

America's Great Outdoors
Notes from Youth Listening Session

Location: Grand Island, Nebraska

Date: July 12, 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?

N/A. Not available.

Comments	Question (Y1-Y4)
Fish.	Y1
Explore enjoy scenery and wildlife – get messy.	Y1
Creeking, wade in creek.	Y1
Hunting, Camping and canoeing, fishing.	Y1
Hike and take photos and having fun.	Y1
Camping, horseback riding, hiking.	Y1
Bicycle adventures – off road	Y1
Going to school for architecture and design green, my responsibility to do it efficiently and environmentally friendly.	Y2
People to advocate for it. Tell the stories of why being outdoors is fun, people are going to want to go out there more and in turn they'll want to protect.	Y2

Personally aware of the environment. You have to be educated on what's harmful and what's not. I personally should get more education on what should be done.	Y2
Recruitment for more sportsmen.	Y2
Action is best form of persuasion. Want to be the first and show them how fun it is, if people enjoy it more they'll protect it.	Y2
Make effort to use resources that are good for environment-lead.	Y2
Lead by example - model the behavior. Human element of connecting.	Y2
Expected to be involved in everything (sports, FAA, etc) no down time. Kids' schedules are holding us back most.	Y3
I think technology is holding us back - I know kids who spend all day playing video games. Time management, families should schedule time to be outdoors because kids are so busy. Educate kids more, because they don't know you can have fun somewhere other than a mall.	Y3
Lack of information about it. Fear of nature because they don't know. In school system -- education about natural resources, there is no room for it - standards don't allow for creative education or outdoor education. Time and standards.	Y3
Technology not the enemy but needs to be incorporated appropriately. Advertising in telling kids to get outdoors is good first step -- but needs to inspire more. Many camps charge -- need to offer more programs that are free to attract all families.	Y3
School scheduling -- a family is unable to enjoy an excursion like Lincoln safari because there's soccer practice, band practice, etc. By the time everyone is home, it's dark. Too late to explore. Maybe school could let out at noon for scheduled outdoor activities. Institute siestas.	Y3
Says her school is 4 days a week 8 to 4 so we have that extra day. (Elba, NE)	Y3
Time and scheduling including on weekends too busy to enjoy outdoors.	Y3
Boundaries/hassle to get somewhere to be able to enjoy outdoors. Limited green space and woods to play in because of urban sprawl. Creates an invisible boundary -- community planning and how developments are being set-up.	Y3
Incorporate it in the classroom. Allow for more outdoor education. Instead of looking at ecosystem diagram on a projector -- take them outside and show them the ecosystem.	Y4

Promote a resource benefit program/stimulate funding program where every kid in HS has an opportunity.	Y4
Advocating for outdoor education, as budget cuts occur -- emphasis on natural resources education decreases and opportunity to get outdoors, field trips, etc., get cut. Restructure our education system. Open up more jobs in that sector and educate HS students on those jobs.	Y4
As opposed to viewing technology as the inhibitor, take advantage by connecting the people with opportunity. One stop shop for outdoor opportunities. My three year old niece already knows how to use the internet and computer -- capitalize and reach out.	Y4
Address the pride issue; celebrate the natural wonders of where they come from. Speak with passion and enthusiasm about the core beauty of our communities. Restore and celebrate our environment and letting people know what's available.	Y4
Interactive parks -- better way to inspire/make a National Park like wildlife safari.	Y4
Encourage families to take vacations and explore their states. Restore pride and get more hands-on and making teachers have more hands-on opportunities in schools. In chemistry we didn't do one chemistry experiment. Biology the same way -- get back to exploring.	Y4
In the 80's they got rid of 5th and 6th graders having three days to learn outdoors. In June Great American Campout -- bring tents teach families how to experience the outdoors. National ads should show families doing things outdoors -- state outdoor photo contest. Nature clubs after school -- 8 weeks -- geology and rocks, birds, mammals, etc. School could be 15 minutes longer and get them outdoors. Grab them in grade school.	Y4
How do we engage you -- reach your generation?	
Opportunity and empower to advocate.	N/A
Starts with parent, the way to get kids outdoors is to get parents to want to get their kids outdoors. Educate parents on the benefits.	N/A
Agree with both, passion and enthusiasm.	N/A
Grew up on farm and involved in 4H and met other peers involved in outdoors. Best friend got him into outdoors and 4H/FAA teacher and their passion.	N/A

Seems adults want to blame the technology, it's not the enemy -- should use it, but my view is if the parents aren't encouraging the kids it won't happen. Use technology to reach out and incorporate it to advertise outdoor opportunities -- like Facebook.	N/A
Personal ownership of your lifestyle and activities -- and someone has to encourage.	N/A
Agree that it should be peer-to-peer; someone has to show you and communal groups. Local aspect, community bringing people in and showing them why it could be fun and sharing passion and enthusiasm.	N/A
Waterfest is free family event and 1400 people attended, took canoes o the lake, taught how to fly fish, etc., and people who never had the opportunity -- provided a destination for the parents to take kids and learn together.	N/A
Any questions/comments?	
How many people who have more money have more opportunities to get outdoors -- how are we going to get under-privileged kids opportunities to attend camps/scholarships.	N/A
Supporting after school programs for under-privileged kids to encourage them. Most programs tailored to middle or upper class. Make the outdoor recreation opportunities affordable. Accessibility for your with disabilities.	N/A
Support is the key word. Improve local programs that currently exist. Getting outside is more than HD, it's 3D reality.	N/A
We didn't have money for toys, so my experience was I actually went to the park because it was free, but is was convenient -- kids need a place to go.	N/A
Prioritize the development of green spaces. Everyone needs to get back in touch with nature and seek refuge in nature.	N/A
Why can't current programs or classes incorporate an outdoor component? Federal government won't be able to do it all, we need a grassroots component.	N/A
We need volunteers to go out and volunteer to mentor a kid outdoors. We have someone who takes kids hunting an out and shows them how fund the land can be -- we need more. Make being able to go outdoors affordable fun.	N/A