

America's Great Outdoors
Notes from Youth Listening Session

Location: Seattle, WA

Date: July 1, 2010

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

Discussion Questions

Y1. Where do you go when you are not indoors?

Y2. What do you do personally to protect the environment?

Y3. What are some obstacles and challenges that prevent young people from spending time outdoors?

Y4. What recommendations would you make to President Obama to get more young people engaged in, and connected to, the outdoors?

Comments from Youth Listening Session Tables 2, 3, 4	Question (1-4)
park	Y1
lake	Y1
mall	Y1
beach	Y1
fishing	Y1

basketball court	Y1
football	Y1
walks	Y1
biking	Y1
hiking	Y1
camping	Y1
boating	Y1
swimming	Y1
kayaking	Y1
BBQ	Y1
tennis	Y1
golfing	Y1
soccer	Y1
bowling	Y1

backyard	Y1
rock climbing	Y1
water park	Y1
dog park	Y1
workout	Y1
Woodland Park Zoo	Y1
backpacking	Y1
mountain biking	Y1
snowboarding	Y1
Seattle Center	Y1
dancing in the street	Y1
rollerblading	Y1
paintball	Y1
pick up trash	Y2

compost	Y2
recycle	Y2
use environmentally safe products	Y2
use public transportation	Y2
limit what I buy	Y2
biking	Y2
dispose of garbage properly	Y2
use cloth instead of paper towels	Y2
turn off lights when not being used	Y2
gardening	Y2
remove invasive plants	Y2
open window instead of A/C	Y2
grow trees	Y2
walk to store	Y2

save on gas	Y2
check car for low emissions	Y2
help animals with home	Y2
use less paper	Y2
use water filtration system instead of bottled	Y2
buy local	Y2
carpool	Y2
money	Y3
bike lanes are narrow	Y3
video games	Y3
punishment	Y3
weather	Y3
internet	Y3
TV	Y3

transportation	Y3
lack of equipment	Y3
safety	Y3
not mainstream	Y3
lazy	Y3
chores	Y3
lack of experience	Y3
school	Y3
lack of leadership, direction	Y3
homework, studying	Y3
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)	Y1
Beaches-City Parks (Discovery, Golden Gardens)	Y1
Nearby Wilderness- Steven pass, Snoqualmie Falls, San Juans, Mt. Rainier, North Cascades, Olympic	Y1
City Areas- Seattle center, community centers, greenlake, waterfront, walk around the neighborhood, backyard.	Y1
Outdoor sports- Basketball and tennis courts, running in city streets, bike trails (Burke-Gilman Trail)	Y1
Don't litter, Clean up public spaces	Y2

Volunteer (restoration and conservation projects)	Y2
Use water responsibly- conserve turn off the faucet, don't water grass	Y2
Became a vegetarian	Y2
Recycle, compost	Y2
Ride bike, longboard, walk, use public transit instead of driving	Y2
Bring own bag to grocery store	Y2
Plant trees and other plants, vegetables	Y2
use gas efficient car and drive in an efficient way	Y2
leave nature and wildlife alone- don't feed animals or pick plants	Y2
Shop secondhand, donate old belongings, instead of throwing them away	Y2

Carpool	Y2
Transportation- Don't have outdoor space within walking distance so they can't get there	Y3
Money- Many parks charge admission fees	Y3
neighborhood parks may not be safe for youth-homeless people, drugs, etc	Y3
Lack of activities- Nothing to do in neighborhood	Y3
Kids would rather stay inside with electronics (video games, TV) than go outside	Y3
Parks don't appeal to young people-Should have more Bike/Skate parks	Y3
Some parks restrict activities that youth want to do, like biking or skateboarding	Y3
Lack of knowledge- Some people don't know what opportunities exist	Y3
More events in parks-increase awareness and appeal to kids	Y4

Make it easier to get to popular events	Y4
make sure programs that get kids outside are well-funded, especially in schools	Y4
Increase awareness so kids know that opportunities exist-advertise to kids and families, get them involved in getting other kids out	Y4
More funding to parks in general-must be a priority	Y4
Create programs that appeal to students, like activities, sports, community events, fun thing	Y4
Subsidize student admission the outdoor places, like zoos and parks, and outdoor activates,	Y4
Create incentive for volunteering to get kids out and involved-even just a t-shirt	Y4
Utilize the way kids communicate-advertise and emphasize the importance of getting outside on the internet, on TV, in schools.	Y4
Put wifi in parks- draw kids in	Y4
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)	Y4

Create playground equivalents for older youth-rock climbing, bike parks, skate parks	Y4
Keep parks safe for kids	Y4
Make it easier to organize large, fun events like capture the flag, kickball nerf gun fights	Y4
More boating and fishing opportunities; water parks in general- We don't have any outdoor water access	Y4
More programs to get kids out to nearby wilderness	Y4
Create interesting parks with cool art and design appeal to kids	Y4
More community farms and gardens where people could come work and then take food to connect them to the environment and teach nutrition skills	Y4
Free wi-fi in parks	Y5
More unstructured opportunities/activities (rock climbing, canoeing, Frisbee golf, fishing, kayaking, rafting, mountain biking, etc)	Y5
Checkout or rental equipment in parks	Y5

the beach	Y1
city park	Y1
national parks	Y1
greenlake park	Y1
forest service trails	Y1
skateboard park	Y1
hiking	Y1
movies	Y1
sport fields	Y1
downtown Seattle	Y1
the mall	Y1
parties	Y1
coffee shops	Y1
fast food	Y1

Pike Place market	Y1
swimming	Y1
Alki beach/park	Y1
picnics/bbq	Y1
biking	Y1
volunteer	Y2
avoid littering	Y2
pick up garbage	Y2
recycle/composting	Y2
use reusable bags/water bottles	Y2
conserve energy	Y2
fundraising	Y2
buy local food	Y2
Location- too far away	Y3

minimal personal transportation options	Y3
no driver's license	Y3
limited public transportation	Y3
limited money/equipment	Y3
lack of time	Y3
competing entertainment options	Y3
cultural norms	Y3
safety concerns	Y3
lack of awareness and interest	Y3
lack of experience	Y3
pollution	Y3
conflicting priorities	Y3
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	
Comments from Youth Table 1	Youth Questions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Beaches • Discovery Park (parks) • Lakes • Neighborhood • North Cascades National Park (mountains, lakes, rivers) • Gold Creek Pond • Basketball court • Pools • Hiking • BBQ • Sailing • Kayaking/Canoeing 	Y1
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Remove invasive plants • Pick up trash • Make duck boxes • Buy local • Recycle • Plant trees • Public transportation/carpool/walk/bike • Use less water • Reuse water bottle • Compost 	Y2

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Doing something else / something better (e.g. video games) • Information not available • Being lazy • Parks: dirty and dangerous • Parks are closed when you want to use them (not open) • No equipment/gear for recreation activities 	Y3
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More organizations that take kids out • More teenage clubs (e.g. an outdoor club for socializing) • Find funding for activities • Make jobs or internships (summer jobs) • Greater awareness of organized activities to teach skills and get kids out in nature • Outreach to expand information • Outdoor field trips' • More programs for younger kids (start earlier) • Opportunities in your own neighborhood • Make outdoor activities accessible (more roads, more ways to get places) • Outdoor activity classes 	Y4
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide opportunities and outreach for students to get them to volunteer in their communities as well as other places • Make jobs and internships and apprenticeships (e.g. work directly with a park ranger to learn skills) for when you're in high school, during school, during summertime, after graduation (year-round opportunities) • Programs for younger youth (start at an earlier age, e.g. 5 years old) 	Highest Scoring Results from the Dot Voting Exercise
Comments from Youth Table 5	Youth Questions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 • University Plazas • Late Night at Greenlake • Coulan Beach • Alki Beach • BBQ/Picnics • Concerts 	Y1

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fireworks • Party • Rock Climbing • Farming/Gardening • Boating • The Bite of Seattle 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recycle/grocery bags • Canteens/re-usable water bottles • Take the bus • Carpool • Education • Using energy efficient lighting/appliances • Pick up liter • 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) 	Y2
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transportation • Getting caught up in technology (video games/electronics) • Destruction of parks • Opposite sex • Cell phones • Feeling unwelcome • Being lazy • Safety concerns • Weather • Location/environment • Gang violence • Parties • Knowledge of the places to go/knowing the benefits • Over crowded spaces/capacity • Who you'll meet there • Maintenance of the space • Not enough activities offered • Parking restrictions • Easy access • Busy schedules 	Y3
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Incentives to recycle • Funding for the parks • Outdoor swimming pools • Environmental education • Promote/encourage/support/sustain/love more 	Y4

<p>outdoor programs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Build more outdoor playgrounds • Increase volunteer opportunities • Environmental policy • Cleaning up polluted areas/ground spaces/urban areas • Preserve national parks • Preserve natural areas/zoning laws • PR events at National Parks 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Funding the Parks • Promote, Fund and Support Outdoor programs • Environmental Education 	<p>Highest Scoring Results from the Dot Voting Exercise</p>
<p>Comments from Youth Table 6</p>	<p>Youth Questions</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The beach • Parks • Outside • Camping • Roadtrip • Walking around • Ride bike • Community center • Movies • Franklin, Chief Health, Cleveland (high school) • Work • Basketball • Baseball • Sports 	<p>Y1</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Take garbage out • Don't litter • Separate recyclables • Remove invasive species • Pick-up litter • Plant trees • Don't smoke • Don't drive • Don't overuse water • Water garden • Eat natural/organic food • Unplug stuff • Recycle • Compost • Dangerous gases in the air 	<p>Y2</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of safety • Health reasons/keep clean • Oil spills 	<p>Y3</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transportation • Area/location (transportation, too far away) • Not enough time • Endangered species • Permit • Construction (being closed) • Park closure because of budget • 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of safety • Health reasons/keep clean • Oil spills • Transportation • Area/location (transportation, too far away) • Not enough time • Endangered species • Permit • Construction (being closed) • Park closure because of budget 	Y4
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide more job opportunities (12 votes) • Make school service learning requirement strictly environmental (5 votes) • Have a clean environment (5 votes) • More field trips to national parks (5 votes) • More events in parks (4 votes) • More diverse leaders in national parks (3 voters) 	Highest Scoring Results from the Dot Voting Exercise
Comments from Youth Table 7	Youth Questions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City parks • Walking around town • Getting food/eating outside • Football field • Parades • BBQ • Festivals • Basketball • Alki Beach • Hiking • Biking • Coulon Beach • Jogging • Kayaking • Camping • Soccer • Jobs • Football camps • Forest restoration • Frisbee 	Y1

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sleeping • Reading • Tanning • Gardening • Rock climbing • Family reunion • Birthday parties • Wild Waves • Fishing • Boats • Drive in theater • Mount Rainier • Games • Hiking • Snowshoeing • Golf • Seattle Center • Volleyball • Long boarding • The zoo • Swimming • Bird watching • Pike Place Market • Arboretum 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Don't litter • 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 • Don't build dams • Pull out invasive species 	Y2
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 	Y3

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 • 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 	Y4
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Include outdoor education in school curricula ○ Support community events (i.e. basketball tournaments, community BBQ's, parades) ○ Increase funding for parks and programs that get youth into the outdoors – this year community programs got cut ○ Increase awareness about problems so that community can help get it fixed faster 	<p>Highest Scoring Results from the Dot Voting Exercise</p>

Comments from Youth Table 8	Youth Questions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Basketball • Beach • Skateboarding • Woods/camping • Fishing • Mountain biking • Snow boarding • Skateboarding 	Y1
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recycling • Composting • Plant trees • Clean around the schools and community centers • Community service • Make sure no gun shooting around • Stop gun violence/ gangs 	Y2
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mom says can't be out at night • Fear • Being harmed • Too far away • Violence • Transportation 	Y3
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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) 	Y4
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Giving money to make parks more attractive • Programs with educational incentives • Transportation 	Highest Scoring Results from the Dot Voting Exercise