

**America's Great Outdoors**  
**Notes from Youth Listening Session**

Location: Berkeley, CA

Date: July 23, 2010

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

Discussion Questions

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

Discussion Question Y1-Y4	Comment
Y3	Poverty, access
Y3	Distance
Y3	Pay kids/legal resident aliens
Y3	Volunteering for X and getting Y
Y3	NPS narrowly -- defining role to include local and state natural areas
Y3	Mission alignment
Y3	Continuity
Y3	VIP -- 50 mile barrier
Y3	Hub for youth in each N.P.
Y4	Employ Youth
Y4	Preserving natural lands/waters (national and local/urban)
Y4	Match youth to projects they are interested in
Y4	Youth-defined conservation
Y4	Bottom up (community) program design
Y4	Broad experiences: PR, planning, not just field work --career pathways

Y4	Outdoor industry partnerships
Y4	Co-design
Y4	Environmental education
Y4	NPS metropolitan liaisons/Youth Corps led by youth
Y4	Comprehensive collaborative (multiple partners) long-term tracking and opportunities for youth
Y4	Easier to get a group of wilderness permits: streamline process/bureaucracy
Y4	Pay for internship programs = complicated: Hard to hire local youth (VIP program); Formalize internship programs (MPS and partners? / D of A / D of I?); Better/easier access/pay for undocumented youth
Y4	NPS--new "series"--youth development/stewardship/internship
Y4	Prevailing wage issue: Make youth priority/youth friendly, don't lump with unemployed adults; mechanisms to provide "classification" for youth and people who work with youth
Y4	Money for transportation
Y4	Streamline /simply partnership agreements and expectations
Y4	Bring "park to youth"--i.e. CA state parks working in central LA to create new park : focus on urban areas and urban fringes
Y4	Use cultural resources in addition to natural resources
Y4	Money/policy -- energy dept. -- to refocus on bikes -- connect to open spaces
Y4	More partnership/volunteer coordinators: Forest Service, NPS , BLM (all agencies)
Y4	Access to jobs for young people : preferential hiring authority for young people who serve in Cons. Corps, etc. -- healthy forests public lands corps act
Y4	Better systems for seasonal employees (health insurance, etc.) or better "pipeline" to permanent positions (so we can keep youth once we get them)
Y4	Bring "living stories" to communities
Y4	Use of cultural resources to engage youth (emphasize interconnections between cultural and natural resources) -- holistic approach
Y4	Creating youth-friendly environments where young people can feel safe -- train staff
Y4	Replication of successful models that better integrate NPS interpretation and education with park partner education and stewardship
Y4	Tribal interface
Y4	Support connection with youth from every age; promote potential future employment opportunities...train youth to go back to their communities as promoters of programs
Y4	Recognize gaps between "silos" of engagement: Provide support to bridge those gaps (i.e. youth participate in program, then don't know what to do with their transformation)
Y4	Streamlining partnership agreements and expectations (internal and external)
Y4	Simplify and create access to paid internships, long-term careers
Y4	More positions--youth program coordinators and partnership coordinators

Y4	Looking at cultural/natural resources holistically, in terms of outreach, partnerships, and programs
Y4	Emphasize creation of youth-friendly environments with youth leadership
Y4	Building in family components to all youth programs
Y4	Better integration among and between agencies and partners in development of youth programming
Y4	Encourage funding of "Learn + Serve" CNCS -- funnel money to get kids into park
Y4	Liaisons for NPS resources/ hard to connect with resources /get bounced from one place/person to another
Y4	Using cultural resources as "bait" -- build bridge to natural resources
Y4	Support programs that engage families (i.e. passes for future events, directions for returning, etc.)
Y4	Programs that provide repeat experiences
Y4	We need "youth development coordinators" who can facilitate connection between orgs and parks
Y4	Social media
Y4	Importance of providing emotional/physical safety (know "quiet history" of sites -- why some populations won't recreate there)
Y4	Early Age--utilize a variety of community-based organizations (e.g. youth, religious, cultural, schools, etc.) to expose youth to outdoors
Y4	Pre-teen/Adolescents -- foster a sense of environmental stewardship/responsibility through more intense experience; maximize peer to peer communication and connection ( e.g. outdoor camp operated and maintained by Boys and Girls Club)
Y4	Young Adults -- provide skill building opportunities in the outdoors (e.g. Corps) as part of a career pathway; provide challenging and transformative experiences
Y4	Provide a national framework within which public-private partnerships (cross-sector collaboration) can work instead of disparate efforts
Y4	Facilitate conversation between different funders (currently there are few linkages between corporate funders and foundations grantmaking in the same area)
Y4	Land management agency should consider multiple benefits when allocating funding for projects or maintenance and include youth development goals
Y4	Explore ways to leverage non-traditional sources of funding, such as Department of Labor (WIA) or safe schools/healthy start/crime prevention
Y4	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 lands [leads to] jobs
Y4	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
Y4	Start with activities in the city, build up to going to the camp, then coming back to help maintain the camp facilities

Y4	Start with community-based organizations: schools, religious groups, athletic programs, youth groups, etc.
Y4	Must move past cultural and language barriers
Y4	Parents don't understand the value of letting children participate in activities
Y4	Have family oriented activities
Y4	Youth development and public land agency partnerships
Y4	Existing organizations, like corps, can set up infrastructure
Y4	Help get "kids" to parks - Ex. Yellowstone Recovery – youth corps set up spike camp, groups rotated in
Y4	How do we institutionalize partnerships? Through schools? Possible issue with funding gaps
Y4	National framework to take work to scale - ex. Girls on the Run, national non-profit connected to schools, funded by shoe company
Y4	Cross-sector partnerships/collaboration is really important. Outdoor industry can be a major player; Ex. REI Kids on Trails
Y4	No Child Left Inside; Outdoor education; Connect art and nature
Y4	Need funding for transportation costs
Y4	Make school funding more secure to make room for innovative programs
Y4	Federal legislation; fully fund Public Lands Service Corps Act; pass Youth Corps Act
Y4	National framework to organize efforts - Ex. AmeriCorps. Have a database?
Y4	Encourage funders to collaborate
Y4	Connect private foundations with corporate funders in same grant making area. Right now we have separate conversations - corporate funders talk to each other and private foundations talk to each other
Y4	Make Workforce Investment Act (WIA) dollars more accessible for this type of work
Y4	Local, state, and federal maintenance dollars could go to youth programs if allocated according to multiple benefits, include youth development goals
Y4	Tap into more non-traditional sources of funding; Public safety community – officers /workers/funding are untapped resources