you know what you really need compared to what you think you need. Freedom is not a sales pitch. Go to the wilderness and find out what it means.

I'm a year older than [redacted] and a long time runner, and I agree with him. You can run anywhere. We have no need to use wilderness areas for racing events.

I'm pleased to know that 4x4ers and ORVers are helping to clean up public lands. I do have trouble when I see pieces on the news showing a 4x4er during a clean up activity taking their vehicle up a slickrock with dirt and rocks flying so they can get where they feel they "just have to go". That sort of negates the good they're doing with their clean up activity and is the type of behavior what many can't understand or tolerate - tearing up the land for entertainment. That's not enjoying our public lands; that's destroying them.

Instead of killing animals that "attack" campers in our national parks, I believe that campsites should be protected from these animals in the same way we protect the animals in our zoos. We have the technology to fence the campsites in, it would be basically a one time expense and potentially save the lives of both campers and the animals that need our protection.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

It doesn't go against our rights as Americans. If we take your point to the extreme, I want to go to the top of that mountain in some national park but 'm afraid of heights. Mountain climbers have access to it. I demand access and an elevator should be installed so I can go to the top of the mountain. I think land should be preserved as both wilderness and multi use areas. The threat is unrestricted development, with the extreme amount of development we have already had in this country. More should be saved. In the long run, it's the right thing to do. To sell the last of our wild lands to make the quick buck is a mistake. Large corporations are the only winners when that happens. Average citizens don't see the large profits, only the degraded land.

It is important for our youth, and adults as well, to learn about and appreciate the natural beauty found in our National Parks and sites.

It is important that all generations are exposed to the natural world both via education and experience. All public school systems should provide "field trips" to national parks located near them. Any and all adults who are associated with these students should be able to attend as chaperones, in order to learn what the students are learning, to be exposed to the outdoors, as well, and possibly lead to more outdoor activities and exposure to friends and families in an ever expanding circle of respect and love of national parks.

It is my family's goal to visit every National Park site, first in the continental United States and then beyond. This venture has been a blessing to our family, and we want all families to have the same opportunity. The American people, and all people, need these places of nature and history to know who we are and to be all we can be. We must fund these 400 sites completely.

It is really important for our youth, our future, to be given the opportunity of education about our National Parks.

It should not be about making people feel good. It should be about protecting the land and water so that other critters and plants have a chance and so the future has options - not like us where all the decisions were made by earlier generations to cut down the big trees, plow up all the prairies, drain all the wetlands, shoot all the buffalo, and kill the Native Americans.

I've been a OHV user for many years. I used to basically ignore the enviros until one trip into the central Sierras. We had a group of six vehicles, going through the Swamp Lake trail. We passed a group of hikers/backpackers about a mile from the lake. We were polite, waved, etc. We pretty much ignored them as they camped on the other side of the lake from us. Next day: we filled 3 bags with the trash they left, and put out the fire they left burning (there was a fire restriction in effect). They violated back country rules by setting up camp within 5 feet of the water's edge. They left several piles of human waste (not even bothering to bury it). I guess they wanted to feel closer to the animals. A couple hours later we passed them again on the way out. We offered to let them carry their waste out, and were treated to a significant amount of profanity (although there were several children in our group). This was when I started being an activist for mixed use of public lands.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

I've seen elk in the wild less than a quarter of a mile away from atvs not even flinch from the loud noises the atvs created, in the mountains of Montana. We have been riding atvs in the mountains and on the plains for 30 years and hope to always do so. The public land is just that PUBLIC. This summer we have ridin almost 700 miles in two months on roads ON ROADS AND TRAILS. Don't close in riding areas and they won't become high-impact areas.

I've visited the Siskiyou over a period of 50 years, as my sister lives in the area. I also worked for BLM and have seen how the pressure from industries leads field managers to allow development such as logging, mining, and new roads. I'm in favor of the national monument because it will strengthen BLM's hand in resisting those pressures. The area will be more and more important to the growing tourist economy.

altho the routes may exist on the ground, that is the roads are there, designation of the route and "inviting the public" to use it as a designated route will require NEPA. A motorized route from the south to north borders of Oregon was once identified and promoted by the State of Oregon using existing backroads and traversing several eastern Oregon Forests. The Forest Service was sued and had to pull all the signs out and make the designated route go away because NEPA wasn't done on some of the Forests. I believe the theory was that, yes the roads are there, and yes motorized use is occurring on them, but nobody has analyzed the effect of inviting more use and what that increased use will impact in terms of wildlife, etc.... Just goes to show, nothing is easy anymore.

, Thanks for visiting the Tx Master Naturalist site! We all agree that education is the key. It is very important to make sure our children understand their role in the enviment. The TMNP gives us a great way to educate both children and adults and I encourage you to get a program started in your state. Just last week I took 120 3rd graders on a nature trail and taught ecology. We make our school programs very hands on learning. We do the same with adults. We participated in an Earth Festival for Earth Day and are planning another for next year. We had 900 students from 2nd to 5th grade attend. Education, education, education!

-What long term damage? I have been riding the same trail for over 30 years and it looks the same-no change, same animals, etc. So you are saying that conservationists are god? We would not have any nature if it wasn't for them? Wow, that's encredible. The earth has been around for millions of years and will continue long after humans are gone. With what time I have here on earth, I am going to enjoy.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

-I have said time and time again but I guess for you I will have to say it one more time. If an area of forest is put off limits to me as a hiker and backpacker because it is deemed to be an area that houses a threatened or endangered species I AM FINE WITH IT!! Is that clear enough for you? Above all else I am a lover of nature and wildlife and I would like to see it survive as long as possible and I personally feel that is much more important than my own self centered desires. As has clearly stated there are literally hundreds if not thousands of animal and plant species that are now endangered. Do you not feel like their survival is just a little more important than your desire to ride your ohv everywhere? Your protests as far as elderly and kids is a very weak one as well. I do not know any elderly person that want to ride a motorbike or 4wd nor do I know any that could handle the rough ride but I do know a few that like to hike and do as often as me. As far as kids go they have more energy and more spirit of adventure than I do so I see no problem with them hiking either. Yes it is a problem for disabled people but there are more than enough places now for them to go so I see no need to add more.

First you say the vandals are a minority! communicate effectively with the vandal minority Then you say many are respectful and do not return to private property once informed. Many of the atv riding adults have been respectful. After hearing once that they are on private property, they don't return. Then you say - However, based on my experience, most of the atv riders are vandals. Do you see the conflict with what you are trying to say? You're dealing with that very small percentage of ALL ATV riders, those that either don't care (minority) or are misinformed (and once informed don't come back). You go from minority and respectful and then you still can say most of the atv riders are vandals? Credibility disappears with statements that are conflicting.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

-Thank for the links and I will be sure to access them from home as my computer here at work is unable to access many outside web sites. I am glad you provided some and no I did not realize the Sierra Club had an ohv chapter but again thank you for pointing that out. As I said I have only seen destruction and then seeing peoples votes on this site for oil drilling, etc. and less protections for endangered species just showed me more and more that my feelings, because of the damage I have seen, is correct. Maybe some of these links will make me reconsider, we will see. Mind you none of this will make me want to hike a multi use trail or go out and buy a ohv. Your activities impair mine and hinder my enjoyment of the outdoors plus no er how you try to candy coat it your recreation causes damage to trails,wildlife habitat, wildlife themselves and forests and that is something I cannot endorse just like I cannot endorse hunting no er how much good hunting groups do. IF I am incorrect then yes I would apologize but her statements towards the President were just as abusive as any I have said and I am really growing tired of people trying to make Mr. Obama out to be the next coming of Hitler. No I did not read the code of conduct. Once again though you danced around my question of damage caused by ohvs but at least you admit to causing some damage. As far as my lifestyle damaging the enviment of course I think about that EVERY DAY! I have taken great steps to minimize my damage by driving a fuel efficient car, car pooling to work when possible, I took advantage of Obamas tax rebates and redid my home with energy efficient windows, doors and siding. I have been replacing my old appliance for years with energy star appliances, I am vegetarian and I regulate my electricity use strictly. I have and will continue to do my best to minimize my carbon footprint, can you say the same?My comment to stands. This was an obvious organized group that came here with a planned attack to demote ideas on conservation and promote ideas for greater ohv access and less protections for species and forests. The only reason you do not have a problem with it is because the group efits what you want.

Just because the demographics change it doesn't mean that the parks should. It would be better to encourage the people to enjoy what is there than change things and allow uses that very likely to change the enviment of the park. Work to make the kids feel comfortable in the woods, don't change the woods to make it less "scary".

Just use the Land and Water Conservation fund money to help with the Parks.

, Help me out here as I am not familiar with the areas that you are referring to. I get the grasp of what your idea is about and think protection for this type of areas are needed. But not sure why The National Park Service is the right agency to manage these areas. First, are these areas not currently protected at all? Such as State Park or regional park status? If they are protected what's not currently work? Would the protection as a National Monument status work as well rather than National Park? I live within two miles in either direction of two state run parks that are well managed, that is at least as long as the funding holds out in these difficult times! When Death Valley was a National Monument in many ways I feel it was better run then under the National Park status it is now. Thanks -

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

I think the author is advocating just what you want. This idea is not about motorized travel in wilderness, it is promoting all forms of recreation in and out of wilderness areas. Wilderness Areas by definition do not allow motorized travel. Promote all forms of recreation that the standards of Wilderness allow, as well as promote all forms of recreation (as you put it) in already developed areas.

To say ...OHV .. (is) ...a small subset of the population is incorrect. Studies have shown that far more people take advantage of OHV use than those that hike. For some OHV's they pay fuel taxes that go to funding many projects, we are talking millions of dollars already. California alone, it gave out grants of over 27 million dollars - that did not include operating cost of CA OHV parks. If it were that hikers/backpackers were the dominate users would you expect the same from them? ... to pay a much larger share of the cost to support the parks?

it is okay that you dont understand why we like to go offroad. We are not asking you to join us. What we want is to keep the ground we already have. Not one time have I ever said I want access to all of the park ground. The OHV community is growing and at the same time we are losing trails and ground at an alarming rate. In the state of Indiana the OHV communtiy has about one acre of ground to ride on to every ten thousand acres of public ground. We need to find a place for people to ride their OHVs. The state of Indiana has stated OHV use is a viable form of recreation.

-I have been riding since I was 8 Years old and have never been crippled or hospitalized, neither have my kids. You would stand just as much or more of a chance falling from a hiking trail. Every year there are many hikers that have fallen to their death. Some of my families fondest memories are when we were out on trails riding, having a picnic and enjoying the great outdoors! My OHV is not smelly, but I have run into some very rank hikers.

Let's all do a little homework and see how our government representatives voted in the past regarding funding for National Parks. If we're not pleased, let's let them know, first by contacting them and second by putting them on notice that they may not count on our support/vote in the next election. Let's start acting again like the UNITED States of America. That is how we became a great nation and that is the only way we can get back there.

Many of my BEST National Park memories include a guided tour and/or conversation with a ranger. The parks need to be fully staffed to inform, educate, motivate, and inspire future generations!

maybe you have said it too many times already. No er how many times you say it, it still is not true. I have seen many a hiker destroy trails that also leads to erosion. Maybe you can widen your narrow mind. Do you walk everywhere? Maybe your car desturbes our peace. D H-Right On!

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Most, if not all of the land involved in this proposal would involve redesignation and management of lands already within federal, and in some cases, state, ownership. It would not incorporate a significant amount of private land, and where it did, the government would likely enter into a management agreement with the owners, affording them assistance or tax advantages for participating.

Maybe solar or wind power. Most people don't consider drilling for oil to be a green job, just because it's done outside. If that was the case, turning forests into parking lots wul be a green job.

Missouri has one of the best state park systems in the nation including a funding system that is supported primarily by a voter-approved sales tax. Even so, they recently had to reduce staffing and thus services that get people outdoors. I imagine other state parks that don't have state sales tax funding are in even worse shape.

Most parks do not have the funding to conduct studies to find out what their visitors want. Some come to picnic, some to exercise, some for programs, some to hike, birdwatch, etc. Some attendance surveys show that different ethnic/civic groups often have different associations with parks (groups that are highly social like to barbecue but may never get on a trail), groups that are well-educated may prefer displays and educational programs, groups that prefer lots of technology may not feel comfortable where there is no electricity, inner city kids may have fears about the outdoors that country kids do not have, there may be language or cultural barriers that prevent some groups from enjoying our local, state and national parks, etc. As demographics change, so must parks.

Mr , while you may be correct, there are plenty of places (like the Hunter Creek Valley near Aspen, where thousand-year-old peat bogs have been heavily degraded by OHVers) where irresponsible users have damaged sensitive wetlands and riparian habitats. Most of it happens illegally. So not only are they being extremely poor stewards of the public lands, but they're also criminals. More restrictions, more enforcement, and less "access" is required to reclaim these places for their sensitive inhabitants. And most of the places that is talking about in Utah are on BLM land, which apparently doesn't have the same restrictions. Or else they don't enforce them.

My best childhood memories are of traveling the country visiting many national (and state) parks. With the reasonably low entrance fees and the cheap camping fees, it was the only vacation my family could afford. But it instilled in me a sense of wonder at the beauties that can be found in our own backyards and a love of travel and adventure.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

My family's farm -- west of the Mississippi -- is certainly "open space" but it isn't anybody's idea of a Wilderness Area or Wildlife Corridor, so the 80% open space statistic doesn't mean much. Wolves and buffalo outside national parks are subject to shooting (often from helicopters) and poisoning, so saying wildlife has plenty of places to live doesn't hold water, either. What negative impacts do wildlife corridors have on rural communities? No examples are given, or even hinted at. The Nature Conservancy is a non-profit 501(c)(3) corporation; they make their financial reports and IRS Form 990 public at: { Link } If Ms Anderson has evidence the Nature Conservancy is making "huge illicit profits" then it's her patriotic duty to present that evidence to the IRS. Government does properly have some role in some things. Preserving and protecting God's Creation are among the things government should do.

My mother has taken part in being a leader of school-age youth for years along the towpath at the Cuyahoga National Park. Funding consistently for staff helps secure being able to utilize the parks for all, because planning ahead makes a functional schedule rather than a haphazard one. Please do your part in ensuring access for the key to our spaces set aside for nature and humans to mix.

My wife and I are in our 60s, and as day-hikers we get into wilderness areas far enough to enjoy their wilderness character. In my younger days I did some overnight trips, and they are nice to remember. No motorized or mechanical vehicles should be allowed, except wheelchairs, which have long been permissible in wilderness areas.

Please check out the idea I've posted. It's inspired by ecologist Dennis Martinez. I think you might like it. { Link }

National Park access fees should be tiered. Residents (U.S. Citizens) should not pay the same fees as non-residents. Resident Seniors and families should get access at reduced rates.

National Parks like the Cuyahoga National Park and Recreation Area can be incorporated as a field trip for all school kids somewhere in the 13 years of education. I believe that starting at the elementary school level in programs that reinforce natural science while kids are most curious is key. Also it teaches them how to be stewards for preserving the land for themselves and generations to come. The principles of environmentally friendly and "green" are ones that start at home, continue through school and are a lifelong investment in what each person can do to help out.

National Parks need more funding to more completely fill their role in creating generational memory, wildlife conservation, and retention of quiet spaces.

National Parks should be fully funded & staffed. As should the educational programs. I plan trips & vacations around what National Parks, monuments, etc. are in the particular state I'm visiting.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

No new roads some like a very good idea!

No OHV's or other motorized vehicles, (other than your vehicle to get you there), should be authorized in National, or State Parks unless they are emergency vehicles looking for missing people. They prefer, and start with people on foot and on horses, and using dogs to try to track someone before the mechanized!

I am very glad to hear about America's Great Outdoors Initiative. We are in desperate need of some serious change and future planning.

This is an extremely important act, and our landscapes need protection now, before there is even more irreversible destruction caused.

Utilize the existing nationwide network of utility easements, particularly those linking all the highrise electric towers as a cross-country pedestrian pathway/network for walkers, hikers and cyclists (or at least mountain bikers since the existing trails underneath them are dirt). Then promote the trails. This would encourage Americans to walk more, as in Europe, because it would be a safe and fairly scenic, extensive network.

These easements could also be used for community gardens and to plant orchards for public consumption, to feed our homeless citizens. Local garden clubs could even have contests to beautify these corridors (designing so they do not interfere with vehicle access to service the towers).

It is necessary to protect our environment.

I was very excited to hear that you have launched America's Great Outdoors Initiative. Thank you so much! Your active leadership will help make real inroads here at home with a ripple effect abroad. There are so many environmental and wildlife issues that need to be dealt with today if we are to leave anything for future generations to inherit.

I know this is just a start. But I hope it is the beginning of big change based on the recognition of the problems we face and actionable strategies we can implement. I would imagine you could get grassroots efforts going on this initiative. There are many, many Americans who, I'm sure, will be willing to coordinate actions to make America's Great Outdoors Initiative become reality.

I am a Mechanical Design Engineer in product development. I escape to the wild each year for an uplifting rest from my fast paced daily work. I learned to do this from my father who taught our family backpacking and low impact camping in the Cascade Rockies of Washington State when I was growing up during the 1960s. He was a vice president of Archer Daniels Midland Company (ADM) and understood the great value of the wilderness experience. After his teachings I began leading my friends in wilderness experiences ranging from The BWCAW and Montana's Bob Marshall Wilderness to Alaska.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Take kids camping. I have taken my daughters wilderness camping since they were age 4 and they love it.

Please save (more wilderness and) Utah's Red Rock Wilderness while we still can. Please protect these national treasures before they are privatized, built over and used up. Many red rock gems are unprotected outside Zion National Park and outside the wonderful newly designated Escalante National Monument, my personal favorite.

Southern Utah's Red Rock Wilderness is important to me for enjoying its spectacular landscape photography. Every year I travel there for Canyoneering hiking adventure, the secluded serenity and the natural splendor that it offers away from my usual busy life at home. The other people that I meet there from around the country and from around the world are always equally thrilled with the terrific scenery. The picturesque expanses of artfully shaped multi colored sandstone formations, narrow slot canyons, soaring cliffs and arches are rejuvenating to the spirit and breathtaking to experience and will continue to do so for all others if they are left unchanged.

After travelling to various highpoints of interest around the world I discovered the most amazing gem of southern Utah's The Red Rock Wilderness. It is a major national treasure that generates continuing tourism and should be protected for anyone to enjoy without us changing it. It should not be given away to those few who would damage it, mine it, build over it and use it up. These belong to all Americans.

Future generations will thank you for your forward vision if you can save these special areas now. You and this Administration are the forward visionaries today.

If interested in spectacular photography of Utah's red rock wilderness, see the well written guide book *Photographing the Southwest - Volume 1 - A Guide to the Natural Landmarks of Southern Utah* by Laurent Martres. If interested in Utah's canyon hikes see the guide book *Non-Technical Canyon Hiking Guide to the Colorado Plateau* by Michael Kelsey. These fine works are two of the best books that I own. (This adventuring is the real thing. These canyons are several hundred to over 1000 feet deep and widths from several hundred feet to sometimes only a few inches wide. They meander through a rainbow of hard sandstone combining unusual color and texture to surprise the camera.)

Please save more wilderness and Utah's Red Rock Wilderness.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

A few areas to consider saving: Robbers Roost - area located east of Utah's amazing Goblin Valley State Park, (including Moonshine Wash, Blue John Canyon, Robbers Roost Canyon, Happy Canyon and many others in the immediate area too numerous to mention). ? East of Zion National Park: Englestead Hollow, Birch Hollow, Upper Orderville Canyon, Parunuweap Canyon, Mineral Gulch, Misery Canyon. ? North Wash Side Canyons - along the east side of Utah highway 95 between Hite and highway 276. (Including Leprechaun Canyons) ? Lower White Canyon and the Black Hole, Long Canyon, Gravel Canyon, Cheesebox Canyon and Fry Canyon located south of Hite Utah along the east side of Highway 95. ? Maidenwater Canyon - located along the east of Utah Highway 276 and south of its intersection with Utah Highway 95. (Including Swett Creek Canyon and Woodruff Canyon) ? San Rafael Swell – located north of Goblin Valley State Park.

Thank you for launching the America's Great Outdoors Initiative. As a retired physicist from Los Alamos who has spent the past fifteen years working to preserve what remains of our prairie grasslands ecosystem, I am so very grateful for this initiative.

The focus of my efforts has been on preserving what little remains of the once vast population of Gunnison's and blacktail prairie dogs that populated the front range of the Rocky Mountains. These animals, as you are well aware, are a keystone species in their ecosystem. To this end, I helped initiate one of the first ordinances in the country that offers protection for the prairie dog colonies in the City of Santa Fe. More recently, I have joined forces with The New Mexico Wilderness Alliance and other organizations to begin the process of establishing a wildlife corridor that will eventually extend from Mexico to Alaska along the spine of the continent.

It is for these reasons, along with the recognition that we have no choice but to preserve and protect our environmental quality that I applaud this initiative. It gives me hope that my wife, my daughter, granddaughter and great granddaughter (as well as my son) will have a chance to enjoy what so many of us have taken for granted.

We need to promote walking and bicycling and canoeing in ALL of our urban places as a first step to generating more interest among urban residents in visiting our great national parks and monuments. Leaving the car or the bus and walking or riding your bike is only possible where facilities are in place to accommodate those choices. The more the choice to walk/hike/bike is available the more likely people become to choose health and get active.

Enhance emphasis on establishing land value to facilitate prioritization

Educate the public about the value of public and private forests

Develop a method(s) to aggregate small landowners to facilitate participation in ecosystem services markets.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

National Parks and Recreation areas should be effectively managed to give as many citizens as possible reasonable access to desirable recreational opportunities. There should be well-marked roads and trails to direct people, and portable toilet and garbage facilities at remote places, to protect plants and wildlife from pollution. For example, I was at Yosemite this summer. There were several spots to enjoy the river from, but only one was clearly marked. However, there was no way for the general public to access it because there was no parking available nearby for the general public. I can understand that the Forest Service wants to keep the river pristine, hence the hidden day sites, but it is not fair that the one improved beach was available only to a handful of campers willing to camp without water, right next to a major highway. Surely that spot could be better used for the general public, and water could be available easily, right next door is a stable that must supply water for it's horses. Of course, to park at the stable you have to be able to drop several hundred dollars on horseback rides--after paying to get into the park. I'm a teacher and I just don't get paid enough to afford the first-class tour, but I still deserve that chance to enjoy the beach and have a barbeque with my family for one afternoon.

Finally, I think a great idea for general stimulus would be to encourage the BLM and Forest Service to partner up with cities and counties to protect and preserve historical and archeological sites and items, by creating roadside mini-museums (think out of the box--they don't have to be buildings) that can serve as centers for tourism in small towns and communities across America. School children can get involved in research and discovery, along with local community groups and businesses, to bring pride and commerce to our main streets all over America.

I want to encourage you to preserve and expand for the health of our nation and planet and so generations forever will be in awe of these special places..

Leave a legacy that will outlive you and establish your place among the giants of conservation.

Regarding America's Great Outdoors... "what works" is Conservation Districts. They are an arm of local government and are located in every county and state across America. Partnered with NRCS, but with a grassroots mentality. No need to create a new bureaucracy at tax payer expense to start from scratch. Conservation Districts exist for this very purpose, and are well established and extremely effective.

As a donor of a conservation easement in NH, I wanted to thank you for taking the time to organize a conference on the value of protecting outdoor lands. Donating a conservation easement is a big step for a landowner and I think many more long time landowners will participate if we can continue to explain the benefits to future generations and to ourselves. I can't thank you enough for helping us out with this work. We are thrilled that our property, First Mountain in Shelburne, NH will be permanently protected through the diligent work of the Mahoosuc Land Trust.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

I attended the Listening Session at the Grapony Center in Concord, NH. I think it was a good idea and I thank Secretary Vilsack for an excellent presentation. Unfortunately, that's where the good information ended. Of the 300 or so participants the vast majority were directly associated with some agency trying to obtain the developments rights from private landowners. The session and the breakout sessions quickly degenerated into a begging period for more federal dollars for these organizations. Jane Difley, president of SPNHF said her Organization (the biggest in the State) didn't have enough money to properly administer the easements they currently own and asked for more Government dollars.

· Experiential opportunities in the outdoors and numerous green places to go there's no replacement for the real thing.

I want to thank President Obama for the Americas Great Outdoors initiative, and for addressing land conservation as an important activity. With all the topics that the President and his team have to cover, it is great that they made time for this one, since land conservation is important to our future quality of life.

Perhaps attorneys can be encouraged in bar associations or network referral systems to acquaint their Will and Estate-Planning clients with Nature Conservancy trusts for those clients who might be interested in inserting such trusts in their wills.

I live in Idaho and can understand why it is the fifth worse state to live in if you are an animal. I am originally from Michigan and I think Michigianians have more of an understanding that we are suppose to be stewards to protect and care for all we are given.

Everyone should visit the Field Museum in Chicago. There is a ticker in the entrance way that reads how many species are dying each day. It is quite an eye opener. Tom Brokaw on a documentary called "Baby Boomers" was asked how our generation would be remembered. That is when the stark realization hit that I think our's will be remembered as the generation of greed. We care more of what happens to us today than what will happen to the world tomorrow.

Please reevaluate how the BLM functions. I'm speaking specifically about the lands out west where the wild horses used to have their own lands. They shared this with other wildlife.

Please protect the land, and save the animals who call it home. Please don't be overly influenced by the cattle ranchers, oil and development concerns.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

I am so pleased that Pres. Obama is hosting this conference on the Great Outdoors. As a 60 year old woman (and tomboy forever) I have enjoyed the pleasures of being in the great outdoors for my entire life and in less than 2 weeks, my husband and I will embark on our greatest outdoor adventure. We are going to be walking around Lake Superior for 4 1/2 months. We are doing this to bring attention to freshwater issues and to set an example for people of all ages to follow your dream and GET OUTSIDE!!! We take our grandchildren out in nature whenever possible, but we know there are too many children today who are growing up without enough time Outdoors. Our adventure is called Full Circle Superior and we invite people to follow us through our website our FB fan page.

First, President Obama and the public need to know some facts about who is behind this campaign. Sportsmen are very excited about this project as it will open doors to promote more youth hunting, buy more hunting lands, and get more of the Pittman-Robertson gun tax \$ for their state.

Increasing their funds enables them to buy more lands, which if you are not of the 4% that hunt, you will only enjoy in off seasons, but many animals can be hunted all year long now so maybe not.

OUR NATIONAL PARKS, NATIONAL FORESTS, HISTORIC SITES ARE HOME TO MUCH THAT AMERICANS TREASURE. ONCE GONE THEY WILL NOT RETURN. WE, THE AMERICAN PEOPLE, HAVE THE OPPORTUNITY TO THINK OF THE FUTURE AND NOT JUST THE IMMEDIATE NEEDS. I FIRMLY BELIEVE, GIVEN THE CHOICE, WE THE PEOPLE WOULD VOTE TO INCREASE FUNDING FOR NATIONAL PARKS AND PARK RANGERS, THE FORMER HAVE BEEN UNDERFUNDED FAR TOO LONG, THE LATTER CAN NOT SURVIVE ON THEIR SALARIES. IT IS TRULY A DISGRACE!

And I must make a special plea for my home region of Southwest Oregon called Klamath-Siskiyou Bioregion. It is in the northernmost part of the California Floristic Province, one of the Earth's 25 Biodiversity Hotspots. These hotspots are biogeographic regions with a significant reservoir of biological diversity that are under intense threat from humans. Together they contain about 60% of the Earth's known species.

A second priority encompasses what we here call the Siskiyou Wild Rivers National Salmon and Botanical Area. This would establish robust, cohesive protections for the forests and watersheds of five Wild & Scenic Rivers on public lands. To conserve them, commercial logging, mining and off-road vehicle use will be restricted. Roadless areas will be protected as Wilderness, and nine candidate rivers will be given Wild & Scenic River status. A key piece of this would be protection of southwest Oregon's Rogue River and the neighboring forests. You must nudge Congress in the right direction here for the benefit of America.

National, state and many local parks support life-long activities like biking, hiking and paddling. These activities are so important for a healthy, fit America.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Parks also preserve our natural and cultural heritage and remind us what makes our nation great. Unfortunately, some state governments have looked to their parks as a way to cut "non-essential" programs from budgets in meager times. Parks have been closed, staff cut, land even sold! Yikes!

The Panel Discussion presenters were obviously very well qualified to speak and it was evident that they all took the subject matter very seriously. Specifically as to the NH presenters and as to our past and present trusted NH leaders in general, someone said at the session that we NH folks are fortunate in that they "get it" as to the value of our forest resource for all of its multiple uses - including working forests. I concur that they "get it" and that we are fortunate to have their support. This appears to be in contrast to some of our neighbors. How do we keep it this way in NH? You make a good point in your statements about re-connecting Americans with the Great Outdoors. This needs to be done - with the parents, the teachers and the students.

Please remember to include an education component. As a Girl Scout leader I am very passionate about getting children connected with the natural world. It would be great to bring this project into the schools via geography, science, math and history.

There is space for all on our public lands. Education and enforcement of rules to stay on established roads and trails is the answer not banning. Cows and clearcutting do more damage to water resources than any ORV could think of! If you have a problem with irresponsible users of any resource, educate and if they won't respect the land fine and ban them and not all those that do.

It's not about trying to see the outdoors at 30+ mph as you claim. These roads provide access to camping areas that give people the opportunity to slow down, relax, and enjoy scenery that would otherwise be unreachable for them. Should nature be preserved only for the ultra fit that can hike all their camping gear 20 miles up a trail? If all you want to experience is the tiny sliver of the great outdoors that can be seen along hiking trails departing from a paved parking lot, you're truly missing out on what nature has to offer.

There are plenty of designed "Wilderness" areas for you to enjoy peacefully. I am glad you enjoy it. But don't try to take away my right to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. I along with millions of others enjoy riding ATV and enjoying the great outdoors. I also can ride all day and not see another human except my group. BUT, I do see deer, elk, and bear. I have seen more wildlife from the back of my ATV for the last 10 years, than I have in 40 years prior as an outdoorswoman, walking in the forest. If you don't like ATV go to Yellowstone or any other national park, or any designated wilderness area, there are millions of acres. Good luck getting into the center of that wilderness area. That alone tells me we have too many acres designated already.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

As a struggling ATV enthusiast, hunter and outdoorswoman, I see the benefits of protecting our environment and natural resources. I find it very interesting that today's national forests, BLM and private land is even here today for us to enjoy due to today's environmentalists. Conservation is the answer to improving and sustaining our environment, managing our national forests by continued support from the public from fees charged to access and enjoy the forests not closing the roads and keeping our public lands from the public. I for one am against anymore tax dollars going to our national parks, most of the visitors are from across our borders that have not contributed a dime to sustain. Whereas keeping all our national forests open to the public, foreign and domestic, sustains the state and local economies, not just our government, to be spent in other mismanaged divisions. I have enjoyed the natural wonders and woods of the Pacific NW for over 50 years, I have not seen Yellowstone.

Good idea. Let's quit bombing other countries, then using our taxpayer dollars to fund rebuilding of those countries and hiring companies owned by high ranking professional politicians in Washington to do it. Sorry, I got off track. Just think what all those dollars could do for OUR country?

National, state and many local parks support life-long activities like biking, hiking and paddling. These activities are so important for a healthy, fit America. Parks also preserve our natural and cultural heritage and remind us what makes our nation great. Unfortunately, some state governments have looked to their parks as a way to cut "non-essential" programs from budgets in meager times. Parks have been closed, staff cut, land even sold! Yikes! In the 1940's, recovery brought us hundreds of thousands of acres of accessible parks and left a legacy that helps make our country great. Let's work so that recovery in the 2010's does not leave out our state parks. Having a strong system of local and state parks in every state is essential for maintaining our great America!

I have spent 2/3rds of my life protecting natural resources, as well as you as humans, by fighting fires in the wildlands and forests. My body has paid a little for that endeavor as I have gone through 4 knee surgeries and will have to have at least 1 knee replaced as I approach my retirement. I live in a forest. I love it. I hike as much as I can. I raft and kayak and I ride my quad more as a recreational thing now than as a racer as I was. In the future, it will allow me to go to places I went when I was healthier without having to deal with extra pain and suffering. I believe there are 100s of thousands of folks in my shoes who would love the chance to see things their bodies just can't accommodate on foot any longer. I suppose there are plenty here who simply would say "Too bad for them, they should not have abused their bodies so much..." Well, if I wasn't hiking into fires with 50-60 pounds of gear on my back to fight fires in the wilderness caused by "green" hikers setting their toilet paper on fire so they would 'leave no trace', then maybe I would be in a different place. I guess you could call it environmental bigotry. I saw it growing up in Santa Cruz when they started banning mountain bikes from the trails as incompatible and I see it now with them wanting to ban anything with wheels.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

There are many, many ways to enjoy America's public lands while preserving them at the same time. In fact, each promotes the other. Using the land for recreational activities OF ALL KINDS can generate revenue, promote land resource education, and of course provide Americans a wonderful way to relax and enjoy this country. The easy way out to protect our lands is to limit anyone from using it. It's cheap and it doesn't require any thought or foresight. But the reality is that it's not complicated or expensive to find a way to manage public land that allows everyone to use it and preserve it at the same time. There are no lack of enthusiasts who will devote their FREE time and knowledge to this cause. Just give them a chance. This country is at its best when the citizens are involved and managing it at a ground level. Not when bureaucracy and limited interest radical groups are making the decisions.

I learned my respect for our country's land by USING IT. Not by being excluded from it. As a hunter I face stereotypes and accusations all the time. I'm referred to as "killer", "animal hater", "redneck" (even though I live in the heart of Chicago), etc. But it is my time spent in the forests hunting that has given me my respect and devotion to our land and its wildlife. I've spent many days in the woods without having seen a deer, turkey, or whatever seasons game I was hunting. But I enjoyed those days as much as any. Just by being in the woods and enjoying the hike, hunt, and scenery. Being an avid off-road motorcyclist has done the same thing for me. It makes me want to preserve our land because I use it. Not by being excluded from it. When I'm not allowed to use land the respectful way I like to use it, I will slowly and surely lose my commitment to taking care of it. There are many ways to allow everyone to use the land and enjoy it. Roping it off is not one of them.

, in that case then, the government should not support democrats because they are the most intolerant discriminatory group out there. The Boy Scouts, on the other hand, have made positive impacts on thousands of lives while teaching conservation and environmental responsibility. They have connected more kids to the great outdoors than any other organization I know of.

My OHV group just did a "clean up day" on BLM land. We filled 5 giant dumpsters full of trash. Including garbage from a Sierra Club camp-out. When's the last time you saw a Sierra Club "clean up day". I've looked in my area and found none. I'd love to participate!

I strongly support and applaud this idea. I've worked with young people on conservation projects who were provided from the Student Conservation Association and Chicago Botanic Garden intern program. They are always bright, enthusiastic, and diligent workers. The only downside is if they are not engaged in productive work, or given trivial or bureaucratic work. This can discourage them from future conservation involvement. So bring on the youth for many beneficial reasons, but make sure that their supervisors give them productive work and a rewarding experience so that they will maintain a life-long conservation interest.

While recreation, economics, and personal connections are *very* important considerations when encouraging people to get involved with the great outdoors, we must ensure that there is sufficient natural habitat for those people to enjoy when they get there *and* for wildlife to enjoy when and where humans give them some space of their own.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

For 25 years I have been riding in our National Forests through out California (where I live), Idaho, Oregon, Washington, Nevada, Arizona, Montana, Utah, New Mexico and Texas. I enjoy riding with my children in places off the beaten path...single track in our forests...designated and open trails. I rarely and I mean rarely, see another biker, hiker, equestrian or other dirt biker. There are no homes to bother and no pollution to speak of relative to all other forms of pollution. There is more dust and noise around my home from freeways, garbage trucks, leaf blowers, weed whackers, lawn mowers and boom boxes. There are billions of homes in the world displacing sewer, garbage causing carbon dioxide affecting the planet in such a far greater way than OHV use that it is almost laughable anyone would think OHV use contributes anything at all...comparatively. I had to be crude but humans and animals who breath, fart and excrete bodily "stuff" create more carbon dioxide and pollution in such extreme amounts that point a finger at OHV use defies rationale thinking. Look...billions of homes on the earth have dug foundations...displacing insects, rodents and other animals, not to mention the erosion issues! OHV users use such a minute portion of public land in usually remote places, it is hard to understand the opposition other than the environment is a religion in and of itself!

The disconnection between some of these folks and reality is truly alarming. The preservation of and responsible access to our nations natural lands can and does coexist. From my experience, the vast majority of people who frequent our national forests and other such lands are kind-hearted OHVers and, or sportsmen who truly appreciate the outdoors and our wild places, not individuals who are destroying it. Sure, there are a few "bad apples" who abuse our lands, but punish those individuals and not the vast majority of outdoor enthusiasts. Expand our National Forests and Open Spaces, but allow responsible access including managed OHV use. We mtn bikers, rock climbers, dirt bikers, 4-wheelers, fishermen, equestrians, and other outdoor enthusiasts must unite against these anti-access extremists. Through responsible access, appreciation for wild places is gained and protection is guaranteed.

The DOI recently told BLM to be setting aside areas for other sources of energy like geothermal and solar. This is much to my dismay, as its in the middle of 'my area' on a new map, potentially adding more closures in my area. That said, the BLM is doing a pretty good job with 'my area'. They do what they are allowed to do by the USFWS, and even then a lawsuit from the Private sector can change what the BLM is doing. Evidence my 49,000 acres of sand dunes closed over an Administrative lawsuit. Now, I belong to an ORG that watches BLM and makes sure they are doing everything that they need to. Filing reports on time, studies, etc to avoid that they get sued by our opposition on a stupid admin lawsuit to close more land. My ORG works very close to the BLM and things are good. If what you say about your area BLM is happening, I would agree with you. But, my area BLM is ok with me.

I recently saw an electric motor scooter on the street, and it was very quiet indeed. Quiet electric OHVs would be an advantage in front-country areas where OHV noise now conflicts with picnicking, camping and fishing. It's especially a problem in confined valleys and around lakes, where the noise of conventional OHVs bounces off rock or water surfaces, spreading widely. The erosion impacts would have to be analyzed case by case, as they are now.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

This is a great idea. In many cases, land trusts can move nimbly and efficiently to safeguard land for future generations. Many land trusts also have strong ties with local communities that help residents understand the importance of land preservation as well create opportunities for public access.

Great idea! It is also important to ensure that the Farm Bill's easement programs benefit farms in all states. Each region of the country can be defined differently, and food security is important everywhere. In New York's Hudson Valley, the region's diverse agricultural base provides eighty percent of the fresh foods to New York City's greenmarkets. Farms in our regions have a different character than other regions of the country, yet they provide critical public benefits that support public health and the regional economy, and provide a first hand experience for many Americans to connect with the outdoors.

In many regions of the country like New York's Hudson River Valley, scenery and vistas are critical for regional economic development. Here, the region's majestic views are a critical draw for visitors that contribute to the region's \$4.7 billion tourism economy. Viewsheds, that also overlap with recreational opportunities for boating, fishing, swimming and critical habitat, are appreciated by the region's residents for the quality of life that they provide and contribute to the region's reputation deemed by Congress to be "the landscape that defined America."

Trail Riding is a great way to spend time with the family. My two sons love getting out into nature and enjoying the national forests.

they used some of the same tactics to keep the wild nature of an area in my state on state land. I'm all for it. I think most reasonable people would agree that overall, as a country, we have far too little wilderness and too much land open to development and land that has been developed. 50% of our national forests are currently open to development. I would say that is more than enough. Don't forget, there is still state land and private land open to development. I think most people are leaning toward preserving more of what is left.

Idea for the National Parks! For a couple years the Mariposa CA Symphony Orchestra has presented a concert at Yosemite National Park and it was very well attended. I believe that it brings new visitors to the park etc.

Dear Mr. President My wife and I are retired teachers enthusiastic about nature and avid gardeners. Three years ago we had to leave our home in Seattle and move to Houston to care for her mother who has Alzheimer's Disease. After three years another sister stepped up and volunteered to take our place. We planned a leisurely trip back to Seattle taking 18 days and visiting four National Parks: Big Bend Mesa Verde Grand Canyon and Sequoia. We saw what the CCC did to make trails and make it possible for visitors to enjoy these beautiful works of nature. Very few countries in the world have national treasures like these and we saw peoples from all over the world visiting them. We have 9 grandchildren and three great grandchildren. We hope that these wonderful places will be preserved in all their natural splendor for them and many generations to come.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

The short message I would like to pass along Keep as much of our land wild and undeveloped for people to enjoy and wildlife to thrive. Once property is developed we can never get it back.

When I think of America's Great Outdoors I think of our national parks like Joshua Tree. Please help us protect these places.

I and my family have visited 56 National Parks and Monuments. They are an invaluable to all people in the US.

I support all your effort to repair the damage we've done to ourselves and build a better future. I think you're a man of great integrity and intelligence and we're lucky to have you as our President. When I think of America's Great Outdoors I think of our national parks and hope that your efforts will include preserving these precious resources particularly providing .

As I wrote you during your splendid trip to Acadia National Park as an American I am most grateful for and proud of the National Park system. I have had the great good fortune of having visited many of them and enjoyed hiking and water sports. I cherish the simple pleasure of just being outside and listening to the sounds of the wilderness. Know that your children will always appreciate those opportunities and that the attention your trips bring to the Parks brings a more secure future as well. Thank you for that.

Growing up in New York City I understand the importance of natural spaces. I now attend Sterling College in Craftsbury Common VT and am majoring in Sustainable Agriculture. I am so grateful to my parents for exposing me to the outdoors from a young age. If not from that regular exposure to areas of nonconcrete I'm not sure I would have found my passion for the natural world.

We have just returned from visiting Crater Lake National Park Colorado National Monument and Cedar Breaks National Monuments. Whenever we make vacation plans our plans include units of our National Park system. Our National Parks are among our most treasured inheritances. Please protect preserve and enhance our National Parks so that they will continue to be the Great Outdoors for America and the world. Thank you. We are counting on you.

My love of nature was the inspiration for my scientific career in biology and chemistry research.

As an avid hiker experienced wildlife watcher and amateur photographer I have visited these "units" of our national park system: Rocky Mountain national park in Colorado Big Cypress national Preserve in South Florida (where I hiked a section of the "Florida National Scenic Trail") Zion and Bryce Canyon NPs in South Utah Padre Island National Seashore in Texas and Katmai NP (and Preserve) in Southwest Alaska.

When I think of America's Great Outdoors I think of our national parks especially Sequoia which is nearby.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

I grew up going to Glacier and Yellowstone National Parks because I lived in Montana and my parents loved the Parks. I love the National Parks and so do my children they are America's Great Outdoors! This also speaks to issues of science education and the importance of all Americans to understand the world they live in.

I am writing to express how important our national parks are to me and my family. When my two sons were growing up we often visited national parks on vacations. We were astounded by their beauty and wildness and also by how many people felt the same way we did. Parks in all different parts of the country thrilled us Acadia Cumberland Island Yosemite the Grand Canyon we always came away changed and enriched by the experience. Our boys grew up to love the outdoors and to be concerned about the environment. Strongly connected to the Great Outdoors they hike camp and fish often choosing back country and remote settings where they feel amazingly comfortable and comforted. They have volunteered to clean up rivers and remove invasive species. They have studied botany geology and environmental science. One volunteered with the Student Conservation Association to work in the Grand Canyon over a spring break while in college. He then worked for 4 months with on a Geocorps job a project that brings geoscientists into national parks. He was stationed in Guadalupe Mountains National Park in Texas a remote but fiercely beautiful treasure of national land. We need our parks to keep that connection with the natural world to remind us that we share this beautiful planet with other species that deserve a fitting habitat and our respect. Our parks need us in terms of full funding a robust volunteer program for young people protection from development (roads oil or gas drilling excessive snowmobiling hazing of wild animals). Our park system should be expanded and maintained both national and state parks. A friend's son recently took a bike trip from Oregon to California and remarked on the drastic difference in parks in those states the Oregon parks were beautifully maintained and welcoming to visitors/campers etc. while the California parks were understaffed closed and unwelcoming. I also believe it is important to provide wildlife corridors so the animals in our parks can survive. When we visited the Tetons one summer we were fascinated by the geology but saw crowds of people of all ages completely mesmerized by the bison and moose there. Federal state and local governments must work together on this.

I use our national parks. They require more funding and allowing each park to retain a portion of its fees for park improvements is a great idea and long overdue.

I grew up spending summers camping in Stanislaus National Forest in California. What a beautiful place! The Rangers taught us "all we needed to know" about the land plants trees and history all around us. Girl Scout Camp backed up what we learned from the Rangers. I have passed along that respect for the land to my children and grandchildren. America's Great Outdoors encompasses land history awareness of our surroundings and respect for nature.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Every summer i invite grandchildren to join me one by one on a trip to one or more National Parks. I just took the last of the three able to come this year back home. All our lives were enriched by the beauty of our nature our history lessons and the people we met. I am so grateful for the latest one (Port Chicago) in my area and plan to take my grandkids there next summer

Teddy Roosevelt will forever be remembered for establishing out national park system and when I think of adventure in America I think of our national parks. I urge you and your administration to take the following actions: 1. Ensure that national parks have the funds necessary to safeguard park wildlife and provide park visitors with a safe clean and rewarding park experience by the National Park Service's centennial in 2016. 2. Fully and permanently fund the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) to enable the Park Service to buy private land within park boundaries from willing sellers. 3. Preserve for all Americans present and future large areas of public lands and waters to secure the health of our ecosystems ensure wildlife conservation maintain public access to parks and open spaces reduce the impacts of climate change and protect our cultural heritage. 4. Improve opportunities to use our national parks to get kids into active healthy outdoor activity that will help them lead long healthy lives.

And our national parks are not complete without their wildlife. And they are a tremendous destination for foreign visitors as well.

My family and I enjoy the Great Outdoors. We love visiting our national parks and want to see them protected and maintained in a manner that will allow our future generations to enjoy them. Additional Funds are needed to do this.

Thank you for your leadership in health care global peace climate energy and environmental issues. Please consider the importance of America's national parks in your Administration's agenda. America's national parks ARE America's national treasures and something that all Americans can get behind. Please know that America needs more parks for people to enjoy. In the Las Vegas Valley we're working on creating a new national monument that preserves and protects a significant Ice Age Fossil site an area that will surely provide insight into global warming and cooling periods. Please consider using The Antiquities Act to create this new national monument and bringing new sites into the system that better represent our changing country and protect remaining natural areas before we use them all up. The proposed new national monument in the Las Vegas Valley Tule Springs Fossil Beds will provide a significant wildlife corridor that will link four federal agencies.

Every visit that I have made to a national park is now a treasured memory.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

I hope you and the family had a great time in Acadia National Park this weekend (despite the heat.) It's one of my favorite National Parks (though I'd have a hard time choosing favorites when I think of Olympic and Yosemite and Yellowstone....) I'm sure you noted the beauty of Sand Beach and the fun of being atop Cadillac Mountain. As you seem to appreciate our National Park System I am hoping you will take the following steps to ensure our parks' sustainability and health: I thank you for your past conservation efforts and hope that despite a still hostile economic climate and many pressing issues you will lead the fight for our National Parks.

Americans and Foreigners care about the future of these incredible places so they will be there for our children and grandchildren to enjoy.

My husband and I are great fans of our National Park system. We have gone to live at both Bryce Canyon and Zion Canyon National Parks for extended periods of time to take in their incredible beauty and to see first hand the role they play in the lives of our own citizens and the lives of the millions of visitors from beyond our borders that come each year to revel in their natural splendor. We were moved and permanently changed by our experiences in both parks as we have also been by visits to parks like Joshua Tree Mesa Verde Yosemite and the parks of the giant California Redwoods. Each year we make it our goal to see yet another of these magnificent parks and discover even more of their value. In our view it is imperative to preserve and improve these national treasures so they will prosper not only for our generation but for many generations into the future.

I care about the future of these incredible places. Please remember the importance of protecting national parks and the many programs managed by the National Park Service that improve our communities.

Our national parks provide respite recreation and inspiration for our citizens and habitat for all kinds of precious wildlife. Moreover our national parks have been a conservation inspiration to the rest of the world.

My husband and I have a goal of trying to visit all our national parks. We have seen beautiful and stunning scenery and learned about the history of our country in national parks. They are a treasure. I am an American who cares about the future of these incredible places so they will be there for all children and grandchildren to enjoy.

I would like you to know that I am a retired teacher who finally made got to go on a trip out West nearly 4 years ago. I visited the Grand Canyon Bryce and Zion. I was overwhelmed by their beauty. I want to go back and see the other natural wonders of the West. Please make sure they are not destroyed. Thank you very much for reading my comments.

Leave a legacy

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

I hope you and your family enjoyed Acadia National Park on your recent visit there. Our national parks and state parks are great to visit or stay as their prices are low enough for people who are on limited income to enjoy.

Including the above let's get back to supporting the Boy Scouts of America and the Girl Scouts of America ALL OVER America by allowing and encouraging Scout Groups free access to National Parks.

Nature provides a sanctuary not only for the animals but it provides a calm place of renewal for every human being on the planet. Protecting our National Park Service is a social responsibility to all Americans. Your assistance is needed NOW.

Thank you for supporting change in America and protecting our environment for future generations.

The natural beauty preserved in these parks is an irreplaceable part of our cultural heritage and our national identity.

Hiking and camping in our national parks has always been a wonderful summer vacation joy for me and my family through many years as I am now 82.

I care about the future of these incredible places. As I write this I am planning my next visit to a national park. I hope you found Acadia as wonderful as I did when I was there 15 years ago. I can't wait to go back next year. Please remember the importance of protecting national parks and the many programs managed by the National Park Service that improve our communities. National parks are good investments in our future.

Americans care about the future of these incredible places. My children love to camp and hike and soon my grandchildren will be doing the same. I want them to have the opportunity to visit and enjoy our national parks.

Particularly I have a brother who is a senior citizen and visiting the parks is one of his most treasured pastimes. One of the few his can afford.

There should be no hunting mining or oil/gas extraction from our Nat. Parks. Motor vehicle use should be tried to be kept to a minimum by using shuttles and banning snowmobiles and offroad vehicles.

. My vacations are nearly always to a national park.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Growing up in California which has some totally awesome National Parks like Yosemite and Kings Canyon National Park I learned to appreciate the beauty and majesty of nature going to those places. I in turn brought my children to those places as they grew. Now we live in SC and it doesn't have the national parks we grew up with and we miss them. Some states are really missing out. I know you just spent a weekend in Maine and while the East Coast is great you should go to Yosemite after tourist season. It is the most spectacular place ever. October would be a good time to take a break and take in Yosemite and Kings Canyon National park. They're close together so you can see both in one trip. You will love the Sequoias.

This is one of my most passionate pleas so that animal life can survive the vicious atmosphere we've forced upon it.

President Obama It is so important (as you know) to get our young people involved in the great Outdoors. Get them involved in our Parks Rivers Wildlife & Plants in and beyond our Great National Parks. An Old Chinese Proverb: TELL me & I will Forget SHOW me & I may Remember But INVOLVE me & I will Understand It would be great educational opportunities for school graders & park visitors. It would be good for your administration to take the following steps: We need a new national campaign that will involve people in communities throughout the country in protecting our parks for the next generation. Revenues primarily from oil and gas leasing have accumulated during the past several decades in the Land and Water Conservation Fund unspent for its intended purpose.

Get loaded guns out of national parks. We must protect visitors wildlife and employees from the dangers of loaded firearms.

Urge the National Park Service to develop plans to get people to our parks on transit not by private automobile. This will help in the goal of reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

Bring back the CCC in an environmentally responsible fashion! This was a GREAT program that connected youth to the great outdoors and gave them a sense of pride. This was a win/win program.

This is an excellent time to build up our parks and put a few people to work in a WPA type program to do it. Our parks should be a symbol of national pride as well as an engine of economic growth.

I have been fortunate to have spent my entire life having access to National Parks visiting them has been among my fondest memories. For the sake of future generations we MUST insure that they are permanently protected.

Preserve large areas of public lands and waters to secure the health of our ecosystems ensure wildlife conservation maintain public access to parks and open spaces reduce the impacts of climate change and protect our cultural heritage.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

In "Rewilding of America" (I believe that's the book title) the author speaks of large tracts of land for wildlife corridors. I apologize for not knowing the exact information but I believe the US should initiate and maintain large long wildlife areas for "undivided" migration to keep animals safe.

Fully and permanently fund the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) to enable the Park Service to buy private land within park boundaries from willing sellers. Improve opportunities to use our national parks to get kids into active healthy outdoor activity that will help them lead long healthy lives.

Dear Mr. President Thank you for all that your administration has been working for on behalf of the environment including your Executive Decision of July 19 for stewardship of our waters. . . . Too many of our nation's children are deprived of life enriching experiences outside of their urban neighborhoods. Please evaluate and consider new sites to bring into the system that better represent our changing country and >protect remaining natural areas before we use them all up. If we are to stay healthy in body and mind our lives cannot be limited to office parks shopping malls video games and making and spending money.

We have such a gift in our National Parks. What a great asset to our country!

Our national parks are such an incredible treasure!! You must do all possible to protect them for us & future generations.

Our family began exploring Glacier Park since before it was a National Park. Mt Vaught at the head of Lake Macdonald is named for a great Uncle. The family spent every summer they could on and in that lake. My husband first went at the age of 6 weeks and now our very large family goes every summer they can to the cabin they built on land they purchased up the North Fork. This land is now in a trust so it can never be sold.

National Parks are our national treasures. They inspire us and for those of us who are lucky enough to visit them change our lives forever.

this is one of the most important parts of preserving the Great Outdoors and one of the most misunderstood. My husband and I have seen the impact a new national monument can have on a region's economy: along route 89 in southern Utah instead of a dirty and dangerous coal mine there are now dozens of new trading posts motels and restaurants catering to the tourist trade brought to the state by the Escalante/Grand Staircase National Monument. Even in the great outdoors people have to eat and sleep!

We drove from Florida to Arizona and Utah this spring and national parks played a tremendous role in our enjoyment of the great outdoors. We met many people from foreign countries who were measuring America by what they saw in our national parks.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

National parks were part of my childhood and should be part of future generations childhoods.

Parks are the best memories I have in growing up with my family and raising my family.

My daughters and I spent the last month visiting national park sites throughout the south. We learned about American history at the Cumberland Gap Little Rock Central High School San Antonio Missions Palo Alto Battlefield Fort Pickens Chalmette Battlefield and Andrew Johnson's home. We observed Kemp's Ridley sea turtles and other flora and fauna of the Gulf of Mexico at Padre Island and Gulf Islands National Seashores. We experienced the preservation of wildlands at Big Thicket and Little River Canyon National Preserves. We enjoyed American culture at New Orleans Jazz and Jean Lafitte National Historical Parks.

I am 62 years old. Have been to several National Parks. They are one of our National Treasures. We need to keep them going. I want my grandkids to enjoy them as much as I have.

Our parks are counted on by so many to renew the spirit and inspire us to be more than we have been. Please do what is in your power to help guarantee these spaces for future generations. If you have ever seen a grizzly bear with her cubs or watched pronghorn antelope run then you know you are in the presence of grace.

Dear Mr President I am so much an advocate for our National Parks. Living in BoulderCO and having access to Rocky Mountain National Park is a joy of my life. I hope that future generations have the opportunity to enjoy what I have.

I love the National Parks. They are one of the great things about our country. The learning about nature the fun on family trips and my own national pride are all wrapped up in my memories of these places.

Education is the only way to train people to respect and appreciate nature. People are too dependent on motor vehicles for their outdoor experience. We need to get them on the ground to understand the valuable resources our nation has.

I hope you enjoyed your recent visit to Acadia. I have been there many times in the past. I live near Redwood National Park and am a frequent visitor there too. Our parks and open spaces are precious and irreplaceable resources.

Over the past 30 years we have been to over 20 National Parks around the USA and well know the value of these unique resources not only for their geographic content but for the preservation of natural factors and wildlife as well.

Not only do I donate regularly to the National Parks but I also use them on a regular basis. Are you actually looking at legislature that actually has a positive impact for me? Do me a favor...Ask_____ to use public transportation for the next few weekends...and donate the proceeds to our National Parks.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

National parks are everywhere! I don't think a lot of people realize how many exist and how wonderful they are. We need to get the word out and educate the population so that communities can be involved in protecting what is rightfully theirs. The points described below are ways to help make that happen. Thank you for listening!

I visited Alaska in May on a small boat from Seattle to Juneau and then onto Denali National Park. I saw whales dolphins seals otters puffins and even a mama bear and her cubs from the boat. Getting up close to the glaciers there were many seal pups sitting on the ice floes. What an exciting experience that I hope my grandchildren will be able to enjoy seeing animals in their natural habitat.

I am an active National Park and Seashore user and feel strongly that there is a strong link between a strong and well funded National Park System and the America's Great Outdoors Initiative ("AGO"). I applaud the administration for their efforts to promote AGO and when I think of America's Great Outdoors I think of our national parks and seashores. They further engender personal reflection in an increasingly fastpaced and digital culture.

National parks are our National Treasure. .

I have visited and explored all 58 of our National Parks including the one in American Samoa! When I was little my folks would take me to a different park for their vacation and I grew up passionate about our beautiful parks. Please give our National Parks the top priority in your Great Outdoor Initiative!

. I was lucky enough to grow up near the Great Smoky Mountains National Park where I delighted in seeing black bears as a child and learned to love the wildlife and beautiful vistas during many hikes through my teenage years. As an adult there is no other place where I feel a stronger sense of peace belonging and awe...the daily grind simply disappears when I enter the Park. They inspire long walks that keep our bodies tuned and our minds clear.

Our parks are treasures of the earth that we must preserve and protect so that our children's children's children can enjoy them like we have. We depend upon the balance of the entire earth ecosystem for our survival. Keep our National Parks. User fees are fine to help but the country must support the basics of the land.

I have just finished reviewing some old photographs from vacations past. It brought back a flood of wonderful memories camping hiking with the kids and friends. I would hate to think of our grandchildren and their growing up without just such an experience.

My family spends much of our leisure time each year enjoying at least one National Park. Every park we have visited amazes us with the majestic beauty of the natural world and the vision of the people responsible for setting these areas aside for future generations to enjoy. We would like to urge you to work hard to protect and improve our National Parks.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

My wife and I are 80 and 81 years old and about to take off on our long-awaited "bucket list" trip. We plan to spend 78 weeks driving through the American West. We'll stop and see a few people (family and friends) but mostly we will be on a nonscheduled roaming to appreciate the National Parks and other beautiful sites. We have already enjoyed many other national and state parks and want future generations to be able to enjoy them at least as much as we have. So we strongly endorse your American Great Outdoors initiative.

Every citizen should take time to enjoy our nation's treasures and experience the beauty of this country.

I have had the very good fortune to visit Yellowstone and Grand Teton National Parks 3 of the past 4 years. Each visit we wish we had more time. The natural beauty of the mountains canyons geysers "paint pots" the river Jackson Lake...all these are amazing but it is the sightings of the animals that make the visits truly memorable. A full moon setting over Jackson Lake at sunrise...with a moose and her calf in the foreground on Moose Flats. A grizzly among tiny yellow flowers on a field below a road in Yellowstone. A black bear down by a creek...or one time wandering past the cabin! A lone black wolf loping down a path toward a den greeted by pups on arrival...all witnessed through a spotting scope but still...WOW. I wish I hope every American could have these experiences of quiet wonder and awesome solitude. \.

The National Parks are very important for this country and to me personally. I have a goal of visiting and hiking in all of our 50+ National Parks before I die. I am 41 and have visited more than 20 of them hiking hundreds of miles. To me these parks represent all of the beautiful biological and geological diversity this country has to offer and are therefore worth protecting.

. National Parks were a significant source of education for my husband and I as we were growing up. Our parents took our families and traveled almost every year to one or more National Parks to camp. So many Americans have worked hard to maintain the National Parks in their pristine original state it would be devastating to allow them to deteriorate. Strengthen the capacity for federal regional state and local agencies and private landowners to work collaboratively in order to protect not only our national parks but the wildlife plants and rivers beyond park borders.

My grandson is six. He loves to go outside and play and he loves to pick up trash since he wants the trees and animals to be healthy. National Parks can provide a more natural outdoor experience. For a little while we can let go and enjoy nature without constant reminders of the pollution and stress that seems to grow daily around us. .

. Last year we took our four daughters and their children to the Tetons and Yellowstone. Our It is a lesson many of us pass down to our children and grandchildren.

My wife & I just returned from visiting four of our National Parks. It is always an uplifting and renewing experience to do so. Each park had its own personal message for us.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Dear Mr. President: please follow in the footsteps of your predecessors and beef up the National Park efforts. Also look at how you can help the state parks which are being shortchanged all over the country especially in California. This doesn't have to be financial help but rather putting emphasis on what the people can do themselves. This could be one of your elements asking citizens to help preserve their environment.

Our green space is shrinking and needs more protection as we become more populated. Green space gives us a place to center ourselves and find a balance in our lives.

National parks are good investments in our future. Please stop the TC2 Coal fired power plant in Trimble County KY. Many trees are being destroyed because of the transmission lines for the property being taken by EON.

National parks are good investments in our future. These places that still show us what our country once was must not be allowed to be corrupted by development or cease to exist altogether. We would all be the losers.

National parks are good investments in our future. They are the one chance we have to experience nature get away from electronics and revitalize our minds and souls. We need them more than ever in these troubled times.

I have spent time at a few National Parks and I wish everybody who wants to could visit them too. they are beautiful and spiritual places. A great place to unwind from daily life

Our ancestors have given and sacrificed much to create and maintain these parks so I feel it is the least we can do to maintain and improve them for our future generations!

We live near Yellowstone National Park and see the influence it has on everyone who visits there. It is only one of many gems in the park system and they all need care and nurturing.

National parks are good investments in our future. With the economy in dire straights many activities have been cancelled for youth pools closed zoo cost up as well as days shut neighborhood parks not maintained due to budget cuts

National parks are good investments in our future. But we have to remember these are also the last places for our wildlife to live I think without them the park would not be such a learning and living environment for generations to come...thank you

We took our 7 children to Utah's National forests and to the Grand Canyon for many years. They are all adults with families of their own and have continued this tradition that we started with them.

I can testify that I plan my vacations every year around visiting national parks in all parts of the nation. Most of the journey I take by Amtrak another way to see the magificence of the North American landscape.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

We spent our honeymoon at Yellowstone NP and have returned many times with our children now in retirement and hopefully some day with our grandchildren. There is nothing like the experience. It must be preserved.

Both when I was a child and when we took our own children to visit the National Parks we were enriched by the Ranger programs. Adequate funding should be restored so this kind of experience can continue through the generations.

I am a concerned American who cares about the environment and I volunteer to help wildlife and the environment.

I also feel that our Parks are grand cathedrals of priceless treasures great opportunities and soul nurturings that enrich and expand our minds and spirits. Without them we are diminished as a people and as individuals.

Finally the parks provide a living classroom for many branches of science. The knowledgeable staff need to promote ALL science and its importance in our lives. Only America's parks provide such a unique and encompassing opportunity.

We can start to make a difference in small ways and by involving our young people. Issue a challenge to the Nation's young to take the challenge and come up with as many ways to save our parks and get involved! We all love a challenge!

My husband and I recently returned from an exhilarating tour of National parks and monuments in South Dakota North Dakota and Nebraska. Our trips around the US continue to reinforce the importance of our wonderful park system.

My son is 5 months old and I want to take him to the parks to share the joy I have known in them. I am sure you want the same for your children. Keep up the good work I know it's hard sometimes but I feel good knowing you are trying.

The National Parks and Forest Preserves have had such a profound impact on my daughter's life while she was growing up learning about the land and animals I am proud to tell you she graduated from Veterinarian School of Medicine June 12 2010.

As a frequent visitor of the national parks I am strong supporter of preserving and adding to these land legacies.

National parks are good investments in our future. I think National Parks are vital for the education and nurturing of our youth and I support them monthly with financial donations. Of course it goes without saying that National Parks are essential for the spiritual upliftment of all peoples.

Mr. Obama this is a great way to distance you from the oppressive negative administration that preceded yours. Fresh air and fresh water aren't new ideas and the parks work directly with that end result. Please show that there is a heart in Washington DC.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

My deceased husband helped develop Yosemite Park working with the CCC's a great program we could use again! And my present husband volunteered 13 years with Gulf Islands National Park in Mississippi. We heartily endorse "America's Great Outdoors" initiative.

Nothing beats the beauty of nature to keep our balance and give us solace in these hard times. National parks are good investments in our future. I so admire the NP rangers they are a devoted group of men and women and so informed!

I have personally had the good fortune to visit most of America's national parks and have found them to be aweinspiring. They are so unique indeed in the world. The park rangers were without exception excellent informative and helpful. These parks are our real national treasures.

WE MUST SAVE THESE PARKS NOW.

My family members all enjoy our parks and revel in the freedom to explore the wonders of nature. We look forward to our vacations when we can once again have the joy to relax in the beautiful splendor of all the parks have to offer. Please help us keep our plans for years to come!

How many great moments have been spent in National Parks how can we rate these or put a value on them? Great places are of great value and they are for everyone in our society from all "walks of life." What is mutually ours needs to be greatly protected. These parks are nearly sacred.

I am a retired NPS interpretive ranger and over the years I have given programs to hundreds of school groups. When I was in the 8th grade we went on a field trip to Mammoth Cave and I was so captivated by the park ranger who guided us through that I decided I would like to do that some day.

National parks are good investments in our future. Your children and grand children and mine deserve to see the unspoiled beauty of these majestic places. If you don't protect them they could be sold off to the highest bidder as Bush did for much of our publicly owned resources. You do not want to go down in history as another auctioneer of public lands.

I want you to know how important the National parks are to me and this Country. I visited 10 national parks in a 2 week vacation from CA to CO and back. I'm a park pass holder every year. I love the passport program and plan to collect all the parks stamps. I give the passport books to friends as gifts and promote the amazing resources and parks afforded to us. However if you don't maintain and continue to care for the parks they won't be here for my nephews to enjoy with their children.

Having been to some of our National Parks I can attest personally to the importnt role they play in connecting people to the natural environment on a scale that cannot be duplicated by the private sector. Their importance to the preservation of species and cultural history is impossible to quantify.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Since the time that President Teddy Roosevelt recognized the importance of preserving significant areas of our country for public use and appreciation there is no doubt that Americans and others are appreciative of these parks and sites so there should be maximum effort by the administration to insist on the continuation of the program.

Our parks are our greatest heritage! . . .

National parks are an incredibly important part of our country. In these we can take our children to get a personal and intimate view of nature. We can provide for our kids a place for them to go find themselves through explorations on foot of their surroundings. I recently spent two weeks in several parks; Grand Canyon Mesa Verde and Zion. We need to protect these and all the other national parks. My kids loved the hikes the tours the history lessons both geological and anthropological.

Our recent visit to the Chincoteague National Seashore was wonderfully refreshing and recreational in the best sense: recreating our spirits in the presence of the great Atlantic ocean on a beach that is just beach no condominiums boat docks etc. etc. Our national parks are incredible resources for us all and an inspiration to visitors from other countries.

I attended a listening session in Davis Ca. on July 7. Support for the National Parks was demonstrated by attendance. Many more people in favor of maintaining peace and quiet [wilderness values] than opening areas to ORVs and dirt bikes. Please support less invasive use of National Parks. If a person wants to hear noise and breathe exhaust we've got plenty of that in town.

I know that for me spending time on the Blue Ridge Parkway nourishes my love for the beauty and wonder of the natural world and I believe that encouraging and strengthening that love by preserving and building upon the legacy of our National Parks will have a profound effect on more people realizing that we must take better care of these treasures before they are lost forever.

I have been making a point of visiting as many of the Western Parks as I can and I have found each one to be extraordinary. The well developed parks like Denali and the Grand Canyon are fine but my favorite is Lassen Volcanic National Park because you can truly feel like you are away from the crowds. For the sake of man and animal we need to be sure we don't love our parks to death.

Our parks are a huge part of our heritage. They belong to all Americans and should be kept in good condition to preserve our history and environment. There is so much in our parks to learn and enjoy. My family and I have traveled to many parks and enjoyed them immensely. It is a crime that not enough money is given to the parks to keep them up. Please do all you can to protect our parks!

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Help preserve our environmental treasures! . . .

We recently visited Bryce and Zion National Parks. I was startled and disgusted to see a sign on the Lodge entrance to Zion that portrayed a gun with the words "No weapons" across it. I hope you will have some influence to get that legislation allowing guns in our Parks repealed! One more request: I'd like to see more minority families in our Parks. It is very obvious that they are missing.

I support all of the ideas put forward here and have one of my own. Exposure to the beauty of these places would help but there sometimes needs to be a reason to get people engaged. Considering the condition of the economy jobs are needed especially for young people. Consider the prospect of setting up something similar to the CCC in our parks. They need maintenance that has been deferred. Put unspent TARP and stimulus funds toward opening up jobs in our National Parks. The workers get exposed to their wonders and we the people get to reap the benefit of their labor.

. . . Use the projects below to create much needed jobs. . .

We have enjoyed visiting many of our nations' National parks and hope to visit many more. National parks inspire us to be the best we can. . .

We have our national treasure the National Parks because of farsighted "average" Americans brilliant visionaries and planners others in high political office. I hope we as a people with the help of our elected officials will always protect and cherish the National Parks not to mention maintain them by every possible means. We all have to do our share to keep our National Treasure available always for all Americans.

My first National park visit was in 1952. I have since then held a great respect for our National Parks. This past Winter I did 3 National and 11 State parks. (I also sail as crew on 19 TH. century Tall Ships). These are added to the national treasures that are our's. We need to do everything possible to preserve all of the above.

My parents took us to national parks on vacation. Thus I learned to love nature. Therefore we took our children to national parks on vacation as well. These are parks are our treasures and must be treated as such.

With all the buildup furor over peak oil and energy independence which is real and created in part by our lack of appreciation for and understanding of our natural world we must prioritize our Natural Treasures and teach our People respect for and an understanding of why we need this Natural World as much if not more than what can be extracted out from under it. What we have left of it is damn little to leave our future generations.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

It is very important to me and my family as we visit national parks as often as we can. We are actually leaving out of town today on a long roadtrip across several states visiting national parks recreation areas and forests. These lands are invaluable to us and as I take my 21month old son for his first camping trip I can only hope that he will carry on this tradition with his children. Please protect our parks for future generations.

The legacy we leave behind will be a reminder to value their gift and preserve it for future generations....we live in the most beautiful diversified (geographically geophysically geologically and ethnically) country rich in culture and tradition. You can't reproduce natural beauty and you can't restablish native flora and fauna....what we have is what we cherish and provisions for protection should be a mandatory promise to all who value life.

On a personal note having read books about Theodore Roosevelt's personal crusade to protect and defend these places of beauty and majesty and having seen Ken Burns' America's National Parks series on PBS seeing and hearing the personal comments from so many Americans about what these lands mean to them if all we do in our lifetimes is preserve what has been lent to us by God and our future generations we will have done much of what God asks of us.

We must incorporate new educational programs in elementary/middle/high schools... and of course should extend into college courses each level becoming more and more advanced in the knowledge of nature and the outdoors. Organic agriculture sustainable living and renewable energy should be the main focus of our educational programs. We have more than enough resources to provide everyone with the knowledge and knowhow incorporate educational programs at a young age to produce healthy healing foods. And could very easily be taught how to grow and make their own medicines. We must stop competing and start collaborating:)

Growing up some of my fondest memories were of visiting national parks with my family and now retired with our children grown and with children of their own my husband and I are finding new wonder in exploring them. In a few weeks we leave for Olympic National Park and can't wait to see it for the very first time. We always make a special effort to see wildlife in every one of the parks we go to and are sure that most people feel the same way as we do.

Since 1951 when my husband and I married and began our family we have visited our National Parks. Every year during summer vacation we would head to the parks to restore and renew our love of this land and seize the opportunities offered to instill that love in our children. As the children grew and were old enough to drive we ventured farther and farther to explore parks distant from our eastern seaboard home. Both of our children grew up appreciating and thoroughly enjoying this national heritage. I cannot conceive of a United States that would carelessly set aside what has been so carefully developed since Teddy Roosevelt's time. Europe saves castles: the US saves lands and creatures. Both represent what has been; however the first a;ways looks backward and will never continue to grow: the second looks forward and continues to grow whuile connecting to the past. Don't settle for castles!

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

I know that from my own childhood experiences that the love of parks and wildlife develops from being exposed to these elements in an atmosphere of appreciation enjoyment and education. The more children and young adults connect emotionally with the natural world through the experiences in parks and protected areas the more they will learn to value the natural wonders therein. The word "progress" can and should be used synonymously with protection and preservation.

. My 2 cents: I would spend hours in the woods near my house when I was a troubled kid/teenager there I would think and find peace. my parents were abusive and insensitive I knew I didn't count with them and because I felt inferior because I didn't count I was shy and had no friends. Because of the time I spent in the woods and reading I grew up to become a strong adult who counts. I have a special relationship with the earth and I want it to be there for others to find peace.

Our National Parks are one of our greatest treasures!

I grew up visiting the fantastic breath taking National Parks in our country. They were magical as a child and stayed with me as soothing memories during my life. They were places I wanted to return to and hoped would be preserved and protected forever. When there is no other place to go there are always the National Parks to visit and escape to. No other nation has a brilliant National Park system like ours. National Parks are a piece of heaven that belong to the American People.

There is something about nature that just soothes the soul. Every day we have less and less of it left to enjoy. Please protect the National Parks so generations to come can enjoy the beauty and peacefulness they have to offer. We don't want to have to explain to our children or grandchildren why there are no National Parks for them to visit. We don't want them to have to learn about nature from a book. Please protect the Parks and the programs they offer. Thank you for your consideration.

Please protect our wild places for future generations!!!

When I think back to the legacy that CCC gave us in the 1930s I often would like to go back and tell those guys what wonderful places they created. They would be shocked to see the wanton development but could be proud that what they built continues to exist. Lets have a new generation of people who leave a larger legacy of federal parks to honor the work that was done so well. As an outside person I can only say protect the undeveloped areas from wanton greed that is so much a part of the American culture.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

As a personal note please know that when your children get older they are going to want to learn more about America and our National Parks give that lesson. Gettysburg to show where America was split and fought for and against slavery. Mount Rushmore where the president's heads were carved. In California the great Redwood Forests where they tower for 100s of feet over other trees to reach for Heaven. There are many more National Parks where families can go to see experience and learn about history. Do not let them go please.

I feel free when I'm in a forest with trees towering overhead.

Green spaces are critical for so many reasons. We know that they help to save our air from the damage we do to it every day. Time spent in open spaces helps to heal us as well there is ample research showing the mental and physical benefits we gain just by being out in open unspoiled places.

Thank you for all that you are doing. Please remember our parks.

Our parks are one of the few wild places that remain to teach future generations about the importance of preservation of our planet. I would also like to add that they need more protection from oil gas and forestry industries as well as buffer zones around them free from development so that eco systems and migratory routes stay intact. In addition we need more protection for the endangered species that live in and around parks most especially wolves and grizzlies who are the top predators naturally. My last comment is that all ORV and ATV should be permanently banned from National parks.

I am proud to serve as a National Park Volunteer at Congaree National Park.

Having been born and raised in Florida I have used many of our Federal and State parks. We Floridians love our parks and use these often. We also have observed in our State and all other States that we visit that Parks are loved and needed by all men women and children of not only our Nation but all others that come here. Our National Parks should be one of the most ecologic sensitive issues that our Government oversees with the foresight of the future. Not to rape and pillage our assets but to add to these assets for the future generations.

Some of my most memorable experiences have taken place in one of our country's national treasures a National Park. Whether hiking in Yosemite or viewing wildlife in its natural habitat in Denali I have been awed and inspired by the beauty that surrounded me. I felt truly fortunate and moved by the opportunity. Such memories often give solace for a busy working person to remember what is real and pure and what must be protected so humans can continue to commune with nature and their inner selves. Additionally I feel these experiences left a lasting impression on our son who is currently a graduate biology student at work saving the frogs in the Sierras. Conservation has become his personal ambition and I couldn't be prouder.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

America's Great Outdoors serve many purposes not least of which is fighting global warming.

. My wife and I visit as many parks and monuments as is possible every year. The discoveries are overwhelming.

I can't begin to tell you how important our National State and City parks are to me. I can't imagine a world without them it would be a place of desolation. I've seen beautiful places in my own state gobbled up by greedy developers who abandon the site as soon as they've squeezed every dime they can out of it or by vandals who destroy with ATVs and graffiti. The wild places give me comfort and inspiration.

. To the extent that we protect and enhance our parks we are contributing to our own health and heritage as Americans.

I love our national parks as does my whole family. In fact we are preparing to leave for a camping vacation in Grand Canyon Zion and Bryce national parks. So they are very very special to us.

Some of my most treasured moments throughout my life have been when visiting our glorious National Parks.

I treasure our national parks and have been fortunate to visit many of them. As a matter of fact last summer I packed up my "green car of the year" with my three children and some camping gear and traveled the western US visiting nine national parks. We were awestruck time and time again at the beauty and wildlife we found in our national parks. This summer our family will climb Mt. Whitney after camping in Tuolumne Meadows and I'm sure we'll be awestruck once again. I consider John Muir and Teddy Roosevelt my heroes for making these places accessible to all of us.

My husband and I love to visit Rocky Mountain National Park and many other state parks multiple times per year.

. To me the highlight of any vacation across our country is visiting our national parks. We do this often when we visit relatives in the midwest and east coast.

. The reason that the robber barons of the 20th and 21st centuries haven't completely destroyed our country is because of our national parks.

Just today I listened to a mother of 4 children talk with them about attending the Glacier Institute; all were excited about what this offers.

Our National Parks are important. Please keep them for our children.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

. I HAVE JUST FINISHED A VACATION AND GREATLY ENJOYED SOME OF THE NATIONAL PARKS.

I am an Oregon resident who loves our country's national parks. Indeed my family is spending our summer vacation this year seeing as many national parks as we can. .

Those of us who grew up experiencing the outdoors through National Parks have a wealth of memories we want our young one to have as a part of their lives.

I am a true lover of our National Parks and a long time member of the NPCA. . .

They must be protected for the children of the future. .

Youth access to parks and recreation is a proven way to keep them off the streets. Having access and going to parks also teaches them to respect and protect their environment. .

First stop the space program. Then hire people to plant trees. Build reservoirs. . .

. I was just in the Grand Canyon river rafting and realized what a National Treasure we have.

I am blessed to live in the foothills of the Blue Ridge mountains here in Virginia.

. . . As your family has recently enjoyed Acadia National Park my family has as well. We also recently visited Olympic National Park in Washington state. Living in North Carolina we have the advantage of the Great Smokey Mountains and Blue Ridge in the west and the Outer Banks in the eastern part of our state. We love having these natural places as a refuge for peace and beauty.

. National parks are a public owned national treasure and must be protected for future generations. .

. Apart from the fact that the parks constitute a haven for animals and the natural things that grow. .

We need to fully fund our parks and provide needed services for families who visit them.

. I have personally enjoyed many of them over the past 50 years from the Everglades to Alaska and many in between. .

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

. I grew up visiting Yellowstone every 5 years with my family and I spent one of my college summers working there.

I hope your family enjoyed the Acadia visit. Our national parks should get more attention. . . .

. . . . Our family began camping when our five children were very young. We bought a ten dollar pass which entitled us to all national parks monuments forests etc. and that included free camping! Since we were on a very limited budget this allowed us to enjoy many wonderful vacations touring the country and camping along the way. As senior citizens my husband and I continue to take relatively inexpensive vacations camping with our grown children and our grandchildren in many of the same places we visited years ago. One problem does exist!!! Many of the places we visit now are quite run down and are understaffed. (there is only so much the S.C.A. can be expected to do!!!). I hope you will realize the importance of protecting all of our national parks monuments forests for all of us now and for future generations.

The work proposed below can be done with army troops returning from tours in Iraq and Afghanistan. The thing the soldiers most miss about duty back home is the comradeship of their fellow soldiers and this kind of unit work would solve some of the drinking driving dieing and suicides that I hear about. I also think civilian military formation for young adults of late teen age to give direction to many young people would help with work in the national parks and elsewhere. I have volunteered for natural area restoration and I clearly began to see a huge need for more focus on forests and even in developments especially to remove invasive species of plants. SDD

. I am an unabashed lover of our National parks system. I want to thank you for taking family vacations in two of our beautiful National parks this past year. As you know people of color do not spend the same amount of time outside of urban areas that Caucasians do. This is a shame and a problem that needs to be addressed. I believe that our National parks are ideal places to begin outreach to include all people of our nation in outdoor recreation. If a person has never experienced to wonderment of the beauty of nature they will not care if it is protected. The National Park Service has many programs already in place to reach out to people of all ages cultures and ethnicity but the Parks are so severely underfunded that the programs reach far too many people.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

. A personal story My wife and I both thought we needed to "get away" from our house and go someplace cooler and more comfortable during the hot weather. We chose to go to a place where we spent our first honeymoon after getting married in the mountains of Virginia. What a refreshing time we had hiking in the mountain trails remembering our visit there over 40 years ago horseback riding etc. We then had a wonderful meal at the lodge..topped off by black berry ice cream pie a wonderful treat. In less than 1/2 a day we both felt refreshed after our time in the mountains time well spent. Our story is just one of many about how important our national parks are to the people of this country. Please do everything necessary to keep the parks well kept and available.

Remember what President F Kennedy said ask not what your country can do for you but to ask what you can do for your country so we the people need to get out there and do our part and get out there and start cleaning the parks and streets our property's and help the neighbors to haul junk away and help the elderly and be kind to your neighbor and get involved in service work and help clean up America and don't listen to gossip about the president because it doesn't mean a thing it's just cheap talk and we need to help do our part to stand united with our president and do what we can and to make our grand kids proud of what we Americans are made of and how proud we stand By Robert E Rome When I think of America's Great Outdoors I think of our national parks. National parks provide some of America's finest outdoor classrooms and serve as a basis for conservation history and civics education for millions of people each year.

In addition to the suggestions following please consider my personal observations. I recently completed an eighteen day camping tour of Badlands Teton Yellowstone Glacier and Teddy Roosevelt National Parks along with visits to Mount Rushmore and Devils Tower National Monuments. Some of the most enjoyable activities were with the park Rangers. Whether at evening campfire talks or guided hikes their insight made the experience complete. The young ones became involved in discussions and their questions were very well received. I don't know if there is an offseason for Rangers but getting the Rangers into the classrooms across the country may be beneficial to the health of our natural and wild places. Introducing our youth to the beauty and history of these places would lead to a more environmental attitude needed to further protect the places that make this country special. It is working with my grandchildren and I know it will work on a national level. thx. Gary. When I think of America's Great Outdoors I think of our nation and contributing to the health of our people. National parks provide some of America's finest outdoor classrooms and serve as a basis for conservation history and civics education for millions of people each year.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

I make it a point to take my grandchildren to visit at least one of our national parks or recreation areas each summer. Over the years we have been able to see most of the parks in the eastern United States and four parks in Colorado. I believe it is important for our children to learn about our nation's heritage by attending programs and events at the parks. This summer we will go to the Great Smoky Mountains National Park. I have observed how budget cuts have reduced the number and frequency of ranger-led programs. In spite of these cutbacks the park personnel do their best to make the visitors' experience rich and memorable. But we must make sure that these experiences remain available for future visitors.

When I think of America's Great Outdoors I think of our parks national state and local. I also think in terms of what is nearest and most attainable to all Americans personal gardens at home or in the school surrounds. Schools should receive strong incentive to give every child opportunity to "play" in a garden that they prepare plant caretake and from which they harvest to eat. I also think of farmers' markets where children are exposed to peruse happily in company of moms who get the choice of largely organically produced goods not forced to be overpriced. Today we must bear the burden of being visionary as were those few who preserved for us what we still enjoy despite encroachment of "civilization" because those wise people could foresee mankind's propensity to abusively use and waste what is incalculably precious. National parks MUST be adequately funded so they can continue to play an important connection of people young and old to the outdoors. By preserving our parks we preserve the natural and cultural diversity of our nation and contribute to the health of our people.

The Framers of our Constitution stated the essential purposes of government in the Preamble. The establishment and faithful maintenance of our national parks as a fitting legacy bequeathed to future generations is inherent in the Preamble's stricture to "promote the general welfare". I have striven to visit a different national park every year. Last year I spent a glorious week in Glacier National Park a park whose namesake glaciers are threatened with extinction from global warming. This year I'll visit Lewis & Clark National Park a site celebrating visionary leadership and a story of indomitable courage combined with intellectual curiosity and a mission espousing goodwill toward the continent's original inhabitants.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

The National Parks have played a huge role in my and my family's life for many years. For all of our family vacations the national parks are the only locations we considered. Without them how could we know the splendor of God's protected country; how could we have seen the true beauty of wildlife along the roads in the early morning hours up close and personal for our enjoyment; where could we have taken senior citizen parents in their 70s and 80s to enjoy the mountain vistas to watch them ride down alpine slides to encourage their hiking in some of them to watch their reaction for the first time seeing the grandest canyon on earth to see Old Faithful....oh my God the list goes on! When my parents could no longer travel they sat and watched a video we made for them from all our family vacations and just enjoyed reminiscing about the good times they had the memories they made and just wished they could still travel to our spectacular national parks. As for me personally the national parks provided me with the serenity solitude and healing I needed when dealing with some serious health issues. If it wasn't for the national parks I would definitely have turned out differently. I am now an avid hiker climber and will remain in awe of these special places. Our future generations need these national parks to learn cultural diversity; we need to keep the interpretive programs to educate our younger generations to promote careers in the environmental arenas in how to save our national wonders and not forget about our wildlife which is so important to all of us. National parks provide some of America's finest outdoor classrooms and serve as a basis for conservation history and civics education for millions of people each year. It is imperative that we protect these places as such as they are.

The United States is so unique with all of our national parks. National parks. Previous administrations and groups worked hard to create the park system. Ken Burns made such an exceptional movie on the parks that even people (like me) who think they know more than a little bit about the parks probably learned a tremendous amount of 'new' information about the parks system! I grew up in Washington DC (10 yrs) and Silver Spring MD (24 years) before ending up in AZ. While I still prefer the DC area Arizona is amazing!!! If you like the outdoors only about 20% of AZ is privately owned. That leaves about 80% as National State County Reservation land. Most of this land can be used by the public. How wonderful that is for Arizonans! The parks play an important role in living in AZ and also the rest of the USA should be kept going and well maintained so that Americans and (legal) visitors have the opportunity to see how beautiful our country is!!!

Dear Sir I think president Roosevelt was wise and realized that some places are symbols. Symbols of America's birth struggles strength and symbols of hope. We must have these symbols to remind us lest we forget and history fades. I love to go to the outdoors to get away from the dirty city to find peace to find closeness to God and nature. The solitude allows me time to think and time to recuperate from life. These places are treasures the belong to ALL Americans even those not yet born! I hope you realize the value of protecting our parks wildlife and wildlands. No one has the right to steal such places away for their own personal ATM machine. These places are symbols that are as important as the symbols in DC and New York. They are American symbols and treasures and they must be saved for every American.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

As a child and a teenager I grew up in the outdoors and I know from experience of the confidence it provides when an individual is comfortable hiking riding horses playing in the mud swimming camping. AND most important "THE OUTDOORS" is "OPEN" 24/7 and available to us all through our national parks. As our population grows and grows and grows there are fewer and fewer empty lots grandparents in the country and other opportunities to experience the outdoors which means that our national parks are essential if we are to provide our people with opportunities to know to take pleasure in to educate themselves about the natural world in a personal individual experience. Let's plan for the physical and psychological health of our population with greater attention to and more value placed upon our national parks. . . .

. My Daughter soninlaw and grandsons left just yesterday for a three week trip out west (driving all the way) to see some of our great parks Zion Bryce Canyonlands Arches Grand Canyon Lake Mead etc. I have been thrilled by so many of the parks and love to go to the one nearest my home Shenandoah National Park. I have noticed over the years that they all NEED HELP and attention and care! They are gifts for all Americans and I am disgusted that previous administrations have let them gradually deteriorate or not get the quality of care they need. You are doing so much for this country healthcare financial reform etc. that I am confident that your administration can help restore the national parks to the conditions and quality they and the people of the USA deserve. GO FOR IT! I know the rest of this letter is basically a "form letter" but it would be nice to think that someone somewhere with a sincere interest in this issue reads this!

I am a native New Yorker that's NYC. Unfortunately I don't get to national parks much. Went to the Grand Canyon once (awesome) and of course close to home Liberty & Ellis islands (not parks so much but of course important and impressive) As a New Yorker I believe you should bring some park to the city. I contribute when possible to The NY Restoration Project and the Central Park Conservancy (I was married in the Conservancy Garden). I think all urban projects should include public space that contains gardens and tax breaks given to organizations who "green" their buildings. I may never get to see Yellowstone but I really enjoy the public space on 4546 St between 5th & 6th ave the block where I work which brings natures peace and sanity to frantic midtown. So I'm all for the great outdoors especially when it's in the middle of the city. . . .

A little over 200 years ago this great nation was for the most part ALL wilderness and in that amount of time we have succeeded in ruining the majority of this precious gift. We have not always been very good stewards of the land and the diversified life forms that make up these important Ecosystems. The saying that comes to mind is "So it goes so do we" meaning that if we neglect these areas and continue to assault these areas to satisfy our own greediness for the minerals precious metals oil gas etc. we will in the end condemn ourselves and our future generations to failure. What is left of our wilderness areas must be preserved at all costs. Without America's Great Outdoors we become nothing more than just a blight upon the face of this planet and will in the end doom ourselves to obliteration for not being the care takers we are supposed to be. . . .

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

When I think of America's Great Outdoors I think of our national parks and California State Parks. This is our legacy to leave future generations. California has reduced support of the State Parks and they are falling apart. The parks both National and State reserve key areas for safe enjoyment of the outdoors and save them from future commercial development. We camp every year and whenever we travel our family visits whatever National Park is nearby. We have just spent time at the volcanic parks on Maui and Big Island of Hawaii which was very educational to my children. Next summer we are planning to rent an RV to visit several National Parks from the West to Mt Rushmore. These are cherished landmarks that not only Americans but visiting international tourists come to see. I am proud to meet people from other countries that are here visiting and taking the time to see our remarkable sites. I've toured a lot of Europe and Asia and they continue to maintain their key areas of History and I am so glad we do too! It's part of who we are. Please don't lose focus on this long term strategic opportunity.

As a child I relied on my parents to help me reach the great outdoors. The Jersey shore the Delaware river lakes waterfalls creeks even the woods between my house and the local church and golf course. As soon as I got my driver's license and first car the National Parks became my travel companions. My parents proudly taught me volumes about the CCC. The topic was but a paragraph in my history book. TSKTSK on our educational editors!!! When I went to Acadia National Park the first time and saw the stonework of the little bridges and the buildings the carriage paths the trails I cried with gratitude. Thanks to everyone who made this preservation possible. This is and always will be MY park. When I hit any trail I bring a garbage bag and pick up any litter I find along the way. Once when I was in the park and stopped at an overlook to see to the balancing rock far above us. I looked down and the slope below me was filled with garbage tires diapers and even a bathroom sink. So instead of taking the trail up to the rock my friend John and I spent our afternoon collecting the waste of others and putting it in dozens of black bags and carting it to the nearby park dumpster. Sure we could have driven away upset by what others did but we took care of it and made a hidden little nook of our world cleaner and better than we found it. I felt empowered. I took back something that someone had taken away. What makes a garden beautiful is all the colors textures shapes angles scents what makes it priceless is getting dirt in your shoes and under your fingernails. People should feel that way about the natural world. And that's how to get the feeling connect directly to it. Mr. President in your book you described the impact it had on you to fly in a regular airplane with other citizens I assume coach seating versus first class and private planes. Same thing here. If a pair of boots is all that separates you from the majestic rock you are standing on top of and you had to walk climb and sweat to get to that spot it means something. It means everything!

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

I may be late responding to this because it is already 72610 but I am going to respond anyway and hope that I can add my thoughts: My aunt and uncle lived and worked in Yosemite National Park year round and when I was 9 years old I was fortunate enough to live with them for a year and a half in Yosemite valley. This was many years ago. This experience shaped my life fundamentally and I am deeply grateful for that and to them for providing that opportunity for me. EXPERIENCE IN A NATURAL WORLD SETTING IS INVALUABLE IN SHAPING LIFETIME RESPECT AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE PHYSICAL WORLD AND HUMAN BEINGS AS JUST ONE PART OF THE WHOLE. Every child every person should EXPERIENCE that reality and the National Parks are able to provide that opportunity. YOU HAVE to get INTO THE NATURAL world to begin to understand your small part in it and to appreciate that. When you GET IT you will work to protect it for the rest of your life teach you children to do the same and support all those who spend their lives as Park Rangers as environmentalist and all who treasure the worlds resources THAT SUSTAIN ALL LIFE. aloha from hawaii .

. With our daughters my husband and I visited over 30 national parks across the U.S. When they were young the girls participated in as many junior Ranger programs as they could and always looked forward to hiking spotting wildlife learning names of plants and animals and mountains. We have photos of them with the Rangers from Yellowstone and Yosemite to Acadia. And now after spending 2 years teaching at an environmental education center in CA our youngest daughter is in graduate school at Duke working on her degree in coastal environmental management. She is passionate about doing what she can to protect the earth and about sharing her love of the environment with her students. Her masters project is on the effects of sedimentation caused by development on coral reefs. If you ask ___ where this passion and love of the environment came from she will tell you it is from her days at Assateague Ntl Seashore at Acadia the Everglades and all those other parks where she spent lazy summer days exploring and learning to appreciate nature and the wonderful gift our varied and wondrous environment is for our country. We must capitalize on the treasure that our national parks are for our country and our people. It is unbearably sad to think that so much of what my daughters experienced as young children 20 years ago is currently unavailable to them due to lack of funds and other problems due to neglect and lack of foresight in previous administrations. But we can turn this around now. .

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Below is the standard letter NPCA while it is a good letter it does not reflect all that I think about of our National Parks. Our Parks are a reflection of our society if we take care of them and respect them then our society can be proud of them. I have been vacationing in National Parks for over 30 years both before and after having kids. It is hard to explain the feeling when you drive into a National Park when you see the brown signs there is no other feeling like it. My kids which are both now in their 20's still enjoy going to the parks. As a matter of fact we were all in the National Parks of Utah just last July all 5 of them. We even brought my future soninlaw who as never been in Utah with us. He was wowed but what he saw and experienced. I will always be visiting a National Park throughout my life and I want to enjoy and be proud of the parks. The parks reflect on me personally and as a nation. We need to reverse the damage done to them by the previous administration. The parks are a place where people from any background can go into and enjoy they are not just for the rich but you can feel like a rich person when you are in one of our great National Parks. Thank you for your time

We love our National Parks. When I was more mobile we hiked camped and took our children to a National Park at every opportunity. As I have become less mobile we have taken my parents in their 80s and city raised to National Parks in a rented motor home. Now we travel to National Parks in a camper van and even if we just drive through it is a refreshing and awesome experience. We love Yellowstone and the Grand Canyon and go as often as possible now that we live in the west. When we lived in Virginia Shenandoah and The Smokey Mountains were our favorite hang outs. WE loved Chincoteague and the wild horses Jamestown and its history and DC itself with its wonderful historic hiking trails and museums.. I would love to see more accessible areas and events for mobility challenged people. This is an area that our country is sadly lacking in. Many of the accessible areas available have been planned and tested by able bodied people and are not really accessible to those in wheelchairs or using canes. Rest room doors open outwards so no one can get in without help even though there is usually one handicapped stall inside the restroom. Soap and towel dispensers cannot be reached by those in chairs. The National Parks should be for ALL Americans not just children or inner city teachers being park rangers. Those are good ideas too but what would be better would be to get the inner city KIDS out to National Parks.. The National Parks should be for ALL Americans not just children or inner city teachers being park rangers. Those are good ideas too but what would be better would be to get the inner city KIDS out to National Parks.. I would love to see a National Park in Idaho. The River of No Return Wilderness area would be a wonderful inclusion. It is unspoiled and is what America used to be. Some mail is still delivered by air. Radios are still used for communication. Jet Boats are the only way to get up river to historical ranches along the river. It is a beautiful area and should be protected.

I just visited 2 National Parks with my grandson (Crater Lake and Mt. Rainier) which just reaffirmed the great need to protect our national lands.

This year I have had the pleasure of visiting some of our country's national parks. I have waited a long time to retire and do this. . . .

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Maryland does not have any national park within its boundaries; but where I live the closest wildlife sanctuary is the Patuxent Wildlife Refuge located off MD212 (Powder Mill Road) in Lanham. I have visited this refuge a few times; it has wonderful trails to either walk on or ride the tram(s) provided; and it also has a wonderful indoor exhibit of the diverse wildlife and their habitats as well as some interactive displays for adults and children to enjoy. If you and the family have not yet visited this sanctuary I recommend that you do so at your leisure (perhaps in the early to mid autumn).

Over the years since 1963 when we were married my husband and I have taken trips to many of our national parks. We hope to visit those we have not yet been to in the years to come.

I love the national parks; I believe they are our most valuable national asset because they provide us with mental and spiritual blessings.

As an avid hiker and nature photographer I visit a number of our national parks every year and consider them one of our greatest treasures.

There's enough proof from studies done to show that knowledge is learned quicker and stays much longer when it is learned experientially. Also this will open a field to children which they are more likely to go into as adults if they've had some experience.

My late parent were always supporters of our National parks and held annual passes for many years. In addition to the joyous times our parks offered them and me I agree that National parks play a tremendous role in connecting people young and old to the outdoors preserving the natural and cultural diversity of our nation and contributing to the health of our people. National parks provide some of America's finest outdoor classrooms and serve as a basis for conservation history and civics education for millions of people each year.

This issue is very important to me as I just returned from a trip where I brought my wife and four sons to Rocky Mountain National Park this July.

When I think of America's Great Outdoors I think of my dad. He spent time teaching us the names and calls of the birds the names of the trees weeds flowers and little animals. We were so proud of ourselves when we went to school because we knew and loved nature. Today National parks provide some of America's finest outdoor classrooms and serve as a basis for conservation history and respect for all of nature.

I have been thinking a lot about the National Parks recently. National parks play a tremendous role in connecting people young and old to the outdoors preserving the natural and cultural diversity of our nation and contributing to the health of our people. National parks provide some of America's finest outdoor classrooms and serve as a basis for conservation history and civics education for millions of people each year.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

If you are in any doubt about how important and special our National Parks are please watch Ken Burns' wonderful documentary "America's Best Idea." It is inspiring but it also illustrates how easy it would be to lose these amazing places either through neglect or giving in to special interests who would use these resources for their profit. The National Parks make me proud of America. Endless war makes me ashamed and angry.

Our State and National Parks are very important to every generation. National parks connect people to nature and remind them of the importance of protecting our natural resources thereby contributing to our health and the planets health. National Parks preserve the natural and cultural diversity of our nation. National parks provide some of America's finest outdoor classrooms and serve as a basis for conservation history and civics education for millions of people each year.

. National parks play a tremendous role in connecting people in my family to the outdoors. They preserve the natural and cultural diversity of our nation and contribute to the health of our people.

America's national parks are one of its greatest treasures and in a world where development takes precedence over preservation of natural beauty so much of the time it is imperative that our national parks always be there to provide people with the opportunity to escape and reconnect with nature. I feel that more opportunities should be given inner city children to experience nature as well as this can be a lifealtering experience for them.

our parks are all we have thats still nice

P.S. Increase littering fines

I have spent many vacation days both as a child and as an adult in our National Parks. A few years ago I backpacked 90 miles of the Appalachian Trail in the Great Smokies National Park. All the parks are truly amazing and need to be protected for future generations to enjoy.

I know your wife wants us to get moving and this is a way to do it.

. Please go and stand on the north rim of the Grand Canyon and be still; just look and listen. Our children must experience this. Go to Happy Isles in Yosemite National Park and listen to the roar of the waterfall. Visit Yellowstone in winter and walk in the snow. God is good.

. P.S. I Love Wildlife . Thank you for helping to save these executives why saving the Western Gray Whale important. I look forward to your swift action to ensure a complete ban on whaling in Iceland.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

I'M 25 YEARS OLD AND WHEN I WAS A LITTLE KID I WAS ALWAYS OUTSIDE PLAYING. THAT'S WHAT I REMEMBER FROM MY CHILDHOOD! A GREAT CHILDHOOD! IF CHILDREN DO NOT PLAY OUTSIDE AND PEOPLE DON'T ENJOY THE OUTDOORS ANYMORE THEY WILL NOT CARE ABOUT IT! THIS EARTH IS OUR HOME AND WE MUST CARE! IT SHOULD BE PRIORITY NUMBER 1. WITHOUT IT WE ARE NOTHING.

My grandfather helped build some of our state parks when he was a young man. He took great pride in it. Our family vacations were always to a state park or a state campground. I raised my daughters to respect nature and took them mountain climbing and hiking all the time. I'm a volunteer in my town for the Greenway Volunteers. We take care of the hiking/biking trails that run through our town. Getting back to nature is great exercise its an inexpensive get away there are parks and trails in every state. We need to protect them NOW so that they'll still be there for future generations to enjoy. We have just one home once we pave over and drill it and sprawl all over it its gone we don't get second chances to get it back. We are losing so many different wild life species and plant species to carelessness. Lets stop and think about protecting something so precious before its too late.

I agree with all of the above. I feel strongly that poor inner city youth need to be given the opportunity to experience the outdoors.

We truly need to keep our parks up. These national treasures are a must see.

In addition to what we already have to do in National parks we need to add more activities with stick limits to how and what we do in the arks. WE should add very stiff fines to people that trash our parks and do not put out the their fires completely and correctly. This even includes water divining scuba diving and fishing.

In the past CCC forces performed much go develop and improve national partks. Something similar could put young people to work.

I thought you would like to know that my husband and I will be making the National Parks our destination next summer!! I can't wait! I haven't seen any of the midwestern parks.

P.S. A very positive step in these difficult times and in particular for young people is to give them meaningful jobs. A program akin to the CCC of the 30's would be a very good model to follow. It would provide jobs needed maintenance to our parks and forests and at the same time expose those same individuals to the natural world in all its ramifications. This type of program is long past due.

I visit National Parks whenever we travel. Yellowstoe Glacier Yosemite just to name a few. Of course weas a nation could always use more. Thank you for anything you do to help our parks.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

In addition Mr. President I would like to provide a few personal remarks. I believe we need to provide corridors for wildlife without these wildlife paths for free moving wildlife life in the US will suffer greatly. Our children must get back to nature if they are to grow into protectors of our earth and its bounties. We need larger and larger wild areas with little or no sounds of civilization and we need places that are farther and farther from roads. Our earth our wildlife and our children need your committment and the power of you and your office now.

We need more parks. Please evaluate and consider new sites to bring into the system and protect remaining natural areas before we use them all up.

I support the "America's Great Outdoors" project. Please take the following steps: Our national parks and park resources are second to none in the world: protect preserve enhance enlarge.

My husband and I are members of the outdoor organization The Tacoma Mountaineers of Tacoma Washington. We live near Mt. Rainier and love to introduce our visitors to the wonders of the Park. We want our children and grandchildren to take their friends to the parks too. It is sad to witness the deterioration of the parks due to tighter budgets. Our citizens need to become more involved in the great Outdoors and our parks need to be ready to welcome them. Please remember the importance of protecting national parks and the many programs managed by the National Park Service that improve our communities.

President Obama Please make the preservation of our national parks a priority in your Great Outdoors initiative. For the last 15 years I have backpacked numerous times in the Grand Canyon and on the Appalachian Trail. I hiked in the Grand Canyon by myself the first time and was so moved by the experience I recruited family and friends to make the next trip. As a result ten other adults have backpacked with me over the years. Most have returned for multiple trips. Every single one of them can speak to the lifechanging experience the trip was. Some talk about what they've learned about other cultures some about a greater spiritual connection with God some have grown closer to family some began recycling programs. You see time spent in these incredible places makes a huge impact for good one person at a time. Americans care about the future of these incredible places.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Unfortunately this has been a TERRIBLE summer for me and the future does not look bright. The outdoor beckons but I believe I have only been outside a handful of times. I did go to my local park on 2 occasions. On the first the songstress apparently didn't know the lyrics to "Sweet Home Chicago" as she sang (loudly almost as if in my direction) ... GO HOME ... BABY DON'T YOU WANNA GO GO HOME etc. and upon my quick departure immediately segued into "SOMEWHERE OVER THE RAINBOW ..." which I always liked except for when it is sung so spitefully. My last visit was better as I met a local antique vendor who had lots of fabulous items and was so kind to me; we chatted for over 10 minutes I would say. Another guest at the fair stopped by her booth while I was there ~ we were talking about our age (typical women thing!!) and she commented "Black women don't look as old as we are because we stay out of the sun no wrinkles!" See I am white and they both were black but we all were talking about age. Whatever. I tell you that because strangely enough as I went to visit other booths at the fair nobody (or very few!) people would even make eye contact with me! IMAGINE! Another nice day turned bad. So parks are great a great place to gather. But honestly it really depends on who gathers there. Sincerely

This is our outdoor legacy to the next generation. It is our obligation to protect it.

National parks are good investments in our future. But once gone we have nothing.

National parks are good investments in our future. We cannot wait any longer to protect our parks.

We need to provide good Park jobs for all that need them!

Our national parks represent our living legacy to future generations.

Growing up I spend many summers traveling across the United States camping in and near the National Parks. This helped me appreciate the vastness of our country and the diversity of the people who founded it and lived here originally. This also helped me appreciate the history lessons I received each year in school. It is important that we support the parks for generations to come.

And importantly adequately STAFF the chronically under staffed parks!!!

National parks are good investments in our future. They are also a legacy for our children and grandchildren and need to be protected.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

I have enjoyed many parks over the years with my children and now my grandchildren.

National parks are good investments in our future. There are 42 wolves left we have to stop the killings of these beautiful animals.

National parks are good investments in our future. Actually the parks are the only place we can visit where the environment and nature is protected.

National parks are good investments in our future. They must be respected and we must prove that we care by taking care of them for the future generations....

I have been to Yellowstone Teton Yosemite. They are great places and we need more places like them.

Our national lodges built during the depression are works of beauty and art. They are a national treasure.

I have visited many of our national parks and am always amazed at the uniqueness and beauty of each.

Our National Parks are treasures that can never be replaced if we lose them so they must be cared for and nurtured!!!!

National parks are good investments in our future. These are our natural treasures and it is our prime responsibility to preserve and protect them against any and all threats.

I love parks; they are a peaceful place to be. I hear trees and streams when they talk and feel all things are possible.

Keeping our national parks in good condition will not only help us today but make lives better for many future generations!! Let's do it!!!

Parks have become Sacred Places

I have been going to Acadia for more than 30 years. Finally retired I hope to see many on the National Parks in the West and South. I hold a Golden Age Pass.

I am a big user of National Parks. Living in Michigan and having a place out summer place out side of the Sleeping Bear Dunes they are a big part of my life.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

I worked in Yellowstone N.P. nearly 50 years ago. The experience will live in my memory as long as I live. Our national parks are the diamonds of the Earth. When I think of America's Great Outdoors I think of our national parks. National parks

I have become a more spiritual person as time has gone on in my life. I believe and respect that all of the world's great religions come from the same God but I choose to follow the Hindu path of India. This path in particular is aware that everything in this world is connected and that even the earth is a spiritual being in a sense of great importance to us and must be respected and protected. In addition we need to stay connected to nature and the earth in a way that is becoming more absent for too many people in our country. For the people of our country to continue to develop fully and correctly in these very difficult and challenging times it is important to try to reconnect with the earth the planets the seasons plants and animals that are a part of us. One very important outlet for this is our national parks. We need more and more national parks and we need to get more of our countrymen to visit and spend time in them reconnecting to our planet and to God. Please therefore take heed of the issues mentioned above and support them all to the best of your abilities. It is vitally important if we are to go on that we love this planet and care for it doing everything we can to safeguard it and to preserve it. Of course the criminal acts in the Gulf of Mexico serve to strongly emphasize this point. This can be seen as a warning signal from God that we need to take notice and act in the appropriate manner.

Thank you for offering to protect our National Parks! They were almost abandoned during the last Administration and we are fortunate to have your leadership!

Not only that but everywhere in the world I travel people are in awe of our public lands and knowledgeable about our national parks. They have visited them or hope to visit them. .

My goal has been to visit everyone of our National Parks. So far I have visited 12 of them including St. John in the VI Acadia Olympic Yellowstone and more.

My wife and I really enjoy these great treasures and have now visited more than 30 and will soon add several more. Please we need to protect and cherish them all.

Our family didn't have much money when I was a child but we could afford to camp in National Parks. Yosemite was within halfaday's drive so it was the place we camped in most often.

Our national wilderness wild places wildlife open spaces vistas and farmland are a priceless legacy that must be preserved intact for future generations at any cost. .

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

I have stated that our great National Parks are a living cathedral of the highest order! President Theodore Roosevelt I recently found agreed. He stated "It was like lying in a great solemn cathedral far vaster and more beautiful than any built by man". It is our obligation to respect preserve and promote the beauty (admired for centuries by those who came before us) for those that come after. I know after having had the pleasure of not only personally visiting many of our national treasures but by watching in the news as you and your lovely family visited them also that this should not have to be a hard sell. I do realize however that there are some among us who have no sense of the history splendor and promise of excitement that our National Parks render along with our huge responsibility to preserve them for posterity! Let's not even think of Paving Over Paradise: They paved paradise they put up a parking lot A big hotel a boutique And a swinging hot spot. Don't it always go to show You'll never know what you got till it's gone? They paved paradise they put up a parking lot. They took all the trees they put 'em in a tree museum. They charged the people A dollar and a half just to see 'em. Don't it always go to show You'll never know what you got till it's gone They paved paradise they put up a parking lot. "Paving Over Paradise to Out in a Parking Lot" Our National Parks and those who run them are to use the vernacular AWESOME!

Because my mother's family was in Oregon and my father's lived near Chicago and we lived in Annandale Virginia every 45 years we took a road trip during summer vacation swinging through National Park campgrounds on varying routes west north and toward home. I remember the howl of wolves at Craters of the Moon when I was five the raccoons at night that cleaned out our cooler in the Everglades bear tracks in Yosemite getting the next to the last campsite in the Grand Tetons Old Faithful spewing high deer and the scent of spruce at Devil's Tower. I've taken my own family to Glacier National Park to the ashes across from Mt. St. Helen to Zion canyons the Rockies and Mammoth Cave. The National Parks are treasures to be preserved for generations to come.

As someone who has been visiting national parks for more than 50 years I can't think of anything that has had as profound an effect on my life or the lives of my family. . .

. This year in fact my daughter and I will both be visiting Yosemite for the first time and we could not be more excited about finally being able to breathe in all this national jewel has to offer. .

.I have spent my whole long life visiting many of our parks and national forestshikingcamping and fishing with my family as a childand now as an adult. National parks It's where I got my most valuable education. . They are valuable watersheds as well.

The American Indians said it best: "We do not inherit the earth from our ancestors we borrow it from our children." Help us protect and save the earth for future generations. .

. Our parks are integral to our past shaping who we are and what we value. As a teacher it was natural to tie the lessons of environmental and political succession with the health of our society and National Parks. .

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

. . Our natural treasures play a huge part in the world's balance. Ensure that national parks have the funds necessary to safeguard park wildlife and provide park visitors with a safe clean and rewarding park experience by the National Park Service's centennial in 2016.

. . Collect fees from the people who use the parks to fund the parks. Discourage littering by outlawing disposable containers or collecting a deposit refundable upon return of disposables. Hire the out of work to do maintenance and cleanup. Pay for it with use fees.

National Parks have and still are very important to our family. Last weekend we went swimming at a national park. Our children grew up going to national parks and have learned a lot from the park Rangers. Please keep funding the parks. the parks are needed to help our youth grow up. The National parks play a tremendous role in connecting people young and old to the outdoors preserving the natural and cultural diversity of our nation and contributing to the health of our people. National parks provide some of America's finest outdoor classrooms and serve as a basis for conservation history and civics education for millions of people each year. Heed the advice of the National Parks Second Century Commission a group of well respected individuals who spent more than a year developing a vision for how to protect the parks and connect Americans two them in the next century.

Thank you for your 'America's Great Outdoors" initiative. Our American wilderness is one of our greatest gifts to the world as well a precious legacies we can leave future generations. . .

. Our national parks should have a prominent role (over pooppy carcinogenic and maltreated cattle and subsequent desertification of Western U.S.) in any SUCCESSful initiative focused on "America's Great Outdoors." .

. Last year I visited Yellowstone National Park Glacier National Park Mount Rainier National Park and several wildlife refuges.I intend to visit others this year. These national treasures should never be abandoned. .

I visit National Parks on a regular basis and most times base my vacation plans on visiting a National Park. National Parks are truly an American treasure that I try to take full advantage of.

. Having personally visited many of our national parks (some more than once) I know they also provide inspiration and awe for many adults and children who have little opportunity to experience such natural magnificence. .

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

There simply is no form of any kind of media that can even start to match the sights that can be seen in every national state and county park in the nation. Of course the national ones are the ones that come to mind first. When I was a kid my entire family used to get together and go camping we had the best 'family time' that anyone could ask for. I should mention that by family I mean parents siblings aunts uncles and cousins. What can I say my Dad had three brothers and a sister. Between them they gave me twenty one first cousins and five siblings. How were we supposed to know that this was the cheapest and easiest way to go on vacation and have a seriously good time of it. One time my Mom's parents even came with us and they were amazed at the party that never ended. My cousins siblings and I are as close now as we were forty four five years ago and the memories are still the best of my family. There is something to be said about being one step ahead of broke when it comes time to raise a family. Mrs. Clinton wrote the book 'It takes a village'. We were the village and I will savor that feeling until the end of my days. Please do not do any thing that will cause others to be unable to enjoy the Parks and life in general. I told ___'s sisters about all the great times we had together and it must have sounded pretty good to them. These days four times every summer we pack everybody up from Grandma to little ones and their bottles and head to a central State Park for fourday weekends. And the cycle continues. It will teach anyone a whole new meaning to save the planet and remind them that the Human Race ain't the only game around. Thank you for taking the time to read this and please keep our parks the way that God made them.

Thank you requesting citizen feedback in "America's Great Outdoors" Initiative. America is blessed with wondrous natural resources that all of our citizens can access and enjoy and our National Parks are what comes to mind first. These parks are the perfect place to connect young and old to the outdoors and to foster appreciation of our natural heritage and resources. The diversity of the Parks offers something for everyone and helps us all appreciate the variety and bounty that our 50 states offer. In addition they serve as outdoor classrooms to teach about conservation history and culture. It is essential that we as a nation preserve our National Parks. I encourage your administration to act in the following ways:

Everyone I know has taken a vacation in one of our national parks. Everyone had a favorite and we love to fight about the virtues of them. We must do everything we can to maintain these treasures.

. One keeps on forgetting that they are also source of revenue because they generate tourism and much needed tourism dollars. I know I am a travel facilitator/Interpreter who brings in hundreds of tourists in the travel season.

. My own time spent in the National Parks during the summers as a young adult is among some of the best times of my life. The parks' beauty and originality are unparalleled! Please help preserve the parks for future generations!

Bring back the camp fire circles at night led by a park ranger to sing songs tell stories learn about wilderness. No computers no hand held games just people with other people in a precious National Park.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

One of the great things that America has is its National Parks and Monuments. Sadly over the last 30 or so years these treasures have been allowed to deteriorate and most are now in deplorable condition.

. In fact this September I will be spending a great amount of time in several national parks. I could not do this if it were not for the forward thinking people who came before me that saw the value of saving our American landscape and culture.

I was thrilled when I heard that you and your family would be making a visit to Mount Desert Island and Acadia National Park. To my husband and I it is one of the most wonderful places we've ever been to and we've traveled a bit. I am fairly sure you were AWED as well. One of the best things about Acadia is the incredible system of hiking trails and carriage roads. The history of the trails and the roads is amazing. Bird and wildlife watching are also terrific there. It is a very special place that deserves special care and attention so that for generations to come folks can leave a bit of their heart there each time they leave only to come back and enjoy it more every time.

We need cooperative efforts between federal state and local agencies and private landowners because wildlife doesn't understand boundaries on a map

My parents introduced me to our national parks when I was young; my grandfather built the roads in some of the national parks in California. My life would have been very different if I had not had the national parks experience. It saddens me to think of all the children in our country that are missing out on that experience.

. My family and children now adults have been fortunate during our lifetimes to enjoy the U.S. national parks. As educators we applaud the dedicated staffs of those parks which need protection and preservation for the present and future generations.

I am a CPA today from working my first summer of college in the accounting department at Glacier National Park. After doing the numbers there was plenty of time for hiking and camping with my new fellow student friends.

OUR NATIONAL PARKS HAVE BEEN ALLOWED TO BECOME SHABBY AND THEREFORE UNDERUSED. IT WOULD NOT BE A BIG STEP FROM THIS TO ALLOWING THEM TO BE AUCTIONED OFF TO COMMERCIAL INTERESTS. THESE LANDS WERE PRESERVED FOR A REASON!

THANK YOU FOR WHAT YOU HAVE ALREADY DONE TO TRY TO REVERSE THE SUICIDAL DESTRUCTION OF OUR ENVIRONMENT. WE ARE BEHIND YOU AND WANT TO POINT OUT THE GREAT NATURAL RESOURCES OF OUR WONDERFUL COUNTRY WHICH ARE IN GRAVE DANGER.

As I came to the national parks later than many as a young father I experience a double shot of "oh!" That first view of Yosemite's valley; the long soaring road to the South Rim; the pushing force of Old Faithful and the interior immensity of Old Yellowstone Inn I remain overwhelmed with America's natural grandeur and power.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

. Having lived for many years alongside the most highly visited national park the Great Smoky Mountains and visited 12 others in the U.S. I wish to state that they are our crown jewels and should be preserved in the best condition possible for all time. .

When I think of America's Great Outdoors I think of stillness and simplicity; I think about how I quit smoking cold turkey because the patch didn't work (gave me whelps) and the gum gave me heartburn! Instead I took off each morning to our nearest national park: Sequoia National Park and there I hiked ten plus miles for three days straight and then something clicked. I realized I was a nonsmoker! Sure parks connect us to each other but most importantly they reconnect us to ourselves in the larger scheme of things.

America's national state and local parks are still the best ideas this country has ever had. They are a national treasure for each and every person and must be treasured as such. preserved protected and secure for our guture. . .

Wherever possible our forests and national resources should be protected and preserved. They are vital to our country as resources where future generations can enjoy and celebrate the beauty of nature and the vital connection between human civilization and the natural world. My son loves to hike and walk savoring the beauty of the world around him and sharing that with his friends. It has added a dimension of thought and respect that would be unimaginable were his world centered solely on TV video games and other 'artificial' pursuits. America's state parks are invaluable in many many ways. Whatever can be done should be done in order to maintain and preserve these parks for the present and the future. .

Thank you for the initiative America's Great Outdoors. We are lucky to have amazing natural resources in the United States. As this initiative unfolds please keep in mind the national parks and Student Conservation Association which does great work all over our country.

. When I was just six my parents took me on an eightweek crosscountry camping trip to most of the west's great national parks and I still remember how impressed I was with the knowledge of the park rangers about the beautiful surroundings. I congratulate you and your administration for all that you have achieved thus far...please know you have the support of the citizens of our great country!

I live in the beautiful state of Utah and one major concern I have about our parks is the law our state passed allowing people to carry guns into the parks. This seems to create a danger to the wildlife and families who vacation there. . .

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

our state parks the expanse of countryside and all our green areas in and around cities. I have enjoyed (during my work across the country) to have an opportunity to visit parks such as Yellowstone and Yosemite (and places such as Mt. St. Helens the Atlantic and Pacific coastlines the lakes and forest land in Idaho the Adirondacks in New York and Presidents' sculpture in South Dakota) and consider them national treasures. I recently enjoyed seeing the series on National Parks on PBS and hope you have an opportunity to see at least some of the highlights with your family. It visually and historically was a gem as are any of the Jacques Cousteau specials including the one on reefs in the Pacific Ocean. s. And even with the oil disaster keep focusing on the goal of environments for future generations as best as you can.

Improve opportunities to use our national parks to get kids into active healthy outdoor activity that will help them lead long healthy lives. Our parks are irreplaceable and so beautiful. Visiting some of the parks was an awesome site and made one feel so close to our creator

We need to think of our future. We need to think of our children's future and our grandchildren's future. Improve opportunities to use our national parks to get kids into active healthy outdoor activity that will help them lead long healthy lives. . . .

. Throughout my life I have visited and stayed in many of our national parks with my extended family and my life is enriched by having an appreciation for the outdoors conservation and wildlife. We need to do what we can to keep the national parks available for generations to come. . . .

My wife and I have visited National Parks like Isle Royale in Lake Superior and have been struck by the awesome beauty of these wild places. We have also been struck by the need for more resources to fund upkeep and enhancement of these wonderful treasures. . . .

For me there is nothing more important than to link the children of this nation with the great outdoors. It provides a wonderful opportunity for families to recreate together. . . .

We have often been in National parks across the country. Little is more important than preserving these for all reasons not the least of which is a legacy we pass on to future American generations. . . .

Having spent a considerable amount of time in a large number of our National Parks both with my husband and before we were married with other friends I have very strong feelings about the wonderful heritage we have. When we are in the parks we always attend Natural History Lectures put on by the rangers and also go on conducted hikes.

I was lucky to begin visiting National Parks at a very young age and developed a life long love of the outdoors. I am over 60 extremely active and retain a love of nature. I believe our care for scenic wild spaces is a core value that sets America apart from many other nations. The spirit of our magnificent National Parks strengthens and inspires our hearts minds and spirits.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

I know you viewed the 'National Parks' documentaries on PBS and this says it all. Please don't forget it as our protected areas are going to end up being our only National treasure after the TransNational Corporations pillage what's not protected (ie the Gulf).

. Having visited a number of our national parks I'm well aware of their beauty and the need to preserve them for future generations as well as we the current citizens of the US. I'm even more convinced of the need to take care of the national parks after viewing the excellent PBS series on the national parks.

Looking back at some of my fondest memories growing up I think of family trips to some of our national parks. Visiting Yellowstone for instance inspired within me a love of seeing animals in their native habitat doing exactly what wild creatures should do. I also found it fascinating to see what the land looked like before Manifest Destiny inspired a nation to conquer the West. In other words national parks connect people young and old to the outdoors preserving the natural and cultural diversity of our nation and exposes an increasingly urban population land outside a cityscape.

. Last year at the age of 74 my wife and I enjoyed 4 National Parks in the State of Utah camping and hiking and seeing fantastic places that we had not seen before. The Park Pass for seniors is a great incentive for getting people of all ages to enjoy and learn about our natural areas and national treasures.

Dear Mr. President; thank you for doing the right thing on so many issues: health care, wall, reform, etc. I like to think that these parts of my life let me enjoy the other parts of my life like trees, lakes, fresh air. Please help me to enjoy what really matters in life.

. I have visited several in my home region: Acadia National Park being one of them. This National Park is an example of the careful conservation efforts of our predecessors. These people had a sense of the importance of preserving the natural beauty of our country for eternity. We need to continue this legacy.

I have many fond memories of childhood trips to Bryce, Zion, Grand Canyon, Yosemite, Yellowstone, Acadia, Lassen, Crater Lake, Olympic, Redwood, Petrified Forest, Grand Teton, and several others. Fortunately, my parents loved to travel, and every trip made me long to return. Every natural wonder excited my curiosity. I continued throughout my life to visit other parks wherever I traveled.

. My family and I have spent a week in Acadia National Park during the last 15 summers. As I am sure you noticed last week, Acadia has many varied ways for people to enjoy the outdoors. In order for future generations of Americans to continue to enjoy and have access to the natural beauty of America's National Parks.

I've lived in the US for the last 28 years and I know that our National Parks are one of our greatest and most precious natural resources. I have been to almost all National Parks in the lower 48 states and Alaska and have found great joy in visiting them.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

. At a more personal level my family has enjoyed many vacations in which visits to our National Parks were the main part of our itinerary and my children have many fond memories of our experiences together. Our country's great outdoors are a tremendous gift and the national parks are an especially wonderful treasure. .

During the past years we have taken many vacations which always include some of the national parks. They are beautiful and must be preserved for future generations as well. It is also necessary to preserve these lands and more as they become available for wildlife and flora to survive. . .

Our national parks are also our national heritage. Our forefathers found this country wild and subdued it for our benefit. Holding on to the wilderness that Native Americans and White settlers gave birth to this country from is not just ecologically conservative but historically significant. . .

My family has appreciated and used our national parks for generations. They have allowed us to reconnect with nature relax and enjoy their many benefits. I can't imagine what it would be like had not these areas been set aside for both animals and humans. Let's keep always keep it that way. . .

. OUR NATIONAL PARKS HAVE BEEN SHAMEFULLY NEGLECTED. "AMERICA'S GREAT OUTDOORS" INITIATIVE WILL HELP CUSHION THE MOST RECENT LOSS OF FUNDING. GIVE CITIZENS A CHANCE TO DEMONSTRATE HOW THEY FEEL ABOUT THIS HERITAGE. ADD A SQUARE ON OUR INCOME TAX RETURNS THAT GIVES US A CHANCE TO INCLUDE A DONATION FOR THE PARKS! SEE WHAT HAPPENS.

I love the great outdoors. I have written but not published six stories based on the five senses trying to get parents or teachers to get young children outside and learn to see smell touch feel and hear the things that are outside. This can be in a park or in your back yard or on a trail. . .

. Think about what Ken Burns' documentary showed and how the promise of national parks needs to be preserved for our children and our grandchildren. National parks were a gift from farsighted Americans in the past and we need to be the stewards of this legacy for the future generations. . . It's not just about minting a new series of quarters!

I think it is great that people can use our national parks but to me they are more of a living national treasure that must be preserved not only for their beauty but also for the ecosystems that they support. They are rugged and wild like our American heritage and are part of the American spirit. .

. I just finished my vacation which was traveling around the Olympic Peninsula in the State of Washington where I hiked in several parks. It was so beautiful and wonderful to be outside. I got to hike at Lake Quineault Ruby Beach Hoh Rain Forst Lake Crescent and several place in between. Please keep these in their natural beautiful state.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Mr President One of my first jobs during collegewas working in Yosemite National Parks. I had lived in San Francisco and had not really enjoyed our wonderful park system. They need all the support that our country can give. They are part of our great heritage. .

What is more American than our own National parks? They are symbols of our greatness and our uniqueness. They are beautiful places for tourists to have a true American experience when traveling here from abroad as well as treasured National landmarks for Americans to enjoy with their children and grandchildren. . .

. My husband and I are taking a vacation to the National Parks in the western United States this fall. I am so excited to finally be able to see Yellowstone and Mount Rushmore among many others. This is a trip I have been planning for months and I am so grateful for opportunity afforded us through the efforts of John Muir Horace Albright and Teddy Roosevelt.

An important part of getting Americans outdoors is the promotion and of our National park system. To do so we must ensure that national parks have the funds necessary to safeguard park wildlife and provide park visitors with a safe clean and rewarding park experience by the National Park Service's centennial in 2016. . .

I've just returned from a week camping in the Mt. Hood National Forest (Timothy Lake North Arm Campsite). I live in Rhode Island so this was a distant site for me but an amazing experience. Every morning I took a long run part of it along the Pacific Crest Trail. I cherish this wonderful heritage preserved from development (though there is both logging and energygeneration) and I hope it will be available to my grandchildren. National forests and parks play a tremendous role in connecting people young and old to the outdoors preserving the natural and cultural diversity of our nation and contributing to the health of our people. National parks provide some of America's finest outdoor classrooms and serve as a basis for conservation history and civics education for millions of people each year. .

. The parks do so much for our country from sheltering endangered species to educating our citizens about the environment. My visits to our parks have been an education and a pleasure. A recent visit ti Zion gave me a different perspective on democracy. Everyone there has to ride the park bus to access the park. rich and poor alike are exposed to the same wonders.

. My wife Cindy a school administrator and I were able to spend a couple days in Glacier national Park this summer. As with Yosemite Yellowstone or Death Valley the memories and photos from our visits to these national treasures will serve to reinforce and reenergize our efforts to preserve and protect this nation's legacy for our grandchildren and future generations.

Our national parks should be protected at all cost. 470 Appalacian mountaintops have been blown up and destroyed forever the oldest mountain range on the planet. The shame of it makes me want to leave the country. If that isn't enough we're destroyed the water with gas drilling. Parks will be our only place to breathe and dream. . .

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

I recently spent 18 days visiting various National Parks on a road trip/vacation. I was mostly in the Grand Teton National Park. This was the third time I have been there and it is a life changing experience even for a 64 year old (my age). Our National Parks are a legacy that all Americans must protect and preserve. I encourage you and your administration to take the following steps:

I have had some of my most memorable aweinspiring uplifting and rewarding experiences visiting National parks. I feel so proud of those Americans who had the foresight and courage to recognize and preserve the great natural and important cultural areas we have in our country. I love how you see people of all ages and people from many other countries enjoying the wonders of the parks. National parks provide some of America's finest outdoor classrooms and serve as a basis for conservation history and civics education for millions of people each year.

When I think of America's Great Outdoors I think of our national parks I have Mt Rainier and the Olympic National park near me here in Washington State. In fact my church Normandy Park Congregational Church UCC will be taking our annual hiking trip to Longmire and Paradise at Mt Rainier to enjoy God's glory of wildflowers. If your haven't been to our state I strongly encourage you to come and visit us specifically... see our church website at npucc.org. National parks provide some of America's finest outdoor classrooms and serve as a basis for conservation history and civics education for millions of people each year.

When I was 15 years old in 1955 I traveled from home in Pennsylvania to Great Smokys National Park. There I met the late Arthur Stupka. He was a wonderful mentor and inspiration to me. I went on to degrees and a doctorate in biology founded The Conservation Agency and have always worked on and treasured our National Parks and Seashores. When I think of America's Great Outdoors I think of our national parks. National parks provide some of America's finest outdoor classrooms and serve as a basis for conservation history and civics education for millions of people each year.

National Parks are a great resource in recognizing nature's treasury. There is a great poster made in the 70's by Crum that demonstrates what unwise use of nature's treasures becomes. Why not use the national parks and that poster to challenge the populace to recognize what unwise management and use resources with the resolve to do better.

The first national park I saw was Yellowstone and that is when I really knew what was great about America! I knew I wanted to see more of this "real America" and visit other national parks. I realized that there were these places without development or highway noise and I was hooked; I could feel my soul soar into this great open space! National parks play a tremendous role in connecting people young and old to the outdoors preserving the natural and cultural diversity of our nation and contributing to the health of our people. National parks provide some of America's finest outdoor classrooms and serve as a basis for conservation history and civics education for millions of people each year.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

I have always loved nature and being outdoors from the time I was a toddler riding on my Grandfather's shoulders when he went for walks in the woods. Very many of my family vacations were spent in our national parks and I am lucky enough to live within 50 miles of the Olympic National Park one of our greatest treasures. . . . One of the top reasons I voted for you in the last presidential election was because you stated that you support efforts to protect our natural environment. Please don't let me down!

I've always been so proud that ours was the first country to preserve natural lands for ALL people to be inspired by and enjoy. They more than anything else personify the vast diversity and beauty of this country. The richness of our natural heritage is one of the greatest assets we have in America. It is my belief that staying connected with nature contributes to our emotional well being and our magnificent national parks afford this opportunity to people from all walks of life. .

I am an artist and live in Moab Utah next to several outstanding National Parks and would like to see children do art in the parks especially since many art programs are being cut in the schools. They could sketch draw paint photograph different aspects of our incredible natural heritage as a tribute to our country have a local showing. It is a wonderful way to really look at nature and appreciate all the beauty around us!

I grew up in New York City. While I enjoyed all that the city offered I always wanted to see more of the country that I saw on National Geographic and other TV programs. As an adult I travelled overland across country twice meeting people making friends and learning the true meaning of awestruck. There is nothing to match a sunrise in Yellowstone a night in the desert SW or a thunder storm over the Grand Canyon. We are blessed as no other nation with a rich and diverse landscape. .

This summer my kids received their Jr. Ranger Badges when we were visiting Sequoia National Park. They learned a lot and enjoyed nature. My son said upon our return that he didn't feel right about playing his DS anymore. Since then he has continued his addiction to electronics but he also is a great fan of the outdoors. Our National Parks are so vital to these kids. . . .

When I think of nature and national parks I envision animals living in peace in a clean safe and protected manner to where we and our children and future family can see learn and appreciate the beauty of nature and God's other creatures who deserve a lot more respect and protection than what they currently get. Please help us to achieve this Sir...

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

My husband and I were in Southwest Harbor Maine a few weeks ago when you and your family visited Mt. Desert Island This is one of my favorite places a place to which I return each year to renew and refresh both my body and soul surrounded by the beauty that is Acadia National Park. I have also visited many other National Parks across the country and was overwhelmed by the wonder and majesty of all of these places. I am sure that your family has experienced that feeling as well. National parks provide some of America's finest outdoor classrooms and serve as a basis for conservation history and civics education for millions of people each year.

I would be bereft if our National Parks were allowed to deteriorate and be lost to all of us to my children and grandchildren and all future generations.

I grew up in Brooklyn N.Y. worlds away from the mountains the forests and the rivers of our nation. I thought the roadrunner in HannaBarbera's cartoons on Saturday mornings was a mythical creature. When as a young woman I saw a roadrunner with my own eyes and got to tour many of the great parks of the West including Yosemite the Grand Canyon Bryce Zion and Yellowstone it literally opened a whole new world to me and I have been an avid conservationist ever since. Consequently I think our national parks

My family has had the pleasure of visiting many of the country's national parks over the years. Now that our children are grown my husband and I continue to enjoy visiting the parks. Just last month we spent 10 days in Yellowstone and the Grand Tetons. Such visits are a source of great enjoyment and relaxation. My son and his wife are looking forward to taking our young grandson on visits to some of the national parks.

Every September my dad and I go to the Mt. Cheaha Park (I can't remember if it's a state or national park) he is a member of Narcotics Anonymous and they have an event up there each year.. Anyway it's so much fun. I've been going up there since I was a baby and I couldn't imagine what my life would be like without that park.. Thank you for paying such attention to them it means a lot to so many people including me.

My family just returned from an exhilarating trip to King's Canyon/ Sequoia and Yosemite National Parks. Although I had read about and seen pictures of these extraordinary places they can't begin to demonstrate their grandeur. This was a wonderful opportunity for us to reconnect with our teenage boys with some quality time and to get some great exercise experiencing nature.

I live less than 10 minutes from one of our national treasures the Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area. I see evidence of the previous statements on a weekly basis when I meet people on the trails on the creeks and on the river when fishing. Enjoying our national parks together instills a strong sense of national pride and brotherhood. It is us the people and most importantly the Park Rangers that know our parks the best.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

I worked as a teaching assistant for a sixth grade teacher. We took the students on a week long trip to Yosemite National Park as a culmination of their year. They spent the entire year learning about the flora and fauna the geology the people who lived in the valley. The actual camping experience taught them selfreliance and teamwork. And for many the hike to Nevada Falls via the John Muir Trail and The Mist Trail was a life changing challenge that boosted their selfesteem and ability to set lofty goals. I believe the exposure to this grand national park has enhanced their lives and made them more aware and caring adults who will always value the beauty of natural places.

. I am sure you and your family experienced the unique freshness sparkle and magic of Maine on Cadillac Mountain in Acadia National Park. I have made pilgrimage to this site every year for over 60 years; and moved to Maine because of it and the Belgrade Lakes District. Did you notice that looking to the sea from the top of Cadillac you see 15 degrees of the curvature of the earth in a way you can never forget once you notice.

I am a retiree who lives near AND ENJOYS Joshua Tree National Park and the Mojave Preserve both in California. I would appreciate your giving attention to the steps listed below and keeping our National Parks as a high priority in your administration. You and your administration are doing a wonderful job especially considering all the things that need addressing in our country.

. State parks and National parks were highlights of our vacations when we were growing up. My parents were teachers and we would never have been able to afford Disney World or any of the other hot tourist places. I'm sure there are thousands of Americans now who use the parks for a much needed break as well as those who love the parks just because they are beautiful. Please keep the parks safe available and as natural as possible.

. I also am reminded of the thousands of animals who live in those national parks. These animals are among the most beautiful creatures in our country and deserve as much effort to make their environment liveable as we do. They deserve a chance. Animals have always been my passion and it is my belief that Americans need to be continuously educated about them and have the chance to see them first hand. But we can't do it by ourselves. Thank you for taking the time to read this.

. I grew up withing less than an hour from the Great Smoky Mountains National Park and it played such a huge part in my life growing up in East Tennessee and the lives of my children one of which lives and works in the Pigeon Forge and Gatlinburg area. It has been an historical gem for hundreds of years and has educated the nation about the early settlers and the good and bad things done in the name of our government...such as the Trail of Tears.

Death Valley National Park is my favorite unit in the Park system. I love many other Parks but it is DVNP that brings me back time and again. The intersection of human history with some of the most spectacular physical geography in the world never ceases to amaze and inspire. I support the NPCA and I support your work to fully fund and expand the NPS.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Our national parks are our legacy and it is priceless. Knowing we have these enormously valuable assets and knowing they belong to the people of this nation is truly mindboggling! The richness the beauty words cannot convey what the parks especially those closest to me mean to me. They are ours our awesome treasures that must be protected and sustained for ALL of us and for those who will follow.

Some of my happiest hours have been at National Parks. They hold some of the most amazing sights in America. They are national treasures that should be cherished and protected. I can imagine an innercity kid going from dirty hot noisy streets to the Grand Canyon or Zion or Yosemite and being enthralled with the beauty the sounds of waterfalls and birds the silence of a redwood grove and the wonderful aroma of pine and redwood. Remember that national parks were a great boon to the economy during the Great Depression.

One of my earliest memories is of camping in a national park. Since then National Parks have played a major role in my life with experiences of Yosemite Glacier National Park Yellowstone and the Smoky Mountains which have left poignant memories which are part of who I am now at the age of 82. I'm everlastingly grateful for the insight of our former presidents who realized the value of setting aside and protecting areas of our magnificent country for future generations. National parks provide some of America's finest outdoor classrooms and serve as a basis for conservation history and civics education for millions of people each year. And they help to connect us to the best within us. I urge you to continue this heritage and take the following steps:

I am a senior citizen with a Golden Pass which I use whenever possible. My best vacations and happiest memories are the ones where I visited our beautiful National Parks. Beautiful scenery nature study and pride in our wonderful country are memories I will never forget. The Park Rangers are helpful interesting and very competentthey are the key to a meaningful trip. Please give strong support to our parks and the people who make our visit enjoyable!

My family and I have spent our most memorable vacations camping hiking biking and just enjoying the beauty of the great outdoors in our national parks. We have spent weeks in Grand Teton Yellowstone Acadia Smoky Mountains Point Reyes Cape Hatteras the Grand Canyon and Zion. Spending time in those places allows us to breathe to slow down and to remember that we are not the only creatures on this earth.

In addition to the comments below I strongly encourage the administration to fulfill its promise to base its policy decisions on sound science. On controversial issues like Snake River salmon recovery the administration has come up woefully short of fulfilling its obligation to make informed and scientifically educated decisions. It would be a shame if petty regional politics also intruded in the debate on America's Great Outdoors.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Everyone loves to go to the park. When I was young our family lived across the street from a small city park and we played there most days. Now being much more mobile we have taken our current family to many national and state parks. Being outdoors appreciating nature and just being away from the crowded artificial environment of the city refreshes a person and gives one a better understanding of what life really means.

The first 47 years of our marriage we visited and camped in many of our national parks or just visited many of those with our own kids as we traveled across the country to visit friends and relatives. Our last trip included Mt St Helens after that tragedy [at least to the folk living and camping there]. The spectacular regrowth 30 so years later was a joy to see and to wonder. We must save these wonders for as many travelers as will go.... Beauty and wonder and love for the outdoors.

When I was a young girl our family camped from Florida to California and back mostly staying in State & National Parks. It was an experience I'll never forget and shared with my children and hopefully will share with my grandchildren. The Parks are a national treasure (and economic reserve as well) and must be protected and maintained. With all the other issues your admin. has to deal with please don't let them slip through the cracks of time & energy. I thank you for everything you are doing to help us out here in America and keep you and your family in my prayers. I invite you to visit NC's 5th Dist. and ride the Blue Ridge Parkway & share through reporters to all America the beauty of our mountains we love. It will inspire you and them to save America's great outdoors. Maybe bring Elaine Marshall & Billy Kennedy (running against Virginia Foxx) with you for a photo op & support? Fund raiser in WinstonSalem/Greensboro?

Many people underestimate the role that a connection to the outdoors can have on a person. This connection ideally starts at an early age and builds throughout one's life. A person connected to the outdoors has a greater respect and understanding of their surroundings. School field trips in which children come to appreciate and learn about the outdoors and their National parks are invaluable resources that we must further take advantage of.

Stop allowing ATV's in our national parks. They have plenty of other places to go and there is no possibility that the people who enjoy riding around on loud gasguzzling machines are people who really care about the national parks or anything else but their own boneheaded pleasures. I have been going to the parks my whole life and there is no place for these polluting idiots without severe damage being done both to the flora/fauna and other visitors. TIME TO SAY NO TO THE MOTOR VEHICLE INDUSTRY FOR A CHANGE.

Your administration needs to take the following steps; Get rid of Salazar. He's as bad as Palin. The damage he has done to our beautiful wild horses and to the magnificent wolves is criminal. He is not what I expected from the Democrats and if he continues he will ruin our national parks. You should be listening to what the people want and stop buying in to the pockets of big oil and ranchers. Our parks need to be kept safe protected in every way. Stop allowing drilling and causing more and more endangered species. So something right for the good of this country.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

We have an obligation to future generations to protect and preserve our environmental resources. Any other course of action leaves them with a broken future. "National parks and reserves are an integral aspect of intelligent use of natural resources. It is the course of wisdom to set aside an ample portion of our natural resources as national parks and reserves thus ensuring that future generations may know the majesty of the earth as we know it today." John F. Kennedy .

I was thrilled to learn that MY PRESIDENT and his beautiful family took a vacation not too far away from me in ME at the Acadia National Park! You are setting a great example by vacationing in this National Treasure. Acadia is one of my favorite places on Earth and I am sure you all had a wonderful time. Perhaps more Americans will learn to explore our amazing natural heritage through publicizing your own experience in Acadia. Could that happen? . . .

growing up in Alaska I was surrounded by its wonderfull forrests streams & ocean.We played in the woods as soon as we could walk & hiked and camped out as teens so its very important to me to preserve our wild placesespically in Alaska where we have had Republicans in power so long who seem only to want to destroy & develop them.To their ruin. The more kids & families who play picnic & hike in nature the betteras they will want to protect them as spiritual places when they are older. .

. As a child my family took vacations to National Parks every summer especially Yellowstone. We also visited the Grand Canyon Petrified Forest and many others. Those experiences will always remain with me ... seeing the beauty of the world that God created that is mostly untouched by humans. In today's era fewer and fewer people are takin advantage of these national parks. It is sad to talk to kids who have never been to any of them. There must be a way to make them more aware of their presence and the enrichment they can bring to their lives. .

. We started the concept of National Parks and in doing so started the environmental movement to save our open space our plant and animal wildlife our historical buildings battlegrounds and forts in essence to preserve what makes America. I recently went to Zion & Bryce Canyon National Parks and enjoyed the natural settings the camping & hiking the Ranger led programs and the trams which help reduce traffic and pollution. These types of programs NEED to receive funding to continue to preserve and expand the benefits we can receive from the National Parks.

In our family our vacations are centered around the National Parks. The parks teach history and geography as well as an appreciation of the beauty of the landscape as well as the varied ecosystems. As a teacher I see that many students are disconnected from the outdoors by being plugged into video games movies and other indoor activities. If they don't learn how to appreciate this beautiful world they live in they will not learn how to take care of it as the next generation's stewards of the earth. . . .

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

When I go on vacation I always go to National Parks and monuments. After I got my PhD I took my kids for 72 days to 23 national parks just in UTAZ & NMexico! Since then we have had fun on many Sierra Club Service projects. To strengthen the Park system I recommend a National Park Service program such as Sierra Club runs. This way people can have fun while working on trail and vegetation improvements AND seeing spectacular natural sites as well as making friends for life who have similar values. . . .

One of the most important things when I was growing up was the time I spent outdoors hiking in national and state parks and enjoy our national forests. I learned to love nature and respect it. I raised my children the same way. National Parks play an essential role in helping families enable their children to reconnect with nature. Nature is not only good for our souls but for our bodies and brains as well. I hope that we will continue to support our national treasures found in our parks and national forests. . . .

Our national parks are gems in the crown of the United States and serve our land and our people in many beautiful ways. National parks are an extremely important resource in providing not only the preservation of a variety of lands and animals but in introducing and teaching children and adults alike to appreciate what our homeland has to offer what nature has to offer and to provide recreation and renewal of body mind and spirit. It is so important to maintain and expand this basic resource for all Americans. . . .

. . . I live in an area that is blessed with two large National Parks around us Moab Utah. It has been ideal for the elementary schools here to be able to take field trips to Arches. Also as one of the founders of the Moab Valley Multicultural Center we have found the local Parks authorities very willing to collaborate on summer programs for the children we serve from various ethnic and class background who don't usually have the opportunities that more affluent local children have. This has enabled them to experience the outdoors in such beautiful surroundings and learn about the local fauna and flora. . . .

___ and I have dedicated our time in the our golden years of retirement to volunteer our time efforts and sweat equity to support the maintenance upgrades and spirit to individual National Parks Forests and Monuments throughout our great country till the 2016 Centennial of the National Park Service and chronicle our experiences on our blog parkwithjackandkiefer.blogspot.com (through google) to echo the call of President Obama's "America's Outdoors Initiative" and hopefully inspire others to join in the Great American Odyssey...Thank you for your lifetime commitment to our Country... . . .

PERSONAL NOTE: AS A CHILD GROWING UP IN THE MIDWEST MY STRONGEST AND FONDEST MEMORIES COME FROM THE TIME MY FAMILY SPENT OUTDOORS IN NATIONAL STATE AND COUNTY PARKS. MY LOVE AND RESPECT FOR NATURE AND THE ENVIRONMENT STEM FROM THOSE EXPERIENCES AND I BELIEVE IT IS IMPERATIVE THAT WE PASS THESE PLACES ON FROM GENERATION TO GENERATION. WHEN WE LOSE THESE TRADITIONS WE LOSE OUR FUTURE. NOTHING COULD REPLACE THE JOY OF LIFE AND THE SENSE OF WONDER AND DISCOVERY I EXPERIENCED WHILE EXPLORING OUR NATURAL WORLD AND IT WOULD BE CRIMINAL NOT TO GIVE THOSE OPPORTUNITIES TO OUR CHILDREN AND SO ON. . . .

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

President Obama and Administration As a single mother the California State Parks have become an essential part of my life. They offer an affordable haven within which I am raising a moral environmentally conscious member of our community. I hope that in the very near future I may incorporate more experiences with our National Parks and I hope to travel across many state boundaries to do so. Please do everything in your power to ensure that these landmarks these necessary areas are available in their untarnished beauty to our children and our children's children. Thank you so much!

Our closest parks are Kings Canyon National Park and Sequoia National Park I hope you can come visit them one day because they are beautiful! Along with considering many of the important points outlined below I would like to request a serious consideration be paid closed attention when considering helping fund our park services and that is to lower the entrance fees to these parks. Our community here in the Central Valley of CA is very poor and for many making the trek to park means having to do without because you're having to put money away for gas food and the entrance fee to the park which may not seem like a lot but to many in our community it unfortunately is a lot.

My father who passed away suddenly in January of this year visited most of our National Parks during his lifetime. It is those times spent with him camping in Yellowstone with snowcovered buffalo sleeping just outside our tent; hearing the elk bugeling throughout the night; taking my adult son with us on our last adventure to Yellowstone so that he could both enjoy the incredible wildlife as well as the amazing natural phenomena and sights to behold in conjunction with spending a most incredible camping experience with his grandfather that I think of most when remembering my father...a man that I always thought of as "just" my Dad...but later came to understand that he was an incredible human being. I look forward to taking my granddaughters on the most incredible adventures that my Dad exposed me to. Please take the necessary steps to ensure that our National Parks will be there for them to experience as I did with my Dad.

My paths during the 65 years of my life have afforded me to see some of the wonders of all 50 states Puerto Rico and Gaum. Visited 5 continents and many place on each. The is from Beriut Lebonan (Marine Barracks 1983) to seeing and hearing the bombs of Viet Nam. Alaska to Santiago Chili and north or the Artic Circle in Norway to Ascension Island in the South Atlantic. The world comes to see and enjoy our national treasures and parks as we go to see theres. I traveled coast to coast and northern states to Florida after my Grandfather after he was in his 80's. Seeing our treasures are unedited compared to writers slanted and biased view of our great nation.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

For the past 4 years my husband and I have rented a series of smaller RVs and toured a large percentage of America's National Parks. It is impossible to describe the wide range of beautiful topography and the large number of wild animals we were privileged to see on these trips. My all time favourite park is Yellowstone. We were able to be close to so many animals and to experience so many incredible places within the park; it moved me beyond words. We arrived in October in a snowstorm; spent a couple of days in temperatures in the 40's to 60's; and left the park in short sleeves and short pants! We saw moose including a mother with her young one; buffalo whose daily fun was to stop the cars on the park roads while tourists took photos; we saw a coyote a wolf hares many types of birds and a myriad of other animals. We saw Old Faithful erupt. We saw mineral springs mountains etc. We felt blessed to have the opportunity to explore the Park. I am disabled and have to walk with a walker. Every Park we visited had ensured that those with disabilities could experience almost all that it had to offer. One last personal thought. Last fall before we left for southern California and a trip that included 3 deserts giant redwoods and sequoias enormous sand dunes Joshua trees and of course Muir Woods we saw the National Park television show about how Muir Woods came to be. Standing there ourselves we felt a sense of history that we could be a part of a place that became a national park because of one man's life long efforts. It was thrilling.

Below is the standard message from the NPCA however I have a few different objectives for our national parks... I was fortunate enough to grow up in Malibu California riding my horses down to Broad Beach and Zuma with the dogs hiking up Bonsall and Solstice Canyons as well as having Deer Creek as my playground. I was a decorated Junior Lifeguard at Zuma for five years and cherish our canyons and especially our waters. What plagues me however is not only the city's neglect in community planning that allowed our wetlands to be overrun septic tanks from \$1020 million dollar homes to infect the water and worst of all the allowance of new home owners to not only build on state land obstructing trails but also to stimulate laws that prevent our precious natural playgrounds from being enjoyed as they always have been. I am a dog owner and horse lover and the land that was once all cattle is becoming evermore manicured and devoid of any of its original spirit. I cannot even take my dogs to the beach I grew up on because some people are not responsible pet owners. Segregating animals from nature because of fearful or irresponsible humans is as ridiculous as if I were to propose that people should not have children because some kids become criminals. Instead of barring pet owners from the trails and the beaches institute some sort of permit process that would not only bring much needed revenue to our park employees but more importantly encourage animal owners to be more responsible! I can only pray that this is actually the President reading this because no one seems to take the exclusion of pets from public life seriously but for many people our animals are most precious and they deserve to enjoy some semblance of the habitat and lifestyle that we as humans have so far removed them from. Preserve protect and cherish our parks and beaches the wealth of our nation is truly in our land but do not forget that people are not the only part of this country... Thank you so much for your time. . . .

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Thank you for declaring National Wilderness Month. As a lifelong Westerner who grew up on the National Forests of Utah and California, I agree that "we must ensure that future generations can experience the tranquility and grandeur of America's natural places." Unfortunately the greatest unprotected wilderness in the lower 48 -- Utah's wild canyon country -- remains in jeopardy from policies leftover from the Bush administration. I'm a SUWA member and I agree with their analysis:

Thanks for declaring September as National Wilderness Month. Supposedly, you stated that "we must ensure that future generations can experience the tranquility and grandeur of America's natural places." However, policies from the Bush administration remain in place which threaten the pristine natural beauty, quiet and solitude of worthy wilderness-quality lands throughout the West, especially in Utah's redrock country. The Bush administration's "No More Wilderness" policy and resulting land use management plans for 11 million acres of BLM land in Utah have left 80% of these lands open to oil and gas drilling and designated an astounding 20,000 miles of ORV routes. However, I have taken numerous trips throughout these lands across south and central Utah and, well, literally ten million acres of land there deserve to be designated "wilderness." You would do a wonderful service to this and future generations if you started designating some of these acres as wilderness. Of course, it also would help address the potential devastation of climate change, as well.

Wilderness is essential to man's wellbeing

I am a native Utahn and have been active as a member and volunteer of the Southern Utah Wilderness Alliance. I have spent a great amount of time exploring Utah's magnificent canyon and desert areas with my children and now with my granddaughters. I mourn the likelihood that these lands and wildlife will be lost for future generations if action isn't taken very soon. Please make protection happen now!

I grew up in Colorado and developed a deep appreciation for the beauty of American wilderness. When declaring September as National Wilderness Month, you stated "we must ensure that future generations can experience the tranquility and grandeur of America's natural places." However, policies from the Bush administration remain in place which threaten the pristine natural beauty, quiet and solitude of worthy wilderness-quality lands throughout the West, especially in Utah's redrock country.

I've traveled these areas extensively and hope they will remain pristine in perpetuity. Peace!

These lands are a vitality important to keep wild and free and safe for future generations of Americans to enjoy and soak in their grandeur, beauty and uniqueness. Land once lost can never be reclaimed from either the drilling or the ORV routes and all the damage they cause. To despoil such landscapes for a few more thousand barrels of oil or the machines that are a part of Americas crazy love affair with burning all the oil seems such a poor tradeoff. Furture generations won't much remember the oil, they will cry in sorrow over the loss of such beauty.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

When declaring September as National Wilderness Month, you stated that "we must ensure that future generations can experience the tranquility and grandeur of America's natural places." Zion National Park recognized its own 90% Congressionally (newly) designated Wilderness Zone, by conducting public input on a Soundscape Management Plan and draft EA-- proposing new audibility-based, and loudness, Standards for the Wilderness Zone. These draft Standards don't go far enough, but they are a sufficient start to get some improvements in place from tour aircraft (hopefully a ban), and some beginning effort from the FAA on other aircraft noise sources. Thank you for your Administration's support on that. However, policies from the Bush administration remain in place which threaten the pristine natural beauty, quiet and solitude of worthy wilderness-quality lands throughout the West, especially in Utah's redrock country. Two of these WSA's are right next to Zion National Park.

I am very pleased with your administration, if I was ever asked by a poll I would tell that. Please keep up the good work on all fronts and please help protect the environment. Utah has some incredible wilderness that needs to be protected.

Tonight we are camped at Millsite State Park in Ferron, Utah. We spent the day touring the northern section of the San Rafael Swell. These lands need permanent protection from coal mining and oil and gas blight. From the huge coal fired plant spewing haze causing pollutants into the air, to the bullet holes in the canyon walls and road signs, to all of the OHV "trails" scarring the landscape it is clear that these lands need protection from all of those who do not care in the least for pristing wildlands that can support wildlife. We only saw cows today, not a single antelope or bighorn sheep. How sad. Thousands of people come from all over the globe to see the redrock country of Utah every year. I hope in years to come there will still be something to see.

I'm a frequent visitor to Utah.

Maintaining as much pristine environment as possible is essential for the human spirit and is a critical element in the future of Utah's economy. The states that protect the most land will, in the long term, have robust tourist industries as people flood from around the world to see the marvel of wilderness. Setting aside wilderness is the bast savings account our nation gave have.

I have visited some of these fragile places and been awed by them. Please stop this destruction and save these gorgeous places for future generations.

We have visited So. UT's federal public lands many times over 30 years for quiet recreation in some of the most unique and spectacular landscapes in the world on the Colorado Plateau. These include national parks, monuments, forests and BLM lands. These lands are America's treasures, our legacy to the future. Please do the right thing for the precious public lands of UT.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Here in Utah the red dust from the red rock country is in our blood. Not only do we cherish the pristine wilderness, but this natural asset bring tourists from all over the world. It can't remain healthy with roads and trails invading the fragile desert and riparian areas. Please help us protect this irreplaceable treasure so you can bring your children and grandchildren to enjoy it as we do.

As a Minnesotan who enjoys visiting wildlands in Utah, I very much appreciate the President's recent proclamation of National Wilderness Month.

My family and I have personally had the privilege of enjoying the public lands of the redrock country in Utah. We greatly value the experiences we have had there and want those experiences to be protected for future generations.

I am a Oregon resident with a great fondness for the wild places of Utah.

President Obama-- Thanks for declaring September as National Wilderness Month. It was very timely for me as I have just returned from vacation at Yellowstone National Park, our nation's first designated national park. As much as I love visiting our national parks and monuments, it is also essential that we protect "the tranquility and grandeur of America's natural places", especially those still remaining wilderness areas. However, policies from the Bush administration remain in place which threaten our ability to do this throughout the West, especially in Utah's redrock country. Please push to enact the America Red Rock Wilderness Act while rescinding the Bush administration's ill-conceived "No More Wilderness" policy that will decimate wilderness quality areas with drilling and ORV use. And, while your at it, in your spare time:), please revisit the 2008 Resources Management Plan, another short-sighted, wilderness unfriendly fiasco. Thanks and keep up the great work.

We are traveling to Utah later this month and wish to continue to do so because the lands are intact, not because they have become a moonscape of drilling rigs and trucks and roads. For crying out loud, DO SOMETHING!!!

I personally know the wild beauty of Utah's redrock country, as I have been a frequent visitor since 1989. I live in the Chicago area and happily drive 1400 miles to visit places like the San Rafael Swell to hike in the quiet backcountry with camera gear in my pack. Talk to Sen. Durbin, a fellow Illinoisan and sponsor of America's Red Rock Wilderness Act (S. 799) since 1997, and he will tell you why Utah's wild places must be protected and preserved. Illinois' other senator, Sen. Burris, is a cosponsor of the Act. Thirteen congressmen from Illinois cosponsor the Act (H.R. 1925), including three Republicans.

Thank you for declaring September as National Wilderness Month. However, I have hiked and camped in Utah's redrock country which continues to be threatened by the Bush-era policy of no more wilderness. Land use management plans for 11 million acres of BLM land in Utah have left 80% of these lands open to oil and gas drilling and designated an astounding 20,000 miles of ORV routes. It is past time to protect these precious lands.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

I appreciate your enlightened view of the value of wilderness to our country's long-term health.

I have vacationed in Utah seven times. The red rock areas of Utah are really awe inspiring. Mr. President, and Mr. Salazar, please protect Utah's red rock areas by declaring them Wilderness. Thank you.

I volunteer in a visitors' center at the Gulf Islands National Seashore. We hear from visitors every day how grateful they are that there are national parks. And they mention particularly the Gulf of Mexico coast where so much natural area has been irresponsibly built upon, destroying both the function and the beauty of the shore.

I am an 18 year old college student who has been an avid nature lover my entire life. My family has spent the summers exploring state and national parks as well as our own land which is in forest preserve. From the stunning vistas of Yosemite and Yellowstone to the peace of Brown County, Indiana and the quietness of rural Iowa, nature has fostered serenity and hope in me.

I hope that my grandchildren and their grandchildren are able to enjoy America's great outdoors as much as I do. I have hiked the Appalachian Trail, several trails in Alabama, Georgia, Florida and plan to hike out west next year (summer is the time for me since I teach). I recently met a group of guys in their 30's who have been hiking together for the past 20 years along with their scout master who is now 76. WOW! I have not met very many people can say they still love doing an activity after 20 years. Outdoor activities keep families and friends together.

I'm an avid outdoors junkie, anything that I can do outdoors is a blast. Specially when it's mountain biking. Mt. Biking is growing rapidly here and I have heard of stories where fighting over land ends up getting our beloved trails closed by people who love nature. When in all reality the two are just alike, other than the fact that one group does it on a mountain bike.

Mountain Biking changed my life. It truly did! I got in shape, I got happier, I met my husband, and I moved to the great American West.

I am a mountain biker, we are environmentalists by nature. We ask for equal access, not exclusive. We build trails, repair and rebuild. We are conservative. We wish to pass on our love and respect of trails on to the next generation and beyond.

In today's stressful world, more than ever we need our quiet and natural spaces. Children and adults require open spaces to thrive.

Visiting our State and National parks is the only way many Americans can enjoy low cost family vacations. What better thing is there for our children to grow up to appreciate in life than quality time in the great outdoors and getting lots of family time, exercise, and fresh air.

This is our heritage. This is our legacy.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

I've been an active outdoorsman all my life. And the older I get, and the crazier the pace of my life, I find I need the quiet of the woods and the connection to the natural world all the more. This is not some abstract political position here; it's a question of spiritual survival and nourishment for my soul.

I love the outdoors and do lots of camping / hiking every year...Without these recreational places there is no escape and relaxation available to those of like mind.

I love this country. I love its beauty and its natural treasures.

Many of the resources available to our population have been under assault by development, pollution, and infestation from invasive species. By protecting tracks of land now, we can better preserve them for future use. The uses of these lands, through dynamic management principles, can provide open space for recreation, habitat for threatened and endangered species, as well as aiding fisherman, ranchers, and farmers in protecting their livelihoods.

The benefits for preserving natural parks translates not only to recreational advantages, but serve as carbon sinks that help to offset greenhouse gas emissions.

Isn't it all about the above. Who needs more buildings and houses. KEEP AMERICA BEAUTIFUL

Do it it for your kids, my kids, and for the future of the great nation. We as a nation are nothing if we do not leave the beauty of our great land for next generation to enjoy.

I myseld used to weigh 300 lbs. I mountain biking the trails here last year, so far Im back down to 260. Please help us to help us keep in shape

There shoudl be protected spaces for recreation including for horse back riding and we should be protecting farms, too. We need open space for mental health, trees to cleanse the atmosphere and spaces for people to recreate in their chosen activity. This is so important to our health as individuals and our communities.

It's the outdoors that save us all from the stress of our lives, the lives we are forced to live working very hard to live in the homes we have. President Roosevelt knew it was so important that he preserved the Yosemite valley. Praise God for that - wouldn't you say?! MY ENTIRE FAMILY WOULD LIKE next generation to enjoy America's great outdoors too.

If we start now we can help America get back on her feet by keeping it's members physically fit and ready for the challenges ahead!

I grew up learning from and enjoying all the great wild places this wonderful country has to offer.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

As a 7th generation American outdoorsman I have grown up enjoying and still love out natural riches. I also want to dedicate my life and service to protecting these resources by conservation and working to improve sustainability. I am a second year Forestry Student and am very passionate about our outdoors... Tracy Byrd said it best in the Mossy Oak Song ""Pass it on in the name of conservation, pass it on to another generation, pass it on.... Nothing like the sound when the day breaks""

We can do it. The fee's collected and jobs made plus the free education that the America's shared outdoors provide is a great way of gett'en us move'en in the right direction.

If you want to say no to drugs, say yes to mountain biking! Keep American's options to have fun and not get fatter.

I want my son to experience the same beauty, wonder, and sense of preciousness that I know. If we don't protect the beauty around us, one day, it won't be there.

America's open spaces are some of the most spectacular. Protecting these places improves quality of life and help to foster appreciation for the natural world.

These things are a necessity to our society that's needs to be revived, meaning that our youth needs to stop spending 8 hours a day in their homes playing the newest game system on the market and, rather, go outside and camp, hike, fish, or just do anything outdoors. That spirit is still in the hearts of Americans and I think we should do what we can to bring it back to the surface.

. I know economic times are rough; recovery isn't going to happen overnight. But now, more than ever, we need our wild spaces. We need places to renew our souls.

. The damage is something that we can't undo once it's happened. We need to make decisions that will decide the future of not only our passions, and hobbies, but more importantly, our Earth.

The next generation needs to see and learn the great outdoors like us. It can teach them a lot of thing that could come in handy if ever camping or just out walking in the woods.

Here is an idea. How about having people collecting welfare work in a park twice a week. Have them learn what its like to EARN a check!!!

...support conservation of our farms, ranchlands and forests without expanding wilderness zones which severely limit the activities permitted in their boundaries.

Even us hunters are committed to conserving wildlife and lands for more generations to come

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

I teach middle school science and having the outdoors protected will be great for our generations in the years to come. I take students out trapping during the school year on my own time, and I show them how nature works and try to interest them in activities that they can enjoy in the outdoors.

Not only will this benefit the next generation, it will benefit all of us, right now.

My father always had us kids in the mountains. I was born and raised that way. I have 2 children of my own who enjoy the same thing. I'd like them to carry that on to their kids as well!!

I'm sure President Obama would agree, but sometimes we need to be reminded of what's important...& If the American people got out of the living room more maybe we have a nation that would not be 65% overweight.

HELLO no living species can exist without nature.

I have spent much of my 56 years in America's great outdoors. As a former user of 4 wheel drive vehicles, and growing up in a family with guns for hunting I have distanced myself from both because of the lack of respect, and lack of connection to the natural world shown by those misusing the same. I can not put into words what joy and connection to what life is really about our wildlife and wild lands have been for me... In better managing the use of our wilderness, and educating people about our connection to nature I believe we will be a much more fulfilled and happy people. And that will carry on into our daily lives and the many generations to come. I am so very pleased that the issue of such a basic need as our wildlife, and great outdoors being preserved and nourished is being recognized by this administration.

My father taught me a great respect for the environment and a great love for the outdoors. I've been a conservation volunteer, hiker, backpacker, and avid mountain biker. As I've seen our country's majestic wildernesses and open spaces, I've been impressed by both their value and fragility.

I am volunteering at a national wildlife refuge near our home, putting out a newsletter and planning educational programs.

I want my daughter and her future kids to grow up knowing what a national park is firsthand, not through a history book.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

I am excited to learn that you are in a position to recommend protection of wild areas such as the San Gabriel Mountains around Los Angeles. There is a gestalt principle at work here. Protected areas must be contiguous or will not thrive. Animals and plants disperse over a territory; they cannot cross highways or commercial zones. To preserve a natural environment that benefits the air and water we depend on and offers residents an outlet for recreation and education, the entire ecosystem must be allowed to function.* Management must consider the needs of predators in the region-- mountain lions, bobcats, bears, etc. -- and design recreational areas that do not interfere with the animals' migration, reproduction, or search for food.* Protection of the D.E.L.T.A. rescue sanctuary must be included. If Los Angeles County continues to harass this operation, we will lose it. Thank you for considering my comments, and good luck with this important issue.

I feel that we can reduce global warming, reduce all schools' budgets, improve children's nutrition, help to fight children's weight and diabetes and have a wonderful opportunity to inform students of the importance and complexity of plants and their contribution to the planet. Very simply. Have every school in the country grow vegetables and fruits whether hydroponically or in the ground. Every class would have their own section that they would be responsible for, naturally opening the way for science departments to work this into their part of the curriculum. This produce would be used in daily breakfasts and lunches and possibly in "bake sale" fund raising type efforts.

I used to rock climb as a youth in San Gabriel Mountains. Please protect the area. These mountains benefit our quality of life and the health of our families by providing us with clean air and water and incredible natural beauty.

I'm sorry that I won't be able to attend as I am out of town. This marks a historic event, giving people the opportunity to have their voice heard on what matters most to them about the many wonders and beauty of the great outdoors. It shows people's appreciation and how they want to protect what they love.

In our Community, Monrovia, I am a founding member of the Monrovia Mountains Conservancy which helped educate our Community about the benefits of Conservancy of our local foothills, rather than housing development. Along with many other supporting voices, our Community voted by over 78% to tax itself to preserve the foothills of the San Gabriel Mountains, in their natural state, into perpetuity.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

The simplest way to improve people's health and thereby connection to the environment and nature is to eat a diet high in raw fruits, vegetables, nuts and seeds, to the extent of 60% to 100%. This eradicates addictions, diabetes, as well as many other "modern living" diseases and this also preserves the resources of our planet. A natural life, that includes growing at least part of one's own food supply, leads to a natural connection and empathy with nature. It's as simple as that. In terms of specific regional issues, the San Gabriel Mountains soar above our homes, from Santa Clarita to San Bernardino, providing much of our public open space. These mountains benefit our quality of life and the health of our families by providing us with clean air and water and incredible natural beauty. Our region's youth obesity and diabetes crisis has brought new urgency to connecting our people and communities back to our mountains and rivers.* Enhanced educational and interpretive programs so that kids--and everyone--can learn more about native habitat, plants and animals, as well as growing fruits, vegetables, nuts and seeds.

When we enhance our relationship to wild places, especially so close to a large city, we improve our relationship to the very soul of our community and our selves, with far-reaching consequences in terms of other issues such as crime reduction, education, health, and a sense of how we fit into the larger whole.

We must be responsible stewards of what we have inherited as well as what we create so Americans in the future will be able to understand the richness of this country.

One of the biggest and positive impacts that comes from our parks monuments trails and such is that they are available to everyone - rich and poor. This can not be said about many of the places to visit here in our country. Please do all you can to preserve our tremendous heritage for generations to come.

My father was in the military so we moved around the country a lot. My parents always took us to see the important scenic and special places in each area we lived. I did that with my children as well. Today I am retired still traveling still loving to see all that this country has to offer.....we must keep faith with all those who came before because they made us what we are. Thank you for all your efforts and especially for the Great Outdoors Initiative.

This initiative is a great way for people to around the country and in any community to be involved in something where they can see the federal funds "do" something that they can physically see enhance their community. Even though funds being spent are being used globally for some initiatives that benefit all people now seem to NEED to see something spent that they feel ownership of. This is a way to do that.

Americans continue to connect to the land and its historic and cultural resources but also for tourists this is a great attraction and will continue to bring tourists to the US.

I write as chair of our village's Historic Preservation Commission and as a family that vacations to view our nation's historical and outdoor treasures. It is important to our family that these great national assets be preserved.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

I have researched my family tree as many many others do and have done before me. What a thrill it is to visit a place where my ancestor lived fought or died. If these places of historical importance disappear future generations will never be able to experience that feeling of "closeness" or "connectivity" that I have felt with my ancestors.

Visitation to state and national parks provide important economic development for neighboring communities. Jobs are created and sustained. State and local tax revenues resulting from outdoor recreation travel support important services and programs. Travel and tourism creates entrepreneurial opportunities and grow small businesses.

My home is listed on the National Register for Historic Places. I am an active volunteer for architectural preservation and Historical Districting to help insure that our visible history is preserved for future generations to learn from and enjoy.

My family has spent delightful hours visiting historic sites throughout this nation. We also visit wilder landscapes and parks. Both are important and I trust that the historic sites will also be honored in America's Great Outdoors Initiative.

As the owner of an historic home and farm and a descendant in Frederick Law Olmsted's family I am well aware of the need to continue support for Federal state and private lands that provide Americans with the open spaces to enjoy natural and cultural sites and landscapes whether in active recreation enjoyment of the outdoors or as an environmental asset. These historic and natural sites are found in a wealth of locations so that Americans can celebrate our shared earth and heritage.

Preservation is also good for the economy. Many individuals gear their business towards the preservation area and earn their living helping keep America's treasures in good repair for all to benefit from.

We just returned from Grand Canyon National Park were on Labor Day we were treated to the experience of watching 100's of foreign visitors marvel at one of the world's greatest natural wonders. Other countries recognize the amazing natural and historical gifts that we have preserved for all to experience we just have to recommit our spirit and resources to preserve our treasures for the world.

One of the few ways that remain for people to connect to the past -- their heritage -- is through experiencing a place. There is something emotionally special about standing on the same ground where a great battle was won or lost or seeing the very house where Abraham Lincoln lived. Our parks and wilderness areas are also a way of connecting with America's past. One stands in Yosemite and thinks "This is what it looked like before civilization came; before McDonald's." Heritage tourism is a growing industry because there is so little left of our past. People DO want to see historic places and unspoiled wilderness.

This is an issue that affects me and My family personally. We use state parks many times a year and is our way to "re-charge" from living and working in an otherwise crowded society.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

As someone who lives in an historic district within an old Connecticut manufacturing city I know first hand how important our historic structures are. They help to define who we are where we came from and how that context informs our future.

If our National Parks had not preserved in the early 1900's we would not have their beauty now. Let us continue to preserve our history.

As a longtime hiker and camper in our glorious national parks and monuments I want future generations to enjoy the advantages I have had.

I have just come from our local Historical Society meeting this Thursday evening. We are struggling to restore a Sheriff's home and attached Jail built in 1880. A few weeks ago I visited an archaeological dig with my nephew and his family at Fort Michilimackinac. We saw first hand items that have been unearthed that were here long before the territory was settled by the French and English. These historic and natural sites reflect a wealth of resources histories and voices whose interpretations help all Americans celebrate our shared earth and heritage. There has been a lack of parity for over a decade between funding for our historic and cultural resources in our National Parks and other public lands. We appreciate the funding for cultural resources trust it will be brought back into balance with our natural resources. Americans continue to connect to the land and its historic and cultural resources but the work is not finished. There remain important places and lands that need your help to guarantee permanent protection. We need more Parks Monuments Trails and other permanent protection for the sites and lands that are important in our heritage. The Rail-Trail projects undertaken across the country are an excellent example of connecting people back to the land.

Americans ever year spend a great deal of time and money going to various countries overseas to admire their wild lands cultural recreational and landscaped areas. Millions of dollars are spent on those visits. Equally world citizens visit our sites. For us not to venerate our country's contributions to those same kinds of areas sends a very negative message about the way that we value our country. Even if no one else visited our sites than our own citizens we deserve the opportunity to enjoy all the benefits that can be derived from the admiration of them.

We just spent three days at the Great Smoky Mountains National Park with our four children and enjoyed every minute of it.

Over the course of this summer I've had the opportunity to visit several sites throughout our great country having significant historical and recreational value including San Lorenzo National Forest near Santa Cruz Wendover Air Field and Bonneville Salt Flats near Salt Lake City Mississippi River historic sites between LaCrosse WI and Clinton IA where I grew up the Tall Ships Festival in Chicago and most recently beautiful areas in Maine between Portland and Ellsworth including the Maritime Museum in Bath. Perhaps the most transformative was a week on Seguin Island at a Light commissioned by President George Washington. These visits helped to strengthen and refresh me and allowed me to appreciate and understand our rich national heritage in personal ways not possible through an iPod or a BlackBerry.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

In our area historic homes are few and far between; however we are blessed by beautiful mountains and very historic passes. Both Cumberland Gap and Clinch Mountain Gaps helped funnel pioneers into western Tennessee and Kentucky during America's most important era of settlement. A visitor/interpretative center is desperately needed at the Clinch Mountain site in Grainger County Tennessee. We are blessed with care of the famous Cumberland Gap through the auspices of the Cumberland Gap National Historic Park; however additional funds are needed there to develop additional areas that Americans of all ages can use. The recent designation of U. S. 25 E across Tennessee provides some level of protection to this region; yet additional funding is essential. It is very important that we continue to preserve our forest lands water sheds and historic homes/areas as the future -- our future -- depends upon these connections with our past history and culture.

I have recently moved from Washington to Georgia. It is remarkable how lush and green both states are. I was not expecting that of Georgia and am happy to be surrounded by so much beauty. My husband and I enjoy hiking in the many waterfalls in north Georgia and running and bicycling. Please do what you can to preserve our open spaces to continue our quality of life in enjoying the great outdoors.

In Western NY (Buffalo and surrounding Erie County) Federal state and private lands that provide Americans with the opportunity to connect with the outdoors and promote conservation and recreation are also intertwined with our most treasured historic and cultural sites and landscapes. Buffalo has many natural and cultural sites and landscapes areas whose constituent resources are closely related to one another are inextricably linked because environment shapes human societies and people in turn affect their environments. These historic and natural sites reflect a wealth of locations resources histories and voices whose interpretations help all Americans celebrate our shared earth and heritage.

Our natural beauty and landscapes are so unique in this world. We talk about what it means to be American and taking care of what we have and that which we take for granted helps insure that our country stays beautiful and breathtaking for generations to come!

Ken Burns' wonderful TV series on our National Parks epitomizes how they provide Americans with the opportunity to connect with the outdoors and promote conservation and recreation. They are also intertwined with our most treasured historic and cultural sites and landscapes. These historic and natural sites reflect a wealth of locations resources histories and voices whose interpretations help all Americans celebrate our shared earth and heritage.

It's nice to have places to vacation and enjoy nature but the most icritical part of this initiative is to provide a sanctuary for wild animals. We are nothing as humans if we do not recognize the importance of the diverse ecosystem that is our world and set aside a great amount of land for them to flourish.

I cannot tell you how much reverence I feel for these historic resources and never take a vacation without visiting one of them. Please help to keep them safe and protected.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

I strongly believe that my four children are the literate and appreciative nurses and teachers that they are today because we took the time when they were young to take them to the various sites of our American History.

It is at these sites that people connect with their natural and cultural heritage. People relax their minds and exercise their bodies and realize how connected we are to all life on earth. Families that play together outdoors get closer and develop a reverence for nature which is critical as we must take care of the earth if we expect it to take care of us. We must learn the lessons of our ancestors in order to create a sustainable future.

As a landscape designer and lover of the outdoors there is nothing more important than providing those spaces for our future generations to learn from the previous. I was taught about the cultural heritage of the US through interaction with outdoor spaces as a child. It was that exposure to America's treasures that gave me a sense of place and belonging to this great Nation. It is why I went into Landscape Architecture and it is why I am so involved in my community today.

Americans need their history now more than ever and more and more people are realizing the incredible value that a historic site holds. I grew up in the largest National Forest in the nation and I might value the outdoors a little more than your average American. History is too important to be left behind historic preservation saves one small piece of America at a time ensuring that it'll be there for many many future generations to come. Long live History!

Please help preserve our history for generations to come!!!!

Our children are depending on you to preserve their cultural and historical heritage. My sons can't imagine not being able to visit the historical areas they now enjoy with their children and grandchildren.

I live in a tiny town in northern Arkansas that depends on BOTH the natural resources and the rich history of our town and our area to attract tourists and to attract new people to our area. We are working as hard as we can to preserve what our town has to offer but we need more help. Please share funding for our efforts to preserve our local history with the funding to preserve our natural resources. We need all the help we can get!

As an educator I have brought students to many history parks to study history and geography in the field. As a college professor for physical geography I often refer to our national parks and their geology. It would be a shame not to preserve both physical and cultural aspects of our country by lack of adequate funding to monitor and protect them.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

I agree with the statements given about providing for our National Heritage. We have just found what we believe is a Cherokee built cabin hidden under a hotel here in Cave Spring. By that discovery all manner of people have come forward talking to each other. A side effect is that many are claiming Cherokee blood no doubt truly spoken for this area and for Georgia. That we are all related no matter our colors is making us more connected and gives rise to more tolerance of each other than ever. This is definitely worth some thought as money is allocated. People are our resources too. Therefore the statements below should be heeded. Federal state and private lands that provide Americans with the opportunity to connect with the outdoors and promote conservation and recreation and are intertwined with our most treasured historic and cultural sites and landscapes. Natural and cultural sites and landscapes areas whose constituent resources are closely related to one another are inextricably linked because environment shapes human societies and people in turn affect their environments. These historic and natural sites reflect a wealth of locations resources histories and voices whose interpretations help all Americans celebrate our shared earth and heritage. Americans continue to connect to the land and its historic and cultural resources but the work is not finished. There remain important places and lands that need your help to guarantee permanent protection. We need more National Parks National Monuments National Trails and other permanent protection for the sites and lands that are important in our national heritage because once we know where we've been then we know where we're going.

Our small rural community has been enhanced by pending stimulus funds to provide energy conservation lighting upgrades in the Village -- at the historic Belmont Mill and Sargent Park. Citizens and community organizations are hopeful that the Village and its green space and walking trail potential will be available & treasured for the next generations. Americans continue to connect to the National Monuments National Trails and other permanent protection for the sites and lands that are important in our national heritage.

Getting outdoors is not just about hiking biking playing a sport etc. Many wonderful historic sites help get us into the 'great outdoors.' Historic cemeteries indian burial grounds trails like that of Lewis and Clark are all part of our historic landscape.

As the President of the statewide non-profit historic preservation organization Preservation Iowa I have witnessed first hand the power of community revitalization and economic stimulation that comes about because of the rehabilitation of historic resources/buildings. These commercial and residential buildings make up the very core of our Iowa and most American communities. Historic rehabilitation has also played a very important part of the disaster recovery from the devastating flooding that affected Iowa in June 2008. To date over 50 historic rehabilitation projects worth over \$200 million have gotten underway or have been completed.

In addition as an urban planner with experience in historic preservation efforts I know how important preservation and rehabilitation can be in rejuvenating urban neighborhoods and downtown commercial areas. That preservation enhances the market value of buildings provides a stronger tax base for local communities enhances job opportunities in those areas and provides jobs in the building trades during the revitalization phase.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

As one of the original proponents of the Ebey's Landing National Historic Reserve on Whidbey island WA I have seen the many positive outcomes of preserving our farmlands forest historic sites and vistas. The Reserve draws people to the island who love history and the landscape - still used as it has been for more than a century. The protected environment here has drawn new people in to settle and tourist to help keep the local economy alive. Such areas if not protected are truly a loss for those who live there and those who would come to study or visit. They are resources to be protected for all of us - and our great grandchildren.

Americans continue to connect to the land and its historic and cultural resources but the work is not finished. There remain important places and lands that need your help to guarantee permanent protection. Our built environment serves as a record testifying to significant themes in the development of community and industry alike. Each structure in this environment makes a contribution to this story. It is of utmost importance to capture those stories essential to the understanding of our past to preserve them for interpretation by future generations. We need more National Parks National Monuments National Trails and other permanent protection for the sites and lands that are important in our national heritage.

I have hiked throughout the Grand Canyon National Park and frequently visit our local park at Bear Mountain in New York near West Point Military Academy. I think you can see that National parks provide some of America's finest outdoor classrooms and serve as a basis for promoting exercise, conservation of the land, history, and civics education for millions of people each year. To continue to foster the strength of our National Parks for the benefit of all Americans, Thank you for your guidance for the preservation of our National Parks and considering my comments.

When I think of family vacation time I look to the National Parks. We have visited several and there is nothing that can compare with a trip to a national park. From scenery to the educational programs provided, a trip to one of our National Parks is an educational experience of a lifetime. We are so blessed to have a wide variety of national parks in America. Your administration needs to take the following steps to ensure the parks will be viable for future generations:

I love our national parks! Great place for getting in touch with the land & creatures. Most people of course don't have acres of their own to wonder on & enjoy the beauty of it all. Have to have that refuge. Also the parks do provide alot of jobs.

Visiting national parks has provided our family with most cherished vacation memories which we plan to share with future generations.

Our National Parks are a National Treasure and one of the things that proves to the world our love of our country and our freedom.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

We personally have visited several of our national parks, monuments and historic sites and there is no place in this country that thrills us more. The older I get the more interested I am in seeing where I've come from and what the people of this country have done to insure that I and generations after me will continue to learn the valuable lesson that, we don't know where we're going if we don't know where we've come from. I love the outdoors and I'm thankful for the men & women that help preserve God's wonderful creation. Our son recently became employed by the Park Service at the Historic Preservation Training Center in Frederick, MD. We're so excited that he will become one of those men that will preserve our parks for future generations.

Parks are good for our health, physical and mental.

Some of our nation's greatest wealth is found in our natural resources. Our greatest natural resource are our unsullied, undeveloped National parks.

They are especially important to those of us who live here in Arizona as they attract tourists to our state and provide us with wonderful places to get outdoors.

My personal first experience at a national park was in our first national park as a fifteenyearold. Yellowstone was amazing! I saw many animals I had never seen before. While it wasn't my first time in the mountains, as an lowan at the time, I was still amazed. But the mud pots and painted rocks and waterfalls were dazzling. I would like to see the parks have a steady funding source and for user fees to be either cut or curtailed completely.

I'd like there to be National Parks for my son and his future family to enjoy like I've had and my parent's before me have had

Parks for our mental health as well as for habitats for our precious wild creatures. Most important we need our parks and wildlands for our mental balances.

When we were raising our four children, we took every opportunity to visit our state and national parks and national monument. Our children felt very commected to our beloved USA and our great outdoors.

Even though I cannot camp in the National Parks any more, I still relish the memories of my experiences in many of them. They were our best vacations for the beauty and serenity to be found there. We are so in need of this remarkable natural foundation of our country!

Along with the Constitution, our National PARks System is indeed America's best idea.

It's a great way to put people to work a la FDR.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

We are a nation in SERIOUS need of outdoor recreation, sport and communing with nature. These spaces are essential to preservation of the American way of life! Thank you for considering my comments and in advance for your positive action.

As Ken Burns said in his wonderful documentary on our National Parks, Saving them was the greatest Act ever. Everyone loves the National Parks. I spent one summer as a Camp Councillor at a Pioneer Girls Coub Camp 6 miles South of Yosemite, It was heavenly. To see them is to believe in them and to love; them.

National parks have for years played an important role in my lifetraveling with family as a youngster; hiking in the Smokies every chance I got while I was in graduate school; taking my mother, aunt and and landlord who were all in their seventies on a trip across the United States from North Carolina to California and the Pacific North West. Now I am a senior citizen and still cherish our national parks! spent my 10th wedding anniversary riding a mule to the bottom of the Grand Canyon. The national parks preserve the natural and cultural diversity of our nation, and contribute to the health of our people. What a great opportunity to put people who need work to work doing the backlog of work that needs to be done to maintain trails and other infrastructure.

I do not think I can say it better. I lived by YOSEMITE, for awhile and hope that these special places will be able to last forever!

Mr. President, I have many fond memories of visits to the Grand Canyon and other National Parks such as Bryce, Yosemite, and Estes. Summer vacation trips west with my parents when I was a young teen played a major role in the forming of ideas I hold dear to this day concerning what is of great value in these United States of ours. I believe

Our National Parks are at the very heart of "America the Beautiful," in every way. We need to ensure the viability of longterm survival of these irreplaceable national treasures that we call our National Parks. It is critical that your administration take the following steps:

America's Great Outdoors is spectacularly represented by our beautiful national parks.

And I have just been to the Grand Canyon National Park with my granddaughter that was a great experience for us.

One year I took my class to Tree People, a conservancy off Mulholland Drive in Beverly Hills. How they came alive! One little immigrant child in particular was so filled with joy in being in nature, that the remainder of the school year was bearable for him, in the cement jungle of L.A. I wish every child could visit the parks and nature spots twice a year or more. For some, the school taking them is the only way they can get there!

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

My family and I live within 5 miles of the LBJ National Historical Park and I am continually impressed with the programs that are made available to families for them to learn more of our history; experience living in earlier years and the influence that has had in shaping one of our presidents.

When I think of America's Great Outdoors, I think of our national parks "America's Greatest Idea."

Our family has been visiting state and national parks forever, since my children were very small, in tents going camping. We always left our site cleaner than we found it, and our children always loved camping and experiencing the "great outdoors." We even had a couple of encounters with hungry bears raiding our trashcans late at night (in the early 1970's). We have raised bright, happy children who love and appreciate the parks and feel that they are sacred. They are also good citizens. I feel that it is so healthy for people experience great times out of doors and to develop a love of all living things, including the wildlife, trees, etc. As a family, we have seen some of our prettiest sights out of doors and will never forget the images. I'm sure they make us better and more appreciative people.

This initiative is a GREAT idea, a step in the right direction, positive, brilliant! I only wish I lived closer to one of our National Parks, or could afford to visit any of them, or could do something for them, the ones I've seen are truly magnificent, and I've seen pictures of many of the rest and know they are too, they are treasures to be preserved, saved, cared for! Thanks for doing this, I hope it works!!! Next on the agenda...JOBS, PLEASE!!! There has to be a way to change this outofcontrol, surreal nightmare of an economy!!! It's so discouraging, depressing, frustrating and sickening what is happening to the dreams of so many people no jobs, no homes, financial ruin, sick, no health care, you know all about it. But for those of us on the receiving end of this insanity, it feels hopeless. And, I certainly don't see a way out of this, I don't see it getting any better anytime soon. But, what do I know, I'm just an administrative assistant, living outside of Detroit, trying to hold onto my little home, like my family members and friends, and I know that's not what this is supposed to be about but I saw the opportunity to reach you and had to take it! I don't know what you can do, I don't know what ANYONE can do, but we need help!!! Please!!! ALL my comments!

Having just returned from an amazing trip through Yosemite, Kings Canyon and Sequoia National Parks with my granddaughter, I am acutely aware of the importance of our national parks. As a single grandparent raising my granddaughter, I am trying my best to instill in her the love of the outdoors that I have found so renewing. During our trip, she had her first experience touching snow, catching fish, seeing squirrels, deer and chipmonks. It also brought back fond memories that I have of camping trips with my parents. My granddaughter said she just loved being out in nature, and even became a Jr. Ranger through a wonderful program offered by the national parks.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

For many Americans, national parks are "once in a lifetime" trips families talk about for years (the Grand Canyon, Yellowstone, Yosemite, the Everglades). For some, they are old friends, revisited and rediscovered every year. But for every person who visits them, they are a precious opportunity to see the natural world and the history of our country and to remind themselves that we are only passing through, and that we will be remembered for the quality of our stewardship while we are here.

The National parks are America's best idea. As a youth and as an adult, I have enjoyed the educational opportunities and the recreational opportunities in the National Park System. The following steps are urgent:

When I think of America's Great Outdoors, I think of our national parks, parks like the Grand Canyon, Zion.

When I think of America's Great Outdoors, I think of our national parks (and monuments).

It wasn't until I retired from the U.S. Air Force that I truly had an opportunity to visit and enjoy our nation's national parks. It has been a sublime experience, and one I hope to share, one of these days, with my grandchildren. The scenery is absolutely amazing, the closeness with nature creates an emotional connection, and the wealth of experiences offered by our National Parks is absolutely amazing. National parks are an invaluable asset to the United States, and we should treat them as such.

I care deeply about America's future. National parks represent the best America has to offer our children and grandchildren a glimpse of what the world once was, a connection with the few wild place left in this country, and an opportunity to appreciate our heritage, history, culture, and natural resources. National parks are our tangible connection to our past, present and future.

Our National Parks stand as a symbol of the USA's commitment to our future.

There is no better way of connecting family time than in the great outdoors. We spent 2 weeks in Wyoming and South Dakota National Parks last summer and everytime my 2 year old sees the pics on the computer he says he wants to go back! The 4 and 7 year olds are helping me find our next great adventure to a national park. We decided after last year that we want to take our kids to as many national parks as we can while they grow up. It means a lot to us and them. We should be proud of our nations National Parks and take good care of them so that they will be here for generations to come!

When my husband and I think of America's Great Outdoors, we naturally think of our national parks. Thank you for considering our comments and best of luck.

My first comment when contemplating our National Parks is all the jobs they create (AND GOD KNOWS THEY'RE NEEDED!!!!) As well as how many more you could create by protecting these national treasures. I also think of America's Great Outdoors, I think of our national parks.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

As someone who has frequented our parks as a kid and now as an adult, I cannot think of better places to roam than the parks. I have been knocked down by deer, chased by a bear, licked by a wolf, intimidated by a buffalo bull, watched badgers playing and spent hours enjoying other very wonderful activities.

Congratulations for letting your daughter go to summer camp. It's a great place for her to uproot and reroot, learn more about herself and others in a neutral setting, and more fully appreciate the natural world and her relationship to that. It's an opportunity too few children have today.

I grew up traveling "OUR" National Parks. At 62 years of age, I still desire to visit "OUR" special and sacred places unscathed and preserved as Nature intended. If one only listens, the wilderness and its inhabitants have a great deal to teach us.

I have had a life long love affair with our country's incredible national parks. I visit as many as I can each year.

Many I have personally visited all of the major parks in the western half of the United States. I hope one day I can take my children there to see just how wonderful our country truly is.

Our families most precious trips and memories are surrounded by the nature and beauty of our national parks, what better way is there to experience the great outdoors!

I live in Moab, Utah mainly for the wide open spaces around us including 3 National Parks.

Once we get conservation funding and with proper implementation, we can then focus on issues such as agroecology, local school and household garden projects that will benefit local communities, states, and the rest of the nation, educationally, emotionally, and personally. Thanks.

One of the most magnificent places on the planet is the Avenue of the Giants in Northern California, the Tallest Trees in the World, a place of prayer and peace and LIFE so magnificent we have not grown enough to comprehend yet Please set priorities to protect these magnificent representations of LIFE on this planet.

I am a resident of San Miguel County and this area is magnificent in beauty and wildlife. Please protect this area and others like it.

Please protect key landscapes on a large scale for the land, for the people, before it's too late. I ask that: 1) The Obama administration conserve large landscapes, including our healthy wildlands, connecting them with working forest and ranch lands, private lands and the connections across these large areas.

Many areas that are rich in biodiversity are also targets for resource development or human community development. While these needs are important, it is also important to consider our planet as a living organism and to intelligently relate to this organism. We have lost a great deal to human development. Human survival depends on the protection of these precious resources.

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(cont.)

Protecting agriculture land for farming is going to be essential to building resilient communities. Let's us be smart and stewards not only to lands for wildlife and ecological protection but for people too.

Roadless areas in the San Juan Mountains.

Please protect key landscapes on a large scale for the land, for the people and the animals. We are asking that: go clean, go green.

Please protect key landscapes on a large scale for the land, for the flora and fauna, and for the people.

The natural world needs help. More than ever.

All of our Wild Lands, here and across America need to be protected for us and future generations.

Areas of South Park and the Platte River basin

If we do not connect people with wild nature humans will certainly continue on their pathway to utterly destroy the Earth. More and more humans are becoming "cyber" or living in a virtual world of computer technology, television and videos. Seeing people continuing their horrid driving habits in gas-guzzling cars and trucks when the entire ecosystem of the Gulf of Mexico is being destroyed is a graphic example of how disconnected people are from the reality of their impact on nature.

Protecting and preserving crucial corridors of our shared ecosystem is an act that will be appreciated for generations for its contribution to our future as a land and as a people.

My family and I use these wild areas on a weekly basis throughout the year for rafting, backcountry skiing, mountain biking, climbing, backpacking and photography. I believe that the motorize sports are important as well, however I feel that they have enough areas and the remaining roadless areas should be set aside and protected. Some of these as Wilderness and other as special non motorized areas.

Dear President Obama, other than for campaigning, have you and your family been to my beautiful state? It's a place of phenomenal diversity and beauty! I certainly hope that the southern desert grassland Otero Mesa and scenic Rio Grande, our native wildlife and plant species, significant water resources, and imperiled desert ecosystems. are all here for your family to visit after your next 6 years in office. Thank you, President Obama for working to promote the tradition of wilderness in New Mexico. We look forward to your involvement with the America's Great Outdoors Initiative.

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(cont.)

I worked in Yellowstone Park for 3 summers in my 20's and had the best experiences of my life. I continue to enjoy the great outdoors here in New Mexico and while on vacations in the United States. I see lots of tourists both Americans and people abroad enjoying our parks , national forests and wild rivers . The more we preserve the better.

Having raised my children in New Mexico, and having served its people in emergency rooms throughout the state for over thirty years, I have many reasons to care for its wild and beautiful places.

I live in New Mexico and spend over 30 days a year outdoors in national forest or BLM lands.

We continue to be blessed with our National parks thanks to president Roosevelt's support and commitment to the Civilian Conservation Corps which improved the National Parks in the midst of a Depression.

While a huge fuss was kicked up at the time the coastal lands north of San Francisco were protected, that public land is now part of what draws tourism here, and creates jobs in our region.

I just want to say SAVE NATURE AND SAVE LIFE.

I want better safer out door parks so that when my home gets foreclosed on i ll have a safe place to stay with my family thanks

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(cont.)

When a site marries environmental, historic, and cultural resources you'll find the most successful formula for bringing people outdoors to enjoy the places that tell America's stories. Take Saugatuck, Michigan for example. It's a sparsely-developed landscape of spectacular beach, rare freshwater dunes, water, woods and wetlands; habitat to several endangered species; and home to a large number of significant historic and archeological sites. Saugatuck has been a very successful draw for Chicago residents and others for more than 120 years because all of these resources work together for one of the best visitor experiences.

What works: What are the most effective strategies for conservation, recreation, or reconnecting people to the outdoors? One of the most effective strategies for reconnecting people to the outdoors is providing federal dollars for local projects. Modeled after its sister program, the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF), the Historic Preservation Fund (HPF) provides dedicated funding to support the programs and activities for historic and cultural sites. Programs like Save America's Treasures and Preserve America along with National Heritage Areas play important roles in promoting heritage tourism which brings people with their dollars out to experience those sites. The programs also attract private dollars to restoration projects and work in partnership with the federal government to promote economic development and create jobs.

o According to one analysis, between 1999 and 2009 the Save America's Treasures program allocated around \$220 million dollars for the restoration of nearly 900 historic structures. This investment by the SAT program generated in excess of \$330 million from other sources and created 16,000 jobs (a job being one full time equivalent job for one year) at a cost of \$13,780 per job created. (D Rypkema)

o We are fortunate to have in our midst the I&M Heritage Corridor, which was the first explicit bringing together of preservation, conservation, recreation, and economic development in the country. There are now almost 50 national heritage areas in the U.S. that owe their existence to the pioneer I&M Canal National Heritage Corridor.

Challenges: What obstacles exist to achieve your goals? (for conservation, recreation or reconnecting people to the outdoors) The obstacles to achieving our goals of reconnecting people to historic sites outdoors are The lack of full, permanent and dedicated funding for the Historic Preservation Fund limit the matching grants for State Historic Preservation Offices; Tribal Historic Preservation Offices; and limit funded preservation activities like planning, survey, and public education for historic preservation. Eliminating funding for SAT that leaves no preservation \$\$ for "bricks and mortar" projects and ends the most successful preservation effort in the country's history.

o If the I & M Corridor, with its many natural, historic, and cultural resources were given more funding, it could continue to rehab historic resources, and develop more programming to draw even more people to the to this beautiful 96 mile-long historic site.

Federal Government Role: How can the federal government be a more effective partner? (in helping achieve conservation, recreation or reconnecting people to the outdoors) The Federal Government can be a more effective partner by:

- Reinstating FY 2012 federal funding for historic preservation for Save America's Treasures, and Preserve America at FY 2010 levels.
- Increase to at least FY2010 levels National Heritage Areas' funding.
- Provide full, permanent and dedicated funding for the Historic Preservation Fund at \$150 million and the Land and Water Conservation Fund at \$900 million.

Tools: What additional tools and resources would help your efforts be even more successful? We believe that increasing the capacity of federal, state and local agencies

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(cont.)

to care for and interpret historic and cultural places would go a long way to helping our efforts be more successful.

In 2000 my family moved to the Appalachian Mtns. from Houston, TX where I was born and lived for 16 years. Seeing nature flourishing with beautiful mountains was a refreshingly new experience. After several months of wondering what to do, I ventured into nature. I found that our purpose as humans is not to spend our lives in shopping malls or sitting in front of the television, but to use our bodies to explore this fantastic gift that is the world around us. This is the key to a healthy lifestyle, which Americans desperately need. In the 10 years that I've spent enjoying the outdoors I have seen so much of it destroyed or just diminish from being unkept. We must take care of the world that has taken such good care of us, so that we may enjoy it for many years to come.

What Works: Involvement/participation- WE need to get people involved. WE have too many public employees who try to take over and be gate-keepers which make many stay away from public places. I was able to get 100 acres on a Scenic River for a Public Park and kept it for 10 years with a single Ranger. One day Ranger Jane showed up with 2 other ladies and told me that I had NO RIGHT to tell people they could come to the place even though I had signed waivers and had an agreement. They also made up some story about my being a "gay basher." They got rid of the hard-working Ranger and replaced him with 4 others... I do not lead hikes there anymore, I do not do "kids in creeks" there anymore and I seldom visit and pick up the site. I saw the same public employees who try to limit public participation at the AGO meeting along others who think parks belong to Park employees and not the citizens. In trying to deal with our Natchez Trace Park people, there is no concern for the public nor genuine safety issues. As a full time volunteer for public parks, spaces and Green-ways, I tend to feel less than welcome..... My suggestion is to replace most of the paid bureaucrats with motivated volunteer groups and neighborhood coalitions. Challenges? Absolute indifference of Government to dumping and filling and ruining of watersheds by a few connected developers.... When you complain or report incidents - you become the enemy. There is something wrong! It is not that we have too much government, it is that we employ too many who do not care, work as little as possible and work against and not for PUBLIC interests. I say motivate or terminate. Most Public employees work fewer hours for more money and benefits than most other workers..... We have a volunteer network in Nashville Parks and Greenways which should be a model for others. Federal Role? Funding, incentives and motivation... Get friendlier, more committed and dedicated workers who care..... Think about those who have worked to conserve great parks, forests and places- not many were Government Employees. Continue to get more public input outside of the paid to work group.... Tools? SCHOOLS! Conservation incentives- Identify the treasures and publicize more about what WE should and can do... Work with existing conservation organizations and help locals to help themselves... A 20,000 acre tract near me that was bought with Federal money is now like a War zone with insensitive shooters and 4 wheelers. There is something wrong in our society with militant groups intent on violence which tool should be training and behavior modification. We need more public education about Good and Bad practices and more public information about what is sane and rational and to do more about those who abuse the environment and to make it news.

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(cont.)

Hunting and fishing are ways of life. They are our passions. We share it with family and friends and it trully makes us whole and makes us who we are. We MUST protect our land and waters. We MUST ensure that they will be around for generations to come. President Obama, this is not a choice, this is an obligation.

early on as a child I grew up fairly alone, being separated from my siblings, and having to deal with an abusive father. I turned to nature at a very young age. I have always felt a spiritual greatness, an importance that which preceeds anything I had, and still have ever known. This ancient vastness of nature that we have been blessed to live upon. I know I am only one human, one man, even so, there are many many things I wish to accomplish in the conservation of the natural world. To better preserve the world for humans as a thriving race.

America's outdoor spaces are one of the most valueable featues our country has. I have yet to visit another country that guards its natural spaces the way that America does. Protecting our outdoors for the future is one of the greatest gifts we can give to the next generation.

I strongly recommend designation of the Prairie Pothole Region of North Dakota, South Dakota and Montana as a "Treasured Landscape" in the administration's America's Great Outdoors Initiative. The Prairie Pothole Region supports outdoor recreational activities for millions of Americans, providing opportunities for both adults and youth to connect to our natural heritage. Migratory birds produced in the region support or enhance the outdoor experiences of waterfowl hunters, bird watchers, boaters and many other outdoor enthusiasts in nearly every state. My father was an employess of the Dept of Interior and used to purchase these pot holes in ND for wildlife reproduction in the 60's. We lived in Minot, ND and I have many fond memories of traveling the beautiful countryside and learning about migratory and reproductive habits of ducks and geese. He instilled in me the importance of prairie potholes. I urge the administration to recognize the Prairie Pothole Region as a Treasured Landscape.

I am very happy to hear about this program. As you take input, please consider the following: - We need not only to protect existing wilderness areas, but increase them, if possible. - It is essential to consider the effects of habitat fragmentation on plant and animal species; ten separate 1000 acre areas are not as biologically productive as one 10,000 acre area. - The agencies which oversee natural resources must be given stable and adequate funding, and the authority to enforce. - Park and recreation areas should be designed to get people out of their cars. (Let them borrow bug nets if they want!)

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(cont.)

Dear Great Outdoors Representative: The present government is doing a great job with such things as the Everglades Comprehensive Invasive Species Management Area (ECISMA) and Army Corps of Engineers Efforts (GEER) BUT what I've noticed is the public hasn't been brought along. (Such as the NWF is doing with their Yard Habitat Program.) If we're (The U.S.) going to spend \$1,000.00 an HOUR sending helicopters to the Big Cypress to spray for invasives on two trips, shouldn't we get the public to STOP reseeding those areas with their own backyard invasives? Further, DOT gives Highway Enhancement Funds to my city of Parkland and the powers managing those funds NEVER made them remove the invasives on the properties in question. Want to have a GREAT OUTDOORS? Don't give out FEDERAL MONEY unless INVASIVE REMOVAL on the affected property is COMPLETELY REDONE. This includes National Register for Historic Places such as the Bonnet House in Fort Lauderdale, who say: If we remove the INVASIVES, we affect the history. Balderdash! The Invasives were planted by humans and they should be removed. Make it a 10 (ten) year requirement that ANY HISTORIC AREA that doesn't remove their invasives will lose their designation. Furthermore, require that FUTURE HISTORIC DESIGNATIONS MUST BE INVASIVE FREE. Give me a chance and I'll tell the president. Thank you. Sincerely yours in Wildlife Preservation,

Greetings. I love the freedom in our National Forests. The Angeles Forest provides a wonderful place for urbanites to find respite. However, litter is a HUGE problem there. We need 'No Littering' signs posted with their relative penal codes in English and Spanish, and 'No Dumping' signs in the obvious places (just follow the trash!). Enforcement people are a must, especially in crowded spots, and particularly near the water. Big Tujunga Narrows and Stonyvale Picnic Ground are wonderful, but not when filled with empty beer cans and full diapers. Please add resources to fix this problem and keep the Angeles beautiful. Thank you.

Hello, My name is (name deleted) I live in Grand Junction, CO. I'm a retired wildlife biologist, having worked for the Colorado Division of Wildlife for 33 years. I'm also a hunter, fisherman, hiker, back packer, mountain biker, down hill and back country skier, outdoor photographer and camper. I take every opportunity possible to make use of public lands in the vicinity of my home town as well as other areas throughout the west. I support the basic idea of Americas Great Outdoor Initiative. I also support the following ideas or concepts; * Protection of key landscapes on a large scale * Creation of a comprehensive quiet recreation strategy for federal lands. While motorized recreation on public lands has its place, I think it will be very difficult to substantially expand OHV trails without negatively impacting important wildlife habitats. * Science based management of natural resources on public lands * Sustaining opportunities for sportsmen to continue to enjoy hunting and fishing on federal public lands and waters. I also support the following policies or ideas: * New reforms of BLM onshore oil and gas leasing procedures * Colorado Oil and Gas Conservation Commission rules that provide additional protection for wildlife and wildlife habitat in the oil and gas drilling permit process * Protection of Colorado's non-wilderness roadless areas either by the Clinton Administration Rule or by the recommendations of the Colorado Roadless Area Taskforce Thankyou for the opportunity to comment on this important initiative. Cheers.

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(cont.)

I attended yesterday's Listening Session in Chicago and wanted to briefly share my comments and ideas:

1. Thank you for attempting to further strengthen one of America's greatest assets its outdoors and to reconnect Americans with their outdoors. It's great to see our White House doing that.
2. We very much hope that ways will be found to build on the work of local organizations and local coalitions that are saving and restoring natural areas and parks all across the country. From experience, we know that local groups (especially nonprofit land trusts and similar organizations) can be creative and build alliances of municipalities and other non-profits that are really effective.
3. We urge you to be sure to do all that can be done to fund land preservation and land restoration on public and private lands. We have a good backbone of protected land but much more needs to be done. Moreover, natural lands that are not stewarded with natural processes will tend to degrade over time.
4. We would urge you to be aware of the importance of ecologically minded stewardship of lands close to home. Backyards, woodlots, school and corporate campuses are all places where nature can be treated well with natural landscaping, organic gardens, rain barrels, and other good practices. The process of doing this builds ecological literacy so that camping and excursions elsewhere are more enjoyable as nature is already understood. Create living spaces around us also awakens the hearts of adults and kids by making possible encounters with wildlife. Community gardens are also extremely useful in getting people outside and creating community across all races and backgrounds. People in cities and suburbs should have nature around them so they don't have to travel hours away to see birds and butterflies. If this is done on a larger scale, it will also lead to cleaner streams and lakes, less erosion, and richer soil. Healthier land and water contributes to community health in an important way. We'd urge the White House to implement a bird garden and some natural landscaping at the White House itself to show that we can bring nature home in ways that benefit people and wildlife.
5. We urge you to support conservation easements by extending the more extensive tax incentives for private landowners that donate them. Easements are an important and cost-effective tool for land conservation across the nation.
6. Trails and trail systems are critical and need to be substantially expanded and improved. For truly healthy living, people and children should be able to get outside and do normal tasks and errands without using a car. We have a soccer field complex that is less than 2 miles away but has absolutely no bike trail access so we must get in car to drive there. On the other hand, our city of Grayslake has a generally excellent bike trail system that allows us to go grocery shopping, visit friends, and get to the gym on bike. A precondition for really offering healthy outdoor living is when people in urban and suburban America can do most of their normal daily activities by bike or by walking. This is good for health and will also contribute to our long-term energy independence.
7. The federal government can play an important role in strengthening America's Great Outdoors and our connection with the outdoors by creating a useful set of indicators that, like GDP and the Dow Jones Industrial Average, tell us how our Outdoors are doing in terms of water quality, preserved lands, accessibility to open space, etc.

Good luck in this initiative!

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(cont.)

In both looking at how much outdoors there is to enjoy and how many people are able to enjoy it, we need to look at big enough picture. With the global climate crisis, we need to look at the health of entire ecosystems and allow plenty of space for wildlife to adapt. And with kids, we need to look at adapting what is already in their environment to getting them out to find that the woods are not, as one of my urban friends fretted when I took to the woods in rural Ohio, full of bears, snakes and rapists.

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(cont.)

20 August 2010 The Honorable Kenneth Salazar United States Secretary of the Interior
c/o America's Great Outdoors U.S. Department of the Interior Fish and Wildlife and Parks
1849 C Street NW Washington, DC 20240 Dear Sir, Thank you for your vision and
your leadership in helping to make President Obama's America's Great Outdoors initiative a
personal and national priority. As millions of Americans spend their summer days enjoying the
great outdoors, including our 392 national park sites across the country, we are reminded of the
important role they play in preserving our public lands and national heritage. From the great
southern wildlands like Great Smoky Mountains National Park to places like the Ocmulgee
National Monument, which memorializes our continent's Native American history, the national
parks provide some of the best means of connecting Americans, young and old, to America's
Great Outdoors, and preserving the natural and cultural diversity of our nation. As the AGO
initiative winds down, with the ending of the summer, and you begin to ponder the incredible
outpouring of the ideas and hopes of the American people in order to assist the President in
crafting a 21st century conservation agenda, I would like to offer several thoughts. The ideas
below emerge from the work of the National Parks Conservation Association's southeastern
regional program. They are framed within the context of the AGO's four questions. I)
Challenges: What obstacles exist to achieve your goals for conservation, recreation, or
reconnecting people to the outdoors? Major obstacles to advancing a 21st century approach
to conservation include the following. A) The Need for Full Operational Funding for the
National Park Service. Compared to the overall federal budget, the Park Service is very
small—only one tenth of 1 percent. Providing Parks the funds needed to serve visitors and
protect resources is a tiny investment in our national heritage, and provides economic benefits
and jobs in struggling communities nationwide. A recent NPCA-commissioned report, *The U.S.
National Park System: An Economic Asset at Risk*
<http://www.npca.org/park_assets/NPCA_Economic_Significance_Report.pdf> , found that the
National Parks generate over four dollars in value to the public for every tax dollar invested by
the Federal Government. The President's 2011 budget request for the National Park Service
is approximately \$2.7 billion—a decrease of \$21.6 million over the current fiscal year 2010
budget. Within the total budget, nearly \$100 million in park programs are reduced or
eliminated—including Save America's Treasures and Preserve America grants—and parks are left
without funding to pay for cost of living adjustments for staff. The operations budget proposal
does not come close to meeting the \$100 million request by the National Parks Second Century
Commission, and is insufficient to maintain current park operations and visitor services. As
recommended by the National Parks Second Century Commission in their final report to Congress
and the Administration, NPCA is advocating for a multi-year commitment that reduces the
operations shortfall by at least \$100 million per year, as well as an additional \$500 million to
meet the construction and maintenance needs of our National Parks. First and foremost, the
President and Congress must support operations funding for the National Park Service, sufficient
to meet its' needs. B) Lack of a Secure and Fully Funded, Mandatory Land and Water
Conservation Fund. The Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) was established in 1965
by Congress as a bipartisan commitment to invest in our natural areas, working lands and historic
and cultural heritage, and to increase access to recreational opportunities for all Americans. The
LWCF has protected land for our national parks, national wildlife refuges, national forests,

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(cont.)

national historic and scenic trails, and wild and scenic river corridors. In addition, the LWCF state assistance program has helped develop new state parks, trails, and recreation lands in every state in the nation. The LWCF has also helped farmers and ranchers protect working lands with conservation easements and saved some of America's richest wildlife areas for hunting and fishing. In spite of these successes, the LWCF program has been dramatically underfunded. Every year, \$900 million from federal Outer Continental Shelf (OCS) drilling lease proceeds are supposed to be dedicated to the LWCF. But the full funding of \$900 million promised by Congress has been reached only once since 1965. Congress has diverted as much as \$17 billion -- 85 percent -- of the Fund's dedicated revenue for projects unrelated to conservation or recreation. Over the last eight years LWCF funding for federal land protection has dropped over 70 percent, hitting a low of \$130 million in Fiscal Year 2008. In order to preserve America's treasured landscapes and places of national significance, it is essential that the President and Congress fully fund a mandatory LWCF program. Current events in the Gulf of Mexico make keeping this promise more important than ever.

II) What works: What are the most effective strategies for conservation, recreation and connecting people to the outdoors that you have used?

A) National Parks Work! The National Parks embody America's natural and cultural heritage. They preserve the exemplary places and tell the defining stories of the American character and experience. National parks provide some of the best means of connecting citizens, young and old, to America's Great Outdoors, and preserving the natural and cultural diversity of our nation. They are, in essence, the world's greatest outdoor classrooms and provide opportunities for life-long, place-based and service learning. Consequently, National Parks are the heart of America's Great Outdoors and should have a prominent place in the President's initiative.

B) The National Park Service Works! The National Park Service has become legendary for doing amazing things with few resources. To give one example, the Rivers, Trails, and Conservation Assistance Program (RTCA), which receives less than one percent of the National Park Service budget, is making outstanding contributions to community-based conservation efforts around the southeast. The program offers NPS staff assistance to community partners for planning, organizational development, project coordination, facilitation, and public involvement in achieving locally-defined goals for natural resource conservation and outdoor recreation. To highlight one project in Georgia, much of the floodplain along a 50 mile stretch of the Ocmulgee River between the cities of Macon and Hawkinsville is already in public ownership, but is managed under a patchwork of federal, state, and local jurisdictions. Because of this fragmented management, recreational access to the river has traditionally been very limited. RTCA is helping to change that by working with the city of Hawkinsville and Bleckley, Houston, Twiggs, and Pulaski Counties to develop and improve public access points along the river, thereby creating a canoe trail, or Ocmulgee Blueway. When the Blueway project is finished, RTCA's partners will be able to promote river events such as festivals, river races, and run/bike/paddle races that can be combined with other eco-tourism promotions in each county. These developments will support local businesses, such as outfitters, restaurants, hotels, and shops, as well as create new constituencies for environmental stewardship. Ultimately, this project has the potential to link the city of Macon and the Ocmulgee National Monument downstream to the Altamaha River Canoe Trail and the city of Darien on the Georgia coast, over 200 miles away. From Darien it will connect to

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(cont.)

the SE Coast Saltwater Paddling Trail, running al

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(cont.)

Our community remains supportive of the National Park Service and the Forest Service with the realization that both are very large landowners in Washington's Western Clallam and Jefferson Counties. Both of these agencies have played, and could play into the future, a significant role with regard to "getting people into America's Great Outdoors." While the goals of this initiative are laudable, the idea that America's Great Outdoors should be an independent tourist/recreation draw is contingent upon people feeling welcome and invited to visit, explore, recreate and enjoy those lands. At the present, our "Great Outdoor" recreation centers are seriously lacking the financial commitment necessary to meet the new level of hype being used to promote them. For years, our community and others have argued for fully staffed facilities where there are no more "rare ranger sightings" associated with educational and recreational offerings by overwhelmed, multi-tasking and multi-hat-wearing front country recreation, interpretative, enforcement, and educational staff. In addition, while the recent investment by Congress into both the NPS and USFS through ARRA addressed some of the maintenance backlog for both agencies, it only took on the projects that were "shovel ready." There continues to be a significant maintenance backlog that is limiting access to and enjoyment of "America's Great Outdoors." It would be worth a note of caution to the Executive Branch that it may be problematic to highlight the need for America to rediscover itself, and its historic connection to its lands, only to have the visiting public find dilapidated buildings, unmanaged trails, outdated visitor centers (such as the one at NPS Hoh Rain Forest). Further, the expecting public may encounter facilities and parks that are understaffed or so heavily relying on volunteers that staffing seems to be a second thought. Also, there are great needs for both the USFS and NPS to engage in recreational planning if we are to see a true realization of the vision associated with this initiative. Over the past decade or longer in our region, we have continually been promised "plan revisions" or "new planning opportunities" to address the concerns and issues being raised about our public lands. Yet, in nearly all such cases, those required recreation plans, day use plans, capital investment plans, forest plans, etc., all get continued out to some tenuous, unattainable date in the future. America has a remarkable heritage that is integrally tied to the utilization of its natural resources and outdoors. This initiative has the potential of rekindling that flame of discovery in the hearts of many of our fellow citizens. The challenge that lies ahead is ensuring that those outdoor resources are prepared for the expected and/or hoped-for visitors. What Works? First and foremost, local collaborative, constructive efforts are probably the best example of what in fact works. In our community, there are conservation efforts focused on salmonid recovery that involve tribal and local governments working in partnership with citizen, state, and federal land owners on specific project enhancement efforts. However, these efforts, unless it is the application period for a specific project grant round, rarely see the continual participation and engagement of all of the federal land managers, particularly the NPS. If the meeting is to regulate, or to explain how the federal agencies could apply for state salmon recovery funding board funds, then we see tend to see the federal agency at the table. If it is to develop a coordinated planning effort, their attendance is less than certain. The USFS in our area, however, has been an active technical supporter of the local collaborative salmonid efforts and deserves recognition for its involvement in these efforts. Unfortunately, some of the agencies own policies and procedures require the agency to create its own local citizen advisory group. Recently, the USFS ONF found itself having to do just that, in spite of two

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(cont.)

well established salmonid recovery/watershed planning groups, effort to undertake a focused watershed initiative in the Calawah Basin, when many locally felt it would have made better sense to utilize the existing salmonid recovery organizations that have been working, planning and promoting local driven conservation for the past decade. Unfortunately, the USFS administrative process did not allow for the local ranger district to utilize what was in place. Second, citizen buy-in to the idea that the Great Outdoors applies to them - all of them. People need to feel that they are a welcomed group that can partake in activities without worry about being shut out or closed down. This may require land owners like NPS and the USFS to put as much attention on the front end visitors as there seems to be on the wilderness and backcountry users. If all feel welcome and have a positive experience, that will then result in returning, engaged users. Challenges. First, there needs to be a clear realization that adding more land, wilderness or otherwise, to existing USFS and NPS holdings will not result in more people visiting and using that specific park, forest service site, etc. Second, there needs to be a realization that over the past two decades, or so, the discussion of recreation on federal lands has developed some very restrictive "socio-economic classist" views. If we are going to be asking Americans to enjoy their outdoors, we need to realize that this is going to include a large collection of various user groups, enthusiastic, and types. At the present time, there seems to be an agency bias against outdoor recreation that does not fall in the "day hike/outdoor wilderness walk" style of recreation. However, there are a larger number of outdoor enthusiasts that believe their interests in exploring the great outdoors as off road vehicle drivers, hunters, horse riders, etc., should also be incorporated in such new policy efforts. At the present there continues to be clashes between interested user groups and enthusiasts that usually leave a level animosity hanging about the recreation lands. On the opposite end of the spectrum is the hope that some forms of tourism aimed at understanding the underlying ecosystems, species and climate of the region could be developed to attract other users. However, the true investment in such new tourism markets has not been made a priority. In fact, some of the hype assigned to such objectives have been seized upon as a means of dissuading other users that may not meet the "perceived ideal visitor." A balanced, multi-use and user approach needs to be developed as part of this new initiative. Third, the process of engaging in the permits, or being involved in the planning is not an easy one. In many cases, the interested participant has to spend numerous hours attending briefings, meetings, reading through high technical documents, and then have a narrow window to submit formal comments. Such a process can be a significant negative persuader for the general public wanting to be engaged in the future of our Nation's "Great Outdoors." Fourth, the process itself seems to be a hurdle. Many times the lament from the USFS/NPS is that "the NEPA we have on recreation is outdated," "need to revise the existing plan," or, "no plan exists, so we have to wait until we can undertake that plan to address your access issue." Then when efforts are made to determine when a recreation plan, or plan amendment is to be considered, it is usually many, many years off in the future. Federal Government Role Focus. If the goal is to encourage the use of the outdoors and the properties managed by the federal government for recreation purposes, the agencies need to: 1. Make the lands and facilities usable. Limited use and/or closed doors, trails, and campgrounds due to a lack of maintenance funding, or lack of funding for operations, is a significant barrier that has to be addressed. The field staff are doing remarkable things, but they cannot be exp

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As someone who grew up with nature, drifted away during my teens and early twenties, and has recently redeveloped a connection to our nation's amazing natural heritage, I fully support your effort to "leave no child inside." I have worked as a seasonal park ranger, and after being laid off from my full time job as an arts educator, I have decided to go back to school to pursue degrees in environmental management and forestry. Never has the need to protect our wildlands been so fundamental to the future of our nation, and never has there been a greater need to provide access to these lands to people of all ages and backgrounds. I offer below a few suggestions: - Continue your support of the NPS and all of the work it does. The ARRA has provided many parks with much-needed funds to repair their visitor services and facilities. There is still a backlog of needed maintenance, and many parks are in desperate need of long-range plans to adjust to increased visitation and climatic changes. - Provide incentives and opportunities for inner-city families to get into the outdoors, whether this be in the form of youth leadership retreats, natural history programs held in green spaces, community-sponsored bus trips to our national parks and forests, or something else entirely. **ACCESS TO NATURE MUST NOT BE RESERVED FOR THE ELITE.** - Work with local landowners, nonprofits, and NGOs to develop a nation-wide network of protected areas and wildlife corridors. Landscape-level ecosystem conservation will be an essential component for the future integrity of our larger protected areas. - Continue the country's tradition of providing a wide range of access to our wildlands. Different types of people will seek different outdoor experiences. It's important to make sure that Americans have the ability to camp in a developed campground using an RV or tent while also protecting vast roadless wilderness areas where visitor use is minimal and natural systems are able to function unimpaired by human development. - Continue to set an example for minority families everywhere. The U.S. will soon be primarily a non-white population. It's important that folks don't feel that National Parks and the outdoors are places reserved for retired white couples. Our protected lands should be places where people of all backgrounds can go to explore nature and push the boundaries of their own comfort zones. Seeing our mixed-heritage First Family on TV enjoying the National Parks may help break down some of the racial stereotypes associated with the National Park Service. Best wishes as your administration continues to tackle this daunting challenge.

Send more resources to the state level to fund Nature Centers and other environmental entities that conserve our wildlife and natural resources.

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Hello, I attended the Initiative meeting in the Twin Cities (Minnesota) on August 4, and want to submit my comments: One of the most effective strategies is to preserve the wilderness resources we currently have, and not allow them to deteriorate. As we talk about how to connect people to the outdoors, we must make sure we make sure the "outdoors" are still there. The Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness is one of the premier outdoors resources we have, and it is in imminent danger of being destroyed. Preserving the BWCAW should be among the top priorities of the Interior Department and the National Forest Service. It is a national--international--treasure that all should be concerned about. The current threat is from sulfide mining drilling and the potential sulfide mining that has never been accomplished anywhere in the world without environmental damage. The drilling has been going on for some time as I write this, and international mining companies are pouring money into the drilling and exploration, at a rate that no local counter-investment can match. The sulfide mining drilling/exploration is occurring in and under the watershed leading directly into the BWCAW. The waters in this area are interconnected marshes, wetlands, creeks, rivers, and lakes, eventually leading through the BWCAW into Quetico and ultimately to Hudson Bay. Acid mine drainage into this watershed will be unstoppable, and will alter the environment for centuries. Much has been written by experts concerned about sulfide mining near the BWCAW, which I won't repeat here. But, for a government concerned about the Great Outdoors, a major part of the plan MUST be preserving the Great Outdoors that currently exist. The federal government has a regulatory role on what mining and drilling permits are allowed. I greatly appreciate the EPA's decision on the Polymet mine Draft EIS earlier this year. However, much more vigilance is needed to protect the Great Outdoors that is the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness. Thank you,

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Department of the Interior, I attended one of the public youth listening sessions held in Albuquerque, NM on the America's Great Outdoors initiative. I was representing Talking Talons Youth Leadership, which is an animal rehabilitation center in Tijeras, NM. We use our non-releasable exotic animals to teach youth about science, the environment, and protecting these animals and their habitats. We have a summer camp where we take the kids on hikes in the East Mountains, fieldtrips to other rehab centers and nature centers, and really spend most of our time outside. We are trying to create a community garden using garden club volunteers in the community because this will teach that a person can be sustainable on their own - we don't always have to get what we need from a grocery store. The land that our center sits on is directly connected to Cibola National Forest area, and we are working with the USFS to create a program that involves the community in Talking Talons as well as the national forest. These are just some things on the horizon... What Works - Our most effective strategies include the use of our non-releasable exotic animals. We use these animals to teach kids about science and the individual animals' stories. The kids get to learn how to hold them, and this is how they build a strong connection to the animals. Because they start to care deeply about the animals, they also start to care about preserving their habitats in the wild once they learn about them. Caring about the conservation of the species and the species' habitats is then a small step from there. Challenges - Since we are a non-profit organization, we rely on state and federal grants to help us serve our community with our programs that connect youth to animals and the outdoors. This is our greatest obstacle; money and getting available grants. Federal Government Role - Really the grand obstacle to all of our programs is available grants to apply for. Maybe if the federal government had more money set aside for this effort, organizations like us could thrive because more grants would be available to us. Thank you for your time, and I hope these comments help you on your way to submitting your report to the President.

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(cont.)

The following comments are submitted in response to the America's Great Outdoors Listening Sessions and a copy of these comments are also attached America's Great Outdoors Listening Session Comments of _____, Knoxville, Tennessee July 15, 2010

1. Commercial timber harvest in our National Forests should be discontinued. This practice, which is heavily subsidized by the tax funds of the citizens of our country, cannot be justified under any pretense except as noted here. Our timber resources should only be commercially harvested, if needed in the event of a catastrophic event that severely damages private forest lands over a very large area of several million acres. As the US Forest Service (USFS) now practices commercial timber harvest, and growing timber for this purpose, private businesses that own and grow timber for the wood products industry are forced to subsidize their competition.
2. The primary mission of the USFS should be to manage our National Forests for water quality protection and recreation. There are several ways that users can assist in funding the recreational programs, which I will not attempt to enumerate here, that should be considered by the USFS.
3. I appreciate very much the recent introduction in the Senate, of the wilderness bill by Senators Lamar Alexander and Bob Corker that will protect some additional areas of the Cherokee National Forest under the provisions of the 1964 Wilderness Act. But there are many other roadless areas in the Cherokee, Nantahala, and Pisgah National Forests identified by both the USFS and citizens organizations that should be designated as wilderness study areas. They should be given immediate protection from timber harvest, road building, and any other development until their qualification for protection under the provisions of the 1964 Wilderness Act has been determined. A number of our National Forests throughout the nation should be officially, by legislation, designated as National Recreation Areas with qualified areas given additional protection under the provisions of the 1964 Wilderness Act. The Cherokee, Nantahala, and Pisgah National Forests are three of our National Forests in the southeast that should be designated as National Recreation Areas. The use of ATVs and ORVs for recreational purposes, should be prohibited on all federally managed public lands, except on roads maintained for use by ordinary passenger automobiles. The use of bicycles and motor vehicles (wheeled vehicles) in our National Parks and all other units managed by the National Park Service should be restricted to use only on roads maintained for use by ordinary passenger automobiles, except on roads and trails constructed and maintained specifically for use by wheeled vehicles other than ordinary passenger vehicle. The long standing controversy (67 years) concerning the construction of a road in the Great Smoky Mountains National from Bryson City, NC to Fontana Dam will be resolved once and for all, only when Swain County, NC is paid the full amount of \$52 million in lieu of building the road, as agreed to by the new agreement which replaced the earlier "1943 Agreement" that promised the road. The Department of Interior should include in it's budget, starting with FY 2011, sufficient funds to complete full payment of the \$52 million in no more than another 5 years. Current payments (2) add up to \$12.8 million, leaving \$39.4 million due.

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-- Thank you for wanting to get input directly from the stakeholders of our community and work together for solutions. My name is (name deleted) and I have lived in Highland Park, CA for over 30 years. This is the neighborhood I have grown up in and the one I love. I am a Champion Mom with the Network for a Healthy California Los Angeles Region. I am a spokesperson who advocates eating more fruits and vegetables and increasing physical activity among low income California residents. I will try to make it to your Occidental College visit but if I am unable to I wanted to voice my thoughts based on my experiences. Thank you for the opportunity. **WHAT WORKS** Community Outreach in low income neighborhoods. Inner city children are often unaware of hiking trails and there is a lack of access to parks in their neighborhoods. When cities such as Los Angeles are so over populated with buildings, etc. what is needed most is usually a park. In Highland Park a huge housing development is being planned on Ave 57 and Piedmont. Would a small "pocket" park serve the area better? Creating and conserving parks is one of the best ways to promote a healthier lifestyle for residents of neighborhoods. Sycamore park is an excellent example of a park that works. As a child many of my birthdays were celebrated there. The playground equipment was falling apart back then. A big sense of community pride arose when beautiful playground equipment was installed for the children and a set of exercise machines for the parents. The location of the parentsmachines are right next to the children's so they can safely watch their children as they work out. All parks should have a set of machines strategically placed. With the obesity epidemic in our country and the economy the way they are... this is a solution. Families would have a safe place to exercise and gym memberships would not be a requirement!!! Conservation of our parks and the government helping to create new parks works. They also are community gathering and building places. Government helping to protect historical landmarks like the Southwest Museum in the Highland Park area of Los Angeles. As a child our family would visit this museum on a regular basis. We would walk to the museum. As a teenager my best friend (name deleted) and I would jog at Sycamore Park and end our jog at the top lookout area of the Southwest Museum. Walking through the outdoor gardens and sitting on that bench as we viewed the city was the best. The museum was such a positive place for our community to enjoy. It is sad that my children will not have the wonderful experiences I had at this museum because the exhibits and museum are not functioning as they were. Government should protect and conserve historical landmarks that provide enjoyment of the outdoors , educate and are a sense of community pride in neighborhoods across America. Providing safe, lighted bike pathways, swimming pools (adding splash pads & curvy slides like at Northridge's pool to our area pools), enforcing dog leash laws on hiking trails are a few other things I can think of . The Audobon at Debs park is a great example of partnerships that help bring the great outdoors to inner city children. If you really think about it most of these places are possible because of a park. When the great outdoors is perceived as a safe and fun place to be a lot will be accomplished. Lower obesity and crime rates. I also have to mention protecting & conserving the Boys & Girls Clubs of America. We went there as children and now my children go there. The club on Pasadena Ave is an amazing place which encourages children to play sports, swim etc... The club provides (when funding is available) outdoor experiences for children. The partnership of the Federal Government should be to help build up communities. Work with the stakeholders to find solutions and build a solid foundation. Thank you for your time.

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Thank you for the invitation to attend your America's Great Outdoors Initiative Listening Session held in Albuquerque, NM on July 17, 2010. This event was well organized and attended by a diversity of stakeholders from throughout our state; a testament to both your successful outreach and the great interest of the conservation community in New Mexico. While I was able to participate in some of the sessions, I was unfortunately unable to provide a comment during the breakouts. Thank you for the opportunity to comment in writing.

Observations at the 7/17 Meeting During the sessions, I observed a strong conservation ethic across a wide spectrum ranging from agriculture, preservation, youth education and empowerment to multiple use. I was also impressed by the agency leadership exhibited by Department of Interior and Department of Agriculture and your interest in developing more effective federal support for local projects and programs worth investing in.

Comments I would like to provide comments focused on programs and opportunities that will cultivate and grow the conservation ethic in our communities for current and future generations of Americans . . . in their own backyard! While implementation of sustainable management strategies in our large blocks of public land is important, I believe that federal agencies have an opportunity for a stronger supporting role in cultivating community appreciation of the natural and built environment within the urban and rural areas where our citizens live. Without an understanding of conservation amongst our citizenry and youth, we will lose the opportunity to get them out of the house and to appreciate, experience and support conservation of our wonderful natural areas outside of their community.

What works The USDA Forest Service Urban and Community Forestry (UCF) Program provides funding to support a State Urban and Community Forestry Program (offered through State Forestry Organizations and the National Association of State Foresters) in each of the 50 States and 6 Pacific Islands. State UCF Programs cultivate local community forestry efforts in our cities, towns and villages through technical assistance and funding support for: development of management plans, tree inventories, arborist education, etc. In addition to providing resources and expertise, State UCF Programs are in-tune with the needs of municipalities and are successful at developing extensive partnerships and programs that support local communities. Here are just a few of the partnerships that states throughout the country have successfully developed:

- Environmental: EPA, State, regional, and local organizations (SmartGrowth, Green Infrastructure, Air and Water Quality);
- Community health (partnerships with hospitals, healthcare providers, urban greening and connection to human health and activity);
- Non-profit citizen organizations (at the local, regional, and national level);
- Community planners and housing organizations;
- Utility and energy providers;
- Outdoor education organizations

The impetus of success for State UCF Programs relies on creative program implementation and partnerships that leverage a limited level of base program funding support provided by the Federal Government.

Challenges While the USDA Forest Service and individual State UCF Programs have built an Urban Forestry Program that provides: research, services to communities, and effective partnerships; there are great challenges to building sustainable municipal programs that result in a true impact on the conservation ethic of our citizenry. States face two critical challenges in implementing our programs:

- The current Federal allocation formula for State UCF Programs is based on a state's population. This results in many states throughout the country receiving on average \$200,000 to implement a statewide program. As a result, the ability to effectively serve mid to

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small size communities is greatly hampered (ironically, these are the communities that our programs have the most potential to impact when services are provided!). State UCF Programs are effective at developing non-traditional partnerships that elevate the importance of urban forestry and often result in additional funding support for individual communities. The challenge lies in sustaining sufficient funds to deliver a sustainable statewide program that can operate and grow to serve the needs of communities. Federal Government Role The Federal Government has an opportunity to recognize benefits provided by the already established Urban and Community Forestry Program and align its extensive resources and programs to support it. For example, nationally we see many separate efforts at expanding implementation of "green initiatives" through Federal Agencies, such as: HUD, DOT, EPA, Department of Commerce, Department of Energy. Locally, there is extensive synergy at aligning these resources on-the-ground, but the state and local urban forestry stakeholders consistently dedicate significant time and resources to compete for a diversity of federal funding sources that serve a common purpose in the local community building healthy forests that result in healthy people. Rather than promoting competition among federal agencies for a "piece of the green", the Federal Government has an opportunity to align a diversity of agendas and overlapping resources into one synergistic "Community Conservation Initiative". This initiative has the potential to: bolster existing programs, further partnership and leverage of resources, and result in sustained and lasting change in the conservation ethic of our communities. Tools "Aligning our resources to create a lasting impact" Across the country, we often talk about the importance of the 3-legged stool in sustaining local urban forestry programs: the state, the municipality, and the grassroots citizen organization. While many state organizations have these pieces in-place, we struggle to maintain sufficient funding to maximize our impact on the citizens of our states. We challenge Federal agencies to recognize the existing infrastructure and expertise in states throughout the country and seize this opportunity to align your diversity of agencies and resources toward a common goal. If Federal leadership accepts this challenge, the states and our partners are poised to provide input and support so we together can ensure successful implementation of an effective and sustainable "Community Conservation Initiative".

Hello, I attended the Annapolis Great Outdoors listening session on Friday, June 25, and didn't get a chance to share my comments in the breakout session with (name deleted) Deputy Assistant Secretary at USFWS. Wetlands and headwater streams are critical to sportsmen and women and to continuing our outdoor heritage. Aquatic animals of all shapes and sizes depend on wetlands at some point during their life cycle. These small streams and wetland have been left vulnerable to destruction and pollution due to two recent Supreme Court decisions that dramatically reduced the scope of Clean Water Act jurisdiction. We need the Administration to work with Congress to pass legislation to restore Clean Water Act protections to these critically important yet vulnerable waters. Thank you,

Nobody was listening at the Grand Junction session so here is what I wanted to say:

1. Eliminate the estate tax permanently so that farms and ranches can remain in the family.
 2. Reduce intraagency conflicts. There should be no reason the BLM and the NPS can't get along.
 3. Reduce interagency conflicts. There should be no reason the BLM is writing the planning document for drilling in the White River National Forest.
- Respectfully submitted,

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Last Friday I attended the session at the Occidental College in Los Angeles and during our break out group, our facilitator at the Samuelson Pavilion encouraged us to follow up with our challenges and or "what's working" recommendations with an example or story. 1. Challenge Our organization has been providing outdoor education programs over 35 years to youth in the public and private sectors and when trying to reserve "group sites" at some of the National Parks, these sites go very quickly because there are not enough. Group sites are critical when working with large groups of students. An example is Yosemite National Park, we need to solicit assistance from several of our staff on the 15th of each month to arrive in the office by 6:30, set up their computers to recreation.gov (the site that reserves for the National Parks) and at 7:00 a.m. SHARP, everyone needs to select a group site, these sites are taken within five minutes. Please increase the number of group sites available for so we can continue our mission of nurturing and educating these youth groups and providing an environmental stewardship inspiration. 2. Federal Government Role How can we partner with the federal government to make outdoor education programs available to our disadvantaged and at risk youth groups? We have a part-time grant writer and would welcome the opportunity to bridge grants that make these effective programs available to low income schools and organizations. 3. What works We have hundreds of stories and letters acknowledging some of the "life changing" experiences that take place in outdoor education. Here is one of many stories pertinent to environmental stewardship. a. A group of students attended a 5-day backpacking program in Yosemite National Park and at the conclusion of their program they were so inspired by their environmental stewardship calling, they returned to their communities and began a crusade to educate their peers and local residents by providing them with alternative on saving on the cost of electricity, within a short period of time, they reported a total of 200,000 pounds of carbon as a result of a program they have launched called the "pay it forward" project. b. A Salvation Army group of youth based out of Los Angeles and grant funded for a 3-part series of outdoor education combined with leadership, service learning and environmental stewardship taught these "at risk youth" and provided them with the tools necessary from the "Leave No Trace Behind", what they can do to contribute in their communities, reconnect with the outdoors and understand the importance of conservation. This particular group's last program was in the wilderness backpacking in the San Jacinto Mountains. Upon their return, they exchanged all paper and styrofoam eating/drinking utensils and now bring in their own washable eating utensils, maybe a small contribution but monumental to this group of youth. 4. Tools I have attached a list of outdoor education programs we provide and are constantly looking for new areas, Angeles National Forest is another great location. It would be helpful to have detailed trail maps accessible by GPS or downloadable to easily navigate trail groups without getting lost. We welcome any future discussion on how we can help support The America's Great Outdoors Presidential Initiative. Warm regards,

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The new America's Great Outdoors program is a great opportunity to encourage the people of America to go out to wilderness quality lands and connect with nature. This can only happen if they actually enter the great outdoors by leaving their motorized vehicles and spend time on foot enjoying these great places. An added benefit of exploring the great outdoors on foot is that others can enjoy wilderness in peace and quiet. I am from Utah where many of the areas that are administered by the Bureau of Land Management are under attack by large numbers of motorized recreational vehicle enthusiasts. Often new illegal trails are carved out into the bush often with disastrous ecological effects. Please put key provisions into the new America's Great Outdoors program that places emphasis on the non-motorized enjoyment of America's wild places. Other possible provisions could create funding sources for education and enforcement to protect America's trail system from illegal incursions by motor vehicles. Thank you for considering my ideas.

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I attended the listening session in Minneapolis yesterday, and I had a few comments to share:

What works: I believe that important aspects of reconnecting people to the outdoors are to a) improve access, b) reduce fear, c) enhance connections to natural resources and connections between people in outdoor settings, and d) "make it cool." Some thoughts on these components...

Access. I live in Minneapolis, and I love living here. But, I don't think I would be happy to live in many other large US cities. In Minneapolis, there was forethought to design a park system where each residence would be within 6 blocks of a park. Easy access like this, for everyone, will make reconnecting to the outdoors possible for all. Access to the outdoors must be planned for and incorporated on the front end.

Fear. In terms of reducing fear... I believe that there we must clarify the true risks and benefits of unstructured, outdoor activities. When I was a child, my friends roamed freely in the outdoor world. We were encouraged to get outside and play. This unstructured play taught us to be creative and make our own fun. It taught us independence and how to think for ourselves. Today, parents are afraid to allow children to roam around outside unsupervised. Parental fear of stranger abduction of their children is pervasive and greatly unfounded. I think it would be beneficial to clarify the true risks of death or injury from various sources. Although the data varies from year to year... in 1999 there were 49 children killed related to stranger abduction, while this is horrible it is hardly a serious risk for most children considering there were ~50,000,000 children in US in 1999. Just for comparison, over 40,000 people are killed in car accidents in the US each year. Maybe it would be safer to let kids play outside in the neighborhood than put them in the car and take them to a "safe" supervised activity.

Connections. People are much more likely to maintain their involvement in an activity if they feel connected to the resources and connected to other people who are involved. These connections build up over time... I don't believe they are likely to occur after a single "outdoors program." This relates to the two points above... I believe the easy access... and encouragement of regular, unstructured outdoor activities will create ongoing outdoor activities, rather than "special" one-of-a-kind outdoor programs.

Making it cool. People are bombarded with commercial advertising about what clothes, cars, and electronic equipment are cool. Let's get real... it's way cooler to be active, fit, engaged, and focused in an active outdoor activity. And no, it's not just about acquiring the latest piece of outdoor equipment. Just being out there is cool. How can we get that message out??!

Challenges: I think one key challenge is to better understand people perspectives on conservation, recreation, and the outdoors. We need to better understand the barriers to, motivations for, and perceived rewards of outdoor recreation and conservation behavior. We also need better analysis of what IS working. Do people who have better access have greater participation? If we break down the barriers to conservation behavior, do more people engage in the behaviors?

Federal Government Role: There is a huge role for the government in facilitating the suggestions above. Strategic planning, leadership, funding, and coordination/encouragement of partnerships with state and local governments, corporations and nonprofit organizations.

Tools: More support for coordinated research on human interaction with natural systems. --

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(cont.)

Hello there: Thank you for the opportunity to comment. We are a land trust (a 501 c3 nature conservancy nonprofit corporation) serving Whidbey and Camano Islands in Washington State with a mission of protecting our islands most important natural habitats, working farms and forests and scenic vistas in partnership with willing landowners and our community. Like many of the other 1,600 Land Trusts in the U.S., the Whidbey Camano Land Trust has done incredible work to help advance the land protection missions of our federal, state and local agency partners. We have over 1100 active household members and have protected over 6200 acres of land on these very special northwest islands. Land Trusts are a powerful way to enhance our governments work to protect our nation's most important landscapes and provide outdoor recreation opportunities, particularly hiking, biking, horseback riding, bird-watching and, in appropriate areas, hunting. Land Trusts live and work in the areas they help to protect and we rely on establishing and keeping good relationships with our local and state government officials and with landowners and the public. We can work in places and on projects where federal agencies have no access. We can work more quickly and creatively than the federal government. We can stretch and leverage federal and other public monies to go much farther than federal agencies can with the support of landowners of all different persuasions. We work in close collaboration with our public agency partners to ensure that all of their legal and other requirements are met. We hold the highest ethical standards and have adopted and actively implement the Land Trust Alliance's policies and procedures for land trusts. Just a few examples of our work:

1. Ebey's Landing National Historical Reserve, a unit of the National Park Service: In just 5 years, our Land Trust has secured over \$16 million dollars (with another \$6.8 million of requests pending) to permanently protect hundreds of acres, including the most important prime, historical working farmlands and nationally significant natural areas. The \$16 million came from a variety of federal, state and local grants as well as private donations of money and land no funding was from LWCF. Our key partners include the NPS, USFWS, NRCS and Navy, as well as State Parks, WA Natural Resources, Island County, Whidbey Conservation District, Town of Coupeville, Ebey's Reserve Trust Board and many private organizations and individuals. We are working with our partners to protect hundreds of additional acres of prime working farmland at risk from residential development.
2. Nationally Significant Fish and Wildlife Habitat: Using a variety of USFWS grants matched with state, local and private dollars, we have protected one of just 12 remaining populations of golden paintbrush, a federally threatened species. We are actively recovering golden paintbrush at this site as well as restoring the prairie landscape to benefit other species. We are working to permanently protect another golden paintbrush population at risk of elimination as well as a remarkable and rare old-growth forest along a marine feeder bluff benefitting threatened salmon stocks. We have protected critical wetland and upland habitat at Crockett Lake, a critical stopover for tens of thousands of migratory birds. We have protected thousands of acres of salmon habitat, including protecting and restoring important former estuaries, located just one ebb tide from the huge Chinook and other salmon runs in the Skagit Delta, so that juvenile salmon can find refuge. The above is just a few examples of the work we have accomplished in just a few short years because of our dedication to collaboration and healthy partnerships with federal, state and local agencies. Please enhance the excellent, low-cost work of our nation's 1,600 land trusts by:

1. Making the enhanced tax incentive for conservation easement donations permanent. This tax incentive

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(cont.)

greatly benefits our nation's small farmers and keeps prime farmland available for our nation's own food production. Our nation's small farmers deserve full credit for their invaluable donations of conservation easements that eliminate development and ensure the best soils are kept permanently available for food production. 2. Increasing funding for the Farm Bill conservation programs, including the Farm and Ranchland Protection Program and Wetlands Reserve Program and increase the leverage of these funds by allowing land trusts to acquire conservation easements. This will greatly reduce government spending at the same time that it increases private/public partnerships. And it protects farmlands and water our nation's most valuable resource. 3. Fully funding the Land and Water Conservation Fund, Forest Legacy Program and the new Community Forest and Open Space Program and change these programs to allow direct acquisition of land and easements by land trusts. Thank you for taking the time to read our comments. We are committed to working in close partnership with our federal government to achieve the best land protection and, as a bonus, reduce the workload burden on our federal resource agency partners.

Thanks for conducting a listening session in New Hampshire to receive input about how to best protect America's Great Outdoors. (<http://www.doi.gov/americasgreatoutdoors/Join-the-Conversation.cfm>). I will not be able to attend your event so I am submitting my comments via email. Bigger threats than insects, disease, and fire to my family's forests are state and federal Government Regulations. The state of Massachusetts' Department of Conservation and Recreation has all but eliminated forestry on 60% of public land and they now threaten to limit private landowners' opportunities to sustain their family forests. Job losses as a result of the state's preservationist policies are enormous. I urge the Obama administration to support family forest land owners, jobs, and open space conservation by enabling private landowners to make a living on their sustainably managed land. As the president and 9th generation of my family's Tree Farm business, I oversee the sustainable forest management of thousands of acres in Massachusetts. W. D. Cows, Inc., is the largest private landowner in the state. As the past president of the MA Forest Landowners Associate and the MA State Director for the national Forest Landowners Association, I presume my views are shared by many. Last year I closed my family's long held sawmill because manufacturing lumber in Amherst just doesn't make economic sense anymore. Moving forward we are focusing our efforts on sustainable forest management and log sales. We also are seeking other forest-based economic opportunities to sustain our family business into future generations. To ensure the future of private forests, we could use your help improving our forest-based economic opportunities in areas including solar and wind power, carbon credits, spring water production, conservation restrictions, and markets for logs. Biomass power has become virtually a criminal thought in my state. How is this environmentally preferable and renewable fuel source not being given full encouragement of the Patrick and Obama administrations? We need your help to turn MA and this country around. If you want to protect open space, please do not take rights and opportunities away from private forest landowners. Please encourage our sustainable and economic opportunities and encourage the state of MA to do the same. Thank you.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

As a financial donor to your primary AND presidential campaign, and in light of this country's growing support for the Republican party, I want you to act now on wilderness conservation. We have a limited amount of time to create, expand, and better protect our wilderness, monuments, wildlife refuges, parks, forests, trails, and rivers. To ensure that future generations will always benefit from our public lands, consider these priorities for America's Great Outdoors: - Address conservation on a large scale - Protect our wilderness - Improve watersheds and wildlife habitat - Connect people with nature - Fully fund the land and water conservation fund Thank you for your leadership. You have this one chance to shape a bold conservation strategy for the 21st century. Please act now.

Dear President Obama et al., It has come to my attention that the Civil War Preservation Trust (CWPT), which I am a member and whose great-grandfather served in the Union Army's 27th Ohio Infantry, Company "H", has proposed that battlefield preservation be made a key element of this outstanding conservation initiative. For more than a year, CWPT has encouraged senior administration officials to use this opportunity to commit resources for preservation of the nation's remaining unprotected battlefield land as a lasting legacy of the Civil War Sesquicentennial (2011-2015). We ask that you please take a few moments to express your interest in battlefield preservation, and let the Administration know many Americans believe in the importance of protecting our nation's endangered Civil War battlegrounds. When you visit the website <<http://members.civilwar.org/site/R?i=otRGnRo8FlxudHXqexJiCw..>> , be sure to vote "promote" for battlefield preservation and offer your own personal thoughts on why this should be an Administration priority. Here are a few points I wish to have included: Preserved Civil War battlefields are tangible links to our country's past. The 150th anniversary commemoration is expected to stimulate renewed interest in the conflict and generate unprecedented tourism to Civil War sites. Protection of America's remaining Civil War battlefields will leave a lasting legacy of national commitment to preservation and conservation. Preserved battlefields revitalize local economies and create jobs by encouraging heritage tourism. The more historic land that is preserved, the longer visitors stay in a community and the more time they spend patronizing local businesses. Battlefields are outdoor classrooms for this and future generations. They allow visitors to walk in the footsteps of the Civil War heroes and experience the landscape much as it was during the conflict. Preserved battlefields help protect water resources; sustain parks, working farms, forests and ranches; and provide open space for passive outdoor recreation. Battlefield preservation in Pennsylvania, Maryland and Virginia, where many significant sites are located, is also vital for protecting the Chesapeake Bay. Parkland created through battlefield preservation near growing population centers like Nashville, Atlanta and elsewhere can benefit quality of life for residents. I hope, sir, that you will definitely consider these salient points in your decision.

I support battlefield preservation, especially of Civil War sites. This is very important ground to protect, and provides open space as well.

Save our national heritage!! Fund Civil War Battlefield preservation!! Thank you.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

The Obama's, more than any other couple to ever occupy the White House, should understand the sacrifices made by Civil War soldiers on their behalf. It is obvious that they do. The preservation of those historic battlefields leaves a legacy that they can share with their children and the nation's children. Here is an area that they, as much as Theodore Roosevelt did for conservation of Natural Resources, can own in their own spectacular way. Roosevelt once asked what it would take to save millions of acres. He was told his signature on an Executive Order. I urge the President to sign an Executive Order and using his signature to save millions of acres of battlefields in the United States.

When I was a child, the Civil War was still being taught as a major event in school. These days, it's a minor blip. In 1961-65, the Civil War centennial was a remembrance of a bloody, sad chapter in our collective history. The folks in New England, who seem to "edit" our history texts, see a need to trivialize that era (except for slavery!). This is why we need to preserve our battlefields; so this history is not lost to future generations. Thank you for reading this,

Dear Department of the Interior, As a member of the Civil War Preservation Trust, ancestor of two Civil War Veterans, and a civil war reenactor, I would like to urge you to make "Battlefield Preservation" a key element in the "America's Great Outdoors Initiative." As a civil war reenactor, myself and thousands of others have had the opportunity to enjoy the outdoors on civil war battlefields across this country, while at the same time teaching literally millions of Americans about our civil war heritage. As we approach the sesquicentennial of the Civil War in 2011 - 2015, I feel there is no better way to honor those who served and died in that great war than to set aside land for future generations to enjoy while at the same time re-living history. Battlefield Preservation is the most honorable way I can think of to conserve America's Great Outdoors. Thank you so much for your attention to this initiative.

DEAR SIRs WE SURELY HOPE YOU CAN DO EVERYTHING YOU CAN TO PRESERVE ANY WILDLIFE HABITAT. PLEASE SEE MY ATTACHMENT. THANKS

Our history is short. We cannot lose any of it by destroying or ignoring places where people fought and died for our country. Citizens cannot do this alone. We need the government to support these historic places. Visit them. Stand on the ground. Then decide that nothing is important about that land.

please keep up with the support of civil war battlefield preservation, thank you

As the single greatest catastrophe in this country's history, yet it's seminal event, we have a duty to preserve the blooded fields on which our ancestors fought and died to preserve the Union and free a people from slavery. Please do not let our heritage be paved over.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

As Americans it is incumbent on us to protect the hallowed places where so many of our forefathers gave their lives. The protection of Civil War battlefields provides this opportunity to our current generation. Battlefields are rapidly disappearing because of unwise development that disregards our historic resources. We do not have much time to act. Those of us who share this common interest and sense of responsibility must act now. Our numbers are many, and our will is strong. Our battlefield organizations, National Park Service, and government officials must be strongly encouraged to protect these legacies of our national fabric.

President Obama: It is important to preserve our Civil War battlefields. We don't need Walmarts or Casinos built next to them, destroying their historicity. The Civil War has impacted our country like no other and our battlefields, if preserved, will keep reminding us of that now and for generations to come. If we lose sight of this and allow our history to fall prey to developers who only want to build malls, office parks and housing developments. They can all be built on non-historic property and it is important to uphold that on the federal, state, and local levels of government.

Federal Government...Please continue your support of the CWPT that works so hard to preserve our heritage...

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

I am a professional geologist with over 30 years working in private industry and state government (Oklahoma Geological Survey). In the past, I have worked for the National Park Service (Crater Lake) and the U.S. Geological Survey (Yosemite National Park and Arizona). I have also worked with the Nature Conservancy, the Oklahoma Water Resources Board, and the Norman (Oklahoma) Environmental Control Advisory Board (to city government). I am also a petroleum geologist and work with local education and rockhound groups. The United States (and the world) is facing some critical decisions regarding the wise use of its natural resources, including water, petroleum, and minerals. As such, we are going to need trained professionals in these fields to give us direction and provide solutions to some of the important questions we face. The geosciences community is in the forefront of these issues, and it is critical that we continue to attract young people into our profession. One way to do this is at an early age grammar school. And there is little that young people like to do more than collect things. As a child, one of my earliest and fondest memories was breaking open a rock in a local streambed to discover it was loaded with small shells ancient brachiopods that lived millions of years ago. The Girl Scouts and Boy Scouts have programs and merit badges in geology, and one of the requirements is building a rock, mineral, and fossil collection with identifications. In addition to Scout leaders, local rockhounds often sponsor kids programs in which adults take children into the field to collect specimens. A column in a recent rockhound magazine that I subscribe to discussing the AGO initiative is titled "Conservation and Recreation." To this title I would add "Education." I would encourage you, in your deliberations about allowing collecting specimens on federally managed lands, to allow the small-scale (e.g., no digging, even with only a shovel) collecting of common rocks, minerals, and fossils. Rockhounding is not only a popular outdoor pastime for (usually) older people, but is critical for engaging children at an early age. Obviously, some federal lands should be entirely off-limits to collecting anything e.g., national parks and monuments. But collecting on other lands in which the collector does not disrupt the surface and does not sell his/her specimen for private gain should be allowed. This is a complex issue and there are many points of view. However, my 30+ years experience as a professional geologist and part-time educator tells me there are many avenues of compromise. I would be willing to discuss this issue at greater length at your leisure.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Thanks for a great time at Occidental college last week. It is great to have an administration that cares about the (our) environment. My comment: Even though off-road recreationists talk of large numbers of enthusiasts, the data is not accurate. There are many people that use their 4-wheel street-legal vehicles as access and touring of public lands. Our interest is in low impact use and protection of the lands. There is a sector of off-roaders that are mainly interested in their vehicles, the speed and the destruction of lands (carving hills, climbing boulders, racing in sand dunes and washes, riparian areas and the like). Off-roading on public lands should be limited to street-legal vehicles where law enforcement can easily check for id, see the license plates and enforce the law more easily. Speeding and destroying land should be reserved to contained parks, preferably funded by the recipients of the off-road related sales of RVs, vehicles, clothing, parts, etc. This type of activity should not occur on public lands since it destroys the land and excludes everyone else from the use. The nuisance, the pollution, habitat destruction, noise and chaos created is not something the public should accept on public land. This destruction has saddened us as local hikers in north San Diego county. We have hiked into the proposed Wilderness area of BLM and found beautiful riparian areas destroyed. BLM does not have enough rangers to control the problem. We fear for our safety as hikers and equestrians with our lands being open to this type of rampage, Thanks,

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

My name is (name deleted) I attended the "Listening session" Friday August 27, 2010 in Nashville, Tennessee. I was in room 201 but during my comments the Moderator and the Note Taker were whispering to each other and my comments did not get attention or recorded (nor did my name). I am retired, but active in the Friends of the Cumberland Trail State Park and the Every Child Outdoors Tennessee Coalition (previously the No Child Left Inside" coalition). I am also a past Director of Tennessee State Parks. What works: Taking kids outside. I have taken kids on hikes both for pleasure, exercise, and education. The Friends' has sponsored some K-12 teachers to attend workshops to teach them how to prepare and implement outdoor classes and other activities. School, church, scouts, and park led activities to take kids outside works. It works for social ability, educational, health to combat obesity, and for future conservation/environment efforts. We should incorporate these efforts into our K-12 education standards and requirements. We should require outdoor activities to address childhood obesity and education of almost all classes. Teachers' degrees should have this training and education in their curriculum. Teachers should know how to create and implement outdoor activities and education when they get an education degree. The Challenges: To get (require) educators to place importance on outdoor activities and classes. Many teachers are themselves over weight and uncomfortable outside. Many educators I have talked with do not hold outdoor activities and classes as an option. In fairness to teachers they have a lot on their plate already, like teaching-to-the-tests. To address our liability laws and tort reform to encourage schools and other organizations to take kids outside, so that teachers, parents, and scout leaders are not afraid to take kids outside. The flip side of that effort is to train adult leaders in how to conduct an outside activity. We need to allow kids unstructured, unrestricted outside play at all levels, as well as supervised outdoor activity. Federal Government Role: Much of what I have mentioned does not involve more money or greater spending. If we change our focus and priorities at schools, church youth, and other adult-led activities it can be done. Get teachers and parents to lose weight and lead by example. Discourage and help parents to avoid "helicopter" parenting. Provide training to teachers, parents, and adults on leading outdoor activities. Increase levels in park staffs' in this regard will be necessary. The main people who will help teachers, and other adult leaders will be park/staff rangers, and health professionals. Friends- of-parks organizations can (as we have done) play a major role in bringing together environmentalist, educators, health professionals, etc. to provide a comprehensive approach. Tools: Educators have their hands full addressing the many requirements place on them without additional burdens that they will not be paid for. The number one thing we can do is make outdoor education and exercise for kids a priority, and reward effort and success. The second thing we can do is beef up the staffs' and resources of parks, park staff, health professionals scout and church leaders who can work with educators in this mission. Thirdly, we can encourage parents to lead by example in getting outdoors, losing weight, helping kids study about the outdoors and what happens out there. Thank you for this opportunity. Please acknowledge receipt of this message so I'll know it went through.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

These are my comments for your report to the President on the America's Great Outdoors Initiative. 1. Explain why. I attended the Annapolis meeting and heard many good presentations, including your video. What was missing was explaining to the "unwashed" WHY it is important to conserve natural resources, the importance of ecological health. I don't think that just emoting over beauty or saying we have to save resources for future generations is enough or convincing. 2. Focus on restoration. In many areas, there are no land or waters to buy or save. It's all been developed or destroyed. I believe we need a major effort by all conservation agencies to restore degraded areas. Also, we need to help people understand how small parcels can make a difference. The Audubon at Home program at the National Audubon Society is a good model. Thank you for this important effort.

It is very important to preserve the remaining special places and landscapes in this country. There are 9 million acres in Utah that have been waiting for 20 years to be approved for wilderness protection. The Southern Utah Wilderness Alliance www.suwa.org has identified the most spectacular and important land in Utah for protection. The Utah land bill has been tabled for about 2 decades. Now is the time to protect this valuable land. We rush to drill gas wells on the public land because of the gas companies political clout, but what about the needs of the average citizen who pays taxes. The land is a valuable resource for tourism. When I have toured the national parks in Utah during the summer, the majority of the visitors to the parks are from outside the U.S. Please protect the land in Utah, and the rest of the valuable scenic and recreational resources that we have in this country. The needs of the citizens and tax payers should not be disregarded for the benefit and profits of gas and oil companies.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Friendly Greetings! I attended the August 4 meeting in Minneapolis which focused on the Mississippi River, and would like to elaborate on comments I made there. The Mississippi River and its corridor through the Twin Cities form the Mississippi River National Recreation Area. About half of this waterway is classified as "impaired" by excess turbidity, mainly caused by sediment contributed by a major tributary, the Minnesota River. A major study is about to culminate in a Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) for this portion of the river, which we call the South Metro Mississippi. It will provide numerical goals for sediment reduction as well as targets for restoration of the ecosystem. As water clarity improves, healthy aquatic vegetation will return, which will provide food and habitat for waterfowl, fish, and other forms of aquatic life. I would like to suggest that America's Great Outdoors Presidential Initiative takes explicit actions to support the achievement of the water quality targets that will soon be established through the South Metro Mississippi TMDL for Total Suspended Solids. By engaging the National Park Service, Environmental Protection Agency and US Department of Agriculture in a concerted effort, the federal government can help us launch a major ecosystem restoration initiative that will greatly enhance the quality of outdoor experiences in the Twin Cities Metropolitan Area. Exhaustive research has gone into establishing a water quality standard for the Mississippi that will restore the aquatic ecosystem, and to identify where the major sources of sediment are located. Citizens working with state and federal experts have developed a suite of Environmental Indicators and metrics analogous to those for the Chesapeake Bay. I believe that with federal support and cooperation, we can launch a quality, science-based Mississippi River restoration project that will greatly enhance the outdoor experiences of residents of and visitors to the Twin Cities Metropolitan Area.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

<<Large Landscape Conservation final.pdf>> September 2, 2010 Honorable Nancy Sutley, Chair Council on Environmental Quality c/o America's Great Outdoors 1849 C St NW Washington, DC 20240 Mailstop 3156 Dear Ms. Sutley: Thank you for your work in collecting and synthesizing an abundance of important ideas, recommendations, and policy tools as you prepare the America's Great Outdoors report for the President. We hope you will find the enclosed Policy Focus Report, Large Landscape Conservation: A Strategic Framework for Policy and Action, a valuable resource as you continue your work. Over the past two years, we have explored the topic of large landscape conservation with key policy leaders, practitioners, academic researchers, NGO leaders, and funders. Our conversations started with the recognition that the most important land and water issues facing North America—including land use patterns, water management, biodiversity protection, and climate adaptation—require new approaches, many of which transcend the reach of existing jurisdictions and institutions. This exploration has resulted in the enclosed report, which describes regionally based initiatives currently underway in forest lands, ecosystems, watersheds, and wildlife corridors that involve multiple jurisdictions and ownership. The report recommends ways to encourage such efforts and foster innovation going forward, including:

- * Gather and share information. Establish a common, coherent scientific database and develop an annotated atlas of governance efforts.
- * Encourage a network of practitioners to build capacity. Catalyze collaboration through a network similar to the Land Trust Alliance to identify best practices and ideas for policy reform.
- * Establish a national competitive grants program to enable and sustain promising efforts. Facilitate homegrown partnerships, improve coordination among ongoing efforts, and recognize the most promising approaches to large landscape conservation.
- * Improve the policy toolkit. Strengthen incentive-based tools for landowner conservation and improve coordination and participation by federal and other governmental agencies.
- * Facilitate innovative funding opportunities. Maximize and focus the use of existing federal and state programs and authorities that can be implemented quickly and without significant new funding.

The report provides greater detail on each of these recommendations. Thank you again for undertaking this important effort. Please contact me if I can be of any further assistance.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

What Works In my community of Western North Carolina, partnerships between land trusts, the state clean water management trust fund, the natural resources trust funds and the National Forests are effective in acquiring conservation easements. Coops of farmers and some state and federally funded local facilities help small local farmers process their products and get them to local and regional markets. The school system in Madison County uses local food in the school lunch program. Challenges Conservation easement transaction costs are very high and not possible for many people who would otherwise be willing to put land in easements. NC Farmland Trust fund has never been adequately funded and \$2M a year does not go very far. Local participation in providing funds for land preservation projects is not possible for poorer mountain county governments. Federal Gov't impediments The system of using volunteers is hopelessly tangled in bureaucracy originally meant to provide some kind of liability protection to agencies. In my own community, an effort to keep a NFS recreation area open more months of the year by having volunteers clean bathrooms, cut grass, and empty garbage complete fell apart because of onerous and unrealistic requirements placed on those who wanted to volunteer. Innovation and grass roots work is key but when all is said and done, all groups are desperate for funding, especially in these hard economic times. Agricultural policy does not take into account impact on small farmers but rather serves corporate farms. Farm subsidies need to be eliminated or completely restructured to provide benefits to small farms and farmers. Food Health and Safety Act as originally written would have put most small farms out of business. Tools Good data and research needs to be done and disseminated to the public and decision makers quickly -- and not so couched in cautious bureaucratic language as to be useless. Example, fish and wildlife initiative to study impact of large wind turbine installations on bird and bat life is disappointingly "cya" in tone. There needs to be some compensation to local governments when a large percentage of the counties land base is publically owned and therefore, tax exempt. Selling off existing public assets is NOT the answer to this problem

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

On behalf of the Los Angeles County Department of Regional Planning, I would like to submit the following comments:

- **What Works** · School field trips to the outdoors for elementary, middle and high school students, and participation in projects that restore the environment or recreation areas serve well to reconnect people to the outdoors.
- **Preserving outdoor areas and providing the means for the public to utilize them through trails, trailheads, parking areas, information kiosks and websites, definitely increase the use of the outdoors for recreation purposes.**
- **Challenges** · **Funding for procurement and maintenance of outdoors spaces are two of the most pressing challenges to increasing conservation, recreation and reconnecting people to the outdoors.**
- **Safety is also a major additional challenge in many urban areas.**
- **Staffing to work on procurement efforts is another challenge; many local governments and land preservation agencies are short on personnel and other resources, and are burdened with innumerable priority projects, lessening the time these groups have to work on procurement.**
- **A lack of monetary resources has forced many school districts and other groups to cut field trips, physical education classes, and other non-academic efforts, reducing the time young people spend outdoors.**
- **Federal Government Role** The federal government can be a more effective partner in helping to achieve conservation, recreation and connecting people to the outdoors by:
 - **Fully funding the Land and Water Conservation Fund every year**
 - **Remembering that even though Americans may not put environmental issues at the top of their "concerns" list every year, preservation of the environment and outdoor recreation opportunities will always be important to the American public.**
 - **Allowing more control to federal units such as individual national parks and wildlife refuges for determining priorities, allocating resources, and working with local jurisdictions to conserve environmental resources and develop joint recreation resources.**
- **Tools** Additional tools and resources that would help our efforts be more successful are:
 - **A database of best practices regarding strategies that local and regional jurisdictions have employed to encourage conservation, promote recreation and facilitate reconnecting people with the outdoors.**
 - **A database of grant and other funding opportunities to assist local and regional jurisdictions in the acquisition and maintenance of parklands and recreational facilities, and to hire and train personnel to manage conservation efforts and educate the public about outdoor resources and use opportunities.**

Thank you for the opportunity to participate in this discussion.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

As a motorcycle rider, I have been involved with the Santa Fe National Forest Travel Management Rule (TMR) for four years. We formed the Blackfeathers Trail Preservation Alliance so that we may have standing and input on the TMR. The Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) for the TMR on the Santa Fe National Forest (SFNF) was just released. Much of our input for the 525 miles of single track trails appears to have been ignored! We have been granted about 140 miles of single track trail. Dozens of established trails have been eliminated. As you probably know, Off Highway Vehicle (OHV) use has more than doubled in the past 20 years. Yet, the Forest Service plan is to cut the trails by more than half! Does this make sense? Increasing use of these remaining trails will only lead to the degradation of trails rather than their preservation. It appears the fix is in for decreasing OHV access to the forest. At this time, similar actions are happening on all National Forests and BLM land across the country. The SFNF claims not to have the money to maintain the present trail system. Most of the money goes to road and hiking trail maintenance. Little or no money has been allocated for OHV recreation that has doubled within the past 20 years. What little money is raised from fees and taxes goes to enforcement. In fact five years ago, a \$35,000 OHV Grant to develop trails was unused by the SFNF. Presently the SFNF has only five miles of declared OHV trail! Now it appears in the DEIS that the FS wants to reduce access and limit riding areas to accommodate hikers, mountain bikers, and horseback riders that are disturbed by the sound and sight of an OHV. What ever happened to a multi-use forest? As an OHV user, how are my fees and taxes benefiting me? Dont you think its time to recognize who the real users are and accommodate increasing trends rather than limiting access to OHV users? According to the Out of the Wilderness article in Newsweek 2/9/08 the Pergams and Zaradic study showed outdoor activities (hiking fishing camping) have been significantly decreasing, about 10% per decade, since the 1980s. That is a significant decrease! Ive certainly noticed the decline of hikers and mountain bikers in the SFNF over the past thirty years. Yet, the FS as well as the Department of Interior (DOI) are more responsive to the dwindling number of hikers, mountain bikers, and campers than the ever increasing numbers of OHV riders that actually use the forest. I attended the DOI public listening meeting in Albuquerque NM in July. I counted three OHV users, a dozen ranchers, a few educators, and several that already work with youth in the forest. All the other attendees, in large numbers, were the NO ACCESS environmental groups Ive seen for the past four years at the SFNF public meetings. These groups allow very little compromise in sharing trails; their goal is to eliminate OHV use as much as possible and to create a wilderness-like atmosphere within the multi-use forest. . I watched Americas Great Outdoor Initiative (AGOI) video and read the material and did not see a single word on OHV use. AGOIs purpose is to promote and support innovative community-level efforts to conserve outdoor spaces and reconnect Americans to the outdoors. It sounds like a great plan to involve youth in building trails and take ownership of their forests. Where is the AGOI connecting OHV use to outdoors? Where are the OHV advocates within the DOI? I believe the DOI is creating a platform for environmental groups to reinforce the limited access decisions of the DOI on public lands. Its also apparent the AGOI is headed off in the same direction by not including OHV users. The DOI and the Department of Agriculture claim to recognize OHV use as viable form of recreation and say that they are limiting access at reasonable pace. I would not call this first round of limiting access (over 50%) a reasonable pace. I would call it an agenda meant to severely limit OHV use on public lands.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

What happened to the multi-use concept? The CEQ, EPA, and the Departments of Agriculture and the Interior are allowing major input into how public lands are to be managed from the same environmental groups (as indicated from the AGOI listening meetings) who are pushing for yet another wilderness omnibus bill that would declare millions of square miles as wilderness areas without public input. The OHV community is growing and is a viable means of creating jobs in America today. In Colorado alone, OHV use is a Three Billion Dollar Industry! We will all be watching very closely as millions of miles of roads and trails are closed to the public for OHV use. These decisions will affect millions of people everywhere. Many people are not as well-connected as the environmental groups and their input will not be heard. Their jobs will just disappear and they will be added to the rolls of the unemployed.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this important subject. First, there is a "real" discussion regarding fully funding LWCF at the appropriated \$900M+. This is very important to the success of any federal conservation initiative. Second would be increasing duck stamp prices and therefore the impact of those funds in the associated acquisition projects (offshore O&G tax's, etc...). With that said there are several issues that have accumulated in the last administration and out the USA at this point in time way behind in the ability to respond to this discussion: 1. There needs to be an immediate hiring of new real estate staff and planning staff in the Interior and Agriculture Agencies. The training of these new staffers needs to be fast tracked. 2. The appraisal services needs to be completely re-engineered. This has started but also needs to be fast tracked. 3. There needs to be an acceptance of third party appraisals and a very quick review of all appraisals. 4. Boundary expansions need to be put into a much more efficient process so that there is not a full year or more of time lags and discussions. This is not rocket science, we know these resources. For a successful program to be put into motion quickly and efficiently, say in 6 months or less than a year, the above items will have to be addressed ahead of funding. I have only touched on the tip of the funding iceberg so as to keep these comments concise (think MMS, NOAA, FEMA, etc...). This is short term as President Obama does not really have that much time left when you look at the reality of how DC works. Last but not least, we can "dialogue" all day long while our problems (or opportunities) are just growing bigger and bigger. We know enough about our resources that it is time to act. Another key element is that there is no such thing as consensus. Take comments and move forward. Thanks again for the opportunity.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

To whom it may concern: I reported verbally regarding three pressing issues that are impacting the Thorn Creek Watershed located in South Cook County, IL and Will County. 1. the first matter involves the abundance of Koyotes that have facilitated the demise of the Beaver Population in the 1000 acre Thorn Creek Nature Preserve at the Headwaters of Thorn Creek. I have also been told that the Public Works of Matteson has been killing beavers in the headwaters of Butterfield Creek which impacts the recharge of groundwater resources. I understand how Beavers can impact a stormwater drainage system as they blocked the stormwater in a 1996 storm event from getting into the Mary Woodland Reservoir located in Lynwood, Il in the Lincoln-Lansing Drainage District. At that time, the MWRD-GC determined to hire Beaver Trappers which kill 90% or more of the Beavers because of their out-of-date trapping practices. Also, at that time. the Beaver's Engineering Skills were 'out foxed' by the Engineers at Clemson University. They developed the widely used Beaver Pond Levelers. I received the most advanced version this past winter while visiting Clemson University and plan on installing these devices this coming fall in the Cook - Will County area. But. first we must have the Beavers restored to the Thorn Creek Nature Center which contains the 'flashiest' stream in N. E. Illinois. Thorn Creek's gradient is 18 to 20 feet per mile and this combined with the inadequately controlled release of StormWater creates a major silt flow into the Little Calumet River because the sediment collecting Sauk (Trail) Lake and dam has been filled with silt for about the past 50 years. 2. Sauk (Trail) Lake and Dam at 26th Street is an on line multiple purpose stormwater detention, recreational project built in 1930 by the Cook County Forest Preserve with one third of the cost provided by Bloom Township. It has been cleaned twice, but not since Govenors State University was constructed in 1972 where there are several ornamental Retention Ponds that need to be upgraded for Detention and discharge through Wetland Treatment Trains in accordance with the down stream Cook County Forest Preserve's Stormwater Management Policy. (<http://www.fpdcc.com/downloads/SMP.pdf>. which is lacking implementation by the Cook County Board of Commissioners. 3. Thornton Transitional, Composite Reservoir has just been awarded a 70 million Dollar Grouting Contract by the MWRD-GC. The following is my statement given to Region 5 on Aug. 31. after hearing the response from the Distinguished Panel at America's Great Outdoors' work shop at Northwester University: Comments and Related Environmental Concerns from a Stakeholder of the Thorn Creek Watershed, regarding the Thornton Transitional Reservoir and the lack of maintenance of Sauk (Trail) Lake and dam at 26th Street in Chicago Heights. Rev. 8/31/10 After a few FOIA's to MWRD-GC and ACE, and follow-up questions, I have may have uncovered a potential boondoggel regarding the MWRD's building potentially the 'World's Largest Toilet Bowl' in the Thornton Quarry, in Thornton, Illinois. The rest of the story - - The World's Largest Sanitary District is in the process of constructing a Reservoir in the Thornton Quarry to contain raw diluted sanitary waste from the Deep Tunnel (TARP). Unfortunately it appears that there has not been an 'Environmental Impact Study' although I recall reviewing an Environmental Assessment by Townsend Engineering via the ACE many years ago. This may have been the predecessor or a first attempt to comply with the 1970 Federal Law. (<http://www.hks.harvard.edu/saguaro/pdfs/sandereisandsklessons.pdf>) As I recall there were many unresolved issues regarding groundwater contamination and that some perimeter test wells were required by the USEPA to monitor the potential impact that this future structure will

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(cont.)

have on 'Well Water Resources' in the Thorn Creek Watershed. Its operation depends upon continued pumping of water into Thorn Creek. Today August 30th, the Legal Researcher indicated the documents I requested appear to be missing and were not archived in any 'Depository Libraries'. That was the first place I searched, as GSU is a Depository Library in the Thorn Creek Watershed. Before considering that a recent expenditure to grout the North Portion of the Reservoir (the Transitional Lobe, North of I-80) at 70 million dollars may be a needless waste of tax resources it is necessary to consider how the use of this reservoir may have changed in the past forty years. I believe the original concept and evaluation involved the diluted sewage from the Deep Tunnel (TARP) and suggested further study, but based upon flooding issues in the Thorn Creek Watershed because of unregulated development a new aspect of putting the Thorn Creek stormwater into this reservoir was added to the project. Also Groundwater useage in the 107 square mile Thorn Creek Watershed has changed, but there remain numerous communities that use Groundwater and private wells which may be impacted by the activity that is presently planned for the Thornton Quarry. Continued reliance on this Groundwater at least on a temporary basis has been demonstrated by the interruption of Lake Water from Hammond. During a recent severe winter, this surface water resource was blocked by Mother Nature (Ice) for up to a couple of weeks when the intakes in Hammond which is about 1 mile from the outfall of the Grand Calumet River froze over. Other vulnerabilities such as a recent oil pipe line failure which was prevented from getting into Lake Michigan could have also caused water intake problems at Hammond where I have advocated the intake be extended ten miles out into the lake in recent years. As I recall, there was a report that the Hammond Intake is the lowest quality in all the Great Lakes and this necessitates added chemicals which impact the health of the quarter million or more bi-state users. I also have discussed with the Hammond Trustees the need to use Ozone instead of Chlorine as used by the Lake Bluff - Lake County Water Commission for the past 25 years. Ozone is used exclusively in the State of Florida. Finally, storms on the Great Lakes have an impact on potential ship disasters. Also, Earth Quakes could impact the Thornton Quarry structurally because of its proximity to the Kankakee Arch on which the South Suburban Airport may be built, in the near future. These are some of the numerous issues that need to be designed into an equitable environmental solution for the future use of the Thornton Quarry. Forty years latter we have a better scientific understanding of the Groundwater Resources in Illinois which was assisted by the IEPA's Resource Management Tool. (rmms.illinois.edu, using I.E. only) I believe the Groundwater Guardian the Thorn Creek Watershed Stakeholders should be involved in an Environmental Impact Study, before committing more tax payer money on this potentially fool hardy venture. 'Dilution of Pollution is not a solution, not even in the Oceans. and Adding Thorn Creek's Storm Water to the mix will make a bigger mess for processing in the Calumet Plant where I formerly worked. Hopefully a Environmental Impact Study which involves the Stake Holders of the Great Lakes will produce a prudent solution as the Thorn Creek Watershed is a component of the Great Lakes Watershed with its waters during normal flows diverted via the Sanitary & Ship Canal to the Mississippi Watershed. This Watershed also provides Sauk (Trail) Lake that and Dam which if restored will be a potential source for deterring the Asian Carp migration into the Great Lakes. Please reserve a seat for ___ (Environmental Science Graduate of GSU) and my self, Ed.D., NIU, at the North Western University, morning "listening session". Thank you,

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(cont.)

I am a land planner and landscape architect who has planned a very unique (for this area of North Texas) 1200 ac Nature Preserve oriented residential development that is within 30 minutes of the eastern edge of the Dallas Metro Area and 10 minutes from the fast growing cities of Rockwall, Terrell, Fate and Royse City. It is planned to have 70% of each lot in a contiguous conservation easement dedicated to the Texas Land Conservancy, one of Texas' approved land trust. Currently, 625 acres have already been dedicated and it known as the HIGH POINT PRAIRIE. The development is named Los Establos and was envisioned to restore a Tall Grass Prairie ecosystem that is very scarce, particular in this part of Texas, where developers typically do high density suburban lots with little thought to preservation and open space. This residential development was a leap-frog to the typical development around here and the nation to make this financially feasible but is still having a difficult time selling lots in the current market. I recommend a special federal, state and county program to encourage other developers and adjacent land owners in semi-rural areas to set aside lands for the future that can save significant portions of ecosystems for future generations. I will be willing to serve as an advisor to a group that is interested in pursuing this. This is an opportune time due to the slow down in sprawling residential development to avoid the same mono-environment type of planning that steadily creeps along gobbling up and destroying native habitats and using high amounts of energy and natural resources.

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(cont.)

Land should not have to PAY for itself. It is a God-given gift to man to enjoy. No man created it and man can pay to enjoy it by paying fees to walk or run or hike. Our country seems to think everything has to be commercialized and make money. Not true. Humans seem to lose their best attributes when they no longer have access to land and wild life. Examples are our cities. There should be more land saved for future generations so they can smell the rain on clean earth and see the plants and animals created for viewing. Too many people think Man rules the earth. More land and access to nature is humbling and soul-enhancing. Please set aside more huge tracts of land for people - not contractors. Our San Francisco Bay Area hosts unique public lands of incredible beauty and wildness close to large population centers. Our public lands belong to Americans of all ages and provide us with clean supplies of drinking water, healthy air, and an opportunity to experience wildlife and nature. I urge you to implement the following priorities: --The Obama administration should create new national programs that help connect people - especially our youth - with nature. Outdoor play and a connection to the natural world benefit children in many ways. The federal government should develop new administrative incentives and funding to expand state and local opportunities for students to reconnect and learn about nature. --Enhancing sustainable economic development opportunities through tourism and recreation will benefit local communities. Communities can diversify their economies by expanding tourism-related industries and boost ecotourism in their region and thereby increasing demand for food and lodging services. --Stewardship and conservation of our outdoor recreation lands, important watersheds and valued private lands works when we come together around our shared common values. Everyday across our state concerned citizens, tribal leaders, conservation groups, recreation businesses, and local elected officials join together to enhance and preserve their treasured special places. --Increase funding for recreation, improved access and trail system revitalization through the Public Lands Service Corps Act of 2010: The bill (H.R. 1612) "increases service opportunities for youth and young adults on public lands (ages 18-24), providing green jobs, improving infrastructure, restoring public lands, encouraging cultural and historical research, improving the health of coastal, marine and estuarine ecosystems, addressing climate change and assisting with scientific data collection." --Fully Fund the Land and Water Conservation Fund: The administration should support full funding of the Land and Water Conservation Fund and other programs that foster conservation on private lands. These efforts would help keep wildlife habitat intact and connect wild areas, protect lands around lakes, rivers and streams. The fund can also be used to establish new local parks and trails, or provide key wildlife linkage areas. Thank you for considering my comments.

Discussion Question 1

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(cont.)

As a community activist working with families to achieve a healthier lifestyle I encourage you to support efforts in our region to connect families with nature. Our San Francisco Bay Area hosts unique public lands of incredible beauty and wildness close to large population centers. Our public lands belong to Americans of all ages and provide us with clean supplies of drinking water, healthy air, and an opportunity to experience wildlife and nature. I urge you to implement the following priorities: --The Obama administration should create new national programs that help connect people - especially our youth - with nature. Outdoor play and a connection to the natural world benefit children in many ways. The federal government should develop new administrative incentives and funding to expand state and local opportunities for students to reconnect and learn about nature. --Enhancing sustainable economic development opportunities through tourism and recreation will benefit local communities. Communities can diversify their economies by expanding tourism-related industries and boost ecotourism in their region and thereby increasing demand for food and lodging services. --Stewardship and conservation of our outdoor recreation lands, important watersheds and valued private lands works when we come together around our shared common values. Everyday across our state concerned citizens, tribal leaders, conservation groups, recreation businesses, and local elected officials join together to enhance and preserve their treasured special places. --Increase funding for recreation, improved access and trail system revitalization through the Public Lands Service Corps Act of 2010: The bill (H.R. 1612) "increases service opportunities for youth and young adults on public lands (ages 18-24), providing green jobs, improving infrastructure, restoring public lands, encouraging cultural and historical research, improving the health of coastal, marine and estuarine ecosystems, addressing climate change and assisting with scientific data collection." --Fully Fund the Land and Water Conservation Fund: The administration should support full funding of the Land and Water Conservation Fund and other programs that foster conservation on private lands. These efforts would help keep wildlife habitat intact and connect wild areas, protect lands around lakes, rivers and streams. The fund can also be used to establish new local parks and trails, or provide key wildlife linkage areas. Thank you for considering my comments.

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(cont.)

I am concerned about the future we are leaving for all of our grandchildren, yours and mine, particularly the environment, the depletion of natural resources and the loss of beautiful natural places still left in the country. If we continue taking and using what every we want or feel we need now to satisfy our every whim, there will be very little left for future generations. We need strong leadership in the country to change our ways and convince us to pay a price now so future generations will not have to pay a much bigger one in the future. Our San Francisco Bay Area hosts unique public lands of incredible beauty and wildness close to large population centers. Our public lands belong to Americans of all ages and provide us with clean supplies of drinking water, healthy air, and an opportunity to experience wildlife and nature. I urge you to implement the following priorities: --The Obama administration should create new national programs that help connect people - especially our youth - with nature. Outdoor play and a connection to the natural world benefit children in many ways. The federal government should develop new administrative incentives and funding to expand state and local opportunities for students to reconnect and learn about nature. --Enhancing sustainable economic development opportunities through tourism and recreation will benefit local communities. Communities can diversify their economies by expanding tourism-related industries and boost ecotourism in their region and thereby increasing demand for food and lodging services. --Stewardship and conservation of our outdoor recreation lands, important watersheds and valued private lands works when we come together around our shared common values. Everyday across our state concerned citizens, tribal leaders, conservation groups, recreation businesses, and local elected officials join together to enhance and preserve their treasured special places. --Increase funding for recreation, improved access and trail system revitalization through the Public Lands Service Corps Act of 2010: The bill (H.R. 1612) "increases service opportunities for youth and young adults on public lands (ages 18-24), providing green jobs, improving infrastructure, restoring public lands, encouraging cultural and historical research, improving the health of coastal, marine and estuarine ecosystems, addressing climate change and assisting with scientific data collection." --Fully Fund the Land and Water Conservation Fund: The administration should support full funding of the Land and Water Conservation Fund and other programs that foster conservation on private lands. These efforts would help keep wildlife habitat intact and connect wild areas, protect lands around lakes, rivers and streams. The fund can also be used to establish new local parks and trails, or provide key wildlife linkage areas. Thank you for considering my comments.

Our San Francisco Bay Area hosts unique public lands of incredible beauty and wildness close to large population centers. Our public lands belong to Americans of all ages and provide us with clean supplies of drinking water, healthy air, and an opportunity to experience wildlife and nature. I urge you to implement the following priorities: -- Create new national programs that help connect people - especially our youth - with nature. --Enhancing sustainable economic development opportunities through tourism and recreation will benefit local communities. -- Increase funding for recreation, improved access and trail system revitalization through the Public Lands Service Corps Act of 2010. --Fully Fund the Land and Water Conservation Fund. Thank you for considering my comments.

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(cont.)

The San Francisco Bay Area is a critical habitat not only for humans, but for wildlife and aquatic life as well. The public lands in our area must be protected for the benefit of future generations and to ensure species survival. Accordingly, please: (1) Enhance sustainable economic development opportunities through tourism and recreation that will benefit local communities. (2) Increase funding for recreation, improved access and trail system revitalization through the Public Lands Service Corps Act of 2010. (3) Fully fund the Land and Water Conservation Fund, which fosters conservation on private lands. These efforts would help keep wildlife habitat intact and connect wild areas, protect lands around lakes, rivers and streams. Thank you.

I've received notification from The Wilderness Society that you're looking for public input on actions for public lands. I'm sick of industries operating without any concern for human or environmental impacts. Regulations and penalties need to be sufficient to ensure that human safety is guaranteed and that ecosystems are preserved for future generations. If companies can't make those promises, they shouldn't be allowed to operate. Clean water and air, beautiful landscapes, and diverse species that are older than our own species are not worth losing for a few transient dollars. Companies that violate regulations need to have severe penalties. If companies can consider penalties a standard operating expense, then they're not severe enough. Our country is creative and industrious enough to come up with alternatives to destructive practices. Stop holding back progress and destroying our planet for economic reasons. Thank you for considering my comments.

I would very much like your input on the issue of walking dogs free of leash in conservation land. I live in eastern Massachusetts where land is crowded. There is a movement afloat here to ban off-leash dog walking in our conservation lands, lands that have been purchased using our municipal and federal tax dollars. The Great Meadows Wildlife Refuge is a huge part of several eastern MA towns and the federal government banned dogs (both on-leash and off-leash) completely from all of this land. Many communities in eastern MA have banned off-leash dogs from conservation lands. Yet dogs need off-leash exercise and off-leash socialization with other dogs to be emotionally and physically healthy. PhD animal behaviorists have done studies that prove that dogs need off-leash exercise and off-leash socialization with other dogs in order to have good quality of life. If we can't provide for this need for our companion dogs on conservation land, our society is turning its back on "man's best friend". If you look at the writings by animal scientists, small fenced in parks do not enable the amount of exercise needed for most dogs or satisfy a dog's "seeking system" (see Dr. Temple Grandin's research). Conservation lands with trails and a variety of terrains, water and shade are needed for healthy dog exercise and socialization opportunities. I hope that the need to provide off-leash dog walking on conservation land will rise to a high level of importance in the President's Initiative. I would like to know how I can participate under the Initiative to bring this issue the attention it deserves.

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(cont.)

Our country is blessed with many beautiful and diverse natural ecosystems. Most Americans quickly recognize that the everglades, the Rocky Mountains, our coastlines, and other sites as national treasures. Less well known is the Prairie Pothole Region of the Northern Great Plains. This magnificent expanse of native prairie and wetlands supports a host of important wildlife species and is absolutely critical to the future of continental waterfowl populations. Despite its significance, bits of the Prairie Pothole Region are lost every year to agricultural conversion and wetland drainage. It is my hope that the America's Great Outdoors initiative will recognize and protect the Prairie Pothole Region and a national landmark or similar status to help preserve its future for wildlife and people.

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(cont.)

Dear Sir/Madam: On July 1 I attended the Listening Session on Americas Great Outdoors and have included an expanded version of the ideas and issues I presented that evening. I hope you find them helpful.

Eastside Audubon The mission of Eastside Audubon is to protect, preserve and enhance natural ecosystems and our communities for the benefit of birds, other wildlife and people. Thank you for holding the Listening Session in Seattle. I welcome the opportunity to tell you about our program and contribute to the discussion of conservation of our natural areas and the promotion of greater involvement in the outdoors by American families. I represent Eastside Audubon, a chapter of the National Audubon Society with a service area that includes East King County from Lake Washington to the Cascade Crest and from the Snohomish County line to just south of I-90. Established in 1980 as a Chapter of the National Audubon Society, Eastside Audubon has grown to about 450 members and conducts all its activities using volunteers. Eastside Audubon has three primary means of serving the community: Conservation of birds and preservation and restoration of bird habitats, education of children and adults about birds and conservation issues, and recreational bird watching. The chapter sponsors a variety of bird watching trips and native plant walks, provides classes for adults, works with youth in a variety of settings, monitors land use and development that impact our communities, and conducts bird surveys of sensitive areas. I will respond to each of the four questions discussed in the breakout sessions.

1. Challenges: What obstacles exist to achieve your goals for conservation, recreation, or reconnecting people to the outdoors? A major obstacle is the lack of a national priority to support the consolidation of natural areas at the local level in multi-use urban and suburban parks and neighborhoods. Other priorities such as continual construction of soccer and baseball fields, hardening the environment by paving trails, and brighter lighting of parks seem to take precedence over preserving the natural environment. The introductory film reinforced the belief that nature is far away and the need for people to have to travel to amazing vistas to appreciate the outdoors. There was only token mention of local parks. In addition to protecting our national parks and forests we need to help people appreciate the outdoors where they are.

2. What works? What are the most effective strategies for conservation, recreation, and reconnecting people to the outdoors that you have used. Eastside Audubon has a number of programs that have been effective. For example, over the past five years the chapter has made a major commitment to conservation and bird watching recreation at Marymoor Park in Redmond, WA. We hold a monthly work party of 15-30 people and have been successful in restoring and preserving habitat for birds and other wildlife, and establishing a network of birding trails with high quality interpretive signage. This was done with the volunteer labor of our members, community people including high school and college students who were contributing their community service time, and employees of companies such as Microsoft and the Puget Sound Bird Observatory. We are committed to establishing a legacy of stewardship to pass on to children. Our chapter works closely with teachers in 14 schools in East King County and provides classroom-based educational programs on birds and the environment which include topics such as bird migration, species identification and typical foods birds eat. Each year we provide nature camp scholarships to six children from low-income families, a \$150 grant to a teacher to support environmental education, and a \$500 college scholarship to a high school senior who plans to study science or the environment. Chapter volunteers lead over 75 bird watching field trips per year for people of all skill levels and are committed to getting people out

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(cont.)

of their homes and into nature. 3. Federal Government Role: How can the Federal Government be a more effective partner in helping to achieve conservation, recreation, and connecting people to the outdoors? We welcome this new initiative and hope it will get the federal government involved in many kinds of grassroots conservation and recreation activities. Promoting this White House Initiative as a national priority in a manner similar to President Kennedys Presidents Council on Physical Fitness would be a great beginning. We recommend that the federal government provide ongoing and consistent support for citizen science projects such as the Audubon Christmas Bird Count and the Cornell Lab of Ornithologys urban bird count and their joint Project Feederwatch. Also needed is financial support for analysis of the collected data and promulgation of the results. We also recommend that the government establish a massive effort to remove invasive species from natural areas, to plant native species of plants, to clean and repair trails and waterways, and to preserve open land in urban and suburban areas where most of the people live. These programs will also provide jobs to millions of Americans. In addition, we need government leadership to help the country stop burning fossil fuels and to review all legislation for its effect on the carbon load in the atmosphere. 4. Tools: What additional tools and resources would help your efforts be even more successful? Federal, state and county coordination will greatly help local organizations expand the kinds of activities conducted by Eastside Audubon which rfect the overall goals of the White House Initiative. These programs can be expanded to new communities and strengthened in the communities where they are already in place. Support for public-private partnerships is also important. Eastside Audubon has partnered with King County in its work at Marymoor Park, and with local businesses such as REI and Puget Consumers Coop to support education and conservation programs. Other communities have asked us to participate with them, but we are limited by size and budget. America is blessed with natural beauty and it has taken the active participation of citizens in Audubon and many other organizations to advocate for cooperation among the various levels of government to protect what we have. To expand the range of opportunities for families and improve the natural areas we cherish will take not only government but also average citizens who feel a sense of belonging and ownership for their country. Conservation and recreation can co-exist and enhance one another. Local community groups are one important aspect of a program to reconnect people to the outdoors. We hope the federal government will support this kind of community involvement. Thank you,

Along with many thousand others, I insist that our HUGE, Centralized Government continue funding our nations hallowed ground: Civil War Battlefields. Aside from the many wrong-doings being committed by Congress, etc., these hallowed grounds must be cherished and understood by all! Thank You,

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(cont.)

I would like to take this opportunity, as an American citizen of the greatest nation on Earth, to remind you to remember all National treasures that have been created and desperately need to be preserved. Both land and sea, from the actual salt water to the highest redwood trees, these are Americas greatest symbols. They cannot lobby or vote, but must rely on a President with foresight and a love of preserving what is truly great about our Nation. Please put conservation and preservation on your list of priorities so you can leave a permanent and pristine home for our treasured national symbols. Thank you in advance for your time and attention to my request.

Dear Sir, I understand that there is a new draft of the Imperial Sand Dune Recreation Management Plan. I with my family have been going to ythe dune for over 40 year. Frist with my kids and now with my grandkids. My family keeps growing the same as the number of duners keeps growing. Yet the recreational area and camping area keeps getting smaller. As with any active sport there is some risk. That risk increases the more congested the area gets. I hope the new managment plan will increase the area to ride and area to camp. Thank you

We are writing to express our support for continued equestrian use of federal land. This country has a long and proud history of horses on our trails and continuing this tradition is an important link to the past, an opportunity for our citizens to connect with the outdoors in a unique way. In addition, it is crucial that we continue to allow access to vehicles with horse trailers. Without it, how are we to actually reach those trails? Horse owners are, for the most part, good stewards of our wild places. We know the importance of maintaining the land, protecting trees and wildlife, packing out what we pack in. Thank you.

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(cont.)

Dear Department of the Interior and President Obama;. As a Committee Member of the St. Louis Bay Chapter Ducks Unlimited, outdoors enthusiast and supporter of waterfowl habitat conservation, I strongly recommend designation of the St. Louis Bay Estuary and River watershed as a "Treasured Landscape" in the administration's America's Great Outdoors Initiative. The St. Louis River provides the headwaters for the Great Lakes which sustain many millions of people. Its heartbreaking to see the lack of waterfowl over the river compared to my childhood growing up in the Bayview Neighborhood of Duluth when great flocks of ducks could be seen traversing the flyway over the St. Louis Bay. Now Duck sightings have become relatively rare. One of the causes that I can see is the pollution from Iron Mining. Sulfides, Heavy Metals, suspended solids, and other pollutants continue to be discharged into the river. I have looked at reports from the Dunka Pit where the above pollutants are discharged into Birch Lake which then flows into the Boundary Waters Canoe area Wilderness. The Minnesota Pollution Control Agency records on close scrutiny show the science that is generally overlooked. In wet times the tested biology seems to fair well due to the generally followed dilution solution to pollution followed by these state agencies but in times of droubt the impact of the pollution kills everything which results in stream sterility unable to sustain wildlife further up the food chain including waterfowl. Recognizing the influence the outdoors has on our youth and the need for conserving america's natural landscapes, the president and his administration have proposed the America's Great Outdoors Initiative(AGOI). This initiative is designed to promote the outdoors to youth, advance private-land conservation strategies, and use SCIENCE-BASED management practices to resore and protect our lands. Our Great Lakes Headwaters are not only being polluted, they continue to be further threatened by newer sulfide mining proposals to extract base metals. These newer sulfide mining proposals are intended to provide jobs. However these jobs are being proposed by an industry with a horrible legacy of envfironmental destruction. Sulfide mining is a net job killer in tourism, logging, agriculture, and public employment. The pollution diminishes recreational oppurtunities, kills wildlife, increases health care costs, increases electricity cost through PUC agency subsidy, causes widespread property devaluation reducing government revenue and concentrates these costs on surviving businesses, for a thousand years. The federal governement needs to join the State of Wisconsin in banning these sulfide mining activities in wet areas which are at risk including the BWCA Wilderness and the Great Lakes. We need laws that prevent State and Federal Agencies from protecting polluters by being allowed to issue permits to pollute and pre-empting lawsuits by environmental organizations intending to enforce the law. Once polluted by sulfide mining, the Great Lakes would take many thousands of years to recover. These Lakes of which the St. Louis River forms the headwaters contain 25 percent of the world's fresh waters. Let's make a good first start by cleaning and keeping clean the Lakes St. Louis River headwaters and it's estuary. Let's bring the Ducks back to the St. Louis Bay. Let's stop sulfide mining and force iron mining to at least make attempts to mitigate their pollution.

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(cont.)

Dear Policymaker, Here are policy priorities we think the Obama administration are to consider in designing a policy for America's Great Outdoors. 1) Conserve large landscapes, including our healthy wildlands and rivers, connecting them with working forest and ranch lands, private lands and the connections across these large areas. Protect large natural areas such as: Mid-elevation lands currently proposed for Wilderness designation by citizens of Colorado - especially the Hidden Gems Wilderness Proposal. The Hidden Gems specifically seeks protection for ecologically rich landscapes at lower elevations that are under-represented in existing wildernesses and protected areas. 2) Critical migration corridors, landscape linkages, headwater areas, and areas of varying elevations must be protected in the face of increasing development, destructive recreation, and climate change. Areas like the Thompson Divide (NE of Paonia and SW of Carbondale) should be protected from the fragmenting impacts of energy development and road building to ensure that we don't isolate the last great pods of habitat in western Colorado. Protecting these public lands and rivers will provide our best hope for addressing loss of species and open space, preserving water quality and adapting to climate change while preserving the wildlife and lands we enjoy today. This will give us the opportunity to actively reconnect our children to their incredible natural heritage. Just recently, there was a huge success for wildlands protection in the magnificent Vermillion Basin, which the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) announced it will close to future oil and gas leasing. Following this lead, we need bold actions like this to protect large, unfragmented treasured landscapes. 3) Reaffirm and implement BLMs authority to establish Wilderness Study Areas. This effort should include giving the Bureau of land management the authority to establish new Wilderness Study areas and to protect the wilderness characteristics of those areas. Hundreds of thousands of acres of land across the West that were identified by citizens and BLM as worthy of wilderness designation have been leased, and they deserve both a commitment and an approach to real protection before they are lost forever. 4) Create a comprehensive Quiet Recreation Strategy for federal lands in Colorado. This strategy should variously provide for non-motorized activities such as hiking, mountain biking, fishing, family camping, wildlife photography, and more. A formalized acknowledgement should create more sustainable use of our lands while encouraging things like stewardship, trail maintenance, volunteerism, and getting youth outdoors. Using Colorado as a pilot project for a Quiet Recreation Strategy will also provide a sustainable use model for the rest of the country to follow. 5) Support and implement more science-based management of our resources in Colorado. This science-based management needs to provide a better understanding of the impacts of conflicting land uses on other resources across the landscape. Colorado is fortunate enough to have many important native species, such as the sage grouse, which would benefit from the incorporation of a more science-based management plan for their protection. 6) Support opportunities for sportsmen to continue enjoying healthy and challenging hunting and fishing on federal public lands and rivers. Preserve the values and access that make backcountry hunting a wholly unique endeavor. This can be done through a variety of measures, including through the designation of backcountry hunting Special Recreation Management Areas as has been proposed by the Jarbidge, Idaho and Little Snake, Colorado BLM Field Offices in their respective Resource Management Plan revisions. Please consider these conservation policies in your decision making.

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(cont.)

Dear Policymaker, Here are policy priorities we think the Obama administration are to consider in designing a policy for America's Great Outdoors. 1) Conserve large landscapes, including our healthy wildlands and rivers, connecting them with working forest and ranch lands, private lands and the connections across these large areas. Protect large natural areas such as: Mid-elevation lands currently proposed for Wilderness designation by citizens of Colorado - especially the Hidden Gems Wilderness Proposal. The Hidden Gems specifically seeks protection for ecologically rich landscapes at lower elevations that are under-represented in existing wildernesses and protected areas. 2) Critical migration corridors, landscape linkages, headwater areas, and areas of varying elevations must be protected in the face of increasing development, destructive recreation, and climate change. Areas like the Thompson Divide (NE of Paonia and SW of Carbondale) should be protected from the fragmenting impacts of energy development and road building to ensure that we don't isolate the last great pods of habitat in western Colorado. Protecting these public lands and rivers will provide our best hope for addressing loss of species and open space, preserving water quality and adapting to climate change while preserving the wildlife and lands we enjoy today. This will give us the opportunity to actively reconnect our children to their incredible natural heritage. Just recently, there was a huge success for wildlands protection in the magnificent Vermillion Basin, which the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) announced it will close to future oil and gas leasing. Following this lead, we need bold actions like this to protect large, unfragmented treasured landscapes. 3) Reaffirm and implement BLMs authority to establish Wilderness Study Areas. This effort should include giving the Bureau of land management the authority to establish new Wilderness Study areas and to protect the wilderness characteristics of those areas. Hundreds of thousands of acres of land across the West that were identified by citizens and BLM as worthy of wilderness designation have been leased, and they deserve both a commitment and an approach to real protection before they are lost forever. 4) Create a comprehensive Quiet Recreation Strategy for federal lands in Colorado. This strategy should variously provide for non-motorized activities such as hiking, mountain biking, fishing, family camping, wildlife photography, and more. A formalized acknowledgement should create more sustainable use of our lands while encouraging things like stewardship, trail maintenance, volunteerism, and getting youth outdoors. Using Colorado as a pilot project for a Quiet Recreation Strategy will also provide a sustainable use model for the rest of the country to follow. 5) Support and implement more science-based management of our resources in Colorado. This science-based management needs to provide a better understanding of the impacts of conflicting land uses on other resources across the landscape. Colorado is fortunate enough to have many important native species, such as the sage grouse, which would benefit from the incorporation of a more science-based management plan for their protection. 6) Support opportunities for sportsmen to continue enjoying healthy and challenging hunting and fishing on federal public lands and rivers. Preserve the values and access that make backcountry hunting a wholly unique endeavor. This can be done through a variety of measures, including through the designation of backcountry hunting Special Recreation Management Areas as has been proposed by the Jarbidge, Idaho and Little Snake, Colorado BLM Field Offices in their respective Resource Management Plan revisions. Please consider these conservation policies in your decision making.

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(cont.)

I would love to see a return to the Conservation Corps Idea now that our country needs job creation. State and local governments are cash poor right now. I vote for hiring local people to staff state and local parks that have been forced to close (i.e. in Oregon and California among others). Pay local residents \$15/hour to keep these parks open and keep vandals and thieves out! It would be a cheap solution, create jobs, protect the resources we the people own, and allow stressed out Americans to recharge in the Great Outdoors. No more motorized off-road vehicles, jetskis, or snowmobies in our parks, please. It is way too noisy and dangerous when they are allowed to ride roughshod over pedestrians. Thanks,

Dear Secretary Salazar, I am attending the listening session in Albuquerque today. While I have the opportunity, I would like to make my views known. I am in favor of non-motorized recreation on our federal lands. Please limit oil and gas exploration and development, cease road building in sensitive public lands. I would like you to make more opportunities for Wilderness recreation, and I support the tread lightly approach to mountain biking on public lands. I appreciate your help with these efforts. Best,

There is no such thing as "good" habitat destruction (e.g. mountain biking and mountain bike trail building) vs. "bad" habitat destruction (e.g. sprawl). ALL habitat destruction is bad. Selfishness and ignorance of basic biology is driving the push for vehicular (ab)use of wild lands. And, yes, mountain bikers ARE lobbying to allow bikes in Wilderness and Wilderness Study areas, proving that they are out of touch with reality. We DEPEND on the existence and health of other species! -- I am working on creating wildlife habitat that is off-limits to humans ("pure habitat"). Want to help? (I spent the previous 8 years fighting auto dependence and road construction.) Please don't put a cell phone next to any part of your body that you are fond of!

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Everyone should be able to enjoy the sky at night as part of our national heritage. In the northeast there are many cultural sites which are unidentified or unstudied. These sites were meant to be viewed at sunrise, sunset and during certain night events, such as the Perseid Meteor shower. These ceremonial landscapes played a 'lost' role in our nation's history. The federal government could now play an important role in supporting the identification and protection of these sites. The federal government could also play a role in reforming our night-time lighting - inefficient fixtures, wasteful timing and overuse of lighting. 'Dark sky' street fixtures are no more expensive than traditional fixtures. Residential lighting can also be manufactured to be 'dark sky' friendly - I own several. The federal government could provide incentives to states and towns to become more lighting efficient. Public education could go a long way. A one night national 'dark sky' event could bring partners together to raise awareness of the beauty of the night sky as part of our great outdoors and to generate support for more year round changes. In the recent National Geographic issue, a nonprofit in New York working with community farms asked children who had participated in their programs if they had seen the stars - sadly only two children who had recently immigrated from Africa could answer 'yes'. Viewing the stars should part of the outdoor experience for every child. Consider sponsoring a 'Big Star Night' on August 11th each summer to coincide with the Perseid Meteor shower and bring a greater awareness of this light pollution and energy conservation issue. I think corporate sponsors could also be found who are interested energy conservation. Nonprofit and community partners around the country would offer local family oriented events (a sort of 'Trails Night' similar to Trails Day). When everyone realizes what we've been missing, it will generate excitement for restoring our great national night sky! Thank you for considering this idea, please feel free to contact me for additional details. Respectfully submitted,

I am very concerned at seeing all of the current indicated support for OHV activity. I feel this is totally opposed to the growing environmental disasters of CO2 and need to reduce use of fossil fuels for unnecessary electricity and petroleum use. Only perhaps special use for persons whose mobility is imparied should be accomodated to some extent. Purely recreational use which involves blasting around public lands with ATV's, ORV's, etc. etc. needs to be eliminated. I am 76. If that rule means I never get to go some places, that is part of the burden which our developing society has placed on some of us. The land, water, air - resources - are primary and should not be compromised for personal whim/wants etc. Thank you for your reply re my two questions.

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Hello, I was unable to attend the recent Great Outdoors public meeting in LA (July 8). First of all I just want to say what a great idea it is to go out and get feedback directly from the public - thanks for taking the time to listen. My background is as a former faculty in an Earth Science department (GPS at Caltech) - but not in a capacity that gives me any credentials in environmental conservation. Mainly, I have just always had a passion for the US southwest - even from my days looking at Arizona Highways magazines in a school library in the north of England. Since being in the US over the last two decades - very recently as a citizen - I have grown much more attached to this wonderful region. I thus feel internally the tension between conservation and access that so plagues policy on land usage. One of the very best ways to access and be immersed in the vast landscapes of the desert west - where hiking and foot access is largely impractical - is via offroad vehicles, be it along the breathtaking Mojave road in California, the stunning White Rim trail in Canyonlands National Park in Utah, or the numerous trails over the Panamint Mountains near Death Valley, California. Such offroad access is often viewed as destructive to landscapes, and in a very limited number of extremely sensitive areas, this may be true. But on the other hand, most of the people I have come across who use offroad vehicles are connected to the land in much more real and impassioned way than the many city-bound of my friends: they access the land because of their love of it, not to destroy it. Indeed, access to the land and the opportunity to experience it personally is, I think, key to the nurturing of a true appreciation of America's great geographical inheritance in current and future generations. Responsible access, employing a reasonably large number of designated trails and allowing the opportunity for wilderness camping is essential to allow the land to be appreciated. The current policy in many areas of closing trails and limiting camping opportunities, by excessively concentrating activity, only serves to artificially fuel negative images of insensitive intrusion of civilization on the land. Those of us who value the land and want vehicular access want this intrusion less than anyone - the last thing we want in the solitude offered by the vast West is to be packed into tight confines with others. The west has survived and thrived through much busier and more destructive times than these, of logging and mines and the early booms of the 1800's and early 1900's. It is largely emptier now than in those times. Partially, I think, we often suffer from the fallacy of "the fragile Earth" - the idea that with the slightest touch we may break it. As a climate scientist, I have rather grown to appreciate the profound robustness of the Earth and its climate system. Make no mistake - the climate challenges we face are challenges to our own wealth and comfort, not to the planet. We also suffer from a romanticism of the primordial - the myth that much of the west is untouched wilderness that remains in a pre-Columbian state. Yet invasive species, extensive nineteenth century logging, mining, excessive fire prevention, and other activities have touched almost every corner of it. Despite these various ravages, the West has survived and adapted, a new equilibrium reached. A relatively small network of offroad (more properly unpaved road) trails across this land threaten it much less than prior challenges. Yet when larger threats to the global environment are at hand, the connection to the environment offered by direct contact with the land is threatened if we close people off from it. Once closed, and out of sight, the environment seems much more distant and less meaningful. We need to make it more meaningful and tangible. That can best be done by encouraging people to get off the freeway and see it - if only up close once in a lifetime on a offroad trip with a friend. Please consider the

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importance of the human connection with the land and the critical role of widespread offroad access for this connection in the vast expanses of the west. Sealing it from the people may ultimately be the least effective way of protecting it.

When the guns are out of the parks, we'll start to participate again. Until then, we say away.

America's parks are not only an important part of her history, but also of our future. If expansion of parks is impossible (which is a silly thought because nothing is impossible; some things are just a greater challenge than others), then the preservation and beautification of the present parks is a necessity for present generations as well as those to come.

America's parks are truly something that we must protect and preserve for generations to come. I myself travel to several of these across the U.S. and fell lucky to have them available. I fear the movement that has become ever more apparent that many parks are becoming less and less accessible to the general public for interests such as Fishing, Hunting, trailriding of ATV's, camping and hiking. If some had their way, large portions of the Everglades and Rocky Mountain parks would be unaccessible except by non-motorized means. Some of these particular areas are places so remote and can hardly be accessed except during narrow windows each year due to weather alone. As a tax paying citizen I feel that these parks should continue to be available for me, my children and grand grandchildren. Thankyou.

Dear Mr. President, Theodore Roosevelt once spoke about preserving our natural resources for our future generations by protecting them from the short sightedness of industry. I hope that you will work to expand the funding and support for the stewards of our land and game resources, like the National Park Service and Bureau of Land Management. Without these protections, national treasures like Yellowstone National Park and the Grand Canyon would not exist as we know it. The Parks, Monuments, Forests, Grasslands and Wildlife Preserves need another champion like Theodore Roosevelt. I hope that champion is you.

Dear President Obama, I bet it's been a long two years. Did you remember some of the people who helped get you here? I know there's a fear of midterms and a prevalent sense of apathy among congress, but I know there's so much more that could be done. We stand at a crossroads, a final chance to curb the excesses of our society. Not to be cliched, but its on your shoulders Mr. President. Please, help save this land for future generations.

Every generation past has had the opportunity to enjoy one of the greatest joys of living-- nature and the beautiful outdoors. I urge you to consider the detrimental impact that would occur if you chose not to better protect this beautiful Earth.

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Hike4Life believes in enjoying the outdoors, not taking from or destroying it! Many consider the murderous hunting of wild animals an enjoyable Outdoor Sport, H4L respectfully declines and refuses to accept that it is fun or pleasurable to steal the life of another living being. The massacre of the world's animals is directly linked to man and our inherent nature to spread, to dominate and to destroy. At Hike4Life, we believe in sharing the outdoors with our wild neighbors and marveling in the beauty that has been given to us by the Natural World. We do not trash our forests or woodland areas, we don't participate in malicious behavior or mistreatment of wildlife that we may come across, the only thing we leave with are photographs and memories. Please do your part and protect what we have cause once it's gone; it's gone! ?

I am the next generation, the ones who will be living the consequences of our parents decisions for the next fifty years. I am young, and I want to have many an opporunity to enjoy the great outdoors as you have had. I speak for the trees since they cannot speak for themselves, and I insist you extend the amount of space put aside for parks, nature trails, and hiking trails. Because it IS important.

I believe each person has a right to wilderness whether they choose to indulge is their own choice yet I feel they should have the option open to them. Why not protect the land, from rivers to forests to deserts, no matter how forsaken someone somewhere needs them so why not keep them open for all the generations still living? Thank you if you actually read this, but I understand you've got things do. Have a nice day.

I spend a TON of time outdoors and we absolutely NEED more conserved and preserved and restored land. Without it we have nothing. You should read up on Teddy Roosevelt a bit. Regardless, I am devoting my life to conservation and spreading the joys of the great outdoors. Every president has a duty to expand our protected lands and improve what is already protected. Thank you!

I would not be the person I am today without America's protected outdoor spaces. I have never felt better than when I'm standing in the glory of nature's magnificent beauty. Protected outdoor spaces allow people to come together for quality time with each other and they provide a vacation from Blackberries, iPhones, laptops, email and the industrialized world. Please help protect these outdoor sanctuaries for America's future. Thank you!

Let's get America's children off the couch and into our forests, on our beaches, on our waterways. Your consideration of all aspects of outdoor recreation during this planning process is critical to the health and well-being of the United States. From proper management of our natural resources, to the maintenance and protection of access rights for EVERY American citizen. This includes a robust and all inclusive motorized access policy. Do not lock up America's most treasured natural resources and spaces with the most discriminating and exclusive land use management designation available - Wilderness. Leave America's wide open spaces available to it's citizens. Not for development, but for access and recreation.

MOUNTAIN BIKES DESTROY NATURAL AREAS - PLEASE KEEP THEM OUT. THANK YOU.

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Mountain Biking promotes healthy lifestyle, appreciation for nature, and more. Please help promote this activity by allowing access to more trails. Allowing bikes into wilderness areas already used by horses etc would be a great start. Thanks for all that you do, especially given all the conservatives out to destroy you.

One of my favorite parts of driving up to college two weeks ago was driving through Pennsylvania. My mom was napping in the passenger seat while i drove through the Pennsylvania Wilds and the Northeast Pennsylvania Mountains, and for those few hours, I could not have been happier. Sitting there, making my way through the ever-present road work on highway 80, i found myself imagining what it might have been like to live in the wooded hills surrounding me. That is a moment that everyone should have the privilege of having-finding a connection with the land's original inhabitants. If that, more sentimental, view doesn't move you, maybe a more scientific and pragmatic look would help. In my first grade class we learned a song about the habitat. I don't remember it all now, but i do remember that there were two main habitats we discussed: the forests and the oceans. The points we covered (as first graders) were that the forests and oceans help their respective inhabitants to "breathe." As a middle schooler, I learned how the forests and oceans help organisms "breathe"-they recycle carbon dioxide that we produce and give off oxygen, which we breathe. As a junior, driving around with my mother, visiting colleges, we were listening to a book on tape, specifically Bill Bryson's A Short History of Nearly Everything. While listening, I heard him mention something about trees and how they produce oxygen and take in carbon dioxide. Naturally i was intrigued. As i listened, however, I became slightly horrified: the amount of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere was at a dangerously close point to overwhelming the naturally "fix-it" threshold of the trees, who have been helping counteract our trials and errors of the past millennia. Needless to say, that's not good. I have now presented two views to you on this issue and all that is left for me to do is give you my support. So, i urge you to take every opportunity that you find to help protect our wildlands, where lingering memories of days long past might flash through some young persons mind, and where the flora is doing its best to keep us, as a species, alive and well.

Stop Factory farming, whaling, killing of innocent animals and the destruction of their habitats. The survival of humans, the animals and our planet earth depend on changes now.

The more people that hike and enjoy the outdoors will result in more people who care about the land. Those people will in turn want to invest in it. Preserving our national parks and monuments is vital for our continued high quality of life. There is something deeply spiritual about walking a trail and being with Nature. I want my children to enjoy it someday too.

The park system in America is the best this about America in my opinion.

There needs to be an intelligent approach to outdoor conservation- Namely that the access be based on the vehicle's environmental impact: 1. RESTRICTED ACCESS: motorized vehicles 2. SEMI-RESTRICTED ACCESS: horses 3. UN-RESTRICTED ACCESS: mountain biking & hiking

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We are very fortunate to have some wonderful places in Minnesota - Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness, Itasca State Park and the Headwaters of the Mississippi River, just to name a few. We have experienced first hand the beauty and importance of preserving these precious places for wildlife to flourish and people to visit and have had the pleasure of sharing these places with our children and hope to have the opportunity to do the same with our grandchildren. Please help support preserving these very important places. They are part of what makes our country GREAT!!!

With the damage caused by the Station Fire where I live, it is more critical than ever that we protect what is left of our outdoor spaces. In addition, when I went hiking in Eaton Canyon yesterday, there was gang tagging on the signs! This is unacceptable and more forest rangers and park rangers should be hired.

Excellent listening forum in Denver. Unfortunately we had to leave before the breakout. A few thoughts: Waterways should be central to AGO themes. Not only waterways in urban areas but also from their source. The upper watersheds are in danger in many areas. Focus on multi jurisdictional projects that protect the watershed and provide for recreation from the source down. Waterways would also appear as a "new" emphasis and give a refreshed image in the Park and Forest system which has appeared to focus on National Parks and Wilderness Areas. (without losing focus on Parks and Wilderness). Continue to increase roadless areas. In general, motorized transport does not reconnect anyone to the earth. Recognize conflicts in directives to the USFS. Example, if forests are to be open to alternative energy development does that include a string of windmills on the Continental Divide? How are energy, recreational and wildlife concerns to be balanced? Right now it appears that the USFS is encouraged to support all alternative energy development. Urban green space is vital, even on the top of buildings. Another Colorado idea, Historicorps, directed through Colorado Preservation Inc, is an excellent model for the means in which to couple experience in the natural environment with a recognition of the importance of our shared history. Do we need a national lottery? Thank you for the effort.

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In the small town of Cuba, NM we have organized a partnership to operate a program of trails, walkways, and physical activity to address health concerns in our community. You may find out more about our program at <http://www.stepintocuba.org>. Here are some challenges and potential solutions that arise from our experience of the last several years.

MAJOR HIGHWAYS Our community is bisected by US Highway 550. Our NM Dept. of Transportation seems far more concerned about moving traffic through Cuba quickly, than encouraging pedestrians to do personal business or enjoy recreation on foot. We need speed controls and other traffic calming approaches such as bump-outs, crosswalks, flashing lights, trees, islands, etc. We need a process that allows for adequate public input on this issue. We think that periodic community input sessions and highway design that reflects community desire for more walkable communities should be a priority for state highway departments utilizing Federal funds.

US FOREST SERVICE AND US BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT TRAILS We have a working local partnership for developing local trails that interconnect with scenic Federal lands and the Continental Divide National Scenic Trail that surround our community. Our local plans have been difficult to implement because of scarcity of resources for construction and maintenance of trails. We are dismayed that so much of our Federal budget is directed at maintaining outdoor recreational opportunities remote from where people live, and so little is directed to connect population centers - such as Cuba, NM - to nearby opportunities. Again, a meaningful local public input process, and a re-prioritization of resources seems like the answer. The health and quality-of-life "pay-off" from local trails seems huge in comparison to their cost to construct and maintain.

SMALL CITY PARKS Our city park is not a green refuge from the "concrete city jungle," but rather a center of outdoor activity. We are developing a year-round fitness trail that will serve as a hub for a network of walkways that will connect to our schools, businesses, services, surrounding Federal lands, and the Continental Divide National Scenic Trail. We are pursuing resources available for developing the park, but they are few and far between. Development of a "national blueprint" for small town parks, including potential resources for development, would be an important tool. A program of municipal park development might be very constructive "economic stimulus" for current times.

SOCIAL SUPPORT FOR PHYSICAL ACTIVITY We have a program of social support led by a walking champion. It includes fielding walking referrals from our local clinic, individualized counseling on physical activity plans, organization of walking groups, and worksite healthy activity promotion. These are evidence-based approaches that address our community and Nation's excess weight and diabetes epidemic. They should be among the highest priority of New Mexico's and other state health departments. Unfortunately, they are not, and resources for social support activities such as these are scarce. Health insurance entities rarely cover them as a health benefit, and municipal recreation budgets - such as Cuba's - are inadequate. Rearranging funding priorities to provide for a "pedestrian coordinator/walking champion/physical activity leader" in small communities and neighborhoods, perhaps employed by health departments, seems a potential answer.

YOUTH OUTDOOR EDUCATION The No Child Left Inside movement seems an important key to a healthier future for our country. Programs that encourage environmental and outdoor education, self-reliance in wilderness situations, summer youth corps outdoor jobs, and mentoring seem like an important direction. We are advocating for a safe routes to school program that allows for

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school bus drop-off and pick-up at our city park, with students walking the remaining 1/3 mile to and from the school campus. With the addition of a pedestrian walkway from the park to the schools, we would have a natural venue for school-based outdoor activities. I hope these ideas are useful and can be incorporated into the Americas Great Outdoor Initiative. Once again, please read more about our ideas at <http://www.stepintocuba.org>.

Ideas for America's Great Outdoors Initiative This initiative is partly motivated by a need to enhance recreational opportunities on public lands. But increased recreation opportunities will not flow from a whisk of a pen in Washington D.C. Any successful recreation management policy must be accompanied by adequate budget, staffing, and above all, management's priority to achieve critical on-the-ground goals. Federal agencies' allocation of budget, staff, and management effort should reflect the developing reality that outdoor recreation provides a greater good for more Americans than any other aspect of its multiple-use mandate. The time has come to make managed recreation the BLM and Forest Service's top priority. Prioritize all efforts on clearing the repair/maintenance/improvement backlog in the National Park Service before designating any new National Parks or other similar protective area designations. (The National Park Service alone estimates that it would need an extra \$9.5 billion to clear a backlog of repairs and improvements.) All too often "conservation" means reducing public access and recreational uses. The AGO Initiative should explore ways to enhance a diverse range of recreational uses, including motorized and non-motorized recreational uses, across federal, state and private lands. Federal land managers too often limit or restrict public recreation activities. Federal land managers should focus on recreation friendly management plans that are not restrictive and embrace a wide range of diverse recreational uses, including motorized and non-motorized recreation. Thank you,

First, we need to fund permanent land conservation in a meaningful way. With all the billions spent on completely useless stuff at the federal level (like F-22 fighters for \$250 million each, that have never, ever been flown in combat), surely we could find a few billion each year to buy and protect wilderness areas for future generations. Second, in regard to western states in particular, we have to stop this ridiculous dance with the anti-predator wackos in Idaho, Wyoming, etc. who hate wolves and bears pathologically, blaming them for every dead sheep, or for killing elk and leaving fewer of them for human trophy hunters to shoot. The United States' past anti-predator campaigns were cruel, short-sighted, and stupid, and there's no reason to repeat them. More wolves does mean fewer elk, but that means healthier herds and more trees and other vegetation, leading to less erosion and a healthier ecosystem all-around. Third, we need to ban destructive activities like off-road vehicle and snowmobile use on federal land. The small minority who is only able to enjoy the outdoors by tearing it up with machines, should not be able to ruin these lands for the wildlife and people who respect them.

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Please continue to leave the dunes open to the public for ATVing. This is a big money maker for the economy. Do you know the amount of money spent on Trailers, Off road vehicles. Quite a bit as we own a Trailer, Sand Rail and 3 ATV's. We work hard to be able to enjoy these activities. I'm so tired of the "Greenies" taking everything away. This is a great family activity. Are the people who don't ATV going to go out in the 100 degree weather and have a picnic in the dunes? I don't think so. This is just another one of our rights being taken away. Washington DC needs to worry about bringing the jobs back to the US and leave our parks alone!!

We who enjoy the Imperial Sand Dunes, as hundreds of thousands do each year, ask that the dunes stay open and available to all for recreation. For 50 years this has been a recreation destination for generations of families. We have experienced numerous closures over those years and continue to fight the forces that would have the entire area closed to the many thousands who enjoy their experience there. Please help to keep the dunes open and available!

Please consider the needs of responsible Off Highway Vehicle Users, we are stewards of the land & contribute untold thousands of hours of volunteer trail maintenance where our families & children recreate, please keep these areas open to the public & DO NOT DESIGNATE them Wilderness,

I support the OUIBUS proposal and I for sure want to raise Otero Mesa to a national monument and the Organ Mountains to wilderness status. Thank you,

I do not know if it is still timely to provide input to the America's Great Outdoors discussion. If so, I would like to add this: There is a great impediment for the majority of Americans to enjoy the outdoors: they have to get to the outdoors by road. Most roads provide either no access for pedestrians or poor access. Federal highway standards now call for new highways to have sidewalks and marked bike lanes. Sidewalks that are built are generally truncated with hydrants, signs, and utility poles, and traffic signals at intersections (if present) do not allow for safe highway crossings. Bike lanes at the sides of the roads are on pitched shoulders, often gather road debris, have no physical separation from adjacent vehicular traffic, and disappear at intersections. These lanes are very dangerous to use, hence are rarely used. I strongly recommend that all highways built or modified with Federal money be required to have bicycle/hiker trails built as part of the highway project, in the place of both bike lanes and sidewalks. It is imperative that these trails be physically separated from the highways for safety either by distance or physical barriers. In addition such construction must allow for safe crossings at major intersections, employing bridge overpasses if necessary. Trail construction should be cheaper per mile than the combination of sidewalk and marked bike lane since the trail does not need to be built to such high traffic load designs as the 6 feet of bike lanes now allocated for highways. While designs that employ bike lanes and sidewalks often see limited use, designated bike lanes are likely to see heavy use both as access to outdoor activities and as transit options to vehicle use on highways. Their development would allow for greatly increased use of the outdoors by large numbers of people with no increase in spending. VR,

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Sirs, America's Great Outdoors is an unprecedented conservation effort spearheaded by President Obama and several government agencies to reconnect people with nature. You're off to a good start with America's National Parks, National Forests, National Monuments, National Wilderness Areas and National Wildlife Refuges and other protected places set aside for the American public. A few suggestions for how to proceed from here: Expand farm programs that help farmers return their farms to being places where biodiversity reigns and the farm is fertile, productive, sustainable, profitable and serves as excellent wildlife habitat. The CSP Tier III effort is a good example of how all these elements can work together. Expand wilderness areas and put a stop to logging therein. Period. Improve Watersheds and Wildlife Habitat Fully Fund the Land and Water Conservation Fund, and America's National Parks, National Forests, National Monuments, National Wilderness Areas and National Wildlife Refuges. They have all been underfunded for years and this needs to be stopped and turned around. Thank you for adopting a bold conservation strategy for the 21st century.

To Whom It May Concern: I would like to express my concern that you please consider battlefield preservation in the 'Americas Great Outdoors' Initiative. Positive things about such preservation include: Preserved Civil War battlefields are tangible links to our country's past. The 150th anniversary commemoration is expected to stimulate renewed interest in the conflict and generate unprecedented tourism to Civil War sites. Protection of America's remaining Civil War battlefields will leave a lasting legacy of national commitment to preservation and conservation. Preserved battlefields revitalize local economies and create jobs by encouraging heritage tourism. The more historic land that is preserved, the longer visitors stay in a community and the more time they spend patronizing local businesses. Battlefields are outdoor classrooms for this and future generations. They allow visitors to walk in the footsteps of the Civil War heroes and experience the landscape much as it was during the conflict. Preserved battlefields help protect water resources; sustain parks, working farms, forests and ranches; and provide open space for passive outdoor recreation. Battlefield preservation in Pennsylvania, Maryland and Virginia, where many significant sites are located, is also vital for protecting the Chesapeake Bay. Parkland created through battlefield preservation near growing population centers like Nashville, Atlanta and elsewhere can benefit quality of life for residents. Thank you for your consideration in this.

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The White House Initiative on America's Great Outdoors. A specific proposal to increase youthful physical activity on public wildlands. What Works Orienteering is a "map reading sport" and has become a popular outdoor activity for high school groups, scout groups and others, of all ages, across the country. The sport challenges the orienteer to solve a series of physical and mental problems by interpreting features on a map and then navigating their way to a solution. High schools, from across the country, have come together to compete on our state parks and public lands in orienteering events. Challenges In preparation for these events, school groups would like to practice in more places, more often and not just at few, local orienteering events. However, because a map fee is made necessary by the expense of the special purpose recreation map, most agencies consider an orienteering event a "Special Use" and therefore require a special use fee and other requirements that make an event expensive for the orienteer and difficult to administer. By simply recognizing that orienteering events are a non-profit activity and not applying special use requirements to the orienteering competitions, the agencies could greatly increase the opportunities for youthful participation in this sport. Federal Government Role- All federal agencies could have a "MOU on Orienteering" that recognizes orienteering: - as a legitimate backcountry activity and should not be considered a "special use." - has minimal and no lasting impact on wildland habitats - has a role in training search and rescue personnel as well as preparing the outdoor recreationist for the backcountry experience - as opportunity to enhance the physical fitness of the participants - investment in maps is an investment in public land infrastructure (as if the agency itself produced the maps) and that recouping the investment by charging a map fee should not be considered a commercial activity. Tools- The best tool the federal agencies could provide is to encourage orienteering on appropriate spaces within their jurisdiction. This would not require funding on their part, just a well understood "Memorandum of Understanding".

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(cont.)

I am disturbed to see the "fuelish" Americans desire to promote more OHV use on our public lands. Come on people, wake up, end motorized recreation, and get back on your feet. The benefits include : a cleaner environment, less oil consumption, and improved human health. If observant you may notice most motorized recreationalists have poor physical fitness and need exercise. Take a hike ; ride a bicycle ; paddle a canoe or kayak ; replace your snowmobile with X-C skis ; sell your powerboat for a sailboat. Wake up humans ! Human caused climate change is real so we must change. We cannot "stay the course". As a supposed world leader, America must set a "pro-environmental" example for the developing world. A convincing part of this would be to denounce our previous non-environmental practices as having a negative impact on the earth and admit to leading developing nations astray. In other words the U.S. must admit our mistakes, commit to pro-environmental change, and promote the changes for all humans. Only then will The U.S.A. truly be a world leader with the foresight needed to create a sustainable future for all life on earth. Currently, we are so preoccupied with the delusion that improving the economy and resuming our accelerated growth and consumption based on fossil fuels is in our best interest. This short sighted ignorance will be our demise. We have kept our oil based economy so long that we may have setbacks as we develop and implement cleaner technologies, but they will result in a stronger, more sustainable economy. If we don't commit to a "green" change for human development then we truly are "Earth Cancer". With a growing population of 7.2 billion cells we will end our hosts (earth's) ability to support life. How ironic that, Homo Sapiens, the most intelligent (?) of Earth's life forms could be so ignorant as to cause environmental damage to our host and therefore compromise our future.

I attended the listening session yesterday, and would like to reiterate a few points missing from the breakout sessions. First, let's get an omnibus wilderness bill onto the floor of the Congress like last year. Being from southern New Mexico I would like to see the Organ mountains-desert peaks wilderness bill included. This bill, co-authored by senators Bingaman and Udall, has been carefully crafted with all constituents and stakeholders included in the process. I would also like to see Otero Mesa designated as a National Monument. This very unique and fragile ecosystem is also a cultural monument. It is the last contiguous stretch of Chihuahuan desert grassland left in north america, home to many rare/endangered species of plants and animals, and native american petroglyphs in the surrounding mountains. I hope to see it as a protected area, and not spoiled and polluted by HEYCO's oil drilling for what BLM describes as an "insignificant" oil reserve. Much more important to this arid region is the enormous water table under this small oil deposit. Get these two southern New Mexico treasures on an omnibus bill for wilderness this year! Thank you,

Discussion Question 1

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(cont.)

The America's Great Outdoors (AGO) initiative has two problems: 1) AGO must ban GMO crops and trees. GMO "foods" cause cancer, diabetes, aborted fetuses, permanently altered DNA, etc. ArborGen's GMO eucalyptus destroys native plants, water, and wildlife (proved in Brazil, Thailand, etc.). It also hosts *Cryptococcus gattii*, which causes fungal meningitis. GMO pine and poplar are also threats. 2) AGO's administrators (Jackson, Salazar, Vilsack) are untrustworthy. They did not, e.g., clean up toxic supersites, reform the Minerals Management Service (key in the BP ecocide), or curb Monsanto's filthy GMO "crops." Monsanto is committing domestic terrorism by knowingly selling disease-causing GMO products. Industry skills must not administer an environmental program.

Our next generation will be able to enjoy our state and federal parks, monuments and forest preserves because we already have huge control over wilderness areas throughout the U.S. The founders of our Constitution intended for a smaller federal government and wanted the states to have more control. Mr President, please reduce the size of the EPA and remove carbon dioxide gas as a listed pollutant. We all want to protect the environment that we live in, even us republicans. Unfortunately a scam is being perpetrated on the American people. Global climate cycles are due to solar activity, mass volcanic eruptions, asteroid strikes, etc. At this point in history, humans do not have any significant effect on the Earth's climate.

I would ask that you NOT set aside any more land for designation as a National Monument or Wilderness areas. I live and work in Siskiyou County California which is a very rural county that has more than 65% of the county managed by the US Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management. The attempt to establish a Monument here would take more of what little private land we have and eventually take it off the tax rolls and hand it over to the federal government, not for management, but for set-aside land that can not be managed. This should not be allowed to happen. In these economic times, we do not need more land that is unproductive, but we need to start wisely using the resources that we have in this country. We should not be importing all of our needs (fiber, energy, steel, wood products, etc.) when we can and should be providing them for ourselves while at the same time producing thousands of jobs with this production. We have some of the most productive land in the world in the Pacific Northwests Forests; and the worlds best land managers, we can managing these lands wisely for the benefit of both forests and our societal growth if given the chance. Creating Monuments and Wilderness areas only locks up this land making us more dependent on other countries to supply our basic needs. Please do not create more Monuments and Wilderness areas. We can encourage Americans to enjoy the outdoors, while educating them on the needs of using our resources responsibly instead of using other countries resources where the management is not done as responsibly.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

I am a voted for you, volunteered for you, and donated to your campaign. Make me want to do that all at least one more time. Please don't mess our country up. We only have one Earth. We need to share it with those alive today and ALL those who come after us. This is our duty, responsibility, and reason to live. You have power - do something with it. Here are some things you can do: Address Conservation at a Large Scale Protect our wilderness Improve Watersheds and Wildlife Habitat Connect people with Nature Provide Increased Access and Recreational Opportunities Fully Fund the Land and Water Conservation Fun

I am so excited that you are our president. Please keep up the good work and save our environment for our grandchildren. Keep wolves protected Put the money into the Land and Water Conservaton Fund Protect our wilderness from logging and ATVs- keep at least some part of our country as close to what God made it as possible- RAMP UP THE EPA!!!

I ask that the Government and all agencies achieve Conservation at a Large or International Scale; protect Wilderness; improve Watersheds and Wildlife Habitats; connect people with Nature via Education and Direct Exposure; provide increased Access and Recreational Opportunities; revive the Land and Water Conservation Fund; and abandon, now and as long as America exists, all Dependence on the Business Sector.

I have reached the age where my health will not allow me to get out and hike the trails of my younger days. But my memories of those trails and sites are still with me and I want my grandchildren to understand why I loved the wilderness so much.

I've spent many years canoeing and camping in the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness in northern Minnesota. This unique and beautiful wilderness is one of our national treasures, and must be preserved and protected together with our other wilderness areas.

i was just reading about FDR and the CCC program he initiated and the creative people, on the whole, that were charged with its implementation--and the USA is certainly better off. i applaud the obama administration with also caring about the wilderness and wetland areas and i support whatever it can do to leave such a legacy. it will have to hang tough since the gop seems intent on scuttling any of his ideas, independent of their merit or the benefits for our country.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

It is myopic to think of nature solely in terms of human recreation (although that is somewhat preferable to thinking of the earth as a limitless resource that we cannot use up). I'm stunned to see that even the Democratic Party does not have climate change as one of its top agenda items -- yes, we need to protect "America's Great Outdoors" but we need to look beyond this to our constant stream of toxic waste, the pollution that already fills the ocean -- such as the Great Pacific Gyre, a mass likely larger than the state of Texas consisting entirely of human rubbish.... When will the White House face the reality of what is happening to our planet as a whole? How many more catastrophes will it take --more fires to destroy Russia? More floods to cover 50% of Pakistan instead of only 20%? A further increase in the occurrence of severe storms that wreak havoc on our cities, cause our rivers to overflow and wash away precious soil, destroy the trees in our parks? We are sorely mistaken if we think we can protect one parcel of land (or destroy one parcel of land) without considering the global situation. We've decimated the diversity of species on both land and water -- some 80% of ocean species have disappeared. We're hurting human health, causing cancer, premature puberty, all sorts of chronic diseases through environmental pollution. (No wonder the cost of healthcare is so high. You can't fund both sides of a war and expect to win it.) Toxins in, toxins out. What waste we create remains waste, if not forever, then for a very, very, very long time. Please: show us you understand the connectedness of these issues. Take the need for clean energy seriously; reduce the production of plastics; do whatever it takes.

More wilderness, more open spaces...less drilling and environmental degradation and destruction. I am asking you to save NOT give away my (our) country to the greedy industrialists who would defile any and all in their wanton disregard for all that is great and beautiful about this country and planet.

My hope is that the majority of people will more and more see humans as part of the Earth and honor the complete cycle of its contents. I want decisions that reflect the responsibility we have to each other and the future, and respect the essence of every being, both alive and not-alive. Respect to me means not wasting, using materials for their intended purpose in no greater amounts than necessary,

One of my greatest pleasures in life is hiking and birding in the GREAT OUTDOORS! Americans are so fortunate to be able to camp, hike, and backpack in our many great national parks and wildernesses! I know that money is tight and the economy is way down, but with our burgeoning population, now is NOT THE TIME to cut back on protecting and preserving our special wild places. It is important that we fully fund the Land and Water Conservation Fund as it was intended to be, and not keep taking money from it for other services! If we don't continue to save and protect our special wilderness lands and fully fund our national parks, then we will have done a great disservice to our children and those that come after us! There is only ONE EARTH and once its inhabitants, species, plants, and ecosystems are gone, there will be no more! We cannot create more! Please continue your strong leadership in protecting and creating a better tomorrow for all Americans!

Discussion Question 1

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(cont.)

One of the fastest and most effective way to reduce global warming is to restore wild forests and wetlands. That's why I am asking you to seize this opportunity to create, expand and better protect America's remaining natural outdoor spaces, including wilderness, monuments, wildlife refuges, parks, forests, trails, wild and scenic rivers and even some historic sites. To ensure that future generations will be able to live at all and and enjoy our public lands, please consider these priorities for America's Great Outdoors: - Stop the paving over and wholesale destruction of any existing wild land and water. - Restore and protect our existing wilderness - Improve Watersheds and Wildlife Habitat - Connect people with Nature by providing Increased Access and Recreational Opportunities One way to do this immediately is by fully funding the Land and Water Conservation Fund Thank you for your leadership in shaping a bold conservation strategy for the survival of humanity.

One of the things I love about America are its open spaces. We have such wonderful pristine habitats, let's keep them that way for when I'm old.

our great outdoors are a national treasure, and part of the heritage that we should protect for future generations. I am an American citizen living abroad in Costa Rica, teaching ecology and conservation courses at the undergraduate level. One of the wonderful aspects of Costa Rican culture is the value that the average citizen places on the country's natural heritage. Everyone, from taxi drivers to school teachers, is proud of the many national parks here. I would love to see Americans as involved with the great outdoors as my neighbors here are. America, too, has a great diversity of beautiful protected lands that we can all be proud of. In order to make sure that future generations enjoy our natural heritage as well, it's important to make conservation and environmental education a priority. In planning the America's Great Outdoors initiative, I think these priorities must be addressed. Specifically, we need to: 1) address conservation at a large scale. To preserve species that require large home ranges, and to give species a better chance to survive warming-associated range shifts, we need to look at conservation beyond the local-scale park approach. We need to conserve landscapes and create corridors. 2) we need more community-centered conservation, education, and recreation programs that connect people with nature. If we can get people out enjoying our amazing natural landscapes, we'll have more people invested in preserving them. Also, we need to consider conservation programs outside of reserves-- encouraging tree planting, involving local schools in constructing bat houses or restoring riparian ecosystems, etc., etc. 3) fully fund the Land and Water Conservation Fund. In order to protect America's natural areas, we will need resources. As an educator and as a scientist, I ask you to consider these three priorities for the future of America's wild lands. Thank you for your leadership in this vital endeavor.

Please consider these priorities for America's Great Outdoors: - Address Conservation at a Large Scale - Protect our wilderness - Improve Watersheds and Wildlife Habitat - Improve and restore offshore barrier islands - Fully Fund the Land and Water Conservation Fund We need your leadership to shape a bold conservation strategy.

Please do not sell or privatize any national parks or BLM lands. Provide funding for maintenance and prevent money from park fees from going to the general fund

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Please protect our wild areas before it is too late and they are swallowed up by development. Please, please preserve space for the wild animals and plants. It's the LEAST we can do to preserve at least a part of nature.

Please protect our WILDERNESS AREAS and our SMALL FARMS, especially our DAIRY FARMS. THANK YOU AND HAPPY BELATED BIRTHDAY,

Thank you for your leadership of our country during such trying times. My prayers, hopes and actions are with yours to help our nation grow healthy, smart, and clean.

Please....No more wilderness. Locking up our public land does nothing but to serve those with self serving interests. These people want us off of foreign oil, but won't let us drill...they want us to drive electric cars, but with no infrastructure to charge such vehicles, they promote wind generation, but don't tell of the inconsistencies, they want clean renewable power such as hydroelectric, but they make us pull out our dams, they won't support nuclear or anything related to. We need to ask ourselves today...are we better off than we were 50 yrs ago...is the direction that these individuals are pointing us to really going to make us better than we are today....I think not. Lets take the steps to put this country back on it's own two feet!

Protecorate! Save them dang trees! Please. Thank you, savior of the forest.

Protecting natural areas and species is one of the most important roles of government. Once they are gone, they cannot be returned to their original state. In addition to enjoying the outdoors, my research focuses on freshwater snails and mussels. The U.S. has globally exceptional diversity, with hundreds of species, but these are among the most critically imperiled organisms in the nation, with about 70% at risk if not already extinct. Only by preserving natural, free-flowing rivers, can the loss of species be halted. Similar concerns apply to other organisms. And a better environment promotes human health. Large-scale conservation efforts, expansion of protected areas, enforcement of environmental regulations, controlling greenhouse gases, developing sustainable energy-all of these are key parts to a sustainable future. While we develop other energy sources, well-regulated expansion of nuclear energy, including cutting the red tape that prevents establishment of a suitable waste disposal facility at Yucca Mountain, is probably a necessary intermediate.

These lands need to be available for the next generations of Americans to enjoy.

To give the future the benefit of our public lands, I hope you will - optimize conservation - protect wilderness - improve watersheds and wildlife habitat - provide more access and recreation, and - fully fund the Land and Water Conservation Fund. Thank you for your leadership in the 21st century.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Unadultered wilderness inspires my imagination, creativity, and sense of wonder. I bring that sense of wonder and joy to school children in my community through after-school outdoor nature and birding activities. It's important to know that extensive wild places will be enjoyed by them in the future. In our overcrowded world, wilderness needs to continuously be created, expanded and increasingly protected. Please consider FULLY funding the Land and Water Conservation Fund.

As Conservation Chair of the Salem Audubon Society, I am writing to urge you to help expand and protect America's great natural places, including parks, wildlife refuges, wilderness, forests, and rivers. To prepare for a future in which the only remaining natural places will be those that have been purposefully set aside, it is imperative that we take action now. Specifically, please addressing conservation at a landscape level, which is needed to ensure the survival of larger species of mammals and birds. Protect wilderness wherever possible, as it is an ever diminishing resource valuable for recreation and wildlife habitat. And fully fund the Land and Water Conservation Fund to make this possible. Please take advantage of this opportunity to leave a great natural legacy for future generations.

Each year coal plants pour millions of tons of harmful pollution into our air. This pollution doesn't stop at state lines, and as a result people throughout the country are forced to breathe unhealthy air. I am pleased that the EPA is acting to help states be good neighbors by reducing air pollution escaping across state lines. The proposed rule will produce at least \$100 billion, and possibly up to \$290 billion, in public health savings, and it will prevent at least 23,000 heart attacks, 26,000 hospital visits and 240,000 asthma attacks, according to EPA estimates. In contrast, delaying action could result in up to 36,000 deaths related to dirty air. Like the highly successful acid rain program, the rule sets final clean air requirements but gives coal plants flexible options to achieve those requirements. The areas with the most cleanup to do will also realize significant benefits so that no state will bear an unfair burden. This is a national problem that needs a national solution, and I urge the EPA to quickly finalize this common sense approach to protect public health and help states efficiently and cost-effectively clean up their air.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Mr. President and Staff and Members of the Administration, I write this in the name of the future. For our land, wildlife, and water and for the generations of Americans who will either praise or damn us for what we do here. America's great outdoors need our protection and this can be best achieved through continued vigilance over what we have, the need to expand beyond what we have and the determination to create new ways of preservation and conservation for today, tomorrow, and onward in this dream called America. This would include our shared outdoor spaces such as wilderness, monuments, wildlife refuges, parks, forests, trails, wild and scenic rivers and historic sites. Please consider such important priorities as large scale conservation including wilderness protection which is at the heart of any logical meaningful attempt to improve and protect watersheds and wildlife habitat as well as allowing Americans to continue to share in and be shaped by our natural world which is the heart of America herself. Please fully fund the Land and Water Conservation Fund and continue to provide access for these critical recreational opportunities. We need you to lead. America's wildlife, lands, and waters need you. We need you. Please act for our children and our children's children. This land is our land. It is the land of the free. Please don't forget.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Thank you for calling for a renewed effort to connect people with nature in America's Great Outdoors initiative. As a scientist, educator, and naturalist, I can personally testify to the need to connect people with their natural world and the many benefits of doing so. This is true even in a rural state like Vermont, where I have had to teach people how to do things as simple as observe the migration of geese in fall, see wildlife signs all around them that they had never noticed, and recognize common wildflowers. Along the way, people of all ages and backgrounds have come to appreciate the restorative power of nature something that E. O. Wilson calls "biophilia". The keys to making nature a greater part of our life are few and simple:

1. Restore our damaged forests and grasslands. People cannot be expected to cherish clear-cuts or cornfields. They need places that are truly natural and inspirational. These places can vary in size from a few acres in a city park to millions of acres such as the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem. Natural areas of all sizes are needed, but to make them most valuable, we need to develop greater sensitivity in how we treat all of our lands, including agricultural lands, developed lands, transportation networks (it doesn't help to have a preserved area if no one can reach it), and residential areas. Whatever the intensity of use of land, we should instill a belief that every place in America can be beautiful if we want to make the effort to do that.
2. Conserve landscape-size natural areas in every state so that every American can actually visit one within a day's drive. These areas should be at least 10,000 acres in size and should have as their primary purpose the restoration of natural ecosystems, such as old-growth forests, prairie grasslands, or other outstanding features that made America such a land of wonder and opportunity for the first Europeans who reached this country 400 years ago. Restoration should include both the natural vegetation and wildlife to each area.
3. Protect wildlife. A landscape without wildlife is just open land. A forest with wildlife is paradise. We need to conserve critical habitats, establish protected wildlife corridors, and provide information to private landowners on how they can take simple and inexpensive steps to improve habitat for wildlife, such as protecting streamside vegetation and leaving a few dead trees to provide cavities for wildlife.
4. Provide more opportunities for people to learn about nature. The 21st Century equivalent of the Civilian Conservation Corps would be to staff every public land from city parks to national parks with naturalists who can teach people to observe nature and understand what they are seeing. We need thousands of naturalists to share their knowledge in biology, geology, astronomy, and meteorology with the general public.
5. Ensure that all Americans have access to natural areas. We need to provide public transportation to more natural areas and create more opportunities for people to recreate in the outdoors. Until we get the people to the natural areas, they are not achieving their potential value to Americans.
6. Bring more land into protected natural areas. As America's population grows, so too should our conserved lands. We must protect and restore more land and the best way to do that is to fully fund the Land And Water Conservation Fund. Thank you for bringing this issue to the attention of Americans.

I want everyone to cherish and protect the world in which we all live. Appreciate the beauty of each tree, each body of water and each animal that lives there. Please put more emphasis on our wild places and encourage people to get out and explore the world around them.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Please do all you can to protect America's wilderness, parks, forests, wildlife refuges, etc. These beautiful and wild areas, once lost or destroyed, can never be replaced. If kept as they are, they offer so much to this great country and her people and animals. Thank you in advance for protecting these areas.

Please put a moratorium for the wild horses' protection !! Do it now !! Their existence is at stake and the BLM's propaganda must be stopped. It is deplorable what legacy this administration is leaving for our wild horses and burros - please do this now - end the corruption of BLM. Place a moratorium on all round ups !!!

Wild and open spaces must be preserved for future generations. No financial gain, business benefit or gain in employment can match the value of nature that is unspoiled. Allowing commercial interests to utilize our national parks, forests and other natural areas for capital gain amounts to selling off a treasure that cannot be replaced in return for a short-term gain that can be accomplished through other means. The national wild areas are themselves attractions that generate capital, jobs and opportunities on an ongoing basis. It does not make sense to allow any exploitation of these lands for the gain of a few, when the loss is felt by so many. I appreciate your attention to maintaining the wild and natural areas of our nation for current and future generations.

I see two major areas for increased natural resource protection that are currently much neglected: 1) There are many relatively small areas of unique ecosystems and rare species that should be protected as scientific natural areas. In my part of the country, there are many small bogs, fens, and native prairie remnants that are extremely important scientifically for the rare ecosystems and species they contain. Most of these ecological relicts are areas of only 10- 1000 acres, but they should be protected from all human alteration. 2) While our national parks and monuments were wisely created to protect our most spectacular natural treasures, there need to be more federal parks and natural areas closer to human population centers. As the petroleum age declines and transportation becomes ever more expensive, I think that it is essential to have suitable natural parks near cities, where urban dwellers can travel quickly and with relatively small use of fossil fuel to hike, camp, and otherwise enjoy natural environments.

I just learned that aquatic life is gasping for air in the shallows of the Gulf of Mexico. My grandchildren deserve better. Please fully fund the Land and Water Conservation fund. The outdoors is our legacy and we need to pass it on better than we find it. I look forward to cycling the trails of our forests, swimming in our lakes, enjoying clean air and sounds of wildlife, not machines, in wilderness. There is so much to undo when cattle overrun public lands, eroding and polluting to make their owners richer. We mustn't use it all up in one generation! Please do all you can to secure, protect, support and improve our wild heritage. Thank you for all your efforts bringing this country into the 21st century.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

I want the next generation to enjoy America's great outdoors too, so please seize every opportunity to create, expand and better protect America's shared outdoor spaces. AMERICA'S BEST IDEA deserves our best protective efforts. I hope this will be a hallmark of your presidency -- leaving our natural heritage in better condition than it was when your administration began.

You have already taken steps to protect earth, sea shores, rivers, and air of this country. Thank you, heartily. I write this letter with gratitude and to urge you to address conservation on a large scale, to continue to strengthen protection for our wilderness lands, as well as for the practical cleanliness of soil, water, and atmosphere. Wilderness is spiritual "money in the bank" for future generations' discovery and enjoyment -- and perhaps holds solutions among its life forms to inspire us in future. Protecting soil from toxic wastes, protecting water sources, air and sea shores are matters of immediate safety. This has been a most difficult Congress. However, I hope you know how many of us will back you in defending our wildernesses, lands, waters, and air. Thank you.

Mr. President, Besides the economy the greatest single threat to this country as identified by the U.S. Military is climate change. Working to stop further damage that, once done cannot be repaired, would create jobs, build a new world economy, and provide new infrastructure tax bases to rebuild our world. Of course as part of that renewal we must deal with the individual parts of the puzzle. This must include protecting those wild places we have now. They are some of our greatest assets and why would we not more assets as we rebuild our country economically and environmentally. Don't let the obstructionist block what we know will heal this country. Don't let their hollow promises of compromise make us compromise our values. Stand tall and lead this nation. Those of us who will follow only need a leader with true vision who will do what it takes. President Obama, ... be that leader!!! Thank you

The wilderness areas are the jewels of America. Please do whatever you can to preserve and maintain them. We must spend more money on our national and state parks.

America's Wilderness Areas are a national heritage and are under constant threat from human activities.

I hope to continue using America's great natural resources, the mountains, forests, rivers, shores and all of these incredible spaces set aside for nature and the citizens of America. My children now enjoy these places on their own and I hope the next generation will be as fortunate. Stop all thoughts of drilling, mining and wholesale lumbering of forests. We need more natural spaces set aside for us, the citizens of America. Keep the privateers from damaging these treasures...please fund more land and water conservation initiatives. Protect our natural resources from pillage by private greedy corporations and anyone else who would put these places up for auction. America's great natural spaces cannot be replaced. Thank you for addressing this most important issue of conservation.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

I love my wild places, and I don't want to see them destroyed by our terrible energy plan. We should develop more clean energy, and make it more available to people so that we can avoid using fossil fuels.

I want to tell you about the trip we took to Canada in August. The Canadian Rockies are beautiful, they are cared for, and the government protects the wildlife and wild flowers before people and making money. It was a joy to find large areas where people are not allowed so the wildlife can be protected. They even build viaducts over the highway so wildlife can move from one safe area to another without the terrible results of fast moving cars. I was very impressed with the cleanliness without sacrificing the wildness. I was impressed with the well designed signs to inform travelers of the animals, the forests, and the history of the area. Please look to Canada for their solution to protecting the great outdoors. We all need clean air, clean water, clean beaches, and clean roadsides. It benefits us all when our government works as hard for the wildlife as they do for big corporations. In the long run, we will be a better country.

Please protect our current Parks and wilderness from short sited overdevelopment. May I suggest using all media to raise awareness on conservation. TV News broadcasts are a great and often only source of information to the general public. Of course, the newspaper (hard copy and on-line) would be a far reaching source as well. It's important to keep this at the forefront of the American consciousness just as much as "Going Green". I also strongly encourage you to develop more educational programs and opportunities to keep our upcoming generations involved with nature. Right now, many could care less. I think it would be beneficial to, if possible, work it into the school system. This will ensure they keep up the stewardship of our great wildernesses. Currently, we are well beyond the carrying capacity of this earth. I know this is very controversial but ultimately, we as Americans must control our population, which in turn should resolve overdevelopment issues. I have a great love of nature and I have witnessed this time and again as a fundamental need of repair and replenishment for the human race. Please use this opportunity to create, expand and better protect America's shared outdoor spaces, which of course includes wilderness, wildlife, wildlife refuges, parks, forests, trails, wild and scenic rivers and historic sites. Please consider these priorities for America's Great Outdoors: - Address Conservation at a Large Scale - Protect our wilderness - Improve Watersheds and Wildlife Habitat - Connect people with Nature/this must be a constant. Too many young people are completely out of touch. We are raising generations more interested in video games, Blackberries, shopping malls. - Provide Increased Access and Recreational Opportunities - Fully Fund the Land and Water Conservation Fund There is nothing much more important than this. Thank you for your involvement in the stewardship of this great Country.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Please stop "gifting" American oil, water, mineral, and timber resources to industries demonstrably willing to rape the land for riches that belong to all Americans! Their actions prove the dishonesty of themselves and the promises they make. We've lost too much already. Without strict, unyielding conservation my children and grandchildren will never see the beauty of America. So much of the natural beauty, the clean lakes and rivers, magnificent mountain scenery, and places to camp and fish away from the filth and noise of the cities has disappeared in my lifetime. Without strong leadership from you my great-grandchildren will have to wait in line for a peek at what my generation has experienced and loved. They deserve so much more but will not find it without your help. For the sake of all Americans please demand of Congress the laws to protect what belongs to all our people and the financial commitment to make it happen. Don't let congress give away America! Please be the Roosevelt of the 21st Century. Attach your name to the legacy of Teddy. Thank you for the leadership to save our natural wealth that you and only you can provide in this effort.

This group wants me to write you to protect the wilderness so future generations can enjoy it. While that would be good, I think our wilderness areas will be essential for the survival of future generations. I grew up in WV and I can guarantee that the coal industry puts their bottom line over all else. My Father was a State legislator and what I saw and heard of these people was a horror. My proof that they have not changed is in the actions of the mining companies in WV compared with the actions to save miners in Chile. From what I have read, the oil companies are quite willing to take shortcuts to save a buck. They seem very much alike to me. We can't let these greedy folks get ahead of real people. They don't care about anything but their bottom line.

My granddaughter deserves to enjoy America's great outdoors, as do your grandchildren yet to come. Therefore please seize this opportunity to create, expand and better protect America's shared outdoor spaces, especially the estuaries and their land edges where rare creatures like the Diamondback Terrapin live between ocean & inland waters. I live near & have kayaked the Kiawah River estuary where these turtles as well as nesting eagles have found a fragile home. Yet housing developments threaten this region. This is an area deserving of protection. In advance I thank you for your leadership as I understand you plan to shape a bold conservation strategy for the 21st century.

Please protect America's outdoor spaces. We owe ourselves and our descendants access to unspoiled lands and natural resources. Please promote and sign the necessary legislation. Your leadership is critical if we are to save our environment from current destructive practices.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

In the last three hundred years humans have become dominant among the creatures on Earth, but only aware of it in the last thirty years or so. We are about as qualified as the Pauper in the palace of the Prince to lead the nation, or in this case the living world. Appreciation and love of anything must be a combination of knowledge and exposure. Now that the vast majority of our citizens inhabit cities, it is especially important that they have an appreciation of nature. Without such an appreciation, it is doubtful that our species will survive the climate change that we, in or ignorance have precipitated. I therefore suggest that we need some kind of natural experience and education appropriate to the age of students at every grade level. The education must take place in the schools and be complemented by experience in the fields, woods and streams of America. The education must emphasize the many ways in which we humans are dependent on the natural world: for breathable air, filtered water, vegetables and medications, psychological development. For the exposure, it is important that wherever possible our national parks, reclamations and wetlands be as accessible to our big cities as possible. Cleaning our wetlands, streams, rivers and oceans should probably be our first priority. Most

Discussion Question 1

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(cont.)

America's Great Outdoors Listening Session Comments Obstacles to getting outdoors and recreating: · Perceptions of Risk · Costs (money & time) · Equipment · Skill

I think that the biggest hurdles to getting people outside are the perception of risk and the lack of free time and transportation/access to public lands. There seems to be a perception that parks are filled with perverts and drugs/crimes. Parents are reluctant to let children play outside unsupervised, due to the perceived risks and the stigma associated with "letting" your kid get hurt. Perhaps an educational campaign (advertising) could help to break down this perception of the outdoors/parks being scary places. Pools have lifeguards to supervise and provide rescue skills if needed to visitors to the pools; Can parks/public open space provide (volunteer, paid, combination) "parkguards"? Would a system of parkguards that patrol parks and supervise and assist visitors help to get more folks out enjoying the outdoors? Other big hurdles are the cost of equipment needed for many outdoor activities. Trails can be enjoyed via human powered (hiking, bird watching, running, cycling) for low to no costs. These activities are similarly impacting on the environment. Motorized and equestrian uses require additional expensive equipment and skills, and are heavily impacting on the landscape. Most of the nation's population can partake in human powered recreation on trails in the outdoor setting, utilizing a wide variety of types of trails (greenways, rail-to-trail conversions, ADA accessible boardwalks and nature trails, as well as challenging natural surface trails). Trails provide access as well as experience while conserving public lands by concentrating foot (and other) traffic on the trail's surface. Trails that don't provide the access and experience that users' desire will be used less frequently and users will establish their own trails to get the access and experiences they desire. Trails need to be properly designed and maintained to minimize their impacts to natural resources; Trails need to be inventoried and treated as facilities with appropriate budgets for maintenance and construction. Other than breaking down the perception of risk and keeping the monetary costs associated with outdoor recreation low, we need to make accessing public lands easier for all Americans. National Parks and Forests are wonderful places, but are inaccessible to the majority of the nation. Regional, state and local public lands are where the work needs to be done: Trails and facilities need to be built and maintained. Access needs to be improved, by providing safe pedestrian/cycling routes and public transportation alternatives that access the parks/open spaces and fit the typical and atypical American's busy daily schedules. We need to encourage citizens to "make time" for the outdoors: put down the remote and take a hike, picnic dinner with your neighbors or family in the park, skip the gym go for a run in the woods. A nationwide advertising campaign that makes outdoor recreation seem cool, coupled with paper and electronic resources to help Americans locate and access their public lands is needed to get folks motivated and active. Construction of new public lands and greenways can further enhance the natural and man-made landscape by providing connectivity b/w parks and people and other parks. Greenways and rail to trail conversions provide transportation corridors. These can be co-located along natural features (rivers, waterways, ecological communities) and planned/constructed in a manner that symbiotically provides benefits to man and nature. Corridors can provide safe and efficient commuting routes for students and working Americans as well as recreation for weekend/evening users. It is important to balance access and recreation with conservation. Science and research can help inform and enlighten the public as well as land managers about many management concerns. Science provides an objective lens

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(cont.)

to investigate problems and formulate solutions that will help provide an optimum balance of high-quality recreation experiences with conservation/environmental goals. Finally, I would like to point out that there are a range of types of parks from National Park Service Units to the local urban open space or playground. America's Great Outdoors come in a variety of flavors and are managed by a plethora of agencies and departments. This initiative is being put forth by DOI, but needs interagency cooperation and public support to be successful. Thanks for hosting the listening sessions; America has great people and great lands that need to be united. I am a researcher at Virginia Tech (cooperating with _____ of the USGS); our primary research efforts have been on recreational impacts to public lands. My passion is for science, trails and outdoor recreation. I am very excited to see the Obama administration and Secretary Salazar put effort into reuniting American's with the outdoors. I believe that this is needed and can/will help address several pressing societal issues (health, energy, economy).

As the comments on a recent blog post clearly illustrates, over 90% of the people believe the problem starts with the parents. Until we get the parents of our nation's youth setting a good example, we will be fighting a never-ending battle unfortunately:

<http://dean.runnersworld.com/2010/07/the-great-outdoors.html#comments> Hope that helps with the feedback.

What kind of country, what kind of world will this generation leave behind? Our grandchildren will ask "What were you people thinking?" Is their entire grasp of nature to be found in books & National Geographic? National Geographic can put out a new series - "Remember When?" Remember when there were actual live animals here? Oh, that's right - we destroyed their habitat & food sources. When is enough enough? Suburban Sprawl - cut down all the trees, destroy animals & then name subdivisions after them. Maple Grove? Yeah, it once was. Whispering Pines? They don't even whisper anymore as they are all dead.& gone. Mallard Cove? This goes on ad infinitum. Please vote to help save what little we do have left.

Hello, I would like to see access to public land ownership made easier to poor people. That includes the impossible- Land Trust and the BLM. They hold auctions that you have to pay a registration fee and a current market price to start the bidding. This makes it impossible for the poor, because we are cut off before we can even start. The rich get richer, only they can get access. Also the burning of forests by the BLM, should be stopped. Isn't there enough forest fires every year, losing billions of acres and yet they burn more. It is not a scientific fact that it is a sound practice. Millions of animals lose their homes and winter supplies of food. Thanks

I am a firm believer in vigorous, well-informed local initiatives aimed at grappling with conservation and preservation problems. Attached is an article I wrote about three years ago (published in the Star Tribune) recommending as a state-wide model the strategies and measures taken by the Ten Mile Lake Association to preserve the water quality and surrounding environment of that water body. I am submitting it as my contribution to the forthcoming listening sessions project.

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(cont.)

I received the following email comments from someone unable to attend the Listening Session in Fort Pierre, SD scheduled for tomorrow. Please see their comments below. Dear Sir/Madam I am sorry that the Pioneer Grazing District will be unable to attend the Public Listening Session on the Presidents America's Great Outdoors Initiative. The enclosed letter is our comments. I hope they are helpful. The Pioneer Grazing Association is an association of independent livestock producers who utilize and care for a portion of the Buffalo Gap National Grasslands in southwestern South Dakota. We appreciate the opportunity to comment on the President's America's Great Outdoors Initiative. The Buffalo Gap National Grasslands are for the most part, well maintained and being exceptionally cared for and preserved for the next generation. Allotments are managed as an economic unit with private area ranches in order to fulfill the goals of Title III of the Bankhead-Jones Farm Tenant Act of stabilizing and perpetuating the rural, agricultural economics of the arid plains of the western United State. Unfortunately, unfounded concerns and political ideologies have prohibited range management and control of the population of prairie dogs inhabiting the grasslands. This has not only adversely affected the health of the range, but also allowed for the spread of disease in the prairie dog population of other species. Reconnecting people to the outdoors must include proper management of our collective resources and wildlife so people will be able to view aesthetically pleasing vistas without soil erosion and fear of disease. Further, closing existing roads and trails creates obstacles to people enjoying the grasslands. The Interior Department should be facilitating, not discouraging, the public's enjoyment and making it easier, not harder to access public lands. The Buffalo Gap National Grasslands has traditionally been managed for and achieved: conservation of the land and sustainable use of the resources, provided vehicle use for access to private lands and recreation; and equal opportunities the disabled, aged and/or infirm. Recently, these conservation and recreation achievements have been threatened by ideological management of the National Grasslands. If the goal of America's Great Outdoors is to reconnect people to the outdoors and activities please encourage scientifically based, as opposed to ideologically based management of the population of all species of animals inhabiting the National Grasslands. Further, encourage use of the grasslands by maintaining access for all people no matter what their limitations are. Restrictive designations, reservations and/or areas will not achieve the goal of reconnecting all people with the outdoors. Thank you for your thoughtful consideration of these comments. Pioneer Grazing Association sincerely desires continued and improved sustainable development of the grasslands in order to encourage people to reconnect with our great outdoors.

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(cont.)

To whom it may concern, I recently had the privilege of attending the Listening and Learning Session for the America's Great Outdoors initiative held on June 25, 2010 in Annapolis. I was not able to attend the breakout sessions in the afternoon so I would like to provide comments now. I am a Professor of Biology and a book author (Teaching the Trees: Lessons from the Forest, 2005, University of Georgia Press). While studying the nation's old-growth forests for my next book (Getting to Old Growth, in production, Ruka Press) I learned how few of this nation's forests are left uncut and allowed to develop their full ecological richness and beauty. I would like the Federal Government to form a network of old-growth forests throughout the nation. What a wonderful project this would be for AGO! I would be willing to oversee its creation. Please see the attached document "Old-Growth Forest Network" for more details. In answer to your specific questions: What works: The best strategy of all is 1) protecting natural land, and 2) helping average citizens get out and experience the natural land (through maps, signs, tours, etc.). Challenges: I would like to work full time at forming this network of old-growth forests, but I still need to eat. My challenge is finding income to support me while I do the conservation work I believe in. Federal Government Role: In the same way that chain stores and chain restaurants benefit because all over the nation they have name recognition and people know what to expect there, the Federal Government could help in this conservation effort by centralizing and giving "name recognition" to the Old-Growth Forest Network project. Being part of a Federal Network would make the project more likely to be successful. While the Federal Government support initiatives via the National Forests, please keep in mind that not all states have National Forests and therefore not all states benefit from the initiatives. Tools: I need a way to reach someone in the Federal Government with my idea. If it is supported I would need a small budget.

Wildlife and Land are important to us as Americans. We have a treasure trove of species and land that is incredible. We must find methods and techniques that replace warfare such as animal poisoning, hunts, and aerial shooting of our wildlife. Alternatives: Preservation of National Parks as Wildlife Sanctuaries that prohibits any type of wildlife hunts, wolves as example. Population control through sterilization methods such as tubal ligation that has been tested in Albany, New York and birth control in the form of chemical sterilants. Population control of wild horses and burros/donkeys where the animals can run free and not be kept in holding corrals filled with displaced mustangs and burros. Alternatives: Mustangs and burros are part of our culture, our heritage. Instead of being scapegoats, as has been the case for years, there needs to be Equal Representation of mustangs and burros when litigating with cattle rancher interests. Federal sanctuary lands need to be established such as sanctuaries already established by private individuals. Working animals such as special bred dogs and donkeys to protect livestock. Population control through birth control in the form of chemical sterilants and methods such as tubal ligation that has been tested in Albany, New York.

I'm my total honest opinion OHV's should not be allowed to destroy mother nature in any form and if not stopped or controlled there will be no wilderness nor any thing else left for people to enjoy except bare dirt and desert with no trees or greenery.

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(cont.)

Keep OHV out of national parks and wilderness areas. Turn decommissioned military bases into OHV parks. Leave the others for those of us who have the gumption to use our own two feet.

Please invoke added protections for wilderness areas from all kinds of despoiling. Please work on Conservation efforts for our wilderness areas. Please put in place laws which protect watersheds from pollution, runoff, and destruction by impervious cover thereby protecting our drinking water. Please instigate laws which protect the habitats of our indigenous wildlife. By fully funding the Land and Water Conservation Fund you will be doing much toward these goals. Thank you,

I have been exploring the wilderness since I was a Cub Scout in 1963. My family took us to wilderness lakes in Minnesota, Wisconsin and Canada. We were taught to respect and nurture nature as a prime responsibility. I think our government has a prime directive from our nations finest leaders including Theodore Roosevelt and many others. It is a critical need even and especially in hard times, to protect our natural world from exploitation and irreversible destruction including wilderness, monuments, wildlife refuges, parks, forests, trails, wild and scenic rivers and historic sites. Having been a teacher, officer of the Fraternal Order of Eagles, a journalist and parent, I am insisting these priorities be met for our national heritage to be kept intact and the health of our people, living creatures and awe inspiring heritage. - Address Conservation at a Large Scale - Protect our wilderness, especially in Alaska, the Arctic, shoreline health and reefs. - Improve Watersheds and Wildlife Habitat with adequate protections from development. - Connect people with Nature with excellent school and community programs. - Provide Increased Access and Recreational Opportunities through youth corps and other ways for young people to save us. - Fully Fund the Land and Water Conservation Fund WE desperately need your leadership in shaping a powerful conservation strategy for the good of our planet and likely for our actual survival.

Discussion Question 1

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(cont.)

I am discouraged with the postings that appear on the website. Many are only requests for personal projects and have little to do with national leadership that seeks conservation and connection with the outdoors. The most important leadership the outdoor initiative can provide does not fit within the categories you provide. It is the articulation of a land ethic. (Although I said this at a Listening Session it does not appear in the notes from those sessions) If nothing else appears in the final document, the national need to articulate a land ethic needs to be there. We need to be stewards that care for the perpetual functioning of the natural world for our clean water, food, and materials for shelter. The dominant American culture makes us forget this connection to the landscape at all levels including our personal health and physical fitness. If we had clear guiding principals about the land and water upon which the nation stands we would not make inconsistent and costly decisions about natural resource management, transportation, food production, residential development and even public health. In terms of your categories I will offer limited discussion: What works Spending time outside works. Getting people to spend time outside is not always easy. Some of the places that inspire people require effort in terms of time and physical capability. I think the physical requirements improves the quality of the outdoor experience and develops an understanding that is lacking when a person drives to a place. Not everyone can spend time in wilderness, but for me it is a place of rejuvenation and solace. There is nothing else like it. When I take someone new into wilderness they start with a level of anxiety that can only be dispelled through the accomplishment of the journey, particularly a hiking journey. Without exception they want to go again. It might take a while but the experience is not forgotten and there is a request to go again. Anything that expands the opportunity for young adults to work outside is helpful. Not all families have a chance to hike together because of time and ranges in physical capability. This was true in my family. For me it was the formative period of my early 20's when I was lucky to have jobs in the woods with natural resource agencies. The many months I spent living in tents and doing hard physical work gave me a level of confidence that has served me well and allowed me to take others outside to see the wonders there. It also laid the foundation for my determination to live near wild places and arrange my work and family life to accommodate time backpacking, hiking and nordic skiing. That time working in the woods in my 20's laid a foundation for lifestyle choices for which I am very grateful. Until recently I did not appreciate how much women in particular were hesitant to go outdoors. I moved to my current home to be closer to hiking opportunities. As it is always safer to have a hiking companion, than to go alone, I looked for others that wanted to go hiking. I found that if I started with shorter hikes, and gradually took people on longer and longer hikes they became quite confident and compelled to do more. The first year there were five of us. The next year over 30 women wanted to be on what they called "the hiking email list", then next year there were over 50 women, and some of the men in the community knew where we were going and asked to go along. You can imagine this number of people gets unworkable. It works better now that we started categorizing hikers as preferring long haul and short haul hikes; people started using subsets of the list to hike with people with similar skill levels. Barriers to getting people outside Proximity: In our busy world, it is the proximity to wild places that can make a difference. The closer you are the more you might visit those places regularly enough to venture further and further into the wild places. Lack of access to mentors: While none of the outdoor skills are particularly difficult, it is easier to love

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the out of doors if a person's first experiences are with a mentor. The mentor can quietly demonstrate basic outdoor skills and backcountry travel ethics. Simple things like trash, pack it out. Personal responsibility for your raingear, your foot care and the ability to ensure your water is safe to drink is all important. The hiker needs to be able to read a map; experience reinforces what the topographic lines really mean.

I have two: 1. Sponsor a photo contest for the various parks inviting all to submit pictures taken in the parks. This will have the result of participants really examining the beauty and wildlife found in the parks and will provide pictures to exhibit in public and in private. A HUGE WIN WIN event The prize could be a calendar made from the pictures. 2. Make use of the marvelous lectures and demonstrations given in the parks offering talks in schools and auditoriums around the country. It will generate an interest in travelers who do not usually think of the National parks as centers of learning and the opportunities that can be found there. . Thank you

I am a long-time Utah resident, and someone who greatly enjoys hiking and watching wildlife on federal lands in Utah. I've seen increasing problems and resource impacts in recent years. These include the dangerous expansion of cheatgrass and other invasive/noxious weeds, destructive fires due to excessive fuels from past and current mismanagement, overgrazing of riparian and Mojave desert tortoise habitats, and illegal OHV route proliferation. The status quo is not working; we are "losing ground" on several resource management fronts. I also do not agree with most elected Utah politicians who are simply shills for fossil fuel, ranching, mining, and/or OHV industry interests, have financial conflicts of interest, and/or are ideological wingnuts. They do not speak for me or many other Utahns who realize that we are on the wrong course and need to change direction. Of course, it would help if more Utah voters stopped selecting anyone with a pulse and "R" next to their name on the ballot as their representatives. In short, Utah needs your help to preserve its precious wild lands that give us clean air, drinking water, open space, beautiful recreation areas and wildlife habitat. From Cedar Mesa to Red Cliffs, Utah offers an extraordinary home to wildlife and outstanding recreation opportunities. However, development, increased recreation, overgrazing, cheatgrass fires, and climate change have put some of our most precious outdoors destinations at risk. Large natural areas, such as Cedar Mesa, the San Rafael Swell, Wasatch Mountains, Beaver Dam Wash and Red Cliffs -- provide our best hope for addressing loss of species and open space, preserving water quality and adapting to climate change while preserving the wildlife, recreation and lands we enjoy today. Protecting these lands will give us the opportunity to actively reconnect our children to their incredible natural heritage. In addition, it is imperative that the backroom Norton/Leavitt "no more wilderness" deal be revoked, and BLM's authority to inventory and protect (on an interim basis) wilderness quality lands be restored. Thank you very much for your consideration.

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(cont.)

I am a landscape architect who designs parks and believes completely in the power of outdoor experiences. Children who grow up with quality outdoor experiences are at a distinct advantage in life. The outdoors is good for the mind and the body and I believe all people should have easy access to the types of outdoor spaces that set this country apart from many others. As an adult, I know I have benefitted from my outdoor experiences and to this day find a calming power in the mountains, by the water or on a bicycle cruising down a safe trail. This power is real and lasting and the more people who are able to benefit from it, the better off we'll all be. The value of urban parks, wilderness and everything in between is difficult to measure; but far more important than most of what we strive for in our daily lives. I continue to firmly support this administration and look forward to watching you find new and creative ways to protect and restore the places the citizens of this country need now, as much as ever. I will professionally and personally throw whatever support I can towards this effort. Thank you for your efforts to date and please do all you can. It matters more than so many things, yet sometimes is easy to overlook. Sincerely;

Please plan for America's future by creating, expanding and better protecting America's shared outdoor spaces, including wilderness, monuments, wildlife refuges, parks, forests, trails, wild and scenic rivers and historic sites. Furthermore, please make these priorities: large-scale conservation; protect our wilderness, improve watersheds and wildlife habitats, provide increased access and recreational opportunities, and finally, fully fund the Land and Water Conservation Fund. Thank you for taking care of our natural heritage.

As you decide on what to do with our national parks, forests, wilderness areas, and other national outdoor treasures, I ask you to consider the following: 1. Please work to protect vast areas of unfragmented land throughout the country, particularly in areas with significant biodiversity or unique ecological systems. 2. Set as a goal to protect at least a third of all land in the US 3. Work hard to preserve existing biodiversity on protected lands and restore biodiversity as much as possible where it has been lost (such as restoring large carnivores to areas where they have been extirpated). 4. Expand access, camping sites, and recreational opportunities in national parks, while retaining and expanding wilderness areas. Regards,

Please make it a priority of this administration to preserve and protect our remaining wilderness, conserve habitat for wildlife and native plants, improve our watersheds and fully fund the Land and Water Conservation Fund. For me, personally, I feel closest to God when I am in the natural world. It is rapidly being lost to the interests of big business. Please take BOLD STEPS, and make conservation and connection to the natural world a priority. It's very important.

I've always thought that America's parks, forests, and other wild places are among the best things about this country. Protecting and expanding this aspect of America should be one of our highest priorities. I urge you to protect existing wilderness and implement conservation at a large scale. Without parks, trails, and wild places, we'll lose our connection to the land--please don't let that happen.

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(cont.)

I backpack into the wilderness ocean beaches of Olympic National Park, Washington, each summer for the last 16 years. The peace, serenity, clear air and quiet are worth any amount of money. And like other coastlines, like California's, once a forest or prairie is developed, cut-up and/or paved over...it is gone. Most of America is developed and used such that watershed values, wildlife habitat and peacefulness is seriously compromised, degraded. My wife, Kirsten wants as much of our remaining undeveloped public lands to be forever kept that way for generations of Americans just growing. Please take every opportunity to be a "protection President." Even as he despoiled our country, President Bush set aside that great big area in the Pacific Ocean. Please do better than him and, like Teddy Roosevelt, set aside just as much park, wildlife refuge and federal forest land as you can. The Antiquities Act lets you do...So please do it!! I endorse the following guidelines: - Address Conservation at a Large Scale - ecosystem scale - Protect our wilderness - Set-aside, Improve Watersheds and Wildlife Habitat - Connect people with Nature - Provide Increased Access and Recreational Opportunities - Fully Fund the Land and Water Conservation Fund Fully funding the LWCF funding is a real biggie. Money is there from offshore oil drilling; please see that it gets used as it is supposed to be and not left in the Treasury. Thanks!

An extremely important educational tool and deserved preservation for all the souls who fought and died to solve the greatest internal conflict this country has ever encountered. All citizens of this country need to know of all the sacrifices that were made for this country to have evolved as it has. There is DNA in that ground that is common to all Americans and that soil should be preserved to honor them all. Thanks,

I am writing to urge you to create meaningful science-based public policy that will protect America's shared outdoor spaces, including wilderness, monuments, wildlife refuges, parks, forests, trails, wild and scenic rivers and historic sites. Especially important to me are protecting forests and watersheds, including wetlands. Adequate wetlands public policy could have greatly mitigated the flood damage caused by Katrina, as you well know. Thank you for this opportunity to comment and to advocate for a meaningful, science-based public policy for protecting our country's wilderness areas.

Please work to protect our right to hunt and continue creating national forest!

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(cont.)

I've been grateful for what remains of Maine's wilderness for the past thirty years I've lived here. Only six percent of Maine is public land, so the threats to what remains continue to rise. Here are some proposals.

- The Western Mountain and Lakes landscape totals over one million acres, encompasses both the Mahoosuc and Rangeley Lakes/High Peaks Regions, links the Northern Appalachians as they pass from New Hampshire to Maine, and serves as a bridge between the White Mountain National Forest to the south and the Maine Woods. This region comprises the southwestern boundary of the Maine Woods closest to population and tourism centers making it the demonstration landscape that is most vulnerable to development pressures that could fragment the forest. Loss of lands from the timber base and severing recreation corridors, such as snowmobile trails, would undermine the area's local economy which relies primarily upon forest products and tourism. This provides us with an unprecedented opportunity for addressing loss of species and open space, preserving water quality and climate change adaptation while preserving the wildlife and lands we enjoy today.
- Protect our Wilderness: In Maine, we are working with Congressional leaders to protect wilderness and wildlands from the islands off our rocky coast to the mountains on our western boarder Your support of these proposals can preserve our wildest lands for future generations.
- Improve Watersheds and Wildlife Habitat: Restoring our public lands helps protect clean water supplies and adapt to the effects of climate change. The Obama administration should prioritize collaborative restoration projects on public lands, making restoration a national priority.
- Support Proposals to Connect the Outdoors to People especially Youth: Support nature education programs, a revived civilian conservation corps, and programs that inspire people to go outdoors.

Thank you, President Obama, for working to keep Maine the most forested state in the country. We look forward to your involvement with the America's Great Outdoors Initiative.

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Hello, I attended the July 1st Seattle listening session and wanted to contribute my comments. In terms of federal government role, we need an overarching vision for the future that acknowledges our current living patterns and economic system are not viable, even in the short term. It is this system that, at the micro level, has limited funding for outdoor preservation and sustenance of facilities and programs. At the larger level, it is responsible for the pattern of wasteful suburban and exurban land use, wanton resource extraction, and the religion of the car that are driving the losses others described at this meeting. I realize these problems are beyond the scope of the DOI. However, a significant change in the relationship between government and the economic powers shaping the landscape and constraining our future must occur for the DOI to meet the Great Outdoors Initiative's goals in any meaningful way. Primary among these is a reform of land use to forbid further exurban development, to make roadbuilding the last priority of the Department of Transportation, and to tax pollution and financial ponzi schemes to fund clean energy and infrastructure development. No serious attempt to acknowledge these problems has been made since my childhood memories of President Carter. The near-trillion dollars used to prop up a financial system based on junk mortgages and Monopoly money would have been much better spent on restoring our existing rail system, building the high-speed rail system Obama announced, developing smart grids, fixing disintegrating water and sewer systems, and reinstating the CCC as an employment and environmental restoration program. Hands-on doing and building of systems and infrastructure to carry us into the indefinite future will connect people with nature as they perform restoration work, and make them aware of how the systems we depend on constantly teeter on the edge of failure. The NGO and other professional environmental speakers at the meeting miss the larger point, and are probably incapable of getting it. Incremental adjustment of federal law and massaging the bureaucracy for funding or rule changes will not address the economic and political forces causing the problems they are working to solve.

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(cont.)

President Obama: The public lands in this country that we all share are a critical part of our heritage, our present, and our future. Whether in cities or in rural areas, they are precious pieces of land remain in a natural state for all Americans to learn from and to enjoy. Additional lands must be added in the coming years to any and all US government public land agencies to preserve and conserve natural areas for the expanding US population to use and enjoy. These lands provide wildlife habitat, watershed preservation, recreational opportunities, educational settings, historical lessons, scientific laboratories, spiritual experiences and much more. Public lands are the one and only locations where all Americans can enjoy these opportunities in diverse areas and on a large scale - private America does not afford this. Many Americans have special places and have special stories of those places that they treasure - I do. Let me tell you about mine. My favorite place is the Blue Ridge Parkway in North Carolina and Virginia. I have been going to all parts of it as often as I can for 50 years. My parents took me to Peaks of Otter as a small boy and I was hooked on the Parkway. Mount Pisgah is a special place for me these days also. I enjoy hiking, nature study, and camping while on the Parkway. The non-commercial setting and rustic appearance is also a plus for me, as the NPS does a great job maintaining the area in pristine condition. I truly enjoy the fact that I can always depend on the Parkway appearing the same now as it did 50 years ago. The campgrounds there provide an affordable, clean, and scenic spot for my family to spend the night actually right on the Parkway and I always stay in them when open. My times hiking on the Parkway have been some of the best in my life and I look forward each year to returning to experience it all over again. Public lands conservation in this country must become a national personal, social, and political priority if it is to succeed. This land ethic must be learned and adopted by all Americans. Large natural areas set aside provide the best hope for meaningful conservation to take place. All public land agencies must be involved in the process and include expansion of these agency units. Partnerships with private citizens and American business will be needed in coming years to be inclusive of all segments of America and provide out of the box thinking. Citizen connection with public lands through educational and recreational opportunities is essential for any meaningful conservation to take place - Americans will only protect what they know and care about. More resources must be used for this goal. Education of Americans, especially children, about the wonders of US lands is needed. Full funding of the Land and Water Conservation fund is needed to help assure these conservation goals are met. Previous generations of thoughtful Americans made my enjoyment of the Blue Ridge Parkway possible. I am thankful for their hard work, sacrifice, and vision. We must continue that legacy now for future generations. Thank you very much for listening.

Self Serve Rental Mountain Bikes: This provides revenues for Forest Conservation while providing a service to the public that will encourage outdoor activities. Visitors can't always bring their bikes and locals do not always have the means to get their bikes there or have mountain bikes versus street bikes. The City of Denver has self serve bike rentals where you can use a credit card to rent by the hour and if you don't return the bike your card gets charged for the cost of the bike.

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(cont.)

What will be done to step-up (make it easier to participate) with la's green garbage program. A stepped-up program would help green spaces, public and private. San Francisco's program is much more enabled for resident participation. Will enforcement be a part of a plan? (my landlord won't allow green garbage other than yard trimmings [my councilman's office -(name deleted)- was of no assistance])

Thank You for Your Time in Southern California: Though I wasn't chosen to speak up at the general summit or break out session, I will share these thoughts regarding education in our great outdoors. Educational experiences and research projects can also be considered forms of recreation on our public lands. Real world field settings are better, more exciting and more efficient learning environments than any classroom or laboratory we could ever build. Two big obstacles continue to be the cost of getting students into the field and liability issues. Many administrators, principals and other leaders in education hesitate to support these real world learning experiences for these and other reasons. How can we work together to tear down these barriers and encourage leaders and teachers to use these rich educational settings that wait for them? Then, could we assemble groups of mentors or field learning leaders that can help educators from K-12 to the university levels better appreciate our natural resources as their classrooms and laboratories? There are plenty of professionals (even some that may be retiring) capable of sharing their expertise in the field with educators that may hesitate to use these resources. For instance, I have more than 25 years experience teaching geography and earth science here at Santa Monica College. I have led my students on field trips throughout the southwest states and have worked with the NPS on restoration and research projects from Death Valley to Channel Islands and from the SMMNRA to Joshua Tree National Parks. Considering the natural and human diversity of our region, it would be difficult to find a better place to encourage such field learning on our public lands. How can I help?

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Dear American's Great Outdoors, I was one of the Green Teens who attended on of your Listening session, at the listening session people voiced alot of there opinions. At the same time I felt that the group was to big and that some of the topics that were brought up were not for the environment. Alot of people mentioned schooling and how testing took up so much time and money, this is true. I felt that everyone was just saying what the didn't like instead of giving a possible solution. I have been a Green Teen for two seasons, what is a Green Teen? We are a group of teenagers who work on our own garden and other farms, including dairy farms and other vegeatable farms. We also feel that everone has the right to locally grown food, so along with a farm nereby called Common Ground we sell our produce for cheap price. Expanding on the idea of cheap local produce. This summer I learned about a place called Belo Horizonte here the believe that food is a right not a privilege. An I trully believ in this. In our nation we look down on people who don't have the money to go to starbucks for a five dollar coffee. Instead showing them they better, more enviornmental safe and cheaper way. Yes our naion has food stamps and has soup kitchens, but to get food stamps you have to go through loads of paperwork and at the end you dont qualify because of one little thing that doesn't fit the criticrea of food stamps. Soup kitchens the feed as many as people as they can but that not even half the starving people in our nation, and alot of it beacuse lack of secreaty and the shame we put on people for eating at soup kitchens. In Brazil, in this town it doesn't matter if you are the richest or the poorest or someon where in the middle. All that matters is that ypu get the right to fresh locally grown food. Now i don't know if this will ever be possibe because of the world we live in, but if we can just start it in small communitys we can make a difference slowly but important changes. Thank very much and I will continue to spend in comments inn hope to seeing a change in one of them. Thank you,

Discussion Question 1

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(cont.)

Like many states, Illinois is facing severe cutbacks in State funding for conservation. Land trust organizations, like the Natural Land Institute, have stepped up to fill the gap in funding for land protection programs, using private funds and volunteer labor. The Federal government can assist these private land protection efforts by:

1. Maintain and expand income tax incentives for gifts of land or conservation easements. These incentives need to be reauthorized and made permanent.
2. Do more cooperative agreements and partnerships between the NRCS and private conservation groups to do planning, outreach and technical assistance needed to implement federal conservation assistance to landowners.
3. Invest in green infrastructure through use of the USEPA state revolving loan funds for clean water and safe drinking water projects by promoting the use of these funds to finance land protection projects and best management practices.
4. Energy legislation should help fund carbon sequestration using existing permanent land protection programs.
5. Develop more permanent land protection alternatives for the Conservation Reserve Program, including paying for conservation easements on land that lacks a cropping history and that should never be farmed.
6. Remove barriers to the use of the Wetland Reserve Program and Conservation Reserve Program by conservation agencies and private organizations for permanent land protection initiatives, such as payment limits, ownership requirements, nontransferable applications and prohibited reimbursement of restoration expenses.
7. Recognize the Upper Mississippi River bluffs between the Quad Cities and Twin Cities as a Treasured Landscape.
8. Put additional resources into implementing the Mississippi River Basin Initiative.

Private land trusts in Illinois have been effective partners to implement the goals of the State Wildlife Action Plan and federal, state and local conservation priorities. Developing partnerships with land trusts is a cost effective way to deliver federal conservation programs. Respectfully submitted,

Dear group, Thank you in advance for letting me write in... Although Kansas has the Tallgrass Prairie Reserve, the government owns only 1.2 percent of Kansas land for natural habitats / national parks vs. 84 percent of Nevada, by comparison... The buffalo need a "home on the range" and I hope you'll please consider Kansas when making any key decisions...

For fire burned areas, like my area near the Station Fire and Sayre Fire, we need workers to cut/weed out truly dead wood. In the wooded areas off of the 210 freeway between Slymar and La Canada cities--this area needs thinning, before some car or human yahoo sets the area ablaze. My suggestion is to have young teens (12-16 yrs) taught how to use the tools, given proper clothing, and how to thin certain areas WITHOUT disrupting the animals, birds, and insects homes drastically. To pay for this would be via donations, selling bumper stickers (or other small goodies) and the businesses that can donate food, games, points on to food point totals--a variety of ideas not mentioned would work--JUST GOOD VOLUNTEERISM would be best. Part of their resume. ===== The area concerning Kagel Canyon, Shadow Hills, and the truck driving school" (1) drop the school (2) plant more oak trees than elm (3) ticket more polluting cars/truck to help finance the area Thank you--got to go

Discussion Question 1

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(cont.)

Your policies are locking the old and infirm into the cities. Youth who could become outdoor enthusiasts are similarly excluded because of the costs associated with access to wilderness areas, and the specialized equipment required for hiking and backpacking. Hunters and other sportsmen must hike into desolate areas in California's Mojave desert, a region which requires one to carry a gallon of water for each day. It is clear that the intent of the preservationists is to exclude man, as though he were a threat to the very lands that he is part of. Our "land of the free" is rapidly becoming a land of slaves, subject to the whims of special interest groups and their Quislings in the federal government. Stop restricting public lands, they are not the exclusive property of the progressive misanthropes who jealously restrict the open spaces. Keep the neo-animists political ambitions restricted to San Francisco and Berkeley. There they can pass laws in support of America's enemies, consume a steady diet of Nat Geo and Animal planet on TV, and leave the rest of us in freedom.

Set up a program where students - high school and college - earn credits -not money - to up their grade point average for participation/time spent at Nat'l Parks. A paper could be verified By park official at presentation of program. Sent from my iPhone

HI, I HAVE NEVER UNDERSTOOD THE REASON IS BEHIND HUMANS GROWING AND MAINTAINING GRASS (LAWNS). FROM MY PERSPECTIVE, I SEE THE WASTE OF WATER, SEED, CHEMICALS, TOOLS, MACHINERY AND MANY HUMAN HOURS. AN ALTERNATIVE: 1. ONLY ZERO SCAPING, NO MATTER WHAT THE LOCATION OF THE COUNTRY. 2. ONLY PLANTING SEASONAL AND ENDEMIC, GROWING HERBS, FRUITS AND VEGGIES. 3. THE GOVERNMENT REWARDS THOSE LAND OWNERS NOT GROWING GRASS, INSTEAD GROWING THINGS TO EAT. 4. CHEMICAL INDUSTRY MUST ONLY PRODUCE AND SELL NON-TOXIC SUBATANCES. WE ARE FOREVER CHANGING AND KILLING THE LIFE CYCLE OF HUMANS AND ANIMALS WITH THE UNEEDED USE OF UNHEALTHY CHEMICALS. THIS PROCESS IS FULLY SUPPORTED BY OUR GOVERNMENT OR THEY WOULD STOP IT COMPLETELY. THESE CHEMICALS CHANGE THE FRAGILE BALANCE OF BOTH HUMANS AND ANIMLAS.

Discussion Question 1

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(cont.)

There are 2 parts to my comment: 1) The best way to protect natural habitat is to leave it alone! People are the biggest threat to pristine environments. To preserve America's natural splendor, we should improve recreational facilities IN THE CITIES AND SUBURBS. If urban life is more wholesome, outdoorsy and inspiring, the populace will automatically learn stewardship and love for the land. There's no way you can protect and preserve a wilderness area by making it more accessible to humans. Make the cities and suburbs more accessible, and leave the wilderness as it is. 2) I strongly recommend all the following: - restrict the use of off-road vehicles to places designed for them - retract that absurd bill about allowing guns in state parks (who knows what people are doing or will do out there? plus it's terrifying for female hikers) - federally enforce very high fines for any kind of litter - teach stewardship in all schools - federally mandate that all beer and cigarette packaging contains DO NOT LITTER THIS warnings, and shame industry into taking more responsibility for their products destroying nature. (Most litter on trails, beaches and wilderness is beer bottles/cans, cigarette butts, bottle tops, and snack wrappers. I know because I pick it all up every single day.) - federally mandate higher refunds for recycled bottles and cans (they pay 10 cents each in Michigan, and it's made a huge difference in how clean the state is. - crack down HUGELY on any and all corporate, county and state infringement on the environment -start a White House campaign, featuring Michelle and the kids or whomever, and let the country know what is expected of them. We need leadership! - Require EVERYONE to agree to a list of rules before entering a state park, federal reserve, wilderness area, etc. "I will not litter, I will not disturb creatures that reside here, I will not remove or displace any part of the natural habitat, I will cause no harm, including by my voice, I understand I am a guest here. THANK YOU FOR READING OUR CONCERNS AND IDEAS. IT SO-O IMPORTANT!!!!

Basically, all this programs needs to do is create, expand and better protect America's shared outdoor spaces. Just keep these priorities in mind for America's Great Outdoors: > Address Conservation at a Large Scale > Protect our wilderness > Improve Watersheds and Wildlife Habitat > Connect people with Nature > Provide Increased Access and Recreational Opportunities > Fully Fund the Land and Water Conservation Fund Thank you.

The Hingham Land Conservation Trust is a small non profit charitable organization in the town of Hingham, Massachusetts. The work that we do in conserving land, holding conservation restrictions that protect the land and environment and advocating for local land conservation is mirrored by many land trusts, large and small, across the country. At a time when even in these difficult economic times land values are very high, economic incentives for land conservation are critical. We have great hopes that the America's Great Outdoors program will provide such help and support to local efforts all over the United States.

Discussion Question 1

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(cont.)

I'm writing to applaud President Obama and his administration for publicly supporting the work of non-profit land trusts. I am a founding board member of the Black Canyon Land Trust in Montrose, Colorado. This small non-profit has taken more than 300 conservation easements on private farm and ranch lands, working with these willing landowners to protect about 30,000 acres for working agriculture, wildlife, and scenic open space. We could not have done this work without the important programs of the federal government that provide tax deductions and other incentives to encourage private landowners to conserve their properties for the benefit of the public and future generations. There is no other land conservation work in the U.S. that is having such an important and far-reaching effect on the permanent conservation of private lands. Please do all that you can to provide permanent funding and programs for conservation easements through the Land and Water Conservation Fund, Farm Bill programs, and to make the enhanced easement incentive permanent. Thank you for your support of conservation for working private lands,

I was fortunate many years ago to do a three week trip through the National Parks and Forests of the Western US. Since then I've spent many vacations traveling through some of the most beautiful and environmentally important lands in America. Recently my 21 year old daughter completed her own three week whirlwind trip of our nation's national parks and other public lands. I am writing to ask that you ensure the lands are available for future generations and that even more lands are protected. Thank you for having your administration take the time necessary to talk with the American public about what is important to them. These are lands owned by all Americans and it is important that our voices are heard above those of businesses that look at our nation's natural resources as just a way to make a lot of money. These lands are much more important than that. Primarily I encourage you to preserve lands that have already been protected and to provide funds needed to manage these lands property. The National Park Service, Fish & Wildlife Service, Forest Service, Bureau of Land Management are all under funded and need more money for staff and to improve infrastructure. Lands that are protected are threatened by in-holdings and by development along the boundaries. Money needs to be appropriated, especially Land and Water Conservation Funds, to let agencies buy in-holdings and adjoining lands in order to protect lands already set aside. LWCF needs to be fully funded, as you have already requested, to allow this to happen quickly before these lands are destroyed and lost forever. Wildlife corridors are needed to allow wildlife to move between protected areas. As more and more land is developed and roads are built it is becoming increasingly difficult for animals to not become isolated in small pockets of habitat. While developed recreational lands are important it is also important to establish and secure wilderness areas where people can get away from the hustle and bustle of their everyday lives. The wilderness values of these potential areas can be lost very easily and swift action is needed to identify and protect wilderness areas that need to be protected quickly. Thank you for your attention to this matter.

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(cont.)

Please give serious consideration to the private sector as the source of funding for open space and farmland protection. Create a program not unlike The New Market Tax Credit program which has been very successful in creating capital for inner cities throughout the nation. Rethinking the way we protect land on a national basis could be an initiative of the Dept. of Agriculture and Department of Treasury that models itself on the New Markets Tax Credit Program in permitting taxpayers to receive a credit against Federal income taxes for making qualified equity investments in to be created or perhaps even existing organizations akin to Community Development Entities (CDEs). Substantially all qualified equity investment would be by design invested in the purchase of development rights (farms) or fee properties (open space). The syndication of these credits would allow for socially responsible investments in farmland protection and food security. In addition I would urge the administration to look to flexibility in federal agricultural programs that can accommodate our smaller farmers. Trends in our county indicate that fruit and vegetable producers have a bright future if food safety programs can be administered in a way so as not to bury producers in fees and additional paper work. When future programs are instituted I would suggest that the control of the actual transactions be decentralized and done in a manner which can be directed by those who know the import of strategic properties.

As a Board member of the Whidbey Camano Land Trust on Whidbey Island in the State of Washington, I want to say thank you for launching America's Great Outdoors Initiative. Our Land Trust protects natural habitat and working farms and forests. We do amazing work and significantly leverage donor dollars. We know the local area and its needs and priorities. We enjoy widespread community support. Partnering with local Land Trusts is a great way for federal agencies to accomplish things they can't do on their own. Give us the tools and we will accomplish the job for you: make the enhanced tax incentive for conservation easement donations permanent provide for community forest conservation bonds fully fund LWCF and the Forest Legacy Program and change these funds to allow direct acquisition of land and easements by land trusts. Respectfully submitted,

In a small town on Washington's Olympic Peninsula, our local Jefferson Land Trust (which is among the 6% of land trusts in the US that have earned national accreditation) is working collaboratively with private citizens, local business, and other non-profit organizations, as well as city, county, and state governments and federal agencies to preserve open space, habitat, and working lands for future generations. Over the last 20 years we have collaborated with many partners to accomplish far more than any one group could on its own. Broad community financial support and volunteers make this possible. Federal support could be even more effective with enhanced tax incentives and full funding of the Land and Water Conservation Fund, Farm Bill conservation programs, the Forest Legacy Program, and other conservation funds. In addition to protecting working farms and forests from conversion, our work also helps mitigate the effects of climate change and provides habitat corridors to aid species in their adaptation to those changes. We have also convened a broad coalition to envision the Olympic Peninsula 100 years in the future and plan ways that we all can work now to provide a diverse and healthy environment that also is economically viable and sustainable for future generations. Thank you for your help and interest.

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(cont.)

Dear Mr. President: On behalf of Jefferson Land Trust, I want to thank you for launching the America's Great Outdoors Initiative: a 21st Century strategy for conservation in America. As a homegrown network of hundreds of concerned citizens throughout the Olympic Peninsula, Jefferson Land Trust is at the front lines of the effort to conserve the places that make America special. Through innovative partnerships with private landowners and our partners in government, we're beginning to turn the tide against the unplanned development that has put a growing strain on our wildlife, our waters and our treasured landscapes. We truly appreciate your decision to mention America's 1,600 local land trusts in your remarks launching this initiative. It is our belief that the federal government can achieve far more with its limited resources by working through local partners like Jefferson Land Trust to engage private landowners in communities across America. Take the example of our work with a variety of government and natural resources partners to preserve Tamanowas Rock a sacred tribal place for the Jamestown S'klallam Tribe here on the peninsula. The Land Trust, along with members of the Tribe, State Parks, and the Department of Natural Resources have banded together to save this magical place from development and to preserve it for sacred use by the Tribe. Thank you, Mr. President, for making America's Great Outdoors a priority. We need and are grateful for your leadership in launching a process our nation desperately needs to better protect the places that sustain us and define us as a people. From our majestic parks to our collective backyards, America's Great Outdoors is a legacy we owe to our children and grandchildren.

Discussion Question 1

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(cont.)

Dear President Obama, Thank you for launching America's Great Outdoors Initiative: A 21st century strategy for conservation in America. We appreciate your support in helping us to protect and preserve America's great places. Lummi Island, WA is one of those special places. As a board member of the Lummi Island Heritage Trust, I am well aware of the importance of your action in furthering our mission of preserving the land and the rural character of our beautiful island. Preserving this rich environment directly benefits and protects the flora, fauna, and the quality of life of the 1,000 people who live in our community. In the 11 years since our organization was founded, we have successfully created 3 preserves which encompass 273 acres of protected land. In addition, we have worked with land owners to place conservation easements on 557 acres of private property, thereby limiting much potential development. For such a small community, these are substantial accomplishments which are due in large part to the L.I.H.T.'s commitment to educating our island community about the value of conservation. Their phenomenal response clearly demonstrates their dedication to this place and the principles of conservation. One of the greatest threats to our continued success is the economic challenge which our country currently faces. We need federal support for this work through grants and tax incentives for land owners who donate land or conservation easements on their property. We are working with our legislators to help make current enhanced tax incentives permanent and to insure adequate funding for this program. We truly appreciate your decision to mention America's 1,600 land trusts in your remarks in launching this initiative. It is our belief that the federal government can achieve far more with limited resources by working in partnership with land trusts, such as the Lummi Island Heritage Trust, to engage private land owners in conservation across America. We appreciate your leadership in these important issues. Thank you for making the America's Great Outdoors Initiative a priority. With your help, this initiative can preserve the gift of the natural world for our children, grandchildren and generations to come.

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(cont.)

Dear President Obama, Thank you beyond words for launching this initiative about the Great Outdoors. Our natural areas are great treasures for all our people and need to be loved and cared for. The focus you have put on this truth will help open people's eyes to the importance of protecting our natural areas and precious, natural places. One of my most important concerns is that the uses made of these places includes caring for wildlife and their need for homes. All life is precious and wildlife is quite vulnerable to the intensity of human lifestyles. We need, as a caring society, to be aware of and concerned about our feathered and furred and scaled friends. Thank you for taking a stand on this important need. A second concern that I have about the uses made of America's Great Outdoors is that we continue to set aside places that can stay wild and undeveloped. We human beings need places of quiet for solitude and to restore our weary spirits. In our increasingly busy lives, we have to take time to rest the soul—for health and for life balance. Finally, the work of land trusts across the country helps protect important areas for wildlife and for the community, for public benefit. Land Trusts identify the most important areas to protect for today and for future generations. In our work of partnerships between private landowners and nonprofit organizations, we actively think about the kind of world we are leaving our children. Thank you for keeping the needs of nature and all of us depend on nature in the forefront of conversation. We are grateful for your leadership.

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(cont.)

I am a member of the North Carolina Horse Council, Back Country Horseman of America, and Equine Land Conservation Resource. I also serve on the State Trails Committee that reviews applications and recommends grant awards for Federal RTP and state Adopt-a-Trail funds. Equestrian access to public trails is one of the most threatened and diminishing resources, particularly in the eastern US; only OHV users have less access to public land. Though Federal lands like National Forests seem to stay committed to all forms of outdoor recreation, this open-minded ethic has not been transferred to State and local governments in their planning for parks and recreation. Repeatedly I encounter State and local planners and land managers that are absolutely oblivious to the equine industry around them, and (one of) the erroneous assumptions they operate from is that as urbanization increases, horse ownership decreases. Part of the role of the organizations I support is to raise that awareness and educate, and we do the best that we can, case-by-case. However, an increased push from the Federal level to equally consider ALL forms of outdoor recreation in the planning process would be helpful, particularly if any part of the land purchase or facility development receives federal funding (CWMTF, RTP, Land and Water Conservation Fund, Federal Aid in Wildlife Restoration Act/Pittman-Robertson funds, etc.). ALL uses should be OBJECTIVELY evaluated before being ruled out based on sound scientific/technical reasons, not based on elitist preservationist or just plain uninformed opinions. A particular problem in NC is the Wildlife Resources Commission that manages hundreds of thousands of acres purchased with the assistance of Federal money; they will barely tolerate non-hunting recreation until it becomes a "problem" - which it almost inevitably does because WRC will not commit any resource to management or facility development. When the problem is perceived, they prohibit the use (be it mountain bikes, equestrians, etc.) in the state Administrative Code; how many other public lands codify their rules of conduct as law? When challenged on prohibitions, WRC will often produce a biologist who will claim the presence of some sensitive or threatened flora or fauna (which may only be present on a small portion of the land). This is a waste of public resource and a misuse of conservation policy. There are many models (adopted by other states) that could be followed and would foster responsible collaborative use (not to mention increased public appreciation for the importance of hunting and maintaining these conserved lands). Below is information and recommendations for consideration; * Horseback riding and carriage driving are legitimate and culturally-significant forms of outdoor recreation. * Riding and driving, along with the care and maintenance of equines and equine-property, is physical activity which gets people out of doors, encourages exercise, and causes appreciation for the natural ecosystem. * As urbanization increases, so does the equine population and the demand for recreation opportunities. This is, in part, because well paying jobs and disposable income are clustered around urban areas, and many fast growing areas still have ex-urban areas where traditional agricultural lands are being redeveloped as hobby farms or commercial equine operations. * Use of Federal funds to purchase land that will allow any form of recreation (including hunting) should mandate the inclusion of ALL forms of recreation. The exclusion or prohibition of equestrian, mountain bike, and/or OHV use should occur only through a methodical, transparent and reproducible evaluation process that includes input from all stakeholders. * State and local tax codes need to be revised to recognize equine operations as agricultural, not commercial, enterprises to be eligible for tax relief, farmland preservation, and/or voluntary agricultural districts. * As traditional agriculture is replaced by

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(cont.)

hobby farms, federal state and local conservation incentives need to be developed and/or strengthened to recognize the open space preservation value of equine farms. * Similarly, incentives and strong indemnity laws should be developed for private land owners to allow trail easements on their properties. Public/private partnerships between local and state governments and large residential developers should be strengthened to allow public recreation opportunity. * Greater opportunities for "front-country" equestrian experiences in local and State Parks must be developed, so that people (and their horses) can gain the skills and appreciation to progress into the often more-challenging National Parks and Forests. * Equestrians need to become better educated about conservation ethics, impacts of trail use on the environment, the importance of volunteerism, and training to prepare themselves and their mounts for the multi-use trail future. This can be done through funding to agricultural extension, soil and water conservation districts, and state horse councils and equine industry commodity groups. -- BLOQ Resources

Federal agencies' allocation of budget, staff, and management effort should reflect the developing reality that outdoor recreation provides a greater good for more Americans than any other aspect of its multiple-use mandate. The time has come to make managed recreation the BLM and Forest Service's top priority. All too often "conservation" means reducing public access and recreational uses. The AGO Initiative should explore ways to enhance a diverse range of recreational uses, including motorized and non-motorized recreational uses, across federal, state and private lands. Federal land managers too often limit or restrict public recreation activities. Federal land managers should focus on recreation friendly management plans that are not restrictive and embrace a wide range of diverse recreational uses, including motorized and non-motorized recreation. The administration has prided itself in being open and transparent, yet Representative (name deleted) and Representative (name deleted) have not yet received a response to their requests for documents. It will benefit the outreach function of this Initiative if the Department of the Interior would respond to H. Res. 1406. The initiative and the public will benefit from a full understanding of the various public and private conservation efforts currently underway. Accurate information is critical for good decision-making. Statements that state large areas of our nation's natural landscape have been lost to population growth and development, or that a changing climate and new sources of pollution are affecting wildlife and watersheds, must be put into an accurate context. The initiative must disclose how much land is being conserved. The initiative should work with the over 1,600 privately run land trusts to find out how much land has been protected in recent years. The initiative should disclose how much land is conserved via federal conservation efforts, such as the Department of Agriculture's Conservation Reserve Program. In addition, it would help to disclose how many federal dollars are being spent on the various conservation efforts. Finally, the initiative should disclose the conservation efforts underway via the Land and Resource Management Plans of units of the National Forest System, the Bureau of Land Management and National Park Service. ATV and off-highway motorcycle riding encourages and promotes physical fitness. OHVs provide access to the Great Outdoors for Americans of all ages, shapes, and sizes.

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(cont.)

Thank you for this opportunity to comment on The America's Great Outdoors Presidential Initiative. I was fortunate enough to have been able to attend the meeting at Occidental College on July 8, 2010 and was impressed by the members of the panel and their desire to reconnect Americans with the outdoors and to further the protection and formation of outdoor areas. While I do live in Los Angeles and understand the need for urban parks, my comments are geared more to the units that are under the NPS. As someone who spends almost all of their vacations in National Parks, I have much to say but will limit my comments to the following areas.

Education: There needs to be more education on protection of parks and their resources. This should not only take place in our parks but in our nation's schools. These lessons should also include educating the public on the proper behavior in parks. Too many people go to our outdoor areas without the knowledge of how to properly act. This causes negative impacts to the park, its natural resources and the enjoyment of other park visitors. This holds true for not only for NPS units, but also for lands under other federal protection and in urban parks. Since the NPS and some other federal agencies already work with the Leave No Trace organization, parks should utilize them more. While some parks, such as Rocky Mountain National Park, have embraced the LNT organization and have included LNT information in all their guides and information booklets, other parks have not. LNT information should be prominently display in visitor centers and also in the park newspapers that are given to visitors when they enter a park. Another way of using LNT is to arrange local LNT educators to come and speak at organizations, parks and schools.

Park Rangers: Visitors need more interaction with Park Rangers. I have been in parks that the only place that you see Park Rangers are in the Visitor Centers or on the few Ranger led programs. There have been times that we have been in a park we did not see any Rangers the whole visit. Get more Rangers out in the field because visitors enjoy the ability to interact with Park Rangers not only during Ranger led talks but, also while they are hiking or at a popular spot. Children who get to talk to a Park Ranger could become a future Ranger. Our Park Rangers deserve a career path that is stable, with better pay and benefits. Give seasonal rangers more opportunities to become career employees. This would allow the NPS the ability to hire and keep qualified people. Rangers and their families often live in substandard housing and some struggle financially. Many are transferred to other parks or units every few years and are never able to set roots down. These men and women protect our nation's treasures, sometime risk their own lives and should be have a decent quality of life.

Volunteers: With budget restraints, having park volunteers has allowed parks to continue to serve their visitors and protect the parks. There needs to be more opportunities for people to volunteer. We live very close to the Santa Monica Mountain National Recreation Area and there are only a limited amount of volunteer activities and most of them involve hard physical work, such as trail building. Those of us with physical limitations would like an opportunity to help in other ways. A program for "spontaneous" volunteers would be nice. Those, who at the last minute find out that they have a few hours to help out, could go to a visitor center and look at a list of things they could do for that day. For example, since trash has become a problem in parks, one could go to the visitor center and borrow some gloves, a pick up tool and trash bags and pick up trash while they are enjoying the park. Having volunteer activities for families is also important. This is a good way to get the whole family outdoors while also serving as a learning experience.

Over development: Over development inside our parks is becoming a problem.

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Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

This is especially true in Yosemite where the park is starting to look more like an urban park not a national park and many projects are overblown. An example of this is what was done to the Yosemite Falls area. Although a parking area has been restored to its natural condition and a small picnic area was added adjacent to the restored area, a huge restroom was built right next to them and the area now looks like a city park. Instead of one's eye being drawn to the falls, the first thing one notices is the restroom. While corporate sponsors are a very important source of money to improve parks, projects they sponsor should not become a monument to their corporation. New building inside of a park should be limited to only facilities that are vital to the safety of visitors and the park or as replacements for an already existing facility. Any new structures should be built in areas that are already developed. Again, Yosemite comes to mind for they will be building an 18 acre complex to house the Yosemite Institute in an area that is currently undeveloped. This institute is used by only a small percentage of visitors and should be built outside of the park or in an area that is already developed. Development adjacent to our parks and outdoor areas should be controlled. This especially pertains to oil drilling, mining and power plants. While they are physically outside of a park, their activities impact visitor experience and the natural resources of the park. Over crowding: The problem of overcrowding in our National Parks has to be addressed. Massive traffic jams occur daily in our most popular parks during the summer. Traffic jams and crowds lessen the quality of a "visitor experience". While some people believe that adding more units under the NPS will help with overcrowding, they fail to realize that this will not alleviate the overcrowding of popular areas because people want to go to those parks. In fact, I was shocked to hear that there has been discussion of a campaign to get more foreign visitors to come to our National Parks that stressed our most popular parks. I personally could not get reservations in multiple National Parks that we had wanted to visit this summer because their lodging was already booked. It is not right that tax payers can not get lodging in a park when a campaign to get more foreign visitors is being planned. More parks or protected areas: One way to protect our great outdoors would be to incorporate more natural areas into the NPS System. For example, the Angeles Crest area in the San Gabriel Mountains is already partially under federal or state control, its status should be raised to at least a National Recreation Area. Also, there are lands in the San Gabriels that are worthy of wilderness protection. Its location near one of the largest cities in the United States means that it is easily accessible to millions of people but lacks the facilities and staff to protect its resources. However, before too many areas be added for protection, it is imperative that the already existing areas have enough budget to be able to maintain their facilities and protect their resources. Again, thank you for giving me the opportunity to share some of my thoughts.

I know this is a little of topic, but I'm a common man that enjoys the outdoors and fear that it may be disappearing. My enjoyment is tied to OHV as I'm not in the best physical condition due to medical conditions. I would hope that are elderly are given consideration in whatever plan that is put forward.....Thanks,

Discussion Question 1

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(cont.)

Tools; I think the Federal Govt can use the tools on the local and city level to create Community gardens through parks and recreation not only as an outdoor classroom to reconnect children to the food we eat but also to provide a sustainable food supply to our starving future. This will allow individuals to enter prominent careers in agriculture and cities pay there park staff good money and benefits, it time that we start growing our own food instead of depending on Mexico and California to feed us. It's time we take the city parks to a new level and start feeding the future, this will benefit all especially the govt

Greetings (name deleted), Presently, the Community Alliance for Open Space (<http://twitter.com/CA4OpenSpace>) is focusing on winning a pending lawsuit against the City of Los Angeles to preserve the Lopez Canyon Restoration Project Site (within the Rim of the Valley Corridor - NE San Fernando Valley, San Gabriel Mountain section) as an industrial use FREE Open Space Zone. We have quite a battle before us but we are in it for the long haul. In the meantime, I thought you would be interested in knowing what is going on right next door to Lopez Canyon. Please see the attached photos. This section of the San Gabriel Mountain range, along with Lopez Canyon, is located near the Pacoima Wash Greenway and the Tujunga Wash Watershed (Lake View Terrace, CA 91342 & Pacoima, CA 91331 above the 210 freeway off Paxton St. and Foothill Blvd.). The activity taking place in the attached photos can't exist within the proposed San Gabriel Mountains National Recreation Area. Your thoughts on this matter are appreciated and any proposed collaboration to stop this desecration is welcomed. Thank you for all that you are doing to protect the San Gabriel Mountains. Best regards, "It is horrifying that we have to fight our own government to save the environment." Ansel Adams

To Our Administration: My name is (name deleted) and I am an outdoor enthusiast, wetlands supporter and fortunately, a Ducks Unlimited employee. I urge and understand the importance of designating the prairie pothole region as a "treasured landscape". For all of my childhood and into my adult life, I was effected by this region, in that I grew up in Eastern, NE. Without the PPR, I would never have had the opportunity to enjoy the beauties of what North American Migrating Waterfowl bring to communities around our great nation. Research and public opinion will show that this region is the key player in preserving these dreams and lifestyles of not only NE residents, but all supporters around the country, due to the nature of migration. By not shining light and ultimately government support of this area, we do not risk the chance, we destroy the opportunity to do perpetual good to our nations heritage. Not only do I beg, I demand that this region be designated as a treasured landscape. It is on your shoulders to bring the voice of us citizens to the forefront. Regards,

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Hello, Thanks for holding the Great Outdoors Listening Session in Minneapolis, MN. An on-going conversation about our "great outdoors" is vital for our people and our land, and I appreciated hearing perspectives from administrators and from my fellow citizens here in Minnesota. In our smaller breakout sessions, the conversation in my group was centered around two of the four topics: challenges, and the federal government role. Less of the conversation was devoted to what works, and what tools could be helpful in local - or national - efforts. I wanted to share with you a project the Center for Changing Landscapes at the University of Minnesota is working on that could have national implications: Minnesota's Network of Parks and Trails Inventory and Framework (MNPAT). I've attached two pdf documents for MNPAT: a one page project description, and a pdf presentation we've made for the project. We would hope the work we are doing could inform future efforts nation-wide. As well as the attached documents, there is more project information and 87 county maps available on our project website: <http://ccl.design.umn.edu/mnpat.html>. If you have questions on our project or would like more information, we would welcome the conversation. Congratulations on a successful session, and we look forward to seeing the outcome of this national effort. Best regards,

My main comment is this: you don't encourage appreciation of our great outdoors, and you don't encourage more use and appreciation of our outdoors, by fencing us out of our wilderness. I'm a great believer in the long B.L.M. philosophy of multiple use of our public lands. Increasingly, here in California, BLM lands are confiscated by federal agencies either to be incorporated into military bases or as national parks and monuments. I'm a rockhound (and will be president of the California Federation of Mineralogical Societies next year). My family and I have long enjoyed trips to BLM lands in California and Nevada and Arizona to collect rocks and common invertebrate fossils for personal enjoyment and education. Increasingly, such activity is being limited and constricted as BLM lands are placed out-of-bounds to American citizens. Please, on behalf of the 135 nonprofit clubs and societies belonging to the California Federation of Mineralogical Societies: don't fence us out! If you wish to encourage public enjoyment of public lands, keep them public!

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Hello, I am inquiring about the America's Great Outdoors Initiative to support grassroots efforts and reconnecting Americans to the outdoors and the conservation of outdoor spaces. We have for the past seven to ten years been working on something similar in Metropolitan Kansas City in getting a diverse population involved and exposed to the Outdoors. In 2003 our TV show Urban American Outdoors debut across the country and locally featuring one of the first multicultural outdoors TV shows to air. Our audience both traditional and diverse became immediate fans. We never knew what to expect but we found out that a lot of people wanted to be a part of what we were doing and ever since we have continued to move forward in our goal of connecting all people, because we believe that Outdoors is for everybody! What I am interested in is how do we go about setting up a listening session in Kansas City? We are planning for an Urban Outdoor Summit Sept. 24 & 25, 2010 could this be done at the same time? Also do you have material we can hand out to our guest at this conference. I am so happy that we have an administration that is full inclusive when it pertains to the Outdoors. We have been trying to dispel some of the myths and fear associated with being in the outdoors and I think we have been doing a good job according to a lot of the emails and phone calls we get. I Hope to hear from someone soon and I will be able to provide any material you may need from us. Thank you,

I probably won't be able to attend the meeting on August 9 in Concord NH, but wanted to send a quick email to urge that the Forest Service end the practice of clear cut logging in the White Mountains (and elsewhere) in favor of timber harvesting methods which are less disruptive to the local ecosystems. Also, I'd like to suggest that off road vehicles should be banned in conservation areas and on recreational corridors such as rail trails. Thanks and best regards,

To all the people that are helping save the wild mustangs and burros: I have heard about the cruelty of these wild mustangs by starving them in captivity and while rounding them up by helicopter, they caused the death of many horses. i know that colt and their mothers are dieing because of mishandling in Nevado and other states out West. Why the rush? Why can't you handle these horses in a more humane way by feeding them and if some are giving them medical assistance? Preserving our Heritage as American, the choice to destroy one of most loved animals that are apart of nations history. You will be hated by humanitarians everywhere if you don't find homes for the animals out West that you don't want there. What do you expect to gain by committing such a cruel act? Alot of people are finding out about what's going on and it will be the shock of America. Consider what you are doing as a cowardly act and you should be ashamed to call yourself Americans.

I believe the first thing that should happen is that Obama should tell Salazar to stop killing wolves. Humans need to realize that wild animals **DEPEND** on the outdoors to survive. Without animals, what is the outdoors ?

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Ladies and Gentlemen, Good afternoon. I am (name deleted), President and CEO of the Illinois Association of Park Districts (IAPD). The IAPD serves 350 park districts, forest preserves, conservation, municipal park and recreation, and special recreation agencies throughout Illinois. Our members have strived for years to promote community-based recreation, the conservation of land, water, and wildlife resources, corridors and connectivity, and to reconnect Illinois citizens to the great outdoors the very goals the President has set forth in the America's Great Outdoor's Initiative. We enthusiastically embrace and support this agenda! Illinoisans understand the importance of recreation and conservation. According to a 2009 survey,[1] nearly 80% of Illinois voters support a \$350 million capital investment in land and water conservation. In the past 5 years, Illinois voters have approved 11 out of 12 referenda to support forest preserves. And yet while the general public understands the value of parks and open space, our agencies struggle to obtain consistent and reliable funding sources to maintain and enhance our efforts. As a result, Illinois is in the bottom 10% of all 50 states when it comes to publicly-owned land for natural resource protection and enjoyment.[2] Our State is in the bottom third in spending for open space.[3] So, as we embark on this exciting national initiative, consistent and reliable funding must be at the top of any agenda. And there are many reasons why we should be allocating additional resources for parks, recreation, and open space. Not only would it help reconnect Americans with our public lands as the President has suggested, but doing so would help our nation attain many of its other priorities. For instance, our nation has spent a considerable amount of time debating and discussing how to provide healthcare for our sick and elderly. But public park and recreation agencies are approaching these problems head-on by working to keep our nation healthy and reducing the need for doctor visits in the first place. As the chief providers of recreational programming, organized sports activities and other fitness programs for children and adults, we are leading the fight against obesity. Because many schools have chosen to eliminate physical education from their curriculum due to budget constraints, our demand for these activities is only increasing. So our programs are already promoting physical fitness and good health, and with consistent and reliable funding we can do more. Much attention has been focused on the development of new technologies such as electric and fuel efficient automobiles. At the same time, champions of parks and open space have been working on ways to provide alternative modes of transportation so we can reduce the need for automobiles. Connecting corridors of green space such as trails and greenways provide the capacity for people to move from place to place without a car. But achieving widespread connectivity of our trails and greenways also requires consistent and reliable funding for more land acquisition. Parks and open space also play a critical role in fighting climate change. They help improve air and water quality. They help prevent soil erosion and pollution caused by agricultural and road runoff. They serve as natural floodplains. For every 1% of increase in protected wetland along a stream corridor, peak flow decreases by 3.7%, which is crucial for storm water runoff and flood management.[4] A single tree's contribution in controlling air pollution, soil erosion, soil fertility, recycling water and humidity is worth almost \$200,000 over a 50 year period! In other words, it makes economic sense to invest in our natural resources. There are countless other examples of the ways park districts, forest preserves, conservation and recreation agencies positively impact other national objectives. Congress recently authorized funds to save the jobs of local police. The after-school youth programs our agencies provide helps

Discussion Question 1

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(cont.)

keep kids off the street and reduce crime. With additional funding, these programs could reduce the overall need to fight crime. My point today is that investment in our parks and open space pays dividends well beyond simply engaging Americans with the outdoors though that is a worthy goal in and of itself. Investment in these resources would help reduce the demand for national spending in many other areas, too. But funding must be consistent and reliable. In closing, Illinois' park districts, forest preserves, conservation, municipal park and recreation, and special recreation agencies continually strive to connect Illinois citizens to the great outdoors, and we stand ready to help the President achieve the goals set forth in the America's Great Outdoors Initiative. As we move forward, consistent and reliable support and funding are needed to enhance our efforts. [1] Fairbank, Maslin, Maullin & Associates survey taken of 600 Illinois voters from May 12-14, 2009. [2] Illinois State Land Conservation Funding, The Illinois Environmental Council Education Fund, in partnership with The Nature Conservancy and The Trust for Public Land, March 2007 [3] Ibid. [4] 1993 Illinois State Water Survey

Please protect America's Wilderness with wildlife a patronage of the mountains, the forests, the wetlands, the seas, and valleys, the cavedwellers, and the arctic, cascades, and the tundra left astray. Wildlife have some areas over-populated, and many which are just on a mere existence. Wolves, and other wildlife exuberate these harsh elements, assuredly as you've seen a Sarah Palin ad [of her own style] and the endangered species act, which also need updating to adjust to the life and death of some casualties of. Yet, a new milemarker should be here with your team helping a new arranged plan of support and wildlife eco system so desperately needed. Wildlife of all realms needs your support, even if it calls for sending some to another country to help out with our overpopulation of certain wildlife parks, trails, mountain areas and communities where families are endangered. Numerous tasks require a steady hand, a man whom can think on all these levels, and the courage to bring a wilderness society a new preserve for our future generations. Please remember Alaska was our last newest State, and it too offers a huge preserve and cause of understanding of wildlife intelligence, nature behavior, and eco systems to be in harmony for our future generations to see America's majestic creatures, and those whom choose to visit America's parks and wildlife preserves that actually have wildlife in its wake. I witnessed on June 20, 1977 the time of new life being brought while a 100% eclipse was taking place at Bimini, Bahamas. The sea turtles hatched millions of hatchlings, and they clickety-clacked up and down the entire white shoreline while I [humbly] sat on a Large Sea Turtle who ever so patiently, moved and dug herself out while letting me know I was no longer welcome to sit on her shell to see this sight. To the right, and left of me were many large sea turtles all moving after while, as the eclipse slipped behind the silverstreaked ocean and the sun came in full view of a lovely brilliance of a magical afternoon. Since I was 14 yrs old, the others on the island were all youths, with a counselor, boat captain, and island natives at this area. I am forever in their debt. - Address Conservation at a Large Scale - Protect our wilderness T - Improve Watersheds and Wildlife Habitat - Connect people with Nature - Provide Increased Access and Recreational Opportunities - Fully Fund the Land and Water Conservation Fund

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

We need more Wilderness on public lands. We need respect for the natural forests and wonders that we have inherited. There is plenty of private land for tree farms and cows, so keep them out of the national lands. Recreation is already a more important use of national forests, especially here in the East, than is log extraction. Machines are incompatible with protecting wildlife and natural ecosystems, to say nothing of the important spiritual connection of humans to nature. Protection of the natural habitat itself also leads to clean water supplies to adjacent communities, as well as air purification and soil creation capabilities.

BY ALL MEANS preserve the Civil War battlesites. I have been to Gettysburg (twice), Vicksburg, and Fort Sumpter. The Chicago Civil War Roundtable has been to Chickamauga. The Civil War has been called "America's Illiad". Homer would understand.

Acquire and restore damaged natural areas in exchange for public access. Acquire from private ownership damaged and abused natural areas, such as abandoned riverfronts. Engage community volunteers from all walks of life to clean up and restore the damaged areas in exchange for permanent public access. Improve water quality, enhance wildlife habitat, eradicate exotic invasive species and replant with native plant communities. Design trails and greenways with the health of the natural resource foremost in mind. One example is Great Barrington Housatonic River Walk www.gbriverwalk.org <<http://www.gbriverwalk.org/>> a National Recreation Trail.

I am in support of listing the prairie pothole regions as a Treasure which it most definitely is - there is a diminishing habitat for Ducks and if we do not be proactive and guard this treasure we will all lose

Make illegal modified car, motorcycle and off road vehicle mufflers illegal to sell and/or install across the nation. They pollute and make too much noise!!!

when we do our taxes there is a box which if checked automatically gives a dollar to the presidential reelection campaign. We spend an obscene amount of money of campaigns and this dollar should do toward National Parks and historic preservation

Discussion Question 1

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(cont.)

Department of Interior, Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Presidents national dialog about conservation. This is an important opportunity to indentify issues that can make a difference for the future. The Federal Government, through the Army Corps of Engineers, (Missouri River Authorized Purposes Study[MRAPS]) has undertaken study of management of the Missouri River. The 65 year old law (1944 Flood Control Act) that governs management of this great river basin, which covers over 1/6 of the country is outdated, and inefficient in addressing the contemporary needs of the nation. The "Challenge" is to objectively review and study how a modernized management can better meet the contemporary needs of the basin and country, and make the necessary amendments to the existing legislation. The "Federal Role" will be to provide the leadership to implement the modernization process. Modernizing management of the Missouri River will provide numerous opportunities to enhance recreation use, environmental quality, and sustainable use of the river resources for all the Basin States. Modernizing management of the Missouri River will diversify state economies through numerous opportunities for enhanced recreation development and use. Applying adaptive management tools to future management decisions will provide for efficient, cost effective, and sustainable use of river resources, and can provide a pathway for addressing developing issues such as the effect of climate change on river flow. And finally, creative use of river functions to meet authorized purposes will save multiple millions of management, resource restoration, and resource enhancement dollars. Our Chapter urges the Department of Interior to fully engage and partner with the Corps of Engineers to modernize management of the Missouri River!

Comments regarding America's Great Outdoors Initiative: The Williamson Act that was established in California in 1965 is an incentive for ranchers & farmers to keep large tracts of land intact. It helps protect watersheds, provides space & water for wildlife among other advantages. However, this year the funding in California was essentially dropped--\$1 Million in funding out of the \$39 Million that is needed to fund the Williamson Act. Why can't these funds would be restored? If the President wants people to use the Great Outdoors more, why is the U.S. Forest Service proposing to close roads in our National Forest (Sierra National Forest)? They also propose a ban on vehicles driving more that 10 feet off a main road--how does that promote dispersed camping? That doesn't seem family friendly. I support H.R.5580 by Rep. Devin Nunes' (R-CA) that would require Congressional approval before designating future monuments. The designation of National Monuments impacts ranchers, farmers, miners, etc. by restricting their traditional activities within those areas. I am unable to attend the Davis or Los Angeles Listening Sessions due to prior commitments.

Discussion Question 1

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(cont.)

Today, many families are losing touch with America's great outdoors. Fields, forests and streams are becoming fragmented by lack of support for conserving these crucial areas. As Ducks Unlimited members, we understand the importance of habitat conservation and have led this charge for decades—and we will continue to do so. Recognizing the influence the outdoors has on our youth and the need for conserving America's natural landscapes, the president and his administration have proposed the America's Great Outdoors Initiative (AGOI). This initiative is designed to promote the outdoors to youth, advance private-land conservation strategies, and use science-based management practices to restore and protect our lands. I am asking that you take a moment to e-mail the Department of the Interior, which is currently accepting ideas from the public on how and where the AGOI can provide the greatest benefits for Americans and the natural landscapes that support their outdoor lifestyles and livelihoods. Through sound scientific research, DU knows that the future of waterfowl and waterfowl hunting depend on more aggressive conservation of the Prairie Pothole Region, also known as the "Duck Factory." Encouraging the AGOI to designate the Prairie Pothole Region as a "Treasured Landscape" will help secure the future of waterfowl populations throughout North America.

WHO WANTS OR NEEDS 'EM! OPEN YOUR EYES! WHEN YOUR DRIVING DOWN COUNTRY ROADS, U.S.A., THEY ARE THE LAST VESTIGE OF THE WILDERNESS IN THE COUNTRY. THEY PROVIDE FILTERING MECHANISMS THAT CLEAN THE WATER THAT PROVIDES WATER FOR THE MILLIONS OF HOMES SURROUNDING THEM. FURTHER MORE THEY ARE THE NEST PROVIDERS FOR ALL OF THE U.S. WATERFOWL. THE PROCEEDS OF WATERFOWL LICENSES, GUNS, AMMO, CLOTHING, MOTELS, HOTELS, TRANSPORTATION, AND OTHER PERIPHERALS REACHES INTO THE MULTI-BILLIONS. AND THEY ARE BEAUTIFUL! IT BEHOOVES THE PRESENT POPULATION TO DO THEIR UTMOST TO PROTECT AND PRESERVE THEM. THANK YOU.

Agency, The problem is not the duck factory at all as stated by the Ducks Unlimited organization. The Ducks migrate south from these areas where they have food, water, and protection against the predators. Once the young ducks are hatched and fly south with their family group they go to places like the Sacramento valley, and the deltas to pair up for the return flight to the so called duck factories. There is a large natural lake left after the ice age call "Salton Sea" that is being deliberately being drained to place a highway on the north end that has been taken over by an Indian tribe that will completely destroy the habitat. Also, there is a Wild Life Refuge on the east side of the Salton Sea that is "The Wister Unit" that could use more help that the ducks unlimited organization has neglected for some time now. The harvesting has not been very successful due to lack of interest of the low number of birds that have been showing up there since the "Sea" started being destroyed, and neglected. The global shifting for several years now has made the migration of Ducks and Geese later in the season and also should be changed by at least 6 weeks for waterfowl. I hope you honestly hear my voice as I am a hunter and not a politician with the interest of the future of these Gods creatures.

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(cont.)

Hi I will say I have never hunted the Central Flyway and probably never have the chance, BUT, I have read many articles over the years and I do understand that the small lakes and ponds which make up the "Prairie Potholes", are of almost immeasurable value to the waterfowl populations of the central flyway. They do need protection, they must be protected for the "health" of the many species of birds and animals which depend on them.

I am 59 years old and have been lucky enough to live in South Dakota pretty much my whole life. My Dad started me hunting with him when I was just a youngster and have loved it ever since. I really enjoy the outdoors and have taken countless numbers of people and introduced them to hunting and the outdoor experience in South Dakota. I would like to make a recommendation on the management of our farm ground in the Midwest. I think we have to start thinking out of the box to get the agricultural programs to coincide with the wildlife programs so we can start having a win win for everyone especially the game that lives on the land. The last seventeen years have been extremely wet in northeastern SD and we have lived up to our nick name of being the Pot Hole Region. The cattails and slough grass is growing wild in all the low lying areas along with the CRP acres that have covered a lot of the marginal farm land and the wildlife have done very well with all the new found habitat to live in. The CRP program started going out three or four years ago as the commodity prices went up and the fixed payment on the CRP acres stayed the same and land owners started taking their land out of the program and put it back into production. Now all of a sudden there is money available to put these acres back into grass and some farmers are taking advantage of it. This is great news for the sportsman and the wildlife that lives on the land. The PP (preventive plant program) is another one that could really benefit wildlife if the rules were changed just a little. When these acres are too wet to be planted in the spring these little bodies of water turn into great nesting areas for pheasant and ducks as well as homes for the deer in the area. By late summer these areas start to dry up and here comes the disc and these areas are gone and can't be used by wildlife for food and shelter for the coming winter. We have to start working together to maximize our assets so we can get the most benefits out of the land for the farmers as well as the sportsman and the wildlife. Thanks,

I am 80 years old and since I can remember have enjoyed nature and waterfowl with or without a gun. So my Grandchildren and son can have the same opportunity, I encourage you to designate the Prairie Pothole Region as a "Treasured Landscape".

To whom it may concern: As a farmer in Minnesota, I support making the prairie pothole region of MN, SD, ND a "treasured landscape". Having farmed for many years, I know it is hard to bring off a crop in poor soil. Most of these soils are dry and of poorer quality than the top producing areas and are best left as prairie or grazing land.

To Director of Interior My wife and I think that the greatest thing we can do for our grandchildren and their grandchildren is to help the wildlife, like birds, ducks, turkey, deer, elk, bear, etc. for the future. In order to do this, we must have save the little Habitat we have left. Please have the AGOI provide Habitat and the Prairie Pothole Regions in the USA is a great area to save.

Discussion Question 1

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(cont.)

The Prairie Pothole Region is found in the northern Great Plains of North America. The region consists of grass-covered wetland habitats covered with few-to-many shallow depressions called either potholes or sloughs, and they were made 10,000 years ago as glaciers retreated. Prairie potholes are usually filled with water and are included in many habitat restoration projects. If we forget to protect the habitat of this region it would be like us letting Lake Superior dissolve and wither away; that also was a glacier that retreated. For the love of the animals & land . . . "Save the P.P. Region"! Appreciate all your time & efforts in the conservation today for tomorrows habitat. We only get one earth plant on her well. Thank you kindly.

Save the Missouri Coteau and the Prairie Pothole areas. The Duck Factory of America. Saving the Great Lakes would be beneficial to our future, as well as the Mountains from strip mining and mountaintop removal. Too bad we can't save our whole planet from ourselves.

Please give the North American Prairie Pothole Region a HIGH PRIORITY for preservation of a unique habitat for Migratory Wildlife.

Please don't let our country destroy any more duck habitat. We are trashing this country. Thanks

Man will destroy all land for wildlife unless they set aside needed land for wildlife Wake up America....

Ladies and Gentlemen, I'm writing you to ask you for your help in protecting and preserving what is left of our native Prairie landscape. I'm 65 yrs old and have been an active and avid outdoorsman and conservationist for well over 40 yrs, since I made my 1st excursion to the Prairies after I graduated college in 1968. I have visited the Prairies annually since then and have seen 1st hand the destruction and loss of so many thousands of acres of native grasslands and wetlands. We have so little precious left! Help me....help all of us who place such a high value on the importance of this landscape. Thank you so much!

Ladies and Gentlemen, Please add my name to that of fellow conservationists endorsing the designation of the Prairie Pothole Region as a "Treasured Landscape". As I watch my Louisiana coast disappear and degrade as a result of hurricanes and the recent oil spill, I feel the need, not only to save the "Coast" but all of the treasured landscapes which comprise our national heritage. Count me as a supporter of anything which will benefit the preservation of the prairie pothole region.

Discussion Question 1

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(cont.)

IN MY OWN WORDS, PRAIRIES AND POTHOLES, WHO WANTS OR NEEDS 'EM! OPEN YOUR EYES! WHEN YOUR DRIVING DOWN COUNTRY ROADS, U.S.A., THEY ARE THE LAST VESTIGE OF THE WILDERNESS IN THE COUNTRY. THEY PROVIDE FILTERING MECHANISMS THAT CLEAN THE WATER THAT PROVIDES WATER FOR THE MILLIONS OF HOMES SURROUNDING THEM. FURTHER MORE THEY ARE THE BEST PROVIDERS FOR ALL OF THE U.S. WATERFOWL. THE PROCEEDS OF WATERFOWL LICENSES, GUNS, AMMO, CLOTHING, MOTELS, HOTELS, TRANSPORTATION, AND OTHER PERIPHERALS REACHES INTO THE MULTI-BILLIONS. AND THEY ARE BEAUTIFUL! IT BEHOOVES THE PRESENT POPULATION TO DO THEIR UTMOST TO PROTECT AND PRESERVE THEM. THANK YOU.

I will make this short and easy. The Prairie Pothole Region is a very valuable piece of real estate that reproduces endless wildlife for our and other countries. I urge this administration to recognize the Prairie Pothole Region as a "Treasured Landscape". If lost it will never be recovered. Thank you for your kind consideration.

I feel the AGOI needs to focus on land restoration. Original habitats of land and water are critical. Public access to these lands are also crucial.

I am writing as a conservationist first and duck hunter second and am concerned greatly as to what's happening in the Prairie Pothole Region. This area needs preservation status help. When the area is destroyed it can't be brought back. The untold amounts of carbon released for a temporary gain is unacceptable. The harm to waterfowl that has called it home since the melting ice glaciers is a paramount concern. Please protect this region for all the future waterfowlers and conservationists. I thank you.....

I am asking that you do everything possible to save the remaining Pothole region in North and South Dakota. Once this area is lost, it is gone forever. Conserve what we have left before it is too late, as we are losing the battle right now. This should be a treasured landscape to preserve for our future generations. We don't need another bushel of corn or wheat; We need to protect what we have now.

I am a Ducks Unlimited member and believe that the prairie pothole region is one of our most important waterfowl breeding areas and needs to be conserved to the extent that we can.

Our wilderness lands must be protected and preserved, not emptied of the wild species and certainly NOT turned over to development in any way whether it be pipelines crossing the lands or mineral mining rights issued or taking the surface and/or ground waters, or any other kind of destruction that

PUH-LEEEZE, get ORVs under control and off public land. They are devastating national treasures.

I want to see: 1) More land protected as wilderness. 2) Reasonable restrictions on ORVs. They do tremendous damage to the environment

Discussion Question 1

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(cont.)

to President's OBAMA ADMINISTRATION During pasted years I visited the 4 corners The Rockies Florida and was impressed that the size of the wild spaces which was a great opportunity for wild life (unfortunately in florida the "lamentein" are disappearing !) Please continue that policy which is a BEST for the following generations Thank you for considering my comments. I look forward to your reply.

With the state of the economy and the nation at war it is more difficult than ever to focus on what seem to be non-essentials. Yet at this time it is more important than ever for us to focus on what makes our nation great. This year I have personally witnessed many more people visiting national parks in my area. People not only look to them for inexpensive vacation options during belt-tightening times; but they also look to nature to restore their faith. In nature we look upon the grandeur made available to us through the thoughtfulness of our nation's leaders. That is why I am so pleased to hear about the America's Great Outdoors Initiative. We need real innovation and dedicated resources to conserve and protect our land water and wildlife so that generations to come can appreciate nature come what may. We can't let industries make our decisions for us. We can't afford to sell our nation's heritage during difficult times. Please encourage maintenance and development of sanctuary for wildlife. Please take an active role in guiding conservation with the highest level of care. Thank you.

I am certain we have saved all of the great places already please stop this land grab. I enjoy off road motorcycling on public lands

Gentlemen: As a young boy I was privileged to join and participate in Cub Scouts and Boy Scouts (and was active until I joined the USAF). This put me in touch with the great outdoors in many of our 50 states and I was able to hike camp canoe boat fish hunt and otherwise enjoy this beautiful country God has blessed us with. Following my Air Force tour I married and raised three children. To "pay back" some of what I had "taken" from Mother Earth I returned to Scouting as a Scoutmaster and also served in several management positions. As a family unit we spent many weekends and vacations camping in the western states with our Jeep and tent trailer exploring the remains of many "ghost" towns and learning more about Americana than is usually available in most text books. Later we took up dirt bikes (motorcycles) and snowmobiles exploring the back country Alpine Nordic and backcountry skiing mountain climbing and the like. I think it is safe to say that I have a deep appreciation for the outdoors and would support most projects that would promote the accessibility of our public lands to current and future generations of Americans. This is not one of them. Unfortunately many of the places I have been privileged to visit have been designated Wilderness Areas and Off Road Vehicles (ORV) can no longer use the pre-existing trails. That forces the ever increasing numbers of ORV enthusiasts to use the ever decreasing number of "open" trails thus making them more dangerous more crowded and further away from home. Result.....fewer and fewer people get to enjoy the busier and more dangerous trails and more non participating people in the area complain about noise traffic and other negative aspects typical of large groups of people in smaller areas with a view toward obtaining more land closures. A vicious circle. Let's get some proponents of the use of public lands involved and come up with some ideas which when enacted will move us closer to our multitude of objectives.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Hello I use many open to the public lands to enjoy the outdoors with my family as my parents did with me. I have spent time helping to clean and clear public lands at my own expense and time as well. I will believe that we are all entitled to these areas and should be good stewards of them. To just close them outright serves no purpose that I can see. I belong to various off road and outdoor groups and none of these groups were asked to come to any meeting on this closure. Are you absolutely sure that we are all represented in this? Thank you for your time

I am an avid outdoorsman who loves taking my family camping fishing hiking mountain biking four wheeling in many different settings. I love the forests the deserts the oceans the mountains and so does my family. Please do not close any public land from the use of the public. Please keep the land open to transportation such as ATVs and 4wheel drive vehicles. I am an adopt a trail coordinator at my local OHV area and volunteer many hours a year for work projects and clean up days. Using the land responsibly is sustainable and is a right of the citizens of the United States. Thank You for your time. Keep public lands open to the public.

Mr President. I object to your America Great Outdoors Initiative. In my experience areas designated National wilderness and monument designations limits the areas in which people can actually access. As an avid outdoorsmen (Hunter fisherman ATV'er Dirtbike'er Snowmobiler mountainbiker and hiker I find it most enjoyable to be able to do my sports with as few limits to where I can go as possible. The tougher it is to access an area because of nature the more fun. The tougher it is to access an area because of Government restrictions the more boring and un-enjoyable it is. Also I start paying taxes in 2 years. some of my paychecks already get cut for tax purposes. I want that money going to keep these areas open and easily accessible to the public not to close them off. Thank you for your time. IF you are an aid reading this it's for the President of the greatest nation on this planet. Not you.

My family and I live in an urban area and we do enjoy the outdoors every weekend. And I do mean "every" weekend. We enjoy riding off-road motorcycles. My sons ages 9 and 16 enjoy the nature and the outdoors vs. playing video games and riding in SUVs to the local shopping mall. Both are junior rangers. As a result we respect nature conserve recycle and use renewable energy as much as possible in our lives. Despite any preconceived notions against dirt bike riders we live green and unlike others don't simply use "green" as a buzz word. Other benefits from our sport are that my wife and I have a strong family bond with our 2 sons. We exercise regularly and stay physically fit. Any plan that restricts our off-road access to enjoy our sport does not represent our interests.

My family has enjoyed many places of scenic beauty that we would otherwise never have experienced without being able to access these places by traveling off road. Please stop these closures so that others can have the opportunity to witness these beautiful spots.

Our Family of 9 enjoys camping in the beautiful outdoors especially in the dry Desert as 1000 of us do. Mr. President Please let us enjoy our Public Land and the great outdoors and DO NOT CLOSE our Public Lands. Thank you.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

President Obama As a life long Democrat and member of organized labor and I vote for the person best suited to insure my continued employment. With that said and as you understand better than anyone I'm sure many issues are not just D. or R. so I would like to ask your support to continue to allow me and many others the chance to enjoy the great outdoors in our favorite past time including off-road motorcycling and horse back riding. These activities are my families two favorite past times. We as a family have enjoyed countless hours together as well as spent 10's of thousands of dollars to enjoy our hobbies. The initial Wilderness Act envisioned about 20 million acres as suitable. Today we have over 120 million acres of Wilderness where public access is restricted. The majority of the public have been forced onto smaller and smaller areas outside of Wilderness. In order to encourage Americans to enjoy the outdoors we do not need more Wilderness areas we need less! Thank you for your consideration.

With our world facing very real environmental problems why would we restrict opportunities for people to form relationships with our natural world in a way that if properly managed does not promote any significant environmental damage? Let's focus on real environmental problems and let's encourage people to get involved by promoting activities that allow them to develop their own personal relationship with nature. Thank you

While I believe that we do need to preserve the natural beauty of this great nation we should encourage people to enjoy that beauty not restrict them from it unnecessarily. In order to encourage Americans to enjoy the outdoors we do not need more Wilderness areas we need less. If the goal is to reconnect Americans especially youth with the outdoors I believe that it can best be done by providing more places for them to enjoy their favorite forms of outdoor recreation. Off Road Vehicle use is by far the most popular form of recreation followed by Mountain Biking yet the Initiative seeks to create Wilderness and Monument areas closing another 13 million acres to people who enjoy those most popular forms of recreation. Please consider all forms of recreation that are impacted when Wilderness and Monument areas are designated. It truly pains me to see more and more of our Nation's lands being isolated from new generations of Americans. Please reconsider closing additional public land and make more land available for use by our children and subsequent generations.

I am writing to voice my objection to the America Great Outdoor Initiative. The goal to reconnect Americans especially youth with the outdoors can best be done by providing more places for them to enjoy their favorite forms of outdoor recreation of all types. Off Road Vehicle use is by far the most popular form of recreation followed by Mountain Biking yet the Initiative seeks to create Wilderness and Monument areas closing another 13 million acres to people who enjoy those most popular forms of recreation. OHV and ATV activities are a fantastic way for families to enjoy both the great outdoors as well as quality time together please don't make it any harder to find safe and scenic locations to recreate.

I enjoy sending time in the national forests. I travel by jeep and motorcycle. Your intended legislation will limit access to the forests. Please don't legislate away the public use of public land.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

I moved here from Kansas so I could ride on mountain trails in Colorado.

I want to express my strong opposition to the designation of more wilderness. My wife and I are ardent hikers and backpackers and enjoy frequent use of existing wilderness for that purpose. But I'm also an off-road motorcycle rider and mountain bike rider and appreciate the opportunities I have to enjoy non-wilderness areas for those purposes. Far more citizens take advantage of recreational opportunities on non-wilderness lands than on wilderness lands. Designating more wilderness will have the perverse effect of actually preventing the public from enjoying the outdoors. Not everyone wants or is able to strap on a pack and hit the trail. At a minimum the President needs to include the two largest forms of recreation as a priority in his plan to reconnect Americans with the Outdoors: Off Highway Vehicle recreation and mountain biking. More areas need to be opened to people who enjoy these most popular ways to enjoy the outdoors.

Please dont lock us out of our public as most people dont use them I for one use them frequently with my wife and two little girls. There is nothing more thrilling to me than exploring the forest with my family. Thanks for your time

The only outdoor recreation I have is use of two wheeled vehicles on public land.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

To whom it may concern I am writing you concerning land and forestry use involving ORV (Off road vehicles). Are people misinformed and don't fully understand what is at stake and what may be leading to a lost right for ALL of us? Myself I LOVE the smell of fresh crisp clean outside country air and the sight of more trees and less buildings. After all this is where I grew up. But I feel some groups and individuals are going about this land protection thing all wrong. I call it LAND LOCK. Little by little our rights are being ripped from us. The areas for (adults and children) to enjoy ORV (Off-Road vehicle and snowmobile) are far and few between. Some people and groups like to complain about pollution. Let's look at the facts! There are serious doubts about people having an effect on the planet called global warming now and there is data out now actually showing the contrary to this. These small vehicles emit about the same emissions as a lawn mower due to the ORVs limited time of use and the small size of these engines. I do believe that chain saws weed trimmers and lawn mowers emit more pollution than ORVs in general due to our forty hour plus work week. Should restrictions be put on those as well? I feel the need to write about other states as well as my own. The land closure issue seems to be the same scary path that the entire country is on with all of these silly bans because of the people and groups that DON'T fully understand all issues they bring up. Let me to fill you in on some facts about the woods and animals. My brother is a hunter and I have nothing against that. The funny thing is that we see more animals when we are out in the woods enjoying ourselves on our ORVs relieving some stress and showing our young people these beautiful isolated areas of the outdoors when my brother sees fewer animals. The animals know we are not out there to hurt them when we are on our ORV. Animals are smarter than what they get credit for. They can sense when they are being hunted or when there is a hunter nearby. Some breeds actually cry out to warn others. They have strong senses that they use to survive. They don't speak or rationalize like we do. They use their senses to survive therefore their senses are very strong. I have been in situations where I have gotten very close to wild animals even with a motor running under me you can't tell me that they can't sense I was not going to hurt them. Another example this one I have seen many times. As I ride down the trail I see a bunch of birds on the ground eating some seeds that fell from a tree. As I come through some may move a short distance on the tree or a surrounding tree. I then see them go back to the fallen seeds on the ground in my rearview mirror as I pass. I doubt that I've devastated them. I have also been in similar situations with deer. One occurrence comes to mind. I was coming over the top of a hill and as I went over the top there was a deer standing in the trail eating. He didn't care at all about moving from the middle of the trail. Another time I remember was when I was with two other friends on our bikes. We were in Beartown state forest in Massachusetts. We left the parking lot going up a big hill. We stopped and shut off the bikes to talk about which way to go as the trail split off. As soon as we stopped a quail came walking out of the woods and started to walk around my friend's bike. He then started to peck at the rear tire. We just laughed and were wishing we had a video camera as these things happen to us quite often with wildlife. Don't get me wrong I support and think that land preservation is VERY important but I know the facts first hand! We need land protected for us NOT from us. We need to create more designated areas for ORV use. I spend a lot of time out in this great country's wilderness. ORV riders don't drive animals out of an area. A trail through the woods does no damage unlike removing trees and developing the land Putting in a new road for cars to run over animals or building new houses

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

or malls! The clubs that I belong to help to keep trails free from fallen trees and other blockages for all. Animals use these trails as well. Even in small local areas (such as power lines) people seem to enjoy complaining about ORVs and the sound of a small engine. I have been on the side of the trail and have been surprised several times when an ORV came around a nearby corner and at that point was just able to start to hear it. This applies to ORVs of today's standards with factory exhaust. An ORV is one of the classic sounds of the country or wooded areas just like a chainsaw log splitter lawn mower or a weed trimmer. I say "If you don't like what you hear move to the city and see how many pleasant country sounds you hear." Another effect that people don't think about is the impact on young people. Kids that take up these sports develop respect in learning about wild life and the environment and getting out enjoying our wooded areas with family and friends. They are usually not the type to leave food wrappers and beer bottles behind. When you take land away "or don't have any areas to begin with" guess where kids go. They hang out in the cities and towns more and a good part of them may get in trouble. Of course this is not the major cause of youth trouble but everything adds up these days. Some elected officials actually enjoy these activities themselves. I would be proud to take someone along to show him or her the fun and beauty of these sports. The revenue these sports create is also beneficial as well. States should take a good look at this issue and designate more areas for its people to enjoy these activities that can be separate from hiking or skiing areas. Don't let America continue on a LAND LOCK path. Do your part and help stop this before we all lose out! Thank you for your time!

Wilderness and Monument are the most restrictive forms of land designation and reduce access. We need to revert some of these lands back to Multiple Use in order to promote access for urban youth and all Americans. My late husband loved to ride his off road motorcycle. He passed away of a heart attack while sitting on his bike in the middle of a ride in 1999 in a place called Stonyford CA. The members of his group "Valley Trail Riders of Livermore (CA) adopted the trail and have been taking care of it ever since he died. This group is very responsible and takes care to teach the children of the group about taking care of the landscape. It would be a shame to not have a place to ride as a family.

Closing Land to controlled motorcycle and ATV pleasure riding simply takes away the American way of life that has gone on for 30 years. RV trips with families for the weekend tens of millions of dollars revenue from Motorcycle Dealership business millions of healthy young people enjoying the outdoor life will all be pressured. PLEASE THINK AGAIN

Dear President Obama It appears that your administration is about to embark on a program that will deny citizens of the United States access to a large swath of their public lands.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

I support careful stewardship of and preservation of access to public lands for prudent use by hikers mountain bikers equestrians etc. These rules while they achieve the goal of protecting lands may create a generation of Americans that don't know about or appreciate the importance of these areas. Mountain Biking does more where I live to introduce our young people to the beauty and value of our wilderness than any other single activity except perhaps hiking. It teaches the value of volunteering for trail building and maintenance and helps to expand appreciation for our lands and encourages us to "leave no trace". It encourages health and fitness in a nation that is facing crisis levels of obesity and chronically poor fitness.

I Believe that locking the wilderness away from people is the worst thing that can be done !!! I enjoyed the wilderness as a youth with the boy scouts and all my friends. it teaches you to love you're land and use it with respect. If its locked down then no one will respect what they don't know. To spend any money to close down nature from the benefits of proper enjoyment is absurd!!! Instead you should take a look at WEST VIRGINIA it has opened maintained trails with a permit fee and largely boosted it economy with out handing out (waisting) tax dollars. If you want to know whats good for any area you have to live there for a while. You can't know whats good in ARAZONA if you live in D.C. or for NEW YORK and live in COLORODO. I live 35 minutes south of D.C. and have watched development destroy all the woods I enjoyed as a youth. I have seen allot of people that call themselves tree hugger that have never spent a week or two in the woods camping and in joying nature instead they have to have a blow drier and cell phone. There idea of camping is a motel room!

I have two children who love the outdoors. We are a family of motorcycle riders and have been forced to go further and further to ride and enjoy the land that our grandfathers were all able to enjoy. For you to close these areas to me & my family is a disgrace to all who enjoy the outdoors. Given there are a few that neglect the outdoors but to take away the rights of everyone because of those few is ridiculous!

My principle hobby is riding motorcycles on primitive trails on National Forest and BLM lands near my home in Durango Colorado. This is my chosen way to experience the wilderness. Like 99% of the off-road motorcycle riders I know and ride with I go great lengths to ride responsibly. We do not damage trails. We do not ride trails closed to motorcycles. We maintain our machines to run quietly. And we do more to clear downed timber from our trail systems in the spring than any other use group. Sadly our contributions to trail preservation and maintenance seem to go unnoticed. Motorcycles are being excluded from more and more single track trails. I have seen several occasions where a trail in closed to motorcycles it quickly falls into disuse and disrepair and within a few years is unusable. Certainly there are public lands where user conflict is a serious concern but where I live if motorcycles are not allowed on the trails they will disappear. We have abundant land for motorized recreation in Southern Colorado. We maintain the trails. We ride responsibly. For these reasons I write to oppose the administration's recent proposals for increased Wilderness lands National Monuments and other potential land use changes connected to the Great American Outdoor Initiative that would exclude motorized users from public lands. Let's find a way to enjoy and preserve these lands for all user groups.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Part of being an American is to have the freedom and responsibility to explore our wilderness areas. Be it OHV's mountain biking hiking or camping with the family. Please consider this coming from a man who has raised his children enjoying responsibly the great outdoors. Thank you very much Mr. President for taking the time to read this..

dear pres obama i am 67 yrs old and have been riding off road dirt bikes since 1969-most of my riding has been in nmex-but also in ariz cal and tx i also have two college degrees-in biology-SMU 65 and ecology WT A&M U 88 i have a unique view of use/abuse of our natural lands-i know we can achieve both objectives(use-preservation) by objective monitored controlled enjoyment of our natural lands-we are achieveing this goal right now in the s cal desert with the co operation of the BLM and the area motorcycle clubs i cannot put into words what it is like to ride in the desert-the epitome of total freedom-'high wide and handsome'- what an uplift to the soul it provides!!!-being able to ride and see no people no vehicles no cattle no signs at all of civilization-just the beautiful blue sky the desert and the mtns in the distance-you the desert and God!! i know i am not alone in pursuing this enjoyment-there are thousand of us enjoying this unique aspect of the American Dream i know i am seconded by many others when i plead with you not to close even more of the dwindling public lands that are available to the enjoyment of Americas' caring and involved citizens thank you for your time in reading my responce

I am an avid outdoor enthusiast and enjoy a variety of outdoor activities from hiking to mountain biking to motorized OHV use. There is a need and a place for all such activities in order for each of us to enjoy our public lands. I strongly reject the notion that these radical special-interest groups are somehow smarter more noble more worthy or more representative of America. Please do not let them steer us toward ever more restrictive policies - keep our public lands publicly accessible!

Most of the land in the west is open space. Wildlife have plenty of places to live. There is no need to create Wildlife Corridors or designate additional Wilderness Areas. I object to spending my tax dollars locking the majority of the public out of more of their public lands through inappropriate Wilderness and Monument designations. This will discourage the public from enjoying the outdoors.

I enjoy hiking any chance I get and I find that people who travel into the wilderness whether it be by off road vehicle mountain bike or hiking/backpacking enjoy these areas and maintain them. They do NOT destroy them! More people should get out and enjoy the beauty that America has to offer.

I ride atv with my 3 of my 4 sons.It allows me to spend quality time with them enjoying the outdoors instead of playing on the Internet or video games.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Regarding closure of American Public and Private Land and Wildlands for recreational use: I am a fifty one year old American born and raised here. I was a Boy Scout in my younger years and as an American growing up in a wholesome family I was taught to respect our environment for today and for the future. I ride motorcycles on and off road. I hike and mountain bike on trails. I boat on waterways. I do all this in a responsible manner. This is one of my American Freedoms I cherish. Taking away and/or limiting public private and wild lands for this type of use is something I am completely against. If revenue and preservation are necessary then I propose the Government fine force to rebuild and/or repair and/or punish with monetary consequences the ones who abuse and violate responsible use of our nations wilderness public and private lands.

I am 63 yrs of age and have enjoyed outdoor recreation in many forms I have enjoyed hiking riding offroad and and now I share the sport of trail riding with an organization that does what the government promised they would do when they applied the "Green Sticker" fee the "wilderness permit" fee the Special "Group permit" fee the "Day use" fee the "Yosemite Pass" and so many other leans. I can remember when the "Green Sticker" fee was first proposed the Government offered to maintain our trails police our public lands and recreation areas for the few bad actors that did not use them responsibly provide permanant and temporary employment (summer jobs for college students) in order to maintain a good balance of enviremental empact and "SERVING" the public for thier responsible recreational enjoyment. There is not enough room in this format to write about the broken promises to the public and how most of our funds have be misappropriated for political and special interest. Wouldn't it be nice if we could trust our government servants with our taxes a government that would listen to and recognize the responsible majority not regulating for the sake of control. I am fairly sure that this letter will never see another set of concerned eyes I trust this initiative will be passed in some midnight session by a small group of politicians that have never ventured into the forest with their friends to install water bars clear brush plant trees and trully enjoy the great outdoors. The last thing and the most important thing that I trust. There are still a greater part of this Nation that will do "the right thing". President Obama Myself and others would respectfully request that you investigate the agencies that have misappropriated funds and NOT rendered the services that we have paid for. Please protect our PRIVILEGE to enjoy and be responsible for our public land and recreation areas. Thank You

This letter is about my concern on the closing of so many of our public lands. For the past 40 years I have enjoyed our outdoor recreation areas and the past 10 years have been able to explore with my children. Which is priceless! We boat we hike and we offhighway ride. I fear that if we don't become understaning to others needs then all our riding areas will be closed. This will cause a backlash and will lead to violation protests. Being fair is the utmost importance. Please help keep our recreation and offhighway opportunities open to all Americans. Thank You

I am partially disabled and motorcycles and bicycles are the only way i can acces some of our lands. Wilderness diesgnation excludes too may Americans who have a right to access.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

I live in busy crowded Los Angeles with my husband and two children. We visit California city desert monthly to dirtbike spend time together and enjoy the wilderness. By taking our freedom away to visit public land our family bonding time and children's memories will be lost. Limiting access to private land can only harm the American family and the youth's interest in wilderness. I do not believe the people's best interest is at heart here.

Every year more and more so called "public land" is being closed! It is getting harder and harder to find places for law "to go and spend time with their family's riding their dirt bikes and quads. With money being as tight as it is it seems that spending "2 BILLION" of my tax dollars (it is "OUR" tax dollars) to close public land is not a wise thing to do. But for some reason you people in government think that there is no end to the money you can spend! The more "Public Land" you close the more trampled the land that is open will become. I have noticed this over the years and when the land that is open does get trampled you want to close it because of over use! I have been riding in areas for over 30 years and in the past 15 to 20 years I have watched them slowly get "worse and worse" because of over use! Because of the fact that other areas get closed to orv use and no other places are being open to take the load off of them this is what happens! There are more and more people getting into riding off road every year. But our areas are getting smaller and smaller. It does not take a rocket scientist to see what is coming! Instead of giving kids a place to go and have fun you are just keeping them from doing anything contributing to nothing for them to do causing them to hang in the streets get into trouble and over populate our juvenile detention centers!! Give families back their rights to do FAMILY things!! Make the right choice by keeping our lands that "WE PAY FOR & OWN" open. Some of my best memories are when I was young riding dirt bikes up in the woods and spending time with friends & family.

Our leaders need to include the two largest forms of recreation as a priority in this plan to reconnect Americans with the Outdoors. That would be Off Highway Vehicle recreation and Mountain Biking. Both of which our family friends and neighbors are involved in. Just by taking the sample of residents in our neighborhood who participate in these activities it would seem that a large number of our population enjoys these 2 sources of family recreation. I object to the spending my tax dollars locking the public out of more of their public lands through inappropriate Wilderness and Monument designations for a select minority many of which do not even frequent the "wilderness".

I am writing to voice my opinion on these wildlands closures. Please refrain from closing more public lands. Me and my family have been using these lands for over 28 years. We spend 4 days a week riding motorcycles and driving jeeps around the Owyhee front in Idaho do not want to see our rights to these lands infringed upon. So please hear us loud and clear. Public lands need to remain public!

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Keep public lands open to the public! I object to my tax dollars being used to lock the majority of the public out of more of their public lands through inappropriate Wilderness and Monument designations. The president needs to include the two largest forms of outdoor recreation (Off Highway Vehicle and Mountain Biking) in his plans to reconnect Americans with the Outdoors. As a BSA Scoutmaster I am dedicated to introducing our youth to the great outdoors. Living in the State of Texas makes this a challenge due to the chronic lack of public lands - almost all land in the state is privately held. Please don't make the job of educating our youth in outdoor skills by closing more lands to public use. We must be able to get there before we can enjoy it! Can we protect our public lands without locking them away from the public? YES WE CAN! Say NO to land closures!!!!

The President proves over and over again that he says one thing and does another. He clearly wishes to stifle American freedoms under the guise of he knows what's best for us. He is schooled in the Saul Alinsky mold of destroying America from within. He is not to be trusted at all! In any case Local Stewardship projects are the key to improving forest health. This has been proven time and time again on both private and agency lands where active stewardship has produced better forest health and increased biodiversity over non managed preserves. The President is interested in local involvement in his plan yet no multiple use groups have been included or invited. The initial plan has clearly been created by a small segment of special interest groups who seek to limit access to our public lands. Wilderness and Monument are the most restrictive forms of land designation and reduce access. We need to revert some of these lands back to Multiple Use in order to promote access for urban youth and all Americans.

I really value the quality time my young son and I spend off road and in wilderness areas. My son recently started motorcycle desert racing and really enjoys the challenge.

I am an OHV enthusiast who recreates in the American Southwest and do it responsibly. I am one member of a larger group of men who have ridden together in Arizona New Mexico and Colorado with our off-road motorcycles. We are responsible obeying all laws & restrictions; we all purchase ORV Tags and are happy to do so if it helps keep trails open. We are always courteous of other users on the trails and give the right-of-way to hikers mountain bikers or equestrians but to be perfectly candid we rarely see anyone else on the trails wherever we ride. I strongly object to any further closures of "public" lands. I respectfully submit that a better approach is to allow those of us who love the open lands to participate in upkeep and trail maintenance. Most of the people I know that are involved with off-road vehicles; be they motorcycles ATV's mountain bikes or jeeps are more than willing to help maintain trails & roads; they just need to be enabled to do so. We have long admired the well managed off-road use program in Colorado and have worked to try to influence the establishment of a similar trail system in Arizona and have offered repeatedly to help maintain such a trail system. It is sad to see that small self-serving special interest groups have gained so much power and influence that they have closed off the use of so much land; our land; to all but a very small group of people. Please do not allow this trend to continue; please keep our lands open for all Americans to enjoy.

Discussion Question 1

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(cont.)

Many of the most important lessons I ever learned in life were learned in the wild or in a Bog or at a Tide Pool along a stream creek or brooke. And we can't forget the Ponds Lakes Rivers Aquaducts Sloughs Wetlands Swamps Falls Irrigation Ditches Reservoirs and Geothermal Resource Areas. I learned about animal anatomy. I tried to heal the hurt animals with just the things I could find out there in the wild country. I learned animal husbandry and the birthing process of many animals. I studied the animals habitat and how the animals used the habitat mostly out of necessity. I learned about the pecking order of things in the wild. How interacting properly would mean life or death within the colony or pack or whatever group you had been accepted into. I learned how certain species must rely on others of their own type to be able to exist. Or maybe use a decoy animal of a different species to draw near an animal of which you are predator of. I learned to provide food for myself and for animals of which I felt necessary to susstain life or comfort or power. Many of these self taught Nature Studies were learned. And in the years to come I would learn that these beautiful places were ideal for studying the opposite sex of my same species. I learned very much about everyone of these subjects without even one textbook. I could go home and dig into the encyclopedia set and find my answer. Then when a nature program came on TV I would amaze my parents with my knowledge. This is one school you can't lock up. Not if you have an ounce of compassion for learning.

ORVs ATVs and off road riding are a good use of land. They are also a good family sport. Propery used parks can be balanced between people animals and habitat

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

I am one of the people who attended last night's function in Seattle- I appreciate the effort this administration is putting out to try to get input. I am just a citizen that enjoys hiking and camping in the outdoors. I have no affiliations to any groups. I was a bit intimidated to talk last night because so many of the comments and suggestions were put forth by extremely knowledgeable and articulate spokespersons from different nonprofits and environmental interest groups. I have a few comments I will put forth now. What works: I have read of groups like Conservation Northwest that work with interests that environmentalists traditional have butted heads with hunters Logging companies and developers they have sat down and been cordial to each other to find ways to satisfy everyone's needs. I think this is the approach we need to use as we reach an era of resource depletion. Challenges: As I mentioned in what works- resource depletion- This will ultimately be the sticky wicket This will be the Government's role to educate the public and industry about the brutal facts of overpopulation and resource depletion and everyone can't have all that they want. There will have to be incentives and education to try to steer this country in the direction of sustainability. Federal Gov. role: My wife and I love to camp and hike and one thing we noticed that is frustrating is the different passes and fees at different outdoors areas. Couldn't the Federal Government oversee a single pass that all the states dipped into? Sometimes you go to a trail head up miles of poorly maintained forest and once there find out you need a pass to park there but you can't buy it there- same with some camping areas- A sign says to buy at the regular place you would buy a hunting or fishing license- but the sign may not be specific in the location and I don't know the businesses in the area. A pass for all the states we would gladly purchase. Tools- I would like to see websites that could give you information on hiking and camping and other outdoor activities that would tie together the disparate agencies involved State Parks BLM Land County Parks State lands etc just have one place to go to find out about outdoor opportunities. Another tool would be a website for volunteer opportunities. One last comment is that I think some of the traditional uses of public lands need to be reexamined. I don't believe that ranchers should be able to leave their stock on public lands- Cattle foul waters and destroy fish breeding habitat and they are unpleasant to encounter when out hiking. If Ranchers don't have enough of their own land they shouldn't be raising livestock. Cattle are a big greenhouse gas producer and are not efficient for food production either. Thank you very much for your time and interest

Prior to the Station Fire in the mountains around Los Angeles we had the opportunity to go up into the mountains and get away from the city. This is so important to making life in L.A. livable. Now we have lost a lot of the wilderness that we relied on for our spiritual rejuvenation. I urge that you develop wilderness management plans that: 1) Eliminate fires of this size and 2) Help L.A. to recover from this fire more quickly. This might mean better planning and/or more resources. This is such a huge loss to us.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Our public lands belong to all Americans and provide us with clean supplies of drinking water healthy air and an opportunity to experience wildlife and nature. Our region hosts unique public lands of incredible beauty and wildness close to large population centers. Investing in our region will permanently protect a large and varied natural landscape create economic opportunities for neighboring communities conserve the region's biodiversity and recover its wild species through habitat conservation and restoration. I urge you to implement the following priorities for my region:

Protect the proposed Berryessa Snow Mountain National Conservation Area: Located less than 100 miles from the Bay area and Sacramento the region stretching from Lake Berryessa to Snow Mountain is our outdoor wonderland. It gives us clean drinking water spectacular views and places to hike kayak and more. Local people have come together to support designating the Berryessa Snow Mountain region as a National Conservation Area so future generations can enjoy this natural treasure. The administration should protect this treasured area and other unique landscapes for future generations.

Conservation at a Large Scale: Large natural areas such as the Berryessa Snow Mountain region provide our best hope for addressing loss of species and open space preserving water quality and adapting to climate change while preserving the wildlife and lands we enjoy today.

Create Economic Opportunities: Protected public lands can provide economic benefits to their surrounding communities. Communities can diversify their economies by expanding tourism-related industries boosting ecotourism in their region and thereby increasing demand for food and lodging services and increase property values by protecting the area's natural amenities.

Improve Watersheds and Wildlife Habitat by investing in restoration of the Berryessa Snow Mountain region. This will create jobs that are built around proper stewardship of our natural areas. Thank you for considering my comments.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Public lands belong to all Americans providing us with supplies of clean drinking water healthy air and the experiencing of wildlife free-flowing waters and the earth. Investing in our region will permanently protect a large and varied natural landscape create economic opportunities for neighboring communities conserve the region's biodiversity and recover its wild species through habitat conservation and restoration. I urge you to implement the following for my region: Protect the proposed Berryessa Snow Mountain National Conservation Area which is less than 100 miles from the Bay area and Sacramento; it extends from Lake Berryessa to Snow Mountain and is one of our outdoor wonderlands. It gives us clean drinking water spectacular views and places to hike kayak and more. People in this area are coming together to support the designation of the Berryessa Snow Mountain region as a National Conservation Area. It is truly a natural treasure that should be protected for its water supply and for the enjoyment it brings to those who want to explore it now and by future generations. Conservation at a Large Scale: Large natural areas such as the Berryessa Snow Mountain region provide our best hope for addressing loss of species and open space preserving water quality and protection from climate change while preserving the wildlife and lands we enjoy today. Permanently protecting wildlands such as those in the Berryessa Snow Mountain region should be a priority and looked upon as an important legacy of this administration. Protected public lands can provide economic benefits to surrounding communities diversifying these economies by expanding tourism-related industries boosting ecotourism in the region and thereby increasing demand for food and lodging services. Investing in restoration of the Berryessa Snow Mountain region we will create jobs that are built around proper stewardship of our natural areas. This restoration will enhance wildlife habitat preserve critical water supplies and connect people to the land. The importance of reconnecting or staying connected with nature cannot be overstated. The Berryessa Snow Mountain region provides countless opportunities for connecting the communities of the Bay Area and the Central Valley with nature. Existing outreach programs for families and children will only be enhanced by permanent protection of this natural playground where recreation and outdoor education opportunities abound. Thank you all. May God bless you all as you consider all the comments you receive about the future of conservation and may you make the most ethical and considerate of decisions.

Thank you for launching the America's Great Outdoors Initiative. Escape into the wilderness has been a major contributor to the quality of my life. My vote is to preserve this precious resource to the greatest degree possible. Thank you.

I attended the "America's Great Outdoors Initiative" meeting in Albuquerque NM this past July and based upon the information I heard especially during the Comments session I believe that Trout Unlimited's programs could play a vital role in making the Great Outdoors Initiative a success.

Restoring and creating habitats preventing activities that will damage the habitats introducing fishing to our youth etc. all will continue to support the manufacturers suppliers of equipment necessary for our sport. Fishing guides lodging and food businesses transportation companies etc. will benefit also from our sport. In short jobs will be maintained and created.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

we staRT with small animals as their fate affects us all.

Here in Wisconsin we have made remarkable progress in protecting fragile streams and restoring ones that were marginal.

I live in California. We are leading the nation in many environmental efforts - especially in regard to automobile and truck pollution. We are also a highly dysfunctional state in regards to our government (not unlike the national Congress). Much of our environmental efforts have come from the public support of private groups like TU. The cleanup of the Sacramento River after the disastrous train wreck and chemical dump of a few years ago was largely undertaken at the insistence of many private conservation groups pressing the state to act. Our state is under the constant threat of oil gas and mineral development - and the pressure to make our public water privately owned - on public lands. Help us protect our public waters from the assault of private corporations.

I am from Alaska and I am really worried about this Pebble Mine project.

I am a member of the Upper Green River Chapter of Trout Unlimited in Pinedale Wyoming. I moved to Wyoming to marry my wonderful husband also a TU member and Chair of the National Wildlife Federation and to enjoy the clean environment and wild experiences outside my doorstep. One of my favorite outdoor activities is to fish for wild trout. I joined TU because its mission is focused on healthy watersheds intact habitats and restoring degraded streams so that these support healthy populations of fish and wildlife. TU also works to educate and involve the next generation of Americans like my chapter does by supporting youth fishing days in Pinedale. It's hard in a little "backwater" place like Pinedale (pop: 7000) to know what is going on in the nations capital. I rely on the National TU folks to take my message of protecting wild rivers and wild places to national leaders like you. My local TU Chapter is currently working on placing an experimental fish screen at the mouth of an irrigation ditch to prevent wild trout from entering the ditch and being left to die once the irrigation flow diminishes. If this is successful we'll contact ranchers and replicate this effort throughout the county. Our landscape efforts are not on the large scale of TU but when we all work together good things will happen in our nation. I didn't inherit a polluted planet with filthy water and degraded streams but my generation will be leaving this for the next generation of Americans. UNLESS we get off our duffs and have a serious effort to protect the water and habitat for fish. We may use wild trout as the reason for these efforts but the truth be told it will benefit us and our children and grandchildren just as much. I thank you for your efforts and ask you and President Obama to keep up the work to help America's wild places and great outdoors.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

I am an active member in the Colorado Trout Unlimited Organization and am writing this letter with the hope that I can help make America's Great Outdoors (AGO) Initiative successful. Our mission is the protection of coldwater fish species and their habitat. Through my involvement I have learned that the Organization is full of people willing to sacrifice their free time to help protect something they cherish. I pride myself in working within a close-knit community to make a difference in my streams and river ways. I quickly learned that protecting fish means a lot more than I thought. We also need to protect our rivers and watersheds and repair and restore degraded waterways for fish and other native species and plants. I found that repairing damage done by man requires constant work. We to protect the areas that have not been damaged yet and we need more projects like the Land and Water Conservation Fund to help us do that. Educating the next generation of anglers and conservationists is also a critical component in our success. My chapter is leading the way in integrating Trout In the Classroom in Colorado. We help young kids learn the value of cold water fish by raising them in their classroom then releasing them in the wild months later. The program has been hugely successful and we are expanding the program this year from one school to five. Building on the projects and programs mentioned above will help implement the activities to make the initiative a success and helping unite and expand a grass roots effort will only strengthen the initiative.

I am writing as a citizen of the United States of America and a resident of Minnesota to offer suggestions from my experience regarding strategies and activities that can help make America's Great Outdoors Initiative a success. My recommendation is to protect intact habitats reconnect them to surrounding areas and restore degraded habitats so that they again support healthy populations of fish and wildlife. It is also essential that we sustain historical conservation gains by engaging the next generation of environmental stewards through educational programs and outdoor activities. and roadless lands on national forests we can ensure that these special places continue to serve as strongholds for trout salmon and many other species.

I am writing as a member of Trout Unlimited (TU) to share what our North Bay (San Francisco Bay) Chapter has been doing to promote this cause for the past 7 years. Following a conservation speaker at one of our meetings 7 years ago several of us were in discussion when someone observed "We all have gray hair! Where's our next generation of conservationists and environmentally concerned citizens going to be coming from?" After brainstorming this question for a bit and mindful of the fact that fly fishermen are generally excellent stewards of the environment we decided we'd better start teaching young people how to fly fish and "hook" them with an interest in nature. That first year we oriented 28 youth (ages 8-18) in all the aspects of fly fishing; casting knots and rigging reading the waters and entomology knots etc. This past year we had grown to 124 participants and now include the parents or guardians who learn FF skills so that they can coach and support their young people. In short we've been doing OUR job in helping young people get outdoors but we'd certainly appreciate some support from AGO.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

I am writing as a member of Trout Unlimited (TU) and an active participant in land conservation efforts here in Maine to offer suggestions from my experiences regarding strategies and activities that can help make America's Great Outdoors (AGO) Initiative a success. Local Land Conservation groups provide for the protection and preservation of critical habitat through the process of easements donations and community support for reserves parkland trails waterfront facilities and scenic and historical venues. Community-based partnerships and public access including fishing hiking and camping and other low impact activities offer a way for ordinary citizens to connect with the outdoors and with conservation efforts. Financial support through favorable taxation State Bonding (e.g. Land for Maine's Future) and public and private donors makes this possible. Both healthy watersheds and a landscape-scale approach to conservation are needed to insure continued public access to the natural places in every state. TU's Land conservation programs strategy is to protect intact habitats reconnect them to surrounding areas and restore degraded habitats so that they again support healthy populations of fish and wildlife. It is also essential that we sustain today's conservation gains by engaging training and empowering the next generation of environmental stewards through educational programs and outdoor activities. Faced with hydro power licensing issues we must provide alternatives both for power and habitat preservation as does our local Damariscotta Mills Fish Ladder restoration which involved TU the Damariscotta River Association and the State of Maine among others. I thank you for your efforts.

I am writing to offer support for community-based strategies and activities that can help make America's Great Outdoors (AGO) Initiative a success. I am a Life member of Trout Unlimited (TU). In addition I am a Life Member of the North American Fishing Club a member of the Federation of Fly Fishers Secretary of the Board of Directors of Potomac Riverkeeper and a member of two watershed organizations in West Virginia where my wife and I have a second home. For the latter two organizations I am heavily involved in stream monitoring as a WV-certified monitor and various other activities related to conserving protecting and restoring the two watersheds. My experience has shown me that a community-based approach involving working partnerships with appropriate local regional and national organizations is a viable way to connect people with the outdoors and conservation efforts. I am pleased to see this theme echoed in the President's memo on the AGO Initiative. Unhealthy streams and rivers cannot support healthy populations of fish and wildlife or provide clean water for drinking and recreation. Thus it is essential that we not only sustain today's conservation gains but also work towards further gains. I believe that this can be done by engaging the next generation of environmental stewards through educational programs and outdoor activities. Each of the organizations that I mention above are involved in such efforts in various ways. Working together we can develop a strategy that achieves the goals of the AGO Initiative. Building on the projects and programs of Trout Unlimited and the other organizations will help implement I thank you for your efforts and look forward to working with you as it develops.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

I was born and raised in Vermont. I spent two years in Nevada and Arizona as a missionary for the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints; other than this time out west I have lived my whole life in Vermont. I spent a lot of time staring at screens of different kinds while growing up (TV computer) and although we went camping fishing and hiking I didn't develop an appreciation for the outdoors until after high school. I see now the value of our Great Outdoors and hope that that appreciation could be fostered in many more hearts than is currently the case. Much hard work and effort will be required of all of us but I believe that the results will be worth it. **** Of special interest to me is having more self **** sustaining wild trout habitat as well as more habitat for grouse woodcock and waterfowl. Please help us to not only save what we still have left in our great places but to restore our backyards to something that we can be proud of. ***** I can only imagine the hard work and effort that you must put into this. Thank you for doing your best.

My family and I believe that Trout Unlimited is a prime exemplar of true balanced use of our natural resources.

Secretary I have been a member of TU for the last 2 years and have been impressed with their attention to conservation issues. This is a great organization that is focused on conservation from the most local level there can be - the local chapter of guys and gals taking a Sunday afternoon to haul tires and beer cans and shopping carts out of a local stream (by hand) all the way up to projects on the scale of dam removal. The attention to every level of the environments we work to maintain or restore is the only way to ensure success with something as daunting as conservation on a landscape scale. Please read their words below and let this great organization and our officials help with the AGO.

Trout and Salmon need clean and plentiful water resources.

TU's mission like my own is to conserve protect and restore North America's trout and salmon fisheries and their watersheds. As a native of Colorado north of here I know you understand this. I personally conduct on-stream demonstrations in micro-fauna and trout diet. By employing a landscape-scale approach to protect reconnect and restore riverine habitats and sustaining of the AGO Initiative. If I can be of any service in this endeavor please contact me.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

You have got to be kidding!?! I am writing as a member of Trout Unlimited (TU) to protest your plan to implement the "America's Great Outdoors (AGO) Initiative". We do not need the federal government to spend any additional non-existent dollars on these proposals. The country is broke and as responsible citizens we continue to gladly rely on private donations rather than see irresponsible fiscal themes echoed in the President's memo on the AGO Initiative. It is essential that we sustain today's conservation gains by engaging the next generation of environmental stewards to voluntarily contribute to our educational programs and outdoor activities and additionally discourage them from becoming increasingly dependent on big government. We will pledge our own funds to preserve our own selfish interests thank you. As conservatives we privately engage the next generation of environmental stewards and sustain our conservation legacy. For example TU has worked to educate students about water quality and freshwater ecology. Building on the projects and programs mentioned above will help us to privately implement our activities. Please use any available federal funds should they ever become available to serve the truly poor thank you. It would be a travesty to waste money to directly support the lifestyles of the well-heeled members of Trout Unlimited.

I am and/or have been a supporting member of several conservation-purposed organizations. While a number of such organizations have had success in supporting the maintenance and revitalization of their focus species none appear to me to have had the broad based impact on multi-use initiatives as has TU. And who in their right mind can minimize the importance of clean water on quality of life and life itself? Indeed a "river runs through it" with "it" being the lives of every American citizen. Building on the projects programs and philosophies mentioned above will help implement the activities to make the AGO initiative a success.

The Middle Rogue Chapter of TU takes a hands-on approach to improving habitat through tree planting and stream improvements as suggested by the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife as well as working with other groups and raising funds to pay for heavy equipment when required. For example dam removal on the Rogue River here in Oregon will provide safe passage for upstream migrations of salmon and steelhead and more importantly will provide safe return of endangered silver salmon smolts as they return to the ocean. We also look forward to the removal of the Klamath River dams which are a major impediment to returning salmon and steelhead trout. For example the Middle Rogue Chapter has worked with Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife in teaching freshwater ecology by raising trout in classroom tanks and taking field trips to release them into the wild as well as teaching "Angler Education" classes to 5th grade classrooms throughout the area.

We must act to protect intact habitats reconnect them to surrounding areas and restore degraded habitats so that they again support healthy populations of fish and wildlife. . . To engage the next generation of environmental stewards and sustain our conservation legacy youth programs like Trout in the Classroom and service learning opportunities are critical. For example Trout Unlimited has worked with the EPA to educate students about water quality and freshwater ecology. I thank you for your efforts and look forward to working with you as it develops.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

As a long term volunteer with TU and the U.S. Forest Service I lead volunteers into the wilderness twice each year. We repair watershed damage do fish and wildlife counts and build exclusion fencing which keeps grazing cattle out of the Golden Trout spawning areas. This is only possible with a cooperative effort between the Governments (State and Federal) the cattle ranchers and T.U. volunteers. . I thank you for your efforts and look forward to working with you as it develops.

One issue that is very close to home and my heart for me is the Marcellus Shale drilling in PA. This drilling poses an immediate and unmeasurable threat to lands and wildlife of PA. Someone must set new standards and procedures to eliminate the threat to our great outdoors.

It is not enough to protect individual blocks of habitat; we must reconnect them to surrounding areas. For example, dam removal on the Penobscot River in Maine will reconnect hundreds of miles of habitat. Where habitat is impaired, such as the Driftless area of Minnesota, Iowa, Illinois and Wisconsin, we must restore it. For example, TU works with programs like Cooperative Watershed Restoration, National Fish Habitat Action Plan and the Farm Bill to improve in-stream and riparian habitats.

ONLY A HOLISTIC APPROACH WILL DO.

Our natural world must be protected and kept as pristine and viable as possible. All life on Earth is inter-connected, and the quality of our lives depend on the health of our ecosystems and wildlife, who play important roles in the natural balance of Nature.

Just as I am thinking of my children's children, I pray you are also. We have to leave a legacy of understanding that we did what was right for their future.

This is a great idea. There are many capable people who I'm sure will bring great ideas to the table.

Please support these efforts so that our children and grandchildren will have these treasures as we did.

I think putting a stop to the ongoing consumption of our undeveloped and wild areas by urban sprawl needs to be curtailed somehow. Bring communities and suburbs back from the edge of decline, that would make more sense and energy savings.

The future of our human race depends on our actions and our responsibility to our earth and all that inhabit it. We must be stewards of this precious land that we all need to survive on.

Though not a US citizen myself I nevertheless regard the the magnificent parks, refuges, national forests and public lands in the USA as part of my heritage, particularly in this shrinking and so-called "globalized" world. Comprehensive conservation of our natural habitat is important to all peoples.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Our national landscapes are a great part of our character as a nation. We cannot afford to let them be diminished, because it will diminish us as well. The idea to preserve special places and wildlife was one of this countries best ideas.

I suggest that you publicize the benefits of establishing CONSERVATION EASEMENTS ON PRIVATE lands. I find that most people do not know or understand the benefits of such easements. If you will highlight them, more folks will help in conservation.

We were afraid that the Obama Administration was going to follow the Bush Administration's total disregard for our precious wildlife refuges, parks, wilderness areas, and our entire environment. We hope this Initiative means that there will finally be a real change.

this is important to me. I want to leave this as a legacy for my children.

Our nation needs this initiative!

This is a thrilling start to the preservation of many species and habitats. I implore you to continue moving in the direction with a strategy that will protect and save our great outdoors, the wildlife and their habitats. I truly believe it is crucial to the well being of all Americans to keep our natural world healthy and vibrant!

As someone who has visited several of our wonderful national parks, this initiative is especially worthwhile and vital to our nation.

I would like to incorporate school people, students and teachers, probably High School and College ages, to be in programs of work-study projects.....to assist in repair and maintenance and stewardship of local parks, rivers, creeks, oceans, habitats that need attention...this could be a 'for credit' program so the monies needed could be lessened some what.....thanks for doing good things for where we all live...intribe,kathy

Our world is a gift that we shouldn't waste! No artist could rival nature's brush with landscapes or wildlife. It's too precious not to protect!

This effort will positively impact our lands, our citizens and our environment for many generations to come and will be a great example to other nations in protecting and preserving their precious natural resources. I deeply thank you for both your awareness and willingness to address this issue that is of concern to all Americans who love the natural world.

I look forward to seeing your good work in our great outdoors!

We are the caretakers of this land and its waters. We can do no less than cherish this commitment for the generations to follow.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

It will be the single-most important initiative we undertake in order to secure the future of our natural world.

It's truly an exciting time, to be working toward a comprehensive plan that will protect and preserve our glorious wild spaces for generations to come!

The protection of the natural world has always been very important to me as it should be with everyone who cares about this planet.

We can't get it back once it is gone. The earth, land, wildlife, the great outdoors, obviously means a lot to a lot of Americans. Please protect as much of it as you can.

my family and extended family make use of our state parks and camping areas every year as a reasonable and healthy area to get together explore and make memories. Please do all that you can to keep these wild areas available and unspoiled

wild horses and burro's should be included they need to have their land returned to them also so they can thrive.

Our national parks, (wildlife) refuges, Florida's national forests, and public lands all across this beautiful country represent the best of America. Thank you so very much in advance for your valuable time spent considering my comments with an open mind and understanding of nature's needs. God bless you and America!

There is nothing better to spur the imagination for our young minds than nature and the great outdoors. Let us keep it intact for the next generation.

I take advantage of the parks and waterways around here all the time. I'm wondering how my places can sustain a large growth. We definitely need more opportunities. Valley Forge Park, for one, has gotten so crowded it is hard to enjoy the nature sometimes on the weekend.

Watersheds and wetlands, wildlife and ocean creatures are far more important than politicians!

We must protect all these beautiful places, and animals that reside there

I am a Kindergarten teacher, and I trust that you will do all in your power to leave my students and their unborn children a healthy intact natural environment. Thank you!

I thank you for your time,,,,,please try to help keep profiteers and bad management from mis using the land and harming environment and species,,,It is time for more protection for our fragile earth,,,Do all you can and thank you,,,!!

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

After a wonderful few days in the Grand Teton National forest and Yellowstone National Park in mid-July this year with my 13 year old grandson tagging along, I cannot imagine losing any part of this beautiful country to satisfy the almighty dollar. Future grandparents should have the opportunity to show these beautiful lands to their grandchildren..

The future of our ecosystems, our wildlife, and our human communities depends on the actions toward conservation and preservation that are taken now.

PS Nothing is more important in the long run than taking care of our home, the earth.

I have lived for over 20 years in three of the great National Parks, Olympic, Mount Rainer, and Sequoia-Kings Canyon and I know how grand they are and how vital to our citizens' future they are. So. please take heed!!

I also must state the obvious. These are PUBLIC lands. These wonderful places must always be managed for the PUBLIC, with the PUBLIC's interests held in priority consideration. Our public lands must never, never be sold or leased to private enterprise. Private enterprise, especially big corporations hold one primary goal, first and foremost, and that is to exploit resources for their own profit.

Please make it possible for our future generations of children to love the same things that we have loved and to learn to live with nature and not to destroy. We have already lost so much.

Do not permit any mining, lumbering, drilling, hunting, snowmobiles, ORVs, etc., in these refuges...only hikers and backpackers, birdwatchers, and the like. Thank you.

The tradition of maintaining a strong stewardship of our precious national treasures is something we should be proud of. We cannot let down those who let us inherit these treasures by neglecting them now.

We need to preserve them not only for ourselves, but for future generations. Why should we deny them such beauty, education and pleasure?

I am thrilled with your Initiative. Nothing is more important to me than conserving and protecting our land, water, and wildlife. They are the foundation of our physical and spiritual well-being.

For years my husband and I took our three daughters backpacking in many of our National Parks and Wilderness Areas. We became a very close family, learned to truly appreciate these treasured places, and created some of our most precious memories. I want this to be available for future families in America. Therefore,

As our population grows and global warming looms, our public lands must be able to withstand and survive enormous strains.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Our forefathers had the vision to set aside great tracts of land for parks, refuges, national forests and public lands so that a way of life could be preserved through the ages. These parks, refuges, national forests, and public lands represent the best of America.

I have just returned from a vacation in several national parks. Something that is a constant in the national parks we visit is that people stop -- wherever they are -- for wildlife. Watching wildlife in a natural environment is a big thrill for people. The biggest thrill of my family's just completed vacation was seeing Kaibab squirrels on several occasions at the North Rim of the Grand Canyon. Wildlife needs protection, more than ever. The fact that we saw these rare squirrels (not having seen them on two previous trips there) tells me that they are getting some necessary protection. Not all creatures are so fortunate. We must act now to conserve the majestic landscapes and diverse wildlife they support.

We are the keepers of this great, wonderous country...we cannot let corporate interests destroy this precious gift!

I live in Moab, Utah and realize the need for a cohesive program as I have seen tremendous changes in this area now that it has been discovered.

I have enjoyed the great outdoors all my life. I hope my grandchildren will have the same privilege. That would seem to be in our hands together.

Our family has owned land,since 1947;now in a land trust, on the North Fork of the Flathead which is only 3 miles from Canada.It is a refuge for the entire family every summer.

Being a native Michigander, preserving our state's amazing natural resources is a high priority for me. Last summer, I visited some of the few large tracts of remaining prairie grasslands in our nation with stops in Oklahoma, Kansas, and Nebraska. Every effort must be made to save these now tiny pockets of our nation's heritage!

I believe public lands number one priority is conservation. All life deserves to exist & when the environment is safe for wildlife, its safe for us too. We should consider ourselves guardians of our lands not abusers of it.

Nothing is more important on our planet than the amazing natural world we live in . We must enhance its beauty and integrity for the health, benefit, peace and enjoyment it gives us all!!!!

Yes, this is not only ours, but theirs...the generations to come. Our american grandchildren and great grandchildren. Let's be remembered as Heroic, the generation that made the decision to save our Wilderness. This is our moment. Progress through Preservation.

As a Wildlife Scientist with 47 years of experience in research on the behavior and ecology of endangered species, I know the importance of protecting critical habitat for wildlife, while ensuring safe and peaceful wilderness recreation for future generations of Americans.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

This is a very important issue to me personally. I am an immigrant to the US-- we came when I was 7 years old. At that time I wanted to see Yellowstone and Disneyland. Well, I have been to both many times (as well as numerous other national parks and other "wildlife" areas). I have a son now, who's 8, and he has been to several national parks (including Yellowstone), but has never been to Disneyland (I'm not sure he even knows it exists). The point is that I believe that the national park systems (and I include other "wild" areas) are crucial to what we are as a nation and what is important and significant.

My father spent his entire work life in the Upper Peninsula of Michigan, working as a state forester for the Department of Natural Resources. My brothers and I had the unthinkable good fortune to grow up in fairly pristine nature. One of my brothers became a wildlife biologist and spent the last decade working with the California Condor restorations project. To us it feels like protecting our natural lands is like protecting our true mother. Please take this opportunity while it is in your good hands to make policies that will value what is truly irreplaceable - and that is ecosystems that support so many wondrous lives.

Please protect our outdoors for us and the animals. It is a place of mental relaxation... a place for all to enjoy...God bless

As a National Park visitor for over thirty years, I am excited that you are considering a broad-reaching, inclusive plan for them.

For the most part, individual species will continue to reproduce if given the habitat elements that they need. As these elements become fragmented a landscape-scale conservation effort will be required to maintain continuous access.

I grew up in a family treasuring our outdoors and wild spaces; camping 'rough' was a regular part of my childhood, and I can never thank my parents enough for this.

As a child, my family camped in America's beautiful outdoors, and I naturally fell in love with its wonders. From Michigan -- to Bristol Bay, Alaska -- to the Gulf of Mexico,

As an active user of federal and state lands for camping, hiking, skiing and just plain enjoying, I want to thank you for launching the Initiative. One more thing I do want to add is the tragedy of the cattle grazing in our national forests. They ask camper and hikers to tread lightly, pack it and pack it out. The cattle are destroying beautiful areas all through the forests. As a resident of Montana I am appalled at the devastation they have created. Cow patty's everywhere, trampled grasses and flowers, destroyed stream beds. This issues should be a priority!

After just returning from a visit to Alaska and visiting the Tongass National Forest, and being awed by the beauty of the glacier and environs there, I feel it is essential to continue to protect our National Parks and Forests.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

My family and my wife's family spent most summer vacations in the National Forests. It was a treasured part of our childhood and we should ensure future generations have the opportunity to do the same.

It makes me so happy to learn that the Obama administration values our wildlife and wild places, and intends to conserve them. What would our country be without these beautiful wild areas and creatures that bring beauty to our lives.

I teach kindergarten students. We use outdoor recreation areas to learn about the water cycle, habitats, animals, plants, and the connection between people and the natural world. My family also visits parks and public lands for our vacations. We love to camp in the outdoors.

I live in a rural area. and try to implement integrated landscaping not only in my own backyard, but in others who ask me about landscape design. We almost lost a state treasure this year, our Alamo Lake. People were horrified to hear that the state "misappropriated" monies that were left to the park for its continual operation. My grandson has already missed out on so many treasures that we used to take for granted

I have nine grandchildren. My biggest hope for them is that they will be able to enjoy our wild spaces as I have. I want them to hear bird song, to see a fox or a whale, or even a wolf someday. I hope that they will have forests to explore, clean air to breathe, and clean water to drink.

I am 73 years old and as I begin the last leg of my life on earth, I wish to At my age I can see more clearly the needs for the future. I was born in Wyoming and have seen a dramatic change in the exploitation of wild places. An example of this is the need to expand the greater Yellowstone to the whole ecosystem and not straight line boundaries. National forest land should be included in the national park and additional lands purchased to capture the essence of what is need to be preserved.

My wife and I love our National Parks and have had the good fortune to visit some of them. We value them and want to see more energy, thoughtful planning and money put into these "forever jewels" of our nation. It would be wonderful to regain the spirit of Teddy Roosevelt and the resources that were put into forming and maintaining these wonderful and awesome places.

I have had my breath taken quite literally away so many times in my life by the natural beauty of our National Parks and natural preserves. No picture, no video, no second hand account and no great numbers of them could prepare one for the grandeur and the sheer immenseness of the beauty and majesty of those places. Those moments and that pristine majesty are priceless!

Conservation is not at the bottom of my list of important issues facing not only our country but the world. Those who want to leave every decision to "the market" would be living in a very different world now, if it were not for the likes of Teddy Roosevelt, Ansel Adams, and others like them in bringing the necessity of preserving our outdoors to the public's attention.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

We have no greater national treasure than the beauty of our wildlife and the land that supports them. I suppose that I am a proud environmentalist, but each meaningful time in my life I can honestly say was inspired by the beauty of nature. I want my children and grandchildren to experience that joy. Please continue with a strong and protective plan that will insure the future God's creation.

I am incredibly excited and pleased that the Obama Administration is launching the " Initiative". I think protecting America's wild spaces and natural resources is essential for Americans now and future generations. I am a strong supporter of President Obama and I hope the Obama Administration will continue to implement creative, forward thinking strategies such as this one.

I have seen the beauty in Yellowstone National Park and Rocky Mountain National Park both many times. When I was young my parents would take us to the mountains to observe the cute little chipmunks and the beautiful elk and deer and big horn sheep. They taught us to respect all of God's creatures including wolves and bears and coyotes. Why is it that so many want only to kill these majestic animals?

I have loved every visit we've been privileged to make to our national parks, as well as to local and regional conservancy places. These are sanctuaries of beauty and healing, absolutely irreplaceable treasures of our nation. It gives me joy to think of returning the wolf to balance the ecosystems of Yellowstone and other western parks. Even to be part of rescuing the bluebird by having a nesting box in our backyard is hopeful. I hope that we will learn to protect prairie dogs and other smaller animals, birds, fish, and plants that are part of the interconnected wholeness, the health of our country. Trees, intact wetlands, healthy rivers--all help us have the flexibility and resources to withstand climate change.

I am a vagabond/photographer/writer and since 1998 have been traveling the country. I have visited every state, have been to nearly 30 National Parks along with Historical Sites, National Monuments and other places of interest. This fall I will embark on another lengthy (4 to 8 months) trip around the country visiting another 85 places of interest, including 60 National Parks, Monuments and Battlegrounds, Wilderness areas and National Forests. As one who has had the privilege to have seen so much of this beautiful country, I believe it of utmost importance that these places be preserved for the enjoyment of future generations in as pristine condition as possible and more lands designated for preservation under the umbrella of the National Park Service and National Forest Service. We must preserve these lands for the Seventh Generation.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

I grew up in Cleveland, Ohio, where the locals would brag about the "emerald necklace" of interconnecting parks and woodland corridors that snaked through the city and its surrounding suburbs. As it turns out, what was a nice thing for dayhikers to have is a necessary thing for the wildlife to have, and if you've ever been to Cleveland, I'm sure you've been impressed by the diversity of wildlife in the greater metropolitan area. The wildlife in the great wildernesses of the West do not have such different needs: they too need open spaces they can roam, and passable corridors across entire regions without human blockades. Just as no single suburb of Cleveland could have implemented the "emerald necklace" of parks there, no single state or local authority can implement an integrated policy across the publicly held lands: we need the Federal Government to be the neutral force in charge to keep the public land strategy coordinated and effective.

Almost 75 years ago the pioneering conservationist and ecologist Aldo Leopold called for a new "land ethic", arguing that not only land managers but also the American people needed to reconnect with nature and understand the interdependence of all living things. In spite of Leopold's efforts and the contributions of those who followed and fought to protect our soil, water, air and natural resources we find ourselves a decade into the 21st century still struggling against powerful political interests to establish a clear environmental policy with any kind of widespread public support. Our present course is unsustainable and irresponsible. That is why I want to As a wildlife biologist and park naturalist I have spent the last 12 years monitoring threatened and endangered species, restoring habitat and educating the public about conservation issues. I have personally witnessed the transformation that can occur when people make a direct connection to nature and experience the wonder and beauty of our public lands.

We are so thrilled that we have a "Green-Thinking" Government. Since President T. Roosevelt and the Naturalist Muir, our protected lands and wildlife flourished. The overpopulation and the pollution that goes with it, is threatening these wonders. Delani National Park takes the tourists sightseeing in a little train, so the cars of the visitors don't disturb wildlife and damage air quality. Maybe this process could be implemented in other National Parks also. The Great Smokey Mountains National Park is one of the most polluted outdoors in the country, There is bumper-to-bumper traffic, I think that it is the most visited place in the Nation. If this park would follow the example of Delani, the pollution would be cut down. Also, charging an entry-fee would help to hire more employees and create more guided tours, lectures and other educational efforts. The Everglades National Park was a joy to visit, but lately it has regressed, and there are not as many enjoyable programs as there used to be. The visitors especially enjoyed the tour through Shark Bite that started from the Visitors' Center in Flamingo. All that is gone now, even though it could bring in revenue and delight the public. The little train was taken out years before the hurricane struck.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

I personally have experienced the breathtaking beauty of our nation and it's wildlife because of these protected areas. Treading lightly in remote wild lands and leaving no trace is the hallmark of backpackers and hikers. These should be the hallmark of our government to preserve not only the lands, but the wildlife that inhabit these areas as well. Now more than ever we need a comprehensive approach to safeguard wildlife and wild places from the harmful impacts of global climate change.

In addition, now more than ever we need a comprehensive approach to safeguard wildlife and wild places from the harmful impacts of global climate change, pollution, mineral extraction, population pressure and poorly planned development. This initiative must include the conservation of large, connected landscapes to help build resilience to the impacts of climate change and other threats. We must act now to conserve the majestic landscapes and diverse wildlife they support.

It is difficult to overstate the importance of this initiative at this time in our history. Our parks, refuges, national forests, and public lands are home to some of our our most treasured and historic places. Now more than ever we need a comprehensive approach to safeguard wildlife and wild places from the harmful impacts of global climate change. We share a responsibility to leave the next generation healthier and better connected to the natural world. Thank you again for having launched this important process, and I encourage you to make sure this effort has the guidance, tools, and resources necessary to make the initiative's lofty goals a reality.

I am very happy that that you have launched the Initiative. This may be one of the most important things that you do for the future of the America. To ensure the existance of the best of this country for our children Please make sure this effort has the guidance, tools, and resources necessary to make the initiative's lofty goals a reality. This initiative must include the conservation of large, connected landscapes to help build resilience to the impacts of climate change and other threats.

I take a great deal of pride in our treasured landscapes and share a responsibility to leave the next generation healthier and better connected to the natural world. I thank you so very much for launching this important process and I encourage you to make sure this effort has the guidance, tools, and resources necessary to make the initiative's lofty goals a reality. We will be judged by how we treat each other AND our environment.

I am writing to thank you for launching the Initiative and think it is a great idea.. I heard about it through my support of Defenders of Wildlife. I also agree with thier comments:

We need dedicated resources to protect wildlife.

Excluding the Gulf and other shoreline areas from offshore drilling for gas and oil would go a long way toward the goals of your policy.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Generations to come can enjoy the beauty of our parks and the diverse wildlife that they are comprised of.

friends of mine have just returned from 4 weeks in your wonderful National Parks, including Yellowstone, and sent me pictures and descriptions of the beautiful Blue Ridge and other spectacular places. At the same time, the tragedy with the bear attacks was reported in Australia on the main TV news services. Is there not some way you can deal with this without killing a bear which, seen from downaunder, was living naturally and caring for its young. Anyway, on the positive side, I urge the USA, as world leaders, to employ real innovation and dedicated resources to conserve and protect your land, water, and wildlife.

It may well be that I will have memories of the South Dakota Badlands, of the Black Hills, and Yellowstone and Glacier National Parks to treasure and might not again have the time or resources to make another visit there or to another park, forest, or other public land. I am, nonetheless, very pleased that you have launched this important process and I encourage you to make sure this effort has the guidance, tools, and resources necessary to make the initiative's lofty goals a reality. The benefits will belong to many.

Wild places are important to future generations and the earth's biodiversity.

It's time to save for the future. Our parks, National Wilderness areas, refuges, national forests, and public lands represent the best of America.

Our precious wildlife, forest, lakes, oceans, and land rely upon humans to keep it safe.

HAVING EXPERIENCED A WONDERFUL TRIP TO THE BAD LANDS, BLACK HILLS, YELLOWSTONE AND OTHER WESTERN SITES WHEN I WAS EIGHT,

We must protect our national treasures - INCLUDING OUR WILDLIFE.

This has been too long neglected. Our parks, refuges, national forests, and public lands represent the best of America, and in some cases, the best in the world.. We have seen too much of this in the recent past. Without a plan, these environments are likely to be grossly exploited, and in the end, will lose the character for which they were preserved in the first place. During my life I have been fortunate to visit many of our National Parks and wildlands, and I am thrilled that you have launched this important process. I encourage you to make sure this effort has the guidance, tools, and resources necessary to make the initiative's lofty goals a reality.

THANK YOU! Launching the Initiative is a innovation to dedicate resources to conserve and protect our land, water, and wildlife.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

They are home to our most treasured and historic places, and a too-rapidly dwindling source of wildness.

Or national parks are a precious commons that should be protected at all cost.

I love the wildlife and want my children, grandchildren and great grandchildren to have the same privilege. Without your help, all this beauty will disappear.

We need to leave something worthwhile for future generation to see and admire. There is nothing better than nature.

From childhood to adulthood, few things have provided me the comfort and solace our great outdoors has. Please please please make it a priority to ensure it is here to do so for the ones that follow...

And remember, we are only borrowing our Mother Earth from our GRANDCHILDREN and it is our responsibility to return her in better condition than we received her. May you walk in beauty

Our family really values our public lands and hopes the govt. will be a good steward for future generations.

I am very much encouraged by the recent decision to once again protect our wolves in the West. It is an important and welcome change from the way the administration seemed to be heading -- away from environmental improvement and a disregard for the welfare of all wildlife. Every living thing on our planet has its own crucial place, and we should do everything we can to avoid losing any one species before we get to the point where our own species may be endangered! Thank you for considering our concerns as citizens.

PLEASE LISTEN TO THOSE WHO LOVE THE EARTH AND WANT TO PRESERVE ITS BEAUTY AND WILDLIFE, NOT TO THOSE WHO WANT TO EXPLOIT IT FOR THEIR OWN GREED!

THE ___ FAMILY WORKS CONTINUOUSLY TO PROTECT OUR FRAGILE PRECIOUS ENVIRONMENT AND FEEL GRATEFUL TO "DEFENDERS" FOR THEIR GENEROSITY, VIGILANCE AND EFFICIENCY.

I will continue to send letters like this and sign petitions until I'm sure that my nieces, nephews, and their children will always have a beautiful world to live in. The human mind and soul needs more than the basic food, clothing and shelter to stay healthy. Without wild spaces and biodiversity, our planet will become a man-made prison - a global "ant hill" in which human life becomes nothing more than working, buying, procreating and fighting wars. To keep alive the "better angels of our nature", it is vital to respect, cherish and protect all creation.

The administration is on a positive roll. You are encouraged to continue to move forward with all due haste with a keen eye on preserving our precious earth and its inhabitants.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Many Americans like myself take enormous pride in the great and beautiful landscape of this country. When we elected President Obama we knew he was very serious about preserving our environment for future generations.

I personally support the efforts of DEF to protect and enhance our natural environment. I know you believe in the statements in this letter, too, and will do your utmost to see that they become reality. Thank you for being an ethical and idealistic president.

Dear Mr. President, The Great Outdoors, Wild Life, Great Water Ways, Lakes and Streams, Purple Mountains Majesty, these are the amazing things God gave us to visit and be awed by. I want my son to be able to enjoy these things as a youngster and be able to teach his children some day the importance of these great and amazing things ! Human greed has slowly put these great things in critical circumstances and I think that is so sad. It makes me tear now as I am typing this ! My Grandma was my girl scout leader when I was young and taught the importance of Nature and animals and to RESPECT them ! Camping, Nature, those are things that help to keep sanity in crazy times! They say City Livers get depressed being around concrete, and skyscrapers ! They say everyone needs nature in their lives or you could seriously go crazy ! We need nature and wildlife and so do future generations ! Sir, PLEASE Do everything in your heart and soul to keep these great things of Nature and Wildlife not only safe but growing and thriving and increasing in sustainability ! Please ! It is so important, without nature I know I would go crazy and be very depressed and so sad that future generations would not know what a forest or animals were ! God Bless America !

America and please forgive me for stating the obvious is enormous. Our country has an example of every biome and is home to species that can be found nowhere else. Our country biologically speaking is very very special and is unique in the world. I should probably state now that I approach the issue of conservation from the standpoint of a biologist well a biology student but it's essentially the same mindset. My ultimate goal as a biology student is to get my doctorate in astrobiology which I assure you is a real thing. I want to study life off Earth which at this point consists of finding places where it could develop in the first place (which is proving something of a challenge) and finding analogs of harsh extraterrestrial environments on Earth. From the vantage point of an aspiring astrobiologist life on Earth is so precious as to be invaluable because it's the only life we know of. Certainly it is incredibly unlikely that there is no other life in the universe but it is definitely likely that life on Earth and life off Earth did not develop in the same way. Our whole evolutionary history is special; it's ours and ours alone. If we don't protect our country's wildlife we can lose an important part of ourselves. To ensure that our country retains its biodiversity and remains beautiful and unique please consider these priorities for America's Great to help foster an ethic of conservation among Americans

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

I have seen tiny parks created out of small spaces on Long Island when I lived there. It was amazing how many people used those tiny spaces all of the time. People NEED to be connected to the outdoors and nature for their physical and emotional well being. This is a perfect time to maintain create and expand the parks systems; as President Roosevelt did creating JOBS that are much needed for many in this country.

Abolish and rewrite the old mining laws of the 1800's which allow widespread destruction and pollution with no restoration requirements. Abolish mountaintop removal and stream filling forms of strip mining.

I grew up in a family which took our vacations camping in both national or state parks in the West. When I married my husband and I took our children camping in national and state parks and later in BLM campgrounds across the country.. Those children are now grown and they take their children hiking and camping in national and state parks wilderness areas and BLM areas. It's important for us as a nation to keep these areas available for posterity so that they may know that we share this planet with other life than just human. We took them to the high mountains and to the oceans. They grew up loving and cherishing these very vital areas.

Our forests and national monuments are precious treasures that can never be replaced once they are gone.

It really hurts me to see so much of the countryside I love disappear.

Not only have I enjoyed hiking in our wonderful national parks but so have my children. I want our national parks to be better protected so that my grandchildren can enjoy what we have.

I believe america can save itself from itself but someone has to take a stand NOW...I believe this is the generation to do it and it starts with this presidency... Thats .why i voted for you because i know we can.

SINCE YOU BECAME PRESIDENT MORE WOLVES HAVE BEEN KILLED THEN IN THE ENTIRE 8 YEARS OF BUSH !Yes the states are allowing this but you can take action to put an end to this. And you can easily stop all killing of wolves on all types of federal land period. Also your Sec. of the Interior is destroying the wild horse herds of America. RESTORE PROTECTION AND STOP ROUNDING UP THE WILD HORSES NOW. These are my top priorities plus the list below. Dare to be bold and make hope a reality instead of a hollow slogan.

Time that my husband and I spent in our National Parks and national Forests are some of the best memories I have of our lives. I pray that everyone can enjoy our great outdoors.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Some of my fondest memories of childhood have to do with the outdoors. I got the chance to go to camp several summers and sleep in cabins then tents and finally leanto's as I got older. Surrounded by the wonder of the woods and the sounds of nature lulling me to sleep at night I was instilled with a lifelong love for the outdoors so much so that I became an academic botanist that has done research on rare and endangered plants. These days I am trying to educate the public on the negative aspects of invasive foreign plants and the need to keep them out of their gardens as well as encouraging them to volunteer to help eradicate these plants from natural areas where they are altering ecosystems.

At an early age I was introduced to the wonders of our beautiful country and its National Parks. I have travelled with my children and grandchildren throughout the west. It is my hope that they will continue to enjoy life in the great outdoors of the U.S.

The most important thing we can do in our generation is make sure the planet is in the best possible condition for future generations. That should take priority over all economic concerns and everything else.

I have a personal connection to the Smoky Mountain National Park as well as Mt. Mitchell and Lake Jordan in North Carolina.

Our family has been enjoying for years the magnificence of our National Parks.

My husband and I have spent a lifetime of vacations at state parks and national parks. We consider this type of vacation the best kind of getaway. Our lives have been enriched by enjoying nature instead of crowded noisy cities. Now that we are over 65 and unable to do things like snow skiing snowmobiling water skiing backpacking and hiking we have at least those wonderful memories of vacations past and we can still relax and enjoy the state and national parks in a more laidback fashion.

I don't believe there is a better legacy we can leave our children than conscientious stewardship of our land. We are so blessed in the U.S. with natural beauty and open spaces. Let's keep that blessing intact!

For decades our family has enjoyed hiking backpacking and camping on state and federal public lands.

All these abovementioned points will lead to future generations teaching their children how to search for and watch Monarch butterfly eggs grow and turn into beautiful creatures that they can release just as I have taught my children. They will be able to know the beauty of a small stream and learning to fish with their Dad even if you don't catch anything but a good time and conversation with Dad. Walking in the woods learning about trees and animals before they become extinct the trees and the animals.... Thank you for taking the time to read this as well as for your leadership in shaping a bold conservation strategy for the 21st century.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

I have always wanted to go to Yellowstone (after watching many nature shows about it) to personally see touch and experience its beauty. I have visited Muir Woods in Northern Calif. and was awed and inspired by the huge trees and the sounds of nature all around. I hope that every American will have a chance to visit these beautiful wild places that connect our spirits with nature now and in the future.

I've had the privilege of visiting and enjoying our National and State Parks and want future generations to have that same opportunity.

For years our family has enjoyed the the beauty and grandeur of the great outdoors both in this country and abroad. We have fond memories of the Grand Canyon national parks in the U.S. Northwest and especially of the U.S. National Park in St. John U.S.V.I. We have visited there for the past 29 consecutive years and for many years have participated in the Volunteer Program on that island.

I have greatly enjoyed America's excellent wild places in my 47 years and I want the next generation to enjoy them too. Places such as the Roan Range Wild Horse Area in western Colorado Boundary Waters Canoe Area in northern Minnesota the Frank Church River of No Return Wilderness in central Idaho. And so many others whose character leaves one with a sense of being energized and recharged.

Summer camping and rafting in Idaho what could be better? Knowing that I and future generations can do this again and again. And that each time we will find wildlife and clean air and water.

For many years I have enjoyed the parks.

By the end of 2010 I will have enjoyed donating six weeks of volunteer effort in our national parks and national forests. Preservation of our public lands is one of my highest priorities.

Our great outdoors are so important to me and my family. We just traveled through Badlands Mount Rushmore Yellowstone and Grand Teton. Almost all of our vacations center around trips to the outdoors.

I came to this country over 40 years ago and the first chance my husband and I had we crossed the country camped in National Parks and admired the beautiful landscape. Later when our children were born we continued to visit natural and historical monuments and instilled in them a love for the country and for nature and wildlife. Although I have no grandchildren I still want the next generation to enjoy what we were able to show our own children.

My time in nature is my time to connect with God and to the interconnectedness of all life. It is the lasting universal heritage that we must preserve and that future generations deserve. Your dedication to the the principle of nature conservancy will be part of your great legacy.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Our great natural landscapes are an attraction for foreign visitors as well.

Anyone who has visited one of our wonderful National Parks or protected areas has experienced the magnificence of so much of this country. This beauty is also important to our future and health as a society.

The Adirondack Park adjacent to my home serves as a wonderful template for preserving wilderness and a range of buffer areas. Come visit and enjoy what every American should know as their heritage. Watch the Ken Burns series on our National Parks then visit a wilderness area within one and understand the treasure that is America. Please please protect our natural environments our watersheds our clean air our biodiversity. Once tamed our wilderness is lost forever. Protect it from the pressures of industry and housing.

As I was growing up my family took me as often as possible to enjoy the great outdoors. We hiked the Appalachian trail. Did white water river rafting in many states. Camped and swam in our wilds. Keep the water mining of Natural Oil out of our protected lands.

Although some of the negative actions and destruction enabled and abetted by the previous administration has been stopped there is much more to be done to save and restore wild scenic special places that should be a legacy to future generations as well as an enjoyment for all of us now even those who have not yet had the opportunity to experience these special places.

Like millions of others my life and values have been deeply affected by my experiences growing up in an urban environment but with many treasured visits to our National and State Park Systems. As we urbanize we need the counterbalance of these preserved locations to stay in touch with something greater than ourselves. Lose the parks and the human race becomes more selfish. We have too much of that already. Please support the parks and our natural heritage at every opportunity. Help make us a better people.

Dear President Obama & company As a young active college student America's public lands are essential for me as a place of escape beauty and wilderness. Someone (who I've since forgotten) said it best when he noted that an American looking for beauty need not look outside his own country. Let's keep that truth alive and preserve our parks and public lands.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

I am a recently retired American who has loved nature and the outdoors since early childhood. Memories include: huckleberry picking on dusty trails Priest Lake Idaho; exploring cliff dwellings in New Mexico and Arizona; wilderness hikes in the Sierras the Pacific Northwest the Southwest (as well as in Costa Rica and Peru); hundreds of hikes in state and national parks of California where I lived for over 30 years. Newly moved to Arizona my dashboard is already piled with City State and National Park receipts; I visit these areas several times a week often with my age 6 grandchild who already loves hiking climbing and camping and knows a lot of natural history. I find peace and perhaps wisdom through my frequent visits to protected wilderness areas. It becomes clear that each of us is part of an apparently infinite variety of plant and animal life earth and that this amazing creation earth life must be treasured and protected. We human beings don't have the right to destroy it through waste pollution and wanton development.

All of the above are excellent goals and should be pursued but ABOVE ALL ELSE protect all our current and possible wilderness from development mining and drilling.

I have firsthand heard people from other countries comment how surprised and delighted they are with the openness and variety we have in the United States. They are amazed at places like Yellowstone National Park where they can see nature and an array of wildlife. Even though they may have seen pictures of the Grand Canyon seeing it in person is aweinspiring. We are so fortunate to have such a majestic country with so many diverse regions. Each needs to be protected and preserved for future generations. We cannot sit back and wait for someone else to take the initiative. Five years ten years from now may be too late. Could you have predicted the Gulf oil disaster before it happened?

Allow protected wildlife to stay protected

When I need a break from my very busy life style I head to a National Park or quiet campground and trails. I am a community organizer. Between work and volunteer activities my days are very hectic. To reenergize myself I go to back country areas protected by government agencies.

Plus it creates jobs and we desperately need those now.

As our sons were growing up we spent time camping and hiking in many beautiful places in national state and local parks and the rural countryside near historic places.

I never had an opportunity to visit our great parks til I was in my 50's; but I knew all my life that they were worth saving for all humanity. Not just to be leased to ranchers or for oil drilling.
Thank you !

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

My favorite vacations have been in National Parks. Some of my greatest enjoyment has been watching wolves and bears in the wild in Yellowstone. My children grew up loving the natural world because of their vacations in National parks.

Recently I had the good fortune of hiking in Rocky Mountain National Park in Estes Park CO. I cannot imagine a world without that lovely example of nature nor should I try to. It's part of our legacy as American citizens.

It's great that this country's prominent politicians are showing some concern with ecological issues. We have so many beautiful places in this country that are all different. We are so lucky to be able to enjoy and protect these areas so let's make sure we do so.

I have three children and someday they will have grandchildren. I've raised them all to enjoy and cherish the natural world and we have spend many happy times hiking and camping. I think that preservation of our wilderness is not just a good idea. It is also vital to ensuring that our future citizens are aware of and can engage with the natural world. Our protection today is for their sakes.

Please continue on in the tradition of Teddy Roosevelt by safeguarding the outdoor space that is still left and restoring those areas such as wetlands that are so vital to our environment health!

All my favorite family memories from childhood and continuing into my adult life involve being outdoors. Camping hiking cooking over the campfire are all memories entwined with the feeling of closeness in my family and in the community. We must protect our outdoor areas and keep them GREAT so that future generations have the opportunities to make their memories as well.

I grew up traveling with my family on summer vacations to America's National Parks State Parks and various forest river and ocean areas. I learned as much about this country on these trips as I did in school.

Take immediate action to stop global warming which is destroying many habitats for wildlife. It's important to me that my grandchildren and their children to come have the opportunity to enjoy the many wonderous and beautiful places and the wildlife that inhabit them that I was fortunate to enjoy as a child. It breaks my heart that they are so rapidly slipping away from us. Our wilderness must be protected in order that the earth can repair herself. By fully funding land and water conservation fund perhaps the generations to come will be able to enjoy those things. Thank you for your consideration in protecting our wilderness and wildlife. When I was growing up my family spent summers and took small trips throughout the year to the Great Smokey Mountains. We enjoyed the rivers and lakes and all the amazing wildlife we encountered there. Today due to many factors much of that has changed and it saddens me greatly.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Dear Mr. President and Officials Having traveled most of my young adult years I can tell you what it is like to have seen Yellowstone National Park. Learning from the Rangers about the wildlife there and how to Respect these areas. I have seen Alaska and I cannot tell you how i felt when i saw my first Salmon fish. I was taken in by people who were Locals and they gave me tours of their area. They Loved where they lived and also respected the open space that we are so Blessed to enjoy to date. Mr. President and Officials What are YOU going to leave the next generation for them to see? That's why I am asking you to seize this opportunity to create expand You have the power to Tax companies to help fund what is needed.

A bold conservation strategy for the 21st century is of serious importance. Many people think the purpose of conservation is for pleasure and enjoyment of the outdoors. I feel and science is backing me up on this it is critical to the survival of the human race along with all the creatures we share this earth with. I lead weekly nature walks for children and adults. The wonder a respect I see in their faces reaffirms my commitment every week. We need the outdoors for our well being as well as our survival. Educating people on the importance of a clean healthy balanced world is vital to the future of conservation. Giving people a place to connect to nature close to their home and throughout the country will benefit all of us. Please make public land protection and expansion a cornerstone of our countries policy.

I was born in the beauty of New England raised in the beauty of the desert Southwest went to college in the beautiful mountains and Ponderosa pine forests of Northern Arizona spent a decade in the Midwest (Iowa) and now live near the Pacific Ocean on the beautiful California Central Coast. Each region beautiful in its own unique way and each deserving of having its natural beauty preserved for future generations to enjoy.

If earlier generations had not taken action to preserve our wilderness areas think what our country would look like now. We have a responsibility in these times to provide for future generations to experience America's natural beauty and not destroy it. Adirondak Park created by New York State is an example of action taken by one of the original 13 states to set aside natural assets for all of us to experience the natural beauty of the mountains for all of us. Future generation not only need new technology. They need a beautiful country in which to realize a balanced life in which they can raise their children and comprehend the beauty of nature.

I still believe in the hope you bring that we all can create if we allow ourselves to give up that hard shell of cynicism. WSe can still make a difference one tract of land @ a time.

I believe that this plan will also help preserve our planet and sustain all life for geenerations to come.

I spent some of the happiest days of my childhood in Sequoia National Park and the Kern River Canyon. I want my grandchildren to have the same opportunity to create beautiful memories of America's wild places.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

I applaud your efforts in many areas of your Administration after stepping into the biggest mess from GWBush... My deeply felt request to Protect America's Great Outdoors you are the one that can stymie the selfish and thoughtless land mongers in our Congress. I Love America and All that We as Americans Stand for Please show the Universe YOU CARE!

Protect our current wilderness areas but also reinstate the government's ability to declare new areas as wilderness areas without building new roads or fullservice camping which harms the wilderness areas we are trying to protect

I personally find the natural beauty of the many places in this country so relaxing inspiring and uplifting that I am writing to ask you to take the following actions to be certain that these places remain unspoiled and are not destroyed.

Our nation and the world economy faces a difficult time. But during the last depression it was public conservation spending that helped pull us out of it. And the legacy Roosevelt left by wilderness and park spending is enriching our nation today.

Our future generations deserve to have the benefits of our beautiful outdoors to enjoy the same as it used to be in the past. Please keep greed from destroying it any further.

Keep Roadless areas intact Roadless

To me it is incredible that anyone could fail to see the value the necessity of conservation of our land.

Coming from Hawaii I see everyday the benefits to our economy watershed native species health and well being that protecting wilderness creates. The natural landscape is the reason why people love the place so much and when the wilderness is destroyed it leaves a scar on the land as well as our hearts.

The National Park concept first introduced in our country is an idea that makes me proud to be an American. I have visited all fifty states with my children and national parks and monuments in most of them. It's extremely important to me not only to protect what we have but also to expand the preservation and protection of our natural and historical heritage. I hope that my grandchildren will also be able to enjoy what I treasure. Climate change is already having an impact on wildlife so protection of habitat is also vitally important.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

I grew up in the Black Hills of South Dakota. It is a wonderful place that includes the Mount Rushmore National Park as well as one of the most beautiful State Parks in our Nation Custer State Park. The Black Hills are the oldest Mountain Range in our Nation unique in the fact that they were formed from Granite Rock. It is a place that the Lakota Indians have always cherished as well as the many other people who have settled and lived there. I have been fortunate to visit all of the National Parks in the western part of the United States and have wonderful memories of driving through Buffalo herds in a jeep floating down Snake River with my husband and our 2 children looking for Moose then climbing through Bryce Canyon and finally driving to the Grand Canyon. We have so many treasured places in America where people can enjoy the land and animal life that lives off those lands. I am hopeful that it will be taken care of and preserved for our children our grandchildren and their grandchildren. Our environment and water ways are an important part of our legacy. They need to be protected and sustained through proper management and proper funding.

I have been very blessed over my lifetime thus far in being able to be around and observe the beauty of various ecosystems and their varying forms of wildlife (from the Sierra Nevada mountains to the Grand Canyon Puget Sound and the Cascades to the Sonoran Desert where I now reside about 1/2 mile from the Saguaro National Park East). Our children and grandchildren have gotten to observe wildlife in our front yard as well as in the park or in the nearest National Forest on Mt Lemmon. When we lived in San Francisco going to school we lived a few blocks from Golden Gate Park (an Oasis Retreat in the middle of that city) While there I tutored a boy about 10 years of age who had never been out of the city. As the world and our own countries population increases I believe that it becomes more important than every to preserve open natural spaces for people to connect with and enjoy. Please preserve as much as possible in as many areas as possible; our future generations will need it and thank you for it.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

As a person who likes to vacation on MARTHA'S VINEYARD.....I think you have begun to see more of the value of conserving our Natural Environment. Nature is God's Gift to Humans helping us to continue having healthy mental conditions. Nature is also a gift to all other animals.....not only for their mental conditions.....but also for food. Without enough protection of our lands as well as our oceans we lose food and habitats not to mention oxygen and a calming environment. Please help us on Cape Cod and the Islands to protect our Lands.....our Ocean and our Sounds (both Vineyard Sound and Nantucket Sound) and our Bays too.....from overdevelopment. We may all suffer for it in the future. There are more wide open ocean spaces that will be of less risk to human life. The Wind Farm in Nantucket Sound may prove to be destructive to that tiny section of water.....and perhaps to all the human life in that area. We have many small aircraft ferries full of people and small recreational boats all over the Sounds. A few years ago I remember reading that an SSA ferry from Woods Hole to MV broke down in Vineyard Sound. It floated at the whim of the winds until rescued.....as any boat that has lost power will do. Imagine that happening in Nantucket Sound.....after the building of 130 wind turbines. Will Coast Guard helicopters be able to get between all the turbines to save human lives??? Will any rescue vehicles be safe from so many huge towers.....in high winds??? (We have high winds with some regularity way out here in the North Atlantic Ocean as we are.) Imagine a nor'easter coming through with 5570 mph winds or higher.....at the same time as an engine break down. Remember the deaths that occurred in NYC about 5 or so years ago when a ferry bumped into the wharf while docking? Quite a few lives were lost. I don't know what that dock was made of.....but turbine bases are cement !!! It can't be good to bump into one of those !!!! I do not mean to be selfish or dramatic about this.....as though we are the only people with these gifts. However we have such a tiny amount of land and water I am truly trying to have people in positions to help understand that we are being squeezed out. Most other states in America have much more in resources than we do.....(except maybe Hawaii.....as you well know !!!.....but even HI does have more land and ocean than we do). I hope you will understand what the Kennedy Family truly understood.....and took steps to protect. Our little bit of the world needs help to save it from a construction and destruction the might ruin us in less than 100 years. PS: I was on MV last Saturday. I didn't "get to see you and your family" on our rounds !!!! ;) I hope Sasha and Malia have had a chance to have a ride past the Bus Stand in Edgartown. There is a great sign there.....addressed to them.....painted by the "Y" kids. I think they should be able to take it home with them. There is probably a nice place on their playground.....or in a playroom.....or somewhere.....where they could put it !!! (They might have fun showing it to their children when they are grown !!!! A Great fun memory !!!!) I was a teacher for almost 40 years.....I trained on the Big Island for Peace Corps (1969).....then I began a Head Start (type) PreSchool in the Fiji Islands. After teaching outside of MA for so many years I am happily back home on the Cape.....and I hope to see it remain the beautiful place it has always been. Please help !!!!! THANK YOU for all you have done since 2008 Election and your Inauguration in January 2009.....to straighten out so many issues and problems. I am quite aware of all the successes in just 2 years. Hope to see you and the family vacation on the Cape sometimes too !!!!!

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Your commitment to Wilderness and Wildlife is the main reason you got my vote.

In my own area of Philadelphia Pa and touching on the suburb of Lafayette Hills we are in a battle to protect land that is being considered for trails and farm that would fragment an already fragile biodiversity and take away the home of the Bobolink along with other animals. We must all be stewards of this fragile planet.

Our survival depends on a healthy ecosystem....clean water clean air biodiversity.....the outdoors is so much more than a great place to play!

Thank you for your leadership in attempting to restore sound conservation and environmental policies to our country. Much remains to be done. Specifically it is absolutely vital to make preservation of wilderness establishment of new parks and monuments and restoration of wetlands and wildlife habitat the cornerstone of America's Great Outdoors. New and growing threats specifically overdevelopment pollution and a changing climate demand a focused approach to preserving and protecting the wild areas wildlife rivers and lakes and cultural and historic sites that connect us to nature to each other and to our shared history. I beg you to make these your highest conservation priorities.

I remember the heartbrake I felt when Bush's regime violated much of our public lands and placed immediate profit over longterm social enjoyment of the lands we have for the public. I would like to tell my children that all the lands that have been disregarded and ravaged in the past eight years are now brought back under government protection so that thier children and generations to come can enjoy the experience of being in the woods the desert or the mountains and connect with nature once again on the most basic immediate level. Everyone should have that oppportunity. Please protect our nations parks and fund the ability to conserve more for generations to come.

please there is no other choice. You will be remembered as the strogest and Best President in history! We must wake up to the reality that Animals and Nature deserve the Same respect we demand for ourselves. Somewhere we all got onto the wrong road And we must get back on the Right road. I'm behind you 150% .

I believe that we are not only responsible for ourselvesl but also responsible for future generations. They are dwindling so rapidly it is heartbreaking. The very things that give America is unique character among nations is being lost.

The nation must preserve it's natural environment and serve the sacred trust inherited from previous generations. protect air & water quality everywhere Improve Watersheds and protect Wildlife Habitat Build renewable power generation plants and retire fossil fuel power plants convert all existing coal plants to clean coal plants with carbon sequestration and construct energy storage systems to give the electrical power distribution system a backbone that empowers distributed power generation on a robust scale.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

As one who has enjoyed the national parks and wilderness areas of this great county for many years I want the next generation to enjoy the outdoors too. I live just two miles from Rocky Mountain National Park and never cease marveling at its beauty and wonderful wildlife.

As you know the more complicated our society and our lives get the more important nature is to our survival.

Living in Michigan protecting our water resources is especially important to me!

I have just returned from an eleven day wilderness canoe trip with my wife son and his fiancée in one of America's incredibly beautiful and pristine parks. I am 65 years old and I have been enjoying the great American outdoors since I was a boy. I often introduce others to nature's beauties and wonders.

I want the next generation to enjoy America's great outdoors too and you as the leader of our country have the power to make certain that happens. Here in California for example development and conservation are in constant contest against one another. With your help work toward restoring the Eastern Sierras' Mono Lake toward historical water levels and preventing development around can continue. Outdoors. The America we love cannot survive without them:

We are all only here for a very brief period of time. It is our moral responsibility to preserve the environment for those to come here after us.

Americans share at least one thing in common: place. It defines us motivates us inspires us. Whether it be the seashores of Long Island Sound where I grew up the midwest prairies where I worked as a biologist or the Connecticut River Valley where I live the land and the life it supports have been integral to my sustenance wellbeing and cultural identity.

I have long enjoyed visiting our National Parks across the country and want to preserve support and expand these opportunities for the future.

I have enjoyed many of America's outdoor treasures in the past and hope my grandchildren will be able to enjoy them as well.

In addition I want to preserve wild areas for native plants and animals. We need to protect and preserve these areas. Humans are not the only living being on this planet and it is time we started thinking about all living creatures. We need to stop building instead we should rebuild areas that are dilapidated. We need new cleaner sources of energy instead of depleting our earth of all its natural resources. I know it is expensive to make these changes but the our future the earth's future depends on it.

Now more than ever we need to keep our green lands intact!

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

These are our most valuable resources and must be preserved. These resources are our heritage.

I have greatly enjoyed the largely unfettered access to the great outdoor areas since my settling here in 1965. The many wilderness experiences in Colorado and elsewhere have made a lasting impression on me and my preferred means of relaxation in the outdoors. For example this weekend we are headed to the Wildcat Hills of Nebraska for horseback riding on a friend's ranch. Also my wife is US Forrest Service volunteer for the Poudre Wilderness Volunteers in Larimer and Weld counties.

I grew up visiting our national parks with my parents people of the "Greatest Generation." I want my grandchildren to have those same opportunities and more. Please take every action needed to protect and enhance the parks and monuments that preserve our heritage and culture. Also STOP the "let it burn" philosophy that became popular within the national forest service. Please don't let forest fires burn up Yellowstone or any other national treasure again in the name of misplaced trust in the "natural processes."

The Sacred is most fully realized within Nature.

I understand that in this political climate that allocating money for these things may be challenging but timing is very important and we should make this time something that will be recognized as a point at which we really did something to make these opportunities for recreation and protection a reality.

This planet and especially the beautiful areas of it this continent need to be protected conserved and kept free from development. We have and continue to destroy so much of it...

We have a Moral Responsibility & Obligation to leave the Earth in a Healthier State for Future Generations.

I think it is essential to protect the wilderness. I think God manifests himself through wilderness and we have much to learn from it. We should respect it and not deplete it. Help us to do that .

Cities need carbon credits so they can do the right thing to protect openspace.

Oil dependency pollution and urban sprawl have contributed to encroachment and resulting destruction of our wilderness areas not to mention funding cuts and the repealing of laws that once helped protect them. Once they're gone they're gone. Encourage the development of green energy sources

I grew up near the natural wonders of the Everglades. I worry now that my daughter might never experience the beauty of the Southern Florida wilderness let alone my grandchildren or greatgrandchildren.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Our family has been blessed to be able to many national parks and forests learning so much and just enjoying nature and all God's wonderful creation in the process. There is so much fragile natural beauty in our country. We have gained such a strong appreciation for these wonders and the ecosystems they are part of. My children and grandchildren and their grandchildren thank you.

One great concern of mine is the generation of electricity from solar power plants. Solar is just one of the componets that will allow this country to lessen our dependence of fossil fuels. My concern is the solar power generating facilities that use water. Water is one of our countries most precious resources. Using our water resources in the generation of solar power will put extreme pressure on our water resources. Please do not allow Federal monies for this purpose. Droughts are still a reality in many parts of the country that have great potential for solar power. Lessening the threats to our wildlands is important. Conserving them is extremely important especially our water resources.

Whenever I feel disturbed distracted and overwhelmed by my daily routine and have need to be restored I find what I lack in the great outdoors. Being in nature whether walking running biking swimming or simply sitting reminds me of the beauty around and inside me. I spent last weekend hiking and camping on the Appalachian trail in Harriman State Park. As evening approached I sat on a rock by a clear mountain lake and marveled at how lucky I am to be able to enjoy such a simple and unfortunately vanishing pleasure.

These precious places are not simply tourist attractions but help to preserve our world our environment our lives.

I am excited to say I just got from taking my three kids on a weeklong camping trip to Yosemite National Park Mono Lake and the national forests around the Eastern Sierras. I'm also eager to head outdoors next month with the kids and dozen families from our school for National Public Lands Day exploring and protecting the Black Rock Desert/High Rock Canyon National Conservation Area. We do trips and projects like this every year because we want to see and preserve America's natural beauty for my kids and future generations.

We must conserve and preserve our wilderness. There is so little left. Conservation of our publiclyowned open spaces is a winwin situation. All Americans benefit. The more we lose open spacethe more we allow industrial concerns to degrade our publiclyowned land the more we lose as a nation.

America is blessed with great beauty and we are called be be stewards.

I want the next generation to enjoy America's great outdoors and not have to clean up after our mess. Increase funding to protect federally protected wildlife from overzealous state governments

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

If have been to many beautiful parks and wild life area around the country. It was very moving for me to get to see these places. I walked through many of them and I would be very disappointed to see there areas disappear. Just camping in local parks has been a great experience. Listening tp the wild life at night and see them at twilight. I am an early riser so I watch them throught the window of the trailer so I don't disturb them. Having people dig drill and build new homes in these places would be an injustice to future generations Please do everything in your power to stop the cruelty to our land.

I know these are tall issues to address (along with everything else that needs your attention) but our children are worth it and this beautiful spot on this beautiful planet is worth it.

The healthy natural presence of our wild places is the foundation on which the rest of life rests and thrives. We have no greater task before us than protecting it.

We should not steal from the future!

We need your help to keep our world beautiful and clean..I love the space around me in Coco. as well as Kansas when it is kept with clean water and space..Thanks Pam Darnell

Provide adequate funding for restoration and law enforcement on public lands

We need to support adequate funding for our National and State Parks Systems and the National Park Service. And we need complete streets more and better pedestrian and bike interconnecting our residential communities and linking them to shopping recreational and employment centers and multimodal transportation centers.

I want our future generations to enjoy America's great outdoors too. I raised my daughter from infancy to love and respect all that we call our great outdoors. As a result she is now working on her Masters degree in Outdoor Education so that all of the children's lives that she touches will have a greater appreciation for all that the "great outdoors" encompasses.

Without your leadership in shaping a bold conservation strategy for the 21st century our future generations will not have the opportunity to enjoy and appreciate what many currently take for granted. Thank you in advance for your decision to create a bold conservation strategy for the 21st century.

Most of the great parks are overcrowded illustrating the need for nature in our lives to repair our souls in this hectic world. These places are sanctuaries that reflect the beauty of our planet and are irreplaceable in this rapidly expanding civilization. We simply need to do a better job of protecting them and creating more for future generations before it is too late. We don't need to mine every mineral log every forest and carve every access road in this brief generation.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

The great outdoors is one of the only things we have left to exercise freedom in this great land. The fresh air the exploration a place for children to learn about the world and roam. I have a 2yearold boy and he's going to be out and exercising his mind and body instead of staying inside and playing video games...

I can still remember being 10 years old (I'm now retired) and going with my parents and grandmother to Yosemite National Park. It was a wonderland for me then and it still was when I was there for my fifth visit just three years ago. I am fortunate to be living next to a great river and near many beautiful state parks. I am looking forward to a fall visit to Yellowstone. These experiences should be available to all Americans and also to those who visit our country to see its beauty.

Luther Standing Bear once said "Man's heart away from nature becomes hard; [the Lakota] knew that lack of respect for growing living things soon led to lack of respect for humans too." So I ask that you please consider the following. It's not only for nature's sake but mankind's own sake. We need to protect these natural places before future generations have nothing left.

for the 21st century even if the militaryindustrial complex is running our country at this time you can do something that will benefit your very own family particularly your two fine girls who deserve a fighting chance in our environment. I never could understand how the real rulers don't seem to care about their own families when it comes to the environment. Is the money and power that important when one jeopardizes their very own?! I realize the executive branch no longer leads the nation but the least you can do is make it as difficult as possible for those who do. Thanks very much for doing something to help the situation!!

And a resident of the Great Lakes region of the U.S. I feel the Great Lakes need special protection from oil drilling industrial pollution and sewage as the major source of fresh water for millions of citizens. and the Great Lakes

We can't afford to allow the erosion of pristine places to continue in the name of development or for profit. We must also protect these fragile habitats from the effects of global warming and our lack of stewardship. To protect other species from extinction is to protect ourselves as well.

It is imperative that we preserve America's remaining out door spaces into the future especially with an eye on preserving the natural habitat for wildlife. Our own survival and that of our fellow creatures depends on this.

If the next generations have only stories of what it "used to be" like to live in this country their emotional bodies will grow cold and die from lack of nourishment. Memories are nice but do not nourish. Maybe that is already taking effect as observed in the attitudes and opinions and careless "care less" attitudes of today's unhappy hate filled egotistical expressions of intolerance. Cement tall buildings. fast food and unethical practices will produce exactly what it consumes. i hope it is not too late we live here taking for granted that Mother Nature won't crumbleour memories are very short when it comes to disturbing something we are \$\$\$\$\$\$ to.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Experiencing Nature and protecting it is so important to all of us. Especially as our climate changes we need to take action now.

End these stupid wars and spend the money repairing the mess this country is in. Don't ever bail out Wall Street again bail out the working class instead. Picture what would happen if you gave the money to the working class bills paid off no one thrown out of their houses no more you owe xxx dollars to xxx scams anymore. Best of all shred the credit cards.

It is most important that we maintain outdoors and protect the wildlife. Do it now so the upcoming generations may enjoy.

I have enjoyed taking my own children to many of the national parks.

Clean Energy (Solar Wind etc.) Clean Air Clean Water

My son is almost two and has discovered the wonder of the playground made by nature....I hope to be able to truthfully tell him that our country protects nature our most beautiful and important resource.

I want the next generation and generations beyond to have the opportunity to enjoy America's great outdoors. America is a large and unique land from lush forests to deserts to mountains to plains...the diversity of our wilderness is aweinspiring and is a huge part of what makes our country great. As our lives become more technological and urban or suburban our link to the land and the wilderness grows weaker. We need the people of America and our government to remember the land before it is too late. I was born in Utah a truly majestic state with mile after mile of wilderness. As my life has marched on away from the place of my birth I am always amazed at the strong tie and I have to the wilderness of my youth. It makes up the fabric of the person I am today. I hope that my children can feel the same connection to their place of birth California and that over the years we can all enjoy the lands that resonate so deeply within our beings.

Keep all the undeveloped natural lands the way they are and return 10% of the overdeveloped land to its original state.

Preserve pristine nature and prevent contamination through genetically engineered species. Recognize that animals and nature should be treated as the valuable resources that they are Eliminate pesticides herbicides and fungicides

ensuring that ecosystems do not become fragmented "islands." Ensure that wildlife corridors are part of the park system. that are in keeping with the peaceful experience of the landscape that the great majority of park goers are seeking.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

On a personal note if we do not take care to ensure the healthy conditions of beautiful planet Earth now we may not get another chance. The recent disastrous oil spill will take its toll on Earth and future generations for many years to come. If we don't reach out to preserve the wild and historical magnificence we have left in America it will slip uncontrollably out of our hands forever.

I think of Teddy Roosevelt often these days. When he was a kid he used to think the Great Seal of the United States was actually a seal one that ate fish. I wonder what he would think of his wild places today the ones he loved so much. Please do everything in your power to save and protect our remaining wilderness areas. It's so disturbing to see what we've done to our wild areas in my lifetime alone I hate to reflect on it. When I was a kid the rains resulted in an amazing explosion of frogs everywhere on a biblical scale. Big ones little ones smooth ones bumpy ones frogs the size of my pinkie nail hopping all over the place like crazy super balls dropped from the sky. It was a sight to behold. Wish my kids could see it but it's gone. Vanished. Just a memory in my mind's eye. Today frogs are disappearing faster than a popsicle in Palm Springs. I used to watch baby horny toads (what silly scientists call the Texas Horned Lizard) frolic by the hundreds at my bare feet; I'd scoop them up by the handful. Now they're endangered. I used to watch pronghorn antelope bound gracefully beside our family car on the freeway at 50 miles per hour now my kids think I'm making this up. The creek and wetlands where I caught pollywogs and powderblue damsel flies is now a cement drainage ditch. There's still a lot to save. But we must act now before it's all gone. I want my children to enjoy America's great outdoors too. Obama carpe diem! Hurry. Seize this moment to create to expand to better protect America's shared outdoor spaces. Wilderness whispers words of wisdom: let it be. Monuments wildlife refuges parks forests trails wild and scenic rivers and historic sites all these must be protected. My ____ should always be able to enjoy our public lands. Please consider these priorities for America's Great ____ Thank you Mr. President. It's a new day in this brave new world. Help us and help Congress shape a bold conservation strategy for the 21st century.

I am thankful for the foresight of past generations that set aside Wilderness State and National park lands for us to enjoy. These are one of the largest assets and treasures in our country. I spend most every weekend hiking snowshoeing and biking in my backyard paradise the Wasatch Mountains of Utah. My favorite vacation is to backpack and reconnect with nature. I feel lucky to live so close to many wild places that can make this a reality. I never tire of exploring the outdoors enjoying wildlife and the remoteness. I notice every year more and more Americans are discovering the outdoors and these paradise settings are getting crowded. Further those lands not protected are often challenged with access issues development and grazing/mining/drilling interests. It is with real concern that I write to you to ask that you help to ensure that future generations will always benefit and enjoy our public lands please consider these priorities for America's Great ____

"In wildness is preservation of the world" is a statement truer now than when first written which is why our society needs to diligently conserve and protect our natural heritage.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Thank you for all you have done for the environment already. I know you are cleaning up a mess left behind by Mr. Bush but I appreciate what you have been able to achieve despite all the obstacles.

It's so depressing to travel across our country and to see the wilderness disappearing under strip malls and mega churches and ubiquitous gated communities. We need to plan smarter plan better! We also need to consider our responsibility to protect the animals that live in the few remaining open spaces. !!!

I currently enjoy bicycle trails. We need more for recreation and for kids to get to school safely. Please continue to support RailtoTrails.

Once these special places have been violated we can't get them back!

Above all make sure to decrease pollution through enforcement of existing regulations which should be protecting our environment thus protecting the public's health and wellbeing. Continue to fight for an increase in renewable energy which will help as well.

My kids are 10 and soon to turn 13 I hope that they get some of the same chances I had to be inspired by the Wildernesses and wildlands of this country that have shaped our heritage. I also believe that all things on this planet are interconnected and our future is dependent on the good health of all species and environments on our planet. We need to do a better job of protecting and even enhancing the health of these environments and through protecting Wilderness monuments wildlife refuges parks forests trails and wild and scenic rivers and historic sites we are on the right track but with the threats facing our world we need to do an even better job. More protection is necessary!

This is IMPORTANT! And now is the time to act because soon it will be too late and our irreplaceable wildlands wildlife wilderness and entire natural heritage will be destroyed and gone forever. Please prove that all of us who voted for leadership and change did not make a dreadful mistake that leader and break with past pollution exploitation and destruction. Take a stand for conservation and preservation.

I was privileged to have grown up in Montana. From the time I was small Big Sky country was my "personal" backyard. It would be difficult to describe the effect this upbringing had on my world view but I do know that I want future generations to enjoy America's great outdoors as I have.

This is also a great opportunity to create new jobs! Privatizing and / or exploiting our public lands can never be undone so we believe it is extremely important to protect first!

We need to preserve our beautiful wilderness to pass on for future generations. There is nothing more beautiful than nature.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

To cut to the quick just keep one thing in mind: When it's gone it's gone. Forever. Or millions of years whichever comes first.

I thought that electing a man with young children would make our country's natural wild beauty a priority for him. I hope I was right.

In my first college English class we were asked to write an essay on our home town. I thought about that for a while and realized that my true home town the one that nurtured my soul was all the many summer long camping experiences I had in the Sierra Nevada high country of California. I wrote my essay about that "home town" the place from which I gained a love of the Earth and nature and all that lives on this Earth. I now have a bumper sticker that sadly reads "Daddy what were forests like?" I urge you Mr. President to do all that is possible to preserve my "home town" so that no child in this country will ever need to ask the question that is on my bumper sticker.

Our 24 year old daughter is already enjoying Montana Wilderness. That's why I am asking you to take this opportunity to create expand and better protect America's shared outdoor spaces including wilderness monuments wildlife refuges parks forests trails wild and scenic rivers and historic sites. We believe the long term vision of protecting our land will bring economic benefit to our small community in Montana. In fact saving this special place will ensure tourism dollars now and in the future. Working as an 'information center volunteer' I talk to people daily who are in our community to enjoy the small rural place surrounded by our 'wild' country. We find our own spiritual renewal in the outdoors. for the 21st century and for your leadership on all the issues we face today.

Once these treasures are gone they're gone for good. Leave what we've had the chance to enjoy to our children grandchildren etc.

As more and more people become disconnected with the land there is less understanding and less concern about the importance of healthy watersheds wetlands forests and the need to protect working lands. It makes it easy for them to dismiss or misconstrue the importance of these lands to their food sources and the rural people who manage and sustain them. Access to wild lands and recreational opportunities in nature at least provides a connection point many will otherwise not experience.

I have been to all 50 states and a good share of our national parks.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

On a more personal and local note I call your attention to Sterling Forest in New York just an hour's drive from New York City. This area had been an outdoor enthusiast's paradise under private management a decade ago but since relegated to the perversely limited vision of the Palisades Park Commission of NY & NJ it has become a wilderness museum "Look but don't touch" with all former activities circumscribed or banned. Please do not let this become the norm for government administration of our wilderness lands.

Being a student at the University of Wisconsin-Platteville who is pursuing a degree in civil engineering I have learned through my courses the importance of our natural habitats. As our population grows we are continuously increasing our quantity of residential and agricultural acreage. To make room for this growth natural habitat is taken and developed. If we continue this process our wildlife will be ruined and may become extinct. Also the natural wilderness is key to helping us control our runoff by slowing it down and letting it infiltrate the soil thus recharging our water table. With water resource concerns growing out west we need to take control of our bad habitats and start preserving the natural engineering we see in the wilderness. Push sustainability into the forefront of land development. Thank you so much President Obama for taking the time to consider my email with a clear and accepting mindset. Your leadership is key to shaping a bold conservation strategy for the 21st century and future generations.

I realize that there are major economic worries to be dealt with at this time. However I feel these ideas are very important as well.

We need to stop thinking about ourselves and consider what we will leave the children.

Our government needs to stop selling off public lands and/or leasing them to oil and gas companies. These lands need to be preserved and protected from pollution so that they can be enjoyed not only by people today but for generations to come.

As a U.S. citizen I am blessed with the parks wilderness areas and other lands that have been preserved for our enjoyment and kept free from development.

We are a fast growing nation but we ought to be mindful of our responsibility to nature in order to protect the great land which will provide for our future generations.

Preserving our wilderness AND THE CREATURES THAT LIVE IN IT is essential to preserving the beauty that is this nation. You open it to ranchers and oil interests we all know they will trash it ALL...for profit. What kind of legacy is that? Stop the commercial interests NOW before it's too late.

As an Eagle scout I "grew up" in the outdoors. Countless lessons were taught to me by mother nature at her best and especially at her worst. Having access to wilderness of all sizes both physical and mental is critical for a well rounded education.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

I love the outdoors & being able to see the beauty of God's handiwork. My dad & mom took us girls out to California when I was a teen and i really enjoyed it.

Americans are willing to step up for protecting our natural resources. Your leadership will galvanize the efforts of those working so hard on these issues.

Please think long term as you make your decisions. We really need to protect our great outdoors

I was lucky enough to take many family vacations as a child to national parks. I want the next generation to have this opportunity and others like it as well.

And thank you for protecting these resources for our next generations.

I have been a long time lover of Yosemite National Park. Ever since I moved to California over 30 years ago it has been one of my favorite places to visit. Yellowstone Bryce and the Grand Canyon may not be what they are today had they not been protected. and Foster programs that educate all ages especially young children so they will grow up seeing and understanding the importance of living in harmony with nature.

We need more money to fully fund National Parks upgrades! I look forward to your reply.

"To cherish what remains of the earth and to foster its renewal is our only legitimate hope for survival." _Wendell Berry

You have the power to keep the beauty of our great outdoors intact for all generations to come. So please create expand and better protect America's shared outdoor spaces including wilderness monuments wildlife refuges parks forests trails wild and scenic rivers and historic sites. Please ponder as priorities the following list bearing in mind that our great outdoors are not only for recreation they are for the mental and physical good health of all. Thank you for being a leader. Please lead now in one of the most important aspects of the century.

! Keep Oil drilling out of our wild areas! without allowing destruction by ATV's! Be more proactive about our endangered animals and plantlife!

As a member of the boomer generation I want to be sure that wilderness the outdoors parks etc. are preserved not only for my own use as I retire but for my children and grandchildren. Camping and hiking are a great joy for our families and our children need to be able to experience areas that are pristine and support wildlife clean water etc. The natural beauty of this country is the heritage we pass on.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

My father's family left the coal mines in Pa. to homestead in Wisconsin. My father taught me to love and respect Nature. I have been able to pass that view to my daughter. It is my hope that she may have the same chance if there are any unspoiled wilderness areas left. Hunting and fishing have always been a part of my life so I understand at a personal level the delicate balance of Nature. I have seen in my lifetime the effect of the destruction of wetlands and loss of habitat. I urge you to save what little wilderness is left and not put profit before posterity.

INCREASE FUNDING FOR ALL PARKS

With so many people now living in urban environments the need to protect honor and make available these important and beautiful spaces in our country is vitally important!

Our own personal "wealth" may be diminishing for ourselves and for those to whom we might want to pass on whatever we have earned; but that doesn't mean that the natural treasures of American must diminish and deteriorate as well.

When children families have parks wildernessplaces of peace it has been shown the crime is less....People need places to rest reflect appreciate our world...The bang for the \$Buck is better if we do not have violence in our streets communities & towns... The \$price for parks/wilderness is off set by what we do not have to repair by violence. All children should have a place/chance to play & appreciate beauty. If the only consideration is co\$t.....Consider the value in peace less valalism more beautiful America AND** HEALTHIER ENVIORMENT(trees etc). As you know the republicians want to cut funds for parks etc...soon after that crime rises (not seeing the connection to value).....Children have no place to run off energy so possible distruction occurs. The republicians have their own "private" parks then want tax paying citizens to have less....This is not The Good America that promotes giving less to children/citizens than what the wealthy have. Cannot put a value on healing powers of Nature to all. I trust you'll do the prudent/just thingtrue meaning of "Conserve" in this case:)cb.

From The Great Law of The Iroquois Confederacy..... "IN OUR EVERY DELIBERATION WE MUST CONSIDER THE IMPACT OF OUR DECISIONS ON THE NEXT SEVEN GENERATIONS."..

The following matters are of vital concern to me and my family. Please protect our national resources. They are treasures. They are nonexpendable and cannot be replaced. These matter are of great concern to myself and other Americans.

I wanted to add something to this letter of my own but I just can't say it any better than this. This is sooooooo important please please.

"Shared use" isn't really shared if one use destroys it's value for another. For example who wants to visit a clearcut on their vacation?

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

These lands are our public trust and are not meant to benefit a few corporations for profit.

In the face of exponentially increasing population the pressure on open lands and undeveloped areas is ever increasing. We have surpassed the ecosystems ability to process our waste and replenish resources. Absent the wisdom to control population only the preservation of natural resources can slow the ultimate consequences.

Now you can prove to the world and the Republicans that although you have had to increase the national debt for the next generation you have also insured that you have protected the environment for the them.

Nature cures a multitude of ills. It contributes so much to our physical and mental well being it heals and challenges us we are part of it and it of us we must always treasure and protect its sacred inheritance to be passed on.

Provide Increased Access but protect against inappropriate use such as offroad vehicles and snow mobiles

We don't own this land we just borrow it from our children. What will your legacy be?

I am one of the lucky few Americans who gets to live with two of this country's most beautiful national parks right on my doorstep. We spend our winters in Bozeman within an hour's drive of majestic Yellowstone and our summers in Grand Teton National Park with our extended family. These wild and scenic spaces are of vital importance to all of us who live and work in their gateway communities.

Please know that this letter is sent with most sincerity and concern. This is so important for all Americans. We so much need places to feel safe and relax. Thank you.

IN Hawaii we have an especially beautiful outdoors.

Let's make sure we are giving our kids as great of a chance to enjoy our natural landscape as we have had!

There are still many natural and historic places I would like to visit before I die or before I become too ill.

IT IS SO VERY IMPORTANT TO PRESERVE AS MUCH OPEN SPACE FOR FUTURE GENERATIONS AS WE CAN. I CANNOT IMAGINE A WORLD WITHOUT OUR BEAUTIFUL NATIONAL PARKS OUR MAGNIFICENT WATERWAYS AND OUR RICH ANIMAL HERITAGE. WE MUST MANAGE THESE CAREFULLY TO MAINTAIN THEIR HEALTH AND SAFETY.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

I am a 79year old who will not live to see the fruits resulting from your positive action to improve and protect our national parks and monuments. However I desire that my children grandchildren etc. are able to enjoy the wonders of our wilderness areas and national parks just as I did. Please prevent the opportunists from stepping in and diminishing or destroying whatever we already have.

help us all to become better citizens of our beautiful country. ; those quiet places where we can soak up peace away from the clang of our daily life! before all our wildlife disappears in this century! ... Mother Nature is the ultimate healer. * Please protect our beautiful parks forests and trails from those who run roughshod with mobile/sports vehicles! ...don't whitewash your promises.

Since the early 90's our family has had a blessing in that the vacations we have taken included many of our national parks and forests. The awe inspired reactions by my family are priceless. Watching everyone stop "dead in their tracks" and stare at moose along side the road in the Grand Tetons. Later in the same day we watched new born bison in a meadow frolic with their siblings in Yellowstone. This isn't scratching the surface of almost two decades experiencing the wonders of our nation. There are some possessions of the American people that have to be protected against greed and exploitation at all costs.

no dirt bikes or snowmobiles which spoil the experience for everyone else for example.

I've recently retired as a public school teacher. For my entire career teaching grades 6-12 in many areas of the country I incorporated outdoor activities into my lessons because I consistently saw positive results with my students. Hands on lessons in nature promote academic success no matter the discipline.

We believe that our country is at a crucial fork in the road. The fork that should be taken is to protect and build on the parks monuments forests seashores etc that have already been set up.

I grew up feeling a strong connection to nature through countless visits to state and national parks. Through these experiences I gained an appreciation for the world we live in and our impact upon our world.

This is the foundation of the American spirit and is critical to the next generation. The experiences had at these sites form the spirit that is the motivating core of Great Americans. Part of being a visionary is to address OUR outdoors on a significantly large scale.

Our Earth is in ecological crisis! Now is not the time to destroy what's left.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Twice I have had the experience of exploring and being a part of the northern Minnesota Boundary Waters. My experience in the pristine lakes where we could drink the same water on which we were canoeing provided personal and professional growth for me. My heart is heavy with continuing news of the devastation of not only wilderness areas but other more urban lands in this country. And I am saddened to know that conservation is not apparently one of your considered priorities. Our children and grandchildren deserve to have a planet that can still be seen as the little blue dot in the universe...not a dullhued orb.

"Just think how senseless and lifeless a youngster's life will be if they are not able to enjoy the outdoors by being in it conserving it and sharing this with others. Being in the great national parks like Yosemite teaches an individual not only respect for nature but expands their love for it and inspires creative ideas harmony and peace." "Involve our youngsters in conservation by making it an academic standard to fulfill in the curriculum"

I have 2 children that already love the outdoors. It is a lifeline of relaxation that cannot be found anywhere else! Not to mention the peace and quiet that our natural places offer the ability to see wildlife in a natural habitat and recreation that cannot be digitized or otherwise simulated.

My husband and I have spent many wonderful vacations enjoying our national parks and monuments and other wild areas. We are environmental consultants in NJ who treasure the opportunity to study the wildlife and plants of very different areas throughout the US. If we don't preserve unspoiled habitats we will never know what we have lost from our biodiversity heritage as development and resource exploitation devour the land.

In the face of rising population and its everspreading development as well as its desperation for extractive energy sources the importance of conserving natural landscapes for future generations has never been greater. Failure to hold a strong commitment to this value will eventually alter the character of our nation's great outdoors irreparably and with it the character of our citizenry who will have fewer and fewer places to experience the restorative value of the natural world. Even now that experience is foreign to some especially in urban areas. Electronic technology has also begun to diminish our youth's interest in connecting with that natural world which portends a perilous loss to the American psyche. Furthermore in order to not exacerbate the existing polarity between environmentalists and their opponents I urge you to be realistic about the scope of envisioned projects. Some megalandscape multimillionacre complexes envisioned by wellmeaning groups while admirable in idealism will only panic those threatened by these prospects (e.g. ranchers) and will galvanize all sectors of opposition. It is strong enough already. Conservation projects must be viable apropos existing stakeholder interests not decreed as government fiat with winners and losers. This is challenging to say the least; but respectful and patient collaboration is essential to longterm success.

Tax advantages for wildlife conservation; Remove Coal as a major fuel source; Save all wildlife for future generations; Renewable energy Our grandchildren need your help...Thank you!

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Stop the killing and roundup of Wild Mustangs and protect them in their habitat

Our parks and forest will be plundered by those who don't care or those who find a way to make a profit from them. Our children and their children deserve to have these places available to them to enjoy and love the way I and many others have during our lifetimes. Please save these wonderful places. We deserve them.

It is inexcusable the way humans have trashed this planet! I don't want to be known as from the generation that did nothing but make it worse. Please do what you can to protect it from those who are so selfish and greedy that they don't care about the trashed up planet they leave for their grandchildren.

Being with nature is one of the most important health needs of our citizens. We must protect our wild areas for the animals native to them and parts of other public lands for people to reconnect with our great outdoors.

From ancient times to the present the greatest and most valuable assets humanity relies upon are based in healthy intact natural ecosystems. Food shelter medicinal and spiritual needs are satisfied within these natural environments. The past century has seen unprecedented use and decline of natural resources to the point that future generations may only know it from photographs and stories. I have been blessed to have grown up and thrived through ready access to recreational areas. public lands please consider these priorities in protecting and preserving America's recreation and wilderness lands:

wilderness monuments wildlife refuges parks forests trails wild and scenic rivers and historic sites. I'll admit to it; I have a vested interest. I've been hiking the Appalachian Trail since age 7 and have visited many national parks wildlife refuges monuments national seashores and so forth in my 56 years. I don't have children but am always conscious of how our actions affect future generations. Thank you for considering my opinion. I wish you and yours health and peace.

In my 72 years of life a constant source of inspiration and renewal has been nature and especially as found in the relatively unspoiled portions of our great outdoors. Nothing is more important!

Perhaps it would be a good idea if the drilling logging and mining interests were to be severely limited in these regions.

A Healthy Earth and healthy ecosystem will help us lead healthy lives. We are connected. You can't have one without the other.

Let our descendants enjoy all that we have enjoyed and more!

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

A relationship with nature and time in it are extremely important for child development and wellbeing and are necessary for the next generation to be engaged citizens.

Now is the time to take action to protect our great outdoors. Our wilderness National Parks natural habitats and nature's natural beauty must be preserved in a time when development is encroaching on us all.

It is imperative that we protect national parks forests preserves monuments and add to that more wilderness areas parks monuments forests and wetlands. The very life (both animal and human) that are protected in these places is threatened unless we take action to both protect what we have and extend it. National Parks need buffer large buffer areas to stop encroaching growth and to protect what is in them animal life forests woodlands watersheds etc. We need these things to and to preserve the life sustaining things that they provide to us as humans water supply clean air sanctuary for our souls. You must fully fund the Land and Water Conservation fund increase funding for all of our national treasures and make additional funding available to state and local governments for the outdoor and open areas they protect such as state forests parks wet lands and woodlands. Thank you for your time

Protect and increase our opportunities for outdoor recreation. Natural places and open spaces need to be more available in most of America.

All my life of 70 years I have loved nature and the outdoors. Many of my most cherished memories and periods of personal growth have been within nature's awesomeness.

Protecting the outdoors is a major priority and I want the administration to do everything possible including adequate funding to protect our great outdoors.

P.S. Please don't overpromote our wild areas to those who have not yet learned how to respect them first and play by the rules of the parks. This means not bringing in a myriad of plastic containers and other forms of packaging that will likely end up as garbage or worse...litter. People need to understand why we need to respect these areas and this means behaving appropriately with respect to nature. Additionally...NO noise from any electronic devices is essential too..no booming cars ipods cell phones and obnoxious illegally modified exhaust pipes on motorcycles or cars. If such is how people want to behave in such a setting or any setting for that matter..and cannot take 5 to do a digital detox and hear what the world sounds like naturally and discover the joy in peace... Then perhaps they need to stay out of these precious treasures.

Save our wildlife particularly those at risk; Ask for the current Secretary of the Interior's (Ken Salazar (sp)) resignation. Appoint someone who really cares about saving public lands and wildlife for the public and future generations.

Keep up your efforts to make this the best country it can be.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Sir what a legacy for your children grandchildren you would be leaving them to see what wonders GOD has created. How sad if they would not be able to enjoy the wilderness and all its beauty because we didn't expand create and protect the sites and the animals that live in these spaces. Will you not help protect this beauty for all to enjoy now and in the future.

engage public and private corporations to assist in conservation in their regions. Consider tax advantages if necessary. for us and for our children. Really seek out alternative energy sources and develop them for use. No more drilling!! let's not have any more species face extinction because we neglected these important areas. engage children teenagers and young adults with innovative electronic campaigns. Engage adults thru electronic and print media. Make it cool to be outdoors! help the states maintain and fund their outdoor recreational areas. so America keeps the wilderness it already has and can return important overdeveloped areas back to the wild.

I have 4 Grandchildren ages 7 10 11 and 18. I want them to be able to truly experience this beautiful country. Not have to be told what used to be. Thank you for your kind attention to this problem.

Prevent further degradation of National Parks We really need to come together as Americans on this issue.

Fund More Jobs in the National Park Service

Dear Mr. Obama & Administration As someone who lives in a state of beautiful clear lakes abundant forests and magnificent mountains I would like to see everything possible done to preserve what few tracts of wild spaces are remaining in our country. Many American's have taken too many liberties with the land and mistreated it for too long. It is time that we consider what wild spaces remain and attempt to protect it for future generations. I recently visited Yosemite National Park. I was in awe of its beauty and I am thankful for those who recognized its importance to humanity and fought to protect it over a hundred years ago. I wonder what Yosemite would be like today if it had not been protected as a national park? I shudder to speculate.

As an avid outdoorsman and user of our public lands I want the next generation to enjoy America's great outdoors too. That's why I am asking you to seize this opportunity to create expand and better protect America's shared outdoor spaces including wilderness monuments wildlife refuges parks forests trails wild and scenic rivers and historic sites. The Monongahela National Forest here in WV has just designated several new wilderness areas that will benefit generation to come. However we need this type of vision across the board in all our public lands management. Many roadless areas across our great country are prime for wilderness designation but they languish due to petty political concerns.

We must protect and enhance our outdoors. We only have this chance one time. Please act very strongly and positively on our request below!

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

In order for the next generation to enjoy America's great outdoors we need leadership that values a strong conservation agenda. Let this be another example for the CHANGE we voted for.

I am grateful for what Franklin D Roosevelt did to create the national parks that we now have.

We all need to protect our planet!!

As a nation we are quickly expanding with no end in sight please save these wilderness lands.

Mother Earth does not belong to us. We belong to her. She is in critical condition and "Yes We Can" do something about it. Hopefully before it is too late. My focus is on 'clean water for all living things'. That does not include putting an UNapproved prescription drug considered a toxicant by the FDA in our drinking water. We drink only about 1% of that. Just think where does the rest of it go?

Thank you for preserving the most beautiful and wonderful parts of our country for my children and grandchildren and their grandchildren to enjoy.

We all know it is our responsibility to care for this planet for future generations. I don't understand why I have to fight so hard for something we should all agree on.

As an outdoor enthusiast myself I am deeply grateful to those leaders who have worked to protect wilderness areas in the past. I also know well that without such leadership and supporting efforts by all of us who value America's great outdoors pristine forests and many other areas would have long ago been spoiled to make a quick buck for the privileged few. Finally as a psychologist I am aware of the growing body of research showing how important spending time in nature is to our wellbeing.

In particular... keep destructive intrusions (drilling mining offroad vehicles unnecessary killing of wildlife etc.) out of all existing federal parks and reservations.

We need wilderness and wildlife not only cities.

I am asking you to seize this opportunity to create expand and better protect America's shared outdoor spaces wilderness areas natural monuments large wildlife refuges where wildlife is **TOTALLY PROTECTED FROM HUNTERS** parks forests trails WILD and scenic rivers and historic sites.

Development continues at an unsustainable pace. Protect what you can now before it is too late.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Thanks for helping our future generations to have an exciting world to live in!

You may be strongly aware of Southern California beaches but less knowledgeable about how mountainous the area is particularly east and north of Los Angeles that needs ours and your protection. Essentially there are 4 high uplifts rising steeply to where the terrain reaches 10000 feet above sea level: Going from south to north the first is Mt. San Jacinto (San Jack). This is a "Sky Island" going abruptly above the Palm Springs desert to almost 11000 feet and which has recently received National Monument status. One goes through 5 climatic zones as he/she ascends it as if one was traveling north to the Arctic. As a youngster (I am 84 years old) this was my first Big Mountain inspiring and true spiritual ascent. The next is the highest in true Southern California Mt. San Geronimo. This is also called "Greyback" because it is above timberline. Earlier on I fought successfully at Forest Service hearings to save it from ski development. It is ringed by youth camps and these precluded any development of its 11500 foot summit. The third area is Mt. San Antonio just above 10000 feet and also called "Old Baldy" because winds from the Pacific have stunted its pine forests. It is a good day ascent on skis in the winter. Hopefully it will receive wilderness protection as part of the proposed San Gabriel Wilderness Area. And finally there are the southernmost Sierra Nevada peaks that reach a climax of 14495 feet about 200 miles north of Los Angeles at Mt. Whitney. These were my playgrounds on many occasions and as a biologist I have done significant research there over several decades. I also took my 2 children into the Sierra to give them what I call "The Gift of the Hills" that I also received from my parents and grandparents when I was growing up. Anyway I am and have done whatever I could to protect these mountains for my children and now my two grandchildren. I look forward to your efforts for help in these goals. Please follow the examples of President Teddy Roosevelt and the Sierra prophet John Muir to become true political activists in saving what are truly "Nature's Gems."

My family and I spent a lot of time in our National Parks and the wilderness areas of America. I owe my dedication and love of the outdoors to those days spent in such places

Please also protect our Gulf of Mexico for many reasons but for me personally I want to enjoy eating seafood from there. I also would like to see my three great grandsons to enjoy the pleasure of the beaches food sand and culture of the shores of the Gulf. Protect from oil spills and any other poison seeping in from other sources. We must protect our planet since it is where we live.

My family and I camp hike and visit national parks many times a year. I hope they will be afforded the opportunity to do the same with their children.

keep our national parks and national wilderness areas free from development and prospecting

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

As a grandmother who with my late husband enjoyed our great outdoors I want the next generation to enjoy America's great outdoors too. (As a former grant writer for a tristate council of governments I have been privileged to see the fruits of the LWCF in numerous small towns in our area. Present and future generations will enjoy the trails parks and recreation opportunities this fund has made possible).

Everything possible must be done to ensure the conservation of our rights to have wilderness areas and historic spaces all over the United States for our children and their children. Protection of the existing areas as well as the creation of new areas can only enhance our environment and our wellbeing as well as assist us in living our lives connectively with all beings on our great Earth.

Your administration often talks of positive change from the policies of the Bush administration. There are few better areas to make such change in and few that need it more than wilderness conservation.

I have spent the summer working in a park and financial survival is all they think about conservation and protection are not even on the table any more... no roads no motors ni some parts even no people. small peices of land can be linked to create wildlife corridors. at 20 to 40 dollars a night for a tent space only the rich can camp. all it takes is a trail a restroom and a trash can.

Protect endangered species of animals and willife and create sanctuaries where they will live and thrive.

There is nothing more important than protecting our very essence of survival as a species. It shouldn't even be a question!!! I know you know. Please take ACTION!!!!

With or without you in the White House this is a critical moment in our history. As I'm sure you're aware there is more at stake than being the first AfricanAmerican being elected to the White House. The environment globally is at a sensitive turning point some things eg endangered species have already gone beyond recovery or restoration. But as the leader of this country you can create the conditions which will protect & preserve our great & irreplaceable natural resources. In the tradition of First Ladies i.e. Lady Bird Johnson Eleanor Roosevelt this is a cause that Michelle Obama could shepherd in some way. What a great legacy this would be!

Our future generations deserve the chance to experience our National parks system as my family has had the opportunity to do for many generations. Personally I would like to see Point Lobos on central California's coast and the Pajaro River State Park also on California's central coast as well as the many State Parks at Big Sur California added to the list of National and State parks that should be preserved for the future. I'm sure it's a difficult decision on your part given our Nation's current economic condition on what parks will stay open and which ones will need to be closed due to a lack of State and Federal funding. I hope that funds will be found to keep all of our National and State Parks open.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

I am aware of funds for conservation projects being slashed and budgets for our National Parks being cut. This leads to a detrimental change for our great wild lands. We have to do better to conserve these valuable and unique landscapes for our next generation and for our dwindling and endangered wildlife.

We need to stop openpit coal minningNOW. And we need to cleanup coal ash mess. I think the best place to keep the coal ash is to put in the yards of big coal Officers and that of the power company. If more room is needed then use the yards of Congressmen of help the coal company.

The outdoors have always provided refuge for me and my friends and family. We look to these spaces as vacation destinations as areas to gain more knowledge about our natural surroundings and as sites to gain spiritual refreshment.

Your administration has already proven leadership in medical care and at least addressing the Wall Street mess within the limits of obstructive industry interests and Republican obstructionism. Supporting conservation efforts is part and parcel of defending the environment energy conservation and global warming action. Thank you for your continued intelligent leadership.

This natural world is what we have to pass on to future generations of Americans; please protect our natural world.

Our greatest President's left a legacy of the beautiful national parks and recreational areas we now enjoy.

America can be proud of its early conservation efforts. Let's keep the tradition going and protect what cannot be replaced.

I want my son to be able to have the same incredible experiences that I have been able to enjoy in the many parks and forests and mountain lakes I have been privileged to visit.

I worry that my grandchildren will not have a healthy environment and a clean outdoors with space to roam. Please be a leader. Forget politics. Protect the future. Thanks for all you do!

Our family spent many weekends and vacations visiting parks and lakes around the country. Camping hiking and boating provided us the opportunity to make the natural world part of our lives and fed out spirits. After many years my husband and I have gone back to camping a chance to feed our souls.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

I believe these efforts are not for mere enjoyment of nature but they are vital to continuing generations being able to live healthy lives. Our health is tied to our environment and without the hard work of conservation and preservation we will increasingly become overpolluted overdeveloped weaker and sicker. My children are already suffering from this trend as they suffer from environmental illness. Increasing numbers of children suffer from allergies autism and other environmentally influenced diseases. Protecting our wilderness forests parks and preserved spaces is just one step among many we need to be taking toward better health of future generations.

I spend as much time as I can out in the various natural settings available to me here in Oregon. There is no comparison to a man made park. Man will never really duplicate the beauty of a forest built by god. We need to think beyond humans. This world is not just ours to destroy in the name of profit. We must take a stand to say that plants and animals have the right to live their lives the way they want to without fear of destruction at human hands.

The wonderful world of nature cannot be replaced if it is exploited by money seeking companies and persons. Responsible and careful development practices must be followed by all so this heritage is preserved.

All of the following criteria are vitally important to your agenda. By adding one important element to the necessary actions would have a profound impact on the other necessary steps And that element would be to lower the immigrant numbers for the U.S.A. Sheer over population is a root cause of all social economic and environmental issues.

As a mother of two young adults I with their father joyfully introduced them as children to many of the great spaces our forefathers had the wisdom to preserve for all Americans not just the rich and privileged. Together we explored the Grand Canyon Arches National Park Lassen Sequoia and Kings Canyon glorious Glacier and ethereal Bryce Canyon Grand Teton the incredible Yellowstone Zion Mesa Verde Canyon de Chelly Petrified National Forest and a couple of favorite haunts Yosemite and Pt. Reyes National Seashore. Preserving these amazing lands for all is one of America's best ideas.

One of President Clinton's greatest legacies is the roadless acts.

Stop the selloff of PUBLIC LAND to private developers Permanently protect public lands from any and all development

Our natural world has been extremely important in my life both growing up and as an adult.

I have not been the parks all the years that I have been working and hope that in my "senior" years to experience all the places of America the beautiful

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Just last weekend my boyfriend and I went to Wildwood Park in Oregon. There are a bounty of Douglas firs on the banks of the salmon river. The BLM has done a wonderful job restoring the land and making it a good home for the salmon that call the river home. There's even a viewing area on the river where you can see under the water to fingerlings. The air is fresh and cool. It's an opportunity to learn that wouldn't exist without conservation. We walked the nature trails visited the boardwalk through the wetlands and enjoyed a lovely picnic dinner. Outdoor places need preservation so more people can luxuriate together and learn and be awed by what nature has to offer.

however restrict access by offroad vehicles to reservations set aside for that purpose outside forest areas where they can tear up the ground all they want without destroying the forests and wildlands and terrorizing wildlife. There is no reason why 510% of the population should be able to dictate policy on managing public lands.

Encouraging people to enjoy and appreciate the great outdoors will foster a respect for others as well.

The Seventh Generation rule should apply hereit is not just about us and maybe our grandchildren.

The possibility to connect with the natural world is one of the most underrated resources we have. Ecosystems and wilderness are not luxuries; they are fundamental to being human and must be preserved for ourselves our children and future generations.

Once they are destroyed it is virtually impossible to recreate them.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Despite world wars cold wars police actions race riots economic depressions S&L/Financial meltdowns wars without end and global warming... despite it all the United States has an enduring legacy of land preserved and protected in our national parks wilderness areas preserves monuments state parks and local open spaces. These lands create an enduring sense of place confidence security for every citizen of these United States. Despite all the bad news one need only step into a local state or national park and hope seems to infuse into your spirit; the hardedged world almost always seems to lose some of its spirit. John Muir and the great visionary park advocates are true heroes we can call our own. Please join the ranks of Lincoln Roosevelt Johnson Carter as a towering champion of America's natural heritage; seize the day and this moment in our country's astounding history to create expand and better protect America's wonderful parks preserves wilderness' monuments wildlife refuges indigenous/native sacred places and rivers. Be as bold as the visionaries before you and think of generations to come who will look back a hundred years to this time and place and thank President Obama for his vision. When considering a legacy of land which is the stage upon which America continues to evolve please frame your strategy with these priorities: Expand the existing system by buying out inholdings eliminating grandfathered nonconforming activities and correcting haphazard politically contrived boundaries with ecological watershed boundaries. Do this through programmatic and agency cultural direction and fully applying the Land and Water Conservation Fund which was established to do just this and not offset the federal deficit; Provide the longterm nondeclining agency budget funding necessary to manage restore administer police protect and interpret our public trust lands. Of any government employee the public trusts park and forest rangers over anyone else; it is an honorable and indispensable career profession and responsibility of our government. Depoliticize the Department of the Interior Department of Agriculture and other public land management agencies and bring back the esteem morale honor and integrity to professional career civil service.

I regularly enjoy outdoor activities and in fact that is my passion. Many experts believe that we as a society have become so disconnected from nature that it has caused a "nature deficit disorder." Our society has become so involved with technology/media that there is no time to commune with nature. This absence from nature has caused detrimental outcomes for our children. Please consider future generations and provide for the above mentioned priorities.

As someone who cares very deeply about the earth I am asking you to seize this opportunity to create expand and better protect America's shared outdoor spaces including wilderness monuments wildlife refuges parks forests trails wild and scenic rivers and historic sites. The natural world is vastly important to all life on this planet as an ecologist and person who believes that all things are connected protecting and caring for the planet we live on is vastly important for the well being of all present and future generations. Restore and protect wetlands

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Kayaking our lakes rivers and bays hiking camping and fishing in back country photographing majestic sciens wildlife and flora climbing and cave exploring just sitting listening to nature and coming to that peace that can only be experienced in natural settings that is what I want the next generations to enjoy in America's great outdoors too. I may be too far along to participate in every one of those activities any longer but my children grandchildren nad hopefully many future generations will be able to enjoy them.

The wilderness areas we still have left are our heritage and our future. They are the refuge of many forms of wildlife that without the human race would also suffer. It is against the law in most places to have less than adequate housing for our pets; are not these great creatures entitled to the same? We as humans also need these beautiful and pristine places to be able to go to from the cities to rejuvenate our souls. To have places of respite from the drone bright lights and hustle of city life.

We have a country rich in resources wilderness and natural wonders. Please work to keep it that way for generations. With the advent of climate change and the reckless use of resources we have polluted squandered and wasted our riches. We need to pull back take responsibility now as stewards of gods creation and protect what we still have. We must be true stewards of the land.

Every summer my family and I choose a national park to visit. This year we visited Zion National Park Grand Canyon and Antelope Canyon. In past years we've been to Yosemite Glacier National Park Yellowstone and the Grand Tetons. They have all been amazing places and our children have learned to hike and appreciate nature and wildlife. Of course it was sad to see Glacier National Parks glaciers swiftly disappearing pollution in Yosemite and Grand Canyon but that's what happens after 8 years of an administration who didn't care about preserving our national treasures. I hope Mr. Obama will be a different president who doesn't sell off our parks and reserves to the highest bidder but treasures them as much as our founding fathers who established them as national treasures for future generations like my family.

I care deeply about the outdoors and am appalled by and ashamed of the damage to the environment perpetuated by big business that has been allowed to continue even after the Bush administration left power.

With all the other pressing problems its easy to put wilderness on the back shelf. However wilderness can be a part of the solution for those problems including: global climate change economic growth clean water clean air and health care. Wilderness provides a myriad of resources free if left alone. Our enjoyment of it which improves health is only one part of it. People pay to visit areas with wilderness; wilderness sequesters carbon cleans water and air as well.

I am also concerned that these sites stay affordable to all which many are not these days and ask you to keep that in mind as well. at a reasonable cost

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

I have two grandchildren ages 1 and 3. They are fascinated with the natural world as most young children are. This is perhaps our most important opportunity to act given the political and ideological climate of our time. Truly it may be among the MOST IMPORTANT efforts of your administration when you consider the very long impact of preservation and conservation.

Once lost they can never be replaced. This is the heritage we should leave the next generations not a desolate landscape ruined by oil spills and pollution. Please protect our natural wilderness and national parks.

I have been fortunate enough to do some wilderness hiking and have visited most of the great national parks. Those are our national treasures and as such they should be treasured protected and preserved for future generations.

Tha means we need to address global climate change

Natural unspoiled pieces of earth are one of the greatest reminders of the joy of living. I want my children and their children to continue having the opportunity to benefit from contact with the beauty of our outdoor world.

I live near the Mississippi River which carries silt effluent from waste treatment plants and lots of agricultural runoff. Iowa's rivers rank fourth from the bottom of all the states' water quality. Improvement of watersheds is very important.

Please bring all energy producers back in line with the clean air and water act as this is turning out to be a huge blunder and detrimental to our parks and environment in general.

The lands around the parks must also have some protection. In some areas for example: Washington Coastal parks and both Mt Rainer and The Olympic Rain Forest park in Washington State the trees have been clear cut right up to the parks boundaries causing huge blow downs in the parks. With only 2% of all old growth forests still standing world wide we need to protect these ecosystems. I loved Roosevelt's Conservation Core it gave people jobs self respect skills and respect for nature and changed some peoples lives forever who were employed in this movement. I think this is a positive way to make the above bullet points happen and get our youth outdoors.

ReHab our Parks and Monuments

We need to preserve natural areas for the benefit of people yet to come. Unless we take steps to do so they'll all be used up with very few left to enjoy.

Nothing was as important to me as a child as the opportunity to enjoy nature and the outdoors. I already feel like there are fewer opportunities for this for my own children.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

perhaps enact the 'Buffalo Commons' park idea in the upper midwest all of it and protect more by designating more wilderness by designating preservation areas by an ecosystem approach by promoting green rails through developed areas every year!

Open spaces and wilderness areas are important not just for personal enjoyment and reflection but also to protect sources of drinking water.

Please help preserve this great land for our children and all future generations. Thank you very much for your time.

I am 87 yrs. old. I have seen the beauty of the mountains the National parks and have enjoyed nature as a whole. I want the same for my GreatGrand children. Please protect our natural beauty and resources.

If nothing else this will help provide jobs in this country jobs that only people can do onsite and not outsourced. You have the chance to correct the last irresponsible Administration's mistakes sir as well as indicate you have kept faith with the people who hired you.

My son and his future are my motivation for protecting our resources. I want him and his generation to enjoy everything nature has to offer.

Please keep in mind that the BEST way to save the environment is to limit the growth of the human population through education cheap and easy access to birth control methods (including hysterectomy on demand) and limiting immigration. Thank you.

I live in Taos NM which is a very beautiful place with many outdoor recreational opportunities please keep the outdoors as inviting as it is in NM. I am blessed to live here!

Clean Air Clean Water and healthy living depend on you.

Having grown up on a small farm in eastern Ohio I have a special love of nature and the outdoors. I value the land and its ability to "take care of" the human family through nurture of body and soul. Currently I live in the city but near the ocean and a nature conservancy area. I feel very fortunate to be able to have these close by. City living requires that its dwellers have places that are accessible and protected. Such places offer a balance and perspective to life that is so very necessary for all of us humans and is certainly necessary for for the nonhuman family that shares this fragile planet and seeks to survive and to flourish.

I think it is important to remember we are already overpopulated on this earth. All beings need a place to "get out and away from it all". And quite honestly I for one am happiest in nature!

Our natural life and open space are a gift from God and ours to protect and enjoy. It is critical for our wellbeing and the wellbeing of all future generations!!! You are the head caretaker!!! Remember?

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

This is one of the most beautiful countries in the world with so many different wilderness areas. Our National Parks are awesome as I can testify. We need desperately to preserve them for our great grandchildren

I hope that my greatgrandkids can freely enjoy the great outdoors just as I did in my youth.

I have loved nature and forests ever since childhood growing up in southwest Virginia and I really hope that the next generation will be able to enjoy America's great outdoors too.

I personally believe it is of the utmost importance for American's to realize that we are part of the natural world not disconnected from it. If more people can come to this understanding we will have a better chance to face looming threats such as climate change.

and provide on sight education to maintain the preservation of the wilderness and encourage responsibility for those enjoying and experiencing this Nature. without harming the local wildlife and their habitat

The natural environment still left untouched by mankind should be protected and preserved for sustaining life for future generations. If wilderness areas are left as they are the unique ecosystems at play in the macro and micro climates will help our air quality and water quality as well as provide habitat for flora and fauna greatly at risk. The most important rationale for saving our wilderness areas is to improve the quality of our environment.

Once these public spaces are gone they are gone forever.

Even though there are places I will never see in person knowing that they are there and protected gives me great peace of mind.

The two words that I stress are BOLD and CONSERVATION. As our population continues to grow and that old innate exploitation gene in human nature remains with us it will not be easy for you to prioritize Conservation. That is the reason you will need to be both bold and adamant that the priorities listed above remain as one of the hallmark's of this Administration's legacy to the people of the United States.

Now my personal coment. Nature has grounded and expanded my life. From country walks with my Mom to cross country excursions on land and water (I've probably missed only 1/2 dozen states.. regretably). I've been through Yellowstone Acadia Grand Canyon Denali and more national and state reserves than I can remember. I have been blessed as have my children who have grown to share my passion. Our heritage as well as our hope lies in the Grand Creation we have been placed within. Please strive to protect this great treasure we've been asked to steward. Thank you

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Longrange planning is as important as shortrange planning in responsible government. We want the next generation to enjoy America's great outdoors too. Fully fund the development of alternative responsible energy development

Please don't let corporations dictate what our next generation will be able to enjoy. We must have responsible leadership if we are going to maintain responsible conservation! Just say no to corporate greed.

Firstly it is imperative to us future generations and the planet itself that both the amount and quality of pristine roadless wild lands be protected. These "islands of life" will form the seeds around which the globally sustainable ecosphere germinates in decades and centuries to come.

It's important to preserve wild places so that people and their children can get away from video games television and the internet to experience nature first hand. In this way we can pass on the conservation ethic that is America's best idea.

But more important than enjoyment is the knowledge people need to have about the natural world and how it works. Without this they simply don't understand the importance of our legislators making wise decisions on issues that affect the physical world.

As a young girl growing up in rural Maryland my family and I feel personally connected to the unique wilderness all Americans share.

I believe that we need to look at things that are important to us and the inspiration of all who still enjoy and want to keep the appreciation of outdoors because if we don't protect them now where are we going to go take the appreciation of the outdoors at? I love to see the outdoors and love to see the sunsets or how the clouds create in the sky with colors and from the horizon of the mountains. To hear the birds chirping melody songs to see a moment of magical delight of seeing beautiful deer and others. I love the beautiful national wonders waterfalls rivers historic sites monuments and other places. I would like for good people who work in Washington to take the time to buy a ticket to go to those places and see them for yourself and I know it will change how you feel and you will want to protect the outdoors for generations to come.

Educate more people about the importance of Nature Protect our water sources Restrict new roads being built in America's most pristine outdoor spaces Thank you for your consideration!!

If we do not protect our great outdoors with its treasured wonders and wildlife then we will end up destroying humankind in the future.

My family has enjoyed the Cuyahoga Valley Towpath Trail & look forward to the day it extends right up to Lake Erie. Not only do we enjoy the beauty of nature but it provides the exercise of bicycling for the children.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

We must do ALL that we can do for the generations to come!

Our country has become so disconnected from its most precious resource our connection to nature.

Please consider what your grandchildren along with mine will not be able to even see much less have at thier fingertips to enjoy if you do not step up and at least consider doing something with these above ideas. Once they are gone they cannot be brought back just like all of our other past losses and those we are presently losing. I could name them all or at least begin to name them but I'm sure you are completely aware of all of our wishes.

I am a proud natureloving American. I love my beautiful country and We need to capitalize on all of the green energy resources we have in this country keep our natural resources clean and accessible and get off oil and other polluting methods of powering our lives.

There is more much more to life than making money and destroying our earth mountains soil air and water to do it.

Our population is growing. More people means more development. Let's keep some portion of our country natural.

I have always enjoyed the beautiful outdoor sights that nature provides and respected nature's importance to continued life on this planet that of human beings as well as other life forms. We must do everything we can to protect the natural world. I voted for you because I believed that you shared many of my priorities for this nation including conservation of our great outdoors.

We only get one chance to preserve our most magnificent wild places. Once they are developed we never get them back.

and educate them Stop the coal oil and nuclear power industry from further pollution Educate people about how bad coal oil and neuclear energy is Start programs for cleaner energy uses and educate people about "going green"

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

The main reason that we live in Alaska is to benefit from the beautiful lands surrounding us. We visit the National Forest almost daily and frequently enjoy visits to national monuments and national parks here in Alaska. In addition the majority of our vacations outside the state include visits to the great outdoors including frequent camping trips. We were lucky enough to spend two years traveling around America in a small RV and visited our parks forests monuments and other public lands from coast to coast. In our travels we love to bring our grandchildren and great grandchildren along to learn to love nature as we do. An upcoming trip to Arizona and New Mexico this fall will include my 90 year old mother on our visits to Saguaro Organ Pipes Petrified Forest/Painted Desert Grand Canyon Carlsbad Caverns and Guadalupe Mountains National Parks. We already have a trip next spring planned to visit the many national park areas in southern Utah. The National Parks are the crown jewel of America and need to be maintained upgraded and expanded. These areas are enjoyed by millions of Americans as well as foreign visitors. The parks are suffering from neglect and we are counting on you to reverse this trend and give them the attention and funding that they need.

I grew up in a creek in Santa Monica California I knew every frog and dragonfly that was there personally! We climbed hills and slid down them in the rain every chance we had. During summer vacations our parents drove us to many of our country's national parks where we camped and learned invaluable lessons about our environment and the priceless animals who inhabited these sites.

As a citizen of Arizona I have had the opportunity to grow up in the shadow of the incredible natural beauty of the Grand Canyon and other areas of my state.

I feel blessed to have been able to enjoy all of America's great outdoors.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

We need to protect and conserve all the wilderness habitats that are left in this country. It is important to and wildlife habitats. So that wildlife has a place to live and thrive. All creatures and plants play a part in OUR ecosystem. When you lose just one creature or plant it has a snowball effect on the rest of our ecosystem. We need to so that they can see it's beauty and appreciate what it truly has to do with all life. We should without disturbing the wildlife that are there. We have a town in our state called Ithaca New York. It has numerous waterfalls and parks yet maintains a town around all this without disturbing it. They appreciate the beauty nature has brought them and it also brings in tourism dollars. I've been to Acadia National Park in Maine and was in awe by all it's beauty and how we can visit this area and keep it relatively undisturbed. This park brings in a huge amount of tourism for Bar Harbor Maine where cruise ships come to port so that people can visit Bar Harbor and Acadia National Park. While there we took a cruise on the ocean to go sightseeing for whales. We saw dolphins racing along side our ship and we got to see some huge whales. It was awesome. When my daughters were young we used to take them hiking and to parks a lot. It was an inexpensive healthy and good time for all of us. They still appreciate nature and love to camp and hike. It is important that we Conserve the public federal state and local parks that we have and to create more to help stop suburban sprawl and wildlife. We must all learn to coexist with nature or we will not survive without it.

Dear President Obama I am writing to you to ask that you Please help US to protect our natural heritage legacy protecting and conserving our wilderness areas and the resources with which to do so. I cherish these beautiful areas and although I haven't visited alot of them just knowing that they're there gives me hope; a renewal of spirit and rejuvenation of soul when I am in their midst. I feel it is of the utmost importance that we realize how beloved these places are in the hearts of all Americans and how it is all of our birthright to maintain and uphold their care so the next generation can enjoy America's great outdoors too.

That's why I am MOST STRONGLY URGE you to seize this opportunity to create expand and better protect America's shared outdoor spaces including ESPECIALLY wilderness wildlife refuges (FORBID HUNTING AND TRAPPING THERE) parks forests trails wild and scenic rivers and historic sites. Protect ESPECIALLY our wilderness FROM NUMEROUS THREATS AND PROTECT WILDLIFE ESPECIALLY SPECIES SUCH AS WOLVES PRAIRIE DOGS ETC. FACILITATE connecting people with Nature WHILE PROTECTING THE ENVIRONMENT WHILE THERE IS STILL TIME.

the trashing of America is proceeding unabated!!!!

Once these places are gone they can never be replaced.

protect our country from the devastating effects of pollution and emissions that cause global warming

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

I believe as the Native Americans do we are all connected to each other as well as our surroundings. I also believe that everything starts at the top whether that be a family company or government. Mr President you get the opportunity to help change the world that we know

I have had the privilege of growing up in the beautiful parts of this land the Southwest and New England. I camped and hiked and canoed and loved every minute of spending time in nature.

I have enjoyed camping in many areas of this beautiful land both as a child and again when my children were young. These are precious memories that will always stay with me. We still enjoy the majesty of so many natural areas where ever we travel and would like to protect these areas for many generations to come. We currently are fortunate enough to reside in an area where we are lucky to see wildlife in their natural habitat. This is always amazing to whomever is lucky enough to get a glimpse of a bobcat havelina roadrunner or even a rattlesnake.

Hiking though the Southwest has truly been one of the divine pleasure in life. Thank you for your heading our nation to a sensible conservation strategy for the modern world.

You've seen several of the National Parks this summer and you've spent time on Martha's Vinyard. Perhaps if you were able to visit the National Parks as a private citizen the way most Americans and foreign visitors do you would be adamant about leaving a natural heritage legacy for future generation to enjoy America's great outdoors too. Martha's Vinyard is a great place to relax and enjoy the company of others but isn't it a bit overcrowded especially with the rich and/or famous?

When America's first National Parks and wilderness areas were established they were done with future generations in mind and with the goal of protecting forever an unparalleled treasure a collection of landscapes viewed with wonder the world over. When I first set foot in a wilderness area specifically Tuolumne Meadows in Yosemite National Park I was struck by the calming effect of the wild silence and conversely the excitement it generated within me. It changed me forever. Sadly America's collection of environmental gems has been tarnished and is under tremendous pressure from increased population and its attendant pollution. Repair and protect our existing wild lands and establish further areas of untrampled wonder. We have been to the moon. Let us come back to Earth save what we've got then we can reach for the stars.

I am thrilled that your administration has made the decision to focus on Amercia's great outdoors. Our country is rich in natural wonders but those riches must be protected form overuse and exploitation pollution and overdevelopment.

The outdoors are so important to us and our future generations please keep them safe by making more wilderness areas safe from energy exploration roads and roads in general.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Given that we have monumental issues in front of us I have to strongly express my need for immediate efforts for the only environment we have. When asked during polling "what is the number one issue for you?" and then I'm given the choice of Economy Education or Employment... I say strongly the ENVIRONMENT. It has fed sheltered and supported us for hundreds of thousands of years and now we are very quickly destroying our source. I grew up in Southern Arizona's beautiful Sonoran Desert. I spent every night outside growing up playing in the desert surrounding our neighborhood. I explored the ecology that I learned about in school. Still today I love to hike mountain bike kayak... you name it to appreciate the environment we live in. Any trip I go on involves outdoor exploration... and most recently Yellowstone left me breathless. But our world is suffering and right under our feet. In my own home town of Green Valley AZ we have had to consider health effects from the mountains of copper mine tailings which my mother and grandmother worked for (health wise I've already had 7 surgeries and am treated as a medical anomaly and a friend from high school has died of cancer caused by a contaminated aquifer she was 31). Many of the flora and fauna of the Sonoran desert are endangered and some extinct and yet development continues as well as a new copper mine in some of the most beautiful area of Madera Canyon I could imagine. We are losing our outdoors. Please always remember what we do to one strand of the web of life we do to the whole web...

I love my country. "Oh beautiful for spacious skies.... purple mountains majesty... from sea to shining sea" I cherish this land and I am committed to doing what I can to see that we are good stewards of this "grace." It is a gift that can be lost not most likely from outside forces but by our own neglect and misplaced priorities.

As one of millions who enjoy the great outdoors I know the most important thing we can do for future generations is to preserve as much as possible of it in its natural state. Set aside wilderness at a Large Scale

I appreciate that you and your family have created a garden at the White House. What a wonderful way to begin that introduction to other life around us! I was fortunate enough to grow up with weekends in the country. Although I didn't realize it at the time it was a critical experience that has helped me connect to other humans as well as other life around me as I have grown up. I don't think I would have nearly the appreciation for life and all it has to offer were it not for that experience. Thank you for putting a garden a significant part of our food source before us as a model of how to begin reconnecting with the land and our communities.

WE DID NOT INHERIT THE EARTH FROM OUR ANCESTORS WE BORROWED IT FROM OUR GRANDCHILDREN. PLEASE HAVE BIG OIL RECREATE TESLA'S POWER TOWER PATENT IS ONLINE. THEN THEY COULD CHARGE HOMES AND INDUSTRY A MODEST FLAT FEE TO US AND THE WHOLE WORLD.

Growing up my father would take the family to the Gila Wilderness Forest in New Mexico which was quite a long way from El Paso Texas where I grew up. This is where I became interested in the beauty of forests and the creatures who live in them.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

We have been to several of the National Parks and cannot imagine our country without them. We need more of these sacred places where all of us can be renewed by spectacular natural wonders and we are hoping we can have another national park in the great North Woods of Maine. In this contentious society we live in nature remains replenishing of our minds and spirits.

Transportation to the parks so that poor people can visit them too

This Earth is the only one we have let's protect it!

As a psychotherapist I know the value of the outdoor for mental as well as physical health.

I am 54 my mother is 73 and a few weeks ago we spent a wonderful weekend camping with my nieces and their very young children at a National Forest in Oregon. We could not have had a better time as a family.

We need to conserve for those who come after us.

If one thinks seven generations ahead regarding this very worthy project it will help our earthly home.

Develop educational programs for youth (at all levels of school) to learn about the environment and its conservation

My favorite place is Mt Rainier National Park which I find most restorative to visit and be in wild setting. Natural areas like this are vital to our wellbeing. Particularly as population increases and people live in close proximity. Seeing nature's balance and beauty give respite.

As I am someone who lives in the wilderness areas in Rockland County outside of New York City I have easy access to use of our local national parks.

Nowhere else can you "HEAR" the silence or noise (if you will) that permeates into your spirit awakening awe and wonder of the unspoiled nature left for us and future generations!

There are many important issues in front of you and the American people right now. This is one of them maybe not as big as the economy jobs or lost homes but important nonetheless. The "great outdoors" can help the people to recreate relieve stress gain a new perspective on other issues in our lives so it will be good to protect and improve it also for human life and wildlife.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

If it weren't for efforts similar to this one I wouldn't be able to enjoy camping and hiking in Glacier like I will be in a couple weeks!

Our family did not have much money but our family vacations every year involved choosing a state or National park and going camping. Memories flood over me when I reflect on those trips. My appreciation of the natural world and the interconnectedness of all life on our planet was planted and flourished in those trips.

I recently spent some time in Glacier National Park with my brother's family. It was even more beautiful than I remembered. Please save these places for our future generations. They bring out the best in our people.

My husband and I have enjoyed our forests parks historic sites and rivers so much; I can't bear the thought that my grandchildren and their grandchildren won't have the same heritage.

Protect the wild for all of us.

I've always enjoyed the great outdoors in Colorado and Arizona. Especially the fishing. When I was a kid my dad would drive the family around in the forests to see if we could spot elk and deer and we always did. What great memories!

As the president of the United States of America this is one of the greatest undertakings that you could bring to fruition.

Too many of our nation's children are already losing their connection with nature and suffer from what Richard Louv called "nature deprivation disorder." Furthermore we need programs by dynamic wellpaid naturalists at these sites to help invite more participation in nature and educate the people of this country including our children.

This letter is about National Parks and the outdoors in general. Having gone to school in Wyoming and Washington State I am well acquainted with outdoors activities and much enjoy them.

Some of our family's most treasured memories are the vacations we took in our National Parks. Let's make that possible for future families also.

This letter seems to say very well my thoughts on the environment. My family very healthy in mind and attitude all enjoyed our ventures exploring and camping and canoeing while they were growing up. As adults they view the wilderness areas as places to restore their sense peace and harmony. Protect these important treasures please.

As a teenager I hiked and camped all over what is now the Desolation Valley Wilderness Area long before it was so designated. The experiences I had are still wonderful memories that I can look back on. At the age of 93 my physical condition prevents me from repeating those experiences but I can still visualize them today with great pleasure.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Here in Washington state I was fortunate to grow up camping hiking hunting and fishing and it has enriched my life in many ways. I am healthier physically mentally and spiritually because of my connection to the natural world. My love of wild places has led to an environmental ethic that goes beyond wilderness to include global regional and community concerns like climate change sustainability transportation food security and issues of inequality and social justice. I believe that protecting natural areas and resources will benefit all of us even urban dwellers who never set foot in the woods. Indeed we are all part of the web of nature and must protect it for the survival of this and succeeding generations.

Thank you for your utmost attention and concern on this matter that elevates us to the great country we continue striving for.

Every day that I can I walk into Griffith Park to enjoy some fresh air clarity and peace of mind and to stay healthy. Life in the US today is complex and often hectic; it is this gift of spending time in nature that I give myself almost everyday that really brings me happiness inner strength and revitalizes me to continue my work my life my art.

There is nothing like hiking where no one else has ever hiked before. Or seeing the vastness of wilderness and letting go of all pent up stress from work unemployment traffic pollution the economy etc. Yes connecting with Nature. AAAAHHHH!!!

Perhaps greater concern for our public spaces will also make us less reckless about destroying public (and private spaces) in other countries by military means

I work overseas in Kenya for USAID and see the consequences of the lack of conservation and the effect on watersheds and wildlife habitat. The snow is almost gone on Mt Kenya and Kilimanjaro. I love returning to the states to camp in our pristine national parks and wilderness areas. LETS KEEP IT THAT WAY!

All these things are what make America different and make this country strong; we are the land of the great outdoors as we should ever be!

Like most Americans I value our heritage and the wild outdoor places and wildlife that remains so very important to me today. We must protect our great country in every way so we can ensure that these priceless lands will be preserved for all of our citizens.

I would like my children to have the opportunities I have had to enjoy valued natural space.

No doubt the day will come hopefully many generations in the future that we will no longer have "a great outdoors".

Nature is the backbone to a full understanding of beauty and human's placement in the world. Please allow future generations the opportunity to have this most important of human reflections.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

My family particularly enjoys the Cape Cod National Seashore.

Some of the most profound experiences I have ever had have happened in the wild lands of America.

Personal note: If we don't act now to conserve and preserve our natural areas the earth will be doomed! It is already revolting against humans with such natural disasters as increased and new tornado zones the Canadian earthquake that rocked the northeast United States shelves of ice breaking off Greenland melting polar ice that is threatening wildlife habitats relentless oil spilling into our oceans both in the gulf and in China Iceland's volcano spewing forth smoke that affected a continent across the ocean...the list goes on! When we can respect the earth she will provide for us but if we ignore and take advantage our resources will all be gone. I was always taught: Love your Mother (Earth). Thank you for doing everything you can to preserve our beautiful world for future generations. Otherwise what's the point of anyone having children?

I have 2 daughters and 2 granddaughters. I am a volunteer senior keeper at an accredited rescue facility for abandoned and abused big cats. I advocate for the environment I am a vegan. Having spent the most glorious vacation ever in our national parks in Utah and Colorado this is a legacy I want my descendants to enjoy also.

Creating the world's first National Park at Yellowstone is one of the truly significant contributions of America to its people and by example to the world.

This year my husband and I took one of the best vacations we've ever had. We visited Mt. Rushmore Crazy Horse Devils Tower Yellowstone and Glacier National Parks. What a wonderful way to get away from the stress of life and to explore the grandeur and beauty of this country! We kept all of our entertainment dollars within the US and supported many mom and pop shops hotels and restaurants along the way. Our vacation wouldn't have been nearly as fantastic if we hadn't been able to get out and hike a few trails to see those hidden gems of waterfalls and to see the bears elk mountain goats and prairie dogs.

Our greatest treasure is our National Parks.

Our children are becoming increasingly an indoor generation. We need to renew our commitment to the natural surroundings to give them places to visit and thrive.

I have watched interviews with inner city children describing how changed they were by the experience of spending time in wilderness areas and how much more peaceful they felt as a result. This alone is reason to preserve our wilderness.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

As a former Montessori teacher and Director of the Forest Ecology Preserve Nature Education Center my mission has been to help people especially children become truly awed and inspired by nature. Heartfelt appreciation (love) must come before the desire to care for it can exist. The following is an article I wrote a few years ago which will hopefully illustrate my deep concern for our next generation and the future of our planet: *Where Do Children Play?* "If the youth have not been taught to love the good and beautiful to respect the rights of others and to appreciate the worth and value of the things about him his education is incomplete. Let us teach Alabama's boys and girls to love flowering fields the vernal woods and limpid streams for they are their playground and the habitat of all our wild creatures." Excerpt from: *Some Birds Fish and Game of Alabama* (1925) I.T. Quinn Commissioner These beautifully written words from I.T. Quinn in 1925 still hold significance for us today but sorry to say the children's "playground" has changed locations. What Richard Louv has written in his best selling book *"Last Child in the Woods: Saving Our Children from Nature Deficit Disorder"* sheds light on this relatively new phenomenon. Louv sees our children so plugged into television and video games that they are "the first generation to be raised without meaningful contact with the natural world." This disturbing fact is one which should help motivate us all to help create places where children and families can learn to appreciate the wonders of the natural world once again. "Children (and adults) need nature's nutrition"* for the many life lessons and benefits they can receive each and every day. Brent Evens* Social Worker and CoAuthor of *The Nature Center Book* states "Nature centers [such as the Forest Ecology Preserve] are providing places and programs that literally put youth in touch with nature. This is where our communities can encourage kids to be kids to climb trees play in the creeks skip rocks encounter the critters and dig in the dirt." He also asks the question "How can we prepare the next generation to inherit the Earth if the next generation has no personal relationship with the Earth? The great indoor migration is putting the [mental physical and spiritual] health of our children as well as the planet at risk." Nature play and programs...have never been more important. *****

The national parks hold a very special part in my life. As a city dweller they have given me an opportunity to realize the space and grandeur of field mountains glaciers streams. Above all my husband's ashes are scattered in Yosemite and I often think of the place where he is overlooking a fantastic waterfall half dome the grand expanse of sky and forest. I hope my ashes join his when I die. This may sound creepy but it is true. We need these spaces to keep us human in touch with nature. the more population we have the more we need these places.

This is also a great way to help combat global warming

I live in the foothills of the Blue Ridge Mountains in the Appalachian region of North Carolina. It is very important to me and others that I know to preserve the natural splendor and biodiversity of our region.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

I live in an area with thousands of acres of public lands. The predator/prey population is complete. All Americans should be able to enjoy our public lands.

Thankyou for standing up to the DoNothing Republicans who created the mess we are in!

Exploring and enjoying the outdoors together is one of my family's favorite things to do. We've visited many National Parks Monuments and Forests where my son has learned much about the natural world and caring for it and where our entire family has found joy and renewal. These places are surely one of America's greatest assets.

We owe it to our children to protect and preserve the environment and all of its inhabitants. It is the legacy we leave with them and the future they have before them. "We simply need that wild country available to us even if we never do more than drive to its edge and look in. For it can be a means of reassuring ourselves of our sanity as creatures a part of the geography of hope." Wallace Stegner the Wilderness Letter

My favorite place to experience is Pt. Reyes National Seashore. It is a sacred place managed for habitat and wildlife rather than humans. I feel renewed after spending time there and the quality of my life is improved.

I have only one grandchild but she deserves to enjoy the beauty serenity and educational opportunities that only interaction with nature can give her. How about your children and grandchildren? Do they not deserve the same?

Thank you very much for the many achievements of your administration. Overall you have accomplished a great deal and worked hard to solve our nation's problems. Although you have already accomplished things that will stand as a legacy for the future please consider one more way to enhance that legacy in a truly meaningful way.

I just returned from hiking in the Desolation area off of Highway 50 in Calif. with my brother & son.

Research indicates that the very health and wellbeing of our country and our planet may depend on our responsible management and protection of the natural places.

Your leadership is very much appreciated.

As someone who believes that preserving our natural heritage is crucial to the life humans will live in the future I want the next generation to enjoy America's great outdoors too.

Reconnecting with natural areas and with our heritage helps to foster a greater sense of compassion for all that is an important quality for all American's.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

One of the best things America ever did was to create national parks monuments refuges and wilderness area for all people. We need to always protect these actions and never take them for granted.

I was fortunate to grow up taking family vacations to many of our treasured national parks and am passing that opportunity onto my children. Most recently we visited Effigy Mounds in Iowa. It is a gorgeous place filled with history nature serenity and hope. All Americans deserve to have these opportunities available to them.

When my family get the opportunity for a vacation we often make use of America's great PUBLIC outdoor spaces and camp in them on our way to visit distant relatives and friends.

I spend a great deal of time in an area of the world that still flourishes in a natural manner....southern Mexico. The lack of industrial development in this rather remote area affords me the life experience of watching the flow and balance of people and nature in an everyday manner food is on the table fish are available to catch there are natural settings for cows to live their lives etc. People have fewer toys to play with but enjoy their families and nature as a result. It is now a lifestyle that I don't want to lose because it brings a harmony within and without I have not experienced in living 50 years in different areas of the United States. I'm not saying to go back to being without modern conveniences but not to destroy that which makes life worth living in the first place. There is more harmony when people coexist with nature and not destroy it for personal gain. There is more freedom for all creatures to enjoy life human and otherwise when we live with them and respect their needs and desires for simply living. It's a choice I still have and had to look for a place in the world outside of the U.S. to enjoy this "not doing harm to others" everyday. Give that back to us through conscious decisions that keep us close to our inheritance with Nature.

Our family has put conservation easements on our lands 52 acres in Southern Oregon so that it is protected from future development. It's our small way of husbanding the land for the future.

It's the most important legacy we will leave to future generations!!!

generations of Americans to come deserve to enjoy America's great outdoors too.

Our national parks and wilderness areas is our inheritance and our legacy to the next generation. People need nature and wildlife in this fast paced stressful society.

Every year for 30 years I have taken my family to camp in the wilderness from Key West Florida to Prudhoe Bay Alaska and many places in between. Wild places enable you to recharge to be more productive and provide an inexpensive way to have fun with the whole family yet learn at the same time.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

It is always easier and more economically feasible to preserve what already exists than to try to recreate it after it has been destroyed

My grandchildren and yours can only benefit by protecting the American Great Outdoors.

What a fantastic opportunity to protect and care for our natural world. National Parks National Forests Wilderness Areas and State Parks have played a formative role in my family's life.

Even if I personally do not utilize these lands (which so many I do) just knowing that they are there LIVING and in preservation provides some peace and wellbeing.

Since my husband's retirement we especially have enjoyed visiting the wonderful National Parks and Monuments of this great country.

Protection of our wild natural areas must never be seen as an expensive luxury but as an essential for good health the spiritual and physical health of humans who visit these areas and commune with the wild outdoors the health of the plants and animals that live there the health of the nation by preserving for future generation what has been a healing source of strength for present and past generations.

Now more than ever our populace needs to have access to nature national parks forests riverways etc. With all the problems with our modern day lifestyles this link to nature will become more and more important!

"We must protect the forests for our children grandchildren and children yet to be born. We must protect the forests for those who can't speak for themselves such as the birds animals fish and trees." The Nuralik Nation Says it better than I can.

It is a great idea to protect and preserve and create and expand existing sites. It is our greatest resource!

Our special wilderness lands have been a vital part of my life.

I live in a large city but love to visit our wilderness areas and feel good just knowing they're there. I want my grandchildren to know and love these areas as I do.

I live within 2 miles of one of our wilderness areas the Superstition Mountains of Arizona and I love that it is available to us all that there is no development or road system allowed to tear up the trails and that it provides thousands of people the opportunity every year to explore a varied wilderness experience within 40 minutes of Phoenix.

I am a parent of 5 adult children who love to enjoy our country's beautiful nature. Our youngest daughter is working at Yellowstone National Park this year and loves her surrounding nature.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

We are blessed to live in a country filled with many kinds of beauty. It would be shameful not to protect what we are lucky enough to have to show our gratitude & to leave to our successors.

Trees do more than . They make our oxygen too. With human population ever increasing and breathing out more CO 2 we need all the oxygen we can get. I would live out in the woods if I could but I live in a desertno one appreciates a tree more than I do.

Our amazing wilderness defines us as a nation for ourselves and for the world.

Every generation to come should be able to enjoy wilderness in America.

IT STARTS IN PARKS!

I have visited three of our national parks: Yellowstone Glacier Yosemite. Each is gorgeous in its own way and I truly enjoyed being there if only for a short time. I noticed that each had many visitors of all ages nationalities. etc. and I trust this will continue through the coming years. America is truly beautiful and all of our national parks plus other land and water spaces need to be preserved for generations to come.

My family and i are very grateful to the farsighted pioneers and officials of our nation who gave us the national parks and many other types of nature preserves. We have spent many enjoyable days in these parks and through them have come to value our earth and want to care for it.

We all share in the stewardship of all fo God's creatures!!!!!!!!!!

Many of the best times of my life have been spent in the wilderness often wilderness that wouldn't exist if it wasn't protected.

I am strongly in support of any conservation of American wilderness. As I watch urban sprawl in Tucson more and more of our beautiful unique desert begins to disappear. I grew up able to see the Milky Way in the night sky now it is not visible because of light pollution. I believe we can have growth and protect our environment. Being responsible and protecting our lands and water can only be a winwin for us and future generations.

I am a lover of wilderness and the outdoors in general. As a teacher and parent I know how important the outdoors is to our children. It helps them be more resilient in an ever more stressful world. I just returned from a 5 day backpacking trip and feel more ready to face the problems that confront me.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Our natural areas are also tourist attractions. They are a part of the American image.

My grandchildren and their children deserve the opportunity to enjoy wilderness that has not been compromised by development.

We definitely need to respect the gifts God has graciously given to us. Thank you for your attention to my letter.

I'm glad you're my President. I know you care deeply about matters such as this. I know you want your daughters and their children to enjoy all the beauty of this great land of ours for many years to come. I know I can count on you to do the right thing.

My grandchildren deserve to be able to enjoy the wonders of Nature in the same manner I did when I was growing up.

I will always treasure the last trip that my husband and I made with my late motherinlaw to the Four Corners area. She had lived in Seattle her whole life. We toured the national parks in the area and enjoyed driving through the national forests. Over and over my motherinlaw said "I never knew there was anything like this in our country." I can still hear the awe and joy in her voice.

We have visited most of our nation's National Parks over the past 52 years and many of our National Monuments. We want our grandchildren to be able over their lifetimes to be able to appreciate nature as we have enjoyed it.

We can best keep enjoying the great outdoors by not decreasing what protection there is and increasing regulations designed to protect the great outdoors and its inhabitants. We can also continue to enjoy the great outdoors by cleaning up the pollution in government. There is a rotten spell that has been emanating from government for some time now from all three branches of what is supposed to be a representative democracy but the only ones getting representation are the corporations...need I say more.

Our family takes great pride in our national parks and considers them not only a place to visit and experience renewal but also a legacy to be passed on to future generations.

Every person should have the opportunity to be in a natural area at least for a time without knowing the interruptions that come in our modern society. If they can experience that silence more will be willing to conserve the little we have left.

Natural lands have the necessary capacity to clean air with forests and vegetation supply clean water with effective natural filtration and serve as evolved habitat for an entire spectrum of organisms.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Jesus sought out lonely places to reflect and pray. We need such places.

I want my grandchildren and their grandchildren to be able to have the same wilderness experiences that we were able to give to our children.

I want tomorrow's grandchildren to enjoy America's great outdoors too. Our health peace of mind and happiness will all be enhanced by advancing these goals; they are important to our wellbeing as a nation.

My favorite places to visit in our country are the parks and wilderness and national monuments.

I want my kids and my grandchildren to be able to enjoy the beauty of nature when I'm long gone. I don't want them to grow up in a world that doesn't appreciate the great outdoors and only cares about material things. I wish for them to see nature and actually enjoy it and want to be there. I know so many people who don't care about the environment and it's because they don't realize how important it is. I want all people to realize the importance of nature and to be able to enjoy it. It really matters.

I know there are a lot of things that are vying for your attention but the most important one for me personally is protecting our nations natural environments.

The earth in its natural state is precious.

I have enjoyed the great outdoors and have lived for 75 years in this beautiful country. I have always said that the great outdoors is food for the soul.

I definitely realize that YOU have many issues to contend with however keeping our ENVIRONMENT and WILDLIFE free and safe for our progeny needs to be a PRIORITY!

Parks and wilderness in California are of particular importance to me and I would like these to be a priority for future funding and protection.

These places are priceless and if we let them disappear they will be gone forever there will be NO way to get them back. To ensure that current and future generations will always benefit from and enjoy our

At 44 years old I am back in school as a senior Biology major with an emphasis on Environmental Ecological and Evolutionary Biology. I am planning on working to protect wildlife and the earth.

For the sake of all of our offspring we want future generations to enjoy America's great outdoors too.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

PLEASE HELP PROTECT OUR OUTDOOR SPACES!

I am a longtime hiker with a particular affinity for the red rock country of the Colorado Plateau. While working in aerospace for a quartercentury I spent almost every summer vacation on the Plateau. I've been to the bottom of the Grand Canyon nine times and to Arches Goblin Valley Zion Bryce Toroweep Monument Valley Capitol Reef Garden of the Gods Kolob Calf Creek you name it I've probably been there. More than once. And I've been to the Tetons Yellowstone etc. In other words I value America's parks beyond measure. They're not just a part of our country and of humanity they're a part of ME. Those are not just wise things to do they are integral to sanity.

Priorities for me are that we do not compromise existing wilderness by allowing mining logging road building which would harm the water the forests the natural beauty of these areas. That the department of interior cannot sell public lands to the highest bidder. That science and nature are used to determine how to best protect areas that are open to development for business as well as citizens to create a winwin. That we enforce clean air and water regulations. Businesses that pollute are held responsible.

I teach too many students who have never been exposed to nature and an appreciation of all life forms. The first reaction of many of them is to step on a bug shoot a deer or use a street as a trashcan. We need to not only preserve our wilderness areas but to add programs accessible to all citizens especially the young ones that will teach responsibility and an understanding of the web of life.

This is not just about the next generation being able to enjoy the great outdoors. Whenever we take away protected land it usually is a stopgap measure with no long range provable positive solution in mind. However when we destroy the land the impact is long range with an irreplaceable loss. Please do not engage in stopgap measures. As the Native Americans say one must see the effect of your actions on seven future generations. We are so untrained in this thinking and you have the power to shift that.

It is of paramount importance to protect our wild spaces. As our population continues to grow these areas are necessary to provide spiritual relief to our every day grind

First fire Ken Salazar and replace him with someone who cares about the environment instead of oil and mineral extraction.

I REALLY want this and it's the right thing to do...

I trust you to do what is best for all creatures great and small; from each sapling to the largest of mammals. Do the right thing.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Provide Increased Nonmotorized Access and Recreational Opportunities

We are so privileged to have these wonderful places and they need to be protected.

I have been lucky enough to enjoy our incredible National Park system and have visited quite a few wilderness areas.

Teddy Roosevelt and John Muir began creating these special places. I have been in many national and state parks state and national forests wilderness areas and national monuments. Each of these visits has enriched my life. Please help!

Beauty especially natural beauty is being pushed aside in our fastgrowing and sometimes outofcontrol world. The sanity and awe that come from being in nature are what have sustained me and my children through times of stress and adversity. It is a comfort that is ours by right and citizenship. It is also our right and responsibility to maintain and conserve the diversity that will surely provide life for our descendants into the future. I am doing my part by becoming a woodland steward and supporting conservation causes. I know I can do more.

I know you think LONGterm and of future generations as a parent and a responsible citizen although so many people don't have the luxury of thinking for the future. Sustainability is not just a catch word it is a necessity for all life. I want the next generation to enjoy America's great outdoors and REAP the benefits of the watersheds bigeochemical cycling pollutant filtration and nutrient sources of the future.

This is the most important issue for me. The loss of the middle class is important but without a connection to Nature we will be lost as a species.

As a mother a person who appreciates the grandeur of nature a student of nature who realizes all the critical services nature provides to us which we eradicate at our peril and a citizen who votes and assesses voting records I want the next generation to be able to enjoy and benefit from America's great outdoors too.

Improve Watersheds This great country has always protected its wildlife and their habitats with the Endangered Species Act. Now however it seems that no one in our Congress Senate or leaders of our states care about what has always been one of our greatest assets. Do we want our children grandchildren and future generations to look at these wonderful animals in history book pictures because we have slowly destroyed them by the greed of the American people. These animals have no one to protect them except us. God created them for man to take care of they are a vital part of our heritage please insure that they are a vital part of our future. Thank you for getting protections for our wildlife and their habitats.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

I am fortunate enough to live with the redwoods in Northern California which were nearly wiped out by lumbermen before protective laws were passed. It is up to our elected officials to advocate for the preservation of our national treasures. We are counting on you.

Wild Horses living free on their original territory

I visit and enjoy this nation's public lands whether it be hiking in our nation's and states' park and wilderness areas or kayaking canoeing rafting on our many lakes and rivers.

If nothing is done to save this your children and grandchildren will never know the joy and beauty that was originally created by our Great Father in Heaven.

Promote appreciation of and respect for our natural and historic places Increase awareness of the benefits that accrue by preserving our heritage Increase funding for preserving and protecting our heritage

The natural environment keeps humans alive. To protect the environment is to protect human beings.

Stop the killing of wolves and buffalo

We need to protect future environment including wildlife and all elements of ecosystems for future generation. Please stress to the public that we must overcome with vigor the selfishness and selfcenteredness that seems to wish to use up resources and kill the golden goose that is our planet that provides our water and air and that sustains our life. We have obligations.

The great outdoors is too precious to not be protected. To be out in the wild is very humbling and peaceful for the soul. We must protect these wonderful places.

Fully fund our national parks they need a lot more money than they are currently getting. Increased access should not include motorized vehicles in national parks or wilderness areas

The concept that land(which includes all our natural resources) is a resource that belongs to everyone being created by the Creator for all is fundamental & goes far beyond conservation into economics.The value of land should be taxed for the whole community & labor & capital should be untaxed in order to cure our economic ills. Anyone who causes any pollution or damage to our natural resources should be taxed. Tax what you burn not what you earn. For more on this crucial matter go to www.henrygeorge.org

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Our planet would be lifeless without wilderness areas. We all gain energy in every aspect of our lives from our forests grasslands and natural waterways. We need a new perspective and respect for our planet and what makes it work naturally.

We need to protect our public lands for future generations!!!!!!

I voted for you and will in the future as long as I see that you are a president that puts conservation ahead of business. Let us set the standard for the world. Thank you.

: Please conserve large landscapes that include our most pristine wildlands working forest and ranch lands private lands and the connections across these large areas. Large natural areas provide our best hope for addressing loss of species and open space preserving water quality and adapting to climate change while preserving the wildlife and lands we enjoy today. : Wildlands represent some of our healthiest and most intact lands. Please use all tools available to protect our public lands including recommending new wilderness and national parks designating national monuments and expanding National Wildlife Refuges. : Restoring our public lands helps protect clean water supplies and adapt to the effects of climate change. Please prioritize collaborative restoration projects on public lands making restoration a national priority. By restoring our forests we can spur economic growth by providing needed jobs and improve recreation opportunities. : Please create new national programs that help connect people especially our youth with nature. Today youth especially people of color are underrepresented on our public lands and it is important that new policies and programs are developed to encourage more youth participation including nature education or recreation programs and a revived civilian conservation corps. No matter where they live all children deserve the opportunity to learn about and experience the wildlands that belong to all Americans. : Recreation is a great way for people to experience nature and help develop a strong conservation ethic. Please ensure access is increased for all Americans. : Please support fully funding the Land and Water Conservation Fund and other programs that foster conservation on private lands. These efforts would help keep wildlife habitat intact and connect wild areas protect lands around lakes rivers and streams. The fund can also be used to establish new local parks and trails or provide key wildlife linkage areas. Strong leadership is needed to shape a bold conservation strategy for the 21st century.

Stop destroying the U.S. You don't see other countries destroying their lands (not including the ones at war). They have more respect for their country than people who live in the U.S. has.

there is just so much of the wilderness left please do whatever you can to preserve as much of what is left as you can we are not alone on this planet we share it with a vast array of amazing wildlife. it would be a poor legacy to the next generation to let any more of it disappear. want the next generation to enjoy America's great outdoors too.

scenic rivers and historic sites including the herds of Wild Mustangs and Wild Burros.that every American has a right to see if they so choose..

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

We don't camp but have travelled around many of the country's parks and continually tout the Grand Canyon experience to friends and family.

With all the carbon dioxide in the air our country is in need of as much oxygen as we can produce. Green plants and trees give off oxygen. That is why I want you to protect and conserve America's land parks and forests. Clean water is a top priority for America. We need to protect our scenic rivers lakes and creeks. Americans take oxygen and clean water for granted. These two commodities will not last forever if we do not conserve them.

Wilderness areas are vital to the health and wellbeing of people wildlife and planet Earth. Humans need to experience natural places and the best way to guarantee that this can happen is by expanding and protecting national state and local parks.

Having space outside connects people to the land and supports care for the future of our planet. If we do not have space outside we loose the ability to care about it and our future on a livable planet.

The key points are well covered in the letter above but I would like to add my personal feelings to this. In the past few years I have spent time to go internally and discover my true core values. Many people do this maybe before they are in their 50's but they do the self examining to find these. In the truly hard uncertain times of this era I know Nature is my core. To be unable on a daily basis to enjoy the fluttering butterflies the song birds busy taking care to find their next meal a box turtle slowly crossing the flowering wildflowers the beautiful sky at night would be unnatural to me. I am one of the lucky individuals who has the opportunity to live in an area that is being protected. While not a National Park the NJ Pinelands is a National Reserve. Protecting all of our land should be our priority. The land does not belong to anyone we merely babysit it for the next generations. On my watch I'd like to believe we will continue to do just that save it for all to come. Enjoying the wonders of this great Earth is OUR right. Please continue to go to all lengths to save every possible inch of America.

Once the great outdoors is gone we can never get it back.

I am asking you to preserve the Great Outdoors in the face of indiscriminate development urban sprawl increasing population and fewer and fewer open space for people to experience for a sense of peace and to reconnect with our natural world.

All my life I have cherished America's wild lands. As a child they were my playground places where I learned to respect nature and my own connection to the earth. As an adult they provide an oasis from the fast pace of my daily life. One of my greatest sources of pride in this country is our natural heritage areas.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

I would like to continue to enjoy my wilderness areas as well as giving future generations the opportunity to enjoy America's great outdoors. When we lose connection with clean air and water and the peace that being outside can bring we don't fight to protect it. How selfish it would be for our current administrations to take that connection away from our children and everyone who uses this earth after us. in every possible way

As a child I was blessed to grow up in Utah a state abundant in rare natural scenery of stunning beauty.

We should revere our lands.

Dear Mr. President & Admin Officials: I am one of the countless Americans who enjoy and feel very proud about the Great Outdoors Wilderness Areas and Natural Beauty of America.

Knowing that there is some wilderness left and that there exist wildlife refuges give me spiritual solace eventhough I live in the urban environment og the city of Philadelphia. Nature has sustained me in my often difficult life on this earth as a refugeeimmigrant from World War II. I deeply worry about the protection and survival of the American flora and fauna against corporate greed.

I go into the national parks and wilderness areas every summer on my vacation. Some of my most memorable times are in the solitude and great expanse of the natural landscape. This is a landscape millions of years in the making. It is priceless beyond any money you could put on it. I want it to remain this way for all people for all time.

I want the children of tomorrow to enjoy America's great outdoors too. And my children thank you.

It is only through nature that we can fully understand ourselves and our origins. Preserving our precious wilderness and other outdoor wonders is therefore fundamentally necessary for us to become complete as human beings. Quickly address and implement solutions to slow Global Climate Change

We have an historic opportunity to transform conservation for the 21st century and leave a naturalheritage legacy that future generations can enjoy. ; wild spaces are vital to the ecosystem

We have an historic opportunity to transform conservation for the 21st century and leave a naturalheritage legacy that future generations can enjoy.; wild spaces are vital to the ecosystem

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

I grew up spending most of my summers in the Adirondacks or St. Lawrence river and can't imagine my Grandniece and nephew not having that opportunity. PLEASE not only save and protect our wild spaces even more importantly help America be a benchmark for saving our Planet (as a habitable space for people and wildlife). To me that is one of the key things the world needs to wake up to before it is too late. Make us the leaders not the followers in this effort I beg you...

Protect our Wetlands

For the people of this country young and old the open spaces provide peace and appreciation and foster respect for the environment.

Having a healthy environment for everyone to live in is very important to me. I could write a very long letter telling you why but I'm taking care of my elderly father who has Alzheimer's so I just don't have the time now. Please read the following form letter and let it speak for me. Thank you.

As an Ohio Certified Volunteer Naturalist I spend a great deal of time protecting habitat raising butterflies and introducing people to the natural world around them.

I enjoy the great outdoors a lot myself and always clean it up so that there is something for the next generation; therefore I expect the government to help ensure that there is a great outdoors too.

I personally would like to ask you to be the president who made environmental issues important. I realize there are other issues more important but would you please leave something for your daughters and my grandson to enjoy and remember. Thank you so much for your time.

for the 21st century and beyond....the world is our playground for young and old and every ethnicity please help save it!!

When I think of all that so many people have done for this great country of ours in so many ways to protect and preserve this great country of ours: the very least we all can do is to continue what they have started.

As a child my parents took our family to many of the National Parks in almost every state and I have many fond memories of the beautiful mountains rivers canyons oceans forests etc as well as the wildlife. It disturbs me to see mining, logging drilling and otherwise destroying the integrity of the environment that belongs to all of us.

I firmly believe that the heart of humanity and our ability to keep the planet healthy for future generations is to preserve as much undeveloped and unexploited land as possible.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

For all of you with sons and daughters I want their future to be even brighter than ours. Environmental conservation is the most important thing we as a people can do to contribute to the healthy future for our children that we all want. With sustainability and ecofriendly business practices it is possible to actually lower the financial cost of our basic needs and instill quality morals for our future generations. You men and women know what to do so do it for the sake of the human race!

I have lived in Illinois my whole life and have always enjoyed the outdoors and the opportunities that the great lake and wonderful parks provide us. I also have been lucky to travel to Hawaii camp at the Boundary Waters and visit several other beautiful American nature sites. For the past five years I have been a Ranger in DuPage County and have seen first hand the enjoyment people receive from coming out to our wonderful outdoor areas. I implore you to follow with any and all means possible to protect enhance and continually support monetarily and politically the environment in which we live visit and enjoy everyday as Americans. Thanks for your time and continued support of our natural areas.

I've live most of my life in southern California. I'm now living in central Florida. I've enjoyed the incredible beauty of our country's southwest and now am getting to know appreciate and love the southeast. I've also had the opportunity of enjoy other areas of America's great outdoors. The very health and wellbeing of our nation and its people depends on maintaining the integrity of these areas. Our great outdoor spaces and wilderness areas must be protected.

The larger our population grows the more need there will be for wild lands to recreate in and to protect our natural heritage.

I have just come home from a vacation in southeast Alaska and Glacier Bay. I am overwhelmed at the expansive beauty of this place and the abundant wildlife on land and in the sea. I had the opportunity to speak with many who grew up in this area or have been visiting here for many years. They have seen the changes here from overfishing ignorant trophy hunters and clearcut logging and none of these changes are good. I am not naive to the needs of growth but we are just beginning to understand the urgency of conservation.

How wonderful it would be for this Administration to be known for its conservation efforts and successes. When we conserve we protect not only our remarkable natural heritage and protect wild places and wildlife we also do so much for people on so many levels. Thank you.

I have been backpacking in the western US wild areas for over 40 years and have begun to share this experience now with my children. I am concerned that there is less wild land now than even a few decades ago and feel strongly that we need to take steps to preserve what little is left.

I am an avid hiker and regularly use our wonderful state and national parks for recreation.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

I have enjoyed Yellowstone Lassiter smokey mountzins sequoia National parks and Kings Canyon.

Don't let developers turn our most prescious resources into parking lots and strip malls; some things are worth more than money. To help others realize the value of our natural environment they need to be exposed to one which is not polluted or paved over.

For those of us who live in a watershed environment like we do in Michigan the water becomes vital. What we put in obviously we take out. One simple example is that of salmon. Over the 25 years of living here we have gone from being able to fish for salmon from Lake Michigan to not being able to eat it. Our efforts are beginning to pay off for Lake Erie I hope that we are wise enough to continue to clean things up.

As a grandmother and a physician I know the next generation's health depends on enjoying America's great outdoors.

I am writing to encourage the protection of public lands.

My husband and I both work in land conservation in North Carolina. While we've seen tremendous strides in public lands acquisition funding and management we are all too aware of the largescale threats of population growth and global warming. The first inevitably places more and more pressure on our natural resources through inappropriate land use. The second places more insidious stress on all of our natural lands since global warming is likely to cause more erratic weather increased catastrophic fire sea level rise including saltwater inundation of freshwater resources and increased exotic invasion in natural areas made more vulnerable by environmental stress. Setting aside MORE and LARGER natural areas is not the only solution; we obviously have to reduce the source of global warming limit population growth through education and engage in wise land use planning. However acquiring and protecting large blocks of forest will help reduce global warming acting as a carbon sink and a source of oxygen. Acquiring natural areas with high diversity clusters of rare species and relatively little evidence of disturbance will ensure that these areas act as reservoirs to minimize species and natural community losses. And acquiring extensive areas along rivers and streams (of at least 300 feet in width) will ensure that aquatic resources are protected for our drinking supply as buffer against flooding and for the rich diversity of species which rely on riparian resources.

p.s. If you need convincing come to the Rouge river and take a trip up the river in the jet boats. You will want to preserve it and all the other places that look like it.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

As someone who has found the wonderful and much needed respite in getting into a wilderness setting to recharge and relax I cannot encourage you enough to protect what seems to be rapidly disappearing. Wealthy "owners" of lake shores here in Minnesota seem to believe they can do and build anything they want destroying the God given blessings I believe need indeed must be preserved. Why do a few always think they have all the rights that ought to be shared with all? And when those "powerful" folk buy legislators even governors with their wealth so no rules or regulations get passed we have destroyed what may never be reclaimable!

To live in a country such as ours without wilderness would be a shame and a huge injustice to future generations.

Address Conservation as a national priority areas and their bordering areas through federal educational and access programs

THIS ISSUE DOVETAILS NICELY WITH THE FIRST LADY'S DRIVE TO IMPROVE FITNESS IN KIDS A HEALTHY WILDERNESS SYSTEM IS VITAL TO TEENAGER'S EXERCISE & HEALTH.

If we don't protect our vital but fragile environmental treasures now it will be too late to undo the damage.

If it is a fact that parks are free why not start charging? I know that the parks need a lot of money for upkeep and have been suffering from neglect for some time. These treasures should be cherished for our greatgrandchildren and beyond. Thank you for anything you can do!

I also believe that protecting our outdoor spaces is a key component to fighting global warming.

Please help save the earth so we have something to leave to the future generations.

PLEASE KEEP UP THE GOOD WORK. WE NEED A FAST MOVING TEAM TO UNDO THE DAMAGE FROM THE LAST ADMINISTRATION. WE KNOW CORPORATE INTERESTS DO NOT MOTIVATE YOURS!!!!

OUR AMERICAN MUSTANGS AND OUR WILD BURROS NEED TO BE PROTECTED. THEY ARE AN INTEGRAL PART OF OUR AMERICAN HERITAGE. I WANT THEM TO BE ON OUR PUBLIC LANDS FOR OUR CHILDREN AND OUR CHILDREN'S CHILDREN.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Dear President Obama: I think you are one of the greatest Presidents we have had in the 58 years I've been alive. You've accomplished so much with such hideous opposition from the Republicans and aggressive right wing fanatics. No doubt you are aware however that these same people are fighting to downgrade public protection of our national parks and wildlands. No doubt they want to put an oil well on every square inch of whatever is left that is beautiful in America. God Bless you for all that you have accomplished thus far.

PROTECT OUR ENVIRONMENT AND PEOPLE... NOT THE OIL/COAL/GAS/NUCLEAR INDUSTRIES WHO POLLUTE!

This is such an inexpensive means to help educate children and adults as to the natural beauty of our planet ; it is also a great stress reliever for many! I want the next generation to enjoy America's great outdoors too.

When I was a child I was greatly excited about the return of summer for a number of reasons one of which was the numerous camping trips that my mother brother and I took during the warmer months of the year. I grew up loving to camp and I continue to do so today. Please make it possible for me to share the joy of camping as well as many of the other activities that can be enjoyed outdoors with my children.

Our shared outdoor spaces provide the opportunity for human interaction with the natural world and as a result of this interaction improvement in our collective physical and emotional health. Understanding the advancing threats placed upon many of these natural areas we would wisely protect what we have now. In order to do this our nation's people need to know what they have even if they do not live close to these resources and do not have first hand knowledge of these resources. The way in which they will have this knowledge is to visit natural areas and enjoy the splendor that is there. For this reason I ask your administration to take the lead in this America's Great Outdoors project!

I know how much you and your family enjoyed your recent vacation on Mount Desert Island. I have lived here all my life right on the ocean and quite near Acadia National Park (at least by boat!). You enjoyed so much of the outdoor beauty that our state has to offer and I voted for you and still support you 100%. I even have a framed picture on my wall of a poster which shows you on a hundred newspaper covers the day after your inauguration. (And that says a lot as I'm not into politics at all.) You made history then and you have continued to make history with your wisdom and courage. I commend you for your leadership in shaping a bold conservation strategy for the 21st century. Thank you.

It is my belief that conservation of wilderness both dry and wet is at the heart of planetary need.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

My husband and I are retired and have been lucky enough to travel across this country enjoying some of the wild and historic places as we go. The young people of this country deserve to have the same opportunity now and in the future but what will be left for them?

Dear President Obama: When my father died in November 1985 I felt numb for months. Fortunately or providentially my momma sister and I visited the South Rim of the Grand Canyon on Father's Day 1986. As I stared at the wonderful shapes and shadows of the Canyon I experienced the awesome majesty of God. Slowly from that day forward my heart and soul began to heal. For the next 20 years our little family was privileged to visit many wondrous natural sights in our great National Parks System and in other places set aside for the public's enjoyment.

Please protect Earth.

Protect our Great National Parks (a world treasure)

What a beautiful gift this North American continent is! Within our borders we are blessed with unspoiled natural resources wildlife habitat and watersheds.

THE MAJOR DIFFERENCE BETWEEN WHAT I WANT TO DO WITH AMERICA'S RESOURCES AND WHAT OTHERS LOBBY FOR IS THAT WITH MY METHOD THE LAND AND WATER REMAIN NATURAL WITH NOTHING DESTROYED OR CHANGED THAT CAN NOT BE UNDONE. WITH OTHER METHODS THE PRESENT GENERATIONS USES OUR RESOURCES AND LEAVES LITTLE OR NOTHING FOR THE FUTURE. PLUS ONCE USED UP AND PERHAPS DESTROYED IT CAN NOT BE UNDONE. WE WILL ALL DIE EVENTUALLY AND TAKE NOTHING WITH US SO HOW WE USE THIS EARTH IS WHAT WE LEAVE FOR THE NEXT GENERATION. LET'S STOP BEING SELFISH RIGHT NOW.

I want the wildlife to be able to live peacefully in their habitats and free of humane destruction and interference. It would also be great if the next generation of humans have a great respect for animal life and their habitat. They would be able to take in the beauty and educational aspects of protecting wildlife and their lands.

Our country is nothing without our land! Please work to protect the natural resources that we have so that future generations can enjoy America!

P.S. I Love Wildlife . Thank you for helping to save these executives why saving the Western Gray Whale important. Thank you for considering my comments. I look forward to your swift action to ensure a complete ban on whaling in Iceland.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Nothing is more "American" than the enjoyment of America's great outdoors and Public lands! I want to remind those who seem to forget that Generations of motorized OHV Users and Supporters are taxpayers who through those very taxes which have funded the procurement expansion and maintenance of these areas. Millions of private dollars and countless private hours of time are donated every year by the OHV community to expand and maintain OHV trails and riding areas. The OHV community has proven through their personal investment of time and money that they care about the land and are committed to responsible use of that land. These people have an equal RIGHT to use and enjoy these lands. I urge the managers of PUBLIC Lands recognize this invaluable commitment as well as encouraging and expanding the responsible use of Public Lands for ALL Americans. Local land managers who should already have the authority to enforce existing land usage laws can through the proper enforcement of existing regulations; protect our Great Outdoors and Public Lands. There are more than sufficient regulations and statutes in place to allow managers to protect our Public lands! We DO NOT want or need additional wilderness or land areas closed to the public. What is "public" about land that cannot be accessed by a substantial segment of the "public"? What we need is for our public lands to be more accessible to ALL citizens including responsible motorized travel as well as improved access for the handicapped. To ensure that current as well as future generations will always benefit and enjoy our public lands please consider these priorities for America's Great Outdoors: Increase Public Awareness and a Positive Image of Responsible OHV Usage Protect access for ALL Americans to ALL public lands including the existing OHV trail systems by increasing land use education and etiquette and by encouraging responsible motorized access to public lands including additional motorized access areas Fully Fund all motorized and offroad trail opportunities Fully fund our local USFS districts to enforce existing laws and regulations to protect our public lands. Fully Fund land use education programs specifically aimed at Responsible OHV access and Use. Please DO NOT lock OHV users out of Public Lands which belong to ALL Americans! We encourage and insist that those in power create a pathway to increased access to public land by all users while assuring those very lands are protected through improved and responsible land management.

I recently returned from a ten day trip visiting National Parks in Montana and Wyoming and my experience there has really caused me to reflect on the importance of our shared outdoor spaces. My time spent hiking wildlife watching and talking with the NPS Rangers created one of the most memorable vacations I have ever experienced.

Having grown up in the beautiful Willamette Valley of Oregon I have a great appreciation for our green spaces towering trees and a walk in the woods. That is why I know that preserving these special places and creating more will have a lasting positive effect on our generations to come.

As a lifelong outdoorsman I have found America's natural areas to be an immense gift that should be preserved and protected. Nature in its original unaltered state is the greatest thing we have. Wilderness renews the soul and has an intrinsic value to all Americans and all of humanity now and in the future that is far greater than that of any material resource.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

I have spent my life of 56 years stewarding America's landscapes and productive farms. I teach natural history environmental science and land conservation. The connection we humans share with the one great life force of nature is essential to the wellbeing of this generation and future generations. I have spent many weeks and months experiencing our great wilderness areas forests and parks. The solutions for our future as a civilization depend on preserving intact healthy ecosystems and our planet's biodiversity. Without these resources we will lose the basis for our greatest commodities and economies. Please be bold in creating new wilderness areas expanding our national parks and forests adding watershed management protection and conserving our precious natural heritage so that my children and grandchildren and all future generations. While camping in one of the beautiful New York State campgrounds in the Adirondacks this August I was struck by how these facilities benefit the poorer families. For many the summer vacation consists of packing up the camper truck tents and moving to a campground by a lake. The respite from daily life and work is palpable in the woods and on our waterways. Spending time outdoors around a campfire fishing hiking or paddling renews our souls and restores our health. Being in nature is a necessity for us all. I was on a nearby island in Maine when you visited Mt. Desert Island with your family this July. I was so thrilled to know you were taking time for yourselves surrounded by the immense beauty of Acadia National Park. It made me extra happy.

Let us enjoy all this by implementing the Clean Air Act.

And many many thanks for thinking about the future of this country.

This is our home. It gets so depressing to go outside and be surrounded by nothing but concrete and asphalt noise and pollution. The wilderness brings one's soul back to life.

We should all be thankful for the insightful leadership of many presidents over the past century to allow us to have the fabulous natural wonders we still enjoy today. I thank you for your leadership in protecting many of our most important natural lands during the first 18 months of your presidency.

I want the next generation to ... understand how important pristine natural areas are to our health and survival.

As a resident of the State of Michigan the Great lakes are my true heart's home and particularly the Michigan Dunes area where I reside. The overwhelming beauty endless opportunities for outdoor recreation and easy access to wilderness areas that exist in Michigan make this a resource of inestimable value and one which we must protect and preserve with great care. If you have never experienced the beauty and bounty of this place I urge you to come! Bring your family and dear friends. The experience will change you and enrich your life!

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Beyond the obvious benefit of our children having natural parks and places to see the other species on this planet actually count for something and they need natural places to live.

All my life (I'm 75) I have enjoyed the outdoors hiking kayaking or just refreshing my soul taking in the beauty of our natural world. Years ago I worked at an environmental education school/camp which gave elementary school children a wonderful week exploring and learning about the natural world which greatly enriched their lives.

EVERY EFFORT should be made to protect and preserve our wildlife and environment! This is a no brainer.

The times I enjoy the most are spent in National Wildlife Refuges National Monuments National Parks...all of those wonderful places where beauty birds and other wildlife and hiking trails abound.

I disagree with the trend to make wilderness more accessible. By its very nature wilderness needs to be unchanged. When a road is cut into it or it is so easy to reach that people can drive an air conditioned car into it it ceases to be wilderness. With the advent of the live cam those who want to see the wilderness can watch it on line but may not destroy it in their selfish abuse of it.

There really is nothing more important than saving the environment.

I believe this is ESSENTIAL for Americas' health in ALL aspects.

I'm a retired scientist. I spend much of my time reading the literature of conservation biology. I'm deeply concerned about restoring more of our degraded native ecosystems. I also spend a lot of time in the field watching wildlife. We must do more now especially now due to global warming.

We need to reduce the price of camping and simple recreation in our parks! the economy is suffering and we should be able to retreat to the woods to spend time freely with our friends and family All Americans should be able to afford to camp in their local parks!!

It's about protection of the commons a concept being forgotten about in the unbalanced overemphasis on privatization of everything a concept that has its consequences in the weakening and destruction of every one of our global life support systems. We have to take action to protect our support systems which come from the Earth that doesn't have polluted air water and soil and that provides niche ecosystems for various other living creatures with whom we share planet earth.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

We should work to protect and preserve our natural spaces as they are untouched by man so that all future generations can see these treasures and be awed by their beauty. "Leave it as it is. The ages have been at work on it and man can only mar it." Theodore Roosevelt May 6 1903

Please don't buy into the arguments that too many jobs will be lost if mountain top removal mining is discontinued or coal fired power plants are moth balled the increases in recreation and other positive uses of the environment will more than offset terminating these polluting enterprises plus decrease the health related costs of foul air and water.

We have a lot of animals that are on the extinction list that could be protected very easy. If we had somebody that could help us protect those species then that might result in very good things for those different species. The wilderness is a beautiful and breath taking scene! We need to keep the wilderness that way for the future generations in the world so they can see what we see today.

Large parts of my state Oregon are national forest and need to be protected from clearcut logging mining and other extractive activities. These forests belong to all Americans not lumber companies.

Wilderness and our National Parks are amazing treasures that belong to all Americans.

I write this from Acadia National Park in appreciation of the foresight and dedication of the system's founders and advocates.

There are many smaller wild areas of beauty that are mingled close to and among the areas where people live. The advantage in setting aside these is that people can take advantage of them on a daily or more regular basis. Saving our larger spaces is very important but there is always a problem of over development of these. When people visit they need places to stay and eat and other activities. Having many smaller places close to home can help with this problem. Being close to developed areas also means they are in more danger of being developed and their beauty and recreational value lost forever.

After retiring as a US ambassador in the Third World I founded and continue to Chair a SOLAR ENERGY company. Like all SOLAR it's expensive but we do it for our GRANDKIDS!

WE CAN'T SQUANDER OUR RESOURCES AND NATURAL PLACES FOR SHORTTERM PROFIT. Thank you for your leadership in shaping a bold conservation strategy

I have wonderful memories from spending time in the great outdoors and would hope that 50 years from now other children can build great memories out there too.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

As has been said before we do not "own" the land. We are only caretakers of it in trust for our children's children's children. Let us do that wisely. It is our "capital". One does not wisely spend "capital" and call it "profit".

Watching the TV special on our national parks recently I was flooded with memories of how important these natural areas have been to me and my entire family. I really don't know what our country would be without such opportunities to connect with the natural world. Not only do they give so much in terms of family fun and rejuvenation from the workaday world but they help us to understand environmental issues and their importance for our very survival. How can we fail to pass on this legacy to the next generation of Americans? You now have a potential role in seizing this opportunity to create expand and better protect America's shared outdoor spaces including wilderness monuments wildlife refuges parks forests trails wild and scenic rivers and historic sites.

National Parks connect me to this country more than almost any other government policy.

The above actions will create badly needed jobs for our citizens.

Protection of outdoor space has always been important to me and my family. As outdoor enthusiasts we believe that wild spaces are important for quality of life as well as a big part of American culture and an important link in learning about the world around us.

Some of my best memories are hiking the John Muir Trail and other trails out of Yosemite Valley and then camping in the snow in the valley over the December holidays. It is my favorite park but each is valuable to us.

I am enjoying my retirement by spending as much time as possible visiting our nation's national parks national forests and national monuments.

I want the next generations of humans to enjoy America's great outdoors the way that I have and I also believe that it is our duty as dominating species on this planet to protect and preserve the homes of other species. Protect rare and endangered species and communities
We believe in you!

What follows is a canned organization message. I want to add my personal endorsement and concern that the Obama administration preserve this country's great heritage of fantastic wilderness. Red Rock country in Utah the great mountain ranges in Colorado Wyoming and California these are some of the memorable experiences of my lifetime.

Increase Science and Research to ensure protection of our wilderness limit motorized vehicles of any sort in wilderness lands so as the ecosystem is sustainable. Thank you for your leadership and please ensure protection for America's greatest resource and that is our land water flora and fauna.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Support Scientific Research

We have a tremendous legacy in this country because of past Presidents and legislatures that understood the need to preserve the grandeur of our country. We have to stop letting mining and oil drilling interests determine where they will dig and drill next...we the people need to make that determination and it should NEVER be in these sacred places. Left to these companies we will one day have no place left of beauty as they will gladly tear up every square inch of our country in their endless search for dirty energy resources. It simply has to be stopped!

Caring for Creation is part of our responsibility as people of faith and as citizens.

All my life I have loved and continue to love the outdoors. For both enjoyment as well as mental and physical health I hope that the next generation can enjoy America's great outdoors too.

I have seen the destruction of our natural spaces over the last 60 years and want to save what's left for my great grandchildren.

Please President Obama consider that the natural world and all its raw beauty as truly America's greatest resource. So often as I hike the trails or canoe our rivers I find Europeans here enjoying the outdoors and the wilderness experience because they do not have our scenic wonders and our vast landscape protected and entrusted so that all generations here and afar will have what our ancestors had wide open spaces verdent forests living streams.. It is our duty as custodians and stewards of the land to protect plants and animals and the microorganisms that are vital to a healthy ecosystem.

As someone who grew up in a family that took every opportunity to go camping and hiking I learned the value of nature experiences. Even in these tough economic times we need to remember the future generations' needs for wild lands and healthy habitats for us and for other creatures.

I have more than a seventy year history of enjoying the mountains seashore and deserts which I shared with my family and friends. I have never tired of reliving the experiences and looking for more and new ones and I've never been disappointed. It is vitally important for us to protect the outdoors for future generations.

These are precious and belong to all Americans.

I enjoy the outdoors. I live in Seattle and probably my favorite part of the area is all the beautiful outdoor spaces.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

I live with a view of an open space and mountains. I want me grandchildren and generations to come to enjoy that view to hear the coyotes yipping and howling to see the bald eagles in our area to continue thriving and having a place to hunt and live.

Ouir future generations sould have the same opportunities to enjoy our outdoor landscape and associated flora and fauna as we have.

Extraordinary vision created our treasured national wilderness and recreational places and I ask that you show extraordinary vision in continuing that legacy for future generations.

My sweetest memories of my childhood circle around vacations in the State and National Parks and those experiences have influenced my entire life. I want the children of 100 years from now to enjoy and be molded by America's great outdoors too. That's why I am asking you to seize this opportunity to create expand and better protect America's shared outdoor spaces including wilderness monuments wildlife refuges parks forests trails wild and scenic rivers and historic sites. Energy forms will come and go but we cannot sacrifice the precious tapestry of Life that is our legacy for the finite possibilities of a few more years of archaic energy! Our children deserve better than that.

Once we lose these precious gifts they are lost to everyone forever.

PLEASE: for our kids and their kids and all future generations

I want the next generation experience the abundance beauty and resilience of our land. Provide increased access and recreational & educational opportunities The time of believing that man can subjugate the earth is over. Please help lead to way to an era in which we act in harmony with the resilient web of life on Earth.

Outdoor activities are important to people's health.

from overuse and invasive species Connect urban citizens with natural areas Utilize existing park space rather than developing new systems Fund a plan to reseparate the Mississippi River from the Great Lakes in order to prevent the introduction of additional exotic species

We and particularly you are called to be stewards of the earth. It is timepast timeto take the long view for our future. The shortsighted actions we have taken so far and the path we are on must be changed for the sake of our children their children and all the creatures on this planet. Let's leave the oil and coal in the ground for future generations and better applications.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

There are a myriad of ways to provide energy without destroying the unique natural wonders of America and our earth. Wind solar and geothermal opportunities abound in this country but are grossly underused. A national mass transit plan would go a long way in reducing our addiction to fossil fuels and preserving the planet. We need someone to show that they have vision as John Kennedy did and are resolute and fearless like F.D.R. We MUST utilize our resources properly for if we don't what planet will we move to when this one is no longer inhabitable?

This is very important for all of us. I want the next generation to enjoy America's great outdoors too.

Being in nature is one of the most important parts of life. It transcends our daily struggles builds character and connects the soul beyond the limitations of family work and school.

Please please please take advantage of your position to take care of the earth. What more important job can government do? I want my children and grandchildren to have clean air and water but also to have access to unspoiled nature. We simply must create expand and better protect America's shared outdoor spaces including wilderness monuments wildlife refuges parks forests trails wild We simply must start thinking about your future. Please use your position to do the right thing and help us to do so.

This is not just for recreation but for our health. These wild places are critical for biodiversity and a healthy planet. We are tied to them. If they die so will we.

I can not imagine a future for our children country and the world without our protected areas our wetlands forests national parks. Wildlife is such an important part of our heritage. The Native Americans had a great respect for the land animals and life that they were given. We desperately need to keep that tradition for future generations.

Our natural world will be a key tool for our salvation when we're ready to seek solutions and reground our culture. Future generations must depend on us to the right things today just as past generations have done the right things for us.

All my life I have benefitted from the beauty and peace derived from our natural environment. Even though I am in my eighties this homage to nature is an important aspect of my daily concern.

I'm sorry I missed the America's Great Outdoors meeting in our town. I agree with what is said below and where I live public lands are quite common and make our lives more interesting. Please make decisions with our kids in mind so they can enjoy the lands the way I do. That means keep undisturbed lands undisturbed and support BLM and USFS land use plans that have a good dose of gentle use and recreation. Thank you.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Especially in times like these when political wrangling and humancreated and natural catastrophes gnaw at our tolerance and good temper refuge in wild spaces always gives relief. You locked in the whirlwind of urban settings do not have the opportunity to gain this relief and benefit. Work to make it ever more available to yourselves and all we citizens.

Base decisions on science not big money interests

When we destroy the remaining wilderness areas we come closer to destroying ourselves. including global warming and pollution

I have very fond memories of family camping trips with stops at many of the National Parks across the US when I was growing up.

As a recent graduate with a BS in Environmental Science I have been working and volunteering on the Boston Harbor Islands this summer. I feel very strongly that the government needs to take action on protecting our natural and historic places.

As a resident of the State of Tennessee I appreciate and value highly the wilderness lands that have been set aside for the enjoyment of people of every age from near and far. I was born in New Mexico and grew up there and in Texas. My appreciation for God's creation began with visits to Carlsbad Caverns White Sands Lincoln Forest Bandelier Valle Grande in New Mexico and continued with visits to Big Bend and the Davis Mountains in Texas. In Tennessee a visit to the Great Smoky Mountains or one of our scenic rivers is not only aweinspiring it renews the spirit.

We do not inherit the earth from our ancestors we borrow it from our children. ~Native American Proverb

We need to act now to protect the future of our country and its environment. We can't allow big oil and big coal to continue their unabated pollution.

I've lived in many states in the Northeast and MidAtlantic and have taken the opportunity to enjoy the state/national parks wherever I have lived.

We the human race have to stop destroying the Earth like we've got someplace else to go. What we've got is all there is and when it's gone it's gone. Keep the mountain tops where they are. Keep the oceans vital as the seat of life on the planet. Keep species and ecosystems alive as the irreplaceable treasures they are. Short term economic gain in return for destroying the planet forever is no deal.

Nature should be preserved. We are smart enough to use ecofriendly sources of energy and to realize that nature contains many scientific revelations and diverse information that have the potential to yield more benefits than money can buy. It's up to us..

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

I have a deep abiding respect for the beauty and awe of nature and the wonder that is the lands of the United States.

. I am asking you to seize this opportunity to create expand and better protect America's shared outdoor spaces by adopting a common sense sciencebased approach to conserving wild places.

Big Oil and Dirty Coal are always looking for opportunities to drill mine and desecrate America's wilderness; don't let them!

We MUST save our wild places for future generations!

For the past 30 years my husband and I have spent part of each summer camping in nearby national parks sharing this experience with our children grandchildren and now our great grandchildren. On these trips we all have created and shared precious memories that bind us together not just as a family but also as appreciators and lovers of nature and the wilderness. We hope that your decisions will enable our grandchildren and great grandchildren to continue these traditions and create more memories for many years to come. Please help us and them preserve our national parks and natural resources for the future of all Americans.

First I want to say that I've seen improvements in the protection of outdoor areas since the end of the Bush administration. In particular I am happy that the Interior Department walked away from its proposal to clear cut much of the old growth forest here in Southern Oregon where we live part of the year.

There will be an opportunity this fall to make good sound choices concerning preservation of our shared public lands. While I agree with the 'generic' points below my primary concern is that we not allow the destruction and despoiling of irreplaceable natural resources and unique natural areas. All too often in the past companies looking only to their own shortterm profit have been allowed to create whatever damage they wished and leave the messes (Superfund sites among them) for the US citizens to pay for. And of course "remediation" isn't going to recreate these places as they were originally. Putting money directly to work in our national parks and other such areas can be good for the economy as well if it's done properly.

I am an industrial scientist. My doctoral work at Oxford University concerned carbon in the environment. I strive to protect the environment oceans farmlands wilderness mountains from excessive damage from human activity through pollution global warming or whatever cause.

Hopefully an awareness of the need for developing the uses of sun wind water to resolve our energy needs will reduce the strength of the argument for more & more destruction of our natural resources by the petroleum interests.

Legalize bicycling in all Wilderness areas. Permanently stop road decommissioning.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Contact with nature restores our humanity.

We need to preserve the blue planet by keeping it green.

My brotherinlaw and I have hiked the Cascade trail and climbed Mount Adams several times.. Everyone should have a chance to enjoy the great outdoors.

Cape Cod's National Seashore has been a boon to many. As our population grows so does our need for more areas to be preserved.

TO Whom it may concern Not only will this help wildlife but also the people.

My grandfather had a homestead in Montana which our family sold back to the Forest Service and it is now a part of Glacier National Park. We expect that land to be preserved for everyone to enjoy.

My family and I greatly enjoy being able to visit this country's natural wonders. For example mt. Ranier and grand canyon nps in 2008 crater np in 2009 and mt. Rushmore and devil's tower national monuments and wind cave and the badlands nps. In 2010. It was the good foresight of the leaders of prior generations that has made this possible. The current administration has to be equally vigilant and proactive in safeguarding our national treasures.

Do not underestimate the importance of contact with the outdoors to good citizenship based on understanding of the environment that sustains us.

I well remember the tremendous awe that I experienced in Bryce National Park with its riot of colors its rock formations the drama of the views as I travelled in and out of the dazzling sunlight and into the shade. The dense sense of peace and quiet that reached deep down inside of me as I gazed in wonder at the many delights of nature small and large. I want future generations of Americans and visitors to our nations to have the opportunity to experience that same awe and wonder that I experienced at Bryce and the sheer joy and delight in the many other wonders we have to discover in our national system of preserved public places. I want to be able to continue to explore new places and to make return visits to places that have held me in awe and wonder. To see with my eyes to hear with my ears and to experience with my heart and all of the senses with which humans are blessed.

My wife and I love to hike and camp. We have seen some of this country's amazing and wellpreserved national parks with Big Bend and the Everglades among our favorites; our goal is to one day see all of them.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

We lived in Vero Beach Florida from 1958 to 1963. At that time a 50000 acre freshwater marsh formed the headwaters of the St. Johns River. It was wild and the most beautiful marsh I have ever seen in my long career as a fishery biologist. It had cypress domes surrounding circular ponds. The ponds were shallow with white sand bottoms. Flying over the marsh it looked the craters of the moon. You could wade the ponds while fishing for bass. When you caught one because it could not dive it would tail walk across the top of the water. Meanwhile you could look at the beautiful surroundings and watch the myriad ibises herons roseate spoonbills etc. Before we moved to Louisiana. Minute Maid bought the marsh drained it bulldozed everything flat planted part of it in citrus and allowed the remainder to grow up in a trashy mess. Now all that I have left is beautiful memories of it and an abiding sorrow that it is gone.

. Our environmental treasures must be better cared for than they have been for the past ten years.

Ensure our safe clean precious earth environment to be here for our grandchildren and their grandchildren. We cannot make a more honorable decision.

Perhaps the best argument for protecting our wildlife and wilderness places is Ken Burns series on the National Parks "America's Best Idea."

As a psychologist I see the positive effect that access to nature has on the cognitive and emotional growth of children.

We need to keep the wide open spaces we have left wide open. There are too many reasons and they all revolve around money that we are willing to put the great outdoors at risk. Please back any legislation that will preserve and respect our forests wilderness undeveloped land rivers sanctuaries and all the other many beautiful places we have left but are open to destruction by the almighty dollar.

With more people we need more wilderness monuments wildlife regues parks forests etc. I have enjoyed and continue to enjoy and be refreshed by the outdoors.

Protecting and expanding the last few relatively wild places is essential. The Earth gives us all we need to survive (this is true even for those who don't consider themselves "environmentalists"; no one can live well without unpolluted natural resources). Destroying or degrading the remaining natural areas imperils our own survival and the more natural areas we preserve the greater the possibility that we will 1) discover new medicines 2) preserve ecosystems upon which we depend for our survival 3) respect the other forms of life (besides human) which God/Mother Nature has created and 4) survive as a species. (Really). Protection of the environment is one of the top 3 issues which determine how I vote.

I've spent many years of my life hiking backpacking biking and other outdoor activities. The places where these things can be done are in jeopardy from resource extraction and destruction. Any place that has been saved up until now needs to be expanded improved and saved again.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

As a child I grew up on Appletree Lane and ran around on Butterfly Hill. Both are now subdivisions. The things a child learns on Butterfly Hill you can't learn in school or the Discovery Channel but they are I think of elemental importance. They have been for me. I think of them as gifts. I would like to leave a world where the gifts of nature are still a part of the child.

Once you give private enterprise license to extract resources from public lands they lose their wilderness quality forever. There need to be some places that are set aside for nature and the solace it provide to us.

Our connection to nature is fundamental to our physical and mental health and our general wellbeing. I want future generations to enjoy America's amazing outdoors and have this primal connection to our land.

These places are our heritage and belong to all citizens not to the faceless corporations that would destroy them forever for the sake of a few months worth of polluting fossil fuels or industrial minerals. There are both known and unknown wonders in these places that should remain available for our children to discover.

Now is the time for a bold strategy to protect and preserve our great nation's wild places. In my home state of Wisconsin there are many worthy projects such as the Ice Age Trail and the Driftless Area Park Preserve. These are excellent examples of biologic geologic genealogic and economic diversity as well as some of the most beautiful wildlands imaginable.

These wild spaces and species are a vital part of our natural national trust. They are not ours to use up and deplete we are entrusted to care for them for our children.

Once wilderness areas are turned over for development there is no turning back. It is so important to preserve wilderness areas and to treasure all of our outdoor spaces.

Our global resources are finite and are presently supporting a burgeoning global population growth. How long can this go on? We MUST protect every bit of the natural environment with which our planet (..and so far the only planet in the observed Cosmos) enjoys; water oxygen just the right distance from the Sun to produce a surviveable temperature and so many more "happy" coincidences.

Save our nature...save us.

water air habitat our heritage our deepest connections renewal recreation regeneration for all of our children My family and I enjoyed spending our vacations in the wilderness areas across the US. They were times of growth and communion; I dearly want this experience for my grandchildren as well.

I have photographed and written about nature for years and in Texas I enjoy as many undisturbed public lands as I can visit such as Big Bend or the Big Thicket National Preserve.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

And please remember: America's public lands belong to the PEOPLE and our descendents NOT to the oil companies coal companies gas companies and others who are only concerned with what resources they can steal today.

We want our children and grandchildren to appreciate nature as we have known it!

The greatest pleasures I have had were visiting and supporting the existing parks and wild areas in our beautiful country. Never think that we have done enough situations change we need to preserve and add to our outdoor assets. Population grows we need to make readily available close to heavily populated areas new places to provide our citizens the experiences we should all share.

In my life I've been able to find lots of "favorite" spots outdoors both popular and little known. I want my eight grandkids to enjoy America's great outdoors too. Now climate change and corporate greed seem bent on destroying our nations' precious resources of land and sea.

Growing up some of the most memorable experiences I had were family vacations to National Parks. My love for biology my push for conserving in both my own life and in my political advocacy and my respect for what God has given us all stemmed from these early experiences. Today I continue to enjoy a range of parks monuments forests and other federally protected outdoor regions.

I don't normally send emails like this I don't think they do much good. But right now the stakes are really high. I am an aquatic biologist by trade and I am alarmed at the scale of environmental devastation. People say they love their country but I really don't think they know what that means. Soon there will be no country left to love (other than Applebees parking lots and poisoned waters full of kids with nowhere to go). We NEED wilderness to survive (e.g. basic ecological services like clean water). We also need them to survive AS A CULTURE self reliant skillful and healthy people. So here goes I'm sending this note into the ether in case this plea will fall on your ears. Just so you know I am a volunteer firefighter and I also volunteer to teach kids science spending most of my time serving my country with no reward making it doubly painful to see wanton destruction by those who wish to socialize the negative externalities of their business in extremely irresponsible ways just to make a quick buck and head to their next tea party. Canned message follows (if anyone does read this thanks for your time)...

Fully Fund and protect and preserve the Everglades.

Once these are spoiled an important part of their legacy as Americans is lost. Why should our grandchildren and great grandchildren have to struggle to restore what we have squandered?

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

I would not be the person I am today if it were not for the frequent access that I had as a child to wild places. They helped to keep alive the awe for life that is so important to anyone traversing through difficult times. The beauty that we experience in wild places and the places that get stirred within one's heart as the connection to nature is recognized is truly a necessary part of personal growth. More and more one sees that this is being understood as access to wild is frequently a top consideration in any city's planning and development. At the University of Colorado at Boulder where I have resided for the past 11 years there is now talk of incorporating Wilderness Hikes into orientation of new and prospective students. It would be good to see more of this. I know you would too.

Once destroyed you can't get them back.

Please remember that our public spaces are decreasing and that the next generation will look back to us and condemn us for not protecting these natural resources.

Future generations deserve to inherit pristine wilderness.

More places like Williamsburg should be encouraged to form foundations.

"In wildness is the preservation of the world." John Muir

When it comes to sharing resources I have found that people tend to take a short term approach to getting what they want for themselves. That is why I think it is the job of government to step in and take a long term approach for managing shared areas and ecological assets. Government needs to select policies that will bring the greatest good to the most people for the longest time. To ensure that future generations will always benefit from and enjoy our Institute Reforesting Programs: plant seedlings of hardwoods pines firs and redwoods using volunteers and park employees.

Promote reforestation and beautification in all states. Continue to identify and protect endangered species of wildlife and plants.

Our health depends on these wilderness areas!!

I enjoy natural areas where I can see wildlife.

Some of my happiest times in life have been at state parks in my home state of Pennsylvania at the Grand Canyon and on the Allegheny River Wilderness Islands.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

I grew up hiking in the wilds of the eastern US. The memory of those outings are still among my fondest.

Expand multiple use areas where bike riders horseback riders and other sport participants (skate boarders surfsail etc.) can share the outdoors.

Please remember that the country that our children and their children live in will be determined by the decisions that you/we implement now.

As someone who has visited and cherished Yellowstone Park I want the next generation to enjoy America's great outdoors too. Future generations should have the chance to marvel at all the wondrous nature out there. Earth itself is a precious resource and it is up to us to protect it.

Also leaving land wild is a great hedge against global warming. We need every advantage in that fight!

America's great outdoors are not ours to do with what we like but a precious resource loaned to us from our children. America has put our trust in you and I am confident that you will make the hard decisions.

It's been shown on numerous occasions that most industries or businesses do not self regulate very well. They are interested in profit not safety or being environmentally conscious. Please don't allow big business/corporations to ruin the beauty of our environment for short term financial gains. Our future generations deserve more.

Your administration has already made great strides in the conservation of America's parks and wilderness so please keep the momentum going!

My children and grandchildren look forward to enjoying safe drinking water fresh air and beauty in the wilderness.

My number one concern is the environment. I have seen the clear cutting the gas guzzling vehicles carrying one person to work the trash thrown out of cars etc. So many of us pretend our poor behavior has no negative repercussions. My children and I suffer from the pollution in the air. We need better controls on pollution! Who can provide that but the government?

Our shared places are vital to our country.

It's only with actions such as these that our kids and or kids' kids will have anything left.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

We have so enjoyed our retirement years because of the opportunity in this great country of ours to get out and see the awesome places that have been set aside as National Parks National Forests Wildlife Refuges National Monuments and National Historic Sites. We've loved Yellowstone (and revisit it annually in all seasons); Grand Teton; Joshua Tree; Great Smoky Mountains; Glacier; Rocky Mountain National Park. We've visited a historic Ranger Station along the wild and scenic Lochsa River in Idaho. We're leaving home again in two weeks' time to enjoy elk bugling in the Rockies of Colorado.

I would like to have access and recreational opportunities in our parks and reserves; however not to the extent that the terrain is damaged as with the off road vehicles.

As a lifelong resident of the Chesapeake Bay area I have enjoyed the benefits of vigorous outdoor recreation in state and national parks. Our youth and indeed all Americans will need undeveloped natural areas to sustain the love for the incredible natural resources that have brought such prosperity to the US.

I am always impressed by the quality of our national heritage and the expertise shown by those managing these lands.

There is a growing disconnect between humanity and the wilderness in today's fastpaced technological society. I feel that by starting to work towards the above goals today we can begin to get back to nature. No matter how much we may think ourselves of a higher priority than our environment we cannot live without it. Fragile ecosystems are being destroyed this very day this very hour because we do not have the proper protections in place. The effects are and will continue to be devastating if you do not act to protect what we still have.

The great outdoors can be a salve to our spirits like no other. When the news is bad or life seems gloomy the great outdoors can help us put it into perspective. It is essential to our mental and physical health. California is filled with such places from the ocean to national parks like Yosemite. Spend some time with your family here and you will see.

America's great outdoors is still the country's greatest resource & we must preserve it for the future. I was lucky to have grown up long before nature deficit disorder but I feel strongly that we need to reverse that trend especially in these stressful times.

As a field biologist I can reassure you that conservation is critical not only for recreational purposes but also for research opportunities many of which we have yet to envision. Not long ago the scientific community would not have considered the importance of setting aside pristine areas in terms of understanding the biological impacts of climate change. Now much of our information predicting organismal response is based on phenomena observed in areas our federal government has wisely set aside for protection. Such conservation initiatives are increasingly important.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

I am thinking of not only the next generation in our family but at least the two generations after them. We do our best to conserve energy recycle protect wildlife and protect the waters with which we come in contact. As a society we need to praise and support the scientific community as they tell us the truth instead of religious theories.

As the population of the country grows more pressure is placed on the wild places and even greater protections need to be put in place to protect these irreplaceable parts of our country.

In order to protect our land for our children and grandchildren whether they live in the country or cities we need to protect our natural resources and respect the forces of nature instead of trying to control them.

Our country has enough strip malls which half of the stores aren't occupied to begin with. There need to be places in this country that are exempt from expansion.

Some years ago a team of economists sat down to calculate the economic value of all of the contributions to planetary and human health made by forests. I don't remember the figures but they were basically priceless. The lesson of climate change is that there is no planetary ecosystem that is expendable. If we behave as if there were it will be us who will eventually be expendable. We depend on wilderness of land and of sea for our survival on this planet whether we know it or see it or not. Our psychological emotional and spiritual health also depend on the wild places being held sacred. I want the next generation to enjoy and be humbled by America's great outdoors too. That's why I am asking you to seize this opportunity to create expand and better protect America's shared outdoor spaces including wilderness monuments wildlife refuges parks forests trails wild and scenic rivers and historic sites. Address Conservation on a Large Scale from development and drilling

The preservation of natural areas is important to abate the effects of climate change.

There are literally many issues of critical global concern demanding national and personal attention. The issues outlined below are basic and should be the foundation of our national policy without further delay. We have dithered far too long. Science has told us what we need to know. Let's get on with it.

Please do the right thing for our planet and all living things.

As a child my parents took our family camping and fishing as on a regular basis. This gave me and my siblings an opportunity to learn to appreciate the wonders of America's outdoors.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Some of my favorite trip and times have been in national parks monuments forests and historic sites. I strongly support doing more to protect more areas for recreation environmental protection and use by future generations. Parks and wild areas are more important than another oil well or another building. Let's think long term about the health and well being of people plants and wildlife that we need and enjoy so much!

I am getting too old for wilderness exploration but I want my children and my grandchild to enjoy America's great outdoors too.

Stop killing wolves

This is necessary as overdevelopment will make this country a very unsightly place to live in.

The National parks are the visions of another forward thinking President. He would be very upset and not what he envisioned of how a treasures are being whittled down by leases and permits. The Parks are being nickle and dimed to be a Disneyland atmosphere and for profit for a few.. Stronger protection for all life within parks. boundaries . Public or BLM lands need to be added to Nat'l Parks to make" Green corridors" for migrating wild life. Summer and winter ranges. Decrease the number of leases for mining and grazing. They are being given first priority by Government Agencies to the detriment of wild lands and wild life.. Have an environmental group be in charge not a government agency. No building. create a buffer zone near all rivers and no clear cutting. Ban mountaintop removal. poisoning the future.

YES PRESIDENT OBAMA WE ARE YOUR CONSTITUENTSTHE ONES WHO LOVE YOU! WE KNOW YOU ARE DOING YOUR BEST AND THANK GOD FOR YOUR INTEGRITY IN THE FACE OF AN AMERICAN DISASTER IN THE MEDIA. I KNOW YOU WILL DO ALL YOU CAN TO PROTECT OUR LAND OUR HERITAGE AND OUR WILDERNESS.

We all love and benefit from america's remaining nature and wilderness and we all suffer from it's unwaranted destruction! Site solar energy on fallowed lowgrade farmland not in unspoiled desert habitat. Do not spoil sweeping vistas with any new power transmission lines in the name of green power. areas both large and small. incl linkages.

Stop building on protected land

We cannot preserve and protect our wildlands wildlife and National Parks if we keep allowing development and/or oil and gas exploration & drilling on public lands.

. I don't believe providing more public access or adding recreational areas is a promising way to protect the wildlands. That only promotes destruction of the natural lay of the wildland.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

It is time that people realized the importance of protecting the beautiful earth we have. Creatures that live on earth were put there for a purpose and not to be destroyed by thoughtless actions of man. We are only one species and can't live without a diversity of species. Get with it!

The bottom line is that we must absolutely protect America's great outdoors for future generations of Americans and for our children now.

I spent an amazing three months back in '98 traveling in a converted Chevy van around the US with my two sons (then 10 and 12). We clocked up an amazing 16780mi from Mexico to the North Slope and from California to the Dakotas. We wound from park to park on the maps staying almost exclusively in park campgrounds. It was a spectacular journey. I wish that everyone in North America could do something similar... Now and for generations to come. Ours is a beautiful and wondrous land.

Keep big business especially Oil companies out of Public Lands. We are not benefiting from their actions. If they must drill or mine anywhere they need to be accountable and have plans (and backup plans) in place beforehand to take care of any mishaps. We cannot take their word that their methods will be safe. We need to demand proof from them before we let them touch our land or water! Please do everything you can to get BP busy at once cleaning up the wetlands around the Gulf Coast! All of the wildlife that depend on these areas can be decimated within a generation or two without them. BP is now saying they are not finding oil on the water...make them look harder! Under the water under the sand...the oil is there! Force them to work harder to find and clean it up! Americans are increasingly living in cities away from nature. We need places to go to experience and teach our children to appreciate nature. If we don't protect these habitats we will lose precious species which are interconnected with other wildlife. Please depend on scientists for data instead of hunters. We need to be able to get away from the cities without having the noise and pollution of offroad vehicles and speedboats following us. We need to protect our lands and waters. They are already endangered by Global warming (or climate change if you prefer) and pollution. We need to keep them as clean and pristine as possible. We need a campaign to make littering socially unacceptable!

These initiatives if supported and undertaken wisely and free of politics will ensure that our most important resources will be preserved maintained and protected. If we cannot protect our land and natural resources then what kind of "superpower" are we? Without natural resources there will be no USpeople cannot and should not survive without them. Be bold!

There is nothing like close contact with nature in a park or wilderness to instill lifelong love and respect for nature and passion for conserving it. I hope we can pass this on to future generations.

Please provide full funding for our national parks.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Next time you need a little vacation you must go to Zion nat'l park. It is the most beautiful space on earth.

As yearly visitors to National and State Parks we value preserved protected and rehabilitated natural areas for many reasons including discovery rejuvenation from being closer to natural vistas as well as for the opportunity to share these places with many of the international visitors who travel here each year. What purer more economically beneficial way for promoting international cooperation and communication is there? When our leaders are at war when ignorance and the hate and fear ignorance begets are raging all around us it is both amazing and rewarding to share time and space in mutual admiration of a pristine area with those who disagree with us as individuals and a nation. There are few investments which have a greater return.

I grew up visiting the National Parks of our country as the only vacation our family ever took. They are like a second home to me.

(This crusty old white guy will be 80 soon. Was beginning to think I'd never see a president and administration so dedicated to their jobs.....and so far it looks like their pants are staying zipped.)

Humans have taken ENOUGH land from nature for their own gains & greed! Leave the preserved areas alone.

The history and sights of our beautiful country have to be preserved.

By creating more outdoor areas for people to enjoy the united States people will benefit by having healthier lives. Since obesity is one of America's biggest problem I feel that it is very important for people to have a wide variety of things to do outdoors and most importantly be able to access it easily. If this access means building more parks and outdoor spaces then I think that should be the next step. Outdoor recreation stimulates people to be active which in turn will benefit them throughout their lives. by building more natural parks bike paths and outdoor recreation areas.

This is why I have belonged to The Nature Conservancy for many years even though I am and have always been low income. Some things are just more important than fulfilling another personal desire. But Nature Conservancy can't do everything alone or even in conjunction with all the different agencies they partner with. I have traveled across this great land visiting state and National Parks as I traveled. Each area has different specialties brought to light for the casual traveler by the capable rangers that love and staff them. Each park is a new adventure! What will it showcase? How will it be interpreted? Education and outreach to our children and grandchildren are crucial. If our young people don't develop a love and appreciation for the wonders around them there will be no need for parks in the future. And that would be a major loss to us as humans.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Our public lands belong to all Americans and provide us with clean supplies of drinking water healthy air and an opportunity to experience wildlife and nature. It is also about better connecting people especially young people to nature. With the stresses of our rushrush society and lifestyle more than ever we will continue to need more natural wide open spaces to decompress and relax and escape from the worries and challenges of the concrete jungle. And it is about connecting people to each other following the principle that that the best conservation outcomes occur when people work together to protect connect and restore private lands working lands and our wildest lands.

Its very important to maintain established hiking trails instead of closing them.

National parks and historical sites are where our family up to 3 generations of us have had some of our best vacations and where multiple generations can have a wonderful experience together and in smaller groups then meeting in the evening to discuss a wonderful day. I want future generations to be able to take advantage of this familystrengthening bonding experience.

I fully support more places for recreation while protecting the wilderness. Which brings me to the next key point we need to ". That becomes difficult when the wilderness isn't protected and wildlife habitat becomes endangered. That is nature. Thank you for your support concerning these important matters.

This is a legacy a few visionaries in our past have left us unpopular in their time.

Once this wilderness is gone it is gone forever. Please preserve it for our future generations.

Like many American's I am a US ecotourist! I spend my vacations visiting the wilderness and my dollars are spent in the various communities near these areas. I live in Florida and I vacation from Maine to Washington State and the midwest. It will be a travesty if our children's children are unable to enjoy nature in the manner that my family does each year!

I look forward to your response on the matter.

I grew up in an inner city back East. I will never forget the first time I traveled out west and set my foot in a national park. I had never seen anything like it. I had never felt anything like it. Even the people seemed different. It changed my life. Unfortunately the parks have changed and not for the better in my lifetime. Grant endangered status to threatened species sooner rather than later

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

I was lucky enough to grow up near the redwood forests of Central California and the experiences I had hiking through and camping in these magnificent works of nature shaped the person I grew up to be. I wish to preserve these and other wilderness areas so that others may experience the benefits I've enjoyed from the beautiful nature scenery in our country.

My children and grandchildren must experience America's great outdoors. I am a physician a psychiatrist who treats children. Medical studies show that being outside in green places helps depression and attention deficit hyperactivity disorder.

As a Marriage and Family Therapist Intern I work with at risk and underprivileged populations of children and I believe that underprivileged and at risk children who have access to the natural world have a much better chance of avoiding the pitfalls of drug abuse and crime. We need policies which will give kids in the inner cities (like in south central LA where I have worked) opportunities to see wildlife and open spaces.

i have enjoyed our national parks and wilderness areas since I was a boy and have hiked rafted and kayaked through some of Alaska's California's and several other states wild and scenic rivers and parks. in all its aspects there is truly so little of it left without a home they cannot survive especially young people but for responsible users only!

I'm concerned though that wetlands protection should be tempered by care so that such areas don't breed mosquitoes especially those with a potential to give West Nile virus or malaria to those they bite.

My wife and I regularly visit national parks and monuments in New Mexico and California.

; it is so important not only for people but for animals and the planet to have wilderness animals are losing natural habitats fast please protect them tell the truth about wild animals; teach people that wilderness can be enjoyed for itself. Don't have to be out there shooting at things or wiping out species including handicapped access water sources are becoming increasingly important.

I know the health of our rivers and waterways is integral to our health and well being. I grew up the first 20 years of my life with the Shoto River and Manitowoc River in Wisconsin. They are etched forever in my memory. They are part of my bones. They are part of my knowing that nature comes first... for the benefit of all.

The "great outdoors" is my church...it is where I go for spiritual solace and renewal. If more people went to my church there would be less violence and hatred in the world.

Reinstitute the WPA or CCC and put people to work.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Preservation of America's resources is a sacred trust begun by Teddy Roosevelt. His vision helped to shape our love of the outdoors today. Your vision will shape the love of generations yet unborn. I pray that you will do all that is possible to give them a legacy of American beauty and pristine wilderness.

Remember if we don't take care of our planet it won't take care of us.

I am very grateful that some people had the foresight to preserve and protect certain areas for me.

One of my fondest memories is the first time my father and I hiked and camped in the John Muir wilderness of the Sierra Nevada. This was a grand experience followed by many more in our nature parks and wilderness areas.

We must think ahead to ensure our precious natural resources are protected and that wildlife has a place to call home.

Just remember. the GOP wants to sell everything taxpayers own to private industry to make a profit for the super rich.

I am 82 years old and I want to make certain that future generations can benefit from the preservation of our great outdoors to protect it from destructive development. Once we lose land we can't get it back.

When I was growing up the most special vacations were in our National Parks Yellowstone Mesa Verde Yosemite etc. Now I want the same for my grandchildren to enjoy the splendor of our great outdoors.

Looking for opportunities to add National Parks National Monuments and National Forest land should also be considered. Since contemporary Americans use and waste more resources than any group of people in human history it is imperative that we protect existing national land and do all we can to add to our already robust National Park System.

Establish more national parks and monuments and maintain those existing Keep our forests healthy Protect and restore wildlife habitat and wetlands Improve opportunities for outdoor recreation

To ensure that MY GRANDDAUGHTER and future generations will always benefit and enjoy our Support efforts to keep roads and vehicles out of wilderness areas including snowmobiles. The noise of vehicles are extremely disruptive to wildlife not to mention hikers and backpackers who are out for a true wilderness experience.

In addition to the below please also push the creation and enhancement of habitat corridors through urban areas and the development of parks as part of a collective urban ecosystem that connects to wilderness areas in rural areas and allows for wildlife habitat in urban areas.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Protecting the Earth and our natural resources is so important it's unbelievable as to how many people don't realize this. On the other hand many do understand. Of course we need energy to survive in this world today but our means to survival is a contradiction when it is slowly destroying the planet we live on. It is crucial for us to start working with the Earth instead of just taking from it for future generations. They deserve to have an abundance of clean water air nature to enjoy and normal climates to live in without fear.

All of these areas help us to be better people and citizens.

We are running out of lands that can be so designated so we must act as soon as possible to preserve as much as possible.

both areas now unprotected that will otherwise be lost AND protect our existing National Parks from the damage caused by overuse and inappropriate use (e.g. snowmobiles and offroad vehicles of all types).

Life itself evolved from the natural world. We must protect and preserve that world while we can.

I grew up in Yosemite National Park. I know how important the GREAT outdoors really is. We need to preserve and protect the greatness that we have.

Without clean fresh water we will have nothing to pass on to following generations. The planet will be bereft.

As an avid camper backpacker and hiker I want the next generation to enjoy America's great outdoors too. through Reforestation of Areas Leased for Logging through Education

I believe preserving places we enjoy is vital to our generations now as well as our upcoming generations as well. It is important for people to connect with nature and enjoy the outdoors. We cannot live in a world where we are so caught up in society and it's ways of constant watching of television programs; as well as endless hours on the internet. We the people of America have the opportunity and the right to provide changes in our one and only world. You can help us be the change.

Once it is gone it cannot be retrieved.

During my life I have visited quite a few national parks forests and monuments and found them very relaxing and enlightening.

I know we all can achieve great things when we work Together!

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

please act now!!

Two of the things important to us are our Freedom and our Great Outdoors.

My name is and I'm a strong supporter of protecting the environment and the wildlife that inhabits it.

WE NEED OUR PRECIOUS FORESTS AND WILDLIFE to Keep Balance in a world that must align itself with Loving Kindness to survive.

Concrete asphalt and cars everywhere. Let's maintain some sanctuary!

PLEASE HELP..THANK YOU.

There are children in our great country whose feet have never touched the ground they walk on concrete and pavement all their lives. It is difficult or impossible to imbue a generation so cut off from Mother Earth and Nature with respect and love for the natural world and her creatures. We must change this! Our children need to feel the splendor of being in nature and then they will want to preserve and protect it.

These lands are recreational areas for millions of people. They are sacred lands for many indigenous people. And their beauty is so important that we could never duplicate it.

As an elder nearing my eightieth year I want the next generation to enjoy America's great outdoors too. These efforts are needed NOW!

*Just a thought but my home state of Michigan is full of lucious greenery and animal inhabitants and most of our residents are moving out of state if they have not already. Good place to start.

I think if more people spent more time in the wilderness there would be less stress and conflict in society.

Not only do I want the next generation to enjoy America's great outdoors too I feel a connection with ALL life on this planet and do NOT WANT ANY of it to be destroyed or damaged due to carelessness or greed. This is not just soft hearted thinking here we do NOT know everything and so when we allow species to be destroyed we may place ourselves and/or other species' on the endangered list! I don't want that to happen and I'M SURE THAT YOU DON'T EITHER!

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Parks wilderness areas historic places are all part of what makes America America. They speak to our souls and need to be preserved.

We have a really gorgeous country with lots of geographic variety.

We have a duty to do as much as we can to preserve the environment for future generations.

Just went to California for the first time and saw giant trees rocks waterfalls and meadows. It was astounding!

MAYBE YOU COULD ENCOURAGE MS. WINFREY TO DONATE SOME OF HER MILLIONS TO OUR NATIONAL PARKS FOR THEIR PERPETUAL CARE! AND THEN SHE COULD TALK TO HER OTHER WEALTHY FRIENDS...AND THEY COULD DONATE SOME OF THEIR MILLIONS TO OUR PUBLIC SCHOOLS!

I want my children and grandchildren to have the opportunity to enjoy what we have please do not let greed and politics take away what should be our greatest legacy to future generations. The earth is not ours to destroy we share it with all of the diverse peoples and species on it and have a responsibility to take that fact seriously. Thank you.

Acadia National Park is one of my favorite places. When I lived in Boston and the "citiness" would get to me I would hop in my car and drive the very long drive to Mr. Desert and walk the Wonderland Trail. Such wonderful things to see: first pine forest then what seems like a large bonsai garden then huge granite rocks leading to the Atlantic. Then back into the car for the long drive home refreshed. I know since you have recently returned from Acadia that you understand the wonderment of our National Parks and other wildlife habitats.

Our family values outdoor recreation for physical and mental health more than any other thing.

Our resources won't last forever please protect them! We do need much more conservation and less usage of our resources.

The first job to undertake is the rebuilding of the Gulf coast. Our citizens that live there MUST be protected from worsening storms. Our knowledge of natural processes and ecosystems is sufficient to accomplish this. Our success in doing this difficult job will serve as a springboard for further tasks in wilder surroundings.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

It is imperative that we protect not only our earth's natural ecosystems but also focus on sustaining the plant and animal biodiversity that are so interconnected with the habitats in which they live in. Just as the wildlife depends on their habitat for essential resources the trees plants and animals within the natural community helps recycle the nutrients that sustains a healthy ecosystem. As a part of protecting our wilderness we must allow easy access and mobility for the animals so that they can travel more freely and not be confined to regions surrounded by human development. A solution is to develop 'wildlife corridors' as a safe passageway for animals that can be implemented in a way that helps guide wildlife through a network of protected lands.

If we wanted to continue the Bush Administration's policies we would have elected McCain!

Some of my greatest learning moments have come to me in the outdoors

The importance of protecting wild places and wilderness areas for future generations cannot be emphasized enough. These places help to rejuvenate us reinspire us and are of utmost importance to the environmental balance of the planet.

Since I was a child I enjoyed learning about the natural world around me. After serving in Viet Nam these "green islands of hope" became more important to me. I am retired from The National Park Service now and hunting and fishing along with gardening have become a way of life for me. I am personally proud that you are my President and that you have given me hope by steering this country in the directions that you have. You have done a tremendous amount of work for us and I am grateful and proud of you.

I went with my grandchildren to a park in Long Island that is a bird sanctuary and they loved it. I hope it will still be there when they want to show it to their children and grandchildren.

I grew up in the 60's and 70's and was exposed to conservation then in Arkansas. Colorado is my home state now and we've been blessed with people with enough foresight to set aside land and preserve it for those in the future. If it wasn't for their bold acts I feel Colorado would definitely not be the great state it is with great views and vistas and land that everyone can use. I want the next generation to enjoy America's great outdoors too. It is time to take our short sighted narrow views and think of the future and what will be left for them to explore and cherish!

Many young people today don't even realize that they are part of nature! I want the next generation to enjoy America's great outdoors and the opportunity to find their place in it!.

Nothing is more important than protecting our environment so future generations will have a healthy place to exist and will be able to enjoy America's great outdoors too.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

As an avid hiker my family and I spend many days each year in a wide variety of parks national forests monuments wilderness areas and other places that have been set aside for the public to enjoy. This is a priceless heritage that has been created by leaders from Teddy Roosevelt onward who have a vision of the value of public spaces and conservation.

Since I was a child I have been a regular visitor to America's National Parks and Monuments. My life has been immeasurably nourished by these wilderness areas and places of great environmental splendor or historical importance.

PERSONALIZED PART: this is the first step in preventing climate change. I voted for change but not that.

Our national parks system is the one of the greatest legacies we can preserve.

Clean water is one of this country's most valuable resources.

If these lands and sites are ruined we can never recover them.

I want my children and all future generations to be able to grow up as I did in the beautiful country that is our home. It's important for the mind and health of all people to have a chance to enjoy nature and I would not want to deprive our next generations of this great pleasure that too many people take for granted.

One of the most precious things we have as Americans is an amazingly diverse natural environment and I want the next generation to enjoy America's great outdoors too.

for the 21st century. President Obama I think you are a wonderful leader and I support the changes you are trying to bring about to make life better for all mankind not just Americans. Keep plugging away for us.

P.S. They always want me to "personalize" the message. I can't put it any better than they do and the fact that I took the time to fill in the blanks with my name address and other pertinent information should be enough to show that I care and I want you to do the right thing. I trust that you will.

We are studying how your administration's policies are more proconservationist than the previous Bush presidency in my ENV. LAW class at NC State University.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

I have worked within several wilderness areas on projects that provide for increased environmental protection and recreation. The original wilderness areas plan included areas that fit the intent of the designation and protected pristine and unique lands accomplishing tremendous good for those fortunate enough to have the time and physical ability to enjoy such wonderful country. I continue to work on volunteer projects within and outside of Wilderness areas of Sequoia National Forest. As additional areas were sought to add to the original wilderness areas that meant the intent of the wilderness law. Some of these were private in holding, lands that needed to transfer from other agencies others were areas that took time to survey and to process. The Wilderness system grew for good reasons. As the years went by the term Wilderness began to be misused and politicians learned they could stir up emotion by claiming to "protect at risk Wilderness areas" with new legislation. So the original definition and purpose for wilderness areas, a quite noble one, became skewed and often were based on emotion, politics and not on any science. Wilderness designations in many of these areas can do harm by restricting the abilities to conduct land management activities that are needed to protect the lands, public and adjacent communities. There have been areas closed to 4x4 over the last 20 years based on no logic just emotion. Such as areas proposed in this bill. In these areas prior to wilderness designation vehicle use had been restricted to designated routes that due to soil and rock and infrequent use no environmental damage was occurring. This was all based on scientific studies. Many of the areas that were closed under the desert wilderness act have no other ways to access them due to distance traveled to and from water and the severe environmental conditions. Without 4X Jeep type access there is no other way to recreate, protect or study these areas. The USFS and BLM have spent many years studying and improving the roads that can be maintained to allow for recreation, and environmental protection, while closing those that do not provide for all those issues. Protection of public safety and protection of the area from invasive species, disease and from the effects of catastrophic wild fire is greatly impacted by the designation of wilderness area to areas that do not meet the intent or definition of Wilderness area. Non Wilderness lands can be managed for any type of recreation opportunity that is eco friendly for that area and in a much more cost effective manner. Designating more Wildernesses will discourage the public from enjoying the outdoors because many unintended and cumbersome regulations that automatically apply. The President said he is interested in local involvement in his plan, yet none of the local user in these areas that I am involved with have been contacted. Only national interest groups who do not use the area at all have been promoting the changes in our area. The Initiative seeks to address Climate Change and should use the best science, which has been determined to be the need for fuel load reduction, (logging, chipping, masticating and control burning) to promote forest watershed health and reduce greenhouse gas emissions. These activities are restricted by wilderness areas. Reduction of hazard fuels from our forests to provide for public safety and to reduce emissions by the reduction of plumes that transmit huge quantities of material into the atmosphere daily from catastrophic wildfires requires renewable resource harvesting in America, also known as logging. In the US we have now evolved logging practices to mimic natural fire in the forests. Our logging is done under the strictest environmental regulations in the world. Wilderness designation generally eliminates logging and all other fuels management practices. There are many scientific reports how logging can reduce the wildfire threat and the emissions of green house gasses. An

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Increaseing wilderness acre has already increase the occurrence of large fires and the emission of green house and toxic gasses by wildfires. The Klamath County seat in Ca. the city of Yreka, 2 years ago had un healthy CO2 levels for weeks above the Federal Permissible Exposures limits due to fires burning in wilderness areas. .

I look forward to the day I can take my kids and share with them what my DAD had shared with me and made me a better person for it.

I take my nephews and niece on Jeep rides several times a year so they can see first hand and learn respect for the land and the animals living in the area. It's a wonderful experience to share with young people and it would be a shame to have them lose this privilege. As a avid 4-wheeler and snowmobiler it's important to me to be sure that I always respect the land and make sure that others do the same.

I was raised riding dirtbikes and ATV's and would like to raise my kids in the same manner. We contribute alot of revenue to the towns in which we go riding and racing in and in this economy these little towns rely on people visiting and recreating in their community.

im not sure what gives people 2000 miles away the rite to govern how our land is used without giving every one a say in it. were i live there is a great amount of people who recreate with our ohvs. people come from hundreds of miles away, probably because there is no place to ride were they live.

My 4 children go and drive in the forest to fish, bike ride and snowmobile.

My family and many other families, spend mulitple weekends every year together, bonding and building strong respect for the outdoor beauty of this nation. The majority of offroaders are not abusers but are conservationist to conserve and protect our outdoors. This builds great family relationships and better citizens.

My family has enjoyed Off Highway vehicle recreation for over 30 years. We treat the environment with respect and help keep it clean. I sure do wish the Federal Government would quit spending money they do not have.

My Family like many others spend a lot of time in the wilderness Camping, fishing, Hiking, Four Wheeling, and Ditbike Riding we enjoy the outdoors and if that is taken away the kid's would spend more time with their friend's instead of family and more time's than not they will make bad decissions from being around the wrong people instead of Family. We talk more when there is no TV, Video Game's, Computers, or Cell Phones and there is more involvement in our kid's lives without these distractions.

My family likes to camp and enjoy adventures on OHV's.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

My name is and I am writing today to express my views on the management of our natural spaces. I am an active outdoorsman and support ALL who would use our natural and wilderness areas including hikers, mountain bikers, campers, horseback riders, and off-road enthusiasts. In addition . Thank you for taking the time to listen to my concerns.

My name is and I live in Southern California. I have been an avid motorcyclist and outdoor recreation enthusiast my entire life (41 years).. My family and friends regularly enjoy public lands via motorcycles, mountain bikes, hiking, off roading, camping, fishing, etc. Since

Nature can be enjoyed responsibly, it provides for stress relief. Those looking to spend activities in wildlife enjoy the wildlife not destroy it.

Public lands belong to the public and the public is everybody, not an elite few

Please work to increase public access to our outdoor areas by increasing the amount of areas designated for the use of Off Road Vehicles as well as for mountain bikes, horse riders and hikers.

I have two suggestions: 1 - If you so choose to designate more wilderness, I would like to see Washington DC and New York city reverted to its original state of wilderness because there is very little outdoor enjoyment on the east coast - these are obviously highly sought areas in which to reside - we need to save it. 2 - Fish and Game needs to revert back to "land management" by helping maintaining the land, not a law enforcement agency - oh, no money? Try selling 1/2 of the new vehicles provided and put two people in a vehicle - or for that matter - does every Fish and Game officer need a new 2010 F350? I know - astounding thoughts.

Dear Sir, I've personally enjoyed many of these areas since I was a kid and it has contributed greatly to my own understanding of myself and nature. We need more space we can freely enjoy, not less. Thank you,

finally please keep all of our off highway riding areas open we have little as it is. thank you for your time

Finally, TAKING PRIVATE PROPERTY OFF THE TAX ROLLS INCREASES THE NATIONAL DEBT! Let people who are wealthy, buy up real estate, PAY THEIR TAXES, and keep it pristine.

Hello, OHV access is disappearing and those of us that ride are forced into smaller and smaller areas with reduced recreation opportunities. These remaining areas are then too crowded. More access is a good thing. Sincerely,

Mtn biking is of my greatest passions.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

How can you continue to restrict access to outdoor activities while drafting legislation mandating kids be active, these lands belong to everyone including OHV users. You should be advocating using these lands not cutting people out. If you want to get kids active in sports and other recreational activities (stupid).

I am a big wilderness supporter. I work for the National Park Service and have spent countless days and hours in the backcountry here since I was about 8. It is very important to me and I think well worth preserving. That said, I also am a firm believer that there should be different 'levels' of areas for different people and different types of use. Yes, those that can hike into remote areas, the most remote without even trails can thoroughly enjoy the true wilderness areas. If the researchers can be limited, then there is very minimal impact to wildlife and the environment in general. Currently there is way too much research, killing animals and harassing them in the name of research. But there needs to be areas that others can also enjoy and learn to appreciate this great country. Some like to ride horses, some mountain bikes, others motorized motorcycles etc. Should everywhere allow all access? No, I don't think so. BUT I also believe that there are already enough areas for wilderness use in this country and adding more will not improve anything in any way. There are also huge funding issues for the current wilderness areas. I know this very well working at a National Park. We cannot even maintain what is there now, how can we possibly maintain and properly manage even more? I say this from both a taxpayer and an employee. Let's properly do what we have now. I strongly encourage no more wilderness areas at this time. Not only are there enough areas now, but from a monetary point of view- this is like a person that can't afford the upkeep or payments on their house buying a new vacation house in the mountains because they love the mountains so much. Then asking someone else to pay for it since they don't have the money. First let us properly maintain and fund the current Wilderness areas (National Parks, Forest Service etc). I would support more areas for motorized use, and mountain bike etc. I think this is a great way for all, especially youth to get exercise, experience the outdoors and stay out of trouble! It also does a lot to stimulate economic growth, with users making various purchases to equipment. Please, let's fix what we have now first! Thanks for your time, (name deleted) Some boiler plate one points I agree with below:

I am an almost weekly user of the outdoors. I ride motorcycles on legally designated riding trails, hunt and camp and hike with my wife. This is an essential part of my lifestyle.

I am an Arizona native who regularly enjoys using our public lands via motorized means. Continued access to public lands for all forest users, including motorized users, is vital to my family's continued enjoyment of our public lands.

I am an avid outdoor enthusiast that enjoys our public lands. The proposed closure certainly looks like more of the same Government rhetoric, massive closures for specific lobbyists. Keep our public lands open to the public. This includes all forms of outdoor recreation, not just specific uses. As a responsible off road driver I respect our public lands and enjoy visiting areas I otherwise would not be able to. These trips are spent with family and friends. Please leave our public lands open to the public. Good management, education and stewardship are important, not mass closures.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

I am an avid outdoor enthusiast who enjoys fishing, hunting, and riding off road vehicles. These are pastimes that have been handed down to me and I wish to continue the trend. I have observed a continued and escalating trend to "manage the impact" of these activities, which in most cases results in limited access and closures. The fact that I enjoy these activities implies stewardship on my part to preserve them for future use. Listed below are but a few of the multiple reasons that I oppose the closure of more public land.

I am offroad and mountain biking enthusiast and have a company that employs 20 people who rely on our public lands being open for use.

I feel that the general public has a right to recreate in the national lands that we ALL own and we do not need further restrictions to do so. There is already PLENTY of un accessible land now as it is!

These lands belong to the people. We love America and want to enjoy the countryside. That's why we make our homes and raise our familys in rural areas. We should be able to enjoy this great country! Thank you for your time!

This is the Public's Land, to use, and enjoy.

This letter is to respectfully voice my concerns and objections to the president's land use proposals (restrictions). As an avid outdoors man, myself and my family have enjoyed public lands for generations through camping, hunting, fishing, bicycling, and OHV use. My children are taught, as was I that as users, we have a duty not only to respect the resources, but also to act through responsible stewardship and by always picking up not only after ourselves, but after those not quite so responsible as us. Through the fees we pay for annual OHV permits and park access, we are further supporting the continued management and preservation of our rights as American citizens who are entitled to our own American forest lands. Thank you for your support in this matter.

This letter reflects the views of my whole family, we are very close, my son does well in school and is a happy well rounded kid. One of the main reasons for this is our weekend getaways to our local forests. There is no phones, computers, x-boxes etc, just us and other familys bonding and enjoying the outdoors. Our recreational activities include camping, hiking, mountain biking and yes, we ride off highway motorcycles too. Surprised? well most motorcyclists I know are multi-activity familys and individuals who truly care about the land they recreate on. My family has planted trees, done trail maintenance, picked up litter, cleaned up streams etc. we believe in land stewardship and practice it. This is why it's imperative that you allow us and the groups who represent us such as the BRC and the ARRA to actively participate in any matters involving decisions on our public forests and lands. When there is no transparency, people who stand to lose the most, such as OHV users, become very suspicious of what is really going on. Below are some comments I selected from a comment menu in the letter generator that further reflects our feelings on this issue. Thank you for considering my thoughts, concerns and comments,

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

We work hard and need to be able to have a cost effective release to keep in shape, and stay happy. To do these things with our Children and creat memories for us all.

As an active member in the outdoor community, I and many of my friends volunteer hundreds of hours every year to construct, repair and maintain wilderness trails. We are instrumental in educating the public regarding these resources and promote responsible OHV recreational use. We invest our time, money and talent to responsible OHV recreation and will continue to do so for the recreation we value and the environment we cherish. Responsible recreation is the answer, public education is the key.

Dear Sirs, As a father of 4 and a husband to my lovely wife, the one activity that we have left to do together away from home is to go off road and ride in the desert and sand dunes around Southern California. Please take these comments into consideration.

Dear Sirs: My family and I recreate on public (and some private) lands on almost a weekly basis. We enjoy hiking, camping, hunting, and OHV riding, and have done so for many years. The time we spend together as a family enjoying our public lands is priceless and irreplaceable. We encourage you to consider the following comments while drafting public lands planning and management agendas. The President is interested in local involvement in his plan, yet no multiple use groups have been included or invited. The initial plan has clearly been created by a small segment of special interest groups who seek to limit access to our public lands.

I have enjoyed these activities as well as hiking and camping in public lands One day I hope to pass these on to my children I just hope there are enough areas left to do so.

I raised my daughter riding ORV's in our National Forests. True ORV enthusiasts are respectful of our environment, helpful (we donate many hours working on trails) to others, hard working, and family oriented. My daughter feels a lot of her confidence and drive for success (she plans on being a doctor and starts college next year) came from learning to ride motorcycles on mountain trails. The goal to reconnect Americans especially youth with the outdoors can best be done by providing more places for them to enjoy their favorite forms of outdoor recreation. Off Road Vehicle use is by far the most popular form of recreation, followed by Mountain Biking. Remember these youth will be our next generation of police officers, lawyers, carpenters, computer technicians, and Presidents. The Initiative must preserve Multiple Use lands as Multiple Use for current and future generations to enjoy these and all other forms of recreation. ORV riding is not only a recreational activity, it is an esteem building, family and friend bonding, and environment respecting activity. Please keep this form of recreation a priority in all law making decisions.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Maine's forests provide countless benefits for human and natural communities. Over 70 million people live within a day's drive of Maine and rely on them for clean water and air, as well as for their outstanding recreational opportunities. These diverse forests also contain a dizzying array of flora and fauna, including many endangered or threatened species, as well as rare tree and plant communities. Increasingly, we are confronting the reality that our forests face more urgent threats than ever envisioned. These threats include sprawling growth and development that are diminishing forests in Maine at an alarming rate, and climate change will have tremendous impacts on forests and on plant and animal species in Maine, New England, and globally. As the climate warms, species will generally shift their ranges up to higher elevations and to the north. The more our forests are fragmented by development, roads, and shopping malls, the harder it will be for species to successfully shift their locations, adapt, and survive.

Create Economic Opportunities: Protected public lands can provide economic benefits to their surrounding communities. Communities can diversify their economies by expanding tourism-related industries, boosting ecotourism in their region and thereby increasing demand for food and lodging services, and increase property values by protecting the area's natural amenities.

Federal, state and private lands that provide Americans with the opportunity to connect with the outdoors and promote conservation and recreation are also intertwined with our most treasured historic and cultural sites and landscapes.

The American people need to be considered as the fourth branch of our government. Our voices are vital to the direction of our country. My family lives and thrives because of the great outdoors. Our garden and chicken sustain us nutritionally, and our trails give us ways to mountain bike and hike to keep us active and healthy.

I grew up loving this, please let my children and grandchildren do the same.

I have been up and down the east coast and recently got to visit the northwest for the first time and the great majesty that is nature must be protected for the wildlife as well as generations to come. People can learn and take much pride in the land if it is kept safe and clean for all to see.

I am just an every day middle class citizen working to support her family. The outdoors, parks, rivers, beaches, etc. are one of my favorite destinations. They are beautiful, enjoyable, easy to access, and inexpensive.

Please, help protect the land, and those of us who choose to embrace nature. Your kids and their descendants will thank you!

Our favorite way to relax is to take three weeks a year to tour the state and national parks. We meet wonderful people and appreciate the beauty God has given this world.

I would like my son to be able to enjoy the outdoors the way I enjoyed them as a child..free and unwavering. This is important to the survival of our way of life....on this planet. Enough with the concrete jungles already. PEACE!

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

We all need to get out more

Outdoors is one of many cures to our OBESITY epidemic. - PS GO OBAMA

There are places right now in our country where no person has ever set foot. It is pristine, untampered by our industrialized ways. Let's keep them that way.

I wish to have much of the roadways in our national forests preserved. I am disabled and can no longer hike, but I can still take my pick up on back roads. There are many places I have enjoyed that I can't get to because the roads are no longer maintained. We all can't hike!

America is beautiful and has beautiful places to visit when people want to get away on a vacation; so why would you want to ruin the opportunity for Americans to see the Land of the Free to wander in the awe of it all? Our next generation deserves the opportunity to see what we see now in America instead of some built over acre - with probably some useless thing that they cannot return home with photos and state "went on vacation and all I came home with was photos of some built over item instead" of what they wanted to see. I am a photo technician and the photos that I see being printed most of the time during the summer months are photos of people enjoying their vacations - wanting to share those photos with family and friends and to be passed on - Please do not ruin and take away what Americans have the freedom to do - visit natural and historical places as well as vacation spots in parks for recreation.

The most powerful life-changing moments occurred in the wilderness- nothing is like the time you spend in land virtually unaffected by man.

Please its for the best not only for us but for our future generations our children and grandchildren my sons love the outdoors!!!!!! thank you.

I spend every summer with my children in National parks. Better outside seeing history instead of inside raising your health care bills by gaining a ton of weight. Spend the money where it belongs. Here in America

I live in the country I could not even imagine life without nature. I hunt fish hike and camp and as an outdoors-man I respect the wildlife out there. The people that don't hunt or fish misunderstand the sportsman we care for our wildlife we want them to be healthy and thrive in fact we are some of their greatest voices for their survival. We live in a diverse and beautiful country and I personally don't think I would survive without nature it's part of me

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

I have camped and enjoyed the great outdoors since I was a kid and have taken my children as young as 2 weeks camping. Our family spends alot of time outdoors and wish to see it protected and expanded for generations to come. Expand and help fund safe biking for commuters for Cities more people would bike to work if they felt safe. Even small parks are better that buildings left empty for more than 5 years. Current parks need help in up keep DON'T let our parks fall apart.

Hunters and fishermen should not be excluded from these efforts either. Remember that they provide more than 2/3 of the funds used to preserve our lands now!!!

I have been a SportsMan my hole life. The sports in my house growing up where fishing, hunting, hikeing, sking and pretty much anything that has to do with the outdoors. Some of my best times growing up as a child was going out in to the Great American Outdoors with my father teaching me all the great things about our great outdoors. From how to hunt and fish and make fire to basic survival. Alot of those lessons tought me alot and i don't think i would be the man i am today and now that i am a new father i look forward to teaching my child all the same things and hope we can share the great outdoors with many young generations to come

President Obama, You and your Family, we share the same love for nature. When you vacationed w/ your family at Grand Canyon, I was also there that week. When you went to Acadia, I was also there about a week later. We don't need to convince you how wonderful our outdoors are, but we need YOU to convince all legislators (Congress) why it is so important to protect and expland these precious places...

Mr President, I have a young daughter, and I know you have two. My daughter and I get to spend the most quality time when we are outdoors sharing time together. It's critical to me that we continue to have the open, wild and wonderful spaces for families to bond and connect. I want the next generation to enjoy America's great outdoors too. Thankyou for your time and attention to this critical matter.

As an avid mountain biker I value the chances I have had to learn about myself and my limits on the trails and it is important to protect our current trails while also allowing more to be built. Please help stop the destruction of our trails and keep others open to mountain bikes.

I have seen so much destruction of all of these things in my life and my wife has as well. We are both outdoor enthusiasts, true nature lovers, and now that my wife is in her final years of life, the outdoors that she has loved all her life is what brings her the most happiness. Please don't let the environment and our natural resources go with her.

Mountain-biking in the forest leaves less impact on the environment than any type of trail use. It gives the youth of our rural communities a healthy activity where they can enjoy the forests.

I love being able to go out in the woods and being bymself to find peace within please protect them and the wildlife that resides within.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

I live in Southwest Virginia surrounded by beautiful mountains, streams and wildlife. I would like to think that future generations would be able to enjoy and experience this majestic landscape.

I have been raised knowing the value of the nations nationalparks forest and wildeness areas.. Our parks and wilderness continue to provide an enriching and learning environment for everygeneraion from ttodays citizens all the way back to the grand ladies of the victorian era who used to walk the trails of places like pikes peak in their dresses and heeled shoes.

I am a physical education teacher and an outdoor enthusiast. I backpack, ski/snowboard, and my passion is whitewater kayaking. I try to find ways to incorporate outdoor education into my elementary curriculum which is hard. Its hard because our schools have only taught traditional sports throughout the years which are usually sports that are hardly ever played after highschool or college. This leaves students without any outlet for exercise after that. If we could get children more involved and educated about the many oportunities for fun, rewarding activities in the great outdoors, the next generation will place more value our great outdoors and better longterm conservation will come from that. I dont know if anyone actually reads these but that was my 2 cents.

I grew up with the outdoors to help me and This is for our children to have a better life. Without nature our will suffer.

I hike, fish, walk, sit, snowshoe, take pictures, read books, ride bikes, and generally any other activity you can think of outdoors. This country is beautiful and we need to keep it that way. I have been to countless national parks as well as state and local parks that are the most beautiful places on the planet. You need to do whatever is necessary to preserve our forests, lakes, rivers, oceans, mountains, streams, brooks, creeks, tributarys, wetlands, and hills.

Went camping at an Ohio State park and spent a good deal of time improving the fire ring and site that we were on. They just don't have the resources to take care of what they have.

Come to Harriman State Park, for example, in NY, sometime with your wife and kids and dog. You can hike 3 hours to a mountain lake and swim, or walk umpteen shorter trails without so much as a water bottle! My dog, Charlotte, and I would happily be your hike-guides for a day!!!! Thank you for all you do, Mr. President. You are greatly appreciated by ALOT of us!!!!

America's wild spaces have their own intrinsic value. Wilderness for the sake of wilderness. It has inspired American's throughout our history and deserves preservation. Wilderness also offers it's own environmental benefits such as acting as a carbon sink.

The United States of America has almost 3.8 million square miles to call its own. In this vast area are some of the most pristine and beautiful natural wonders. Our nation is blessed with large areas of open space. Space to hike, bike, kayak, or anything else that any citizen desires to do. We need to be proud of America's Great Outdoors.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Aesthetic reasons aren't the only reasons why more outdoor areas should be protected. Think of it as an "active" tourism reason. People travel to go and play/ride/climb/hike/be outdoors. It stimulates the local economies and is generally healthy for us (mentally, physically, spiritually). If trees could run away from destruction, they would. One way of making sure they survive is to experience the beauty first hand.

Not only does protecting America's great outdoors ensure that our future generations will be able to enjoy them, it also ensures wildlife in those protected areas will have refuge from the ever growing human encroachment into their native habitats.

I want my children to be able to enjoy what I enjoy now. Please take the time to consider what it would be like if you don't take the steps needed to preserve America's landscape.

Having grown up in a rural community and with a natural love of the outdoors, I treasure the times I have to spend hiking, walking or running in the outdoors. Please help conserve our natural spaces. Thank you for your attention to my email. I appreciate all the hard work you are putting in as President and know your job is a tough one. Keep up the good work!

Nature is everything to me. I went to an environmental high school and I have never been more aware of our environmental issues than now. The more we protect our environment, the more we will protect ourselves! Please!

The Outdoors of this country are one of the few things that keep me tethered here.

We go camping and hiking, its the best experience to be in the beautiful outdoors with nature!!!

Mr. President, I live to walk outdoors each and everyday to breathe the fresh air of America, I love the landscape and the parks...nature makes up America the beautiful, and that is why we all need to contribute to preserve it.

My dad is a Fish Biologist that taught for 30 years at New Mexico State University and did his research on the Gila trout, a native trout in the Gila National Forest on the Arizona/New Mexico border, that was recently down-listed from endangered to threatened status, which would have not been possible without federal funding and protection of wilderness areas and endangered species. Without protection, the Gila trout and wilderness habitat, would not still be there for future generations to enjoy.

I am a fan of your administration and think you're doing a great job. As someone who works in a busy metropolitan office (Rockville, MD). It is a special treat to take weekends in the summer and 'check out' from the hustle-n-bustle by spending time camping outdoors. After a long hard day of hiking it is soothing for me to sit back and zone out to the rhythm of mother nature. It's an evasion of everyday life where e-mails and cell-phones are constantly interrupting our thoughts/actions. Thanks for your work so far we appreciate you and your efforts,

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

AS a former Park Ranger in Michigan, I know by experience that people look forward to using their job vacations to see our National Parks, State Parks, city Parks, Trails, esp. forests to camp, fish, hunt, etc. Our majestic scenic mountains and rivers and our National Monuments. If you don't take full responsibility now, you will be the start of natural disasters and what our forefathers wanted for the people of our Land of The Free!!! Please govern yourself, accordingly and with respect to all citizens. Thank You!!! ;)

And most of all, my wife and I love the outdoors and can't get enough of it. We are so proud to live in a country that cares deeply for our environment for future generations.

I was an Eagle Scout, so this really hits home. I want my children to experience the same outdoors that I got to growing up by being able to go camping and rap

To many people, having access to great outdoor spaces makes life worth living. Certainly it has played a large role in shaping the experiences of our urban population. The city can't survive in a vacuum...we need to preserve these places set aside for us by our great forefathers.

As a fellow Chicagoan, you surely appreciate the chance to get away from a vibrant city to a place where "skyline" takes on a new and wonderful meaning...where the mind and body are liberated to explore the unknown...where serenity and awe are just a breathe away.

I am 51 years old, and I spend the majority of my leisure time enjoying the out of doors. Climbing, hiking, scrambling, camping etc. God willing, and access willing there will be more years to come. I dream for the next generations, the same opportunity and the open spaces I have enjoyed. Please help protect the lands and access.

This country was started with outdoor explorers and hunters. The ability to hunt, fish, and explorer, is within us put there by God.

I ride a mountain bike and I volunteer hundreds of hours a year to benefit the forests. Thank you

I was very poor growing up. This was the only thing our family had to do for fun. Let unthier under privileged families still enjoy one thing americans can afford. Not everyone gets treated liek the President.

Hello Mr. President, I love hiking and camping

I want my children to have the opportunities to explore and enjoy the outdoors the same way I have. Please make sure this happens.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Dear Beloved President Obama, I had the pleasure of knowing what it was like to go camping since I was a few months old in 1972 with my family to see 30 of the beautiful and unique 50 states! It's getting increasingly more difficult to see what was once open, free, after all, we are the land of the free but how much of that are we able to experience these days? These are some of my most precious memories not only of my family but also knowing what it is to appreciate my United States of America! Please be urgent about doing something to preserve the little we have left, to call our own Natural Wonders, because they still are! "If it's to be, it's up to me."- Mahatma Gandhi said that and I remind you of the power you have to be the change you wish to see not only here in the U.S. but in the WORLD!

Life is quite miserable for most people in this country, in this world actually. Hiking helps keep people sane.

Not only is it important for our future generations to come, but nature provides so much for us to live a well and balanced healthy lifestyle. We need you to help nature thrive! Thank you:)

This weekend I am hiking at one of my favorite locations along the Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore. During the end of summer and beginning of fall season, I try to get out to Cowles Bog at least once a week to watch the development of the season. Watching the trees transform into colorful blankets of leaves is one of the most profound moments in the human experience. Even if I am unable to visit all the national parks, monuments, forests, etc in America, I need to know they exist and are protected.

Dear Sirs I am E-mailing you concerning the Obama Administration's "America's Great Outdoors Initiative". Having spent many days of my life in the Northern prairies of our great country specifically North and South Dakota and Eastern Montana I passionately encourage you to include this national treasure better known as "America's Prairie Pothole Region" in your America's Great Outdoors Initiative. This region contains some of the last and best remaining natural waterfowl nesting habitat and is currently under severe degradation by continued pressures to convert virgin prairie lands and drainage of vital wetlands to croplands. In most cases these areas are of marginal value for agriculture purposes. On the other hand these same areas are necessary and vital for the continued wellbeing of our precarious continental waterfowl populations. As a member of Ducks Unlimited Delta Waterfowl and a number of other Conservation oriented organizations I ask for your support for including this treasured Northern American landscape in your America's Great Outdoors Initiative. I thank you in advance for your support of this request. sincerely

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Please designate the prairie pothole region of North Dakota South Dakota and Montana as a "Treasured Landscape" as part of the Obama Administration's America's Great Outdoors Initiative. As a falconer birdwatcher and duck hunter I am one of the millions of Americans who finds huge recreational opportunities in the prairie pothole region. As a biologist I value the rich ecological diversity of this area and its importance as breeding and staging grounds for migratory birds and other wildlife. As a taxpayer and observer of state and national policies I recognize the importance of jobs and revenue created by outdoor enthusiasts in the prairie pothole region. I strongly support the Administration's efforts to preserve protect and enhance these productive wetlands and grasslands. Please formally recognize the Prairie Pothole Region as a Treasured Landscape.

PORT strongly believes that strategic investments in our nation's iconic landscapes; working farms and ranches; and open, natural spaces for our country's urban youth are critical and timely. However, we ask for caution and balance in achieving these laudable conservation goals.

By eliciting input from land conservation leaders, working family farmers and ranchers, outdoor enthusiasts and the public at large through the local listening sessions, we anticipate and sincerely hope the results will demonstrate the diversity and depth of opinions, land uses as well as stewardship across the country.

A "one-size-fits-all" methodology to land conservation is clearly not appropriate throughout the country.

We especially urge you to remain true to and prioritize the stated objective of the America's Great Outdoors initiative to preserve working farms and ranches.

On behalf of the western states in which we live and work, we submit that the conservation of private ranch and farm lands is the most effective and efficient use of federal funds for land conservation.

The cost of a permanent conservation easement is about a third of the cost of outright fee purchase and is often far less expensive, particularly when negotiated by a community-based, local land trust. These conservation easements are perpetual, so a federal investment for this purpose assures the protection of open spaces for future generations.

Assurance of landowner compliance with the terms oftbe conservation easement is overseen by - and at the expense of - qualified conservation organizations, avoiding added burden and expense to federal agencies. Local land trusts are comprised of professional staff and volunteer boards familiar with the customs and needs of their communities.

PORT respectfully requests that you enhance the programs under your control that are working successfully here in the west and to consider mechanisms to expand their efficiency and ability to leverage conservation gains. Such programs include the Land and Water Conservation Fund; the Farm and Ranchland Protection Program (FRPP); and the Grasslands Reserve Program (GRP).

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Allowing Land and Water Conservation Fund dollars to be used for private land conservation of working agricultural lands through qualified conservation organizations would not only yield the best bang for the federal government's limited conservation bucks, but also generate greater public support to champion full funding for the Land and Water Conservation Fund, especially within agricultural and rural communities.

Agricultural land trusts are the fastest-growing sector of the land conservation movement because we are locally driven, locally managed, and overseen by local fiduciaries. We are proud to support the continued delivery of ecosystem services, natural resources and the protection of the working lands which produce food and fiber - and - the security of producing America's needs within our borders.

Most development before 1950 focused around centers, surrounded by expansive rural and natural landscapes. Forming a combined ecosystem, cities and smaller centers concentrated diversity and innovation in commerce and culture, while large areas of farms, woods, and wetlands generated a wide diversity of natural species. This interconnected pattern of central places and surrounding greenspaces, evolved over centuries and embedded in nature, has now segmented into suburban forms that mandate driving for every major movement. Commercial strips line most highways and residential sprawl spreads far into the countryside, fragmenting both communities and nature. Auto-dependency also fuels a basic contradiction: low-density sprawl creates high levels of traffic congestion.. Limited land, unlimited traffic aggravation, and escalating local taxes to service all those scattered subdivisions make the continued strip-and-sprawl conversion of outlying areas unsustainable. Global energy and climate concerns make policy changes even more urgent. A Greenway-inspired Centers and Greenspaces approach that re-centers most new development into walkable, mixed-use forms can protect our natural and agricultural heritage, end wasteful land, energy, and pollution practices, and provide a wider range of transportation choices, from walking, biking, and cars to transit alternatives

In January 2009, an Intermunicipal Task Force from the Town and Villages of Red Hook and Tivoli proposed zoning changes to save farms, protect rural character, reinforce traditional village centers, and promote economic development. The Centers and Greenspaces plan identified over 50 farms to be included in an Agricultural Business District, designed to replace the current mostly 3-acre suburban-scale zoning and permit greater business opportunities for farmers. The Town's existing purchase of development rights program would receive funds through incentive zoning for development located close to the Village. The zoning package included detailed Illustrative Plans and standards for walkable, mixed-use neighborhoods to ensure compatibility with existing centers and to provide design guidance for future development proposals. Instead of reacting to random development locations, the plan offers a positive vision for where growth is mutually beneficial, acting as an advertisement for new economic investment and streamlining the review process. A Fiscal Impact Study showed that the Centers and Greenspaces strategy could increase the commercial tax base and reduce the potential for town-wide residential development, limiting both sprawl and school tax impacts..

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Reinforce existing centers and main streets with new infill buildings and redevelopment;

Mix uses to promote walking from housing to stores, jobs, parks, schools and civic uses;

Integrate major centers with transit services;

Locally identify priority growth areas for close-in expansion and conversion of strip districts or subdivisions into new centers.

Employ a range of protection measures for farmland and natural wildlife areas;

Adopt rural and agricultural zoning, not suburban residential standards;

- Plan for continuous greenspace systems, rather than just parcel-based solutions;

Locally identify priority greenspaces for future public or private conservation.

In recent years, the concept of growing food for local consumption has become iconic to a healthy lifestyle, especially in light of the endemic obesity, diabetes and other chronic disease rates that have swept the nation as a result of poor dietary options and a lack of consumer education. It is against this background that the Rockland Farm Alliance (RFA) was formed in 2007. What began as a modest group of concerned citizens in Rockland County, with the help of the local Soil & Water Conservation District (SWCD) and USDA's Resource Conservation & Development (RC&D) office, has grown into an impressive coalition, poised to create much needed change. The goal of the organization is to create local food production into our suburban community in a portable model that can be adapted to and successfully deployed anywhere.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

According to US government sources, 81 % of the US population now lives in either cities or suburbs. There are many programs available to support rural agricultural development and under HUD, there are a few that are designed to address struggling urban populations, but there are no programs available to support agricultural development and food production in America's suburbs. For communities to truly reconnect to a local food source, it is critical that that food source be accessible. This means we must bring the farms to the suburbs and the small urban centers. The overall goal of the Rockland Farm Alliance is to develop replicable models for increasing local food production for these communities that house the majority of the population, through the creation of community agricultural models. We have already begun this process in suburban New York City, in Rockland County, New York, where we have created a nonpartisan community lead and government supported effort to reverse the exodus of local food production from our county.

There is no doubt that increasing public awareness of food quality and security issues have fueled a dramatic rise in efforts to develop and support local food production. The Know Your Farmer program has begun to empower citizens throughout the country to begin to take responsibility for their food. This flood of interest has spawned thousands of Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) programs, and they are growing exponentially. As participants in this effort, we founded the Rockland Farm Alliance so that we too can know our farmer. As leaders of this effort, we are developing a model based on the principles of sustainability; economic, social, and environmental. This model is being tested, documented and analyzed to support it's ultimate evolution into a program that can offer success to any community, with the participation and support of local leadership and the general public.

When a municipality purchases farm property, they are providing leadership to other communities around the country who want to preserve urban farmland as productive agricultural land. There are many established pro-farm efforts around the country, including active farmland protection programs and farmland trusts, along with many successful publicly-owned agricultural demonstration and education farms. The development of small acreage-publicly owned urban farms as thriving farming businesses with added social benefit is, however, cutting edge.

To keep farming viable, it is imperative that we build a strong agriCULTure-community connection which contributes to a vibrant local economy and stable local food system. Agriculture is a valuable local resource that preserves our open space, protects our heritage, increases local economic prosperity, and provides food security at the local and national level.

Additionally, we cannot stress enough that community coalition building at the outset is of paramount importance to the successful development and deployment of any such project. Demonstrated community support and involvement is another key success factor for the Farm. This includes an active and dedicated volunteer base to help with fundraising, assorted farm tasks, events planning and management and raising community awareness. The RFA is already well schooled in these tasks and prepared to leverage our membership base accordingly. Volunteer coordination is an important role that will likely demand a part-time employee to be truly successful.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Employing sustainable farming practices eliminates the need for chemical use and provides a safe environment for neighbors, visitors and farm employees, particularly for children. There are also other effective and highly-regarded sustainable farming practices that may be considered wise business choices for the farm in the future. Additionally, sustainable farming practices will attract beneficial insects and birds to the farm, helping with pest control and pollination.

Rockland County, NY consists of 174 square miles, 30% of which is parkland. There is also an abundance of open space not designated as parkland, much of it privately owned. Despite Rockland's modest size, there is ample agriculturally viable land in the County. As part of the Glynwood Center's Keep Farming© program, the RFA met with Rockland County Planning Department, who generated several useful maps, detailing soil quality, particularly prime agricultural soil zones and open space throughout the County. As a result of this research effort, and with input and support of RC&D and the County's SWCD, the RFA was able to begin identifying specific parcels of land in the County which would be well suited to implementation of a Small Acreage Community Farm. We are pleased to report that we are ready to begin development of the first of the identified parcels. The site is a retired farm in New City, NY (The Cropsey Farm) and the RFA will be developing a five acre parcel as Rockland County's first community farm. The project will be called, appropriately enough The Cropsey Community Farm. The Cropsey project is the first phase of an initiative that we hope to expand to every community in the County. The project focus is the agricultural development the 5 acre parcel of this former, now non-working farm. The Cropsey property is jointly owned by the County and the Town of Clarkstown, and is well situated in the heart of the County. ~ After reaching agreement with the County Executive and the Town Supervisor, the RFA began identifying objectives. These stated objectives are: • Working Sustainable Small Acreage Farm • Preserves green space in productive agriculture • Community-operated • Organic farming demonstrations • Educational opportunities developed by the SWCD/Cooperative Extension Service/ Local NGOs • Consensus-based management plan • Financially independent entity • Celebrates family farm heritage/community events highlighting local agriculture The RFA formally took possession of this land on June 27, 2010. The community has embraced this initiative with enormous enthusiasm, illustrating that the issue of food affects us all and transcends partisan politics.

Like any agricultural enterprise, launching the Cropsey Community Farm will entail significant initial capital investment. The Board of Directors have calculated that the start up costs for this project will be under \$100,000. We have instituted a membership drive, which we anticipate will raise \$25,000. We have also aggressively pursued grant funds for both the agricultural and educational initiatives planned for the Cropsey Farm. We anticipate that this two pronged fundraising campaign will cover the capital costs of creating the working farm. Future revenues to support the farm's long term overhead and maintenance will be generated by the CSA program and educational programs, which are targeted to both the local schools and general community.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Despite the novelty of this effort, we have already identified and are in discussion with municipal officials regarding two additional parcels in Rockland County, both of which are well suited to adoption of the Cropsey model. Reaching final agreement on these two properties will increase the acreage being farmed from 5 acres to 45, and there are many more potential sites available. There is little doubt that if our community is given the opportunity, we can continue to add local parcels of 4-20 acres, implementing this model, creating a sustainable community that both supports and is supported by their local farm.

With the guidance of a professional facilitator, each step in the development of the local community farm will be documented and analyzed, in order to continue to improve the model. This will ultimately result in an easily implemented program that almost any community can successfully develop and support.

Maintaining the environmental and economic integrity of the Maine Woods, the largest continuous expanse of largely undeveloped and unfragmented forest in the Eastern United States, a unique productive working forest with a vast array of nationally significant public values that private landowners have managed and the public, from near and far, has enjoyed for generations

Using Maine as a proving ground for collaborative on-the-ground conservation and stewardship strategies that apply federal programs to stretch tax dollars and conserve the nation's natural legacy far more effectively than ever before.

maintain a sustainably managed forest landscape, which continues to produce wood products and protects ecological and cultural values, while maintaining and improving recreational opportunities. It is an initiative that is not simply focused on sustaining a natural resource, but equally as important a way of life and an industry that has been the backbone of the state's economy for 150 years.

Maine can provide a new, cost-effective approach to landscape scale conservation that contrasts with some of the federal government's most noteworthy landscape conservation initiatives, such as the Chesapeake Bay, the Great Lakes and the Everglades. In those landscapes, the government faces the important, but costly, challenge of restoring degraded habitat and water resources.

Keeping Maine's Forests advocates for a different strategy that invests upfront and adds value.

We can act before the landscape is developed and fragmented.

We have the opportunity to invest in the long-term conservation and stewardship of a functioning ecosystem that supports nationally significant wildlife resources, a large timber resource that supplies globally competitive forest products industries, jobs essential to the rural economy, and world class outdoor recreation experiences.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

It is time to look at Maine's forests through a new lens. Historically, we have relied upon forest landowners to shoulder the brunt of the responsibility for maintaining the many values of the forest which directly benefit the public such as wildlife, stored carbon, and recreational access. These are invaluable public values and should be treated accordingly - rather than as liabilities which burden landownership. Keeping Maine's Forests seeks to redefine that relationship by offering new options and reward landowners for maintaining and enhancing forest values.

The Keeping Maine's Forests Initiative seeks to create an innovative and robust partnership among private, federal, state, and tribal interests to conserve Maine's forests and enhance stewardship

Maintain a stable or increasing flow of wood fiber

Promote healthy forests - sustainably managed

Safeguard key natural resources, particularly water resources

Conserve and enhance key fish and wildlife habitats

Provide abundant recreational opportunities.

Sustain local economies.

establishment of one or more pilot projects to be pursued over the next three years.

With 18 million acres of forest covering some 90% of its land area, Maine is the most forested state in the country. While known as the Pine Tree State, Maine's forests actually include an unusually diverse range of native hardwood and conifer species that vary in composition based upon location and elevation. These forests are home to a great diversity of plant and animal life and the source of clean water for Maine's 32,000 miles of rivers and streams, 6,000 lakes and ponds, and aquifers

The Maine forest is truly a sustainable resource that supports almost twice as much standing volume of timber today than it did 50 years ago.

The forests are the very heart and identity of the state. Today, Maine's forest products industry employs tens of thousands of workers who efficiently produce paper, lumber, furniture, along with rapidly emerging opportunities in energy and chemicals.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

The Maine Woods remain a fabled destination for anglers, hikers, hunters, paddlers, snowmobilers, campers and all who enjoy the outdoors. They provide an essential base for Tribal Nations to sustain cultural values and contribute to their livelihood.

With the emergence of climate change as today's greatest environmental challenge, Maine's vast forest resource takes on even greater importance to maintain the storage of carbon to combat the build-up of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere, to help replace the use of oil, and to maintain a contiguous forest landscape that will allow plants and animals to migrate and adapt to changing climate conditions

That a resource of such extraordinary value and national significance remains intact today is a testament to those who have owned and managed these lands through the generations. Unlike the vast expanses of public lands in the Western U.S., Maine's forests provide a wealth of public benefits, including recreational access, while largely remaining in private hands.

Landowners, loggers, mill owners, environmentalists, sportsmen and women, and recreationists have not always seen eye-to-eye on forest issues such as forest practices, motorized recreation, and land use regulations. However, these diverse interests joined together in Keeping Maine's Forests because they realize that they share a common goal to keep forests as forests.

Inspired by the enthusiasm for landscape conservation voiced by Interior Secretary Salazar and Agriculture Secretary Vilsack and their challenge to Maine to develop a broadly supported proposal involving diverse forest interests, the Steering Committee for Keeping Maine's Forests has worked intensely to develop the project proposal described in this document.

Cooperative endeavors over the past dozen years have led to the conservation of over two million acres of forest land in Maine - nearly 10% of the state's land area -- mostly through working forest conservation easements along with a lesser acreage of fee acquisitions. Key to this success has been the leadership of Maine's Congressional delegation and federal funding made available through programs such as Forest Legacy and the North American Wetlands Conservation Act. Keeping Maine's Forests seeks to build upon this success through an initiative that expands use of USDA and DOI conservation and stewardship programs which in turn can leverage additional state and private efforts.

For generations, the public has received a wealth of public benefits from Maine's forests, including access for recreation, with the costs largely being born by forest landowners. This was acceptable to the landowners at a time when many held land largely as a strategic timber reserve for their mills.

Keeping Maine's Forests seeks to reframe the relationship with forest landowners so that they are fairly compensated for the full suite of public values that their lands provide. This can involve purchasing development rights, providing incentives for good stewardship and developing markets for the purchase of ecosystem services. Creating a new partnership with forest landowners will bring predictability and stability back to Maine's forests in a way that will reward mill and woods workers, local residents, hunters, hikers, fishermen, investors, and the general public for many years to come.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

While all Maine's forests are truly of great value, the expanse of contiguous forest that stretches from the White Mountains along the Maine-New Hampshire border, north to the Allagash Wilderness Waterway and east to the Downeast coast is truly unique. Known to most as the "Maine Woods," it is valued as the state's primary source of forest products, home to the state's most revered outdoor recreation destinations, and an expansive unfragmented landscape supporting an array of wildlife found nowhere else in the eastern U.S. It encompasses approximately 12 million acres including most of the 10.5 million acres of unorganized territories unique in this day and age with no local government and few public roads, as well as adjacent forest lands in surrounding towns. It is an area with strong traditions and a rich history.

Scientists from the Wildlife Conservation Society have used satellite imagery, census data, and computer mapping technology to create maps showing the impact that humans have had on the world's natural ecosystems -- the human footprint. When viewed in this manner, it becomes abundantly clear that the forest which stretches across the northern half of Maine is indeed unique from a national perspective. The human footprint map shows with great clarity that the Maine Woods is the largest continuous expanse of unfragmented forest in the Eastern United States

According to The Nature Conservancy, this unbroken expanse of forestland comprises the largest intact temperate broadleaf and mixed forest in the country and one of the best examples in the world. As such, it is an ecological resource of global significance providing habitat for a great diversity of plant and animal life.

To gain a better appreciation for the resource, one needs to step inside Moose River Lumber Company, Madison Paper Industries, Old Town Fuel & Fiber or any of the over 200 forest products facilities in Maine that produce paper, lumber, energy and many other products.

For two centuries, most of the Maine Woods has been actively managed for timber feeding an industry that has, and continues to, play a central role in the state's economy. Today, Maine's forest products industry generates \$4.3 billion per year, accounting for over 40% of Maine's manufacturing sales and employing over 18,000 people (and indirectly supporting over 55,000 jobs).

In northern Maine, the forest products industry represents the cornerstone of the local and regional economy. From mill workers to woods workers to truckers, jobs created by Maine's forest products industry provide an important source of income for Maine families, communities and tribes

While global competition and the current recession have impacted these industries like others across the country, there is strong evidence and a conviction that the forest products industry will continue to be a mainstay of the Maine economy for many years to come both for traditional forest products and for new uses of wood for energy and chemicals.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

A recent study by the Maine State Planning Office found that Maine's forest products industry ranks first in the country in terms of its contribution to the state's economy and second in the nation in terms of its contribution to state jobs (based on available data). To ensure that the state's working forests remain productive long into the future, Maine's landowners have become national leaders in forest certification. Over 7.5 million acres of the state's forests have been certified by one of three programs that certify forest lands for sustainable forest management (Forest Stewardship Council, Sustainable Forestry Initiative and Tree Farm).

Another valued perspective of the Maine Woods is from a canoe while paddling down such iconic wild rivers as the Allagash, St. John, St. Croix or Machias; or from a mountain ridgeline on the Appalachian Trail in the "100-Mile Wilderness;" or from a snowmobile traveling along some 13,000 miles of maintained snowmobile trails.

Fly-fishing for wild brook trout on a remote pond, paddling for a week on a backcountry river, hunting moose or staying in a century-old sporting camp are experiences that are plentiful throughout the Maine Woods and virtually impossible to find anywhere else in the eastern United States. These extraordinary recreation opportunities support an important segment of Maine's tourism economy including outfitters and guides; inns, motels, restaurants and sporting camps; recreational vehicle and equipment stores, and many other enterprises that serve visitors to the Maine Woods.

The picture would not be complete without looking at the Maine Woods through a cultural lens, as the ancestral lands of Native American tribes including the Penobscot, Passamaquoddy, Maliseet and Micmac who sustainably manage their lands today in a manner that supports the cultural integrity and economic base of the tribes. The Maine Woods are also the backdrop for many Maine communities, like Jackman, Greenville, Fort Kent, Bethel, Rangeley, Millinocket and Grand Lake Stream whose heritage and economic vitality are intertwined with the surrounding woods. More broadly, the Maine Woods are indeed a part of the cultural fabric of Maine and the quality of life for its residents.

Maine Woods is over 95% privately owned and most is actively managed for timber production. The fact that these tremendous public benefits have been maintained across this entire area is a result of a stewardship ethic that historically runs deep in the private owners of these forests and Maine people who truly view the Maine Woods as a "treasured landscape."

The rich natural and cultural heritage of the Maine Woods make it an ideal location to create a new and transferable model for landscape conservation that reinforces traditional uses and, through a public-private partnership of remarkable scope and scale, ensures that they will carry forward into the future.

Severing of the direct ownership link between the mills and the timberlands means that the lands are treated independently as an investment whereas previously their primary purpose was to provide a secure source of raw material for a nearby mill.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Inherent in all of these perspectives is the reality that the public seeks assurances that the benefits provided by the forest -- healthy fish and wildlife habitat, wood supply, and public recreation - will be there in the future.

There is clear evidence that the new ownership regime is ready and willing to engage in conservation partnerships when sufficient resources are available.

Selling working forest conservation easements or high value recreational and ecological lands is proving to be attractive to many new owners enabling them to extract important revenue from their land base while meeting the public's desire for forest conservation.

Conservation organizations such as the Forest Society of Maine, The Nature Conservancy, Trust for Public Land, and the Downeast Lakes Land Trust have found that many new timberland owners are eager to take advantage of the opportunity to sell working forest easements as part of their overall business strategies, as it enables them to achieve their financial objectives while meeting public expectations.

Keeping Maine's Forests believes that a strategic investment in conservation and stewardship of the Maine Woods today will pay huge dividends to the public long into the future.

the steering committee required several months of intensive meetings to build trust among the parties and hammer out a set of objectives for the Keeping Maine's Forests initiative that were acceptable to all.

Operating at a landscape scale and Creating a partnership with private landowners to achieve the objectives outlined below through purchases (fee, easements, and potentially other creative mechanisms) from willing sellers, and incentives for sustainable forest management

Maintaining the most diverse, robust and economically beneficial forest products industry possible and the jobs that this industry provides. As well as supporting other related efforts to maintain and enhance Maine's forest products industry, this will require, but is not limited to, maintaining the supply of wood from Maine's forests; and, to the extent possible in a free market system, have wood supplies which are both reliable, stable in price, and verified as from sustainably managed forests.

Contributing to meeting Maine's energy needs by reducing our dependence on fossil fuels and high energy costs.

Protecting biodiversity (such as rare, threatened, and endangered species recognized at the federal, state, and tribal level, unique and exemplary natural areas, late successional forest features in working forests, and others similar, as well as maintaining, and where practicable, restoring viable populations of game and non-game wildlife).

Maintaining or enhancing existing public access for the full spectrum of existing recreational uses, and attracting an increased number of recreational users by selective investments in improved recreation facilities.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Preserving special places, e.g., old growth forests, areas with special recreational or cultural values, unique or exemplary natural features, and other similar features.

Maintaining and increasing carbon storage, thus contributing to reducing levels of atmospheric greenhouse gases.

Facilitating the adaptation of forest systems to a changing climate particularly by maintaining large contiguous and interconnected areas of forest.

Keeping Maine's Forests seeks a future that maintains both the environmental and economic integrity of the Maine Woods through a matrix of public land, private land permanently protected by conservation easement, land managed under long term agreements for habitat or ecosystem services and other private forest land. This matrix will help assure the vitality and competitiveness of the forest products industry, sustain a healthy and intact forest, protect valuable habitat and provide for public recreation.

This matrix, and its benefits to the industry and the people of Maine, can be achieved through thoughtful and creative design and use of a variety of financial incentives that reframe the public-private relationship - rewarding landowners for long-term assurances of public benefits provided by these forests, and through investments in acquiring conservation easements and fee conservation lands.

DOI's Climate Change Adaptation Initiative has established the North Atlantic Landscape Conservation Cooperative (along with other regional LCCs) to design plans for sustaining landscapes capable of maintaining healthy populations of fish, wildlife and plants in the face of climate change.

Through its WaterSMART initiative, DOI seeks to ensure stable, secure water supplies for future generations through a variety of strategies including protecting water resources from land uses that could impact the quality and quantity of fresh water supplies.

Keeping Maine's Forests' overarching goal - to maintain the forest resources and traditional uses across the Maine Woods - is ambitious. It will require the collaborative energies of the state, tribal and federal governments along with forest landowners, land trusts and many other private partners. While challenging, the goal is attainable.

The past dozen years have seen unprecedented levels of conservation investment in the Maine Woods increasing conservation ownership (both fee and conservation easement) from less than 8% of the Maine Woods in 1998 to around 23% today. The purpose of this proposal is to maintain this momentum by embarking upon a new initiative that offers a comprehensive array of conservation options and stewardship tools for forest landowners who wish to take advantage of them.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

After the pilot project(s) has been established, the Keeping Maine's Forests Steering Committee will evaluate the project(s) and assess how well it has achieved the diverse objectives of Keeping Maine's Forests. Based upon that evaluation, the Steering Committee will decide whether to expand the initiative to other lands and how it should be modified to meet the needs of forest landowners and the public.

Maine landowners and conservation partners have demonstrated their ability to work together with state and federal agencies and accomplish forest conservation at a landscape level. The West Branch Project (329,000 acres), Katahdin Forest (Project (246,000 acres), and Downeast Forest Partnership (339,000 acres) are three of the most prominent examples of the extraordinary conservation partnerships that have occurred in recent years.

Keeping Maine's Forests seeks to build upon the foundation and momentum created by these efforts through one or more pilot projects that: Connect together and expand upon existing conservation ownerships;

Provide attractive alternatives for landowners who have elected not to sell conservation easements under the existing programs;

Offer forest stewardship opportunities that are attractive to landowners and sustain and enhance the public values of Maine forests; and

Utilize federal stewardship and conservation programs in creative and coordinated ways.

The 21,700-acre West Grand Lake Community Forest is the nationally top ranked Forest Legacy project currently being considered by Congress for FY '11 funding. By protecting 17 miles of lakeshore, it conserves the last large unprotected shores of West Grand Lake and Grand Lake Stream, a world-class angling destination that supports many nature-based tourism jobs.

Atlantic salmon restoration efforts, such as those led by Project SHARE (Salmon Habitat and River Enhancement), have received almost \$5 million of federal funds over the past decade from multiple federal agencies including the National Marine Fisheries Service, NRCS, USFS, USFWS, and National Fish & Wildlife Foundation, along with a tremendous amount of technical assistance from several of these agencies. Existing NRCS programs have been effectively used by Downeast forest landowners, such as the Passamaquoddy Tribe, Penobscot Nation, and the Downeast Lakes Land Trust, who are eligible under existing program criteria.

One of the region's largest forest landowners is interested in selling a working forest conservation easement over major portions of its extensive Downeast ownership (totaling several hundred thousand acres). An initial focus would be a large block of forest land which stretches from Sunhaze National Wildlife Refuge on the west to Moosehorn National Wildlife Refuge on the east. The landowner's forest lands benefit from a wood supply agreement for pulpwood assuring good silviculture and a continued timber flow for the foreseeable future.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

These lands also encompass critical habitat for Atlantic salmon, exemplary natural communities, significant wading bird and waterfowl breeding and deer wintering areas, and many miles of established snowmobile and ATV trail networks. The proposed easement acquisition would connect many existing conservation areas and create a continuous corridor of permanently conserved forest land from the Penobscot River to the Bay of Fundy.

A proposed 12,000+-acre conservation initiative in the East Grand Lake watershed would conserve over 27 miles of pristine lakeshore on East Grand Lake and five other ponds along with an expansive wetlands complex along the international border in the Upper St. Croix River region. Preliminary plans call for a working forest conservation easement while assuring public recreation opportunities on East Grand Lake.

Several Downeast landowners, owning several hundred thousand acres of forest land, have expressed strong interest in participating in a pilot stewardship program that would provide fair compensation for management practices that address a range of ecological and recreational benefits derived across the forest landscape. New approaches to habitat management utilizing umbrella wildlife species would be tested while incorporating federal wildlife priorities such as Atlantic salmon restoration, migratory bird habitat and wetlands conservation.

The Manomet Center for Conservation Science has offered to help lead a pilot stewardship initiative in the Downeast region that would establish a payment for ecosystem services program. Manomet's efforts would be tied into national efforts being pursued by USDA's Office of Ecosystem Services and Markets and the North Atlantic Landscape Conservation Cooperative.

Recent conservation successes in the region using Forest Legacy funding are exemplary for striking an effective balance at maintaining the working forest, providing high-value recreational opportunities (motorized and non-motorized), and protecting water quality and critical habitats. Looking ahead, the region is well suited to meet new national conservation directions that recognize a landscape view of forest land conservation, both to maintain the forest economy and to provide a corridor of habitat across the landscape that will allow plants and animals to travel to suitable habitat in order to keep pace with climate change.

The recently completed 3,600-acre Stowe Mountain project in the Mahoosuc Mountains provides an excellent example of how strategic use of conservation funding can maintain a wide range of important public values. In an area where surrounding forest ownerships had been subdivided and developed, a working forest conservation easement was purchased that kept the property in active timber production, preserved critical links in regional hiking and snowmobile trails, and preserved high elevation ecological areas. The project was funded through a combination of Forest Legacy, state and private funds.

Nearby to Stowe Mountain in Riley Township, a timber investment company donated a working forest conservation easement on 6,700 acres surrounding Robinson Peak adjacent to state lands in 2008. This project demonstrates how the changing ownership patterns in the Maine Woods have created new conservation opportunities and how federal and state tax laws can encourage forest land stewardship (the owners received a tax benefit for their donation).

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Heart of the High Peaks - The High Peaks region of Maine's Western Mountains (the mountainous area located between Carrabassett Valley and Rangeley) is one of three high mountain regions in Maine and the only one without significant conservation protection. It includes nine of Maine's 4000+ foot peaks, the largest contiguous block of land in Maine above 2,700 feet, and one of the largest roadless areas in the state. The high elevation of the headwaters to five river systems means this region has the clearest and coldest free-running waters in Maine, supporting the state's largest concentration of wild brook trout streams.

Landowners of nine parcels of land totaling over 50,000 acres in the High Peaks area (straddling Crocker Mountain, Mount Abram, and Saddleback Mountain), have expressed interest in conservation transactions. These lands include extensive high mountain terrain near the Appalachian Trail, documented habitat for Canada Lynx, Peregrine Falcons and the Bicknell's Thrush, Brook Trout, and successful spawning streams for sea-run Atlantic salmon.

Negotiations with some landowners have progressed further than others. A Forest Legacy application has recently been submitted for two candidate projects, a 12,000-acre ownership along Crocker Mountain, in Carrabassett Valley, and a nearly 6,000-acre parcel along Orbeton Stream.

Numerous Western Maine landowners, owning tens of thousands of acres, have responded positively to the potential opportunity to participate in a pilot stewardship program that would compensate them for the public benefits derived from their land. One area which would benefit from such a program is the Orbeton Stream valley (near Saddleback Mountain). Orbeton Stream, a headwater stream of the Kennebec River, is well known for brook trout fishing and is a traditional spawning ground for sea run Atlantic salmon. One of the major landowners in the valley has indicated a willingness to consider participation in stewardship programs that would both improve timber operations and enhance recreational opportunities along Orbeton Stream.

Looking more broadly at the region, Keeping Maine's Forests has identified four "Demonstration Landscapes" within the Maine Woods ranging in size from 925,000 acres to 2,600,000 acres to illustrate the potential outcomes that could be achieved through the Keeping Maine's Forests initiative.

In each of these areas, which are described on the following pages, there exists: An extraordinary array of conservation values of statewide, tribal and national significance; An existing base of conserved lands (23% - 35%); Forest landowners owning substantial acreages who have expressed interest in pursuing forest conservation and stewardship opportunities; and, Experienced non-profit conservation organizations prepared to take the lead on major conservation initiatives within the region.

As resources and landowner interest permit, Keeping Maine's Forests is prepared to pursue pilot projects in all of the Demonstration Landscapes and beyond, as there are a wealth of exceptional places and resources on lands outside of the identified demonstration landscapes that are essential to the overall integrity of the Maine Woods and fully deserving of conservation and stewardship efforts

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

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Allagash & St. John Rivers Size: 2,100,000 acres Description: This demonstration landscape is defined by two great wild free-flowing rivers, including the longest free-flowing river in the eastern U.S., and the remote forest lands that surround them. The 92-mile Allagash Wilderness Waterway, the first state-managed "wild" river in the national Wild and Scenic River System, was created through a cooperative state-federal effort in the 1960's and conservation of the St. John River has become a top national priority for The Nature Conservancy over the past decade. These intact river systems and the unfragmented forest landscape provide critical habitat for the federally threatened Canada lynx, the endangered Furbish's Lousewort and other rare species. Stretches of the St. John River corridor contain some of the highest concentrations of rare plants in Maine, along with week-long backcountry paddling opportunities with exciting whitewater. These remote rivers and forests offer some of the finest backcountry recreational experiences anywhere and support the employment of many local guides. These forest lands have been harvested for many generations providing surrounding mills with a continual flow of raw material.

Conserved Lands: Approximately one-third of the Allagash & St. John Rivers Demonstration Landscape is currently conserved, mostly through working forest easements. The primary fee ownerships include the state's ownership within the Allagash Wilderness Waterway and The Nature Conservancy's ownership along the St. John River.

Moosehead to Katahdin Size: 925,000 acres Description: This demonstration landscape extends between two extraordinary places of national renown - from the eastern shore of Moosehead Lake, Maine's largest lake, to the boundary of Baxter State Park and Mount Katahdin. It encompasses the famed "100-Mile Wilderness" section of the Appalachian Trail (AT), the most remote section of the entire route between Georgia and Maine. It includes over 200 lakes and ponds, including the largest concentration of remote ponds in Maine many of which support wild native brook trout populations which are unique in the U.S. and which have spawned the establishment of many traditional Maine sporting camps over the past century that continue to flourish and attract clients from near and far. The area includes abundant critical habitat for the threatened Canada lynx. In addition to 100 miles of the AT, the Moosehead to Katahdin Demonstration Landscape is also a haven for motorized recreation interests with over 150 miles of maintained snowmobile trails, along with extensive opportunities for cross-country skiing and snowshoeing. This demonstration landscape is surrounded by diverse forest products facilities including hardwood and softwood saw mills, paper mills and wood energy plants.

Conserved Lands: The Moosehead to Katahdin Demonstration Landscape has been the focus of public and private conservation initiatives over the past decade led by The Nature Conservancy, the Appalachian Mountain Club, and The Trust for Public Land. They, along with other federal, state, and local partners, have facilitated strong federal investments through the Forest Legacy Program with both TNC and AMC becoming major conservation landowners in the region. To date, approximately one-third of the demonstration landscape is under conservation ownership or easements.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Western Mountains and Lakes Size: 1,200,000 acres Description: The Western Mountains and Lakes Demonstration Landscape encompasses a spectacular array of remarkably accessible natural features including the Rangeley Lakes, the Mahoosuc Mountains, the Upper Androscoggin River Headwaters and the High Peaks Region (10 of the 14 highest mountains in Maine). The region serves as the key conservation connection between the White Mountain National Forest in New Hampshire and the Maine Woods. The Appalachian Trail traverses the demonstration landscape encompassing some of the AT's most noteworthy features such as Saddleback Mountain and Mahoosuc Notch. The diverse landscape provides critical wildlife habitat ranging from expansive alpine ridges to the wetland complexes of the Umbagog National Wildlife Refuge. The area is a favorite destination of outdoor enthusiasts including angling on the Rangeley Lakes, Rapid River, and other pristine waters, hiking the region's many mountains, skiing and snowmobiling scenic trails, and sightseeing along the Rangeley Lakes National Scenic Byway. The counties encompassing this Demonstration Landscape have the highest percentage of jobs in the forest products industry of anywhere in Maine. The Penobscot Indian Nation has 42,000 acres of trust land in the area that it managed for forestry, wildlife, and other natural and cultural values.

Conserved Lands: About one-third of Western Mountains and Lakes Demonstration Landscape is under permanent conservation ownership or easement. Federal ownership includes the White Mountain National Forest, Umbagog National Wildlife Refuge, and the Appalachian National Scenic Trail. Other federal investments include several successful Forest Legacy Projects in the Grafton Notch and Rangeley region and over 110,000 acres of the Pingree forest conservation project.

Near term conservation opportunities: Ten different parcels totaling approximately 57,000 acres, approximately half easement projects and half fee projects, are in various stages of negotiations with a wide variety of landowners.

Downeast Size: 2,600,000 acres Description: This area is distinctive for its large lake and wetland systems and is renowned for its outstanding outdoor recreation destinations ranging from the world-class angling opportunities at Grand Lake Stream to the backcountry Machias River canoe route. It includes the Downeast coastal river watersheds, the U.S. portion of the St. Croix International Waterway, and eastern headwaters of the Penobscot River. Five federally designated free-flowing Atlantic salmon rivers occur here, along with significant brook trout and landlocked salmon fisheries. The area features Maine's greatest diversity of peatlands, which is unequalled in the nation, Globally Important Bird Areas designated by the American Bird Conservancy, and 17 extensive Beginning with Habitat Focus Areas, which are of statewide wildlife significance. The Downeast Priority Landscape serves as a primary wood basket for a diverse forest products economy including mills in Baileyville, Bucksport, Chester, and Old Town, as well as several biomass plants. The Penobscot Indian Nation and Passamaquoddy Tribe have 49,000 and 69,000 acres of trust lands respectively in the area that they manage for forestry, wildlife, and other natural and cultural resources.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Conserved Lands: Over one-half million acres of the Downeast Priority Landscape are currently conserved. Federal conservation lands include the Moosehorn and Sunkhaze National Wildlife Refuges as well as over 94,000 acres conserved through the Forest Legacy Program. The Downeast Lakes Forestry Partnership "Sunrise" easement is one of Maine's largest working forest easements permanently conserving over 300,000 acres of sustainably managed forest lands. The area includes two large community forests.

Near term conservation opportunities: Seven parcels totaling approximately 285,000 acres, primarily easement projects, are available for conservation.

North American Wetlands Conservation Act With wetlands so prevalent throughout the Maine Woods, NAWCA grants (typically for \$1 million) have been used extensively in Maine with great success both for fee and easement acquisitions.

NAWCA has recognized the value of landscape level conservation and has embraced working forest easements as an effective strategy for wetlands and wildlife habitat conservation.

Cooperative Endangered Species Conservation Fund - ESA Sect. VI RLAG grants have been used successfully to protect Atlantic salmon habitat both by fee and easements.

Healthy Forest Reserve Program HFRP, which is not subject to the same limitations as other NRCS programs, has played an important role helping a number of large landowners develop forest management plans that will sustain or improve Canada lynx habitat.

Cooperative Forestry Assistance Program The Cooperative Forestry Assistance Program has proven an effective tool in engaging family forest owners in active management of their woodlands, creating long-term relationships between family forest owners and private consulting forester, and enhancing access to the USDA conservation programs listed herein and/or forest certification programs.

Office of Ecosystem Markets Emerging markets for forest ecosystem services could create significant new income streams for forest landowners and communities. The proposed KMF pilot stewardship project offers a potential proving ground for an ecosystem services model.

North Atlantic Landscape Conservation Cooperative This stewardship model proposed by Keeping Maine's Forests fits in perfectly with the LCC. Keeping Maine's Forests would hope that its stewardship initiatives could become a demonstration area for the LCC's efforts.

Gulf of Maine Coastal Program The program has played an important technical assistance and advisory role for implementation of conservation projects in the Maine Woods beginning with the Pingree project in 2002 providing habitat information and assisting with grant funding through USFWS programs.

The Keeping Maine's Forests initiative will increase demand for the program's advisory and technical assistance services.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

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Tribal Wildlife Grants Maine's tribes have substantial forest land ownerships and have been integrally involved in major conservation initiatives such as the Penobscot River Restoration Project. TWG grants have enabled the tribes to take a leadership role in resource stewardship.

As active participants in the Keeping Maine's Forests initiative, Maine's tribes will look to expand stewardship activities on their forest lands.

Rivers, Trails Conservation Assistance Program RTCA has played an important supporting role in the development of numerous recreation projects in the Maine Woods such as the Northern Forest Canoe Trail.

Keeping Maine's Forests proposes a ground-breaking collaborative effort involving USFS, NRCS, USFWS, and NPS working together with their state and tribal counterparts, landowners and non-profits to create a new model for stewardship incentives that is: 1) based upon the latest and best science; 2) available and attractive to forest landowners; and 3) provides a cost-effective approach to maintaining and enhancing a wide range of ecosystem services found in the Maine Woods. Utilizing the latest science regarding the habitat requirements of certain umbrella species could serve as a foundation for the stewardship program.

Over the past months, the Keeping Maine's Forests Steering Committee has wrestled with developing a set of common principles and translating those principles into this proposal. It has not been an easy process, and the group is aware that many challenges lie ahead. Nonetheless, we have created a foundation for collaborative action on forest issues that is unprecedented in Maine. In these times of political polarization, this achievement is noteworthy.

As part of the process of developing this proposal, Maine landowners owning more than 10,000 acres within one of the four Demonstration Landscapes were surveyed to gauge their interest in pursuing conservation or stewardship opportunities that might become available through Keeping Maine's Forests. Of 42 landowners surveyed, approximately half expressed an active interest in pursuing either a conservation and/or stewardship project, another third wanted to see how the program evolves before pursuing a project, and less than 15% expressed no interest in Keeping Maine Forests opportunities.

Maine has one of the strongest land trust communities of any state in the nation including numerous groups whose mission and expertise focuses on conserving forest lands, such as the Forest Society of Maine and the Small Woodland Owners Association of Maine Land Trust. Additionally there are key land trusts whose geographic focus centers on the Maine Woods such as the Downeast Lakes Land Trust, Mahoosuc Land Trust and the Rangeley Lakes Heritage Trust. Regional and national organizations such as The Nature Conservancy, Trust for Public Land, Appalachian Mountain Club, The Conservation Fund and the New England Forestry Foundation have all taken on major forest conservation initiatives involving hundreds of thousands of acres in Maine over the past decade. There is no question that Maine has non-profit partners capable of taking on the challenges and opportunities contained within this proposal.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Landscape conservation, climate change adaptation, sustainable forestry and payments for ecosystem services are just a few of topics that are at the forefront of the environmental research agenda and of direct relevance to Keeping Maine's Forests. Maine's scientific community has taken a leading role in the inquiry of these issues, developing on-the-ground programs to apply their findings. The Maine Department of Inland Fisheries & Wildlife in collaboration with Maine Natural Areas Program, Maine Audubon and others initiated a statewide approach to landscape conservation in 2000 through their Beginning with Habitat initiative and the development of a State Wildlife Action Plan.

Since 1975, the Cooperative Forest Research Unit at the University of Maine, a landowner-university cooperative whose members own over 8 million acres of the Maine Woods, has been conducting on-the-ground research on sustainable forestry. The scientists at CFRU seek to answer real questions about real management challenges such as how to best sustain quality habitat for the Canada lynx.

The Climate Change Institute at the University of Maine is a national leader in researching the impacts of climate change on forest ecosystems and the Manomet Center for Conservation Science has focused its recent research initiatives on developing a science-based approach to payments for ecosystem services for forest landscapes. These and other highly regarded Maine institutions are prepared to assist in the implementation of the Keeping Maine Forest initiative.

The Keeping Maine's Forests initiative is a natural outgrowth of other endeavors of state government that have focused on the Maine Woods. For the past 40 years, Maine's Tree Growth Tax Program has helped Maine landowners maintain their property as productive woodlands and supported Maine's wood products industry by assessing property taxes on enrolled forest lands on the basis of forest productivity value, rather than market value.

The Maine Department of Conservation has worked with Maine landowners and the forest products industry to make Maine the national leader in certifying forest lands for sustainable management with over 7.5 million acres now certified by the Forest Stewardship Council, the Sustainable Forestry Initiative or the Tree Farm program. The Maine Bureau of Parks & Lands has dual certification of its public reserved lands and has managed those lands for multiple uses with a minimum of public controversy.

Since its creation in 1988, the Land for Maine's Future Program (LMF) has contributed \$130 million to land and easement acquisitions including many large projects in the Maine Woods, often providing the state-required match for federal land acquisition funding programs. Maine voters have demonstrated their strong conservation ethic by consistently passing land acquisition bonds with support typically topping 60% including strong support from the state's northern counties. Maine's senators and congressional representatives have been stalwart supporters of federal funding for Maine's forest conservation projects.

Discussion Question 1

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Over the past 35 years, the policies of Maine's Land Use Regulation Commission (LURC), which has responsibility for planning and regulation of the 10.5 million acres of unorganized territories, have sought to maintain a forest land base that will continue to support a forest products industry, wildlife and outdoor recreation including a unique transfer-of-development-rights program that allows large forest landowners to develop suitable portions of their ownership in exchange for permanent conservation of other lands.

Research needs: The plan will identify research tasks that need to be completed in order to effectively implement Keeping Maine Forests as more specifically presented below.

Outreach to forests interests, local communities and the general public: The plan will lay out a public information program designed to keep stakeholders and the public fully informed about the objectives and progress of Keeping Maine's Forests and solicit public input at key points in the process.

Collaboration with other efforts such as the North Atlantic Landscape Conservation Cooperative: The success of Keeping Maine's Forests will be, in part, dependent on how well its efforts are coordinated with other efforts around the region and country.

Management/Stewardship needs: The plan will address the substantial monitoring and stewardship responsibilities and costs that will result from the proposed easement and fee acquisitions and the proposed stewardship initiative.

Expected project outcomes: The plan will identify short-term and long-term project goals and expectations.

Evaluation mechanisms to strengthen the model: The plan will include specific methods and criteria by which to evaluate the effectiveness of the pilot projects and to revise strategies in order to strengthen the Keeping Maine's Forests initiative.

Keeping Maine's Forests believes that the core of the implementation plan can be developed within a six month timeframe because so much work has already been completed to date. At the same time that the Steering Committee is developing the implementation plan, forest landowners and their conservation partners can be working out details for the pilot project(s). Similarly, resource managers can be working with the scientific committee to construct the framework for a model forest stewardship program.

The pilot project phase of Keeping Maine's Forests is expected to last approximately three years. After the completion of the pilot projects, the Steering Committee will conduct a detailed evaluation of Keeping Maine's Forests, determine whether it should be expanded to new areas and recommend any changes that are needed to better achieve the established goals and vision.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

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Fundamental to the underlying principles of Keeping Maine's Forests is that landowner participation in stewardship and conservation efforts is purely voluntary. The purpose of the initiative is to create new opportunities for forest landowners that they can elect to pursue. No landowner will be required to take any action or penalized for not participating. Keeping Maine's Forests acknowledges and applauds the fact that many large forest landowners have proven to be stewards of their lands without any governmental involvement and may elect to continue in this manner.

We understand that a sustained effort will be required to meet the objectives of Keeping Maine's Forests. The initiative is structured to be scalable depending upon available funding with the expectation that the effort will begin with one or more pilot projects that prove their effectiveness in meeting the objectives of this effort before additional investments are made.

There is sufficient landowner interest and organizational capacity to work in several areas and on multiple land acquisition and stewardship efforts simultaneously should there be available project funding. Projects will be selected through a competitive process with funding to be provided only to projects that successfully achieve the goals of Keeping Maine's Forests and meet the requirements of the federal funding program.

The cost of working forest conservation easements in the Maine Woods has averaged less than \$150/acre easements in southern Maine have been more expensive);

Maine's forest products industry and forest-based recreation tourism in Maine together generate approximately \$6 billion annually in economic output.

Perhaps most revealing is the fact that since 1998, over \$280 million has been raised from public and private sources to acquire fee lands and conservation easements in the Maine Woods. Of that amount, over \$180 million came from private sources. These figures demonstrate the level of commitment that has already been made to the conservation of the Maine Woods and provides optimism that a true public-private funding partnership can be successful over the next decade and beyond.

Over the past months, the Keeping Maine's Forests Steering Committee has made tremendous progress in identifying common concerns and agreeing upon conservation and stewardship strategies to pursue as part of the proposed pilot projects. However, the Steering Committee members view this proposal and the Keeping Maine's Forests initiative as a dynamic effort that will evolve and improve based upon the experience with the pilot project(s), additional research and analysis, and ongoing discussion.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

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"Why would you go west," asked Henry David Thoreau over 150 years ago, "when Maine has everything?" In his travels through Maine's lakes, rivers, mountains, and forests, Thoreau recognized that he was experiencing one of the country's greatest natural treasures comparable to the grand landscapes of the west. Remarkably, the forest landscape witnessed by Thoreau is still largely intact today. Since Penobscot guides led Thoreau through the Maine Woods, the forests have grown multiple stands of timber sustaining Maine's forest industry. With a few exceptions, the trees, plants and wildlife witnessed by Thoreau in his rambles still can still be found in abundance. The sense of awe that Thoreau experienced is still common today among those who recreate there.

Through this proposal, Keeping Maine's Forests seeks to initiate an unprecedented partnership - a partnership that will work to ensure that, in 150 years, the Maine Woods are still providing the wealth of public benefits, from wood to wildlife, that they do today. Keeping Maine's Forests would help to sustain the tradition of private ownership and stewardship that has characterized this region and fueled Maine's economy. To do so requires that we develop new approaches to share the responsibility for maintaining the valued resources and outstanding recreation opportunities that the Maine Woods provide.

The specifics of the Keeping Maine's Forests proposal are divided into two categories: Conserving the Forest Landscape and Enhancing Forest Stewardship. These are two of the three legs of the stool upon which the future of the Maine Woods depends. The remaining leg is sustaining rural economies through strategies that will maintain and expand forest based industries, including traditional forest products, energy and forest based tourism. These rural development strategies will be presented in a separate proposal that is currently under development.

Keeping Maine's Forests Long-term Objectives: The Keeping Maine's Forests Initiative seeks to support private ownership of actively managed forest lands utilizing a range of conservation tools that keep them as forest, protect significant ecological values, ensure sustainable forest management and guarantee public access. Where high value ecological, cultural, and recreational lands exist, fee acquisition from willing sellers will likely be the most appropriate strategy to protect the public's interest. These could include areas such as riparian corridors, old growth forests, wetland complexes and other unique natural communities, trail corridors, popular recreation destinations, critical wildlife habitat, and areas that include a high concentration of these resource values. In addition, where there is community interest, Keeping Maine's Forests would support the establishment of community forests.

It is a goal of Keeping Maine's Forests to maintain or increase the overall timber output from Maine. Acquisition of working forest easements in the Maine Woods will help prevent the loss of land from the timber base that would otherwise be subdivided or developed.

However, in addition to simply keeping forests as forests, the Keeping Maine's Forests initiative proposes to pursue measures that will help to ensure that, in accord with landowner objectives, the opportunity for timber production is maintained on these lands for the foreseeable future such as: Creating an easement template that does not diminish the ability of landowners to provide a sustainable flow of timber to Maine's forest products facilities;

Discussion Question 1

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(cont.)

When evaluating potential forest conservation projects, the highest priority projects will be those which protect exceptional ecological or recreational values, and/ or maintain active forest management consistent with sustainable forest management principles;

Assessing the feasibility and cost of other mechanisms such as incentives for stewardship that will help support an active forest products industry consistent with sustainable forest management principles.

Of the 2.1 million acres of forest land conserved in Maine since 1998, about 80% has been through conservation easements and the remainder in fee acquisitions. Of those lands acquired in fee by both the State and non-profit organizations, most have continued to be actively managed for timber production (though typically in a less intensive manner), a practice which Keeping Maine's Forests seeks to continue so as to minimize impact on timber supply. While it is anticipated that timber production may be reduced on some of the fee lands acquired, efforts can be made to offset this through enhanced productivity elsewhere. Over the past 50 years, Maine's landowners have doubled the harvest from their timberlands while, over the same period, almost doubling the standing volume of timber in the woods. With a concerted effort to increase productivity, this trend can, and should, continue into the future. In particular, smaller ownerships (mostly in the southern portion of Maine) are a seriously underutilized resource growing more than twice as much wood than is currently being harvested.

If the pilot project phase proves successful, the Keeping Maine's Forests initiative is intended to be a sustained effort over many years, learning and improving along the way, with the ultimate goal of a broader landscape of conserved forest lands that are privately owned and sustainably managed for timber production with selected fee conservation lands embedded within this landscape. The extent of the conserved landscape and the mix of conservation and stewardship tools utilized across that landscape will depend upon the results of the pilot project phase described earlier and the refinements made to the approach outlined here based on what is learned from the pilot project, as well as landowners' desire to participate (all transactions are on a willing seller basis) and availability of resources to implement the Keeping Maine's Forests initiative.

This landscape vision recognizes that there is an appropriate place and need for well-sited residential and tourism related development within the Maine Woods in and near established communities and resort facilities. Moreover, strategic siting of resource-dependent industrial facilities and alternative energy generation such as wind power should be provided for within the Maine Woods.

Legacy Forest Legacy has been used extensively in Maine with great success - providing some of the nation's highest scoring projects and those with the greatest conservation impact for the price.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

The forests of what is now Maine had sustained the native tribes, and had been sustainably managed by the tribes, for 10,000 years. Tribes continue to practice culturally and traditionally appropriate natural resources management practices today on Indian Territories and Trust lands acquired under the terms of the 1980 Maine Indian Land Claims Settlement Act and 1991 Micmac Settlement Act. Income from the sale of timber provides much needed revenue for tribal government operations and the harvesting of raw materials for culturally relevant activities allows tribal people to continue practicing indigenous traditions. Many of the tribes' land management initiatives support the goals outlined in the Keeping Maine's Forests project.

The tribes manage their land holdings for long term sustainability while providing a range of beneficial uses. Indian Territory and Trust lands are managed to maintain and enhance ecological integrity, respectful of the diverse fish, wildlife, and plant populations that depend on these forests for their survival. The protection of riparian buffer zones, wetlands, and other environmentally sensitive areas are given special recognition in the development of tribal forest management plans.

The implementation plan for the pilot project phase will include: Budget based upon anticipated federal, state and private funding: The plan will establish a budget for the pilot project phase of Keeping Maine's Forests.

Solicitation and selection procedures for pilot projects: The plan will establish a set of project selection criteria that build upon the following Keeping Maine Forest project principles: Maintaining timber supply to support a diverse and robust forest products industry (priority to be given to projects that include mechanisms to ensure this outcome)

Promoting healthy forests - sustainably managed;

Reducing Maine's dependence on fossil fuels;

Protecting biodiversity;

Maintaining public access for diverse recreation opportunities;

Preserving special places;

Maintaining or increasing carbon storage; and

Facilitating adaptation of forest systems to climate change.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Modifications to federal programs required to achieve desired outcomes: The plan will propose any modifications needed to federal programs to effectively implement the Keeping Maine Forests agenda.

I'll keep it short. Our national parks are one of the last places that I can go to seek mental, physical, and spiritual renewal. They are the true temples of God's own making and not man-made heated and air-conditioned energy hogging boxes that we call a church. The last places to walk amongst, see, smell, hear, and touch the divine. Please do all you can to help others to experience them and to save them from our selfish ways that threaten their future.

I never recognized how unique and invaluable our National Parks are until I traveled to Europe. Europeans everywhere I went asked me if I had ever seen the Grand Canyon or been to Arches in Utah or Yosemite or Yellowstone. Although these places are underappreciated by many Americans, it is clear to me now that they bring prestige to the USA on a global scale. Every national park that I've been to has as many foreign visitors as Americans. This surprised me at first, but now I realize that foreigners travel to the USA specifically to see some of the most incredible natural landscapes in the world. Since we live in a country so abundant with natural beauty, Americans tend to take this for granted. However, the beauty that is protected by our National Park System transcends all boundaries of race, culture, and time. Everyone can find peace and overwhelming beauty by visiting these areas. Please take all measures necessary to strengthen the NPS and encourage all Americans to experience these wonderful places to the fullest with minimal impact to the natural world. This is truly a place for everyone to enjoy.

I love America's National Parks, Monuments, and Battlefields. They are something I cherish. Last week I was at the funeral of my father-in-law at Indian Gap National Cemetery. We had a 7-hour wait for our flight from Philadelphia back to Albuquerque and spent most of it at Valley Forge. As a child, my dad, who was a college professor, took us on vacations with National Parks at the center of each trip. I learned a great deal from ranger talks and hikes and the small learning centers at each park HQ. Some of my fondest memories are from times spent in National Parks. It is my wish that the National Park system be fully funded so every inch of each park is kept open for people to explore while protecting the land for future generations. The NPCA tells me that there are funds in the Land and Water Conservation Fund that are not spent for their intended purpose. Please remedy that problem. As a taxpayer and voter, I am in favor of setting aside new lands and monuments for the National Park System. I want the history of the USA and the rich beauty of the land preserved for myself and for the future. Thank you for your time.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

I am very fortunate to live near the Point Reyes National Park and it is my church. I have always found the outdoors to be a soothing magical place where whatever is weighing on me comes back in a more manageable perspective after I've been hiking or out somewhere in nature- open spaces open us up. Our national parks remind us all of what is truly important and beautiful and it keeps us small and wondering and in awe. Many of our parks exist solely because someone loved a tree or a stream and wanted it protected from private enterprise and development. Ken Burns' documentary on our national parks said it all so perfectly and clearly portrayed them as our greatest treasure and as a creation that makes us a truly great country. And yet our parks are still threatened daily- our only designated wilderness area here within the Point Reyes National Park is currently facing serious threats from private enterprise which could begin the slow encroachment of our parks throughout the country. I am turning sixty this year and so was fortunate to grow up when kids could bump around in the outdoors and explore the wonders of their local creek and forest. These are critical components of a child's education and our current generation has been denied these experiences unless they are lucky to have parents who have the time and money to make it happen. I believe we need to make these experiences available to all kids. I am also old enough to remember when the schools had money to include outdoor education weeks in their curriculum and as a teacher I see the yearning and excitement the kids have for any experience out in nature. Somehow as a country we have learned to value a sole quest for money and have lost the spiritual balance that an experience out in nature can provide. You can't love the environment unless you've been given the opportunity to be out in it. The parks feed our soul and also protect habitat for wildlife while many species are slowly disappearing from our planet. I support your initiative- and perhaps more government jobs within our parks could be created thereby helping the parks and helping with unemployment. Your initiative will support national parks and bring them the national attention they deserve and the continued protection they need. Thank you for all you have been attempting to do and for considering my comments.

I would like to urge you as President of our great country to fully support our National Parks for the benefit of our people and our visitors from abroad. I personally have learned so very much about our history by visiting National Parks throughout my 36 years on earth. When I think back on my childhood and early adult life my most vivid memories are always those spent with my family at places like Ninety Six SC Castillo De San Marcos FL Fort Frederica GA Gettysburg PA ...the list goes on and on I very much appreciate our national parks and know that many many others do as well. I can think of no better place that you can spend time outdoors spend time with family and/or friends learn about history and about nature all in the same location and all for what is usually a very reasonable fee or even free (paid by taxes) As do many other people these days I have a great many friends from around the world. I have close family in South Africa and in the UK Canada and Australia and many friends in these places and others. One statement almost without fail that they have to say about our country is how very much they appreciate America's willingness to preserve historic sites. Please next time you are visiting with someone from abroad ask them what they think about our national parks...then ask their kids. I hope you have a fantastic day and will consider continuing to support and promote our national treasures which are our national parks. With love from our home to yours...

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

I really care about our National parks and over the years our family has gone to many. I like that they preserve the natural world places of quiet and also give us opportunities to learn more about our history. I hope you will work to preserve them. National parks seem like a wonderful place to use lots of labor if you could get that funded. They are a wonderful asset to our country. People from all over the world travel there. We have seen many different groups. Thank you for the good work you do and have done.

We just returned from a month-long road trip which included stops at several National Park sites. Whether it's a well-known site such as Yellowstone or one of the lesser-known parks the National Parks are a special collection of America's beauty and history. They provide a wonderful way for families to connect to the outdoors and cannot be overlooked by your "America's Great Outdoors" initiative. Please ensure that our National Parks get the funding and tools they need to continue to preserve and protect these very special places and history both large and small. There's nothing like returning to a National Park with your children and knowing that someday they'll be able to return with their children. Thanks for reading.

The AHC also received a significant number of reports concerning access issues on state, county, and local public land. While the primary objective of the AHC is to document issues on federal land these reports are also of interest because they create a fuller picture of equestrian access issues throughout the country. Furthermore, they could be analyzed in-depth at a future date or be of use to state and local equestrian organizations such as State Horse Councils and trail riding clubs. These reports clearly demonstrate the need for recreational riders to be active within their local communities and for State Horse Councils to actively engage their state legislators and land managers on equestrian access issues.

It remains important that recreational riders continue to report their experiences to enable the AHC to create a complete picture of the access issues facing equestrians around the country. The AHC will use this information to work with both the land management agencies and Congress to address access issues facing equestrians.

Urban Programs and Operations - in partnership with National Parks, Recreation Areas, and Monuments and local government agencies and communities

Close to the major metropolitan areas of the state, urban Corps programs serve as a portal to the National Parks and Forest system for urban youth and young adults. Corps are an ideal segue experience as young people with little or no interest in the environment are attracted to the corps as a job and educational opportunity. Once introduced to the environment through the hands-on nature of corps work, many young people are "hooked" and excited about the possibility of a career related to the outdoors. In addition to working within their local communities, urban corps typically offer members the chance to leave home to work on projects for 5-10 days during which they camp out. Organizing these "spike" projects to the non-residential corps introduces young people to wilderness and parks they might not otherwise have seen.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Residential Centers - The CCC currently operates residential centers in a number of locations throughout the State. These centers offer housing, food, educational programs and provide a unique opportunity for young people who need housing or need (or desire) to move away from home. Many public land management agencies have housing that might be transformed into temporary or permanent residential corps operations, thereby offering a transformative experience to more young people.

Emergency Response

The Corps in California have developed the capacity to respond to fires, floods and emergencies. Corps members and supervisors are trained and the Corps programs have established partnerships with federal, state, local and nonprofit emergency response organizations. Through this system, Corps are able to dispatch crews of young people across the state.

"Days of Service" Corps organized local communities to engage other youth, young adults and community members in projects such as neighborhood tree planting, coastal clean-ups; school and community gardens. As part of a 21st Century Conservation Corps, these efforts can be significantly expanded in communities statewide with young adult corps members serving as role models, mentors, leaders and educators.

Use Cooperative Agreements - The success of a 21st Century Conservation Corps requires partnerships with federal agencies that are best defined through the use of cooperative agreements to explicitly acknowledge the multiple goals resulting through partnerships with corps accomplishing the needed work while developing the youth participants. This process needs to be streamlined to more quickly solidify partnerships. (This issue was well-covered at the listening sessions in California- and is a significant barrier if not addressed.)

The 21st Century Conservation Corps can tap into existing sources of funding for maintenance and capital improvement projects. The Corps experience is rooted in performance of work, therefore, identifying funding for the work that needs to be done e.g. fire fuel reduction; emergency response; restoration of wetlands or the removal of invasive species; or the installation of solar panels on federal parks facilities. However, bringing the Corps to scale will require additional funding Specific sources of funding include:

Funding the Public Land Corps Service Act

Designating a 21st Century Conservation Corps initiative within AmeriCorps

Employment and training funds from Department of Labor

Higher percentage of NPS entrance fee fund to youth programs

Designate earmarks or set asides specifically to Conservation Corps to work with DOE, DOI, USFS, DOI, and DOT

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

The mission of the 21st CCC is to "engage young people in full and part-time service to meet the critical environmental issues of our time through by building upon an existing infrastructure of proven corps programs."

Through partnerships between existing Corps programs and federal agencies tasked with implementation of the America's Great Outdoors, the 21st CCC would:

- Engage, educate and employ more young people in service to the environment

- Expand and replicate innovative Corps programs and projects

- Develop career pathways from Conservation Corps to federal employment in natural resource management

- Facilitate connections between corps programs and other youth partner programs to expose more young people to the outdoors.

The Conservation Corps in California stand ready to assist, support and assume leadership for this initiative that would bring this mission and set of goals to California, to:

- Connect people, especially urban youth and young adults with the outdoors and the environment

- Create a new pipeline to diversify and replace the aging federal work force

- Address the staggering rate of unemployment among young adults with significant negative long-term consequences

- Respond to the critical backlog of maintenance on public lands including severe fire threat to communities across the state

In California alone, the system of state and locally-run corps programs that have served as models for other states and locals includes: the California Conservation Corps (CCC), established as a state agency in 1976, with 27 field operations; and 13 locally-run independent non-profit corps located in the state's largest metropolitan areas. Through this network of corps programs and operations, at least 4000 young people are engaged in addressing California's critical environmental issues each year.

Corps Address Current Critical Environmental Issues

Corps programs respond to the changing environmental needs identified by land and natural resource management agencies. A 21st Century Conservation Corps can build on the current work project expertise and capacity to expand the scope and scale of any, or all, of the Corps work in areas including:

- Energy efficiency

- Fire fuel reduction

- Water conservation

- Climate change

- Habitat restoration

- Parkland Improvements

- Trail maintenance and construction

- Emergency response and mitigation

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

While the Corps in California have been continuously operating for more than a generation, the program model can respond to the current issues raised by the AGO initiative building on these essential program elements and best practices that have proven effective over time.

The Corps model can quickly adapt to a variety of conditions, needs and expectations including location, duration, and numbers of corps members. Projects can be done within the daily commute of existing corps facilities; or, temporary tent camps can be set up to house corps members temporarily assigned to a project. Longer-term tent camps can be established for larger scale projects that might run over a period of months.

Instead of federal agencies establishing and sustaining programs within federal operating units where there may not be enough work to support an effective program, Corps can stitch together projects from a variety of federal, state and local agencies thereby creating full-time corps experience - something that is difficult for any single federal agency to manage and sustain.

CCC's Backcountry Programs - in partnership with USFS, NPS and State Parks

This is a CCC Legacy program with over 2,000,000 hours of service over 30 years and 8,600 miles of trail built, repaired or maintained. Each year, young adults are recruited from within the ranks of the CCC, local corps programs, as well as through AmeriCorps national network for an extremely challenging six-month experience and assigned to work in some of most important national parks and forests in California. They live and work building and maintaining trails, restoring meadows and habitat and other similar work.

Coastal Fisheries Program - in partnership with US Fish and Wildlife, State Fish and Game and local environmental action groups

The Corps partners with USFWS, State Fish and Game officials and local environmental groups to restore salmon habitat in California's north coast. Corps programs remove invasive species along critical stream beds, restore spawning grounds, replant vegetation along stream banks stripped by logging practices and perform other tasks related to the restoration of wild salmon habitat along California's coast. These projects have received funding from a variety of state and federal sources and are performed in cooperation with native tribes and local nonprofit environmental groups.

In the memo that established the America's Great Outdoors initiative, President Obama painted a picture of a landscape in which significant places are protected through the work of robust public-private partnerships.

National parks are essential to completing that picture. The National Parks Second Century Commission envisions national parks as cornerstones of a network that protects the nation's biological, geological, and cultural diversity. This is a role that many parks already play, although the system is by no means complete.

The network would span the map, encompassing public lands, private lands, and connecting corridors beyond park boundaries. In this vision, existing parks would anchor regional and local protection strategies, and new parks would be established where preserved areas are lacking.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Fragments of protected landscape are often insufficient to support healthy fish and wildlife populations. Because parks often protect valuable habitat at the core of larger ecosystems, maintaining functioning natural environments across a larger region can depend on protecting key lands adjacent to parks, and conserving other habitat areas and connecting corridors. Degraded landscapes, waterways, and air quality in and around national parks, and large-scale threats such as invasive species and climate change, make it imperative to look beyond park boundaries and work in partnership to restore and protect whole landscapes.

In 2008, the U.S. Forest Service designated its first official wildlife migration corridor, protecting the path that pronghorn have traveled seasonally for 6,000 years.

Outside Forest Service lands, keeping intact the 150-mile roundtrip between Grand Teton National Park and the upper Green River valley is a collaborative effort involving the National Park Service, Bureau of Land Management, conservation groups, and private landowners. The effort uses tools such as wildlife-friendly fencing and conservation easements to ensure that the park's summer pronghorn herd can migrate to its winter range.

To the north, conservation groups, community members, park supporters, local landowners, and agency leaders are rolling up their sleeves to remove, realign, and sometimes replace fences. Their goal? To unblock migratory routes that Yellowstone National Park's northern pronghorn herd uses for its seasonal journey to and from wintering grounds outside the park. The project runs on volunteer effort and is privately funded.

Scratch the surface of any of the 392 National Park Service units, and you are likely to find a dynamic combination of committed staff, volunteers, and partner organizations. Their pursuit of the NPS mission—supported by national and regional offices—has established a base of programming, community engagement, and partnerships that make each park a natural platform for achieving multiple AGO goals at once. Making national parks a cornerstone of this initiative promises tremendous leverage to achieve many of AGO's aims, often by simply highlighting, providing additional resources for, or learning how to replicate park programs. The following seven examples illustrate the capacity of the National Park Service to realize AGO's goals.

Golden Gate National Recreation Area, California — Building community while building an urban park

Once an abandoned Army airstrip along San Francisco Bay, Crissy Field is now a gem in the Golden Gate National Recreation Area, which hosted more than 15 million visits in 2009. During restoration, more than 3,000 volunteers—including students from 120 local schools—worked 30,000 hours to re-create native dunes and marshes. They planted more than 100,000 native plants, some of which were tended by school classes at the park's nurseries. "I Grew Crissy Field" T-shirts became a common sight in neighborhoods near the park, and local buses emblazoned with the "Help Grow Crissy Field" message were the public face of a project spearheaded by the Golden Gate National Parks Conservancy.

Crissy Field Center, a collaborative venture that employs eleven Conservancy and three Park Service interpreters and educators, reaches more than 100,000 young people and adults each year. The Center's aim is to engage the multicultural communities surrounding the park

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Community campfires, programs en español, easy living history walks, and hands-on marsh explorations draw families to the park;

Day camps combine outdoor investigation, field outings, and fun projects for kids, who can then be youth leaders and mentors when they enter high school;

Inspiring Young Emerging Leaders (I-YEL), a yearlong internship program that prepares city high school students to be environmental and social leaders— and to go to college. I-YEL participants teach youth programs, do community outreach, attend conferences, and create their own service projects. More than three-quarters of the program’s alumni have graduated from college or are currently pursuing degrees. One, Mariajose Alcantara, just celebrated her second anniversary as a park ranger at Marin Headlands.

Over the course of three years, the Crissy Field restoration at Golden Gate National Recreation Area awarded nearly \$30 million to local contractors, engineering and design firms, and other businesses.

Crissy Field now hosts more than a million visits a year. Two out of five visitors are from outside San Francisco.

Seven previously abandoned buildings were rehabilitated following Crissy Field restoration, and now draw visitors and commerce to the west end of the field. Tenants include a large climbing gym and swim and gymnastics schools.

Glacier National Park, Montana — Regional collaborations in action

At the heart of the Crown of the Continent ecosystem—one of North America’s most ecologically diverse and jurisdictionally fragmented landscapes—Glacier is a national park that purposefully operates in a regional context. Threats to park wildlife and other resources originate from outside park boundaries, as do key support and collaborations that help the park protect those resources.

The Crown Managers Partnership, a collaboration of federal, state, and provincial land managers from the U.S. and Canada who share information and develop joint resource protection strategies. Among its achievements is a transboundary memorandum of understanding outlining joint management of the Flathead River system, which originates in Canada and forms much of Glacier Park’s boundary.

The Crown of the Continent geotourism initiative, a partnership of 50 regional business, community, governmental, conservation, and tribal groups that collaborated to produce a map celebrating the region’s natural and cultural heritage. The partnership now supports a user-generated travel information and social networking website that highlights the region’s rich recreational and cultural resources and how to protect them.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

The Crown of the Continent Initiative, a coalition of nearly 20 scientific, academic, recreation, and conservation groups from the U.S. and Canada. In collaboration, the organizations have developed a ten-year action plan to protect the ecosystem during a time of climate change.

Great Smoky Mountains National Park, North Carolina and Tennessee — Reaching beyond park boundaries to educate and inform

Great Smoky Mountains, America's most-visited national park, hosted almost 9.5 million visits in 2009. It is a great example of a park that extends its reach well beyond park boundaries.

Podcasts, video overviews, and video blogs inform and educate visitors to the park's website and that of its nonprofit partner, the Great Smoky Mountains Association. Topics range from elk reintroduction to why there are so many dead trees in the park. One video gives kids an inside look at the park's Junior Ranger program, which is so much fun that the park had to start a "Not So Junior Ranger" program for interested parents and other adults.

Students visiting the Appalachian Highlands Science Center in the park learn about ground-level ozone pollution and identify ozone damage to plants in the park. Back at their schools, they plant "ozone gardens" that they monitor, adding their observations to a database from sites around the region.

Great Smoky Mountains is an active "Parks as Classrooms" site. In 2009, the park held an "electronic field trip" with staff from its Twin Creeks Science Center. The event was broadcast to more than three million students in the U.S. and abroad.

Business leaders, elected officials, and other interested community members don hip waders, ride in patrol cars, collect garbage, and get hands-on experience with other key aspects of park management. Five half-day sessions in the "Experience Your Smokies" program give community members a behind-the-scenes view of, and a greater appreciation for, park management.

Lowell National Historical Park, Massachusetts — Weaving new stories into a historical park

When rangers in this urban national park reflect on Lowell's early days as a booming textile town settled by Irish and French Canadians, they tell a broader story about the challenges of immigrating to a new country. Focusing on the continuing story of immigration invites Lowell's substantial immigrant communities to connect to the park.

The Mogan Cultural Center, operated in partnership with the University of Massachusetts Lowell, is one way the park is changing that. Side-by-side with the "Mill Girls and Immigrants" exhibit, the Center houses the Angkor Dance Troupe, a world-renowned group from Lowell's Cambodian Community. A community collaboration produced a Cambodian neighborhood walking tour presented in English and Khmer. The tour shows how Lowell's most recent immigrants have made the city home, participating in the long-standing immigrant tradition of adapting old sites to new needs and building new structures to serve cultural needs.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

For a day, students visiting the Tsongas Industrial History Center are textile weavers, immigrants, assembly line workers, industrial engineers, and scientists.

The Center is a partnership between the park and the University of Massachusetts Lowell Graduate School of Education. Here, K-12 students and teachers learn about the Industrial Revolution, labor history, immigrations, economics, technology, and more while exploring historic cotton mills, canals, gatehouses, and worker housing.

Everglades National Park, Florida — Using science and community support to promote ecologically sensitive recreation

Between 2005 and 2008, assessments done by the National Parks Conservation Association and Everglades National Park identified boats that run aground as a major cause of seagrass damage in Florida Bay. In 2010, the park will begin pilot testing a new “Pole and Troll” zone, to slow down boats moving through shallow waters in the bay.

In the meantime, NPCA worked with 30 recreation groups, outfitter and guide associations, conservation organizations, and local governments to develop the Eco- Mariner online course. Eco-Mariner provides motor boaters with the knowledge they need to protect the Bay’s sensitive environment.

San Antonio Missions National Historical Park, Texas — Connecting a city with nature and culture

Located in a low-income, predominantly Latino area in the heart of San Antonio, San Antonio Missions National Historical Park relies on partnerships to engage youth and adults.

In 2009, the park hosted the first “Get Outdoors—It’s Yours” day in the country, collaborating with other federal and local agencies. The 2010 event drew 60 exhibitors and 5,000 young people to the park for a day of family activities, take-home projects, and learning about the local environment and outdoor recreation.

Through the National Park Foundation’s “First Bloom” project, the park partners with the Boys and Girls Club and the Sunshine Cottage for the Deaf to help children learn about weather, nature, and native plants. Children have planted native gardens along the trail from one of the missions to the San Antonio River, updated state databases on non-native plants, and planted native plant gardens at their program sites.

In conjunction with its partner group, Los Compadres, and the University of Texas San Antonio Center for Archaeological Research, the park hosts volunteer archaeology days, conducts teacher workshops, and runs field schools that have trained 60 university students in archaeological techniques.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Collaborations with the San Antonio River Authority and other partner organizations will result in upgrades to the riverfront hike and bike trails that bring tens of thousands of people past the missions each month. New “portals” will link the trails with each of the park’s four missions, welcoming more trail users to visit the park, and extending the park’s educational reach by locating panels about local history and ecology along each of the portals.

Calumet-Sag Trail, Illinois — NPS Rivers, Trails and Conservation Assistance program aids partnership to connect Chicago’s southern suburbs

RTCA staff helped organize the coalition that garnered the community support and governmental collaboration needed to move the 26-mile Calumet-Sag Trail from idea to reality. Now that trail engineering and planning are underway, as well as fundraising for trail construction, RTCA is turning its focus to sustaining community support over the long term. Recently it helped the fledgling Friends of the Calumet-Sag Trail establish itself as a nonprofit organization, and is helping the group position itself to raise matching funds for a federal grant.

The Calumet-Sag trail will run through 14 communities in Chicago’s south suburbs, creating new recreation opportunities, as well as a way for commuters to walk or bike to train stations along six rail lines that serve 200,000 residents. The trail will connect to four forest preserves and 500 miles of local, regional, and national trails. Ultimately, it will connect the I & M Canal National Heritage Corridor to the west with the Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore to the east.

For nearly 100 years, national parks have connected Americans with the great outdoors and our country’s rich heritage. Perhaps this explains why most Americans think first of national parks when they hear the phrase, “America’s Great Outdoors.”

Millions of us flock each year to our national parks to marvel at Yellowstone’s geysers, learn about our shared history at Philadelphia’s Independence Hall or Gettysburg’s Civil War battlefield, enjoy a swim along the shores of Cape Cod, or find a respite from the city in the bay breezes at San Francisco’s Golden Gate National Recreation Area. And National Park Service (NPS) programs help bring nature and recreation to Americans’ doorsteps, whether they live near a park or not. The Park Service offers educational programs that reach well beyond park boundaries, helps communities develop trails and greenways that connect youth and families to healthy outdoor activity, and assists in protecting historic buildings and cultural areas.

National parks are available for all to enjoy. Our national parks offer a range of recreational and educational possibilities unmatched by any other public lands in this country—from bike paths and scenic drives to backcountry hiking adventures, camping to canoeing, virtual field trips to hands-on service learning projects, and from ranger-led tours to unscripted explorations of historic and natural wonders.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Yet, as the National Parks Second Century Commission found, our country is barely scratching the surface of our national parks' tremendous potential. Using the substantial contributions that parks already make as a springboard to achieving its aims, the America's Great Outdoors initiative (AGO) can foster a legacy that connects all Americans with the rich heritage that national parks represent.

53% Associate national parks with America's Great Outdoors, before learning anything about the initiative. 80% Believe national parks should be the centerpiece (43%) or an important focus (37%) of the initiative. 88% Say it is "extremely important" (69%) or "quite important" (19%) to protect and support major parks such as Yellowstone, Grand Canyon, Yosemite, and the Everglades—despite concerns about the current economic situation and the federal budget.

In the presidential memo that established the America's Great Outdoors initiative, President Obama laid out an ambitious slate of goals to create a 21st century strategy for reconnecting Americans with their rich natural heritage, and sustaining that heritage into the future. National parks have been charting a course along this heading for decades.

As Administration officials crossed the country listening to Americans' experiences and ideas, they saw firsthand how parks from Blue Ridge Parkway in the east to Santa Monica Mountains in the west are positioned to help advance the President's goals for the AGO initiative. Nearly 400 National Park Service (NPS) units and a core of National Park Service outreach programs offer a base of land and facilities, staff and volunteers, programming and expertise tailor-made to serve as a centerpiece of this effort to reconnect Americans with the outdoors.

NPS programs provide models that can be easily replicated by other agencies and in other places, as the federal government leverages its resources in support of community-driven efforts to protect landscapes and connect kids and adults with nature through education, recreation, work, and service.

In 2009, national parks hosted 285 million recreational visits, up four percent from 2008. A high proportion of Americans visit national parks, making parks a natural platform for reaching out broadly to achieve many AGO aims. 91% Have visited a national park or other NPS unit 62% Have visited in the past two years.

Recognizing the tremendous recreational value of national parks for the families it serves, YMCA works with the NPS Rivers, Trails, and Conservation Assistance program to create opportunities for healthy living and outdoor education. Connecting downtown trail networks to national trails and national parks creates urban gateways that encourage city dwellers to get out in nature. RTCA is a partner in YMCA-led healthy community programs across the country. More than 60 current RTCA projects highlight community wellness.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

1) National parks connect people with healthy recreation and inspiring environments. From urban trails to backcountry wilderness, parks appeal to everyone from city schoolchildren learning about nature to families camping in an iconic landscape. Parks are widely accessible places for families, youth, and adults to enjoy and learn about the outdoors.

2) National parks and Park Service programs catalyze and support collaborative and community-based projects. The Park Service manages more than just parks. NPS manages programs that clean up rivers, promote hiking and biking trails, and bring hands-on science education to schools. These programs, which leverage federal resources in support of local priorities, are ready-made to replicate in other places.

3) National parks engage and educate Americans in hands-on, outdoor classrooms. Interpreters and educators bring treasured landscapes and historical collections to life for visitors of all ages. Volunteer and service learning programs offer practical education, and a way to give back. Hands-on investigations and collaborations with researchers spark interest in science and related jobs. Park-based initiatives and community collaborations offer proven, place-based education models and a foundation for expanded programming.

4) More national parks will expand public enjoyment of America's great outdoors. Expanding the National Park System could protect a greater diversity of ecological systems, better represent of our nation's evolving cultural heritage, and offer easier access in urban areas and parts of the country where national parks are few and far between. Park innovations in interpreting historical and cultural stories, and in linking recreation, learning, and service engage youth and social and cultural groups typically disconnected from nature.

5) National parks support jobs, service learning, and volunteer opportunities in conservation and outdoor recreation. Park programs and collaborations with community partners, youth service, and employment organizations establish pathways for careers in outdoor recreation, education, conservation, and management. Parks are treasured by locals and visitors alike. They are often key drivers of economic success in surrounding communities.

6) National parks connect and support efforts to conserve and restore larger landscapes. Important ecosystems and culturally significant landscapes often center on national parks. Many parks provide essential habitat in networks of protected areas and connecting corridors. Parks are resources for, and partners in, conservation of public and private lands outside their boundaries, and offer significant expertise in natural area restoration. Indispensable to restoring natural functions in large ecosystems such as the Everglades and Great Lakes, park projects also engage local contractors, scientists, and volunteers in revitalizing wetlands, fisheries, forests, and other close-to-home areas that then serve as outdoor classrooms, recreation areas, and vital habitat.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

A group of Maui County (HI) teachers spearheaded a collaboration with Haleakala National Park, The Nature Conservancy (TNC), and local resource and cultural experts to produce the Ho'ike o Haleakala curriculum. Melding science with resource management, current issues, and Hawaiian culture, the curriculum brings the park into classrooms at a time when field trips are difficult to arrange. Interested teachers and students tap into volunteer projects restoring native landscapes in the park and adjoining TNC preserve. A local nonprofit runs teacher training, and in 2009 was awarded Centennial Challenge funds for a new invasive species learning module.

With the National Park Service 2016 centennial in mind, 85% of voters surveyed favor giving national parks enough funding so they are fully restored and ready to serve the public for the next 100 years.

At Indiana Dunes National Seashore (IN), restoration of the Great Marsh, which once stretched 12 miles along Lake Michigan's shores, is renewing native plant and bird habitat and allowing the marsh once again to filter runoff draining into the lake. Restoration efforts provide:

- Seasonal jobs for biotechnicians;
- Business for local companies supplying equipment, native plants, and labor;
- Community partnerships to restore adjacent wetlands;
- Improved bird watching, bringing more visitors to the park and surrounding communities; and
- A natural classroom for students and adults from nearby urban areas, including Chicago.

In the space of two years, during some of this nation's most challenging economic times, public commitment to supporting America's national parks has increased by 14 percent. In a June 2010 poll, 69 percent of voters said it is "extremely important" that the federal government protect and support major parks such as Yosemite, Everglades, and Yellowstone. Enthusiasm for national parks permeates public perceptions of the America's Great Outdoors initiative. The same poll found strong identification of national parks with the idea of "America's great outdoors." After learning about the initiative, four out of five voters polled believed national parks should play an important or central role.

Americans are already anticipating the 100th anniversary of the National Park Service in 2016, spurred on by national events such as Ken Burns' sweeping documentary, and preparations at parks around the country. A strong commitment to national parks strengthens the legacy this initiative seeks to achieve, both in public perception and by virtue of the great leverage that national parks offer in reactivating America's relationship with the outdoors and protecting its natural heritage for generations to come.

Recent Survey Finds Support for LWCF Want Land and Water Conservation Funds to be spent as originally promised—to support parks, seashores, forests, and waterways—rather than forego that spending because of concerns about budget deficits and other national challenges.

The Park Service has a long-standing commitment to partnerships that benefit communities, historic sites, and recreational opportunities outside park boundaries. But inadequate funding impairs the ability of the Park Service to support community initiatives.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

The Rivers, Trails and Conservation Assistance program has enormous leveraging potential in helping communities expand access to healthy recreation by preserving open space and building more trails, yet it receives barebones funding. The National Underground Railroad Network to Freedom helps protect and connect local historical sites, museums, and interpretive programs associated with the Underground Railroad. It, too, is underfunded.

Another successful partnership program, the Centennial Challenge was begun in 2007 to foster projects and programs that protect parks, enhance visitor services, and foster hands-on learning. In 2008 and 2009, \$24.6 million dollars in federal funds were matched by \$32 million from partner organizations in 35 states and the District of Columbia. While the Centennial Challenge was successful in aligning resources to advance some local and park priorities, it suffered from a few key problems, including short fundraising timelines that made it difficult for smaller partners to participate.

Nationwide, national parks support more than \$13.3 billion of local private-sector economic activity and 267,000 private-sector jobs.

A recent study found that every federal dollar invested in national parks generates at least four dollars of economic value to the public.

Volunteers give 5 million hours of service each year at national parks, a \$100 million dollar contribution that connects people to their natural and cultural heritage.

Each year, the Student Conservation Association (SCA) enables 4,000 interns and volunteers to provide more than two million hours of service at cultural and natural sites across the country. One in ten NPS employees served in SCA, demonstrating its value as a career pipeline. According to SCA, 70 percent of its interns and volunteers remain active in conservation after their term of service.

During youth listening sessions across the country, Administration officials heard from young people eager for outdoor learning to be part of their school experience. Participants also underscored the need to provide experiential education opportunities relevant to students' daily lives, empower kids to translate what they learn into actions they can take in their homes and neighborhoods, and use new technologies to connect to the younger generation. The National Parks Second Century Commission identified this need as well. It pointed out that parks need to embrace technology to facilitate park-based learning anywhere, at any time, and to take advantage of social media and new media initiatives to augment park-based programming. Barriers include security policies for government-supported websites, legal concerns with service agreements, and challenges integrating the Park Service's traditional strength in place based education with tools such as the Internet and social media.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Many national parks are leaders in learning to speak the language of youth and different cultures and connecting them with outdoor opportunities. But national parks are able to meet only a fraction of the demand for youth and adult programming, often with severely outdated materials, exhibits, and technologies.

Whether it is the science of climate change at Glacier National Park, the technological breakthroughs of the Wright Brothers, the engineering advances at the St. Louis Arch, or the trajectory calculations of Civil War projectiles at Gettysburg, there are strong intersections with the Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM) disciplines in our national parks. Generous private sector contributions significantly support STEM learning, and national parks need to be better positioned to attract more of that funding to engage teachers and students in learning based on America's most compelling natural and engineered wonders.

The NPS Teacher to Ranger to Teacher (TRT) program got its start in Colorado in 2003 and went nationwide in 2007. TRT engages teachers from low-income, Title 1 school districts as uniformed park rangers for a summer. Back home, teachers bring parks into their classrooms, weaving into the curriculum new lesson plans based on their experiences as park rangers. In 2008, 84 teacher rangers augmented interpretive staff at 48 national parks. During the 2007-08 school year, teacher rangers taught more than 24,000 students about the ecology and history of the national parks in their classrooms.

New Parks Connect Broader Communities with America's Natural and Cultural Heritage

- Selma to Montgomery National Historic Trail, Alabama, (established 1996) commemorates the 1965 Voting Rights March in Alabama.
- Cane River Creole National Historical Park, Louisiana, (established 1994) preserves two plantations and promotes understanding of the traditional culture that supported them for generations.
- Manzanar National Historic Site (designated 1992) preserves the site of the Manzanar War Relocation Center, where Japanese-Americans and resident Japanese aliens were interned during World War II.
- Ice Age Floods National Geologic Trail—the first of its kind—connects federal, state, and local historic sites, parks, and other facilities in four states (ID, MT, OR, and WA) that tell the story of the geologic consequences of a series of mammoth floods from prehistoric Glacial Lake Missoula.

In all cases, the federal public land agencies should implement the 21st Century Conservation Corps by partnering with the national network of existing Conservation Corps/SCA and leveraging their experience, expertise and knowledge. There are currently operating Conservation Corps/SCA programs in all 50 states that annually engage more than 30,000 young people in service. Rather than trying to duplicate this infrastructure and expertise with new federally-operated programs, the federal land management agencies should use cooperative agreements to engage existing Conservation Corps/SCA under the "21st Century Conservation Corps" banner. Programs would operate under common branding and parameters but with local operating partners in each location.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Community. Programs have a connection to the local communities and are often based in these communities and target young people living in the shadows of the public lands where they will serve.

Diversity. Programs engage a diverse group of young people, often including 'at-risk/at-promise' youth and typically reflecting the local community. Nationally, 57% of current participants are people of color and 66% come from families with income below the federal poverty level.

High Quality Work. Corps provide high quality professional service work to public land managers, often meeting critical needs with unique service models that are unmatched in the private sector.

Paid Service. Young people receive a living allowance, stipend, education award and/or paycheck for their service.

Service. Developing an ethic of service and focusing on service projects are central features of all programs.

Sustained, Full-Time Service. Young people serve full-time for a defined term of service ranging from four weeks to one year.

Service-Learning. All program service activities follow the service-learning cycle of preparation, service and reflection.

Professional Development and Education. Professional development of the participants ranging from GED classes to GIS skill development is a key component of all programs.

Supportive Services. Corps professionals provide case management, counseling, career preparation and life skills development for all participants.

Youth Voice. Young people are an integral part of program operations through corps councils, promotional opportunities into crew leaders and other leadership positions, and alumni engagement.

Post-Program Services. The corps experience does not end with the conclusion of the term of service as corps staff support each participant in transitioning to additional education or career-oriented placements.

The National Park Service can significantly increase the allocation of NPS fee revenue from the national 20% fee account that is available to support youth programs engaged in the 21st Century Conservation Corps.

Both USDA and DOI can bolster their use of Corps/SCA under the 21st Century Conservation Corps as work force within the maintenance and capital improvement project budgets.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Update national park general management plans (ONP, NCNP, Mt Rainier NP) so that they include a climate change focus.

In an era of climate change, not only must we be thinking about managing our lands differently, we must think about protecting lands differently. The old model of drawing lines on a map and protecting an area is not sufficient for a warming world. Certain species of plants and wildlife have begun migrating further north and higher in elevation, numbers of caribou, moose, and bighorn sheep are dwindling in some areas, and fish kills resulting from rising water temperatures are becoming more common. It is the job of land, water and wildlife management agencies to anticipate and react to these changes and determine which areas will become vital habitat in the future. The agencies must then actively work to secure protections for these habitats to give fish and wildlife all the help they can adapting to a changing world.

Highly disruptive activities such as logging, mining and drilling multiply the stresses on wild lands and wildlife already struggling for survival due to climate change. An integral part of climate-smart management is to limit or eliminate non-climate stressors. A good example to build on is the decision earlier this year to ban off shore oil and gas drilling in Alaska's Bristol Bay, a pristine ecosystem and fishing ground. We hope that the America's Great Outdoors initiative will prompt action to deal with these stressors with climate change in mind.

The United States stands alone in the world for the breadth, diversity, and sheer magnitude of its public lands systems. The Department of the Interior manages more than 500 million acres, and the Forest Service manages another 193 million acres. Individual states manage their own networks of bountiful parks, forests, and refuges, giving the United States an unmatched mosaic of public lands.

One area of particular concern is the coastal plain of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge. The Arctic Refuge is one of America's most spectacular natural treasures, and the area's coastal plain serves as its biological heart. The coastal plain is the calving grounds for the Porcupine caribou herd, a home or resting spot for more than 135 bird species, and the most important land-denning site for polar bears in the country. The coastal plain of the Arctic Refuge is also considered sacred ground by the Gwich'in, who have subsisted off of the Porcupine caribou herd for thousands of years

President Eisenhower established the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge – then referred to as the Arctic National Wildlife Range – on December 6, 1960. As we celebrate the 50th anniversary of this historic occasion, we should honor the region's natural and cultural values by working to ensure that future generations will be able to experience and enjoy them too. As a step towards more permanent protections, the coastal plain of the Arctic Refuge should be designated as a National Monument and the area should be permanently withdrawn from oil and gas leasing.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Strategies to secure current carbon strongholds on public lands are consistent with efforts to responsibly manage and protect other natural values, including water quality, clean air, and wildlife habitat. In fact, safeguarding our carbon rich federal forests could help the Forest Service shift away from heavily subsidized logging of older forests and towards its goal of watershed and forest restoration. Focusing on science-based forest and watershed restoration would not only help natural systems adapt to climate change, it would also form the foundation for a robust restoration economy, creating new, long-term jobs for local communities.

America's private forests, farms and ranchlands - and the families who work them - are essential to the success of efforts to safeguard America's outdoor heritage. Providing people who work the land with the support and incentives necessary to manage for healthy fish and wildlife habitat, clean water, carbon sequestration and abundant recreation must be a priority of the America's Great Outdoors initiative.

Applying the right programs in the right places, and developing new conservation curriculums can simultaneously support more sustainable rural economies that create jobs producing the food and protecting the natural resources that America needs. These programs can also ensure that fish, wildlife and the recreation that depends on them can adjust and prosper in a warmer world.

A survey of state conservation agency administrators showed that 96 percent felt that programs that conserve natural resources and provide public access to private lands are important to achieving their organizational objectives⁴. This feedback should not be surprising.

Through the America's Great Outdoors listening sessions, young people across the country have had an incredible opportunity to inform the dialogue about reconnecting youth to the natural world. Sierra Club programs have helped engage young people in the public listening sessions where they have shared some of the reasons children, youth and families are not spending much time exploring and enjoying the great outdoors.¹⁷ Barriers include inadequate infrastructure, including insufficient access to safe and nearby parks and open spaces, lack of interest, fear among parents and youth alike, and alternatives luring kids indoors.

Solutions lie at all levels of government, across agencies and in the private and non-profit sectors. Coordination at the federal level is critical to address the societal trend that has moved an entire generation indoors. The America's Great Outdoors initiative is an important step towards developing a greater understanding of the problem and identifying cross-agency solutions to tackle the widespread cultural shift taking place today which has been best described in best-selling author Richard Louv's "Last Child in the Woods" as Nature Deficit Disorder (NDD).

Continue creating opportunities like America's Great Outdoors that give youth a voice in discussions about their future and their world and ensure that youth suggestions are given ample weight in the report. Establish a youth council to advise the administration on issues pertaining to youth and the outdoors to elicit ongoing participation.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

The vast forestlands that stretch from the Adirondacks of New York, across the northern regions of Vermont and New Hampshire, into the 10 million acre Maine Woods and on to the Acadian forests of Maritime Canada, is the largest contiguous forest east of the Mississippi. It includes thousands of miles of rivers and streams and provides habitat for a rich diversity of wildlife. This eco-region represents the largest remaining temperate broad-leafed and mixed forest in the country and is home to the largest populations of black bears, loons, moose, native brook trout and threatened Canada lynx. In addition, the economies, well-being, traditions and values of the rural communities that dot the landscape depend on these forests.

As one of the most studied and visited wild places in the nation, the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem (GYE) provides a wonderful opportunity for the Department of Interior to highlight their America's Great Outdoors Initiative. With over three million visitors in 2009, and higher numbers expected this year, the GYE offers an unprecedented opportunity to showcase how our public lands can be managed to mitigate the effects of climate change so that future generations will enjoy this treasure, and for the survival of some of America's iconic wildlife such as grizzly bears, trumpeter swans, elk, and wolverines- all species that will be effected adversely through climate change unless we adapt new public lands management policies the address our changing climate.

The Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem is an iconic set of two national parks and six national forests that anchor roughly 20 million acres in the Rocky Mountains. Unfortunately, this areas is under attack from the effects of global warming. Snowpack in these areas is being reduced dramatically, white bark pine beetle infestation is running rampant and threatening a prime food source for grizzly bears, and , increased threats of expanding oil, gas and coal mining developments are just a few examples of the pressures on this prized destination area. The effect of climate change on the greater Yellowstone region is widely recognized by both agencies and NGOs as a driving factor for future lands management. There is a great opportunity for DOI to help shape the direction of new policies both from a land protection and resource extraction/energy development perspective. The National Park Service has already directed both National Parks to develop Climate Change plans. Now through AGO Initiative, this visionary work can be enhanced through public awareness.

Work with DOI to provide more incentives to private landowners in the area to ensure their lands are also managed in a way that provides connectivity to neighboring critical habitat.

Park Prescriptions is a movement to create a healthier population by strengthening the connection between the healthcare system and public lands across the country. The goal is to increase the prescription of outdoor physical activity to prevent (or treat) health problems resulting from inactivity and poor diet.

Park Prescriptions will allow visitors to public lands to increase their time spent enjoying physical activity and will also provide physicians and other health care providers with a new set of tools to inspire patients to improve their health. Park Prescriptions programs also benefit public lands by promoting park stewardship and increasing potential funding sources.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Parks nationwide are making it easier for visitors to utilize trails by increasing trailhead visibility and establishing trail ratings. Because each program addresses barriers between citizens and public spaces in a unique way, creators of these programs can learn from each other.

By forming a cross-sector coalition, Park Prescriptions unites health care and public lands through mutually beneficial means that serve the health of all.

Parks and public lands are an underutilized healthcare resource. For example, just 20 percent of the 300 million visitors to America's national parks cite active recreation as the main reason for their visit.

At the same time, parks and public lands represent enormous acreage—nearly one in every five acres of the United States is federal land that is open for public use. Clearly, there is a great potential for increasing physical activity for the millions of Americans who have access to federal, state, and local public parks and open spaces.

Park Prescriptions, which links medical professionals to park resources, is by nature a collaborative concept. This report is an invitation to further this important work through continued communication, knowledge-sharing, and cross-sector collaboration.

Highlight successful examples of current programs that use physical activity in outdoor settings as part of a medical prescription or treatment

Demonstrate opportunities for growth within similar recreation programs, whether driven by the healthcare community or public land managers

Support healthcare professionals and public land managers in developing new programs, growing existing ones, and expanding their efforts

Programs that provide incentives seem to increase participation (Table 1). For example, children that return to hike additional trails on the Blue Ridge Parkway as part of the Kids in Parks program receive toys and games. Chicago residents that receive a prescription from their doctor to exercise receive a free gym membership valued at \$30 to \$70 depending upon their income.

The Children and Nature Initiative provides Continuing Education Units (CEUs) and a small stipend for participating doctors. Most insurance companies and government programs do not reimburse a physician for time spent counseling patients or for prescribing exercise.

Parks, public health agencies, healthcare providers, and other entities across the United States are working together to promote physical activity and nutrition and improve the health of patients and the general public. Some of these partnerships have developed strategies to leverage the doctor-patient relationship to achieve this goal.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

These programs have begun to learn what works, what deserves more study, and the institutional realities that may challenge their success. Generally, two overarching needs must be met. Healthcare practitioners need more education on the value of physical activity in nature as a powerful resource for health and more training on how to counsel and prescribe it to their patients. At the same time, parks and community programs need to tailor their communications and programs to better serve patients with a variety of health conditions—as well as the doctors making the park prescriptions.

The programs highlighted in this report represent a small but shining portion of the landscape of rapidly emerging innovation. However, the existing efforts are fragmented. By establishing mechanisms for shared communication, learning, funding, and coordination, these local efforts can be leveraged into a more impactful, cross-sector movement that improves health and well-being on a national scale.

We have a moral if not legal obligation to preserve lands from over development

No community will pass up chance to get federal \$ for parks, land

Have to create good program

Suggest model like Buncombe County Conservation Easement program Goal- To protect, preserve farmland, mountain top, steep slope lands before developed Results: nearly 4,000 acres of land have been entered into program Costs: County has spent nearly \$5.3 million to leverage over \$25 million in private donation, grants, owner donation (Southern App Highlands conservancy a huge partner)- Require partnerships, but guarantee \$ once partnership matches are set

Consideration for smaller counties, cities with limited \$

Wonderful nonprofits in area that know how to prioritize and sort out best projects

Gauge real interest by extent of local participation, \$ contributions

Program will likely encourage conservancies to become active in areas where they aren't

Tax benefits increased for land or easement contributions

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Trout Unlimited's objective is to insure that we sustain, protect and connect the environment. If we do this we will have fish. This costs real money and we support the efforts of the Great Outdoors Initiative to provide the support.

The America's Great Outdoors initiative provides an opportunity for local partners in Tennessee and across the country to work with the federal government to implement a strong, forward-looking, 21st century conservation agenda that will protect our water, wild lands, trails, green spaces, wildlife, working farms, ranches, and forest lands, and reconnects families to nature and the outdoors.

To succeed, America's Great Outdoors must: Keep doing what America does better than any other nation in the world and provide new, expanded and better protected parks, wildlife refuges, monuments, rivers and trails that will benefit us all.

- o The Tennessee Wilderness Act of 2010 was introduced by Senators Alexander and Corker earlier this summer. It would permanently protect the headwaters of the Upper Bald River as federally designated Wilderness. It is these headwaters that eventually feed into the Tennessee River, providing hundreds of thousands of Tennesseans with clean drinking water.

- o Next year is the 75th anniversary of the Ocmulgee National Monument. The Ocmulgee River corridor south of Macon contains a wealth of natural and cultural resources. The opportunity now exists to provide landscape-level protection for this corridor through the innovative use of a dual National Park and Preserve designation. The Greater Macon Chamber of Commerce, in consultation with the National Park Service, is seeking to undertake a study of the potential for enlarging the boundary of the Ocmulgee National Monument.

- o National parks provide some of the best means of connecting citizens, young and old, to America's Great Outdoors, and preserving the natural and cultural diversity of our nation. They are, in essence, the world's greatest outdoor classrooms and provide opportunities for life-long, place-based and service learning.

- o Blueways are a locally-driven, cost-effective way to get youth outside, protect our natural heritage, and boost local economies. The effort to create a blueway connecting the North Forked Deer River to the Mississippi River is a public/private partnership that will accomplish all of these goals.

- o The Cumberland Plateau of Tennessee should harness the quiet, underutilized assets of the small towns, old-fashioned historic districts, and abundant wildlife into economic drivers for the region via promotion of eco-tourism and heritage tourism, allowing residents and local businesses to benefit from new tourism revenues. This will diversify and therefore strengthen the economy of the region. It will also diversify and therefore strengthen the potential income sources for farmers and foresters. The Cumberland Plateau is Tennessee's greatest woodland treasure. Let's come together to ensure that this unique corridor of Tennessee's history and nature is preserved for future generations. Protection of the Cumberland Plateau is supported by public and private organizations who work to promote eco-heritage tourism in the region's 21 counties.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

o The Tennessee Civil War National Heritage Area is supported by a diverse partnership of conservation and preservation groups that have brought multiple benefits to many audiences in Tennessee in the past decade. Tennessee Century Farms has been an extremely valuable audience for both the Tennessee Civil War National Heritage Area, the state agritourism program, open space initiatives, and the work of the Land Trust for Tennessee.

The Rivers, Trails, and Conservation Assistance Program (RTCA)offers NPS staff assistance to community partners for planning, organizational development, project coordination, facilitation, and public involvement in achieving locally-defined goals for natural resource conservation and outdoor recreation. The Mississippi River Blueway Corridor in West Tennessee, is engaged in a RTCA blueway/water trail project that will connect the North Forked Deer River to the Mississippi River. The project partners anticipate expanding economic development opportunities and promoting needed conservation to the North Forked Deer and Mississippi River Area. The Blueway will promote new tourism based businesses and increase recreation and education opportunities along the river.

o The Natchez Trace Parkway is one local example where private landowners are conserving their lands around the Parkway, creating a mosaic of protected landholdings.

SUMMARY OF IDEA: Great Outdoors America™ A mechanism established to help keep the great outdoors healthy, open, accessible and relevant to the American people by providing a complete complement of management tools:

Restoration in support of sustainable outdoor recreation ?? Evaluation, Monitoring, and Research

Outdoor Ethics, Education and Stewardship Training ?? Communications and Information, including, but not limited to good maps and signage

Law Enforcement Support and Programs

FUNDING: Private Sector - Corporations, Individuals and Philanthropic Organizations

Given the issues surrounding outdoor recreation and America's outdoor resources, core funding for the foundation is anticipated to come from manufacturers of any recreational products and accessories currently not covered under legislative acts like Pittman-Robertson or Dingle-Johnson with the Wallop-Breaux amendment, which authorize an excise tax on some sporting goods used by anglers and hunters in support of conservation and wildlife protection across North America

With 75-80% of all giving from the private sector coming from individuals, and considering the number of outdoor enthusiasts not in the market for new equipment, the foundation would be remiss not to offer individual memberships.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Philanthropic organizations that support the intent and mission of this foundation should also be sought after.

Public Agencies (Federal, State and Local)

Industry (Recreational Products and Aftermarket Accessories Manufacturers, Retailers, Travel & Tourism, Health & Wellness, Insurance, Finance, Extraction Industries, etc.)

NPOs/NGOS (Outdoor Recreation, Conservation & Enthusiast Based Organizations)

I personally like the idea of educating children, young adults and adult citizens to the types of programs available like Tread Lightly, Stay the Trail, ATV Safety Institute. These are, the types of programs that I'm familiar with, they get people into the forests and into the sand dunes of the west and all across the country.

OHV recreation is maybe the most mis- understood of all. Most of those that ride with us are between the ages of 35 and 70. We have several of us that have cancer of one type or another. Several of us have heart problems, differing in degrees of seriousness. Several have MS and yet more of have knees, ankles, hips etc. that have been operated on and some have replacements. Yet we manage to give back by participating in trail clearing, trail maintenance, water damage mitigation. Most of us belong to NMOHVA, an OHV advocacy group that supports OHV education , Tread Lightly, and rider education programs across New Mexico.

OHV recreation supports itself with license and registration fees and grants that we receive from the state as well as companies like Yamaha, and Polaris.

I ask that anything proposed along this line , be subject to , public input , scoping by the public , comment periods, proposal of alternatives, EIS scrutiny and more public comment . This pretty much is what is done in the travel management process. It seems to work pretty well.

America has a long and successful conservation tradition and Americans still believe strongly in conservation of our natural and recreational resources. Today, however, our country's remarkable conservation legacy hangs in the balance. A new wave of threats could well undo what has been accomplished.

The Nature Conservancy's vision for the America's Great Outdoors Initiative is to create and sustain a network of large areas of restored and conserved land, water and coastlines around which Americans can build productive and healthy lives.

Large landscapes that can become focal points for conservation through strong private-public partnerships (Landscape Partnership Projects).

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Expansive aquatic systems that are already a national focus and in some phase of restoration Including: the Great Lakes, Mississippi River, Chesapeake Bay, Puget Sound, Gulf of Mexico/Louisiana Wetlands, the Greater Everglades, California Bay Delta, and the Colorado River Basin (Large Watershed Projects).

Metropolitan/urban greenspace corridors that may also include cultural and historical features (Metropolitan Greenspace Projects).

North America and the United States are blessed with a diversity and abundance of natural resources, natural systems and habitats that have been central to our growth and prosperity as a nation and a foundation for our way of life. Despite urbanization and the increasing use of technology, our health, welfare, economy, culture and identity still depend heavily on the quality and productivity of our land, water, oceans and coasts. While we rely on nature for our well being, no place in our country is immune from at least some human impacts. We depend on nature, and it now depends upon us for its survival.

The United States has long been a global leader in the creation of parks and in the conservation of natural resources. Beginning in the last half of the 19th century, conservation and care of our environment have been accepted by the American people as an essential role of government. In the past decade alone, voters have passed statewide and local open space ballot measures at an overall rate of 73 percent, showing their strong support for public investments in conservation.

More than three-quarters of voters believe we can continue to protect the environment while strengthening the economy.

A striking 86% of voters support using funds from oil and gas fees to help preserve our natural areas. That support goes across party lines: 89% of Democrats, 89% of Independents, and 83% of Republicans.

More than three-quarters of the electorate (76%) express support for maintaining at least the minimum funding level originally established for the Land and Water Conservation Fund in the 1960s: \$900 million a year.

The AGO listening sessions reveal an exciting new trend in American conservation that shows great promise in addressing the many threats to our land, water and coasts. Landowners, businesses, non-profit organizations, and local, state, tribal and federal agencies are working together to take responsibility for the restoration and conservation of large areas—watersheds, whole natural systems, and whole landscapes.

In place after place we have heard citizens talking not just about their backyards, but also about the Chesapeake Bay or the whole Crown of the Continent in western Montana. Increasingly, they see the connections between their well being and the health of these larger places.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

While publicly owned parks and forests are often essential to large landscape conservation, almost all large landscapes include people and the working farms, forests and ranches that are vital to our economy and to the American way of life. Successful conservation will require finding ways to achieve both public and private stewardship of America's land and water.

The Nature Conservancy's vision for America's Great Outdoors Initiative is to create and sustain a network of large areas of restored and conserved land, water and coastal ecosystems around which Americans can build productive and healthy lives.

Protect and interpret the cultural resources that are part of our national heritage. In many places cultural resources are intertwined with natural resources.

Involve and engage all Americans, particularly young people and people of color, in the conservation and enjoyment of nature.

Operate at a watershed, ecosystem or metropolitan area scale

It is essential that our society provide opportunities for contact with nature and the outdoors for a new and more diverse generation of Americans. Citizens are willing and able to participate in shaping the future of the American landscape, if they come to know and enjoy parks, farmland and the recreation in the outdoors.

Urban areas depend upon the surrounding countryside not just for recreation, but for their water and food supplies. This provides the opportunity to build economic connections between cities and surrounding areas that can in turn help to finance regional conservation initiatives.

In addition, many important cultural and historic features are located near urban areas and can be incorporated into the metropolitan greenspace projects. Particularly important is the recognition and incorporation of the National Heritage Area Program in this aspect of the initiative.

The vast majority of Americans live in urban and suburban areas. And many of these areas depend on healthy rural areas to supply clean water and other environmental services. Cities and suburbs must be safe and enjoyable places to live to prevent urban areas from further spilling over into the surrounding countryside. Isolated parks, while important, cannot achieve these goals. Metropolitan scale park and greenspace systems can provide outdoor adventure close to home, protect wildlife habitat and water resources, and connect city and country in a positive way.

Implicit in working at a landscape scale is the need for close coordination across jurisdictions and collaboration with affected stakeholders.

Use the report of the agencies to develop and release a plan for an operational initiative. This plan should include specific five-year goals.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Our country faces many challenges and a good deal of uncertainty as we prepare to enter the second decade of the 21st Century. Americans are struggling, as well, to find the common ground required to solve those problems. For more than 100 years, however, most Americans have agreed on the importance of conserving our country's legacy of rich and productive land, water, and coastlines. While we have made substantial progress in protecting America's environment and conserving our natural and agricultural lands, there are, today, many threats to that progress.

The America's Great Outdoors listening sessions have revealed that people across America are ready to address those threats and to renew the substance and spirit of our conservation tradition. A striking new trend that has emerged from these meetings is the great interest of agencies, organizations and people working cooperatively at the regional, watershed and landscape levels to accomplish conservation at a large scale. From western Montana to the Hudson Valley of New York, diverse groups have shown the tangible progress that can be made by this partnership approach. The Nature Conservancy believes that these successes should set the direction for American conservation in the 21st Century, that the federal government acting in new, more collaborative and flexible ways can be the catalyst for lasting conservation accomplishment.

I have enjoyed and recreated in the great outdoors of Tennessee my whole life. In my younger days, I hiked and played in the creeks and woods surrounding my house. I hunted with my Dad and my older brother, and proudly brought home game for that night's supper. I have fished and swam in our creeks and lakes. I have kayaked down the steepest whitewater creeks in this part of the country. Now, at age 60, I have relaxed into a routine of enjoyment of the outdoors while staying fit, by riding my mountain bike. This is a sport that I have enjoyed for more than 25 years. I am here today to ask for support for more mountain bike trails, particularly in national parks and national forests.

Mountain biking is simply bicycling on trails in the woods. Those that try it, usually come away loving it. The sport requires specially designed and built trails that take a great deal of labor to create. Therefore, these trails are almost always built on public lands, where continued and long term access is guaranteed forever. The characteristics of a purpose-built mountain bike trail are unique to this sport. Mountain bikers want a narrow corridor with flowing turns, reasonable grades, and interesting elevation changes. A destination is not so important as the feel of the trail as it is ridden. Because mountain bikes travel much faster than a hiker, a greater length trail is desired. Mountain bikers routinely go out for a Saturday morning ride and cover 15 to 20 miles before calling it a day. To build trails with this kind of distance requires a reasonable amount of land. Many dedicated mountain bikers are riding three or more times per week. For them, it is both an exciting sport and an avenue to lifelong fitness.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

In the Middle Tennessee area, our trails are quite limited. The trails that we have are heavily used. Metro Nashville Parks Department has one mountain bike trail. We also have one short beginner trail at a state park east of Nashville. 24 miles of trail was built by club volunteers at Montgomery Bell State Park, 30 miles west of Nashville. As a demonstration of the popularity of the sport, that mountain bike trail has routinely recorded more than 10,000 visits per year. Most of those users are driving more than 30 miles from Nashville to use this trail.

Middle Tennessee mountain bikers also appreciate the mountain bike trail opportunities that can be found on Federal lands within reasonable driving distance of Nashville. There is one or more mountain bike trails at Land Between the Lakes National Recreation Area, Big South Fork National River and Recreation Area, Mammoth Cave National Park and Cherokee National Forest. I have ridden at most of those locations and the mountain bike trails are my main reason for visiting when I go.

Another local project that deserves to be completed is the Rails to Trails trail that presently exists from Nashville to Ashland City. Corridor exists and that trail should be completed all the way to Clarksville. My neighbors are an older couple that continue to stay active. While mountain biking is more action than they want, they love to ride the Rails to Trails routes.

Other important points regarding the mountain bike trails in this area:

The Tanasi Trail System is an important recreational trail, having received Epic status by IMBA in 2004.

The Tanasi trail is responsible for a positive economic impact in the region, as it plays host to a number of outdoor events. Specifically, the Black Bear Rampage mountain bike race, the SERC Race #6 mountain bike race, and the Cohutta 100 race, routinely attract 200+ attendees and their families annually to each event.

The economic impact to the region would be adversely affected if the above events would lose a venue where they could continue to host these events. The economic benefit to the region not only positively affects the event promoters, but restaurants, campgrounds, hotels, gas stations, and other retail establishments.

SORBA Chattanooga has completed untold hours of trail maintenance on both the Tanasi Trails and the Chilhowee Trails. For of these efforts SORBA Chattanooga received a Certificate of Appreciation from the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Prior to that time SORBA received a letter of appreciation from the Ranger noting that chapter's and IMBA's efforts in rehabilitating the Thunder Rock Express trail in 2004.

I spent many years as a volunteer building trails at Montgomery Bell State Park. As much as I like to see my buddies enjoying the trail, nothing give me the same gratification as seeing a family drive up, loaded with all size bikes. The kids are always excited, and can't wait to get on the trail. I have escorted many such groups to show them around. The young riders give it all they've got, and wear themselves out every time. My hat is off to those parents for getting their children involved. We need to find ways to get more parents to take up this activity with their children.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

When I grew up in south Nashville, we rode our bikes every day. We played in the woods nearby my house. One thing that we did was to build trails in those woods so that we could ride our bikes. We loved the feel of the turns on the dirt trail, even with our old single speed Western Flyers. I wish that every neighborhood could have even a small patch of woods so that kids could enjoy that same experience. Where undeveloped lots exist, if the government could get an easement for a trail, I bet you could get volunteers to help build the trail. Youth that grow up enjoying these type experiences are going to gravitate to mountain biking as adults, and consequently an active lifestyle as well as a love for nature.

Mountain biking is an exciting sport for young people. And lets face it, it is going to take an exciting sport these days to lure our children out from behind the computer screen. We all need to do our part to make more and convenient trails available. We need to promote mountain biking to young people as the outdoor adventure that we know it to be.

I read an article in the newspaper recently that reported that Tennessee ranked last of all states for adults that are considered physically active. That report noted that the number of Tennesseans who met the definition of "physically active" ranked 13 percent less than the national average. The promotion of mountain biking and trails can help change that statistic. I find that mountain biking gives me an engaging sport that I always look forward to, and as a secondary benefit, provides my much needed exercise. The fact that I am enjoying this exercise in America's Great Outdoors, makes the sport that much more attractive.

New England's Great Outdoors is defined in large part by the northern hardwood and spruce fir forests that blanket the region. From the southern border of Connecticut to the tip of northern Maine, we are fortunate to live among 33 million acres of forest owned and stewarded by hundreds of thousands of private landowners. New England's forests work twenty-four hours a day to provide clean and ample water; store carbon to mitigate climate change; grow wood for products we all depend on; support a diverse array of wildlife; offer woodlands for hunting, fishing and other forms of enjoyment; and provide a renewable source of locally-produced energy. In economic terms, the annual contribution of forest-based manufacturing and forest-related recreation and tourism to the economy in Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont and New York is roughly \$20 billion (NEFA 2007). Forests are indeed the lifeblood of New England.

A Great Outdoors Initiative that emphasizes the permanent conservation of the private working woodlands and the wildlands that define New England and serve the nation would build on the region's rich conservation history. This is a history that dates back nearly 400 years and sets a high bar for conservation with the first public park in the English-speaking world (the Boston Common), the first regional land trust in America (The Trust for Public Lands), and the work of conservation luminaries such as Henry David Thoreau, George Perkins Marsh, and John D. Rockefeller.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

The 150th anniversary commemoration is expected to stimulate renewed interest in the conflict and generate unprecedented tourism to Civil War sites. Preserved battlefields revitalize local economies and create jobs by encouraging heritage tourism. The more historic land that is preserved, the longer visitors stay in a community and the more time they spend patronizing local businesses. Most of the over 900 acres of battlefields preserved by CVBT are in Spotsylvania County. In an area rich in history, the biggest tourist draw is its Civil War heritage.

Battlefields are outdoor classrooms for this and future generations. They allow visitors to walk in the footsteps of the Civil War heroes and experience the landscape much as it was during the conflict. Protection of America's remaining Civil War battlefields will leave a lasting legacy of national commitment to preservation and conservation.

Preserved battlefields help protect water resources; sustain parks, working farms, forests and ranches; and provide open space for passive outdoor recreation.

Battlefield preservation in central Virginia, where many significant sites are located, is also vital for protecting the Chesapeake Bay. All of the properties protected by the CVBT lie in the Rappahannock River watershed, thus their preservation and proper management ensure no adverse impact on the tributaries to the Bay.

We are very judicious in what we identify for preservation, making sure that what we acquire relates to the National Park Service's (NPS) resources, thus working toward a cohesive whole.

If well designed, the multipurposes delivered by urban greenways favorably effect environmental [water & air quality], ecological, flood damage avoidance, public health, recreation, non-motorized transportation, environmental education, cultural resource preservation, economic enhancement, development pattern stabilization, quality of life, etc. For these attributes to be realized nationwide, the barriers of the status quo need to be removed, or at least lowered through the conduct of the PAGO Initiative.

As envisioned in Raleigh, greenway systems and networks primarily follow riparian corridors that are the interface of terrestrial and aquatic ecosystems. Conservation of optimum corridor widths and integration of core habitats can create a mosaic pattern that maintains ecological functions in an urban region. This [landscape ecology] systems scale approach could be advanced through required consideration during State Wildlife Action Plan updates, State Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan updates, and local stormwater management plan updates.

Finally, I will be so bold as to suggest that NC State University (a Land Grant institution) in collaboration with the other colleges and universities within the Triangle region are uniquely suited to be considered for and serve as a center of excellence for green infrastructure.

TIGER II Discretionary Grants are available for multiple purposes including planning and bicycle/pedestrian networks.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Urban and urbanizing areas are perhaps the most difficult place to pursue conservation, open space, and public use initiatives. They are the areas with the greatest total population and density, they are the most disrupted by development, with the highest fair market value on remaining lands, and the least available grant funding opportunities. In this difficult context, greenways offer a system scale conservation and land use pattern that provides multiple positive public functions. The Urban Park and Recreation Recovery Act provided some funding from 1978-2002, but has been unappropriated since. Currently, HR 3734 The Urban Revitalization and Livable Communities Act is proposed as an updated replacement. It better recognizes and responds to the complex multiple issues and needs of viable urban areas, and deserves widespread support. The proposed appropriation is greatly needed to fill part of the void in grant funds availability to address close to home conservations and public use where the vast majority of people live.

Greenways can and should be part of the solution. With more attention to the integration of existing and evolving natural systems data into required planning exercises, pertinent relationships will become obvious and more collaborative programming will be possible. Similarly, related health data and population statistics will further inform planning. Thus, progress can be made through better integrated interagency planning exercises to meet 21st century challenges. With this improved decision-making tool, funding needs can be better justified and funds can be better directed to fulfill their intended mission

America's woodlands play an essential role in a healthy outdoor strategy. The Great Outdoors of America includes more than 260 million acres of family-owned forest land, roughly one-third of the U.S Forestland. This private forest land provides multiple public benefits including clean air, water, forest products, wildlife habitat, and recreation opportunities. Family forest owners will continue to play an important role in America's Great Outdoors with a little support.

- The enthusiasm of the individuals that meet the public (generic comment);

- The understood need (of some federal & state agency individuals) to share outdoor activities with urban oriented/trained children (generic comment);

This outreach program is an honorable one (this assumes there are no self-serving and/or clandestine agendas).

The Sesquicentennial (2011-2015) of the American Civil War is fast approaching and the anniversary commemoration is expected to stimulate renewed interest in the conflict and generate unprecedented tourism to Civil War sites. Protection of America's remaining Civil War battlefields will leave a lasting legacy of national commitment to history, land preservation and conservation. Battlefields are outdoor classrooms that can teach history, geography, biology, and geology to this and future generations. They allow visitors to walk in the footsteps of Civil War heroes to learn what they did on that hallowed ground while also experiencing the landscape much as it was during the conflict.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Many Americans come to battlefields in order to study military tactics and leadership. But the real story these places tell is America's story. They provide patriotic inspiration and reflection on the Civil War, its causes, and its repercussions that continue to echo in the struggles of today. All Americans who visit these battlefields leave with a better understanding of the violence that forged our country and our form of government. They learn to appreciate the debt owed to the American men and women who fought and died on these battlefields and battlefields the world over. The Civil War set our nation on the road toward the multi-cultural society it is today. The values tested and clarified in that great conflict are what continue to bind the nation together today--a country of immigrants united by our shared history and ideals. That story makes these places unparalleled outdoor classrooms for illustrating our continuous struggle over differing visions for the future of this great nation

Saving battlefields is not only about telling the nation's story and recognizing the sacrifices of generations that came before, it also creates valuable open space for the American public. In the not-too-distant future, these preserved Civil War battlefields will be the "urban parks" of their communities, just like the Mall is to Washington DC. Some, such as Manassas, already are. They are multiuse spaces containing scenic and educational hiking trails for exercise and enjoyment. Their woodlands and wetlands provide habitats for birds and wild animals and their fields land for farmers to cultivate. The open space protected by these battlefields preserves vitally important watersheds and groundwater supplies. If not saved, development may ruin the environment and these historic oases which attract visitors, new residents, and businesses that grow and sustain the economy. Battlefields respect not only history but natural resources, as well.

South Dakota is home to some of the most unique and varied landscapes in the United States. These natural environments are among our state's greatest assets. Tourism is South Dakota's second largest industry. In addition to the National Parks and other landmarks that draw visitors, partnerships among landowners, governments and organizations have helped make South Dakota a popular destination for hunting, fishing and other outdoor recreation. For example, the federal Land and Water Conservation Fund has helped local organizations and landowners conserve the native tallgrass prairie habitat that supports some of the best pheasant hunting in the nation.

Wherever that's the case, lake dwellers need to pick up what is essentially a loose ball and run with it: i.e., launch a sustainability campaign of their own, lake by lake. It won't be easy and it will cost money, but with commitment and diligence it can become a reality. My model is Ten Mile Lake in Cass County, where I have spent most of each summer for the past 46 years. What began there as a modest preservation effort about thirty years ago has evolved into a full-blown program with enthusiastic support from most lake residents. More to the point, its effects so far are positive: water clarity has improved and nutrient levels have declined; quality indices are better than when we began our effort.

Large landscape conservation also provides significant economic and fiscal benefits to rural and urban communities.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

There is general agreement that the promise of large landscape conservation is its focus on land and water problems at an appropriate geographic scale, regardless of political and jurisdictional boundaries. While it is hard to define precisely what constitutes a large landscape conservation effort, there is a growing consensus that such efforts are multijurisdictional, multipurpose, and multistakeholder, and they operate at various geographic scales using a variety of governance arrangements. The common currency in large landscape conservation is regional collaboration—the ability to work across boundaries with people and organizations that have diverse interests yet share a common place.

In response to these concerns, people from many walks of life are experimenting with a variety of approaches that are best captured by the term large landscape conservation. This new paradigm for conservation is provocative, but can be difficult to define. Based on research and a range of examples, the paradigm encompasses three criteria: (1) multijurisdictional—the issues being addressed cut across political and jurisdictional boundaries; (2) multipurpose—they address a mix of related issues, including but not limited to environment, economy, and community; and (3) multistakeholder—they include public, private, and nongovernmental actors.

Large landscape conservation provides significant benefits to rural and urban communities in areas near the conserved landscapes through increased income, employment, and economic prosperity, and improved fiscal balance (American Society of Landscape Architects 2009). These benefits to human communities flow directly or indirectly from services provided by the ecosystems present within the conserved lands. Ecosystem services can be categorized as general services that provide water, food, fiber, and energy; regulating services that purify water and air, sequester carbon, regulate climate, decompose waste, pollinate crops, and provide pest and disease control; supporting services such as nutrient cycling, soil formation, photosynthesis, and seed dispersal; and cultural services that provide spiritual and intellectual inspiration, recreational experiences, and aesthetic benefits (Millennium Ecosystem Assessment 2005).

Many people move to rural areas to live, work, and conduct business due to quality-of-life considerations associated with the environmental amenities provided by ecosystems, such as clean air and water, active outdoor recreation, and hunting and angling opportunities. Protected public lands, such as designated wilderness, national parks, and national conservation areas, are also an essential component of large landscape conservation. They provide valuable environmental amenities and protect lands that are significant economic assets for local and regional rural economic development. An extensive study of the role of protected public lands on economic prosperity in the West concluded that counties hosting or close to protected lands have the fastest economic growth (Rasker et al. 2004).

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Economic activities associated with ecosystem services arising from conserved and protected lands, such as tourism, agriculture, hunting and angling, and outdoor recreation, directly contribute both dollars and jobs to local and regional economies. Other studies have documented the positive effect of protected open space on residential property values. The closer a property is to open space or park land, the higher the premium placed on its value (de Brun 2007). In addition to these economic benefits, large landscape conservation provides extensive fiscal benefits on both the revenue and cost sides of local government budgets. Nearly all of the economic activities noted above are taxed in some way, and increased property values resulting from conserved lands produce increased property tax revenues for local governments.

Conserving natural and working landscapes also improves the fiscal balance for communities by concentrating residential development in appropriate locations. Working lands and conserved natural landscapes generally generate less revenue than residential properties, but they require very little in the way of public infrastructure and services. Many fiscal analyses of the costs of providing community services indicate that working landscapes generate more public revenues than they receive in the form of public services (American Farmland Trust 2006). Ecosystem services maintained through conservation of natural landscapes can significantly improve the fiscal balance. Allowing ecosystems to do what would otherwise require engineered systems avoids the costs to construct and maintain man-made structures. Some examples are flood control by healthy riparian systems, water purification by forest landscapes, mitigation of tidal surges by coastal wetlands, and wastewater treatment by freshwater wetlands. A recent study of water suppliers found that the extent of forest cover in their watersheds affects the water treatment costs (Ernst, Gullick, and Nixon 2004). Data analyzed for 27 water suppliers indicated that for every 10 percent increase in forest cover in the watershed, the treatment and chemical costs decreased by approximately 20 percent. Due to these and other fiscal and economic benefits, an increasing number of communities are including land conservation as part of their strategy for providing safe water supplies.

Policy leaders at regional, state, and national levels, along with representatives of conservation organizations, have initiated a number of new policies and programs over the past several years to address land and water issues at a large landscape scale. These initiatives broaden the foundation for large landscape conservation within the context of other activities.

The National Parks Second Century Commission (2009, 16–17), an independent body convened by the National Parks Conservation Association, recently concluded, “Parks will be key elements in a network of connected ecological systems and historical sites, and public and private lands and waters that are linked together across the nation and the continent. Lived-in landscapes will be an integral part of these great corridors of conservation.”

To complement these government initiatives, a group of ten national nongovernmental conservation organizations released a proposal in February 2010 to support large landscape conservation through existing federal programs and authorities (American Rivers et al. 2010). These and other recent efforts build on a solid foundation of regional land use planning, ecosystem management, and interstate water management throughout the United States.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

In response to the challenges and opportunities posed by the nation's most compelling land and water issues, people across the continent are experimenting with a variety of approaches to achieve large landscape conservation. In addition to being multijurisdictional, multipurpose, and multistakeholder, these initiatives operate with various governance arrangements and at diverse geographic scales. The goal of each project is to address issues at a scale that is big enough to surround the problem, but small enough to tailor the solution (Porter and Wallis 2002).

The process of achieving large landscape conservation requires regional collaboration, and people have invented a variety of approaches tailored to fit the scope and nature of their particular issues. Based on both practical experience and a study of hundreds of regional initiatives in North America, there appears to be a continuum of approaches—from informal networks, to more formal partnerships, to regional institutions

The Blackfoot Challenge is a landownerbased group that coordinates management of the Blackfoot River, its tributaries, and adjacent public and private lands, covering approximately 2,400 square miles in Montana. The Blackfoot Challenge has produced an impressive list of accomplishments over the years, including integrated weed management practices; land protection through conservation easements; restoration of streams, riparian areas, and native grasslands; removal of fish passage barriers; and educational outreach about the watershed. The organization clearly meets the criteria for large landscape conservation— multiple jurisdictions, multiple purposes, and multiple stakeholders—and illustrates one way to organize and govern such an initiative, in this case as a nonprofit organization. With respect to the issue of scale, it is large by eastern standards but small by western standards. The Blackfoot Challenge is also a good example of how landscape-scale efforts often nest within one another. The watershed lies within a region know as the Crown of the Continent (figure 7). During the past eight years, a number of independent and complementary initiatives have emerged to promote conservation and community stewardship in this remarkable landscape that covers 18,000 square miles (about twice the size of New Jersey). Numerous Crown-wide initiatives and subregional efforts address issues in southeast British Columbia, southwest Alberta, the Rocky Mountain Front, the Blackfoot-Clearwater watersheds, and the Flathead Valley.

Beginning in 2006, the Lincoln Institute of Land Policy and the Center for Natural Resources and Environmental Policy at The University of Montana convened a series of roundtables to facilitate communication and understanding among these initiatives, and to explore opportunities to work together. The roundtables created an informal, ad hoc network of networks, representing another promising model of large landscape conservation. The Crown meets the basic criteria of what we mean by a large-scale landscape, but operates at a much larger geographic scale than the Blackfoot Challenge and functions with a different model of organization and governance.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Scaling up to an even larger level is the Yellowstone to Yukon Conservation Initiative (Y2Y), an effort to protect core wildlife areas and corridors across 500,000 square miles (nearly three times the size of California) and spanning the U.S.–Canada border. Y2Y began as a network of biologists and conservationists who were concerned about the northward trend of declining wildlife populations and habitats. Today, Y2Y continues its networking function, but programmatically focuses on protecting key connectivity areas for wildlife— areas that both currently harbor endangered species such as the grizzly bear and face significant threats from habitat loss, invasive species, and climate change. While Y2Y focuses on wildlife corridors and connectivity, it works closely with private landowners, community leaders, and others to address a range of issues related to land use, community and economic prosperity, and wildlife management. In this respect, Y2Y meets the basic criteria of large landscape conservation, but operates at a much different scale than either the Crown or the Blackfoot Challenge. While it operates as a nonprofit organization, it relies heavily on partnerships with diverse stakeholders to achieve its objectives, thus embracing several ways to organize and govern a large landscape conservation initiative.

It seems likely that sustained movement toward landscape-scale conservation can only be achieved by bringing existing (national, state, tribal, and local) and emergent (regional, cross-jurisdictional) forms of governance together in place-specific, highly adaptive ways. This kind of collaboration seems to be emerging organically in response to a number of human and ecological problems. This suggests, further, that the focus on large landscape conservation might well result in a healing of not only ecosystems, but also related human systems. As traditionally adversarial conservation, community, and economic interests search for common ground, one arena of shared interest is a growing recognition that unscarred landscapes, clean water, fresh air, and a rich biodiversity based on healthy ecosystems are becoming the best economic engine available to many local communities. The potential of strengthening those economies while healing and preserving large ecosystems creates a significant new political context in which conservation and economic action converge. Perhaps even more appealing is the prospect that, in the course of working hard to discover and claim that common ground, the people who inhabit those ecosystems will have contributed to the strengthening of their civic culture, and to expanding their capacity to address the next set of challenges and realize the next set of opportunities they encounter. At the same time, the roles of federal, state, and local governments are being refined as they act more as a catalyst, partner, and resource to facilitate homegrown conservation of large landscapes.

The promise of large landscape conservation is that it seeks to address land and water problems at an appropriate geographic scale, regardless of political and jurisdictional boundaries. While it is difficult to define precisely what constitutes a large landscape conservation effort, there is a growing consensus that such efforts are multijurisdictional, multipurpose, and multistakeholder, and that they operate with various governance arrangements at diverse geographic scales. The common currency in large landscape conservation is regional collaboration—the ability to work across boundaries with people and organizations that have diverse interests yet share a common place and purpose.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

During the past two years, participants in the national policy dialogues have identified nearly 200 cases that, depending on the criteria used, represent examples of large landscape conservation (Lincoln Institute 2010). Taken together they reflect the variations in governance and spatial scale, and include policy initiatives, plans, government programs, and nongovernment organizations that serve as either advocates or intermediaries. This preliminary inventory also reveals that such efforts are organized for multiple purposes, from informing and educating people to sharing data, planning, decision making, implementation, monitoring, and evaluating on-the-ground outcomes.

Freedom to Roam was instrumental in helping advance and pass the Western Governors' Association (WGA) policy framework for wildlife corridor conservation across the West and continues to be closely involved in WGA's wildlife corridor initiative. It has also developed a national campaign to promote and conserve wildlife corridors as a solution to habitat fragmentation and climate change impacts on species. One of Freedom to Roam's programs is Witness for Wildlife (W4W), which focuses on building grassroots awareness of the great wildlife corridors in North America. W4W combines citizen science with a Webbased community, wherein participants are encouraged to report, share stories, and upload data, images, and videos onto a W4W Web site.

Historic preservation plays a unique role in preserving Nebraska's great outdoors by: Contributing to smart growth and offsetting urban sprawl.

[Historic preservation plays a unique role in preserving Nebraska's great outdoors by:] Enriching natural areas.

[Historic preservation plays a unique role in preserving Nebraska's great outdoors by:] Preserving landscapes and open spaces associated with important historical themes.

[Historic preservation plays a unique role in preserving Nebraska's great outdoors by:] Preserving archeological sites and traditional cultural places in their natural environment.

[Historic preservation plays a unique role in preserving Nebraska's great outdoors by:] Collaborating with environmental groups in preserving lands of both natural land values and culture.

Modeled after its sister program, the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF), the HPF provides dedicated funding to support state and tribal historic preservation programs, among others. Under the HPF, grants are provided to Nebraska, which implement federal, state and local preservation initiatives.

With full funding, historic preservation will succeed in: Saving open space.

[With full fundin, historic preservation will succeed in:] Promoting "green" initiatives. The best "green" projects retain existing buildings and utilize existing infrastructure.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

[With full fundin, historic preservation will succeed in:] Developing ways to promote "heritage tourism." Tourism to Nebraska's historic sites and museums generate over \$100 million annually. It encourages travel and rediscovery of our historic and natural treasures through state and national historic parks and sites.

[With full fundin, historic preservation will succeed in:] Expanding surveys of historic and archeological places. This includes identifying and recording Nebraska's cultural landscapes. This helps communities, local governments, tribal governments and the public to work to preserve important setting associated with historic events and the important geographical contexts of historic places.

[With full fundin, historic preservation will succeed in:] Assisting tribes in preserving places significant in traditional culture.

[With full fundin, historic preservation will succeed in:] Providing assistance to local governments to recognize the importance of historic preservation within their own growth management and comprehensive planning.

The America's Great Outdoors Initiative needs to benefit all Americans through parks, recreation, open space, and human habitat. Increased funding for existing federal programs will promote preservation and heritage tourism and encourage people to discover and explore America's Great Outdoors.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on President Obama's Great Outdoors Initiative. We appreciated the opportunity to meet with you and your staff recently in Washington, DC, and greatly appreciate respresenatatives from Washington coming here to listen and participate in this ongoing conversation. This is an expression of respect that we sincerely hope will be further reflected in policies that emerge from our discussions.

The Confederated Salish andKootenait Tribes applaud the America's Great Outdoors Initiative goal of reconnecting Americans with the environment. We believe this effort can help create a new generation of Americans committed to the protectionand restoration of the lands and waters where Indian people have lived sustainably for thousands of years.

Indian people and Indian cultures--the caretakers of the continent for millennia--stand at the center f America's conservation heritage. For many generations, our leaders and elders have played a critical role in the development of the nation's growing sense of responsibility for this priceless national heritage.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

The Outdoors Alliance for Kids (OAK) supports the Administration's America's Great Outdoors (AGO) initiative to engage the public in shaping a new conservation and recreation agenda that meets the needs of the 21st Century. OAK appreciates in particular the emphasis on engaging youth in the agenda-setting process. The members of OAK are brought together by the belief that the health and well-being of current and future generations, our planet, our communities and the economy depend on humans having a personal, direct and life-long relationship with nature and the outdoors. OAK is working to expand the number and quality of opportunities for children, youth and families to connect with the outdoors.

Emerging research suggests that time spent outdoors in nature results in health benefits for children and youth and that significant exposure to the natural world during childhood results in positive attitudes towards the environment in adulthood.

I grew up in Georgia near the Atlantic ocean and some of my happiest memories are related to the ocean.

There is something that is worth more than any words one can share when you are able to experience and enjoy the majesty of the outdoors.

As a registered landscape architect I have dedicated my professional life to studying, preserving and enhancing America's outdoor environment from the wilderness to the most urban of places.

I grew up playing, hiking and camping in nature. When my husband and I had our own kids, we continued the tradition with them. It's my hope that they do the same.

Protection of our environment for future generations should be our highest priority.

My partner and I travel in our 36 ft. trailer enjoying the beautiful natural wonders of our country. We would like future generations to be able to enjoy our public lands as much as we have. Please consider these priorities for America's Great Outdoors:

I want the next generation to continue to enjoy America's great outdoors too. (public transportation needed; rails, high speed transit) Please let me be able to

Thank you for your leadership in shaping a conservation strategy that is necessary for the 21st century. I feel it is vitally important to protect and preserve what we have, for all of us now and for our future generations.

I am the father of a 4-year-old and I want her to be able to enjoy America's great outdoors as I have done.

I am an avid backpacker and hiker.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

My daughter should be able to enjoy America's great outdoors too.

Educating the public is very important. Citizens are willing to work with you in so many areas, if they know what to do. Programs that include students everywhere will provide the caring citizens of tomorrow.

Hopefully your legacy will also be the legacy of my future children and grandchildren. The prospect gives me great hope!

America's first greatness has always been her land, and we cannot be a great country without preserving that heritage.

The time is now to protect our earth

I want the my sons and their children and their children's children to enjoy America's great outdoors too.

I love the out- of-doors and my grandchildren do too. I want them to be able to see all the wonders our country has. Please protect it. But we also need to protect the wildlife such as horses and wolves. What does this do in regards to them?

It is important save as much of the wilderness we can ,as there are wonderful creatures that live within ,and I would love to have children of the future to enjoy what I have ,and not have to look in a book and say ,"So that animal us to roam our woods and wetlands . " Please stop destroying these wonderful places and save them and the living things in them.

I'm a former Forest Service employee who was fortunate to have had a role in protecting some of the finest wilderness areas in America, including the John Muir Wilderness and the Ansel Adams Wilderness. Though I've returned to my native Philadelphia, those precious landscapes are still a part of me, as they will be for my children, thanks to their protected status. However, there are hundreds of places around the country that lack significant protection, and once they are lost to development, neglect, or other threats, they can not be replaced.

Let us work to save these wonders for our children and grandchildren and all future generations...When it is gone it can not be replaced.

As someone who spends a great deal of time in our public backcountry practicing primitive recreation, I care very deeply about how those lands are managed and treated. I am outside every single week, and often make my vacation plans around places where I can backpack, camp, and fish.

The outdoors, particularly development-free, unspoiled areas like wilderness, hold the resources for our future both spiritual and practical.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

The issue of protecting the environment, natural spaces and growing our existing wild spaces is the issue most important to me.

Every year we take our children camping, hiking, whitewater rafting and when we travel, try to take them to natural areas to which they have never been. Nothing on Earth is better than its natural beauty, diversity of ecosystems and the complexity of geology, geography and living species.

As a New Yorker, I find it necessary to escape the city at least a few times a year and reconnect to nature and the great American outdoors. It is essential to my productivity in the workplace and overall well being to be able to recharge my batteries, by taking in the stars at night, hike down a mountain trail, explore a native forest, or swim in the waters of a pristine beach. I have been lucky enough this past year to see the sun rise at Cadillac Mountain in Acadia National Park in Maine and hike to the top of Bear Mountain at Bear Mountain State Park in New York. I treasure these experiences and they allow me to cope with city life and experience the beauty of nature in most extraordinary ways. I look forward to many new adventures in the years to come.

When push comes to shove Nature is what makes life worth living. A future with nothing but concrete sidewalks and structures is a very bleak one in my eyes.

We need to keep as many natural places as possible. For one reason, they are much more healthier.

I live in the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem so I know the importance of protecting habitats and migration routes. I want my grandchildren to be able to experience the wilderness that I have been fortunate to enjoy.

I can't think of a better way of leaving a legacy than preserving our great outdoors.

The magnificence of our wilderness and protected lands has been a source of healing and inspiration like no other in my life

I am strongly in favor of the federal government protecting America's wild places and wild life. I am also strongly in favor of maintaining existing national wild places and expanding the number of federally protected wilderness areas.

These are important places in our lives. Each year we go to national parks as a sanctuary to renew our energy.

Some of my best memories of vacations were when I spent time with my family in American's national parks. I hope to see many more. My family and I spend alot of time outdoors, going to nature centers, taking walks in the woods, etc. I hope that America's beautiful lands will be preserved, for future generations and for the animals and plants that live on the lands.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

I'm an outdoorsy type, as they might say. I grew up in the Boy Scout program and achieved Eagle Scout. I take my family and kids outdoors regularly along with the youth group of my church and serve other non-profit groups that work to help our treasured green spaces.

Along with thousands of other americans and visitors, I regularly enjoy the protected areas of the U.S. we need to protect our water, air an land and increase the protected areas now and in the future.

Now let's begin our struggle to save what we have left for our descendents!

As an instructor for the National Outdoor Leadership School leading college and high school students on month-long trips in Alaska, Wyoming, and Washington state, I have a deep understanding of the importance of a connection to nature and wilderness for American society. I strongly believe that time spent in forests, mountains, and oceans is a necessary part of human happiness and the right of all Americans, and that large scale wilderness preservation is one of America's great gifts to the world.

Camping was how my family enjoyed our vacations. I want my children to have the same fond memories.

Since I was a child I have been spending summers in Yellowstone and Grand Teton National Parks. This experience honestly created the person I am today. Taking week long trips in the backcountry taught me how to rely on myself and how to lead a group of people in a way that benefitted the entire group. Mr. President I urge you to do that now. Please consider the old Iroquois saying "In our every deliberation, we must consider the impact of our decisions on the next seven generations."

The future generations will thank us. A society with no regard to protecting and respecting the environment and other species is a doomed society. Thank you for taking these steps, they are the right and moral thing to do.

When I was growing up, I was able to enjoy the out-of-doors. I am thankful that my parents gave us many opportunities to learn from the natural world. I want young people to be able to do this in the future as well.

I am lucky to have open spaces near my home: the Allandale Woods and the Arnold Arboretum. My wife and I have personally seen mountaintop removal coalmining when visiting friends in West Virginia. We've been horrified by what it does to surrounding communities, their water supplies and their overall environment. It must be stopped. We must switch to a green economy and train those miners for green jobs.

Man NEEDS to preserve wilderness to save his sanity. Our minds and bodies were designed to be outdoors. Concrete and buildings only suppress our true nature and leads to depression and schizophrenia.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Respect/ Nature in all her forms

I am all about the wilderness areas being saved for people to recreate, not just for preservation. Some recreational activities do need to be curtailed at some of the more sensitive areas, but the areas should be available for the enjoyment of the population in some manner. Some areas might need restricted access due to flora and fauna endangerment; that is understandable and those protections need to be in place.

I know growing up I used to always seek out creeks and lakes to swim in and some of the fondest memories I have is at a lake with my family. I have since taught my children to love the outdoors. It would just be ashame if in the future you had to go for hundreds and hundreds of miles to see a tree or a forest or a lake or a creek or a wild animal. In Arkansas you have all of those things in your back yard and easy access to them. I would love for you and your administration to keep it that way for us here and all over the this great land of ours.

I am an outdoor educator in Florissant, Colorado, and I have seen firsthand what a profound impact even three short days interacting with the natural world can have on a sixth grader. In our program, students from Colorado Springs and Denver, who normally spend their days in front of televisions and computer screens, discover firsthand the healing benefits of time outdoors. They become more engaged, experience greater calmness, and establish a connection to something they identify as "greater" than themselves. They feel a part of something and become empowered. Children with behavioral problems find themselves more calm and able to pay attention for longer periods of time. Over-scheduled kids feel a profound sense of peace when sitting silently in an aspen grove listening to the leaves. One of the many problems with our plugged-in generation is that there is less and less access to wild lands. This is an issue that affects the physical and mental health of both children and adults. Public lands must be protected.

It is important to safeguard our great outdoors for the next generation to enjoy.

In North Carolina we added new state parks recently. But land is being developed quickly and we need to protect more of it before it is too late.

I was fortunate enough to spend many weekends and summers camping and hiking with my family and friends while I was growing up. I still enjoy camping, mountain biking and hiking as an adult. I have also gained a rich appreciation for our county's history and heritage by visiting our Battlefield National Parks. This exposure to the wonders of our nation's parks and wilderness areas has enriched my life.

Having a 6 year old and an 8 year old child as I do makes this matter all the more obvious and personal. The delight and wonder children feel in nature is infectious.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

In 1933 FDR put a generation - including my daddy - to work restoring and preserving America's wilderness. The CCC also improved access for all Americans to National Parks, Forests, and other wilderness areas. Daddy's generation reaped the benefits of work and an improved economy. My generation got the physical health benefits of clean water and the psychological health benefits of wilderness. America's wilderness lands need restoring and protecting again. America's youth need jobs. And I want my grandsons to have the physical and psychological benefits my generation enjoyed

I just spent a day hiking the beautiful Pinnacles National Monument near Soledad, California. It was beautiful...and it needs to stay that way.

I grew up in the beautiful State of Maine, in a rural area where the elders taught me to recognize the native plants and trees. I knew them by name. I lost that connection to the land, which I took for granted, when I moved to the other side of the country. Whenever I return to Maine, I am shocked and saddened to see how many of the wild spaces I remember have been built up, cultivated, or "prettified" so that all you see is grass, rather than Queen Anne's Lace, daisies, milkweed, and joe-pye-weed. This is a huge loss--those who never knew those plants will not know what they are missing. I hope you will make the conservation of natural areas a top priority.

My wife and I frequent the Adirondack mountains in NY every year and are very grateful for the opportunity to have open access to this untarnished wilderness.

With all the beauty and recreation that nature provides through our national park system, there is the added benefit of counteracting CO2 emissions and global warming when we make new parks and preserve older natural monuments.

For people to care about something (anything?) they need a personal connection with it. I am a strong advocate of outdoor education as a means for connecting people with our environment, natural resources, biosphere, etc. I believe that an individual's attraction to a given activity, whether that be mountaineering, backcountry skiing, looking at wild flowers or (my daughter's current favorite) capturing grasshoppers can be utilized as a path toward a deeper understanding of ecology, resource management, and a land/water/planet ethic.

In the United States, we are blessed by having public lands that are set aside for the use and enjoyment of all the people. The federal role in the administration of these lands is invariably driven by the agenda of the administration in power. The current administration appears sensitive to the interests of the conservation community but there is no guarantee that the next administration will share this perspective. I believe that a more comprehensive understanding of the 'natural world' serves all people regardless of political affiliation. As a world population we are presented with many natural resource challenges (e.g. climate change, deteriorating air quality, limited access to potable water, loss of arable land, etc). I believe that the federal government could be of great assistance in promoting the education of people with respect to the natural resource challenges that we face.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

As an outdoor educator, I have a strong connection to wild places. I believe that protecting wild places and sharing those places with people has a great deal of value for our society. In sharing such places with people, I believe that we can help with the development of an individual's land/water/planet ethic. I believe that the development of such an ethic is invaluable to addressing the natural resource challenges that I mention above. My goal is to help foster such a land/water/planet ethic.

As a native of Wyoming but a resident of Texas, I have always understood the importance of having (or lacking) a critical connection with the natural world.

I truly believe that if more people would go outside and reconnect with nature, that the world would be a better place. It always feels so good to be with the trees, breath fresh air and forget about one's problems. Nature is peaceful and replenishing, but the large corporations that run the world are exploiting it for profit. If something isn't done to protect the wilderness pretty soon, it will cease to exist and we'll only be left with cities and concrete - - how depressing!

I love our country! It is the most beautiful country in the world, hands down.

I grew up camping, fishing and doing many other outdoor activities. I want these opportunities to be available to the next generation. Without stronger protections for the beautiful wild spaces we have, and making additions of protected wild places, we will lose these beautiful places and have only concrete and polluted air and water to live in. I want fresh air, and tall trees to escape to, no concrete jungles and noisy traffic.

The only way to ensure that Americans will be invested in the protection of nature is if they are given an opportunity to appreciate it now. By creating new refuges and conserving current ecosystems, you will be protecting important ecological resources, beautiful vistas, and necessary habitats.

This is very important to me. The outdoors is how I survive in this world. It brings me peace, joy, sustenance for my soul. It keeps me grounded and inspires me with it's beauty. Protecting the outdoors and all that that means is important for me and I believe it is important to my family, friends, and others like me. As it is, too many are disconnected from their natural environments and I wish them to be preserved so others might be inspired and find their happiness as well.

I live in an area that is blessed with abundant natural beauty, and it is beginning to be eroded

Our country, businesses, and scientists need to work with and learn from the natural world with which we are inextricably linked. Providing opportunities for everyone, particularly children and the impoverished to enjoy nature is essential to create a just and sustainable world.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Saving America's remaining natural places is not only about recreation. It is about survival for many plant and animal species and their habitats. And ultimately, it's about preserving our nation's character and legacy from further development and encroachment. We have already lost more than we should have. The destruction of more forests, grasslands, archaeological sites and other heritage resources is unthinkable. Conservation of these priceless resources is the only way to save them from destruction. It will take courage and bold leadership to resist pressures from many corporate and other special interest groups. To ensure that our nation's wildlife, plus its natural and cultural resources are protected and always available for future generations, please consider these priorities for America's Great

Because I've grown up with fields, trees, parks, hikes, mountains and seas and shores, I want the next generations to be able to experience the beauty. Thanks for all this Democratic administration does to improve our lives.

The U.S. must implement 3 things to establish a democracy: publicly-funded campaigns, election reform (a la W. Europe) and end obscene corporate lobbies!

Wilderness areas and parks are engines of economic growth to adjacent communities while providing resiliency and buffering capabilities for ecosystems. We need more protected areas and a national program to encourage redevelopment of brownfields and protection of greenfield sites.

Both our survival and the Earth's survival is at stake. They are irrevocably tied together. As one goes, so goes the other. Does it not make sense to protect that which keeps us alive?

I do not feel our public lands should be used for business purposes, (ie timbering or mining) those ventures have their own capital to purchase lands and do not need the public lands, NO MATTER WHAT RESOURCES ARE THERE OR UNDER THERE. Timbering and fire burns for land management are necessary within reason, but not clear-cut thousand of acres in a swath.

Wildlife migration corridors and green space in developed areas are excellent ways to keep nature healthy and accessible in our modern world. , those who follow will appreciate what we do now.

Not only do these spaces conserve wilderness, offer pleasure to people and wildlife, but they also help buffer climate change, absorb air pollutants to some degree, and help to conserve water and absorb flood waters.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

I am amazed at how many petitions we have to sign and how many letters we have to write to try to secure some sort of legislation for what should be obvious; we need to respect and protect our natural resources! Isn't this apparent in the wake of these recent disasters? Isn't this a no brainer? What type of governing body would want to sacrifice our natural resources, which once destroyed, are nearly impossible to recover? And for what? Fuel, convenience, PROGRESS? How progressive will it be to future generations when they have no resources to fall back on? No land to cultivate or parks and forests to enjoy? What about the invaluable role these resources play in our fragile ecosystem? It is scientifically proven that when our forests and streams are irreperably altered, our country and the entire planet feels the effects and suffers for the mistakes we have made. The Forest Service is currently spending millions on road reclamation projects because of the now-realized damages that were done to the national forests when they built logging, lookout and recreational roads. While this is a step in the right direction, it will not restore the landscape to what it once was and it will not undo that damage that has already been done. It is so much more expensive to try to go back and fix mistakes that were made than it is to see the big picture and make decisions based on all the variable not just the current bottom dollar and instant gratification mentality the US has become infamous for.

WILDERNESS MATTERS

connect more people with nature - which has been shown to improve physical and mental health and increase creativity

Some of the most meaningful and restoring times my family has spent together have been in our parks and wildland areas, both when I was growing up and as I raised my family. Preservation of these areas so that my granddaughter can someday take her family to enjoy them, is to me of paramount importance.

About twenty years ago, my wife and I enjoyed the privilege of visiting Glacier National Park. I wish every American, every human being in fact, could experience that beauty. Unfortunately, the glacier is receding and in a few more years will disappear entirely. This is due to global warming, but can serve as an apt illustration for anyone who would like to know what it would be like to lose any of the natural beauty of our wilderness.

As a national park junkie (who travels to several national parks each year), I implore you to protect and fund additional monies for our national parks and wilderness areas. As a nation, we need to do more to protect and enhance our parks and wild lands. They provide sustenance for all creatures and give me a huge sense of pride in our country and our freedoms (to enjoy our parks and wildlands in many ways).
I implore you to create more wilderness areas and to continue to build - and fund - the national parks, monuments, and wilderness areas

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

These places hold a special piece in my heart. They are a natural resource, once they are gone, they will be gone forever. We have some of the most beautiful places on earth, it would be shameful if they were destroyed forever. American has always been a leader, let's show the rest of the world how to protect our lands natural beauty and preserve what so many passionate people have strive so hard to protect over the years.

protecting living beings, not corporate interests - for the other species who share this continent with us - , putting the needs of living beings above those of special interests and corporate greed - ; what affects one ultimately affects all, and we are not apart from the rest of the living beings on this earth, but interconnected. - for the quiet and nonimpacting enjoyment of our continent's natural places; do not develop and destroy them. We have enough roads, developed places, and recreational facilities already.

Teach eco-literacy in our schools. Make sure our children understand the biological networks in which we live, that we count on to survive.

I truly look forward to taking my children and grandchildren to visit the parks, monuments, trails, forests, and other such sites. They are pieces of this country for everyone to enjoy...rich or poor. Please protect our nation's natural beauty and animal habitats.

We have nothing else that offers people such inspiration; the wild is a wellspring that contributes to sanity and sound perspective.

I am a Christian and I think it very important for our country to realize we did not create the world and are to be guardians of it. We will all be held accountable to our waste and neglect. We are already seeing wild animals encroaching on our cities -- because we have invaded their habitat. Did you know that the animals were created the same day as humans. God does care about what we are doing. Please protect our planet!

It's not right or fair for us to destroy the beauty & gifts of Nature, as we are only borrowing them from the future. We must save & protect these places, & the animals & plants that call them home, FOR our children's future!!

Clean air and water are really the most important thing on Earth for all of us. By preserving wild areas and wildlife we preserve the life giving air and water that we cannot live without. We also preserve the peace of mind that comes from natural experiences and that is second in importance only to the essentials needs with which it is connected.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

For years now my touchstone with spirituality has been the time I spend in the natural world. My trips into the mountains, particularly the Sierra Nevada have been one of the strongest connections with my family as well. I want the next generation to enjoy America's great outdoors too. That's why I am asking you to seize this opportunity to create, expand At a time when the corporations are taking over our government, buying up farm and timberlands for their own exploitation, the preservation of what remains untouched is of paramount importance. - - - This is of the greatest importance to me, my family and future generations.

Many of my most treasured childhood (and adult) memories center around being outdoors in this beautiful country of ours.

The wilderness belongs to no individual, but to all of us.

As I child, I was blessed to be surrounded and seduced by the joys of nature. I have also passed this on to my grown children, who are in touch with their indigenous selves. I want to ensure the same for all children.

EMPOWER THOSE WHO ARE THE RIGHTFUL HEIRS OF OUR BEAUTIFUL LAND!!!!!!!!!!

The following words are from a sermon entitled "Reverence For Nature" given by our oldest son, a Unitarian Universalist minister: "Both my parents were teachers and summers involved long camping trips to all of the great National Parks. These were learning experiences. The trips offered early introductions to natural history, geology, botany, taxonomy, ecosystems, forestry, and conservation." Our second son is a fire management specialist with the Nature Conservancy, spent three fire seasons on a hotshot wildfire crew in Alaska and is presently on a two week assignment with a fire crew at Lassen Volcanic National Park in California. This summer we had the pleasure of camping for the first time with our granddaughter along with our daughter and son-in-law.

- I had the opportunity to visit Mesa Verde this summer for the second time in my life. It is such a magical place with so much information about how people survived in the past. Our country had a vision that set up national parks to preserve the natural wonders, we need to continue to protect this heritage for the future generations. We have made such a strong effort so far we must continue to keep these places protected and cared for.

I want my grandchildren, and everyone else, to have the opportunity to enjoy the country I have been blessed to travel through over the years.

I just came back from a two week road trip out west to visit some six of the National Parks. They were amazing! I am considering volunteering next summer to help maintain and help out these parks. I

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

We have seen too many disasters in our generation that have spoiled the beauty that the US has to offer. Let's not keep making mistakes and let us have something to cherish now and for the future. I love all the wildlife and trails that the state of Washington has to offer, it wasn't until I was able to actually see the beauty firsthand that I started to discover and enjoy the diversity that we have in our nation.

Specifically, the National Conservation Lands:

- Should be managed to conserve, protect and restore the cultural, ecological, and scientific values for which these lands have been designated.

- Should be managed to provide visitors with the opportunity to experience natural and historic landscapes and enjoy a self-directed experience with minimal improved facilities.

- Should not contain new roads unless for emergency purposes.

- Should be managed to maintain biodiversity, promote ecological connectivity with surrounding landscapes, and resilience in the face of climate change.

- Should have their own budget line-item appropriation which will allow for transparent budget allocations for individual management units.

This year we celebrate the 10th anniversary of the National Conservation Lands. Even with much to celebrate, our National Conservation Lands still lack a unifying management vision as well as the necessary policies and procedures to ensure adequate protection of their outstanding resources. It is time for the Department of the Interior and the Bureau of Land Management to set the management directives that will protect the National Conservation Lands in a way that recognizes and protects their significant natural and cultural values and responds to this unique time in history.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Service-learning on public lands

There is a pressing need to provide service-learning opportunities on public lands to help restore the Nation's natural, cultural, historic, archaeological, recreational, and scenic resources, train a new generation of public land managers and enthusiasts, and promote the value of public service. Therefore, we urge the Department to include service and service-learning as innovative solutions to issues of how to build knowledge of, and appreciation for, our public lands and how to encourage a new generation of Americans to make working on public lands a career. Through the study of our parks, forests, and other lands we can connect young people with their natural environment and cultural heritage, creating a new generation of environmental stewards. Along the way, students can contribute to energy conservation, reduce the carbon footprint, and learn about the use of alternative sources of energy. For those who are so inclined, this experience can lead to a pathway to careers in federal land management agencies, which are in serious need of n

which Summer of Service programs exposed middle school students to public lands with promising results. Summer of Service (SOS) initiatives, included in the 2009 Kennedy Serve America Act, are examples of innovative service-learning opportunities for middle school youth over the summer months. SOS programs are designed to be intensive, structured, supervised, and designed to produce identifiable community improvements. In the summer of 2010, students engaged in community-based service-learning projects that addressed a variety of community needs and included exposure to national parks and other public lands. Expanding SOS opportunities to the Department of Interior, USDA, and other federal agencies will enable more young teens to participate in service as a "rite of passage" from middle to high school and provide opportunities for them to enter their teenage years with a positive experience that reinforces community connections, enlivens their education, and strengthens personal and civic values. At the same time, communities

I am writing in my capacity as Executive Director of Innovations in Civic Participation (ICP), a non-profit organization supporting the development of innovative high-quality youth civic engagement policies and programs in the United States and around the world. ICP embraces a positive view of young people that recognizes their potential to create beneficial and lasting social change in their communities through active participation in service opportunities. We believe that the America's Great Outdoors (AGO) initiative is one such opportunity and have submitted brief comments to the AGO online conversation (attached for reference).

We commend President Obama and Secretary Salazar for launching AGO, a long overdue national dialogue about conservation and reconnecting Americans with the outdoors. We are excited that this initiative includes the Departments of the Interior and Agriculture, the Environmental Protection Agency, and the Departments of Defense, Commerce, Housing and Urban Development, Health and Human Services, Labor, Transportation, and Education.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

ICP believes there is a pressing need to provide service-learning opportunities on public lands to help restore the Nation's natural, cultural, historic, archaeological, recreational, and scenic resources, train a new generation of public land managers and enthusiasts, and promote the value of public service. Therefore, we urge you to include service and service-learning as innovative solutions to issues of how to build knowledge of, and appreciation for, our public lands and how to encourage a new generation of Americans to make working on public lands a career. ICP believes that service and service-learning offer answers to these challenges.

Service-learning on public lands

Service-learning is a teaching methodology and strategy that lends itself to the study of our public lands. Through the study of our parks, forests, and other lands we can connect young people with their natural environment and cultural heritage, creating a new generation of environmental stewards. The history of our public lands is the history of the United States. The study of what lies beneath those lands can introduce students to art, anthropology, history, science and countless other disciplines.

Service-learning is also a pathway to careers in public lands management, the green economy, and engaging students in the study of various sciences and the environment. The civic, historical, and scientific resources and learning opportunities that public lands offer have the potential to engage young people in a way that no textbook can. With proper planning, this unique experience could lead to careers in public lands management, academia, museum work, and other activities. Getting young people out to experience those lands will energize and invigorate their education as well as reduce the "nature deficit disorder." Along the way, students can contribute to energy conservation, reduce the carbon footprint, and learn about the use of alternative sources of energy. For those who are so inclined, this experience can lead to a pathway to careers in federal land management agencies, which are in serious need of new, younger, and more diverse employees.

Using service-learning to educate young Americans about their heritage is consistent with Secretary Salazar's vision of programs to educate, engage and employ young people. In announcing the creation of a Youth Office (April 28, 2009) the Secretary said "We can and must do more to use our great landscapes as classrooms and as pathways to opportunity for our children." Through service-learning we can connect the next generation to our natural environment and our cultural heritage, educate them about American history, deepen their commitment to American values, and help foster their becoming responsible, participatory adults. Additionally, service and service-learning will help maintain public lands, reduce the maintenance backlog, and help ensure that our parks, forests, and coastal lands will be available for future generations.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

The most important reason to incorporate service-learning in youth programming at the Department is that it works. Research shows that service-learning programs positively affect young people in at least three ways: they do better in school because they better understand complex issues and have better problem-solving skills; their civic attitudes and behaviors improve as they develop connections to their community and reduce risk behaviors, and they develop social and personal skills.

By designing and planning service-learning projects, students learn valuable problem-solving skills and develop self-confidence and a sense of efficacy. When students engage in structured reflection in the classroom they develop higher order thinking skills, as well as increase their sense of responsibility and their connection to their community. Service activities that last at least one semester allow students the opportunity to see how their activities impact themselves and others, as well as to develop more meaningful relationships with adults and those from different backgrounds in their communities. Students benefit from an active learning method that increases their understanding and learning retention.

Therefore, we urge the Department to use AGO as an opportunity to infuse service-learning into Department initiatives on public lands.

Expand Summer of Service

We also strongly encourage the Department to build on efforts undertaken last summer in which Summer of Service programs exposed middle school students to public lands with promising results. ICP helped develop the Summer of Service (SOS) initiative included in the Kennedy Serve America Act, which reauthorized the Corporation for National and Community Service. SOS programs are examples of innovative service-learning opportunities for middle school youth. SOS programs are designed to be intensive, structured, supervised, and designed to produce identifiable community improvements. Students completing 100 hours of service through SOS programs are eligible to receive \$500 education awards.

In the summer of 2010, students engaged in community-based service-learning projects that addressed a variety of community needs and included exposure to national parks and other public lands. To take but one example: through an SOS program, some Seattle students visited Mt. Ranier National Park for the first time, even though on a clear day they can see the mountain from Seattle!

SOS is important because in the summer months, the lack of constructive activities and opportunities for young people often results in academic decline, risky behavior, and an increased likelihood of failing to make the transition to high school. Yet, when young people participate in service activities they are better able to control their own lives in a positive way, avoid risk behaviors, strengthen their community connections and become more engaged in their own education. Expanding SOS opportunities to the Department of Interior, USDA, and other federal agencies will enable more young people to participate in service as a “rite of passage” from middle to high school and provide opportunities for them to enter their teenage years with a positive experience that reinforces community connections, enlivens their education, and strengthens personal and civic values. At the same time, communities across the US might find an important new resource in their own backyards—young people who are ready to serve, if only they are asked and given the opportunity to do so.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Expand focus on Youth 9 to 16

Finally, it is important to target pre-teens and younger teens. Most programs engaging young people in public lands take the form of Youth Corps or Conservation Corps, which typically enroll young people between the ages of 17 and 25. While these programs are an excellent means for developing a relationship with young adults, they fail to reach elementary and middle school students. Considerable research indicates that habits like participating in outdoor activities are cemented in the years between 9 and 16 – long before young people are eligible to participate in a corps. As you develop the AGO initiative, we urge you to include such young people in your vision.

Integrating service-learning into the Department's programming can benefit communities adjacent to public lands by improving student achievement, graduation rates, and college attendance rates, as well as through the improvement and rehabilitation of public assets, including parks, forests, trails, rivers, estuaries, and coastal and marine areas.

While it may not be obvious, research shows that the great majority of adults who are active in the environmental science, engineering, and advocacy fields "had formative outdoor experiences during childhood or had role models who directed their attention to the environment." Those groups that are disconnected from the outdoors -- minority youth, low-income youth, and women -- are also disengaged from STEM-related learning.

Thus, connecting such youth with nature will not only contribute to their physical, social, and emotional development, and set them on pathways to employment, but it may also instill in them the enthusiasm to pursue a career in science or in another STEM field and thereby help to further another Administration priority.

Service-learning provides critical tools for a 21st century workforce by providing students with the skills to understand complex environmental issues so they may make informed decisions in their own lives and find solutions for real world challenges facing us as a nation.

We look forward to working with you to ensure that America's young people develop a greater appreciation for their history and natural environment through service and service-learning.

I am writing to express my strong support for full funding for the Land and Water Conservation Fund (L WCF). My position likely reflects a message you heard from communities across the country this summer, including Golden and Grand Junction, while conducting your "America's GTeat Outdoors" listening sessions.

Mr. Secretary, your leadership and support for L WCF are greatly appreciated. Please continue to champion L WCF as a tool for boosting the health of our economy, our communities, and our families by including it in the America's Great Outdoors report to the president. Additionally, I ask that you encourage your former colleagues in the U.S. Senate to fully fund the program before the end of this Congress.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

The attached selection of opinion pieces and letters to the editor published in the Denver Post, the Grand Junction Sentinel and the Pueblo Chieftain demonstrate broad and diverse support for the program from Colorado anglers, outfitters, birders and youth organizations. LWCF helps fund many of Colorado's recreation areas, including the Platte River trail system, Castlewood Canyon State Park, and Garden of the Gods.

As Coloradans well know, protecting our public lands provides numerous benefits to our state. Protecting these open spaces helps create a vibrant recreation milieu that leads to economic activity and jobs, and helps Colorado attract new residents and businesses. In fact, outdoor recreation, including hunting, fishing, camping, climbing, hiking, paddling, backcountry skiing, mountain biking, wildlife viewing, and other activities contributes \$730 billion annually to the economy. Outdoor recreation is responsible for eight percent of all consumer spending nationwide according to the Outdoor Industry Foundation. Here in Colorado, spending on outdoor activities translates into nearly \$500 million in annual state tax revenue and supports 107,000 jobs across the state.

Additionally, in a recent national bipartisan poll conducted by Public Opinion Strategies and FM3, 85 percent of Americans view the LWCF as more important today in light of the British Petroleum oil spill.

Fully funding the Land and Water Conservation Fund also preserves our natural heritage and provides close-to-home recreational opportunities for every American.

I hope that the following media clips from media sources in Colorado demonstrate how the LWCF has provided a continuum of conservation that has touched us all.

Thank you for your leadership on behalf of our public lands, and our national heritage.

Denver Post, February 10, 2010 letter

Land Preservation

Sinjin Eberle, Vice President, Colorado Trout Unlimited, Denver

The Obama administration has proposed increasing the amount of funding available for the Land and Water Conservation Fund, a 45-year-old program that has protected wildlife habitat and provided recreational opportunities in national parks, national forests, and national wildlife refuges across the country.

Instead of using taxpayers' money, LWCF protects federal lands and provides grants to communities for local parks and trails using a small portion of royalties paid by companies conducting offshore drilling.

This common-sense approach to land conservation benefits anglers and hunters because conservation creates opportunity. The opportunity to hunt, fish, hike, bike and ski in these wild places is increasingly at risk from an array of land-use threats, and must be protected as a part of our national heritage.

It simply makes sense to use funds generated from natural resources extraction to invest back in America's natural places - protecting and promoting another kind of resource, open space and clean water, that benefits each of us.

Interior Secretary Ken Salazar, Sen. Mark Udall, and other advocates for LWCF in Congress and the administration are on the right track to see that we meet our responsibility to protect America's great outdoors for future generations.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Grand Junction Sentinel February 26, 2010 letter

Land and Water funds are critical/or area wildlands

Tom Burke, past chairman, Colorado Wildlife Commission, Grand Junction

For 45 years, under both Republican and Democratic administrations, the Land and Water Conservation Fund has provided critical dollars for enhancing and protecting public lands, wildlife habitat and recreational opportunities. Since the LWCF has only once been funded to the full level authorized by Congress, and recent appropriations have been at record lows, a proposed increase in the fund, derived from royalties from offshore drilling, shouldn't go unnoticed or unappreciated.

The president's new budget asks that more than \$2.5 million be allocated for expansion of Canyon of the Ancients National Monument in southwest Colorado. In previous years, \$1.5 million in LWCF funds went to the McInnis Canyons National Conservation Area and another \$440,000 to the Colorado National Monument. More than \$9 million has been allocated to the White River National Forest and in excess of \$6 million has helped preserve critical habitat in Gunnison County and assisted programs in the Black Canyon National Park and Gunnison Gorge National Conservation Area.

All of western Colorado benefits from these expenditures, which not only improve our quality of life, but assist in attracting businesses and creating and retaining jobs in our outdoor, tourism and hospitality industries.

With leadership from the administration and our elected officials in Congress, we can ensure that this investment continues to produce economic and recreational benefits for our communities, and most importantly, for our children and grandchildren.

Pueblo Chieftain, Sunday May 9th letter

Visit National Parks

By Joe Greiner, President, Wilderness Aware Rafting, Buena Vista

National Parks Week was celebrated in April, reminding Coloradans to use places like our beloved Rocky Mountain, Mesa Verde and Black Canyon of the Gunnison national parks to teach our kids about our natural and cultural heritage.

Other public lands, such as the Arkansas Headwaters Recreation Area, the Colorado River and the proposed Dolores River Wilderness, also enable our kids to enjoy active, outdoor activities. Healthy lifestyles depend in part on access to parks, rivers, trails, and open spaces.

But these places also are economic engines for tourism-based economies, supporting thousands of jobs nationwide. For instance, my company, Wilderness Aware Rafting, brings 10,000 people per year to Colorado to raft our amazing rivers.

The support of Interior Secretary Ken Salazar and our elected officials in Congress for critical programs that protect our land and water, such as full and dedicated funding for the Land and Water Conservation Fund, is vital to the health of our families, communities, and tourism-based economies. A national conversation about the value of our public lands and waterways, such as that being proposed by the new America's Great Outdoors initiative, could help to sustain our outdoors heritage.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Denver Post, September 19, 2010 opinion editorial

Ensuring full funding for Land and Water Conservation Fund

By Andrew Currie, Ken Strom, and Erica Stock

If you live in Colorado, you know that we are privileged to enjoy countless breathtaking vistas, magical wilderness areas laced with free-flowing rivers, and highly-rated urban parks and trails every day for recreation, sports or just some peace and quiet.

What many of us might not know is that a large number of our most beloved lakes, streams, woodlands, local parks and playgrounds have been protected for us by the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF). The LWCF is the principal source of federal dollars for protecting land in America's national parks, forests, and other public landscapes and ensuring recreational opportunities for Americans in every state in the nation. LWCF helps fund many of Colorado's recreation areas like the Platte River trail system, Castlewood Canyon State Park and Garden of the Gods, as well as national treasures like Yellowstone National Park, California's Big Sur Coast, Florida's Everglades, and historic Civil War battlefields.

The Land and Water Conservation Fund was created by Congress in 1965 and is authorized to receive \$900 million annually in federal revenues from offshore oil and gas leasing. Unfortunately, the LWCF program has received full funding only once in its history. In recent years, it has steadily declined to a low in appropriated funding of \$155 million in 2008, and in total has been shortchanged about \$17 billion since its inception. Despite this, the LWCF has worked in every state of the Union - indeed nearly every county in every district in America - to fund state and local park activities. These projects contribute not only to our natural environment, but also create jobs and draw visitors for recreation, sporting and other activities.

Colorado's treasure of mountains, rivers and great outdoors brings in hundreds of thousands of outdoor recreationists annually - participating in bicycling, camping, fishing, hunting, paddling, snow sports, hiking, climbing and wildlife viewing - who generate an estimated \$10 billion in state tax revenues and retail sales and services across the state while supporting over 100,000 jobs.

LWCF began as part of a simple deal: as America's oil and gas was extracted from federal lands and waters, a portion of the associated revenue was intended to be reinvested in conservation of the lands and waters Americans care about. But even though there's been more than enough revenue year after year from the oil and gas leasing to fully fund LWCF at no cost to the American taxpayer, Congress has diverted the funds and failed to use the money for its intended purpose.

Efforts are underway, supported by groups across Colorado and the nation, to insure the long overdue full funding for LWCF. Recently on July 30, the issue to fully fund LWCF passed in the U.S House of Representatives. We applaud our Colorado delegates heartily for their efforts and role in this success. Congresswoman Betsy Markey, 4th District Colorado, cast her affirmative vote that day joining Jared Polis and Diana DeGette, and Colorado U.S. Senators Mark Udall and Michael Bennet were instrumental by cosponsoring legislation in the Senate that would ensure a dedicated source for permanent full funding of LWCF.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

But the fight to make things right is not over. Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid has tabled the Senate's discussion and vote on the L WCF until after the August recess, fearing he would not have enough votes to pass the issue. We must ensure that full and pennant funding for L WCF remains a priority in September.

Let's make this extraordinary value crystal "clear" for Congress. We greatly appreciate what Congresswoman Markey, Senator Udall, Senator Bennet and others have already accomplished, and we urge our Colorado Senators to keep up their strong leadership as the L WCF goes before the Senate, and to continue their robust support.

A victory here will finally and rightfully ensure full and dedicated funding for the Land and Water Conservation Fund, one of our best tools for conserving the Nation's great outdoors, increasing recreational access to our favorite parks and natural places, and supporting the tourist and recreation industry jobs and businesses that in large measure contribute to Colorado's economic health.

Andrew Currie is founder of Conservation Havens, LLC Ken Strom is the director of Audubon Colorado, the state program of the National Audubon Society. Erica Stock is the outreach director for Colorado Trout Unlimited
Denver Post,

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Denver Post, September 24, 2010 opinion editorial

Expanding opportunities for young people on public lands

By Harry Bruell and Stacie Gilmore

The outdoors are one of the West's most valuable assets. They provide sustenance, recreation, energy and income. But our wild places are also our best classrooms, and with strong national leadership, we can continue to offer Western kids and young adults unique service and educational opportunities in the outdoors.

Too many young Americans are exercising their thumbs playing video games these days, instead of exercising their bodies playing outside. Too many children grow up in families that have never visited public lands or fished in a river or hiked a trail. And, because the recession has been particularly hard on young workers, too many are facing closed doors instead of looking forward to bright futures.

We've seen firsthand how a personal and physical connection with nature can change that. We've seen young people awestruck by our natural landscape and inspired to get up off the couch, explore the outdoors, provide service on our public lands, and learn about Science.

We've seen how experiencing nature exercises the mind as well as the body - inspiring young people to ask questions about how our world works and how they can shape it. And we've seen how a first hike or climb can inspire pursuit of the knowledge and skills required for a career as a conservation professional or a scientist.

But that's not just our experience. A new National Wildlife Federation report confirms that spending time outdoors helps kids to become stronger students with fewer disciplinary problems and more enthusiasm for learning, who ultimately perform better on standardized tests.

For more than a decade, our organizations have engaged Western youth in education and conservation. The Southwest Conservation Corps has engaged thousands of young people in paid service - from middle school youth to Veterans returning from Iraq and Afghanistan - to build stewardship skills by working on conservation projects that benefit people throughout the Southwest.

These young people represent a huge - mostly untapped - resource for meeting public lands needs across the country such as building trails, maintaining wildlife habitat and protecting communities from wildfire. Environmental Learning for Kids (ELK) cultivates a passion for science, leadership, and service in a diverse community of learners.

Urban youth experience the outdoors, develop science skills, and explore the wide variety of natural resource careers available to them. Through multiple year programs, youth turn those experiences into not only high school, but college graduation. More than 80 percent of ELK's alumni study a science field in college, an amazing statistic for Latino and Black students.

But we can't do it alone. Continuing this success story and making these opportunities available to more American kids and young people requires federal leadership. That is why we were so pleased that the federal America's Great Outdoors Initiative held listening sessions in Golden and Grand Junction. These events gave everyday Americans - including children and young adults - a chance to talk firsthand with U.S. Interior

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Secretary Ken Salazar and other federal leaders about conservation and its personal impact on their lives.

One of the most important messages they heard was about the essential connection between conservation and education, with local residents calling for passage and allocation of resources to tools and programs to engage young people in the preservation of our natural heritage such as the Public Lands Service Corps Act and full funding for the Land and Water Conservation Fund.

The Federal Government should use these resources to build upon the existing network of conservation corps and environmental education programs to engage thousands more young people in public lands service, expose thousands more to the outdoors through environmental education, and invest in the lands that make these experiences possible.

The meetings were just the beginning. Federal officials are now compiling the lessons they learned and preparing a report for delivery to President Obama in November. That report will shape the future of America's conservation policy, and by extension, the lives of so many Western kids and young people whose future depends upon having opportunities to explore the outdoors or do work on public lands.

We all have an interest in sending Washington a message. They need to hear that investing in the outdoors and programs that provide educational and service opportunities for young people is the best way to help more American kids to build productive lives as the next generation of scientists, conservation leaders, and informed voters.

Harry Bruell is CEO and president of the Southwest Conservation Corps, and Stacie Gilmore is executive director of Environmental Learning for Kids in Denver.

Group 2

- 1) BIE schools should allow fieldtrips and outdoor sports, bass fishing and archery competitions
- 2) Organizations and groups in school systems should have mentoring programs built into high schools to teach environment awareness, urban basketball leagues and give students 1 on 1 attention

As your agency prepares to draft and finalize the report to the President on the Great Outdoors Initiative, we write to congratulate you on the public enthusiasm that has been generated around the listening sessions and the initiative and to make recommendations for priorities in the work to come.

We and our members are excited by the commitment of this administration to conservation and we urge you to make enduring changes in levels of public investment in conservation and in the structures and strategies agencies adopt to make those investments.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Fully Fund the Land and Water Conservation Fund

This fund created by Congress in 1966 is the single most important source of federal funding for the protection of new conservation lands and improvement of existing recreational areas to the benefit of all Americans. The program has added millions of acres to the nation's inventory of parks, wildlife refuges, forests and state recreational areas. The revenue stream, however, has been anything but reliable. Though the annual authorized spending level is \$900 million, Congress has usually appropriated far less (dipping below \$150 million during the mid-1990s). Now is the time to ensure that the Land and Water Conservation Fund becomes a true dedicated trust fund to protect these receipts from being diverted to other unrelated issues.

Cumberland Plateau and Southern Blue Ridge Mountains -- 10-15 million acres of land centered on Great Smoky Mountain National Park and portions of Kentucky, Tennessee, North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia and Alabama that supports the highest wildlife diversity in America, and includes portions of the much-loved Appalachian Trail and draws millions of visitors to view the spectacular scenery.

Crown of the Continent -- This 10-18 million acre landscape stretches from Missoula, Montana, north through national forests and Glacier National Park to the Canadian border and to the edge of Great Plains prairies.

Sky Islands and Arizona Desert -- On the U.S.-Mexico border between the 'bootheel' of New Mexico and California and stretching north to the Grand Canyon ecosystem lies 30-40 million acres of some of the most diverse and unique habitats in North America and one of our richest landscapes of cultural and historic sites.

Chesapeake Bay -- The 41 million acres of land around the Chesapeake Bay and 2.9 million acres of water at the heart of the Bay itself, spans New York, Pennsylvania, Delaware, Maryland, Virginia and West Virginia.

Sierra Nevada -- Between 2-10 million acres of California land and rivers between Lassen National Park and Sequoia National Forests protect the water supply of California in the face of a warming planet as well as essential wildlife habitat and recreational opportunities for millions of Americans.

Everglades and South Florida Between 5-10 million acres of land, water and wetlands between Lake Okeechobee and Atlantic beaches in the north and Everglades National Park and the Florida Keys to the south supports the largest subtropical wilderness in America and is home to millions of Americans.

Great Lakes -- are some of our nation's most revered natural places, spanning eight states and representing 95 of the country's fresh surface water. The Great Lakes also provide drinking water for more than 33 million people and are home to 130 globally endangered or rare plant and animal species that inhabit the ecosystem.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Gulf of Maine -- Stretching from Cape Cod, Massachusetts to the Canadian border and beyond. The waters of the Gulf of Maine are one of the world's richest ocean ecosystems and the 44 million acres of watershed which feed into the Gulf are home to more than 10 million people.

We look forward to working with you and the rest of the administration to ensure that we leave a legacy of treasured landscapes and healthy ecosystems.

We thank you and members of your Administration for the hundreds of hours and thousands of miles traveled across the country listening and learning. Our members have been at all of these meetings, and we, too, have seen the enthusiasm for a 21st century conservation and recreation strategy. Across the nation the public has been energized by the opportunity to share their stories and their models of conservation and preservation success, just as they are excited to hear so many of their neighbors' creative new ideas.

The American People Strongly Support Conservation

Across all political affiliations, the American public overwhelmingly supports the potential of your America's Great Outdoors Initiative, with 84 percent of voters reacting favorably when they hear about it, according to a recent poll conducted by Hart Research Associates. Americans are deeply concerned that children are spending less time outside enjoying and learning about our natural environment, and they want to protect our most treasured outdoor places for future generations. This has been reinforced at the ballot box as in the past decade voters have approved 73% of all state and local ballot initiatives for conservation funding. The response to the AGO listening sessions is a reaffirmation of our country's one hundred year old bi-partisan conservation and outdoor recreation tradition.

A Bold America's Great Outdoors Initiative Is a Path to the Future

Fortunately, we are hearing ideas at the America's Great Outdoors listening sessions, and from our millions of members, that, if implemented boldly, will address these threats.

Protect natural system integrity and connectivity. Healthy lands safeguard our watersheds, providing clean drinking water for millions of people and habitat for the diversity of America's plant and animal species. Our protected lands and waters, however, are not always well-connected or large enough to maintain viable wildlife populations or sustain natural ecological processes.

Across the country, government officials, conservationists, forest land owners and ranchers, and rural and suburban community leaders are increasingly working together to create large-scale landscape restoration plans. If supported by an America's Great Outdoors Initiative, these cooperative efforts can create networks of critical ecosystems, natural resources, and recreation lands from the inner city to wildlands.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

These places can include large areas of mostly undeveloped public and private land protected from unplanned growth with a variety of tools; important watersheds and rivers; and cultural landscapes that can sustain and interpret the natural, recreational, and cultural heritage of the American people. Such connected and continuous areas can also help natural systems and fish and wildlife to be more resilient to impacts of climate change.

While we leave detailed proposals and more specific recommendations on how to achieve these outcomes to the individual organizations and groups of organizations represented on this letter, we all believe that conservation of America's lands, waters, trails, and coastal areas is central to America's future and to the health, welfare, and happiness of the American people.

Saving America's lands and waters can bring us together as a people in passing on a legacy of healthy natural systems, recreation areas, preserved historic and cultural sites, and productive working lands to future generations of Americans.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide thoughts and feedback on the America's Great Outdoors Initiative. You have received many worthwhile comments from conservation groups across the nation. In this letter, the undersigned groups would like to reiterate the importance of wildlife corridors as one of the most important landscapes to protect in order to build resiliency in a changing world. Comments from Freedom to Roam, National Parks Conservation Association, The Wilderness Society, and Sierra Club have all highlighted the need to protect wildlife corridors and ecological connectivity, especially in light of climate change impacts.

We have written this additional letter to call out a recommendation to America's Great Outdoors that will protect wildlife corridors and the communities that rely on these landscapes for their economic health, recreation, and spiritual and cultural sustenance.

You have ample authority to support such a designation and the procedures for applying it are already built into your land management processes. Just a few of these authorities include: the duty to manage for biological diversity on the forest system; the duty to enhance the recovery of listed species, under Section 7(a)(1) of the Endangered Species Act (ESA); the sustained yield mandate of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA); and the Antiquities Act, which allows the President to designate and protect such areas.

In the box called out to the right, we have described what a new wildlife corridor land designation would accomplish. This is not the only example, as marine and freshwater species also rely on wildlife corridors and deserve a corresponding aquatic designation. However, we hope it articulates our recommendation more fully and shows the benefit of a new administrative land designation.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Southwest, Colorado is home to a 100-mile mule deer migration corridor between low elevation winter ranges on the Southern Ute Indian reservation and the HD Mountains, to high elevation summer ranges in the rugged Weminuche Wilderness of the San Juan Mountains. Primarily migratory animals, mule deer depend on connected landscapes to move seasonally between their summer and winter ranges, and are an important game species and resource for the Southern Ute Tribe.

An official wildlife corridor land designation would identify and protect this corridor through binding standards agreed upon by federal land management agencies and in cooperative agreements with Departments of Transportation, other state agencies, private landowners, and local governments.

The designation of the HD Mountains Mule Deer Migration Corridor would have the following effect: 1) a female and fawn start their migration in the ragged peaks of the Weminuche Wilderness and benefit from the protections that wilderness lands provide; 2) they approach US 160 and are led by a wildlife fence to an underpass that delivers them safely onto private land; 3) as they pass through private lands they find safe passage thanks to wildlife friendly fencing and a conservation easement; 4) they then enter into their winter range in the HD Mountains where natural gas drilling operations have been located to avoid important movement areas and activities have been reduced during migration periods; and 5) the Southern Ute Tribe, that has been tracking and studying mule deer for the past 7 years, has agreed not to develop gas resources in the southern HDs to allow the mule deer to survive and start their journey again to their summer range in the spring. All of this would be supported by a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the Governors of New Mexico and Colorado thanks to the Western Governors' Wildlife Corridors Initiative.

Some of this scenario, such as the Tribe's data collection and concentration of energy development as well as the Governors' MOU, is currently a reality. The new land designation with binding land use standards across agencies and cooperative agreements are not yet a reality.

America's Great Outdoors (AGO) has a unique opportunity to be a leader by creating this new wildlife corridor land designation. AGO can utilize ongoing work, such as BLM's Ecoregional Assessments, to help identify corridors and then create and apply designations through land management plans and executive order. An important component will be inviting partners to join in wildlife corridor protection by providing funding and incentives through the Farm Bill, Land and Water Conservation Fund, Transportation Bill, Climate Bill, Energy Bill, and several internal DOI programs such as the Partners for Fish and Wildlife.

Currently, a policy paradigm shift is occurring in the U.S. toward supplementing natural resources conservation expenditure programs with incentives that allow private landowners to retain more of their income in exchange for undertaking conservation projects and practices on their land.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

In May of 2008, Congress approved a two-year extension of expanded federal tax incentives for conservation easement donations. Specifically, the new law raised the deductions a landowner can take for donating a conservation easement from 30% of his or her income to 50%, and to 100% percent for qualifying ranchers and farmers. The law also extended the carry-forward period for the donor to take the deductions from 5 to 15 years.

Recent data indicates that the increased incentives have resulted in the protection of upwards of one million acres a year since they were first enacted in 2006. Despite this success, the incentives are set to expire at the end of this year.

In addition, extension of the expanded deductions will level the playing field for donors at all income levels, allowing landowners with moderate incomes to get the same deductions that donors with higher incomes already realize for the exact same donations; ensure on the ground conservation by requiring donors to meet existing Tax Code requirements for conservation related donations; and expand and increase opportunities for outdoor recreation.

There is a policy shift occurring in the U.S. toward enacting tax credits against income due for conservation related donations. Conservation experts agree that credits are a broader and more effective incentive than deductions. Two main factors are causing this shift. First, conservation tax incentives are a sound mechanism for creating certainty during times of inconsistent and unpredictable conservation funding trends. Second, growing concerns about uncontrolled exurban expansion (particularly relating to forest intrusions around metropolitan areas) continue to galvanize support for greater federal investment in private land conservation.

Historically, the primary federal tax incentives for private land conservation have enabled high-income property owners to realize income tax deductions for the charitable contribution of easements donated for conservation purposes. The donation of easements also results in a reduction of the taxable value of the property subject to an easement providing an additional incentive for the owner or their estate.

Although the federal tax code does not include conservation tax credits of any kind, a number of bipartisan proposals have emerged in recent years which have garnered a diverse cross section of support. For example, the 2008 Farm Bill included proposed tax credits for landowners who take voluntary measures to aid in the recovery of species that are listed as threatened or endangered under the Endangered Species Act (ESA) or deemed by the Secretary of Interior or Commerce to be warranted for protection under the ESA. The functional equivalent of a tax cut, the proposed credits sought to reduce a conservation donors taxes on a dollar for dollar basis, allowing more working farms, ranches, and private forests to remain in-tact while also protecting at risk wildlife species. While not freely transferable, the credits would have also been available to third party participants who participated in the voluntary measures undertaken by the donor.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

The most powerful conservation tax credits ever enacted at the state level are transferable. Transferable credits can be sold freely at a discounted price to another entity with sufficient income to benefit from the credit. By establishing cash payments to lower income donors and creating a market for credits needed by higher income credit purchasers, integration of a transferability component makes credits a far greater incentive than deductions for the majority of potential conservation donors.

On behalf of America's 1,600 land trusts, we applaud President Obama for recognizing the potential of partnering with locally supported organizations to chart a new path for conservation in the 21st century. In communities across America, land trusts are working with private landowners to keep key farm, ranch and forest lands in productive use, create community parks and open space, protect important fish and wildlife habitat, and conserve our scenic and historic heritage. You have heard from many of them at the America's Great Outdoors listening sessions you held this summer.

The National Alliance of Forest Owners (NAFO) applauds the President's efforts to promote the public benefits of working landscapes through improved federal policies under the America's Great Outdoors Initiative (AGOI). NAFO's mission is to protect and enhance the economic and environmental values of private forests through targeted policy advocacy at the national level. At the time of this submission, NAFO's members represent 75 million acres of private forests in 47 states. NAFO is committed to sustaining the ecological, economic, and social values of forests and to assure an abundance of healthy and productive forest resources for present and future generations.

America's private forests make significant contributions to the outdoor values American's cherish – recreation, open space, wildlife habitat, clean air and water, and more – in addition to the renewable forest products we all need and enjoy. Private forests in the U.S. represent 57% of the forested landscape, so conserving them is critical.

The recent USDA Forest Service report, *Private Forests, Public Benefits*, underscores that one of the most effective means of conserving private forests is vibrant markets for the goods, services and other public benefits they provide. History has demonstrated this. Over the past century the U.S. population has increased by 3½ times, creating an unprecedented demand for forest products and services, particularly in the housing market. During this same period total forest acreage in the U.S. has remained constant, and the volume of trees has increased 50% over the past 50 years as forest owners sustainably manage their lands to meet market demand. In addition to the many conservation benefits, working forests sustain rural communities, where the forest products industry is often the only source of family-wage jobs. In the U.S., private forests support 2.5 million jobs, \$87 billion in annual payroll, and contribute \$115 to the national GDP.

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(cont.)

NAFO's members recognize this and work to protect and enhance the economic and environmental values of privately-owned forests for the long term. That is why NAFO is a leader within the Working Forests Coalition, a diverse group of organizations united around keeping working forests working by ensuring forests are an economically viable land use. NAFO endorses the comments provided by the Coalition on this Initiative.

Biogenic carbon is part of a relatively rapid natural carbon cycle. Trees and other plants absorb carbon as they grow. Combustion of harvested biomass for energy releases previously stored carbon back into the atmosphere, which the growing biomass reabsorbs. Federal agencies, including EPA (in programs other than the PSD Tailoring Rule), the Department of Energy, and the Council on Environmental Quality, have long recognized this principle, as have international organization such as the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change and the European Union.

On behalf of the Appalachian Mountain Club (AMC), thank you for the opportunity to provide our recommendations to the America's Great Outdoors Initiative. AMC enthusiastically embraces the Administration's goals to develop a conservation and recreation agenda for the 21st Century.

Founded in 1876, the Appalachian Mountain Club is the nation's oldest conservation and recreation organization. It is today a national leader focused on the intersection of conservation, outdoor recreation, and environmental education, with activities across a 12-state region ranging from Washington, DC to Maine, AMC has over 100,000 active members, supporters, and advocates advancing a mission to promote the protection, enjoyment, and understanding of the mountains, forests, waters, and trails of our region.

AMC has decades of experience in providing hands-on outdoors programs for youth, in many cases providing young people with their first backcountry experiences. With programs and facilities in spectacular outdoor settings, AMC programs help kids and adults alike learn about the joys and rewards of outdoor exploration and adventure. In 2009, AMC served nearly 40,000 young people through both backcountry and close-to-home programs serving schools, families, teens, schools, and at-risk youth. Overall, we hosted 150,000 overnight guests and 500,000 day visitors at our front and backcountry destinations around the region.

AMC also has over a century of experience in identifying and protecting the many special places of our region as well as constructing and caring for trails. Today AMC maintains over 1,500 miles of trail on both public and private land with professional trail crews, Chapter volunteers, and teen trail stewardship programs. Our mountain-based research makes a unique contribution to land, air, and climate change science and policy. We have been involved in nearly every major land protection effort in thenortheast in the last one hundred years, frequently taking the lead in regional coalitions focused on protecting significant recreation, land, and water resources.

Discussion Question 1

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(cont.)

AMC staff and volunteers attended all of the AGO listening sessions in the Northeast and Mid-Atlantic and, in collaboration with the Outdoor Alliance and Outdoor Industry Association, we hosted two "homegrown" listening sessions in Freeport, ME and Boston, MA. The recommendations of the homegrown sessions are described in the August 27th OA/OIA report to the Administration. We offer the following specific recommendations based on AMC's long history and wide experience in conservation, recreation, and outdoor education.

The Northern Forest of Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont, and New York includes the most forested states in the nation and is also within a day's drive of 70 million people. This region includes the 12 million-acre "Maine Woods" of the Keeping Maine's Forests Initiative.

The "Quabbin to Cardigan" region from north-central Massachusetts to the White Mountain National Forest in New Hampshire includes approximately two million acres of intact, interconnected and ecologically significant forest spanning 100 miles from north-central Massachusetts to the White Mountain National Forest in New Hampshire.

The Appalachian Mountain Club and the recreationists of our region share a long history of outdoor exploration and partnering with the federal government to protect treasured landscapes. Our members' stories exemplify the rewards of rich connections with the natural world that are valued over generations. A sample of these stories and photos from the Northeast are available at <http://www.outdoors.org/conservation/ago-stories.cfm>.

We appreciate the attention this Administration is giving to revitalizing a national conservation and recreation agenda, and the time you have spent listening to stories and ideas from across the country. We look forward to working together to build the next era of America's outdoor culture and connections.

I write to support America's Great Outdoors Initiative. It's directly implemented by Hudson Valley non-profit organizations, such as the Sloop Clearwater.

Not so for all of our children. A new generation of dynamic and diverse youth is learning how to grow green cities and a green future. They are planting seeds of green ideas in those same playgrounds where only concrete once existed. It is these same youth that know this very simple truth: there is no separation from human health and that of the health of their environment. They know: public health is environmental health.

Let's support this Nation's youth to make the changes we need for a more sustainable future. If we do not empower these young people now-- this rainbow race-- when they are ready to act fearlessly, in the future we may lose them and lose our best hope for the Earth's future.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Clearwater has been a longtime catalyst in inspiring, educating and activating Hudson Valley residents and beyond. Clearwater's programs empower our youth to become active in their communities to create change. Over half a million school children have been educated via their sloop-based and on-land education programs; the impact of this was clear during the August 5th listening session in Hyde Park. The youth that participated in this session were passionate, determined, and committed to action for better access, green jobs and additional programming in the outdoors.

The overwhelming message was clear: the outdoors is the way to overcome many of the obstacles they face as a generation.

I enthusiastically support the ongoing efforts of Clearwater and the youth of the Hudson Valley as they seek to continue their effective efforts for the goals of President Obama's America's Great Outdoors Initiative.

I want to take this opportunity to write in support of the Hudson River Sloop Clearwater's (Clearwater) recommendations entitled "The Next Generation of Environmental Leaders: Local Solutions for National Challenges" submitted to the C.S. government, on behalf Youth in the Hudson Valley area. In the Hudson Valley, Clearwater has set the standard for engaging our youth in a direct experience and appreciation of both the scenic beauty and the complex environment and ecological balance that make up the Hudson Valley. Their recent initiative is a direct result of their response to the America's Great Outdoor Initiative. Their listening sessions in the Hudson Valley allowed them to hear the voice of the youth of the valley - our next generation of environmental leaders.

Named for the very river valley that it works furiously to save, Clearwater has been a longtime catalyst in inspiring, educating and activating Hudson Valley residents and beyond. Clearwater's programs are focused on empowering our youth to become active in their communities to create change needed to overcome our environmental challenges. They have reached over half a million school children with their direct experience education programs employing both sloop-based and on-land programs. That they are making a real difference as reflected an their listening sessions. Panicipating youth exhibited passion, determination, and commitment, action for better access, greenjobs and support for additional programming in the outdoors.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

The overwhelming message was clear: the outdoors is the way out of many of the obstacles they face as a generation. This is particularly true for the youth of the river cities of the Hudson Valley.

In conclusion, I fully support our sister organization, Clearwater and applaud their efforts to reach the youth of the Hudson Valley. Clearwater has clearly embraced the goals of President Obama's America's Great Outdoors Initiative. I believe the America's Great Outdoor Initiative has the opportunity to amplify this successful youth outreach program by enhancing them further federal support, and would urge serious consideration.

I write to you today in support of the Hudson River Sloop Clearwater's (Clearwater) recommendations entitled "The Next Generation of Environmental Leaders: Local Solutions for National Challenges."

As coordinator of the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation's Hudson River Estuary Program, I am well aware of how important youth involvement in the environment is to the future of the Hudson River and the greater Hudson Valley area. Clearwater has a long and enduring record of inspiring, educating and activating Hudson Valley residents, and especially the region's youth.

I fully support the ongoing efforts of Clearwater and the youth of the Hudson Valley in enacting the goals of President Obama's America's Great Outdoors Initiative.

On behalf of the youth of the Hudson Valley, the Hudson River Sloop Clearwater (Clearwater) is submitting the enclosed recommendations entitled 'The Next Generation of Environmental Leaders: Local Solutions for National Challenges' for your consideration.

It was with great pride that our youth attended the August 5th Listening Session in Hyde Park, NY. Representing the culturally, ethnically and economically diverse communities throughout the river valley, Clearwater is presenting their three key environmental concerns: No Child Left Inside - kids need to get outside to be strong and healthy; Next Generation of Environmental Leaders - the great outdoors builds leadership; and Green Urban Leaders and Green Cities - support for a sustainable future. Please also see the video submission, link below, these youth created in their great outdoors with Clearwater's help.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Like the America's Great Outdoors Initiative, Clearwater's goal is to engage and activate young people, especially those who live in our under-resourced and/or inner-cities communities, and to secure the means and ways to get them outdoors to experience our unique natural heritage.

We must ensure that our next generation of leaders can succeed and, with the AGO, we can solidify the groundwork for success for our children. Together we can inspire, educate and activate the next generation of environmental leaders!

'Yesterday there was a discussion among young people, which I think is an important element and an important voice we have here.'

– Thomas Vilsack, U.S. Secretary of Agriculture

'Our fore fathers set aside all this land, this public land, so we all could use it. It is really our land.'

– Harris Sherman, Under Secretary USDA

As 'the landscape that defined America' the Hudson River Valley stands ready to support our Nation's youth as they step up to lead the country. Hundreds of our Hudson Valley youth attended the August Listening Session in Hyde Park, NY representing the economically, culturally, ethnically diverse communities along the river. On behalf of these voices, the Hudson River Sloop Clearwater (Clearwater) is communicating their recommendations for access, outdoor spaces close to home, and green jobs.

- INSPIRING: SUPPORTING NO CHILD LEFT INSIDE
- EDUCATING: THE NEXT GENERATION OF ENVIRONMENTAL LEADERS
- ACTIVATING: URBAN LEADERS AND GREEN CITIES

The Hudson River Valley gave birth to many important figures in our country's history. In the 1960's, the Hudson River and its Valley was in dire straits—cars could be seen floating down the River and citizens dared not eat fish from its putrid waters, let alone swim in the largest body of water right in their backyard. It was in 1969 that local resident, civil rights and environmental activist, Pete Seeger and many others launched the sloop Clearwater to clean up the Hudson River and pass the Clean Water Act. In a birthplace of many of America's historic movements, these actions helped solidify the beginnings of the environmental movement. There is now a new pulse in the environmental movement in the United States—the next generation of leaders.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

___ and hundreds of our Hudson Valley youth attended the August Youth Listening Session to have their voice heard and represent their communities. Building upon the youth's passion and concerns shared in the August 5th session, Clearwater has taken their messages and distilled them into three key issues found in this paper. These young leaders live, participate in, and in many cases operate youth environmental programs along the Hudson River. They are extremely connected to their backyard. We present this region as a microcosm of the country and that those living on this landscape can define the future with local solutions for national challenges.

Noted author Richard Louv (*Last Child in the Woods*, Algonquin Books of Chapel Hill, 2005) used the term "nature deficit disorder" to describe a host of issues including attention disorders, obesity and depression to a lack of experience with nature. Clearwater believes that No Child Left Behind's emphasis on testing must be balanced with getting kids actively engaged with nature. Our policy is No Child Left On-land: connect kids directly to an ecologically and historically important river: the Hudson.

According to the Chesapeake Bay Foundation, another leading provider of environmental education: The National Science Board of the National Science Foundation confirmed the importance of environmental education to student learning in their 2000 report, *Environmental Science and Engineering for the 21st Century*: "The twin goals of learning are to acquire knowledge and gain skills such as problem solving, consensus building, information management, communication, and critical and creative thinking. Environmental issues offer excellent vehicles for developing and exercising many of these skills using a systems approach...changes should be made in the formal educational system to help all students, educators, and educational administrators learn about the environment, the economy, and social equity as they relate to all academic disciplines and their daily lives." (www.cbf.org)

Pete Seeger started Clearwater to clean up the Hudson River. Over the last 40 years, our concerts, sloop and on-land education programs, and environmental advocacy programs have inspired, educated and activated millions of people. Pete knew that people needed to be inspired to care, educated to understand, and activated to create change. Clearwater has become a catalyst in a collaborative effort to create a new and sustainable future for river cities in the Hudson Valley.

The Hudson River connects all cities from NYC to Albany. These river cities are working to create unified communities and Clearwater is at the forefront of this effort. It is clear that putting the 'eco' in the economy is critical now for the future of our under resourced environmental justice river cities.

The Hudson River Sloop Clearwater is actively working with partners throughout the Hudson Valley to promote the Hudson River through public access, cultural opportunities, the green job industries, public transportation options, and park development. Utilizing the foundation of our organization, we have and will continue to use our floating classroom, the historic sloop Clearwater, to educate communities about the natural resources of the valley. Our goal is to both connect everyone to the river and river cities through our river and land-based environmental education programs.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Clearwater funds children and young adults from inner-city and under-resourced communities to participate in our comprehensive plan to create the next generation of environmental leaders. This project will establish a leadership pipeline for youth between the ages of 8-20, inclusive of all ethnicities and cultural backgrounds from New York City north to the Capital District. We plan to focus particular attention on youth from inner city and/or under-resourced communities within the Valley's environmental justice designated communities such as New York City, Harlem, Yonkers, Peekskill, Newburgh, Beacon, Poughkeepsie, Kingston, and Albany.

By providing our young people with interactive environmental education programs both on-board the sloop Clearwater and along the river's shores they will forge a strong connection with the Hudson River and the larger natural world. They will also be exposed to the wide range of green job opportunities available to them through hands-on experience and demonstration projects.

With the procurement of funding for Clearwater's environmental education and advocacy programs we will be able to continue and expand operating our programs in the abovementioned river cities, thereby further developing a virtual pipeline of inspiration, education and advocacy-- a pipeline which directly benefits the youth in our communities and the future health of our world. Clearwater's award-winning education programs provide students with first-hand experiences sailing on a traditional sloop, lessons in the ecology and history of the Hudson River and leadership development, teamwork and self-realization. Clearwater's methods of enabling children and young adults to transform from passive observers to active participants by including them in the lesson has proven to be an effective technique for combating apathy and fostering civic involvement. These methods provide powerful examples of real life applications for classroom learning through hands-on environmental science lessons combined with sailing and navigating a 106 foot traditional vessel: the sloop Clearwater.

Program participants will be more environmentally literate and have an increased appreciation of the Hudson Valley's heritage. Participants will have an increased enthusiasm for learning about the environment and desire for protecting it. They will gain knowledge of environmental careers and opportunities for internships. All participants will be more open to being environmental stewards and incorporate environmentally responsible behaviors into their lifestyles. Participants will learn how to become involved in protecting the environment and understand the connections between healthy rivers and healthy communities. This year, Clearwater, with the help of the Hudson River Foundation, NYSDEC, and Stevens Institute, installed realtime water quality monitoring equipment that includes the sloop in a river wide monitoring network, where key data on the river's health will be reported in real time to the web. Clearwater will use this equipment to continue to engage kids about investigating the Hudson after they have left the boat and returned to their classroom.

This pipeline consists of programs that represent the greatest and most effective leadership program in our forty-year history and will ensure a forever flowing continuum of lifelong learning for students in the Hudson Valley. These are lessons that they can apply to their future development as leaders in our communities and beyond.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Young adults have the opportunity to sail on the Clearwater on a single educational sail, or to challenge themselves with a youth internship, as a sailing apprentice or in an education internship. A Youth Internship consists of a week long, live aboard internship, in which a student will learn how to sail the sloop Clearwater, assist in teaching our prestigious education curriculum and to explore green opportunities for their future. A Sailing Apprentice lives aboard the sloop Clearwater and works along the professional crew for a month. Apprentices are trained to operate and care for a traditional sailing vessel and participate fully in the education program. Lastly, Education Internships allow young adults to teach hundreds of kids about the Hudson River. Interns live aboard the sloop for two to three months to assist in delivering Clearwater's celebrated education programs, while fulfilling shipboard duties from sailing to chores and maintenance.

Clearwater's Environmental Justice Associate is currently working on an Environmental Justice project in Peekskill and on Watershed Protection/Green Stormwater Management and Infrastructure in Poughkeepsie, Kingston and Beacon. In each of these projects, youth empowerment has been a significant component of this work. Each of these communities has requested additional program work from Clearwater in area schools, youth programs and in integrating youth directly into green cities and sustainability programs. The Peekskill Community-Based Environmental Justice Inventory and Angler Survey have provided training for youth to become active participants in the environmental and public health of their communities. Our work in the Fallkill Creek has involved hundreds of local youth in stream monitoring and cleanups and related art and community projects. By expanding our Environmental Justice Associate position from part-time to fulltime to focus on youth empowerment by receiving additional funding, Clearwater could provide more youth with information on green jobs, while providing greater assistance and insurance in formulating youth into the next generation of environmental leaders.

Clearwater's mission is to inspire, educate, and activate the next generation of environmental leaders. Clearwater lends support to the issues of the future that face our youth and fosters the idea that in a time of challenge American's reach to our heritage and to the spiritual renewal found in nature. The activation of these young leaders is a celebration of the coming to fruition of the first part of the Obama administration's initiative. Clearwater is proud to support our youth and to be a strong advocate for their voices now in hopes of the future they will create. Those same voices speak clearly: these youth recognize the outdoors as a way to overcome many of the obstacles they face as a generation.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Clearwater connects kids to the largest ecosystem in their immediate world, the Hudson River. The sloop is a living time machine and students are challenged to look not just to our history, but to reshape, re-identify and reassess how they want their future to be—to take the education they receive aboard the sloop Clearwater or during our on-land programs and assess the necessary decisions they will have to make as the next generation of leaders. Clearwater's education programs have been used around the world as the model for environmental education programming including: the Great Lakes (Inland Seas, Bay Sail), Puget Sound (Sound Experience), Chesapeake Bay (Living Classrooms), Long Island Sound (Soundwaters), The Netherlands (Greenpeace), and St. Petersburg, Russia (Neva River Clearwater).

For over 40 years, the Hudson River Valley has been a hub of environmental collaboration where, as a community, we helped clean up the river against all odds. This next generation has already begun to institute the lessons learned in these programs and willingly pass them on to their families, friends and schoolmates. It is through our next generation of environmental leaders, here in the Hudson Valley and beyond, that our nation will become a community of environmental progress and change.

On behalf of the millions of organized sportsmen and women and conservation professionals from across the country, thank you for recognizing the need to conserve America's Great Outdoors for future generations. From time spent hunting, fishing, and trapping, America's sportsmen know the value of America's outdoors. Collectively, hunting, fishing, and wildlife related recreation generate more than \$122 billion annually in economic activity at the state and local level, which equates to about 1% of the gross domestic product. But more than just economic value, the outdoors is part of our heritage as Americans and as hunters and anglers.

Engaging Hunters and Anglers in Conservation – Over the 20th Century, most conservation dollars came from hunters and anglers, through license fees and taxes on hunting and fishing equipment. Hunters and anglers have been a key part of every significant national conservation victory. We appreciate the efforts the Administration has made to get input from the sporting community, such as the Wildlife and Hunting Heritage Conservation Council, and encourage the Administration to continue to engage sportsmen in conservation decisions.

Protecting Clean Water – Clean water is important to fish, wildlife and people alike. From rivers and lakes to estuaries and coasts, America's waters are an integral part of America's Great Outdoors. The Administration should protect America's waters from pollution, development and loss of wetlands, and support the restoration of degraded waters.

We look forward to working with the Administration to ensure that our children and our grandchildren have the same or better access and opportunities we have had to hunt and fish in America's Great Outdoors.

Thank you for this opportunity to submit our official, written position on President Obama's America's Great Outdoors Initiative. As a 40-year National Park Service partner, we welcome this opportunity to continue our work with you toward our shared goal of inspiring generations of youth to lifelong stewardship.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Through better alignment with NPS long-term partners on programs and capital investments, the NPS can spur growth of public/private partnerships. We support the NPS taking the following steps:

Commit to longer term funding for key partner organizations with proven track records.

Dedicate funding for underserved schools to attend National Parks-based environmental education programs.

Fund longitudinal studies researching the benefits and impacts of environmental education.

Thank you for the opportunity to contribute to this important process. We look forward to 40 more years of growing our mutually successful partnership with the National Park Service.

As you work to develop the AGO final report, we stand ready to assist in telling the story of conservation and recreation in America—concrete examples, case studies and individuals, and recreation participation and economic data. As stated, outdoor recreation is the conduit through which many Americans can see themselves connected to the outdoors. The report should take full advantage of this deep connection to the great outdoors.

The Conservation Fund appreciates the opportunity to comment in support of the America's Great Outdoors Initiative established by President Obama on April 16th, 2010. We commend the leadership of Secretary Salazar, Secretary Vilsack and other Administration officials to engage the American public to promote innovative, community-level efforts to conserve outdoor spaces and reconnect Americans to the outdoors through this important initiative.

TCF builds diverse and leveraged partnerships between governments, communities, landowners, private investors, and foundations to conserve special lands and waters while enhancing local economies. Working in support of federal and state agency land acquisition priorities, we leverage public funding, private contributions, and program-related investments to purchase land from willing sellers and then transfer ownership to public and private entities, providing both a conservation outcome and a cost-savings to the agencies. We also believe conservation is as much about people as places. A thriving community has a healthy environment and a healthy economy. We work closely with our agency partners and private supporters to build both by forging partnerships that conserve land, train leaders, and invest in conservation at home.

As you work to seek comments from federal, state, and local entities, the non-profit conservation community, and the public at large, TCF wishes to submit recommendations for targeted funding increases and additional program authorities, as well as examples of successful tools and on-the-ground conservation success stories that are driving conservation forward and address the significant challenges facing our nation. As America's Partner in Conservation, TCF seeks your help to conserve key landscapes in partnership with our federal, state, and local agency partners.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Through federal land acquisition and grants to states, LWCF has had an impact in every state and in almost every county in America, creating and enhancing national parks, forests, wildlife refuges, and other federal public lands that provide public access to recreation in urban, suburban, and rural areas alike. LWCF also provides grants to states for projects like parks, sports fields, swimming pools, playgrounds, and trails. In addition, LWCF has funded the protection of over 1.5 million acres of working forests in over 30 states and has helped federal and state agencies conserve historic and cultural sites that are part of our nation's rich and diverse history.

TCF has used funding from LWCF to protect special places like Rocky Fork in Tennessee's Cherokee National Forest along the Appalachian National Scenic Trail, Big Thicket National Preserve in Texas, and the Rocky Mountain Front Conservation Area in Montana. This year, LWCF helped us conserve sensitive lands at Blackwater National Wildlife Refuge in Maryland, critical wintering habitat for manatees at Crystal River National Wildlife Refuge in Florida, and an important project within the Lesser Prairie Chicken Area of Critical Environmental Concern in New Mexico, among others.

The America's Great Outdoors Initiative recognizes, in addition to enhancing the nation's current conservation programs and leveraging federal funding many times over with regional, state, local, and private resources, that there are several landscapes in the country representative of the success of communities coming together to achieve common goals. TCF would like to highlight several areas as models of landscape-scale cooperative partnerships where we have first-hand experience with working with federal, state, and local partners to accomplish strategic on-the-ground conservation.

The Conservation Fund, in partnership with The Nature Conservancy, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, private donors and the State of Montana, launched an unprecedented 5-year effort to protect 220,000 acres of wildlife habitat along the Rocky Mountain Front while maintaining the region's traditional ranching heritage. The Richard King Mellon Foundation has provided key support. In its first year, the Rocky Mountain Front Initiative moved forward with four projects, protecting 21,274 acres of critical migratory corridors for grizzly bears and a wide variety of other species that depend on the Front's rich ecosystem.

Along with our partners, we have completed another four projects during the FY2010 and moving into the FY2011 budget cycles. Federal LWCF funds as well as other funding sources such as the North American Wetlands Conservation Act, Neotropical Migratory Bird Grant Program, state, and local funding, have directly gone toward acquisition of conservation easements on working ranches in this rare and unique landscape along the eastern Front of Montana. In combination with the multi-agency efforts in the Crown of the Continent bioregion, the Rocky Mountain Front is one of the best examples of community-driven conservation in the country. The Conservation Fund is honored to be a part of the on-the-ground, landscape-scale conservation efforts in this region of Montana.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Since 1994, TCF has worked with the National Park Service (NPS) to protect in perpetuity 32,000 acres of bottomland hardwood forest, savannah, bogs, and freshwater marsh in the Big Thicket National Preserve. In 2003, as a direct result of a complementary acquisition effort on the Middle Neches Tract that established the Pineywood Mitigation Bank in cooperation with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, The Conservation Fund initiated a strategy to assemble and protect the highest-priority conservation lands and river corridors in East Texas that will not only provide ecosystem services to citizens and protect wildlife, but will form the foundation for a new forest-based economy.

Along with the U.S. Forest Service, FWS, NPS, and State of Texas, The Conservation Fund is working to conserve the watersheds and river corridors throughout East Texas that provide an interconnected link for fish and wildlife, water quality protection, and people, while also ensuring that the region's forest resources remain intact and healthy. The Neches River NWR, Longleaf Ridge Conservation Area (Forest Legacy Program), Trinity River NWR, Chenier Plain Refuge Complex, U.S. Forest Service lands (Davy Crockett, Angelina, Sabine and Sam Houston National Forests), and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineer's Steinhagen (Town Bluff) project are all critical and interconnected components leading to the longer-term protection and restoration of East Texas forests, rivers, and wetlands systems. We are working with our partners to secure funding from a variety of federal, state, local, and private sources for our collective conservation efforts in East Texas. We are also closely tracking opportunities for future funding provided under a revived Weeks Act, described above, whereby the USFS would have the resources necessary to acquire and restore cutover lands and important longleaf habitat for addition to the National Forest System.

Chesapeake Bay – Blackwater NWR, Harriet Tubman Historical Park & Virginia NWRs. Harriet Tubman is one of the most enduring figures in American History and a model for heroism all over the world. The story of her lifelong struggles for freedom, equality, justice, and self-determination are an inspirational element of our nation's historic fabric. Today, American interest in the life and lessons of Harriet Tubman – nearly 100 years following her death – is only growing.

Recognizing the extraordinary courage and patriotism of Harriet Tubman, the National Park Service (NPS) completed a Special Resource Study in January 2009 determining that lands associated with the life of Tubman in Dorchester, Caroline and Talbot Counties in Maryland and in Auburn, New York, meet the criteria for becoming part of the park system. Through the study, approximately 5,700 acres on Maryland's Eastern Shore have been identified as significant parts of Tubman's biography, including Harriet Tubman's birthplace near Blackwater National Wildlife Refuge (NWR) and Poplar Neck, the farm she originally fled in 1849 on her journey to freedom. Conservation of these lands and the establishment of a Harriet Tubman Underground Railroad National Historical Park is the best way to ensure that these parts of Harriet Tubman's historic legacy are both permanently protected and made available for Americans to experience.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

The Blackwater NWR and Harriet Tubman proposal is a strong model of landscape-scale conservation in the eastern United States. Currently threatened by development, climate-induced and natural sea level rise, and invasive species, the Blackwater NWR and the associated Tubman areas represent a partnership in its infancy with tremendous potential moving forward for multiple federal, state, and local agencies to work together with the communities of Maryland's Eastern Shore to protect a way of life and a landscape that has remained relatively untouched since the days of Harriet Tubman's life.

The success of the Tubman Historical Park and Blackwater NWR landscape partnership will require a broad conservation vision and a focus toward building upon existing partnerships. Already, the current partners are focusing on a strong land protection effort for Dorchester County, Maryland, targeting properties that have been identified through the NPS study as key Tubman heritage locations. Within the Dorchester County landscape, partners are already directing Federal and state LWCF funding, along with other funding sources such as Migratory Bird "Duck Stamp" funding, NAWCA, and private funding, toward several key tracts within the Blackwater NWR acquisition boundary that have important Tubman resources or serve as buffer areas for Tubman tracts.

The Blackwater NWR and Tubman areas are only a representative slice of the tremendous work underway within the Chesapeake Bay. The Conservation Fund is also working with the FWS to protect critical landscape-scale projects at the Rappahannock River Valley and James River NWRs, as well as through the NPS and ongoing partner efforts to protect the Captain John Smith Chesapeake National Historical Water Trail, the first federally-recognized water trail in the country.

The Conservation Fund has partnered for more than a decade with the FWS and NPS in national, regional, and local workshops focusing on balancing nature and commerce and creating new, innovative "tools" for areas that border parks, refuges, and other natural or significant cultural landscapes.

In North Carolina, the Resourceful Communities Program of the Fund has worked with rural, impoverished communities across the state to help local leaders connect their needs to available resources. Working in partnerships with community-based groups throughout the state, the Fund's work has enabled rural communities to secure more than \$80 million for carrying out projects that directly improve the environment and economy. Seed grants made to community groups providing self-help in their communities and loans to small businesses have helped secure community forests, retain ownership of working farms, woodlots and pasture, and develop better environmental stewardship tied to the long-term health of these outdoor assets. Of special note is that many of these rural communities are persistently poor and minority, too often left out of the mainstream of public programs due to lingering prejudice and lack of cultural sensitivity.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Similarly, for more than five years, the National Endowment for the Arts and the Appalachian Regional Commission have partnered with the National Trust for Historic Preservation and the Fund to offer and provide, on a competitive grant basis, assessments of small Appalachian town assets and prescriptions for increasing eco- and heritage tourism and other forms of economic growth based on their natural and cultural assets.

Working with NiSource, fourteen states, and the FWS, The Conservation Fund is using the green infrastructure approach to identify the highest potential habitat needed to mitigate impacts on a number of federally listed threatened and endangered species over the next half century from the continued operation of a natural gas pipeline. The Fund is also working with the Land Trust of Tennessee, the City of Nashville, and the County of Davidson on an open space master plan for the Nashville region using the green infrastructure approach to site development out of the Cumberland River floodplain and protect watershed and economic values.

The Fund's mission of protecting America's land and water legacy includes conserving parks, trails, and recreational areas where families can enjoy the outdoors. We also have been a leader in bringing together corporate leaders, educators, community planners, government officials and others to join us in our efforts to get kids outside. In 2010, we helped sponsor the Outdoor Nation Youth Summit held in New York City. Outdoor Nation harnesses the passion, energy and ideas of young people, empowering them to reclaim, redefine and rediscover the outdoors. The goal is to increase and dramatically expand youth participation and engagement, especially among urban communities and communities of color. The Fund is contributing \$50,000 in scholarships for youth leaders to take the movement of reconnecting children with nature to the next level.

Outdoor Nation grew out of the National Forum on Children and Nature, a groundbreaking effort led by the Fund in collaboration with Rich Louv, author of *Last Child in the Woods* and head of the Children and Nature Network. The National Forum on Children and Nature was a 54- member Forum made up of a diverse group of public and private leaders dedicated to improving children's health and overall well-being, while encouraging them to rediscover America's outdoors. In 2008, the Forum endorsed 30 demonstration projects nationwide that creatively reconnected kids with nature. These projects shared relevance, impact and an ability to be replicated, among other features.

The Conservation Fund strongly supports the America's Great Outdoors emphasis on children and the younger generation, and instilling a connection to the outdoors within all Americans. We stand ready to assist the Administration in exploring new and innovative ideas for reconnecting children with nature and the beauty of the world around them, whether through urban parks, greenways and blueways, regional hiking trails, or with their families on further explorations into our nation's wildlife refuges, national forests, parks, monuments, and special resource areas.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Our public land conservation heritage in this country is a great democratic legacy. Every American has equal access to this great land estate – an equal chance to test themselves, catch a trophy trout, stretch out on the grass of a city park, goof off, find solitude or carve out a living. These lands also sustain our physical needs, providing us with clean water and air, cultural legacies and wildlife habitat -- for many Americans they are nature's lifeblood.

The Wilderness Society is the leading public-lands conservation organization working to protect wilderness and inspire Americans to care for our wild places. Founded in 1935, and now with more than 500,000 members and supporters, The Wilderness Society has led the effort to permanently protect 110 million acres of wilderness and to ensure sound management of our shared national lands.

Americans cherish the Great Outdoors and have demonstrated that passion with a long conservation heritage. Our federal public lands have played a vital role in that conservation legacy, and have helped define our nation's character and shaped our culture, economy and natural environment.

Our public land conservation heritage is also a great expression of democracy, where every American has equal access to this great land estate, something that is unrivaled anywhere else in the world. While the federal lands provide unparalleled recreational opportunities and support livelihoods in many rural communities, they also are our nation's lifeblood, providing the coolest and cleanest water, key wildlife habitat and many of our wildest lands.

While we've made conservation history in the past, there is an opportunity to make conservation history again.

There is a great opportunity to create good-paying jobs in rural areas and involve people in nature through vibrant restoration programs. Restoration activities also generate much common ground between historic adversaries and help bring communities together.

The human experience of wild places is among the greatest benefits provided by our national parks, national forests, wildlife refuges and other public lands. Recreation is one of the primary ways people connect with nature. Americans celebrate the deep connections between people and place forged by recreation on public lands.

While our public lands represent great national assets for protecting nature, the network of land is not complete to ensure we can protect all the ecological, economic and recreational values into the future. In some cases, adding key lands for public access, key wildlife corridors, wildlife habitat and recreational pursuits represent great opportunities to add to the network. This is especially true as we address new threats such as climate change.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

During the last century, each generation has stood up and protected some of America's iconic landscapes, and worked to build a conservation legacy. While we have made great progress so far, growing and new threats call upon this generation to take bold action to help ensure future generations can enjoy the Great Outdoors as we do today. The recommendations found in these comments provide the America's Great Outdoors Initiative the opportunity to make historic contributions, which will protect the natural systems that provide us with clean air and water, sustain our economies, allow for spiritual and physical renewal, and provide educational and recreational opportunities.

Since Yellowstone National Park was created in 1872, each generation has made a contribution to America's conservation heritage by permanently protecting lands with designations including national parks, wilderness, national monuments, wild and scenic rivers and other designations. These designations free iconic landscapes from the threat of development, and help make them available for future generations to enjoy, much the way we enjoy them today.

Citizen and community led efforts to permanently protect our nation's wildest lands offer strong examples of collaboration, bringing diverse stakeholders together to reach compromise and community oriented solutions to conserve public lands. This approach produces more broadly supported wildlands designations that benefit from the long-term support and stewardship of local communities.

The Wilderness Act of 1964 created the framework for citizen involvement and broad community engagement in developing future wilderness proposals. The history of wildland designations over the last four and a half decades shows that the vast majority of the 756 wilderness areas that comprise the National Wilderness Preservation System today were designated as a result of robust citizen activism, bi-partisan collaboration, and diverse stakeholders and public land users reaching compromise on real, on the ground issues.

The National Landscape Conservation System (Conservation Lands)—the most innovative American land system created in the last 40 years—was established to protect the crown jewels of public lands managed by the Bureau of Land Management.

The success of the FLRA resulted from several factors. First, groups nominated themselves, but they also had clear criteria laid out beforehand for collaborative groups to follow. Furthermore, meaningful incentives were in place for successful groups.

The increases described above would advance forest and watershed restoration, meet the demand for FLRA funding, and—in the process—result in \$120 million in FLRA fund dollars PLUS the required \$120M Forest Service match being directed to restoration.

Implement the minimum road system by decommissioning unneeded or problematic roads, stormproofing necessary roads, and adequately maintaining the appropriate system into the future.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

During the 1930s, the Civilian Conservation Corps was created as a way to address the high unemployment of the time. Through the program, much of the infrastructure for our national parks and other public lands was built. But, the CCC also helped develop a generation of conservation-minded people who worked on our public lands. This political infrastructure helped support conservation-minded programs and designations.

Building on the model of the CCC and the existing network of Youth Conservation Corps, the Administration could create a Youth Restoration Corps to carry out many of the activities that would follow from the suggested changes outlined above. This would be cost-conscious, effective and would accomplish restoration goals, as well as get young people outdoors. This effort could and should be coordinated with educational institutions at all levels.

Some of the restoration work would include work such as trail building and maintenance that can be accomplished with CCC-type labor.

Forest restoration programs can only be successful if a robust monitoring system is in place. Youth from a conservation corps could conduct a lot of the monitoring that needs to occur on public lands. A strong monitoring program, connected to youth, would help make restoration an enduring part of Forest Service management.

The human experience of wild places is among the greatest benefits provided by our national parks, national forests, wildlife refuges, and other public lands. Plants and animals, mountains and meadows, caves and canyons, rivers and lakes, historic and cultural sites all beckon us to explore and learn, to grow and thrive, in ways both simple and profound. Wildness is essential to the human spirit.

For these reasons, Americans celebrate the deep connections between people and place forged by recreation on public lands. Americans, and others, can enjoy the wild parts of our national landscape in myriad ways while, at the same time, ensure their protection. Roads have long offered plentiful opportunities to explore national parks and other cherished places. Hiking, biking and pack trails lead to favorite picnic spots, fishing holes, hunting grounds, climbing areas and camp-sites. And at the wild heart of our nation, wilderness offers some of the most remote and profound of primitive recreational experiences.

Opportunities for these kinds of adventures have been a cherished American birthright since before the founding of the republic, and are among the most compelling reasons we work to protect public lands. The founders of the National Wilderness Preservation System were invoking this birthright when they defended public lands as sanctuaries not only for wild creatures and untrammelled ecosystems, but for human beings seeking beauty, inspiration, challenge and renewal.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Direct experience is what inspires people to care for wild places, and recreation is an important source of such inspiration. Recreation is one of the primary ways people connect with nature. This is why we seek to make common cause with all who visit and cherish our public lands. We envision deep, broad, and varied constituencies – traditional and new together – working to promote widespread and sustainable enjoyment of natural places. Only by doing so can we ensure in a democracy the public support for protecting America’s public lands for all time to come – and ensure at the same time that all future Americans will be able to enjoy these experiences we hold so dear.

Roads to Trails Program. Roads are the biggest threat to clean water in our National Forests. In 2001, the Forest Service estimated that between 75,000 – 115,000 miles of these roads were no longer needed. In addition, the Forest Service is about to kick off a nationwide effort to identify mile-by-mile every unneeded road. By converting even a small percentage of these roads to hiking and biking trails, we can turn an environmental liability into a treasured community asset. Roads-to-trails projects are already being accomplished on a limited scale (for example, on Mt. Hood National Forest in Oregon, where the recent wilderness bill authorized roads-to-trails conversions), but could be easily scaled to a national level.

The Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program provides a great example of what we can accomplish with a public-private partnership to fund public lands work. In 1990 Republican and Democrat politicians came together and formed the Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program to fund the protection of outdoor recreation lands and wildlife habitat across the state. It has thrived, and is now one of the two most important, and stable, funds for conservation in the West. Twenty years of success make WWRP a model state program, proving the power of providing incentives to local governments and simultaneously leveraging federal money – all working collaboratively in service of conservation. The WWRP is supported by the Washington Wildlife and Recreation Coalition, whose members include business, local, state and tribal government leaders, conservation groups, and many others. Providing \$620 million in state money for a thousand projects across Washington and paying to protect more than 350,000 acres, WWRP has made life better for people, animals and birds in 37 of the state's 39 counties. As well, the WWRP has leveraged more than \$405 million in local and private money. From skate parks to wildlife corridors, the WWRP is making Washington State a better place for families of all types.

Go Wild for Trails: Campaign to designate National Recreation Trails in Wilderness. Wilderness areas offer some of the most unique and outstanding recreation opportunities in the country. They are places where you can escape to experience nature in a way not available anywhere else, and yet many people don’t know this incredible opportunity exists. By designating National Recreation Trails in Wilderness Areas, we can highlight some of the best trail experiences in the nation and encourage people to get out there and experience Wilderness.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Ensure the recreation permitting process better serves all Americans. One of the Administration's top priorities is getting young people – especially disadvantaged youth – to experience the outdoors. Many groups are working to make this a reality, but have been stymied by the agency's recreation permitting process that stacks the game against them. A two step process is needed to even the playing field, and ensure all groups have equal opportunity to get kids out into the woods:

National Youth Water Monitoring Network. Our wildlife and waters are suffering because managers do not have the resources to conduct monitoring to track the health of our national lands and waters. Our children are reported to be suffering from a growing disconnection with the natural world. We can address both of these problems by creating a National Youth Monitoring Network. The NYMN will be a joint project between the Department of Interior (USGS, BLM, NPS), the Department of Agriculture (FS, NRCS), and the Department of Education, and spearheaded by a White House Executive Order. The Executive Order will direct the Departments to:

Develop a plan, including objectives, parameters, and protocols, for monitoring water quality and aquatic health that can be feasibly and accurately carried out by school children;

Develop a national online data base in which school children can enter monitoring data, and track trends over time;

Develop and distribute national curriculum for multiple grades that will teach school children, inter alia, about the life cycle of water, scientific concepts involved in monitoring, methods to protect water and rivers - and restore them when degraded - and the relationship of land use and water and river quality. Curriculum can integrate art, literature, science, physical education, etc.;

Funding to train teachers to teach the curricula, participate in the monitoring network, and to utilize the local environment as an extension of the classroom;

Funding available to schools who participate in the monitoring programs.

Incentives for states to integrate the environmental education concepts related to the monitoring program across core subject areas;

Discussion Question 1

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(cont.)

LWCF is the premier federal program to conserve irreplaceable lands throughout the nation. It is a critical tool to acquire in-holdings, expansions of public lands, and new federal designations throughout the national parks, national wildlife refuges, national forests, wild and scenic river corridors, national scenic and historic trails, the Bureau of Land Management lands and other federal areas. The companion LWCF state grants program provides crucial support for state and local park acquisitions, recreational facilities, and trail corridors. The Stateside program is the government's primary investment tool for ensuring that children and families have access to close-to-home recreation. The LWCF stateside program has funded over 41,000 projects, including sports fields, outdoor recreation facilities and trails.

Our 682 million acres of federal land and waterways provide a critical opportunity to address the unprecedented challenges that climate change poses to our forests, fish and wildlife, and riparian resources. The strategic acquisition of key in-holdings, buffer areas and wildlife migration corridors within and adjacent to existing public lands enhances adaptation efforts and fosters intact landscapes. These natural areas also store carbon, buffer flooding, conserve water, and support healthy fisheries and wildlife populations. President Obama has indicated that LWCF should be fully funded by 2014, and we support his goal.

The Community Forest and Open Space Program provides 50-50 matching grants to acquire forest areas that are economically, culturally and environmentally important to that locality and threatened by conversion to non-forest uses. This program provides federal grants directly to local governments and non-profits exclusively for full fee acquisition - not conservation easements - and the program's criteria are built around evaluation of a project's community impact even above its natural resource value. As part of this community focus, the new program requires public access and active community engagement in forest planning for parcels. The program also emphasizes opportunities for vocational-technical education in forestry and other forest-based education programs, as well as active demonstration sites for model forest stewardship to educate private landowners about forest management. The Community Forest and Open Space Program should be funded at \$75 million annually and provided as a separate entity from the Forest Legacy Program.

The Bureau of Land Management's National Landscape Conservation System comprises some 27 million acres of congressionally and presidentially designated lands and waters, such as national monuments and national conservation areas. Stewardship of the System's many units provides jobs for thousands of Americans while supporting vibrant and sustainable economies in surrounding communities. The System provides immeasurable public values in return for modest investments: outstanding recreational opportunities, wildlife habitat, clean water, Wilderness, and open space near fast-growing cities. Recent changes have improved clarity in the System's budget, but the System still suffers from a lack of prominence in the Bureau's budget structure, and there is a real need for sub-accounts that reflect the diversity of the System's many units. Furthermore, despite the fact that the System comprises more than 10% of the BLM's land, it has historically received less than 5% of BLM's budget.

Discussion Question 1

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(cont.)

TWS is a strong proponent of transitioning our country to a sustainable energy economy by developing our renewable energy resources in a way that protects lands and wildlife. We believe renewable energy can be an appropriate use of public lands when sited in areas that do not include important wildlife habitat and other sensitive natural and cultural resources. We support increasing funding to improve the renewable energy permitting process at the Department of the Interior and allow BLM to develop a program to guide projects to the most appropriate locations. We endorse both protecting treasured public lands and using suitable public lands for renewable energy development as part of the transition to a clean energy economy.

Lets step back for a second. There is a major difference between the mandates of the Park Service and the forest service. The Park service is responsible for preserving areas of special significance from human alteration while creating a window into those special areas through the management of park infrastructure. As such there is no place for motorized recreation off park roads in the park system. The Forest service is responsible for conserving resources for public use. The conservation of public use should be more than a window. Those uses that have been traditionally used on those lands should be allowed as a means of integrating the people with the land. Motorized recreation is compatible with the Forest service mandate. I am the trail boss for a shared use trail club and I know from first hand experience that shared use is possible.

Does ___ realize how much he has polluted the planet by flying all over the world in a jet aircraft? This must be one of those cases where it is OK for him to participate in highly pollutive actions but it is taboo for the rest of us. I am offering tours myself ! I think we need to realize that we are most likely dealing with people that live in large urban areas on the east coast. They THINK they have seen the west but in reality they haven't, they could not have based on their comments. I can think of at least one excellent example right off hand. Drive I-70 west from Grand Junction Colorado, tell me just exactly how overrun and tainted that land is. You can drive for literally hundreds of miles and see exactly no human influence other than the road across the landscape. When I snowmobile to the top of a mountain, I can see for many, many miles in every direction, pristine open lands, most of it completely untouched by man without the need for federal government intervention, and still open to be enjoyed by all.

Your question "What good is land, while "pristine", that nobody will ever see?" has been answered effectively many times already in this forum. See, for example, the Idea: "We will always have more to learn from native species and their natural habitats -- don't sacrifice our teachers for a cheap thrill or a quick buck".

___ said "We need local solutions, not you clowns living thousands of miles from ground zero making choices for us." Umm. Federal land is owned by all of us. Not just a few locals.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Clowns? When your argument doesn't hold water, you revert to name calling. It doesn't really help your cause. I hear a lot about environmentalists not wanting to compromise. Who is not wanting compromise now. In my posts, I have always said access is important and even offered suggestions to reach a compromise. Remember, I am a snowmobile enthusiast, also. I can also see the benefit of conservation and preserving wild areas. They benefit both wildlife and people. There should be areas that we manage and areas that we don't. I don't see how stating facts is manipulating numbers. Maybe you just don't like the facts. 50% of our national forest are open to development. Does that hit home at all when that is put in context? I think the amount of national forest that is wilderness designation is closer to 25%. These will be the largest areas of undeveloped land left as our population grows into the future. I guess because you can't bring your vehicle into wilderness areas you are locked out. This locked out argument is a funny one. I guess if I drove an 18 wheeler and wanted to take it into the woods, I would be locked out because most of the roads are not big enough, right? Oh ya, the federal government is in violation of the Constitution. I thought it was a government for the people, by the people. If the people want to preserve the land, that's what should happen. You're not one of those people that don't believe in paying taxes because it's not in the Constitution.

I also pay taxes and vote. Yes, wilderness is motorized access closure. They do not lock people out. Wilderness designation usually does not get through congress without support from the home state's representatives. The areas I advocate as wilderness have not been accessed already. So there is nothing to "keep open". Where they have already been accessed, I advocate leaving some of the existing uses when the area is made wilderness. The reason motorized access has lost areas is OHV use has grown tremendously. The more there are the more regulation there will be. That goes without saying. A lot of the issues we face now were not issues before. Also, the population continues to grow. I would say 50% of our national forests open to development is enough. Personally, I think the rest needs some sort of protection. If not wilderness, than something similar. In the future, these areas will be our largest wild areas left. People and wildlife depend on them now, and I believe it will be more so in the future. Compromise is when both parties meet in the middle. You really can't dictate what the compromise will be. I don't think most environmentalists want to close all the public land to motorized use, just like I don't think most people want motorized access in wilderness.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

I believe some areas should remain roadless. Roads bring more development. Development is fine, there should be areas without it. Roadless areas provide clean air and water. They are also excellent habitat for big game animals and clean water for fish. These areas are important for people and wildlife. Access is important, but there should be areas without roads. Regarding forest fires, more forest fires are started near roads than any other reason. We have a huge amount of roads and logging in Michigan and we still struggle with a lot of the same problems with forest health. I don't think logging is bad and it is necessary in most areas. I don't think it's the total cure for every forest problem. Some of your statements about what is not allowed in wilderness is misinformed. If an area is roadless now, do we need to build a road in case someone wants to go there and they are not physically able. That argument doesn't really make sense when talking about areas that are roadless now. 2% is not misleading. That's the amount. It equals 25% of national forests. 50% have roads and are open to development. Some of the areas I have been to are little more than tree farms. There are enough roads in national forest to go around the Earth 17 times. How many areas do you think need roads? All of them? We are just talking about national forests. How about all the forested areas with a multitude of roads that are not in national forests. As we go into the future, these roadless national forest areas will be the largest tracts of undeveloped roadless areas we have left. Logging, mining, and other development are fine. Do we need to have these activities in every area we have left. Most of the country is available to development. How much do you think should be available to development, 100%. 2% wilderness sounds like a small amount to me. If we had 5% protected from development, I think that would be a small amount. People in the past who wanted to preserve wild land met criticism, also. Some of the areas that were preserved are some of our most treasured areas. T. Roosevelt even believed conservation was this country's most pressing issue. I believe these wild areas that we preserve today will be more important into the future than how much land is available for me to ride on today. I get tired of rehashing the same points. Access is important. Not all areas should have roads. That's my opinion. I don't think we will convince each other to change our point of view. Some of this we might have to agree to disagree.

There are more trees on the land today where I am than there were 100 years ago. There are plenty of pictures to prove it too. The gold and silver boom had a profound effect on the land where I live. They cut down the WHOLE forest to build with and to heat with. Looks much better today. More testimony to the fact that the land is extremely resilient. Why is it a radical idea to provide for ohv users at the same time you provide for those wanting land for no uses? Since we are also viable forest users, we require viable land to recreate on as well.

Discussion Question 1

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(cont.)

Oh golly, now you want the emotionalists to come up with facts? The notion that OHV users are bad stewards of the land is unfounded. There are just as many, if not more, bad eggs in the hiker/skier crowd. As motorized users we generally do not like to throw stones but, the fact is, I have cleaned up more non-motorized user messes in the forest than from my bretheren on motorized vehicles. I also happen to despise those who get on an ATV just to go tear up some trails, or worse yet, off trail areas. Funny thing is, I spend lots of time in the forest all year round. I would certainly turn in an ATv rider who was damaging the land intentionally. In the last 15 years though, I have never had to turn in a single person. These incidents are the exception, not the rule as the opposition would like people to believe.

Since you do not seem to approve of OHV companies making profits, I wonder how you feel about a company like General Electric? You know, the big corporation making hundreds of millions in profits, far more than all the OHV manufacturers put together, then taking massive amounts of our tax dollars in the form of stimulus money only to lay off ten of thousands of workers. Our system is very corrupt on many levels. Your "green" administration is also very guilty of corporate profiteering. Tracy, You need to understand that as individuals in this free country, we all have our own ideas about what getting away from it all means. You want us to get away from our vehicles. I happen to use my vehicle to get away from the people. The hiking trails in my area are VERY busy all summer long. Camping along them requires luck to find a spot, and taking the risk that you may be coming back down and starting over in another place. If I load the truck with the camping supplies, which in my case does not include tv or cell phone, I can access clean, quiet, pristine places you could not access on foot if you had a week to walk in. Most of us do not race to these places, just leisurely trips back into the forest to set up tents from where we may hike a trail, or just explore the area. The problem I see is that you want to change the way I live my life, they way I want to use the forest because somehow you think your way is better, more enlightened, less impactive, quieter, or whatever. What you need to know is that it isn't all about you. I live adjacent to the forest. I have made MAJOR lifestyle sacrifices to do so. I do not need someone hundreds or thousands of miles away from here dictating how I can use the forest. The USFS is charged by congress with maintaining the forest lands for multiple uses. One of those is motorized access. If you do not like this, I suggest you spend your time in the the 120 million acres of designated Wilderness. That is what it is for, and we definately do not need anymore of it.

I think it is downright hilarious to see someone actually type something akin to this "idea". "You can draw whatever boundaries you want and say "This is a National Park" or "This is a Designated Wilderness Area" but CO2 will still go there and destroy the environment, and do so a rate which is so fast and so expensive to US citizens that any other effort you take Except real CO2 reductions will amount to vacuaous "Greenwashing."" - It is scientific fact that plants utilize CO2 in photosynthesis. Trees, grasses, weeds, algae, etc etc all NEED CO2 to survive yet this is what you claim will destroy our forests. Interesting "idea"

Discussion Question 1

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(cont.)

Daniel Boone National Forest, geeze that makes me laugh. Back when 4x4s roamed the Daniel, a person could hike that place without fear. But, after the 1/2 closure, and another 1/2 closure, and another 1/2 closure, they just closed all motorized in the Daniel. Then the pot growers moved in, and you don't dare walk the Daniel during the summer, unless you want to be killed execution style. Remember the 4 kids? Shared use does benefit everyone. Seen it in the Daniel, and have seen it out west. Usually, it's not realized until it's too late.

"pass a strong Global Warming law" Ooops, nobody told you yet? That was a hoax.

A few important advancements need to be noted, and if not in your area, maybe copied and applied. The Colorado Snowmobile Association supported a law that makes OHV noise standards easy to check in the field. There were standards but law enforcement had no viable way of determining those standards in the field. Now, with new standards, and the tools to enforce them, we have addressed the reasonable noise issue. To help with enforcement, all law enforcement now has jurisdiction over the laws in the forests. That means the local Sheriff can respond and issue citations. We are trying to police our own. We want a reasonably quiet forest as well. Rule breakers can expect to be punished. There are also new emissions standards that snowmobile manufacturers are required to meet now. This is to work towards making OHVs more palatable to the greenies. It is also a great idea to use technology to clean up the sport. As we work dilligently on the OHV side, do accept that those with strong "green values" will still oppose OHV use. The goal is to eliminate their use on public lands. I am all for working to improve the sport. Just realize that the opposition will not care, it will not ever be enough for them.

Some of the commenters are way, way too hard on BSA. There is room for organizations that have specific philosophical standards. I went to an all-male university. I support church-affiliated schools as well as public achools. I certainly wouldn't support an exclusively-BSA initiative here, but it is absolutely wrong to turn down the opportunity to work with millions of youth thourgh this good organization.

More fires are started near roads. Access is important, areas witout roads are also important. Roadless areas provide clean water to a large portion of our population. Part of the reason we have clean rivers now is because of environmentalists you find have no perspective. I snowmobile and sometimes I find other snowmobilers, OHVers, etc., have no perspective. We all DO own the national forests. Because there are areas you can't take a motorized vehicle doesn't mean they are off limits to you. You just can't take your vehicle. Talk about the king's forest, let's give it to big business so they can use it up and get rich while the middle class gains nothing.

Discussion Question 1

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(cont.)

AIANTA (American Indian Alaska Native Tourism Association) is a national nonprofit association of American Indian tribes, tribal tourism officials, and tribal businesses engaged in providing best practices and capacity building for Indian Country tourism since 1999. We are made up of member tribes, tribal individuals and industry professionals from six regions - Eastern, Plains, Midwest, Southwest, Pacific Northwest and Alaska. AIANTA's mission is to help define, introduce, grow and sustain American Indian and Alaska Native tourism that honors and sustains tribal traditions and values.

At one time, all of America's Great Outdoors was Indian Country. Indian people still consider those special places to be our homelands. Our proposal for the America's Great Outdoors Initiative is focused primarily on the public lands, including National Parks, National Landscape Conservation System, national monuments, forests, rivers and all other public and state lands.

Tribal partnership and participation in the recent Lewis & Clark Bicentennial (2003-2006) and Jamestown Colony Quadricentennial (2007) taught us many lessons that can directly apply to the goals of America's Great Outdoors. We learned that, locally and nationally, Americans are intensely interested in learning about American Indian lands, histories, cultures and tribal perspectives on America's public lands and our nation's history. They want to learn more about the histories of their own communities, national parks, forests, rivers and landscapes before European settlement. They want to know how Indians took care of the land before there were "public lands.": They are interested in learning from tribal members whose lands are now national parks, monuments, forests, byways and scenic rivers. They are interested in enjoying outdoors activities offered by tribal businesses, such as guided hiking, horseback riding, bird watching, river rafting, hunting and fishing trips. They're curious about sleeping in a tipi and hearing coyotes sing in the early morning darkness. They love the stories our elders tell. They call it the wilderness, and to us it is our home that creator provided with abundance and beauty.

When they leave our hospitality, these visitors often feel even closer to the public, park and tribal lands they have just visited, and to the coyotes. Hopefully, they will also learn that we are all part of one ecosystem and stewards of our mother, earth.

Statistics show that heritage and nature based tourism are the fastest growing sectors of the tourism industry. Heritage tourism relies on authenticity and conservation - the kind to be found in Indian communities and national park lands. Heritage and nature tourism are helping tribes to balance our need to protect tribal lands, traditions and values with our equally important need for economic growth and sustainable jobs.

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(cont.)

AIANTA proposes a formal national partnership between American Indians and the National Park Service (NPS), Bureau of Land Management (BLM), and other federal land management agencies to ensure inclusion of tribal perspectives and concerns in the management of all public lands. We are particularly interested in perpetual inclusion of unfiltered tribal perspectives at all National Parks and in all upcoming National Park Service commemorations, such as the 150th anniversary of the Civil War (2011-2015), 100th anniversary of the NPS as an agency (2016), 50th anniversary of the National Trails System (2018), 150th anniversary of completion of the trans-continental railroad (2019), and beyond. This national partnership would enable broad scale public awareness and education efforts about such things as tribal soldiers who fought on both sides of the Civil War (both sides even had Native brigadier generals) and about national park lands before they were National Parks.

Former National Park Service Director Russell Dickenson once said that he did not know "of a single major National Park or Monument today in the Western part of the United States that doesn't have some sort of Indian sacred area." A national partnership would raise public consciousness on issues such as cultural resource protection and ancestral use of parks and other public lands. It would help tribal communities participate in the economic benefits to arise from increased tourism to the national parks and historical sites during commemorations like the Civil War 150th and the NPS 100th. It can provide a framework for improved federal agency/tribal relationships and collaborations to protect and conserve the parks and other public lands. And it can enthrall Americans of all ages to get outdoors and reconnect with our shared land, water, wildlife, culture and history. A partnership between tribes, the National Park Service and other federal land management agencies can offer outdoor recreation visitors fresh activities, authenticity, new discoveries and adventures, insight, solitude.

Conservation Northwest is a non-profit organization based out of Washington State that works to protect and connect wildlife and wildplaces in the Pacific northwest. Since our inception, we have engaged on issues surrounding the management of our federal lands. Federal lands on the US side of the border in the Pacific Northwest are vital to the maintenance and recovery of wildlife in this region.

In the northwest and more specifically Washington State, our federal agencies have engaged in efforts over the past year that we believe are in line with the goals of the AGO and worth highlighting as examples nationwide. Four activities with federal agency involvement that have begun or continued in 2010 that are worth special attention include:

Discussion Question 1

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(cont.)

Federal agency involvement in the Washington Wildlife Habitat Connectivity Working Group (www.waconnected.org). This public-private partnership is bringing together NGO's, tribes, federal and state agencies, universities, and private scientists to develop analyses that identify and prioritize important areas in Washington state and surrounding habitats in British Columbia, Idaho, and Oregon to maintain and restore wildlife connectivity. The US Forest Service has had representation in this working group since the inception, and in the past year the Bureau of Land Management has joined the leadership team. Not only will the outcomes of these analyses inform land management on federal lands, but the collaborative process in producing the analyses and co-owning the results provides partnerships in addressing connectivity priorities on and off of federal lands.

In 2010, the Okanogan-Wenatchee National Forest adopted the "The Okanogan- Wenatchee National Forest Restoration Strategy: adaptive management to restore landscape resiliency to climate change". This new strategy underwent scientific peer review, and important technical and social review with the Provincial Advisory Committee to this forest. The strategy sets a new vision for the forest to focus on restoring resilient landscapes that will be measured in acres treated, not board feet generated. This strategy is a strong step forward in having forestry, aquatics, and other disciplines integrated into decision making, while using the best available science to guide management. The plan includes an adaptative management approach and process to ensure that it is revised each year to include lessons learned from its implementation to date and integration of recent scientific findings.

The Colville National Forest has been a key partner in recent years continuing into 2010 with the Northeast Washington Forestry Coalition (<http://www.newforestrycoalition.org/>). This impressive collaborative effort has united diverse voices to demonstrate the full potential of restoration forestry to enhance forest health, public safety and community economic vitality. Through coordination and communication with the Colville National Forest, this collaborative effort has successfully worked through often controversial issues to find common ground on federal forestland projects before a decision is reached.

The US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) and US Forest Service (USFS) through the Cle Elum Ranger District have been crucial partners in the successful design, monitoring, and mitigation of the I-90 Snoqualmie Pass East Project (<http://www.wsdot.wa.gov/projects/i90/snoqualmiepasseast/>) The Washington Department of Transportation (WSDOT) proposed to expand Interstate 90 from Snoqualmie Pass to Easton in Washington's Cascades mountains from 4 to 6 lanes to address safety concerns, avalanche closures, and increase capacity for growing traffic. WSDOT recognized that the highway bi-sected an area prioritized by biologists and heavily invested in by conservationists, and that the support and engagement of these partners would be critical to the project. USFWS and USFS joined the Mitigation Development Team that collaborated on the design for a series of wildlife overpasses and underpasses, and have played a key role in the success of this project that initiated construction this year.

Discussion Question 1

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(cont.)

These projects above show how federal agencies in Washington State have and can display the collaboration, ability to adapt to changing needs on the landscape, and utilization of science to guide management. We suggest that the AGO recognize examples of where federal agencies are already showing initiative in meeting the goals of the AGO to not only validate work underway, but provide examples for other geographies to learn from.

Sustaining the working farms, ranches and forests that are important for our economy and our environment. Private land owners hold 70 percent of all the land in America, and play an important role in the northwest. These areas provide wildlife habitat, are a foundation of the American economy, and are an integral part of our culture. They produce food and fiber for our citizens as well as open spaces, community forests and ecological connections across a sometimes fragmented landscape.

America has a long and successful conservation tradition and Americans still believe strongly in conservation of our natural and recreational resources.

The Nature Conservancy's vision for the America's Great Outdoors Initiative is to create and sustain a network of large areas of restored and conserved land, water and coastlines around which Americans can build productive and healthy lives. An operational America's Great Outdoors Initiative that is built on innovation and competition will provide the best return for the federal government's investment in conservation over the short and long term.

Large landscapes that can become focal points for conservation through strong private-public partnerships (Landscape Partnership Projects)

Expansive aquatic systems that are already a national focus and in some phase of restoration Including: the Great Lakes, Mississippi River, Chesapeake Bay, Puget Sound, Gulf of Mexico/Louisiana Wetlands, the Greater Everglades, California Bay Delta, and the Colorado River Basin (Large Watershed Projects)

Metropolitan/urban greenspace corridors that may also include cultural and historical features (Metropolitan Greenspace Projects)

The Conservancy proposes that within a year of establishing this program, initial projects could be up and running. Significant progress could be made within the first two years. By the 50th Anniversary of Earth Day in 2020, 25 Landscape Partnership Projects, all of the Large Watershed Projects, and 10 Metropolitan Greenspace Projects should be substantially completed.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

It is difficult to imagine our children, the extended family of this great nation, ever being anything but eternally grateful for our acting now to create a durable America's Great Outdoors Initiative to provide the means for the American people to work together to save the land, the rivers and streams, the ocean coasts, and great marshes that they will need for their health and happiness in the years long after we are all gone.

Founded in 1951, The Nature Conservancy is a global non-profit conservation organization whose mission is "to preserve the plants, animals, and natural communities that represent the diversity of life on Earth by protecting the lands and waters they need to survive." The Conservancy relies heavily on science in our decision-making and is acutely conscious of the connections between human well being and natural systems. The Conservancy has a million members and programs and projects in all 50 U.S. states and more than 30 countries. Our state programs are advised by Boards of Trustees who represent conservation, science, business and philanthropic leadership in their communities. Through these citizens and through our more than 3,000 staff located across the United States, we are rooted in the importance of place. Over the course of our history, we have directly conserved almost 24 million acres in the United States.

Because of all of our years working in the American countryside, the Conservancy believes in the wisdom of the American people to guide the conservation and management of this country's natural resources. We applaud the participation of senior Administration officials in listening sessions to gather ideas about the future of conservation. Our staff and our members have participated in almost all of these sessions, and we, too, have learned much from them that we have incorporated in these recommendations.

North America and the United States are blessed with a diversity and abundance of natural resources, natural systems and habitats that have been central to our growth and prosperity as a nation and a foundation for our way of life. Despite urbanization and the increasing use of technology, our health, welfare, economy, culture and identity still depend heavily on the quality and productivity of our land, water, oceans and coasts. While we rely on nature for our well being, no place in our country is immune from at least some human impacts. We depend on nature, and it now depends upon us for its survival.

The United States has long been a global leader in the creation of parks and in the conservation of natural resources. Beginning in the last half of the 19th century, conservation and care of our environment have been accepted by the American people as an essential role of government. In the past decade alone, voters have passed statewide and local open space ballot measures at an overall rate of 73 percent, showing their strong support for public investments in conservation.

More than three-quarters of voters believe we can continue to protect the environment while strengthening the economy.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Support for investments in conservation stems from voters' strong personal connections to the environment. More than four in five (81%) say they have visited a state or local park in the past year and a majority of voters report having visited a national park in the past year.

A striking 86% of voters support using funds from oil and gas fees to help preserve our natural areas. That support goes across party lines: 89% of Democrats, 89% of Independents, and 83% of Republicans.

More than three-quarters of the electorate (76%) express support for maintaining at least the minimum funding level originally established for the Land and Water Conservation Fund in the 1960s: \$900 million a year.

The AGO listening sessions reveal an exciting new trend in American conservation that shows great promise in addressing the many threats to our land, water and coasts. Landowners, businesses, non-profit organizations, and local, state, tribal and federal agencies are working together to take responsibility for the restoration and conservation of large areas—watersheds, whole natural systems, and whole landscapes. In place after place we have heard citizens talking not just about their backyards, but also about the Chesapeake Bay or the whole Crown of the Continent in western Montana. Increasingly, they see the connections between their well being and the health of these larger places.

The Conservancy's science confirms the value of an ecosystem-based approach to meeting the many challenges America's great outdoors face over the next 50 years. It is our view that the only effective response to the combination of threats facing America's land and water today is to use multiple tools and techniques to conserve whole watersheds and natural areas that can then provide habitat for the range of native species, productive areas for the use of natural resources and the full range of benefits to human communities. While publicly owned parks and forests are often essential to large landscape conservation, almost all large landscapes include people and the working farms, forests and ranches that are vital to our economy and to the American way of life. Successful conservation will require finding ways to achieve both public and private stewardship of America's land and water.

The Nature Conservancy's vision for America's Great Outdoors Initiative is to create and sustain a network of large areas of restored and conserved land, water and coastal ecosystems around which Americans can build productive and healthy lives. An operational America's Great Outdoors Initiative that is built on innovation and competition will provide the best return for the federal government's investment in conservation over the short and long term.

Provide access to high quality outdoor recreation for all Americans. The health and fitness of children depends upon having safe places to play; we believe that family life is enhanced by access to outdoor relaxation and adventure in places both close to home and in remote natural areas across the country.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Assist fish, wildlife and other natural resources and human communities in adapting to climate change. The conservation and forward-thinking management of large, connected landscapes will be a key factor in helping people and the natural systems on which we depend to be resilient to a changing climate. For example, the protection of large watersheds and their wetlands is essential to mitigating the impacts of flood and drought that result from changing weather patterns.

Sustain the working farms, ranches and forests so important to our economy and our environment. Private owners hold 70% of land in America; these working lands provide important wildlife habitat, are a foundation of much of the American economy, and are integral to our culture.

Protect, maintain and restore the health and biological diversity of ocean, coastal, and Great Lakes ecosystems and resources. Nearly half of the country's population lives in coastal counties and millions of visitors enjoy our nation's seashores each year. The ocean, our coasts and estuaries, and the Great lakes are critical to the social, ecological and cultural fabric of our country.

Protect and interpret the cultural resources that are part of our national heritage. In many places cultural resources are intertwined with natural resources.

Enhance the economic and environmental viability and the quality of life of metropolitan areas and reinforce the connections of urban areas and the surrounding countryside. Federal, state, and local parks, greenways, trails and natural areas in or around urban metropolitan areas are essential to economic development, buffering cities from some of the impacts of global warming and fostering the health and well being of the American people.

While the creation of parks, the conservation of land and water and restoration are important and useful at every scale, to be successful in conserving the overall health of America's land and water, the America's Great Outdoors Initiative should focus its resources and apply the most cost effective conservation strategies and tools for achieving substantial measurable progress toward meeting the goals listed above in three distinct kinds of large scale conservation projects:

Taken together, and sustained in a healthy condition over time, these areas of land and water can create a natural resource framework for America's future. The Nature Conservancy proposes that by the 50th Anniversary of Earth Day in 2020, 25 Landscape Partnership Projects, all of the Large Watershed Projects and 10 Metropolitan Greenspace Projects will be substantially completed.

Operate at a watershed, ecosystem or metropolitan area scale

Take into account the needs of people and nature

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Recognize the importance of diverse citizens participating in decisions that affect the places where they live and work whether in rural or urban areas

Achieve a new level of collaboration and cooperation among government and tribal agencies

Recognize that success requires a long term and consistent commitment of resources

Use competitive processes and pilot projects to get the best efforts up and running quickly

Employ rigorous priority setting and focus on high priority areas in the expenditure of limited resources

Build on the successes of the past and the use of existing government authorities wherever possible

Minimize new cycles of planning where plans already exist

Actively encourage young people to play an important role in creating their own future

The America's Great Outdoors Initiative should commit money, people, interagency coordination, and cooperative decision-making to priority sites. These sites should be selected through a from-the-bottomup,

competitive process that supports community coalitions that have come together around landscape scale conservation goals. (Community coalitions might include the local branches of federal agencies, state and local agencies, tribal governments, non-profit organizations, Resource Conservation Districts, business and landowner organizations and other citizens groups).

Federal agencies should support local, collaborative efforts rather than be the top-down driver of these efforts. Maintaining the delicate balance between Federal support and local and community initiative is important

to long term success. The program should be based on the use of existing authorities, but can be improved by legislative and policy changes discussed below. Federal land acquisition and designation would continue to be important tools within the framework of landscape coalitions, as would easements to prevent the fragmentation of working lands.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Landscape of national significance: Landscape and, where relevant, related coastal features, warrants federal investment given the presence of major federal protected areas or land holdings or previous investment in private conservation, threatened and endangered species, major wildlife corridors, important water resources, and conformance with existing federal and state conservation plans including State Comprehensive Wildlife Action Plans, Landscape Conservation Cooperative Plans and USFWS Endangered Species Recovery Plans.

Strong private-public partnership around a landscape vision: Local residents, multiple NGOs, state and federal agencies are actively collaborating around a landscape vision and are capable of delivering landscape scale results. Where multiple federal agencies exist in a landscape, they are actively working together (or have potential to) around shared conservation goals and objectives.

Leverage: Federal funds can be leveraged with multiple funding sources, including, but not limited to, state funds, private funds, and private landowner donations of conservation easements.

Local Support: Strong support of local community and elected officials. Community support and leadership around a conservation plan is central to the sustainability of conservation outcomes.

Feasibility: Tangible results on landscape level goals are achievable over five years.

Connectivity: The project contributes to the connection of existing protected areas, river and wetland systems, and migration corridors.

Adaptation to climate change: The conservation outcomes will enhance the resiliency of the landscape to the potential effects of climate change. The project has been identified in the planning of Landscape Conservation Cooperatives (LCCs) as important to the protection of habitat in the face of climate change.

Geographic distribution: Focal areas should be representative of America's diverse natural resources and special places.

Landscape coalitions (partnerships of government, tribal, and NGOs joining together to conserve Partnership Landscapes) selected through this process should then be eligible for the following benefits to advance their landscape plans and conservation work:

It is essential that our society provide opportunities for contact with nature and the outdoors for a new and more diverse generation of Americans. Citizens are willing and able to participate in shaping the future of the American landscape, if they come to know and enjoy parks, farmland and the recreation in the outdoors.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Urban areas depend upon the surrounding countryside not just for recreation, but for their water and food supplies. This provides the opportunity to build economic connections between cities and surrounding areas that can in turn help to finance regional conservation initiatives.

In addition, many important cultural and historic features are located near urban areas and can be incorporated into the metropolitan greenspace projects. Particularly important is the recognition and incorporation of the National Heritage Area Program in this aspect of the initiative.

The vast majority of Americans live in urban and suburban areas. And many of these areas depend on healthy rural areas to supply clean water and other environmental services. Cities and suburbs must be safe and enjoyable places to live to prevent urban areas from further spilling over into the surrounding countryside. Isolated parks, while important, cannot achieve these goals. Metropolitan scale park and greenspace systems can provide outdoor adventure close to home, protect wildlife habitat and water resources, and connect city and country in a positive way. Such systems lend themselves to a similar approach to that which we have suggested for Partnership Landscapes:

An interagency council working with the Department of the Interior as the lead agency to develop and shape the program. In this case the Department of Housing and Urban Development, the Department of Transportation and the Environmental Protection Agency should also be members of the council. (The Department of Transportation can play an important role by encouraging state agencies and Metropolitan Planning Organizations to develop and incorporate ecosystem-based regional "green print" analyses of Regional Transportation Plans. These would identify critical natural resources, agriculture and working forest lands, and recreation spaces. Federal transportation funding could be provided for regional conservation planning).

Create long term strategies to support an employment "pipeline" for the next generation of conservationists, with special emphasis on initiatives that provide sustained contact with nature from adolescence to college/graduate school, through education and paid job opportunities in natural resource management, interpretation, outreach, etc.

Conduct research to understand and remove the barriers preventing youth from underserved communities from connecting with the great outdoors—provide both fiscal and programmatic opportunities for the implementation of solutions at all levels.

Climate-informed conservation and restoration projects can also help foster more resilient human communities such as through the protection of water supplies and the restoration of wetlands to mitigate storm damage. Thus how a landscape project affects and is affected by climate change should be a criteria for project selection and project design.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Implicit in working at a landscape scale is the need for close coordination across jurisdictions and collaboration with affected stakeholders. The challenge of climate change only underscores that imperative. Landscape Conservation Cooperatives (LCCs), focused in part on climate change, can facilitate this cross-jurisdictional engagement, operate within a broader climate context, can be utilized to evaluate AGO project selection and design, and can inform the ongoing management of project areas. Establishment of USGS Regional Climate Centers to synthesize climate change impact data, and to collaborate with the network of Landscape Conservation Cooperatives, can inform landscape level strategies for managing climate change impacts.

Should adaptation funding become available through climate legislation, it can be used, in part, to support AGO projects.

Our country faces many challenges and a good deal of uncertainty as we prepare to enter the second decade of the 21st Century. Americans are struggling, as well, to find the common ground required to solve those problems. For more than 100 years, however, most Americans have agreed on the importance of conserving our country's legacy of rich and productive land, water, and coastlines. While we have made substantial progress in protecting America's environment and conserving our natural and agricultural lands, there are, today, many threats to that progress.

The America's Great Outdoors listening sessions have revealed that people across America are ready to address those threats and to renew the substance and spirit of our conservation tradition. A striking new trend that has emerged from these meetings is the great interest of agencies, organizations and people working cooperatively at the regional, watershed and landscape levels to accomplish conservation at a large scale. From western Montana to the Hudson Valley of New York, diverse groups have shown the tangible progress that can be made by this partnership approach. The Nature Conservancy believes that these successes should set the direction for American conservation in the 21st Century, that the federal government acting in new, more collaborative and flexible ways can be the catalyst for lasting conservation accomplishment.

In a time of soaring federal deficits, this renewed commitment to conservation will require increased funding. But much can be done by more effectively targeting existing resources and by making conservation and restoration spending more reliable, predictable and responsive to on-the-ground needs. The additional investment in things like full and dedicated funding for the Land and Water Conservation Fund is extremely small in relation to other Federal expenditures and in comparison to the immense permanent benefits derived from that investment.

As a society we often wonder about whether the things our government has done are wise or unwise, prudent or expedient, but there is little second guessing about whether it made sense for Theodore Roosevelt and his successors of both parties to conserve the natural areas, the rich soils, the productive coastal areas, and headwaters of the nation's life-giving rivers.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Modify agency conservation grant and other funding programs to facilitate geographic targeting, interagency coordination, and partnership with non-federal entities.

Solution: Modify agency programs and OMB budget guidance to provide for multi-year and/or "no year" funding for federal conservation programs, particularly programs involving acquisition of interests in real estate.

Problem: Mutually beneficial partnerships with non-federal entities are often thwarted by overly restrictive rules and guidelines related to cooperative agreements.

I am looking forward to the November publication of your report on the America's Great Outdoors initiative.

I hope that this summer's efforts by the Administration to solicit public input on the potential goals and focus of this initiative have been instructive. As the Administration works to develop its report, I offer the following perspectives for your consideration.

As you know, I have long championed the management and protection of key public lands including national wildlife refuges, national forest and other lands administered by the Department of the Interior. Our public lands should be the centerpiece in any implementation of America's Great Outdoors.

Thank you for your consideration of these perspectives. I look forward to the launch of this initiative in November and working with you to implement it through the federal budget process.

SUPPORTING PRESERVATION OF THE HUDSON VALLEY'S MAGNIFICENT LANDSCAPES An Excellent Opportunity for Federal Partnership

Stretching from Manhattan to the Troy Dam, the expansive and astonishingly beautiful landscapes of the Hudson River Valley are unique. Fittingly, the valley's natural splendor inspired the birth of both America's first homegrown art genre--the Hudson River School of painting--and the modern grassroots environmental movement. Its rich panoply of Revolutionary War battlefields and historic homes (including those of Franklin D. Roosevelt, the Vanderbilts and painter Frederic Church) tell the story of our nation's birth and growth. And its extraordinary geologic and ecological features serve as the great, green backyard for 18 million Americans, many inner-city residents, who live within an hour's drive of the Hudson River's shores.

Large Landscapes, Natural Splendor Threatened

While great strides have been made in preserving the Hudson Valley's unsurpassed beauty and history--federally recognized through the region's congressional designation as one of America's first National Heritage Areas--many of its iconic landscapes and prime agricultural lands remain under severe threat from poorly planned development.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Through a partnership under the America's Great Outdoors Initiative, we can preserve and restore:

A scenic and cultural landscape that is the basis of a \$4.7-billion regional tourism economy;

Farmland that supplies fresh, local produce to 80 percent of New York's population and is essential for creating a sustainable foodshed for the New York metropolitan region;

Habitats that sustain 85 percent of New York's vertebrate species, including 180 rare and imperiled species;

Critical migratory pathways in danger of being inundated by sea-level rise and other projected impacts of global climate change.

Ready to partner

The framework is in place to stem this tidal wave of development. Called Saving the Land That Matters Most, it is the most ambitious land-conservation initiative in Hudson Valley history. It seeks to preserve 65,000 acres of the most significant scenic, agricultural and ecological landscapes throughout the Hudson Valley, permanently preserving these national treasures and providing opportunities for people in future generations to connect with them.

Saving the Land That Matters Most:

Targets lands for protection using cutting-edge GIS mapping and environmental and habitat data amassed by Scenic Hudson's ecological experts;

Identifies lands meeting New York State's highest standards for scenic and ecological resources. Most are visible from existing parkland, Scenic Areas of Statewide Significance or National Historic Landmark Districts, and/or are located within state-designated Biologically Important Areas;

Is a collaborative undertaking involving 17 local, regional and national land trusts.

In addition, the state Department of Environmental Conservation has signed an agreement pledging to jointly fund preservation of 11,000 acres of commonly identified estuarine lands along the Hudson River as funds are available.

Preserving Working Farms, Connecting People to Their Food

Farmland comprises 20 percent of the Hudson Valley landscape. Its farms are the basis of the region's \$530-million agribusiness industry and contribute to its vibrant tourism economy. In addition to being the prime source of fresh produce for New York City, representing 80 percent of the vendors at its GrowNYC greenmarkets, valley farms play a critical role in safeguarding local communities' water supplies and keeping a lid on municipal taxes.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Ready to partner

Saving the Land That Matters Most includes the protection of 25,000 acres of working farmland featuring Soils of Statewide Significance or USDA Prime Farmland. Land trusts engaged in this initiative--estimated to cost \$100 million--have a proven track record for preserving multigenerational family farms through conservation easements.

Protecting & Restoring Rivers & Watersheds

Stretching nearly half the length of the Hudson River--153 miles from New York City to the Troy Dam--the Hudson River estuary is one of America's great ecosystems. The only place along the Appalachian Range's 1,500-mile length where the mountains meet the sea, it is a spectacular biological mixing zone that hosts 85 percent of the state's vertebrate species in just 12 percent of its landmass.

Ready to partner

The Hudson River Estuary Action Agenda--a science-based plan developed with the collaboration of over 500 public and private stakeholders, including government, business, scientific and NGO partners--identifies outcomes and outlines strategies to address critical issues facing the estuary, including clean water, protecting and restoring wildlife, and providing recreation and river access. Land trusts and New York State also have forged a unique alliance in mapping and agreeing on the priority of protecting critical estuarine lands to protect extant biodiversity and plan for adaptation under rising sea levels.

Connecting Our Urban Parks, Providing New Recreational Opportunities

Valley residents and visitors are reconnecting with the region's natural treasures in record numbers. This thirst for the great outdoors is best exemplified by the popularity of Walkway Over the Hudson, which transformed an 1888 railroad bridge into a thrilling state park. (The bridge's adaptive reuse was spearheaded by a grassroots group and funded by the state, NGOs, businesses and individuals.) Since opening in October 2009, it has attracted nearly 800,000 visitors, far surpassing projected attendance figures. Restaurants and shops near the Walkway in downtown Poughkeepsie have experienced a surge in business.

Ready to partner

By creating waterfront parks in communities where none exist--a priority of Saving the Land That Matters Most--Scenic Hudson and other groups are helping many communities revitalize their downtowns. In addition, by partnering with the Hudson River Valley Greenway and local governments, they are developing waterfront trails linking parks and other cultural sites. But federal resources are needed to protect key destinations, develop public awareness about them and make them accessible.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Ready to partner

The state Hudson River Estuary Program as well as organizations such as Clearwater and Scenic Hudson have long been dedicated to introducing children to the Hudson Valley's natural wonders and educating them about the need to protect these treasures. In addition to creating future stewards for the river and its shores, these programs often ignite an interest in outdoor recreation that lasts a lifetime. Federal resources and legislation will provide a mandate to connect children with the outdoors, enabling the valley's environmental educators to broaden the reach of their place-based work into underserved communities and provide new places to engage schoolchildren with nature.

Traditional diets have been shown to improve tribal members' health. "[T]here is a relationship between use of traditional Ojibwe food and the health and wellbeing of Band members." The holistic physical and mental health benefits of traditional food use include: the improvement of diet and nutrient intake; the prevention of chronic diseases (such as obesity, diabetes, cardiovascular diseases and hypertension, gallbladder disease, and dental disease) associated with the consumption of non-traditional foods; the opportunities for physical fitness and outdoor recreation associated with harvesting traditional foods; the opportunity to experience, learn, and promote cultural activities; and the "opportunity to develop personal qualities desired in Ojibwe culture such as sharing, self-respect, pride, self-confidence, patience, humility and spirituality." Harriet V. Kuhnlein, Ph.D., *Ojibwe Health and Traditional Food Use*, Centre for Nutrition and the Environment of Indigenous Peoples (1995), at 39.

The Commission has undertaken a number of initiatives to reconnect young people to the outdoors, with an emphasis on educating youth about treaty rights exercise. For example, the Commission has organized numerous workshops that pair tribal youth and elders in traditional activities. Tribal youth have participated in workshops on hunter safety, spring spear fishing, ice spear fishing, fish decoy making, sugar bush (making maple syrup, sugar, and candy), wild rice gathering and processing, snowshoeing (including making snowshoes), and many other subjects.

The Commission has also developed and instructed outdoor skill workshops as part of the Intercultural Leadership Initiative, a program whose funding was recently eliminated despite the fact that it won a Harvard "Honoring Nations" award in 2008. These winter-based day camps bring together Indian and non-Indian fourth through eighth grade students before they are integrated in high school. Students from different cultural backgrounds participate in workshops such as snow-shoe making, fire-making and winter shelter building, exposing them to outdoor activities while at the same time encouraging exploration of issues related to self-image, conflict resolution, race, cultural diversity, and tolerance through experiential learning.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

GLIFWC has found that to effectively reconnect tribal youth to the outdoors, it is essential that any strategy include: 1) inter-generational teaching/sharing of traditional skills, allowing tribal members who possess traditional knowledge about harvesting activities to mentor tribal youth and build long-term relationships; 2) promotion and support for family structures by encouraging the participation of families, so that skills learned from elders and GLIFWC staff are reaffirmed and continued at home; 3) providing experiences for tribal youth at a variety of age levels beginning around age 10; and 4) providing funding for adequate supplies, materials, insurance and transportation. GLIFWC has invested in an inventory of equipment to have on hand to provide outdoor workshops.

Missouri is blessed with many opportunities to connect with the outdoors, but more needs to be done to make those opportunities accessible. We could do more to provide connections with our major river systems. The Columbia Bottoms Conservation Area is a good example of effort to provide access to the great confluence of the MO and MS rivers. But at the same time, that Conservation Area is under threat of a major casino development virtually next door and within the floodplain. More thorough analysis by FEMA and the Army Corps of Engineers of all “external” costs of such floodplain developments could help local and state governments to understand the true costs of such developments to taxpayers and society.

The topic of reconnecting should also include restoration. We cannot reconnect to what is no longer present. In Missouri many of our grassland, savannah and prairie habitats have been lost. Efforts to restore those habitats on public and private land should be supported.

Missouri has many public land ownership levels -- federal, state, county, municipal. All provide levels of access and types of high-quality outdoor experiences.

Reconnecting children with the outdoors is another important task. Sierra Club members in the Springfield MO area initiated a guidebook for families to enjoy the outdoors in that region of the state and worked with teachers to develop it and with local schools to distribute it. Efforts like this provide some guidance for getting kids started young to enjoy the outdoors. The Sierra Club in Missouri also has an Inner City Outings group which organizes and conducts outings for children who would otherwise be unlikely to enjoy a “true” outdoor experience, including overnight camping.

Local Sierra Club groups sponsor hikes for all ages, providing training for the hike leaders, insurance for all sponsored hikes, and publicity about them on our website and in our newsletters. Finally, the Sierra Club sponsors service trips throughout the country. Besides testing water quality in streams, we sponsor and fund outings to build and repair trails and other infrastructure in national, state and local parks, working with the approval of park staff.

ASA is the sportfishing industry’s trade association, committed to looking out for the interests of the entire sportfishing community. We seek to promote the enduring economic and conservation values of sportfishing in America. ASA represents the interests of America’s 60 million anglers, who generate over \$45 billion every year in retail sales with a \$125 billion annual impact on the nation’s economy, creating employment for over one million people.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

While our ideas below do not focus on economic themes, we took note of the emphasis the President gave to the economic benefits that can come from the AGO initiative. President Obama said back in April, that this initiative is being launched not only because it is the "right thing to do" in a broad sense given the importance of our outdoor resources but also "because it's the right thing to do for our economy. It's how we're going to spur job creation in the tourism industry and the recreation industry. It's how we'll create jobs preserving and maintaining our forests, our rivers, our great outdoors." We agree wholeheartedly that the multi-billion dollar benefits that come with a healthy outdoor industry must be kept in mind as this initiative goes forward and we are happy to provide important economic information pertaining to the sportfishing sector in particular.

Our approach to conservation and management of our natural resources is focused on the resources on which the public depends for high quality, easily accessible recreational fishing opportunities. Over the last 30 years, significant strides have been taken to improve the health of America's aquatic resources, including water quality and fish habitat. We are faced with many fisheries resources challenges but by and large, state and federal agencies, backed by important pieces of legislation including the Clean Water Act and the Magnuson-Stevens Act, have succeeded in reversing a declining trend in many of our nation's rivers, streams, lakes and coastal areas.

Much of this success can be attributed to the tremendous infusion of funding for federal and state water and fisheries management in the form of excise taxes on fishing and boating related purchases and fishing license sales. Since 1950, recreational anglers and boaters have, through a unique user tax on motorboat fuel, fishing tackle, and other sportfishing equipment, generated more than \$5.7 billion in funding through the Sport Fish Restoration and Boating Trust Fund for fishery conservation and enhancement, habitat restoration, clean water programs and boating safety programs. In addition, fishing license sales generate nearly \$560 million in annual revenues for state conservation and education programs.

American sportsmen have played an important role in the stewardship of our natural resources for over 100 years. This, in conjunction with the financial reality of recreational fishing, makes it increasingly important to ASA's conservation goals that the sportsmen's community receives acknowledgement and assurance of its formal and defined roles in the management of fisheries resources. American anglers have demonstrated time and again that they are ready, willing and able to modify how, when and where they fish in the interest of maintaining healthy fisheries. Whether it is through changes in regulations by the government or through voluntary changes in behavior, such as using more fish-friendly equipment, recreational anglers put the resource first. The recreational fishing industry recognizes the need for abundant and sustainable fish populations first and foremost. However, actions taken by the federal government, in particular, to conserve and sustain fishery resources must be met with parallel actions that ensure easier access to those fisheries for the public, a point we'll touch on further below.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

What has worked in the past to achieve timely and regular input from the recreational fishing community is to establish formal and well defined input opportunities. The country's recreational anglers are primarily casual, occasional users of the resource. To obtain their perspective, one must bring this constituency into very specific, structured stakeholder-input systems.

To see what works when it comes to this goal and its challenge, one need look no further than the management of our public lands. For over 100 years, we have managed our public land, for the most part, in a manner that balances public use with private commercial uses such as grazing and energy development. Our marine fishery resources should be managed more like our public land resources.

The National Fish Habitat Action Plan (NFHAP) is most comprehensive effort ever attempted to conserve, restore and enhance fish habitats throughout the United States. The goal NFHAP is to foster partnerships among conservation groups to achieve coordination of on-the-ground efforts for aquatic systems across the country. Combining the collective energy of state and federal agencies with local partners offers the best chance of success.

In monitoring the input the administration has received thus far through AGO, it is clear that this goal has emerged with a strong consensus of support. Without belaboring the benefits we have already seen from an LWCF funding that has received only a fraction of the funding it was meant to receive and the fact that full funding would dramatically benefit outdoor recreation throughout the country, we would simply state here that ASA and the recreational fishing community strongly support full funding of LWCF.

RBFF has established the "Take Me Fishing" Program which to date has given our community the most traction when it comes to reversing downward trends in fishing participation. ASA urges federal agencies to partner with and support RBFF's "Take Me Fishing" Program to increase participation in recreational fishing and boating on our nation's public lands and waters.

ASA very much appreciates the commitment the Obama administration has made to better conservation and management of America's natural resources and to getting more Americans out in the wonderful open spaces of this country. Fishing is one of the best ways to enjoy the outdoors in America and there is compelling data to show that the activity serves as a gateway experience for bringing young people into the outdoors and making them outdoorsmen and women for the rest of their lives. We look forward to working the administration to make important changes to federal natural resource management that will ensure a strong future for fishing in this country and get more people out to interact with natural places through sporting activities that have been at the heart of this country's cultural identity from its very inception.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

In 2008 a new funding initiative, championed by Congressman Norm Dicks, emerged from the Interior Appropriations bill – the Legacy Roads and Trails Remediation Initiative. Funding was provided to protect American rivers, streams, endangered species, and community water systems by repairing the environmental damage caused by the vast legacy of Forest Service roads. The initiative specifically directs the funding "for urgently needed road decommissioning, road and trail repair and maintenance and associated activities, and removal of fish passage barriers, especially in areas where Forest Service roads may be contributing to water quality problems in streams and water bodies which support threatened, endangered or sensitive species or community water sources and for urgently needed road repairs required due to recent storm events." Legacy Roads and Trails (LRT) funding has been used to maintain needed roads; repair culverts, trails and bridges; and reclaim unneeded roads to meet these watershed protection and restoration objectives.

In the first three years of this program \$180 million has been dedicated to national forest watershed restoration. The first two years (\$90 million) of the program resulted in a host of specific accomplishments including:

- 1362 miles of road improved
- 3395 miles of road maintained
- 325 aquatic organism passages repaired
- 1460 miles of road decommissioned
- 38 bridges replaced or repaired
- 1061 miles of trails maintained or improved

National Parks in and around Urban Areas - Especially in the "Shrinking Cities" of the Rust Belt. Create more National Parks in and around urban cores. An excellent example is the Golden Gate National Recreation Area around San Francisco which offers exceptional and accessible outdoor recreational opportunities to many urban dwellers. It has also helped to prevent urban sprawl, and attracted national and international companies that understand that quality of life in and around a city is important to attracting high quality employees, especially in a knowledge economy. Applying this proven strategy to the shrinking cities of the struggling rust belt states could be pivotal to their long term economic recovery. For example there is lots of coastal and riverside land around the Great Lakes has been abandoned due to industry shut downs and foreclosures. With the help of federal dollars and local conservation initiatives, these lands could be restored to become some of tomorrow's proudest new National Parks/Recreation Areas/Monuments. Allow the struggling economy and abandonment in these states to be an opportunity for large scale outdoor urban recreation and habitat conservation corridors. For this idea there is no better time to act than now.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Explore "recreation easements" for private landowners to offer access.. On August 25, a homegrown listening session took place in Lander, WY, and was attended by over 100 people. Hosted by the National Outdoor Leadership School, Central Wyoming College, Teton Science Schools, Wyoming State Parks and Historic Sites & Trails, and TU, the productive conversation produced four main themes, and several presidential messages. A unique presidential message that surface during the discussion encouraged the exploration of a "recreation easement" concept to create financial/tax incentives for private landowners to offer access. It is already popular for ranching families to consider conservation easements, ensuring that their land will continue to be ranched in the years to come.

Thanks so much for all the conversation on this point. I am intentionally avoiding a discussion of the technicalities of what liability issues should be surmounted, how a recreation easement should be written into law, etc. I can't take credit for this "recreation easement" idea. It was a unique point, generated in the homegrown listening session that NOLS co-sponsored. We felt it deserved inclusion in this ideas space, as did all the themes and presidential messages that came out of our session. Access to private lands, or across private lands to public lands, has been a significant issue in Wyoming for many years. Your access to a favored recreation destination often depends on your personal relationship with a landowner who owns the private land between you and that destination. It is appropriate to consider many of these public lands with know public access as de-facto private lands. Conservation easements are gaining in popularity in our state, as traditional ranching families, who anticipate selling the family ranch, seek solutions to preserve the unique and diverse nature of their home place. The success of conservation easements spurred a discussion of recreation easements, where access rights could actually be sold, and maintained by a separate entity. This is one of many thoughts regarding access that came up in our America's Great Outdoors - Central Wyoming Forum.

My answer or idea is the wrong answer.. Our national parks, refuges, national forests, and public lands represent the best of America. They are home to our most treasured and historic places, and are vivid representations of American democracy and values. Protecting our public lands - from poorly planned development, inappropriate oil and gas and mining activity, pollution, and the impacts of climate change should be the number one conservation priority of the Obama Administration. With limited federal spending available, the Administration should be examining how decades old federal programs can be retooled to focus on protecting the key landscapes on our federal lands and to reestablish policies that prioritize the long term future of our wildlife, clean water and other natural resources.

Fully fund Land and Water Conservaton Fund (LWCF). Land and Water Conservation Funding (LWCF) helps states and communities make parks, trails and environmental education programs available. Friends of Baxter State Park in Maine has demonstrated the importance of such outreach programs and materials, for example our popular "Know Before You Go" brochure for first time visitors to Baxter State Park - Katahdin available at Maine Visitor Ctrs, L.L. Bean, etc. Demand is high. In two years we have gone through two printings of 5,000 each, and are working on an updated 2nd edition for 2011.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Promoting a Conservation Ethic. Promoting a conservation ethic fosters action to preserve, support and enhance the wilderness character of special areas such as Baxter State Park, Maine's premier wilderness. The Friends of Baxter State Park, an organization that works to preserve, support, and enhance the wilderness character of the Park, has demonstrated the importance of promotion of the conservation ethic with its successful Maine Youth Wilderness Leadership Program. This program provides ten highly motivated high school students from ten different high schools selected in a competitive process to spend eight days immersed in a wilderness experience. Participants gain a deep appreciation of the outdoors, and wilderness in particular, through hiking, camping, photography, art, storytelling, writing, and history.

Wilderness recreation prevents heart disease and stroke by increasing the heart rate for a sustained period of time. Wilderness provides cheap, clean drinking water that can be bottled and sold. Wilderness provides habitat for trees and shrubs that clean the air providing health benefits that lower health care costs for all nearby communities. Wilderness whitewater provides jobs for river guides. Wilderness rivers provide fishing opportunities for a robust sport fishing industry. On and on... And the best things about wilderness areas: they cost the taxpayer nothing and they provide all their benefits to all future generations, forever.

_____ said "more pressing issues for me -- acid and toxic rainfall, climate change" It's all related, interwoven. The tic tac toe is the acid rain is the climate change. You can't fix one without fixing the other.

_____ said "the contrails are really beneficial in helping to reduce global warming and climate change." So _____, I take it that you would support enhancing jet contrails with chemicals, if that were possible, being as that would be a scientific fix for global warming and you believe in scientific fixes (as stated in your many other posts).

Jet contrails alter the weather on public lands. Where's the EIS?. From Wikipedia: "Vapour trails or contrails, by affecting the Earth's radiation balance, act as a radiative forcing. Studies have found that vapour trails or contrails trap outgoing longwave radiation emitted by the Earth and atmosphere (positive radiative forcing) at a greater rate than they reflect incoming solar radiation (negative radiative forcing). Therefore, the overall net effect of contrails is positive, i.e. a warming.[4] However, the effect varies daily and annually, and overall the magnitude of the forcing is not well known: globally (for 1992 air traffic conditions), values range from 3.5 mW/m² to 17 mW/m². Other studies have determined that night flights are mostly responsible for the warming effect: while accounting for only 25% of daily air traffic, they contribute 60 to 80% of contrail radiative forcing. Similarly, winter flights account for only 22% of annual air traffic, but contribute half of the annual mean radiative forcing.[5]" Contrails have a lasting effect on public lands. I know you folks have said over and over that you want to be able to go where you want when you want however you want to, but jets are having a large effect on wilderness and national parks and those affects are not necessarily readily apparent. Land management agencies should each do environmental studies and documents so we can get this topic properly dealt with.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

_____ said, "if they are not sprayed how are they dispersed with the jet fuel?" They are gasoline additives to improve performance and lower the risk of explosion. These additives and the soot from burning fossil fuel make the nuclei that water vapor clings to in contrail formation. Eventually, these particulates fall to Earth via Newton's law of gravity. Pretty hard for you to understand, I see.

It's always OHVs who post this kind of "idea". This has been posted before. 95 percent of the USA is open to OHVs, especially if you have some land owner permission. Intolerance, by my definition, is someone who wants the last 5 percent to be for their use when there are perfectly good reasons why that 5 percent should not allow their use.

I am proposing to continue with the management strategy that is being done right now that allows rangers to close roads of little importance without going through an EIS process as suggested in a previous "idea" by _____.

_____ said, "these machines take away any sense of reward you get for working hard to get somewhere--everything, whether a sweet viewpoint, or an archeological site, is just another place to pass by on a machine." I think OHV's take away that sense of reward for hard work from their riders. Their ride into a place reduces the value of their own experience in getting there. It's something I don't think machine riders have a handle on. But their experience is a whole lot better than that of the guy who's watching it all on TV.

People who live close to public land have exactly the same ownership of that land as people who live across the country. Do people in Washington DC own the Whitehouse, or does it belong to all Americans?

I worked on a fire crew many years ago. Every time our crew passed the entrance to the national forest, someone would always misquote the sign saying "Land of Many Abuses". That is widespread public knowledge from people who know.

_____ said "let our children experience it like we did when we were young" I agree, let our children experience it like we did when we were young, and that means on foot and silent, like countless generations before us.

I'm always for more recreation funding, as long as it gets paid for by user fees. National forests don't cut as much timber anymore, so entrance, automated pay stations should be installed if people want high end services like visitor centers and trash pickup and signs.

Mining needs to happen at the dump, not in the federal forest. Recycle. When every bit of waste is reused, then we can talk about compromise.

"Conservationists already complain that current federally declared wilderness areas are underfunded and therefore are not being properly maintained" Please show me some proof. Wilderness costs taxpayers almost nothing and is the most cost effective way to "manage" marginal land.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

National Parks need to be fully funded, the wild life and nature need to be preserved. We need to keep these things in our future for the next generations and to keep the earth healthy by preserving nature and help to make it better and grow. Groups in communities can help bring awareness to everyone in their community and help people to act now and get groups into schools more and show kids, young and teenagers, that not only National Parks need to be preserved, but the rest of nature and wild life as well.

The places within National Parks are protected for a reason- they are preserving our culture, history and ecology for the future. We've realized that these places are special and significant and without them around our world wouldn't be quite the same. We come to National Parks to gaze in awe at the natural beauty around us, to hike and backpack to amazing places, to spend time with family and friends, to get away from "the city" or "the office", and many, many other reasons. National Parks provide opportunities to see "nature as the classroom." As an environmental educator starting my first year teaching students and their parents and teachers about Yosemite National Park, I hope it will make a difference in their lives to have visited and learned more about this special place. The more opportunity someone has to connect with a place, the more they might feel ownership toward it and want to protect it for future generations- just as others have done in National Parks before us.

Eminent domain is often an effective method to preserve lands and to gain access to landlocked public lands. Often private landowners who control access to public lands charge a fee for the public to use the public lands, or only allow their friends to use them. Eminent domain to gain access to a public tract of land is a perfectly fair use of the power.

The land belongs to everyone, so everyone has an equal right to say how the land should be preserved. Why should wilderness boundaries stop at County lines, when land on both sides of the line should be preserved? Wilderness designation campaigns can originate from anywhere. That's our right as Americans.

It is disappointing to read the comments from ill informed and sometimes just ignorant people. Living in the Sierra Nevada for 20 years of my adult life and participating in all forms of outdoor activities including OHV's, hiking, fishing, photography has brought me a understanding that there is something for everyone. Those that see it one way or another have never taken the time to visit the areas they are so desperately trying to protect. Many lives depend on these areas and being open for all reasons. Hiking, Hunting, Fishing Photography and yes OHV's. This entire time I have yet to see any one of these segments of people try to willingly destroy the land they use. Just because you call yourself an environmentalist does not mean you live that life. I have seen hikers walk away from campsites (hike in/hike out) and burn thousands of acres of land. That was my livelihood as a young man. Putting out forest fires. So much for those trying to protect the land. The earth heals itself. I have seen meadows that have been trampled by OHV's Sheep and cows come back fuller the next season. Dont be so sure in your belief that that one side is worse then another. Keep all the land open and MANAGE IT. Thus the USDA has a job to do.

If the corridor keeps existing trails open, without the loss of any OHV trails, then this is an idea I could promote

Discussion Question 1

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(cont.)

What Works in Tribal Youth Programs. For the Great Lakes Indian Fish and Wildlife Commission's (Commission's) eleven member tribes, located in east-central Minnesota, northern Wisconsin, and the Upper Peninsula of Michigan (for more information on the Commission, see www.glifwc.org), connecting to the outdoors provides a vital connection to culture. The exercise of the Commission's member tribes' treaty-reserved, off-reservation hunting, fishing and gathering rights depends on an abundance of healthy ecosystems that support natural resources that the tribes depend upon for cultural, subsistence, economic, and medicinal purposes. Federal courts have held that these rights cannot be exercised on most private lands, making the quality and accessibility of public land extremely important. Traditional diets have been shown to improve tribal members' health. "[T]here is a relationship between use of traditional Ojibwe food and the health and wellbeing of Band members." The holistic physical and mental health benefits of traditional food use include: the improvement of diet and nutrient intake; the prevention of chronic diseases (such as obesity, diabetes, cardiovascular diseases and hypertension, gallbladder disease, and dental disease) associated with the consumption of non-traditional foods; the opportunities for physical fitness and outdoor recreation associated with harvesting traditional foods; the opportunity to experience, learn, and promote cultural activities; and the "opportunity to develop personal qualities desired in Ojibwe culture such as sharing, self-respect, pride, self-confidence, patience, humility and spirituality." Harriet V. Kuhnlein, Ph.D., Ojibwe Health and Traditional Food Use, Centre for Nutrition and the Environment of Indigenous Peoples (1995), at 39. Staff of the Commission offer the following in response to the topic What Works: Thoughts and ideas on effective strategies for conservation, recreation and reconnecting people to the outdoors. The Commission has undertaken a number of initiatives to reconnect young people to the outdoors, with an emphasis on educating youth about treaty rights exercise. For example, the Commission has organized numerous workshops that pair tribal youth and elders in traditional activities. Tribal youth have participated in workshops on hunter safety, spring spear fishing, ice spear fishing, fish decoy making, sugar bush (making maple syrup, sugar, and candy), wild rice gathering and processing, snowshoeing (including making snowshoes), and many other subjects. The Commission has also developed and instructed outdoor skill workshops as part of the Intercultural Leadership Initiative, a program whose funding was recently eliminated despite the fact that it won a Harvard "Honoring Nations" award in 2008. These winter-based day camps bring together Indian and non-Indian fourth through eighth grade students before they are integrated in high school. Students from different cultural backgrounds participate in workshops such as snow-shoe making, fire-making and winter shelter building, exposing them to outdoor activities while at the same time encouraging exploration of issues related to self-image, conflict resolution, race, cultural diversity, and tolerance through experiential learning. GLIFWC has found that to effectively reconnect tribal youth to the outdoors, it is essential that any strategy include: 1) inter-generational teaching/sharing of traditional skills, allowing tribal members who possess traditional knowledge about harvesting activities to mentor tribal youth and build long-term relationships; 2) promotion and support for family structures by encouraging the participation of families, so that skills learned from elders and GLIFWC staff are reaffirmed and continued at home; 3) providing experiences for tribal youth at a variety of age levels beginning around age 10; and 4) providing funding for adequate supplies, materials, insurance and transportation.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

GLIFWC has invested in an inventory of equipment to have on hand to provide outdoor workshops.

Youth Outdoor Challenges for Tribes. For the Great Lakes Indian Fish and Wildlife Commission's (Commission's) eleven member tribes, located in east-central Minnesota, northern Wisconsin, and the Upper Peninsula of Michigan (for more information on the Commission, see www.glifwc.org), connecting to the outdoors provides a vital connection to culture. The exercise of the Commission's member tribes' treaty-reserved, off-reservation hunting, fishing and gathering rights depends on an abundance of healthy ecosystems that support natural resources that the tribes depend upon for cultural, subsistence, economic, and medicinal purposes. Federal courts have held that these rights cannot be exercised on most private lands, making the quality and accessibility of public land extremely important. Traditional diets have been shown to improve tribal members' health. "[T]here is a relationship between use of traditional Ojibwe food and the health and wellbeing of Band members." The holistic physical and mental health benefits of traditional food use include: the improvement of diet and nutrient intake; the prevention of chronic diseases (such as obesity, diabetes, cardiovascular diseases and hypertension, gallbladder disease, and dental disease) associated with the consumption of non-traditional foods; the opportunities for physical fitness and outdoor recreation associated with harvesting traditional foods; the opportunity to experience, learn, and promote cultural activities; and the "opportunity to develop personal qualities desired in Ojibwe culture such as sharing, self-respect, pride, self-confidence, patience, humility and spirituality." Harriet V. Kuhnlein, Ph.D., *Ojibwe Health and Traditional Food Use*, Centre for Nutrition and the Environment of Indigenous Peoples (1995), at 39. Staff of the Commission offer the following with respect to Challenges: What obstacles exist to achieving your goals for conservation, recreation, or reconnecting people to the outdoors? A number of challenges face tribes in reconnecting members, particularly youth, to the outdoors. Some of these challenges are shared by Americans of any race - the increased role of technology in our lives and the lure of cell phones, Facebook, chat rooms, video games, cable TV, and DVD movies, etc. Other challenges affect tribes disproportionately - 50% of American Indian children live in single-parent families. These parents often find themselves lacking either the skills, knowledge, financial resources, or time to participate in outdoor activities with their children. In addition, federal government policies of the 1940's, '50's and '60's relocated tribal members to urban areas. As a result, when tribal members return home to their reservations, they often do not have the outdoor skills developed by participating in traditional Ojibwe hunting, fishing, and gathering activities.

Discussion Question 1

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(cont.)

Some level of restriction is needed to maintain an area's status of wilderness. There is not much reason to expose future generations to this if it is not truly wilderness. There is no way to sincerely connect with the "great outdoors" if you are surrounded by people on a meticulously maintained trail. What is the point in which these areas become tourist attractions rather than wilderness, as they were intended? In saying this, I do not mean to dismiss this idea altogether. Future generations do need to be exposed to wilderness, but not necessarily by physically going there. Through the education of wilderness and what it really is, the desire to conserve it can still be achieved. People typically fall into two categories when faced with the issue of wilderness conservation; people who need to see it and connect with it in order to better understand what they are conserving, and people who are satisfied with the knowledge that wilderness exists and still advocate its conservation. People in these future generations who want to personally see these areas and connect with them on a deeper level will go to see them, but they will have a better understanding of what they are viewing and how their presence impacts it. For some people, hearing about it is enough. Knowing that wilderness exists somewhere and is not being intruded by humans is reason enough to preserve it. Both groups, if first educated about the meaning of wilderness, would have a better appreciation for it and have a stronger desire to see it preserved in its natural state. They would have an understanding that the restrictions on access to these lands is not put in place to deprive them of being able to see wilderness, but rather to preserve it and protect it from man's giant footprint. Taking children to designated wilderness areas will not help strengthen their desire to preserve wilderness unless they know the significance of wilderness. The restriction of access to designated wilderness areas only emphasizes the importance of keeping this land in its natural state.

As a long time environmental educator and classroom teacher, I believe immersion is the key to critical thinking and knowledge. How can we encourage ecological literacy in the absence of ecological exploration, inquiry and discovery? We need our parks as classrooms. In the spirit of the adage, "Our children will inherit Earth as we leave it for them," I think we need to make said Earth and it's wild places available to children so they may learn about it intimately and take future ownership for the decisions they will make that influence it. We need to keep making our parks our most relevant classrooms!

To quote a hero of yours, "YOU LIE!!" Your assertions and pseudo-facts are pale falsehoods that have clearly never seen the light of truth. While a large percentage of lands in the Western US are indeed public lands (even up to the 80% you claim, in a few particularly waterless states), they are not 'open space'. They are dominated by roads, agriculture, mining, oil and gas drilling, logging, ski areas, and general human development. Most of the open space in the US is west of the Mississippi, perhaps even the 80% of it. But it only constitutes about 5% of the whole landmass of our country. Hardly a substantial amount. Ask the animals: Here in Colorado, elk and deer populations and reproductive rates are down on the order of 50%-90% over the last fifty years, due to habitat loss and the increasing pressures of motorized recreation. These are verifiable facts that come from the Division of Wildlife. You did make me laugh though, so thanks for your "idea" -- keep 'em coming. As a grumpy conservationist who sees the truth of what's happening on our Western public lands every week, I need to laugh more often.

Discussion Question 1

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(cont.)

Restore grasslands and prairies. The Great Plains states are greatly lacking in public lands and even state conservation lands. Much more can be done to restore tallgrass prairies, and the wildlife that inhabit them. These lands can be bought up in the same way that National Forest and Grasslands were, from willing sellers in overgrazed, mismanaged areas. These lands can be mostly in the form of National Wildlife Refuges to appeal to hunters and birders, but more National Parks are needed in these states. Iowa for example has one of the lowest percentages of public lands. Many of these states end up as drive-thru states on the way to Colorado. More opportunities for camping, horseback riding, birding and witnessing large herds of bison or elk would help make these states destinations instead of drive-thrus. It would help diversify local economies and restore critically endangered ecosystems and wildlife.

As a youth cycling coach for the past 8 years, I can attest that many a youngster that I have worked with has grown to appreciate the outdoors as a result of their ability to legally ride their bikes in nearby parks. As such, I believe more multi-use trails should be built in order to provide more opportunities to get kids outside! By reconnecting with the outdoors, we have a chance of creating future environmental leaders.

I've been an avid hunter since I was a boy and I have to say I'd truly love to have a beautiful wolf pelt to tack to my wall. They are magnificent animals and deserve to be hunted. I'd pay a lot to get one.

This is exactly right! I grew up riding and working on dirt bikes and this definitely inspired my curiosity and love of complex mechanical systems. I went on to get BS and Masters degrees in Mechanical Engineering and I now manage an engineering research group at a Fortune 500 company. I owe all of this to my exposure to dirt bikes in my youth. I still ride dirt bikes, and I hope that future generations of kids have the opportunity to own and ride dirt bikes and that it inspires them to pursue a career in engineering, as it did me. We must keep some riding areas open and pursue sensible legislation that allows kids to experience this family oriented sport. As ____ said, we certainly need more talented engineers in the US!

The National Wildlife Refuge System is the only system of its kind to put wildlife first and foremost. No other system has the welfare of our nations wildlife as its mission. It is time that the NWRS gets fully funded and recognized as such. Wildlife has always been an important part of this countries significance. Perhaps the other people who took of their time to comment are right. It is time for the NWRS to become its own agency separate from the USFws. Both the NWRS and the USFWS would benefit from such a move. The NWRS contains more acres than the NPS but receives less per acre to manage - this makes no sense other than the NPS serves people and the NWRS serves the benefit of wildlife.

I can see what you're getting at. Sort of. I'm all for buying local, or at least USA, but in many parts of the country, particularly in the west, our national forests are federally funded and controlled. Many millions of acres. The land is managed more or less and that's psprt of what this voting is all about.

Discussion Question 1

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(cont.)

roads for wildlife. We need more funding wildlife crossings on our highways where there is a high incident ratio. This should be included in any new road building. It will save alot of people and animals lives. If you've had a loved one die cause of this you'd agree!

This is a wonderful program and has worked well for Washington state. The Washington Watershed Restoration Initiative was formed four years ago and now has over 15 environmental, recreation and Native American partners, as well as Washington Departments of Ecology and Fish and Wildlife. Money that Congress has contributed gets shared throughout national forests in this country, although the push for this program initiated in Washington is spreading positive energy in many other states. It deserves enthusiastic support.

14)(16 Sep 2010) I think God gave us feet for a reason. If you want to see all that remote territory hike it! I believe you are not only diturbing the wild life but other human life as well with ORV's. Your rights only go as far as not interfere with other's rights! My intent is not to trash you Carol, but only a recognition of your ignorance. Do you not recognize that not everyone has the ability to hike these areas. You are right, 'your rights only go as far as not interfere with other's rights!' Your view suggests that people who are unable to hike them do not exist or are not as important as you and those that share in your ignorance. State and Federal lands are there for ALL of us to enjoy regardless of our ability to hike or not. I am a Utah native and I can personally attest that many of the negative comments posted here are absolute lies. I honestly cannot remember any area that has been trashed by an OHV. I am not ignorant enough to say it doesn't happen as I'm sure it does. However, I take every opportunity to visit all parts of Utah and it's surrounding States and have not seen this. Additionally, there are few new trails being produced that I've witnessed. Of those I have seen, the Forest Service seems to manage efficiently by posting as closed or other means. To accompany this, I feel that the OHV training our youth get has been very effective for kids and parents alike. As one of those parents, I now go out of my way to protect our environment and would be the first to turn someone in for making new trails, littering, etc. By my example, my children have learned to pay attention to what others are doing and would do the same. I love the opportunities we all have to enjoy the varied environments of the Western States. Thanks to roads and trail systems that have been around for decades, I've seen and enjoyed scenery that I never could have otherwise. While I believe that some trails that duplicate another trail to the same destination should selectively be closed, I feel the continued efforts to close off large tracts of land to those who choose to access them by OHV are absolutely unacceptable, thoughtless, and self-serving.

All the OHV (dirt bike in my world) users I know respect the land and other users, including hikers (I like to hike and mountain bike too). If a rut and a puddle is destruction then your definition is silly? A rut and puddle is a "drop in the ocean" of our world. I'm sorry, but your argument is nonsense and just not based on common sense. Proper trail building and maintenance techniques actually prevent erosion and protect the landscape. In addition, nature is not as delicate as you think. It can handle a few ruts and puddles. But, forest fires is another matter. Talk about destruction. However, eco-nuts prevent harvesting the good wood after a fire to let "nature take it course" - meaning "let the bugs have the good wood." This too is nonsense.

Discussion Question 1

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(cont.)

Honestly, we have enough wildness in the West.

Trout Unlimited is pushing it's own agenda; one that I think is short-sighted and wrong. If we have no access to hunt and fish from (both of which I also take part in) we have no ability to hunt or fish. If I have to hike 10 miles into fish a spot I used to be able to drive to, I will no longer be fishing that spot. Hunters and fishermen spend money, but so do dirt bikers and ATV'ers. I am not advocating creating more roads, I am just saying leave the ones we got open. There are plenty of roadless areas already in this state. PLENTY. IF you need help finding 'em, let me know. As to cost to maintain them - the hundred or so miles of roads around my house have never been maintained, and have cost no money to the FS since the miners put 'em in 120 years ago. Crazy thing is the fish are still alive and the deer still frequent this area. The FS wants to waste money maintaining roads, that's all them... I say leave 'em as is.

One size does not fit all; nor does one goal. Closing roads in the UT desert will do little to improve water quality and fish habitat in the area (it may help those little pothole bugs, though...). I support mitigation efforts as opposed to road closures. Here in the West, I support only closing roads only when a known environmental degradation is taking place, and mitigation efforts can or will not work. Mitigation efforts can be accomplished by volunteer groups, as has been shown in numerous ranger districts across the West. Enough roads have already been closed; we need access as well as wilderness. I question how much impact roads have on wildlife and how far that impact is felt. The above "idea" references a 1 mi/mi² "threshold" for disturbance. At what level is this disturbance? Is it very, very small? Where was this study conducted? Does it effect all geographic areas the same, or are some more heavily impacted? Does the Forest Service even know the answers to these questions? I feel that this is yet another effort to close roads under some feel good disguise... I mean how can you say no to clean water and healthy fish (we already have both in 98% of our forest land in the west). I demote this idea; you can't close all the roads...

Every road and trail has economic benefit in some way, so that wouldn't be too bad I guess. Economic benefits: - Roads and trails attract tourists who want to spend money riding those roads and trails - Roads and trails offer access for timber removal - Roads and trails offer access for mineral exploration (including for minerals used in wind or solar projects) - Roads and trails offer access for fighting of wildland fires If economic benefit vs. environmental degradation were the deciding factor, almost no road in the US would be closed.

Well, you are wrong. The parking area itself at the end is a bit narrow, and will fit about 12 vehicles. It's the two campgrounds prior to that (where there is ample room to turn around horse trailers, and then park them on the road to the trailhead), the giant road map at the trailhead, the "host" shack with more maps, and the frequent use of signs and fencing past that point that I also take offense to. Google map it, you are wrong (I have only been up to this area, oh, 10 times maybe more... used to be real nice, 'bout 30 minutes from my house, great fishing on the creek) Another example: Sourdough Trailhead, Rainbow Lakes, Hesse, 4th of July, all of Moab, most of the area around Gunnison, most of the area N of St. Vrain....

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Allow snow machines to access Wilderness in winter. As the Federal Government becomes more involved in our lives, from a great distance in most cases, my idea is intended to bring some sanity to the Wilderness designations. Snowmobiles do not adversely impact the lands they travel over. Snowmobiles tread more lightly than even snowshoe users or back country skiers. Snowmobiles also provide useful snow compaction for wintering large game easing stress on the population. In order to reduce overuse of the limited over snow motorized designations, I propose we open any new Wilderness designations to snowmobile use. In most cases I believe these areas of proposed Wilderness expansion already entertain snowmobile use which is being ignored during deliberations on the merit of the lands uses.

Contrails are one of my favorite things. I love being in the backcountry on my snowmobile in the winter and stopping to watch the jets fly over through the clear blue sky. Sightline pollution, you guys really are nuts aren't you.

Since you do not seem to approve of OHV companies making profits, I wonder how you feel about a company like General Electric? You know, the big corporation making hundreds of millions in profits, far more than all the OHV manufacturers put together, then taking massive amounts of our tax dollars in the form of stimulus money only to lay off ten of thousands of workers. Our system is very corrupt on many levels. Your "green" administration is also very guilty of corporate profiteering. You need to understand that as individuals in this free country, we all have our own ideas about what getting away from it all means. You want us to get away from our vehicles. I happen to use my vehicle to get away from the people. The hiking trails in my area are VERY busy all summer long. Camping along them requires luck to find a spot, and taking the risk that you may be coming back down and starting over in another place. If I load the truck with the camping supplies, which in my case does not include tv or cell phone, I can access clean, quiet, pristine places you could not access on foot if you had a week to walk in. Most of us do not race to these places, just leisurely trips back into the forest to set up tents from where we may hike a trail, or just explore the area. The problem I see is that you want to change the way I live my life, the way I want to use the forest because somehow you think your way is better, more enlightened, less impactful, quieter, or whatever. What you need to know is that it isn't all about you. I live adjacent to the forest. I have made MAJOR lifestyle sacrifices to do so. I do not need someone hundreds or thousands of miles away from here dictating how I can use the forest. The USFS is charged by congress with maintaining the forest lands for multiple uses. One of those is motorized access. If you do not like this, I suggest you spend your time in the the 120 million acres of designated Wilderness. That is what it is for, and we definitely do not need anymore of it.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Where I live there is a snowcover limit for snowmobiles. If someone is tearing up land, call the authorities and deal with the offender. This glaring generalization that snowmobile riders are all nitro crazed stump jumpers is pretty funny. Those parts are expensive. We never ride off a main trail with less than 5-6 feet of snowcover. That doesn't take long where I live, and we are 10 miles in, in minutes enjoying the splendor of the lands. Nobody else comes here, they never did, oh, except when the snowmobile club used to groom the road. Nobody is asking to be "excused from all accountability" Enforce the laws, that was something the state snowmobile club in Colorado supported. It was a bill giving all law enforcement jurisdiction on USFS and BLM lands. It became a law. CSA also supported measurable sound laws that work. It feels like we are trying to work towards a middle ground. Every time we try, we have lost ground consistently. You just can not operate under an "I want it all" and sound resonable to anyone.

Creating a national park in the Maine woods is a great idea. For people who are not from here, or do not have experience with the Maine woods, its very hard to know how to access these wonderful places that we hear about. In other states, there are national parks/national forests/national recreation areas that provide easy access and knowledge. I know that if I go to a national park I will have a place to camp, a place to hike, a place to fish, etc. When I look at a map of northern Maine, I don't know where those opportunities exist. A national park will make access easier and bring people and money to our state. It's a great idea.

Great idea, as long as consideration is given to other users, per _____'s comment. We are working on this in our county on a trails program I'm involved with.

I would add, given the success of the various state endowment programs, it may make sense to transfer ownership of some federal lands to the states. There is little reason for the federal government to own some 70% of the land in some western states (Idaho). The state has proven a responsible manager of public lands, in many cases more so than the forest service.

I'd have to support _____'s idea. There is no reason to waste the taxpayers to utilize government agents to "cull" the herd. Legal hunting, with the resulting positive cash flow can be used to do the same thing, provide food for families and provide recreation. Should this area be too urbanized for rifle hunting, archery is still an option.

I promoted. There is no reason this activity should not be allowed. It certainly doesn't do significant damage to the trails or environmenet, at least not to the extent that rock climbers or horse riders do.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

I believe (but could be mistaken, please correct me if so) that business that utilize Wilderness areas for profit pay license or permit fees and are limited in number. Hunting guides are an example of this, I believe permits are sold that regulate the number of guides to a particular area. I'm pretty sure that this is true for whitewater rafting guides as well. I'd guess that horseback excursions would be comparable. I believe that even ski resorts that operate on public property pay a fee for the lease of the land, but I understand it's pretty negligible in relation to the damage done. I do know that private organizations that utilize National Forest lands for fund raising activities pay a fee. ATV clubs in my area run benefit rides for local charities and pay a daily fee for the permit. I'd guess that businesses would as well, but don't have any direct experience.

Federal highway funds are primarily collected from on-highway fuel tax. These funds should be devoted to maintaining and enhancing our highway infrastructure system. That makes these funds in effect a user fee on those utilizing this system. They should not be spent on recreation or mass-transit, which both should have their own source of funding via user's fees. If bikers, or hikers want more trails they need to come up with a way of paying for them without raiding funds collected from other users. Biking shouldn't be that hard, we could have an annual registration fee, like motor vehicles have, with the money collected for bicycle trails and lanes. Hiking would be more difficult to allocate. The Recreation Trails Program is funded by all off-highway gas tax. This comes from OHVs, boats, snowmobiles, lawn mowers, chain saws, etc. 30% of this funds motorized rec trails, 30% non-motorized only and 40% mixed use. So hiking and biking already raid fuel tax-based accounts paid by other users.

I want to thank the OP for proposing the expansion of ATV use into National Parks. I am unaware of any where it is currently permitted.

Idaho already has some 4 million acres of designated wilderness, the most of any state other than Alaska. There are other management themes within the roadless initiative that provides protection to this area without being as extreme as Wilderness designation. Among other issues, Wilderness designation bars the use of chain saws for clearing hiking trails. This area is also popular with snowmobilers, a major contributor to the local economy. They would be banned with Wilderness designation. Lets share the wealth. We can afford to allow some of the other states catch up with regard to Wilderness.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Thank you for the education on wilderness acreage, you made me do some digging. In addition to CA and AZ, Washington actually has more designated wilderness than Idaho does, I stand corrected. As far as snowmobiling is concerned, the Scotchman Peak area is utilized by members in the local snowmobile club. It is adjacent to the trail system accessed by Trestle Creek and from Clark Fork. Wilderness designation would of course preclude their enjoyment of this wonderful area during winter months. And at what benefit? Is there significant utilization of this area by non-motorized users during the winter months, who would be disturbed by snowmobilers? It is my understanding that it is a several mile trek from the nearest trailhead accessible via car to even the edge of the proposed wilderness area. If so, I can't foresee significant non-motorized recreation going on there during the winter. I am an active proponent of ATV recreation and enhancement of the trail system. However, I agree that the core Scotchman Peak area is not a suitable place for this use, and agree that we need to keep some areas free of constructed trails. That has been carried to extremes in areas outside the Scotchman area, to the best of my knowledge there is ONE ATV trail (Porcupine Lake) off the entire Lightning Creek/Trestle Creek road. One area that we would like to explore is a bypass around the washed out Rattle Creek connector that ran from Lightning Creek road to Montana's road system. My understanding from a recent (2 week ago) conversation with people that have recently hiked the Scotchman trail system is that many trails are in poor shape due to deadfall. I can not base this on my own observations. I would like to hike this next year, and would plan on bringing my chainsaw to do some trail clearing. I believe that this is currently allowed under the existing management theme. I'm a firm believer in leaving an area better than I found it. Doing the same amount of work with hand tools is MUCH slower...and apparently has not been happening. Wilderness designation wouldn't help with this. While I support protection of this area, I readily question if Wilderness designation is the best way. Within the existing roadless management options there are means of protecting an area from logging, mining, road building and development, without the restrictions imposed by Wilderness. Can you explain what Wilderness would gain over these other methods? I'm willing to be educated.

I would prefer to see the area protected, not developed.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

I am requesting that everyone here who has posted opinions about how and why mountain bicyclists ride trails (speeding rudely going 30 mph not enjoying nature...) to please STOP. My cycling friends and I love the back country setting probably for the same reasons you do. Riding slowly in nature, seeking scenic vistas, getting exercise, taking photos, studying flora, listening to birds. After 20 years of cycling and hiking on High Sierra trails, and performing a hundreds of hours of volunteer trail work, I have practically no experience with bad behavior, except from an extremely small handful of hikers, equestrians or cyclist. Yes, every user group has faults. And there is existing science to show the user impacts; that cyclists do no more damage than hikers and less than equestrians. Why is this a war with all the finger pointing, when you full well know that any user can cause damage if he or she cuts switchbacks, tromps flowers when going off trail to take photos, or pisses in streams, etc? Why the ridiculous demand that any of the posters here disclose who they are? That is not a requirement of this forum. And the original poster wasn't being deceptive. Seems like he was simply posting his comments like everyone else in this country was invited to do. I don't understand the hostility at all. Gosh, I'm not looking forward to meeting any of some of you rude, angry people on my next hike. Yikes! In the meantime, on a more civilized, kind and generous note please remember that loads of trails are shared perfectly well by hikers, horses and bikes -- and the trails community does better when working as allies with land managers, than being bitter enemies. Stunning trails get built and maintained by all friends of trails. Time to take a deep breath and go on a hike or bike ride. America's Great Outdoors is a really wonderful place we should be enjoying and sharing.

More Mountain Bike Access to Promote Youth & Diversity. Natural surface trails in neighborhood parks will give inner city youth a way to get outdoors; bicycles on trails will be a neat hook for these kids. Once they experience it, they'll learn the finer points about the great outdoors.

Kids on trails.. Make sure children have outdoor space to play in after school and on weekends. A really fabulous way to get kids outdoors is to have trail "parks" where kids can learn to ride their mountain bicycles on trails, away from road traffic, with potential for lots of riding through their formative years. This opportunity would attract all those kids who got mountain bikes for their birthdays & Christmas to get outdoors! They'll grow up learning about trails and will learn to use bicycles for all sorts of trips, rather than driving everywhere in cars.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

As a person who grew up fishing, I agree with _____ in the sense that children deserve the right to learn about the outdoors and have designated areas to fish. However, this does not require a better access to rivers and streams in wilderness areas. In the continental United States, only two percent of the land is registered as wilderness areas. This leaves a great number of rivers and streams for children to have the opportunity to fish without changing the areas our government has set aside as wilderness. There are many rivers, streams, and other freshwater bodies that humans have access to without having to hike five miles into a wilderness area. Where I'm from, there are many public access fishing holes and other than size there really isn't much difference in the kind of fish one may catch. Fish are generally native to a region depending upon the season and the temperature of the water. Children will have the same opportunity to catch fish in a public access fishing hole and a river or stream that may be found in a wilderness area. I do not believe that fish have the knowledge to follow a river into a wilderness area because they know that it is impossible for humans to reach the river. Fish of a certain region are going to be found in many freshwater bodies of water around that same area. There is no need to create roads in order to reach rivers and streams when there are plenty of public places to fish in the same region. From the perspective of the child, I do not believe it matters where they fish. When I grew up going fishing with my father and uncle, I found plenty of enjoyment in just being outside and catching an occasionally bass or brim. Very rarely did I even know where we were fishing and the farther we had to go to reach the fishing hole, the more impatient I became. Ultimately, the opening of wilderness areas to fishing is not necessary. Children have plenty of places to learn of the outdoors and to learn all about fishing in places that are already designated fishing areas.

OHV recreation is extremely important to my family and is one the main reasons for living in Colorado.

Do you not care that many new wilderness areas were formerly OPEN to snowmobiles? I have participated in OHV recreation my entire life and I can say without reserve that a majority of wildlife are not bothered in the slightest by an OHV. We once had a bear cub almost run right through 6-8 of our parked machines and us sitting on the ground. I've watched deer casually observe me as I ride by.

I love the national parks. They need to be taken care of and preserved.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

I think you need to get outdoors. The US has more trees today than it did when the pilgrims landed. It is true that most of our forests were cut down in the 1800's to build homes, railroad tracks, support beams for mine shafts and to fuel steam locomotives. There is an excellent book that shows then and now pictures and in each case the areas that were in many cases totally denuded are now heavily forested. Most would say so heavily forested they cannot tolerate a natural wildfire. When John Muir roamed the forest he was able to stroll through the open forest landscape. When a fire came he climbed up a tree and waited it out. If one did that today you would be incinerated due to the overgrown forests. So there is plenty of forest, but it needs to be managed and thinned to be healthy. Our overgrown forests are also poor habitat for wildlife who cannot survive massive stand replacing wildfires. Wildlife also need wider spacing between trees to be able to travel in the forest.

Equal Use Rights for OHV. Please consider equal rights to all parties in the OHV use matter as this is the American way. Systematically off-road use is being taken away from OHV enthusiasts little bits at a time over decades. This is being accomplished by a non compromise policy by one party and a compromise policy by the other party. The other side has no intention of relenting until all trails are closed to motorcycles and ATVs. This is not a fair compromise this is a total block. I am a hiker and mountain biker as well and empathize and respect these concerns and desires within reason. Please be respectful of all rights of all taxpayers and I ask you to be considerate of the off road community. Most of us love our country and love to enjoy it's wilderness in our way so please always be sympathetic or empathetic of OHV rights.

As a biologist, I believe that the only way to promote conservation of multiple species is to protect large connected habitats, while it's still possible. Climate change is happening, whether politicians want to believe it or not and now is the time to act.

"A kid can spend his whole life in front of a computer and never know about a place like Yosemite". That's what my son, then 13, said to me after a week long back-packing trip in Yosemite National Park. Learning science in nature had a profound effect on his interests, his character and his confidence. He was inspired by his experience to challenge himself physically and academically. We need to make sure these opportunities continue to exist. Park partnerships with non-profit environmental education organizations make this connection possible for all youth.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

I definitely agree that people should be more responsible regarding their use of public land. As someone who comes from a rural community, I'm well aware of the haphazard off-road vehicle use that occurs there. For me, it definitely detracts from the natural experience, and I cringe whenever I hear the sound of a motor while I'm enjoying my natural surroundings. However, the issue is not limited to rural areas, and the younger population in general should be more appreciative of nature. It is imperative, though, that they do appreciate it. Building on that point, I agree that people need to be educated about the importance of the natural world. However, I don't believe that this is the time to incorporate environmental education into our school curriculum. We have too many other problems in our schools as is, and if people aren't graduating from high school, I doubt that they will take that type of study seriously enough. If we cannot teach our children to do mathematics or use the English language effectively, how can we expect them to grasp such a lofty intellectual concept as nature conservation? For this reason, we must first fix the school system, and then we will be able to use them to explain the importance of our environment. I'm not trying to anger you, but I also believe that your point concerning guns in national parks was ineffective. Let me be clear, I'm not debating whether allowing them was a good idea or a bad one, but people do not "tend to shoot them" at just anything. Anyone who decided to murder another human in a national park probably would have made the same decision even if guns were not allowed there. Guns, by themselves, are not innately bad. When someone with bad intentions has one, that's where problems arise. Again, I'm not saying they should be allowed in national parks, I'm simply cautioning you from jumping to conclusions. Finally, your overall point that the future of the natural world lies in the hands of our youth is absolutely correct. The individual person can make a difference, and that's the concept behind this forum. That's why we all have to do our part. Until we can include environmental education in our curriculum, we should educate our sons and daughters ourselves about our environment. As Dave Brower says in John McPhee's book *Encounters with the Archdruid*, "Conservationists have to win again and again and again. The enemy only has to win once." If we don't convey the importance of nature effectively, it may be lost forever. It's up to us right now, and together we can make sure that it's always easy for the younger generation to see the value in nature.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Expand Summer of Service. We strongly encourage the Department to build on efforts undertaken last summer in which Summer of Service programs exposed middle school students to public lands with promising results. Summer of Service (SOS) initiatives, included in the 2009 Kennedy Serve America Act, are examples of innovative service-learning opportunities for middle school youth over the summer months. SOS programs are designed to be intensive, structured, supervised, and designed to produce identifiable community improvements. In the summer of 2010, students engaged in community-based service-learning projects that addressed a variety of community needs and included exposure to national parks and other public lands. Expanding SOS opportunities to the Department of Interior, USDA, and other federal agencies will enable more young teens to participate in service as a "rite of passage" from middle to high school and provide opportunities for them to enter their teenage years with a positive experience that reinforces community connections, enlivens their education, and strengthens personal and civic values. At the same time, communities across the US might find an important new resource in their own backyards-young people who are ready to serve, if only they are asked and given the opportunity to do so.

In a time of scarce public funding and great conservation needs, this kind of flexibility will better leverage federal dollars for expanded recreational access and other conservation benefits from the conservation of lands in partnership with private landowners.

An easement may not be necessary in all situations. In Washington state there is an open space property tax designation that requires public access to be eligible for the significant tax break. Also, designated timberland, which is trending toward closing off the public, enjoys a tax break for providing public benefits, including "scenic and recreational spaces." To a certain degree, public access should be maintained on this land if the landowner hopes to maintain the tax break. This taxbreak is huge. Land with a Fair market value of over \$10,000 per acre is only taxed at about \$200 acre. If the government had to purchase a Recreation Easement, where I live the timber industry would essentially be double-dipping with a tax break and an easement.

For over 100 years the Forest Service allowed firearms and (shudder) hunting on their lands. People carry firearms on trails, and in campgrounds all over the west. Nearly everyone who visited a western national park in the past had to pass through the Nat. Forest first. And tourists survived the blaze of gunfire all these years! This year I felt safe to visit several Nat. Parks with my family. We stayed in the campground next to the one with the Yellowstone bear attack. Glad we were ready.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

This is a naive world view. In reality, people are in charge of everything, everywhere. When we leave an area alone completely, is not really for "wildlife", but to make US feel good about ourselves. And it is impossible to remove people from the equation anyway (global warming, pollution, etc.) When animal populations get too high in the preserve, what happens?--animals migrate to backyards. These off-limits areas would need big fences to let the animals "take care of themselves". I believe we need the opposite approach, get more people INTO the woods. Get more folks to touch the land, feel, experience, understand. The more folks really experience the land, the more support conservation has in the future. Remember, people control everything. They vote, pay taxes, donate, volunteer, CARE. We need to create a new generation of People who Care.

This program has worked for hunting/fishing for years. It needs to be expanded for other outdoor recreation. It needs to be federal, since a state-by-state system will be too complicated, and put a disadvantage on states that don't enact it. Don't drown the income in overhead or steal it for other purposes. The Gov. tried to cheat the hunters/anglers fund, but the conservation groups, including the powerful NRA, cried foul. I'm sure the hiking/ORV/Bicycle groups would be good watchdogs of their funds, too.

Family forests and farms must stay in the family, and not be sold to pay estate taxes. This bill, requires the continuation of farming/forestry so it is almost like a conservation easement. The public is getting an extended benefit from this private land in open space, wildlife habitat, rural jobs, water quality, etc. If a multi-million dollar home is in an estate, there is no clear public benefit to deferring the tax. Yes, I agree all estate tax on property is unfair, but keeping forests and farms is critical to fix now to maintain that public benefit.

We have a choice; either force people into congested cities, or allow us to spread out. Will there be less habitat? Yes. Are animals more important than people? No. Do we have a responsibility to manage the land well? Of course we do. But the idea that we are in a situation where all wildlife is nearing extinction is hilarious. Next time you are on an airplane, look out the window. There is a whole lot more dirt and trees than asphalt and rooftops.

So many of these beautiful places are quite remote. If you are young and fit and have a lot of time on your hands, you can see them. But many people aren't up to a 4 day 60 mile backpacking event. Many of these people benefit from OHVs. Our government needs to think about them as well, and not just assume that a few paved roads and scenic overlooks is sufficient.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Most people would be wrong then. Go spend an entire day on a farm here in Minnesota. You will see AT MINIMUM one of the following (and I've seen EVERY one of the following 'on the farm'): Bear, Fisher, Martin, Fox, Ducks, Geese, Wolves, Squirrels, Chipmunks, Bald Eagles, Moose, Mink, Lynx, Bobcats, Coyotes, Migratory Birds, Hawks, Owls, Doves, Woodchucks, Garter Snakes, Bull Snakes, Rats, Moles, Mice, Pheasants, Porcupines, Skunks, Woodpeckers, All types of non-migratory birds, and of course, the Whitetail Deer. These animals use the resources that the farm provides for protection and forage. I would define that as an animal's habitat. They are free to roam in and out of the area with no restrictions. Go to a farm once and see how the people who make their living from the earth feel about being told that they are anti-animal habitat. After they finish their work for the day (usually long after most urbanites are done for the day... even after starting their days long before those same people have had their Lattes and Espressos) they will probably change your mind about their stewardship of the animals and the lands they call home.

Thanks, everyone, for the comments and questions on this idea. Yes, the land is preserved. A permanent conservation easement would be a required component of using this financing tool. Yes, a conservation easement and management plan are both required to qualify. Duane: the timber industry is supportive of the concept, as is the conservation community (the list of supporters includes Plum Creek, Weyerhaeuser, and the National Alliance of Forest Owners, as well as Trust for Public Land, The Nature Conservancy, Sierra Club, and Land Trust Alliance). The reason that the conservation community is supportive is that it will bring new, private money to conservation deals. There are several differences between the current Community Forestry Bonds proposal and what happened in Montana, but the most important is this: the Plum Creek Montana deal was essentially public dollars to expand public land ownership while the bill now in congress will enable private dollars to put a conservation easement on private lands and maintain those lands in sustainable working forestry. This bill would actually not use public funds - that's one of the cool parts about it. Instead, it would authorize the use of private, tax-exempt financing for acquiring forestland, in just the same way a non-profit hospital would access this capital to build a new facility. So, it can add to the overall conservation funding pie by bringing in new money from the private marketplace. Thanks again, everyone, for the great comments and questions. Feel free to contact me directly with other thoughts:

None of the commenters on this idea seem to have any real knowledge of what the environmental impacts of the Bristol Bay mine might be nor of the economic benefits of the mine. I would suggest that this is an issue to be resolved by the citizens of the State of Alaska who are more knowledgeable on the subject and are more directly impacted by the decision.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Do Not Reward Intolerance. Webster defines intolerance as "a quality of being unwilling to grant or share social, political or professional rights". There are many examples of intolerant attitudes and statements on this website. I really don't understand why we seem to be adopting this "culture of intolerance", but one thing is for sure: Rewarding intolerant behavior creates more intolerant behavior. Not only is the person being rewarded for his or her extreme behavior likely to continue to exhibit intolerance, others who might normally be more tolerant are likely to adopt inflexible positions as a means of achieving their goals. I must admit that when I'm hiking on a Forest trail I would prefer not to step in horse poo. It's slick and kinda stinky and tends to stick to ya. But I'm OK with sharing trails with stock users because I know that somewhere up ahead of me is a person on a horse who is having a great day doing what they enjoy doing, and their experience with nature is just as valuable to them as mine is to me. If you have ever run over a fresh cow pie on a motorcycle or ATV you know how messy that can be. But I'm willing to accept that inconvenience because I know the rancher who has the grazing permit is working hard to feed his family and needs that permit to survive. So I'm having trouble with all the claims of "user conflict" which are so abundant on this website. I fail to understand how the sound of a distant motor or a momentary encounter with a motorcycle "totally ruins the entire experience". Surely these temporary and minor inconveniences can be tolerated. Calling for the exclusion of tens of millions of motorized visitors so a few can realize their preferences seems a selfish, childish and intolerant request. Indeed, I don't think that "user conflict" actually exists - at least not in our western forests where I spend my time. I am fortunate to be able to spend hundreds of hours in National Forests every year, and I have never experienced a conflict with another visitor.

In re-reading my posting, I can see how someone might be left with the impression that I advocate allowing motorized uses on all Federal lands. Not so. I am a Wilderness visitor, and I enjoy my quiet time in the Forest as well. The real issue is how much Wilderness do we need, and what price are we willing to pay for more of it. In our Western Forests, huge areas are already Designated Wilderness -- yet virtually no one goes there. In the Flathead National Forest, for example, 46% of the Forest is Designated Wilderness (reserved for the exclusive benefit of quiet visitors), yet only 1% of all Flathead Forest visitors go there. I can't speak to the need for more Designated Wilderness in the east or mid-west, because I don't have experience there. I am content to let citizens in those areas determine their own needs. That's why "one-size-fits-all" top-down driven initiatives like the AGO don't work.

Clean Water State Revolving Funds. Preservation of land that filters water (or prevents further degradation of American waterways) is a cost-effective supplement or alternative to gray infrastructure of wastewater and stormwater treatment plants. Over the last 20 years, only 5% of the \$70 billion in EPA grant-funded Clean Water State Revolving Funds has been used for non-point source projects, much less land conservation projects specifically. State CWSRF administrators need to prioritize projects each year on cost-effectiveness (pounds of pollution reduced or avoided per dollar), and encourage municipal utilities to pass the savings from funding land conservation on to their ratepayers in the form of lower sewer and water bills.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

One can certainly argue with the national policies of the Boy Scouts of America. But the discussion should be about the three million boys who connect with the great outdoors every months through their local boy scout troops, and the millions of additional boys who could benefit from this kind of program. It's great to think about new ways of getting kids outside and away from electronics, but scouting has proved over the past 100 years that it has a formula that works. America should celebrate and encourage these boys.

Another good example is the Mississippi National River and Recreation Area, which is part of the National Park Service. Goes right through the major metropolitan areas of Minneapolis and St Paul. The river was always there, and many people have a hand in it, and control over it there, but adding an overlay of the National Park Service has really made an impact, and it's exciting to have "National" status so close to home! Helps focus restoration efforts along the river, and raises awareness of this incredible natural resource right under our noses.

Went to our State Fair earlier this month - the University of MN has a whole department working on biodegradable plastic. Already have many "plastic" bags and packaging made out of corn!!! They're also working on open celled foam made out of soybeans. It's already there, it's just a matter of time...

What is the big problem with getting around on foot or horse in wild areas?!?!? I did so without any problem and obviously more cheaply than if motorized. The fun on a vacation starts when you begin putting one foot in front of the other. Escape from the din of civilization is something everyone should try!

_____, right on! I agree. Salmon are renewable, gold is not. Wild lands are a precious heritage. I used to live in Alaska and know how beautiful the place is!

Despite the clear conservation-focused management priorities set forth in the organic legislation and presidential proclamations for areas within the National Conservation Lands, the BLM is not consistently managing the units of the National Conservation Lands to protect the values that led to their creation. As a result the National Conservation Lands are a hodgepodge of inconsistent management regimes. The National Conservation Lands deserve strong policy guidance from the Department of the Interior that ensures their protection. We need to protect the National Conservation lands to protect their natural and cultural resources!!!!

Coming from a state where there are no legal OHV access areas, it is clear the impact to the local economies of a missed opportunity in comparison to neighboring states that do afford use....

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Wilderness should be Wild. I think the Wilderness areas should be Wild. There should be no maintained trails. No trail heads. No trail head parking lots. No GPS, Cellphone, rescue beacons. If somebody tries to use an electronic device to summon help, it should be ignored. There should be no wilderness rescues provided by the government. Marked and maintained trails, and their associated trail heads and parking lots encourage concentrated use. This detracts from the wilderness experience. Of course there will still be a demand for more developed areas, with marked trails, and parking areas, and the possibility of rescue. These areas would have to be removed from Wilderness designation. Perhaps call them "backcountry" areas as a means of distinguishing them from areas that have paved roads. In the interest of fairness I think some of these areas should be designated multiple use. Not all the trails should be restricted to pedestrian use. Horses should be allowed on some. Bicycles, motorcycles, OHV, Jeeps, SUVs should all get areas their owners can use. The division of the available land could be based on the number of users in each group. This could perhaps be determined by trail registers at trail heads. Or perhaps each user would pay a fee based on which type of areas they intend to use.

Civilization/Ecology.... Thomas Berry published a book entitled "The Great Work....Our Way into the Future", Bell Tower, New York, 1999. Thomas Berry, who passed in 2009, believed we stand at a defining moment in history, one in which the earth itself calls out to us to embark upon a resacriization of nature...a new ecological beginning. My comment: The earth is calling.

This planning is already in place through the mandated state trail advisory boards under the Recreational Trails Program,, administered by FHWA, and through the MPO requirements of federal surface transportation funding.

While I support the economic values of Wilderness, the real issue is more attention to the economic value of recreation and wildlife on all public lands. For twenty years, studies have shown that the value of recreation in national forests exceeds substantially the value of commodity activities (fiber, food) -- even when the studies are constrained to measure only the economic activities within 50 miles of forests, and only counting those the expenditures of those who actually put "feet in the forest." Leafpeeper traffic through the White Mountain National Forest this fall, for example, is not being counted as a economic benefit of the forests. In fact, the latest research documents about 200 million recreation visits to forests and another 300 million visits on state and county roads prmpted by the forests and to forest inholdings, including the base of ski areas on private lands but with lift facilities on completely or mostly on national forests.

I strongly support the leadership of Jon Jarvis to demonstrate ways to minimize the carbon footprint of national parks and using park visits to educate us all about our options, and of increasing voluntary efforts by each of us to reduce energy use and more. But as far as AGO focusing on "black carbon soot melting the arctic ice cap" -- nope.

Discussion Question 1

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(cont.)

DOT Livability Focus is Great Opportunity -- But Action Needed. Livability is the new buzz-word for Congressional and Administrative leaders -- and there is great opportunity for those of us who care about conservation and recreation. Obviously we want transportation to focus on more than roads. Livability could mean expansion of programs like Transportation Enhancements (which has proven invaluable in converting abandoned railroads to trails and more) and to programs like scenic byways, the Recreational Trails Program and Safe Routes to Schools. But we need to be active participants in the definition of livability, and now have it stop at the edges of our metropolitan areas and be focused only on getting people out fo cars and to work, shop and school with alternative transportation. DOT leadership understands this and recent statements by DOT Assistant Secretary for Policy Polly Trottenberg are encouraging. The AGO report needs to highlight how much DOT has added to connecting Americans to the Great Outdoors in the past two decades -- and build on this as the parameters of livability are defined in the \$500 billion, 6 year surface transportation bill expected as a Congressional priority in 2011.

NPS Director Wins Quote of the Day: Parks and Health. From yesterday's Pittsburgh Tribune-Review, in an article about the "Let's Move Outside, Junior Rangers" program at Johnstown Flood National Memorial: "Young people inspire us; we want to help them be vigorous and curious for life. It starts with family fun. National parks are amazing places where exercise is disguised as adventure, and we sneak in some learning, too," National Park Service Director Jon Jarvis said. Way to go!

Understand your concern, but I'll give _____ the benefit of the doubt here and accept that his comment is about benign learning about history and park resources. And he is right that you can use fun as a vehicle to increase receptivity to learning!

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Forest Service, Denver Water Board launch \$33 million 'Forests to Faucet' partnership to treat 38,000 acres of national forests in Colorado. Denver Water and the U.S. Forest Service will to treat about 38,000 acres of critical watersheds to reduce damage to key Colorado streams and reservoirs. The \$33 million "Forest to Faucet" partnership was announced in the context of the pine beetle epidemic that's wiped out about 3 million acres of lodgepole pine forests in the state. Part of the Forest Service share of the funding will come from money that's already been allocated to the Rocky Mountain region of the Forest Service but additional funds were "earned" when several national forests in Colorado competed favorably for a national forest health funds. Denver Water customers will pay for the other half of the work, seen as an effective way to prevent the huge back-end costs associated with cleaning up after a fire. The Denver Board of Water has already spent \$10.5 million dealing with impacts to a single reservoir after the Hayman fire. It could cost up to another \$30 million to complete the restoration, and more if there are significant rainfall events that lead to more erosion and sedimentation. The work will focus in thinning, fuel reduction, creating fire breaks, erosion control decommissioning roads, and, eventually, reforestation. The partnership could serve as a model for similar agreements across the West and with other industries, including the ski industry and power companies with infrastructure on forested lands. In total, about 110 million acres of national forest system lands are in need of some sort of treatment. Natural evolution, fire suppression and global warming are all factors contributing to the need for restoration. Before 2000, up to 5 million acres of forest per year were affected by wildfires; since then, the average has increased to about 5 to 10 million acres, and with longer and more intense droughts expected, that figure could go even higher. USDA Under Secretary Harris Sherman, a former Denver Water Board member and former Colorado DNR chief, is a leading proponent of these partnerships and has moved a key Forest Service official, into a new temporary assignment to find additional partnership opportunities to better manage and protect public lands. GREAT INITIATIVE!! BRAVO

Here is an example of how AGO can make a difference: by sharing ideas that represent core concepts, we can build a broad consensus and move together in a united way.

Whatever the President chooses to do with AGO, it is almost certainly going to involve Congressional hearings. This IdeaJam can be a useful resource for staffers on the Hill as those hearings develop -- and I will also tell you that I have appreciated the opportunity it is providing to share ideas and examples of success in connecting people to the outdoors and protecting our lands, waters and wildlife.

Conversation can yield to common goals, trust and progress. Bravo for the Friends of McInnis Canyon and the BLM officials involved here.

The FS fee program is largely legitimate and serves the public well. There are ways to curtail attempts to charge where no services are sought or provided. What some of the posters fail to admit is that federal courts and magistrates have upheld the fee program repeatedly.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Harvard Medical School Offers Prescription for Health: Get Outdoors. Today's Harvard Medical School "Healthbeat" -- 10-12-10 -- offers great advice: A Prescription for Better Health: GO ALFRESCO Most of us spend the vast majority of our time inside. According to one government estimate, the average American spends 90% of his or her life indoors, and as we get older we become even more inclined not to venture out. But is all this indoor time hurting our health? The study results are ticking up: spending time outdoors seems to have discernible benefits for physical and mental health. Granted, some are merely by association and can be achieved by other means, perhaps while indoors, but often only with a good deal more trouble and expense. Here are five potential benefits of spending more time outdoors: 1. Your vitamin D levels will go up Exposing your skin to sunshine -- actually, ultraviolet B (UVB) rays -- enables the body to make vitamin D, which is why it's also known as the "sunshine vitamin." Research suggests vitamin D may have protective effects against everything from osteoporosis to cancer to depression to heart attacks and stroke. Of course, it has to be sunny out, and there are some snags. Where you live, the season, and the time of day affect how much UVB reaches your skin. The farther you live from the equator, the less UVB radiation you receive. Vitamin D production is affected by age (people ages 65 and over generate about a fourth as much as people in their 20s) and skin color (African Americans have, on average, about half the levels of vitamin D in their blood as white Americans). Another problem: sunscreens are most effective at blocking UVB light, the part of the spectrum that causes sunburn, but UVB also happens to be the kind of light that kick-starts the generation of vitamin D in the skin. The either-or of sunscreen and sunshine vitamin has stirred up a lot of controversy and debate between pro-sunscreen dermatologists and the vitamin D camp. But there is plenty of middle ground here: some limited sun exposure on short walks and the like, supplemented with vitamin D pills if necessary, and liberal use of sunscreen when you are out for extended periods, particularly during the middle of the day. 2. You'll get more exercise (especially if you're a child) Being outside isn't a guarantee of being active. Still, there's no question that being outdoors is associated with activity and indoor living is associated with being sedentary, particularly for children. According to some surveys, American children spend an average of 6½ hours a day with electronic media (video games, television, and so on), time that is spent mainly indoors and sitting down. British researchers found that children are more than doubly active when they are outside. Adults can go to the gym. Many prefer the controlled environment there. But if you make getting outside a goal, that should mean less time in front of the television and computer and more time walking, biking, gardening, cleaning up the yard, and doing other things that put the body in motion. 3. You'll be happier (especially if your exercise is 'green') Light tends to elevate people's mood, and unless you live in a glass house or are using a light box to treat seasonal affective disorder, there's usually more light available outside than in. Physical activity has been shown to relax and cheer people up, so if being outside replaces inactive pursuits with active ones, it might also mean more smiles and laughter. Researchers at the University of Essex in England are advancing the notion that exercising in the presence of nature has added benefit, particularly for mental health. Their investigations into "green exercise," as they are calling it, dovetail with research showing benefits from living in proximity to green, open spaces. 4. Your concentration will improve A study published in 2008 found that children with ADHD scored higher on a test of concentration after a walk through a park than after a walk through a residential neighborhood or downtown area. Other ADHD

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(cont.)

studies have also suggested that outdoor exercise could have positive effects on the condition. Truth be told, this research has been done in children, so it's a stretch to say it applies to adults, even those who have an ADHD diagnosis. But if you have trouble concentrating -- as many do -- you might see if some outdoor activity, the greener the better, helps. 5. You may heal faster University of Pittsburgh researchers reported in 2005 that spinal surgery patients experienced less pain and stress and took fewer pain medications during their recoveries if they were exposed to natural light. An older study showed that the view out the window (trees vs. a brick wall) had an effect on patient recovery. Of course, windows and views are different than actually being outside, but we're betting that adding a little fresh air to the equation couldn't hurt and might help. BRAVO to our friends in Massachusetts!

And any comments that fail to reflect on the content are unfortunate. The Collaborative Forest Landscape Restoration Program and the Cooperative Conservation Partnership Initiative are very important initiatives in harmony with the charge given to AGO by President Obama on April 16 -- and I see no reference to them in other postings. Bravo to the Rural Voices for Conservation Coalition for raising the ideas.

Coastal and Estuarine Land Conservation Program -- Real and Priority Conservation. The Coastal and Estuarine Land Conservation Program (CELCP) was established in 2002 and reauthorized in 2009 and provides matching grants to state and local governments to protect lands with significant conservation, recreation, ecological, historical and/or aesthetic values which are threatened by conversion. Priority is given to projects which can be effectively managed and protected and which use leveraged funds. Since 2002, NOAA, which administers the program, has awarded more than \$230 million for projects in 27 of the 34 eligible states, protecting more than 50,000 acres. More information on the project is at { Link } This program is noteworthy for several reasons. First, states need to nominate projects and relate them to state CZM and related plans. Second, each project needs to demonstrate need, secured matching funds and landowner willingness to sell. Third, the projects are reviewed and ranked by teams of public and private sector experts independent of NOAA's analysis. and finally, the prioritized list is presented to the Congress, which then appropriates money annually for the projects -- and the Congress determines how far down the prioritized list they will reach with its funding level. No pork-barrel or earmarking the projects are funded according to the reviewers' priorities. Good example of a strategic use of federal dollars to boost conservation!

Discussion Question 1

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(cont.)

Free Bus Access to and thru Delaware Water Gap NRA. If you live in or around East Stroudsburg, Pennsylvania, it's going to be easier to get to Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area on Saturdays this fall. That's because the National Park Service and the Monroe County Transit Authority are teaming up to provide free "Pocono Pony" shuttle buses to the park, buses that will include a park ranger on board who can help suggest places to go in the NRA or simply answer your questions. "Enjoy the fall weather by taking a hike on one of our many trails, spend a day at the beach, pack a picnic or go fishing, visit Pocono Environmental Education Center and attend one of their many programs or bring your bike and take a ride on the McDade Trail," suggests NRA Superintendent John Donahue. Funding for the buses, which can tote bicycles, as well, comes from the Paul S. Sarbanes Transit in the Parks Program. The shuttles from East Stroudsburg will run to several locations within the park starting on September 25 and continuing each Saturday through October 30. Schedules and route information can be found at the Monroe County Transit Authority website at www.gomcta.com/schedules.htm. Information about Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area upcoming events and programs is available on the park's website (www.nps.gov/dewa). Thanks to the DWGNRA park leadership and the Paul Sarbanes Transit in the Parks program for making this possible -- and to the National Parks Traveler (www.nationalparkstraveler.com/) for highlighting this news.

Would an infrastructure bank be a useful tool for federal recreation providers?. President Obama announced a plan for moving ahead on a 6-year surface transportation program which would embrace a concept he referenced in his Presidential campaign: an infrastructure bank which would raise private capital for transportation projects and guarantee the repayment of those funds with a relatively small federal deposit. This would be his way to "front load" the surface transportation program and create more employment without adding to the federal deficit. And the federal guarantee makes the private capital available at low rates. If the White House likes the idea of an infrastructure bank for roads and railroads, would they also like the idea of an infrastructure bank for parks and other federal recreation sites where entrance fees, user fees and other payments could be earmarked for repayment of the funding? Possible examples of projects: utilities; campgrounds; marinas; lodges and restaurant facilities.

Concessioners and guests team up to raise more than \$1 million for parks. Concessioners in about ten national parks offer guests a chance to make a \$1 per night contribution to help fund projects in those parks. The money is deposited with the National Park Foundation and then returned to be spent on park projects selected by the local park or the local park and a local friends group. Guests can choose to drop the contribution at check-out. Over the past five years, some \$1.1 million has been raised -- more than \$310,000 last year alone.

Sorry, but you have your facts wrong. FLREA's chief goal -- which has been achieved -- is to allow park entrance fees and campground fees for five federal areas to be retained at the collecting sites for operations and maintenance. Going for a walk on a national forest without use of specific services remains free. Enjoy!

Discussion Question 1

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It costs real money to maintain our nation's recreation infrastructure and, unfortunately perhaps, use of this infrastructure is actually used and enjoyed by a relatively small portion of the total US population. It is fair that those who derive the benefits pay a bit more toward the costs. The fees under FLREA are very reasonable, and in almost all cases there are alternatives -- including free access for those who volunteer.

I'll make one more attempt to bring some sensible exchange of ideas -- and ignore the ridiculous emotionalism of some of the commenters here. Neither I nor ARC have advocated recreation fees for use of public lands without significant public services. If you use a developed campsite, though, or a boat ramp, or a developed beach area, it certainly seems appropriate to have you pay a fee that is restricted by law to uses linked to that site and the services used. Interesting that none of the comments about the alleged unfairness of the fees has noted that fees can only be collected after approval by -- and only at the amounts approved by -- advisory committees established by the FS and BLM and which must meet in public and receive public comments.

National Parks, Medical Community and Shoe Co. Team Up for Kids' Freedom Run. Kids to get free shoes October 2, 2010 - By Jason Mansfield, Special to The Journal SHEPHERDSTOWN - Terra Plana has donated 200 pairs of shoes to the kids who will run in Freedom's Run event today. Shepherdstown's Two River Treads is distributing the shoes from Terra Plana's Vivobarefoot Kids line, which features shoes that offer protection and the benefits of being barefoot. The shoes will be distributed free of charge to the young runners expected to participate in the Kids Fun Run this afternoon. "We are thrilled to be included in this event, as it demonstrates not only the importance of child foot health, but gets kids engaged in the outdoors. A healthy lifestyle should be both fun and accessible to all kids," said Galahad Clark, owner of Terra Plana. "The race sends an important message while helping to fund the Wild and Wonderful Trails, which is making this a reality." The trails program aims to create walking trails, gardens and outdoor learning centers for schools in Jefferson County, like the recently completed project at Page Jackson Elementary. Two Rivers Treads is handing out the shoes on a first-come, first-served basis during today's children's event. There is a catch, however, as the kids are asked to wear the shoes during the Kids Run. The little recipients of said shoes also are encouraged to take their families along on a hike in each of the region's four national parks: Harpers Ferry National Historical Park, Antietam National Battlefield, C&O Canal National Historical Park and the Potomac Heritage National Scenic Trail. Harpers Ferry National Park will even provide the kids and their families free admittance for helping clean up the park when they come, according to _____, who works at Two River Treads. The Vivobarefoot Kids line of shoes is intended to allow the foot to function as it would barefoot. "We not only want to promote natural outdoor physical activity, but we want to instill in parents the importance of letting children's feet develop in their natural way. This of course is to spend as much time as possible barefoot, and when you need to wear shoes, to wear those that complement normal foot function," said Dr. Mark Cucuzzella, the race director and owner of Two River Treads. Last year, 200 children participated in the Fun Run, but this year that number is expected to double. The Fun Run, starting at 11:30 a.m., is free and non-competitive, allowing the children to "run, walk, or stroll" around the track at their own pace. The 1-mile run will circle downtown Shepherdstown, starting and ending at Sara Cree Hall and passing the historic "Little House."

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Sorry to disagree, and disagree strongly. Enlisting the private sector, and especially small businesses, in conservation, recreation and wellness is the key to sustainability and success. If we can turn over the National Mall to the NFL and Pepsi for self-promotion, we certainly can and should encourage local and federal park agencies to partner with a running store, a doctor and an innovative shoe company!!!!

While I generally support this comment, I do not believe that management of our lands should be looked upon as a "majority vote" issue. Our federal land managers need to be trained and rewarded for developing consensus on land use decisions, as well as helping the public understand the science issues involved. And there needs to be consideration of the variations in public values within the one-third of the US managed by federal agencies. In short, national park system lands and wildlife refuges deserve more "national" consideration in use decisions than much of the multiple use lands systems.

You certainly bring a smile to my face when you cite the use of the Recreational Trails Program in Baxter -- a favorite program and a favorite place! As you may know, the RTP program has helped with more than 20,000 partnership projects like this across the nation since its creation in December 1991, and has a unified support base of all national recreation trails organizations.

Sorry, I don't have such a negative view on the impact of man on this planet. I'm pretty proud of our conservation tradition in the USA. First national park and the best national park system in the world. Ditto for national forests. And National Wildlife Refuges. And while those programs were the product of visionaries in the early 1900's, the National Wilderness Preservation System and Wild and Scenic Rivers and more were products of the 1960's -- and we are still adding new protective strategies including national scenic byways and the national landscape conservation system in the 21st Century.

Sorry you missed the revolution which took place in the early 1990's. 10% of all Surface Transportation Program dollars -- the bulk of federal road monies -- is now devoted to Transportation Enhancements (TE). TE is all about what you call for -- it has converted thousands of miles of abandoned railroads to trails, built countless thousands of miles of new bikeways and added bike/ped facilities to bridges and other traditional "choke points." This commitment of funding bike/ped activity has been repledged by the Congress several times since its establishment by ISTEA in 1991. And the TE program was just one of the great features of ISTEA. Also created in that legislation: scenic byways program, which can fund expanded shoulders for safe walking/biking along roads through corridors with special recreational/scenic/historic/cultural attributes; the Recreational Trails Program, which provides nearly \$100 million annually to state trail programs for all types of trails -- motorized activities and non-motorized -- even though funding is derived from use of motorized devices off-highways.

Wilderness Inquiry is marvelous, a national leader in helping the physically challenged access the Great Outdoors and now becoming a strong, creative force in connecting urban kids to fun in the outdoors. Bravo!

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(cont.)

The issue here is that we have ignored the inholding issue too long. Once the Congress designates a park/refuge/other special area, we need to proceed to either buy private inholdings at a reasonable price or impose development restrictions -- and pay fair value for the restrictions imposed. I do agree that Tom Chapman is engaged largely in a gaming process that needs to be discouraged -- but not at the cost of legitimate private property rights.

Our national parks include an infrastructure which enhances public access and hardens a small portion of the parks to mitigate environmental impacts. This is a legitimate and desirable strategy, and the poster's message is sound advice.

This is a good example of how conservation, economic activity and physical activity can be combined. And did I mention that at least some of the needed funding for the trail development and operation is from the Recreational Trails Program!!!

It does puzzle me to have people demote an idea like this. Do they oppose more effective and less expensive cancer treatment? Do they oppose new sources of funding to improve recreation facilities at USACE recreation sites? To me, this seems to be a huge opportunity and a win in every possible way.

Why not suggest an alternative for the grazing/mining practices you outline? Higher fees, placed into a trust fund for conservation purposes, could help us circumvent PAYGO problems facing many of our legislative initiatives and allow us to give serious consideration to the multi-year public lands and conservation program budgeting we need!

I think we ALL agree that sustainable, alternative energy needs to be advanced, but that we need to be mindful of unintended consequences. Our highways of the '60's and urban redevelopment efforts of the '60's and '70's proved that good intentions don't deliver good results. I'm reminded of a favorite saying: "There is always a well-known solution to every human problem--neat, plausible, and wrong." H. L. Mencken Wind turbines are good -- but not in the wrong places. Geothermal is good -- but not if it "kills" Old Faithful. Solar is good -- but not if the water demand exacerbates problems with groundwater mining.

Hunters and anglers have helped fund conservation programs for decades. the fees and special federal taxes they pay generate funding used to acquire conservation lands and improve habitat for all species, hunted or not hunted. These revenues are prime underwriters of watchable wildlife programs -- which are free to participants in most instances. The fees and taxes paid by hunters and anglers also pay for law enforcement on public lands -- including enforcement of hunting and fishing laws. And to underscore what has been said above, threatened and endangered species cannot be hunted.

Parks are the vehicle for life-long learning -- and beginning the process early with both formalized learning and learning as an adjunct to mostly-fun visits for kids is a very high priority. NatureBridge is at the forefront of these efforts and can and should be encouraged to expand into more park units.

Discussion Question 1

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Those of you with NPS connections -- be on the look-out for Director Jon Jarvis' message next week about the importance of connecting parks with health efforts in a "flat hat chat." I'm counting on the Director to communicate better than I can why this is a "no-brainer!"

No funding strategy that depends primarily upon an annual, national, political allocation of resources will provide stable, sufficient funding for national parks and other federal recreation and conservation programs. We need to develop operating plans that generate revenues that can be retained, seek an earmarking from major revenue streams and look for non-profit and for-profit operations in parks which are compatible with agency goals and objectives.

It does not take a genius to understand that some forms of recreation are not appropriate for some locations.

The vast majority of Americans enjoy viewing wild animals interacting in their habitat ... not draped over the hood of a car.

You can stop beating the drum... Global Warming is over. We just got through one of the coldest summers in history. This winter promises to be the same. Al Gore made a 100 million dollars from a lie and scare tactics. Ha. Let's learn to share our Public Lands with ALL Americans.

First of all, I don't understand why so many people automatically assume that county specific land bills won't include wilderness and will result in the county exploiting the land to the highest bidder. This isn't even remotely true! And as an example, I'll point to the very successful Washington County land bill here in Utah-which included several hundred thousand acres of wilderness-and I'll also point to the "in the works" San Juan, Emery, and Piute county land bills-all of which will include wilderness and other protective designations...as they should. County specific land bills do not mean no protective designations! That is propaganda on the part of extreme environmentalists. Nothing more nothing less. I believe the opinion of a person who depends on public land for their livelihood and lifestyle should certainly have more say than a person from the other side of country who may or may not (likely not) ever set foot on the land. County specific land bills ensure that those Americans that have the most to gain-or lose-have the most say. All other Americans get a say via how their elected officials vote on the counties proposed bill. It's the right way!!!

I worked for refuge for 30 years on 6 different refuges/wetland management districts, a regional office, and Washington D.C. As former Secretary of the Interior once said: "Refuges are infinitely more important than our national parks" because they are close to more Americans and are catalysts for conservation across the broader American landscape. A system of lands encompassing all ecosystems in the U.S. and protecting a stunning array of species while providing hunting, fishing, and wildlife observation deserves the attention that separate agency status would present. A system of wildlife lands started by Theodore Roosevelt deserves no less.

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(cont.)

Evidence? Hundreds of examples, such as the one below, happen throughout the country. Sponsored by off-road enthusiasts. cleaning up garbage from everyone who thinks our world is their garbage can. Where there are no off-road trails, there is garbage. The off-road community unites to help keep our areas clean and usable for all to enjoy. We are not the problem, we are a part of the solution. Organizations like Tread lightly, help promote the responsible use of land we love to explore. There are many off-road enthusiast, who belong to clubs that promote responsible land use. We, as a community want to do our part , so all can enjoy. { Link }

Horses and History. On the East coast National Parks use birth control (PZP) to manage wild horse herds on barrier islands as opposed to the roundups of the BLM. This idea needs to be extended to the west where wild horses also have a legitimate historic as well as prehistoric place. The National Park Service could lead the nation in treating these animals as the native species they are. Americans are fascinated by them. Think of the history, the Native American cultures, the movement West, the Spanish. Climate change - how have things changed since horses originated here? How do they fit into the ecology as opposed to causing environmental problems since horses had long been in most of the west before the westward movement began?

No matter your choice, this would be illogical to argue against. If you are a hiker, the great reasons to hike would match these. If you are a camper, the same. Mountain biker, equestrian, trail runner, angler, hunter, adventurer, explorer, bird watcher, naturalist. We share what we love. Who we love and what we love is a thread, or glue, that holds families friends and communities together. If we were talking about board games or video games, dinner together or picnics, we could argue what we think is best for our type of needs and wants, but we could not argue what suits others. Like all things, respect, honor, understanding, tolerance and collaboration is necessary for a balanced and sustainable existence.

Just to educate you slightly, rainbow trout and brook trout are, in fact, native to North America. Rainbow trout are native to the West coast or North America and brook trout are native to the Eastern part of North America. Brown trout are native to Europe and Scandinavia.

California Forestry Association: already has a professionally designed courses that cover grades K thru 12 Teaching aides provided. classes for school teachers are held during summer months. Expenses ,food an lodging are covered, all the teacher needs to do is sign up. cal forests can be contacted at, www.foresthealth.org or call 916 444 6592 for further info.

proclamation. I suggest a presidential proclamation to reaffirm that the federal government's role of protecting and maintaining the National Parks System as a national patrimony for the whole people, present and future. The National Park Service should encourage and welcome the cooperation of citizens and communities, but it should never fall under the sway of commercial interests or groups seeking to promote activities that are harmful to the environment.

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Environmental education is absolutely critical if we intend to protect the planet. What better place to conduct this kind of essential work than in a national park setting? It is only when youth get to experience the outdoors for themselves that they truly begin to understand the importance of protecting the environment.

Bristol Bay: A gem on our planet. I was fortunate to grow up in Bristol Bay, Alaska. This gem in Southwest Alaska is home to a thriving culture, an incredibly rich and alive ecosystem, and the largest sockeye salmon runs on the planet. Those who do not learn from history are doomed to repeat it. In the past hundred years we have seen most of the world's salmon rivers destroyed. Ranging from Europe, to the Atlantic runs on the East, to more recently the salmon die off on the West coast, salmon habitat has been destroyed. Yet, still there is hope. Due to the harsh climates and low populations of the North, Alaska has maintained land incredibly rich with life. A large scale mine proposed by foreign mining interests threatens our headwaters. We are at a point where clean water on this planet is about to surpass gold in importance. I can't eat gold. I can't drink copper. But salmon, clean air, clean water, cultural identity, these are things that matter to my humanity. When I pass, as we all will, it's not the material things that'll matter to my life. What matters is the richness I have felt in our natural world. The peace and wonder that accompanies me when I can look out onto thousands of miles of life. Please, join me in telling the US Government that Bristol Bay is a National Treasure worth protecting!

Send a message that wildlife matters. The Federal Government can be a better partner for conservation by sending a message -- from the very top -- that wildlife and wilderness matter. Teddy Roosevelt lead the country and instilled values by insisting that national parks were treasures. We need similar leadership today to set an executive example. Whether it is protection of Alaska or Nevada against rampant energy exploration and development, protection of wild horses, polar bears or wolves, or preservation of habitat for birds and bees -- we need the men and women at the top to lead the way with vocal, visible statements.

This seems like the perfect example of a site that should be seriously considered for Obama's America's Great Outdoors conservation objective. Florida must be looking for ways to protect it's wildlife and it's water resources for the present as well as the future. To preserve this tract of land in it's current natural state will be a positive step toward achieving this goal. Anyone living in this area should see the value of preserving this fragile ecosystem in our midst and do what they can to keep it from development.

In the end we will conserve only What we love; We will love only what we understand; and we will understand only what we have been taught. -Baba Dioum I am passionate about my job as an environmental educator. Although an idealist, I cannot believe that I will transform every student into a conservationist. However I do believe it should be a constitutional right for every child to step off the asphalt and into the wilderness. To rob a child of that ability is to extinguish a part of them. Education is learning about the world. The world is the environment. Teach it.

Discussion Question 1

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(cont.)

We the People. The Constitution of United States reads " We the people". Off highway enthusiast are the People, we are the laborers the contractors the factory workers. We are the American families who love the great outdoors. We use it, we don't abuse it. Four wheel drive clubs do more to protect and care for the National Parks and Forest than any other group. We are there for the back breaking hard, down and dirty work. Maintaining trails taking care of water sheds and run offs. Other groups make a louder noise and can write bigger checks, OHV users do the real work. We need areas to play with our motorized vehicles and share family outing. Family is really what off roading is about. On the trails you will find husbands and wives with their children, Uncles and Nephews, Father and Sons, working together to accomplish the achievement and awards that come from traveling terrain that requires skill and perseverance. These times together builds better people. Responsible people who want their children and grand children to enjoy the same experience. You want a teenager whose active, healthy and respectful? Take him on a jeep trip. They will establish goals to protect, respect and care for Mother Nature as well as their own communities and the people around them. We the People of United States want and need access to our land, please do not make our land available to only a few who wish to control and dictate to the American people Mr. President I can make myself available if you wish to learn more.

Yes,thank You - There is so much room out there. What seems to work well is to provide user groups the opportunity to help care for the trails they love, skin in the game if you will. At least as long as the budgets are thin. The problem as I see it: historically infinite miles of logging roads were available, a fraction were enjoyed by OHV's or other user groups but there were no funds to care for them so when many were responsibly closed to re vegetate during the 50 years it takes to grow a new tree crop. It was perceived as a nefarious loss of access. The way forward involves local ranger districts understanding what folks enjoy and helping make it happen. When a logging road is built, ohvs, bikers, hikers, hunters, horses, and decommissioning should all be considered but we cannot afford, nor does it make sense to maintain them all.

One way to attain the promise of this idea is to form a cabinet level "Department of Conservation Lands". This department would include the US Forest Service, the Park Service, the Bureau of Land Management and the National Wildlife Refuge System. Each would retain their own charter and purposes; but be united under a single department and a single cabinet member. A single department would be able to provide a coherent vision for all PUBLIC LANDS. Those lands could be managed as an intertwined land system; each subject to its own mandates, but sharing solutions, ideas, information, and goals common to good, scientific stewardship. Another benefit--It would undoubtedly save money.

The National Wildlife Refuge System is an inspiration for wildlife advocates world wide. It is the only organization in the United States totally devoted to the preservation of our fantastic wildlife and its habitat.

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(cont.)

A great source for funding would be the bicycling and pedestrian beneficiaries of such planning efforts. Why burden others with plans that only benefit a rank minority of citizens? Possibly bicycle license tags and a hiking footwear federal excise tax would be appropriate. That way these folks could contribute to good conservation the way hunters have contributed to wildlife conservation for decades.

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(cont.)

Coming back to the OP, his idea is to have a sticker or sign with a characters large enough to allow identification of machines violating rules in that area. I'm not opposed to this, but I don't know that it has to be via a site-specific permit. Many states require snowmobilers to display registration numbers in some minimum size on their machine. This would accomplish what the OP stated he desired without creating another bureaucratic maze of permits. "A snowmobile does not automatically 'tread lightly' - operator discretion is crucial. The snowmobile will not keep itself out of unsuitable conditions, nor can it prevent its driver from pursuing clandestine bushwhack routes through breakable tree tops, etc. A snowmobile does not automatically 'tread lightly' - operator discretion is crucial. The snowmobile will not keep itself out of unsuitable conditions, nor can it prevent its driver from pursuing clandestine bushwhack routes through breakable tree tops, etc. Even though thoughtless pedestrians may adopt unsuitable routes on vulnerable terrain, they quickly tire of post-holing into brush, and soon turn around whereas a snowmobile just keeps going and going - even when it trenches foot-deep through unsupportive snow into underlying material. Like any remotely operated vehicle, a snowmobile must be driven with discretion to minimize its impact on the resource and on other forest visitors. Like any remotely operated vehicle, a snowmobile must be driven with discretion to minimize its impact on the resource and on other forest visitors." I agree with the first sentence. Responsible operation is important rather we're talking an over the snow vehicle, OHV or non-motorized recreation. And yes, there are irresponsible operators of all types. I do have to debate this statement: "Even though thoughtless pedestrians may adopt unsuitable routes on vulnerable terrain, they quickly tire of post-holing into brush, and soon turn around whereas a snowmobile just keeps going and going - even when it trenches foot-deep through unsupportive snow into underlying material." I believe what _____ is describing is a circumstance where a brush field, new growth seedlings or small trees exist, and are covered with a layer of snow. The vegetation creates air pockets where the snow is not fully supported, allowing the snowmobile or skier to break through into the void. In my experience, these are conditions that snowmobilers actively try to avoid. This unsupported snowpack may give way at any time, resulting in the machine getting stuck. "Unsticking" a 500 lb machine is far more unpleasant than it is for a skier to extricate himself from a "post hole" scenario (I believe by this _____ means where a skier sinks up to his knees or deeper when the snow gives way). This is a circumstance most riders try to avoid. In general, there are two types of snowmobile "configurations". The first are designed for operation on maintained trails or hard-packed snow conditions. These machines typically have (relatively) short tracks, and a wide ski stance for stability on twisty trails. Designated trails don't seem to be the issue the OP is discussing. Mountain sleds typically have much longer tracks to provide floatation and allow them to operate in many feet (10 or more) of snow. They typically are operated on deep snow off of groomed trails. They don't perform well on trails or hardpack conditions. The snowpack in preferred locations for these machines would tend to put seedlings and brush out of reach most of the time. That of course assumes that riding areas in higher elevations where these machines truly have no impact has not been closed to the snowmobiler. The specific conditions that these machines excel at are typically devoid of vegetation (above tree line and buried under snow) and have no wildlife during the winter season. This is not to say that there can't be issues at certain times of the season, and when operated in sensitive locations. Perhaps some snowmobile riders familiar with the area in

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question will chime in.

I, and I believe most other OHV users, agree that there is a need and benefit to Designated Wilderness areas, off limits to motorized recreation and management. They should exist in as near an untouched condition as possible. I'd go so far as elimination of manmade hiking trails, but that's for another thread. We also are a country that needs natural resources, including mined materials, timber and energy products. We need to be able to utilize some portion of our public lands for these purposes as well. In between are what some are proposing for "backcountry" designation. These areas could be utilized for ORV use on designated trails, a limited road system to allow access for camping, hunters, fishermen, etc. In addition, some logging, when done in areas where thinning and fuels reduction promotes forest health and recovery, makes sense. This type of compromise is opposed by at least a portion of the environmental community. A great many people, and I believe this includes both of us, recognize that there is need to achieve a balance between these uses. However, the perception is that there are extremists on both sides. The perception is that some in the "environmental" community want to eliminate all resource extraction and motorize recreation on public lands, and would restrict nearly all areas without a paved highway as wilderness. The opposite perception is that some that ride an OHV or supports some logging wants to see every inch of public land developed and cares nothing about nature, wildlife or our scenic backcountry. Like most issues, the truth, at least among rational people, is somewhere in the middle.

"If the President cites this forum (as a *whole*), indicating that it will have significant influence on policy (perhaps recounting a few salient details reflecting the breadth of viewpoints expressed) in the next State of The Union Address (i.e. as formally and publicly as possible)...would that do it?" There are several things the president could do that would convince me that he truly wanted public input from all users. If the president were to discuss this forum, if he were to inform the public that 6 of the top 10 ideas heavily promoted continued or enhanced opportunities for recreation involving OHVs, and if he were to do so during the state of the union address as you suggest, yes that could convince me. If he were to quote those results and direct the various land management agencies to re-evaluate their policies and efforts with regards to trail closures, that would convince me. I'm easily convinced, all he has to do is "walk the walk". I hope he does so. If he fails to mention that multiple use was strongly supported in this forum, promotes expansion of Wilderness designation and National Monuments over the opposition particularly of those in areas affected by them, it will also lead me to conclusions about his character.

Which particular National Forest areas in the lower 48 can you recommend for this, that has a comparable concentration of ore and would not also run into opposition of environmental groups?

Close hiking trails of no proven economic use that are degrading environment. Close all federal public land hiking trails unless it can be proven through EIS process that those hiking trails are necessary for long term economic benefit and are not causing environmental degradation.

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I'm assuming you're complaining because you were charged a fee to park at a developed trailhead and hike a maintained trail. If so, sorry, it's time hikers paid some small portion of the cost of maintaining trails.

Charging a fee for the use of parking lots at trail heads, and for the maintenance and construction of trails isn't "stealing". It sounds like we have a small handful of people in a user group that is opposed to paying their own way, and wants everyone else to do so. The RFDP program was a great way to raise funds for facilities from the specific users of these trail systems. Don't like to pay? Just stay off the trails, there are plenty of places to hike in the National Forests that are not developed trail. I know it's only a small, whiny minority, but threads like this make the hiking community look bad.

Someone on a snowmobile can get 50 miles from a parking area, climb several thousand feet, enjoy the view from the top of a mountain, have lunch and be back home that same day. Do you want to try that on snowshoes sometime? I doubt that most people on snowshoes or XC skis will cover more than 10 miles in a day. In my area, and most of the west, that barely puts you out off the plowed roads, let alone into the nicer parts of the backcountry where you are up in the mountains and enjoying the views. As such, I would say that this makes that area "unreachable" by any but a tiny portion of the population that are both willing to XC travel an extensive distance, but also to winter camp to do so. There is room for both groups. Designate some non-motorized areas near trailheads, and route motorized rec off into the deeper backcountry, where the related noise is less of an issue. Hopefully the non-motorized community is willing to meet half way here.

So sorry for not being clear... I meant it would be great for the younger ones to have something worthwhile AFTER school. Let's ask _____ to clarify.

I agree. Allowing students the opportunity to spend a night under the stars in a national park allows them to see themselves and the world they live in in a different light. I always found National parks to be a perfect canvas to exercise the art of teaching. Parks are a legacy that we have purchased for our children. ALL children should be able to experience those parks and learn to value the choices that were made by those who worked to make these parks a reality. To change minds, education must reach the heart. Students must be given reasons why they should choose to preserve open space. One who never experiences open space probably will not feel the passion to preserve it.

People do need to be able to go visit the wilderness to be able to fully appreciate it. However, it's not best to just let people freely roam into national parks and let them turn into tourist attractions. Then we will be defeating the idea of wilderness. American's should interact with the wilderness, but not destroy it. The staff in these national parks should be an small yet effective group of rangers that are proud of the wilderness and the nation that they serve. In his essay titled "Why Wilderness?" from 1938, Sigurd Olsen says, "...there are only two types of experience which can put their minds at peace, they way of wilderness or the way of war." Wouldn't we much rather prefer wilderness than war? We always talk about working toward world peace, so why don't we start sending people into the wilderness instead of war zones?

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It is imperative that we protect our Civil War battlefields before they are gone. Once they have been developed, they will not come back. They will be lost forever. We owe it the brave men, North and South, who fought there to do this. We must preserve their legacy, both sides. The war made us who we are as a nation and as a people. We should not ignore that past, run from that past, or forget that past. We must embrace it. We must ensure that our children and their children will be able to walk those fields as we have and experience that special feeling and deep contemplativeness that comes from being at a place where "something lingers, something abides."

Amen to that. Habitat is everything! Other than zoos, of course.

OHV recreation is here to stay, I would like to see the Forest Service and other land mgt. agencies work a little harder at the creation of safe, legal, OHV riding opportunities. Thanks.

In NC, all veterans fish for free. Finding useless conflicts of interest at this microlevel of payment for a privilege is to argue that we the people, through our government, can do nothing if you are opposed. Payment for parking (your private vehicle) functions like all punitive taxes--to discourage certain destructive behaviors. Carpool if you have problems?

Creating a national park in the Maine woods is a great idea. For people who are not from there, or do not have experience with the Maine woods, its very hard to know how to access the wonderful places we hear about. In other states, there are national parks/national forests/national recreation areas that provide easy access and knowledge. I know that if I go to a national park I will have a place to camp, a place to hike, a place to fish, etc. When I look at a map of northern Maine, I don't know where those opportunities exist. A national park will make access easier and bring people and money to the state. It's a great idea.

We have similar problems with a trail here in my area. There is also a problem with homeless camps along the trail area. The answer to both is enforcement, but we all know law enforcement agencies are stretched to the max. There are numerous examples from all fields of recreation for using volunteer rangers to maintain order. That would fit right in with user fees.

Let's be sure we define "closure" properly. In my area BLM has spent more than ten years trying to develop a plan for off-road recreation. Their lands continue to be "open unless marked closed." Existing trails have not been created under any form of management, so they have no legal status. You could say they are closing trails, but those trails were user-created and never appropriately evaluated. What the Forest Service and BLM are doing is determining where trails are appropriate. So before you holler "trail closure," make sure you're talking about trails that legally existed in the first place. As for _____. calling me out, I say he's never caught me in a lie. What he has done is re-define my words to fit his own preconceived notions. It's a common tactic for the helmet visor vision crowd.

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I must respectfully bring to your attention that motor vehicle use is heavily subsidized. Our roadways are paid for by everyone, whether they drive or not. How much of an impact on roadway maintenance does the average bicycle create versus the average car? On top of that, you can park 12 to 20 bikes in one typical vehicle parking space. Space for parking is not cheap and it eats up our urban landscape. Everyone you see on a bike is saving a parking space for you. _____ is absolutely correct in his additional costs, which just pile on the justification for better bike facilities. Incidentally, like the original proposer, I also live in San Diego and I own two cars, but only drive when I have to, which I have been doing for over 11 years.

Urban and suburban garden plots to help people achieve food security.. There are many federal, state, and local lands that could be converted into community garden plots to allow people to grow their own food and achieve food security. Many times, people who live in apartments, condos, or projects don't have usable space with which to plant a garden. Leadership in this area would help alleviate poverty, encourage outdoor activities, and would improve health of the users both through the exercise and the food produced. An initiative by the federal government could train the workers to administer the plots, and produce jobs for those with little training or skills. It would be a great employment opportunity for young people.

Outdoor activity/education as an alternative to "regular physical education" would bring youth into contact with the great outdoors and offer ways of staying fit and having fun at the same time. Children who may not do well in competitive and or difficult sports oft times excel in outdoor activities such as canoeing, kayaking, fishing, swimming, archery and wilderness survival or team building challenges. The results are more confidence and higher self esteem.

How about donating some of your Manhattan address lands to the Wilderness Preservation Project and leave ours alone. Has it occurred to all of you east coasters that you are the ones who have destroyed what were once beautiful lands in the East? We, out here, preserve our lands well on the state level in Utah. The lands that we always find are managed poorly are the ones you have taken from our state without our permission. In Utah we need less federal regulation and bad advice from people who already messed up all their lands. Demote.

Education. Teach kids every phase of conservation. Let them know the jobs of everyone in the field. From the Rangers to the office workers. What the importance it is for them, and their future generations benefit. What an interesting and rewarding career choice it can be for them.

I AGREE - CONSERVE!

Michigan has Sleeping Bear National Seashore, Pictured Rocks National Seashore, Isle Royale National Park, quantities of state forest lands and national forests. We are already a state with great outdoors trails and lands for all kinds of activities. A problem with state or federal land is that local governments have a funding problem, since those lands don't provide taxing revenue. I agree with _____ about the CCC -- their work is still a pleasure and inspiration that I wish our current politicians would replicate.

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Being a profamily advocate, the multi use facet of the forests is important to those whom believe that responsible use of the mountains, forests, rivers and trails by all grows the value system we all need to share with each other.

I support the creation of a Maine Woods National Park. I have been fortunate to visit 37 of our 58 national parks. Each day spent there was a day of wonder and fun. I shared the experiences with my wife and friends who visited with me. On many of these occasions, I recall reflecting that at least our government got this one right. To preseve and protect vital national resources for all time for all the citizens of the USA was a brilliant movement that should not end today. We the people of America who built a nation and inspired its people to be free, fair, and just ask our government to do the right thing; preserve the North Woods of Maine and New Hampshire, its forests, lakes, pristine rivers and streams, wildlife, valleys, and majestic mountains for the people for all time. The congested noisy Northeast needs a presure relief valve to recreate, renew, and rejoice that we too have a enduring treasure to share with our children and grandchildren who also may inherit our legacies of conservation of the very ecosystem that provides out jobs, homes and food. Man cannot live without nature and nature cannot live as we know it without man.

Being from Michigan, I have seen first hand the kind of thing you are talking about. That is one reason I have always advocated roadless areas and wilderness areas.

Good point. Most hunting and fishing groups (among others), advocate unroaded areas for all the benefits they provide to big game animals and fish.

Access is important. Areas without roads are also important. Here is something I read recently that I agree with. While roads are important for providing sportsmen with access to the lands they use to hunt and fish, too many roads are associated with increased big-game vulnerability and fewer mature bucks and bulls. Too many roads also can decrease the quality of important spawning habitat for fish. Because you saw wildlife does not mean we should not preserve some areas for the good of people and animals. I think there is room for both, motorized access is some areas, and areas without roads, for all the benefits that provides. Some people in past generations saw the benefit of preserving wildlife and wild areas. I think most understand that if we want to ensure that enough habitat will be around for future generations, we must plan carefully today.

To have solitude, you need limited roads.

A couple good reasons to have national forests is to preserve wildlife and wild lands. The many different recreational opportunities are also good reasons. This doesn't mean you get to perform every activity your heart desires on every single piece of public land. There has to be laws and regulations.

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To not preserve some of our wild areas and develop everything would be irresponsible. The overdevelopment of our public lands is what will lead to the destruction of them. There should be areas for development, there should also be areas without development.

Anywhere that is not a truly wild area. How about some place that already has roads and possibly other development. We need to start moving in the direction of more recycling and less land fills. There are plenty of places to mine in the lower 48 states. 50% of our national forests alone are open to things like mining. There is also BLM land, state land, and private property.

You know this is a Chinese company that wants to mine this area. The appetite the Chinese have for natural resources is insatiable. I believe what they want to mine for is gold and copper. They can go to Africa to mine for gold as far as I'm concerned. If your looking for an area in the lower 48, they have mined for copper in Michigan for years. The boom and bust industry of mining hasn't made the area they mine for copper here very prosperous. Some things are more important than the money to be made by developing every concentration of minerals they find. With 50% of our national forests open to mining, I'm sure there must be a better alternative. There will probably be opposition from environmental groups no matter where they mine. I don't think mining has a good environmental track record. I would rather see them find an area where they could buy and own the land to be mined, especially if there are already roads and development present. They can lay on the ground and f*ck the land then for all I care. Here's my question for you. In the past you have said you are against areas being designated as wilderness that are not truly wilderness. Here we have an area that is wilderness. Do we let this go, other areas go, like the Peel Watershed in the Yukon (not U.S.), and then every other wild area that people want to develop. What area should we save?

I agree, there is room for all types of recreation and room for things like wilderness as well. What I find ignorant and disappointing is people who fail to see the value of preserving things like wilderness and only see land for what they are able to get out of it. Land is more than that. Wildlife and people depend on wild areas, for numerous reasons. Living in the midwest, I have seen areas change from having a wild character to development. That is not what most want for all of our public land.

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Most people understand that if we want wild areas to be available into the future, we have to plan carefully today. People of past generations who advocated preserving wild areas were also criticized. Now, it is apparent that they were forward thinkers and the areas they preserved are some of our most treasured areas. Development is important and there is room for it. We have used a lot of land for every need and recreation people enjoy. Wild areas are also important for both people and animals. I would have to disagree with some of the numbers I have read about the amount of "truly undeveloped land". There is some sort of development on almost every area of our country. Even our national forests, which most would think are there to preserve wildlife, are used for development (mining, logging, etc.). If we actually preserved the wild areas that are left, we would probably have a good amount available. The only problem is we are using more than we are preserving and that trend does not seem to be changing. Our population is growing and we are using more and more. You would think in today's modern society, more could see the benefit of preservation and living with nature.

I think it's strange that because some people do not see an issue that affects their own area, then everything must be fine. Even people years ago knew conservation was important. Theodore Roosevelt comes to mind. I don't see how some can argue that there is no issue in regard to wildlife habitat when our own country's population has probably more than doubled since T. Roosevelt. He knew, and was right, that conservation is one of the most important issues our country will face. Remember, critics have always found reasons to not preserve wildlife and wild lands. Some of our most valued areas are still here today because of forward thinking conservationists like Roosevelt.

Sounds good if the waterways aren't closed to existing motorboat visitors in the process. In reality all waters in America's Great Outdoors should be open to use by all Americans.

Sorry to have to disagree. I do not enjoy my ATV. To be candid it beats my 60+ old ass up. I use it because I can't walk the long distances to places I love to see anymore due to the aging process. I guess I am not quite the introvert I used to think I was since I do enjoy meeting other folks way back in the swamps I frequent whether they are on an ORV and I am on foot or in my canoe or vis versa. At this point in my life I feel I have learned the importance of having a sharing attitude from dealing over the last 14 years with many of the conflicting philosophies expressed in a mean spirited manner on this site. I don't consider the average 2-4 mph vehicle speed of myself or others at Big Cypress National Preserve (BCNP) (not Park) as buzzing around. Any faster invites injury and disaster. Nobody can afford that 20 miles deep in the swamp. I don't have to imagine what is suggested for me to imagine because 90 percent of those who enter the swamps down here at BCNP use ORV's already. The fact of the matter is that I rarely see someone else while on foot or an ORV during a day in BCNP. It is that huge of a place. I do know I am lucky to get to go there though and value the experiences in BCNP as much as life itself. Most Americans aren't up for our swamp on foot for more than a mile.

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Many ideas have mentioned Wilderness. Many readers may be automatically assuming this word wherever it is used is referring to the Federal designation that many folks myself included disagree with due to the extreme restrictions associated with the designation. I am beginning to think some folks have possibly using the word to indicate places that are remote and wilderness like even though those places are not classified as Wilderness per Federal Law. This may have caused many of us to vote to demote ideas due to misinterpretation of what the idea author meant when the word wilderness was included in an idea. I will assume at my risk that this idea is not referring to wilderness as per U.S. Federal Law and vote to promote the new outlook presented here. _____ please comment here to let me know if I am right or wrong in my assumption.

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(cont.)

Greater Flexibility for Forest Legacy and LWCF Grants. As many individuals and organizations have pointed out during the America's Great Outdoors listening sessions, the key to empowering communities that are struggling to protect their lands, their waters and their quality of life is fostering innovative public-private partnerships. Two programs that have been instrumental in such partnerships in the past, and that could have an even greater impact in the future, are the Forest Legacy Program and the Land and Water Conservation Fund. These are both highly successful federal programs that have conserved millions of acres of land in communities across the nation. However, to meet the challenges facing conservation in the 21st century both programs could be enhanced through greater flexibility. The groups listed below, including private landowners and conservation groups from across the country, recommend that the Forest Legacy Program and the Land and Water Conservation Fund be enhanced to allow direct support of community-based conservation by providing federal funds for projects where land trusts purchase and hold the land or the conservation easements protecting the land. This kind of new federal flexibility would strengthen both programs by allowing them to:

- Leverage federal funds by making it easier to secure greater co-investments from state and local governments and private sources.
- Foster the development of more ambitious public/private partnerships that work across multiple jurisdictions at landscape scale.
- Facilitate the development of large-landscape projects that require pooling funds from multiple funding sources and that combine the use of different land protection tools, like fee simple purchases, conservation easements, and tax incentives for donations.
- Minimize federal costs for monitoring and stewardship of conserved lands by partnering with community-based groups capable of generating the continuing long-term local support needed for successful completion.

Supporting groups include: The Pacific Forest Trust Amigos de los Rios California Council of Land Trusts California Rangeland Trust Cayukos Land Conservancy Conservation Forestry, LLC Conservation Northwest Conservation Partners Elkhorn Slough Foundation The Forest Guild Forest Society of Maine Grand Traverse Regional Land Conservancy Heart of the Lakes Center for Land Conservation Policy Land Trust of Santa Cruz County Lyme Timber Company, LLC Land Trust Alliance Land Trust of Arkansas Land Trust of Tennessee Lassen Land and Trails Trust Marin Agricultural Land Trust Massachusetts Audubon Society Meadowsend Timberlands Mendocino Land Trust Mountain Meadows Conservancy Muir Heritage Land Trust Northcoast Regional Land Trust Northland Forest Products, Inc. Peninsula Open Space Trust Pennsylvania Land Trust Association The Pinchot Institute Placer Land Trust Redlands Conservancy Redwood Coast Land Conservancy Roseburg Forest Products Company Sedgwick Land Company Sequoia Riverlands Trust Society for the Protection of New Hampshire Forests Solano Land Trust Tall Timbers Transition Habitat Conservancy

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Thanks for your comment, but I would note that the idea you seem to oppose does not directly relate to the specific idea all these groups recommend. This recommendation would, in fact, foster an even greater role for private, community-based conservation -- including working lands conservation easements, where the land can remain in production, contributing to the local economy and stays on the local tax rolls. The list of groups supporting this recommendation includes private landowners and conservation groups -- groups from Florida on up to Michigan, and from Maine to California. I'm sure these groups disagree with each other on a number of other issues. But they came together to support this particular idea. It's an example of private landowners and conservation groups coming together and collaborating around a practical solution to conservation that works in the real world. That's a good thing.

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Overall there are many aspects of your proposal that I agree with, but there are a few that I would like clarified, revised, or removed. I do think there should be some trails left natural for the more experienced and patient hiker, as well as areas that should be maintained for more accessible use. To an extent, I would even agree with distinguishing the two areas. I concur that the wilderness should be wild, left for man to fight through for himself, and that parking lots are a large distraction to the wilderness aesthetics. However, I have always been told that no more than ten people can be allowed in a group in a wilderness setting. So this concentrated use that you're speaking of cannot have an extreme impact, unless every trail and park that I have ever visited made up that rule coincidentally. I also prefer to hike in a more solitary state. That is why, when I know it is going to be a beautiful hiking day, I choose a trail less known and less accessible to all people. If I cannot find one of those, I enjoy the beauty around me and the comradeship of meeting new people on a trail, and maybe that is something that you could look into. As for technology goes, I agree that cell phones take away much of the experience and a GPS ruins the excitement of blundering through the wilderness alone, and yet I cannot agree that signals for rescue should be ignored. That is not only irresponsible to our fellow citizens, but also far too dangerous. I'm sure that the many people who have died in the wilderness would highly disagree with that idea. If help had been available, I have a feeling even the most rugged wilderness man would have accepted it. Since you disagree with GPS systems, do you also disagree with maps of the wilderness? Do you wish that we all had to make the deathly trek through the Sierra Nevada's for the first time, or even through the Appalachians? As much as I love the wilderness, I am appreciative of the work that volunteers do to keep up trails. Your last paragraph is very interesting to me. By "these areas" I'm assuming that you mean the designated areas that you were speaking of. I'm sure that you know that Section 4 C of the Wilderness Act of 1964 bans any permanent or temporary road systems and use of the vehicles you mentioned. "Except as specifically provided for in this Act, and subject to existing private rights, there shall be no commercial enterprise and no permanent road within any wilderness area designated by this Act and, except as necessary to meet minimum requirements for the administration of the area for the purpose of this Act (including measures required in emergencies involving the health and safety of persons within the area), there shall be no temporary road, no use of motor vehicles, motorized equipment or motorboats, no landing of aircraft, no other form of mechanical transport, and no structure or installation within any such area" (Wilderness Act of 1964). I am just slightly confused by the fact that you want wilderness to remain wild and that overcrowding is a problem, but you would be okay with OHV's going through the wild? Or with trails being cut down and maintained so that a jeep can fit through? Does this make your quest for absolute wilderness a selfish act, since it seems like you only want the areas you will be in to be kept as close to their natural state as possible?

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I agree with your sentiment but don't know what solution you are suggesting. When I take my child to the park I leave it up to him if he wants me to play with him or if he would rather play with the other children at the park. Either way, I stay close by. The issue I see are the parents who sit in their vehicles, often with them running, while their children play unsupervised. It's no coincidence that these children are often the troublemakers. If your message is "Parents, spend some time outdoors with your kids, don't just dump them off and expect others to supervise them" then I wholeheartedly agree.

In 1976 Congress provided explicit criteria for roads on BLM lands to be considered for wilderness. If a route wasn't "improved and maintained by mechanical means to insure relative regular and continuous use," it can't disqualify the area from consideration for wilderness.

Like OHV trails, hiking trails have been closed in many places because of excessive impacts. This started with getting them out of mountain meadows in the high Sierra in the 1950s. Closures and relocations are still being done. My own trail club just opened a relocation several miles long, all done with volunteer labor. Any trail should be closed if it is degrading public lands and waters.

Good idea! During the Great Depression in the 1930s the government bought up tax-delinquent lands, many of them also depleted by farming or logging. They were restored by the work of the Civilian Conservation Corps. Some are now part of national forests. Others were turned over to the states and are now state parks, state forests, and wildlife management areas. They attract visitors who benefit local residents through the tourism industry.

Everyone has a right to use the federal lands, but nobody has a right to abuse them. For more than 50 years hiking trails have been closed or rerouted when they were found to hurt the lands, waters, or wildlife habitat. In the same manner, OHV trails need to be cut back to a system that can be sustained without impairing the lands and waters. National forests and BLM public lands now contain thousands of miles of unauthorized OHV routes that were never designed for sustainability. Most of those should be closed and rehabbed to stop erosion. I'm not for a total closure, but the abuse needs to be stopped.

This is an excellent idea. "Wilderness-quality public lands" include areas BLM has found to have wilderness character (now up to 6 million acres after BLM corrected its original 1980 inventory), and other areas Utah citizen conservationists studied using the BLM criteria and found to have wilderness character. There's room for disagreement because some of the BLM criteria are subjective, such as "outstanding opportunities for solitude or a primitive and unconfined type of recreation." Ultimately, Congress will have to decide which lands will be designated as wilderness. America's Red Rock Wilderness Act is one way to do that. County-by-county bills like the Washington County law would be another way. No matter which type of bill is used, protection is needed so the wilderness values of these lands won't be wrecked before Congress makes the decisions.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

I believe the question of compromise is best approached case by case, site by site. The potential for minerals and other resources can be analyzed. The area's values for wilderness purposes and the whole range of recreational uses can be considered. If a particular area is more valuable to the public for wilderness purposes, it should be designated as wilderness. If it's more valuable to the public for non-wilderness purposes such as mining, fossil fuels, offroad vehicle riding or mountain biking, it shouldn't be designated as wilderness. Boundaries can often be drawn to resolve some conflicts. That's how Congress has been handling the wilderness question for many years. It's an approach that considers everybody's concerns and viewpoints.

Some people would oppose anything with the name "conservation" or "environment," not to mention "nature" or "ecosystem." Environmental education has made great progress, but there is still work to do. I'm thankful that high school students today have a better understanding of ecology than many adults.

Well Said, I completely agree with you. Access to our public lands will continually grow future generations of Americans that will learn to love our natural environment. Restricting access only grows indifference to the future of the land, opening the door for future development and permanent destruction of our wild lands.

"Land of Many Uses" connects the American people, who are a "People of Many Interests", to the Great Outdoors.. The National Forest Service has a motto. You may have seen it on the welcome sign the last time you visited a National Forest; "The land of Many Uses". If anything needs conservation, it is the meaning of this motto. American's recreate and connect to our national lands in many different ways. We should embrace this diversity and welcome all to partake of the natural wonders that exist throughout this great country of ours. Locking up land and excluding people from recreating in our public lands only goes to hurt conservation. The best way to get people reconnected to the great outdoors is to get them out there in the great outdoors. The discovery channel just doesn't cut it. When people get connected to the land, then their desire to conserve it will be enhanced and so will support for conservation efforts. Let's all get out there and experience it for ourselves and bring our children along and get them connected at the same time. Please conserve our "Land of Many Uses"

Balance is what the motto, "Land of Many Uses" is all about. Balancing the needs and desires of all of our citizens, not just those of a few.

In this forum, we the people have been asked, by our representatives to give ideas of how we can be reconnected to the great outdoors. My idea is that we need to preserve access to the people and the legal activities that they pursue. If that requires funding to protect the resources and the safety of the visitors to our public lands, I am all for it. In fact there are many funding sources all ready in place. What may need to happen is that those funding sources are protected from the raids that the politicians constantly launch on these funding sources. So I am raising my voice to my representatives that I would like to see access preserved for all Americans to recreate in our National Forests. In so doing we will be reconnected to the great outdoors and fulfill the mission of this forum.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Recreation is far more than play, it is vital for a healthy body and mind. If you think it is expensive to provide recreational facilities and services, you might want to think about how expensive it would be with out those recreational activities made available to the general public. Crime and violence would rise, do to the fact that there would be more idle time and less mental healing from recreation. The costs to mediate said rise would far out way the cost of providing safe and secure recreation. So to answer your question "Do you think we have money to spend to expand opportunities for play when we are cutting food stamp benefits and refusing to support healthcare for our children, handicapped, and chronically ill?" I say yes, because without it we will have more of the bad that you are concerned about. Especially since, like I stated earlier, funding sources are already in place to address your issues, and these funding sources would disappear if the forest was closed to forest users.

My biggest problem with your last statement is that you are assuming that a "bushwaked trail" is going to cause harm to some critical habitat. It has been my experience that most of the "bushwaked trails" are much less intrusive on the environment than the actively "maintained trails" by the forest service. The forest service comes in with a trail dozer and widens the trails and cause unnatural surfaces like cuts and fills that are subject to increased erosion and sediment transportation. Natural trails that follow the landscape and are crisscrossed with roots and rocks hold the soil in place and cause minimal erosion. Your assumption that trails and roads in "less roaded areas" cause damage to critical habitat is just wrong. The mistake made in the past is to assume that every footprint that man makes is detrimental to life on this planet. In fact, the environment of these so called roadless areas have no bearing on their boundaries since a description of what kind of habitat is there or what species may live in them is irrelevant. They are only defined by whether they have roads in them or not, and then they don't even follow that definition. This is where my frustrations stem from.

No I wasn't suprised by the financial market collapse, because just like mother nature everything works in cycles. This whole concept that everything should stay stagnant because that is what we are use to or comfortable with is so childish. It is time to put our baby blankets down and grow up.

It seems to me that the Environmental communittee is very willing to share the public lands with all of us, as long as we do it their way: on foot. There are irresponsible OHV riders out there, but they are a minority, not a majority. It seems that you only see the bad and not the good we do. As a member of an OHV club we have done many projects to help protect our public lands. Public land whould remain public, available to ALL!

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Conservation and Management of Fishery Resources. The American Sportfishing Association's approach to conservation and management of our natural resources is focused on the resources on which the public depends for high quality, easily accessible recreational fishing opportunities. Over the last 30 years, significant strides have been taken to improve the health of America's aquatic resources, including water quality and fish habitat. We are faced with many fisheries resources challenges but by and large, state and federal agencies, backed by important pieces of legislation including the Clean Water Act and the Magnuson-Stevens Act, have succeeded in reversing a declining trend in many of our nation's rivers, streams, lakes and coastal areas. Much of this success can be attributed to the tremendous infusion of funding for federal and state water and fisheries management in the form of excise taxes on fishing and boating related purchases and fishing license sales. Since 1950, recreational anglers and boaters have, through a unique user tax on motorboat fuel, fishing tackle, and other sportfishing equipment, generated more than \$5.7 billion in funding through the Sport Fish Restoration and Boating Trust Fund for fishery conservation and enhancement, habitat restoration, clean water programs and boating safety programs. In addition, fishing license sales generate nearly \$560 million in annual revenues for state conservation and education programs. American sportsmen have played an important role in the stewardship of our natural resources for over 100 years. This, in conjunction with the financial reality of recreational fishing, makes it increasingly important to ASA's conservation goals that the sportsmen's community receives acknowledgement and assurance of its formal and defined roles in the management of fisheries resources. American anglers have demonstrated time and again that they are ready, willing and able to modify how, when and where they fish in the interest of maintaining healthy fisheries. Whether it is through changes in regulations by the government or through voluntary changes in behavior, such as using more fish-friendly equipment, recreational anglers put the resource first. The recreational fishing industry recognizes the need for abundant and sustainable fish populations first and foremost. However, actions taken by the federal government, in particular, to conserve and sustain fishery resources must be met with parallel actions that ensure easier access to those fisheries for the public, a point we'll touch on further below. Recreational anglers will continue to act as good stewards of the waters they treasure, but progress must be made to maximize their buy-in when it comes to federal management actions. -Gordon Robertson, Vice President, American Sportfishing Association

Thanks, I'm not a typical anything; I'm unique, just like everyone else. And I enjoy a bit of satire, particularly when dealing with an obvious pseudonym. This idea, BTW, makes a great deal of sense. At one point in my elementary school years I recall we have a "school garden" and all the kids worked and learned.....and enjoyed a "harvest dinner" at the end of the school year.

Forty years of living in and studying northwest forests shows me something different than "overgrown forests that burn at the drop of a hat." I agree that the forests have been mis-managed. They have been overcut and the resulting unmanaged mix of saplings, brush and grasses are what fuel the fires. Our forests are overstocked, but not with mature timber. On federal lands and industrial lands the timber is too often cut and the landscape left untended. Fire management has created similar problems. If you want to see well-managed timberland, look to the private, non-industrial forestland owners.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Even if some of the designated off-road vehicle trails are closed (and many miles would remain open), there still would be many ways to access these areas - hiking, horseback riding, paddling, etc. 80% of the lands that are proposed for wilderness would be within 2 miles of a road. Here is an example of the area near Moab (all of the routes in green would remain open to off-road vehicles if all proposed wilderness was designated): { Link }

The BLM has the authority under the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976 to provide interim protection to lands it identifies as having wilderness quality. This is what Wilderness Study Areas (WSAs) are. DJ - This "idea" is not about America's Red Rock Wilderness Act; thus this comment board is not a forum to debate its merits.

DM makes an excellent point - well articulated and spot on. We need to allow some use and restrictions need to be based on common sense.

Yes! Charge fair-market prices for the lumber, and for the roads built to access it, and make sure it's harvested sustainably for the forest, not the corporation. Since we refuse to let forests burn, some cutting is needed, but let those who sell the wood pay for getting it.

People who think the wilderness is disappearing obviously dont get outdoors much.

I support this idea whole-heartedly. Two comments though. I find the staff in the USFS very hard working and dedicated. The problem that has occurred is with limited staff and resources they have to deal with more paperwork, more studies, and more litigation. They sometimes can't pursue worthwhile projects or provide on-the-ground support for what seems obvious improvements since they know they can't get all of the required pre-work done. So they start operating from a defensive custodial position not a proactive one. I can't say I blame them but I do wish the situation could improve. The Secure Rural Schools and Community Self-Determination Act is no longer funded at all after this year. Expansion isn't so much an issue right now as reauthorization. Some legislators are trying to make this happen. Please support their efforts.

This is a tremendous idea. In the northwest, private lands and working landscapes play a huge role in maintaining connectivity for wildlife. Incentives that can allow us to maintain our open and working landscapes in private hands, rather than see development as the only alternative, are needed. As an example, see work with ranchers in NE Washington to conserve lands that are key for wildlife: { Link }

As an environmental educator in Yosemite, I understand the need for our youth to connect with nature. For, it is with spending quality time getting to know and understand a wild place that people will care about it, and protect it for generations to come.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

I love the idea of citizen science, such as the Christmas bird count and various other projects. However, the challenge is always recruiting a corps of dedicated, conscientious volunteers who will actually follow through and consistently, over the long term, collect usable data.

Where do you come up with this b.s.? Obviously you are just saying this without actually witnessing this happening. I have been riding my dirt bike since I was 8 years old. I respect the trail, others on it and pick up after the hikers. If there are horses on the trail, I shut my bike off until they pass. I think that you are self-centered to only want things your way and yes your comments are rubbish!

I am a member of 2 different local not for profit offroad clubs. our clubs do many community service events each year. We do lake shore cleanups and trail cleanups. We have 2 events each year where we go camping and trail riding. If you do not come to the trail cleanups you do not get to go to the camping events. We do this to preserve the trail for our future generations if they choose to ride the trails.

""As the world population increases, wildness decreases"" Not so We have more virgin forest now than we have had over 150 years ago. It seems most of the population has grown in small clusters (cities)

This is the peoples land. not all people are able to hike. Don't worry about me and my jeep I practice pack it in and pack it out, and tread lightly. Public lands should always be open to the public!

Since I work for a living there is now way I could see the amount the country i see when I travel the less travel road in my Jeep.(I only get a couple of weeks per year for my vacation.) Not all Enthusisist like to get in a mud hole and just sling mud. I absolutly hate mud, it eats up seals and bearings if it past the seals. I drive as gently as possible. Nothing is as american as a Jeep you have built with your own 2 hands climbing a 100 year old mountain road.

_____ is right that there are times and places where no motorized access should be permitted. There are places where motorized access is appropriate, but not ATVs and jeeps in roadless areas. The pro-ATV crowd makes a mistake in lumping all recreation and conservation progress to their agenda of personal motorized vehicles. where appropriate, it is possible to use public transportation to the backcountry, to then permit hiking and camping. For example, in Denali National Park in Alaska, you can take a bus (not a personal vehicle) to a hub, or be dropped off along the way, in the park's backcountry for personal, non-motorized recreation. That is a good model where promoting recreation is important and expanded access is appropriate to the character of the resource. But there are some places where all motorized access should be prevented, because of distinctive wilderness quality or sensitive species.

Far too many of our youth have never made contact with the natural world; without interaction, there is little to ignite a passion to protect the unknown and unfamiliar. We need to do whatever we can to encourage people to connect with our planet.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

My comment was in response to: "Locking up land and excluding people from recreating in our public lands only goes to hurt conservation. The best way to get people reconnected to the great outdoors is to get them out there in the great outdoors." Look at the wilder areas in your neighborhood -- if yours is like mine, you will find trash and criminal activity. When you invite children to play in your woods, you need to clean up after them and make sure they aren't exposed to unexpected hazards, which means you must patrol to see what is going on, moderate the parties, and clean up after your guests. That is the practical, dollars and cents reason why land is locked up and people are excluded from recreating.

Why not introduce grey wolves where there are too many horses?

Sorry for the slow return on your comment -- I was out enjoying the back country for a few days. Your comment -- "I take it that you would support enhancing jet contrails with chemicals..." As you so often do, you are trying to falsely read into my comments only to further your point. There is nothing in my comment about chemicals that you would lead you to your statement. I only pointed directly to the information on contrails, which you supplied, being overall beneficial! Thus, most likely, making your idea a bad one for the environment and nature. You do make a very valid point that this very well could be "...scientific fix for global warming...". This has apparently been studied and shows to help the environment. I would believe a study like this could be considered as geoengineering. WOW -- something as simple as water vapor, without chemicals coming from jets trails could help combat global warming. We possibly would never have known about it if some people post ideas on this forum got their way to prevent simple geoengineering scientific studies.

Jet fuel (and anything added to it) is sprayed into the combustor of the jet engine. If I remember there are usually 18-20 nozzles to spray fuel into the airstream. So it is sprayed! With only a quick search I failed to come up with anything that would indicate that the process is done by jet fuel additives - at all! I did find: "Streaks of chemicals created in the air by SPRAY systems on airplanes at any altitude" - Note the "SPRAY" part! "The most common chemicals used for cloud seeding include silver iodide and dry ice (frozen carbon dioxide)." I think even propane was mentioned! I doubt dry ice or propane is a popular choice to go with jet fuel. I do realize that not everyone knows how a jet engine works and there are spray applications needed to make that turbine spin and thus the need to spray fuel, additives and any chemicals used. But then again -- "Pretty hard for you to understand, I see."

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Your statement -- "I post an idea here it is for the people who initiated this list." So then the purpose of your post is to dish out rhetoric like Hitler, genocide, scandalous, downright evil and heinous crime to the people who initiated this list! Why! When your title of an Idea is "Control carbon at the source, GEOENGINEERING IS NOT AN OPTION" -- that pretty much says "NO" - no matter what, nothing would be allowed -- no matter if geoengineering is good or bad. White paint on the roofs or otherwise. If you really think that I would believe you on "You will be a part of an experiment without your permission..." with your lack of credibility and, as usual, no facts to back up your claims, then you are sadly mistaken. You have not displayed any facts about your statement of it being illegal and a rape either. Your statement of "They are talking about hundreds of billions of dollars of geoengineering." is directly disputed by the article you have linked -- it states "In fact, starting to investigate the feasibility of deliberately changing the climate won't require a massive allocation of federal dollars...". That's where this program is at -- the feasibility stage -- what will work -- what will not work. If ideas like yours were widely accepted we would never know what might have made the planet a better place, what might have been useful in turning global warming around. There is no "experiment without your permission", there is no "deadly consequences for you and your family", there is no "ruin the great outdoors so no one can ever enjoy it ever again.", there is no "slow death of millions of people" and there is no "extinction of species on a massive scale "going on -- AT ALL. Seems like there is just _____ over reacting for votes!

I am basing it solely on the information you have supplied with the links to articles. I have yet to see anything in the articles that you have made claims to! Sorry but what you are stating is just not backed up by facts. With the respect I have for the science field, and the EPA, I would hope they could come up with positive results, be able to recognize any results that could be detrimental and display the integrity not to use anything that would be harmful to man, nature or planet.

By definition Geoengineering : The modern concept of geoengineering (or climate engineering) is usually taken to mean proposals to deliberately manipulate the Earth's climate to counteract the effects of global warming from greenhouse gas emissions. That could mean proposals as simple as painting roof tops white, or that the facts of an article posted by you that jet contrails have a positive effect of combating global warming. Geoengineering is not doom and gloom. One article states --"To date, no large-scale geoengineering projects have been undertaken. Some limited tree planting and cool roof projects are already underway..." Yea! Tree planting and cool roof project will lead directly to your point of "...heinous crime against humanity and nature that will cause the slow death of millions of people and the extinction of species on a massive scale." Get a grip!

Another example of the same type of group that works with BLM - Mojave Desert Heritage & Cultural Association - { Link } The mission of the Mojave Desert Heritage & Cultural Association is to research and conserve the natural and cultural history of the Mojave Desert region for the purpose of preserving and sharing these resources in perpetuity.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

This is a hard call for me. On one hand I feel strongly that the Forest, parks and all belong to everyone and we subsidize them with our tax dollars. Yet I see the need for more localized funding to support the local effort with improvements and maintenance. I have paid for years the "Adventure Pass" that the Forest Service sell to access several areas in many of the Southern California Forest areas. This pass has also often been controversial. But it allows for those of us that use and access these areas, and the forest in general, more often the opportunity support what we use. I personally access the areas way more often than the average person and don't mind paying the additional fees -- but that does not make it correct for everyone or for that matter legal if it is not.

As usual you Sky Is Falling! 1) "the sky is becoming permanently brown throughout the northern hemisphere." That is, as usual, very inclusive and not correct. I am looking at perfect blue sky right now. Permanent its not! 2) "almost all of the land is being used by people" -- You are kidding right? Again to inclusive and not correct. 3) "the population density is increasing in all areas that are not owned by the government." Yup! too inclusive -- when was the last time you drove by a farm or a ranch? Density of zero is not increasing. 4) "most of the USA is deforested for farms, cities, roads." Then we have no forest at all is what you are saying? Think again. 5) "wilderness areas look remarkably beautiful even from 30,000 feet." -- Yes they do along with all of the non Designated Wilderness areas! Wait I thought you said the sky is PERMANENTLY brown -- so which is it -- brown is beautiful -- wilderness is beautiful and you can see it because it is not all brown?

Ah, there you go - just reading into what I say without even a clue as to what I said. Even in my last comment I stated - "It does not take a satellite photo to realize we have air pollution, the overcrowding of areas, high demands on our natural resources, etc. etc.". I am not a "doom and gloom" kind of a person. Your own little world must be very sad - try opening your eyes and realize that it is not all doom and gloom. Realize that there are A LOT of environmental, habitat, etc. etc problems out there that need to corrected. But some progress has been made and a lot more needs to be done. Be constructive and don't insult peoples intelligent by telling them things like THE SKY IS PERMANITLY BROWN. If you have facts that it is permanent that's one thing and if you don't - statements like that just reinforces Chicken Little - The Sky Is Falling. Your little "hunky-dory" story just displays your lack of facts and reality.

Not sure where you are hanging out, but I live at 5,000 feet and the air is clear, especially compared to down the hill. Even Los Angeles basin air, I believe, is better than it was back in the 60's. Still lots of room for improvement and its coming. As far as hang gliding goes - we had relatives that were in the forefront of hang gliding, innovators, set world records in the very early years of the sport. Several deaths in the family and I have never had the desire to participate for that reason.

Involving children with the outdoors at a young age teaches them about the fragile balance that we must take care of in order to ensure a beautiful & safe habitat for our beloved wildlife. It will also foster imagination and compassion, & these are necessary concepts to start promoting further so that our children will enjoy their childhoods and make the most of them!

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Being productive does not include making accusations and being nasty to one another. While folks are speaking from their own experiences and or beliefs, it does no good in this forum to venture from the point. History has shown that NO ONE is supported and trails don't happen when the name calling and fighting are louder than the reality of each given situation. We all have our own perception of course but this forum did not ask you to attack one another. Here is what is has asked.

- Challenges - What obstacles exist to achieving your goals for conservation, recreation, or reconnecting people to the outdoors? Time, money and other resources are the biggest challenges. We have space and trails but getting access to most is costly in so many ways.
- What Works - Please share your thoughts and ideas on effective strategies for conservation, recreation and reconnecting people to the outdoors. Working together for the common goal and taking into consideration every appropriate user group for each area and trail.
- Federal Government Role - How can the federal government be a more effective partner in helping to achieve conservation, recreation or reconnecting people to the outdoors? Cut the chit and move on appropriate access.
- Tools - What additional tools and resources would help your efforts be even more successful? This is an ever work in progress! We'll never make progress unless we get to work and stop the fighting.

I think this is a very simple, yet solid idea. Education is one of the most powerful tools of understanding who we are, where we come from, and the importance of our interaction with our surroundings. In the Pedagogy Of The Oppressed, Paulo Freire explains that, "Education as the practice of freedom - rather than the practice of domination - denies that man is abstract, isolated, independent, and unattached to the world; it also denies that the world exists as a reality apart from people. Authentic reflection considers neither abstract man nor the world without people, but people in their relations with the world." Ecology unquestionably supports this notion, since it deals with the study of organisms and their interactions with the environment. Allowing students to be surrounding by nature is not only a healthy vacation from the classroom, but also instills in them a better understanding of both the positive and negative aspects of the natural environment of a place, and the impacts that man has on this environment. Perhaps this idea of understanding the world around should be expanded to all ages. Learning is continuous. Without understanding of the historical, natural, and communal environment of places, people cannot understand the place at all. In terms of preserving the great outdoors, I think it is extremely important to have knowledge on the issues and problems that conservationists so eagerly challenge. Otherwise, we would lack the ability to challenge the problems or the challengers.

If the land is private land, then the private use should not be removed. If it's public land, then the person should not have altered it.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

As a rancher using public lands instead of your own privately owned land, you need to take a complete back seat to all other species on the land, including mustangs and burros. You should not be allowed to graze any higher number of animals than that which would have NO impact on existing species and you should not be fencing off water from those native animals or fencing off available range. Many ranchers acknowledge their "guest" status and comply with these goal. Many don't. As a public land owner, your cattle are not my responsibility. The native species are. I have cattle myself and graze them on my privately owned land. Even there, I am subject to endangered species law. On public land, you should be even more so. My personal preference would be for all domestic animals to be removed from public land except for short term recreational use.

An urban park could be a pocket park, parkette, or even urban trails for biking, relaxing, nature watching, jogging and walking. 10' x 10' space to many, many acres. There are just not enough of these smaller natural spaces in most metroplexes, such as Los Angeles, New York, and Dallas. I applaud Parking Day (parkingday.org) where parks are quickly implemented and appreciated within an 8 hour timeframe. All are built inside a smaller space such as a parking space. Some renewed interest in rehabilitation of existing parks is also encouraging, such as the Great Mall. As it invites people back to these great public spaces making them much more inviting to move through them. Thank you for submitting your idea ASLA. Good luck.

I am a volunteer "C" certified buckner and faller with chainsaws and crosscut saws, and am welcomed in anyplace in California, park or forest. The sawyer is the final decision-maker in what is cut, and are trained to do so. The decision to cut is for safety, not for aesthetics. Too much work to bother with that! It should be said that all the agencies, just in the last year, have all agreed upon a single saw course and curriculum, taught across all agencies, for certification, employee or volunteer. This is now implemented, and should make things easier. In my experience, VERY few volunteers are experienced in working with saws IN THE FOREST ENVIRONMENT, which is markedly different than your backyard! The log you are working on is probably not the one that is going to kill you.

One other note: The concept of widespread use of volunteers using saws is relatively new in many areas, and there are grave concerns over the safety. So--there is a transition that is occurring. We are paving the way, demonstrating that we can work safely. Shortcuts that result in problems will retard the progress. Simpler re-certs (with documentation of experience) would be reasonable. Ours are 3 years, but I must say that I learn a lot every one I've taken. Wear your chaps, wear your glasses, wear your gloves, wear your helmet, wear your earplugs.....most "home" sawyers are not used to wearing any of this protective gear. ALL are clearly associated with reduction of injuries. The injury you get may not come from you, but the idiot standing next to you. JHA's....it's not so clear. (Job Hazard Analyses)

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Schoolyard Ecology. Ecology is a powerful discipline to help student understand the world around them. Using the schoolyard for authentic ecology learning is an accessible way of bringing children outdoors. Ecology in and of the schoolyard does not require building elaborate gardens or outdoor classrooms. It only requires teachers who are supported in providing quality outdoor experiences to their students.

Schoolyard Ecology is a well known mechanism to help students learn about the environment in a safe, familiar place. Such experiences, over the course of many years in school, might help students learn about the environment and venture into "wilder" areas. Furthermore, regular use of an outdoor classroom to teach any number of subjects has proven to increase student achievement across the curriculum.

I am surprised that at my old age I am still surprised at all. What I mean is how narrow minded can people be? The conservationist community, the OHV community, the "XYZ" community can all have what they want if we all band together and build our requirements list of how we can all access OUR SOVERIGN RIGHT TO BE ON OUR COUNTRY'S LAND and preserve the interests of all. How hard is this? We can all have access and preserve the interests of the land, wildlife and the citizens. Anyone who feels there is only one absolute option is simply not using that space between the ears. Don't count on the Government people. If you like what you see with public housing, balanced budget, jet setting officials living in one state and commuting via private jet (on our nickel) to DC to work, then let's let the Gov. give more of what we already have.

There is no better way to learn to appreciate and discover our natural world than environmental education in our national park system. This will help get kids who so desperately need opportunities to reconnect with nature out into our last wild areas. There, they can learn scientific principles and start to understand how we humans are a part of nature and need ecosystem support to survive. Nonprofit partners can help get kids out into nature, using America's best classroom - our national parks.

Link this idea (getting young people outdoors) with using volunteers as teachers/docents/leaders, and giving the volunteers credits toward park and program use. There are a lot of older people with skills who like to work with young people. And it could work the other way, too. Young people could help older people who want to get outside but have trouble navigating on their own. Open up some park areas to habitat gardens, maintained by volunteers. Have community events at parks. We live near a state park which is used by people from all over our county, yet the Governator was ready to close it, rather than enlisting volunteers to keep it open - many of us were ready to work. People want to be involved!

Discussion Question 1

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(cont.)

Lack of access for hunters and fishermen. Provide better access for hunters and fishermen- there are places where groups buy up all the land that surrounds the forest service, or state forest, or BLM lands to prevent people from gaining access. Some states are working to solve this issue, but it needs to be done at the federal level in cases of forest service, or BLM lands where private property blocks access- due to group purchases of land. In W.Va. my relatives have some property that is surrounded by the Monongahela National forest- and they have to allow people to access the trails, and the National forest land, they can not block off access. There have never been any problems- it's a narrow trail on the edge of the property that we built so others could get through to the National forest lands, it is marked, and keeps people from wandering around the property. This costs the government no money, the forest service no money- it just allows people to get to the forest service land.

I agree 100% with the fact that the Bristol Bay area needs to be protected, and the Pebble Mine plan should be stopped. Several groups of people have been opposed to this plan for quite some time now, and more people need to get involved with the issue, or the mine may be allowed to proceed! This is one of, if not the most important spawning grounds for salmon in the entire world- the mine could destroy it forever. Off road vehicles are NOT allowed in National Parks. They are allowed on some BLM, and Forest Service lands, also on some state run recreation areas, No off road vehicles are permitted in the National Parks. I am voting your idea as promote, but please understand that off road vehicles, while not allowed in our National Parks, should continue to be allowed on BLM, Forest Service, and state recreation lands, the parks don't allow them, go there for quiet, otherwise, please respect the people who do use off road vehicles right to enjoy recreation as they see fit. Most Off road groups maintain their own trails, and help maintain BLM, and Forest Service trails too. They are not damaging the environment any more so than people who ride horses, or hike in backcountry areas that normally would get no foot traffic.

Good idea, as is the ED OUT idea, kids need up off the couch, away from the non-stop video games, and TV. Our children all went camping, hiking, fishing, rode dirt bikes, and 4-wheelers, there was not a lot of mountain bikes around when they were young, or I'm sure they would have done that too. They learned to ride horses, how to care for the horses, and other animals, they all learned archery, learned to shoot rifles and shotguns, and they still hunt to this day. All our children were girls, who now have their own families, and their kids all spend far more of their free time outdoors than they do inside. They learned to respect the land and the animals, to leave an area as good, or better than you found it, and how everything you do in the outdoors affects the animals and the land, and to not do anything that is bad for the ecosystem.

Having spent a lot of time hiking the AT, I agree, use the AT to get kids outdoors, and involved with the outdoors.

Citizen Engagement and Environmental Monitoring. A long distance trail such as the Appalachian Trail aligned as it is in a north-south orientation and spanning elevations from sea level to the peaks of nearly all the highest points on the east coast offers a rich and diverse laboratory for observing and measuring the effects of climate changes on a global scale.

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National Strategy for Alternative Energy. A national strategy for passive energy generation and transmission is needed in order to manage landscape level conservation assets that begin to approach the magnitude, scale, and national significance of the Appalachian National Scenic Trail.

Volunteers for Active Management. Long term stewardship of public lands is critically important and worthy of consistent funding. Acquisition, heavily dependent upon full support for the Land and Water Conservation Fund, begins a critical process to conserve and protect lands; stewardship carries that process forward in perpetuity. Matters such as forest health, open space management, invasive species control, and vigilant monitoring of natural, cultural, and physical resources requires dedicated and consistent support. Landscape level conservation projects such as the Appalachian Trail have demonstrated that a volunteer corps can prove invaluable in accomplishing this, but even within a volunteer model, financial support is required to provide necessary support for projects.

Youth and National Scenic Trails. Trails offer excellent means for the public of all ages to access public lands. As demonstrated through the Trail to Every Classroom program, trails are an exciting destination for youth to get outside, to learn, to grow, and to enjoy the beauty of life. More specifically, the Appalachian National Scenic Trail provides access to over 250,000 acres of public lands with hundreds of entry points for people to spend a day, a week, or longer enjoying time outdoors. With data showing that day hiking is on the rise and the fact that the A.T. is within a days drive for nearly all who live in the eastern third of the United States, the A.T. is particularly relevant to any initiative that seeks to get Americans outdoors.

Community Engagement and National Scenic Trails. The Appalachian Trail connects numerous communities in rural America. Many of these communities could benefit from additional support for community-based land use planning within a green infrastructure context.

Increase Funding for Recreation in National Forests. National forests, like national parks, are vital sources of outdoor recreation, yet they do not receive sufficient funding to provide adequate visitor services, such as maintained hiking trails, effective visitor centers, proper signage, or even garbage cans. Support for these services could improve the quality of life for surrounding communities and create jobs by funding nonprofits and local businesses. This action would be a boon for the small towns that often are the gateways to national forests. National forest acreage far exceeds that of national parks, and as a consequence, they are often far closer and more accessible to communities in need of recreational space. Why not improve their ability to meet the demands of neighboring towns and cities? A very efficient way to improve these services would be to provide funding to NGOs and nonprofits to carry out the improvements. These organizations are far more efficient than national forests, and it would keep our bureaucracy from becoming even more top-heavy. Projects proposed by nonprofits and NGOs could be selected by vote from the national forest administration and even nearby communities. A current program that could be expanded is the Secure Rural Schools and Community Self-Determination Act.

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Support Collaborative Efforts to Restore Habitat and Connect Communities. Thank you for holding an America's Great Outdoors Initiative Listening Session in Bangor, Maine. The America's Great Outdoors Initiative is providing a wonderful opportunity for your Administration to see partnerships that are achieving tremendous results for conservation. The Penobscot River Restoration Project represents an excellent model of collaboration that will lead to restoration of an entire suite of sea-run fish that are key to the health and resilience of the largest watershed in Maine. Full completion of this project, and the return of self-sustaining runs of American shad, endangered Atlantic salmon, river herring, endangered shortnose sturgeon, and other migratory fish will support a thriving ecological system while revitalizing recreation and economic opportunities that will benefit residents of Maine as well as many thousands of visitors to the state annually. The federal government should continue to deliver and develop programs that encourage landscape-scale collaboration between industry, tribes, non-profit conservation groups, communities, and state and federal government agencies. Funds to support habitat restoration and improve access to historic spawning and juvenile habitat for sea-run fish should be increased and sustained. Restoration at this large-scale ensures the rebuilding of resilient systems that sustain natural resource- and recreation-based economies such as what we find here in Maine. Allowing Federal agencies to implement and fund programs at the local scale will best meet the needs of Maine communities that are working toward long-term regional planning and in support of healthy natural systems as well as strong economies. Funding for initiatives that allows for flexibility in their application to adapt to changing circumstances is also key to project success. Investing in community-based conservation and restoration programs also encourages people to connect with their natural and cultural heritage, and provides opportunities for people of all ages to enjoy, learn from, and become good stewards of their local environment. Sincerely, Laura Rose Day Executive Director Penobscot River Restoration Trust

I remember being at an anniversary event celebrating the outdoor education center I was working for at the time. A thirty something woman of color stood before the room and tearfully talked about how her experience as a young girl going to outdoor school had powerfully impacted her. That overnight trip into the parks opened up possibilities she never dreamed of and set her course for her future. She decided to dedicate her career to science and education, eventually becoming a high school biology teacher. Now she changes the lives of students offering them the opportunity she had years ago. All American children should have an opportunity to learn about and how to steward the amazing gifts that are within the National Parks through residential, hands-on learning centers.

By leasing our Public Lands to the livestock industry we are subsidizing them. They are not Public Lands. They are SPLIT-ESTATE FEE LANDS. The Government does not own the land in its entirety. Ranchers own grazing and water rights on these lands. Yes, the public has access to them, BUT ranchers have property rights that they are not to be stripped of without abusing their Constitutional Rights.

Oh yes, and with NPS at least, the volunteer time you log does carry over to subsequent years. If the Forest Service does the same, Mr. Payen would need to volunteer just 100 more hours to get the special nationwide pass.

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It is sad to impugn an entire large agency full of many talented and conscientious people based on the actions of a few administrators one disagrees with. "Out of control, rogue agency"? Hardly. The Forest Service is a multiple use agency and as such has a lot of balls to juggle. One of the benefits of having recreational user fees which are retained in the area they are collected, is that this counterbalances other economic interests, such as logging, mining, and, to a lesser extent, hunting, that are not always compatible with hiking and backpacking. I support the basic concept of Forest Service fee collection in high use areas, while recognizing that any organization, public or private, is subject to administrative errors made by fallible humans. If you think they have misinterpreted the law, by all means, challenge them. But judges are fallible, too, and other judges may or may not agree with what was decided in _____'s case. Meanwhile, hyperbole does not help your cause, _____. The fee program was meant to address the highly variable and usually inadequate congressional appropriations that were allocated for National Forests in the past. The only realistic alternative I see that would help keep them properly funded but which would place the greater revenue burden on the actual users, would be to have a special federal tax on recreational equipment. This could be even more problematic than the system of collecting fees on site, because of the difficulty of defining what constitutes recreational equipment. When is a shoe a trail boot, for example? What kind of backpack is primarily recreational, versus used to carry books to school? How would you readily define tents used for camping, versus those used only in a backyard to screen a picnic table from bugs?

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We park fee collectors are generally delighted to let seniors know about the America the Beautiful Senior Pass (which replaces the still valid Golden Age passes). It is an even better deal than you imagine from ___'s post: --It costs \$10.00 for the rest of your life (or unless you lose the card or leave it at home). --Any US citizen or permanent legal resident alien aged 62 or older can obtain one. --It covers entrance fees nationwide, at every unit of the National Park system, PLUS participating locations of the Forest Service, BLM, and National Wildlife Refuges. --In addition, you get half off the regular fee on camping in the above jurisdictions. --The card covers the cardholder and everyone else in the same non-commercial vehicle. --The senior need only be in the vehicle, s/he does not need to be the driver or owner. This is a good excuse to take grandpa or grandma with you to visit a park! --If you are riding a bicycle, walking in, or riding in a bus (if the bus has per person fees), it covers the cardholder and three other adults. --If you are riding a motorcycle, it covers the cardholder and any passenger on the same motorcycle. (There was an old rule that allowed a Senior pass to cover two motorcycles, but that has been changed.) The card cannot be purchased by mail, but you can buy it at any National Park Service entrance station, or at their visitor center if they don't collect fees at an entrance station; and also at most Forest Service, BLM, and Fish & Wildlife Service offices or visitor centers. The senior will need to be present and must show ID to prove permanent US residency (driver license or state-issued ID card are usually fine, or military ID if it is the older style that shows birthdate). No application is needed to apply. Just show your ID and pay the ten dollars. Restrictions: --The card can be signed by only one person. --It is not valid for a couple. If the person who signed the card is not present, the spouse would need to buy his or her own, if eligible. --The card signing senior must be present in the vehicle, usually each time you enter the park. If a member of your party other than the senior needs to drive the car out of the park and return, ask first. The staff may be able to accommodate you with a special re-entry pass. --The card is strictly federal and is not honored at state parks, which often have their own senior pass program. --If you lose it or leave it at home, the parks cannot (at present) look up the card, as there is no database to look it up in. But you can buy another one if you like, which is often cheaper than paying the regular entrance fee. --You should sign your card immediately upon purchase. That is what parks which check ID check against. --The senior should always have their photo ID with signature ready to show with the card. --Mis-used cards can be marked invalid. And yes, fee collection rangers usually love to issue these cards. I've personally had to talk people into saving money, saying, for example, "Sir, you have the choice of paying \$20.00 or getting a senior pass for only \$10.00. All you have to do is show your ID. Even if you never visit another park in your life, you've still saved \$10.00." That usually does the trick.

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There already is a national pass for the disabled, called the America the Beautiful Access Pass (a replacement for the still valid Golden Access Pass). It works just like the Senior Pass (see my previous post), except: --There is no charge for the pass. So, if you are traveling with a permanently disabled person, in the same non-commercial vehicle, that person may be eligible for the pass, and everyone else in the vehicle gets in free. The disabled person must be a US citizen or permanent legal resident, and must be afflicted with a major disability affecting one or more life processes. (I forget the exact wording or the list of examples; but in general, if you are eligible to receive federal disability benefits, even if you are not receiving them, you are eligible.) You might think, this is a US government program, so you're going to have to fill out a stack of paperwork to prove disability. Wrong! For some obvious disabilities, like the person is missing a hand, is blind, is deaf, or has Down's syndrome, the only thing you need do is show that person's ID, or if a minor, the parent's ID, to show that s/he is a US citizen or permanent legal resident. Some applicants bring letters from their doctor or show a federal disability card of some kind, but all you really need to do is sign an affidavit attesting to the presence of the disability, along with showing the ID. This is all done at the entrance station and only takes a couple of minutes. If the disabled person is unable to sign the card, the parent or guardian can sign for them. (I would usually have them sign something like "Joe Smith for Sally Smith.") Like the Senior pass, the disabled person must be present; you can't leave them at home and use the card. Otherwise it is a life-time pass.

You asked about discounts for US military personnel; that is the most requested discount program that the federal parks don't have. Apparently, there has been a congressional proposal to add such a discount, but it hasn't gone through yet. It is necessary for Congress to create such a program, since the parks are not allowed to do so on their own. I've never come across anyone among my fellow fee-collection rangers who were not sympathetic to such an idea. Since people always ask about it, it would make our job easier, and make more visitors happy, which we also like.

The Anti-wolf folks don't have any scientific legs to stand on. There is simply no way that a species that has lived in a region for millions of years can harm the natural ecosystem. If wolves were a problem for deer or elk herds there would be no deer or elk herd on the continent. There were a lot more deer and elk throughout the united states back when wolves present. Hunting, development, and other forms of environmental degradation are the biggest dangers to all of our wild species. I understand that people suffer some economic losses from wolf reintroduction and that should be addressed, but the idea that wolves are a problem for deer and elk herds is beyond foolish.

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This works. Nature'sBridge, with campuses in Yosemite, the Marin Headlands and Olympia, Washington, affords a week long outdoor education experience for school kids, during the school year, and has a dramatic impact on the students. My daughter was an instructor at the Headlands and then Yosemite and the letters she got from students reflected how meaningful the experience was. So dramatic was their experience, that after her death, contributions to Yosemite National Institute (since renamed Natures'Bridge) were massive and resulted in an endowment fund (that took a big hit with this recession, by the way) that gave birth to yet another outdoor experience for young women, some of who have returned as instructors in the program. I believe this is a program worth modeling after. I don't know how the public school program is funded, but it is more than worth it.

It is critical that this large parcel of land known as Edison Farms located within the DR/GR be preserved. From an ecological perspective, the DR/GR contains not only extensive intact wetland systems but also a mosaic of interconnected habitat for listed species. The DR/GR is also important for residents of Southwest Florida for its hydrologic features, primarily its role as providing approximately 70% of Lee County Utilities potable water supply. The DR/GR planning effort officially commenced with the release of the McLane Report in May 2007 and since that time has involved all stakeholders and interested parties, including environmental organizations, civic groups, landowners and mining interests. Over a two-year period, there were 23 official DR/GR advisory committee meetings and no less than 9 public hearings to solicit input on DR/GR planning. Countless technical reports and data sources were utilized in the creation of the DR/GR documents, resulting in a proposed overlay that is comprehensive, data-driven, equitable and defensible. Purchase and preservation of this large tract of land located within the DR/GR fits perfectly with the years of work that has already been done. Thanks to the Conservancy of Southwest Florida for spearheading this superlative idea.

Establishing wildlife corridors is essential at all levels. At the community level wildlife corridors that are agreed upon and established would provide important educational opportunities and clarify smart growth boundaries. The same would be true at the national level, particularly with respect to how these overlap with utility corridors, transportation routes and the infrastructure network of human settlements.

Mission 66 helped in a time of growth, now we need to help the National Parks during times when so many folks, young and old, are re-connecting with the natural world. It is imperative that we FULLY FUND the National Parks and the Centennial Initiatives.

I am sorry that you are so hateful. It must be difficult to live in such a state (I only glean this info by reading your angry comments all over this forum.) I was just speaking out of frustration. It seems as though this forum is getting so sidetracked by these OHV issues when there are so many other important and immediate issues to address. I have relatives that own OHV's and use them on their private property and they have a great time. I am all for that. Really, I am. But what I don't want is to have a solitary afternoon walk or a peaceful camp out with my kids disturbed by loud, and frankly, smelly OHV's encroaching on my peace and quiet. If you have private property to ride around in, God bless.

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Happily promoted! I really hope Obama puts this plan into action. I would love to see the gov. fund some "WPA-type" idea like this. People have been asking and it's more than about time the gov. took notice.

That's a great idea. we just have to hope that local governments would put a park for the health of our children before the newest shopping mall. With obesity on the rise and our dependence on oil in this country this would be a wonderful solution, Start kids early on the ideas of personal fitness and alternative transportation.

Excellent idea! Camp is a great experience and really helps to foster better self-esteem. Girls (and boys) of all cultural backgrounds should be allowed to experience this. I think a multicultural camp experience is an idea that should be roundly promoted!

Conservation. I think the Endangered Species Act is a wonderful tool enabling the conservation of species. The problem is that it doesn't protect the ECOSYSTEMS that these individual animals live in. It is impossible to save a specific animal if it doesn't have it's particular ecosystem to survive in. Also, I think all government entities need to work in conjunction with the species on the list. For example, the government has spent millions of dollars raising Black-Footed ferrets in captivity, preconditioning them for release, and then releasing them in the few remaining prairie dog colonies. On the other hand, another government entity is paying millions of dollars to poison prairie dog colonies. In fact, even persons who own private land are forced to poison any prairie dogs living on their property. This just doesn't make sense. They contradict one another and once again, this brings up the whole ecosystem that prairie dogs create. Not only are Black-Footed ferrets on the Endangered Species list, but so are Swift Foxes and Burrowing owls, which both also depend on these prairie dog colonies. The obvious solution is to stop poisoning Prairie Dog colonies and the animals that depend on them will no longer need to be on the Endangered Species list saving the government and people millions of dollars. I think the governments needs to create a new bureau dedicated solely to animal and ecosystem conservation. They need to hire more biologists and environmentalists who understand these complex systems to help manage our wildlife and public lands.

Complete Park and Trail Maps. Maps and Trail system maps and databases are not updated, ie. USDA's National Forest and Park maps do not include all trails in their publications which are distributed to the public. In a publically distributed, Mount Rogers National Recreation Area Trail Location Map. 18 trails are listed, and an additional four trails illustrated. Four trails and an access road are omitted. Sawmill Trail (4556), Buzzard Den Trail (4582), Wright Hollow Trail (4548) Feathercamp Ridge Trail (4550) and Forest Service Road FS287. Recommended Edit: The insertion of SR 731 and SR 605 roads on the map and showing more four trails, the Income Generating Consumers realizes there is more national park located on the north side of Iron Mtn. I'm sure there are 100's of similar maps out there which direct the consuming public away from private businesses which have been encouraged to start with the many economic development programs across rural America.

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core areas and wilderness. Conservation Principles/Land Management Securing sufficient recreation areas (for us) and core areas of habitat (for wildlife) in the Southern Appalachians will require protecting a variety of conservation lands. Fortunately, the region is rich in such lands. SAFC proposes that the areas identified in this section be protected and managed for their conservation value. This protection can take many forms, from wilderness designation to management by wise forest planning. Through protection plans, core areas of forest can be secured as habitat for our native species. Management that assures conservation protection also provides many human benefits, including clean water, quality recreation, and the knowledge that we are restoring and preserving the health of ecosystems on which human well-being ultimately depends. Our Public Lands It is therefore vitally important that we consider the wise management of large core areas, much of which is already in public ownership. The most critical of these lands are those that retain a high degree of their natural ecological function. These areas provide the healthy and stable sanctuaries from which recovery and restoration can proceed. They can also furnish the best reference data to guide the recovery of more-damaged ecosystems. Key conservation lands include forests with few or no roads, tracts of old-growth forest, biological hotspots, and critical watersheds, all of which must be wisely managed over the long term to protect and enhance their natural value. A successful approach, especially here in the Southern Appalachians (but across the nation), should concentrate its efforts on identifying conservation building blocks where national forest ownership offers opportunities for protection. Conservation building blocks include (1) currently protected natural areas, (2) unprotected natural areas, (3) old-growth areas, (4) biological hotspots, (5) aquatic watersheds, (6) high-priority areas for public acquisition, (7) conservation easement areas, and (8) cultural and heritage areas. Management of these components to achieve their highest conservation potential will help establish and restore landscape-scale conservation areas in much of the region. These comments focus on two priority areas of focus: 1.) wilderness protection, and 2.) watershed/water quality in our national forests. Wilderness Priority We need presidential leadership now more than ever to protect our wilderness quality lands so that future generations may also enjoy them. I'm asking the President to please make wilderness protection a central component of his policy emerging from the America's Great Outdoors Initiative. The President has the authority to facilitate better cooperation among the federal public land agencies and Congress to identify eligible landscapes and protect them as wilderness. Currently, the U.S. Forest Service uses overly restrictive criteria in determining their recommendations for lands that should be designated wilderness. Worse, the Bureau of Land Management is bound by a directive from the previous administration to cease all wilderness assessments. Both constraints can be lifted by direction of the President, and I urge that this be done. Expanding America's wilderness preservation system is the best way to protect wildlife, watersheds, and recreational opportunities. Action: Direct land managing agencies (e.g. Forest Service) to conduct consistent and fair reviews of wilderness quality lands. Currently, there is no clear or consistent direction to federal agencies for recommending wilderness in their management of our nation's public lands. It is imperative that the land managing agencies maintain complete inventories of wilderness-suitable lands and provide inclusive recommendations for wilderness designation to Congress... and to achieve this we need to have strong Presidential leadership and direction from the Administration. Roadless Roadless areas in Southern Appalachian national forests are among the

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last truly wild places in the Southeast. They harbor unbroken wildlife habitat, clear-running streams that feed our rivers and drinking water supplies, and backcountry places where we can experience the kind of solitude and spiritual renewal that only undisturbed forests can provide. Since these areas represent the last wild areas of the east, the goal should be to secure strong, long-term protection for the 723,000 acres in the Southern Appalachians. Nationally, roadless areas encompass nearly a third of all national forest land, but only 15 percent of the Southeast's national forests. The 2001 Roadless Area Conservation Rule Roadless areas are identified and "inventoried" by the U.S. Forest Service and should be kept free from logging and other harmful resource extraction. The standard of protection we seek to uphold is the 2001 Roadless Area Conservation Rule, a Forest Service regulation that places roadless areas off-limits to commercial timber cutting and road building. It was signed by the Secretary of Agriculture on January 12, 2001, following years of scientific study, 600 public hearings held around the country, support from eminent scientists and economists, and a record number of comments from the public.

Action: We urge the Obama administration to uphold the protections of the 2001 Roadless Area Conservation Rule.

Watershed/Water Quality Priority Our national forests may soon be the most important natural system capable of capturing, retaining and releasing water. According to the Forest Service, more than 60 million Americans get their drinking water from national forest headwaters. The role of the Forest Service in protecting and managing drinking water supplies affects approximately one-fifth of United States communities, yet few Americans know or understand the important links between forest management, watershed and fisheries health, climate and change and community drinking water supplies. We believe the management of watershed and fisheries resources should be an important priority for the agency. A New Future for the Forest Service - Secretary of Agriculture Vilsack's Restoration Vision: In August 2009, the Secretary' articulated a bold, new vision to conserve and restore our national forests. He outlined a complete commitment to restoration which he defined as "managing forest lands first and foremost to protect our water resources while making our forests far more resilient to climate change". To achieve the Secretary's 21st century vision, the Forest Service needs a 21st century structure. We suggest the agency would benefit from a major reorientation that prioritizes watershed and fisheries restoration and protection. Water is likely the most important ecological and economic resource that the Forest Service manages. Water derived from our national forests is estimated by the Forest Service to be valued at \$7.2 billion, while timber is valued at a mere fraction of that amount. Despite this, the agency is still operating under a structure focused primarily on silviculture and resource extraction. To make restoration as a priority for the agency, we believe a watershed and fisheries restoration program is necessary and restoration experts need to be moved into leadership positions to effectively achieve that goal. Action: Restore forest watersheds and fisheries, protect drinking water quality, enhance declining fisheries and provide connectivity for wildlife migration. In order for landscape conservation areas to function as a regional conservation network, there must be ecological connectivity between the areas. This requirement is difficult to fulfill in a region that has been roaded and developed as much as the Southern Appalachians. However, there currently remain many viable connections across the landscape, and in the long term the potential for connectivity is great -- if we as a culture understand its value and give it the high priority it deserves. Action: Fully Fund Land and Water Conservation Fund Honor the original intention of the LWCF Act -

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ensuring a selection process that allows the Forest Service to acquire a significant portion (greater than 50%) of lands east of the Mississippi (where the population pressures exist and the opportunities for recreation are maximized). Roads The absence of roads is one of the primary prerequisites for landscape conservation areas. Past attempts by the Forest Service's roadless inventory have failed to identify many unroaded areas relevant to ecological functioning. The Forest Service inventory, while identifying many important areas, omits important areas of the national forest that are unroaded. In addition, the agency's inventory of roadless areas was confined to public lands. In fact, many unroaded areas that do not satisfy official size, configuration, and ownership constraints still provide significant habitat and ecological connectivity. Even the smallest such areas can serve as vital "stepping stones" that provide connections between larger areas.

A Picture Says a Thousand Words. As Michael P. Nelson illustrated in his "An Amalgamation of Wilderness Preservation Arguments" there are many ways in which to defend the wilderness and demand the conservation of the wilderness. And as many arguments as there are for the preservation of the wilderness there are an equal number of motives that prompt those arguments. Some are clearly more valid than others. This same sentiment can easily be applied to the arguments of those who do not support the conservation of our wilderness areas. Some clearly are more valid than others. However, the photographer Ansel Adams and the Sierra Club developed one of the best methods for arguing in favor of wilderness conservation and educating the American public about the American wilderness: photography. Through photography and beautifully crafted coffee table texts, the Sierra Club introduced many people to the beauty of the American wilderness. Many of the people who joined the Sierra Club in the sixties did so, in part, because they had been exposed to the many faces of the American wilderness through the books produced by the Sierra Club and its executive director at the time, David Brower. Through these photos many Americans were able to reconnect with an inherent and sacred part of American culture: the wilderness. Although there is a technical definition of "wilderness" in The 1964 Wilderness Act (i.e. "Wilderness is an area where... man himself is a visitor who does not remain") still the concept of wilderness is an abstract one. For many Americans this is why they are detached from the wilderness and are indifferent to the state or presence of wilderness areas. If images of our forests and mountains and rivers were reintroduced into the public scene then the public might once again realize the importance of wilderness. Although the aesthetic side of wilderness is probably not enough for most to make them wish to save it, still it would provide such people with a grounded sense of "what wilderness is." And this is the vital first step in reconnecting the American people with the American wilderness and revitalizing the conservation movement. After all, pictures do what words cannot. And pictures describe and incite emotions that words cannot express, and that is why they are so powerful.

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The Wilderness Act of 1964 defines wilderness as "an area where... man is a visitor and does not remain." Your idea concerning Wildlife Refuges and National Parks therefore goes hand in hand with the government's legal definition of what constitutes "wilderness." Many pass through the states that you and Mr. Harris mention, but do not pause to take in the land around them. A National Park with a well maintained camp ground would then afford visitors a place to appreciate the natural beauty of those states. And as you noted this would also stimulate the economy of those states. Most of these states' economies are solely based in agriculture (whether corn, potatoes, or otherwise) and many of the residents are living loan to loan. Since most of these states also have low population densities it would then not be hard to find areas that could be transformed into either Wildlife Refuges or National Parks. History has shown us time and again that the overgrazing of grass lands can lead to devastating consequences. The most extreme being the dust bowl of course, but that had a number of factors only one of which was the excessive grazing by sheep. Although it is unlikely that we will have a repetition of this tragic natural disaster, there are many other valid reasons for conserving, preserving, and revitalizing the lands in question. Sigurd Olson, writer of the essay "Why Wilderness," would argue that such parks and wilderness areas provide a necessary relief for many people from their everyday lives. But there are more persuasive arguments than that. For those who argue against wilderness conservation due to what geologist ___ might term "the cost" of "(a decreased) the quality of life" (Encounters with the Arch druid by John McPhee) for "present generations," simply look at the benefits hard working men and women of the Midwest would receive: greater tourism, greater economical diversity, and healthier land to name a few. One of the above alone would be enough to make it worthwhile for the government to look into the Great Plains States as locations for National Parks, Reserves, or Wildlife Refuges.

As a teacher of elementary students, I think this is an excellent idea. It will benefit both the students and their families to become more involved in the outdoor world. I think it might be beneficial and more practical in teaching to have students be involved on a regular basis, like once a month, to see how many opportunities there are, rather than full immersion for a week. And maybe more feasible and affordable as well.

ATV's are allowed in Glacier NP. They must be street legal and stay on paved roads, though.

Let me guess, you live in California and you want to protect EVERYTHING from ANYTHING. This is the most ignorant set of statements I've seen regarding mineral resource regulation. Clearly, you have no understanding of the rigorous processes involved and the hundreds of permits necessary to operate such an endeavor as a mine. Simple compliance with the CWA, CAA, RCRA/CERCLA, NEPA, etc. are so complex that an average citizen grossly underestimates the existing framework of regulations that such a NECESSARY activity entails. Where should we move the mineral deposits, so that you would be happy???

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

preserving natural heritage. we need to work harder at developing sources of energy that do not deface our landscape, or destroy our air, water and soil. When I get a chance to visit Alaska, I don't want to see destruction of the landscape so please do not pursue the Pebble Mine project. This is our last chance to preserve our Nation's beauty, where ever it is. And if the local people don't see it as beneficial or harmless activity, their decision should be honored.

As an environmental educator in Yosemite National Park for the last 9 years, I have become intimately aware of the transformational power National Parks possess. Part playground and part classroom, these wild places provide precious opportunity to connect youth to the world around them, their friends and families, and ultimately themselves. With skilled educators facilitating these connections, these lessons can be learned deeply and transferred back to a student's home community. Every child in this country deserves the opportunity to discover their potential to steward their relationships, communities, and planet.

The Hudson Valley is definitely qualified for designation as a part of the National Park System. This is an area of not only national, but global importance. A new park should not only include federal-state-local cooperative efforts, but it should also include federal acquisition of key lands that are in danger of development or degradation. This should include traditional full-fee acquisition as well as conservation easements on farmlands and other lands where some resource use will continue.

(per Comment #1): "Thank you, Judge Donald W. Molloy of Missoula, Montana for ordering the re-listing of the Gray Wolf in Montana and Idaho as an endangered species!"

Comments #2 and #3 notwithstanding, it's unclear what a "Promote" or "Demote" on this Idea would really mean. The last paragraph seems to call for the abolition of all user/access fees for all people visiting all public lands in which some volunteers contribute some of their time. With his Idea Title, is _____ singing: "R-E-S-P-E-C-T, find out what it means to me..." and waiting for us to ask him? ;-)

Although they do not currently pay fees to compensate for their degradation of the views at National Parks, jet airplanes already pay a number of taxes and fees for various reasons -- please provide your expert opinion on each of those types of payments so that we can evaluate your Comment #8 in proper context (i.e. "insane" compared to what?).

A modest proposal for you: try conservation first.

Thank you for your patience in explaining the serious need for legible permits to be mounted on snowmobiles, particularly as reflected in your polite yet firm responses to questions and your clear explication of additional facts and logic. This is perhaps the best discussion of this topic I've seen here in the last couple of months. For those who have not voted to "Promote" this Idea, what serious objection(s) do you have at this point?

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Conservation.

If the Pebble Mine were to extract every ounce of recoverable gold according to the most optimistic estimates of its proponents, then by the end of this century it would add slightly more than 1% to the world's gold supply. This is far, far less gold than we could recover by reducing, reusing, and recycling it and at an astronomically higher environmental price. The Pebble mine is all about privatizing profit for a few and externalizing costs for the rest of us. King Midas tried eating gold and it didn't work out so well. I prefer wild Alaska salmon.

For more info on the Friends of McInnis Canyons, see: { Link }

(per Comment #3): Thanks for the "haystack" of legal briefs. The "needle" can be found in the Conclusion (pp.32-33) of the "Order Granting Motion to Dismiss" in U.S. vs. Smith ({ Link }), which finds the Defendant (Mr. Smith) "not guilty" of parking too close to the "area" of public amenities (e.g. toilets) without buying a permit (mainly for technical reasons having to do with the definition of "areas") -- it does not find the Plaintiff (U.S.) "guilty" as described in the original Idea above. Indeed, the court went out of the way to state: "However, dismissing this citation is not the death knell of the Red Rock Pass program. The record before the Court reveals numerous recreation sites and locations within the Red Rock HIRA which qualify as "areas" and where charging a recreational amenity fee would not violate the other provisions of the FLREA. Assuming an individual's recreational activities were not exempted from the uses for which no fee may be charged, requiring a Red Rock Pass for use of those areas would be appropriate." Perhaps we can continue this discussion on a factual basis.

I've already started to "get it done" per your challenge above -- see my Idea "public native plant gardens" and my Comment #1 under the Idea "Make Your Property A Wildlife Preserve!" Perhaps others could comment on how they've started to "get it done" rather than concerning themselves overly much with your writing style, etc. ;-)

Thank you for presenting this important Program here -- so apropos of the mission of this website and a *profound* tribute to your daughter. For those interested in learning more, the link is: { Link } The text there begins: "NatureBridge: Connecting Youth to the Natural World We are NatureBridge, formerly Yosemite National Institutes. Our mission is to inspire personal connections to the natural world and responsible actions to sustain it. Serving over 40,000 participants annually, NatureBridge is the largest nonprofit residential environmental education partner of the National Park Service. Since 1971 we have introduced almost one million students to national parks through field science education programs for schools and youth leadership programs."

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

(per Comment #13): The permit model you outline, including limiting the number of permits issued to what is locally sustainable, seems like it could apply effectively to Priscilla Burton's original Idea -- thanks -- I'm looking forward to changing my vote from "No Opinion" as soon as she weighs in on the significant matters discussed above....

Implicit in the last two sentences of your Comment #1 is the argument that a few animals must sacrifice their freedom for the sake of others. This is one of the many sad results of human destruction of their native habitats, but we can make it much less sad by holding zoos to the highest standards in how they house and treat their animal guests while they are there (e.g. providing ample room in naturalistic enclosures) and by helping zoos "to restore endangered and threatened species back into the wild" as you say.

Naturalize our new citizens amidst our natural wonders. Welcoming our new citizens by holding their naturalization ceremonies in our National Parks/Monuments would show two great things about our country at once. Credit: This originated as my Comment #1 on (part of) an Idea posted by ___ on Sept. 10th.

We need to encourage our new citizens to connect with the great outdoors, too. If a government function happens on public lands, it usually has to do with public lands policy. What are you imagining being more expensive about this? (Note that I didn't say "all" new citizens would have this privilege/pleasure and remember that they all have to get to their swearing-in ceremony on their own, wherever it's held.) The federal government wouldn't even need to "rent the hall" because it/we already own the National Parks/Monuments! Naturalization ceremonies are shown on national television most every year around the 4th of July and this would remind all of us that the national treasures of our National Parks/Monuments *and* of our Citizenship are part of what we love about our land and our values.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

(per Comment #18): Thank you for helping to "unpack" your original Idea further. While I agree that human access to the natural world is essential for our spiritual and material well-being, I would also argue that it is in our HIGHEST INTEREST to preserve *some* undisturbed natural areas (particularly with critical habitat for endangered species) from *any* human intrusion that is ecologically unsustainable. I suspect that you would agree with this and that we are only debating the location/extent of such natural areas and the intensity/type of human incursions that should be permitted (i.e. *what* activities are environmentally sustainable *where* and *when*). To put a very fine point on the argument, I would be content if research scientists and documentarians had sole access to the *most* vulnerable ecosystems (but only if they could enter and leave without undue disturbance) -- sharing their findings with us on something like the "Discovery Channel" (to borrow a term of mockery from anti-environmentalists) -- while I had personal access to similar but less pristine examples of those ecosystems which would not be irreparably harmed by my visits. While I prefer to hike, if your OHV riding was according to similar precepts (in separate areas from my hiking trails, by the way) then I'd have no problem with it whatsoever. So, I will agree with the motto "Land of Many Uses" if and only if it some day becomes commonly understood that one of the most important of those "Uses" -- paradoxically -- is not to "Use" the most ecologically-significant land for any human purpose that alters its natural state.

If you've never seen photos of this place, check out "Adobe Town" Wyoming on Google Images -- WOW!!!

Per Comment #1, here are some specifics: The Sportsman's Alliance for Alaska ({ Link }) states that: "no where in Alaska, do so many salmon return as to the Bristol Bay watershed. Just a few of the superlatives in this region include: The Kvichak River is home to the world's largest sockeye salmon run and is also within Alaska's designated trophy wild rainbow trout area. Other species found in the Kvichak include Chinook (king), Coho (silver), pink and chum salmon, Arctic Char, Arctic Grayling, Dolly Varden, northern pike, and whitefish. The Nushagak and Mulchatna Rivers support the largest Chinook (king) salmon runs in Alaska, and perhaps the world. Other species found in these drainages include Sockeye, Coho (silver), pink and chum salmon, Arctic Char, Arctic Grayling, Rainbow Trout, Lake Trout, Dolly Varden, northern pike, and whitefish. Lake Iliamna is Alaska's largest lake and America's last undeveloped "great lake" as it is the same size as Lake Erie. It is home to one of only two freshwater seal populations in the world, as well as all five species of Pacific salmon, Arctic Char, Arctic Grayling, Dolly Varden, Rainbow Trout, northern pike, and whitefish."

We need to make the commitment to educate ALL children, at least through the age of eighteen (from the "three R's" to outdoor science), so that they can be good citizens -- good jobs will follow.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

As the terms of and parties to conservation easements vary greatly, the type, extent, and frequency of environmental reviews vary greatly. Where a non-governmental organization (e.g. The Nature Conservancy) or government entity (e.g. an individual state's Department of Natural Resources) has granted a conservation easement specifically to protect a habitat type and/or particular species, environmental reviews may be more rigorous (e.g. involving qualified biologists). A good overview of conservation easements can be found at: { Link } Addressing your particular question, that document states: "The grantee organization or agency is responsible for enforcing the restrictions that the easement document spells out. To do this, the grantee monitors the property on a regular basis, typically once a year. Grantee representatives visit the restricted property, usually accompanied by the owner. They determine whether the property remains in the condition prescribed by the easement and documented at the time of the grant.... If a monitoring visit reveals that the easement has been violated, the grantee has the legal right to require the owner to correct the violation and restore the property to its condition prior to the violation."

Thank you for this "explainer" -- it persuaded me to revisit your Idea "Reduce tax break on closed industrial timberland" and change my vote from "No Opinion" to "Promote."

Thank you for your beautiful and concise presentation of this powerful Idea. I have witnessed on many occasions the special connections that many students have with various aspects of nature, whether it's spotting a hummingbird visiting its nest in branches overhanging a stream or planting a native plant in a school garden that will attract butterflies the next spring. Some of these students exhibited little or no intellectual curiosity sitting at their desks in the classroom -- staring at a book, board, or screen -- but once they went outside, they looked, listened, and asked lots of (really good) questions. So, in addition to its many other virtues, teaching ecology is a very effective way to engage the intellectual curiosity of some students who would otherwise be hard to reach.

Community gardens -- appropriately sited and managed -- are beautiful in so many ways: they teach our children where their food really comes from (i.e. it does not grow in plastic wrap at 'superstores'), the fruits & vegetables are wonderful to look at, people form new "outdoor" friendships based on a common interest in sustaining the environment and eating good food, etc., etc., etc. For a complementary idea (and to attract pollinators), search "public native plant gardens" on this website.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

It is not part of the Wilderness Act that any and all people have the right to enter any part of any Wilderness Area by any means of transport necessary to get them there. More generally, while access is important, it doesn't trump environmental protection -- we must ensure that there is sufficient natural habitat for people to enjoy when they get there *and* for wildlife to enjoy when and where humans give them some space of their own. There is no scientific justification for setting the miles of trails of each type in a particular ratio -- which trails of which types in which areas are sustainable has to be evaluated on a case-by-case basis. To be clear, wherever the environmental impact is minimal and no rare species are imperiled, I'm inclined to favor legally-permissible access trails so that as many people as possible can gain a greater appreciation for the natural wonders that we have succeeded in protecting from 'development.' Finally, if you take the time to read my Ideas and Comments on this website (including the one referenced in Comment #3, above) you will see that I am *not* "upset because the ORV Supporters as showing their numbers here" as you assert -- subjecting their opinions to the light of day is a good thing (on this specific point, please see the Idea description for "Participants: Please use this website to learn something and to teach something.").

It is encouraging to see the USFS working on multi use trails and bringing many users groups together for the benefit of the many rather than the few. I agree that more access is important rather than less as our lands are a treasure to be shared responsibly rather than restricted arbitrarily. Mountain biking is a responsible non-motorized use appropriate for many of the areas currently restricted to it's use. I feel reconsideration of current designations needs to be considered in all of our lands. I agree that many Wilderness areas need to be set aside to hiking only, but many of the previous and upcoming designations are over reaching and excluding Americans and visitors from the outback experience.

It is nice to know that many high schools have adopted mountain bike teams as an addition to conventional ball sports. I'd like to see more trails made available to America's youth as well as the public in general. I see this as a nice gateway to encourage people to get outdoors and enjoy the open spaces that are too often taken for granted.

According to you, AZ should look like an utter wasteland. Yet if you want a chance at a trophy elk, AZ is the place to be. I can drive down the road and see Bighorn Sheep on a daily basis. I often see mountain lions and have even seen the rare Mexican Jaguar on multiple occasions. Wolves are thriving in the Northeastern part of the state, and coyotes roam freely. Hell, I damn near hit a group of javelina at least twice a week within a mile of my house. I could go on for quite some time about how good things are here. Yet we have an open use policy on OHV's here in AZ. We can go anywhere we want and have open range grazing, yet the wildlife here is thriving. Care to explain that one?

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

If you are going to quote something then make sure you know what you are doing. Failure to do so makes it look like you are grasping at straws to prove your point. Section 509 [43 U.S.C.1769] (a) Nothing in this title shall have the effect of terminating any right-of-way or right-of-use heretofore issued, granted, or permitted. However, with the consent of the holder thereof, the Secretary concerned may cancel such a right-of-way or right-of-use and in its stead issue a right-of-way pursuant to the provisions of this title. So in other words, this law only applies to rights-of-way created after 1976 because of one word: heretofore, (legal definition), until now, before this time.

Whether you realize it or not, there has been a shift in the thinking of a lot of OHVers. We have been trying to and succeeding in rerouting some of the more sensitive sections of trails. Many areas have been "hardened" to protect areas that have a problem with standing water. This was done to keep these areas from turning into giant mud bogs. There where bypasses closed recently at both the Rubicon Trail and at Fordyce in the Tahoe National Forest. The main problem with us getting some of the more environmentally sensitive areas either rerouted or having work done to protect them is the USFS, the BLM, and the whole process with the gov't. The OHVers have been doing a lot of work on our trails. There is a massive amount of work currently being done on the Rubicon to meet water quality standards. Some of it needs done and some of it is just plain silly. I have no doubt over the next two years that this will be the model for the rest of the country.

Sounds to me like hikers do not want to pay their way. Looks like a developed trailhead with a paved area. It's about time this come around to bite the hikers in the butt. It was ok when we had to pay fees, now it is their turn. What happened to hikers and backpackers, along with the eco's putting their money where their mouth is and helping out? Guess it was all talk as usual.

As I alluded to earlier, another and I have been working on something for the last 12 years. We are very close to finally realizing what we wanted to do. This has been kept very quiet until recently. There have been two 10kW Tesla turbines running for almost two years without problems. And recently a 50kW was built and is currently running. Now 50kW is the equivalent of 200 amps at 240 volts. Enough to power the average home. There is also a 50kW turbine currently being adapted to a vehicle. A Tesla works through laminar flow, fluid dynamics, and gaseous expansion. I currently hold the equivalent of a Ph.D. in mechanical engineering through 15 years of hard won experience and the other one working on this holds a Master's in electrical engineering. Now before anyone here starts screaming that a Tesla Turbine doesn't work, then you had better do A LOT of research. One of the first powerplants was built at Niagara Falls with a Tesla Turbine to power NYC. And a version of a Tesla is used in every steam powered power plant in the world. We just found a way to do it very effectively on a smaller scale. We should be doing a full release in the next year, depending on how the whole OHV thing goes. Both of us have agreed that if we cannot have equal and equivalent access then we will keep this for ourselves.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

YOu might want to read up on RS2477. These were rights-of-way granted to the states to facilitate the settlement of the west. Courts have upheld these rights-of-way. Trying to retract these grants just to create roadless areas for wilderness protection violates many laws.

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{ <a href="http://pirate4x4.com/forum/showthread.php?t=915074" rel="nofollow"
target="_blank">Link</a> } { <a href="http://pirate4x4.com/forum/showthread.php?t=872650"
rel="nofollow" target="_blank">Link</a> } Just of few on the cleanup we do. Here's one an trail
maintenance. { <a href="http://pirate4x4.com/forum/showthread.php?t=905742"
rel="nofollow" target="_blank">Link</a> } Here's one where we are fighting the expansion of
the Marine Base at Twenty-nine Palms. { <a
href="http://pirate4x4.com/forum/showthread.php?t=917897" rel="nofollow"
target="_blank">Link</a> } They "moved" some desert tortioses on that one.
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Whether you or anyone else likes it, this actually works. Just take a look at the Rubicon Trail. Enough people on both sides finally realized what needed to be done and it is being done.

So are you going to be the one to decide if I get to have kids or not? How about we do like China and practice infanticide. Maybe we could just line people up and use firing squads. Maybe if you would stand up and be a man and push for immigration enforcement, then we wouldn't have a problem. Some 30 million live here by alot of estimates. They are here illegally. They broke the law. Round them up and send them home.

Ther is a deep division in this country based on lies and deciet on both sides. We have the extreme left and right here, and also those who want to find reasonable solutions. There needs to be those who can be bigger men and wmen to stand up and find a reasonable compromise. Who is willing to stand up with me?

_____#107: I hear you! While I try to walk that middle line, I will certinaly revert back to my right-lean when folks post the Anti-OHV lean in a vague and unsubstantated manner

_____#108, "Since we discovered OHV riding we finally have found something we both enjoy and can do together." As my kids grow older, this i exactly what I am counting on. My In-Laws started taking OHV trips 20 years ago. The OHV activity was the draw for the kids. On most every one of their trips now, all their kids (now grown) are camping with them. Now that my In-Laws have grown older, they don't attend as many OHV trips. For them, the grandchildren is the draw. "A family that plays together, statys together."

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

I'm not sure if I know what you mean, but are you threatening OHV users with your last statement? I certainly hope not. And no, I won't SHUT UP either! Guess what dude, your Jeep.... it's a OHV as soon as you drive it off the highway. I'm glad that at 64 you're content to ride a Horse in the forest. (Good luck with that over the next 10 years.) But that doesn't give you any rights to take away mine! _____#110, who wrote: "No longer can you see wildlife close up from the trails, no longer can you dispersed camp without the loud buzzing of motor vehicles screaming across the desert nearby, or doing "donuts" in the fire roads of the forest. Riding up the sides of the banks of the creeks, and screaming across the forest duff making narrow tracks for natural rain to cause erosion and foul the watershed. " Another page of unsubstantiated, generalizations from the Anti-OHV Book! Last Month, I was in the Sierra Nevada Mountains, driving OHV down the trail. I saw wild cattle, Deer and a coyote all within 20 feet of the trail. This summer, I was in the California Desert for a week. I saw snakes, lizzards, Hawks, Fox and Kangaroo Rats. So, I have no idea what you mean that you can no longer see wildlife close up from the trails. As for the rest of your generalizations, It's nothing short of unfortunate that OHV users around you are acting irresponsibly. Some of what you post about calls for existing laws to be enforced while others can probably be addressed with some education by your local governmental agencies. Regardless, you have no right to use the examples of a select few to smear and condemn the rest of us for it!

Not sure about your title, but everything else seems accurate. I have two electric quads at my house (but they are for my kids). I'm holding out on a new quad. Waiting for a good Adult Size electric quad to come out. Or, atleast that's what I'll say on this forum :) The technology is developing, and it's pretty exciting! At this { Link }, you can see that China is on board with the idea.

Man, I wish I could see the votes! Other than protecting their own agenda, I can't think of a single reason in this wide world why anyone would demote the idea of Kids on Trails! Perhaps they think sitting on the couch playing DS would be better?

Fair enough, just say what I said, granted you agree with what I said. "Can you show me in public law where habitat preservation is designated the only reason to be considered in closure decisions? I don't believe that explicitly exists in any past legislation." Jon, you are correct in that such legislation does not exist. In fact, there are Areas Designated by the USFWS as "Critical Habitat" where BLM permits OHV Access.... and it's legal!

Folks, also check out a similar Idea here. Support and Defend the Endangered Species Act { Link } Promote Vote here would be a Demote Vote there.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

My son and I have had a hard time finding something in common to enjoy together. Since we discovered OHV riding we finally have found something we both enjoy and can do together. We enjoy riding and taking in scenery we would not have seen otherwise. We are both responsible riders and care about the environment and make sure we leave in better condition than we found it.

Being a Utah native (born and raised in south eastern Utah) I have to agree with Brad mower, I live in Moab and yes during Easter week it gets crazy here but a big part of the economy here is built around OHV use as well as other outdoor activity's so its just something that I deal with. There will always be those who break the rules no matter what they are but banning something doesn't fix the problem ie: people rob banks so lets just close all the banks, doesn't work. Were all going to have to share and help educate others.

I am a member of an org in Vt and I have to admit that they are very concerned about how the org is percieved. Reputaion is a huge part of being recognized by the community. Look at the VAST Trail System for snow mobiles, if that was not marked and regulated would there be any such thing? Why cant something like this be done for a 4WD Trail System? I promote what the UFWDA is trying to do!

In certain areas, vital wildlife habitat for endangered or threatened species and wilderness areas, yes. As you said yourself people on foot can cause wildlife stress as well. Now before you use the standard idiot logic here let me say that in case of emergencies like wildfires and plane crashes or any other form of extreme peril you can come up with exceptions will be made.

I think there is a lot more than cloud seeding and weather modification going on up there. Lets not forget the grip pharmaceutical companies have on the country. Either way though I agree that it needs to stop.

How about people cut back on the over consumption of natural resources? It is amazing how little responsibility humans want to accept over what is happening.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Get youth outdoors and "getting to know" local wild spaces through creative arts.. Taking responsibility for the global environment can be overwhelming to youth - but caring about a local greenspace (park, garden, school yard, etc.) is not. Tangible, heart-based connections with nature can be created if children and youth just spend more time in a local greenspace. Even better, they can use creative arts like photography, art, writing, video, etc. to enhance their understanding of local nature. Canadian artist Robert Bateman's Get to Know Program (www.gettoknow.ca) is based on this concept. The program's signature initiative is the Get to Know Contest, which invites youth age 5-18 to submit art, writing, photography and videos based on first-hand experiences in nature. Its "Virtual Hikes", "Natural Treasure" and "Best Practices" resources introduce youth to local wildspaces and help teachers incorporate nature into the curriculum. Some resources are location-specific, but more locations are being added over time. With partners like the U.S. Forest Service, the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, the National Wildlife Federation, the program is popular due to its simple philosophy: Something as simple as allowing youth to just be outdoors and connect with local animals and plants, even just for a few minutes a day, through arts or simple observation, can serve as a foundation to them becoming healthy, active adults and engaged citizens who will passionately care about the environment.

Public/Private partnerships. The group I belong to, Friends of McInnis Canyons NCA (non-partisan, 501 (c)(3) has been in existence for over 5 years now and has developed a great relationship with the BLM. The Grand Junction field office has emphasized the "conserve, protect and restore" philosophy embodied in the organic legislation which created this NCA. Our group wishes to see the kind of collaboration present in our relationship with the BLM encouraged by a well defined policy statement from the BLM which would help other units in the NLCS work toward the kind of success we have enjoyed. Many lands are now protected and a healthy Friends/BLM relationship is the beginning of the answer to "now what ?".

Migration Highways through the Madison Valley, Montana. Delineate the centuries old migration highways that animals use to migrate/disperse in and out of Yellowstone National Park through the Madison Valley, MT Hwy 87 and US Hwy 287. Erect effective wildlife crossing signs, reduce speed limits, paint the road with wildlife crossing messaging, erect point of interest signs for travelers to see where these corridors are and what animals use them and where they are going and coming from, create an educational component where school children study these corridors and the wildlife in their area and they develop ways to protect them while crossing the roads, they make suggestions on how to reduce the astronomical number of vertebrates killed on US highways every day (one million).

Idaho County, as declared a state of Emergency in their County due to unmanaged wolf populations! People have risen against tyranny! Great day!!!!

I hear there are two other counties with wolf plans, that's not including Shoshone and Clearwater who I think is going to be next. I also think we need to hold those accountable that brought the wolf in to use as a tool to ruin rural economies.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Restore the Full Jurisdiction of the Clean Water Act. Make a national commitment to clean water by restoring the full jurisdiction of the Clean Water Act. Pass Congressman James Oberstar's House Bill 5088, the "America's Commitment to Clean Water Act," and restore protections for the streams and wetlands that are the source of drinking water for more than half of America's citizens. Director of Stewardship and Public Policy American Canoe Association
www.americancanoe.org

Provide Incentives for Conservation. We need to provide incentives to farmers and others to reduce nutrient discharges and help eliminate the dead zones in the rivers, lakes, bays and coastal areas of the U.S. Paul Sanford Director of Stewardship and Public Policy American Canoe Association
www.americancanoe.org

When I was in Alaska (1970 - 1975), Denali National Park was considered a very wild place. However, with increasing tourism, they implemented a plan to keep tourism down - albeit somewhat - by limiting travel past the 12 mile point on the park's only highway to those who had camping permits in any of the campgrounds past the 12 mile point. If you wanted to see the park past the 12 mile point, you rode the bus! It's my understanding several other national parks have or are implementing something similar. This is a good way to allow tourism, but keep the numbers manageable.

Both California and Arizona have more acres of wilderness than Idaho. If acres "fairness" is an issue, then consider that there are zero acres of designated wilderness in the northern five counties of Idaho. The Scotchmans are not "popular with snowmobilers" although nearby areas that are popular with snowmobilers would remain unaffected. Trail maintenance can be done with hand tools and is done so quite effectively by volunteer groups in many places. There are no other "management themes" that provide the certainty of protection provided for by congressional designation. Wilderness designation would change nothing as the area is currently managed that way, so there really is no need to fear the impact of such designation.

I meant to write that there are 12,000 miles of FS maintained roads. "Trails" was a slip of the "tongue" as that was also on my mind. Most all of the FS roads provide access for all users. I don't have at my finger tips the total number of trail miles in the district (Sandpoint Ranger district) but seem to recall it's only a bit over 100 miles for all types of trails. A significant portion are open to ATV use, I seem to recall looking at it in detail 5 or 6 years ago, but do not recall the exact mileage. All, or almost all are out and back - due to the nature of our topography. I understand the desire, and usefulness of "loop" trails, particularly for the ATV users and think that this can facilitate reductions in user conflict by establishing some directional usage. I believe there is an effort to create such an experience in the Talache area and south of there through construction and linkage. There are probably other opportunities for adding to this system, both motorized and non-motorized, a need that can be addressed in forest planning, travel planning and perhaps in the Bonner County Trails Advisory group. I have participated in the former two, but not the latter, although I follow the BC Trails group's work. I think all three allow different user groups to come to a better understanding of needs and limits and help reduce conflict over land management decisions. Glad to hear you are involved.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Economic Advantages of Wilderness. Public lands designated as wilderness bring value to communities and enrich our lives. These values include clean air, protected watersheds, serene viewsheds, wildlife habitat and opportunities for recreation. The economics of wilderness are described in the 2005 book, "The Multiple Values of Wilderness," published by Venture Publishing. Stake-holders involved in the public lands debates are keenly aware of the value that mineral extraction brings to local communities, but rarely value the benefits to a community that wilderness brings. In my community, wilderness is often thought of as a "taking" from the American people, rather than "giving" to ourselves and future generations. The federal government could be helpful by providing a discussion of the economic benefits of wilderness areas on the DOI webpage and in other media.

I promote this idea. But, OHV use is just one of many user groups. Its my observation that the OHV users are the most vocal and therefore, OHV users are not in danger of losing their rights to existing, designated trails on public lands. OHV riders' appetite for new trails appears insatiable. There should be some land preserved as wilderness for its intrinsic value. Future generations of families will be thankful for that, just as we are thankful to our predecessors for preserving our national parks.

That sounds like a great idea. I recommend corrals at trail heads to help in staging rides. Folks would come from far away to ride the trail. It would be a good way for Tennessee to tourist dollars to the region.

In the west, communities are surrounded by public land. Trails could be constructed to allow travel between communities on foot, horseback, bicycle, motorcycle or and ATV. This would provide recreation and an alternative means of commuting.

Science learning suffers if it's only done out of a book. Children need to connect to nature and learn about it to truly be full citizens of the world. What better place to do this than in our national parks?

The Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness (BWCAW) in NE MN is a beautiful, peaceful, place - but at over 1 million acres, very few people are able to enjoy it. If you are elderly, too young, too busy, or too poor to make the trip, you can't enjoy the "wilderness." You can enjoy the lands surrounding it - the also beautiful Superior National Forest and the MN State Forests - if you have clear skies overhead, beautiful lakes, wildlife around you, you should be content. This restrictive designation of "wilderness" is divisive - it pits motorized vs. non-motorized forest users against one another. And it should not. Only extremists are one or the other. Most people, like my friends and family, enjoy the forest in many ways -- snow-shoeing, snowmobiling; paddling, motorboating, or tubing; hiking, biking, riding horses, or ATVing. We are not one dimensional earth-destroying motorheads. We love being outdoors - we just use a motorboat or an ATV to get where we're going sometimes. We are ALL motorized users. We just stop at different points. I love the BWCA wilderness - but it's big enough!

Public Lands are States responsibility and benefit, Not the Nanny Feral Government

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

I use to hunt, fish, boat, mushroom hunt, bike, hike and motorcycle on public lands. All have been ruined by Government, and I no longer wish to put up with the ridiculous cost and regulations involved with any of it. Liberals have completely ruined the Outdoors for most real people, and turned it over to green toads to save it for whoever takes over when we go bankrupt. What we need is Cap and Tax payable to the Harris's and Habib's of the world.

I love this idea! I've followed this advice for my yards or lots on properties in CA, WI, and UT. In CA, I converted much of a conventional back yard to natural vegetation and put in a pond. In WI, I converted most of a large lot to restored native prairie, and put in some ponds. In UT, where I now live, most of a large lot remains natural habitat, and I put in a pond. My UT lot is in a very arid area, so the pond has attracted many species that I would not otherwise see, including toads, tiger salamanders, and dragonflies. And during the winter months when the deer come down out of the mountains, I've had up to 20 deer in my yard waiting their turn for a drink. More Americans need to lose their apparent obsession with green, well-manicured lawns. They could save money, time, fuel for lawn mowers, and fertilizers if they restore their yards to natural vegetation. And they will attract much more diverse and abundant "watchable wildlife" to their yards.

I voted to demote this idea because I think that most zoos provide good conservation and public education benefits. For example, some crippled wildlife that could not survive in the wild are sustained in zoos, where the public can gain an appreciation for wildlife conservation. In addition, many zoos have important captive breeding programs that help to restore endangered and threatened species back into the wild. Such zoo programs are largely responsible for the successful reintroductions of California condors in California, Arizona, and Baja California. And the San Diego Zoo is running a project for abandoned urban pet Mojave desert tortoises that may help with that species' eventual recovery in the wild . Perhaps most importantly, zoos allow millions of urban children to see wildlife up close. This is imperative if we want those children to grow up to be adults who care about wildlife conservation.

I strongly support and applaud this idea. Developing and maintaining constructive partnerships that include federal participation is often essential to achieving important conservation successes.

When properly located, designed, and constructed, wildlife over or under passes on highways have been shown to successfully reduce road kills in specific wildlife crossing areas with a pattern of past road kills. Unfortunately, these wildlife over or under passes can be expensive, and most transportation funding goes into building and maintaining highways, not to mitigating wildlife mortality. Arizona had a wonderfully innovative state program to address highway wildlife crossing issues, but sadly when Republican Governor Brewer came into power it was largely abolished.

We all must stand together to protect and serve our planet anyway we can.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

There are several things that Gateway NRA can immediately do to improve its short-term performance while developing a long-term vision... 1.) Partner with local communities and organizations that can help Gateway fulfill it's mission with extra manpower and money. 2.) Increase transparency when dealing with the public and act on all proposals within 90 days of receipt. 3.) Strike a balance between preserving the environment and site history while providing educational and recreational opportunities to visitors. 4.) Improve access to Jamaica Bay for human powered watercraft and access to bicycles for getting around the park.

Whether one is hunter/fisher or not, the fundamental concern is to work together to insure the health and sustainability of the eco-SYSTEM. A dying or dead one does little for you regardless of your preferred pursuit. In that regard, it is good to understand what you realistically are or are not contributing in that regard. For example, some "hunters" are no more than irresponsible killers. Yet, a true hunter maintains a deep understanding of and connection with the environment. So the issue is more about where we all together end up taking the environment and our national heritage.

Having large visible permits on snowmobiles will probably not reduce the incursions in to wilderness by the willing participants. I find that much of our boundaries are poorly marked and would help in reducing those incursions. Simply putting a sticker on a sled that will likely be covered with snow or hard to see anyway is not the answer. Education and enforcement of the boundaries will do more for the stopping of the suggested violations than creating another government cost with this additional label. I just hiked and signed a local wilderness boundary that has common encroachment and the damage I seen to any of the land was from the hikers. Trash and trail issues had made more of an impact than any snowmobile from winter use. Find a way to increase education and enforcement of existing area and you'll get the support.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

I have to chime in again for the benefit of _____ and others: "currently 96% of the undeveloped land in America is developed and no longer functions as habitat." Sorry, but you contradict yourself. Of all of America, only about 10-15% is "developed". Another 25% or so is agricultural. This leaves about 60% as truly undeveloped. Much of the ag land, and some of the suburban development functions as some sort of wildlife habitat, as has been pointed out by other writers. Some of that undeveloped land is commercial timber land, which also functions as wildlife habitat, even though some of you would call that "developed". Easier than looking out a plane window is cruising google earth. Vast areas, hundreds of millions of acres, are relatively undeveloped and are great wildlife habitat. Managed forests, with controlled logging, actually provide better habitat with more habitat diversity than unmanaged. I work in the northeast, and the Adirondack park is an excellent bad example. This is 2 million acres of "forever wild", and has not been logged in over 100 years. The forests are unhealthy, lacking diversity. Oh, yes, there are plenty of large trees, but fewer tree species, and a lack of the young forest habitat needed by a large majority of wildlife species at some stage in their life. Western forests are in worse shape with high risk of conflagration in overcrowded, overmature forests. This is from lack of management, lack of harvesting, and lack of smaller scale, lighter intensity fires. By leaving it alone and putting out fires for 100 years, now the fires are too hot and too large to be beneficial. Take a google earth tour of Yellowstone Park. After 23 years, much of it is still gray ash. Million acre fires are not "nature's groovy way of rejuvenating the forest". As others have said, rural folks love wildlife, and understand that balance better than urban folks. The fact that we make a living close to the land gives us an appreciation. What we do as foresters (myself), loggers, farmers and other rural workers does have an effect but it is not always negative. Just to make another correction, we probably have more trees than 200 years ago, but not 400 years ago. Much of the east was cleared for farming, and a lot of that has regrown to trees. Most of the regrowth is natural forest, but some replanted. Much of the west is more stocked with trees than 200 or 400 years ago, due to the lack of fire over the last 100 years. Perhaps that makes up for the cleared land in the east, I'm not sure. But that is besides the point. We aren't going back in time to "pre-Mayflower" unless we all want to move back to Europe or wherever. And you don't because you could have but didn't. So lets make the best of it here. The air and water are a lot cleaner than 40 years ago, we have done a lot to clean up "the environment". But we did it by moving our dirty manufacturing to places like China and Romania, so worldwide, there are places getting worse. By providing more of our raw materials: food, fiber and energy, here, where we frankly will do a better job of it, we are helping the worldwide environment. And we have to maintain a strong economy to be able to afford a clean environment. Go ask someone in Romania if they really care about air pollution from smelting. They care about having food for another day.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

GETTING ALONG IS A BIG STEP IN THE WHOLE PROCESS. . . First of all, we are all Americans . Second - this is our land . Third - it is agreed that wildlife is number one . Fourth - wildlife has the majority of the land to start with . Fifth - We should all get along here . Sixth - The forest has many opportunities for many of us to enjoy in many ways . Seventh - Shared trails can be a good thing if the groups would unite . No.....this is Not the Commandments nor are they rules. It is my opinion. Sure....keep fighting over who gets what and who uses where and how it is used. All of you are just giving USDA/USFS/BLM and Yes.....Fish and Game..... more "ammo" and reason to make sure they write the policies and rules to keep out ALL AMERICANS. I am sure that many groups are okay with this, I AM NOT. My nephew is 16 and after I took him for a ride on legal roads in my truck to show him the forest and he was able to see wildlife from the truck window, for which was Not Scared of the truck at all, my nephew asked when he could ride the ATV in the forest to be deep in it to see many more animals. When many of you finally get a message across to our government that YOU want ALL AMERICANS to stay out of the forest, except for YOU, and the government implements it for you, I will tell my nephew that it is YOUR fault that our young AMERICANS can No Longer Have The Same Chances at Nature and Our Forest As We did Growing Up. That he must rely on books and magazines in order to even get an idea as to what it may have been like to enjoy Our Forest as we once did. Come on, grow up yourselves! It really can't be that hard for all of us to play on the same play ground can it?

Blue Ribbon Coalition - ARRA - NOHVCC - oAAC - Tread Lightly Trainer - and so many others. People need to realize that memberships is what supports causes and helps save our recreational activities. Volunteering builds a unity of recreationist for the areas they use and maintain. Donations help support larger groups that spend too many hours advocating, lobbying, and legal funds to STOP closures of our land. Our future is at stake of our forest recreation..... help support all you can by any means. Don't be afraid to give up a weekend from couch time, get out and Volunteer to help save our forest for recreation. It may even improve YOUR Health. (You will have a good excuse to call in sick to work Monday morning if that helps!)

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Public Lands are just that....."PUBLIC". The Lands that are called Forest are the property of The People of this great nation, not that of the government. If YOU have any knowledge of history than you would know our very own President Roosevelt made a pledge about our forest for The People should use it for recreation and enjoy all it's beauty. By means of motorized transportation in order to be deep in the forest to be a part of nature and the wonders of it. That is why Pres. Roosevelt spent so much time himself in the forest he had replenished for all of us to enjoy. Today there are more causes and levels of importance than there are of results of any actions brought up. Recreation is the fastest growth of American use today. Many activities are taking place in our forest like, bird watchers, hikers, plant enthusiasts, All Terrain Vehicle, Off Highway Vehicles, bikers, campers, water activity, and so much more. If one person thinks they can be an Advocate for every activity and have a inch of success than so much more power to them. But.....there is no such person. Most users of trails rarely come across campers. Those that YOU say YOU experienced were fellow campers most likely. I am sure you did NOT confront them to ask them to be considerate of YOUR FAMILY time as well? This info in this blog type is not to promote or to use it for gain to a club or entity for OHV's. It IS for the government to read our concerns and what we believe in for our recreation as to the type of ways the OHV Community is involved in caring as well as taking care of our forest while also using it for recreation. . So I ask YOU, what do YOU do to help OUR Forest? Please say what clubs or associations YOU may belong to for which YOU support OUR Forest. Don't be shy!

#6 _____.....stated "In my experience, VERY few volunteers are experienced in working with saws IN THE FOREST ENVIRONMENT, which is markedly different than your backyard! The log you are working on is probably not the one that is going to kill you." Volunteers are just that....Volunteers. This does not mean they have No experience or knowledge in the correct operation of Chainsaw or the application as to when to use it. The course provided by USFS, for which I have taken and I am certified, provides much information as to many aspects of "cutting trees down" and when this should be done safely. It is not the idea to run out to the forest and just start cutting trees down! The _____ needs to evaluate the conditions of the trail he is working on, the trees surrounding the areas to be worked, the Safety involved, and if he will be going home after he is done because he has a really good "bucker - faller" as you say with him. As you know Ken, taking the course just does not say you can do what you want in the forest. An educated decision must be made prior to any action even before starting a chainsaw. Approval from the presiding Ranger must be given before one even heads out to an area. Sometimes mother nature will put a little twist in the trees - per say - and then trails may be impassable due to fallen or leaning trees. As with an Ice Storm, Tornado, or just high winds. The presiding Ranger will know if the Volunteer who will be going out to clear the problem trail areas is able to handle any possible situation that may come about. With this input as We have made here I am sure those who read this may start to find that just because a person OWNS a Chainsaw does not make them a professional or experienced Sawyer when the best even come across a situation that Volunteers may not and find themselves in a very bad spot. They are sure to do what is needed to get out of it safely when able too. In Most cases, but there are the odds.

Discussion Question 1

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(cont.)

We have lived here for 20 years and we have seen nothing but good things come out of here we protect it and take care of it.

If you have ever been to the Redrock country in Utah, you know that most of this beautiful area is only accessible by trails. If the trails are eliminated it will only serve to put another star on the no access board of the so called environmental groups. The 15% that they propose eliminating are probably the most scenic and beautiful. From what I have witnessed first hand by traveling these trails with my jeep, it appears that the state of Utah along with many off road groups, takes great pride in providing scenic access to these remote areas of natural beauty. Too bad the BLM doesn't take the same pride.

Great idea and badly needed. Riding bikes in national parks is hazardous to your health. Sharing the pavement with the Winnebagos and Harleys; what kind of national park experience is that? Riding in Yellowstone was one of the worst bike experiences of my life. More MTB trails in national parks will promote healthy, active families and youth who will enjoy a life-long love and appreciation of wild places that only comes from visiting them under your own power.

I am an environmental educator in Yosemite National Park, and have seen students undergo profound change through our program. Being in a place so beautiful and awe-striking, they cannot help but want to learn about how formed; they can't help but muster the courage to hike 3000 feet up waterfalls or go through a pitch-black dark cave. They connect with this place, and want to take care of not only the park itself but the entire planet to which it is so intimately connected. I recently received a letter from a girl who says that every Sunday, she and her family and a couple other families get together and go to the park where they pick up trash for an hour and then play camouflage (a hide-and-go-seek-type game in the woods), two activities she was introduced to on her trip to Yosemite. This is not uncommon. I have heard countless adults say, decades later, that their experience here has changed the course of their lives. Keep supporting these programs--they are invaluable tool for connecting people with not only the parks, but the natural world that they are a part of.

I think we need to re-initiate the idea of spending time in the natural world with our family as a way to trump wastless spending on mindless gadgets that inevitably end up in landfills. It not only would promote wholesome family and community unity, it would be better for the environment as a whole if we spend more funds on protecting our native lands. To cut down on individual driving vehicles, each park should have a shuttle service that takes families and individuals to different areas of the park while the cars stay parked at a parking lot at the entrance or a designated campground. We need to get out of the car, stop being armchair tourists, and get moving (in conjunction with the first ladies "Let's Move" campaign. The U.S. is one of the most beautiful countries in the world. Let's preserve and enhance what we have, and most of all, appreciate it. This can work in conjunction with school programs and lower income groups that might not have the opportunity to visit some of our most amazing parks. O.K., all this said at 6:30a.m. in the morning with little editing. I hope my 2 cents is worth something.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Rockhounds should practice environmentalism, follow the American Federation of Mineralogical Societies Code of Ethics and the Bureau of Land Management Rock Collecting Limits. Collecting reasonable amounts of rocks and minerals without causing environmental damage should be allowed on almost All Public Lands. Some sites may be too fragile or endangered to allow collecting.

All the power in the Northwest US comes from a renewable resource i.e. hydroelectricity. I guess this is not a popular form of renewable power though. I would like a little competition in the electric supply though perhaps this would help keep power costs down and prevent the regional monopolies we have now.

Natural born US citizens are not increasing the population. Immigrants both legal and illegal account for the majority of our population increases. Solution: end all immigration legal and illegal from all countries until our population stabilizes. This would also be good for the economy too, wages would increase, we could even send some US citizens to US colleges instead of subsidizing the rest of the worlds college students at our academic facilities.

Rather than the government or parents paying for this wonderful idea, why don't the companies in each local distract who have done or are doing damage to the environment fund these field trips???

Promote. PLT is an excellent environmental education program. Students who are involved in gardens and other outdoor projects develop a discipline that can help them in other areas.

For those who are interested, here are a couple of links to videos about the proposed Maine Woods National Park... { Link } { Link } It's a special place, worth preserving for future generations.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

To the Obama Administration and interested citizens, My name is _____r and I am the Executive Director of an organization engaged in public land issues for the past twenty years. Since 1997, we have focused attention upon the efforts of certain commercial recreation interests to transform America's Great Outdoors into venues where access is offered for sale to those willing to pay to play. In this forum, has made various statements about recreation fees and claims that we Americans are still free to experience the outdoors as we did before "Pay-to-Play" replaced traditional birthrights. In the paragraphs which follow, I offer some unvarnished history. As _____ has pointed out, _____ stated in Congressional Testimony: "Recreation fees on public lands were one of the issues which prompted the creation of the American Recreation Coalition in 1979." In 1996, Crandall got what he was seeking when the Recreation Fee Demonstration Program became law. In 1997, the Wild Wilderness website was created, in part, as an effort to provide factual information regarding the still nascent issue of recreation user fees. In that same year, Chief of the US Forest Service _____, speaking before a recreation industry gathering announced: "It baffles me that the Department of Agriculture tracks the value of soybeans, corn, or wheat to the penny by the day, yet, rarely is recreation and tourism on federal lands understood as a revenue generator. Instead it has been perceived as an amenity - something extra that we are privileged to enjoy. Fortunately, that's beginning to change." With those momentous words, something very important began to change and I feel strongly that that change should be the over-arching topic of discussion for the entire "America's Great Outdoors Initiative" forum. Quoted below are excerpts of a speech given the following year by _____'s boss, the Undersecretary of Agriculture. The speaking venue was the American Recreation Coalition's "Great Outdoors Week." The message was heard loudly and clearly by _____'s associates. I suspect it was barely heard by the American Public. I trust the outcry of the American Public on this topic is now being heard by the Obama Administration. More importantly, I pray they are listening. _____, Wild Wilderness --- begin quoted --- Outdoor Recreation on the National Forests Remarks of the Hon. James R. Lyons, Under Secretary for Natural Resources and Environment, U.S. Department of Agriculture June 8, 1998 Welcome to USDA and Outdoor Recreation Week.... During my tenure with the Department, we've not only tried to highlight our recreation program, but we've also tried to take a more business-like approach to its management and promotion. We developed a marketing strategy and an icon that we hope will become to outdoor recreation what the Nike swoosh is to sporting goods and that famous Mercedes Benz hood ornament is to automobiles - a sign that connotes high quality outdoor experiences and customer satisfaction... We're working to obtain more resources - through a proposed increase in the recreation budget, through fees collected through the demo program, and, perhaps, through an expanded role for concessions. What about a profit sharing arrangement with concessionaires where the taxpayer and the business benefit from the venue - in cold, hard cash - and the customer benefits from improved recreation opportunities. We're looking toward the private sector to provide more support for national forest recreation - for an expanded partnership with those who realize an economic benefit from recreation on the public lands. In this way, you can help us help you (as Jerry McGuire said) expand your business opportunities while helping us expand recreation opportunities on the national forests. Finally, to accomplish this and more, we need to develop stronger brand and name recognition for national forest recreation. Our challenge, in short, is to help

Discussion Question 1

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(cont.)

the public realize that when they're hiking the Pacific Crest Trail, or biking the Hiawatha rail-trail, or running the south fork of the Salmon River, or relaxing at Timberline Lodge, they're not on a national park - they're on a national forest. And we hope to achieve this through better marketing, through better information, and through improved development of our brand of outdoor recreation.... Can you think of any other entity - private or public - that has the breadth and diversity of outdoor recreation experiences that you can find on the national forests? I doubt it! We've got a great product to sell. And, with your help, we can make it even better! The national forests are truly America's Great Outdoors. Thanks for your continued support and partnership. We'll look forward to seeing you at Great Outdoors Week.

In California, open spaces are very plentiful once you get out of the Los Angeles Basin and other large metro areas. Next time you visit California drive from Los Angeles (in the south) to Susanville (in the North) via State Route 99 or 395 The only other metro areas you will run through will be Sacramento and the greater Reno NV areas. The other 9+ hours of your drive will be in the wide open rural farm, desert, mountain areas.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Several people have been curious about what brings hunters to our Place. We have mostly elk, mule deer, antelope, coyote, and sage grouse hunters. Occasionally big horn sheep, sharptail grouse, pheasant, mountain lion, or bobcat hunters show up. People also hunt whitetail deer here. Our area is not whitetail habitat, but they are being forced into this area by overpopulation in their natural ranges. They cross with the indigenous mule deer, threatening to wipe out the species. We always encourage hunters to concentrate on removing any whitetail or crossbreds that they encounter and tell them how to recognize the crosses. Predation is of utmost importance to the survival and health of a species. If you had a pet cat, and she had four kittens twice a year and those kittens matured in 12 months and began to mate and also produce kittens (the averages for cats, according to the veterinary text I consulted), you would have 9 cats the first year, 25 cats the second year, and 73 cats by the end of the third year. At some point, you would no longer be able to provide each cat with fresh water, abundant food, and clean, healthy space. This danger also threatens wild animals if they reproduce faster than members of their population die. If they overpopulate, they must die slowly of hunger and thirst. Some will resort to cannibalism. The mothers will have to watch the weakest members of the population, their young, die of hunger. If one species overpopulates, it can damage the plants so much that many species will suffer. The only ways to protect species from overpopulation is by predation or birth control. Providing birth control to wild populations is complicated, and chemical birth control poisons water sources and kills aquatic life. Predation protects herbivores from overpopulation. However, predators can also overpopulate. Just as herbivores can stress and destroy the plant populations they depend upon, too much predation can destroy a population of birds or animals. If a wild animal predator is overpredating and harming the prey base, it can be very challenging to do anything about it. Human predators are much easier to control. If you have skilled state biologists, who can accurately gauge the number of animals that need to leave the population to keep it healthy, and honest hunters, who will obey the game laws, the well-being of your wildlife is assured. Of course, some people are not honest. In that case, you have ranchers, on the ground every day, who can watch for suspicious activity and abuses and report them to the wardens. No one hunts prairie dogs on this Place. There are none. Mother Nature wiped out four active towns with a disease epidemic. Some studies have shown that shooting encourages healthier prairie dog towns. Maybe if someone had taken the time to hunt a few of them, they would not have fallen prey to a disease that devastated the entire population.

What better way to apply what is presented in a traditional classroom setting, than move a significant portion of the learning experience outdoors. Learning without Limits - Classrooms without boundaries! There is very little that can't be taught in a park or wilderness setting. These experiential learning opportunities provide a deeper understanding of educational concepts in context; create lifelong memories and a love of the outdoors. And we all know that what you love you protect.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Create master website for US national parks, BLM national parks, US national cemeteries, and World Heritage sites with in the US. This list should be sortable by state, category, size, recreation, campsites, etc. so potential visitors can schedule vacations. My wife and I vacation by zigzagging through states trying to visit as many of these sites as possible. We journal all our travels and very much like the current NPS brochures on each park.. Super sized website listing all NPS, BLM, National Cemeteries, and World Heritage Sites in the US. This website would be sortable by state, category, facilities, recreation, etc. so potential visitors can schedule travel and vacations. My wife and I currently vacation by zigzagging through states to see as many of these sites as possible. That list is about 600 sites long. We've seen about 175 so far.

I fully support the funding of parks and National areas. With out the parks and wilderness areas, the quality of life is lost to the average resident. Case in point, just look at our festering cities, with trash and filth being the norm. What kind of people do you think grow up to productive and good citizens. If those people would be exposed to the wonder and beauty of natural areas, taken for horse back rides into the parks, with young people running around, and smiling at the birds, flowers, and trees they see. Without the parks, we are nothing but a nation of takers and abusers, with no appreciation for what god and country have given us and protected for future generations. Instead we have children growing up thinking that filth, drugs, trash, ECT. is the normal life. Of course they need to be educated in the proper use and stewardship of our treasures as well. Taught that throwing trash around, marking trees, picking flowers, and killing wild birds, just won't cut the measure. Yeah, I use the forests, beaches, and deserts a lot, but hold them equally valuable.

The most recent thing I read concerning roads on national forests stated because of the extremely large amount of roads now on national forest land, as we move into the future, there will be less roads just because of the huge expense the government has in maintenance of all the roads.

I'm not against OHVs and I think there should be places for their use. It seems, though, some think their activity should be allowed everywhere. There are benefits to wilderness for people and animals. It seems there are narrow minded people in all groups that only want their way and don't care about anyone or anything else.

Access is important, no doubt. There should be places where OHVs are allowed and places they are not allowed. To allow OHV access to every last area of our public lands would be a mistake. Like any other activity, balance is the key. Having natural areas without roads, trails, and development all over is what promotes good stewardship for some.

Emphasis should always be on wildlife and recreation on public land. Resource extraction should be given less weight and only in specific areas. When corporations use public land for resource extraction, a few make money over the short term and the majority of the population gain nothing. Don't forget, corporations have the option of using private land as well. It must be more costly and subtract from the "bottom line" when private land is involved.

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(cont.)

Access is important, no doubt. Some areas should have roads, some should not. There are also plenty of economic benefits to unroaded areas as well. A lot of hunting and fishing groups advocate unroaded areas because of the benefits to wildlife. This in turn brings money from hunting and fishing. These are two groups that contribute significantly to the economy.

Most areas in my state are open to OHVs. The only area I am aware of that closed any OHV access happened to be the area we used for hunting, camping, and riding three wheelers (several years ago). The area is located in a state forest. The DNR wanted to preserve the wild nature of the area and closed roads and restricted OHV use. The area retains its wild nature to this day and I am very glad for this. I have no problem finding a different area for any recreation that has been regulated in this area. My children will be able to enjoy this area in virtually the same condition as when I was young and visited with my parents and grandparents.

Regarding Florida, with the large population growth in that state, I would think anyone could see the benefit of preserving some wilderness. If nothing is saved, I would say the OHV community would end up losing trails through population growth and development.

Looking into the Idaho Roadless Rule, 10 million acres may fall into the roadless rule. Only 8 million restrict roads in some way. 4 million of those are already designated wilderness. That leaves about 12 million acres in Idaho open to road construction and re-construction. With our population growing and more pressure for development, the roadless rule may turn out to be one of your best allies.

I fish and support fishing, but I don't think I have ever seen "unimpeachable scientific information". Access is important, no doubt, but if it is determined that a reduction in access to a particular area would improve aquatic resources, then that should be the rule.

Some wilderness areas have a road that designates a boundary of the area. This seems like a good idea in some instances.

My experience with road closures in my state happened when the DNR closed several roads and restricted OHV use in an area to preserve the wild character. The wild character remains to this day and I am grateful I can still enjoy the area which has remained relatively unchanged. This is important with all the increasing development that there is today. I don't think anyone wants a checkerboard of roads and trails over all our public land.

Access is important. Roadless areas are equally important.

There is room for all activities. There should be places where things like OHVs are allowed and places they are not allowed. With the huge increase in the amount of OHV use over the last decade, there should be more regulation.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

I hunt, fish, snowmobile, etc. and I agree with you. With the lions share of our country open to development, it only makes sense to me to preserve some more of what wild areas are left. I have always been an advocate of having enough habitat preserved so predators and animals that don't interact well with people will have a place.

I also think we are mostly in agreement. Access and reasonable resource extraction is important. I would say a vast majority of our public land is open to development. My estimate is over 98% of the land in the lower 48 states allows resource extraction. I also agree that well managed logging is ok, especially if they can log and then remove the road used to access the lumber. Drilling is done all over our public land. If they only drilled on 1% of public land, I don't think anyone would have an issue. The percent of public land open to drilling is much higher. There are very few areas access is denied for development. I think wildlife/wild land preservation and recreation should be the focus on more of our public land. Balance is the key. I think if we could reach a balance and protect (or preserve) more of our wild land, alot of these issues would go away.

I think this is an area that no one could argue is true wilderness. I think it is important to have areas that are void of development, for the good of people and wildlife.

I agree that land needs to be protected. There is room for all recreation and wilderness. Both are important.

Balance should also mean a focus on preserving wildlife/wild lands, not only resource extraction. 50% of our national forests are open to development. When do we start to balance development with preservaion. Don't forget, development is allowed on all private land and most state land. These federal lands are the last best way to preserve some of our wild land. I don't think most people want all our public land offered up to business. Balance means to preserve some and allow resource extraction on some. I think if we were to reach a balance concerning wildlife/wild land preservation, alot of these issues would go away on their own. I would argue over 98% of the land in the lower 48 states is open to resource extraction. Where is the balance? I'm not sure I know who you are refering to with the statement "not just the chosen few". That could apply to almost any group and I would welcome the debate.

In that case, I agree, there is room for all types of recreation and wildlife/wild lands preservation. There is room for both, wilderness and non wilderness. I think the government should focus on wildlife and recreation before natural resource extraction on public lands.

I agree with most of the author's idea, also. In the modern world, with pressure for development in almost every corner, I think the Wilderness Act is important and is one of the only designations that preserves wild areas from development.

Preserving wild lands for people and wildlife is co-existing. Usually people keep their property rights, even after an area is protected.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

I also believe access is important. I have ridden OHVs, snowmobiles, etc. I don't hike or ride a horse. I also believe wilderness is important. Some areas need to be preserved from development for future generations and for wildlife. There is a generational inequality when future generations won't have the same wild areas available to them that our generations had because of development. Some other areas should definitely be available for access by OHVs, etc. There should be balance.

Compromise?. The argument over wilderness preservation is one that contains a vast amount of different viewpoints and opinions on whether or not efforts should be made to maintain the wild, whether or not human interference should be allowed to continue, etc. It is impossible to reach a definite answer as to whether or not the wilderness should be preserved, as no two people contain the same emotions and connections with the wilderness, and there are far too many amenities of life that are possible currently because of human interference in the wilderness. It seems to me that there should be a middle ground where both extremists can compromise and be realistic about the fact that the entirety of what they want to happen in regards to the wilderness is not going to come into effect. A possible compromise to which I am referring would be the idea of mining. Obviously, the process of mining is not a benefit to the idea and beauty of wilderness, which is why preservationists wish for its termination. The other side of the argument is that mining is essential to obtain the materials and elements that we have come so accustomed to having in this era, and to do without would mean a drastic decline in the standard of living; much to the disapproval of a good majority of Americans. If mining were to occur in one place and all the resources possible were extracted from that one area, then the necessity for excessive amounts of mining sites damaging the wilderness would not be there. If we are more efficient with the way in which we interfere with the wilderness, then there will be less of a need to continue to interfere in more and more locations. I believe this idea would represent a compromise for both sides, in that the necessary process of mining for elements included in our daily lives can be accomplished without entirely damaging and destroying more area of the wilderness than necessary.

I am not an official member of any club or group, but I have attended meetings of several and I provide volunteer time for the Washington Department of Natural Resources, primarily at the Reiter Foothills area in Snohomish County, Washington.

On the Land Trust Alliance's website, you can find a long list of organizations that are working to protect Michigan's natural areas. There are many ways you can get yourself involved with these land trusts, and they would appreciate your enthusiasm.

This is a very good idea, well-expressed and representing a need that should be explored almost everywhere that large scale migrations occur. Thanks.

It's called the Wildlands Network now, Frank. It's nothing more than mainstream conservation biology on a scale large enough to allow for migrations and ecologically-significant carnivore populations in wild areas. There's nothing subversive about it and nothing about "lands off limit to humans" in it. This ought to be something that appeals to a guy like you. Someday I'll buy you a beer and we can talk about.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

I don't think you're paranoid, but the "SOBs" aren't after you or anyone else. I've been a Wildlands supporter since 1994 when I heard Noss speak at a conference. I suppose we may share a dream of landscapes where nature is wild and free; but we're realistic enough to know that this is a human-dominated world. Anything we get done on the ground through organizations like land trusts, for instance, will be modest in nature. Most of the emphasis these days is on identifying and developing corridors to keep animal populations from being isolated. This is very tame stuff and something that could benefit sportsmen in the long run.

It's in the public's interest to conserve biodiversity. Did you not want grey whales and bald eagles to survive? The ESA is a visionary piece of legislation. Its shortfall is in the poor way that implementation has been handled.

Decisions should also be driven by the needs of nature, wildlife, and ecological processes. The world doesn't exist only for human uses.

Following up on _____'s insightful comment, please also tell them that predators, like alligators, helped us evolve to be smart and quick on our feet. We should value and respect these species.

Excellent idea. Because of their past conversion to agriculture, native prairies are our most under-represented ecosystems. You could add western Kansas, Nebraska and eastern Montana to your list of places where major prairie restorations should take place.

There are privately-owned ranch lands and publically-owned (BLM) lands that are often leased to neighboring ranchers. That still makes these publically-owned lands just that: Public Lands. "Split-estate" refers to the subsurface (oil & mineral) rights that were withheld by the government back in the homesteading days. This is a separate issue, one that is troubling to both conservationists and ranchers.

We need to teach our children about equal justice instead of social justice. Teach them to do age appropriate, private sector jobs such as lawn mowing, babysitting, corn detasseling, volunteer with day camps, do odd jobs for seniors, etc. This will instill good values and principles. Do not teach them to live off of government provided jobs.

Man, beautiful words of Truth! As a visitor to Alaska in 1994, hiking from the southeast (Klondike Trail) to Fairbanks, to Anchorage, then the majestic Kenai Peninsula and Kodiak, I can attest to the natural wonders you point-out in the state, and I would imagine, especially the Bristol-Bay area, which is a road "much less traveled" than my excursions! You said what I wish to impart here, that there is nothing that can replace the "majesty and beauty of what took millions of years to create"! There's a peace, a beauty, almost in-describable of the natural wonders of a salmon run in full health, or the crystal-clear flow of a mountain stream, un-spoilt by man's conquest! In today's world, this type of habitat is worth more than any substance I can name, b/c of the rarity of this type of un-spoilt beauty! At some point, we must say that "enough's enough"; The greatest resource we can offer for the future is this!

Discussion Question 1

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(cont.)

I agree completely with this statement. As our nation gets larger and larger, we become more and more detached from the wilderness. People no longer go to the parks to get away from society for picnics, instead they go to the mall. If people had areas like national parks and wilderness areas, they would be more inclined to go. Convenience is the key to winning over the hearts of America's future generations. The positives of increasing the areas of open space are truly endless. It creates habitats for the organisms that need protection. There are endangered species all over America, each of these animals need to live in a special type of environment. What is more conducive to retaining wildlife, than area where the animals are protected? With new areas to go to the younger citizens may take a special pride for these new parks. As a younger citizen, I feel like I would be more inclined to take of these parks, and to use these parks. The parks would be something that my generation could call their own. It would also be a great way for many of the out of touch Americans to get back in touch. America is not known for our love of the outdoors, nor any exercise in general. So places like this would create that spark of interest to go see what the new park would be about. If the parks are done well enough then the attention of the goers can be captured and maintained for a long time. There is no doubt in my mind that new parks would be a positive for everyone.

National Parks and recreation areas need to be a vital part of the educational program of every child, but school funding is often scarce, and priorities of administrators are often stretched way to thin. If the Federal government can increase partnerships with non-profits and other organizations, and perhaps provide seed funding for the most under-served communities, it would greatly leverage and enhance the educational process, and better allow parks to fulfill their mission. For example, the greater Los Angeles area has tremendous National and State Parks, and National Recreation Areas. But, studies have shown that vast parts of the student population do not have access to the parks because they may be several miles away, and not easily reachable via mass transit. NatureBridge, a San Francisco non-profit, is running a pilot program in the Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area to bring in groups of school students, and run hands-on science based educational programs. It is a hugely transformational experience for many students who have never had the opportunity to experience the treasures that are our National Parks.

we can all benefit by having garden spots set aside in our cities. Think of all the senergy we would save if we didn't ship all our food from California every day. And we could at last have a sense of "community"!

OHV access to our public lands. OHV recreational access to our public lands helps promote and educate on the beauty of the great outdoors. This in turn promotes conservation and good stewardship of our public land. Much more so than those who try to restrict access. Allowing family and friends to ride dirt bikes together on our public lands and you improve the long term conservation movement. Restrict access and you remove this opportunity to grow good stewards of the land and encourage abuse.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

There will be good landowners and bad ones, just like anywhere. I do agree with the central premise of this idea, but it's often used as a shield by the far-right "property rights at the expense of everyone else" mindset. Private lands offer the greatest opportunity to maintain, restore and enhance our natural resources. The trick is to get public support for projects that provide public benefit, but not necessarily access. I'm currently restoring two beatdown properties in Idaho, and the help I've received from the federal agencies (lots of them) has been great. It wouldn't be possible without the existing programs.

Increase funds for federal conservation programs. Support funding levels of conservation programs for Federal land management agencies to enable them purchase from willing sellers State school trust lands (or easements) with high conservation values for conservation purposes. These programs include the Interior's and Forest Service's Land and Water Conservation Fund, NOAA's Coastal and Estuarine Land Conservation Program, USDA-Forest Service's Forest Legacy Program and the Defense Department's Readiness and Environment and Protection Initiative (REPI).

Make Your Property A Wildlife Preserve!. Welcome wildlife to your land by growing native plants, providing nesting sites, building a pond, and, if you must have them, by keeping domestic dogs and cats at bay, and strictly controlling livestock grazing. You need not be a large acreage landowner - even an acre or two dedicated to nature can provide great opportunities for local and migrating wildlife. Encourage your neighbors and friends to do likewise (all too often folks have some land and, at a loss as to what to do, literally beat up or remove wildlife habitat, having no clue as to the alternative, namely to enhance nature). This works! With a blessing of wild creatures around you, you'll immensely enjoy your nature preserve!

Just google "US Population Growth" and find and crunch the numbers. You can also readily find population estimates for all the States. The US growth rate has varied from about .87% and 1.15% since 2000. I used the 2008 figure of .915% and applied it to our current population of 310 million to come up with a yearly growth rate of over 2.75 million per year. The US Census Bureau seems to be saying the US growth rate is slowing, but I don't see any hard evidence for that. Ours continues to be well ahead of China's. S.Collins -- Yes, the liberal immigrant policies of the U.S. are a huge factor in our rapid population growth. Glen -- Build it (i.e. roads), and more will come. I personally have not found any restrictions to public lands, except for some state lands for which I need a hunting license to access, and some military restricted areas. Thank you all for your comments.

It'd be great for families to "get away from it all," INCLUDING in that all vehicles and their noise and polluting emissions. Popular to contrary belief in this country, "these feet were made for walking." It's a truly healthy means for families to vacation and explore the great outdoors together.

Discussion Question 1

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(cont.)

Giving kids opprutunites. This is were i want to give the idea to give kids the ages 12-15 the Opportunity to be able to get a job so it can keep them off the streets that away the are able to make there own money not half to steal, lie, and get into trouble. It is a great idea and i think that we should at least give it a try; i have Interviewed alot of kids and teenagers and the said that would love to have a job so they won't be out on the streets. i think we should give them a try.

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Global warming is a hoax. Leave decisions about wilderness and designated lands up to residents of the counties and states where those lands are located. It's everyone's responsibility to take care of the the land. Education is key, not designated land.

I belong to several OHV organizations here in CA. I am a lifetime board member of CORVA. I belong to CA Assn. of 4WD Clubs, Stewards of the Sequoia, ASA, and Blue Ribbon Coalition. All of these are good organizations and work very hard to educate OHV'ers and the general public about responsible OHV recreation.

Add Outdoor activity to education curriculum. In this country, we do not incorporate outdoor experiences into our elementary and/or high school curriculum. I propose that the US government require all elementary schools to include an outdoor experience into their school year. This outdoor experience is defined as: 1. One week in length of full immersion. 2. Must incorporate an activity that utilizes the local natural environment, e.g., near a big lake then teach boating or swimming; near a mountain, then take kids skiing, etc. 3. Should begin in elementary schools; this helps build a life long interest in the sport, outdoor experience, etc.

A friend of mine who grew up in a small village in France told me that in elementary school the kids are taken up into the mountains to ski for two weeks each year. This is a part of the school curriculum, as much as, learning math and English. My first reaction is that we (the US) could never do this sort of thing. But why not? I have read that aerobic exercise makes kids smarter. Read this article in the NYT blog: { Link } Perhaps exercise can help raise our kids national test scores.

Discussion Question 1

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(cont.)

Mile-for-mile is not the way to go for this idea. However as a hiker who disapproves of rampant and aggressive OHV use, I decided a few years ago that if I want OHV cherry stems (dead ends) closed off, or if I want OHV to stick to trails, I must be willing to do the same on foot. Such a rule MUST be for the sake of the lands and air around us. I support revegetating a minimally used OHV trail because where I live in the Four Corners, it is for the good of the community air quality and wildlife. If someone did their research and decided that keeping humans out of a certain area (as they do for Peregrine Falcons) was beneficial, including humans on foot (arguably the smallest impact of the types of recreation, at the very least because foot-travelers can cover the smallest terrain in the same amount of time), I would support this even if it closed off an area for me. There are SO many places to explore, we should be willing to "mother" earth and care for it if that is the most responsible approach for ourselves and our posterity.

Discussion Question 1

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(cont.)

While the Original Poster that created this discussion thread makes some interesting points, the O.P. and the subsequent discussion overlook an extremely important issue, that issue being Volunteer Management. I am a recreational trails volunteer on the 513,000-acre Allegheny National Forest, Pennsylvania's only national forest. For many years, my fellow volunteers and I have done extensive work on the A.N.F., building and maintaining trails and bridges, as well as keeping watch over the condition of said trails. During the 2008 Recreation Facilities Analysis (R.F.A.) on the A.N.F., U.S.D.A. Forest Service personnel proposed decommissioning many developed recreation sites on the A.N.F. Planning reports also revealed proposals to rely more heavily on volunteer work to maintain recreation facilities. I attended R.F.A. events held by the agency. During an R.F.A. workshop on 28 June 2008 at the Bradford Ranger Station, I asked about this proposal to rely more heavily on volunteers. Ranger Scardina told me the proposal was indeed being considered and this was the public's chance to give input and ask questions. I asked Ranger Scardina what the Forest Service's Volunteer Management Policy (V.M.P.), the policy (or policies) that governed how agency personnel recruit, retain, and recognize volunteers, was and if I could see the agency's V.M.P. documentation. Indeed, I made it very clear to Ranger Scardina that V.M.P.'s would require a fourth "R", for "recording", to account for a properly kept record of volunteer donations of time, equipment and material to benefit public recreation facilities. If a volunteer offers to use his chainsaw to clear storm debris out of a trail, and the agency requires a chainsaw-operating trails volunteer to take chainsaw safety and other training in order to work on trail maintenance, and the agency also requires that volunteers keep the agency personnel informed of trail work bees, then it would logically follow that said agency personnel would also be responsible for keeping a record of these donations to the agency as prescribed by the agency V.M.P. Correct? (Also of note: the Forest Service requires volunteers and volunteer-organizations to keep a current, signed volunteer agreement on file with the agency.) Whatever incentives (be they perks, a free "pass", or any other form of benefit) would (or would not) be offered to volunteers for their donations to the public good, one would think the proper procedures would be spelled out in the agency's V.M.P. So, one would think that with the Forest Service's doors open for their "open house" workshop in June of '08, and with the invitation for the public to ask questions about such an obvious issue as volunteer management, that the agency administrators would be right there with the obvious answer to an obvious question. At the very least, one would expect that it would not be hard to get the answer in a timely fashion. It's been over two years. To this day, my V.M.P. question remains unanswered. Nobody ever acknowledged my question. The point I took home: the Forest Service personnel don't want to answer the question. If they do have a V.M.P., they aren't sharing it with the volunteers. If anyone in Washington is watching this discussion, and you want feedback from the volunteers on public lands, here it is: It's time for all United States public land management agencies involved with public recreation facilities and volunteer-donations to review their V.M.P.'s, if they have any. Volunteers who donate so much to our nation's public lands are entitled to know that their donations are being applied properly, and that agency administrators are required to handle volunteer management responsibly. Without accountability and agency transparency, responsible volunteer management will not happen. Without responsible volunteer management, there is no logical reason to expect that any agency will be serious about recruiting, retaining and recognizing volunteers, let alone recording their good deeds.

Discussion Question 1

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(cont.)

The Original Poster suggested that this discussion forum would be ignored and buried. Well, I don't know why someone would allow something like this to be created in the first place if the powers-that-be have no intention of taking it seriously. I also have no idea how an agenda on wilderness and public access would fit the Obama White House. The O.P. seems to suggest an agenda, but does not explain why the Obama White House would support such an agenda. Do the politicians in Washington have ulterior motives for creating this forum? I don't know, but as long as it is here and we are participating, we all have computers and can keep a record of what is being said and done. If you're concerned, then put your machine to work, start capturing these discussions as web archives or as PDFs, get connected with other participants and get organized.

My family uses our public lands for multiple uses. We hike, we bike, we ride off hwy motorcycles, and we maintain all trails in our forest, working together with our local forest service on all trails. Our local OHV club maintains equestrian trails, the mountain bike trails, and the motorcycle trails. We all work together to keep all trails open. Most of these are not multiple use trails, but we have trails in our forest that we all want to keep. When a mountain bike trail, or an equestrian trail needs repair from winter erosion, or even a weekend equestrian or mountain bike event, the Forest Service calls our OHV club to get a work party together to fix the trails. At a work party last year to relocate, and build a new mountain bike trail, 60 motorcyclist showed up and only 4 mountain bikers. This was a trail that was not to be used for motorized recreation, and still it was the motorized users that came to build the trail. We can do amazing things when we all work together. If you want to know how it is done, contact the Tahoe National Forest in Nevada City. All Forest Departments can learn to use ALL lands publicly. I hope my kids and my grandkids all have the right to use their public lands to enjoy, just the way we have (until recently).

The Mountain Bikers want access to our Pacific Crest Trail in order to gain further access to our National Trails. The protections from bicycles were put in place for a reason. Foot traffic and Hoof traffic just do not mix with a power vehicle of any kind. These trails were meant to be used in the tradition of yesteryear. It is one of the few ways left to experience what our forefathers did. Mine walked from the East to the West. The best experience I have had was riding my horse "down the trail" knowing that my ancestors had also. If we allow the Mountain Bikers access to these trails I believe that we will lose a great deal of the serenity of our National Systems.

"What happens to the people that live in the Y2Y areas? Will they be forced to leave their homes, quit their way of life (farming/ranching/logging)? Will hunting/fishing still be allowed? Who will manage this vast area? Perhaps the UN?" People have always been and always will be part of the Y2Y vision. Anyone who visits the Y2Y web site will see that sustainable human communities, opportunities for recreation and enjoyment of natural areas, hunting, fishing, and many other ways for people to experience the Y2Y region are inherent in the Y2Y agenda. Opponents of Y2Y spread lies about forcing people to leave. It is not true. The land will still be managed by state and provincial governments, private landowners, industrial land managers, and First Nations/Native Americans, as it is now. It is the use of the land that, in some cases, needs to adapt so that wildlife can continue to use and move through the land. The ownership of the land is not what the Y2Y Initiative seeks to change.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Our Idea of Wilderness. What obstacles exist to achieving your goals for conservation, recreation, or reconnecting people to the outdoors? In order to answer this question, it is first relevant to discuss my goals for conservation, since that is what I am choosing to write about. My goal is for people to understand the importance of the outdoors (wilderness). This is a major obstacle that must be overcome if we are to preserve the wilderness of our nation. In attempting to achieve my goal of teaching people of the importance of the outdoors, it is necessary to identify and eliminate several obstacles. The first obstacle I will discuss is the issue of wilderness being viewed as something disconnected with humanity. In order to fully grasp the importance of wilderness, one must understand that it is not something to be set aside. Wilderness is something that should exist everywhere and be compromised as little as possible by people. Contrary to the Wilderness Act, I do not believe that a place has to be devoid of human life to be classified as wilderness. People are capable of living in harmony with wilderness. This is exemplified by many groups of people native to places such as Africa and Venezuela who live deep within the wilderness of those areas. They do not have an extreme impact on their ecosystem, yet they live happily and successfully nowhere near civilization. Another significant issue that must be addressed is that of how we define wilderness. _____ suggested in her essay, "Wilderness" that we do away with our concept of wilderness entirely. I can't say that I disagree with her. It might be better for us to forget about preserving parts of the world and begin concerning ourselves with the earth as a whole. We should not simply designate a fraction of the planet as wilderness and agree not to interfere with its natural processes. As Robinson put it, "Wilderness is not a single region, but a condition of being of the natural world." This is important to the idea of making people understand the importance of wilderness. In order for us to successfully achieve equilibrium with nature, which we surely need, we must first realize that we are not above nature. Ultimately, these are only a couple of the many obstacles that stand in the way of making everyone realize the importance of wilderness; however, they are extremely important obstacles. First, we must accept that we are all part of nature and thus are affected by everything that goes on in the world. Likewise, everything we do affects the world in some way. Second, we must redefine what wilderness is. We can no longer afford to view wilderness as something that only exists under certain circumstances; it must be a constant that is with us everywhere at all times.

Wow, guys. I'm amazed that this was received so well. I was expecting lots of negative comments. I will rarely ever refer to wilderness as per the U.S. Government's definition of it, unless I'm arguing about how much I dislike the definition itself. I am of the strong opinion that our definition of wilderness is seriously misguided. The Wilderness Act is something of a step in the right direction, but it's not even close to where we need to be. Wilderness in and of itself is not something that occurs in some places and not in others. Wilderness exists, to varying degrees, everywhere. You cannot be anywhere that does not have aspects of wilderness. Even New York City is like that. My argument is primarily geared toward changing how we define wilderness. Only when we have an adequate idea of what wilderness is can we hope to achieve and truly meaningful reform.

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(cont.)

A Review of Successful and Promising Nonfederal Conservation Approaches: Rural communities are leading the charge to address the myriad challenges that face their communities and the conservation challenges of the Nation. There are literally hundreds of examples of projects, programs, and organizations involved in this new era of restoration and stewardship. We know that in the communities where we live and work, our efforts and innovative solutions are beginning to have an effect. Rather than list each group, we have chosen to highlight what we believe to be the most significant characteristics shared by these nonfederal approaches. Although there is no set formula for success, there are a number of general commonalities. Beneficial aspects and components of successful non-federal groups and programs include:

- Collaborative process: A commitment to the use of collaborative processes that are open, transparent, and inclusive to define, implement, and monitor conservation and sustainability goals and activities on the landscape. Collaboration and partnership among unusual allies, such as the involvement of landowners, forest workers, businesses, conservation organizations, civic groups, tribal entities and governments, and federal and state agencies leads to solutions that are durable and address the public interest. Collaborative efforts have helped to break gridlock in federal lands management, and have resulted in the development and implementation of projects that employ local people and restore our forests and watersheds. Collaboration is the foundation for economic prosperity in the West, yet it lacks financial and programmatic support from federal agencies and most federal programs.
- Power sharing: Shared decision-making power is vital to a healthy and democratic system of management and stewardship. Decision-making processes that recognize social, economic, and political inequity and strive to balance and improve these disparities bring communities together, rather than pit them against themselves and each other.
- Triple bottom line commitment: Use of integrated approaches that address ecological conservation and restoration, local natural resource-based economic development, and healthy communities and strong social fabric.
- Business and market strategies: A business and markets orientation - driven by local expertise - that finds a role for federal conservation investments as a complement to broader business models or economic development plans that combine public and private capital and "sweat equity" for lowest cost, highest value outcomes and long-term, sustainable revenue streams.
- An "all-lands" approach: Developing solutions that work across landscapes, from public land forests, to higher elevation private forests, to the ranges and valley bottomlands managed (whether on public or private land) by ranchers and farmers. Effective management and policy recognizes and addresses the social, economic, and ecological connections between private and public lands that share ecological process and span the forest, range, farm, and aquatic systems that characterize the West.

Target Institutions for Transformational Change The role of non-federal entities in conservation and stewardship in the American West cannot be overstated. There are many types of entities that are filling important intermediary roles that neither government nor the private sector can fulfill on their own. The movement of community-based conservation and stewardship that is redefining the West is being built largely by the will and capacity of community, or place-based organizations, and by regional organizations. These intermediary institutions complement one another and ensure that our conservation strategies can go deep into the communities and landscapes we care about, but also spread, aggregate, and regionalize the practices and approaches that emerge from local efforts.

1. Community, or place-based organizations: In the past 15 years, we have seen the

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(cont.)

success of locally-based groups that occupy the space between diverse stakeholders, civic groups, businesses, private landowners, rural citizens, and government agencies. We refer to these groups as community-based organizations (CBOs). They have been essential to the successful implementation of both private land conservation efforts by landowners and the collaborative management of federal lands, and have also excelled at harmonizing conservation objectives with local economic needs. CBOs play social, ecological, and technical/financial roles, including:

- providing critical support to collaborative structures and institutions that assemble diverse interests and viewpoints, and facilitate toward common ground;
- serving as a buffer and conduit between landowners and federal and state agencies (as well as other outside resources) - in many areas there is significant mistrust of government agencies and CBOs can serve as a trusted go between;
- serving to "re-aggregate" the landscape by coordinating and aligning multiple landowners (including government agencies) to achieve landscape scale impacts, particularly in fragmented landscapes;
- providing skilled resources and staffing to help local landowners, businesses, and contractors understand and work with state and federal conservation programs, and successfully meet the requirements (proposals, bids, contracts, etc.) necessary to capture and utilize funding;
- adding value to federal program delivery by integrating federal programs into a broader economic and environmental strategies supported by local communities; and,
- reaching ecologically and economically significant scales and impacts by intergrating public and private lands at a whole watershed scale that effectively bridges the "silos" imposed by agency missions.

2. Regional "scaling" organizations: To support and leverage the work of CBOs and rural small businesses, we must also promote the regional organizations and networks that convene multiple local efforts, help to disseminate lessons learned, and accelerate innovation diffusion. These networks are integral to scaling-up place-based efforts. Regional organizations can be based in urban or rural areas and work across multiple sectors, communities, counties or states. Regional organizations play many roles at different times in the process of implementing community-based conservation and economic development strategies. Regional organizations provide improved access to technical expertise, tools, and philanthropic communities. They build and bring political clout to promote solutions, and connect rural non-profits and entrepreneurs to wider networks, markets, and opportunities. Roles include:

- helping to catalyze and build local organizations in places lacking this capacity, as well as strengthening existing groups;
- providing bridge staffing, facilitation, and technical support in communities that are rebuilding institutional and social capacity;
- serving as liaison between local efforts and federal officials by providing the venues and forums to initiate and build relationships when they are absent and/or frayed;
- reaching out to distant stakeholder groups and interests that have traditionally been at odds with local efforts and assisting with reframing and building common ground;
- documenting and communicating trends and issues that affect multiple communities to improve policies and procedures, including providing vital data collection, mapping, and analysis;
- organizing multiple communities to work together to promote shared vision and solutions; and
- promoting peer-to-peer learning and adoption of best practices.

3. Small rural businesses in natural resource management: Natural resource management functions, renewable energy development, conservation-oriented forestry or agriculture and other businesses can provide high quality, living wage employment protecting, restoring, and stewarding the environment. They include jobs that restore and maintain

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ecosystem functions and services, such as clean air, clean water, and forest and rangeland health and biodiversity, as well as those that reduce energy, material, and water consumption, and move us toward a low carbon economy. The promotion of rural green businesses can help local economies recover by expanding value-added businesses and industries, and creating living-wage jobs that have positive multiplier effects in rural communities (economic activities that maintain and enhance essential local businesses, such as hardware stores, sawmills, feed stores, and by extension, schools and hospitals). For-profit enterprises play the vital role of providing: • service and stewardship work on public and private lands; • entrepreneurial skills, training and employment opportunities; • capital assets needed for conservation work; • equipment necessary to perform land management objectives; • processing and manufacturing facilities to create wood and agricultural products to provide building materials, food, and energy; • ability to take demonstration projects to scale and profitability; and, • market-driven revenue streams that reduce long-term dependence on public funds.

VII. Federal Programs That Complement Community-Based Conservation & Economic Development: RVCC Proposals for the America's Great Outdoors Initiative

The case for federal investment: Restoring and stewarding our nation's natural resources offers significant workforce and small business development opportunities worthy of federal investment. Investment in rural development from philanthropic organizations can never be enough. Federal policy and programs have the potential to build on the success of community-based efforts, bringing them to a scale that will begin to address the magnitude of our economic and ecologic challenges. The country's long term resource, food, and energy security is dependent on this investment.

RVCC criteria for effective federal programs:

- Recognize the interdependence between ecological, economic, and social sustainability. The health of our rural communities and landscapes are interdependent - federal policies must not sacrifice one to advance the other.
- Support and invest in collaborative processes and partnerships with diverse interests.
- Invest in building the capacity of rural citizens, businesses, local government, and community-based and regional organizations to provide employment, sustainable natural resources, ecosystem services, and quality and land-based experiences.
- Promote the creation and retention of long-term family wage jobs tied to public and private land management through contract procurement and grant selection and award criteria. (Not all job creation is equal; scarce government investment should focus on high quality jobs and businesses that can offer sustained local employment and provide the best social and ecological value.)
- Promote and accommodate best practices, allowing for adaptive management and flexibility as long as effective accountability and multi-party monitoring of management actions are in place.
- Ensure the transparency and accessibility of programs and contracts to operators, land owners and managers, contractors, community-based organizations, and small rural businesses.
- Provide clear and achievable financial matching criteria.
- Include performance measures and promote and fund monitoring and evaluation.
- Are as flexible as possible (outcomes vs. outputs driven), and are relatively simple to apply for and administer.

Four federal programs that illustrate elements of the above criteria:

1. The USDA Forest Service Economic Action Program (EAP) (not funded since 2002) helped rural communities and businesses dependent on natural resources become sustainable and self-sufficient. It provided technical and financial assistance to communities throughout the rural West to retain and build the capacity of small, rural businesses to implement restoration and stewardship activities and utilize material that is removed as a

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result of sustainable land management activities. The Economic Action Program is the only Forest Service program authorized to provide this type of business assistance. 2. Community Forest Restoration Program-New Mexico (USDA Forest Service-State and Private Forestry). In 2001, with the passage of the Community Forest Restoration Act of 2000 (Title VI, Public Law 106-393) the U.S. Forest Service created the Collaborative Forest Restoration Program (CFRP) in New Mexico to provide up to \$5 million annually towards cost-share grants to stakeholders for experimental forest restoration projects on public land designed through a collaborative process. These projects may be entirely on one, or any combination of, Federal, Tribal, State, County or municipal forest lands, and must include a diverse and balanced group of stakeholders in their design and implementation. Each project must also address specific restoration objectives, including: wildfire threat reduction, reestablishment of historic fire regimes, reforestation, preservation of old and large trees, and increased utilization of small diameter trees. 3. Community Forest Landscape Restoration Program (USDA Forest Service-National Forest System). Congress, under Title IV of Omnibus Public Land Management Act of 2009 (PDF, 40 KB), established the Collaborative Forest Landscape Restoration Program (CFLRP). The purpose of the CFLR Program is to encourage the collaborative, science-based ecosystem restoration of priority forest landscapes. This legislation requires a broad coalition of interests to assess the landscape together, identify priorities, and sketch out a collaborative plan of action. CFLRP promotes benefits to local rural economies and forest health and should be a model for other programs. The CFLRP is not a grant making program, but rather creates the CFLR Fund, which must be appropriated annually and supports implementation activities associated with a collaboratively developed landscape scale strategy that aims to: • encourage ecological, economic, and social sustainability; • leverage local resources with national and private resources; • facilitate the reduction of wildfire management costs, including reestablishing natural fire regimes and reducing the risk of uncharacteristic wildfire; • demonstrate the degree to which various ecological restoration techniques achieve ecological and watershed health objectives; and • encourage utilization of forest restoration by-products to offset treatment costs, benefit local rural economies, and improve forest health. National Forests compete to be selected as one of 10 projects per year, with no more than two from each Forest Service region per year, and each Region must contribute 50% of the cost of carrying out and monitoring ecological restoration treatments on National Forest System (NFS) land. The CFLRP is authorized to be funded at \$40 million annually. 4. The USDA NRCS Cooperative Conservation Partnership Initiative (CCPI) in the 2008 Farm Bill is an innovative program that encourages landowners to work together to implement and maintain conservation practices that affect multiple landowners at a landscape scale. Instead of piecemeal delivery of programs ranch by ranch or program by program, this initiative supports projects that involve partnership among groups of landowners to address conservation priorities, regulatory requirements, and innovative cross-boundary resource management. This program invites community-based organizations to partner with NRCS for the delivery of specific Farm Bill conservation programs to landowners in ways that meet and respond to local needs, opportunities, and customs. While federal programs like CCPI recognize the value that community-based organizations provide, they fail to provide financial assistance to these partner organizations for their contributions in engaging and mobilizing local populations.

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America's forestlands, nearly sixty percent of which is privately owned, are an essential part of our national green infrastructure. These forests provide Americans with clean air to breathe and clean water to drink. Good stewardship sustains and enhances the value of these forests and helps meet some of America's most pressing needs such as renewable energy, greenhouse gas emission capture and storage, products for everyday life and job creation in rural communities.

To strengthen good stewardship, the forestry community - consisting of the following forest owners, conservation and wildlife groups, resource professionals and environmental organizations - has come together as the Working Forests Coalition (WFC):

- * American Forest Foundation
- * The Nature Conservancy
- * The Conservation Fund
- * Pacific Forest Trust
- * Environmental Defense Fund
- * Society of American Foresters
- * Forest Landowners Association
- * Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Partnership
- * National Alliance of Forest Owners
- * The Trust for Public Land
- * National Association of State Foresters
- * U.S. Endowment for Forestry and Communities, Inc
- * National Wildlife Federation

Maintaining and increasing the public benefits of working forests ultimately requires that forest ownership be financially rewarding. To do this, we recommend changes in government policies to make it easier for landowners to continue to maintain their forests as forests in the face of growing competing economic pressures. Tax policies, conservation programs that offer funding and assistance to landowners in managing their lands and strong markets for forest goods and services, can help create an environment that makes it easier for landowners to afford the investments necessary to keep forests as forests.

The August 9, 2010 America's Great Outdoors listening session in Manchester, New Hampshire provided an excellent venue for a discussion focused exclusively on privately-owned forests. Other venues, including the event held in South Carolina, also fostered meaningful discussion about private forest issues. Many of the forest owners attending spoke about the challenges they face and their desire to manage their lands in a sustainable way.

In the breakout sessions, forest owners stressed the importance of diverse markets for their goods and services as a critical tool to help keep their forest as forests. Healthy forests are founded on healthy markets; as income generating forests provide the resources for better and more consistent stewardship.

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Traditional wood products markets continue to provide the economic means for forest landowners to retain their lands as forests. One important traditional market is building products - such as dimensional lumber, plywood and other sustainable renewables that provide the basic building blocks for millions of American homes and commercial buildings. Another is pulp markets - which produce the paper products that every American uses daily. There was strong interest in particular at the session in promoting the use of wood as a sustainable and environmentally preferred building material based on its renewability, carbon benefits and other important values that can be managed for on a sustainable basis.

There was wide-spread recognition at the listening session that traditional markets alone will be insufficient and that the development of new and emerging markets is of critical importance to maintaining private forest land.

Initiating market systems to enable payments for ecosystem services. This includes services like clean water, clean air, carbon storage and abundant wildlife - services that benefit all Americans.

Utilizing woody biomass as a sustainable, viable and renewable energy source - on par in priority with wind and solar - and in ways that will benefit both landowners and forest health.

Expand Green Wood Products Markets. Sustainably produced wood is the green choice. Compared to other building materials, wood is more energy efficient and produces less pollution in its manufacturing and stores more carbon than any comparable product. Encouraging the use of wood also builds market incentives for forest landowners to manage and maintain their forests as forests. To achieve this, we recommend that the Administration:

Expand Environmental Markets. Environmental services markets may be among the most complex and promising emerging markets that will keep landowners on the land and their forests as forests. While not fully mature, they may hold great promise for providing additional capital to help landowners make their land tenure more profitable and more beneficial for them, the environment and all of us that depend on the multiple benefits forests provide.

We recommend that the federal government -- and the Secretary of Agriculture specifically -- direct USDA's Office of Environmental Markets to analyze the supply/demand drivers of environmental markets and encourage use of the results by policymakers to determine the best approaches to stimulate the growth of environmental services markets. This effort will build on and learn from other working ecosystem market models including those underway through the Department of Defense's efforts to work with private landowners to conserve habitat around important national security infrastructure.

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Utilize Woody Biomass as a Renewable Energy Source. Woody biomass offers an important market for private forest owners - especially for low value wood. As part of the listening session, landowners asked the federal government to create incentives for using woody biomass as a sustainable, viable and renewable energy source - on par in priority with wind and solar - and in ways that will benefit both landowners and forest health. Presently there is uncertainty in federal policy about how to measure net carbon benefits of biomass energy. Protocols for carbon accounting in biomass energy should be addressed on a priority basis to ensure that biomass energy development can proceed in a timely manner and at appropriate scales that provide both energy and climate benefits.

Most of America's forests and woodlands are privately owned, with roughly three-fifths of private forest land owned by families. To ensure these forests continue to provide a myriad of benefits - clean water, carbon sequestration, renewable energy supplies, rural jobs, recreation and wildlife habitat - the estate tax burden must be addressed.

Private forests in America are an integral part of America's landscape and account for more land than public forests. The American Great Outdoors Listening sessions offered an important vehicle to hear from citizens about what is vital to their well-being and quality of life. These sessions reconfirmed that healthy and abundant forests are a fundamental part of the fabric of America and a vital infrastructure foundational to a healthy outdoor strategy.

Given that most of America's forest land is privately-held, our obligation to help private landowners keep their forests as forests, will benefit all Americans. Our nation's forests are a fundamental component for maintaining America's conservation ethic and for helping reconnect people to nature. As we implement a new vision for conservation in the 21st century, we need to ensure that protecting private forests is a fundamental part of the equation.

Off-highway vehicle (OHV) recreation, including all-terrain vehicles (ATVs), offhighway motorcycles (OHMs), snowmobiles, 4-wheel-drive vehicles (4X4s) and other off-highway vehicles (OHVs), as well as personal watercraft helps get children (and adults) outdoors, provides much-needed economic development to distressed, and often rural, areas and provides financial support for all forms of recreation.

OHV recreation is a family activity and many children have been enticed outdoors by the promise of riding an age-appropriate vehicle. Often these kids develop a life-long passion for the outdoors that mirrors that of their parents. The Motorcycle Industry Council's (MIC) 2008 Motorcycle/ATV Owner Survey found that 55% of OHM riders are from Generation Y (born 1980 and after) and that 39% of ATV riders are from Gen Y. The survey also found a 138% increase in women ATV riders since 2000. This increase is indicative of more people looking for family-friendly activity. Further, 70% of female ATV riders rank "Family Activity" in the top three reasons they ride. It is clear that any effort to get youth off of the couch away from video games and computers and into the outdoors, including the America's Great Outdoors Initiative, should include motorized recreation.

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It is also worth noting that OHVers do not limit themselves to motorized recreation. Like any other visitor to public lands, OHVers enjoy many forms of recreation, including hiking, camping, fishing, hunting or other outdoor activities including simply enjoying scenery, having a picnic or experiencing the solitude and serenity that comes with being in the great outdoors. In fact, MIC's survey found that 57% of ATVers listed fishing as an "other recreational hobby," 51% listed hunting and 50% listed hiking/camping, the three most popular "other" activities. Like adults, once youths have experienced the outdoors they want to come back and have many different kinds of experiences.

Motorized recreation, especially for youth on appropriately sized ATVs, OHMs and snowmobiles, is physically demanding and can improve the overall health of American children. While it may seem to non-riders that the machine is doing all the work, these vehicles are rider active and require a great deal of physical exertion to ride. A recent study by the York University Physical Activity and Chronic Disease Unit bore this out. It should also be noted that riders stop and engage in other forms of physical activity while on trail rides.

California State Parks, Off-Highway Motor Vehicle Recreation (OHMVR) Division, coordinates a youth program that draws on the attraction of off-highway vehicle (OHV) recreation to forge positive relationships between youth, law enforcement, and public lands. Off-Highway PAL (OHPAL) is a fun and physical "cop to kid" program that provides youth the opportunity to be involved in OHV recreation when they otherwise may not be able. Incentive-based, OHPAL is available to youth ten to seventeen years-of-age who engage academically and behave responsibly in the community in which they live.

In fifteen years, OHPAL has grown from one program site and twelve ATVs and dirt bikes to nine program sites and well over one-hundred OHVs, including the addition of snowmobiles in 2005. The ATV and/or dirt bike programs are offered at seven State Vehicular Recreation Areas and one State Recreation Area; the snowmobile program is offered at a contracted site near Lake Tahoe, California. The program areas range from coastal dunes, beautiful deserts, and majestic oak woodlands, to the breathtaking scenery of the Sierra Nevada. The different bioregions offer unique riding terrain and the opportunity to promote a relevant environmental ethic in each youth participant.

OHPAL started as a "cop to kid" mentoring program, but has developed into much more. Now with the capacity to reach thousands of youth, OHPAL is entering a new era with increased program availability and accessibility, as well as new formats such as an overnight camping experience and an introduction to OHV management practices. OHPAL is coordinated and facilitated, in part, by California State Parks staff; it uses local police officers to conduct most riding instruction for the program. OHPAL emphasizes safety, responsibility, and respect for each other and the environment. After successful completion of the ATV program, youth are also eligible to receive an ATV Safety Certificate.

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100 seventh and eighth graders from East Middle School in Great Falls, Montana participated in an "Off-Highway Vehicle (OHV) Educational Exploratory," that trained 100 kids over two days to safely and responsibly operate age-appropriate ATVs and offhighway motorcycles. As part of the Exploratory each child had the opportunity to participate in a trail ride and experience the natural wonders abundant in Montana. East Middle School teacher, Brenda Vehrs said, "There is truly an incredible demand for these types of programs, in Great Falls and, I suspect, all across the country. I know first-hand, if you want to get children into the outdoors give them an opportunity to ride an ATV or OHM, and they will turn out in big numbers."

Vehrs also lauded the exploratory for teaching a conservation ethic. "A Forest Ranger had an opportunity to talk to the kids about the rules of riding on U.S. Forest Service land, and other partners provided educational materials on where to ride, how to interact with other trail users and how to be good stewards of the environment. These are lessons that I feel confident the students will take with them as they visit public lands on their own."

She concluded, "Many of our students are impoverished and never get to know what awaits them when the paved streets end and the trails begin. Our OHV exploratory changed that for a few of the kids. I hope as you develop recommendations as part of the America's Great Outdoors Initiative that you remember that motorized recreation can be a valuable tool to introduce children to the outdoors."

Off-road vehicle riding was found to require "a true physiological demand that would be expected to have a beneficial effect on health and fitness according to Canada's current physical activity recommendations."

Off-road vehicle riding was determined to be a recreational activity associated with moderate-intensity cardiovascular demand and fatigue-inducing muscular strength challenges, similar to other self-paced recreational sports such as golf, rock-climbing and alpine skiing.

Oxygen consumption, which is an indicator of physical work, increased by 3.5 and 6 times the resting values for ATV and ORM riding respectively - which falls within moderate intensity activity according to the American College of Sports Medicine guidelines and is in line with Canadian physical activity recommendations.

OHV areas support rural economies. Many economic impact studies from across the country bear this out. A recent study found that in Colorado alone, OHV recreation accounts for a total economic value of more than \$1 billion annually and more than 12,000 jobs. Given the state of the economy, particularly in the west which includes 19 of the 20 most economically challenged counties and the majority of public lands, careful, consideration should be given before limiting recreational access. Many rural areas are dependant on the dollars that motorized recreationists bring to the local economy. Any recommendations resulting from the America's Great Outdoors Initiative should recognize the positive economic impact that OHV areas can have on rural economies and avoid unnecessarily limiting sustainable motorized recreation.

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One successful example of OHV recreation supporting rural economies is the Paiute ATV trail in Utah. A 2003 economic study found that the average rider using the trail spent \$110 per day, resulting in a \$7 million economic impact to local economies. Since 2003 the Paiute ATV trail has only gotten bigger and can accommodate all sorts of recreation with 10% of users now visiting the Paiute for horseback, mountain bike or 4X4 opportunities, and another 10% riding off-highway motorcycles. Rural towns and cities along the trail have had economies revitalized by the success of the trail.

In 2006 the Center for Business and Economic Research at Marshall University, commissioned by the Hatfield-McCoy Regional Recreation Authority, prepared a comprehensive economic impact study of the Hatfield-McCoy Trail System examining data collected in 2005. The overall conclusion was that the Hatfield-McCoy Trail System is and will continue to be an important component of the economic development of West Virginia and of the southern part of the State and it will be a catalyst for further development and expansion.

Specifically, the study found that total retail sales grew in the area by 12 percent and sales per establishment by 25 percent. Payroll increased by \$104 million or 9.5 percent. These gains in sales and payroll were seen in all related sectors including gasoline stations, accommodations, food service and real estate sales and rentals. This latter sector experienced the greatest growth due to the improving property values adjacent to the study area.

Further, the study found that between 2000 and 2005, user visitation increased by six-fold to more than 24,000 visitors. The State of West Virginia provided some economic support for the development of the Hatfield-McCoy Trail System and the Marshall University found that in 2005, the State realized a 125% return on its investment due to taxes collected from OHV recreation-related activities.

For the State of West Virginia the total economic impact of the Hatfield-McCoy Trail System was an increase in output of \$7,776,116, an increase in income of \$2,789,036 and the generation of 146 new jobs.

OHV use supports other forms of recreation through the Recreational Trails Program (RTP). The RTP was created in 1991 as part of the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act, and plays an essential role in funding state trail programs and projects all across the country. Funding for the RTP, which is administered by the Federal Highway Administration, comes from the federal taxes paid on gasoline used in OHV's and other non-highway recreation and is distributed to the states based on a formula that recognizes the user-pay/user-benefit character of the program. RTP funds are distributed through the state transportation departments and natural resource agencies in cooperation with citizen advisory committees and a network of organizations and communities. These partners leverage available funding with cash and in-kind support. The RTP has funded more than 13,000 projects in its nearly 20-year history.

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States must use 30 percent of their RTP funds for motorized trail uses, 30 percent for non-motorized trail uses, and 40 percent for diverse trail uses. Diverse motorized projects (such as snowmobile and motorcycle) or diverse non-motorized projects (such as pedestrian and equestrian) may satisfy two of these categories at the same time. States are encouraged to consider projects that benefit both motorized and non-motorized users, such as common trailhead facilities. Many states give extra credit in their selection criteria to projects that benefit multiple trail uses.

Nestled in the shadow of Mount Katahdin, just south of Maine's Baxter State Park, The Nature Conservancy's Debsconeag Lakes Wilderness Area (DLWA) is a 46,271-acre ecological reserve that welcomes multiple recreational uses. The Nature Conservancy purchased the DLWA in 2002 as part of the nationally recognized Katahdin Forest Project. It provides a vital link in nearly 500,000 acres of contiguous conservation land (connecting Baxter State Park, the Allagash Wilderness Waterway, Maine's Nahmakanta Reserve, and the Conservancy's Trout Mountain Preserve). The land encompasses a 15-mile portion of the "Hundred Mile Wilderness" section of the Appalachian Trail adjacent to Baxter State Park. It holds thousands of acres of mature forests, some of which have not been harvested in 70 to 100 years, or even more. These lands have a long history and great variety of recreational uses and today hiking, camping, canoeing, hunting, fishing, and snowmobiling on authorized trails are all welcome on this preserve.

Prior to the Conservancy's ownership, the DLWA included dozens of miles of established traditional foot trails that were etched in place decades or even centuries ago. These trails were often made by the feet of thousands of individuals - but with little benefit of modern trail planning and construction techniques. As a result, trails tended to proceed in a straight line to the destination of interest (often straight up steep slopes or through wet ground) with little accommodation for environmental protection or the comfort of the hiker.

Rocky Mountain Field Institute utilized an RTP award to restore and protect popular hiking and climbing routes in the Sangre de Cristo Wilderness Area in the San Isabel and Rio Grande National Forests, while providing access to the high country. This project addressed the most difficult sections of the routes with some of the areas over 14,000 feet high.

The peaks that were restored had suffered route degradation due to increased use, extremely steep terrain, severe weather, fragile vegetation, poor drainage, and difficulty of maintenance. All trail work in Wilderness Areas must be done by hand since any form of mechanized equipment is not allowed. Mitigation of the peaks included identification and construction of a single hiking and climbing trail, the closure of unwanted and unnecessary trails, and the restoration of damaged sites through slope stabilization and revegetation.

Due to the steepness of the terrain, and the damage to the tundra, much of the trail included natural rock steps with many water structures. Re-vegetation often included backfilling with native materials, hauled in by human power, and transplants of fragile tundra plants from other damaged areas.

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I had the opportunity to be involved in an effort to introduce seventh and eighth graders from East Middle School in Great Falls to the outdoors through motorized recreation. We offered our students an "Off-Highway Vehicle (OHV) Educational Exploratory," that trained 100 kids over two days to safely and responsibly operate age-appropriate all-terrain vehicles (A TV) and offhighway motorcycles (OHM). As part of the Exploratory each child had the opportunity to participate in a trail ride and experience the natural wonders abundant in Montana.

I knew my students had a profound interest in motorized recreation, as every day kids would ask about a picture of my son riding a dirt bike; however, I did not expect the overwhelming amount of excitement from the students and support from the community for the OHV Educational Exploratory. There is truly an incredible demand for these types of programs, in Great Falls and, I suspect, all across the country. I know first-hand, if you want to get children into the outdoors give them an opportunity to ride an A TV or OHM, and they will turn out in big numbers.

This exploratory provided us not just an opportunity to get these children outdoors, but also to educate them on environmental responsibility. A Forest Ranger had an opportunity to talk to the kids about the rules of riding on U.S. Forest Service land, and other partners provided educational materials on where to ride, how to interact with other trail users and how to be good stewards of the environment. These are lessons that I feel confident the students will take with them as they visit public lands on their own.

While there are innumerable opportunities to enjoy the great outdoors in Montana and our state is rich in natural wonders and public lands, many children simply do not take the opportunity to explore beyond the city limits. Many of our students are impoverished and never get to know what awaits them when the paved streets end and the trails begin. Our OHV exploratory changed that for a few of the kids. I hope as you develop recommendations as part of the America's Great Outdoors Initiative that you remember that motorized recreation can be a valuable tool to introduce children to the outdoors.

Off-road vehicle riding was found to require "a true physiological demand that would be expected to have a beneficial effect on health and fitness according to Canada's current physical activity recommendations"

Off-road vehicle riding was determined to be a recreational activity associated with moderate-intensity cardiovascular demand and fatigue-inducing muscular strength challenges, similar to other self-paced recreational sports such as golf, rock-climbing and alpine skiing

The duration of a typical ride (2-3 hours for ATV, 1-2 hours for ORM) and the frequency of the rides (1-2 times a week) create sufficient opportunity to stimulate changes in aerobic fitness which falls within the physical activity guidelines (American College of Sports Medicine recommends between 450 - 720 MET minutes per week)

"More health and fitness benefits could likely be realized if the frequency of riding were increased to a level compatible with the recommended Canadian guideline for physical activity"

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Using heart rate measurements alone, the demands of riding belong to the category of "hard" exercise - this increase of intensity may be linked to heightened psycho emotional responses (i.e. adrenalin), an effect of heat stress while riding, or a response to repeated isometric squeezing of the handlebars.

When considering muscular force and power involvement, study results indicate a greater impact on muscular endurance as opposed to an increase in strength (NB: this is in reference to hand grip specifically)

"Off-road vehicle riders perform considerable physical work using their arms and upper body." This upper body strength requirement "could lead to beneficial training increases in musculoskeletal fitness"

Study findings also picked up on the psycho-social effects of riding - the "enhanced quality of life and stress reduction effects of off-road riding"

Findings also reflect the "importance of alternative physical activity such as off-road riding to promote physical activity in a group who might otherwise forego exercise altogether" (habitual ATV riders in the study were not avid exercisers) and all physical activity is beneficial.

The Recreational Trails Program (RTP), which was created In 1991 as part of the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act, plays an absolutely essential role in funding state trail programs and projects all across the country. As national, regional and local organizations that support recreational trails, we urge you to support the reauthorization of the RTP as a discrete program in the upcoming multi-year surface transportation legislation and to support funding for this important program in the amount of \$690 million (over a six-year period),

Funding for the RTP, which is administered by the Federal Highway Administration, comes from the federal taxes paid on gasoline used in nonhighway recreation and is distributed to the states based on a formula that recognizes the user-pay/user-benefit character of the program. RTP funds are distributed through the state transportation departments and natural resource agencies in cooperation with citizen advisory committees and a network of organizations and communities. These partners leverage available funding with cash and in-kind support. Work for these projects is primarily done by youth corps, volunteers, and small businesses .

By providing convenient, enjoyable opportunities for people to spend more time outdoors, trails encourage healthier living. Trails are an investment In the future of our communities and our public lands, while connecting people of all ages and backgrounds to the environment - which is good for them and good for the world that surrounds them.

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We have seen firsthand the power of these projects to transform communities and transform people. Indeed RTP-funded projects represent investments in vital infrastructure that promote healthy communities and more importantly, healthy people. In addition, the economic impact of these projects is magnified because they improve access to public lands and waters and support both local tourism and recreation businesses, as well as healthy lifestyles.

Our thousands of members and allies believe that reauthorizing the Recreational Trails Program will achieve both important economic stimulation and strategic investments that will help transform American communities and lifestyles for long-term success.

We also emphasize our strong support for continuation of the Recreational Trails Program as a discrete program. We understand that efficiencies can be achieved by integrating some programs. However, in the case of the RTP, which has come to serve as the foundation for every state's "trail" program, we think that the damage to the program would far outweigh any potential administrative benefits. The RTP has an identified funding source directly related to trail-based recreation, an exceptional record of using those funds to leverage additional funding for trails, and a proven, transparent, responsive state-based system for distributing funds for a wide variety of trail-related uses. All of those exceptional benefits would be lost if the RTP lost its discrete identity.

My family has always enjoyed the outdoors and have spent much time in America's parks and wilderness areas.

We are quiet observers of the Earth's ability to care for itself if left alone by its creatures of all types.

Nature is the most beautiful gift that the world can grant us. Us Americans need to protect our pristine wildlife and make the world a better place.

When I think of how my children and I enjoy nature today, and how much I want their children and their children's children to have the same experiences, I feel compelled to write when this kind of opportunity comes along.

We just returned from a weekend in Rocky Mountain National Park. I watched my children learning about such a vast array of things in such a short period. They come back from the mountains with a balanced and enriched sense of being. This experience is essential for a well rounded development.

Because I live in the wonderful Adirondack Park, I'm aware that outdoor spaces are very important to our national's wealth, personal peace, and the future generations. Please work to protect America's outdoors. Thank you.

This action will save jobs and also create jobs in small communities across America.

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The educational value of having young people view historic sites is hard to overstate. Yesterday, while showing a Junior High Class through the kitchen of our National Register CN&W railroad depot, I was asked where the microwave was put. It is easy to forget that for we who are middle-aged or older already have had experiences which are very much historical to today's youth.

On the subway coming home from work recently, I talked with some tourists from Europe who had come to the U.S. for vacation. They were very excited about our national parks and historic sites. They visit the United States repeatedly because there are so many of these spectacular attractions that it is impossible to visit them in two or three trips. This Initiative will support economic growth in the tourism sector in our country and help our economy.

MAYBE AUTOMATED EMAIL MESSAGES WON'T CUT THE MUSTARD, BUT JUST IN CASE SOMEONE READS THIS: The health and welfare of human beings is, or should be, the #1 priority. After decent housing and food, I believe conserving natural sites, historic and cultural sites, is next in line. Without access to nature, beauty and a sense of history, (as well as the arts, which I also advocate) our lives would be missing a vital source of inspiration and hope. IF WE DO NOT PRESERVE HISTORIC AMERICA, IT WILL BE LOST. IF WE FAIL TO PROTECT OUR WOODLANDS AND PARKS, THEY WILL DISAPPEAR. I want my grandchildren and all children to experience the majesty that is our home.

Patrick Henry once said that he knew of no other way of judging the future than by the lamp of experience. In this "me" culture world of MySpace and FaceBook and MTV, many Americans know little of their history and even less of their responsibilities as citizens. The lessons of American history are great, indeed: perseverance, entrepreneurship, the struggle for liberty and natural rights, the belief in government of the people, by the people and for the people. When more Americans can identify contestants on shows like American Idol than they can name Presidents or elements of the Bill of Rights, we are in trouble as a nation. This is why preserving--and supporting--historic and cultural sites is paramount to America's future. It is this next generation who must learn the great lessons of America to help keep it a strong nation, one dedicated to fundamental natural rights and liberties. James Madison voiced this so eloquently when he stated "Knowledge will forever govern ignorance; and a people who mean to be their own governors must arm themselves with the power which knowledge gives." Help historic sites around the country continue to provide Americans the knowledge of this great land's unique history so that future generations will be armed with the power to govern themselves and be responsible citizens and champions of American principles.

Wilderness is transformative. I would not be the person I am if I had not had access and the chance to be in wilderness and appreciate the world as it once was when humanity arose.

These spectacular area have great wilderness qualities and hold untold artifacts and remnants of ancient societies of the Four Corners area. Please ensure these lands can be protected from inappropriate use.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Just got back from a camping trip into Utah's red rock country. It had been too long - 3 years. What an uplifting experience! I wish everyone could see stars like that. I'm rejuvenated. Thanks for helping us protect such places. Go see those stars!

My wife and son and daughter have spent many vacations with me in this wonderful psychically restorative part of our country. We all come back to work feeling renewed and optimistic about our future. Please preserve this treasure for all our citizens, present and future.

Your efforts to provide a resource that has long lasting effects for the good of our people is sincerely needed. Just knowing that there are wilderness areas and outdoor spaces that are protected from pollution, degradation and the uncaring attitude of the greedy is a tremendous benefit to the mental health and well being of a society.

I will never forget that Clinton designated the Escalante Grand Staircase National Monument and what Carter did for Alaska. This is an action and legacy which will stand forever, for all future generations, human and animal. This is exactly the hope and change from the Bush Administration which those of us who voted for you are hoping to see.

Such incredibly beautiful landscape deserves the best protection available. I hope you and your family can manage a vacation in the area someday so that you may see and know what a treasure is in your grasp to hold for the future. I hope my grandchildren and children will also have the opportunity to enjoy these beautiful lands as my 99 year old father and I did just before his death.

I encourage you to take a personal vacation to hike in the magnificent redrocks of southern Utah so you can appreciate what we hikers are screaming about. I am now 70 years old and on crutches so no longer can visit the quiet beauty of the redrock country. I have hiked in Nepal, Africa, Pakistan, Australia, Alaska, Colorado, Arkansas and Florida but no place comes close to Utah.

I live on the Navajo Nation, just south of some of the stunning lands being considered for wilderness act. I can tell you from experience that Southern Utah is home to some of the most achingly beautiful landscapes in the nation. There is nothing like them anywhere else in America, and our children and grandchildren deserve to enjoy them in their wild glory as we have done.

Mr. President, I know you value the American landscape. Let me share with you my great love for wild Utah and all of America's natural wilderness. I have had the irreplaceable pleasure of camping under the Utah stars in that wilderness. I want my grandchildren and theirs and theirs to have the same opportunity. We must act now to save these lands for their future. Do what you know is right, Mr. President. We will stand behind you.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

I have personally spent time in these areas and money in the surrounding towns while visiting them and can tell you firsthand that these are special, one-of-a-kind spots that need immediate protection and that the likelihood of my spending time and money in the towns near them is minimal without protection. Please don't all prey to the old theory that you cannot support economic growth and jobs while still protecting public lands, especially in this day and age. Thank you!

Department of the Interior... When I was teaching in Oregon, one of the students' favorite authors was Farley Mowat. In the book *Owls in the Family* he talked about his family's trip from the US to western Canada and the abundance of potholes filled with migratory ducks, geese, and all sorts of birds. Anyone who is aware of the area knows how very special it is.

I treasure these areas and enjoy their pristine, untouched beauty.

In Oregon, my native state, they enjoy some of the most beautiful and awe-inspiring public lands in the nation.

Oregon's economic future depends on Wilderness: clean water, wild rivers, and wild lands.

As an Oregonian and an avid outdoor enthusiast, I encourage you to protect as much of the nation's valuable Wilderness and other recreational areas as you can!

In every state, there must be an emphasis on wildlife corridors, so animals can move safely between the tiny bits of habitat we have left for them and so they can move to higher elevations and more northerly latitudes as the climate warms.

My husband and I live far from a city in the high desert with mountains and lakes nearby. The sage country needs to be saved too. We are on the Pacific Flyway and thousands of birds are dependent on the wetlands of this area. The wetlands are at great risk with ranchers wanting much of the water control. There needs to be designated money for the wetlands and other wild and semi-wild areas.

We can help keep America special by protecting more Wilderness and quiet recreation opportunities, preserving more habitat and connectivity for wildlife & humans and permanently protecting remaining old-growth forests. For the wildlife that call our public lands homes and for the millions who enjoy these places for quiet recreation, it is time to correct this Wilderness imbalance for us & all our future visitors. _____ Portland, Oregon Original Obama Voter, VA citizen 45yrs, Oregonian 10+ yrs, All around Nature Boy. The Outdoors is "Everyone's Church". Pls act towards More Wildlands, it has never B4 been Regretted..., It Will be part of Your Great Legacy, so Please think long term, Long term is why you got my vote in the 1st place. { :-) All My Best,

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

. Keep the parks!

. Protect your Last Frontier!

I want them to actually have an outdoors.

. That and keep climbing access available!

. SAVE POUCH CAMP - Staten Island, NY

. PEACE AND LOVE IS WHAT OUR WORLD NEEDS!!!

These are our irreplaceable national treasures.

These grand spaces are the very definition of America the Beautiful.

. I think dolphins should be a protected species worldwide.

and use our resources conservatively and with respect for all living things.

. Please remember that we only have one planet to live on, love and protect.

. Additionally, I vote, and I vote for the environment. Do your best not to lose my vote!

. The outdoors is the great entity that feeds our body, mind and spirit. We not only want it, we need it.

Oh beautiful for spacious skies, indeed. America is a treasure of natural wonders we can't afford to take for granted.

I would like the next generation to enjoy America's great outdoors as have we and earlier generations.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

. It's our national heritage, and a huge treasure for our children to inherit, and their children too.

. I spent my vacation in the mountains in Tennessee this summer - it was beautiful and I want it to stay that way. Elizabeth McCauley

I want my son and the next generation to enjoy America's great outdoors too. . This is an important matter to all Americans.

I want the next generation to enjoy America's great outdoors too. , so that everyone will get the same experiences that we had.

I am a nature lover and I want my 4-year-old daughter to be able to enjoy America's great outdoors too. and conserve our fish, farms, and forests.

I want myself and the next generation to be able to enjoy America's great outdoors. . Nature's beauty is part of America's legacy.

. please do not drop garbage when out camping either, think of others who also need the enjoyment of nature, plus the oxygen from the trees! maria labridis

. This is the kinds of infrastructure spending that will probably never be cheaper to do than it is right now. Future generations will benefit.

These places are treasures, and vital to not only the health of our planet but also our own mental and physical well-being. Please conserve these precious places!!!

My husband and I have spent about 2 & 1/2 weeks backpacking through national parks this summer. This is one thing America has that many other leading countries didn't plan and

I believe it is crucial to protect and preserve our environment and endangered species for the next generation to enjoy. including parks, wildlife refuges, rivers, wilderness trails, and monuments; .

We should be responsible about the world in which we live; its lands, plants, waters and creatures. We must not allow ourselves to become detached and let it fall to ruins.

I want the next generation to be able to enjoy America's great outdoors. Keep our water clean! Plant trees, Take Photos, Leave Footprints. Let's leave this Earth better than we found it. Thanks,

As a naturalized American, I became committed to this country's promise, after visiting the National Parks. It's the highest symbol of our commitment to the democratic experiment. .

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

I hope you will seize the opportunity presented by the America's Great Outdoors Initiative to permanently protect some of our nation's most cherished places, such as Owyhee Canyonlands in southeastern Oregon.

. We are in our 80s & in the poverty class. we have introduced our children & grandchildren to the outdoors & we still enjoy the parks with camper & canoe. we are blessed to be americans. thanks for all you do

. I grew up as a " city girl" but my husband introduced me to the wonders of the great outdoors. We cherish our time vacationing in places such as the Adirondacks & have passed our love of the sacred outdoors to our children.

As a young scientist, our National parks and wilderness areas have provided me with amazing places to study. The wilderness is one of our greatest treasures, something that other countries cannot boast. We should work to protect and conserve these places.

I want my children to enjoy America's great outdoors as much as I have. I live just outside the boundary of America's largest National Park - Wrangell-St. Elias and I hope that future generations can enjoy it, as well as the rest of our public lands, as much as I have.

. I travel extensively overseas for business and i can testify that our national parks and recreation areas are what adds to this country's desirability. I even have friends from overseas that visit here just for our outdoor spaces. They are truly a national treasure....thank

Every generation of Americans should be able to see and enjoy the stunning natural beauty that surrounds us. Far too few of us live in rural areas and every child should be able to learn about and visit wild, natural areas with ease. Family vacations should not only consist of amusement parks. For the sake of our national sanity,

. We need to stop and take a look at the big picture of what we are creating. Respect for ourselves, others and our Earth is something we need to regain. Once our wildlife is gone and our land raped, the picture is very ugly. Will you trade the life of our land for a brief time of monetary gain. There are plenty of other ways to make money.

I grew up learning to have an immense appreciation for the outdoors from the teachings of my elders and the beauty around us that has empowered me throughout my life. Weather it is hiking, kayaking, camping, scrambling, etc... its right there for us and we should all do our part to help preserve things. For our generation and the ones yet to come. Thanks so much! Best,

. The difference between humans and the natural world is that, when not interfered with, nature maintains perfect balance. The intelligence in nature is a perfect system of balance; however, we as humans have a great capacity to create imbalance. There is a purpose that brings us together as humanity to live in harmony and balance with each other and with nature.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

. Many years ago, when our children were young , we took a cross-country trip that included Mount Rushmore, Yosemite, Yellowstone, Crater Lake, the Grand Canyon and other sites. They still talk about that trip and have imparted a love of the outdoors to their children. We want those same beautiful places to be available to our great-grandchildren. Please help to make that happen.

Throughout my youth and into my adult years I have enjoyed many outdoor excursions that have really helped me appreciate the freedom we have as Americans. We have the freedom to travel throughout our vast landscape and enjoy the creation all around us without fear of war or endangerment while traveling. . This will allow the future generations of this great country to enjoy what I have enjoyed.

Doing so may prove to be an important step in the fight against obesity by giving children an alternative to TV and video games at home. The outdoors is also personally important to me; on many trips with family and friends each year, we visit national parks. Being outside and in nature is one of the great joys in my life, especially in this fast-paced modern world. Please work to maintain the land we all share.

What really matters is the natural world we live in. Without it we are nothing. All of our fancy cars, flashy clothes, fine dining, glorious cities, and entertainment are nothing if we cannot breath the air and drink the water. The more we set aside for nature to proceed as undisturbed as possible, the more time we will have on this planet to enjoy our human luxuries. And then, we need parks and other outdoor spaces to get away from the rat race and take a moment to clear our heads and understand that. That we are part of, and not the masters of nature and the natural world. We need to take care of ourselves.

. Expanding land preservation on a large scale is in my opinion the only effective way to protect and restore quality wildlife habitat, especially in a state like mine- Illinois. However, I also believe that acquiring the needed lands for such large scale projects should be done with only those who are from "willing sellers" AND with the use of incentive-based conservation easements. A great example of this is Nachusa Grassland, a truly awesome project the Nature Conservancy has been working on in my own state for over 20 years. This has been just one man's opinion. Thank you for your time

I want the next generation to be able to enjoy America's great outdoors too. including parks, wildlife refuges, beaches, oceans, lakes, wilderness, mountains, trails, rivers, endangered species habitat and the corridors needed for survival, and to conserve our monuments, farms, open spaces and forests. Too many of these precious resources have vanished in my lifetime through pollution, urban expansion, senseless greed, and the harvesting of natural resources (flora, fauna, minerals, gas and oil, etc.) without consideration of the impacts down the road. Please do everything you can to see that we do not lose even more of what makes our country great, and allow everyone the chance to experience nature in all of its pristine glory. Thank you,

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

My age is 86 and I have three children (two in 50's and one 62), six grandchildren (22-33), and 2 great grandchildren (3 and 7). Our range in age is therefore, 3 to 86. Four generations. My wife of 63 years died in January this year. We have many balances to maintain in this wonderful country of ours, the USA. One of these balances is quality living conditions and space in which to enjoy life, our relationships and our pursuits. The other is to retain plenty of natural space (land and water) that will provide us humans with life-fulfilling opportunities to witness and enjoy God's natural beauty and all of nature's pleasures and recreational opportunities that accue from such woders.

Please save the parks for us!

Our wilderness is a national treasure and the key to a sane future.

As a liberal citizen of faith who strongly believes in protecting all of the environment.

Thank you Mr.President for recognizing the importance of protecting our wilderness areas.

I want to thank the Obama Administration for taking the initiative to protect America's Great Outdoors.

I welcome the Obama Administration's conservation leadership embodied in the America's Great Outdoors Initiative.

I was recently in Alaska, and realized EVEN MORE, how we need wilderness and all it's "purple mountains majesty" for future generations to see!!!

Expanding America's wilderness preservation system is the best way to protect wildlife, watersheds, and recreational opportunities.

This is important to the future of the people, the wildlife that inhabit the wild regions of our country which are still intact and the overall integrity of our planetary environment.

My Personal Comments: Some of the biggest tourist areas are around National Parks. The public does enjoy National Parks & Museums, and are better ways to generate money than gambling.

It is exciting to see the Obama Administration's conservation leadership embodied in the America's Great Outdoors Initiative. I find it to be inspiring and indicative of his vision to make conservation of America's treasured outdoor places a national priority.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

I encourage the President to be bold in his efforts to continue to protect our, America's, heritage of beautiful, often breathtaking, natural wilderness. This is something that is important beyond words, and will have a positive impact on many, many generations to come.

Again, I thank the Obama Administration for taking the initiative to protect America's Great Outdoors. I look forward to the president using this opportunity to establish a new and substantial legacy of wilderness conservation, one that can stand as a visible and enduring accomplishment of his presidency.

I appreciate the recognition of the importance of our natural places. The conservation leadership embodied in the America's Great Outdoors Initiative is very much needed.. It is important to make conservation of America's treasured outdoor places a national priority. Our natural resources are threatened by pressures like expanding population, exploitation, unguided development and climate change. The BLM manages many areas suitable for wilderness designation. I want to thank the Obama Administration for taking the initiative to protect America's Great Outdoors.

As my wife and I drove across this country to Colorado in 1969, to begin our graduate school experience, we were awestruck with the beauty of this great land! When we stopped at the Badlands and Mt. Rushmore in SD, and, later, visited Rocky Mt. National Park and Yellowstone Park, we were enthralled with the grandeur of this nation's geographical diversity and the flora and fauna that thrive in these areas! Even though we long ago returned to our native Pennsylvania to seek employment, we have never forgotten the splendor of passing through the MidWest and the Rocky Mountain States. We've also had occasion over the decades to visit other areas of this country and are always impressed by what there to see and experience through a stop at a National Park. Therefore, we applaud the Obama Administration's conservation leadership embodied in the America's Great Outdoors Initiative. In light of all of the wonderful experiences my wife and I have enjoyed through our visits to a variety of national parks,

Like you I'm from Illinois - and I didn't know the true wonders of our country until I moved away at 24. I'm now 30 and I've been in Oregon in Graduate School for a few years. In my time in Eugene, Oregon I've found some of the most amazing wilderness, wildlife, and areas for quiet, mindful recreation. These wilderness areas need to be preserved, for us, for our children, and for the non-human denizens. Our national policies impact the Northwest heavily, and as we turn our sources of revenue from destructive forest and ranching practices, to healthy recreation, tourism, and non-destructive extractive processes, so must the legislature follow suit. We need you to be leading the campaign for a healthy natural world - please do so! With highest regards,

Some of my best family memories are from spending time outdoors, visiting the national parks, and exploring city parks and wildlife areas. I am starting to make the same memories with my children, and hope that they can do the same with their children. Please protect the Great Outdoors!

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

The most important moments in any persons life are the moments spent outdoors. Everyone can remember a feeling of complete awe upon their first views of a mountain, or a grassland, or a rainforest, or a desert. These moments connect us with the land. We must protect every American's right to share in these moments.

. We need to reforest where mining, logging and urban sprawl have claimed 90 % of our original forests. We need to remove dams on rivers where they serve as a detriment to a healthy ecosystem. We need to use renewable energy to power our cities and autos and hemp instead of plastic (ban aluminum and plastic), take fluoride out of our drinking water which is only a by product of aluminum manufacturing and not a dental aid, not try to kill everything by genetically modification or eradication by poisons, bring back family farms, grow hemp which has no illegal drug available and could revolutionize our manufacturing and farming industries. Thank you for your consideration and attention.

As a life long user of the Angeles National forest I want to state my support for a San Gabriel Mountains Recreation area.

I have been visiting Angeles National Forest all my life and those visits have shaped the person that I am now. I hope that it can be preserved and enjoyed by many future generations. We are committed here in Southern California to make that happen! Please lend your support to this very important initiative!

Various federal measures including Forest Legacy have helped land trusts conserve millions of acres.

Thanks for launching America's Great Outdoors. America's land trusts keep agricultural lands in productive use and protect important wildlife habitat.

As a board member of the San Isabel Land Protection Trust in Colorado, I know first hand the difference conservation easements have made in our community.

I personally appreciate this program since my area is dotted with beautiful small farms and woods. Sincerely yours,

This ia an industry which can provide real, needed food while helping dramatically to turn our economy around and help us transition to green energy, and a new economy.

Our land and resources and their beauty are some of our nation's greatest assets. Thanks for your concern, your efforts, and your attention to this important matter.

I am a long time backpacker, fisherman, birder, and general lover of the outdoors. I've served on a number of environmental boards and commissions, most recently that of Audubon Pennsylvania, six years as Chair.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

I grew up on a farm and learned the value of both arable land and land left alone for recreational purposes and wildlife support. Both private and public land must be a part of any complete conservation effort. Thank you,

Thank you for launching America's Great Outdoors! This is an important program that will benefit the entire public. It is appreciated. Your support is a big step in educating the US public on steps towards a healthier society. Thank you.

Thank you for recognizing land trusts in your Great Outdoors initiative. We are a growing force in keeping land open for the valuable services of agriculture, forestry, recreation, and wildlife habitat. Our work is helped by federal programs--tax incentives, farm bill easement programs, LWCF and Forest Legacy--effectively conserving millions of acres.

We are considering initiating a conservation easement through our land trust on 900 acres of forest land that we own in Montgomery & Richmond Counties in North Carolina. One of the factors in our consideration is the tax benefits proposed in the House of Representatives and awaiting action in the Senate. Adoption of these incentives will be a major influence on our decision. Thank you for supporting protection of all of our great outdoors.

The Green Lake Conservancy is a Land Trust that "Preserves Special Places" in the greater Green Lake area. With the assistance of grant dollars & tax incentives, we have been able to preserve over 15 properties in perpetuity. The long range plan for Green Lake County, as required by state law, calls for the county to retain open spaces and its rural character. In order to play a role in that goal, we need continued access to such tools as grants & tax incentives. All land that we are able to preserve & protect is done so in the public interest, so the benefits accrue to present and future residents and visitors. Your support is appreciated.

Dear President Obama, Thank you for launching America's Great Outdoors and recognizing the work of America's 1,600 land trusts to keep agricultural lands in productive use and protect important wildlife habitat.

Tax incentives, farm bill easement programs, LWCF and Forest Legacy have helped land trusts conserve millions of acres. Please make the conservation of private farms, ranches and forests a centerpiece of your initiative.

Our public lands belong to all Americans and provide us with clean supplies of drinking water, healthy air, and an opportunity to experience wildlife and nature. America's Great Outdoors is an opportunity to transform conservation for the 21st century, and leave a legacy that future generations can enjoy. Protecting, connecting and restoring our public lands should be a critical component of a successful America's Great Outdoors.

Our shared public lands -- from the Grand Canyon and Yosemite to our forests in Maine and North Carolina -- provide health, economic and recreation benefits that sustain our communities.

America's great outdoors are special to us all and we have a great responsibility to protect them for future generations.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Here in Oregon, we enjoy some of the most beautiful and awe-inspiring public lands in the nation.

I applaud the Obama Administration's conservation leadership embodied in the America's Great Outdoors Initiative.

It is inspiring to see the President make conservation of America's treasured outdoor places a national priority.

Again, I want to thank the Obama Administration for taking the initiative to protect America's Great Outdoors.

I support the Obama Administration's America's Great Outdoors Initiative.

Protecting Yellowstone means Protecting the wildlife migration corridors and watersheds that surround the park and make up the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem.

As we face global climate change, protecting these connections will only become more important.

Communities throughout Greater Yellowstone value their access and connection to the great outdoors and have a history of working hard to conserve special places.

The San Gabriel Mountains in the Angeles National Forest provide us with natural habitat, wilderness, scenic rivers and a host of healthy recreational activities such as hiking, camping and water play. The Angeles NF is one of the most heavily visited recreational forests in the country and accounts for 70 percent of the open space in Los Angeles County.

___ said Wilderness designations are not cost effective" The trails maintenance programs for wilderness areas cost almost nothing when compared to road maintenance costs for the non wilderness designated government land. Wilderness designation is the most cost effective management designation. We get clean water and clean air and it costs taxpayers nothing."

I like this idea because it an important but neglected component of habitat conservation. Sound travels and decreasing the sonic pollution in an area only widens the effective habitat space.

I whole heartedly agree with this idea. Why is it we protect our forests and parks from specific types of vehicles, domestic animal traffic and etc. and yet allow the fly over of commercial/private airlines? Sound is just as much a part of the habitat as any animal or plant. It's like having an orchestra without any instruments. I will never forget the days following 9/11. The quiet was simply amazing, even in suburban Chicago. Please promote this idea and lets move it to being law.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Some of the best examples I have seen of connecting youth with national parks are the educational trips to the Apostle Islands. Not only do the students who are able to make trips during the school year learn about the animals and plants and habitat on the islands, but also the Native American influences and aspects. It's important to incorporate as much of our history, ecology, preservation and culture into displays, educational information and programs as well as in schools. What better way to do so than by introducing more of our youth to National Parks? .

Thank you for considering my comments because I and my family have visited many of our national parks and truly believe that they are the "crown jewels of America" and "America's best idea"..

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

When I think of the great outdoors in the USA, I think primarily of the national parks. National parks play a tremendous role in connecting people, young and old, to the outdoors, preserving the natural and cultural diversity of the nation, and contributing to the health of people and the planet. National parks provide some of the finest outdoor classrooms and serve as a basis for conservation, history, and civics education for millions of people each year. --Heed the advice of the National Parks Second Century Commission, a group of well respected individuals who spent more than a year developing a vision for how to protect the parks and connect people to them in the next century. --Seize the opportunity that the upcoming Park Service centennial provides to renew the national parks. The administration should apply the lessons that were learned from the Centennial Initiative to developing a new public-private partnership to prepare the parks for their next century. We need a new national campaign that will involve people in communities throughout the country in protecting the parks for the next generation. --Do more to use national parks to inspire and educate young people. The national parks are classrooms for discovery and learning for students and teachers. Programs like Teacher to Ranger to Teacher (TRT) allows teachers from low income school districts to spend the summer working as park rangers where they develop and present interpretive programs, staff visitor centers, and develop curriculum-based materials which they bring back to the classroom. This program should be expanded. And the Department of Education should work with the Park Service to excite children with hands-on learning experiences. --We need more parks for people to enjoy. The park system must also evolve to fully represent the history and culture of the diversifying nation. I urge you to evaluate and consider new sites to bring into the system that better represent the changing country, and protect remaining natural areas before they are all used up. --Provide wildlife corridors to ensure that the wildlife in the parks can find the food it needs and reproduce successfully outside, as well as within park boundaries. We need cooperative efforts between federal, state and local agencies and private landowners, because wildlife doesn't understand boundaries on a map. A recent study commissioned by the National Parks Conservation Association found that every federal dollar invested in national parks generates at least four dollars of economic value to the public. In 2009, as the recession took its toll on the pocketbooks of USA residents, national park visitation increased on average by nearly four percent, demonstrating the enhanced value of the national parks to people in difficult economic times. USA residents care about the future of these incredible places, so they will be there for future generations to enjoy. Remember the importance of protecting national parks and the many programs managed by the National Park Service that improve communities. National parks are good investments for the future.

National Parks have played a major role in influencing my own connection to Earth since I was a child of three. Seventy years later, I still consider the greatest beauty in the world is to be outdoors, and our National Parks have so much to offer and teach to everyone. It is only in the stillness and beauty of our mountains, forests, prairies, and oceans that we put our lives in perspective.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Americans care about the future of these incredible places, so they will be there for our children and grandchildren to enjoy. Some of my family's favorite vacations, memories, and history lessons came from visiting national parks. Please remember the importance of protecting national parks and the many programs managed by the National Park Service that improve our communities. National parks are good investments in our future.

I have just returned from Shenandoah National Park and I can't tell you how much I enjoyed it. I would love to see many other National Parks and hope I get the chance. I have just emailed my family and friends with pictures attached and they can't believe how beautiful it is there. I voted for you and I think you are doing your best. I know it's a very difficult job, especially after the previous eight years. I want you to know I appreciate everything you are trying to do. I'm sorry you had so much opposition when you were trying to give us a new healthcare system. I'm glad you were able to put some of it through.

If you believe they are good investments why are you killing wolves and other animals? Why are you letting all kinds of destructive vehicles run amok in our parks? If you really want to save money, then cut your salary and cut congress and senates salaries that will save a lot more. Time you give as well, and stop smoking and trying to kill yourself.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

I am 83 years old and many of those 83 summers were spent in our National Parks. In fact my children and grandchildren, with a friend, hiked in Lassen National Park last weekend. We have climbed Lassen Peak several times and skied down the ski trails that used to be there. My son and grandson will visit Yellowstone National Park this week as my grandson returns home from his tours in Afghanistan. Please don't let this wonderful experience diminish in anyway and do everything possible to save these places for my greatgrandchildren. Please heed the advice of the National Parks Second Century Commission, a group of well respected individuals who spent more than a year developing a vision for how to protect the parks and connect Americans two them in the next century. Seize the opportunity that the upcoming Park Service centennial provides to renew our national parks. The administration should apply the lessons that were learned from the Centennial Initiative to developing a new public-private partnership to prepare our parks for their next century. We need a new national campaign that will involve people in communities throughout the country in protecting our parks for the next generation. Provide permanent, mandatory funding for the Land and Water Conservation Fund. Seventeen billion dollars in revenues, primarily from oil and gas leasing, have accumulated during the past several decades in the Land and Water Conservation Fund, unspent for its intended purpose. This money should be spent as originally promised to support parks, seashores, forests, and waterways across the country, rather than just another broken federal promise. What's happening in the Gulf of Mexico reminds us how important it is to keep that promise. We need more parks for people to enjoy. The park system must also evolve to fully represent the history and culture of our diversifying nation. Please evaluate and consider new sites to bring into the system that better represent our changing country, and protect remaining natural areas before we use them all up. Provide wildlife corridors to ensure that the wildlife in our parks can find the food it needs and reproduce successfully outside, as well as within park boundaries. We need cooperative efforts between federal, state and local agencies and private landowners, because wildlife doesn't understand boundaries on a map.

My most memorable vacations have been in U.S. National Parks. I spent two seasons working as a concession employee in Yellowstone National Park. U.S. National Parks include some of the most spectacular scenery on earth. Enjoying that scenery and watching the protected wildlife renew my spirit as I am awed by the wonders of Creation. Special attention must be given to National Parks in any program emphasizing the outdoors

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

As a parent of two young children, an scholar in the field of education, a community college administrator, and a lover of the outdoors, I urge you to place priority focus on our National Parks System. Our parks offer something of value to everyone no matter age, ethnicity, or socio-economic background. In direct support of "Race to the Top" and "No Child Left Indoors," National parks provide some of America's finest outdoor classrooms and serve as a basis for conservation, history, and civics education for millions each year. Let's also create jobs through the Park System - WPA style. This will increase our understanding of American History, Conservation, and support active, healthy lifestyles. --Heed the advice of the National Parks Second Century Commission. --Provide permanent, mandatory funding for the Land and Water Conservation Fund- spent as originally promised to support parks, seashores, forests, and waterways across the country, rather than just another broken federal promise. What's happening in the Gulf of Mexico reminds us how important it is to keep that promise. --Do more to use national parks to inspire and educate young people. Experiential learning is well known to be the BEST method for learning in all subject areas but particularly in math and science. Our national parks are classrooms for discovery and learning for students and teachers. Programs like Teacher to Ranger to Teacher (TRT) allows teachers from low income school districts to spend the summer working as park rangers where they develop and present interpretive programs, staff visitor centers, and develop curriculum-based materials which they bring back to the classroom. This program should be expanded. And the Department of Education should work with the Park Service to excite kids with hands-on learning experiences.

My husband and I have a 14 month old son and we can't wait to introduce him to all the National Parks. Our best vacations have been to Rocky Mountain, Glacier, Mr. Rainier, The Badlands, Mt. Rushmore, and the list goes on. I come from a small farm community in Iowa where money was scarce and vacations were nonexistent. I only knew the small community around me and had never been further than Wisconsin. I had the opportunity in high school to go on a trip to Rocky Mountain National Park. That experience opened my eyes to what America has to offer and gave me a sense of patriotism, peace and respect for all living creatures that I could never explain in words. The National parks are such a huge part of our American Heritage and can change a person's outlook in life in just one visit. I know it did for me!

I was always a part of the activities. My daughter and her family often camp and hike in local and national parks. Our 5 year old grandson called just Sunday to tell us the adventure he and his family had over the weekend as they camped and hiked for two days at Mahoney State Park in Nebraska. Let's protect the lands and the health of the people.

Every year for the past 15 years, I have spent a week in the spring camping and hiking in our national parks, national monuments, and even BLM lands with my childhood friend. Our lives have taken different paths, we live far apart now, and it is this yearly ritual that enables us to reconnect and reconfirm our 60-year friendship. The dramatic beauty, grounding serenity, and calming simplicity of these nationally held lands are integral to our shared experiences.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

My family and I take a vacation in one our National Parks every year: seeing you wioth your family in Arcadia in Maine reminded me of our trip there two years ago. So you know first hand what a treasure our national parks are. Visiting all of them is on our bucket list (we're in our sixties). National parks get Americans off the coach, away from the TV and provide some of America's finest outdoor classrooms and serve as a basis for conservation, history, and civics education for millions of people each year.

To get a great feel for what our National Parks do, I highly recommend that you and your family watch the Ken Burns DVD's (especially in Blu-Ray) of "The National Parks - America's Best Idea". They total over 12.5 hours, but are well worth it, as are the extra "Special Features" on each DVD. I have been fortunate enough to have been to many these locations and felt these DVD's really express what I feel. I especially like the Musical number "Teddy Bear's Picnic", in the Special Features on Disc 3. It shows Brooks Falls in Katmai National Park in Alaska. I took my son there a few years ago, and it really is like shown when a salmon run is going up the falls!

Thank you for setting an example with your family of visiting the natural beauty of our country! The local, state, and especially the National Parks are a treasure I visit whenever I can.

My daughter and I spent 10 days hiking on Isle Royale Natl Park for her Highschool graduation trip. It is something we will remember together forever.

When we think of America's Great Outdoors, we think of our national parks.
Thank you for considering our comments.

Thank

When I was young, my parents took "driving" vacations to various states. National Parks were always one of the places we stopped and explored. I still remember those vacations and those parks and would like to see them preserved and kept available to the generations to follow. As an adult, I still take many of my vacations touring our national parks, but I'm saddened by the closing and shortened visiting seasons for many of them, and the cutback on many of the services offered.

My husband, our two daughters (and now our grandchildren) and I love to spend vacation time at our National Parks. Since we live in Arizona, we go to the Grand Canyon at least once a year. Helping to preserve the parks from pollution and industrial development is also important. I was shocked that a company started building a uranium mine within a mile of the Grand Canyon and was so relieved when federal action stopped the mine.

I love visiting our National Parks and I hope they will always b e kept as wonderful places for learning about nature away from the noise. A place where you can hear the birds, the waterfalls an escape into the beautiful that God created without noise.

This year, to save money, my family and I went down the Oregon and California coast on Highway 1. Along the way, we stopped at several of the national parks, exposing our boys (17, 15, and 11) to beautiful landscapes and wildlife that they would otherwise never have seen. To keep this adventure alive for other Americans, please consider taking the following steps:

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

The last bits of pure and undisturbed nature are where we turn to rejuvenate our lives and understand the deep wealth of nature's gifts.

"The National Parks: America's Best Idea "

America the Beautiful! When I ponder those words, the great outdoors comes to mind. I especially think of our National Parks in America. Our parks are a symbol of who we were, who we are, and who we hope to be. It saddens me when I see the condition of our National Parks system. Visitors to our great country may wrongly think that we as a nation do not care about our national symbols. Our national parks are classrooms for discovery and learning for students and teachers. Programs like Teacher to Ranger to Teacher (TRT) allows teachers from low income school districts to spend the summer working as park rangers where they develop and present interpretive programs, staff visitor centers, and develop curriculum-based materials which they bring back to the classroom. This program should be expanded. And the Department of Education should work with the Park Service to excite kids with hands-on learning experiences. Please evaluate and consider new sites to bring into the system that better represent our changing country, and protect remaining natural areas before we use them all up.

I personally think that this is an excellent area to use to promote and make more jobs for the American people. Back in the days of the WPA many people were put to works making , restoring and expanding our parks. By providing jobs more people would have money to take and expose children to our wonderful land.

I am so heartened by your initiative. I cannot think of any issue more important than salvaging what is left of our wondrous environment and her many awe-inspiring species. Now is the time to re-awaken our citizens to our inherent oneness with the land and waters upon which we rely for nearly all of our needs.

National parks were one of the most important ways I connected with nature and my family as I was growing up. Yosemite was a five hour drive and every year, both summer and winter, my parents packed us six kids in the station wagon so we could spend time there - camping, hiking, skiing, learning about nature in its diverse manifestations. National parks continue to play a tremendous role in connecting people, young and old, to the outdoors, preserving the natural and cultural diversity of our nation, and contributing to the health of our people.

A national well-developed curriculum highlighting our national park system should be a part of every school with a short unit highlighting ONE park every year and then a longer unit in tenth grade. What an exciting topic to motivate our children. .

Preserve large areas of public lands and waters to secure the health of our ecosystems, ensure wildlife conservation, maintain public access to parks and open spaces, reduce the impacts of climate change, and protect our cultural heritage. --Strengthen the capacity for federal, regional, state, and local agencies and private landowners to work collaboratively in order to protect not only our national parks but the wildlife, plants, and rivers beyond park borders.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

National parks play a tremendous role in sustaining wildlife and nature, connecting people, young and old, to the outdoors, preserving the natural and cultural diversity of our nation, and contributing to the health of our people.

Do more to use national parks to inspire and educate people, young and old alike. Our national parks are classrooms for discovery and learning for students, parents and teachers. Programs like Teacher to Ranger to Teacher (TRT) allows teachers from low income school districts to spend the summer working as park rangers where they develop and present interpretive programs, staff visitor centers, and develop curriculum-based materials which they bring back to the classroom. This program should be expanded. And the Department of Education should work with the Park Service to excite kids with hands-on learning experiences. Protect the parks' wildlife from unnecessary hunting. It's especially important to save the wolves of Yellowstone from extinction. Return to a strong wildlife management plan scientifically based as was developed for the Park system in the 1950s (of course updating it with current scientific knowledge).

Visiting national parks with my family was a formative part of my own love of nature and conservation.

I appreciate all you are doing to address the issues of today and prepare our structures for our children and the next generations. I imagine the weight of responsibility is incredibly heavy and I thank you. I am writing in support of the points listed below. When I think of America's Great Outdoors, I think of my mom and dad loading their four girls into the station wagon to head to a State Park to camp out on weekends. From Memorial Day straight through to Labor Day, if my folks had time off together we were in a tent in a National Park. As a singly Mom I carried out the tradition - often to the chagrin of my children, who now consider those adventures some of the high points of their formative years. They now continue the tradition, and when I have a weekend off - my preference is to go visit the preserved spots of this beautiful land. National parks play a tremendous role in connecting people, young and old, to their individual spirit, to each other and to the outdoors, preserving the natural and cultural diversity of our nation, and contributing to the health of our people. Their Rangers are role models. YPlease Mr Obama, take the following steps:

I grew up in the upper peninsula of Michigan. Nature surrounded me and gave all the reinforcement of being one with what was around me. It was like a safe haven for me mentally, physically, spiritually and emotionally. How fortunate I was. Many persons have not had the experience of being with nature. To keep our outdoors open for others is vital in my opinion Thans for reading Claire Mautner the words below saying it in another way are important too. i

I have had the privilege of living and working in three of our most beautiful national parks and have visited countless others, many more than once. Also, national parks play an increasingly important ecological and climate role.

With the crisis in the Gulf we need to protect Americas Parks.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Please consider the following action items: Americans care about the future of these incredible places, so they will be there for our children and grandchildren to enjoy. I want others to have the great experiences I have had in national parks, both when I was growing up and still today. National parks are good investments in our future.

I think the writers already said it all, but I'd like to add that I'm working in Lagos, Nigeria and when I come home to Kingwood, TX, my wife and I frequently go to National Parks in the good ole' USA, such as the Smokey Mountains or Zion or Arches... so please keep the pristine areas of USA pristine. Thanks.

An employment program for the parks would serve both the public's use of the parks and the need for jobs. Just look at any national park today, to see what the CCC did during the Depression. The work still stands in testament to the value of such valuable programs.

As a youngster I dreamed of visiting the National Parks - As an adult that dream came true. Thank God they were still there waiting for me and mine. Your administration needs to make certain they continue to not only be there but to be protected and enhanced as this world of ours gets smaller and warmer.

Our National Park system is a real treasure. The diverse environments often brings awe to their visitors. This system needs absolutely protected, maintained and assured it's continued progressive improvement. And most importantly, the system need protected from privatization and free from corporate influence of any kind.

Protect undeveloped places from development or exploitation of any kind. NOT for americans, NOT for people, and MOST CERTAINLY NOT for tourism or the economy, but for the animals, trees, and other creatures of the earth who live there. Let them be the priority for once. -- Heed the advice of the National Parks Second Century Commission, a group of well respected individuals who spent more than a year developing a vision for how to protect the parks in the next century. --Build on programs that work. The National Park Service has tremendous technical expertise and know-how that can help communities preserve their special places. The Park Service's Rivers and Trails Conservation Assistance program has a long history of working with cities, suburbs, and small communities across the country on conservation efforts and providing expertise to help conserve rivers, preserve open space, and develop trails and greenways. You already have a great program, but it's under resourced. There's no need to reinvent the wheel. Invest in a model that is working in communities across the country. --We need more parks. The park system must also evolve to fully represent the history and culture of our diversifying nation. Please evaluate and consider new sites to bring into the system that protect remaining natural areas before we use them all up.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

As a former teacher who has traveled to a number of National Parks, I can truly say there is nothing more inspiring than the grand vistas or the amazing natural peace that infuses body and soul than connecting with these fantastic landscapes and their wildlife. It is so very important that we, as a nation, give a balance of nature with the overwhelming technology to which our children are exposed. Getting involved in national, state and county parks is one way to encourage a healthier population. The outdoors stimulates all types of physical activities to enhance a more active citizenry as well as creating a more mindful, heedful connection to ecology. Supporting our country's incredible natural resources connects us to our past and strengthens our future. Please.

Americans care about the future of these incredible places, so they will be there for our seniors, children and grandchildren to enjoy. Please remember the importance of protecting national parks and the many programs managed by the National Park Service that improve our communities. National parks are good investments in our future.

Please also consider expanding the acreage of our National Parks....to keep lands in their "natural settings" undisturbed by human suffering.

HIRE A NEW INTERIOR SECRETARY. WE DO NOT NEED BUSH POLITICS ANYMORE. PLEASE HIRE SOMEONE WHO REALLY CARES ABOUT THIS COUNTRY AND THE ENVIRONMENT!!!!!!!!!!!!!! Ms.

BUT only do minimal in order NOT to add to the nation's deficit and NOT to cause extra costs for the parks. Too, increase fees if necessary in order to NOT add to the deficit, obtain bigger revenue for the country and decrease the profit of the vendors who provide services inside the parks, and possibly limit users and activities in order NOT to add to the deterioration of the parks.

Our whole family has a greater appreciation of and interest in our national parks since our younger daughter Kelly has spent the past two years as a Student Conservation Association intern. She worked in the Great Smokey Mountains NP and the Lake Mead National Recreation Area. Not only has Kelly received wonderful work experience, but all of us also have learned so much about these wonderful locations.

We've been to many national parks around America--they are always terrific!

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

I have been an avid tent-camper since the Spring of 1976, when my sons, (3 and 6 years old at the time), first agreed to accompany my wife and I on our first camping trip with borrowed equipment. Ten years later, they were taking us camping. Our family car was always a small, compact station wagon and they could pack in all the camping gear we would need on their own. So, often on a Friday, when we arrived home from work, they would announce where they wanted to go camping that weekend and have the maps ready to show us the way. Most of our destinations were state and national parks. We attend church in inner-city Oakland, California and now that our sons have grown up and left town, I take our Sunday school group camping one each summer. I also teach physical geography at local community colleges and work into the course assignment a field trip each semester. Both class and Sunday school students marvel at the impact that the outdoors have on them. Many have never been out on a hiking trail before their first field trip or church camp-out. The inner city children I have exposed to outdoor experiences have been impressed, even inspired by the exposure. I remember children trying to hide their fear of being out of the city for the first time, (terrified by images from horror movies) and voicing regret to leave when it was time to go back home. One teenage boy once said to me: "It is so quiet here I almost don't want to speak and disturb the silence!" Our parks are such a powerful healing balm for children in the inner city, who have been exposed to too much violence and too inhuman an atmosphere that is their daily experience, that I feel we need to have more programs designed to expose them to the parks in their vicinity. My church is working with local neighborhood groups to provide summer activities for the children. But, alas, the need is far greater than what we can afford to do. It seems so much easier to find prisons and youth detention homes to catch them, when they join the programs that are so much more available to them. Please help us! The parks are so much less expensive than the prisons! Maybe your administration would consider some of the following steps:

Our National parks play a formative role in connecting people, young and old, to the outdoors, preserving the natural and cultural diversity of our nation, and contributing to the health of our people.

I love and make use of national parks. They help me connect to the outdoors, preserve the natural and cultural diversity of our nation, and contribute to our health and well being.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Two years ago my son got an opportunity to work a seasonal job at Yellowstone National Park during his college summer break. It was a life-changing experience. He fell in love with nature and all that comes with it. He returned to Yellowstone the following year after he graduated from college. This year he is working at Grand Teton National Park. Every spare minute he has, he hikes. It has become his passion. Right before my son started college he was diagnosed with type 1 diabetes. He struggled with it for most of his college years. That first year at Yellowstone he found something that made him happier than I had seen him in a very long time. It did still take him some time to figure some things out for himself, but this year when I accompanied him on a 10-day journey (with stops at other national parks, of course) to Grand Teton National Park he told me that he had decided that he wants to work for the park service. The national parks have become so important to him, he wants to be part of preserving them. Considering that he has a degree in English and his previous goal was to be a writer, one can see what an impact this spur-of-the-moment decision of working at a park for the summer has had. But hiking the parks has done so much more than simply change his career goals; it has taught him survival skills, it has given him his self-confidence back, and most importantly it has made him feel like a man; something he had never quite felt since he was barely twenty when he was diagnosed, which had always made him feel handicapped. He still writes, of course, but now he fills his journals with his hiking and spotting wildlife experiences in the parks. His passion has rubbed off on me. I recently joined the NPCA, and we both have our NP passports, which we hope to completely fill with cancellations (ink stamps) from all the parks before long. As you can see, national parks play a tremendous role in not only connecting people, to the outdoors, preserving the natural and cultural diversity of our nation, and contributing to the health of our people, it also nurtures their hearts and souls. They also provide some of America's finest outdoor classrooms and serve as a basis for conservation, history, and civics education for millions of people each year. Therefore I suggest for your administration to take the following steps:

Some of my favorite times were bringing my children to National Parks. I'd like them to have the same pleasure.

As a child, every summer vacation to one of our great National Parks are the most wonderful memories with my family. The lifetime experiences of 'America the Beautiful' carry with me to this day...please keep our parks intact.

My wife and I have been making an annual trip to one of our National Parks every year for the past 20 years. We enjoy hiking and photography and can't think of any better places to pursue these two hobbies. The beauty and serenity of our National Parks is unmatched. Right here in Morristown we have Washington's Headquarters and Fort Nonsense, maintained by the NPS, that we love to visit.

What is a better way to move then the outdoors! And where is a top notch place to stay in shape -or get in shape- than a national park! Not only our muscles but also our brains can benefit. We all need to have optimal blood pressure and the serenity of a national park is just what the doctor ordered. Vitamin D has been almost touted as a cure all and national parks have enough for everyone with side effects of pure enjoyment.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

We humans still need recreation to stay healthy.

They truly are our greatest natural resources and a gift for future generations!

When I was growing up, we always went camping in the mountains for family vacations. It meant the world to me. As a single parent, I really never got to do that much with my children in the area of traveling and camping. They did get to go some with my parents on their trips. I just wanted to share this with you. If you ever have a chance to visit a national park, you automatically gain a respect for our great outdoors. My experiences made me appreciate them and want to take care of them.

The happiest moments in my long life were spent in national parks. I can't imagine life without the great outdoors. Please support our national parks to the fullest. If you have ever been to one, then you know how I and millions of other people feel about these wonderful, peaceful sanctuaries.

We should not have to send this message to you as you should know what a treasure the National Parks are.

I have worked in many of the parks with the continental divide trail association, so I have up close and personal experience with many of them and have visited all but 3.

When I think of America's Great Outdoors, I think of our national parks, at least one of which I visit every year.

When I think of America's Great Outdoors, I think of our national and State parks. I visited Mammoth cave and Acadia parks this summer and found the trips to be very enjoyable.

Your initiative "America's Great Outdoors" is a good one, and I thank you for the concept. We need to recreate and consider one of the things that makes us so great is the respect we have for our great outdoor places.

When my wife and I think of America's Great Outdoors, we think of our national parks. Thank you for considering our comments

National parks play a tremendous role in connecting people, parents, grandparents and children, to the outdoors, preserving the natural and cultural diversity of our nation, and contributing to the health of our people.

Our national parks ARE America's Great Outdoors!
comments.

Thank you for considering our

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

We are so fortunate as a nation that we had forefathers who set aside national parks to preserve for conservation. If they hadn't they would have been squandered to development.

Please President Obama, you are the last, best, chance we have to save our wildspaces.

My family and I have visited over 50 National Parks, Shorelines, Historical Sites, Monuments, etc in over 15 states. These were the best educational experiences for my children, and myself. All families should be encouraged to take advantage of these great pieces of America.

Our National Parks are America's National Treasures. I am so eager and happy that the America's Great Outdoors Initiative is on the table right now. I delight in knowing that your administration is choosing to focus its time and focus on such a fantastic part of America. Helping to build a greater connection and a greater accessibility between Americans and nature is so life enhancing and important. Especially in the context of this time. I think we are hungry for a greater connection to the world around us. So, Bravo, for this initiative. I trust that America's National Parks will be a pivotal part of this next step forward. Hopefully our National parks will receive greater care and expansion. America is beautiful, and it is such a treasure that so much of that beauty has been preserved, let's keep it up! Better yet, let's expand on it. The dominant presence of nature heightens the level of happiness and the quality of life for the people around it. Great thinkers, who are the forefathers of America like Transcendentalists Thoreau and Emerson would agree: nature sparks appreciation in mankind.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

As a Natural Resource major from Colorado State University, I have been lucky enough to have had the opportunity to experience first hand the importance of our environment and recognize just how meaningful it will be for future generations. Whether I was out hiking, biking or camping near Ft. Collins' Red Feather Lakes, snowboarding in the Aspen Mountains, or simply just relaxing with the family in our cabin out by the Spanish Peaks, I have always felt a close connection with nature. What follows are recommendations put forth by the NPCA which I truly believe in. I would like to take just a minute more of your time to address the growing concern of the U.S. government and the attacks being made from many members of our society. It is extremely outrageous that your administration has received so many complaints making it seem like you and your administration are the cause of so much of the political and socio-economical problems we currently face. It is clear that no matter whom had taken over from the previous administration would more likely than not be taking on some of the biggest challenges we have ever come across. And though there are times when I have a crisis of faith in our government (because it is hard to say who is right and who is wrong), I still feel very strongly that those in power at this moment in time really do have the best in mind for all of us living in the United States. Though it might not be worth much, I would like you and all of your staff to know that I have never been more willing to pledge my allegiance to the flag of the United States and will continue to stand by so long as you continue to point this country back in the right direction. In closing, Americans care about the future of these incredible places, so they will be there for our children and grandchildren to enjoy. Please remember the importance of protecting national parks and the many programs managed by the National Park Service that improve our communities. National parks are by far one of the best investments in our future. Thank you for your consideration. Mr.

As an American, nothing gives me more pride than our National Parks. I visit many of them each year.

Thank you for spending your family vacation at Acadia. It shows your Family's values. However, not much of the trip made the news. Gibbs has some work to do.

America's Great Outdoors is a major part of my life, and I emphasize that I have enjoyed our national parks often as part of that. National parks are critically important in connecting people, young and old, able-bodied and (like me) disabled, to the outdoors, preserving the natural and cultural diversity of our nation, and contributing to the health of our people. National parks belong to all of us, and provide some of America's finest outdoor learning places. These fantastic parks also serve as a basis for conservation, history, and civics education for millions of people each year. Please keep this up. Our parks have been badly underfunded for a long time, and need some support in keeping themselves in decent shape, though.

Our national parks are America's Great Outdoors.

Thank you for your consideration

Please remember the words of our greatest conservationist Teddy Roosevelt, "There can be no greater issue than that of conservation in this country."

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

National parks have played a very important role in my life. When I was a child my family visited Mt. Ranier, Yosemite, Yellowstone, and Glacier National Parks, and I so loved being in these glorious settings! My husband and I followed this pattern and spent much of our vacations taking our children to many different national parks, where we often camped and hiked. But this was not just for our children; this was where we adults wanted to spend our time. The parks offered us inspiration and renewal. So I would agree that These parks must be preserved. I was shocked to learn how much of national park land is being lost each year. These areas are a sacred trust. We must not lose any more of our wilderness! Instead, we should be preserving more areas as national parks. We should also provide enough funding for enough interpretive rangers in each park. They help these parks become outdoor classrooms. In addition, --Do more to use national parks to inspire and educate young people. For instance, the following program sounds like such a great idea: Teacher to Ranger to Teacher (TRT) allows teachers from low income school districts to spend the summer working as park rangers where they develop and present interpretive programs, staff visitor centers, and develop curriculum-based materials which they bring back to the classroom. This program should be expanded. And the Department of Education should work with the Park Service to excite kids with hands-on learning experiences. --THIS IS SO IMPORTANT AND CLOSE TO MY HEART: Provide wildlife corridors to ensure that the wildlife in our parks can find the food it needs and reproduce successfully outside, as well as within park boundaries. We need cooperative efforts between federal, state and local agencies and private landowners, because wildlife doesn't understand boundaries on a map.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

National parks also provide some of America's finest outdoor classrooms and serve as a basis for conservation, history, and civics education for millions of people each year. They were established to protect important wilderness areas from destructive ideas and destructive corporate executives. --Seize the opportunity that the upcoming Park Service centennial provides to renew our national parks. The administration should apply the lessons that were learned from the Centennial Initiative toward developing a new public-private partnership that will prepare our vitally-needed parks for their next century. We need a new national campaign, one that will capture individuals' imaginations and that will involve people in communities throughout the country in protecting our parks for the next generation. --Provide permanent, and mandatory, funding for the Land and Water Conservation Fund. Seventeen billion dollars in revenues, primarily from oil and gas leasing, have accumulated during the past several decades in the Land and Water Conservation Fund, as yet unspent for its intended purpose. This money should be spent as originally promised, exclusively to support parks, seashores, forests, and important waterways across the country, rather than just representing yet another neocon broken federal promise. What's happening in the Gulf of Mexico reminds us how important it is for responsible Americans--Democrats and Republicans-- keep that promise. --Do more to use national parks in their role of inspiring and educating young people. Our national parks are classrooms for discovery and learning for students and teachers. Programs such as Teacher to Ranger to Teacher (TRT) allows teachers from low-income school districts to spend the summer working as park rangers helping to develop and present interpretive programs, staff visitor centers, and develop curriculum-based materials which they bring back to the classroom. This program should be expanded. And the Department of Education should work with the Park Service to excite kids with hands-on learning experiences. --Build upon programs that already work. The National Park Service has tremendous technical expertise and know-how that can help communities preserve their special places and provide recreational and educational opportunities for people. The Park Service's Rivers and Trails Conservation Assistance program has a long history of working with cities, suburbs, and small communities across the country on conservation efforts and providing expertise to help conserve rivers, preserve open space, and develop trails and greenways. You already have a great program, but it's under- resourced. There's no need to reinvent the wheel. Invest in a model that is working in communities across the country. A vastly overpopulated country drowning in pollutants emitted by supply-side economic madmen foisting off unneeded products onto brainwashed overconsuming victims is not capitalism, not Americanism and not even sane conduct. Study the loss of caribou alone; the lesson is clear. This is our most vital asset--people caring about perpetual upkeep of our living heritage, our air, our water and our wildlife. Real Americans, not pseudo-religious neocon reality bashers do in fact care very deeply about the future of these incredible places, so they will be there for our children and grandchildren to enjoy. Only the BLM and EPA and the corporate business lobby apparently hate reality so much they're willing to destroy it in the name of short-term stolen "profiteering". Please remember the importance of protecting state and especially our national parks and the many programs managed by the National Park Service; these are extremely central and vital programs that improve our communities, and generate jobs, income and tourism dollars as well as educating citizens about priorities in realism. National parks are good investments in our future--perhaps the best investment we have.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

I had the privilege of growing up in a family that inspired my love of the outdoors. We spent many summers in our family's RV, camping and hiking. Much of that time was spent in our national parks. As I have become an adult, I still enjoy the outdoors and especially the national parks. I hope that my children will be able to have the same experiences in the national parks that I did. We need to do alot as a country to promote better stewardship of our public lands, keeping our parks in top shape and restoring a healthier environment that protects our national resources, especially improving air quality, preserving our waterways, and protecting endagered species. We need to encourage our children to get outside and learn to enjoy the beauty of the world around them , especially instilling in them the values of conserving these resources for future generations. The national parks can play an enormous role in this endeavor. I realize that this will all take a lot of money that is particularly scarce in the present economy. However, I believe this in a much needed investment in our public lands that will pay off in the long and short term.

Our National Parks are National Treasures.

Our national parks are important to the country in that they provide great oppotunities for exercise and for an appreciation of the natural world. Many of them are vital to the understanding of our history and culture.

The visits to the national parks that I and my family have had the privilege to make have been some of the most meaningful times in our lives. We highly value our national parks and consider them an essential element of our national heritage.

Finally, there is a ned to preserve large areas of public lands and waters to secure the health of our ecosystems, ensure wildlife conservation, maintain public access to parks and open spaces, reduce the impacts of climate change, and protect our cultural heritage.

Our National Parks are the greatest thing we have ever done for ourselves. Remember the Civilian Conservation Corps? We have lots of unemployed people and our parks need a lot of help. Please, lets do it right again.

My husband and I along with our son and Grandson plus occasionally Grandsons friends have camped in the Beautiful National Parks across America.My Husband is deceased now. I have Happy Memories in Tapes and Slides of those times.Don't allow the Enviroment to be altered.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

One of the important area of the United States is the National Parks. National parks play a tremendous role in attracting people to the outdoors, preserving the natural and cultural diversity of our nation, and contributing to the health of our people. Your administration must take the following steps to preserve these important areas: --Take the advice of the National Parks Second Century Commission, a group of well respected individuals who spent more than a year developing a vision for how to protect the parks and connect Americans to them in the next century. --Use this opportunity that the upcoming Park Service centennial provides to renew our national parks. The administration should apply the lessons that were learned from the Centennial Initiative to developing a new public-private partnership to prepare our parks for their next century. We need a new national campaign that will involve people in communities throughout the country in protecting our parks for the next generation.

I am a lifelong hiker and camper, a more recent rock climber, and, more recently, became a sailor, too. I love all unblemished landscapes: mountains, lakes, rivers, seashores, caves, glaciers, you-name-it. I am an avid lover of all the National Parks I've visited, from the Badlands to the Hawaiian volcanoes. I am eager to see them preserved for future generations. Thank you for considering my comments, and I wish you and yours health and peace.

We have just completed a round-trip cross-country drive on which we visited many of our national parks and saw firsthand how very many people enjoy the the parks. Protection of and investment in our national park system is a wise and prudent investment indeed.

America's Great Outdoors, our national parks. play a tremendous role in connecting people, young and old, to the outdoors, preserving the natural and cultural diversity of our nation, and contributing to the health of our people. My first experience with National Parks was when I took my children on a cross-country trip when they were aged 4, 6 and 8. Our family lived in Massachusetts which has many outdoor sites that are beautiful and informative. However, our visit to Yellow Stone taught us all about the beautiful diversity of our country. Zion National Park and its dramatic beauty was breathtaking. The Grand Canyon was unbelievable. Each site we visited on this trip provided an educational experience that the children and their parents shared. There is nothing educationally and emotionally comparable. As I can testify, Americans care about the future of these incredible places, so they will be there for their children and grandchildren to enjoy. Please remember the importance of protecting national parks and the many programs managed by the National Park Service that improve our communities. National parks are good investments in our future.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

I was employed by the Dept. of Natural Resources with a wife and two small children and had more vacation time off than we had money so we bought a tent and camping supplies and visited National parks and Historic Sites throughout the country. When we were near a State Capitol, we always spent time in their museum. Our son, who was 8 yrs old when we started these travels, had lost his hearing at the age of 3. The on-site education he received each summer made him an outstanding student in public schools. We know all about the fine outdoor classrooms provided in our country. We never failed to attend Ranger programs at night, wherever we were. How blessed we are. He is now in CO., loves the nearness of those wonderful Nat'l Parks and has raised the next generation to be outdoors folks also. -Now nearing 80, we still tent camp, hike, and canoe. There are many new things to see and more to learn. We are all wildflower enthusiasts and birders. -We're counting on you. You and your family seem to appreciate the beauty and educational opportunities our National Parks offer.

Dear Mr. President Our National Parks are a miracle of politics and nature. Set aside through great efforts, maintained by passion and shared with joy with generations of families, both American and from abroad. PLEASE don't let these gems fade away! You can take the following steps: --Seize the opportunity that the upcoming Park Service centennial provides to renew America's commitment to our national parks, perhaps through a new public-private partnership. --We need a new national campaign that will involve young people, especially, in communities throughout the country in protecting our parks for their future. --Got extra billions? Provide permanent, mandatory funding for the Land and Water Conservation Fund. Seventeen billion dollars in revenues, primarily from oil and gas leasing, have accumulated during the past several decades in the Land and Water Conservation Fund, unspent for its intended purpose. This money should be spent as originally promised to support parks, seashores, forests, and waterways across the country, rather than just another broken federal promise. What's happening in the Gulf of Mexico reminds us how important it is to keep that promise. --Let national parks to inspire and educate young people. . Programs like Teacher to Ranger to Teacher (TRT) allows teachers from low income school districts to spend the summer working as park rangers where they develop and present interpretive programs, staff visitor centers, and develop curriculum-based materials which they bring back to the classroom. This wonderful program should be expanded! --Build on programs that work. The National Park Service has tremendous technical expertise and know-how that can help communities preserve their special places and provide recreational and educational opportunities for people. For instance the Park Service's Rivers and Trails Conservation Assistance program has a long history of working with cities, suburbs, and small communities across the country on conservation efforts and providing expertise to help conserve rivers, preserve open space, and develop trails and greenways. You already have a great program, but it's under resourced. There's no need to reinvent the wheel. Invest in a model that is working in communities across the country. --Consider new sites to bring into the system that better represent our changing country, and protect remaining natural areas before we use them all up.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

In reviewing my life, every National Park that I have visited has left an indelible, good memory. National Parks need to be a big part of the equation for outdoor experience. All parks benefit the communities that they are located in. How about encouraging schools to offer summer learning programs in parks?

As a volunteer in Great Smoky Mountains NP and a visitor to many parks across the country, I strongly believe that I hope that your administration will take the following steps: --Heed the advice of the National Parks Second Century Commission, who spent more than a year developing a vision for how to protect the parks and connect Americans to them for the next century. Americans like me care about the future of these incredible places, so they will be there for our children and grandchildren to enjoy. Please remember the importance of protecting national parks and the many programs managed by the National Park Service that improve our communities. National parks are good investments in our future.

America's National Parks are a special heritage and a wonderful asset. We must do all we can to ensure they are adequately funded and available--for all of us! I urge you to advocate the following steps: We all deeply care about the future of these incredible places, so they will be there for all of our children and grandchildren to enjoy. Please remember the importance of protecting national parks and the many programs managed by the National Park Service that improve our communities. National parks are good investments in our future.

Thank you for taking the time to consider these great outdoor palces for better protection and self sustainability.. i would like to see some of these open areas, such as state parks and national areas, that are having a difficult time having enough money to sustain themselves work closely with garden clubs and botanlcal gardens to preserve and protect these areas.. for example our non profit here in the Mississippi Delta would love the opportunity to work closely with a state park or national park and build a public gardens area that would benefit eveyone within the local and state community plus take the financial burden off the state or national budget... we have programs for everyone and would be self sustaining along with being able to provide fresh fruits and veggies to all the low income needy within the local and state community..if just given the chance we really can change the little corner of our world.. with your help we can..

I have worked with Dr. Michael J. Cohen of Project Nature Connect and groups of his students since 1994. We are Eco-psychologists who believe that it has been our disconnection from Nature during the past centuries that has led us to the particular environmental predicament we now find ourselves in. Our reconnection activities have led us to the great outdoors but also to our pets and household plants. Wherever there is the tiniest bit of Nature, there is a lesson for mankind in how Nature works. On a daily basis there is an opportunity for most to be outside, enjoying our Nature birthright. www.ecopsych.com Still, I wish everybody could have the ultimate adventure of being in a national park.

America's Great Outdoors, are inseperable with our national parks.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

I grew up with forests, rivers and ocean. Now I go to the mountains as well as the ocean. Everyone depends on national parks to conserve and preserve the wonderful and wild places. We must not take these experiences away from our children and the generations to come.

My wife and I are now retired. By maintaining a modest lifestyle, we are now able to travel, once each year, to visit National Parks all across our country. Not only is there incredible beauty in these parks, but, by preserving them, they act as a forecaster for climate change. The disappearing glaciers in Glacier National Park are a prime example

Our country's parks are our heritage. They must be preserved and protected.

Seize the opportunity that the upcoming Park Service centennial provides to renew our national parks. We need a national campaign that will involve people in communities throughout the country in protecting our parks for the next generation.

The administration has the opportunity to provide jobs to Americans and to spruce up our parks. Instead of so many people on unemployment for extended periods, give them a job making paths, fixing buildings and observation platforms and any number of other things that need to be done for our National Parks. --Seize the opportunity that the upcoming Park Service centennial provides to renew our national parks. We need a new national campaign that will involve people in communities throughout the country in protecting our parks for the next generation. --Do more to use national parks to inspire and educate young people. Our national parks are classrooms for discovery and learning for students and teachers. And the Department of Education should work with the Park Service to excite kids with hands-on learning experiences.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Seize the opportunity that the upcoming Park Service centennial provides to renew our national parks. The administration should apply the lessons that were learned from the Centennial Initiative to developing a new public-private partnership to prepare our parks for their next century. We need a new national campaign that will involve people in communities throughout the country in protecting our parks for the next generation. --Provide permanent, mandatory funding for the Land and Water Conservation Fund. Seventeen billion dollars in revenues, primarily from oil and gas leasing, have accumulated during the past several decades in the Land and Water Conservation Fund, unspent for its intended purpose. This money should be spent as originally promised to support parks, seashores, forests, and waterways across the country, rather than just another broken federal promise. What's happening in the Gulf of Mexico reminds us how important it is to keep that promise. --Do more to use national parks to inspire and educate young people. Our national parks are classrooms for discovery and learning for students and teachers. Programs like Teacher to Ranger to Teacher (TRT) allows teachers from low income school districts to spend the summer working as park rangers where they develop and present interpretive programs, staff visitor centers, and develop curriculum-based materials which they bring back to the classroom. This program should be expanded. And the Department of Education should work with the Park Service to excite kids with hands-on learning experiences. --Build on programs that work. The National Park Service has tremendous technical expertise and know-how that can help communities preserve their special places and provide recreational and educational opportunities for people. The Park Service's Rivers and Trails Conservation Assistance program has a long history of working with cities, suburbs, and small communities across the country on conservation efforts and providing expertise to help conserve rivers, preserve open space, and develop trails and greenways. You already have a great program, but it's under resourced. There's no need to reinvent the wheel. Invest in a model that is working in communities across the country. --We need more parks for people to enjoy. The park system must also evolve to fully represent the history and culture of our diversifying nation. Please evaluate and consider new sites to bring into the system that better represent our changing country, and protect remaining natural areas before we use them all up. --Provide wildlife corridors to ensure that the wildlife in our parks can find the food it needs and reproduce successfully outside, as well as within park boundaries. We need cooperative efforts between federal, state and local agencies and private landowners, because wildlife doesn't understand boundaries on a map. A recent study commissioned by the National Parks Conservation Association found that every federal dollar invested in national parks generates at least four dollars of economic value to the public. In 2009, as the recession took its toll on Americans' pocketbooks, national park visitation increased on average by nearly 4 percent, demonstrating the enhanced value of our national parks to our people in difficult economic times. Americans care about the future of these incredible places, so they will be there for our children and grandchildren to enjoy. Please remember the importance of protecting national parks and the many programs managed by the National Park Service that improve our communities. National parks are good investments in our future.

One of my favorite resources in our country has always been and continues to be our national parks. Please do what you can to maintain their integrity.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

An important part of my childhood was traveling to national parks around the country, but especially in the West. We camped, hiked, swam in the rivers, and had a wonderful family time. Those are some of my fondest memories. As a mother, I shared the national parks with my children, and now they are enjoying them with my grandchildren. During my 30 years as an elementary school teacher, I used my experiences in the national parks to inspire my students in science, history, and other subjects. I was often appalled that their idea of a great family vacation was to visit Las Vegas or Disneyland. John Muir is one of my heroes. And it is in his spirit I implore you to do your utmost to preserve and expand these national treasures, which are truly an important facet of our American heritage.

My family for many years has considered time in our National Parks to be highlights of our time together in the busy life that we lead. They are "holy ground" and should take first priority in any planning in a great outdoors initiative. They teach us history, geography, biology, ecology, and provide so many other educational, inspirational and exciting adventures. In fact, both of my children have made care of the environment central in their lives: one is director of education at the Mendocino Woodlands (CA) and the other is the volunteer coordinator of a non-profit, Mendocino Land Trust. We need to inspire parents to lure their children away from TV screens and computers and get them outdoors especially to our national parks to experience and learn to care for creation.

Please do everything you can to preserve and Protect Our National Parks and Wilderness:

This summer our family had the chance to visit Yellowstone National Park to visit our daughter/sister, who is currently employed there. It was a truly wondrous trip and not one that we shall soon forget. We were so impressed with the beauty of the park and how well it was run by the National Park Service. This and our other national parks are evidence of the true natural heritage of our country. Thank you for taking the time to preserve these national treasures. We sincerely appreciate it.

Americans care about the future of these incredible places, so they will be there for our children and grandchildren to enjoy. Our national parks are America's crown jewels. Please remember the importance of protecting national parks and the many programs managed by the National Park Service that improve our communities. National parks are good investments in our future.

I am forwarding a canned letter to you, all of which I support. However, mainly, I just want you to know how extremely important vacations in national parks have been for our family- hands down our happiest memories. Recently, watching on television the histories of the parks, I was struck anew by the tremendous foresight Teddy Roosevelt and others showed in keeping these national treasures for all of us. I hope that you will follow in their footsteps. Also, just want you to know that our family prays for you every day and appreciate how overwhelming your job must be.

I visit more than one National Park per year, and they enable me to feel renewed to continue trying to do a good job at my job, with my family and friends, and they also give me an inner peace. The peace and solitude of the parks are of primary importance to me.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

National Parks have been a vacation mainstay for my family for years. Please do what you can to preserve the National Parks for future generations.

When I think of America's Great Outdoors, I think of our national parks; many of which I have visited with my family. I personally have enjoyed hiking, birding, kayaking and photography in multiple national parks.

When I think of America's Great Outdoors, I think of our national parks and wilderness areas. Both play a tremendous role in connecting people, young and old, to the outdoors, preserving the natural and cultural diversity of our nation, and contributing to the health of our people. National parks and wilderness areas provide some of America's finest outdoor classrooms and serve as a basis for conservation, history, and civics education for millions of people each year. --We need more parks for people to enjoy and to better protect diminishing wilderness. The park system must also evolve to fully represent the history and culture of our diversifying nation. Please evaluate and consider new sites to bring into the system that better represent our changing country, and protect remaining natural areas before we use them all up.

Outlaw all off-road vehicles and activities. Period. --Create programs to educate volunteers from the public (from any vocation, not just teachers) to preserve and maintain our parks. Public citizens have a SOVEREIGN birthright to act when and where necessary to protect and maintain public land private lands without unnecessary federal (or state) laws that prohibit them from such actions, as long as they are educated properly. Groups comprised of interested and caring citizens who could volunteer to assist in clearing areas that pose fire hazards should be formed, which would decrease the need for extra government funding for such projects, thereby diminishing the devastating effects of wildfires.

There is nothing more important than saving our natural heritage.

Before you get to the preordained message, I want to tell you why our National parks are so important to me. I am from NH and am very connected to the great outdoors. We have a national forest and I love hiking and camping in it whenever I get the time. I am 45 and still go camping (not RV'ing but real tent camping). It is the only thing that keeps me sane in these trying times. Our environment is so precious and we need to care and cherish it. So I support our national parks and forests and hope that you will too. We need comprehensive climate legislation and we need green jobs and alternative energy to get off the coal and oil once and for all. If we don't, we will not have beautiful forests and clean air and water. All of these actions must take place to ensure beautiful lakes, rivers, etc. for future generations. Please do what you campaigned to do and get our economy going and protect our environment by creating the Green Deal now!!!!!! Thank you, you may now read the preordained message if you want.

The national parks have been an important part of our lives over the years, as our children were growing up and now as our grandchildren are growing up. I hope they will always be available for folks like us to enjoy.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

I will be in Yosemite backpacking in September appreciating that beautiful place and how it has been preserved for us and future generations forever as a National Park.

Pres. Obama, The outdoors connects us to ourselves, and what is best about ourselves. It helps to reduce stress in a stress filled world. The national forests clean our air and are homes for millions of creatures. An important saying is: As go the animals, so shall go mankind. We must preserve our world to preserve ourselves. The national parks are one of the very few areas left where land cannot be raped or pillaged. Please do all you can to promote wilderness, for in the preservation of wilderness lies the preservation of the world. Thanks for all you do!

IT WAS MY PRIVILEGE TO TOUR THE GARDEN OF THE GODS, THE BAD LANDS OF S. DAKOTA, YELLOWSTONE NAT. PARK AT THE AGE OF 8. IT WAS A WONDERFUL EXPERIENCE

I was unemployed for 13 months - being able to enjoy the outdoors, especially in Redwood National Forest, was one of the few things I could afford. It gave me a refuge from the trials and tribulations of job hunting in this terrible economy.

I personally love being surrounded by what nature has to offer and I do not want the destruction of our wildlife to occur. If Americans were more connected and surrounded by nature, then people would be more educated about nature and preserve and protect it as much as possible. Please create more national parks for the future before all wildlife disappears.

The awe inspiring experiences of the great outdoors in my youth are directly responsible for my spiritual growth. This has little to do with religion or church membership but it is an experience that deserves to be part of the life of every child, particularly those in urban areas.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Thank you, Mr. President, for emphasizing the need for our people to make use of "the great outdoors." I think of our national parks. National parks play a tremendous role in connecting people, young and old, to America's Great Outdoors, preserving the natural and cultural diversity of our nation, and contributing to the health of our people. With America's finest outdoor classrooms National parks can serve as a basis for conservation, history, and civics education for millions of people each year. --> Listen to the advice of the National Parks Second Century Commission, a group who spent more than a year developing a vision for ways to protect the parks and connect Americans to them in the next century. --> Grasp the opportunity that the upcoming Park Service centennial provides to renew our national parks. I think you should apply the lessons that were learned from the Centennial Initiative to developing a new public-private partnership to prepare our parks for their next century. We need a new national program that will involve people throughout the country in protecting our parks for the next generation. --> Provide permanent, mandatory funding for the Land and Water Conservation Fund. Seventeen billion dollars in revenues, primarily from oil and gas leasing, have accumulated during the past several decades in the Land and Water Conservation Fund, not yet spent for its intended purpose. This money should be spent as originally promised to support parks, seashores, forests, and waterways across the country, rather than just another broken federal promise. What's happening in the Gulf of Mexico reminds us how important it is to keep that promise. --> Do more to use national parks to inspire and educate young people. Our national parks are classrooms for discovery and learning for students and teachers. Programs like Teacher to Ranger to Teacher (TRT) allows teachers from low income school districts to spend the summer working as park rangers where they develop and present interpretive programs, staff visitor centers, and develop curriculum-based materials which they can bring back to the classroom. This program should be expanded. Could the Department of Education work with the Park Service to excite kids with hands-on learning experiences? I think so, don't you? --> Build on programs that work, like the Park Service's Rivers and Trails Conservation Assistance program. It has a long history of working with cities, suburbs, and small communities across the country on conservation efforts and providing expertise to help conserve rivers, preserve open space, and develop trails and greenways. You already have a great program, but it's under resourced. There's no need to reinvent the wheel. Invest in a model that is working across the country. --> We need more parks for people to enjoy. The park system must also evolve to fully represent the history and culture of our diversifying nation. Please evaluate and consider new sites to bring into the system that better represent our changing country, and protect remaining natural areas before we use them all up. --> Provide wildlife corridors to ensure that the wildlife in our parks can find the food it needs and reproduce successfully outside, as well as within park boundaries. We should have cooperative efforts between federal, state and local agencies and private landowners, because wildlife doesn't understand boundaries on a map. Thank you, Mr. President, for considering my comments.

National parks are what makes vacations great, even legendary!

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Our Nat'l Parks are one of the best things about America. I agree with the below message. I vote!

Our national parks are America's best idea. I have taken my grandchildren to over 50 national parks including several in Alaska. We enjoy the safety, cleanliness, and the unspoiled terrain. The animals depend on us as well since their habitable areas are dwindling.

Build on programs that work. The National Park Service has tremendous technical expertise and know-how that can help communities preserve their special places and provide recreational and educational opportunities for people. The Park Service's Rivers and Trails Conservation Assistance program has a long history of working with cities, suburbs, and small communities across the country on conservation efforts and providing expertise to help conserve rivers, preserve open space, and develop trails and greenways. --The park system must also evolve to fully represent the history and culture of our diversifying nation. Please evaluate and consider new sites to bring into the system that better represent our changing country, and protect remaining natural areas before we use them all up. --Provide wildlife corridors to ensure that the wildlife in our parks can find the food it needs and reproduce successfully outside, as well as within park boundaries. We need cooperative efforts among federal, state and local agencies and private landowners.

Seize the opportunity that the upcoming Park Service centennial provides to renew our national parks. We need a new national campaign that will involve people in communities throughout the country in protecting our parks for the next generation. The parks are sorely in need of upgrades, renovations, and repairs. People throughout the US need reliable permanent jobs. This is the time to add thousands of new jobs that will benefit the parks and the surrounding communities.

Mr. President, As evidenced by your trips to our wonderful National Parks, I know that you are of like mind as myself. They are treasures that need to be a big part of the America's Great Outdoors Initiative. My husband and I have driven across this great country to visit many of the Parks and hope to volunteer at a different park each year after we retire. I will leave the rest of this message as the NPCA has written it. You know what it says! If as a generation I can help with leaving anything behind in this country that would be of great value to all, it would be the National Parks. I so wish all people could get out into nature, hike and just breath in the air. It would go a long way to helping us all get along. Thank you for taking the time to read this. I think you are doing an outstanding job for our country even though I haven't totally agreed with everything you've done. But you are a breath of "intelligence" that we have needed for so long. Thank you for sacrificing this portion of your life for our country.

Have National Parks provide a summer camp program for urban youth so that they get a chance to experience the outdoors for maybe the first time. It could be a source of revenue for the Parks system. Mr.

Discussion Question 1

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(cont.)

National Parks are our country's greatest resource. They are part of our essential infrastructure that support your green efforts, education goals, and support the public health. Follow the advice of the National Parks Second Century Commission, a group of well respected individuals who spent more than a year developing a vision for how to protect the parks and connect Americans two them in the next century. Use the upcoming Park Service centennial provides to renew our national parks. The administration should apply the lessons that were learned from the Centennial Initiative to developing a new public-private partnership to prepare our parks for their next century. We need a new national campaign that will involve people in communities throughout the country in protecting our parks for the next generation. Provide permanent, mandatory funding for the Land and Water Conservation Fund. Seventeen billion dollars in revenues, primarily from oil and gas leasing, have accumulated during the past several decades in the Land and Water Conservation Fund, unspent for its intended purpose. This money should be spent as originally promised to support parks, seashores, forests, and waterways across the country, rather than just another broken federal promise. What's happening in the Gulf of Mexico reminds us how important it is to keep that promise. Build on programs that work. The National Park Service has tremendous technical expertise and know-how that can help communities preserve their special places and provide recreational and educational opportunities for people. The Park Service's Rivers and Trails Conservation Assistance program has a long history of working with cities, suburbs, and small communities across the country on conservation efforts and providing expertise to help conserve rivers, preserve open space, and develop trails and greenways. You already have a great program, but it's under resourced. There's no need to reinvent the wheel. Invest in a model that is working in communities across the country. We need more parks for people to enjoy. The park system must also evolve to fully represent the history and culture of our diversifying nation. Please evaluate and consider new sites to bring into the system that better represent our changing country, and protect remaining natural areas before we use them all up. Provide wildlife corridors to ensure that the wildlife in our parks can find the food it needs and reproduce successfully outside, as well as within park boundaries. We need cooperative efforts between federal, state and local agencies and private landowners, because wildlife doesn't understand boundaries on a map.

To me, our National Parks are the jewels in our Lady Liberty's crown. They are the essence of our way of life and they should be treasured. From Hawaii to Florida, from Alaska to Maine our National Parks allow people to see wildlife, learn about history and culture and enjoy the outdoors. And as of now, it's still affordable. Please keep it that way. Place our parks as a priority. National parks play a tremendous role in connecting people, young and old, to the outdoors, preserving the natural and cultural diversity of our nation, and contributing to the health of our people.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Most of my access to America's Great Outdoors is via the national parks. The grandeur of the big ones, the serendipity of the smaller places -- they all renew my spirit and fill me with a sense of awe! It's amazing to see the diversity of people who make it to the parks. They come from all over the country as well as being a focal point for international visitors. Thanks to the foresight of previous administrations, they are accessible to all regardless of income. The national parks also inspire a responsibility to treat nature with respect, to foster the amazing gift of these parks for generations centuries to come. Nothing can ever replace this legacy!

It is extremely important that we do everything to preserve our national parks and plan for the future. Please know that my family, and extended family believe that in this ever crowded world, we NEED to keep wild places pristine and safe from any commercial development. Thank you for allowing concerned citizens to have a voice!

Our country's national parks are truly unique and wondrous. They are a tribute to the foresight of our ancestors and the continued good sense of the people of this country. They are one of the best examples of the virtues that characterize us as a nation. They set the example that many states have followed to save special lands and landmarks from uncontrolled development for current and future generations. They provide classrooms to teach the wonder and importance of pristine outdoors as well as lessons of history. Their continuing maintenance even expansion should be a high priority to all in a position to ensure their viability. Obviously, funding to support the parks can be an issue but sufficient monies should be available if current revenue streams like the Land and Water Conservation Fund are used as intended. Creative ways to provide further funding should be pursued, Consider a savings bond dedicated to environmental concerns like the national parks, for instance.

We need to preserve large areas of public lands and waters to secure the health of our ecosystems, ensure wildlife conservation, maintain public access to parks and open spaces, reduce the impacts of climate change, and protect our cultural heritage.

Please remember the joy that our national parks bring to so many!

I'M RATHER DUBIOUS ABOUT THE 'PUBLIC-PRIVATE' IDEA; AS IT'S TAKEN A LOT OF JUSTIFIED HEAT FROM RESPECTABLE PEOPLE/ORGS. - BUT IT WOULD BE A GREAT IDEA TO COMBINE THE "TRT" PROGRAM WITH SOME KIND OF A "NEW CCC"; A PROGRAM IN WHICH INNER CITY KIDS NOT ONLY LEARN ABOUT NATURE, ETC., BUT WOULD ALSO HAVE AN OPPORTUNITY TO MAKE A FEW BUCKS, WHICH THEY WOULD THEN PLOUGH BACK INTO THE ECONOMY (I'M NO "TEA PARTY" IDIOT!), DOING WHAT THE ORIGINAL CCC DID; CUTTING TRAILS, ESTABLISHING NEW CAMPSITES & LODGES/CABINS, RESTORING STREAMS/RIVERS/LAKES, AND ETC.. THIS WOULD BE A USE OF STIMULUS FUNDS THAT WOULD BE REPAID IN TRUMPS!

Having been a visitor at many, many of our National Parks I can honestly say that I write to you with first-hand knowledge of the great job the park employees do with such a small amount of money. Just think what they could do if they knew that funding would be available for their current needs as well as future needs.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

And keep the funds collected at parks for that park and rebuild park lands, water and air.

Strengthen the capacity for federal, regional, state, and local agencies and private landowners to work collaboratively in order to protect not only our national parks but the wildlife, plants, and rivers beyond park borders. Improve opportunities to use our national parks to get kids into active, healthy, outdoor activity that will help them lead long, healthy lives. Preserve large areas of public lands and waters to secure the health of our ecosystems, ensure wildlife conservation, maintain public access to parks and open spaces, reduce the impacts of climate change, and protect our cultural heritage.

Sir, I would be most honored to except a position with the National Park Service to serve our Country, our Citizens and our most precious resource, our enviroment. I hope our administration take's the following steps: I would like to request that we more actively heed the advice of our Native Amercan Citizens.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

National parks play a tremendous role in connecting people to the outdoors, preserving the natural and cultural diversity of our nation, and contributing to the health of our people. 1. Take the advice of the National Parks Second Century Commission, a group of well respected individuals who spent more than a year developing a vision for how to protect the parks and connect Americans to them in the next century. 2. Seize the opportunity that the upcoming Park Service centennial provides to renew our national parks. The administration should apply the lessons that were learned from the Centennial Initiative to developing a new public-private partnership to prepare our parks for their next century. We need a new national campaign that will involve people in communities throughout the country in protecting our parks for the next generation. 3. Provide permanent, mandatory funding for the Land and Water Conservation Fund. Seventeen billion dollars in revenues, primarily from oil and gas leasing, have accumulated during the past several decades in the Land and Water Conservation Fund and have remained unspent for its intended purpose. This money should be spent as originally promised to support parks, seashores, forests, and waterways across the country. What's happening in the Gulf of Mexico reminds us how important it is to keep that promise. 4. Do more to use national parks to inspire and educate young people. Our national parks are classrooms for discovery and learning for students and teachers. Programs like Teacher to Ranger to Teacher (TRT) allows teachers from low income school districts to spend the summer working as park rangers where they develop and present interpretive programs, staff visitor centers, and develop curriculum-based materials which they bring back to the classroom. This program should be expanded and the Department of Education should work with the Park Service to excite kids with hands-on learning experiences. 5. Build on programs that work. The National Park Service has tremendous technical expertise and know-how that can help communities preserve their special places and provide recreational and educational opportunities for people. The Park Service's Rivers and Trails Conservation Assistance program has a long history of working with cities, suburbs, and small communities across the country on conservation efforts and providing expertise to help conserve rivers, preserve open space, and develop trails and greenways. You already have a great program but it's under resourced. There's no need to reinvent the wheel. Invest in a model that is working in communities across the country. 6. We need more parks for people to enjoy. The park system must also evolve to fully represent the history and culture of our diversifying nation. Please evaluate and consider new sites to bring into the system that better represent our changing country, and protect remaining natural areas before we use them all up. 7. Provide wildlife corridors to ensure that the wildlife in our parks can find the food it needs and reproduce successfully outside, as well as within park boundaries. We need cooperative efforts between federal, state and local agencies and private landowners, because wildlife doesn't understand boundaries on a map. A recent study commissioned by the National Parks Conservation Association found that every federal dollar invested in national parks generates at least four dollars of economic value to the public. In 2009 as the recession took its toll on Americans' pocketbooks, national park visitation increased on average by nearly 4 percent, demonstrating the enhanced value of our national parks to our people in difficult economic times.

My wife and I just returned from visiting Glacier and Yellowstone National Parks. They are treasures which should be preserved so they can be enjoyed by all.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

I want the next generation to enjoy America's great outdoors too. That's why I am asking you to seize this opportunity to better protect America's shared outdoors spaces, including parks, forests, (and especially all the wildlife refuges, wilderness, trails, wild and scenic rivers) and historic sites, monuments and especially forrests. National parks play a tremendous role in connecting people, young and old, to the outdoors. I think the wild life must be preserved AND PROTECTED FROM THE POLITICCS AND SO CALLED "DEPARTMENT OF INTERIOR". - The participation of ranchers and other private individuals should be MINIMIZED regarding the managing of federal lands: the federal government has absolute control of all federal lands and should NOT be influenced by anybody else."The Conservation of Wild Life" as mentioned throughout this discussson of National Parks, etc., has no meaning, since the Department of Interior, the so-called Protector of Wildlife endorses the killing of wolves in federal lands...

For our children and our children's children unto the 7th generation ... for the health and well-being of all who live on this one earth ... please seize this opportunity to create, expand and better protect America's shared outdoors spaces, including parks, forests, wildlife refuges, wilderness, trails, wild and scenic rivers and historic sites and monuments, and to find new ways to support conservation of our farms, rangelands and forests. When they are gone, they are gone forever...we cannot allow this to happen. I urge

My two children, now adults, loved camping, swimming at Ginny Springs State Park, walks and canoeing at Myakka River State Park. When my daughter was born, my husband was a Park Ranger at Myakka River State Park here in Florida. We even moved to Idaho where he was also a Park Ranger at Heyburn State Park. Please preserve all State and Federal lands for my granddaughters and grandson to enjoy as their mom and Grammy Jay have. I know you are a man of great compassion for all animals and their habitats. Show the world that America is the forefront in keeping our environment as is for future generations. This could be your legacy.

America's national parks are our legacy and are part of what makes this country unique. How many people have the memory of visiting a park and experiencing nature at its finest? It is something that stays with one for a lifetime, and if our park system is improved and expanded, more will have the opportunity to let their minds wander, explore, learn, share, and create.

I am a loyal Democrat and hope that you continue to push Congress for what must be protected now because we will lose these lands and parks if we wait. Please consider hiring veterans and other unemployed people to assist the overly stretched park employees.

We either save our parks now for future generations to enjoy or we forever regret that we didn't.

Each and every one of these issues deserves your attention and support. We have spent many a trip visiting our national parks with our two children. Now that they are adults (who vote) they too have gone back on their own and with friends.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Mr. President, I voted for you because I felt strongly that you could see through the complicity that runs rampant in Washington politics. The big-money-backed-projects win over issues that are important to 'We The People'. I am not naive to the tight-rope you must walk and the obstacles that are thrown in your path. This is why I feel that your advising team and Department heads' loyalties to what you stand for must be validated regularly. Our National Parks and the wildlife in this land have no lobbyists other than 'We The People' and what is important to us matters less and less with each passing year. These hallowed places must be strongly protected from their enemies. I worry that your head of the Department of the Interior and the US Department of Agriculture and Wildlife are too much influenced by "the good old boys" aspect of the complicity problem in their realm of control. Please assure yourself that your team is true to who you serve: 'We The People'. I want the next generation to enjoy America's great outdoors too. That's why I am asking you to seize this opportunity to create, expand and better protect America's shared outdoors spaces, including parks, forests, wildlife refuges, wilderness, trails, wild and scenic rivers and historic sites and monuments, and to find new ways to support conservation of our farms, ranchlands and forests.

Our National Parks are indeed special and allow all visitors to enjoy the outdoors like no where else and, also, to enable wild animals to live peacefully. Our Parks are most important for the future of our country and life itself!!!!

Much of the writing that follows is not in my own words. However, it does very well express my strong sentiments about the importance of protecting and enlarging our National Parks. The earth is our most special treasure and as time goes on more and more people are going to recognize the great value of preserving as much natural habitat and environment as absolutely possible. My family made the effort to put our farm into a conservation easement. I believe it is the most important gift we could leave for future generations. You are in a position to lead the way for similar protection for much land nationally. I encourage you to do so for all of the following reasons. Thank-you.

Heed the advice of the National Parks Second Century Commission --Provide permanent, mandatory funding for the Land and Water Conservation Fund. Seventeen billion dollars in revenues, primarily from oil and gas leasing, have accumulated during the past several decades in the Land and Water Conservation Fund, unspent for its intended purpose. This money should be spent as originally promised to support parks, seashores, forests, and waterways across the country, rather than just another broken federal promise. --Do more to use national parks to inspire and educate young people. Programs like Teacher to Ranger to Teacher (TRT) should be expanded. And the Department of Education should work with the Park Service to excite kids with hands-on learning experiences. --Build on programs that work. There's no need to reinvent the wheel. . --We need more parks for people to enjoy. Protect remaining natural areas before we use them all up. --Provide wildlife corridors to ensure that the wildlife in our parks can find the food it needs and reproduce successfully outside, as well as within park boundaries. Please remember the importance of protecting national parks and the many programs managed by the National Park Service that improve our communities. National parks are good investments in our future.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

We would like the next generation to enjoy America's great outdoors too. That's why we are asking you to seize this opportunity to create, expand and better protect America's shared outdoors spaces, including parks, forests, wildlife refuges, wilderness, trails, wild and scenic rivers and historic sites and monuments, and to find new ways to support conservation of our farms, ranchlands and forests. One way is to end the incursion by utility companies' power towers. Building-integrated solar and wind energy on every rooftop would make these odious Power Links unnecessary. And stop the dump from Los Angeles from destroying Joshua Tree and the desert aquifer. The desert is not a dump. Keep it unblighted by bird killing, fire-hazard ineffeicient wind farms and Power Links. When we think of America's Great Outdoors, Peace and Quiet, we think of our national parks. --Provide permanent, mandatory funding for the Land and Water Conservation Fund. Seventeen billion dollars in revenues, primarily from oil and gas leasing, have accumulated during the past several decades in the Land and Water Conservation Fund, unspent for its intended purpose. This money should be spent as originally promised to support parks, seashores, forests, and waterways across the country, rather than just another broken federal promise. The growing danger of mass destruction happening in the Gulf of Mexico reminds us how important it is to keep that promise. Keep fouling fossil fuels out of our parks, and collect the understory for fire safety and biofuels! No Offshore drilling, - specially deepwater drilling that taps the Abiotic Oil that regulates the Tectonic Plates of the planet, and threatening mass extinction! --Provide wildlife corridors to ensure that the wildlife in our parks can find the food it needs and reproduce successfully outside, as well as within park boundaries. NO fences on the border with Mexico to protect endangered American jaguar, and other migratory animals and birds. We need cooperative efforts between federal, state and local agencies and private landowners, because wildlife doesn't understand boundaries on a map. It's worth it. Thank you for considering our comments.

I want all generations to enjoy America's great outdoors. That's why I am asking you to seize this opportunity to create, expand and better protect America's shared outdoors spaces, including parks, forests, wildlife refuges, wilderness, trails, wild and scenic rivers and historic sites and monuments, and to find new ways to support conservation of our farms, ranchlands and forests.

I want the next generation to enjoy America's great outdoors too. That's why I am asking you to seize this opportunity to create, expand and better protect America's shared outdoors spaces, including parks, forests, wildlife refuges, wilderness, trails, wild and scenic rivers and historic sites and monuments, and to find new ways to support conservation of our farms, ranch lands and forests.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

I don't know if you appreciate the National Parks and natural commons in our nation as much as we do, but our Parks are our national pride. No other country has parks set up the way we do. Lands, commons, that are more protected than other exploited lands and laws help to keep them this way. No other countries leaders were so far sighted and gifted with understanding the value of natureal lands as our early leaders were. Our Parks need money and work. The facilities, infrastructure and ecological management programs need much. And in areas where we live, nearby a National Park, the local jobforce is crying out for work. Funding to put many back to work could rebuild the sagging part of our parks, revieve the economy in these lacking areas and invest in the future. Disregard the naysayers and give us billions for these purposes.

Our national parks really are our best idea. Before the Burns series, I heard this from a German friend. My husband and go to national parks every year. They are our most beautiful and historic places so they are the most interesting. We always meet and talk with Europeans, who visit the national parks specifically as their USA vacation. What an economic plus! We love the ranger programs and seeing junior rangers hiking around to complete their booklets.

As a child I grew up in the Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore. It shaped my life and cultivated my deep love of nature. As a result I got a degree in Environmental Studies and have been doing things to improve our eco system. Without National Parks none of this would have happened. Think of the countless lives that are touched by standing on God's Land, uninterrupted by mankind, including the wilderness that is found in our National Parks.

I am a frequent visitor to the many National Parks, so is my family. My children love to visit and partake in activities they offer, wild life viewing and protection, including water born creatures. The only way to protect this is for you to help in clean water, conservation of our parks and animals. Expecially the endangered species such as the Gray Wolf, Grizzley Bear. Stop the killing of Wolves in Alaska by airplane. Let's save all the animals and parks for our children and grandchildren.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Americans care about the future of these incredible places, so they will be there for our children and grandchildren to enjoy. Please remember the importance of protecting national parks and the many programs managed by the National Park Service that improve our communities. National and state parks are good investments in our future. In SE Tennessee, we need our natural historic landscape and roadways preserved in the area around The Red Clay State Historic park/area. We do not need off ramps of the interstate placed in nearby areas, or other roads, train tracks, franchises, developments, strip malls, or other commercialization businesses, etc., placed in or around these areas. This area also had significant civil war and other war history happened, as well as being part of where DeSoto's route is. Sacred areas should be respected. The mega substation in SW Bradley Co Tn is very close to the sacred council grounds of Red Clay and should be removed, (by a conservation corps) and the land it is on, used instead as a natural conservation energy farm for biodiesel and /or a wildlife or bird refuge or sanctuary more compatible for this area. Formal housing, subdivisions, etc., developments should have to have many fewer homes and "blend in" respective to the environment. Many that still live here on family farms, etc., have Cherokee Indian ancestry (nontribal) or are descendents of the first European settlers that migrated into this area. We need our roads and railroads preserved also as they were used in the civil war, and in our Native American history also, such as Tunnel Hill RD, Blue Springs RD, Apison, etc. We need many more Christian Democrat, naturalist, farming and natural/history tourism oriented elected and appointed officials in all areas on all levels possible to help the natural/Native tourism businesses of our area. We need help in our congressional 3rd district to prevent being "drawn in" to voting for a nonnaturalist conservative and to have a good and fair chance to vote in a Democrat in this next and other elections. We also need at least one of our Senators to always be a naturalist Democrat to help preserve our Tennessee history.

The times I've spent in our National Parks were (and will be) all the more precious to me, because I'm confined to a wheelchair and access to beauty and nature is not something I can have as easily as my able bodied neighbors. Many of our parks have accessible restrooms, a few campsites and disabled parking in the lots. Some also have a few trails leading away from the tourist shops and visitor center areas. BUT WITH AN EVER INCREASING POPULATION OF PERSONS W/ SEVERE PHYSICAL DISABILITIES IT IS SO IMPORTANT TO 1) HIRE AND DEPEND ON DISABLED ACCESS CONSULTANTS TO WORK WITH AND EDUCATE CONTRACTORS 2) CREATE MORE TRAILS THAT LET SENIORS AND OTHERS W/ PROBLEMS WALKING, REALLY GET INSIDE THE PARKS AND 3) HAVE A RANGER ON STAFF WHO IS A PERSON W/ A DISABILITY. As a long time access consultant and designer, I can tell you that much of the access I encounter in public parks and bldgs. has not been designed or tried out by someone who actually needs the modification. But our parks are so precious and healing for all Americans and

In my 85 years I've been blessed to visit many of our national parks! They are a credit to our nation and must be financed and maintained! We must think of the future!

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

I was born in Brooklyn, N.Y. and every Sunday my family went to the park and Botanical gardens. We loved being in the park and away from all the traffic and noise of the city. I want the next generation to enjoy America's great outdoors as much as I did. That's why I am asking you to seize this opportunity to create, expand and better protect America's shared outdoors spaces, including parks, forests, wildlife refuges, wilderness, trails, wild and scenic rivers and historic sites and monuments, and to find new ways to support conservation of our farms, ranchlands and forests.

My most memorable vacations have been visiting national parks. They are so different from the environment I live in, they gave me excitement, joy, peace and a stronger spiritual connection, which gave me hope! Without them I would have nothing to strive to see or care to vacation to. They make me feel connected to our country, the earth, and the heavens. Please don't take away our connections to these important basics! Even my children feel more alive there.

I want my children to enjoy America's great outdoors. That's why I am asking you to create, expand and better protect America's shared outdoors spaces, including parks, forests, wildlife refuges, wilderness, trails, wild and scenic rivers and historic sites and monuments, and to find new ways to support conservation of our farms, ranchlands and forests. I think of our --Seize the opportunity that the upcoming Park Service centennial provides to renew our national parks. The administration should apply the lessons that were learned from the Centennial Initiative to developing a new public-private partnership to prepare our parks for their next century. We need a new national campaign that will involve people in protecting our parks for the next generation. --Provide permanent, mandatory funding for the Land and Water Conservation Fund. Seventeen billion dollars in revenues, primarily from oil and gas leasing, have accumulated during the past several decades in the Land and Water Conservation Fund, unspent for its intended purpose. This money should be spent as originally promised to support parks, seashores, forests, and waterways across the country. What's happening in the Gulf of Mexico reminds us how important it is to keep that promise. Thank you for considering my comments

Provide permanent, mandatory funding for the Land and Water Conservation Fund. Seventeen billion dollars in revenues, primarily from oil and gas leasing, have accumulated during the past several decades in the Land and Water Conservation Fund, unspent for its intended purpose. This money should be spent as originally promised to support parks, seashores, forests, and waterways across the country, rather than just another broken federal promise.

I love and enjoy our country's great outdoors. I want my kids to have this treasure so they can experience it with their kids ! I am asking you to seize this opportunity to create, expand and better protect America's shared outdoors spaces, including parks, forests, wildlife refuges, wilderness, trails, wild and scenic rivers and historic sites and monuments, and to find new ways to support conservation of our farms, ranchlands and forests.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Ensure that national parks have the funds necessary to safeguard park wildlife and provide park visitors with a safe, clean, and rewarding park experience by the National Park Service's centennial in 2016. Do more to use national parks to inspire and educate young people. Our national parks are classrooms for discovery and learning for students and teachers. Programs like Teacher to Ranger to Teacher (TRT) allows teachers from low income school districts to spend the summer working as park rangers where they develop and present interpretive programs, staff visitor centers, and develop curriculum-based materials which they bring back to the classroom. This program should be expanded. And the Department of Education should work with the Park Service to excite kids with hands-on learning experiences.

"To cherish what remains of the earth and to foster its renewal is our only legitimate hope for survival." ___Wendell Berry

There should be no question regarding the future protection of what is left of natural environments and habitats in this country, there is so little left of anything wild. Of course it must be protected and expanded.

The parks are part of our culture, as millions of people make it a point to vacation in the parks every year. That's what we did when I was growing up. I can't imagine not having these places, but I heard a park nearby is closing due to lack of funding. Please don't allow our parks to shrink and close. We need to protect our lands and wildlife, and nurture them, and give people places they can go that is outside and apart from the concrete jungles we know so well. --Seize the opportunity that the upcoming Park Service centennial provides to renew our national parks. We need a new national campaign that will involve people in communities throughout the country in protecting our parks for the next generation. --Provide permanent, mandatory funding for the Land and Water Conservation Fund. Seventeen billion dollars in revenues, primarily from oil and gas leasing, have accumulated during the past several decades in the Land and Water Conservation Fund, unspent for its intended purpose. This money should be spent as originally promised to support parks, seashores, forests, and waterways across the country, rather than just another broken federal promise. --Do more to use national parks to inspire and educate young people. --Build on programs that work. The Park Service's Rivers and Trails Conservation Assistance program has a long history of working with cities, suburbs, and small communities across the country on conservation efforts and providing expertise to help conserve rivers, preserve open space, and develop trails and greenways. You already have a great program, but it's under resourced. There's no need to reinvent the wheel. Invest in a model that is working in communities across the country. --We need more parks for people to enjoy. Please evaluate and consider new sites to bring into the system that better represent our changing country, and protect remaining natural areas before we use them all up.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

When I raised my children, we took many cross-country trips to the various National Parks. Due to this experience my children, who are all adults, have a true love and respect for nature. They are all driven to protect the environment in their daily lives through conservation, recycling, and composting. My grandson is now learning at an early age to respect nature as well. That is why it is so important to preserve the National Parks for future generations as President Theodore Roosevelt intended.

President Obama remember our national parks . My family and I have been traveling to the parks and I am always overwhelmed by the beauty and spiritual presence in the parks. We are so blessed to have these parks to remind us that there is so much more to life than then excessive material items we seem to think we need. We have so much hatred and violence now our parks can give us hope for peace in the future.

I enjoyed our National Parks as a little girl in the 1940s, and now I want my great grandchildren and their children to continue to enjoy them. They are enjoyable and accessible to millions, unlike overseas trips and fancy resorts. Thank you for all you have done and are trying to accomplish, and for considering my comments.

IN NATURE IS THE PRESERVATION OF THE WORLD...this is a quote by a famous outdoor photographer...Ansel Adams. After 9/11 one so many sought out nature for comfort and healing. If we save what is left of the wild places, we save ourselves.

I want all people to enjoy America's great outdoors. That's why I am asking you to seize this opportunity to create, expand and better protect America's shared outdoors spaces, including parks, forests, wildlife refuges, wilderness, trails, wild and scenic rivers and historic sites and monuments, and to find new ways to support conservation of our farms, ranch lands and forests. National parks play a tremendous role in connecting people to the outdoors, preserving the natural and cultural diversity of our nation, and contributing to the health of our people. Additionally, visitors from other countries come here and admire our wonderful ability to protect what we have to share it with all who would appreciate it. --Build on programs that work. The National Park Service has tremendous technical expertise and know-how that can help communities preserve their special places and provide recreational and educational opportunities for people. The Park Service's Rivers and Trails Conservation Assistance program has a long history of working with cities, suburbs, and small communities across the country on conservation efforts and providing expertise to help conserve rivers, preserve open space, and develop trails and green ways. We already have a great program, but it's under resourced. There's no need to reinvent the wheel. Invest in a model that is working in communities across the country.

LOOK WHAT JIMMY CARTER DID - HE DOUBLED THE NATIONAL PARKS ACREAGE WE NEED SOME VERY LARGE GULF MARINE SANCTUARIES OFF-LIMITS TO DRILLING, AND SOME MORE MOUNTAINS OFF LIMITS TO MOUNTAIN TOP MINING. FEEDING PERCEIVED SHORT TERM GREED AND NEED IS NOT SMART POLICY WE ALSO NEED THESE TO ESTABLISH HEALTHY BASELINE AREAS REQUIRED TO FAIRLY EVALUATE AND PUT A COST AND TAX ON THE HUGE NEGATIVE IMPACTS OF DRILLING, COASTAL DEGRADATION, AND MISSISSIPPI RUNOFF

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Don't be afraid to raise the park fees to allow for the protection...many can afford much more to see and use these treasures and discounts can be available for those who can not afford them. Even seniors can afford more and should not always be getting a lower price because of age. Some seniors are the wealthiest in the nation. I am a senior on a fixed pension although I love the discount I can afford what I want by choosing what is most important to me.

We need more parks for people to enjoy. The park system must also evolve to fully represent the history and culture of our diversifying nation. Please evaluate and consider new sites to bring into the system that better represent our changing country, and protect remaining natural areas before they are destroyed or polluted beyond saving. --Provide wildlife corridors to ensure that the wildlife in our parks can find the food they need and reproduce successfully outside, as well as within park boundaries. We need cooperative efforts between federal, state and local agencies and private landowners, because wildlife doesn't understand boundaries on a map.

I want the next generation to enjoy America's great outdoors too. That's why I am asking you to seize this opportunity to create, expand and better protect America's shared outdoors spaces, including parks, forests, wildlife refuges, wilderness, trails, wild and scenic rivers and historic sites and monuments, and to find new ways to support conservation of our farms, ranch lands and forests.

I want to thank you, Mr. President, for contacting American Back Country Horsemen in your efforts to gather information regarding care and conservation of America's public lands. That organization has quietly and voluntarily made enormous contributions to the maintenance of public lands. It is deeply appreciative of your acknowledging them and of your including them in your collaborations.

It's a "no-brainer" to save the outdoors... save parts of the planet from development which ruins the beauty and wonder of nature. Everyone needs the peace that being in the great outdoors offers.

Heed the advice of the National Parks Second Century Commission -- Renew our national parks and establish new parks and refuges that will preserve land for future generations. --Ensure that private companies and interests do not get on the land and exploit it or its natural resources for monetary gain. There is no point of having a wilderness area that is open to logging or a preserve that allows hunting. --Provide permanent, mandatory funding for the Land and Water Conservation Fund. Use the money in the Land and Water Conservation Fund; this money should be spent as originally promised to support parks, seashores, forests, and waterways across the country, rather than just another broken federal promise. --Do more to use national parks to inspire and educate young people. If they are shown the importance of conservation, they will be more likely to care about conservation as adults. --Build on programs that work. If you'd just fund the programs that exist think of the changes you can make. --Provide wildlife corridors to ensure that the wildlife in our parks can find the food it needs and reproduce successfully outside, as well as within park boundaries. We need cooperative efforts between federal, state and local agencies and private landowners, because wildlife don't understand boundaries on a map.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

We just returned from a week in RMNP. It was great, but the crowds were greater than even--more visitors would decrease the pleasure of visitors, and put serious stress on areas and facilities. There are other wild areas in the country which could be carefully prepared to make great new national parks. Please support efforts to find and develop these new areas.

We want the next generation to enjoy America's great outdoors too. That's why we are asking you to seize this opportunity to create, expand and better protect America's shared outdoors spaces, including parks, forests, wildlife refuges, wilderness, trails, wild and scenic rivers and historic sites and monuments, and to find new ways to support conservation of our farms, ranchlands and forests. When Iwe think of America's Great Outdoors, we think of our national parks. Thank you for considering our comments.

The wildlife, beautiful rivers and waterfalls, the stately towering trees have no lobbyists in Washington to pay for their continued protection; to keep snowmobiles out of these pristine lands; to keep up our many national parks. Please ensure that we safeguard what previous generations have enjoyed to that future generations will not have to read about how these great parks once looked and thrived.

I have a daughter who has been a National Parker Ranger and a Interpretative Ranger for the Fish & Wildlife Service for several years. It is through her that I have learned the wonders of our National Parks!. What wonderful treasures our country has!! I can only hope that our country realizes the importance of what we have and will do everything we can to preserve what has taken nature millions of years to create. Thank you for considering my comments,

As a lover of the outdoors, I want the next generation to enjoy the splendor of America's great places, because our landscapes inspire the human soul, and to face the challenges that lie ahead our children and grandchildren will need that inspiration. That's why I am asking you to seize this opportunity to create, expand and better protect America's shared outdoors spaces, including parks, forests, wildlife refuges, wilderness, trails, wild and scenic rivers and historic sites and monuments, and to find new ways to support conservation of our farms, ranchlands and forests.

Americans care about the future of these incredible places, so they will be there for our children and grandchildren to enjoy. Please remember the importance of protecting national parks and the many programs managed by the National Park Service that improve our communities. National parks are essential investments in our future.

I want the next generation to enjoy America's great outdoors too. That's why I am asking you to seize this opportunity to create, expand and better protect America's shared outdoors spaces, including parks, forests, wildlife refuges, wilderness, trails, wild and scenic rivers and historic sites and monuments, and to find new ways to support conservation of our farms, ranch lands and forests.

Discussion Question 1

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(cont.)

WILDERNESS IS CRITICAL FOR OUR HEALTH - FOR CLEAN AIR AND WATER. TREES HELP WITH OXYGEN AND LAND HELPS WITH WATER. IT IS NOT THE MATTER OF JUST "being pretty" it is the *** critical *** matter of SURVIVAL. FOR YOU AND ME EQUALLY. YOU ARE SUBJECT TO IT TOO. AND YOUR CHILDREN. WHERE WILL THEY LIVE? if the Earth gets messed up, where will your children live? I want the next generationS to enjoy America's great outdoors too. That's why I am asking you to seize this opportunity to create, expand and better protect America's shared outdoors spaces, including parks, forests, wildlife refuges, wilderness, trails, wild and scenic rivers and historic sites and monuments, and to find new ways to support conservation of our farms, ranchlands and forests.

Since childhood I have loved the outdoors, and have had many, many excursions into the woods, to parks and waters with my family and friends. That's why I am asking you to seize this opportunity to create, expand and better protect America's shared outdoors spaces, including parks, forests, wildlife refuges, wilderness, trails, wild and scenic rivers and historic sites and monuments, and to find new ways to support conservation of our farms, ranchlands and forests. I've enjoyed many of them, and hope they will still be available and in good condition for the next generations.. . --Pay attention to the advice of the National Parks Second Century Commission, a group of well respected individuals who spent more than a year developing a vision for how to protect the parks and connect Americans to them in the next century. -The coming Parks Centennial will provide a fine opportunity to renew the Parks. Your administration should apply the lessons that were learned from the Centennial Initiative to developing a new public-private partnership to prepare our parks for their next century. We need a new national campaign that will involve people in communities throughout the country in protecting our parks for the next generation.

National parks play a tremendous role in our American identity, connecting people, young and old, to the outdoors, preserving the natural and cultural diversity of our nation, and contributing to the health of our people.

Based on the study from the National Parks Conservation Association we need your help NOW to protect our national parks. People from all over the world come to America to visit our nation's natural treasures. And

Our National Parks define us in a way that nothing else does.
forget the significance of these symbols to what America stands for.

Never must we

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Forty-five years ago my parents drove me and my siblings across the country, from California to New York, stopping along the way at various National Parks and other historical sites. It was during this trip that I first became intrigued at all the wonderful natural areas in the U.S. Many family vacations followed in later years, visting other National Parks, like Bryce, Zion, and Yosemite. One year we met relatives from Chicago "in the middle" at the Grand Tetons. I've made other trips to National Parks with Girl Scout groups and the Sierra Club. And some of those sites include my own family's history, such as the singing of the Declaration of Independence by my ancestor

--Do more to use national parks to inspire and educate young people. Our national parks are classrooms for discovery and learning for students and teachers. My sibling was a park ranger, so I know how much people can learn from the interaction of human guides, as opposed to pre-taped recordings. Programs like Teacher to Ranger to Teacher (TRT) allows teachers from low income school districts to spend the summer working as park rangers where they develop and present interpretive programs, staff visitor centers, and develop curriculum-based materials which they bring back to the classroom. This program should be expanded. And the Department of Education should work with the Park Service to excite kids with hands-on learning experiences. --Build on programs that work. The National Park Service has tremendous technical expertise and know-how that can help communities preserve their special places and provide recreational and educational opportunities for people. The Park Service's Rivers and Trails Conservation Assistance program has a long history of working with cities, suburbs, and small communities across the country on conservation efforts and providing expertise to help conserve rivers, preserve open space, and develop trails and greenways. You already have a great program, but it's under resourced. Invest in a model that is working in communities across the country.

My 2 cents: I am a 60 year old new grandmother. I drive across this amazing country every few years to see my children and grandchildren. Each trip I am more amazed with the national park system and what it offers and teaches us. It is a true insight to the great leader who started it and those after him who maintain the importance of these parks. Please do not let pressures and greed eat away at any of any of these treasured lands and support them in any way you can. You have a huge set of resources with the boomers. Take advantage of our love of these parks and use us to help maintain, manage and manifest the importance of them for future generations. Thank you!

I realize that you have many issues competing for your support. National Parks are something for all Americans to enjoy, yet they are always coming up short when people look for causes to support. Please stop all your divisive activities and support something that all Americans can support. Just a thought, but what about authorizing drilling in ARNWR (which would be controversial) and using funds generate on the leases solely for support of our National Parks(in addition to, not in lieu of, current funding)

As someone who spend most of his time in the outdoors, I spend my vacations primarily in the National Parks and forests, so

Discussion Question 1

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(cont.)

America must lead the global biodiversity conservation effort. Before it is too late, a bold, visionary expansion and completion of the biodiversity conservation system here in America is needed. This is not a "special interest", but is advocated by leading scientists in the fields, such as, Edward O. Wilson (In his recent book, *The Future of Life*). Long-term biodiversity conservation is the goal. Preserving viable, diverse ecosystems of the Earth obviously benefits all for the long-term. Three or four new National Parks should be declared in most states...save the last greatest places before it is too late! The West, the Southwest, the Prairies, Coasts, Great Lakes, Appalachians, Southern Swamps & Tropical Forests and the Northeast Forest all need our attention. Examples include: the Maine woods between Allagash Waterway and the Quebec border, several new park in the Upper Peninsula of Michigan (not to mention Wisconsin & Minnesota), expansion of Appalachian Mountain Parks, Sabine Swamp/River in Texas-Louisiana, Oregon's Willowa-Eagle Cap-Hell's Canyon & the Siskiyou-Klamath, as well as the Cascade Crest of Oregon, and places in the Southwest like the Gila Wilderness as well as the best places in Arizona and Texas. The effort must be visionary and comprehensive in order to preserve the greatest biodiversity for the great time. The established national parks, forests, wildlife refuges, grasslands, coastal freshwater and marine reserves are gifts from the foresight of the previous generations. We now must have even a greater foresight and pass our gifts to the future generations. This is a vital responsibility. Sustain America's spirit, ties to the land and history. Please work on the completion of the Biodiversity Conservation System here in America, be a role model for global efforts and assist global efforts. Thanks so much!

As a fan of the National Parks. We should keep them as is. There are no room for Casino and Super Stores. I want you to help keep the National Parks as a place that All can go to Enjoy.

We need to take care of our outdoor environment with great care. Perhaps, now with the withdrawal of our troops from warring countries, we can use that money to help ourselves. Our infrastructure has suffered much for over 12 years now and we need to take care of what we have with care. If we could spend billions, to kill people, maybe now we can use that money to maintain our environment safe. We have neglected this issue long enough!!!

I want the next generation to enjoy America's great outdoors too. That's why I am asking you to create, expand and better protect America's shared outdoors spaces, including parks, forests, wildlife refuges, wilderness, trails, wild and scenic rivers and historic sites and monuments, and to find new ways to support conservation of our farms, ranchlands and forests.

Discussion Question 1

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(cont.)

Most of us refer to the "simpler times" where we could walk outside, keep our doors unlocked and enjoy our "freedoms" from our own backyards without the tainted worries of pollution, man-made dangers and disrespect. Over the years, our country has struggled intensely to keep the beauty alive within this great country and to watch it go south on a daily basis leaves us with no wonder why our attitudes go south as well. Remembering who gave us these things is crucial as well. God is kind and He provides. We also need industry of educational support as we piece back together the beauty we have destroyed, save the ecosystems and convince the world around us to do the same. Realizing that our needs can be met in other creative ways (food, shelter, clothing) other than robbing our earth's non-renewables or taking simply because we are too lazy to come up with better solutions is robbing our entire world and its heart and existence. Please, President Obama and First Lady Obama, we reach out to you to take care of your own first so that we may build a strong community against all odds. Additionally,

Please leave a lasting legacy for future generations!!!

I love my State and Federal Parks - they are wonderful places for adventure and health... Please give them the funds they need to endure...

This especially important. Everyone believes there project should have top priority but we only have one earth,

I am a former USDA US Forest Service employee. Under the Bush Administration the timber management personnel had free reign. They were not cognizant of the reality that all of the life forms are interconnected in our parks. Their mission was to process as many board feet as possible. As a nation. We must protect the integrity of our parklands and wildlife ecosystems. Otherwise our children will not know and see what these precious places contain. I particularly member one beautiful area that, historically, was an old ranch in the Sierra Nevada Mountains, My job was to find and protect sensitive plant and animal species. I marked areas where the plants were. However, the loggers removed the trees surrounding those plants, totally changing the area for years to come. I was appalled that this exquisite area, which originally looked like a scene out off Bonanza, was so decimated. - -Seize the opportunity that the upcoming Park Service centennial provides to renew our national parks. The administration should apply the lessons that were learned from the Centennial Initiative to developing a new public-private partnership to prepare our parks for their next century. We need a new national campaign that will involve people in communities throughout the country in protecting our parks for the next generation.

Discussion Question 1

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(cont.)

Do more to use national parks to inspire and educate young people. Our national parks are classrooms for discovery and learning for students and teachers. Programs like Teacher to Ranger to Teacher (TRT) allows teachers from low income school districts to spend the summer working as park rangers where they develop and present interpretive programs, staff visitor centers, and develop curriculum-based materials which they bring back to the classroom. This program should be expanded. And the Department of Education should work with the Park Service to excite children with hands-on learning experiences.

I personally visit a National Park on vacation each year. This can be a outdoor park, or a historic site, The NPS helps reinforce what children learn in school when they visit - what a terrific way to better educate our children than a fist hand look at history!!! If you take this away - you are hurting our future and their future. Think about what yu are doing!!!

As a farm owner, human being and an American, I want future generations to enjoy America's great outdoors too. That's why I am asking you to take this opportunity to create, expand and better protect America's shared outdoors spaces, including parks, forests, wildlife refuges, wilderness, trails, wild and scenic rivers and historic sites and monuments, and to find new ways to support conservation of our farms, ranchlands and forests. When I think of America's Great Outdoors, I think of my husband and my farm, the New River Trail, which adjoins our property, and our national parks. Without national parks, many Americans would not have an opportunity to venture the outdoors and the many advantages it offers. I implore you to not push this aside and consider the importance of protecting our country's health and well being, within the national parks, farms, trails, wildlife refuges, historic sites, and forests.

The children are this planets future. Do not let them down. I have three myself.

Please consider your children and the nation's children and do what you can to save and protect our outdoor spaces. I sincerely hope all of our children have an opporunity to experiance and enjoy the great outdoors of our country.

Please save our precious resources!

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

The economy is on everyone's mind these days, what better way to help unemployment than to do some FDR style program employing people to repair, cleanup and improve facilities in America's beautiful National Parks. As someone who's been to many, many of our National Parks, I want the next generation to enjoy America's great outdoors too. That's why I am asking you to seize this opportunity and to find new ways to support conservation of our farms, ranchlands and forests. It is important to me that you preserve large areas of public lands and waters to secure the health of our ecosystems, ensure wildlife conservation, maintain public access to parks and open spaces, reduce the impacts of climate change, and protect our cultural heritage. --Heed the advice of the National Parks Second Century Commission. --Seize the opportunity that the upcoming Park Service centennial provides to renew our national parks. We need a new national campaign that will involve people in communities throughout the country in protecting our parks for the next generation.

I hope you will create, expand, and better protect America's shared outdoor spaces, including parks, forests, wildlife refuges, wilderness, trails, wild and scenic rivers, and historic sites and monuments, and to find new ways to support conservation of our farms, ranchlands, and forests. I hope your administration will take the following steps: --Follow the advice of the National Parks Second Century Commission, a group of well respected individuals who spent more than a year developing a vision for how to protect the parks and connect Americans to them in the next century.

Your daughters have the right to enjoy a preserved and protected system of national parks, wildlife refuges and wetlands to explore and enjoy as they mature, and they have the right to trust and believe those national treasures will exist when they have children.

Please ensure that national parks have the funds necessary to safeguard park wildlife and provide park visitors with a safe, clean, and rewarding park experience by the National Park Service's centennial in 2016. Please fully and permanently fund the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) to enable the Park Service to buy private land within park boundaries from willing sellers. Please preserve large areas of public lands and waters to secure the health of our ecosystems, ensure wildlife conservation, maintain public access to parks and open spaces, reduce the impacts of climate change, and protect our cultural heritage. Please strengthen the capacity for federal, regional, state, and local agencies and private landowners to work collaboratively in order to protect not only our national parks but the wildlife, plants, and rivers beyond park borders. Improve opportunities to use our national parks to get kids into active, healthy, outdoor activity that will help them lead long, healthy lives.

We want the next generation to enjoy America's great outdoors too. That's why we are asking you to seize this opportunity to create, expand and better protect America's shared outdoors spaces, including parks, forests, wildlife refuges, wilderness, trails, wild and scenic rivers and historic sites and monuments, and to find new ways to support conservation of our farms, ranchlands and forests. When we think of America's Great Outdoors, we think of our national parks. Thank you for considering our comments.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

I voted for you, sensing that you understood the stresses on our environment, nationally and globally. This plan makes good sense for our country.

I want the next generation to be able to enjoy America's great outdoors too. That's why I am asking you to use this opportunity to create, expand and better protect America's shared outdoors spaces, including parks, forests, wildlife refuges, wilderness, trails, wild and scenic rivers and historic sites and monuments, and to find new ways to support conservation of our farms, ranchlands and forests. A major part of America's great outdoors is our national parks. Your administration should consider seriously taking the following steps: Americans care about the future of these wonderful places, so they will be there for our children and grandchildren to enjoy. Please remember the importance of protecting national parks and the many programs managed by the National Park Service that improve our communities. National parks are good investments in our future.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

America is great because we have amazing natural resources, I believe that preserving and enhancing those resources is our number one longterm national security issue is we hope to create a sustainable future and provide a decent quality of life for all Americans. In an increasingly urbanized and computerized world, we need places where we can retreat to rejuvenate our minds and souls; rich farm land for sustaining our citizens of the future; forests to clean our air and buffer the affects of climate change, oceans and waterways to supply us clean drinking water, recreation and food. In addition, our natural resources supply ecological services such as erosion and flood control, pollution filtration, and carbon sinks that are worth many billions of dollars each year. I am asking you to seize this opportunity to create, expand and better protect America's shared outdoors spaces, including parks, forests, wildlife refuges, wilderness, trails, wild and scenic rivers and historic sites and monuments, and to find new ways to support conservation of our farms, ranchlands and forests. My son's last year hikes the John Muir trail in California and my oldest son is now working in WA Youth Conservation Corp and is serving two years to help preserve and restore our natural land. Natural areas and National Parks are personal and national priorities for our family and are one of my families greatest joys. The National Parks are national treasures like no other and they have provided my family with some of its greatest pleasures and learning experiences over the years. --Do more to use national parks to inspire and educate young people. Increase service opportunities such as Americorps and conservation corps to give our youth job opportunities and build ownership of the parks. Our national parks are classrooms for discovery and learning for students and teachers. Programs like Teacher to Ranger to Teacher (TRT) allows teachers from low income school districts to spend the summer working as park rangers where they develop and present interpretive programs, staff visitor centers, and develop curriculum-based materials which they bring back to the classroom. This program should be expanded. And the Department of Education should work with the Park Service to excite kids with hands-on learning experiences. Americans, even those who rarely visit, care about the future of these incredible places, they are part of our national heritage and must be there for our children and grandchildren to enjoy. The importance of protecting national parks and the many programs managed by the National Park Service cannot be overstated. National parks are good investments in our future and are the heart and soul of our nation.

We need to take action now so the next generation can enjoy America's great outdoors. I'm asking you to create, expand and better protect America's shared outdoors spaces, including parks, forests, wildlife refuges, wilderness, trails, wild and scenic rivers and historic sites and monuments, and to find new ways to support conservation of our farms, ranchlands and forests.

There are so many reasons to protect our parks and natural wonders in this beautiful country. One big reason is that

Our beautiful natural areas must be protected from over development and other irresponsible uses that will destroy them forever.

Discussion Question 1

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(cont.)

I listen to the news while driving to work and I think, well here I am going to earn tax money for a system that I have no control over. Just a cog in the wheel. Well, you know what? I have bushes for birds in my backyard, I have flowers for the butterflies, I'm teaching my granddaughter to love the outdoors, I serve on the city parks commission, I'm trying to get together a group to start a community garden, I work at the gardens at the fairground so others can enjoy their beauty, I pick up trash along the road. I do this. An individual. It seems to me that somebody in a position of power should do a little something for the environment too. So give the parks a fair shake. Because there's only one world and it's all got to end somewhere.

We really must conserve our national parks and protect the wildlife and natural beauty that is there. Many children growing up today live in a city environment which doesn't make it easy for them to enjoy this beautiful land. It is our responsibility to be just and good stewards of our National Parks. Our Ecco Systems depend on us.

I am asking you to create, expand and better protect America's shared outdoors spaces, including parks, forests, wildlife refuges, wilderness, trails, wild and scenic rivers and historic sites and monuments, and to find new ways to support conservation of our farms, ranchlands and forests.

I want the next generation, my two daughters and two grandsons, to enjoy America's great outdoors too. That's why I am asking you to take this opportunity to create, expand and better protect America's shared outdoors spaces, including parks, forests, wildlife refuges, wilderness, trails, wild and scenic rivers and historic sites and monuments, and to find new ways to support conservation of our farms, ranchlands and forests. --Heed the advice of the National Parks Second Century Commission. --Take the opportunity that the upcoming Park Service centennial provides to renew our national parks. We need a new national campaign that will involve people in communities throughout the country in protecting our parks for the next generation. --Do more to use national parks to inspire and educate young people. Our national parks are classrooms for discovery and learning for students and teachers. --Build on programs that work. The National Park Service has tremendous technical expertise and know-how that can help communities preserve their special places and provide recreational and educational opportunities for people. The Park Service's Rivers and Trails Conservation Assistance program has a long history of working with cities, suburbs, and small communities across the country on conservation efforts and providing expertise to help conserve rivers, preserve open space, and develop trails and greenways. You already have a great program, but it's under resourced.

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(cont.)

All our future generations should enjoy America's great outdoors . So please create, expand and better protect America's shared outdoors spaces; parks, forests, wildlife refuges, wilderness, trails, wild and scenic rivers, historic sites and monuments, and find new ways to support conservation of our farms, rangelands and forests. National parks connect people, young and old, to the outdoors, preserving the natural and cultural diversity of our nation, and contributing to the health of our people. National parks provide some of America's finest outdoor classrooms and serve as a basis for conservation, history, and civics education for millions of people every year. --Follow the advice of the National Parks Second Century Commission, a group of well respected individuals who spent over a year developing a plan to protect the parks and connect Americans to them in the next century. The Park Service centennial provides an ideal opportunity to renew our national parks. The administration should apply the lessons learned from the Centennial Initiative to developing a new public-private partnership to prepare our parks for their next century. We need a new national campaign that will involve people in communities throughout the country in protecting our parks for the next generation. --Provide permanent, mandatory funding for the Land and Water Conservation Fund. Seventeen billion dollars in revenues, primarily from oil and gas leasing, have accumulated during the past several decades in the Land and Water Conservation Fund, unspent for its intended purpose. Instead of breaking another Federal promise this money should be spent to support parks, seashores, forests, and waterways across the country. What's happening in the Gulf of Mexico reminds us how important it is to keep that promise.

I had the wonderful opportunity in the past 2 months to visit and experience four western National Parks far from my home in Maine. The beauty of each Park was so uplifting and intense as to take my breath away. Every few minutes I would think how grateful I was that these lands had been preserved for all Americans and visitors from othe countries to see and enjoy for all time. The preservation and enhancement of these wonderful places takes thoughtfulness and effort, both of which I urge you to actively support.

We need to protect the wildlife that inhabitat these areas

When we think of America's Great Outdoors, we think of our national parks.as do our forests, wildlife refuges, wild and scenic rivers and historic sites and monuments. We want the next generation to enjoy America's great outdoors too. We strongly feel that Thank you for considering our comments.

The park system must also evolve to fully represent the history and culture of our diversifying nation. Please evaluate and consider new sites to bring into the system that better represent our changing country, and protect remaining natural areas before we use them all up. Please initiate a population control, prevention plan including free clinics, free condoms, free tubal ligations/vasectomies to those who qualify financially, to reduce burgeoning teen pregnancies, impoverished populations, and unwanted overpopulation incringing on water, land, food, and housing, and public dependency resources.

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(cont.)

I want the next generation to enjoy America's great outdoors too. That's why I am asking you to seize this opportunity to create, expand and better protect America's shared outdoors spaces, including parks, forests, wildlife refuges, wilderness, trails, wild and scenic rivers and historic sites and monuments, and to find new ways to support conservation of our farms, ranch lands and forests.

Nature and outdoor spaces have been special to me all my 70 years. Some of my most precious memories and moments of growth and insight have been nestled in Nature's arms. I want my grandchildren and the next generation to enjoy America's great outdoors too. That's why I am asking you to seize this opportunity to create, expand and better protect America's shared outdoors spaces, including parks, forests, wildlife refuges, wilderness, trails, wild and scenic rivers and historic sites and monuments, and to find new ways to support conservation of our farms, ranchlands and forests. When I think of America's Great Outdoors, one of items that certainly comes to mind are our national parks. Our family's few vacations were centered around our National Parks. They provide some of America's finest outdoor classrooms and serve as a basis for conservation, history, and civics education for millions of people each year. (Our communities need some common ground issues to come back together on in this pathetically divisive era.)

I suggest that you read the bestseller, THEODORE ROOSEVELT- WILDERNESS WARRIOR, to find a mentor for such action. His political party was not happy, but he had the courage to stand by his convictions and knowledge. He refused to give in and to give up!

Discussion Question 1

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(cont.)

The goals laid out by "America's Great Outdoors Initiative are exciting and very timely. There are more threats than ever to our precious public lands and we have an opportunity to fund management and protect these lands for all generations into perpetuity. With our busy lifestyles and congested urban living situations, it is important to have opportunities for people to visit the outdoors for mental and physical health, and to simply reconnect with the natural world and wildlife we share this world with. A recent study commissioned by the National Parks Conservation Association found that every federal dollar invested in national parks generates at least four dollars of economic value to the public. In tough economic times, Americans visit our national parks in increasing numbers. To that end, I would like to suggest that --Seize the opportunity that the upcoming Park Service centennial provides to renew our national parks. We need a national campaign that will involve people in communities throughout the country in protecting our parks for the next generation. --Provide permanent, mandatory funding for the Land and Water Conservation Fund. Seventeen billion dollars in revenues, primarily from oil and gas leasing, have accumulated during the past several decades in the Land and Water Conservation Fund, and remains unspent. This money should be spent as originally promised to support parks, seashores, forests, and waterways across the country. --Do more to use national parks to inspire and educate young people. Programs like Teacher to Ranger to Teacher (TRT) allows teachers from low income school districts to spend the summer working as park rangers where they develop and present interpretive programs, staff visitor centers, and develop curriculum-based materials which they bring back to the classroom. This program should be expanded. And the Department of Education should work with the Park Service to excite kids with hands-on learning experiences. --The National Park Service has tremendous technical expertise and know-how that can help communities preserve their special places and provide recreational and educational opportunities for people. The Park Service's Rivers and Trails Conservation Assistance program has a long history of working with cities, suburbs, and small communities across the country on conservation efforts and providing expertise to help conserve rivers, preserve open space, and develop trails and greenways. You already have a great program, but it's under resourced. There's no need to reinvent the wheel. Invest in a model that is working in communities across the country. --We need more parks for people to enjoy. Please evaluate and consider new sites to bring into the system and protect remaining natural areas before we use them all up. A recent study commissioned by the National Parks Conservation Association found that every federal dollar invested in national parks generates at least four dollars of economic value to the public. In tough economic times, Americans visit our national parks in increasing numbers.

I was lucky to have parents who took me to many of our national parks while I was growing up. Our parks are treasures which need to be protected. Also, it is important that children and people of all ages are able to enjoy our parks to help foster an appreciation of unspoiled nature, history, and culture.

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(cont.)

I grew up with the loveliest and best managed National Parks in the world. My parents took me through the redwoods in California and I saw Old Faithful in Yellowstone National Park, among many throughout the nation. I learned about different trees, how to plant trees in a park as a Campfire girl, learned about water conservation and pollution in a part as a college student etc. I am concerned about the lack of funding that is being considered for our National Park system. I want my granddaughters and their grandchildren to enjoy America's great outdoors too. That's why I am asking you to seize this opportunity to create, expand and better protect America's shared outdoors spaces, including parks, forests, wildlife refuges, wilderness, trails, wild and scenic rivers and historic sites and monuments, and to find new ways to support conservation of our farms, ranchlands and forests. Our shared outdoor spaces are getting eaten up by big business and money mongers. If we do not protect the planet, we won't have one upon which to live.

I had an opportunity as a child and a young adult to visit many of our national parks and other wild areas, and I think it is important for others to have the same opportunity. It is perhaps the only way to build a foundation for appreciation of and respect for nature. Further, it is the most effective way of understanding and perpetuating the sense of optimism and limitless possibility that inspired our country's founders. Also, and particularly important to me, is the protection of animal habitats, whether they be in parks or in meadows and wooded areas dotting our towns. So I am asking you to create, expand, and better protect America's shared outdoors spaces, including parks, forests, wildlife refuges, wilderness, trails, wild and scenic rivers, and historic sites and monuments, and to find new ways to support conservation of our farms, ranchlands, and forests.

Please save and protect our parks! Your administration needs to please take the following steps:

I am a lucky individual as I have seen a number of our wonderful national parks, Glacier, Yellowstone, Yosemite, Everglades in the past. Wonderful memories of those visits. That is why

Seize the opportunity that the upcoming Park Service centennial provides to renew our national parks. --Provide permanent, mandatory funding for the Land and Water Conservation Fund. What's happening in the Gulf of Mexico reminds us how important it is to keep that promise. -- Do more to use national parks to inspire and educate young people. Our national parks are classrooms for discovery and learning for students and teachers. --Build on programs that work. --We need more parks for people to enjoy. The park system must also evolve to fully represent the history and culture of our diversifying nation. --Provide wildlife corridors to ensure that the wildlife in our parks can find the food it needs and reproduce successfully outside, as well as within park boundaries.

Discussion Question 1

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(cont.)

I and many other Americans want the next generation to enjoy America's great outdoors too. That's why I am asking you to seize this opportunity to create, expand and better protect America's shared outdoors spaces, including parks, forests, wildlife refuges, wilderness, trails, wild and scenic rivers and historic sites and monuments, and to find new ways to support conservation of our farms, rangelands and forests. --Renew our national parks by seizing the opportunity that the upcoming Park Service centennial provides. The administration should apply the lessons that were learned from the Centennial Initiative to developing a new public-private partnership to prepare our parks for their next century. We need a new national campaign that will involve people in communities throughout the country in protecting our parks for the next generation. --Provide Permanent, Mandatory Funding for the Land and Water Conservation Fund. Seventeen billion dollars in revenues, primarily from oil and gas leasing, have accumulated during the past several decades in the Land and Water Conservation Fund UNSPENT for its intended purpose. This money should be spent as Originally Promised to support parks, seashores, forests, and waterways across the country, rather than just another broken federal promise. What's happening in the Gulf of Mexico reminds us how important it is to keep that promise. --Build on programs that work. The National Park Service has tremendous technical expertise and know-how that can help communities preserve their special places and provide recreational and educational opportunities for people. The Park Service's Rivers and Trails Conservation Assistance program has a long history of working with cities, suburbs, and small communities across the country on conservation efforts and providing expertise to help conserve rivers, preserve open space, and develop trails and greenways. Americorps volunteers are a great resource to use to help take up the slack and get the backlog of work done that needs to be done. You already have a great program, but it's under resourced. There's no need to reinvent the wheel. Invest in a model that is working in communities across the country. --Provide wildlife corridors to ensure that the wildlife in our parks can find the food it needs and reproduce successfully outside, as well as within park boundaries. We need to lessen the amount of motorized vehicles in the parks and flying over the parks in order to maintain their natural environments and habitats. We need cooperative efforts between federal, state and local agencies and private landowners, because wildlife doesn't understand boundaries on a map. We as

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Do it for your children, grands and greats! Our --We must protect America's parks. Seize the opportunity that the upcoming Park Service centennial provides to renew our national parks. The administration should apply the lessons that were learned from the Centennial Initiative to developing a new public-private partnership to prepare our parks for their next century. We need a new national campaign that will involve people in communities throughout the country in protecting our parks for the next generation. --Provide permanent, mandatory funding for the Land and Water Conservation Fund. Seventeen billion dollars in revenues, primarily from oil and gas leasing, have accumulated during the past several decades in the Land and Water Conservation Fund, unspent for its intended purpose. This money should be spent as **ORIGINALLY PROMISED** to support parks, seashores, forests, and waterways across the country, rather than just another broken federal promise. What's happening in the Gulf of Mexico reminds us how **IMPORTANT** it is to **KEEP OUR TRUST AND RESTORE OUR FAITH IN OUR GOVERNMENT**. Thank you for restoring my faith in your stewardship.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

The next generation, that's your children/grandchildren and mine, should be able to enjoy America's great outdoors too. That's why I ask you to seize this opportunity to create, expand and better protect America's shared outdoors spaces, including parks, forests, wildlife refuges, wilderness, trails, wild and scenic rivers and historic sites and monuments, and to find new ways to support conservation of our farms, rangelands and forests.

- 1) Heed the advice of the National Parks Second Century Commission (well respected folks) who spent more than a year developing a vision for how to protect the parks and connect Americans to them in the next century.
- 2) Seize the opportunity that the upcoming Park Service centennial provides to renew our national parks. The administration should apply the lessons that were learned from the Centennial Initiative to developing a new public-private partnership to prepare our parks for their next century. We need a new national campaign that will involve people in communities throughout the country in protecting our parks for the next generation.
- 3) Provide permanent, mandatory funding for the Land and Water Conservation Fund and use the current \$17,000,000 revenues for their intended purpose to support parks, seashores, forests, and waterways across the country, rather than just another broken federal promise. What's happening in the Gulf of Mexico reminds us how important it is to keep that promise.
- 4) Do more to use national parks as classrooms for discovery and learning for students and teachers. Programs like Teacher to Ranger to Teacher (TRT) allows teachers from low income school districts to spend the summer working as park rangers where they develop and present interpretive programs, staff visitor centers, and develop curriculum-based materials which they bring back to the classroom. This program should be expanded. And the Department of Education should work with the Park Service to excite kids with hands-on learning experiences.
- 5) Build on programs of tremendous technical expertise and know-how that can help communities preserve their special places and provide recreational and educational opportunities for people. The Park Service's Rivers and Trails Conservation Assistance program has a long history of working with cities, suburbs, and small communities across the country on conservation efforts and providing expertise to help conserve rivers, preserve open space, and develop trails and greenways but it is under resourced. Invest in a model that is working in communities across the country.
- 6) We need to evaluate and consider new sites to expand our park system.
- 7) Provide wildlife corridors using federal, state and local agencies because wildlife doesn't use boundaries on maps.

Thank you for SERIOUSLY CONSIDERING my comments.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

I want the next generation to enjoy America's great outdoors too. That's why I am asking you to seize this opportunity to create, expand and better protect America's shared outdoors spaces, including parks, forests, wildlife refuges, wilderness, trails, wild and scenic rivers and historic sites and monuments, and to find new ways to support conservation of our farms, ranch lands and forests. It is America's best and cheapest investment. Please help preserve it for future generations. My husband and I live 10 miles from Mammoth Cave National Park and spend many wonderful hours touring, and just driving in the beauty of the park. We feel very blessed to have such a beautiful National Park in our backyard. When friends come to visit the first place we take them is Mammoth Cave. They always tell us how lucky we are to have such a beautiful park so near us. We know! My husband and I have visited many of our country's National Parks and Monuments. Help us to preserve our Mammoth Cave and all the other beautiful National Parks and Historic Sites we have in our wonderful country. PLEASE

Along with the consensus opinion that follows please put the issue of restricting or prohibiting roads in wilderness areas at the top of your priorities concerning environmental protection. Thank you. I want the next generation to enjoy America's great outdoors too. That's why I am asking you to seize this opportunity to create, expand and better protect America's shared outdoors spaces, including parks, forests, wildlife refuges, wilderness, trails, wild and scenic rivers and historic sites and monuments, and to find new ways to support conservation of our farms, ranch lands and forests.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

This letter is about National Parks. it would be wonderful for our country and those of us living here if your administration would do the followings: --Heed the advice of the National Parks Second Century Commission, a group of well respected individuals who spent more than a year developing a vision for how to protect the parks and connect Americans to them in the next century, which means to apply the lessons that were learned from the Centennial Initiative to developing a new public-private partnership to prepare our parks for their next century. We need a new national campaign that will involve people in communities throughout the country in protecting our parks for the next generation. --Provide permanent, mandatory funding for the Land and Water Conservation Fund. apparently seventeen billion dollars in revenues, primarily from oil and gas leasing, have accumulated during the past several decades in the Land and Water Conservation Fund, unspent for its intended purpose. This money should be spent as originally intended, to support parks, seashores, forests, and waterways across the country, rather than just another broken federal promise. What's happening in the Gulf of Mexico reminds us how important it is to keep that promise. --Do more to use national parks to inspire and educate young people. Our national parks are classrooms for discovery and learning for students and teachers. Programs like Teacher to Ranger to Teacher (TRT), a fantastic opportunity which allows teachers from low income school districts to spend the summer working as park rangers should be expanded. This program allows teachers to develop and present interpretive programs and develop curriculum-based materials which they bring back to the classroom. And even better if the Department of Education would work with the Park Service to provide kids with hands-on learning experiences. --increase funding to the Park Service's Rivers and Trails Conservation Assistance program. this program has a long history of working with cities, suburbs, and small communities across the country on conservation efforts and providing expertise to help conserve rivers, preserve open space, and develop trails and greenways. --Please evaluate and consider new sites to bring into the system that better represent our changing country. The park system must also evolve to fully represent the history and culture of our diversifying nation. Thank you for your consideration of this important matter.

Please consider reinventing the CCC to employ urban youth in projects to build our parks' future-- it is an investment that will pay off in so many important ways.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

It is crucial to protect our national parks and wilderness areas from development, especially by oil and coal companies, and from lumber industries that employ clear-cutting. I want the future generations to enjoy America's great outdoors, too. That's why I am asking you to seize this opportunity to create, expand, and better protect America's shared outdoors spaces, including parks, forests, wildlife refuges, wilderness, trails, wild and scenic rivers and historic sites and monuments, and to find new ways to support conservation of our farms, ranchlands, and forests. When I think of America's Great Outdoors, I think of our national parks and the wildlife that lives there. --Heed the advice of the National Parks Second Century Commission, a group of well-respected individuals who spent more than a year developing a vision for how to protect the parks and connect Americans to them in the next century. --Seize the opportunity that the upcoming Park Service centennial provides to renew our national parks and preserve them for future generations. The administration should apply the lessons that were learned from the Centennial Initiative to developing a new public-private partnership to prepare our parks for their next century. We need a new national campaign that will involve people in communities throughout the country in protecting our parks for the future. Leasing to gas and oil companies needs to be cut back as newer, cleaner energy sources are developed. --Provide wildlife corridors to ensure that the wildlife in our parks can find the food it needs and reproduce successfully outside, as well as within park boundaries, without fear of being hunted and killed. We need cooperative efforts between federal, state and local agencies and private landowners, because wildlife doesn't understand boundaries on a map.

I have visited several of Americas National Parks and hope that my grandchildren and great grandchildren will have the same opportunity. Please do what you can to protect these national treasures.

I have always traveled abroad for work and thus took most of my vacations outside the US - until about 5 years ago. In the last two years we have been visiting all of our National Parks, and it truly is, as Ken Burns noted, "America's Best Idea" and an incredible treasure to preserve.

Please fund our National Parks, which are the jewels of our country.

Instead of doling out taxpayers money to those who are not working or those who are capable of working but won't and you know fullwell who they are, why not reinstate the tried and true organization the CIVILIAN CONSERVATION CORPS aka CCC used so successfully in the 30's. At least this way the taxpayers can get a return for their money. Our national parks and infrastructures certainly need the help.

According to a recent study commissioned by the National Parks Conservation Association, every federal dollar invested in national parks generates at least four dollars of economic value to the public. In 2009, as the recession took its toll on Americans' pocketbooks, national park visitation increased on average by nearly 4 percent, demonstrating the enhanced value of our national parks to our people in difficult economic times.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

You must take measures to protect the land that we have set aside.

I've had many opportunities to enjoy the national parks with my family and hope they will still be an enjoyable resource for my 7 grandchildren during their lifetimes. Maintaining and protecting the national parks needs to be a priority of your administration!

I am asking you to create, expand and better protect America's shared outdoors spaces, including parks, forests, wildlife refuges, wilderness, trails, wild and scenic rivers and historic sites and monuments, and to find new ways to support conservation of our farms, rangelands and forests. National parks play a tremendous role, preserving the natural and cultural diversity of our nation, and contributing to the health of our people. --Seize the opportunity that the upcoming Park Service centennial provides to renew our national parks. The administration should prepare our parks for their next century. We need a new national campaign that will involve people in communities throughout the country in protecting our parks for the next generation. -- Encourage the Department of Education to work with the Park Service to excite kids with hands-on learning experiences. --Build on programs that work. The National Park Service has tremendous technical expertise and know-how. You already have a great program, but it's under resourced. There's no need to reinvent the wheel. Invest in a model that is working in communities across the country. National parks are good investments in our future.

OUR NATIONAL PARKS ARE THE JEWELS OF OUR UNITED STATES; THEY MUST BE RESPECTED, LOVED AND PROTECTED. DO THE RIGHT THING AND ENSURE THAT THIS HAPPENS, PLEASE !

"Experience is the best teacher." I know this from experience. Please let the children enjoy "park experiences".

Please protect our national parks and forests, out wildlife refuges and wilderness trails, for your daughters and my children. Please create, expand, and protect our shared outdoor spaces by taking the following steps:

I have enjoyed and been grateful for the National Parks for nearly a century and dearly hope you will help preserve them for future generations. Please have your- and our- administration consider this. urgent advice of Park supporting organizations I

I want the next generation to enjoy America's great outdoors, too. That's why I am asking you to seize this opportunity to create, expand and better protect America's shared outdoors spaces, including parks, forests, wildlife refuges, wilderness, trails, wild and scenic rivers and historic sites and monuments, and to find new ways to support conservation of our farms, rangelands and forests.

Americans care about the future of these incredible places, so they will be there for our children and grandchildren to enjoy. Please remember the importance of protecting national parks and the many programs managed by the National Park Service that improve our communities. National parks are good investments in our future.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

I recently visited Glacier and Yellowstone National Parks, and they are indeed national treasures to protect for future generations. We need to adequately fund for maintenance, staffing and programs. --Do more to use national parks to inspire and educate young people. On a recent visit to Yellowstone National Park, I joined a fun, interesting "show and tell" by the ranger for kids and parents to learn about habitat and animals. Our national parks are classrooms for discovery and learning for students and teachers. Programs like Teacher to Ranger to Teacher (TRT) allows teachers from low income school districts to spend the summer working as park rangers where they develop and present interpretive programs, staff visitor centers, and develop curriculum-based materials which they bring back to the classroom. This program should be expanded. And the Department of Education should work with the Park Service to excite kids with hands-on learning experiences.

I am a mother of 3, a grand-mother of 6 and a great-grand-mother of 8. All of my "children" have had the wonderful experience of enjoying the great outdoors here in America.

I am excited about the America's Great Outdoors initiative and I absolutely want the next generation to enjoy America's great outdoors too. That's why I am asking you to seize this opportunity to create, expand and better protect America's shared outdoors spaces, including parks, forests, wildlife refuges, wilderness, trails, wild and scenic rivers and historic sites and monuments, and to find new ways to support conservation of our farms, ranchlands and forests. As brilliantly shown in Ken Burn's documentary series, national parks are such an important part of our country. My wife and I love learning about the history of this land and we have spent the past few years traveling to as many National Park units as possible. National historic sites and parks serve as a basis for conservation, history, and civics education for millions of people each year. --Improve opportunities to use our national parks to get kids into active, healthy, outdoor activity that will help them lead long, healthy lives. The obesity epidemic continues to threaten future generations and we must strive to change our sedentary lifestyles. --Do more to use national parks to inspire and educate young people. Our national parks are classrooms for discovery and learning for students and teachers. Programs like Teacher to Ranger to Teacher (TRT) should be expanded. This great program allows teachers from low income school districts to spend the summer working as park rangers where they develop and present interpretive programs, staff visitor centers, and develop curriculum-based materials which they bring back to the classroom. We need to further increase awareness about the essential role played by these protected lands. At the same time, we must also work to increase the parks currently in the National Park Service. I'm specifically thinking about the threat to auction land surrounding Grand Teton National Park due to deadlock between the state of Wyoming and the Department of the Interior.

We have no time to waste. We are the caretakers of this planet.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

There is an old Amish saying, "We grow to soon old and too late smart". A very appropriate saying for our greedy 2 legged world, the only ones who think they know better and are better than everyone else. Unfortunately as you get older you learn what IS MORE IMPORTANT and it is NOT THE LIFE OF LUXURY but a simpler life one all should learn before it is too late. Please help with that by preserving not destroying.

There is nothing else on this planet that gives me more hope and joy than watching nature's beauty. Whether it's in the wonder that a child experiences or my own experience, I find great pleasure and peace as I experience the outdoors. I am all too often saddened by how I see our landscape changing. I have been to places in this world where the land was not a priority on the agenda of governments and the consequences are too many to count. The destruction and disease that is a result of not thinking about how our planet survives and functions WILL affect us. My memories of trips to the National Parks are precious and I don't ever want to say "I visited this area of the country when it was pristine and beautiful" while looking out at a marred or developed landscape. It would crush me.

I want the next seven (or more) generations to enjoy America's great outdoors too. That's why I am asking you to seize this opportunity to create, expand and better protect America's shared outdoors spaces, including parks, forests, wildlife refuges, wilderness, trails, wild and scenic rivers and historic sites and monuments, and to find new ways to support conservation of our farms, ranchlands and forests. --Seize the opportunity that the upcoming Park Service centennial provides to renew our national parks. The administration should apply the lessons that were learned from the Centennial Initiative to developing a new public-private partnership to prepare our parks for their next century. We need a new national campaign that will involve people in communities throughout the country in protecting our parks for the next seven generations. There is an enormous amount of deferred maintenance to address as well as additional protective acquisitions needed to preserve the integrity of our parks and wild spaces. --We need a serious effort to finally protect wolves and other endangered species throughout our park system and beyond the parks' borders.

As the pressures of modern life continually increase, so does the need to unplug and reconnect with Nature. I want the next generation to realize that they are an integral part of this planet, not just a stop on the internet. I want Americans to be able to climb this country's incredible mountains, marvel at its waterfalls, wander through its canyons and forests, and enjoy the solitude of wilderness. Humans are but one small portion of life on this planet, but we have the power to protect or destroy the other lifeforms. Which will we do? I ask you to seize this opportunity to create, expand and better protect America's shared outdoors spaces, including parks, forests, wildlife refuges, wilderness, trails, wild and scenic rivers and historic sites and monuments, and to find new ways to support conservation of our farms, ranchlands and forests. Our national parks are truly the gems in our country's crown. The United States is unique in preserving so much of our beautiful wilderness in this way.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

I want the next generation to enjoy America's great outdoors too. That's why I am asking you to seize this opportunity to create, expand and better protect America's shared outdoors spaces, including parks, forests, wildlife refuges, wilderness, trails, wild and scenic rivers and historic sites and monuments, and to find new ways to support conservation of our farms, ranch lands and forests.

Please create, expand and better protect America's shared outdoors spaces, including parks, forests, wildlife refuges, wilderness, trails, wild and scenic rivers and historic sites and monuments, and to find new ways to support conservation of our farms, ranchlands and forests. They also provide some of America's finest outdoor classrooms and serve as a basis for conservation, history, and civics education for millions of people each year.

Learn from Parks Canada as part of this. --Increase wilderness areas in parks as appropriate, and make sure they're full-blown wilderness.

I spent time in and learned from the Wichita Mountains Wildlife Reserve here in Oklahoma and the Lake Oachita State Park in Arkansas. These places mean a lot to my family and friends. I still haven't traveled to many of the National Parks and long to do so when I have vacation time. My partner and I plan to take our child (I am currently pregnant with my first child) to these parks and reserves to bond with him/her and teach him/her about life.

Ou National Parks are the Last Remnants of Our Once Beautiful & Pristine Country. WQE have a Moral Responsibility to Protect & Preserve them Forever !

I would like the next generation to enjoy America's great outdoors too. That's why I am asking you to seize this opportunity to create, expand and better protect America's shared outdoors spaces, including parks, forests, wildlife refuges, wilderness, trails, wild and scenic rivers and historic sites and monuments, and to find new ways to support conservation of our farms, ranchlands and forests. I encourage your administration to take the following steps:

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

I want the my grandchildren to enjoy America's great outdoors too. That's why I am asking you to create, expand and better protect America's shared outdoors spaces, including parks, forests, wildlife refuges, wilderness, trails, wild and scenic rivers and historic sites and monuments, and to find new ways to support conservation of our farms, ranchlands and forests. When I think of America's Great Outdoors, like you I think of our national parks. I know you vacationed briefly this summer in Acadia. National parks play a tremendous role in connecting people, young and old to the outdoors. --Seize the opportunity that the upcoming Park Service centennial provides to renew our national parks. --Provide permanent, mandatory funding for the Land and Water Conservation Fund. --Do more to use national parks to inspire and educate young people. --Build on programs that work. The National Park Service has tremendous technical expertise and know-how that can help communities preserve their special places and provide recreational and educational opportunities for people. A recent study commissioned by the National Parks Conservation Association found that every federal dollar invested in national parks generates at least four dollars of economic value to the public. Americans care about the future of these incredible places, so they will be there for our children and grandchildren to enjoy. Thank you for caring.

The legacy you leave will be remembered forever. Will it be a legacy of destruction of the wild places or one of thankfulness for helping the wild places?

I am lucky. I get to enjoy GTNP anytime I want, but I want YOUR CHILDREN to enjoy America's great outdoors too. That's why I am asking you to seize this opportunity to create, expand and better protect America's shared outdoors spaces, including parks, forests, wildlife refuges, wilderness, trails, wild and scenic rivers and historic sites and monuments, and to find new ways to support conservation of our farms, ranchlands and forests.

It has been the role of the President of the United States to create and preserve the National Parks. This legacy has passed on to you to preserve these parks for future generations. And part of that is to preserve the environment so that the Parks and National Preserves will still be intact. My brothers and sisters and I have a love and appreciation for the National Parks and Preserves. Mrs.

In addition, I think now is a good time to introduce a new work program, similar to the New Deal's WPA, to hire unemployed folks to work in the parks doing revitalization, clean up, and needed maintenance and improvements. I realize there would be great Republican opposition, but they oppose everything anyway.

I want the next generation to enjoy America's great outdoors too. That's why I'm asking you to seize this opportunity to create, expand and better protect America's shared outdoors spaces, including parks, forests, wildlife refuges, wilderness, trails, wild and scenic rivers and historic sites and monuments, and to find new ways to support conservation of our farms, ranchlands and forests. National parks play a tremendous role in connecting people, young and old, to the outdoors, protecting wildlife, preserving the natural and cultural diversity of our nation, and contributing to the health of our people. I ask that your administration take the following steps:

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Our family remembers with awe and satisfaction the trip we made across America. We visited the Rockies, Yellowstone, Zion, Bryce, the Great Sand Dunes and many more of our nation's great public forests and parks. We need to keep those areas protected and available for the enjoyment of the generations to come after us.

I have always enjoyed hiking and camping in our national parks, forests and recreation areas. My children and I go on vacation to our National Parks every year. We go camping and canoeing in the Delaware Water Gap National Recreational Area near our home, on many weekends throughout the year. We also camp for 2 weeks every summer on Cape Cod National Seashore in Truro. I have plans to take them west to camp in the Grand Canyon and the Rocky mountains next year. I am also a boy scout leader and take boys of all ages into our national and state parks and recreation areas every month. . I want my future grandchildren and the next generation to enjoy America's great outdoors also. So I am asking you to please make it a priority of yours to create, expand and better protect America's commons, our outdoors spaces, including parks, forests, wildlife refuges, wilderness, trails, wild and scenic rivers and historic sites and monuments, and to find new ways to support conservation of our farms, ranchlands and forests. I have spent many weeks camping, hiking, learning and appreciating nature in our national parks and forests. National parks play an important role in connecting people, young and old, to the outdoors, preserving the natural and cultural diversity of our nation, and contributing to the health of our people. I cant think of anything more important than that to teach our children. I believe that our national parks have suffered from neglect and understaffing for the past 20 years. I would love to see your administration do more to make our National parks, forests, wilderness areas and recreation areas a higher priority on your agenda for the benefit of all Americans. Please consider taking the following actions to support and build our national parks.

: I believe that the vast majority of Americans care about the future of our incredible natural places. Everyone shares the goal of preserving and protecting as much of our natural heritage as possible, so they will be there for our children and grandchildren to enjoy. Please remember the importance of protecting national parks and the many programs managed by the National Park Service that improve our communities. National parks are good investments in our future. Thank you for all of your efforts on behalf of America and it's people. Thank you also for considering my comments.

I absolutely adore America's National Parks. They are breathtakingly beautiful, and definitely worth traveling to see. I have been too many, and they are my favorite places in all of the United States. Any time I have a visitor, I suggest that we go to a National Park. It would be a great tragedy to lose these beautiful places, especially since they are some of the last great natural areas in the country.

I am an ardent backpacker and supporter of our wilderness area and national parks. They are a gem my grandchildren are now enjoying.

Discussion Question 1

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(cont.)

Good Afternoon, I hope this letter finds you well. As an editor for a state wildlife magazine, I understand the value- economic, aesthetic, and social- of the natural environment. Not only does our food and fuel come from our environment (more and more so now that we are working to reduce dependence on foreign oil), but our quality of life is directly related to and dependent on the natural environment of our country. More and more young people are spending time in front of the television and video games where there are no repercussions for their decisions and actions. A child who spends time in the natural world experiences true responsivity (if you shoot a bird with a BB gun, you then experience the injured or dying bird firsthand- an experience that a child would not soon forget). Beyond the teaching of values that comes from the natural world, in S.C. alone, natural resources are said to contribute over 300 million dollars to the state economy. While I work as an editor, I am also a poet, and I am inspired most by the natural world. The gentle beauty and the power of nature found there is without compare in the man-made environments of the city. It is in the natural world where the creator, whomever or whatever you believe the creator to be, comes nearest to us and we are able to take time to contemplate what it means to be human and what we want to do to create value in our short lives- for ourselves, our families, our friends, and even strangers. Protecting our National Parks is an integral part of giving ourselves and future generations the chance to live a good, full life. There is nothing that is more important. Thank you very much,

Mr. President, as I ponder your "America's Great Outdoors" initiative I am moved to appeal to you for your positive consideration of the process defined herein by the National Parks Conservation Association (NPCA). My family and I have enjoyed our numerous visits to Parks throughout the USA over our many years. We must continue to support fully the conservation of this truly unique heritage developed so many years ago.

America's Great Outdoors equals OUR national parks. We are permanent lovers of OUR national parks - and enjoyed learning about their history from the Burn's special.

Thousands of youngsters get their first real understanding of an ecosystem or their first glimpse of the setting of an event they studied in history in a national park. These places make those lessons come alive. They are treasures we can't afford to lose.

My favorite childhood memories are from our trips to visit Mt. Rainier and other state and national parks and conservation areas.

Having had the great pleasure to visit the wonderful state of Alaska and Denali National Park, we need to preserve more land in the contiguous 48 states. Please make this a necessary task.

I think it is very important that we preserve large areas of public lands and waters to secure the health of our ecosystems, ensure wildlife conservation, maintain public access to parks and open spaces, reduce the impacts of climate change, and protect our cultural heritage.

I also think our forests are good for our air quality and green house cover. It is not just the Amazon which help our earth.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

I want the my kids and grandkids to enjoy America's great outdoors too. That's why I am asking you to seize this opportunity to create, expand and better protect America's shared outdoors spaces, including parks, forests, wildlife refuges, wilderness, trails, wild and scenic rivers and historic sites and monuments, and to find new ways to support conservation of our farms, ranch lands and forests. One of the things I think of,

I hope you'll agree with me that the next generation of Americans should be able to enjoy America's great outdoors. Please take this opportunity to create, expand and better protect America's shared outdoors spaces, including parks, forests, wildlife refuges, wilderness, trails, wild and scenic rivers and historic sites and monuments, and to find new ways to support conservation of our farms, ranchlands and forests. Our

Please expand and better protect America's shared outdoors spaces, including parks, forests, wildlife refuges, wilderness, trails, wild and scenic rivers and historic sites and monuments, and to find new ways to support conservation of our farms, ranchlands and forests. National parks play a tremendous role in connecting people to the outdoors, preserving the natural and cultural diversity of our nation, and contributing to the health of our people. Thank you.

Will the next generation to enjoy America's great outdoors too? That's why I am asking you to seize this opportunity to create, expand and better protect America's shared outdoors spaces, including parks, forests, wildlife refuges, wilderness, trails, wild and scenic rivers and historic sites and monuments, and to find new ways to support conservation of our farms, ranchlands and forests.

Our family has spent most of our vacations enjoying our country's magnificent National Parks. Many of our friends have done the same. Some of our most enjoyable discussions with family and friends revolve around the amazing and wonderful experiences we've had at our National Parks. --Preserve large areas of public lands and waters to secure the health of our ecosystems, ensure wildlife conservation, maintain public access to parks and open spaces, reduce the impacts of climate change, and protect our cultural heritage. --Strengthen the capacity for federal, regional, state, and local agencies and private landowners to work collaboratively in order to protect not only our national parks but the wildlife, plants, and rivers beyond park borders. Improve opportunities to use our national parks to get kids into active, healthy, outdoor activity that will help them lead long, healthy lives. Americans care about the future of these incredible places, so they will be there for our children and grandchildren to enjoy. Please remember the importance of protecting national parks and the many programs managed by the National Park Service that improve our communities. National parks are vital investments in our future.

IT IS ESSENTIAL THAT FUNDING NECESSARY TO PROTECT PARK WILDLIFE AND TO DO WHAT IS NEEDED TO UPGRADE VISITOR SAFETY AND TO ENHANCE THE EXPERIENCE OF VISITING OUR NATIONAL PARKS. A GOOD TARGET FOR COMPLETING THIS IMPORTANT WORK IS THE CENTENIAL OF THE NATIONAL PARK SERVICE IN 2016.

Discussion Question 1

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(cont.)

In 1972 our family of four took a six week road trip in our new VW camper and toured America's National Parks and Forests from New Jersey to California and back. This exceptional trip has given us and our children lasting memories of the beauty and diversity of our country. In order for others to enjoy our National Parks in the future we hope the administration will take the following steps:

I have personally visited many over the years. They are our National treasure.

My husband and I are trying to visit all of our National Parks. We have enjoyed 39 of them so far.

But that is not all. For many, national parks are too far away to be the only source of natural land. Greater efforts must be made to retain wooded areas, swamps, and grasslands throughout our towns. This is the most effective way to educate our children about the great outdoors, and to teach them appreciation for nature. The local level is the only way to do this on a day-to-day basis. Wildlife cannot fully thrive in a cityscape, and must have real forests and other habitat to escape to. Native plant life varies greatly from region to region, and the loss of any part of this diversity is a great loss indeed. Additionally, damage to any piece of the environment only further disrupts the delicate ecosystems. The natural areas dotted throughout the American landscape are often forgotten because individually they are so comparatively small. Yet added up, their land mass is at least equal to that of our national parks. While large nature preserves are undoubtedly important, smaller reserves must also be given legal protection. Please commit to the care of the nation's national parks, but do not forget the smaller parks and woods that are such a significant resource.

My husband and I just returned from 4 days at the Great Sand Dunes National Park. It was one of the most fun and also relaxing vacations I've ever had in my 64 years. One thing you and Mrs. Obama should know: The kids have an absolute ball running through the sand! Talk about exercise and getting kids to lose weight!

Ensure that national parks have the funds necessary to safeguard park wildlife and provide park visitors with a safe, clean, and rewarding park experience by the National Park Service's centennial in 2016. Fully and permanently fund the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) to enable the Park Service to buy private land within park boundaries from willing sellers. Preserve large areas of public lands and waters to secure the health of our ecosystems, ensure wildlife conservation, maintain public access to parks and open spaces, reduce the impacts of climate change, and protect our cultural heritage. Strengthen the capacity for federal, regional, state, and local agencies and private landowners to work collaboratively in order to protect not only our national parks but the wildlife, plants, and rivers beyond park borders. Improve opportunities to use our national parks to get kids into active, healthy, outdoor activity that will help them lead long, healthy lives.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

National parks play a tremendous role in connecting people, young and old, to the outdoors, preserving the natural and cultural diversity of our nation, acting as havens for some of our most iconic wildlife, and contributing to the health of our people.

In my recent return from a vacation in the "Last Frontier", I now ask that you continue to focus on the preservation of national parks and the precious land surrounding these areas. Seeing all forms of nature's wonderful gift to mankind, whether it was the Bald Eagle flying overhead, the Humpback Whale swimming along side the boat or a Lynx walking by on the road in Denali, this precious land needs to be preserved for generations to come.

When I think of America's Great Outdoors, I think of our national parks, and the wild mustangs on our public lands.

I was fortunate enough to grow up in the West, near some of our most wonderful national parks.

Nothing has made such an impact in my life as my early years being exposed to the national parks of this country. We have so many extraordinary, irreplaceable treasures.

Please preserve our national parks and open spaces. Add to that, set aside national parks under water in the oceans. Set up your legacy for generations to come. As an example, Italy has done this off the coast of the Cinque Terra. Please protect the water and ocean. Add to that protected areas in the oceans and Gulf of Mexico.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Heed the advice of the National Parks Second Century Commission, a group of well respected individuals who spent more than a year developing a vision for how to protect the parks and connect Americans to them in the new century. --Provide permanent, mandatory funding for the Land and Water Conservation Fund. Seventeen billion dollars in revenues, primarily from oil and gas leasing, have accumulated during the past several decades in the Land and Water Conservation Fund, unspent for its intended purpose. This money should be spent as originally promised to support parks, seashores, forests, and water resources across the country, rather than just another broken federal promise. What's been happening in the Gulf of Mexico reminds us how important it is to keep that promise. --Build on programs that work. The National Park Service has tremendous technical expertise that can help communities preserve their special places and provide recreational and educational opportunities for people. The Park Service's Rivers and Trails Conservation Assistance program has a long history of working with cities, suburbs, and small communities across the country on conservation efforts and providing expertise to help conserve rivers, preserve open space, and develop trails and greenways. We already have a great program, but it's under-resourced. There's no need to reinvent the wheel. Invest in a model that is working in communities across the country. --We need more parks for our growing population to enjoy. The park system must also evolve to fully represent the history and culture of our diversifying nation. Please evaluate and consider new sites to bring into the system that better represent our changing country, and protect remaining natural areas before we lose them to neglect or destructive uses. --Provide wildlife corridors to ensure that the wildlife in our parks can find the food it needs and reproduce successfully outside, as well as within, park boundaries. We need cooperative efforts between federal, state and local agencies and private landowners, because wildlife doesn't understand boundaries on a map.

PROTECT OUR NATIONAL PARKS AND LANDS NOW BEFORE THEY ARE DEVELOPED, DRILLED, DESTROYED, ETC. SO FUTURE GENERATIONS WILL HAVE PROTECTED ALL THE LANDS PRESERVED BY PAST PRESIDENTS AND PRIVATE CITIZENS!!!!

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

As I grew up, our family vacations were frequently camping trips to different National Parks. As my own children grew up we continued this tradition. My children have since commented about the tremendous variety of experiences these vacations provided them and how they feel privileged to have seen so much more of our beautiful country than many of their friends have. One of the goals my husband and I are still working towards is to visit & experience all of our great Parks. I only pray that we have the opportunity to do so before funding or environmental issues cause them to deteriorate! National parks also provide some of America's finest outdoor classrooms and serve as a basis for conservation, history, and civics education for millions of people each year.....From personal experience I have seen how education can interact with Parks to excite kids with hands-on learning experiences. My parents were teachers in the Cincinnati OH area and one of the best & favorite field trips they tried to schedule annually was to take their students to the Cinti Nature Center where they had the opportunity for exactly this type of experience! We need more parks for people to enjoy. The park system must also evolve to fully represent the history and culture of our diversifying nation. Please evaluate and consider new sites to bring into the system that better represent our changing country, and protect remaining natural areas before we use them all up. I believe --Heed the advice of the National Parks Second Century Commission. --Seize the opportunity that the upcoming Park Service centennial provides to renew our national parks. --Provide permanent, mandatory funding for the Land and Water Conservation Fund. The seventeen billion dollars in revenues accumulated during the past several decades in the Land and Water Conservation, unspent for its intended purpose, should be spent as originally promised to support parks, seashores, forests, and waterways across the country, rather than just another broken federal promise. What's happening in the Gulf of Mexico reminds us how important it is to keep that promise. --Do more to use national parks to inspire and educate young people. Our national parks are classrooms for discovery and learning for students and teachers. Programs like Teacher to Ranger to Teacher (TRT) should be expanded. The Department of Education should work with the Park Service to excite kids with hands-on learning experiences. --Build on programs that work. The National Park Service has tremendous technical expertise and know-how that can help communities preserve their special places and provide recreational and educational opportunities for people. --Provide wildlife corridors to ensure that the wildlife in our parks can find the food it needs and reproduce successfully outside, as well as within park boundaries.

All the reasons below are true. But the most important reason keeping our parks viable for the long term is that our citizens will forget what something close to pristine nature ever existed and will no place to rediscover that. We are already losing the race to save the climate, must we also lose any contact with a world in which humans hadn't yet denatured everything?

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Protect the parks and connect Americans to them in the next century. -- We need to involve people in communities throughout the country in protecting our parks for the next generation. -- Provide permanent, mandatory funding for the Land and Water Conservation Fund. This money should be spent as originally promised to support parks, seashores, forests, and waterways across the country. --Do more to use national parks to inspire and educate young people. Our national parks are classrooms for discovery and learning for students and teachers. --Build on programs that work. The National Park Service has tremendous technical expertise and know-how that can help communities preserve their special places and provide recreational and educational opportunities for people. --We need to protect remaining natural areas before we use them all up. Americans care about the future of these incredible places, so they will be there for our children and grandchildren to enjoy. Please remember the importance of protecting national parks.

Although I am not a teacher I have worked in Education for the past 28 years. I have worked elementary, middle and high schools, mostly in poor neighborhoods with minority and special needs students. I have had first hand experience taking students on trips to parks and "wild" places and I have seen the power of those natural experiences on the lives of the students I work with. Whether it was a backpacking trip, a weekend in Yosemite or a day trip to a natural area in San Francisco, I have seen students who were not too interested in school or nature change their attitudes about learning and the world outside their front door. Nature is powerful, it reaches right inside and grabs you. We never have enough money for education and so we never have enough money to fund field trips. We need to act to fully fund education and to ensure that an important component is time in natural settings. Children need to know that the world around them is important and that they play an important role in protecting and nurturing the world around them. We need to find ways for all children to experience the outdoors. There are not words to describe the look on a child's face after they have made it to the top of "mountain" or waterfall or have watched a family of deer feed in a meadow. All children need these experiences. They will become better adults for having had these experiences.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

By traveling to other countries I came to realize what a great asset our National Parks are. They offer educational and recreational opportunities. They support whole communities and offer jobs to millions of americans. They are and could be even more a major financial asset to our country if we invested in them the way we should by supporting their health and welfare. People from other countries are fascinated with the history, ecosystems and animals found in the United States and immortalized by many books and movies. It all began with President Roosevelt and the purpose of the National Park system is even more important today than it was in Teddy Roosevelt's day. Our park system is a way to preserve our heritage for generations to come. Our National Parks were set aside for all Americans for generations to come, to help preserve what made this country great and to ensure there would always be "wild places" to reconnect with our heritage. The park system was not set up to ensure gas, oil and other corporations would have easy access to our resources. They were not set up so ATV, ORV and snowmobiles could have unlimited spaces to be driven. Our parks were set aside for Americans to enjoy nature, learn from it and learn from our past. Please help boost the health of our park system. Our national parks are so important to the animals who live there, they are so important to the people whose livelihoods depend upon them and they are so important to all Americans who go to enjoy their history to allow them to go to the wayside. Please, invest in their future and listen to the experts who have the parks and the American people's best interests at heart. Thank you for your time.

You and your family enjoy vacations and seeing all the beauty of america, we must keep it that way!

I have just returned from vacation to Yellowstone and Glacier National Parks. The first time I visited a National Park was in 1961 when I toured Yellowstone. It is truly wonderful to rub shoulders with fellow US citizens and citizens of so many foreign countries in these awesome places. Our parks speak highly of our values. May they last forever.

re: National Parks Are America's Great Outdoors Dear Barack Obama, I am a teacher who every year for the last 10 years has taken my students to various national and state parks as has every teacher in our school. The children learned about the interconnectedness of all life and about what all life needs to survive on this planet. They learned how different species adapt. They learned the cultures of the early peoples of our land. They learned how we are all dependent on nature to live. And most of all they learned to love, appreciate and take care of the wonderful and beautiful natural gifts we have been given. Sincerely,

When I was in college, I worked in Yellowstone National Park for 4 summers. As our children were growing up we went camping in several National Parks. Now that we are retired, we plan our fall camping trips around visits to National Parks. I cannot imagine not being able to spend time in National Parks.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

I live in Port Angeles, WA "where the mountains meet the sea". Olympic National Park and the Pacific Coast Marine Sanctuary offer incredible opportunities for all people to experience the beauty and wonder of the natural world. They also offer us to challenge ourselves (with our children and grandchildren) on our physical and mental abilities as we explore wilderness. It builds confidence and reminds us of our duty to protect and preserve these treasures for all future generations. I would love to host you and your family to visit these places with my family (I have granddaughters who are nine and eleven who are outdoor enthusiasts!) We have much the same feel in places as Hawaii, just chillier!!! Our parks are our heritage and future-we must use them to keep Americans both energized and rejuvenated. Thank you

Our national parks may be the most significant, altruistic action the government has taken for its citizens. Please continue to protect, support and enhance these great American legacies so that all future generations may enjoy their splendor.

I grew up in one of our OLDEST national parks, a beautiful spot that still calls me back to revisit this magical place, Hot Springs National Park, in Arkansas. People from all over the world would come to visit the 'SPA', take the mineral baths, and drink the incredible water (I still have the water delivered to my residence, no matter the address in all the lower 48). This National Park, within the city, is so beautiful and contributes to much to the history of Arkansas, the Louisiana Purchase, as well as the history of the 'crime' in the 20th century - let me mention Al Capone and others from Chicago - and today serves as the site of the claim to fame of the hometown of our 43rd President, Bill Clinton (he was 5 years ahead of me in school).

My personal experience with Outdoor Schools, family camping, and hiking and backpacking in beautiful natural areas has been the highlight of my life. National Parks, by their very awe-inspiring nature, are the perfect place to instill a wonder of the natural world in children especially. Once they connect, they will fight to save what's left.

Americans care about the future of these incredible places, so they will be there for our children and grandchildren to enjoy and remember those that protected and preserved them. Please remember the importance of protecting national parks and the many programs managed by the National Park Service that improve our communities. National parks are good investments in our future.

I think of my father, who was so proud of his Golden Age Passport to the National Parks; he had earned it not just because he was 'over 60' but because of many years of taking the family to visit national parks from California to Wisconsin, and many states in-between! I grew-up loving the outdoors because our family enjoyed every summer weekend and every vacation in one of our National Parks!

Please remember how fondly Teddy Roosevelt is remembered for his role in helping to create our parks. They are valued and loved by Americans!

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

National parks provide some of America's finest outdoor classrooms and serve as a basis for conservation, history, and civics education for millions of people each year. Ideas: steps your administration could take:: The First Lady is doing an excellent job of promoting exercise and getting out of doors. the key is getting PARENTS to do the same thing and set the example.

This country's national parks are truly wonders of the world. They sustain and embody what we all know we cannot live without, the earth. For me, America's Great Outdoors, is synonymous with freedom. Thank you for listening to my words today.

I have shared a great gift with my children camping with them and visiting parks. These visits make them better children, students and protectors of the parks.

When I think of America's Great Outdoors, I think of our national parks, as the Original representation by its Founders Intent to provide each Citizens equal Opportunity to experience this Great Nation Land Marks ."This Land is Your Land this Land is My Land ".

As you know from your recent visit to Acadia National Park, preservation of our open spaces is crucial allowing generations of Americans to enjoy our unique natural resources.

Our National Parks are the BEST of America.

My family has visited several of the NPS sites, and we think that they are terrific--beautiful with knowledgeable tour guides. We hope to keep visiting new NPS sites for many year to come.

In addition to all the above, the National Parks will be essential for protecting America's biodiversity, not only the big obvious trees, birds & mammals, but also many of the smaller wildlife

When I think of America's Great Outdoors, I think of our national parks, especially the Smokies where I spent my childhood vacation and visit every year now.

When I think of America's Great Outdoors, I think of our national parks and our state parks. These parks play a tremendous role in connecting people, young and old, to the outdoors, preserving the natural and cultural diversity of our nation, and contributing to the health of our people. They provide some of America's finest outdoor classrooms and serve as a basis for conservation, history, and civics education for millions of people each year.

Every vacation we have taken in the 10 years has included a National Park...they are truly the wonders of our world!

National Parks are part of my family's life style. We enjoy camping in Yellowstone, Badlands, Smoky Mountain and other National Parks. I use these experiences to educate my children about the importance of preserving these natural areas and the life within them.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Growing up in the 1950-60's with 4 younger siblings, our family budget was always tight on my Father's salary as a school teacher. There were never many "extras". Our first-ever family vacation was a cross-country trip in 1965 to visit relatives and National Parks. It was wonderful. Since that trip, all of us have enjoyed MANY visits to MANY of the National Parks (as well as to relatives). The sights, the social interactions, and all the things we've learned - geology, botany, history of cultures, etc. - are priceless. As I write this, we are packing for a week at Maine's Acadia National Park, one of our favorites for family walks & hikes.

I feel they are one of the best things our government has ever instituted, and am grateful for Pres. T. Roosevelt's foresight in establishing National Parks. It is important to insure their future.

As a retired couple we use the parks often. This is one place everyone can see a return on their taxes.

Some of my favorite places on this earth are national parks.

I live very near to Redwood National Park. What would we do without their protection? They would be open to guns, hunting, deterioration and would deprive so many of the experience of our national heritage.

Mr President, I hope you and your family enjoyed your vacation in Acadia National Park. Thank you for your efforts in supporting clean energy, on behalf of our planet.

This is why my small home business of photography services has donated all our fine art nature photography from all of our State and National Parks to the following organizations: Smokey Mountain National Park Service, The Nature Conservancy, and to West Virginia National Parks district and to State Parks. com to raise awareness of our current situation in the National and State Parks, and to show everyone the beauty, nature and the importance of our parks in the US. Thank you for considering my comments and views on this matter. Much appreciated.

I'm really glad your family visited a national park for your recent vacation. If we spent 1/32nd of what we've spent on the wars in Asia on our parks, I think all Americans would be able to take their families to a Park. I've left in the stuff that comes with the letter, but I wanted you to know that I think you're doing a fantastic job, and to hang in there.

America's places of natural beauty are precious.

Thank you for considering my comments, and working to keep our national parks a valued resource that all citizens can enjoy.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

As an avid traveler, camper and hiker in our national parks, monuments, historic sites and recreation areas, I implore you to increase funding to the National Park Service. We must not only protect those units we now have but need to acquire new potential sites for the National Parks system. I am now in my mid-70s and cannot travel or hike as much as I used to, but these treasures must not be lost or degraded. Our children, grandchildren and future generations deserve better. As a resident of Los Angeles, I hope your administration will seriously consider the establishment of a National Recreation area in our San Gabriel Mountains--an underfunded part of the national forest system. These mountains are heavily used but the visitors experience is limited by lack of access, lack of rangers, undeveloped areas for parking, lack of information about the geological and biological significance of the area. The area is now being surveyed for consideration as a national recreation area. In order to connect wildlife corridors in the region, including the San Gabriel River, Rio Hondo and the Puente-Chino Hills in a NRA is important to allow free access of wildlife from the San Gabriel Mountains down the rivers to the Puente-Chino Hills in to the San Ana Mountains. And if financially possible, allow visitors to stay without current fees for parking. This discourages those with limited income from visiting the area. On a broader scale,

Mr. President, I strongly believe that everything that has been stated above enriches or will enrich what the "American Experience" is all about. That is part of the legacy of our country and what is uniquely termed the American landscape. Please heed this humble perspective on what we need to do to protect this heritage.

Some of my most cherished experiences with my family are trips we took in which we visited Zion, Rocky Mountain Park, and North Cascades Park. These places challenge, inspire, re-energize, and nourish those who visit them.

I visit state and national parks on a regular basis. I love the serenity I get from being with nature. It feeds my soul in a way nothing else can.

Pursuant to the America's Great Outdoors initiative, --Swt up a program for priority purchase of conservation easements from rural landowners threatened with foreclosure, provided such landowners use the funds for paying down their mortgages. and paying arrearages. --Preserve large areas of public lands and waters to secure the health of our ecosystems, ensure wildlife conservation, maintain public access to parks and open spaces, reduce the impacts of climate change, and protect our cultural heritage. --Strengthen the capacity for federal, regional, state, and local agencies and private landowners to work collaboratively in order to protect not only our national parks but the wildlife, plants, and rivers beyond park borders.

I just rode up on the Blue Ridge Parkway last week, and sat by a little stream. It really renewed my spirit.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Please seize this opportunity to create, expand and better protect America's shared outdoors spaces, including parks, forests, wildlife refuges, wilderness, trails, wild and scenic rivers and historic sites and monuments, and to find new ways to support conservation of our farms, ranchlands and forests. --Do more to use national parks to inspire and educate young people. Our national parks are classrooms for discovery and learning for students and teachers. Programs like Teacher to Ranger to Teacher (TRT) allows teachers from low income school districts to spend the summer working as park rangers where they develop and present interpretive programs, staff visitor centers, and develop curriculum-based materials which they bring back to the classroom. This program should be expanded. The Department of Education should work with the Park Service to nourish kids with hands-on learning experiences.

I hope we can count on you to save this valuable resource for future generations.

National parks play a tremendous role in connecting people, young and old, to the outdoors, preserving the natural and cultural diversity of our nation, and contributing to the health of our people.

I want the next generation to enjoy America's great outdoors too. That's why I am asking you please to seize this opportunity to create, expand and better protect America's shared outdoors spaces, including parks, forests, wildlife refuges, wilderness, trails, wild and scenic rivers and historic sites and monuments, and to find new ways to support conservation of our farms, ranchlands and forests. Thank you so much for considering my comments.

I will be traveling to the Great Basin National Park the first of next month. I have wanted to see it since moving to Nevada 19 years ago. I am so happy that it is available to me. I want the next generation of Americans to be able to enjoy our great National Parks America's for years to come, but we need to expand this dream. Our great outdoors is a treasure that we must guard carefully. That's why I am asking you to seize this opportunity to create, expand and better protect America's shared outdoors spaces, including parks, forests, wildlife refuges, wilderness, trails, wild and scenic rivers and historic sites and monuments, and to find new ways to support conservation of our farms, ranchlands and forests. Here are my suggestions.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

I want the next generation to enjoy America's great outdoors too, and to breathe the good air it makes for us, and I want the other living things that share these spaces with us to stay alive. That's why I am asking you to seize this opportunity to create, expand and better protect America's shared outdoors spaces, including parks, forests, wildlife refuges, wilderness, trails, wild and scenic rivers and historic sites and monuments, and to find new ways to support conservation of our family farms (industrial farms are the nation's worst polluters), ranchlands and forests. National parks provide America's finest outdoor classrooms and serve as a basis for conservation, history, civics and ethics education for millions of people each year. Who knows, a little more green, a little more contact with the wild, a littler more space that isn't "owned" (and exploited) and people might be weaned from their current and politically destructive addiction to anger and indignation! A recent study commissioned by the National Parks Conservation Association found that every federal dollar invested in national parks generates at least four dollars of economic value to the public. In 2009, as the recession took its toll, national park visitation increased on average by nearly 4 percent, demonstrating the enhanced value of our national parks to our people in difficult economic times. Americans care about the future of these incredible places, so they will be there for our children and grandchildren to enjoy; and the animals and plants in these places care even more. Please remember the importance of protecting national parks and the many programs managed by the National Park Service that improve our communities.

I would like my son and his children to have the opportunity to enjoy America's great outdoors as I have. So please seize this opportunity to create, expand and better protect America's shared outdoors spaces, including parks, forests, wildlife refuges, wilderness, trails, wild and scenic rivers and historic sites and monuments, and to find new ways to support conservation of our farms, ranchlands and forests.

It's time to do what you said--conservation. In every way, the National parks need our help.

Americans care about the future of these incredible places, so they will be there for our children and grandchildren to enjoy. Please remember the importance of protecting national parks and the many programs managed by the National Park Service that improve our communities. National parks are good investments in our future, and with 6 children and 4 grandchildren, I most definitely have a vested interest in the future.

When I think of America's Great Outdoors, I think of our national parks (especially the Everglades).

Save the outdoors.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

While we are aggressively trying to protect the Gulf Coastline, let's not forget America's hard earned treasures collected in our National Parks system. Recently the Ken Burns tribute called it America's greatest idea and the treasures are in dire need of protection as they are "loved to death." Ironically it's both a testament to the drawing power of the parks and the need for maintenance to preserve areas that are heavily utilized that make protection of the national parks a high priority. I support the initiatives recommended by various committees and the National Parks and Conservation Association: I believe it is more cost-effective in the long run to make expenditures now for preservation than to try to recover precious resources that might be beyond recovery in the future. These gems are the nation's true legacy whether in urban settings or remote wilderness.

As a person who loves the beauty of nature and finds peace, renewal, wonder and inspiration in the great outdoors, I am concerned for the future of our National Parks. These parks were established to preserve a small portion of our rich natural, national treasures for the enjoyment and use by all young and old, rich and poor. They provide some of America's finest outdoor classrooms and serve as a basis for conservation, history, and civics education for millions of people each year. Neglect and urban sprawl are threatening many of these parks. To halt further deterioration of our National Parks System, I urge your administration to take the following steps:

Preservation and increasing our National Parks is crucial to the survival of our planet.

I hope your administration will take the following steps: I know you have enjoyed the National Parks also. I have fond memories of many good times spent in the National Parks. Blackwater Falls in West Virginia was a place of unspoiled beauty and I hope it still is, since I haven't been there in a while. Rocky Mountain National Park was also a place I have fond memories of. Please help give these opportunities to enjoy the outdoors to everybody.

Somehow include funds to help states that are currently closing parks (Arizona) to deal with budget issues.

And protecting national parks means protecting ecosystems, which in return helps us live in a healthier environment.

Last year and this we visited Grand Canyon, Yosemite, Bryce Canyon, and Zion National Parks. We live right next to the Cape Cod National Seashore. Thus we are very much aware that our Dr.

The New Jersey Pinelands is one of the greatest accomplishments of the Byrne Administration and remains a success story in large-scale landscape conservation. As participants in the creation of the Pinelands, and former governors of New Jersey, we have seen this success first-hand. The Pine lands represents a model of effective landscape conservation that should be highlighted in the report you are preparing for the America's Great Outdoors initiative.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Thirty-two years ago, Congress created the Pinelands National Reserve as the country's first "national reserve." The resulting partnership and ongoing collaboration between the state of New Jersey and the federal government has been enormously successful in protecting this million-acre working landscape. The Pinelands now preserves the largest surviving open space on the eastern seaboard between Maine and the Everglades - and it is located in the nation's most densely populated state. More than 20 million people live within an hour's drive of the Pinelands.

Given its record of success, the Pinelands is one approach that can serve as a positive example of landscape conservation through regional land use planning. The Pinelands, along with other approaches, should be presented as an option which other regions may consider in creating their own solutions to the challenge of sustaining beautiful, culturally rich and prosperous landscapes.

Having just hiked Mount Marcy, the tallest mountain in New York State and one of the Adirondacks' 46 High Peaks this weekend, the exhilaration that comes from leaving one's comfort zone and entering the natural space we have preserved is unmatched in any video game or YouTube video out there. Future generations of Americans cannot respect what they do not know - maintain our wilderness!

There is hope on the horizon! In response to several abuses committed against citizens of the great state of Idaho, our very own legislators are responding, and in a POSITIVE way! Earlier one of the recipients on this email list suggested a BOLD yet SIMPLE solution to dealing with abusive, criminal, arrogant groups of people operating unlawfully within our borders. Unlawful, unconstitutional criminal organizations otherwise known as the BLM and USFS. The proposed solution was simple. Turn control of forests and lands within the borders of the state of Idaho over to Idaho control. Now Idaho has written a proposal, passed by the state legislature, to challenge the right of the USFS and BLM to manage lands within the state:

<http://www.legislature.idaho.gov/legislation/2010/HCR058Bookmark.htm> It is obvious no one could destroy the forests and lands within the state any more than the USFS and BLM have already. Top honors for most public land destroyed goes to Suzanne Rainville of the Payette National Forest. In the Payette and Boise national forests, where 800,000 acres of timber was immorally and irresponsibly allowed to burn to the ground. Along with THOUSANDS of critically endangered species forced to die a horrible death along with their habitat! An estimated \$4 billion in standing dead timber was allowed to rot, go to waste or clog Idaho rivers and destroy tens of millions of dollars worth of bridges and roads, and the devastated forest is the "gift that keeps on giving" with every new mudslide and flood, more than three years after the forest' incineration. View photos, FOIA documents and read more here:

<http://usfspayettenationalforest.blogspot.com/p/9-million-wasted-by-payette-national.html>

The federal government is allowed by the US constitution to own up to 10 square miles for any one building or purpose. Therefore the USFS and BLM are unconstitutional entities. It came with great surprise as I glanced upon a bill in the State of Idaho legislature proposing to challenge the constitutionality of the USFS and BLM!!! It is in it's preliminary stages. However, it needs all the support it can get. Read the entire bill online here:

<http://www.legislature.idaho.gov/legislation/2010/HCR058.htm> and here:

<http://www.legislature.idaho.gov/legislation/2010/HCR058Bookmark.htm>

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

I live in Bear Country and hope and expect that this fabulous place will be protected so I, my kids and my grandkids, etc. can continue to enjoy ALL the amazing amenities nature and America's Great Outdoors has to offer. Please protect our public lands, water, air and natural resources.

As an employee in the outdoor industry, my job and my weekend pursuits are directly tied to America's great outdoors. Getting Americans active and outdoors - and ensuring they have affordable, accessible places to play - is good for us, our communities, and our economy. Preserving special places and creating new places to recreate are important to me and future generations; that is why I am asking you to seize this opportunity to protect America's open spaces, parks, forests and wildlife habitats, and to engage Americans in a conservation agenda that recognizes Americans' ties to our lands.

Thanks for coming to Asheville, NC for the listening session. I'm a cyclist and would love more green space in our town. Also more support for protecting land and water - like full dedicated funding for the Land and Water Conservation Fund - so we can keep our natural world from being torn apart by development. We are nothing without nature, water, healthy land.

We are in a fight to preserve the last remnants of the great american west that have not been settled and roaded. This is not once is not a once in a lifetime opportunity its a once in a civilization opportunity to leave our roadless unprotected wilderness alone for all future generations by protecting them now. These areas are so vital to leaving the western landscape intact as near as it was that it should be the top priority for the administrations conservation efforts. I am a hunter and I value these lands, as do the other hunters. Leaving areas roadless is the best way to protect clean water, preserve habitat, and give all Americans a chance to step back in time to what the pioneers felt and saw. Thank you for considering my comments.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

I am a hillbilly of southwest Virginia and I will never see Bristol Bay or any of the beautiful landscape and animals that live in the area of the proposed pebble mine. I will probably not live to see the next decade for I am a survivor of a brain injury and on disability social security. I give what I can to the folks who are trying to save Bristol Bay and the environment and still make ends meet to pay for my medication and the house hold bills. It is not easy to make ends meet but I think that it is important to make sure that there is a wild scenic area still in existence for my children and nieces and nephews and their children for the the children I will never know to experience and for the world to experience in the coming centuries. God gave us this land to be stewards of and he said to us the fields and plants and animals wisely. He never said to exterminate them and to destroy his world for our own selfish greed and well being. In point of fact the most amazing and beneficial drugs and scientific breakthroughs are coming from studying the way nature has found to solve problems and if we destroy nature we will most likely destroy the one thing that may save us in the future. It may be a cure to a disease or a computer design or a osmosis or electrical energy design that is made from biomimicry that we have found but that discovery may never happen if we continue along the path of destruction and selfish greed that we are currently on. I urge you to stop and think for a minute of the lost future we are making for ourselves and change the way we live and think to correct our actions so that tat future will be saved. It is not to late and you are the one who can make that change and that difference. I pray you will be the one with the courage and the foresight to do what is right not what is easy or complacent and follow the pack but to do the correct thing the one that a statesman does and think of the future of the country and the world and stop the destruction before it begins., Please may God grant you the strength to fight the dragging tide of corporate greed and do the right thing for the earth and the future of the earth and mankind. Stop this destructive course before it starts. Change our ways and put us on the path of environmental stability. Sincerely Yours,

The goal to reconnect Americans especially youth with the outdoors can best be done by providing more places for them to enjoy their favorite forms of outdoor recreation. Off Road Vehicle use is by far the most popular form of recreation, followed by Mountain Biking. The Initiative must preserve Multiple Use lands as Multiple Use for current and future generations to enjoy these and all other forms of recreation.

President Obama: Please save nature for us and our children. For so many children, their only contact with nature is a park. Let's expand our local, state and national parks as well as preserve our vast wilderness areas. When I voted for you, I was voting for environment. Thank you for your attention to this very important matter.

I'd like to help protect americas wilderness and creativeness of a country, for the natural beauty and freedom. I'd like to share my gardening Ideas by giving gardens to public parks and having every one come together to learn and love the beauty the world gave us.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

I recently did a river clean up in the Hackensack River in New Jersey. We spent four hours at the clean up site, each of us with a specific task at hand. Some worked along the shore line, others deep in the marshes and a few were out in canoes cleaning up the water itself. At the end of the day, we filled a 40yd truck bed with everything from plastic bottles and styrofoam to such crazy things as toilets and car parts. The lack of concern this country\'s citizens has for its parks, rivers, and land is a disgrace and needs to be challenged with more heavily fined penalties, educating, and organized clean ups.

As a nature enthusiast, I want the next generation to be able to enjoy America's great outdoors too. That is why I am asking you to seize this opportunity to create, expand, and better protect America's shared outdoors spaces including parks, forests, wildlife refuges, wilderness, trails, wild and scenic rivers, and historic sites and monuments, as well as to find new ways to support conservation of our farms, ranchlands, and forests. Thank you.

Gentlemen: Bristol Bay, in Western Alaska, has incredible wildlife, fisheries, beauty, and offers native Americans a traditional subsistence way of life. The harvesting of wild salmon provides thousands of jobs, millions of dollars to the economy, and offers a truly healthy food to Americans who struggle with obesity and diabetes. The fishery in Bristol Bay has been commercially viable for over 100 years. Unfortunately, there is a huge gold mine proposed in the watershed of Bristol Bay, Pebble Mine, which is Canadian owned. This mine threatens clean waters, habitat, subsistence and recreation. There should be strong oversight of the permitting process and careful analysis of the cumulative impacts to the Bristol Bay watersheds. Thank you for consideration of this valuable resource for America. Most Michael and Diane McBride --

deserves to be saved and sacred. nourishes the planet. thank you,

Thank you for RECOGNIZING THE INCREDIBLE WORK BEING DONE BY America's 1,600 land trusts - Land Trusts are helping this country in so many ways, for both current and future generations. They help keep agricultural lands in productive use, keep working forests working, and protect important wildlife habitat. Tax incentives, farm bill easement programs, LWCF and Forest Legacy have helped landowners and land trusts conserve millions of acres - permanently. Please make the conservation of private farms, ranches, forests and other wildlife habitat a centerpiece of your initiative.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

America's wild places are special to us all and we have a great responsibility to protect them for the wild animals who live there. They were there long, long before humans began to dominate the landscape. We can help keep America special by protecting more Wilderness and quiet recreation opportunities, preserving more habitat and connectivity for wildlife, and permanent protecting remaining old-growth forests. Here in Oregon, we enjoy some of the most beautiful and awe-inspiring public lands in the nation. But places like the Wild Rogue River, the wildlands surrounding Crater Lake National Park, and the Siskiyou Wild Rivers are at risk from logging, mining, and other harmful development. Oregon has protected only 4% of our land as Wilderness, lagging far behind our neighbors. For the wildlife that call our public lands homes and for the millions who enjoy these places for quiet recreation, it is time to correct this Wilderness imbalance. Thank you for considering my comments.

I am writing this because I think it is important that the generation that comes after me be able to enjoy America's great outdoors too. Please seize this opportunity to create, expand and better protect America's shared outdoors spaces including parks, forests, wildlife refuges, wilderness, trails, wild and scenic rivers and historic sites and monuments, farms and forests.

I'm an ardent Oregonian and Pacific Northwesterner, and what I really want is to: 1. keep the untouched, wild and free areas untouched, wild and free!!! Preserve more wildlife habitat and old-growth forest! 2. keep logging, mining, and development OUT of natural places. However, I want these things the responsible way. That is, not an increase in federal laws or top-down regulations. I want people in this country to be encouraged to rediscover how wonderful these places are and to choose, at the state and local levels, to preserve what's right around them. Its more difficult to make a difference this way, but its the right thing to do, instead of imposing more and more control on people externally. Please help me in this goal!! Thanks.

I can't seem to log in and voice my comments. LEAP - the Lindbergh Education Acceleration Prize Our mission is to investigate, showcase, and leverage innovation for a resilient future. LEAP accomplishes its mission by: • Creating project-based educational programs that motivate high school students to investigate, showcase and leverage creative solutions to problems. • Using prize philanthropy and media to promote individuals and organizations that are creating extraordinary solutions to social, technical and environmental problems.
www.LindberghPrize.org ~Powering Imagination~

Dear President Obama and Secretary of the Interior -- On behalf of our small foundation, which supports the work of land trusts in the northeast to protect wild places, I want to thank you for your support of a fully funded Land and Water Conservation Fund and for your America's Great Outdoors Initiative. These are the most lasting investments the federal government can make in the country's future.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Dear America's Great Outdoors: The Vermont Traditions Coalition (VTC) is a coalition of over 20 organizations from the forest product, maple syrup, agriculture, sporting, snowmobiling, outdoor guide, and lake association sectors. We have a daily presence in the Vermont Legislature and play a prominent role in all major public lands issues in Vermont due to the depth and breadth of our statewide network and our knowledge of issues involving Vermont's predominantly rural landscape. VTC believes that a healthy economy, healthy communities and a healthy environment are inextricably linked. VTC works with local and state organizations, state agencies and leaders to protect Vermont's rural traditions, identity and ways of life. Below you will find the March 31, 2010 Vermont Traditions Coalition Public Comment on the New England-New York Forest Initiative Concept Paper. This Concept Paper proposed a massive federal and preservationist group land purchase throughout New England and New York. This proposed regional land purchase stood in stark opposition to everything VTC and a huge groundswell of grass roots Vermonters has stood steadfastly against during the Vermont Land Wars of the last 12 years. Rather than reiterate those March 31, 2010 Comments for you in the context of the Great Outdoors Initiative, VTC will simply include them here. VTC strongly suspects that the Great Outdoors Initiative is headed toward the same policy that's advocated by the Concept Paper. VTC therefore asks that you simply extrapolate the comments from the March 31 VTC submission to the Great Outdoors Initiative. If the Great Outdoors Initiative is headed in the direction of restrictions on recreation, timber management, and road access to federal lands or federal lands to be acquired, VTC's opposition and the rationale for it are clear. Based on the experiences of the last 12 years, both in Vermont and nationally, VTC does not trust the federal government as a landowner and strongly opposes land ownership interests being conveyed to private preservationists groups with restriction agendas. The White House Conference on America's Great Outdoors on Friday, April 16, 2010 stated that: "America's outdoors are part of our national identity. They are the farms, ranches and forests that we take great pride in, and the neighborhood parks, trails and fields where we spend memorable time with our families and friends," said Nancy Sutley, Chair of the White House Council on Environmental Quality. "Too many of these places are disappearing. In launching this conversation, we strive to learn about the smart, creative community efforts underway throughout the country to conserve our outdoor spaces, and hear how we can support these efforts." VTC understands the importance of the great outdoors and the need to reconnect the people with nature. More importantly we understand the importance of protecting Vermont's rural identity and traditional land use practices which make Vermont as unique as it is. As more and more lands are being conserved in the name of the public good, the rigid, broad-based federal land restrictions that come with these purchases are taking away our way of life, piece by piece, year by year and in essence disconnecting people from the "great outdoors". These federal land restrictions have worked to displace hunting camps, shut down snowmobile trails, outlaw all motorized use, ban horseback riding and mountain biking, close off road networks, shut down timber harvesting, end fish stocking, and on and on. These federal restrictions and ever changing land plans cater to, in many cases, unnecessarily to only a small user group. VTC believes all forms of recreation are important. Not only to the people who visit, but to those who live there and depend on recreation to fuel the economy. These broad-based restrictions that are filtered down from federal agencies working in conjunction with wealthy, national,

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

I have been an active and willing land owner with a multitude of public land agencies and conservation groups over the last five years working to provide real solutions to mitigate for the effects of oil and gas development impacts in Wyoming . Our ranch manages an area over 100 square miles in the Upper Green River Valley. Working with a 35 million dollar fund from Encana and BP to mitigate for development impacts is a drop in the bucket. We have been successful and expedient in placing conservation easements on thousands of acres of land on our ranch. This recognizes the need for conservation agricultural practices for the mitigation of not only of oil and gas development but of the development of our nation into a new era. From my cattle grazing operation, my habitat and conservation work, my truth from here on the land, I can tell you that it is possible to conserve our lands while increasing production of our rangelands to produce the protein needed for ever increasing demands. This is the new conservation agricultural model for the rangelands of the world; the rangelands that not only cover 45% of our country but over 45% of our planet's land mass. Mitigation of global impacts can be accomplished with conservation agricultural practices. Grazing and farming practices, when financial rewarded, can sequester not only carbon, but water, soil erosion, wildlife habitat, and more all while increasing food output. This is not only possible but also quantifiable for a measured effect. Cottonwood Ranch and our operation are a very current example of the success of what I consider Conservation Agricultural Mitigation here in the US. I would like to see this administration recognize the need for conserving our ranches in the west for this reason. Recreational impacts on our public lands in the west is just as damaging in places as any development. Agricultural impacts are and can be restorative and productive for entire ecosystems. Thank you for your time

_____ is correct and I wholly endorse his sentiments. Please conserve our natural environment when possible and especially in this instance. Many thanks,

Thank you for launching America's Great Outdoors and recognizing the work of America's 1,600 land trusts to protect important wildlife habitat. The LWCF in particular has helped us protect thousands of acres of South Carolina's most significant lands. Please make the conservation of irreplaceable lands and special places a centerpiece of your initiative.

Thank you for launching America's Great Outdoors. We are especially concerned about land that is being explored for NATURAL GAS. In fact, we own such land. We desperately want our federal clean water, air and other environmental laws that were set up to protect our environment to be fully re-instated for this industry. The Bush administration's exemption of this for-profit industry has already done great damage to our precious natural resources in many areas of this country. However, most importantly, we want you to know that we are enormously grateful to have you as our President. Thank you sincerely for all of the energy you lavish on the many wounds our dear country suffers. With great admiration and respect.

Discussion Question 1

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(cont.)

I applaud the Obama Administration's conservation leadership embodied in the America's Great Outdoors Initiative. Our natural resources are threatened by exploding population, unguided overdevelopment & climate change. Make wilderness protection a central component of policy emerging from the America's Great Outdoors Initiative. The President has the authority to facilitate cooperation among federal public land agencies & Congress to identify eligible landscapes for protection as wilderness. The US Forest Service now uses restrictive criteria in determining their recommendations for lands that should be designated wilderness; BLM remains bound by a directive from the previous administration to cease all wilderness assessments. Both constraints can be lifted by direction of the President; as an emeritus member of the American Institute of Biological Sciences (AIBS), I ask that this be done.

Discussion Question 1

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(cont.)

Thank you for initiating this dialogue. One of us attended the session on the lawn of Lewis & Clark Community College on August 20, but was one of those for whom there was not time to speak publicly. The other was unable to attend because the session occurred during the work week. So we are submitting our joint comments by email. Challenges Reconnecting to our rivers: Missouri is blessed with many opportunities to connect with the outdoors, but more needs to be done to make those opportunities accessible. We could do more to provide connections with our major river systems. The Columbia Bottoms Conservation Area is a good example of effort to provide access to the great confluence of the MO and MS rivers. But at the same time, that Conservation Area is under threat of a major casino development virtually next door and within the floodplain. More thorough analysis by FEMA and the Army Corps of Engineers of all "external" costs of such floodplain developments could help local and state governments to understand the true costs of such developments to taxpayers and society. The MO River from Kansas City to St Louis is highly channelized. That results in a narrow and swift flowing river which limits safe opportunities for visitor enjoyment. Programs such as the Big Muddy Wildlife refuge will provide more varied habitat along the river which will be good for fish and wildlife as well as recreation. More funds and emphasis should be placed on that and similar projects. The topic of reconnecting should also include restoration. We cannot reconnect to what is no longer present. In Missouri many of our grassland, savannah and prairie habitats have been lost. Efforts to restore those habitats on public and private land should be supported. Private Lands: Most of Missouri's grasslands and forests are in private lands. A significant portion of the state is managed for agricultural production. Supporting good conservation practices on private lands is essential for protection of the great outdoors. Initiatives for conservation easements, for example, are a good tool. However, such conservation easements need to be enforced. In Missouri conservation easements have been granted along the Ozark National Scenic Riverway, but not always fully enforced by the National Park Service. Crop Reserve Programs are another way to encourage stewardship on agricultural lands. Our growing population and suburban sprawl constantly put pressure on family farms and forests. We should encourage tax and other policies that enable families to keep their land undeveloped without incurring unnecessary hardship and expense. Public lands: Missouri has many public land ownership levels -- federal, state, county, municipal. All provide levels of access and types of high-quality outdoor experiences. Missouri's outdoors are perhaps best known for our Ozark rivers and streams. We are blessed with the Ozark National Scenic Riverways, which include stretches of the Current and Jacks Fork rivers and is managed by the National Park Service. That linear park is currently undergoing a revision of its management plan. The process has highlighted some glaring management problems which have been a growing concern for years. The NPS has failed to follow the mission of the Scenic and Recreational Riverways designation and has allowed numerous illegal river access points, unauthorized ATV traffic and excessive equestrian use to mar and pollute the rivers. Due to agency analysis and public input, a goal of the management review now is to focus on improving water quality and river habitat and to provide for appropriate, but not destructive, recreation. Carrying through will be a difficult task. The background message to this experience is that proper manage

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(cont.)

Living in Germany for many years as an American, there are many alternate ways that can be implemented to negate the need to use the "potential" energy from Bristol Bay and we need to "bite the bullet" and get on with saving instead of consuming energy. For example: -Slight "for Americans" increases in the price of energy to reduce consumption. Too many pickup trucks driving around with one person in them. Why? Jobs in Detroit? Not hardly as many are Japanese. - Credits for investment in proven technology for personal homes in solar, heat pumps, and photovoltaic technology to make homes energy independent. -Payments for proven insulation technologies to assist the above in homes and companies aimed at the little guy. -Reduction of energy usage through required upgrades in use of LED and other technology for home and industrial lighting. Too include commercial street lighting. The items above are just a few ideas that if we were in a real war like WWII would have been implemented to focus our resources to win the battle. We are competing with the world for resources have a smaller population than the upcoming nations like China, Brazil, India, etc. so we have to think smart with our current small lead in technology to be able to let our grandchildren have at least an equal life style to ours in the future. Jobs and money are finite and either we suffer a bit now and develop new ways to reduce our consumption or the world market will take care of it and leave our grandchildren poor

America's great outdoors shaped my youth and life path, I want the same for all that follow, human and all living creatures. Leaders in Washington need to expand and protect our shared outdoor spaces including parks, wildlife refuges, wilderness, trails, rivers and monuments and to conserve our farms and forests. Benefits will not only include beauty but also clean air, clean water, and long term sustainability. provide for the basi

To whom it may concern, I am greatly concerned about the proposal to pollute and despoil Bristol Bay with the Pebble Mine site. I urge you to impose and enforce the strongest possible protections for our natural, national heritage, to strengthen ties with local indigenous governments, and to put the strictest restrictions on mineral development operations, in order to ensure the protection of delicate wetlands and all of the species which rely on them. Thank you for your time and consideration. -----

As an American citizen I ask that you make keeping Bristol Bay clean a top priority when considering the possibilities of Pebble Mine.

Please, seize this opportunity to create, expand and better protect America's \parks, forests, wildlife refuges, wilderness, trails, wild and scenic rivers and historic sites and monumentt; also, please find new ways to support conservation of our farms, ranchlands and forests. Americans now and for future generations will be beholden to you, much as Teddy Roosevelt is now revered for his conservation efforts. This is an opportunity for you to place a major, positive stamp on your first term as President of the United States of America. I pray for you and our country daily.

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(cont.)

I love the America's Great Outdoors Initiative; please use this exciting new opportunity to protect pristine areas like the redwood forests of the northwest coast and Bristol Bay's clean water and salmon. Our way forward MUST be through renewable materials and energy, so that strip mining, clear-cut logging and other industries that rely on the destruction of our beautiful national heritage can be replaced with alternatives that are sustainable and economically viable as well.

I applaud the Obama Administration's conservation leadership embodied in the America's Great Outdoors Initiative. Please make wilderness protection a central component of his policy emerging from the America's Great Outdoors Initiative. The BLM is currently bound by a directive from the previous administration to cease all wilderness assessments. I want to thank the Obama Administration for taking the initiative to protect America's Great Outdoors. I look forward to seeing the president use this opportunity to establish a new and substantial legacy of wilderness conservation, one that can stand as a visible and enduring accomplishment of his presidency.

Republicans for Environmental Protection (www.rep.org) believes that we have a moral duty to ensure that future generations can enjoy America's great natural heritage. Specifically, we urge the administration to support and advocate the following: Designation of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge coastal plain as wilderness. Permanent protection of roadless areas in our national forests. Expansion of North Cascades National Park in Washington State to include lands in the American Alps (www.americanalps.org) proposal. Presidential veto of any legislation that would weaken the Antiquities Act. Thank you.

Dear Secretary Ken Salazar, America's "Great Outdoors" are not vanishing by some spontaneous black hole. They are being actively destroyed by for-profit interests, and their protection requires the Administration to confront and stop these interests. You may start by desisting from further permits for the blasting of the Appalachian Mountains by coal companies, one of the Greatest Outdoors our nation enjoys. You can also stop issuing permits for the filling and destruction of wetlands by developers, and stop issuing timber sales and oil leases in our remaining wilderness landscapes. To make a contribution to America's Great Outdoors, the Obama Administration can simply stop doing harm.

Discussion Question 1

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(cont.)

Virginia and I applaud America's Great Outdoors Initiative by the Obama Administration. We are grateful to see the President making conservation of America's treasured outdoor places a national priority. Indeed, we see America's natural resources being threatened by expanding population, unguided development and climate change. We desperately need presidential leadership now more than ever to protect our wilderness quality lands so that everyone, now and in the future, may enjoy them. Virginia and I are asking the President: Please make wilderness protection a central component of your policy emerging from the America's Great Outdoors Initiative. We do so because the President has the authority to facilitate better cooperation among the federal public land agencies and Congress to identify eligible landscapes and protect them as wilderness. Currently, and unfortunately, the U.S. Forest Service uses overly restrictive criteria in determining their recommendations for lands that should be designated wilderness. And the Bureau of Land Management is bound by a directive from the previous administration to cease all wilderness assessments. Both of these constraints can be lifted by direction of the President, and Virginia and I urge that this be done. Expanding America's wilderness preservation system is the best way to protect wildlife, watersheds and recreational opportunities. In closing, we want to thank the Obama Administration for taking the initiative to protect America's Great Outdoors. We look forward to seeing the president use this opportunity to establish a new and substantial legacy of wilderness conservation, one that can stand as a visible and enduring accomplishment of his presidency.

Our National Heritage includes the wildlands and the wild creatures. We are fortunate to have such a beautiful country with some of the most unusual and unique locations on earth. We are stewards of our home and it is our responsibility to ensure we conserve these wild places for ourselves and future generations. Each decision we make must take into consideration the seventh generation.

Especially with climate change upon us and likely intensifying immensely over the next 100 years, we need presidential leadership now more than ever to protect our wilderness quality lands so that they will be available as crops fail and there are massive population movements to escape devastating changes in regional ecosystems in the South and Southwest. Having places and pathways will be critically important not only for humans whose livelihoods fail, but also for the migration and protection of animal and plant populations in places they can fit ecologically. I'm asking the President to please make wilderness protection a central component of his policy emerging from the America's Great Outdoors Initiative. The President has the authority to facilitate better cooperation among the federal public land agencies and Congress to identify eligible landscapes and protect them as wilderness. Currently, the U.S. Forest Service uses overly restrictive criteria in determining their recommendations for lands that should be designated wilderness. Worst: The Bureau of Land Management is bound by a directive from the previous administration to cease all wilderness assessments. Both constraints can be lifted by direction of the President, and I urge that this be done.

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(cont.)

As a former resident of Alaska, I would like to express my opposition to the Pebble Mine in Alaska. The mine threatens Bristol Bay's clean waters, salmon, wildlife and tradition subsistence ways of life. The federal government should provide strong oversight of the Pebble Mine permitting process and analysis of cumulative impacts to the Bristol Bay watershed. The standards for mineral development in wetlands should be tighter and the Clean Water Act standards for large-scale metallic sulfide mining should be more stringent. I believe public lands in the Bristol Bay watershed should be closed to large scale mining. Protecting habitat, subsistence and recreation resources should be the top priority. Additionally relationships between federal and tribal governments should be strengthened. Best Regards

Open spaces and preserved farmland are important public amenities. It is totally appropriate for tax incentives, farm bill easement programs, LWCF and Forest Legacy to fund this work. Along with fully funding these programs, new and innovative strategies must be thought of and planned for so that this important work can continue

Discussion Question 1

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(cont.)

As part of President Obama's America's Great Outdoors Initiative, I suggest the following areas of New Mexico as being worthy of being included in the program designed to transform conservation and land management for the 21st century and leave a public lands legacy for future generations to enjoy. PRESERVE NEW MEXICO'S OTERO MESA Ranging across more than a million acres, Otero Mesa contains one of the last desert grasslands in North America. This Chihuahuan desert grassland is rich in native wildlife, cultural resources and potential wilderness. Additionally, the Mesa sits atop a large freshwater aquifer. The area, treasured by hunters and other backcountry recreationists, is near the growing populations of El Paso, TX and Alamogordo, NM offer outstanding opportunities for reconnecting Americans to our great outdoors. National Monument designation for Otero Mesa would permanently safeguard this national treasure, and would provide a huge boost for the local economy. We owe it to future generations to protect the untamed spirit of this wonderful place. For more information, please visit www.oteromesa.org . AN OMNIBUS PUBLIC LANDS BILL New Mexico needs an Omnibus Bill passed in this Congress, to include the following key pieces of legislation: Organ Mountains-Desert Peaks Wilderness Act This bill was designed by the community and is supported thousands of citizens, four local elected governments, two local Chambers of Commerce, half a dozen local sportsmen organizations, community groups and conservation organizations. The bill would permanently protect over 300,000 acres as Wilderness and National Conservation Areas, including Broad Canyon, the Aden Lava Flow, and the incomparable Organ Mountains. For more information, please visit www.donaanawild.org El Rio Grande Del Norte National Conservation Area On May 18, 2010, Congressman Ben Ray Luján introduced a bill in the House (HR 5334) to protect 235,980 acres in northern New Mexico. The El Rio Grande del Norte National Conservation Area Establishment Act is a companion measure to legislation introduced last year by Senators Jeff Bingaman and Tom Udall. HR 5334 was introduced to protect a huge area in north central New Mexico that encompasses the Rio Grande Gorge, Cerro del Yuta Mountain (Ute Mountain: proposed Wilderness?13,415 Acres), and the Rio San Antonio Wilderness Study Area (proposed Wilderness?7,992 acres). Representative Luján and his staff have met extensively with local ranchers, conservationists, and other constituents from traditional communities to ensure that the land and its traditional uses are honored and preserved for future generations. The legislation will protect tribal and traditional economic rights, including New Mexicans' access to the land for grazing and wood and plant harvesting.

Good Afternoon Dept of Interior, The proposed Pebble Mine in the Bristol Bay watershed should be stopped. Bristol Bays clean waters, wild salmon, wildlife and public lands should be protected from the destructive abuses that would certainly occur if the Pebble Mine became a reality. The federal government should do all in it's power to protect and save this valuable resource. There should be stronger relationships between the federal and tribal governments in the area to protect traditional tribal lifestyles. Standards for mineral mining in wetlands and Clean Water Act standards for large scale mining should be more stringent. Please stop the proposed Pebble Mine, prevent the gradual destruction of the diverse and productive Bristol Bay watershed.

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(cont.)

To: President Obama, On the Preservation of America's Natural Wonders "If you ignore beauty, you will soon find yourself without it...But if you invest in beauty, it will remain with you all the days of your life." ~Frank Lloyd Wright I LOVE Beauty – beauty in all its intricate and splendid forms – be it, a spectacular sunset descending into the pink hue sky, a school of dolphins charming us with their spins and flips, a tiny hummingbird hovering before our very eyes, a beaver building a dam, horses running in freedom and ecstasy through a meadow of lilies and daffodils, a rugged mountain challenging us to climb, or simply a quiet walk through a dense forest – the list is endless. As you have admired works of art in the finest of museums, I invite you to imagine this magnificent planet as a canvas upon which a higher power has created and manifested the most stunning, staggering and breathtaking beauty of all. One need only be conscious of this remarkable beauty – the rugged mountains, pristine lakes, roaring seas, remarkable wildlife and rich forests – to understand the magnitude and critical level of importance in its preservation. "In all things of nature there is something marvelous."~Aristotle The great outdoors is "Free" medicine for the mind, body and soul. · The great outdoors "connects the spirit to nature" – it nourishes and feeds the soul with its intoxicating beauty. The oxygen we inhale in the great outdoors has reviving qualities, is healthy and pure, and keeps our spirits youthful. · The great outdoors clears the mind of everyday stresses, while giving us the ability to view life in its true perspective. · The great outdoors strengthens and tones the physical body, helping to keep disease at bay. · The great outdoors brings families closer together as they rally in joy at the prospect of hiking together, with pets in tow, on a glorious Saturday afternoon. · The great outdoors offers the outdoor participant the rare opportunity to be an observer of our precious wildlife in their natural habitat and hopefully instilling a newfound understanding and appreciation. · The great outdoors may even save a marriage or two as the couple reconnects through laughter or admiring the beauty of nature as it unfolds before them. · The great outdoors may help to instill values and respect in children, and get them off the computers every now and then. "Our task must be to free ourselves...by widening our circle of compassion to embrace all living creatures and the whole of nature and its beauty."~Albert Einstein Now, it is up to us, to live up to the task as responsible stewards of the earth to protect our natural treasures, our natural heritage, and magnificent wildlife. Our public lands are continually challenged and stressed with increasing development and pollution pressures, and climate change posing the gravest risk of all. It is time to take bold and urgent action to protect our land, water and history for generations to come. As scientist estimate that 20-30% of species could become extinct by 2050 as a result of climate change, it is time to take the critical steps needed to protect habitat and help species in peril by making this a top priority. Dedicating long-term funding for natural resources adaptation strategies is one important step the Administration can take and the development of a national adaptation strategy that clearly delineates how natural resource agencies should practice climate-smart conservation. Seize the opportunity for a stronger and more united America by creating, expanding and better protecting America's shared outdoor spaces – protect wildlife habitat, clean up our rivers, expand our parks, conserve working farms and forests, create more trails and places for kids and adults alike to simply enjoy the great outdoors in this great country. As well as our wildlife, our prec

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(cont.)

As a retired employee of the State of Michigan for 27 years and former President of the Natural Areas Association, though not speaking for either, please know I fully support the provision for more resources to conserve, survey, manage and monitor our shared outdoor spaces: parks, wildlife refuges, wilderness, trails, rivers, monuments and forests and biodiversity & to work with states & land trusts to do so.

Land conservation ranks among my top two or three concerns for the future of our country and our planet. Thank you for launching America's Great Outdoors and recognizing the work of America's 1,600 land trusts. Keep up the good work, by the way!

Dear President Obama and staff: The AGO initiative has brought long overdue attention to the importance that our natural lands bring to the quality of our lives. Please keep and increase the tax incentives and grant programs that have helped land trusts conserve the farms, forests and waters that we so love.

I was honored to attend the roll out of Great Outdoors America in April. Getting to hear you speak in person was one of the great moments of my life. Thank you for mentioning land trusts in your speech. From those inspiring words I know you realize how important it is to keep agricultural lands in productive use and protect important wildlife habitat. I am the Executive Director of a small local land trust that is doing big things in Colorado's San Luis Valley, the Rio Grande Headwaters Land Trust. We work in the landscape that Secretary Salazar and Representative Salazar call home. As you know from knowing them, the landscape the people here personify the west. With that, they are often land rich and cash poor. Therefore tax incentives, farm bill easement programs, LWCF and Forest Legacy has helped us our other partners who work in the San Luis Valley conserve more than 300,000 acres in the Valley alone. Please continue to make the conservation of private farms, ranches and forests a centerpiece of your initiative.

I want the next generation, including my newborn son, to enjoy America's great outdoors too. I want to thank the President and Secretary Salazar for their efforts to expand and protect our shared outdoor spaces including parks, wildlife refuges, wilderness, trails, rivers and monuments and to conserve our farms and forests. I hope that Congress will get beyond the bickering and ensure these programs are funded!

Hello, My sister and brother in law make their living fishing off Bristol Bay in the village of Eruk. My wife and I went to visit them at their fish site and help fish for 6 tides. The experience was eye-opening, and fantastic. We met Alaskans of all stripes, natives, old-timers, and newcomers. All benefited from the bounty of the Bristol Bay fishery. The fish are phenomenal. It is beyond comprehension that anyone would consider placing this priceless fishery at risk, but clearly those who shortsightedly favor developing the Pebble Mine are doing just that. Once an ecosystem like Bristol Bay is compromised it can never return to its pristine, bountiful state. Please tighten wetlands protections in the regulation of mineral development. Please ensure that oversight of the Pebble Mine licensing process takes into account cumulative impacts on the Bristol Bay watershed. Please strengthen the Clean Water Act for large-scale metallic sulfide mining. Please stop the Pebble Mine and preserve the Bristol Bay fishery for generations to come.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

I applaud the Obama Administration's conservation leadership embodied in the America's Great Outdoors Initiative. It is inspiring to see the President make conservation of America's treasured outdoor places a national priority. Our natural resources are threatened by pressures like expanding population, unguided development and climate change. We need presidential leadership now more than ever to protect our wilderness quality lands so that future generations may also enjoy them. I'm asking the President to please make wilderness protection a central component of his policy emerging from the America's Great Outdoors Initiative. The President has the authority to facilitate better cooperation among the federal public land agencies and Congress to identify eligible landscapes and protect them as wilderness. Currently, the U.S. Forest Service uses overly restrictive criteria in determining their recommendations for lands that should be designated wilderness. Worse, the Bureau of Land Management is bound by a directive from the previous administration to cease all wilderness assessments. Both constraints can be lifted by direction of the President, and I urge that this be done. Expanding America's wilderness preservation system is the best way to protect wildlife, watersheds and recreational opportunities. Again, I want to thank the Obama Administration for taking the initiative to protect America's Great Outdoors. I look forward to seeing the president use this opportunity to establish a new and substantial legacy of wilderness conservation, one that can stand as a visible and enduring accomplishment of his presidency.

what ever happened to the saying "this land is your land, this land is our land" ?? we are losing public land at an alarming rate. i wish for my children to be able to enjoy the outdoors i grew up in or atleast close, because lots have changed already, if we keep going we're going to be stuck in overpopulated cities. There will be a band of outlaw outdoors ORV riders for surely. please let me use what little land is left for me and my children to use. we hike, fish, camp, ride ORV's so we pretty much fill the realm of all around outdoor people. its public land and should remain as so. The goal to reconnect Americans especially youth with the outdoors can best be done by providing more places for them to enjoy their favorite forms of outdoor recreation. Off Road Vehicle use is by far the most popular form of recreation, followed by Mountain Biking. The Initiative must preserve Multiple Use lands as Multiple Use for current and future generations to enjoy these and all other forms of recreation. The initial Wilderness Act envisioned about 20 million acres as suitable. Today we have over 120 million acres of Wilderness where public access is restricted. The majority of the public have been forced onto smaller and smaller areas outside of Wilderness. In order to encourage Americans to enjoy the outdoors we do not need more Wilderness areas, we need less.

It is inspiring to see the President make America's Great Outdoors Initiative a national priority. We need presidential leadership now more than ever to protect our wilderness quality lands so that future generations may also enjoy them. The President has the authority to facilitate better cooperation among the federal public land agencies and Congress to identify eligible landscapes and protect them as wilderness. Expanding America's wilderness preservation system is the best way to protect wildlife, watersheds and recreational opportunities. I look forward to seeing the president use this opportunity to establish a new and substantial legacy of wilderness conservation, one that can stand as a visible and enduring accomplishment of his presidency.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

I love our nation's deserts--from the Joshua Trees of the Mojave to the great Sauros of the Sonoran Desert to the beautiful pinyon and junifer forests of the Colorado Plateau. I want the next generation to enjoy America's public lands too--especially the fantastic wild areas managed by the BLM . I urge leaders in Washington to protect our public lands--especially those managed by the BLM that have been neglected for so long. Our deserts and arid lands will be profoundly affected by climate change. We need to save the best of what is left and manage the rest to sustain us all. Thanks.

No mine

America's Great Outdoors, I have been visiting Alaska since 1983. In my view, it is one of the most beautiful places on earth, deserving of our protection for future generations. The Pebble Mine at Bristol Bay is a really bad idea. I went to college with a gold miner who is now notorious for poisoning Canadian wilderness with toxic mining practices. Once pristine lands like these are contaminated, their legacy lives on in misery and blight. Let's stop this disaster before it happens, and keep Bristol Bay clean and safe for wild salmon, wildlife, and traditional subsistence ways of life. Say no to the pebble mine.

I believe we have a responsibility to protect this nation's treasured places for future generations of Americans. That is why I would like to see the promise of full, dedicated funding for the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) fulfilled in order to achieve the Obama Administration's conservation vision for the 21st century. LWCF is a simple idea that remains as important today as it was 45 years ago when President John F. Kennedy enacted it into law. Please support full, dedicated funding of LWCF to protect clean drinking water, support jobs in local economies, and conserve our common heritage and natural areas for wildlife, recreation, and for our children and grandchildren to enjoy.ago when President John F. Kennedy enacted it into law. Please support full, dedicated funding of LWCF to protect clean drinking water, support jobs in local economies, and conserve our common heritage and natural areas for wildlife, recreation, and for our children and grandchildren to! enjoy.

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Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Dear Oversight Chairperson, The pending operation of Pebble Mine negatively impacts the Bristol Bay area. The Bristol Bay environs support wild salmon and wildlife in traditional ecological-cycle ways and the introduction of Pebble Mine activity threatens the inter-dependent subsistence chain and will have a long-term detrimental effect on the entire region. Public lands should be protected for the public in the most fundamental and generic ways. Large-scale metallic sulfide mining should not be allowed. Furthermore, protecting habitat and recreational resources should be a top priority. Thank you.

Dear ago, Pebble mine must be stopped! In June of 2004, I had the amazing experience of salmon fishing in the very waters that would drain the runoff from the Pebble mine. This would be an environmental disaster of biblical proportions, similar to the tar sands in Alberta. I simply cannot imagine a such a pristine environment being takeover by a large-scale metallic sulfide mine for which the Clean Water Act standards are woefully inadequate. This project must be stopped now!

I spent my childhood in the midst of strip mines in Virginia. I moved to Idaho and then Washington only to discover clear cuts. Because we can do something doesn't mean we should, certainly not for the financial gain of a few. The environment belongs to us all. Messing with one part of the environment messes with the whole of it. Leave Bristol Bay alone.

Folks, I am writing this email in response to the disastrous possibility of the Pebble Creek Mine in Alaska's Bristol Bay region. I visit this area each year in search of the monster rainbows this area sports. Yes, I am a consumptive user of the outdoors and wish to voice my opinion on this proposal. I think there are places to mine, and this is not one of them. This mine will affect so much of our national heritage, that is has to be stopped, right now! I am not normal against this sort of thing, but I think this is a bad idea all the way around. Thanks for your time,

Hi can't log in or register. Any help would be awesome Want to save the enviroment

Let's learn from our mistakes for a change; at mines similar to the one proposed at Pebble Bay, 85% have polluted the nearby water. Leave Pebble Bay untouched and safe for the people and animals that live there. Who wants 9 million tons of waste, a 2 mile long waste pit, disrupted salmon migration. This is public land, regardless of President Bush's management plan to 'open' it up to mining.

Hello, It disturbs me every time I hear of another assault on what is left of our wildlands and wildlife, as with the attempts to begin Pebble Mining in the Bristol Bay area. Other than the profits to the few who will benefit from it, it can only hurt a great deal more wildlife habitat, salmon runs, local residents, and whatever other "collateral damage" will inevitably happen. Please take the side of preserving the best of what we have left instead of allowing the continued exploitation of our as yet unspoiled outdoor spaces! Thank you.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Why is it that you folks WE THE STUPID PEOPLE elect do things most of us think is just plain stupid? This Pebble Mine business for instance. Here we have a perfectly clean environs,net, Bristol Bay, and big business is going to run you dunderheads in another big chase and circle, all for the sake of of risking metallic sulfides if and when this mine operation goes into effect. Oh, don't get me wrong. I know how you're going to vote on this matter, just like you folks always vote - weak, though with a diluted compromise. So, why not grow a pair and do the right thing for a change: close down that operation and open up your minds for a change. Otherwise, you know damn well you're going to create another environ,entail hazard and shrug your shoulders saying words to the effect, "Gee, never thought that would happen. Those mine officials even told me everything would work out just fine." Come on people in power - wake up and listen to the wisdom that says "What harm do to this planet, its environment, you also end up doing to yourself."

Dear Sirs: I have major concerns with the proposed Pebble Mine project. Let me start by saying that I am generally for a cooperative private enterprise/public interest policy. In most cases I would prefer that the federal government stay out of the private sector, unless there is a compelling public interest at stake. For example, I generally support most oil drilling project unless it can be clearly shown that there is likely damage to the environment. I greatly appreciate the natural environment and have enjoyed outdoor recreation most of my life - I believe we must be good steward of the creation with which we have been entrusted. The Pebble Mine project appears to be a clear and imminent catastrophe just waiting to happen. The rare treasure of western Alaska is a jewel to be protected. There appears to be so little benefit from this project compared to the great peril it presents to the environment and the economic welfare of the whole region. I would encourage the federal government to do all that it can to halt the project. Thank you.

Ladies and Gentlemen of the Obama Administration and relevant agencies: Alaska's Bristol Bay is another spectacular example of treasured wilderness that should be protected from large scale degradation. The natural beauty and teeming wildlife of this great region would be forever impacted by the destruction brought by a project such as the Pebble Mine. The traditional fishing patterns of Alaskan native peoples in this area would also be severely affected. Doubtlessly, the area also contains non-renewable archaeological and other historical sites. While impacts to these resources might be somewhat mitigated through careful pre-construction measures, the loss of timeless landscape, old growth forests, and marine environments are not. These effects will last for generations, as they are likely to in the Gulf of Mexico and elsewhere. The need for another ugly and massively destructive project such as the Pebble Mine is difficult to understand. The beauty of the Bristol Bay ecosystem is far more valuable, and the entire watershed should be closed to metallic sulfide mining. We need to protect Bristol Bay and other places like it by prohibiting permits for needless, destructive developments of all types. We also need to strengthen the standards represented in the Clean Water Act, and to enhance the relationship between the federal government and native councils, particularly in matters as damaging to the environment as the proposed Pebble Mine. Please keep the Pebble Mine out of treasured wilderness such as Bristol Bay, and direct them instead to areas that have already been irrevocably marred.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Hi! I am writing to express my concern that allowing large-scale metallic sulfide mining at Pebble Mine will threaten Bristol Bay's clean water, wildlife, salmon, and tribal subsistence ways of life. I would like to see the federal government provide strong oversight of the Pebble Mine permitting process, with tighter standards for mineral development in wetlands, and more stringent Clean Water Act standards for large-scale metallic sulfide mining. Otherwise, the cumulative impact of the proposed mining on the Bristol Bay watershed will be devastating. I also think it would be really productive for the federal government to work more closely with the tribal governments in the area to protect Bristol Bay. Thank you for considering my opinion.

I want future generations to enjoy America's great outdoors too. I urge leaders in Washington to expand and protect our shared outdoor spaces including forests, national parks, wildlife refuges, wilderness, trails, and rivers. We need to find "best practices" to ensure sustainable environments, e.g., forests need to be managed, not just protected. Trees sometimes need to be cut down!

Mr. President and Mr. Secretary, After reading hundreds of the comments on America's Great Outdoors, it is clear that there is great diversity of opinion and high emotion on both sides of the environment issue. It is also clear to me that if the health of our public lands and wildlife habitat is up to credulous and ill-informed public opinion, there is no hope for our once great natural endowment. As a prime example... who, in possession of his mental faculties, authorized the open pit Pebble Gold Mine in Bristol Bay, Alaska?! The Guns and OHV Crowd is fired up at the "threat of Left Wing radical Environmentalists taking over their country." They are furious at the notion of introducing Environmental Sustainability studies into public education, asserting that it is THEIR job to teach their children environmental values, as if Sustainability were a Belief. And they have been conditioned to accept as gospel that America's greatness is synonymous with our aggressive ethnocentrism, and our unregulated freedom to exploit natural resources, whether on U.S. soil or that of other nations, regardless of the harmful cost to living species and their habitat. The Responsibility to Preserve and Protect the Commonwealth is delegated by The People to elected and appointed government officials, who have taken an oath to do so. Their mandate is to sustainably manage the Commonwealth for the benefit of All Americans, not to give equal weight to the demands of All Claimants, nor to Average the results of public polls, such as America's Great Outdoors, and let that Average dictate public policy. No, to Preserve and Protect the Resources held in Common by the People of this country will necessarily require moderating and regulating those uses that devalue and contravene the quality of the Commonwealth, or restrict responsible and respectful access to it by The People. This responsibility is the mandate of the Secretary of the Interior. And he and the President, and the Congress will be held accountable, at the Polls and in the Courts, for proper implementation of wholesome, sustainable regulatory policies.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

You are well aware of the plan to turn the breathtakingly pristine area of the Bristol Bay in Alaska into a very large and wildlife-threatening Pebble Mine. Although it is a fact that some development and mining must happen, to sustain our society, I strongly believe that we must also keep well in mind that we must sustain our most beautiful landscapes as well. Therefore, as someone who deeply cares about the spectacular wilderness areas in our world, I request that this mining plan be heavily reconsidered. The Pebble Mine would pose as a huge threat to the precious waters of the Bay, not to mention the incredible varieties of life within it. These wonderful fish and other fauna could experience a sever drop in population, something not at all desirable to anybody. In addition, the amazing land wildlife living around the area would soon have their homes and lifestyle destroyed, a tragedy all too common in our modern, industrial world. Standards for this type of mineral development in wetlands and other wilderness areas should be more stringent anyway, for the sake of the cleanliness and wondrous beauty of the earth. Limiting or even stopping the Pebble Mine plan would set a huge precedent for wild land conservation, something which is very difficult to disapprove of. This is a great opportunity to begin to make the world a place that balances successful industry with successful conservation. Thank you for taking the time to read these comments, and I hope that you will agree that the time has come to save special places such as these. Ronen Schatsky

Bristol Bay and also other Alaskan wilderness area, including the arctic ocean, are far too important for the environment, climate and as habitat for endangered species and should not be destroyed by any mining and drilling activities. Besides that, mining activities will destroy livelihood of native Alaskans who depend on salmon fishing. please do what is right for us now and later!

Hello!! I would like to be able to take a moment to express my concern on the possibility of a mining adventure to take place near the Bristol Bay in our beautiful state of Alaska. Today with the changing needs of the world. We must start to see that we can preserve the unspoiled areas of nature in the raw (the way it was designed to be forever). We can but all safe guards in place to protect it, but we have seen lately and in the past, that safe guards can fail, with the loss of the area that was to be protected. Once lost it can never be replaced or brought back to the way it was meant to be. Therefore I'am asking that this mining project be omitted in the sake of unspoiled nature. Thanking you for your time.

Thank you for the opportunity to express my opinions about protecting our treasured natural wildlife and wilderness areas. I am particularly concerned about Bristol Bay and the prospect of the Pebble Mine operation ruining that irreplaceable watershed that is essential to the overall health of a huge area. The mining operatiion would be massive, destructive and would generate tons of waste. The fact that foreign businesses want to build the mine is also upsetting. What do we get from it? Money?? I think that whatever money we might get in leases, etc. would be eaten up with efforts to reduce the massive pollution and devastation of the other resources in that priceless area. It is imperative that there be a thorough analysis of the impacts of large-scale sulfide mining, and I believe that the conclusion will be that no such operation is acceptable. . Finally, the standards of the Clean Water Act must be applied and should be made even more stringent. Again, thank you for accepting my comments.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Please protect Bristol Bay from destruction and degradation from mining. Once it is destroyed or polluted it is too late. We, as represented by our government, have a responsibility to protect habitat, wild lands and beautiful outdoor spaces for subsistence and recreation and for future generations to enjoy. I ask for tighter standards and strong federal oversight of the mining permitting process and impact analysis within the Bristol Bay watershed and for mineral development in wetlands generally. And also for the federal government to work more closely with the tribal governments in this area and in these situations. Thank you.

Thank you for launching America's Great Outdoors Initiative and having the federal officials visit Maine to listen to us. You wanted to know what works. Tax incentives, farm bill easement programs, especially LWCF and Forest Legacy programs work. The Woodwise Program was very successful and should be reinstated. Please make the conservation of private farms, ranches and forests a priority.

Please protect Bristol Bay. The Pebble Mine threatens Bristol Bay's clean waters, wild salmon, wildlife and threatens subsistence ways of life. Public lands in Bristol Bay watershed should be closed to large scale metallic sulfide mining. We should protect habitat. Subsistence and recreational resources should be the top priority. The Federal Government should provide strong oversight of the Pebble Mine permitting process and analysis of cumulative impacts to the Bristol Bay watershed. Relations between federal and tribal governments should be strengthened and standards for mineral development in wetland should be tighter. I believe that the Clean Water Act standards for large scale metallic sulfide mining should be more stringent as well. If we don't act on behalf of our precious environment, then who will? Yours truly,

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

On behalf of Tennessee Citizens for Wilderness Planning, a statewide environmental advocacy organization, here are important points to consider in formulating a 21st century agenda to connect Americans with our public lands. Our treasured national parks are a key element of our great outdoors, highlighting our natural and cultural heritage. It is imperative that our parks be maintained adequately, which is not now the case, and that our incomplete parks be made whole. Of particular concern to Tennessee Citizens for Wilderness Planning is the Obed Wild and Scenic River (OWSR). This unique pristine river gorge is lacking about 1/5 of the land in the authorized boundary. As with most special places, the development community sees opportunity for growth. These unacquired lands should be conserved by immediate purchase. The Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF), which has been chronically, shortsightedly underfunded, must be fully funded. Every year, \$900 million from federal Outer Continental Shelf (OCS) drilling lease proceeds are supposed to be dedicated to the LWCF. There are critical opportunities to improve resource security and recreational opportunities. A fully funded LWCF would enable successful use of these opportunities. Land managing agencies should be directed to revise policies that hamper or prevent wilderness review. This positive step could be handled by Executive Order. The growing disconnect between America's youth and our natural world cries out for direct, engaging educational materials for agencies and schools. Early familiarity with the importance of our natural world and how it connects with America's quality of life and prosperity would greatly increase public appreciation and use of our public lands for recreation. We urge the administration to apply creative ideas to the issue of dwindling staff resources, including internships, summer work programs, and work/study type programs in our education systems. Finally, our public lands should be widely recognized for and advertised as national treasures that protect our water supply, foster biodiversity, and offer opportunities for physical, mental, and spiritual health.

I run a small, field-based science program for kids, the main objective of which is to get kids outdoors, observing and learning from their natural surroundings. In my area, off-road motorized use has had huge impact on public lands. I believe that in addition to education, enforcement of existing laws that protect riparian areas, tundra and wilderness is key to the future health of our lands. Thank you for your consideration.

I'm with the California Office of Historic Preservation and we're currently working on an update of our Statewide Historic Preservation Plan. Our State Historic Preservation Officer recently attended two of the AGO listening sessions and was very impressed with them. As a result, we're looking to incorporate a few listening sessions into our public outreach efforts. We would like to be able to tap into any experiences your folks had with conducting the AGO listening sessions in terms of what worked well, and what didn't work so well. I'm not sure who might be the best person to talk to about this, so I thought an email to this general address would be the best approach. Thank you in advance for seeing that this email makes its way to the appropriate people. We would love to arrange a conference call with one or more people on your end who can spend a few minutes talking about their experiences in pulling together and hosting the listening sessions. Thank you again, and I look forward to hearing from you.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

To Will Shafroth and the rest of the America's Great Outdoors team: Attached please find a brief letter from the Land Trust Alliance reaffirming our enthusiastic support for the America's Great Outdoors Initiative and summarizing our most important aspirations for the report. We realize this official submission comes rather late, but hope it will be helpful in summing up the themes you've heard time and again in conversations with land trusts over the past six months. We are deeply appreciative of your commitment to an open process, which has allowed our diverse membership to talk about the conservation tools that will do the most to support conservation in their communities. As always, please feel free to contact me (or our senior leadership directly) if you have any questions. Thanks again.

This summer we had the honor to finally be able to visit and travel in Alaska. We have been waiting for this for 14 years. My husband and I met when we were in college and both grew up in the outdoors hiking, biking, and camping. We went to college and post-graduate schools and worked until we got to the point we felt we had earned the right to go. We spent 2 weeks in Alaska hiking and visiting all these wonderful places. Alaska is the greatest and most awesome place I have ever seen and unlike anything we have down here in the lower 48. As we drove along the scenic byways, it was unbelievable to see mountains rising right out of the sea. It made me proud to be an American and to know that there are still some places in this country we haven't ruined yet. Please keep not only this area of Bristol Bay protected and clean but all of our National Treasures so my family and my future generations can stand in wonder and awe at this beautiful and inspiring country.

Focus on education, individual computers in classrooms, code teaching widely distributed, inclusive.

Treat the earth well: it was not given to you by your parents, it was loaned to you by your children.-Ancient Indian Proverb. I was always taught to make sure anything I borrowed was given back in as good of shape as I received it in or better...If we continue on our current path our children will have little. It seems like a no-brainer to me...short term gain by one of our corporate handlers and long term devastation VS the wonder and beauty forever of an intact ecosystem. The rampant destruction of our planet for our convenience orientation and corporate bottom lines is mind boggling. Please leave Bristol Bays magic for generations to come.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

I applaud the Obama Administration's conservation leadership embodied in the America's Great Outdoors Initiative BUT STOP exploiting OUR PUBLIC LANDS and WILDLIFE. STOP THE HORSE AND BURRO ROUNDUPS. You are destroying herds and it is all totally unnecessary and a burden on tax payers. Your policy in this regard is disgusting and needs to be investigated and challenged. WHERE IS THE TRANSPARENCY. We want answers as to the WHY???? We absolutely KNOW it is not for overpopulation, lack of food or water in MOST cases. These are America's Horses and Burros. These animals walked and worked right beside men and women building this Country. It is on their backs and with their ancestors blood that we have an AMERICA. They deserve to be cared for and PROTECTED UNDER THE LAW. This is just one issue concerning our public lands and while it may not always be easy to find alternate solutions to annihilation of species it is imperative for this Nation that viable solutions are found that enhance our wildlife and OUR PUBLIC LANDS. The special interest have had their way for far too long and it's time that the American citizens have their say.

I want to thank the Obama Administration for taking the initiative to protect America's Great Outdoors. I look forward to seeing the president use this opportunity to establish a new and substantial legacy of wilderness conservation, one that can stand as a visible and enduring accomplishment of his presidency.

When I think of America's Great Outdoors, I think of our National Parks. The message you will receive in most of your emails regarding the parks is articulate and professional. I want to send a personal message of how the parks impacted my life. I am a 67 y.o. child of a deceased veteran. My mother was left a single parent when my father was killed in the Battle of the Bulge. She remarried a veteran who had been in a prisoner of war camp. We weren't fortunate enough to have much to live on but we did have the outdoors and I remember many family vacations in National Parks in Washington State. Summer time was a time for family vacations and family vacations meant time outdoors. My husband, a retired teacher, and I raised three children with the same love of nature and the outdoors. Again, we weren't blessed with funds for fancy vacations but summers were long and the National Parks called us to wonderful family vacations. I am saddened when I think of all of the families are not able to avail themselves of the National Parks and hopeful that we will find ways to sustain these treasures for generations to come. Thank you

The National Parks and all their programs and facilities are amazing . They need to be maintained to be the site of many restorative,fun and educational visits by us all. I didn't go to the listening session held in Albuquerque,but I thought it was a very responsive meeting to have organized. I hope that such meetings encourage young and old to work at maintaining the important link between people,land and wildlife. The Great Outdoors initiative is inspiring.

You should put the unemployed to work in the parks and provide a stipend to lower income seniors who wish to help.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Dear President Obama - I wanted to write to express my support for the objectives of your America's Great Outdoors initiative. I'm sure you'll receive plenty of messages that include text prepared by the NCPA. While I agree with what they write, I wanted to add my personal perspective. My family just returned to the Chicago area last night from a two week driving vacation across the plains and to the Rocky Mountains. Along the way, we visited four National Parks, four National Monuments and a number of other wonderful outdoor places. We thoroughly enjoyed the opportunity to be in the outdoors and experience such vast open spaces of diverse geography, geology and wildlife. Seeing animals such as bison and eagles in their native habitat was especially thrilling for us city folk. We even had the opportunity to "rock hound" for agates at a National Grassland. While Yellowstone and the Tetons are certainly special places, we also benefited from the other types of places in the National Park System. Our visit to Pompey's Pillar National Monument in Montana connected directly to my ten-year-old daughter's study of Lewis and Clark's expedition in school this past year. It added a great dimension to her knowledge of that part of our history. One of the last stops on our trip was at Pipestone National Monument in Minnesota. While this is probably among the lesser known sites in the Park system, it provided my whole family a fantastic insight into an important element of Native American history and culture. I doubt we would have learned about this anywhere else. During the trip, our daughters participated in some of the Junior Ranger programs available at the various sites. This was a fun way to enhance their learning. I am a strong supporter of the National Park System and all that it offers us and visitors to the US. Thank you for your continued support of making these great outdoor experiences available to all!

America's national park system is a model other countries aspire to. Our parks are a national treasure and truly belong to everyone. Please support them by protecting their integrity (e.g. limit use of ATV's on park land) and by providing appropriate funding.

When I was in my 20s, I worked for 1 year for the Wisconsin Conservation Corps, and earned a scholarship, which got me into college. It was a great experience, and I think the country should reinstate the Civilian Conservation Corps that it had in the years of the Great Depression.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

I applaud your Great Outdoors initiative! Every day, but especially in difficult times, we desperately need the great natural world to be accessible to allow us to de-stress, recharge, and find spiritual renewal. Of course the greatest of the great outdoors is our unparalleled system of national parks. Having just returned from Badlands NP (my 16th National Park!), I can give unqualified testimony to the great joy and much needed perspective that comes from spending time in these miracles of nature. As a top priority of your initiative, I urge you to follow the advice of the National Parks Second Century Commission, who have spent more than a year developing a vision for how to protect the parks and connect Americans to them in the next century. Also, provide permanent, mandatory funding for the Land and Water Conservation Fund. Seventeen billion dollars in revenues, primarily from oil and gas leasing, have accumulated during the past several decades in the Land and Water Conservation Fund, unspent for its intended purpose. This money should be spent as originally promised to support parks, seashores, forests, and waterways across the country. Please don't let this become another broken federal promise. --Do more to use national parks to inspire and educate young people. Our national parks are classrooms for discovery and learning for students and teachers. Programs like Teacher to Ranger to Teacher (TRT) allows teachers from low income school districts to spend the summer working as park rangers where they develop and present interpretive programs, staff visitor centers, and develop curriculum-based materials which they bring back to the classroom. --Build on programs that work. The National Park Service has tremendous technical expertise and know-how that can help communities preserve their special places and provide recreational and educational opportunities for people; e.g., the Park Service's Rivers and Trails Conservation Assistance program. There's no need to reinvent the wheel. Invest in a model that is working in communities across the country. The park system must also evolve to fully represent the history and culture of our diversifying nation. Please evaluate and consider new sites to bring into the system that better represent our changing country and protect remaining natural areas before we use them all up. --Provide wildlife corridors to ensure that the wildlife in our parks can find the food it needs and reproduce successfully outside, as well as within park boundaries. A recent study commissioned by the National Parks Conservation Association found that every federal dollar invested in national parks generates at least four dollars of economic value to the public. In 2009, as the recession took its toll on Americans' pocketbooks, national park visitation increased on average by nearly 4 percent, demonstrating the enhanced value of our national parks to our people in difficult economic times. Thank you for considering my comments.

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(cont.)

When I think of my country, I think of our national park system! Whenever I host visitors from other countries, our national parks are one of the first things I mention. National parks play a tremendous role in our great nation's history, and is one of the top reasons why people from around the world come to visit the United States. They are a preservation of our cultural identity, and contribute to our health and education. They also serve as a basis for conservation and recreation for millions of citizens each year. I would like to see the the Obama administration support the following: --Listen to the advise and findings of the National Parks Second Century Commission, as well as those individuals who work within the NPS from rangers to adminitrators. --Forter collborative relationships between the NPS and private institutions to prepare our parks for the 21st century. Individual Americans need to be mobilized with a sense of ownership of these amazing natural resources! --Provide permanent, mandatory funding for the Land and Water Conservation Fund. Seventeen billion dollars in revenues, primarily from oil and gas leasing, have accumulated during the past several decades in the Land and Water Conservation Fund, unspent for its intended purpose. This money should be spent as originally promised to support parks, seashores, forests, and waterways across the country, rather than just another broken federal promise!!!!!!!! --Use modern social media and communications to develop innovative programs that inspire and educate young people about conservation, environmentalism, renewable resources and technology. The Department of Education should work with the Park Service to develop these programs which would protect our National Parks, and at the same time allow them to participate in America's energy revolution. --Use the NPS's experience and knowledge, like the Rivers and Trails Conservation Assistance program, to help cities with green space, community environmental rehabilitation, and to develop urban trails and greenways. --The park system must also evolve to fully represent the history and culture of our diversifying nation. Please evaluate and consider new sites to bring into the system that better represent our changing country, and protect remaining natural areas before we use them all up. A recent study commissioned by the National Parks Conservation Association found that every federal dollar invested in national parks generates at least four dollars of economic value to the public. In 2009, as the recession took its toll on Americans' pocketbooks, national park visitation increased on average by nearly 4 percent, demonstrating the enhanced value of our national parks to our people in difficult economic times. Americans care about the future of these incredible places, so they will be there for our children and grandchildren to enjoy. Please remember the importance of protecting national parks and the many programs managed by the National Park Service that improve our communities. National parks are good investments in our future. Thank you for considering my comments.

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(cont.)

First of all I would like to thank you and the government for providing funds from the stimulus package to help improve my neighborhood. That happens to be the Great Smoky Mountain National Park. You may not know it but we do not receive any funding from the public sector. The people of Tennessee and North Carolina stipulated when they gave the land to the government that the public never be charged to enter the Smoky Mountains and it is still a free park. The funds we have received have made some much needed repairs to the roads and public areas of the park. So We appreciate the work being done. However, we need more work to be done here and in all of our parks. So please continue to invest in the great American outdoors. And by the way, we would love for you to come and visit us one of these days. The Smokies are a beautiful and glorious place to see. Thanks for all your hard work. I appreciate it and many of us do. Even though I live in a Republican strong hold, (we moved here from the Chicago area) I still keep my Democratic ideals. God Bless you and your family.

When my children were growing up, we spent many vacations in our National Parks, driving and flying from our home in New York to Yellowstone, Grand Tetons, Glacier, and many others. Now that we have grandchildren, we take them on National Park vacations. Our National Parks are priceless and deserve your full support and funding.

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(cont.)

Our National Parks are our heritage. So many are in disrepair from lack of funds spent on them. These are wonderful places for families and outdoor education. Your administration has the ability to put parks back on track. The parks offer a chance to hire young folks to learn skills to repair them, much like the CCC of the Roosevelt administration. Use funds already set aside to pay for this work. So many college grads too are out of work. Many talented young folks could work and learn as well. College academic skills should not be all that is important. Listen to the National Parks Second Century Commission, a group of well respected individuals who spent more than a year developing a vision for how to protect the parks and connect Americans to them in the next century. The upcoming Park Service centennial is a perfect start to renew our national parks. The administration should apply the lessons that were learned from the Centennial Initiative to developing a new public-private partnership to prepare our parks for their next century. We need a new national campaign that will involve people in communities throughout the country in protecting our parks for the next generation. Provide permanent, mandatory funding for the Land and Water Conservation Fund. SEVENTEEN BILLION DOLLARS in revenues, primarily from oil and gas leasing, have accumulated during the past several decades in the Land and Water Conservation Fund, unspent for its intended purpose. This money should be spent as originally promised to support parks, seashores, forests, and waterways across the country, rather than just another broken federal promise. What's happening in the Gulf of Mexico reminds us how important it is to keep that promise. Use national parks to inspire and educate young people. Our national parks are classrooms for discovery and learning for students and teachers. Programs like Teacher to Ranger to Teacher (TRT) allows teachers from low income school districts to spend the summer working as park rangers where they develop and present interpretive programs, staff visitor centers, and develop curriculum-based materials which they bring back to the classroom. This program should be expanded. And the Department of Education should work with the Park Service to excite kids with hands-on learning experiences. Build on programs that work. The National Park Service has tremendous technical expertise and know-how that can help communities preserve their special places and provide recreational and educational opportunities for people. The Park Service's Rivers and Trails Conservation Assistance program has a long history of working with cities, suburbs, and small communities across the country on conservation efforts and providing expertise to help conserve rivers, preserve open space, and develop trails and greenways. You already have a great program, but it's under resourced. There's no need to reinvent the wheel. Invest in a model that is working in communities across the country. -We need more parks for people to enjoy. The park system must also evolve to fully represent the history and culture of our diversifying nation. Please evaluate and consider new sites to bring into the system that better represent our changing country, and protect remaining natural areas before we use them all up. Provide wildlife corridors to ensure that the wildlife in our parks can find the food it needs and reproduce successfully outside, as well as within park boundaries. We need cooperative efforts between federal, state and local agencies and private landowners, because wildlife doesn't understand boundaries on a map. A recent study commissioned by the National Parks Conservation Association found that every federal dollar invested in national parks generates at least four dollar

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(cont.)

I hope you and your family enjoyed your recent vacation, and I was very pleased that you chose to spend part of it in one of our country's fabulous National Parks. The stories and pictures of you and your family enjoying our great outdoors and participating in physical activities such as bike riding and hiking, is worth more than just telling people to engage in those activities themselves. Growing up, my family took many road trips and visited several National Parks, including Carlsbad Caverns, the Grand Canyon, and Big Bend. Now with children of our own, my husband and I make it a priority to visit as many National Parks or Monuments or Historic sites as we possibly can on our travels. Living in the beautiful Pacific Northwest, we are so lucky to have several such places nearby, and we in fact visit Olympic National Park, North Cascades National Park, and Mount Ranier National Park every year. One of our favorite vacations was a few years ago when we visited Washington D.C. and all of the monuments there, as well as several historic sites such as Antitem Battlefield and Monticello. We have the National Park Passports and collect stamps for all of the places we visit. As you know and understand, these places are filled with wild, grand beauty that cannot be experienced without going out of the cities and into these back lands. Our emotions of these experiences are difficult to explain, and even pictures don't do them justice. One has to get out and be there, with nature, to feel the awe that this great country holds in its heart. I urge you to help other people have these experiences. With our youth today spending so much time indoors, inactive, it is imperative that you support AND promote legislation that protects these vital national resources and finds ways to introduce these treasures to our youth. Thank you for listening and doing your part.

I have had the privilege to spend time once again in our first National Park, Yellowstone. This profoundly rewarding time means many things to me. It reminds me of the beauty that surrounds us in this world and its fragility. It tells me of all the efforts necessarily spent by others to secure the preservation of this wondrous park and all the others. In telling that story of preservation, I also must consider all those interests which sought to exploit places like Yellowstone and, though often unintentional, to alter them forever. Our nation's best idea is surely the idea that preserved. We must always rededicate ourselves to that commitment, for commercial exploitation, part of our genuine economic needs, will always threaten to forever change what's been saved to this point. I need only point to the Gulf of Mexico to suggest what that looks like.

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My family and I consider National Parks to be a vital part of our country's legacy. When you are making big decisions about the support the national government will provide to these vital parks, I hope you will consider the following points: 1. Time spent in the wilderness is healing, inspiring, and educational. 2. Vacations in a National park are affordable, and therefore especially valuable for families. 3. These parks are one way Americans can connect not just with the wilderness, but with each other. If you visit a campground, you will know this is true, as license plates from all over the country are visible in the parking lots, and people meet and speak with each other with an ease lost to many in modern life. This connection is what keeps us patient with each other's differences, and determined to understand one another's choices. 4. It is Yosemite, the Badlands, Gettysburg and Yellowstone that is our unique gift to tourists. New York City, San Fransisco, Disney World are all fine and good, but when a German or French or Japanese Tourist stand at the Grand Canyon, they learn something about the American spirit no city can embody. 5. Dollar per dollar, the money spent to protect our wilderness, hire and train our Rangers, maintain our parks and campgrounds benefit us individually and collectively in a most cost effective manner. 6. Ours is a family with a great love for the outdoors. When our son returned from a year in Iraq, fighting door to door with his infantry unit, he was wound up pretty tight. My husband and I suggested a camping trip. We headed to upstate New York....in the day time we visited historical battlefield sites such as Saratoga, and camped in parks at night. The combination of days of vigorous walking, as my son and husband shared stories about battles they had studied or experienced, and quiet nights under the stars, with a small campfire crackling allowed my son to decompress and start the healing. Please keep such images in mind as you proceed with "America's Great Outdoors" Initiative.

I am so pleased to learn of the "America's Great Outdoors" Initiative that was announced in April. Being in the outdoors is such a significant aspect of a healthy and vigorous lifestyle. The breath-taking beauty of the natural environment throughout the United States has an awe-inspiring and spiritual component that every individual should be able to experience and appreciate. I encourage and support the effort to ensure that national parks have the funds necessary to safeguard park wildlife and provide park visitors with a safe, clean, and rewarding park experience by the National Park Service's centennial in 2016. I also support fully and permanently funding the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) to enable the Park Service to buy private land within park boundaries from willing sellers. Equally as important is to strengthen the capacity for federal, regional, state, and local agencies and private landowners to work collaboratively in order to not only protect our national parks, but to also protect the wildlife, plants, and rivers beyond park borders. Many of our wildlife species cannot survive simply in isolated pockets of our national parks. Species, particularly the mega-fauna, must be able to migrate and to disperse across regions so that a viable gene pool is maintained. A good example is the Yellowstone to Yukon (Y2Y) initiative to preserve wildlife corridors on both public and private lands. Most importantly it is necessary to improve opportunities to use our national parks to get kids into active, healthy, outdoor activity that will help them lead long, healthy lives. If our children are not exposed to "America's Great Outdoors" and learn to value the outdoors, there is a real danger that the natural resources, wildlife and natural wonders of the United Sates will not have a voice of support for the future.

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(cont.)

I'm responding to the Obama Administration's request for comments on his America's Great Outdoors initiative, One key aspect, I think, relates to our national parks. National parks help connect people to the outdoors, preserving the natural and cultural diversity of our nation and contributing to the health of our people. We love to visit the parks to enjoy their beauty, stimulate our energy and to learn about our ecology, conservation and history. We urge the administration to heed the advice of the National Parks Second Century Commission, a group of respected individuals who spent more than a year developing a vision for how to protect the parks and connect Americans to them in the next century. It also is important to provide permanent, mandatory funding for the Land and Water Conservation Fund. This money should be spent to support our parks, seashores, forests and waterways, Please evaluate and consider new sites to allow the national park system to protect remaining natural areas. A recent study by the National Parks Conservation Association found that every federal dollar invested in national parks generates at least four dollars of economic value to the public. In 2009, as the recession took its toll on Americans' pocketbooks, national park visitation increased by nearly 4 percent, demonstrating the enhanced value of our national parks to our people even in difficult economic times. We Americans care about the future of these wonderful places, hoping they will be there for our children and grandchildren. National parks are good investments in our future.

It distresses me to think that, in a year of the so-called "America's Great Outdoors" Initiative, AmeriCorps funding has been withdrawn from the spectacular programs of the Northwest Service Academy in Washington and Oregon. NWSA volunteers donate months of their lives that often lead to years of service in conservation, natural preservation, and community education. For myself and other alumni, NWSA experience teaches that serving others by working in the beautiful setting of America's national parks is a viable option. Most people are lucky to have time off on weekends to appreciate our unique national gifts. Federal funding for young Americans to help improve and maintain those parks, particularly when funding is in short supply for full-time park staff, is essential to ensuring that others will continue to be able to enjoy those resources. Thank you for considering my comments.

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(cont.)

My recent trip to Denali National Park in Alaska,, with two preteen grandsons, greatly reaffirmed my belief in the importance of a strong National Park system. I learned how President Carter enlarged the park to its present size (over 5 million acres) and strengthened its ability to protect wildlife ecosystems and to educate people of all ages and backgrounds about the wonder and importance of our remaining wilderness areas. I had not realized how much President Carter did for our park system and for wilderness protection; I believe his legacy will last to enhance the lives of many, many generations of Americans. I urge you to support the suggestions of the National Parks Second Century Commission, and to ensure that the seventeen billion dollars in funds already accumulated in the Land and Water Conservation Fund are actually USED as they were designated to be used. Of all the daunting problems before us, I see maintaining the health of our land and our waters, as the most important of all. Strong support for our national parks and forests, with an emphasis on the education of our young people in the wise stewardship of these national treasures and in the science and practice of maintaining their health is ultimately one of the greatest legacies today's leaders can provide for the future well-being of our nation. I think of the incredible success of FDR's Civil Conservation Corps; of the huge economic benefit it provided to the country, and of the lasting improvements made to our public lands that so many American still enjoy today, not to mention the huge boost that the CCC program gave to the mood and faith of the American people. A recent study has found that the same economic benefits would be realized today by federal spending in improving our National Park system....and I am sure it would provide the same uplift to our spirits. I believe it would be incredibly effective especially if combined with a national sustainable energy production program Thank you for considering my comments.

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(cont.)

The National Parks were not a big part of my formative years in Michigan. My family did not have a lot of financial resources for travel and the idea of accessing National Parks was not a priority for my parents. Nor was it a topic of intense focus in my school program. As an adult, I have come to embrace the historically and culturally informative experiences of our National Parks as well as the breathtaking beauty, peace, solitude and deep spiritual connection to our planet that occurs each time I spend a day or a two in our National Parks. It is awe-inspiring and life changing each and every time. I have set my own goals to visit as many National Parks as I can in my remaining lifetime (which should be a lot of park visits!) Going forward, I feel passionate that we must protect the existing spaces and identify key strategic historical, cultural and ecologically sensitive lands that would augment our current National Park system. We owe it to ourselves and the animals we have displaced in our urbanization across our country to set aside green spaces for our health and future. To succeed in this endeavor, the Federal Government must: Initiate outreach to all school-age children about the legacy of the National Parks that has been developed through our Federal Tax program and their rights to access and enjoy the benefits of these great lands. This could be DVDs available to schools for nominal to no-cost for classroom education or a Ranger Visitation program that brings the Ranger to the school (since most schools can't afford bringing kids to a National Park en masse). Initiate outreach to the American public through public service campaigns, government web links and sponsorship days ("fee free admissions by Corporate sponsors") to engage all Americans in this significant recession to enjoy the benefits of our National Parks. Increase promotion of the Passport Program to motivate families to visit multiple National Parks - spending vacation dollars in our own country. Incentivize airlines, rental car companies and tour companies to offer travel packages that include activities within the National Park system. Ensure that national parks have the funds necessary to safeguard park wildlife and provide park visitors with a safe, clean, and rewarding park experience by the National Park Service's centennial in 2016. Fully and permanently fund the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) to enable the Park Service to buy private land within park boundaries from willing sellers. Preserve large areas of public lands and waters to secure the health of our ecosystems, ensure wildlife conservation, maintain public access to parks and open spaces, reduce the impacts of climate change, and protect our cultural heritage. Strengthen the capacity for federal, regional, state, and local agencies and private landowners to work collaboratively in order to protect not only our national parks but the wildlife, plants, and rivers beyond park borders. Improve opportunities to use our national parks to get kids into active, healthy, outdoor activity that will help them lead long, healthy lives. I honestly believe that the rangers and concessionaires at the national parks are doing a great job in maintaining a safe, educational and natural environment for the American people to enjoy. We have many choices in travel, both locally and internationally. We need to focus back on homeland activities that promote economic recovery and ecological responsibility for the American people. Thank you for considering my comments.

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The America's Great Outdoors Initiative has been truly a great idea. Having attended one listening session, it was not difficult to hear the pleas for full funding of the Land and Water Conservation fund, and support for cleaning up the Chesapeake Bay. I would like to say a word about the role the National Park Service, especially the Cheapeake Bay Office, is playing in working toward protecting and restoring the Bay by crafting innovative but thrifty plans for the conservation of culturally and ecologically important lands. This work deserves the full support of Congress. Let's save lands that protect this national treasure by forging partnerships between the federal agencies, states (especially state parks), non-governmental organizations such as The Nature Conservancy and water trail associations and the indigenous tribes and descendent communities whose ancestors loved the Bay long before it was visited by John Smith. Thank you for considering my comments.

I love our national parks. National parks are a great investment for our people and the plant. Please take care of them to the very best of your ability. Thank you for considering my comments.

I think a good way to connect the youth of today with nature is to more fun attractions to our parks. Such as swimming, skateboard and bicycle riding, rope climbing- even simply by designating and painting lines on a paved road in a park to be used for inline skates would be an attractant for youths.

There is no greater national park at any season than Yellowstone. It has been a treasure to me and to my family. I strongly support the your Administration's America's Great Outdoors Initiative. It is critical that representatives from the Departments of Interior and Agriculture make the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem a top priority within the initiative. Protecting Yellowstone means protecting the wildlife migration corridors and watersheds that surround the park and make up the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem. As we face global climate change, protecting these connections will only become more important. For America's Great Outdoors to be successful, the Administration must put meaningful funding behind important conservation programs like the Land and Water Conservation Fund.

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(cont.)

I am writing to you to voice my support for America's Great Outdoors Initiative. For the initiative to be successful, it is vital that your Administration put meaningful funding behind important conservation programs like the Land and Water Conservation Fund. I urge you to make the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem a top priority within the initiative. Communities throughout Greater Yellowstone value their access and connection to the great outdoors and have a history of working hard to conserve special places. I am a strong supporter of the Greater Yellowstone Coalition because of their science-based approach to conservation in the lands surrounding our nation's first national park. One of the organization's main missions is to educate the public about the importance of protecting entire ecosystems, as well as migration routes between ecosystems, and not just arbitrary plots of land. As we face global climate change, and as our population continues to grow, taking such a strategic and comprehensive approach to conservation around Yellowstone and ensuring the connectivity with other viable ecosystems will only become more important. I urge you to look to the work of science-based conservation groups such as the Greater Yellowstone Coalition to guide funding decisions within the America's Great Outdoors Initiative, and to help make the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem a shining example, in our country and beyond, of conservation done right. As always, dear Mr. President, thank you for thoughtful leadership and your outstanding service to our country.

I wholeheartedly support the Obama Administration's America's Great Outdoors Initiative! Our family has been fortunate to have been able to tent-camp in many of our nation's greatest treasures--our national parks. I am grateful every day to know that they exist and am so thankful that citizens who preceded us had the foresight to establish them. But great treasures require safeguarding! Our government has a solemn duty to care for, maintain, and protect each park, and its surrounding ecosystem, from those who would exploit it and jeopardize its future. Two of the most visited, and therefore the most needy, parks are Yellowstone and Great Smoky Mountain. I believe that representatives from the Departments of Interior and Agriculture should make these two ecosystems a top priority within this initiative. For America's Great Outdoors to be successful, the Administration must put meaningful funding behind important conservation programs like the Land and Water Conservation Fund. Care and maintenance requires consistent funding. I strongly encourage you to pursue this initiative to the fullest! The future of our national treasures depends on it.

We human beings use only 2% of our brains at this stage of our evolution. Yet we think that we are brilliant, correct, and informed enough to make decisions about how the Earth's systems actually work. Since all of us pay for the miscalculations of the experts, I'd like to suggest that the least damage that you do at this time, is the best for all concerned.

As a National Park Ranger I know a thing or two about the outdoors, how they are protected and the role that the government plays in that protection. Please step up and save a little bit of this country for our children. Our wilderness cannot be replaced.

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Thank you for launching America's Great Outdoors and recognizing the work of America's 1,600 land trusts protecting natural areas, forests, important wildlife habitat and other special places, and keeping agricultural lands in use growing local food. Tax incentives, farm bill easement programs, the federal LWCF and Forest Legacy programs have helped land trusts conserve millions of acres. Please make the conservation of private forestland, natural areas, wildlife habitat, farms and ranches a centerpiece of your initiative.

As representatives of Western organizations committed to engaging our youth as resources for the outdoors, we are writing to ask that you highlight your support in the America's Great Outdoors report for programs that benefit the next generation, and our public lands and rivers.

We were thrilled by the remarkable effort that the Administration made to engage and include young people in the America's Great Outdoors listening sessions this summer. Getting our kids outdoors:

- provides important health and educational benefits,
- offers employment, career opportunities, and leadership skills,
- builds natural resource management capacity in public lands communities,
- and inspires the next generation of scientists, conservation leaders, and informed voters.

Importantly, our work with young people in the West over the years has also ensured that our public lands and rivers have had the needed helping hands to address critical issues like riparian restoration and management of invasive species. We believe that one of the most effective ways to reconnect youth with the outdoors is to engage them in efforts to protect, improve, and restore our public lands and rivers.

Our nonprofits have expertise in program operations and youth development, deep community connections, and the ability to deliver cost-effective results. But we can't do it alone. As you know, strong partnerships are essential to protect our public lands and rivers in perpetuity. Making these opportunities available to more young people requires federal leadership and expanded support for the existing organizations engaged as partners in these efforts.

This report will shape America's conservation agenda for the 21st century and by extension, the lives of so many Western kids and young people whose future depends upon having opportunities to explore the outdoors or conduct riparian restoration activities.

We hope that you will build upon the existing network of conservation corps and environmental education programs to engage thousands more young people in public lands service; expose thousands more to the outdoors through environmental education, job training, and employment; and invest in the protection of the Western lands and rivers that make these experiences possible.

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As the release of the Administration's final report on the America's Great Outdoors (AGO) Initiative nears, I am writing as chairman of the Sport Fishing and Boating Partnership Council (SFBPC) to call your attention to key areas that SFBPC members feel warrant emphasis by you and the rest of the Administration as you move forward with implementation: make access a policy priority, work through existing successful programs, maintain or increase funding for access programs, work with other federal agencies on cross-programmatic opportunities and emphasize the fun aspects of nature-based recreation.

Given the close link between access and participation, the SFBPC recommends that you and other agencies pay particular attention when making policy decisions that may unduly restrict or limit access to public resources. As noted in the April 16, 2010, memorandum from President Obama, AGO is premised on getting more Americans outside and increasing outdoor recreation. Participation in outdoor recreation is closely linked to access to resources, lands and waters that support recreational activities; this is particularly the case for boaters and anglers. The Council fully supports access limitations to public resources where scientific evidence calls for restrictions. However, we feel that nature-based recreation is unique amongst other uses of public resources due to its relationship to conservation funding in the United States, and its function as a positive tool in managing and conserving sustainable fish and wildlife populations. Given this uniqueness, access to public resources for nature-based recreation should be a policy priority where sustainable resources allow.

Finally, we believe that efforts to reconnect families and children to nature will be most successful if there is a strong emphasis on programs that highlight the "fun" of interacting with nature by actively participating in an outdoor activity, such as recreational angling or boating. The focus on increasing conservation as a vocation or volunteer opportunity in the AGO is laudable, but it is our feeling that in the long-term people are first inclined to undertake activities which are fun and exciting. Nature-based recreation, including recreational angling and boating, is inherently fun and provides a strong incentive for people to continue to participate. Continued participation in nature-based recreation opens the door for participants to understand and appreciate the successes wrought through more than a century of our National efforts to conserve our natural bounty.

These talking points make perfect sense! Do what you can, Please.. I've been to Alaska and understand the importance of keeping it pristine.

I as a voter and a U.S. citizen expect you to demonstrate leadership in sustaining the environment.

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. I understand a decision is being made soon on the Bristol Bay area of Alaska. Please don't let short term gains outweigh the long term impact for this area. Your decision will affect our children, grand children and all of our future generations. Please decline the Pebble Mine's request.

We all are empowered to do right action or wrong. It is wrong action when we do things, due to greed, which cause harm to others sharing our planet, which have no voice and no power to stop us. In typical fashion, what we do to harm and kill fish, wildlife and animals we share the planet with, eventually ends up hurting us as well. We have a great opportunity in front of us, to do right action and If we do not stop it, this mine will endanger Bristol Bay's spectacular wild lands, world-class salmon runs and other outstanding wildlife . Let us be moved by what is good for the future generations of all living things sharing the planet and not by dollars gained today at their expense.

Wetlands are a natural treasure with a very practical purpose. They should be carefully guarded.

Good Morning... I am writing to you to let you know how important our wildlands, parks and outdoor spaces are to our family. There are many areas in the US that are under attack by development, mining and drilling. I am hoping that by letting you know how essential these areas are for families in the US you might reconsider the short sided need to ruin these areas and instead give them the protection and care they need. Families love to go camping and explore the beauty of the US, teaching our kids about our heritage and ways to be kind stewards to the earth. One specific area under attack right now is Bristol Bay. Please ensure our generation and the generations of kids to come that we have pristine wildlands and parks for them to explore and be stewards of. It's the right thing to do!

, We've all experienced, all too recently - with the reach of devastation in the Gulf, how devastating it can be to our natural environment when we place money over Mother Nature. Our resources are extremely limited here on Planet Earth and the areas that we have that are considered "pristine" are even less so. We must do everything we can within our power to protect the most sacred natural habitats that we have for future generations, and not allow them to be pillaged in the name of profits. As we begin to find our way out of this recession, it allows us to make a break from the old way of business. It provides us an opportunity for us to claim that we will no longer allow our children and our children's children to receive a Planet that "used to be" so beautiful but now is nothing more than toxic. The true impact on our ecosystem will be much more calamitous than can be expected if Pebble Mine is allowed to move forward. History has proved time and again that when left to self regulation and oversight companies fail to do so properly. When profit margins are the key success metric for a company all else becomes "risk management" I implore you to truly understand the impact that allowing this project forward will mean for our country. It is within your ability to make sure that we create a future that is full of life and beauty not metallic sulfide.

People, I am writing you out of a deeply felt and profound concern for the integrity of Pebble Bay's clean waters, wild salmon, wildlife and traditional subsistence ways of life.

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Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

I am writing regarding the threat to Bristol Bay's clean waters, wild salmon, wildlife and traditional sustenance ways of life if the Pebble Mine is allowed. I have visited the great state of Alaska twice now and it truly is a beautiful place and America's last frontier. I have not had the opportunity to visit Bristol Bay but I bet it's as beautiful as the Glacier Bay, Denali, and the Brooks Range areas. Strong federal government oversight of the Pebble Mine permitting process and analysis of cumulative impacts to this watershed must be provided and To impact this natural wonder will not only affect wildlife but the First Nation people who depend on its pure waters for their way of life. Alaska's tourist industry will also be impacted and for all of the above reasons, I request that the permit for the Pebble Mine not be allowed.

We support the Obama Administration's America's Great Outdoors Initiative. We believe that representatives from the Departments of Interior and Agriculture should make the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem a top priority within the initiative.

We visit the Park twice a year and sometimes 3 trips a year. We value the wildlife, so dependent on watersheds and open spaces, and the very special nature of Yellowstone. Please do all that you can to protect and provide financially for this very special place/space. Thank you

I raised my son in the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem. Luckily that molded his values and now at age 22 he still has a passion for the great outdoors, enjoying fly fishing, hiking, camping, mountain biking, and skiing. Protecting our special "natural" places is important not only for us, but future generations. Thank you for taking interest in protecting America's Great Outdoors. M

Please consider the following points as the Administration works to conserve your country's special places: - As the world's first national park, Yellowstone should be a priority area as the Administration develops strategies to reconnect people to nature and conserve your treasured landscapes.

As someone who has visited Yellowstone and the Grand Canyon National Parks and has the Bear Mountain State Park in my county in New York I am telling President Obama, that America must do more to protect our national parks, wildlife refuges, forests, and rivers. As you know, the Yellowstone National Park, the world's first national park, is a focal area for protection of our public lands. The Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem, with Yellowstone at its core, is one of the last, largely intact ecosystems left on earth. As Americans, we must ensure it's long-term protection today, tomorrow, and for future generations.

Native people have always known that we must live in harmony with our surroundings. they are not there for our abuse and destruction please stop this action now

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Why Bristol Bay Must Be Protected Our nation has been blessed with a place of such rare and unimaginable beauty – a paradise rich beyond measure with its spectacular wild lands, world-class salmon runs and an array of magnificent wildlife, such as grizzlies, sockeye salmon, chinook salmon, wolves, eagles, beluga whales, killer whales and harbor seals. This American natural wonder is truly a bit of “heaven-on-earth” – an unspoiled Eden with natural treasures of vast tundra, crystal clear streams and pristine lakes. This is Bristol Bay watershed and it is one of America’s last and most important wild places resting peacefully in Southwestern Alaska, United States. Tens of millions of salmon not only support the abundance of wildlife, but also sustains the indigenous Native communities that have thrived here for thousands of years. Bristol Bay’s pristine wetlands, lagoons and the upper reaches of its watershed support millions of migratory waterfowl and terrestrial birds, including bald eagles, Steller’s eiders, rock ptarmigans, Arctic terns, sandhill cranes, swans and emperor geese. Take a trip there now and you ‘d be bound to have the pleasure of observing grizzlies, wolves, seals and whales roaming this nearly untouched ecosystem. It is imperative that the investment in Bristol Bay be to safeguard the beauty of this astounding and remarkable natural wonder. If the mining giants get their way, a man-made environmental and humanity crisis will be in the making. Pebble Mine is a catastrophe waiting to happen. If Pebble Mine is allowed to go forward, it will inflict irreversible damage on Bristol Bay, including the permanent destruction of 60 miles of salmon habitat. In short, Pebble Mine is a filthy project with irrevocable consequences as it will likely destroy clean waters, wild salmon, whales and other wildlife in this largely untouched wilderness and destroy the traditional subsistence ways of life. Bristol Bay’s commercial fisheries generate \$300 million in revenue each year – that’s one-third of Alaska’s commercial fishing revenue. More than 75 percent of summer-time jobs are based on the area’s fish and wildlife. A study of mines similar to the proposed Pebble mine showed that 85 percent of them polluted nearby waters. At Pebble, a proposed open-pit mine would be 2 miles wide (enough to line up the world’s longest cruise ships end-to-end) and 2,000 feet deep (enough to engulf the Empire State Building). As proposed, the mine would generate more than 9 billion tons of waste held behind a series of massive earthen dams – all of them taller than China’s Three Gorges Dam and located just 20 miles from an active fault line! A single accident here would be disastrous, but even the construction and operation of the mine could disrupt salmon migration and jeopardize the larger ecosystem. In no way should the remarkable and beautiful Bristol Bay fall prey and be sacrificed for the senseless greed of foreign mining company profiteers, including Mitsubishi, Rio Tinto and Anglo American. Say NO to the Pebble Mine! STOP the Disastrous Pebble Mine!

It is my belief that the Pebble Mine will contaminate Bristol Bay's clean waters thereby threatening wild salmon, wildlife and traditional subsistence ways of life. Large-scale metallic sulfide mining should not be allowed on public lands, particularly in the Bristol Bay watershed where it can destroy habitat and resources used for recreation or subsistence living.

This is really a no-brainer as a final effort to give Americans the little that is left in America that they can possibly still call their own. For America's Great Outdoors to be successful, the Administration must put meaningful funding behind important conservation programs like the Land and Water Conservation Fund.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Throughout my life I and family members have spent much vacation time in National Parks. It was our favorite kind of vacation. So I whole heartedly support the Obama Administration's America's Great Outdoors Initiative.

I also believe that all stakeholders must have input to the programs, regulations and legislation affecting the National Parks and the areas surrounding the Parks. Environmentalists, hunters, fishermen, ranchers, miners, farmers, and tourists must have their opinions sought out and their opinions heard, but sound technical knowledge should guide the effort to preserve our national heritages.

Yellowstone was our first national park and remains today one of the most beautiful and unique areas in the world. My husband and I have gone to Yellowstone in April or May, every year since 1999. I have hundreds of treasured pictures of wildlife, especially bears and wolves, I've taken in Yellowstone's Lamar Valley. We love and appreciate all our National Parks and want the animals and plants within them to flourish for all our citizens, both now and in the future.

It is not only the beauty of these treasures of our great United States but the wilderness/wildness does something to enrich ones spirit. Our first visit to YNP was 1973, we were unable to return until 1986 with our youngest son, who was 10 years old) on that trip he announced he was going to become a Park Ranger. He is now 34 and after 10 years of vagabonding is finally a permanent Environmental Interpreter for Carlsbad Caverns, N.M. You have never heard nor seen one so happy even after a lot of heart ache getting there. He is hoping his next home will be the Grand Tetons. If more young people were given a chance to visit these wonderful places they will learn what it means to be free and wild just like the first immigrants when they first landed here. We have only missed one year visiting a National Park/Monument since 1986; Hearing a wolf howl or a elk bugle is indescribable. Watching a grizzly bear walk beside a wolf is even more overwhelming.....the hike up Mount Washburn in the spring smelling the wildflowers is a God's wonder. More and more Americans are visiting our nations wonders every year, I must say that it changes many things and in a way is sad because of that but is greedy on my part. Many changes have occurred since 1973 but most have been for the good. Please help keep ALL of these wonders for our childrens future even if for only one visit in their life time. It will be something that will never be forgotten. Remember, our problems with wildlife is because we are taking more and more of their habitat away. We almost killed off the Bison because of our greed, lets do not make the same mistakes again.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Preserving the natural environment gives us spiritual and physical health, and it provides a reason for living and working to make our nation the best that it can be. Please consider the following four points as the Administration works to conserve our country's special places: (1) Yellowstone, as the world's first national park, should be a priority area as the Administration develops strategies to reconnect people to nature and conserve our treasured landscapes. (2) Protecting Yellowstone means protecting the wildlife migration corridors and watersheds that surround the park and make up the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem. As we face global climate change, protecting these connections will become increasingly important. (3) Communities throughout Greater Yellowstone value their access and connection to the great outdoors, and have a history of working hard to conserve special places. (4) If America's Great Outdoors is to be successful, the Administration must put meaningful funding behind important conservation programs like the Land and Water Conservation Fund. Please preserve more of our nation's natural resources. We are so close to losing them forever.

I strongly support and applaud the Obama Administration's America's Great Outdoors Initiative. Thank you very much for considering my comments.

Howdy President Obama, I would like to begin by saying Thank You for all you're administration has done for the natural places in this country. I was born and raised in Bar Harbor, Maine and can not express the myriad of ways that living in such an area in an around Acadia National Park has molded my life. Beyond that, and most definitely a result of my living in such a beautiful and protected region, I have traveled to and gladly immersed myself in many other natural areas including national, state and local parks, natural and conservation areas, wildlife preserves and wildlife management areas. These areas are the green backbone of our country and with the development continuing in this country, most specifically urban sprawl and the use of non-renewable resources, I personally am begging you to put in place related legislation and support all natural areas. Not because it is a popular decision or what your advisors say will garner you votes, but because this is our country, and the natural areas we have at the moment are here only because of continued support throughout the last century and are without a doubt a source of envy from many other countries. You have a young family and I will soon be starting mine, and I hope that I will be able to take my children to places like Yellowstone and Acadia and not have to say things like "well, a few years ago you could see buffalo walking around and even crossing the road!" Thank you very much for your time, and I sincerely hope you and your family enjoyed your trip to Acadia.

I understand that someone from an urban environment may find it difficult to appreciate the value in preserving our natural environments. Having grown up in the Yellowstone Valley, I have first hand knowledge of that value.

It is a place close to my heart as I've often been in that area. The land and all its creatures need spaces in which to just BE, and that helps us humans to just BE as well. As we face global climate change, protecting these connections will only become vitally important. They allow us to breathe!

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

One of the greatest gifts you and your administration can give to the future is the preservation of our wild, natural, and outdoor places. I strongly support the Obama Administration's America's Great Outdoors Initiative.

Yellowstone Park was first, and it continues to be the richest example of a temperate-forest ecosystem. Enlarging the area for animal migration, and protecting these corridors from pollution and hunting are the highest priority. After a dozen visits to Yellowstone in all seasons I still find it the nation's most remarkable place to see wildlife. I vote, I happily pay my taxes because of benefits like Yellowstone, I spend good money visiting Yellowstone, and I am not alone. I support leaving our children a legacy besides a huge national debt. To maintain the Yellowstone legacy the Administration must put meaningful funding into programs like the Land and Water Conservation Fund.

I have been taking my family to our National parks for 35 years and now my children are doing the same with their children. Just this past summer we visited Yellowstone with all of our grandkids for 10 days. The fascination we seen on their faces was worth every penny we spent. There is very few things left in this world that excites me more. I have been all over the world and it amazes me to see the amount of visitors from other countries. We had lunch with a family from China one day and they stated how wonderful our National Parks are. They were in awe over how well they are maintained and the number of them we have. They were in the US mainly to visit our parks and had so far been to 3 and were working their way east. We have something that we need to treasure and save for the future generations to come. Not allowing mining and drilling in our parks is one of the most important things we need to protect them from. With all the oil that we have in North Dakota I just have a hard time finding any reason to soil the beauty of our National Parks. Recently, we heard that they are seeking permission to drill in Theodore Roosevelt National Park in North Dakota. If that happens anywhere in the park it will be a tragedy. There are so few things in this country that we can guarantee will be there for future generations and our untouched National Parks should be safe by law.

I support the America's Great Outdoors Initiative proposed by your administration.

As a university ecology professor, I have taken classes to Yellowstone for extended 2-week field trips. The kids from the city (Chicago) were amazed at both the wilderness and the biological diversity. They had never hiked a trail, ridden a horse, watched for wolves at dawn, or seen the amazing bacteria in the hot springs before. It was a life-changing trip for them, and for so many other people who visit the park every year.

You, President Obama have seen the National Park series by Ken Burns and know how essential preserved places like that are for our country and really for every individual in the country. They offer inspiration, beauty and a chance to see wild life that inspire us. Please 1, bring them up to par and 2, protect them forever.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

I am a supporter of the Greater Yellowstone Coalition and a regular visitor to the park, (as well as others of our wonderful National Parks). Yellowstone Park is my favorite, however, I have been visiting it since my youth and am planning another visit this November near my 70th birthday. I especially support the concept of protecting the entire ecosystem around the park, not just the park itself within a certain arbitrary political boundary. Wouldn't it be great if this concept could be applied to many more of our National Parks?

Protecting wildlife, forests, streams, rivers and lakes, and everything else together preserves human life and the plants as if they are one. Which, by the way, they are! We must be vigilant, wise, and purposeful in our protection.

As a proud environmentalist and a true believer that our national parks were "America's Best Idea." I urge you to do what ever possible to support these amazing places. We travel to Yellowstone twice a year and find beauty, peace, and the most wonderful people who love this place as we do.

In addition to the above comments, I would like to stress how important our national parks are in our lives.

I SUPPORT THE OBAMA ADMINISTRATION'S AMERICA'S GREAT OUTDOORS INITIATIVE!!! - COMMUNITIES THROUGHOUT Greater Yellowstone VALUE THEIR ACCESS & CONNECTION TO THE GREAT OUTDOORS and have a history of working hard to conserve special places.

I voted for you Mr. President because I believed you would do the right thing. Beyond the November midterms I will continue to support you because I believe you to be a man of integrity. Preserving our pristine lands from unregulated mining and drilling is essential to our sense of pride as Americans. Thank you.

I fully support President Obama and his decisions as leader of the United States!!!!

My wife and I have visited Yellowstone National Park during winter about 8 times in the past 20 years. We wish to see it and the whole ecosystem protected. The greater Yellowstone ecosystem is one of the few relatively intact ecosystems in the lower 48 states. We live in Colorado - a fantastic place - but the ecosystem is sliced and diced. Please do not let this happen to the Yellowstone ecosystem Therefore,

It's a unique spot, none other like it in the world.

I personally consider Yellowstone National Park to be one of America's truly great treasures.

I support the Obama Administration's America's Great Outdoors Initiative, Yellowstone symbolizes what is best in our national parks.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

I support the Obama Administration's America's Great Outdoors Initiative, making preservation of land, open water and its accompanying wildlife a facet of this country that is available for all to see and appreciate for generations to come. Many areas are valued, but I am writing to day about just one.

Your initiative to conserve our parks and special natural lands and fauna and flora is altogether commendable,. It will be most important for the country's most notable and well visited park and its surrounding lands, the beloved and popular Yellowstone Park. Added funding is the deserved means to accomplish that long term goal.

We support the Obama Administration's America's Great Outdoors Initiative.

I just spent 2 weeks visiting National Parks in California and Oregon, and the spectacular lands I saw rejuvenated my hope in our country and our future. We need these spaces to preserve the best and most inspiring parts of our country from misuse and exploitation.

We recently spent several days in Yellowstone. It is an extraordinary place and we must do all we can to assure the future of the park and its wildlife. Please consider the following points as the Administration works to conserve that part of the west: - As the world's first national park, Yellowstone must be a priority area as the Administration develops strategies to reconnect people to nature and conserve our treasured landscapes. - Protecting Yellowstone means protecting the wildlife migration corridors and watersheds that surround the park which make up the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem.-

I work in the Greater Yellowstone area as an interpreter of the landscape for visitors to Yellowstone National Park and as a ski instructor. In both of my jobs clients comment over and over again about the wild landscape we have here in Montana. As you know from visiting here, it is a special place that can not be replaced. Including a protective designation of the Gallatin River. Reduce, or eliminate the trucking through this scenic corridor. Note how many people visited YNP this year alone.

I attended the first meeting in Bozeman and gave the representative our document The Migration Highways. A follow up call and email from The President's office was made to us regarding our plan to make Mt. Hwy 87 and US Hwy 287 a Migration Highway for animals going into and out of YNP. We in the Madison Valley want to stop the unnecessary slaughter of these animals on our highways. We would greatly appreciate your help in making this happen. The document is with Jim Lynch, Director of Mt. Dept. of Transportation right now. Please email or call us with an update on the status of our suggestion.

Our National Parks should be one of the most precious legacies that I leave to my grandchildren and great grandchildren.

As a volunteer in one of our national parks, I continually see what they and our other public lands mean to our nation's citizens.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

We lived in the area for four years and have become enthusiastic protectors of this national treasure. I've retired from teaching and know that this is a vital national objective. - Park borders are only visible to humans. Protecting Yellowstone means protecting the wildlife migration corridors and watersheds that surround the park and make up the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem. We know this first hand from living in Jackson, WY.

We love our national park system.

I bring groups of people to Yellowstone every winter see attached for the latest trip.

I believe that the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem should be managed for the good of the ecosystem and not driven by commercial interests. - For America's Great Outdoors to be successful, the Administration must put meaningful enforcement if the Clean Air Act and Clean Water Act and promote clean and renewable energy usage. There are those of us how enjoy the beauty of the outdoors, who have volunteered for the betterment of the outdoors, and who see the need to get all Americans to understand and respect the outdoors. Please continue to use us to promote true change in this area.

As a sportsman with a family that hunts, fishes, camps and simply enjoys the outdoors and all it offers I agree completely with the goals set forth below and ask that you work towards implementing them to help protect the Yellowstone ecosystem. One Last point. I ALSO VOTE!

I support your administration's America's Great Outdoors Initiative and believe that representatives from the Departments of Interior and Agriculture should make the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem a top priority within the initiative. Thank you for your consideration. I look forward to your response.

I have been an active outdoors enthusiast all my life and always enjoy time spent in the mountains and wilderness areas. There I firmly support the Obama Administration's America's Great Outdoors Initiative.

Roadless Area classification still allows for fire/emergency roads. I'm all for it if you still allow mountain bikes.

Mountain biking is a great way to experience the outdoors and access should be expanded.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

The idea posted is based on the false premise that use and conservation are mutually exclusive. The truth is, effective conservation requires some amount of use. For forest managers to actively manage lands some access is necessary. There are only roads on half or one percent of the lands. I think we are already doing an excellent job of conservation. We already have 120 million plus acres dedicated to Wilderness protections. We are doing a very good job of conservation already. It is painfully clear to me that the "less informed" are actually the environmentalists. Comments supporting climate change—a false science recently completely debunked—is one example. The notion that OHV users' sole purpose in life is to destroy the lands they recreate on is another example. The idea that OHVs are polluting the lands and chasing the wildlife is yet another unsubstantiated "feel good" claim. If you environmentalists would just be honest about the problems you would find that your selfish desires are the driving force behind this conflict."

In Colorado the OHV community supported a new law that allows any law enforcement officer to respond to land use issues. This was done to increase the amount of enforcement with little extra funding. It was sponsored by OHV groups because we do want the bad apples plucked. Is that honest enough?

Yea I agree with the idea Families and Friends actively together in the Great Outdoors. I think that sounds awesome heavy industry and farming causes far more harm to our country. Also people that think all genetically modified foods are bad are crazy! Almost all the food Americans have been eating since like 20 years ago or so is genetically modified it saves far more lives than most people realize. It also helps to slow down the farming of new land growth overall in developed countries.

It is imperative that this initiative highlight the importance of collaborative partnerships that include land owners in the decision making process and inter-agency communication. We believe our partnership is a good illustration of how ranchers, environmentalists, and agencies can establish common ground and work together to address mutual priorities. To date over 100 organizations have signed the California Rangeland Resolution to express their support for the work of the California Rangeland Conservation Coalition.

The Rangeland Coalition has come a long way because of the dedication of nongovernmental organizations and support of agency partners. Therefore, the Initiative should support the participation of agency staff and financial support of collaborative conservation efforts that pull together landowners, agencies and interested stakeholders.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Conservation easements, placed voluntarily on private working ranches have proven over the past decade to be a successful means to keep large tracts of working ranches as wide open spaces. Permanent conservation easements on working ranches forever restrict the use of the land to agricultural purposes, while keeping ranchers managing their own ranches. This method preserves the present state of both the land and the ranching operation for future generations. Through the use of conservation easements as a preservation tool, the privately-owned ranches remain on property tax rolls, providing tax income to the local community. Land preserved with a conservation easement with government dollars is also less expensive than fee title acquisition, both initially and over time, because the landowner is responsible for management and maintenance.

Another area of potential improvement is enhancement of the Land and Water Conservation Fund to allow for funding of conservation easements to be purchased and held by third parties in order to achieve national conservation goals in priority landscapes. Ranches and other working lands play a vital role in maintaining ecological processes and connectivity across large areas. Preventing the fragmentation or conversion of large working lands to other uses can be essential to the long-term ecological health of federal conservation lands and the survival of the plants and animals that depend on them.

Partnerships between federal land management agencies and the private sector can be the most effective and efficient way to maintain the public benefits that private working lands can provide. Existing models for such partnership include the Department of Defense's Readiness and Environmental Protection Initiative (REPI). This program achieves federal goals through grants to non-federal entities with a clear purpose of protecting habitat for federally-listed species, and maintaining the ability of the military to test and train.

The clear purpose of the new program would be to maintain ecological processes and habitat connectivity between and around federal conservation lands in strategic landscapes. Federal and state partnerships with non-governmental entities and landowners can be the most cost-effective way to achieve this goal. Strategic targeting of Farm Bill easement and stewardship funding to priority landscapes can be part of the solution. However, the demand for such programs already far exceeds the available resources. Federal land management agencies also need enhanced ability to advance national conservation goals in priority landscapes through strategic grants to nonfederal partners.

Specifically, I wish to reiterate the Colville Tribes' recommendations and respond and respond to Mr. Shafroth's request for examples where co-management between Indian tribes and the federal government has been successful.

Encourage Co-Management Opportunities for Indian Tribes on Federal Lands within Tribes' Aboriginal or Reserved Rights Areas: As noted during the AGO consultation, Indian tribes have demonstrated that they can manage natural resources as good as, or in many cases better than, federal land managers. Tribes also have a particular incentive to manage lands on which the tribes possess reserved rights or share some other historical connection. The Colville Tribes strongly recommends that the AGO report to President Obama specifically mention this issue.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Provide a Set Aside in the Land and Water Conservation Fund for Acquisitions or Management Activities Involving Indian Tribes: Without some source of funding, it seems unlikely that Indian tribes will be able to meaningfully participate in the AGO, especially where acquisition of land is contemplated. The Colville Tribes, therefore, supports a set aside from the Land and Water Conservation Fund for activities under the AGO involving Indian tribes,

Streamline and Make Uniform Agencies' ProRelty Disposal and Acquisition Authority: As noted during the AGO consultation, the authority of the various land management agencies to donate, sell, lease, or otherwise convey real property varies wildly from agency to agency. Some agencies have broad authority while others, like the U.S. Forest Service, have very limited authority to convey interests in federal land. Existing conveyance authority in most cases does not contemplate transfers to Indian tribes. Federal land managers have consequently been reluctant to use what authority they do possess for transactions involving Indian tribes.

Prohibit the Use of the Forest Service Facility Realignment and Enhancement Act ("FSFREA") in Areas of Historical Interest to Tribes: Several commentators have noted that the FSFREA, which allows forest supervisors to sell Forest Service real property at public auction and keep the proceeds of the sales, should not be used in areas where Indian tribes have reserved rights or other cultural or historic connections to the land. In the 2008, the Colville Tribes unsuccessfully sued the Forest Service to prevent the Okanogan National Forest from auctioning a property under the FSFREA within the Colville Tribes' traditional territories. Instead, the AGO should provide a mechanism for these unneeded Forest Service properties to be transferred to Indian tribes without cost to the tribes.

The LRMA has enabled both the Colville Tribes and the Spokane Tribe to employ law enforcement officers to patrol Lake Roosevelt and its shoreline to enforce federal laws (through cross-deputization arrangements) and tribal health and safety laws. Lake Roosevelt is the 151-mile reservoir of the Grand Coulee Dam, the largest hydroelectric power plant in the United States and the third largest in the world.

The 2008 Fish Accords create a 10 year partnership between the Colville Tribes and the federal government for the recovery of endangered Upper Columbia River salmon and steel head and the fulfillment of the Colville Tribes' fishing rights.

The 2008 Fish Accords provide the Colville Tribes with a stable, long-term funding source for fish and wildlife enhancement projects, programs, and activities.

It is universally recognized by those concerned with the preservation and restoration of the Chesapeake Bay that widespread public buy-in can be best achieved by appealing to the citizens' appreciation of the Bay. The immediate corollary is that to appreciate the Bay watershed, one needs to have access to the Bay or its tributaries, or the lands adjacent. Those lands will be best appreciated if they are already preserved and protected from some of the encroachments of modern life, and especially if those lands and access points have scenic, historical, or cultural significance.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

The concept of the indigenous cultural landscape as useful in land conservation programs arose from considering what an indigenous person's perspective of the Chesapeake Bay region might have been when John Smith first explored the Bay and its tributaries. This construct recognizes and respects that Indian cultures lived within the context of their environment, although not in the stereotypical sense of "living in harmony with the environment". American Indian peoples lived around the Chesapeake Bay and its rivers within large varied landscapes, with which they were intimately familiar. They used different parts of those landscapes in different ways: for food, medicine, and clothing procurement, for making tools and objects related to transportation and the household, for agriculture, and for settlements.

The construct of the indigenous cultural landscape is particularly pertinent to land conservation in the Chesapeake today for several reasons. First of all, it embraces an aspect of America's cultural heritage that has widespread appeal for the geotourist. People of all ages and backgrounds are intrigued by Native history and culture and eager to learn more about what life was like for Indians before the advent of Europeans into the Chesapeake changed their world. This fact is acknowledged by one of the major themes of the Captain John Smith Chesapeake National Historic Trail, which embraces respect for, inclusion of, and education about the Indian communities of the Chesapeake.

But the use of such a construct does more than capitalize on the public's great interest about American Indians and their cultures, and the emotional ties such interest brings to the conservation of natural resources. It also recognizes that these indigenous communities still exist, and that respecting them and their cultures is a valid and central goal of any land/water conservation effort. Furthermore the construct re-emphasizes the values that American Indians have toward natural resources, including an attachment to place, and thereby encourages that attachment to place which will further efforts to help the Chesapeake Bay and its watershed.

In the past, opportunity related to American Indian cultural conservation and curiosity has focused primarily on archeological sites, not on the full landscapes in which these cultures existed prior, and for some decades after, European contact. Conservation and preservation of Native archaeological sites is indeed critical, but our efforts should not be limited to such sites. Instead, they should be expanded whenever possible to embrace known archaeological sites - or areas of high potential for pre-Colonial archaeology - and their surrounds, in units of land large and natural enough to accurately reflect the cultural life-ways of the communities that lived within them. Such an approach strengthens the arguments for preserving and conserving and/or restoring larger cohesive landscape units, which may include uplands, forests, natural openings and meadows, as well as riverine, estuarine, and marine waters, in collected blocks and corridors.

This approach also brings equality to the descendants of the indigenous cultures who inhabited these lands historically. If we conserve for both indigenous cultural and ecological reasons, along with scenic and aesthetic reasons, we build a greater meaning for these landscapes, and for the people who were ... and still are ... attached to them culturally. We build opportunities for the public to interact with and learn about these communities which furthers attachment to the Bay.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

The descendent indigenous groups of the Chesapeake Bay region should participate in the process of selecting and prioritizing culturally significant indigenous landscapes, which are currently underrepresented in our federal, state, and regional databases.

We appreciate the tremendous work done by you and members of your administration to solicit input from thousands of citizens on the best ways to strengthen our connection to nature and our shared history, bolster the health of our communities and economies, and protect our natural heritage and clean water supplies.

In particular, we commend your administration for underscoring the value of urban parks, greenspaces, and rivers to families across America, and for ensuring that these vital, "close-to-home" components of our Great Outdoors are an integral part of your Initiative. Many of our cities had the honor of hosting AGO listening sessions this past summer, and we heard first-hand from kids, parents, educators, and others how much open space matters to them - and alternately, how a shortage of parks, recreational opportunities, and access to shared greenspaces harms the health of our residents and our communities.

As you and the First Lady have noted, skyrocketing rates of childhood obesity and associated health problems are directly linked to this shortage of places to run and play. Too many American cities and towns lack adequate outdoor spaces to serve their populations, rendering many communities "exercise deserts." Similarly, several of our towns have world-class public lands, rivers, and outdoor recreation opportunities nearby, but are missing the infrastructure necessary to help citizens reach and enjoy these remarkable places. These same public lands are also often home to watersheds that provide our cities with clean drinking water, a resource increasingly at risk from threats to forests and wildlands.

Further, we know that natural amenities like parks, greenspaces, and rivers contribute to a higher quality of life and are critical to attracting and retaining the workforce necessary to encourage economic investment and make our metropolitan regions more vibrant and globally competitive. We also know that these shared outdoors spaces enhance surrounding property values, contributing to higher tax revenues. They are a smart investment of public funds, yet cities around the nation continue to experience a deficit of parks and protected open space.

Increasing opportunities to connect Americans - especially our children - to the Great Outdoors through innovative outdoor education programs, such as the Junior Rangers Program of the First Lady's Let's Move Outside campaign.

Providing full and dedicated funding for the Land and Water Conservation Fund. This crucial source of support can help to conserve open space and water resources, while also funding new parks, trails, and recreational facilities.

Investing in land and water protection that supports local economies. Safeguarding our nearby public lands and rivers, and the scenic and recreational amenities they provide, bolsters many of our cities' economies by generating billions in revenue and providing thousands of good jobs.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

It also protects critical drinking water supplies through watershed, forest, and wetland conservation.

Including parks in urban redevelopment strategies. Abandoned land, vacant lots, and distressed properties can be an opportunity for redevelopment - not just for housing and transit, but also for the multiplicative value of parkland and open space creation.

Encouraging the kinds of public-private partnerships that have proven so effective around the country. Communities like ours have developed homegrown, collaborative solutions to conservation and outdoor recreation challenges that can serve as national models. These innovative, locally-driven approaches help to protect and restore natural areas while connecting our citizens to special landscapes, and they need the federal government as a partner to leverage local financial support - both public and private - and ensure their longterm success.

By working together to protect our natural heritage and leveraging resources to provide children and families with access and opportunities to enjoy the outdoors, we know we can make our cities and towns healthier, more sustainable, and more economically competitive.

Hello, Thank you for your interest in America's Great Outdoors. While I appreciate your comment and would welcome it elsewhere on the AGO site, it's not germane to the Terms of Participation. Please feel free to re-post to a more appropriate place. -----Original Message----- Sent: Thursday, February 17, 2011 11:19 AM I would like to see more affordable foods in the park. Visitors can purchase lunch, sneaks, etc while enjoying the trip.

To the Obama Administration, Thank you. On the heels of the devastating proposals in the Republicans continuing resolution we hear this clear and concrete call to protect what has made this country strong. I support the America's Great Outdoors initiative and commend President Obama and his Administration for recognizing that we need to protect our natural world to ensure our health and that of future generations. I hope the Administration will immediately implement the recommendations outlined in its Great Outdoors report. This initiative is important to the people of Vermont because: * It can help ensure clean water supplies, support jobs in tourism and recreation, save working farms and ranches, and preserve the special places where our community goes hunting, fishing or just to enjoy nature. * It is driven by communities and encourages local people to recommend the best ways to save their lands, waters and coastlines. * It is aimed at preserving whole natural places, including entire forests, mountain ranges, migratory corridors and rivers. I urge the Administration to take action now on this initiative. Key first steps would be full funding of the Land <<http://www.nature.org/initiatives/protectedareas/support/art30842.html>> and Water Conservation Fund, a permanent extension of conservation easement tax incentives, and support for other government programs that protect our local lands and waters including State Wildlife Action Grants, LIP, Section 6 and Forest Legacy I also invite the Obama Administration to visit Vermont, ranked 5th most desirable destination in the World by National Geographic (yes the entire State!) to learn more about the work of the Vermont Chapter of The Nature Conservancy, the Vermont Land Trust, the Green Mountain Club, the Catamount Trail, the Cross-Vermont Trail and more than a dozen local land trusts.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

To Whom It May Concern: It is so important for me to thank the Obama administration for supporting the America's Great Outdoors initiative. Living in Maui, Hawaii it is so easy for me to see the countless benefits of protecting and preserving our land and waters. Many of our livelihoods depend on tourism and the ability to provide a gorgeous environment for the people who visit this special place. It extends far beyond our community, however. Clean drinking water, land, and air are not just beautiful, they are essential to life. This amazing country has an abundance of superb places to visit and keeping them clean and undeveloped will set in motion awareness that could pave the way for humankind's long-term survival locally and globally. Let us blaze new frontiers in green technology, sustainable renovation and agriculture techniques so we can provide new jobs and a road map for developing countries. Please help by funding the Land and Water Conservation Fund, a permanent extension of conservation easement tax incentives, and support for other government programs that protect our local lands and waters. Thank you so much for helping! Your children and grandchildren will thank you too!!

My comment: Bird Watching Is this effort including the outdoor opportunities afforded by Bird watching which provides for education, stewardship, exercise and environmental awareness?

I support this initiative whole heartedly! I hike 3 miles at a nearby state park every day, but this gets very challenging to fit in before dark in the winter. It would help immeasurably to get kids & adults moving if DaylightSavingsTime was year round. By the time most people get home from work/school in North America in the winter, it's too dark to go outside!!

My idea is to restore the parks under a federal grant to provide jobs for those who are unemployed. A lot of work similar to this was done during the Great Depression of the 1930s. This keep this one at the recession stage. If it was a good idea to bail the banks out, it is also a good idea to sustain the unemployed in this country. We are the only country of our status in the world that makes such a "big deal" about supporting our unemployed. Many of the unemployed could also benefit from job training just so they can maintain themselves and be ready for employment.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

The Earth is all we have in common, and that is why we need to protect it. In the words of John Muir, "Few are altogether deaf to the preaching of pine trees. Their sermons on the mountains go to our hearts; and if people in general could be got into the woods, even for once, to hear the trees speak for themselves, all difficulties in the way of forest preservation would vanish." If we can protect these woods and set them aside for the people, and entice them to go inside, the trees themselves could do the talking in the way of preservation. It is next to impossible not to appreciate the wildness as a part of the human spirit. When the national parks were first gaining their popularity, John Muir also said, "Thousands of tired, nerve-shaken, over-civilized people are beginning to find out going to the mountains is going home; that wilderness is a necessity..." which holds true to this day. In our downturn economy, many people are staying within the country's borders for vacations, and finding the necessity of the national park service and preserved lands in their lives... I believe most Americans would love to have more protected land and better protected land. So ?"Let us do something to make the mountains glad" and focus our energies on protecting our finite wilderness, which is rapidly disappearing as expansion continues in the United States to every nook and cranny. Let us pass any legislation that will protect nature, so that our country can always boast these natural wonders, and remember that "None of God's landscapes are ugly so long as they are wild"(John Muir).

The only way to truly protect our shared outdoor spaces is to get kids out there and to help them make that emotional connection to the forests and the animals.

I support the America's Great Outdoors initiative and commend President Obama and his administration for recognizing that we need to protect our natural world to ensure our health and that of future generations. I hope the Administration will immediately implement the recommendations outlined in its Great Outdoors report. This initiative is important to the people of New York because: *It can help ensure clean water supplies, support jobs in tourism and recreation, save working farms and ranches, and preserve the special places where our community goes hunting, fishing or just to enjoy nature. It is driven by communities and encourages local people to recommend the best ways to save their lands, waters and coastlines. It is aimed at preserving whole natural places, including entire forests, mountain ranges, migratory corridors and rivers. I urge the Administration to take action now on this initiative. Key first steps would be full funding of the Land and Water Conservation Fund <<http://www.nature.org/initiatives/protectedareas/support/art30842.html>> , a permanent extension of conservation easement tax incentives, and support for other government programs that protect our local lands and waters.

One of the principal barriers to effective and efficient conservation of fish and wild life species is the lack of dedicated funding for the full array of fish and wildlife. For nearly three century, the Pittman-Robertson Act and later the Dingell Johnson Act have provided critical quarters of a funding for states to conserve game species. These Acts have successfully brought back wild turkeys, striped bass, elk and many other species . However, they do not directly address the needs of over 90% of the nation 's fish and wildlife that are not hunted or fished.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

For nearly a quarter century, conservationists have been advocating for dedicated funding for all species, particularly those that are at-risk. Five years ago, each state and territorial fish and wildlife agency in collaboration with their partners and the public developed a State Wildlife Action Plan that identified thousands of conservation actions that are needed to prevent future endangered species listings and keep common species common. Although the plans are being implemented nationwide, current federal funding, averaging "bout \$1.2 million per state/territory, is insufficient to meet the needs of the 12,000 species that state's determined to be at-risk.

People come from great distances to snowmobile, white water raft, sky dive, hunt, fish, camp, and hike. They also come to see wildlife and the beautiful scenery. We are currently trying to develop an all-terrain vehicle component through the construction of multi-use trails that will bring a huge increase in outdoor tourism and boost our economy. The success we are having in these areas is due primarily to one major factor: our major private landowners. What works for Maine? Its working forests.

But today, we find the great forests of Maine and our way of life being challenged by those who would take both away from us. The forests of Maine have been privately owned working forests for almost 400 years. These forests provide owners their livelihood as well as the livelihoods of thousands of Maine families. This private ownership has provided the public wide-ranging recreational opportunities, chances for appropriate economic development, and many other benefits. These have occurred without intrusion by the federal government and without the interference of environmental groups who now seek to use funds from America's Great Outdoor Initiative to make drastic, negative changes to our forest industry through expensive, restrictive, and unneeded conservation easements and other options. Please respect the people of Maine by rejecting the use of these federal funds to support the environmentalist schemes over the history, tradition, and needs of Maine's working forests and working people.

The federal programs and public-private partnerships established to carry out the National Historic Preservation Act, offer many building blocks that could support the goals of America's Great Outdoors. As policy recommendations are presented to the President and action plans are developed to implement such proposals, the ACHP offers its active and continuing involvement to the Administration to ensure better integration of the following to meet AGO goals

Existing stewardship programs for significant historic and cultural resources that form an integral part of many special places on private as well as public and trust lands

Historic preservation, heritage education, and heritage tourism assistance like Save America's Treasures, Preserve America, and the National Main Street program that help reconnect people with their heritage as well as the outdoors

Partnership programs that support community-led conservation and involvement, and encourage healthy outdoor activity, such as local walking tours, many of the biking, boating, and other active programs in National Heritage Areas, and discovery hikes along National Scenic and Historic Trails

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Recognition programs aimed at education and engagement like the Preserve America Presidential Awards that could readily be adapted to AGO goals

Approaches for engaging youth in hands-on preservation programs, such as service-learning programs with local schools and federal agencies and their partnership groups, that relate to authentic experience and volunteer activities in places of natural and cultural heritage

Programs that engage volunteers in numerous cultural stewardship activities, reach out to diverse audiences, and celebrate ethnic and cultural diversity in ways that support a broader appreciation for both the outdoors and a preservation ethic

Integration of community and regional sustainability initiatives, "greening" historic buildings, preserving and improving established transportation infrastructure, reinvigoration of deteriorating urban areas

Balanced support for complementary natural resource conservation, outdoor recreation, and cultural preservation through full funding of both the Land and Water Conservation Fund and the Historic Preservation Fund.

All landscapes have a historical and a cultural context, and our appreciation for the outdoors is rooted in both the natural environment and the history, stories, and traditions associated with special places. Indian tribes, Native Hawaiians, and Alaska Natives have always been quite clear about this interrelationship. If we wish to reinforce the connection between people and the outdoors, it makes sense to make the most of this potential.

America's system of parks - a network of local, state and federal parks that provide access to nature and outdoor recreation critical to the health and well being of a thriving nation are not often recognized for the remarkable contributions they make to our mental, physical and spiritual health. These same parks create economy boosting jobs when they are built and represent a ten-fold annual return on investment as they stimulate outdoor recreation and tourism spending.

We all agree, there is an urgent need for the nation to reignite and reenergize efforts to protect these special places and provide the contact with nature and the out of doors needed to combat obesity, attention disorders and other maladies that are plaguing the nation - especially our youngest citizens.

I have attended several of the AGO listening sessions and followed the news coming out of all of them. One of the things I'm proud to say is the nation - all 50 governors, all 50 of our state park directors and the many thousands of citizen volunteers who support them, the leadership of the nations local and national parks and millions of citizens who are regular park users support full funding of the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) and want their states to receive back in the form of Stateside Assistance grants an equal share of the funding. The public understands the beauty of having a small position of off shore drilling royalties supporting the nation's investment in outdoor recreation and conservation. As we take something out of the environment, we put something back into it for the citizens who are the rightful owners of these national assets.

Discussion Question 1

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(cont.)

Across the Western states, human land use and development can impact wildlife habitat unless carefully planned. Land use and development projects can affect the movement of wildlife and the functioning of ecosystems. One of the most effective strategies to abate the threats posed by any changes to habitat is to design development in a manner that protects those crucial habitats and maintains the ecological permeability of the intervening landscape so that wildlife can move between those areas. Strategies are also invaluable if they direct scarce funds towards helping to conserve key private land holdings that serve as important wildlife habitat. These strategies will become fully realized, only if there is publically available information on the status of wildlife habitat in the state.

Western state wild life agency DSSs will utilize landscape-level mapping to visually depict crucial wildlife habitat and wildlife corridors. DSSs will be developed to promote the conservation objectives of each state wild life agency and will give the public access to important wildlife information for use in proactive planning and decision-making processes. The development of these systems will include on-going monitoring and updating of data to maintain the irrelevancy. Conservation efforts will receive an invaluable new tool once state DSSs are completed.

We have reviewed with interest the recommendations on the America's Great Outdoors website and are heartened that many of the most popular recommendations – creating wildlife corridors, protecting species from changing habitats and accomplishing conservation at a landscape level – are already FWS and NWRS core functions. For instance, the FWS and NWRS have a variety of programs that engage private landowners such as the Partners for Fish and Wildlife. These programs are responsible for large-landscape conservation successes like the Rocky Mountain Front and Blackfoot Challenge in Montana, and a new endeavor in Florida with ranchers and the U.S. Department of Agriculture to create a new Northern Everglades National Wildlife Refuge. Such initiatives protect water quality, provide ecosystem services, create corridors for wildlife while simultaneously keeping family ranchers in business and providing opportunities for sportsmen and other wildlife enthusiasts.

Like most participants at the AGO listening sessions, I applaud the administration's efforts to engage the American public in this initiative with the goal of promoting collaborative, community-based dialogue on these difficult conservation challenges. In deed, there are several examples of progressive and effective collaborations that have resolved tough issues with meaningful conservation agreements. In Utah, the Washington County Land bill is one such instance; the Nine Mile Canyon oil and gas drilling agreement between Bill Barrett Company and SUWA et al. is another instance. Similar examples can be found elsewhere: the Blackfoot Challenge initiative in Montana; the recent Lincoln County legislation in Nevada; the Owyhee legislation in Idaho; the Wyoming Range legislation in Wyoming; and the list goes on. When people of good faith and a willingness to engage with each other on tough conservation issues can be brought together, sometimes in the face of a crisis like a pending Endangered Species Act listing, workable and acceptable resolutions can often be achieved. I fully endorse such efforts and urge you to include meaningful collaborative conservation provisions in the final AGO report. .

Discussion Question 1

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(cont.)

Naturally, one regional program that particularly meets the definition and goals of AGO was highlighted during the session - the Urban Wilderness Canoe Adventure (UWCA) in the Mississippi National River Park and Recreation Area. This is a great example of how federal resources and technical assistance can be brought to bear to help facilitate and foster the use and enjoyment of our public spaces by people from all walks of life. The UWCA is an outdoor canoe program focused on getting youth from the Twin Cities on the Mississippi River as a part of the National River Park, a unique federal, state and local National Park partnership. In June of this year, this program was chosen as one of twenty pilot parks to initiate the First Lady's "Let's Move Outside" Junior Ranger Program campaign to give parents and their kids the tools to get outside. In addition to this program, session participants pointed to the rather extensive network of blueways already in place throughout Minnesota and urged further federal involvement and support.

Another great example of people working together is the Missouri River Stream Team, a partnership of citizens concerned about the Missouri River who participate in hands-on projects such as litter control, streambank stabilization, streamside tree planting, water quality monitoring, and storm drain stenciling. Since its inception, the Stream Team has trained hundreds of volunteer specialists, removed over 1,000 tons of trash from rivers and planted tens of thousands of trees along the river. As a result of media coverage and heightened community awareness and interest in stream problems and opportunities, the program continues to grow.

The Penobscot River Restoration Project is one of the largest river restoration projects ever proposed and provides a great example of how public and private conservation partnerships can succeed. The increased interest in restoration helped to focus discussion at the Maine listening session towards rivers. The listening session in Maine highlighted the effort to remove the Penobscot's outdated dams to restore access to 1,000 miles of fish habitat while simultaneously maintaining the same level of hydropower production in the basin. This project has the potential to be a model for rivers around the country: improved health, restored fish and wildlife, balanced energy production, and revitalized communities through increased recreation and economic opportunities. The continuation of restoration is crucial for the Penobscot River, as well as other rivers throughout Maine and the United States.

Beset by both water pollution from sewage and channelization, the region's rivers face hurdles before they can be fully enjoyed. Yet session attendees see progress with the Wolf River Greenway and Blueway, which flows through the region before joining the Mississippi. The Wolf River was central to the discussion, with excitement over the progress with trails at Shelby Farms, and the hope of building educational and launching facilities near the rivers of the region's six counties and transforming 30 to 40 miles of upriver wildlands into a Blueway. Attendees noted the Shelby Bottoms Trail and Greenway along the Cumberland River in Nashville as an inspiring example of success. Others raised the successful recreation economies built around the Buffalo and Spring Rivers, believing the clear waters, strong logistics and transportation, and marketing ensured residents would visit and enjoy those rivers.

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(cont.)

Wildlife Refuges - Designation of Wildlife Refuges can also be an effective means of protecting some of our most treasured river landscapes. One model worthy of close examination and replication is the Silvio O. Conte National Fish and Wildlife Refuge running along the Connecticut River. One of only three refuges with “fish” in the title, the refuge is unique for its broad scope and incorporation of private lands in the four states that comprise the Connecticut River basin. The refuge works in partnership with a wide variety of individuals and organizations to provide environmental education, to encourage and support appropriate habitat conservation and management on public and private lands, and to protect habitat. Several interstate waterways, like the Connecticut, are wonderful candidates for such a grassroots generated designation.

Having public access close to where people live is the key for getting people active in the outdoors. People are more inclined to use a trail if it is within one-mile of their homes.

Inter-connected trail systems that enable people to commute safely to work, school, shopping, and to natural areas and rivers. This allows people to make getting outdoors for active recreation part of their daily lives and makes them more inclined to travel to destination trails and parks.

Technical assistance programs and financial incentives for community and inter-municipal planning, building and maintenance of trails and parks.

Funding/grant programs for acquiring lands with important conservation values.

Tax benefits for qualified conservation contributions.

Mr. Secretary, your leadership and support for LWCF are greatly appreciated. Please continue to champion LWCF as a tool for boosting the health of our economy, our communities, and our families by including it in the America's Great Outdoors report to the president. Additionally, I ask that you encourage your former colleagues in the U.S. Senate to fully fund the program before the end of this Congress.

Other public lands, such as the Arkansas Headwaters Recreations Area, the Colorado River and the proposed Dolores River Wilderness, also enable our kids to enjoy active, outdoor activities. Healthy lifestyles depend in part on access to parks, rivers, trails, and open spaces. But these places also are economic engines for tourism-based economies, supporting thousands of jobs nationwide. For instance, my company, Wilderness Aware Rafting, brings 10,000 people per year to Colorado to raft our amazing rivers.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

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What many of us might not know is that a large number of our most beloved lakes, streams, woodlands, local parks and playgrounds have been protected for us by the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF). The LWCF is the principal source of federal dollars for protecting land in America's national parks, forests, and other public landscapes and ensuring recreational opportunities for Americans in every state in the nation. LWCF helps fund many of Colorado's recreation areas like the Platte River trail system, Castlewood Canyon State Park and Garden of the Gods, as well as national treasures like Yellowstone National Park, California's Big Sur Coast, Florida's Everglades, and historic Civil War battlefields.

Urban youth experience the outdoors, develop science skills, and explore the wide variety of natural resource careers available to them. Through multiple year programs, youth turn those experiences into not only high school, but college graduation. More than 80 percent of ELK's alumni study a science field in college, an amazing statistic for Latino and Black students.

But we can't do it alone. Continuing this success story and making these opportunities available to more American kids and young people requires federal leadership. That is why we were so pleased that the federal America's Great Outdoors Initiative held listening sessions in Golden and Grand Junction. These events gave everyday Americans - including children and young adults - a chance to talk firsthand with U.S. Interior Secretary Ken Salazar and other federal leaders about conservation and its personal impact on their lives.

One of the most important messages they heard was about the essential connection between conservation and education, with local residents calling for passage and allocation of resources to tools and programs to engage young people in the preservation of our natural heritage such as the Public Lands Service Corps Act and full funding for the Land and Water Conservation Fund

The Working Landscape: While select additions to our nation's wildernesses, parks, and monument systems may be warranted, the real opportunity ahead is focused on the working landscape. The vast majority of western landscapes must transition from the old economies of extraction to new economies of stewardship. As we have seen in dozens of exemplary communities and watersheds, when endowed with the appropriate resources, communities can create land management regimes that protect and enhance valuable wildlife and ecological systems, while creating a more resilient base for the economy.

Discussion Question 1

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To support and leverage the work of CBOs and rural small businesses, we must also promote the regional organizations and networks that convene multiple local efforts, help to disseminate lessons learned, and accelerate innovation diffusion. These networks are integral to scaling-up place-based efforts. Regional organizations can be based in urban or rural areas and work across multiple sectors, communities, counties or states. Regional organizations play many roles at different times in the process of implementing community-based conservation and economic development strategies. Regional organizations provide improved access to technical expertise, tools, and philanthropic communities. They build and bring political clout to promote solutions, and connect rural non-profits and entrepreneurs to wider networks, markets, and opportunities. Roles include: helping to catalyze and build local organizations in places lacking this capacity, as well as strengthening existing groups; providing bridge staffing, facilitation, and technical support in communities that are rebuilding institutional and social capacity; serving as liaison between local efforts and federal officials by providing the venues and forums to initiate and build relationships when they are absent and/or frayed; reaching out to distant stakeholder groups and interests that have traditionally been at odds with local efforts and assisting with reframing and building common ground; documenting and communicating trends and issues that affect multiple communities to improve policies and procedures, including providing vital data collection, mapping, and analysis; organizing multiple communities to work together to promote shared vision and solutions; and promoting peer-to-peer learning and adoption of best practices.

Natural resource management functions, renewable energy development, conservation-oriented forestry or agriculture and other businesses can provide high quality, living wage employment protecting, restoring, and stewarding the environment. They include jobs that restore and maintain ecosystem functions and services, such as clean air, clean water, and forest and rangeland health and biodiversity, as well as those that reduce energy, material, and water consumption, and move us toward a low carbon economy. The promotion of rural green businesses can help local economies recover by expanding value-added businesses and industries, and creating living-wage jobs that have positive multiplier effects in rural communities (economic activities that maintain and enhance essential local businesses, such as hardware stores, sawmills, feed stores, and by extension, schools and hospitals). For-profit enterprises play the vital role of providing: service and stewardship work on public and private lands; entrepreneurial skills, training and employment opportunities; capital assets needed for conservation work; equipment necessary to perform land management objectives; processing and manufacturing facilities to create wood and agricultural products to provide building materials, food, and energy; ability to take demonstration projects to scale and profitability; and, market-driven revenue streams that reduce long-term dependence on public funds.

The USDA Forest Service Economic Action Program (EAP) (not funded since 2002) helped rural communities and businesses dependent on natural resources become sustainable and self-sufficient. It provided technical and financial assistance to communities throughout the rural West to retain and build the capacity of small, rural businesses to implement restoration and stewardship activities and utilize material that is removed as a result of sustainable land management activities. The Economic Action Program is the only Forest Service program authorized to provide this type of business assistance.

Discussion Question 1

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Community Forest Restoration Program-New Mexico (USDA Forest Service-State and Private Forestry) In 2001, with the passage of the Community Forest Restoration Act of 2000 (Title VI, Public Law 106-393) the U.S. Forest Service created the Collaborative Forest Restoration Program (CFRP) in New Mexico to provide up to \$5 million annually towards cost-share grants to stakeholders for experimental forest restoration projects on public land designed through a collaborative process. These projects may be entirely on one, or any combination of, Federal, Tribal, State, County or municipal forest lands, and must include a diverse and balanced group of stakeholders in their design and implementation. Each project must also address specific restoration objectives, including: wildfire threat reduction, reestablishment of historic fire regimes, reforestation, preservation of old and large trees, and increased utilization of small diameter trees.

Community Forest Landscape Restoration Program (USDA Forest Service-National Forest System) Congress, under Title IV of Omnibus Public Land Management Act of 2009 (PDF, 40 KB), established the Collaborative Forest Landscape Restoration Program (CFLRP). The purpose of the CFLR Program is to encourage the collaborative, science-based ecosystem restoration of priority forest landscapes. This legislation requires a broad coalition of interests to assess the landscape together, identify priorities, and sketch out a collaborative plan of action. CFLRP promotes benefits to local rural economies and forest health and should be a model for other programs. The CFLRP is not a grant making program, but rather creates the CFLR Fund, which must be appropriated annually and supports implementation activities associated with a collaboratively developed landscape scale strategy that aims to: encourage ecological, economic, and social sustainability; leverage local resources with national and private resources; facilitate the reduction of wildfire management costs, including reestablishing natural fire regimes and reducing the risk of uncharacteristic wildfire; demonstrate the degree to which various ecological restoration techniques achieve ecological and watershed health objectives; and encourage utilization of forest restoration by-products to offset treatment costs, benefit local rural economies, and improve forest health.

The USDA NRCS Cooperative Conservation Partnership Initiative (CCPI) in the 2008 Farm Bill is an innovative program that encourages landowners to work together to implement and maintain conservation practices that affect multiple landowners at a landscape scale. Instead of piecemeal delivery of programs ranch by ranch or program by program, this initiative supports projects that involve partnership among groups of landowners to address conservation priorities, regulatory requirements, and innovative cross-boundary resource management. This program invites community-based organizations to partner with NRCS for the delivery of specific Farm Bill conservation programs to landowners in ways that meet and respond to local needs, opportunities, and customs. While federal programs like CCPI recognize the value that community-based organizations provide, they fail to provide financial assistance to these partner organizations for their contributions in engaging and mobilizing local populations.

The San Gabriels have a unique relationship to nearby urban Los Angeles providing it with over 70% of its open space and hosting over three million visitors a year, rivaling the visitation level at major national parks.

Discussion Question 1

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(cont.)

Currently, the National Park Service is conducting a special resources study of the San Gabriel Mountains and watershed that could help improve recreational opportunities for families and children and address the major recreational deficiencies of the mountain range through the creation of a San Gabriel Mountains National Recreation Area. The Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area In LA County's Westside serves as a shining example of what is possible. We believe that LA County's eastside – the San Gabriel Valley – deserves the same. The creation of a San Gabriel Mountains National Recreation Area should be part of our national public lands agenda and this would be facilitated by the San Gabriel Valley location of the listening session.

The work we are doing is representative of the challenges and opportunities we all face in metro areas across the country in creating healthy recreation opportunities on our public lands. We would like to share our best practices and aspirations with you to create a world class urban forest that meets the challenges of limited open space in a community that suffers from high rates of asthma, diabetes and obesity.

As partners, we know that only by working together can we implement large-scale, positive change for the people and environment within the San Gabriel region. Our partnerships bring together a diversity of knowledge, expertise and constituencies, and therefore are uniquely positioned to help large numbers of stakeholders make collaborative, informed decisions about the best use of resources to achieve shared goals. We welcome the opportunity to host you.

As a member of American Fly Fishing Trade Association Board of Directors and directly involved in the fly-fishing and outdoor recreation industry, I know how important recreational opportunities are for business. Without places to enjoy the great outdoors fly-fishing and outdoor recreation business would suffer. In addition, other small businesses across the country that rely on people who enjoy the great outdoors would also suffer.

Outdoor recreation businesses like fly-fishing shops, guides, outfitters and manufacturers are small businesses that all rely on our public lands so our customers have places to enjoy the sport. America's 60 million anglers generate over \$45 billion in retail sales with a \$125 billion impact on the nation's economy, creating employment for over one million people.

Conserving public lands, adding to our national forests, parks, refuges and monuments, and protecting our shared outdoor spaces helps small businesses open up, hire and expand for a growing outdoor recreation industry and leverages that economic activity to help other local small businesses.

As your Administration heard repeatedly at public listening sessions this summer, full and dedicated funding for the Land and Water Conservation Fund at the authorized level of \$900 million a year is critical to preserving parks, forests, oceans, refuges, and local recreation areas so Americans can access and enjoy the many benefits of our great outdoors. I am confident that your Administration's America's Great Outdoors report this November will highlight the importance of the Land and Water Conservation Fund as well.

Discussion Question 1

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Our nation faces great challenges in sustaining traditions of conservation of our lands and waters and in combating lifestyles which have caused skyrocketing rates of obesity and stress. Happily, the America's Great Outdoors Initiative provides a forum for discussing creative means to combine energies and resources to combat all of these challenges in a sustainable way, connecting more people to the Great Outdoors, making them both healthier and more committed to safeguarding this treasured legacy.

I am writing on behalf of the National Fish Habitat Board (Board) and the National Fish Habitat Action Plan (Action Plan) to make you aware of the Action Plan's strong connection to the America's Great Outdoors Initiative (AGO). The Action Plan is a partnership-based initiative that uses best science practices to protect, rehabilitate and improve fish habitat that is implemented through 17 Fish Habitat Partnerships under the Action Plan's and Board's guidance. These 17 partnerships span all 50 states and bring a broad coalition of partners together, including Federal, State and Tribal Agencies, NGO's, Private Industry and recreational angling groups. One key example of the participation of our federal agencies is the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) which has become an instrumental leader in its implementation as soon as the Action Plan was formulated in 2005, as well through its deep ties to the states through on-the-ground fish habitat conservation practices and funding.

The accomplishments of the Action Plan have already produced significant improvements in a number of our nation's waters. These efforts have created increased opportunities for recreational anglers to get outdoors for better fishing opportunities, making their communities better places to live. As our partnerships continue to grow, we expect to make much larger contributions to the health of our nation's waters and their fisheries, providing unique opportunities for collaboration and synergy between the Action Plan and the AGO initiative.

Implementing the Action Plan is a key emphasis of several Federal Agencies, with many other federal agencies actively engaged through a federal caucus, and continues to be a priority of State and Tribal Agencies as well as private industry, making it a potentially key player that stands in place and ready to help move the AGO initiative forward. While it is certainly recognized that these are financially difficult times across the country, the Action Plan is an already existing plan and framework working for the betterment of our Nation's Aquatic Habitats, which are the life blood of our natural world.

Just as the buildings at CC are important to our history, so too are buildings all across the United States. It takes dedicated hard work and funding to maintain such meaningful places, and in these difficult economic times many of them are in danger of being lost.

I urge you to ensure that America's historical and cultural sites, our tangible landmarks that connect us to our past, be included in America's Great Outdoors Initiative. Please support funding for historic preservation and heritage programs.

Discussion Question 1

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(cont.)

Maine has a unique history for providing recreational opportunities in the outdoors. Vast tracts of privately owned lands which provide the natural resources to support the forest products industry have been shared with the people of Maine and the country. Being a fourth generation landowner, forester and employee of the forest products industry in the State of Maine, "I've been able to work within the industry that also provides many of the outdoor recreational activities I've come to appreciate. Many other Mainers have traditionally shared the same relationship between their work and recreation opportunities. There must be a continued support of Maine's working forests, private land ownership and the unique relationship to recreation in Maine.

Establish new recreational units in the watershed, including a Chesapeake Bay National Park, and new National Forests, National Marine Sanctuaries, BLM and Army Corps of Engineers' recreational facilities. These new units must also be provided with adequate resources for needed land acquisition and construction and management of visitor facilities and services.

Amend the surface transportation law and transportation policies to encourage states to give due consideration to waterway access in the transportation planning process and in conjunction with new construction, reconstruction or repair of road and bridge transportation facilities, except where such use is unsafe, not permitted or appropriate. Promoting waterway access along existing transportation public rights-of-way is one of the easiest ways to enhance public access to the Bay's rivers and streams.

America's Great Outdoors should build on innovative efforts to save our land and water and should help more Americans connect to and benefit from important natural areas. We also can revitalize local economies and create American jobs on American lands by protecting water resources; sustaining parks, working farms, forests and ranches; providing places for outdoor recreation and tourism; and safeguarding people and nature from climate change.

Protection for our public lands creates jobs and economic activity. Public lands help places like our hometown of Bend, Oregon attract new residents and businesses. In fact, outdoor recreation, including hunting, fishing, camping, climbing, hiking, paddling, backcountry skiing, mountain biking, wildlife viewing, and other activities contributes \$730 billion annually to the economy, supporting 6.5 million jobs (1 of every 20 jobs in the U.S.) and stimulating 8 percent of all consumer spending according to the Outdoor Industry Foundation.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

While the agrarian tradition and the natural world define a huge part of this country's legacy, we believe our gardens -- private and public -- are an essential aspect of how we first come to appreciate the natural world around us and provide important educational territory for young people learning about the environment, botany, and our ability to influence the world we live in. For many of our children, reconnecting with the land begins in their own backyard or neighborhood. From Mount Vernon, Monticello and New York City's Central Park to the gardens at Alcatraz (which we are currently restoring with the National Parks Service), gardens are an integral part of the American identity. Each of these environments demonstrates that no matter what one's circumstances -- free or imprisoned, urban or rural, rich or poor - this desire to improve the world around us is at the center of human experience. And as many of these gardens are geographically accessible to urban and suburban Americans, who make up a majority of our population, they are also critical to the goals that you aspire to in your program.

We strongly endorse the importance of the national parks and the farms that we all cherish and see as a part of our national identity. We ask that we approach the preservation and conservation of gardens and planned landscapes with the same urgency. With sixteen project gardens from Connecticut and Washington State to South Carolina and Texas and dozens of others which we have supported, the Garden Conservancy sees the stories of these exceptional gardens and their creators as a valued resource in inspiring the next generation to have a strong relationship to the land. The story of Peard Fryar, the son of a North Carolina sharecropper, who turned his neighborhood into a world of fantastic evergreen topiary sculptures is as much a part of our history as the expeditions of Lewis and Clark and the Homestead Act. Such gardens and landscapes are living monuments to the essential role that plants, nature, human perseverance, and the bounty of the land have played in shaping the American identity.

Land management decisions should not be made without broad local support. Public land should be protected for the public, not from the public. Multiple-use management uses an adaptive style that allows managers to respond to the dynamic nature of the land using input from all local interest groups.

Motorized and mechanized recreation is the fastest growing segment of outdoor recreation on public lands. We believe that education, cooperation and volunteerism among interest groups and land managers is the key to a successful recreational future for outdoor recreation on our public lands.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

For more than 12,000 years, people have inhabited what is now the United States, leaving physical traces of their activities, altering natural resources and landscapes, and passing down stories about special places. As a result, natural and cultural landscapes have become inextricably linked. Thus, by conserving our country's natural heritage, we also conserve our cultural heritage, and allow Americans to learn about history in place, to experience the connection between culture and nature, and to celebrate our shared earth and heritage. The National Trust for Historic Preservation commends the Obama Administration for recognizing the important connection between nature and culture, historic preservation and livable communities, and for including historic and cultural resources as elements of the America's Great Outdoors Initiative.

The federal, state and private lands that provide Americans with opportunities to connect with the outdoors and promote conservation and recreation contain many of our most treasured historic and cultural sites and landscapes. For instance, each year, while visiting pueblo ruins in the American Southwest, millions of Americans admire the breathtaking views of surrounding landscapes and come to better understand the common human challenge of adapting to arid environments and unpredictable weather. Emigrant and pioneer trails also allow many Americans to experience the oftentimes arduous journeys undertaken by their ancestors, while providing diverse recreational opportunities and protected corridors for species migration. Similarly, national battlefields allow modern people to remember the armed conflicts that were fought on American soil and shaped the growth and development of our nation. Many historic places in and near our urban areas also connect people with the outdoors by providing large lawns for picnics and hands-on classrooms for learning about traditional gardening and animal husbandry. Through the preservation of these and many other kinds of historic and cultural sites, people can experience history firsthand, while also taking part in America's great outdoors.

Our country has developed a number of effective programs that encourage public and private partnerships, provide funding to preserve and promote important historic and cultural places and offer opportunities for engaging people of all ages in enjoying and experiencing these places. However, historic preservation programs are increasingly challenged by the attrition of federal funding. Historic preservation has many benefits beyond the important focus of preserving cultural sites. Rehabilitation creates local good jobs, it encourages community reinvestment and, through the reuse of historic buildings and reinvestment in older infrastructure, it helps to create more sustainable communities and provides an alternative to sprawling development. Continued federal investment in historic preservation programs and cultural resources is vital if we, as a nation, are to fulfill our responsibility to protect our shared national heritage for future generations.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Both the national parks and the cultural resources programs within the NPS are seriously underfunded. National parks such as Yellowstone, Yosemite and the Grand Canyon are probably best known for their sweeping natural landscapes, towering mountains and deep canyons, yet these parks also contain many significant historic sites, structures and cultural landscapes. In fact, two-thirds of America's national parks were established primarily to recognize and protect historic and cultural places. Many of these parks, such as Gettysburg, Independence Hall and Chaco Canyon, are well known. More than 27,000 National Register properties are located in parks, ranging from famous landmarks such as Ellis Island and the Old Faithful Inn to remote back country cabins and vernacular farmsteads.

Volunteer programs such as the Youth Conservation Corps, Student Conservation Association, HistoriCorps, the USFS' PIT program and BLM's Project Archaeology provide excellent opportunities for youth to become directly involved in field projects that enhance and preserve historic and cultural resources within their natural environments. For example, by helping to restore a historic cabin for recreational use in a national forest, youth can gain skills in carpentry, roofing, renewable energy retrofitting, and historic window repair—all skills that they can apply to a future career path and that get young people actively engaged in saving historic places. Expand these proven volunteer programs at a national level and create paid internship positions with the public lands management agencies for a full range of career opportunities from interpretation to maintenance to security.

Rivers provide recreation for all ages, they connect us to the natural world, they give us clean drinking water, and they deliver economic benefits to our communities -- but only if our rivers are healthy.

A blueway is a dedicated stretch of river that enjoys special clean water safeguards and is a destination for fishing, boating and other recreation. Just as hiking trails are designed to help people explore the land, blueways help people discover rivers. Blueways provide a fun, exciting way to get kids outdoors, link communities to treasured landscapes like parks and wildlife refuges, and are economic drivers benefiting local businesses and quality of life.

WHEREAS, the Prairie Pothole Region (PPR) of the United States contains the last great confluence of wetlands and grasslands in North America and has been documented to be an area of international significance for migratory waterfowl and many other wildlife; and that within this area the largest remaining contiguous tracts of grasslands are located within the Missouri Coteau region

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Administration work with state and local partners to develop and implement a plan that utilizes a comprehensive suite of Department of the Interior and Department of Agriculture programs to conserve the valuable PPR landscape, including:

- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service grassland and wetland easements to address the current substantial backlog of landowner demand;
- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service-led North American Wetlands Conservation Act projects;
- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service National Wildlife Refuge System and Waterfowl Production Area programs;
- USDA Conservation Reserve Program lands including enrollment in general signup CRP, as well as targeted continuous CRP practices such as CP-33 for upland game birds, CP-37 targeted at waterfowl production, and CP-38 targeted at various game birds including prairie chickens and ring-necked pheasants;
- USDA Voluntary Public Access-Habitat Improvement Program, encouraging public access for hunters and providing economic support to rural landowners and communities; and
- USDA Wetlands Reserve Program; and
- Newly developed programs supporting youth involvement with wildlife habitat conservation and hunting opportunities.

The State Wildlife Grants and the State Wildlife Action Plans that they fund is an existing program that supports the objectives of the AGO. Full implementation of those Plans would allow us to address common federal, state, and NGO goals to keep wildlife from becoming endangered.

As AGO strives to engage and empower the public, particularly through State, local, private and tribal entities Birds could serve as the cornerstone of this effort for two reasons. First, birds are well established indicators of the health of our environment. As outlined in the 2009 and 2010 State of the Birds reports (www.stateofthebirds.org), birds can tell us a story. They are literally the canaries in the coal mine. American citizens also feed, watch, photograph, and hunt birds in increasing numbers every year (http://www.wc.adfg.state.ak.us/viewing/pdfs/birding_natsurvey06.pdf). We can use birds to reconnect Americans to our great outdoors.

Programs to reach the public should also focus on accessible and familiar places and create connections with natural resources at the local level. Additionally, environmental education in school curricula and teacher training regimes is critical. Research continues to show, however, that children learn more effectively when regularly engaged in outdoor learning. To support environmental education in our schools, states and school districts must be provided with funding for teacher training, innovative program development, and student transportation.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

A large percentage of birds and to a lesser extent other taxa, migrate out of the United States at some point during the year. Thus, conservation actions taken within the US may not be adequate for the

long-term conservation of some species. There are already programs in place that help address this critical need that include but are not limited to the following—the North American Wetland Conservation Act, Neotropical Migratory Bird Conservation Act, USDA Forest Service International Programs. Implementing these programs will allow us to continue to address the needs of US priority species.

If we take into account our population distribution, it becomes apparent that most of it is located within urban areas. Access to outlying areas is beyond the reach of many. Certainly weekend or week long "camps" provide an extraordinary experience for many children. The reality, however, is that this type of program provides exposure to the outdoors for only limited numbers and for limited time periods. Opportunities which provide multiple exposures to a substantial part of the population are a critical complement to special experiences.

AGO presents an opportunity to develop a cross-cutting federal initiative to leverage greater protection of recognized national priorities – estuaries of national significance –by focusing and funding existing federal programs, such as the Land & Water Conservation Fund, and newly proposed programs such as the National Endowment for the Oceans.

As members of the bipartisan House Land Conservation Caucus and other concerned members of Congress, we write today to thank you for your commitment to community driven open space preservation embodied by the America's Great Outdoors (AGO) Initiative. Here in Congress, we've worked with members on both sides of the aisle to promote and enact common sense policies that allow landowners and state and local governments to conserve and protect threatened farms, forestland, and other treasured natural landscapes. We appreciate your efforts to solicit input from a broad array of stakeholders, and we would like to offer several proposals for inclusion in your final report to the President.

We urge you to prioritize long-term - and permanent, where appropriate - renewals of tax deductions and credits that incentivize land conservation. For example, we have labored mightily to secure periodic renewals of the qualified conservation easement income tax deduction (26 U.S.C. 170e), which expired in calendar year 2010. The federal estate tax, also lapsed, increasingly drives the development of open space by making it more difficult to preserve working lands from one generation to the next. The uncertainty and unpredictability of continually-lapsing tax incentives severely limits their utility, as conservation often requires complex, multi-year transactions that rely on a stable tax environment to work

Along with many of our colleagues, we have long been proponents of full and dedicated funding for the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF). In addition to the work done by the LWCF on federally-owned and protected lands, the LWCF stateside program provides crucial funding that allows states to provide expanded access to parks and recreational spaces.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Recreational hunters also provide an important constituency when it comes to land conservation; sportsmen have long been some of our nation's strongest suppliers of land conservation. In recent decades, encroaching development and competing public land uses have limited access to high quality hunting and fishing areas. As you develop your final recommendations, we urge you to protect and expand access to public lands for hunters and anglers.

As we work to rejuvenate America's urban centers, drive sustainable development, and promote healthier lifestyles, we would strongly urge the creation of more urban parks and other protected areas at the local, state, and national levels. Put simply, increasing green space improves health. Studies show that residents exercise more frequently where there are neighborhood parks and trails in close proximity. Conversely, the same studies show that where there are no parks, residents often go without exercise. Developing and expanding recreational opportunities and conserving more public lands will improve and increase access to the outdoors, now and for generations to come.

Although we strongly support enhanced and streamlined federal programs, we also believe it's important to stress that many of the best open space preservation solutions are emerging across the nation in a "bottom-up," locally-driven fashion. Our communities are generating home-grown, collaborative solutions to conservation challenges that deserve a willing and nimble federal partner with the resources and wherewithal to leverage and implement them. For example, resources like the National Park Service's River, Trails and Conservation Assistance (RTCA) program -- which provides technical assistance and guidance for recreation and park projects -- allow the federal government to supplement and enhance the innovative work done by local communities.

We are writing in support of the America's Great Outdoors (AGO) initiative and its potential to protect and enhance our local national estuaries and their watersheds lands::

Thriving cities and suburbs that are home to millions of Americans are located along the shores of some of this nation's most important estuaries, including the Long Island Sound, Peconic Bay, New York, New Jersey Harbor, and the Hudson River. Protecting and restoring their health should be an environmental imperative. Yet, federal funding has too often been - allocated disproportionately toward less expensive and more expansive places

in our area alone, the Long Island Sound and its watershed have sustained New York communities for hundreds of years. An estimated eight million people live within the Long Island Sound watershed; roughly twenty million people live within fifty miles of the Sound, and businesses dependent on the health and viability of the Sound account for an estimated \$5.5 billion in economic activity annually.

Your leadership can improve the way federal agencies work with each other as well as with state and local governments when it comes to protecting watersheds and the waters of the nation's harbors, bays and rivers. We ask that you use the AGO process to elevate and prioritize all national estuaries.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

This process presents an opportunity to develop a cross-cutting federal initiative to leverage greater protection of recognized national priorities - estuaries of national significance by focusing and funding existing federal programs, such as the Land & Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) and Coastal & Estuarine Land Conservation Program (CELCP); allowing federal agencies to work together on strategies regardless of agency jurisdiction or designation; and giving national estuaries the same status as national rivers and making them eligible for federal side LWCF funds

We also urge you to give our contiguous national estuaries - Long Island Sound, Peconic Bay, and NYINJ Harbor - the Treasured Landscape status they deserve. Granting this status will go a long way in preserving and restoring our nationally important estuaries and watershed lands while supporting local tourism and outdoor recreation, as well as businesses such as fishing, lobster and clamming industries.

For nearly a decade, I have advocated protection for this wild Chihuahuan desert grassland ecosystem, which is a vast expanse of federal public lands that not only supports an amazing array of birds and game species, but also safeguards a vital fresh water aquifer. Now is the time to formally recognize the value of this rare but unprotected landscape and protect it for future generations, an important and necessary step that I highlighted in my remarks at the commencement of your America's Great Outdoors initiative and in my letter to Secretary of the Interior Ken Salazar, which is attached. I, personally, and the State of New Mexico look forward to supporting your establishment of the Otero Mesa National Monument.

The SMMNRA represents an ideal recipient of these monies. It serves the largest urban area on the West Coast with 12 million people living within less than an hour drive from the SMMNRA. Through our park acquisitions we offer far more than outdoor recreation. We offer living laboratories and classrooms where thousands of students and teachers from grade school through graduate school can study and work every year. Thousands more learn valuable job skills through innovative land management, stewardship, and interpretive programs in our mountains. Many of these programs serve inner city youth.

As residents of the magnificent Puget Sound region, We can easily recognize the importance of the great outdoors and how critical its preservation is to both our culture and economic livelihood. I applaud the Obama Administration's search for solutions to conserving and increasing access to our public lands, improving outdoor recreational opportunities, and celebrating the role that the environment has played in our rich cultural heritage.

On my previous role as Chairman of the Interior and Environment Appropriations T. (11). i Subcommittee, I was proud to work with President Obama to reverse the downward funding S' trend that our land and environmental agencies suffered during the previous administration, In fact, last year we worked together and increased funding for the Land and Water Conservation Fund by nearly \$200 million to \$450 million. The Legacy Road and Trail Remediation program created three years ago has enjoyed increased funding - \$90 million for 2010 - with the strong support of the Administration. And I am particularly pleased that we were able to obtain \$50 million for the Puget Sound recovery in 2010, up from \$20 million the year before.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Both the Northern Forest and the Connecticut River watershed are well positioned to help achieve the goals of the AGO initiative. The Northern Forest has been the focus of an interagency conservation effort, first initiated by the Northern Forest Lands Council, which has helped double protected lands in the region since 1995. The Silvio O. Conte National Fish and Wildlife Refuge was established by Congress in 1997 as a unique new model designed to foster conservation across the entire Connecticut River watershed. The refuge has a project boundary that covers the entire four-state watershed and offers a range of tools to support collaborative conservation with other federal agencies, state and local government, and private entities.

At this time when jobs and economic development are at a premium, we need the natural resource-based jobs that these landscapes support. For example, the Northern Forest's private working forests are the backbone of a forest products industry that supports 148,500 jobs across the four states. The Connecticut River watershed has 221,000 acres of prime soils under active cultivation-it is known as the "breadbasket" of New England.

These landscapes also provide ecosystem services like clean water and carbon sequestration. The Northern Forest contains the headwaters of the Northeast's major rivers, including the Hudson, Connecticut, Androscoggin, Saco, Kennebec, and Penobscot. The Connecticut River watershed provides drinking water for 4.6 million Americans, and provides 70 percent of the freshwater inputs to Long Island Sound. Both landscapes support forests that sequester on average 120 tons of carbon per acre at maturity.

We also believe that AGO will help draw Americans outdoors to enjoy these special places. As you have recognized, outdoor recreation is essential to improve public health and reconnect Americans with the land. The Northern Forest and Connecticut River watershed are both premier recreation outlets within a day's drive of 70 million Americans. Federal lands in the region include the White Mountain and GreenMountain National Forests, numerous national wildlife refuges, and the iconic Appalachian National Scenic Trail. Outdoor recreation across these landscapes helps reconnect Americans to our natural heritage and creates jobs-including 136,000 jobs and \$658 million in tax revenue for Maine, New Hampshire, and Vermont alone.

There are immediate opportunities in FY12 to conserve the Northern Forest and Connecticut River 1-1 S watershed through the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) and the Forest Legacy Program. Beyond land conservation, there are important new efforts emerging in the Northern Forest to enhance private lands stewardship and restoration, bolster the working lands economy, and leverage greater tourism and economic development from the region's natural and recreation assets. The President's Budget should also provide resources to support these activities as part of a holistic approach to landscape-scale conservation

We hope that you will select the Northern Forest and Connecticut River watershed as focus areas for LWCF and other resources in the FY12 President's Budget. We would enjoy the opportunity to provide you with more details on the specific programs and related funding needs for FY12 that would make this effort a success.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

Open outdoor space, be it a vacant city lot that has been transformed into a community garden or an essential biological corridor connecting critical habitat for endangered species, is a valued public resource.

As you know, I have a particular interest in restoring the Chesapeake Bay and greatly appreciate this administration's aggressive commitment to save this important estuary. Great estuaries like the Chesapeake, other watersheds, and landscapes like the Northern Rockies can be powerful themes around which to organize conservation efforts, channel support and create innovative public and private financial commitments. The bay restoration program can serve as a model for how the federal government can promote, protect, and sustain the great outdoors initiative. Federal resources are used to facilitate cooperation among the bay states, conduct research and, at times, compel compliance where other environmental laws come into play. Its substantial financial contribution is but a fraction of what it leverages from the state and local governments, nonprofit organizations and private individuals.

The AGO initiative should find ways to encourage more cooperative arrangements with other landscapes and themes, utilizing a full array of public and private partners. The modest federal investment to create the Rappahannock National Wildlife Refuge, for example, leveraged commitments by local governments and nonprofits to protect more than 30 miles of sensitive wetlands and valued riverscapes within the refuge's proposed management area. In many instances, these protections are in the form of easements held by private land trusts.

It should promote public access and encourage sustainable recreation opportunities. Allowing multiple forms of public use will build demand and create future generations of conservationists.

It must also develop a greater presence in and around urban areas where more than 80 percent of the U.S. population resides: These residents need access to open space that is within a short travelling distance from their homes.

During these difficult economic times, communities around the country are facing job losses and severe economic challenges. Amidst these many challenges, our private working forests could provide an important source of jobs and income, especially in our rural communities. Private forests are responsible for an average of 8 jobs per 1,000 acres. In addition, across 29 states, working forests contribute a sizable \$115 billion to the gross domestic product.

The role of this legislation in saving jobs and also our nation's working forests cannot be underestimated. U.S. Forest Service researchers estimate that by 2050, 23 million acres of forest lands may be lost. Without these critical private working forests, communities could lose jobs, income benefits and natural resource-related services that are crucial for their well-being. Community Forestry Bonds encourage sustainable management of private forests, while deterring the devastating effects of fragmentation, conversion and habitat loss.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

The City of Los Angeles is honored to have been a listening session location for President Obama's America's Great Outdoors (AGO-LA) initiative. We appreciate your visit to our community and the Obama administration's attention to the importance of open space, nature and the Los Angeles River in our urban environment. To assist in preparations for AGO-LA, my office convened a planning group of interested parties, elected officials, environmental groups, conservancies, federal agency staff, local government staff and youth groups to share ideas for greater access to the outdoors. The City intends to continue this local dialogue and welcomes the participation of the United States Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) and other federal agencies.

During AGO-LA, you and other members of the administration asked participants for solutions and ideas to encourage Americans to spend time in the outdoors. Local government, environmental organizations, community leaders, and other stakeholders shared meaningful input into the national discussion, some for the very first time.

On the local level, we will convene the task force created to plan for AGO-LA as a single entity to work with the federal interagency task force on the development of policies and initiatives that can be replicated in urban regions throughout the Country. Our local task force includes participants working throughout Los Angeles County to improve our urban watersheds.

We hope to be a catalyst, through our hard work and a positive experience, for closer coordination of the multiple federal agencies whose separate missions relate to urban watersheds, and who are beginning to work together on efforts such as AGO-LA. What we envision is an interagency task force with all agencies involved with the America's Great Outdoors, as well as the Department of Transportation (for the implementation of the California High Speed Rail project and the conversion of unused rail tracks and yards into regular and linear parks and open space), and the Office of the First Lady for the "Let's Move" program among others.

The magnitude of urban watershed revitalization in the Los Angeles region and its potential to impact millions of people warrants this kind of special federal attention.

We in Los Angeles, partnering with our watershed, environmental, environmental justice (EJ) and conservation communities are ready to lead. The historic AGO-LA listening session and follow-up actions continue to be a convening vehicle for all of us involved in the planning. We are hopeful that our collective advocacy and hard work will transform our urban environment into a more healthy and sustainable one.

Please Help me and my family rediscover our land and restore are love of our Great Nation Thank you for your time!

. Save our wilderness!!

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

. Please do not forget the important impact wild spaces have on young people. They inspire, teach, and build self esteem and confidence.

I want the next generation to enjoy America's great outdoors as much as I do... because they are our legacy, our truth, and our beauty. It would be a shame not to.

. The preservation matrix of natural resources is integral in protecting our native ecosystems and biodiversity, which are some of our greatest national treasure.

. Our wild lands are in fact the last remnants of the world were intended to occupy. I feel it's urgently important for us to hold onto these wonderful places as though our lives depend on it.

. Being an upcoming geologist, I see that people need to understand the world around them and respect the power that it has over us. We need to preserve the integrity of these outdoor habitats and become one with nature once more.

. Nature is essential to the American heritage. A large portion of my childhood was spent in the outdoors. Access to protected open spaces allows the imagination to run free and provides sanctuary beyond the limits of cities. An America in which natural lands were not protect, sidelined for economic interests, is unacceptable.

. I strongly encourage everyone to step back from your desks and take the time to visit the outdoors. Perhaps you are not interested in biking, climbing, rafting, or any other extreme sports, but you can surely appreciate the clean crisp air found away from the city. Please consider what you can conserve for generations to come. The time to act is now!

Hello to America's leaders! I consider my personal experiences outdoors—from family picnics, to hikes, to Rio Grande raft trips, to bicycle races and tours, to music festivals, and to innumerable backpacking and cliff-diving trips—the most valuable and memorable ones. They nourish my well-being. Outdoor spaces are important to me, not just because I work for an adventure publication but also because I urge leaders in Washington to protect our shared outdoor spaces .

The responsibility for good stewardship lies with our generation. It is important that we be proud of the world we will hand over to our children.

It is a breath of fresh air! We know people, children foremost, need exposure to wild places. They need nature...we are a part of it. Read Richard Louv's, *Last Child in the Woods*, or *The Future of Life*, by E.O. Wilson. Read any number of fine books by nature writers over the years. As a species, we would be much diminished by not having access to places like Yellowstone or one the smaller scale, any local sanctuary or plot of woods. I hope every effort will be put forth on this initiative.

Cycling should be allowed in National Parks.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

As a DC resident I love this city and I love the outdoors.

Dear Folks, i thank you for the opportunity to engage in conversation regarding the great outdoors initiative. when i visited the "discussion" site, i was unable to access the discussion portion. i also noticed, that according to the little topic icons on the right margin, the largest voiced opinions on this issue were from folks who want to use offroad vehicles and keep the mountains or other natural areas from being protected. i had the opportunity to visit the listening session held at occidental college in los angeles in the spring. the greatest number of people at that meeting seemed to have a great variety of interests. my prejudice is toward protection of the environment and encouragement of understanding of and participation in nature. as a docent at my local county natural area, i see people hungry for open natural space. on weekends we have people of all stripe, age, income, background come and visit.

What Works: Let there be something along the lines of the civilian conservation corps. we have the california conservation corps, where young folks can work on park and natural areas, gathering work experience in gainful, useful employment. We have the forest service, the los angeles county department of parks and recreation, other good public and private agencies such as el nido, which guides young families. We can have partnerships between local, state, federal, private agencies in the public interest, such as environmental protection agency, department of human resources, other agencies related to the environment and worker support.

what federal government can do : same as above to employ folks to rebuild destroyed structures, access roads and or trails, remediation as needed for the forest, challenge: we have limited access to the national forest. we have a transportation system which needs to be available more hours to more people to more places. we have manufacturers out of work what works: let our stimulus package help folks to make buses or trains (running clean?)and train operators to run longer hours here. let appropriate local state and federal agencies partner with local manufacturers to improve public transportation. let same as above agencies partner with local private public interest agencies to help train folks to run improved public transport system to open space.

what works: the Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area has a successful Transit to Trails program. A San Gabriel Mountains National Recreation Area should include robust transit to trails program that would enable people from park-poor communities to have improved access to San Gabriel Mountains recreational opportunities. There should be a bus service along Angeles Crest Highway and Hiway 39 at least on weekends.

Less traffic. More outdoor recreational opportunities.

Discussion Question 1

Written & Online Comments

(cont.)

We have a family of four, my wife and two daughters. I, personally, cannot image our lives of the last 12 years if we didn't ride together, with friends and family. Our daughters are good kids, no drugs, pregnancies or even bad grades. Their lives have been filled with sport, camping and riding dirt bikes. more than half of our weekends annually are spent outside. We have created an environment where there are no "idle hands". I'm honestly amazed that providing access to this type of activity is such an emotional issue for detractors. No one is forced to take part in the activity, but for those that do and for those that dip their toes in the OHV world, they are changed forever.

I understand that you are looking for what kind of relationship hikers and outdoor enthusiasts have with their federal public lands in the 21st century. I am a long time user of federal public lands--hiking, hunting, fishing, skiing and camping. In the summer months, I am typically using the lands about two weeks of every summer in addition to skiing in the winter. I would encourage you to remember that a lot of us in America are getting older now (I'm over 50). As such, it is more difficult to use public lands in those cases where a heavy backpack might be needed (think of all those people with back problems). We need access--the more the better. This means open Jeep roads to the beginning of Wilderness boundaries for hiking, areas where we can get to high mountain lakes by driving, and continued free use of BLM and forest service lands (we already pay taxes). In general, I support multi-use.

I have been offroading for over 50 years. I raised my family (2 girls, 2 boys) on motorcycles riding in the mountains, desert, and MX tracks. My family and I love the outdoors. We enjoy it by camping, hiking, mountain biking, motocross, and off-roading. The kids have turned out to enjoy the outdoors as much as I do. I believe that most responsible people enjoy and care for our great outdoor areas. As with most things, it only takes a few misfits to completely mess up the opportunities of others. Too bad we (the people) can't get honest people in our government to run this country, as it was ment to be run, by the people!

Good stuff. Add Puget Sound to this mix of inland seas and major watersheds. These systems are the life support systems of the nation.

Right on put down the video games and get out the OHV's go enjoy all the public lands GOD has given us to explore not just parts of them! Cant understand why this idea is losing to badly Promotes: 44 Demotes: 108

I'm a Disabled American Veteran; if it were not for my OHV I would not be able to enjoy a lot of America I served to protect.