

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

Location: Lawrence, Kansas

Date: Sept. 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?

Discussion Question Y1-Y4	Comment
Y2	Sustainability and sustainable living - learning to live outside of houses and with fewer resources.
Y2	Protect sacred sites and return trust lands to the Native people for them to manage on their own. Return sacred lands to native people so they can manage them and educate others on how to live off the land.
Y2	Education- environmental and resource education outside instead of in the classrooms and talk about health concerns- all three can work together.
Y2	Eliminate trash. Clean up day once a week and get groups in different locations to clean trains, roads, highways, etc.
Y2	Enforce laws, educate people about not littering and recycling instead.
Y2	Changing laws- making it free or more convenient to recycle; charge for trash bags.
Y2	Require businesses and corporations to recycle.
Y4	Educate people- pamphlets about local region- weather, land, how to replenish the earth.
Y2	Need to make businesses and business people more responsible for their actions, such as not recycling, not conserving water, not having good environmental practices.
Y2	Has to start at home by mentoring kids and getting them out. Outside classrooms should be one time a week (depending on weather) and mandatory. Otherwise it will never happen because there are too many other distractions.

Y2	Recognize that indigenous people already live outdoors- Provide more educational ways to bring these people back to their culture and give them an attachment back to their communities.
Y2	Media needs to promote respect for land (a lot of land is trashed and media should portray nice lands).
Y3	Respect nation to nation talks- each nation has its own respect for the land and interest in sustainable land. State laws often diminish the rights of people so government needs to respect native treaties and acts. Land is often stripped from underneath the natives' feet and it is slowly going away.
Y2	Funding on tribal lands that goes towards gardening for younger aged youth so it can become a way of life for them. Fund programs that teach kids about where their food comes from.
Y2	Mentorship for younger generations. Get parents involved in children's' life; provide education and healthy eating, gardening and healthy activity outdoors.
Y1	"Play day" where students don't use technology or TV and instead enjoy their families and communities outdoors
Y2	Haskell campus has buildings that are run down, food systems where we don't know where the food is coming from, water systems where we don't know where the water is coming from, and waste issues so there is the potential to use Haskell as a symbol of using better practices to improve the community- like having a windmill that creates energy and gives it back to the community.
Y3	Executive Order to protect the wetlands next to the University.
Y1	Lake, Forest, Trails., Beach.
Y1	Fishing, Hiking, Biking, Swimming, Hunting, Horseback riding.
Y1	Enjoying being outside.
Y1	Pretty scenery.
Y1	Value being outside and your surroundings.
Y1	A time to travel, or see sights.
Y3	Overconsumption of resources/too many trees being taken down.
Y3	New regulations are taking land/resources.
Y3	Forest fires decrease air quality.
Y3	Health issues due to fires & pollution, certain commodities adding to obesity.
Y3	Dangerous atmosphere/sunburn.
Y3	Too much development (businesses, roads, buildings etc.)
Y2	I recycle.
Y2	I give back to the land as much as possible.
Y2	I turn off lights.
Y2	Plant trees.
Y3	Large degree of litter in National Parks.
Y3	Pressure of making money, job competition. Rise in office jobs.
Y3	Videogames/TV.
Y3	Too dangerous to go outside, scared for safety in unknown places.
Y3	Too many convenience items (air conditioning, technology, cars).
Y4	Preservation.

Y4	Sustainability.
Y4	Solar energy.
Y4	Teach more outside activities and benefits, use our resources to get people outside; currently not many programs are available.
Y4	Teach youth how to hunt/fish.
Y4	Increased education of outdoors will lead to better understanding and appreciation.
Y4	Develop programs to teach cultural ways and practices/work with tribes/nations to develop programming.
Y4	Incorporate native traditions and culture into schools.
Y4	Give more funding to local schools and organizations for education.
Y4	Utilize technology better/develop videogames.
Y4	Increased diversity of teachers.
Y4	Better outreach to tribes.