



American Recreation Coalition

*Dedicated to the protection and enhancement of everyone's right
to health and happiness through recreation.*

NEWS

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37 State Governors and the President Proclaim June as Great Outdoors Month

June has been officially designated Great Outdoors Month by President George Bush and more than half of America's governors. The proclamations were sought by a coalition of dozens of recreation and conservation organizations, many of which coordinate special events held during June, including National Trails Day, National Fishing and Boating Week, National Get Outdoors Day and the Great American Backyard Campout.

President Bush's proclamation, issued for the fifth year in succession, was released "to honor those who work to keep our natural places beautiful and to celebrate some of our country's favorite outdoor pastimes." The President goes on to "call on all Americans to observe this month with appropriate programs and activities, and to take time to visit and enjoy the great outdoors."

This is the second year in which many of America's governors have proclaimed June as Great Outdoors Month in their home states. The state proclamations differ in length and emphasis, but most praise volunteerism, environmental stewardship, and outdoor recreation as a means to happier, healthier lifestyles. Here are some of the highlights of the 2008 proclamations:

- *"Great Outdoors Month is an opportunity to **celebrate and experience America's splendor** and renew our commitment to conserve our air, water, and land."*
Alabama Governor Bob Riley
- *"Through biking, sport fishing, boating, hiking, and many other activities, Alaskans are enjoying our state's magnificent scenery and the **healthy benefits of outdoor recreation.**"*
Alaska Governor Sarah Palin
- *"Our citizens play an important role in protecting our natural areas and during this month, **we honor the men and women who volunteer** to help protect our environment."*
Arizona Governor Janet Napolitano
- *"[Arkansas] provides an abundance of outdoor recreational and educational opportunities, endless adventures, and **subsequent quality-of-life rewards and health benefits.**"*
Arkansas Governor Mike Beebe

37 State Governors and the President Proclaim June as Great Outdoors Month Add One

- *“Outdoor activities like biking and hiking give us opportunities to **exercise, breathe fresh air, reflect on the beauty around us and take a break from the often hectic pace of everyday life.**”*

California Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger

- *“Those who take advantage of the opportunities afforded them in the outdoors generally **live longer, healthier, fuller lives** than those who do not; and Colorado receives over 300 days of sunlight, **making almost any day a perfect day to be outdoors.**”*

Colorado Governor Bill Ritter, Jr.

- *“As acknowledged in the **No Child Left Inside Initiative in the State of Connecticut**, June is the perfect month to spend time outdoors and appreciate the natural beauty we are lucky to live in.”*

Connecticut Governor M. Jodi Rell

- *“Outdoor recreation is vital to Delaware’s **economy**, as well as to the **health and wellness** of its residents.”*

Delaware Governor Ruth Ann Minner

- *“Great Outdoors Month will encourage cooperative conservation and new technologies to **help ensure America’s outdoors remain places where families and friends can learn, exercise, and create meaningful memories.**”*

Florida Governor Charlie Crist

- *“Georgia’s Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan for 2008-2013 includes strategic priorities to promote fitness and livability in all Georgia communities, to **enhance Georgia’s economic viability through the social, environmental and economic benefits of outdoor recreation** and to address the need for conservation and proper use of Georgia’s natural resources.”*

Georgia Governor Sonny Perdue

- *“Idaho is committed to finding **solutions to reverse the ‘nature deficit’ trend** in Idaho by reconnecting children to the great outdoors through outdoor youth programming, opportunities for recreation on public lands and environmental and natural resource education.”*

Idaho Governor C.L. “Butch” Otter

- *“Experiencing Illinois’ natural splendor contributes to **happier and healthier lives** for our citizens and a deeper appreciation for the great outdoors.”*

Illinois Governor Rod R. Blagojevich

- *“Outdoor recreation is an ideal way to exercise and **enjoy memorable experiences with family and friends.**”*

Kansas Governor Kathleen Sebelius

37 State Governors and the President Proclaim June as Great Outdoors Month Add Two

- “The Commonwealth advocates **embracing the great outdoors** and engaging in outdoor activities that strengthen both heart and mind.”
Kentucky Governor Steven L. Beshear
- “In Maine and throughout this country, **the number of overweight children is on the rise**, and the State of Maine’s ‘Take It Outside’ initiative **encourages parents to take their children outside and experience their own backyards** and Maine’s many treasures in the great outdoors.”
Maine Governor John E. Baldacci
- “Outdoor recreation **promotes health, fitness, and environmental awareness and stewardship**, as well as opportunity to gather with family and friends to enjoy camaraderie and **create memorable experiences.**”
Maryland Governor Martin O’Malley
- “Biking, swimming, hiking, and other outdoor recreation **promotes fitness and a healthy lifestyle.**”
Massachusetts Governor Deval L. Patrick
- “Great Outdoors Month gives our **children the opportunity to be reintroduced to nature** and the **fun adventures** it holds.”
Michigan Governor Jennifer M. Granholm
- “Outdoor recreation **promotes health, fitness, and environmental awareness.**”
Mississippi Governor Haley Barbour
- “During Great Outdoors Month, the **dedicated men and women who volunteer** to help protect our natural resources are honored.”
Missouri Governor Matt Blunt
- “I encourage all Americans to demonstrate good stewardship and an **appreciation for the outdoors.**”
Nebraska Governor Dave Heineman
- “By encouraging residents and tourists to go outdoors we **encourage a more active and healthy lifestyle, improve mental and physical health, reduce substance abuse** and enhance the economy of the State.”
Nevada Governor Jim Gibbons
- “Countless citizens volunteer their time and talents to protect America’s natural resources and by **working together with the private and non-profit sectors and the general public**, we can help preserve our local parks, lakes, river, and working lands.”
New Hampshire Governor John H. Lynch

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Add Three**

- ***“Spending time outdoors provides countless opportunities for families and friends to get together, learn, engage in healthy activities, and participate in many recreational, community-oriented and leisure pursuits.”***
New Mexico Governor Bill Richardson
- ***“For recreational pleasure, a number of parks and other natural settings offer countless outdoor adventures and activities for the whole family and that appeal to a variety of interests – from playing a sport as a member of a summer league, to the vigorous exercise that comes with bicycling, hiking, horseback riding, or whitewater rafting.”***
New York Governor David A. Paterson
- ***“It is important to maintain and enhance our legacy of environmental stewardship and enjoyment of the great outdoors by introducing children to nature.”***
North Dakota Governor John Hoeven
- ***“We believe that there is no better cause than ensuring that our future generations understand and believe in the values and benefits of the great outdoors.”***
Ohio Governor Ted Strickland
- ***“Recreation is a valuable means for education to reach America’s youth with the message that outdoor recreation is a fun, healthy use of leisure time.”***
Oregon Governor Theodore R. Kulongoski
- ***“Great Outdoors Month is a significant opportunity to help reconnect our children to nature and reverse the troubling nationwide trends of children spending half as much time outside as they did 20 years ago and spending six and a half hours each day ‘plugged into’ electronic media.”***
Pennsylvania Governor Edward G. Rendell
- ***“The Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management and numerous partners are launching the Rhode Island Great Outdoors Pursuit in an effort to reconnect children and their families with the great outdoors.”***
Rhode Island Governor Donald L. Carcieri
- ***“[I] encourage all South Carolinians to take time to enjoy the Palmetto State’s natural beauty with friends and family and pledge to make outdoor activities a part of their everyday lives.”***
South Carolina Governor Mark Sanford
- ***“Outdoor recreation is an essential component to our well-being, with the ability to improve our health and build the human spirit.”***
South Dakota Governor M. Michael Rounds
- ***“At this time, I encourage everyone to explore the great outdoors of Texas.”***
Texas Governor Rick Perry

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- *“The Commonwealth of Virginia is committed to **conserving open space** as well as pursuing **environmentally responsible initiatives.**”*
Virginia Governor Timothy M. Kaine
- *“Outdoor recreation is an ideal way to exercise and **enjoy memorable experiences with family and friends.**”*
Washington Governor Christine O. Gregoire
- *“The mission of this month is to promote **healthier lifestyles to combat obesity, volunteerism** to strengthen our communities and our shared legacy of parks and forests, **protection** of our environment and **enjoyment** of the great outdoors.”*
West Virginia Governor Joe Manchin III
- *“Playing and exploring outdoors gives children and their families time to **connect with nature, engage in exercise and healthy activities, and have fun.**”*
Wisconsin Governor Jim Doyle

The initiative to get America’s governors to speak out about outdoor recreation was led by the American Recreation Coalition (ARC), the National Association of State Park Directors (NASPD), the National Wildlife Federation and the National Recreation and Park Association. More state proclamations are expected throughout the month of June. Proclamations can be read and downloaded at <http://www.funoutdoors.com/node/view/2068>.

“We are delighted by the response of the nation’s governors to Great Outdoors Month 2008, but we anticipate that in 2009 we will see both proclamations by every governor and personal participation in a state park event during the month,” said NASPD Executive Director Phil McKnelly.

ARC President Derrick Crandall pledged to support NASPD’s 2009 goals and to focus on the themes highlighted in the 2008 proclamations. “The governors related the outdoors to health, to education, to economic stability of our communities and to quality of life,” he said. “They have challenged us to look beyond trails and campsites and boat ramps and consider our role in supporting families and communities made healthier and happier through the outdoors. I look forward to exciting dialogues and to new initiatives that center on parks but measure benefits to the public.”

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