



American Recreation Coalition

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

June 2011 Newsletter

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President Obama and State Governors Proclaim June as Great Outdoors Month

President Barack Obama and America's governors have proclaimed June as Great Outdoors Month. The proclamations, requested by a coalition of outdoor recreation and conservation organizations, celebrate the many special events held during June, including National Trails Day®, National Fishing and Boating Week, National Get Outdoors Day, National Marina Day and the Great American Backyard Campout™, and the benefits of time outdoors to the health of Americans, young and old.

President Obama's proclamation states, ***"Our public lands and other open areas provide myriad opportunities for families and friends to explore, play, and grow together -- from hiking and wildlife watching to canoeing, hunting, and fishing, and playing in a neighborhood park. These activities can help our kids stay healthy, active, and energized, while reconnecting with their natural heritage."***

The proclamation goes on to say, ***"This month, let each of us resolve to protect our great outdoors; discover their wonders; and share them with our friends, our neighbors, and our children."***

The proclamation highlights current Administration efforts to help Americans get healthier through outdoor activity, including the America's Great Outdoors Initiative to protect natural landscapes and reconnect Americans to the outdoors, and the First Lady's Let's Move effort to help children eat more nutritious foods, lead healthier lives, and increase their physical activity. More information on these initiatives is available at: www.AmericasGreatOutdoors.gov and www.LetsMove.gov.

The gubernatorial Great Outdoors Month proclamations began five years ago. All 50

states proclaimed June as Great Outdoors Month in 2010, and we expect to equal this mark despite some extraordinary circumstances. While the state proclamations vary in emphasis and reflect key state features, most praise volunteerism, the power of outdoor recreation to contribute to happier, healthier lifestyles, and the legacy of parks and other public lands and waters.

To see and download the 2011 presidential proclamation, [click here](#).

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Great Outdoors Week: Washington, D.C., June 11-17, 2011

Hundreds of outdoor recreation leaders from across America will be gathering in Washington, D.C. on June 11-17 to celebrate Great Outdoors Week 2011. Since 1996, leaders from the recreation community have gathered in Washington each June to participate in meetings and events designed to:

- Increase the visibility of outdoor recreation on the national policy-making level
- Heighten the understanding and appreciation of recreation's importance to the nation's economy, health and quality of life
- Provide an opportunity to highlight key recreation policy initiatives and programs
- Recognize outstanding leadership on behalf of outdoor recreation
- Support the efforts of the American Recreation Coalition

Topics of discussion will range from the link between recreation and health to how we can reconnect America's youth to the outdoors, as well as partnerships and other tools (including technology) to enhance recreation resources.

Among the week's core events for 2011 are:

- The fourth annual National Get Outdoors Day (GO Day)
- Presentation of the 2011 Sheldon Coleman Great Outdoors Award – going to four Cabinet-rank officials who led the America's Great Outdoors Initiative
- Presentation of ARC's Beacon Awards for outstanding federal use of technology
- An ice cream social followed by a healthy walk on the National Mall
- ARC's Legends Awards presentations to seven great federal agency employees
- A special Recreation Exchange featuring White House Council on Environmental Quality Chair Nancy Sutley
- National awards by the Coalition for Recreational Trails
- ED OUT – our "classes in the park" program with Prince William County (VA) Schools
- Release of our new report "Economic ReCreation" highlighting the importance of recreation to the US economy

In addition to Great Outdoors Week, many other events and activities take place throughout Great Outdoors Month to promote the importance of outdoor recreation in America:

- On Saturday, June 4, National Trails Day® attracted hundreds of thousands to volunteer projects along trails on public lands – making these trails more fun for millions!
- Saturday, June 4 marked the start of National Fishing and Boating Week, with events and free fishing opportunities across the nation.
- Saturday, June 11 will be a fee-free day in national forests in honor of GO Day.
- National Marina Day will coincide with National Get Outdoors Day on June 11. At some 120 marinas across the country – and at a dozen GO Day sites – marinas will invite families to experience time on boats and enjoy life on the shores of our rivers, lakes and oceans.
- Saturday, June 21 will be a fee-free day in national parks and other federal recreation sites in honor of the start of summer.
- The National Association of RV Parks and Campgrounds (ARVC), representing more than 3,300 private campgrounds, will celebrate Great Outdoors Month by encouraging Americans to enjoy camping and other recreational activities with family and friends. An e-coupon is available [here](#).
- The National Wildlife Federation-led Great American Backyard Campout™ will encourage families to camp out in their backyards and at community sites nationwide on June 25!

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Celebrate National Get Outdoors Day on June 11!

Thousands of recreation partners are gearing up to host the fourth annual National Get Outdoors Day (GO Day) on Saturday, June 11, at over 100 sites across the nation. GO Day partners in rural communities and major metropolitan areas – including signature sites in Denver, Vancouver, Mesa (Arizona), San Bernardino (California), Apple Valley (Minnesota), Salt Lake City, Milwaukee, and Washington, D.C. – will introduce thousands of families to fun, healthy outdoor activities. Exciting planned events include rock wall climbing, mountain biking, disc golf, fishing derbies, boating, geocaching, introductions to cultural resources and sustainable-living villages, and much more! Participants will be able to build upon their positive introductory outdoor experiences with local EChO-events held at nearby outdoor recreation sites throughout the summer. We hope that non-traditional users of public lands will be inspired by this day of fun activities to make a commitment to spend more time in the great outdoors.

We are also pleased to announce our first-ever GO Day Troubadour! Joe Reilly has been making folk music to introduce children to the great outdoors for over a decade, and he has been featured on National Public Radio's environmental program ***Living on Earth***. His albums for children include "Children of the Earth" and "Let's Go Outside." The title song "Let's Go Outside" has been selected as the official GO Day song for 2011 and will be played across the country on June 11. You can listen to "Let's Go Outside" on the GO Day website, or visit Joe's website at www.joereilly.org.

Find an event near you at www.nationalgetoutdoorsday.org!

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AGO Follow-Up Unites Interests but Faces State and Federal Budget Barriers

Interior Secretary Ken Salazar assembled a remarkable collection of recreation and conservation leaders on May 10 to report on his outreach efforts to implement key provisions of the America's Great Outdoors Initiative report and challenged the leaders to form an active coalition to share this role. He told the group that he and other Interior leaders would meet with each of the nation's governors to outline vital action needs on urban parks and health, on large landscape-scale conservation efforts anchored by cooperation with private landowners and on protecting and enhancing access to the nation's rivers and other public waters. He told the group that conservation efforts of the nation have always been a bipartisan effort and lauded the efforts of key Republicans.

Organization of the conservation and recreation leaders is being led by Bill Meadows, President of the Wilderness Society, and John Nau, former Chairman of the federal Advisory Council on Historic Preservation and an important figure in Texas politics. The group includes dozens of key organizations, including ARC, and is meeting by phone to coordinate efforts – including communications with Congressional leaders about the need to provide federal funding for key programs even during this period of budgetary constraint.

The importance of a strong coalition is made apparent by obstacles facing conservation and recreation programs in federal and state budgets. The House-passed budget resolution for the fiscal year beginning October 1, 2011, outlines a cut of 7% in spending for conservation and environmental programs, and discussions underway about cuts needed to secure passage of legislation raising the allowed national debt could make funding in future years even more challenging. And most states face serious budget problems. California's situation has resulted in the announcement that 70 state parks will be closed this fall.

Success in this initiative is largely dependent upon proof that strategic investment in conservation has economic benefits. Data from all segments of the conservation, recreation and historic preservation communities is being collected and will undergo a review by McKinsey Company. ARC will be submitting information it is compiling and integrating for release during Great Outdoors Week. ARC has also sent copies of the governors' Great Outdoors Month proclamations for use by Secretary Salazar and the Interior team during their visits to the states.

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Forest Service Draft Planning Rule Comment Period Ends

The comment period on the draft planning rule for the Forest Service ended May 16. The draft rule was open for comment for 90 days. The Forest Service reported that it

received over 150,000 comments in that time from a wide range of individuals, groups and organizations as well as state, county, Tribal and federal governments.

More than 35 key recreation organizations submitted comments as the Coalition for Recreation in the National Forests (CRNF). The coalition called on the Forest Service to eliminate the new terms used in the draft planning rule that are undefined by the Congress or by previous regulation, clarify the proposed Forest Service management actions supplemental to the forest plans and outline a strategy for assessing the costs of various proposed actions and decisions. CRNF urged the Chief to fully consider these and other comments and to provide the community one more opportunity for review prior to publication of the final planning rule.

To read the comments submitted by CRNF in full, [click here](#). To view all comments available on the draft rule, [click here](#).

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KOA Sponsoring Great American Backyard Campout™ Event

Kampgrounds of America Inc., the world's largest system of family-friendly campgrounds, is now an official sponsor of the National Wildlife Federation's annual Great American Backyard Campout™ event.

The Great American Backyard Campout™, planned for Saturday, June 25, will bring thousands of people across the nation out into their backyards, neighborhoods, communities, parks and area campgrounds to take part in a one-night event that will provide an experience for all generations to connect with nature.

"The solution for many of society's current challenges, including obesity and stress, can be found outdoors," said Kampgrounds of America CEO Jim Rogers. "We're thrilled to be able to help National Wildlife Federation in their efforts with the Great American Backyard Campout™."

No prior camping experience is required to take part in the June 25 event. Campers are encouraged to go to www.backyardcampout.org to register their campout and receive creative ideas and simple cooking recipes to enhance their Great American Campout™ experience.

To read the rest of the news release, please [click here](#).

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For more information or to address questions/comments, please email: jmitchell@funoutdoors.com. To Unsubscribe, please send an email to jmitchell@funoutdoors.com with the Subject "Unsubscribe."

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