

America's Great Outdoors
Notes from Youth Listening Session

Location: Godfrey, IL

Date: August 20, 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?

Comment	Question I-IV
Youth outdoor activities include gardening, running, fishing, swimming, catching frogs, biking, walking, and hiking.	Y1
Alton residents feel a physical disconnection to the river. How have other communities improved this?	Y3
DOI- Los Angeles-feels the same way. One of the rivers has cement sides, so they need something to balance the use of the river. Transportation to the river is a concern that is being looked at as well.	Y3
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	Y1
Elementary schools are cutting out Physical education. Keep it.	Y4
Wilderness isn't cool anymore. Needs more exposure. Need to get people to bring their friends out there. Free stuff to make it cool.	Y3

Making outdoors cool: education. News is often negative. Bear mauling in Yellowstone. Educate positive aspects of outdoors and remove fears people may have.	Y3
More events held at the riverfronts. i.e. concerts, bike race.	Y3
Turn out streetlights to be able to see stars better	Y3
Have outdoor classes and visit the river. There are people who have never been there but lived here their whole life.	Y3
More family oriented events in the outdoors.	Y4
Boat tours on the river would help develop a connection	Y4
Regional planning efforts: The river ring here is a 600-mile web. Parks and conservation are important.	N/A
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.	N/A
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.	N/A
We need to connect people to outdoors. This helps health, sustainability, and livability. River ring efforts are 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.	N/A
USACE and USFWS manage over 300K acres. Need to fund a long-term program of stewardship for these resources otherwise any success is short term. Reconnection is directly related to the quality of stewardship. Adaptive management does not have to be difficult.	N/A
Access needs to be improved.	N/A
Tremendous framework of local entities already exists here. We don't use this framework as well as we could. Need to use the local communities to reconnect people to the river. Don't focus on St. Louis, but think more regionally. Don't ignore the barges or commerce	N/A

<p>We do a lot of commenting on permits and other USACE actions. Kids want to help and they are ready. The challenge they see is climate impact in the future on them. Don't scare the kids and tell them the adults are working on it. We have to improve the outdoors for the children and the future generations. Take it to the next level. The younger generation needs to be involved in much greater and more important ways.</p>	N/A
<p>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.</p>	N/A
<p>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.</p>	N/A
<p>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.</p>	N/A
<p>Efforts will address access, history, conservation, stewardship, and education.</p>	N/A
<p>Worried about a constituency being involved in the future. Need to motivate kids. Need something "Cooler" than Ken Burns National parks documentary to get kids interested. Need shows that are geared towards the youth and talk about fun activities like rafting. Need to ensure that kids learn about the outdoors. Would like to see mandatory national service of some kind for kids coming out of high school, other than the military.</p>	N/A
<p>80K sites on the historic places register in Illinois. Fund the preservation fund. Historic preservation is a form of sustainability. Historic preservation is sustainable by encouraging reuse of buildings. It's a different way to look at historic preservation.</p>	N/A

<p>Losing IL River to sediment. Need appropriations from WRDA to fix this. Planning on how to fix the problem is done. We just need funding to put it into action. This is the most important thing for IL River.</p>	<p>N/A</p>
<p>Want to get kids outdoors. Make sure we have another generation ready to be stewards and ambassadors to the outdoors. Need upgraded version of things like Smokey Bear and Ranger Rick. We need more media attention.</p>	<p>N/A</p>
<p>We need full funding of land and water conservation fund. Need state money from this fund. 85% is diverted to non-conservation uses. Half to federal and half to state agencies are needed.</p>	<p>N/A</p>
<p>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.</p>	<p>N/A</p>
<p>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.</p>	<p>N/A</p>
<p>Riverlands Migratory Bird Sanctuary: Serves as a river habitat types with restored grassland, forests and wetlands providing resting and nesting habitat for a diverse array of migratory and resident birds.</p>	<p>N/A</p>
<p>Managed by Corps biologists and partners utilizing prescribed burning and gravity feed water control structures to maintain the grasslands habitat and over 300 acres of wetlands.</p>	<p>N/A</p>
<p>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.</p>	<p>N/A</p>

<p>The Riverlands Migratory Bird Sanctuary (RMBS) is a 3775- acre migratory bird refuge located near the confluence of the Mississippi and Missouri Rivers. The Sanctuary was first established in 1989 by the Corps of Engineers as the Riverlands Environmental Demonstration Area to showcase low-cost restoration potential of large river floodplains. The Sanctuary also provided quality open space for the American public as a place they could enjoy the outdoors and learn about the importance of rivers and the habitat this ecosystem provides.</p>	N/A
<p>The Sanctuary, once primarily utilized for agriculture, is now a mosaic of river habitat types with restored grassland, forests and wetlands providing resting and nesting habitat for a diverse array of migratory and resident birds.</p>	N/A
<p>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.</p>	N/A
<p>The area is managed by Corps biologist and partners utilizing prescribed burning and gravity feed water control structures to maintain the grassland habitat and over 300 acres of wetlands</p>	N/A
<p>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.</p>	N/A
<p>Iconic birds like the bald eagle, American white pelican and the trumpeter swan can commonly be seen here at the right time of year.</p>	N/A
<p>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.</p>	N/A
<p>Outdoor recreation like biking, hiking, paddling and fishing are also popular within the sanctuary and draw a multitude of people to the</p>	N/A

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.	N/A
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.	N/A
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.	N/A
Has had more than 500,000 visitors since opening; 65,727 visitors in FY2010 (thru June), 6% increase from FY09	N/A
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ARRA projects: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 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 	N/A

<p>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.</p>	N/A
<p>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.</p>	N/A
<p>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 for the museum.</p>	N/A
<p>LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) certification at the platinum level candidate</p>	N/A
<p>Since its inception, NGRREC has funded more than \$285,000 in research and maintains an expert staff involved in research funded by other sponsors.</p>	N/A
<p>Research conducted here will expand our understanding of the structure and function of floodplain-river ecosystems</p>	N/A
<p>Illinois Governor Pat Quinn awarded Lewis and Clark Community College \$16.3 million for the Confluence Field Station</p>	N/A

<p>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</p>	<p>N/A</p>
<p>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.</p>	<p>N/A</p>
<p>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.</p>	<p>N/A</p>
<p>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.</p>	<p>N/A</p>
<p>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.</p>	<p>N/A</p>

<p>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.</p>	N/A
<p>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.</p>	N/A
<p>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</p>	N/A
<p>Educates students, employees, local citizens and others on the importance of conservation, recycling and other sustainability practices</p>	N/A
<p>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.</p>	N/A