



America's
Great Outdoors:
A Promise to Future Generations
February 2011



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Letter to the President

Dear Mr. President,

On April 16, 2010, you introduced America's Great Outdoors, an initiative aimed at reigniting our historic commitment to conserving and enjoying the magnificent natural heritage that has shaped our nation and its citizens. We are pleased to present you with the America's Great Outdoors report to begin implementation of this 21st-century conservation agenda. The report was created in consultation with the American people. It reflects their ideas on how to reconnect people with America's lands, waters, and natural and cultural treasures, and it builds on the conservation successes in communities across the nation.

To develop this plan, you asked us to travel outside of Washington, D.C., and to listen and learn from the American people. We embarked on what has become one of the most robust conversations about conservation in our history, convening 51 public listening sessions in cities and communities across the country, including 21 aimed at youth. More than 10,000 citizens participated in person and we received more than 105,000 comments. Citizens from across the country, including farmers, ranchers, hunters, anglers, outdoor recreation enthusiasts, parents, teachers, and young people, as well as representatives of conservation organizations, state, local, and tribal governments, historic preservation groups, faith communities, and businesses, shared specific and creative ideas. We heard from all ethnic and age groups, political parties, and thousands of young people.

The message was clear: Americans care deeply about our outdoor heritage and want to enjoy and protect it. They want to join us in taking responsibility for ensuring that this invaluable legacy is passed along to their children and grandchildren. Americans also understand the interdependence of a healthy environment and a strong economy. Many participants extolled the positive impacts that conservation has on our economy and jobs, including recreation, tourism, economic redevelopment, and public health.

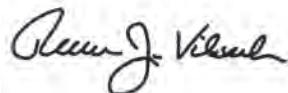
This America's Great Outdoors agenda builds on the stewardship legacy championed by President Theodore Roosevelt more than 100 years ago. Now, as then, the basis for our proposed actions is the value that Americans place on conserving the extraordinary and diverse lands and waters that sustain, restore, nourish, and support us. This initiative is about the government empowering and partnering with people and communities to protect and restore the places they cherish. In formulating this plan, we reviewed the comments and ideas from the public, analyzed existing federal programs, and reviewed successful non-federal approaches to produce a set of recommendations that will support conservation partnerships and reconnect Americans to our natural landscapes and our history.

We stand ready to continue the national conversation you initiated and to work together with the American people to achieve the goals of America's Great Outdoors.

Sincerely,



Ken Salazar
Secretary of the Interior



Thomas J. Vilsack
Secretary of Agriculture



Lisa P. Jackson
Administrator of the
Environmental Protection Agency



Nancy H. Sutley
Chair of the Council on
Environmental Quality



NATIONAL PARK SERVICE - HOWK PHOTO / APOSTLE ISLANDS NATIONAL LAKESHORE, WISCONSIN

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THE NATURE CONSERVANCY - © GODFREY PHOTO / PINEY GROVE PRESERVE, VIRGINIA

America's Great Outdoors: A Promise to Future Generations

From the snow-capped peaks of Washington's Cascade Mountains to the white sand beaches of Florida's Gulf Coast, and the vast expanses of forests, grasslands, rivers, lakes, farms, and rangeland that lie between, America boasts a stunning array of magnificent lands and waterways. Our appreciation for these special places is rooted in the natural environment as well as in the rich diversity of people, stories, and traditions that have become associated with them over the course of our history. Since our earliest beginnings, the lands, coasts, rivers, forests, and mountains and the resources they hold have helped to define who we are as a people and as a nation. They have also been a source of America's wealth, providing places to reflect, relax, recreate, and create lasting memories with friends and family.

However, Americans today have become increasingly disconnected from our great outdoors. We find ourselves cut off from the natural and cultural inheritance that has shaped our lives and history. Our natural resources remain central to our economic vitality, yet they are under intense pressure from development and fragmentation, unsustainable use, pollution, and impacts from a changing climate.

On April 16, 2010, President Obama launched the America's Great Outdoors (AGO) Initiative and charged the Secretaries of the Departments of the Interior and Agriculture, the Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency, and the Chair of the White House Council on Environmental Quality to develop a 21st-century conservation and recreation agenda that addresses these challenges.¹ AGO takes as its premise that lasting conservation solutions should rise from the American people—that the protection of our natural heritage is a non-partisan objective shared by all Americans. Through listening

¹ President Obama instructed the lead agencies to coordinate with the Departments of Defense, Commerce, Housing and Urban Development, Health and Human Services, Labor, Transportation, and Education; and the Office of Management and Budget to develop this report.

sessions and outreach, AGO launched a robust public conversation about the future of conservation in America.

The result is a call for a grassroots approach to protecting our lands and waters and connecting all Americans to their natural and cultural heritage. AGO seeks to empower all Americans—citizens, young people, and representatives of community groups; the private sector; nonprofit organizations; and local, state, and tribal governments—to share in the responsibility to conserve, restore, and provide better access to our lands and waters in order to leave a healthy, vibrant outdoor legacy for generations yet to come.

A Conservation Legacy

The AGO report builds on the legacy of Americans who have taken up the mantle of conservation to protect our unique natural heritage. Throughout our history, conservation actions have been grounded in the premise that our natural heritage belongs to the people and that access to it and its protection are basic American values. Communities have long been catalysts for and champions of action to protect the places they cherish, whether majestic national parks and forests, iconic working lands, or city green spaces.

America's leaders have acted to secure the future of our natural heritage out of a keen awareness that it inspires us as a people and sustains us as a nation. During the Civil War, President Abraham Lincoln protected the magnificent resources of California's Yosemite Valley by setting aside lands that would eventually become part of our third national park. At the turn of the 20th century, President Theodore Roosevelt furthered the concept of federal protection of public natural and cultural resources by protecting some 230 million acres as national forests, parks, wildlife refuges, and preserves and by establishing national monuments. President Franklin Delano Roosevelt championed conservation and development of our natural resources in the 1930s and 1940s to put Americans back to work during the Great Depression.

Conservation in the 21st Century

America's Great Outdoors builds on this nation's long history of actions taken to conserve our natural heritage. What has resulted is a nationwide system of public lands—both large and small and including parks, wildlife refuges, forests, wilderness areas, scenic seashores, hiking trails, protected waters, and recreation areas. America's homesteads, farms, and ranches have contributed to our heritage as well by preserving working landscapes, supplying food and fiber, protecting woods and watersheds, keeping air and water clean, and providing wildlife habitat. Historic and cultural sites have helped to educate us and to remind us of our roots. Together, our public, private, and tribal lands and waters embody one of our nation's founding principles: the right of all Americans to enjoy and benefit from America's natural treasures and the obligation to pass that heritage along to future generations.

Fulfilling that promise—and the shared obligation—to preserve and protect our natural and cultural heritage for present and future generations is one of the daunting challenges for 21st-century America. Busy lives and limited access to clean, safe, open spaces discourage many Americans from taking part in outdoor activities. The nearly 80 percent of Americans who live in or near cities find it particularly difficult to connect with the outdoors.² The outdoors has increasingly lost its relevance in the lives of our children, who now spend only half as much time outside as their parents did, but who spend an average of seven hours a day using electronic devices. Studies show that access to the outdoors can help reverse the obesity epidemic that has tripled among our children in the last generation. They show that time spent in nature can reduce stress and anxiety, promote learning and personal growth, and foster mental and physical health.

We have also grown from a nation of 92 million people 100 years ago to 308 million today, and the Census Bureau projects that our population will grow to nearly 400 million in the next 40 years. Land and natural resource development have fragmented our lands, disrupted natural systems, and imperiled productive farmland and woodlands. One out of three acres that has been developed in the United States was developed from 1982 to 2007.³ Annually, we now lose about 1.6 million acres of our working farms, ranches, and forests to development and fragmentation.⁴ Many of our rivers, lakes, coasts, and streams are polluted. Fish advisories and beach closures occur frequently. Our natural legacy faces new challenges, including new types of pollution and a changing climate, whose full consequences are yet to unfold.

A National Conversation about Conservation and Stewardship

Over the summer of 2010, AGO launched extensive public conversations about conservation. Senior administration officials held 51 public listening sessions all across the nation, 21 of them specifically with youth. More than 10,000 Americans participated in the live sessions and more than 105,000 comments were provided. Americans from across the country shared specific and creative ideas about conservation, recreation, and connecting people to the outdoors. They were farmers, ranchers, teachers, parents, young people, and representatives of land trusts, recreation and conservation organizations, historic preservation groups, faith communities, the private sector, as well as state, local, and tribal governments. All ethnic groups, political parties, and age groups joined the public listening sessions or submitted their ideas in letters, online, or through social media sites.

Through the AGO listening sessions and public input process, we learned that there is a powerful consensus across America that outdoor spaces—public and private, large and small, urban and rural—remain

² United Nations World Urbanization Prospects: The 2007 Revision.

³ USDA Summary Report: 2007 National Resources Inventory.

⁴ Ibid.

essential to our quality of life, our economy, and our national identity. Americans communicated clearly that they care deeply about our outdoor heritage, want to enjoy and protect it, and are willing to take collective responsibility to protect it for their children and grandchildren. In fact, they are already doing so. They are restoring rivers and streams, building and improving hiking trails and bike paths, ensuring the long-term conservation of their private lands, sponsoring beach and roadside cleanups, planting trees and gardens, and restoring migratory bird habitat and populations.

Tens of thousands of young people are participating in youth conservation organizations taking hold from coast to coast. State governments, tribes, and local communities are working together to establish parks, trails, and environmental education centers. Farmers and ranchers, conservation organizations, hunters and anglers, private businesses, public agencies, and others are forming innovative partnerships to conserve millions of acres that benefit communities, wildlife, recreation, and local economies. But we need to do more.

Americans today are calling for a 21st-century approach to conservation. That approach must help us to protect the places and the resources that we value. It must help us achieve greater health and well-being as individuals and as a nation. It must also recognize the economic challenges we face as a government and a nation. We must be wise in how we spend taxpayer dollars, and also recognize the significant economic benefits produced by protecting and restoring our natural and cultural heritage and by promoting outdoor recreation and land stewardship. Today, Americans recognize that pitting a healthy environment against a healthy economy is a false choice—we must and can have both. By investing in our natural wealth and heritage, we can create jobs associated with recreation and land stewardship, while passing on a vital natural legacy to our children and grandchildren.

Most profoundly, Americans have called for a new vision of conservation for the 21st century—one that builds on the traditions of the last century but also recognizes the challenges and changing circumstances of the new century.

This report to the President contains three chapters: Connecting Americans to the Great Outdoors; Conserving and Restoring America's Great Outdoors; and Working Together for America's Great Outdoors. It also includes a special section, *Youth and America's Great Outdoors: What We Heard from America's Young People*. Each chapter includes goals, recommendations, and actions that aim to deliver on this vision in real and tangible ways. Woven throughout is the basic tenet that the federal government must be a better partner and supporter of local conservation efforts. It must empower communities to realize their conservation goals through technical assistance, access to resources, and the science for sound decision-making. It must maximize conservation benefits from taxpayer dollars; catalyze private sector investment; and reconnect with and engage Americans about the importance of our outdoor resources.

America's Great Outdoors Vision Statement

Americans envision a future in which:

All children, regardless of where they live, have access to clean, safe outdoor places within a short walk of their homes or schools, where they can play, dream, discover, and recreate.

Americans participate in the shared responsibility to protect and care for our unique natural and cultural heritage for the use and enjoyment of future generations.

Rural lands—our working farms, ranches, and forests—are conserved and restored through incentives and local partnerships.

Our national parks, national wildlife refuges, national forests, and other public lands and waters are managed with a renewed commitment to sound stewardship and resilience.

Our natural areas and waterways, whether publicly or privately owned, are reconnected, healthy, and resilient and support both human needs and the wildlife that depend on them.

Communities work together to restore and protect healthy rivers and lakes to provide recreational opportunities and to contribute significantly to a vibrant economy.

Continuing the Conversation, Fulfilling the Promise

The national conversation President Obama began in April will reinvigorate America's enjoyment, conservation, and stewardship of our outdoors. It will also join the ingenuity, passion, and grounding of the American people with the leadership responsibilities and resources of the federal government to achieve the shared vision. Working together, we will ensure that our children and their children have the opportunity to enjoy and benefit from America's irreplaceable natural legacy.

In the coming months and years, as we work together to implement the recommendations in this report, the conversation with Americans will continue and broaden. We will honor those who have come before us, and we will leave a lasting legacy for those who will come after us.

This report does not change or substitute for any law, regulation, or any other legally binding requirement and is not legally enforceable.



NATIONAL PARK SERVICE PHOTO / CAPE COD NATIONAL SEASHORE, MASSACHUSETTS

Connecting Americans to the Great Outdoors

America's natural heritage has defined the nation and shaped American culture. Since our earliest beginnings, our relationship with the outdoors has influenced our national character. Both our strong sense of community and our rugged individualism are products of our interactions with nature. Today, even a walk in the woods, a family picnic in a city park, a jog along an urban waterfront, or a fishing trip with a grandchild can restore our connection to the outdoors and create lasting memories that contribute to who we are as a people. Each camping trip to a park or forest or visit to a historic battlefield can strengthen our sense of individual pride and shared responsibility for our lands and waters and the history they contain.

Listening session participants across the nation spoke of their desire for a deep connection with the outdoors. They described spiritual renewal, better mental and physical health, quality time spent with families and friends, and opportunities for employment and for public service as some of the tangible and intangible benefits of being outdoors. People shared inspirational stories of their grassroots efforts to improve their outdoor surroundings. One community converted an illegal dump into a community garden. Revitalizing their urban area provided community members with job training, outdoor learning experiences, green space, and locally grown food.

Participants also discussed youth stewardship programs for the next generation. They talked about programs that engage Americans with the outdoors through biking, hiking, hunting, canoeing, off-roading, skiing, and other recreational activities. They described initiatives that encourage parents to get their children outside. One listening session was devoted to the cutting-edge topic of the connections between outdoor experiences and improved mental and physical health. Other sessions focused on the special relationship that tribal communities have with nature, culture, and the outdoors.

At all of the listening sessions, people spoke about the realized and potential economic benefits provided by the outdoors, including recreation and tourism, rural and urban economic redevelopment, and lower health-care costs. Recreation and tourism and related businesses and enterprises have become powerful elements of rural and urban economic development. In 2006, recreationists spent \$122.3 billion on their activities, including equipment, licenses, user fees, and trip-related expenses. This is one percent of Gross Domestic Product (GDP).⁵ Spending by recreation visitors in areas around national forests is estimated to be nearly \$13 billion annually, sustaining more than 224,000 full and part-time jobs.⁶ Recreation-related visits to Department of the Interior (DOI) lands were estimated to support over 316,000 jobs and create nearly \$25 billion in economic value to surrounding communities.⁷ Despite the current economic downturn, the number of recreation visits to national parks increased from 205 million in 1979 to 286 million in 2009.⁸ Every year approximately seven million anglers, two million hunters, and many millions of birders visit national wildlife refuges.⁹ Visitors spend some \$18 billion annually on lakes and other facilities managed by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), leading to 350,000 jobs added to the nation's economy.¹⁰ Tourism and recreation are also highly significant outdoor activities in the coastal zone. Public lands along U.S. coastlines offer access to seashores, bays, and estuaries for fishing and birding, boating and surfing, and other coastal activities within aesthetic landscapes. Over 180 million people visit beaches and other coastal habitats every year, and coastal recreation and tourism generate \$8 billion to \$12 billion annually.¹¹

In his remarks at the April 2010 White House Conference that launched the America's Great Outdoors Initiative, President Obama cautioned that "[w]e are losing our connection to the parks, wild places, and open spaces we grew up with and cherish. Children, especially, are spending less time outside running and playing, fishing and hunting, and connecting to the outdoors just down the street or outside of town." For many Americans, particularly young people, the outdoors and open spaces are neither accessible nor inviting today. Many of our citizens worry about their safety while outdoors and while making their way to outdoor locations. Simply getting there is another obstacle for many of our citizens, especially our youth and our disadvantaged communities. Many cannot afford transportation to reach outdoor destinations and may not have parks or green spaces close to home. Environmental problems can further complicate the picture. Some communities cannot enjoy outdoor activities because of contamination on nearby land or unhealthy air

⁵ 2006 National Survey of Fishing, Hunting, and Wildlife-Associated Recreation.

⁶ USDA National Visitor Use Monitoring Results: 2005 - 2009.

⁷ Economic Impact of the Department of the Interior's Programs and Activities.

⁸ National Park Service visitation statistics. <http://www.nature.nps.gov/stats/park.cfm>.

⁹ Banking on Nature 2006: The Economic Benefits to Local Communities of National Wildlife Refuge Visitation

¹⁰ US Army Corps of Engineers fact sheet. <http://corpsresults.us/recreation/receconomic.htm>.

¹¹ NOAA Fact Sheet. <http://www.habitat.noaa.gov/about/habitat/keyfacts.html>.

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Communities work together to restore and protect healthy rivers and lakes to provide recreational opportunities and to contribute significantly to a vibrant economy.

quality. Swimmers and sunbathers encounter thousands of beach closures and health advisories each year.¹² In 2008, fish advisories were issued for 43 percent of the nation's total lake acreage and 39 percent of the nation's total river miles.¹³

This disconnection from nature and the outdoors is a serious threat facing America's great outdoors—and it is costing us. Americans' increasing disconnection from the outdoors is one factor in the skyrocketing obesity rates across the nation, which has tripled among our children over the past 30 years.¹⁴ Children today spend less than half as much time outside as their parents did, but instead are “plugged in” to electronic devices for more than seven hours a day.¹⁵ Studies show that access to the outdoors can help turn the tide on the obesity health epidemic.¹⁶ They show that play and relaxation in nature can reduce stress and anxiety, promote learning and personal growth, and provide overall mental and physical restoration. This disconnect also weakens the commitment to stewardship of our shared natural legacy.

When consulted during the AGO listening sessions, Americans across the nation made it clear that they want to reconnect—or connect for the first time—with the great outdoors. They expressed the desire to achieve this through jobs and service and through recreation and education, and they want their federal government to help.

¹² EPA Beaches Introduction. <http://water.epa.gov/type/oceb/beaches/introduction.cfm>.

¹³ National Listing of Fish Advisories, Technical Fact Sheet: 2008 Biennial National Listing.

¹⁴ Ogden, C.L., K.M. Flegal, M.D. Carroll, C.L. Johnson. *Prevalence and trends in overweight among U.S. children and adolescents, 1999–2000*.

¹⁵ Juster, Thomas F., Hiromi Ono and Frank P. Stafford. *Changing Times of American Youth: 1981–2003*.

¹⁶ Kuo, Frances. 2010. Parks and Other Green Environments: Essential Components of a Healthy Human Habitat. [http://www.nrpa.org/uploadedFiles/Explore_Parks_and_Recreation/Research/Ming%20\(Kuo\)%20Reserach%20Paper-Final-150dpi.pdf](http://www.nrpa.org/uploadedFiles/Explore_Parks_and_Recreation/Research/Ming%20(Kuo)%20Reserach%20Paper-Final-150dpi.pdf).



U.S. FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE PHOTO / BIG BRANCH MARSH NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE, LOUISIANA

“Engage parents in the outdoors so they can pass it on to their kids and create future stewards. Volunteer based groups—citizens science, rehabilitation trail work to engage communities to experience the value of the lands first hand.” (Listening Session Participant, Missoula, MT)

1. Provide Quality Jobs, Career Pathways, and Service Opportunities

The importance of job- and service-based learning opportunities related to protecting and restoring the outdoors was a constant theme raised in the listening sessions, especially in the 21 sessions devoted to youth. Americans are committed volunteers, and service is a powerful way to build skills and make a difference. According to the Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS), in 2009, more than 63 million Americans contributed 8.1 billion hours of service, valued at nearly \$169 billion.¹⁷

During the youth listening sessions especially, people expressed a desire to work on America’s public lands and waters. However, they expressed frustration with the application and hiring processes. In some cases, they admitted to giving up and seeking employment elsewhere. Participants recommended that federal agencies streamline their hiring systems and coordinate better with each other and with state, local, and tribal partners and the private sector.

Jobs related to natural and cultural resources help build awareness of and appreciation for the outdoors. In these economically challenging times, increasing opportunities for training and employment in America’s Great Outdoors can put people back to work and produce lasting benefits. These opportunities can strengthen local and regional economies, improve individual health and welfare, and build a lasting stewardship ethic among the American people.

¹⁷ Corporation for National and Community Service. *Volunteering in America 2010: National, State, and City Information*. http://www.nationalservice.gov/pdf/10_0614_via_final_issue_brief.pdf.

GOAL A **Develop quality conservation jobs and service opportunities that protect and restore America’s natural and cultural resources.**

Listening session participants frequently mentioned that jobs and service opportunities provide meaningful ways both to maintain and restore our natural resources and to make conservation relevant, especially to young people. Participants noted that conservation, restoration, and recreation offer quality job opportunities and also spur economic growth for local communities, regions, and the nation as a whole. They also noted that building “green infrastructure” and restoring natural systems create win-wins for jobs, the economy, and for conservation. Increasing opportunities for jobs and training in the great outdoors can put Americans back to work now with benefits that last well into the future. Through increased opportunities for conservation-related jobs and service, Americans become citizen stewards who share the responsibility of ensuring that our natural heritage is passed on to future generations.

Recommendation 1.1 **Catalyze the establishment of a 21st-Century Conservation Service Corps (21CSC) to engage young Americans in public lands and water restoration.**

Many public comments recommended building on existing conservation service corps programs and promoted the idea for a 21st-Century Conservation Service Corps (21CSC) to provide job training and to maintain and preserve public lands. The 21CSC would provide the umbrella structure for the many existing federal, state, tribal, local, nonprofit, and private sector conservation corps programs and proposals. Its purpose would be to build on and leverage the experience and expertise of these programs and to encourage a new generation of outdoor enthusiasts and natural and cultural resource professionals. The 21CSC program will focus on helping young people, including low-income and disadvantaged youth, to earn valuable training and work experience and to accomplish needed conservation work on public lands in the great outdoors.

Action Item 1.1a: Create an interagency working group within the AGO Council¹⁸ to develop the 21CSC framework and harmonize agency processes. The interagency working group will also seek ways to expand the opportunities for the conservation corps to work on projects related to the conservation, restoration, construction, or rehabilitation of natural, cultural, historic, archeological, recreational, or scenic resources on public lands. [Department of Agriculture (USDA), Department of Commerce (DOC), Department of Defense (DOD), Department of the Interior (DOI), Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), Department of Labor (DOL), Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS),

¹⁸ The AGO Council is explained in Recommendation 10.1.

Advisory Council on Historic Preservation (ACHP), and United States Office of Personnel Management (OPM)]

Action Item 1.1b: Form an advisory committee to advise the 21CSC interagency working group and facilitate alignment with and investment in the program. The advisory committee will be composed of diverse representatives from the private sector as well as state, local, and tribal government. The committee would comply with the Federal Advisory Committee Act. It will provide its report within one year of creation. (DOI as host, but in partnership with USDA, DOC, DOD, USACE, EPA, DOL, CNCS, ACHP, and OPM)

Recommendation 1.2 Work with OPM to improve career pathways and to review barriers to jobs in natural resource conservation and historic and cultural preservation.

Listening session comments raised concern over the importance and the difficulty of hiring qualified candidates because of the complexity of the federal hiring processes. This is of particular focus as an aging federal workforce readies for retirement.

Action Item 1.2a: Review hiring authorities for participants of existing public lands corps, youth conservation corps, and similar programs, and develop interagency guidance to clarify and expand hiring authority, including number of hours and type of work required for applicants to qualify for a different status. Participants must meet job prerequisites and complete their term of service. (DOI and OPM)

Action Item 1.2b: Create an easy-to-use job locator web portal that connects qualified applicants to natural and cultural resource job opportunities across the federal government. (DOI and OPM)

Recommendation 1.3 Improve federal capacity for recruiting, training, and managing volunteers and volunteer programs to create a new generation of citizen stewards and mentors.

President Obama has called on all Americans to participate in the nation's recovery and renewal through community service. Annually, tens of thousands of volunteers help federal, tribal, and state land management agencies and local governments perform work on the ground. Service activities on public lands play an important role as these opportunities provide training for inexperienced resource managers, build a stewardship ethic in the volunteers, and help restore and enhance our public lands and waters. In 2009, the CNCS engaged more than five million Americans in service opportunities through its programs, including the Senior Corps, AmeriCorps, and Learn and Serve America programs, and leads President Obama's national call-to-service initiative, United We Serve.¹⁹

¹⁹ Corporation for National & Community Service Fact Sheet. http://www.nationalservice.gov/pdf/factsheet_cnsc.pdf.

“Through partnerships between existing Corps programs and federal agencies tasked with implementation of the America’s Great Outdoors, the 21st CCC would: Engage, educate and employ more young people in service to the environment; Expand and replicate innovative Corps programs and projects; Develop career pathways from Conservation Corps to federal employment in natural resource management; Facilitate connections between corps programs and other youth partner programs to expose more young people to the outdoors.” (Listening Session Participant, Missoula, MT)

Action Item 1.3a: Improve access to federal resources through an easy-to-use web portal that matches volunteers with opportunities, allows volunteers to create their own projects, and offers resources for training and technical assistance. Hundreds of thousands of volunteer opportunities are searchable on CNCS’ www.serve.gov, an online resource for finding, creating, and listing volunteer projects. (DOI)

Action Item 1.3b: Expand capacity to build on and promote partnerships and programs on public lands that connect people to the outdoors through meaningful volunteer service opportunities relating to restoration and education. (DOI, USDA, DOD-USACE, DOL, and CNCS)

“I think there is a desire to go outdoors, but there is a lack of priority for it when people are so busy... We are all so busy that we don’t have the time to get out anymore.” (Listening Session Participant, Minneapolis, MN)

2. Enhance Recreational Access and Opportunities

As highlighted in the AGO vision, recreation provides one of the easiest and most natural ways to connect with the outdoors. America’s lands and waters offer a multitude of outdoor recreation activities that enhance health and wellness, encourage appreciation for natural and cultural resources, and present enjoyable opportunities to connect with family and friends.

Federal agencies provide exceptional recreational opportunities and facilities on more than 635 million acres of land that receive over a billion visits each year.²⁰ The federal lands include a diversity of natural and cultural landscapes and features such as the 16 million acres of Alaska’s Yukon Delta National Wildlife Refuge; expansive fishing opportunities at Virginia’s John H. Kerr Dam and Reservoir (Buggs Island Lake); the majestic peaks of Utah’s Wasatch-Cache National Forest; and the cultural and historic heritage of Georgia’s Kennesaw Mountain National Battlefield Park. Our federal lands provide innumerable trails, roads, waters, and facilities that support and promote a broad range of recreation and tourism opportunities.

Federal agencies also promote recreation along multi-jurisdictional wild and scenic rivers and national trails and fund recreation projects through such programs. In addition, state, county, and municipal entities manage thousands of parks, natural areas, and historic sites that are enjoyed on a daily basis by tens of millions of people nationwide. In addition, many private landowners provide access to their lands for recreation. The contributions of these lands to the physical, mental, and spiritual health of Americans; the quality of life of communities; and the economic benefits at the local, regional, and national levels are significant.

²⁰ USDA report on Major Uses of Land in The United States, 2002.



NATIONAL PARK SERVICE - DOMBROWSKI PHOTO / BUFFALO NATIONAL RIVER, ARKANSAS

“City transportation and general transportation is lacking. We need better public transportation to get around to different areas in the city, and we need shuttles that take people to outdoor spaces further away.” (Listening Session Participant, Albuquerque, NM)

Many public comments focused on limitations to recreation on local, state, tribal, and federal lands. Many people commented on the lack of physical access related to public transportation, roads, trailheads, and trails. Others noted that the lack of information or access to information about recreational opportunities on public lands and waters is a problem. This information gap ranges from poor signage and notifications of trail or park closures to outdated, complex government websites that are hard to navigate and understand. The lack of coordinated information and regulations adds other barriers to recreation access and enjoyment.

Increasing recreational access must be balanced with the preservation and stewardship responsibilities of the federal land management agencies. Each federal land management agency has specific preservation and stewardship responsibilities based on their mission and additional designations such as Wilderness or Wild and Scenic Rivers. Increased recreational access is an important goal of the AGO and a priority for the American people, but it must be developed in ways that are consistent with and appropriate for the specific authorities of each agency.

GOAL A Increase and improve recreational access and opportunities.

Federal agencies support a broad range of outdoor recreation opportunities on federal lands and waters. These range from the USACE *Handshake Partnership Program* that provides incentives for partnerships to increase recreation on USACE lands to U.S. Forest Service (USFS) *Kids in the Woods program*; National Park Service (NPS) *Junior Ranger*; Bureau of Reclamation *CAST for Kids*; Bureau of Land Management (BLM) *Take-it-Outside*; and First Lady Michelle Obama’s *Let’s Move!* initiative. All of these programs encourage children to be more active outdoors. Authorities and initiatives to support recreation across the federal government include the Department of Transportation (DOT) *Recreational Trails and National Scenic Byways Authority*, the Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plans supported through the Land and Water Conservation Fund and managed by the DOI, and EPA *Urban Waters Initiative* that is helping communities access, improve, and benefit from their urban waters and adjacent lands.

Listening session participants observed that information about “what recreational activities are permitted where” is often inaccessible or unclear. They said that permitting for recreational access is not consistent, and that if federal programs and resources were aligned and better targeted, the recreation benefits would be vastly improved. Furthermore, recreational users felt that recreation should be a higher priority for land and water management agencies. Many also observed that the First Lady’s *Let’s Move!* initiative offers powerful partnership and awareness-raising opportunities about the positive relationship between outdoor recreation and public health.

Recommendation 2.1 Support outdoor recreation access and opportunities on public lands by establishing a Federal Interagency Council on Outdoor Recreation (FICOR).

Despite the many opportunities for quality recreation, many participants in the AGO process observed that significant obstacles remain to outdoor recreation on public lands and waters. Participants called for better integration and coordination among the federal agencies whose missions include providing outdoor recreation and/or natural resources and environmental protection.

Action Item 2.1a: Improve coordination, effectiveness, and efficiency among federal agencies through the FICOR.

The FICOR should also work closely with existing FACA bodies that support recreational activities. These include the Wildlife and Hunting Heritage Conservation Council, Sport Fishing and Boating Partnership Council, the First Lady's *Let's Move!* initiative, and the President's Council on Fitness, Sports and Nutrition. (USDA, DOI, DOC, and DOD-USACE)

Key tasks to accomplish in FICOR include:

- Coordinate recreation management, access, and policies across multiple agencies to improve public enjoyment and recreational use of federal lands and waters.
- Provide the public with reliable and up-to-date web-based information that is easily accessible with modern communication devices. Evolve and promote the federal interagency www.recreation.gov website to become a one-stop portal for information and resources about federal outdoor recreation opportunities, locations, access, routes, features, transportation options, and permit and reservation requirements.
- Streamline and align policies and procedures among federal, state, local, tribal, and other recreation providers.
- Improve the engagement of young people and their families in outdoor recreation through healthy, active lifestyles.
- Target underserved and disadvantaged communities for both access to and engagement in the benefits of and opportunities for outdoor recreation.
- Identify ways to improve access to our parks, refuges, and public lands for persons with disabilities.
- Identify partners outside the federal government who can promote outdoor recreation and provide additional resources and access.

Recommendation 2.2 Support community-based efforts to increase access to outdoor recreation.

Across the nation, people stressed the importance of creating recreation opportunities. This included providing spaces for recreation, establishing and maintaining recreational facilities such as trails and sidewalks, and eliminating physical barriers such as fences or roads between communities and places to recreate. People also recommended technical assistance and additional federal support for regional-scale recreation planning and for creating physical recreation connectors like trails. Many (particularly young people) observed that a primary limitation for using the great outdoors is safety.

Action Item 2.2a: Expand technical assistance and align programs that support local, state, and tribal efforts to enhance public recreation and conservation, including, but not limited to, the *NPS Rivers, Trails, and Conservation Assistance Program* (RTCA) and the National Trails System; DOT enhancement and trails and scenic byways programs; state programs such as California's Green Sticker Program; CNCS community-based efforts to increase access to outdoor recreation; and USDA *Voluntary Public Access Program (Open Fields)*. (DOI, USDA, DOT, and CNCS)

Action Item 2.2b: Partner with local and adjacent tribal school districts to support school kids on field trips to federal urban parks and other units. (DOI, USDA, DOD, USACE, and DOT)

Action Item 2.2c: Support community-based programs that improve the safety of open spaces and access routes, similar to DOT *Safe Routes to Schools* and Department of Justice (DOJ) Byrne Criminal Justice Innovation. (DOI, DOT, USACE, and DOJ)

See also: Recommendation 5.1 (increase the number of community parks and green spaces); Section 6, Recommendation 7.5 (incentives to encourage hunting and fishing on private lands); Section 9, Recommendation 9.1 (establishment of national recreational trail blueway).



NATIONAL PARK SERVICE / GROUNDWORK ANACOSTIA RIVER PROJECT - CHESTNUT PHOTO / WASHINGTON, D.C.

3. Raise Awareness of the Value and Benefits of America's Great Outdoors

"We need a philosophical change of what the great outdoors is. We don't need to go out west or to some faraway place. It can be a little stream, out your door, even if it's in the city. It exists where we exist." (Listening Session Participant, Hyde Park, NY)

The outdoor experience has lost its currency for many Americans. Increasingly busy schedules, shifting cultural norms, financial barriers, and the lure of new technology often keep many people from venturing outdoors for recreation, play, work, or service. During the listening sessions, participants spoke about the need to make the outdoors desirable and relevant to America's young people. Many people articulated a need to redefine the "great outdoors" to include iconic national parks and forests, wildlife refuges, and cultural and historic sites, as well as neighborhood and city parks, community gardens, and school yards. One of the most frequent recommendations was to launch a national public awareness initiative. It would use 21st-century communications technology and techniques to show Americans that going outdoors is fun, safe, easy, and healthy.

Many listening session participants observed that their experiences in nature and at historic places occurred early in their lives through formal and informal education. These experiences inspired a lasting connection, and for some, lifelong careers and commitment to service in the outdoors. Cultivating a stewardship ethic through education will produce the next generation of scientists, conservationists, naturalists, farmers, ranchers, forest landowners, anglers, rangers, entrepreneurs, and community leaders who value nature and outdoor experiences. Education is also an important tool to raise awareness of the many benefits of our great outdoor resources. These benefits include food and fiber; physical, mental, and spiritual health; economic values of community enhancement, outdoor jobs, industry, and tourism; and the essential services that healthy and resilient natural systems provide as they clean our air, purify our water, prevent floods, provide habitat for wildlife, and absorb pollution.

Unfortunately, many schools have had to cut back on their environmental and outdoor education programs due to tight budgets. Many nonprofit, faith-based, and private sector programs are filling the need through after-school and weekend programs, but these still leave out many children. Supported by the AGO vision, there remains a need to promote environmental literacy and awareness through a variety of strategies and partnerships.

GOAL A Cultivate stewardship and appreciation of America’s natural, cultural, and historic resources through innovative awareness-raising partnership initiatives and through education.

There is a growing deficit of public awareness about the value that our natural heritage and resources provide to the nation and about our shared stewardship responsibility to protect them. Particularly in the youth listening sessions, participants argued that they are removed from nature and the great outdoors, both physically (because so many now live in cities), and emotionally, socially, and culturally. These young people called for an innovative campaign to make the outdoors relevant and exciting to them. Many comments noted that particularly in fiscally challenging times like today, programs that promote environmental education are pushed aside. Therefore, our children are losing a primary point of early exposure to nature and natural systems that can spark their imaginations and drive them to become a scientist, innovator, conservationist, poet, or community leader. Nongovernmental organizations, religious institutions, and others are stepping in to provide varied environmental education opportunities, but, participants said, as wonderful and effective as some of these programs are, they cannot reach all the children who would benefit from them, as school programs would.

Recommendation 3.1 Launch a public awareness initiative to show that experiencing America’s great outdoors is fun, easy, and healthy.

Listening session participants suggested that increasing access to, and expanding opportunities for healthy outdoor recreation is essential. The USDA and DOI are partnering with the First Lady’s *Let’s Move!* initiative through *Let’s Move Outside!*, which is focused on reducing childhood obesity through outdoor recreation. Together, AGO and *Let’s Move Outside!* initiatives would partner with public, nonprofit, and private groups to mount an innovative communications initiative aimed at young people and their parents. The joint initiative will work to expand opportunities for outdoor activity; educate the public about the health, community, and economic benefits of outdoor activity; and provide information on where and how to get moving outside.

Action Item 3.1a: Increase access to and expand opportunities for healthy outdoor recreation by integrating and advancing the shared goals of AGO and *Let’s Move Outside!* initiatives through a coordinated strategic plan. (AGO Council and *Let’s Move Outside!*)

“Speaking as parent of two sons who played team sports, but were not interested in the outdoors. One went to a college that had a state-funded outdoor program that got him on a backpacking trip. It changed his life, and he majored in environmental science.” (Listening Session Participant Concord, NH)

The joint initiative will use well-known spokespeople, leverage private sector investment, and use social and other innovative technology to increase enthusiasm and information about the great outdoors. By leveraging existing media and technology, and by developing new, user-friendly tools, this joint initiative will help make the outdoors exciting and accessible for children and families of all backgrounds.

Action Item 3.1b: Build partnerships that demonstrate and promote the health benefits of parks and outdoor spaces. Also build support for restoring, protecting, and creating and accessing these places. (AGO Council and *Let’s Move Outside!*)

Action Item 3.1c: Coordinate a national strategy with the public health and medical communities that promotes the benefits of parks, outdoor spaces, and natural places to improve the health and well-being of Americans. (AGO Council)

Recommendation 3.2 Work with the Department of Education and other federal agencies to align and support programs that advance awareness and understanding of the benefits of nature.

One of the most common concerns raised at listening sessions was the need to integrate learning about nature and the environment into school curriculums. The federal government has an important but limited role to play in supporting the nation’s states, districts, and schools to ensure that all children gain a basic level of environmental literacy and understand how environmental issues cut across different subject areas. The Department of Education’s *21st Century Community Learning Centers Program*, for example, provides support for activities that increase learning time, including after school, before school, and summer school programs. The administration’s *Blueprint to Reauthorize the Elementary and Secondary Education Act* proposes to reform and strengthen this program by incorporating approaches that better integrate community involvement and comprehensively redesign and expand the school day. In addition to giving more time for academic work (which could include topics like biology), programs would also provide enrichment activities, which could include opportunities for experiential learning outdoors. Furthermore, the Effective Teaching and Learning for a Well-Rounded Education program would provide competitive grants to states, high-need districts, and private sector partners to strengthen teaching and learning across academic content areas. Other opportunities for federal agencies to become more coordinated and strategically invested through existing environmental and outdoor education programs include distance learning web activities, professional teacher development workshops, and formal education programs.

Action Item 3.2a: Report to the AGO Council on specific ways to integrate and support the outdoors, nature, cultural sites, and the environment into place-based, experiential, expanded-time programs; after-school and summer school programs; and service learning programs. (DOI and the Department of Education)

Action Item 3.2b: In partnership with local school districts, the private sector, and non-governmental organizations, expand connections to public schools and youth organizations through existing web-based programs, service learning, teacher training, field trips, and residential and other programs. These could include, but are not limited to, the NPS *Teacher-Ranger-Teacher*, *Electronic Classroom*, and *Citizen Science* programs; USFS *Pollinator Live* program; National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) *Bay-Watershed Education and Training Program (B-WET)* program; and USDA *Know Your Farmer Know Your Food* program. Special emphasis will be placed on engaging underserved communities. (DOI, USDA, DOC)

Action Item 3.2c: Work with the Bureau of Indian Education (BIE) to develop curricula that incorporate traditional tribal practices, activities, and environmental literacy for both the classroom and outdoor activities. (DOI)

Recommendation 3.3 Promote and support replicable programs that teach about and connect children and families with their natural and cultural heritage.

“Hunting and fishing are ways of life. They are our passions. We share it with family and friends and it truly makes us whole and makes us who we are. We MUST protect our land and waters. We MUST ensure that they will be around for generations to come. President Obama, this is not a choice, this is an obligation.” (Listening Session Participant, Missoula, MT)

An appreciation and an understanding of America’s great outdoors cannot be gained without an understanding of the nation’s natural and cultural history. Education about America’s great outdoors should include both formal education and informal opportunities outside the education system—outdoor learning, nature walks, orienteering, recreation, hunting, fishing, and many other activities. Many programs promote stewardship and appreciation of our natural and cultural heritage beyond the school day. They are led by diverse organizations, including faith-based and scouts organizations, hunting and fishing groups, outdoor recreation and conservation organizations, and groups working with future farmers. They are as diverse as America, yet they share the common goal of instilling a stewardship ethic in their communities. These remarkable programs are helping to launch the next generation of scientists, farmers, ranchers, conservationists, entrepreneurs, artists, teachers, and community leaders who care about the outdoors. The federal government should support, celebrate, and reward these initiatives.

Action Item 3.3a: Support and expand existing federal programs that emphasize place-based, experiential learning, including: The NPS *Parks as Classrooms* and *Junior Ranger* programs; CNCS *Learn and Serve America’s* expanding network of environmental and cultural resources service grantees; NOAA *B-WET*; USFS *Children’s Forests*, *NatureWatch*, and *More Kids in the Woods*; and BLM *Take it Outside* and *Hands on the Land*. (DOI, USDA, DOC).

4. Engage Young People in Conservation and the Great Outdoors

Youth participation in AGO had a tremendous impact on the themes of this report and influenced its recommendations. At 21 youth-specific listening sessions across the nation, government officials met with hundreds of young people, each of whom had a personal perspective on—and experiences with—the outdoors. From a uniformed conservation corps in Missoula, to a room of high school kids in Orlando, to Native American youth in two BIE schools, these voices were diverse, passionate, and thoughtful. As we look to protect America’s great outdoors for current and future generations, it is imperative that we continue to engage, empower, and learn from our young people. They are our future farmers, ranchers, hunters, anglers, conservationists, scientists, teachers, business leaders, and elected officials who will inherit and carry on the stewardship of our nation’s outdoor legacy.

GOAL A **Build stewardship values and engage youth in conservation and recreation.**

America’s young people are our nation’s future. We have an obligation to ensure that America’s great natural legacy is preserved for their enjoyment, welfare, and livelihoods. To honor and capture the youth voice, a separate pullout report, “Youth and America’s Great Outdoors,” was prepared by a team of young and committed federal employees.

Recommendation 4.1 **Engage young people in the implementation of AGO.**

Thousands of young people joined in the AGO process through the listening sessions, the AGO Facebook page, and the website. Many of our youth are already participating in the protection and enhancement of our



U.S. FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE - HILLEBRAND PHOTO / NCTC, WEST VIRGINIA

natural resources and want to help address the challenges of connecting with the outdoors.

Action Item 4.1a: Disseminate and implement the “Youth and America’s Great Outdoors” report. (DOI working with the AGO Council)

Action Item 4.1b: Create an America’s Great Outdoors youth outreach strategy. (AGO Council)



NATIONAL PARK SERVICE - PEACO PHOTO / YELLOWSTONE NATIONAL PARK, IDAHO, MONTANA, WYOMING

Conserving and Restoring America's Great Outdoors

At the beginning of the 20th century, Americans realized the immense natural wealth of the United States was limited, as symbolized by the closing of the western frontier and the disappearance of the vast bison herds on the Great Plains. In response, President Theodore Roosevelt made natural resource conservation a primary goal of his administration. Roosevelt focused on the public estate, placing some 230 million acres under public protection. He created five national parks, signed the 1906 Antiquities Act, established 18 national monuments, established the U.S. Forest Service, placed 16 million acres in the new National Forest System, and set aside the first lands to become national wildlife refuges.

The America's Great Outdoors Initiative celebrates Roosevelt's legacy even as a new chapter in American conservation emerges. Some of the challenges we face today are similar to those faced at the dawn of the 20th century. Then as now, Americans viewed the existence of shared public spaces in cities and towns as essential. Then as now, Americans recognized the need to conserve our public lands for the benefit of all Americans. Then as now, Americans understood the importance of clean, abundant water for human consumption, agriculture, wildlife, and other uses.

We now have new challenges. Today, we recognize that to protect ecosystems, watersheds, and wildlife, conservation must take place across large landscapes. This requires collaboration among landowners, public land agencies, and local communities. Each year about 1.6 million acres of our working farms, ranches, and forests are lost to development and fragmentation.²¹ We also face the reality of a warming planet and need to manage our lands and waters to adapt to these changes. And there is even greater appreciation for the importance of recreation and of the role of public and private lands in providing places for Americans to experience

²¹ USDA Summary Report: 2007 National Resources Inventory.

America's Great Outdoors Vision Statement

Americans envision a future in which:

All children, regardless of where they live, have access to clean, safe outdoor places within a short walk of their homes or schools, where they can play, dream, discover, and recreate.

Americans participate in the shared responsibility to protect and care for our unique natural and cultural heritage for the use and enjoyment of future generations.

Rural lands—our working farms, ranches, and forests—are conserved and restored through incentives and local partnerships.

Our national parks, national wildlife refuges, national forests, and other public lands and waters are managed with a renewed commitment to sound stewardship and resilience.

Our natural areas and waterways, whether publicly or privately owned, are reconnected, healthy, and resilient and support both human needs and the wildlife that depend on them.

Communities work together to restore and protect healthy rivers and lakes to provide recreational opportunities and to contribute significantly to a vibrant economy.

the great outdoors. Over the last century, our appreciation for conserving historic and cultural sites has grown.

The chapters that follow focus on urban parks and community green spaces, conservation of our working lands, stewardship of our public lands, and protecting our rivers and water resources. One cornerstone for accomplishing the goals set forth in these chapters is immediate full funding of the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF).

There are several common themes throughout this section of the report. First, although Roosevelt advanced conservation with bold decisions from the White House, the recommendations that follow seek to catalyze and bolster local conservation efforts that emanate from outside Washington, D.C. Second, many recommendations recognize that federal agencies must partner with local stakeholders to conserve community parks and green spaces, large landscapes, watersheds, and rivers. Third, mitigating and adapting to climate change must inform how we manage our federal lands. Lastly, especially given the current budgetary environment, it is vital that federal agencies work more effectively to align, target, and better leverage their resources and work with a variety of partners to leverage additional, non-federal resources for conservation.

5. Strengthen the Land and Water Conservation Fund

“Increased and consistent funding to support federal, state, and local conservation, including full funding for the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF). LWCF investments ensure continued protection of America’s public lands and enhance public access.”

(Listening Session Participant, Poughkeepsie, NY)

The Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) is a primary source of federal funding for states and federal agencies to protect and conserve America’s national treasures and to promote outdoor recreation. LWCF revenue is primarily generated from outer continental shelf oil and gas drilling activities, and collection is authorized up to \$900 million, subject to congressional appropriations. Its purpose is to fund federal land acquisition; conserve threatened and endangered species; and provide grants to state governments for recreation planning, development of recreation facilities, and acquisition of lands and waters. This fund program has enjoyed a broad base of popular support and oversight since it became law in 1964.

Although LWCF revenue collection is authorized up to \$900 million, appropriations have been provided at this level only twice during its more than 45-year history. Since the program’s inception, the LWCF has funded the purchase of more than 4.5 million acres of land by the federal land management agencies of USDA (USFS) and DOI (NPS, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS), BLM) at a cost of \$6.1 billion. The NPS *LWCF stateside program*, which requires that 50 percent of federal investment be matched by the grantee, has funded about 38,000 state and local projects. Funding recipients have acquired some 2.3 million acres and have developed about 27,000 recreation facilities. Acquisitions funded through LWCF stateside grants must remain in recreational use in perpetuity. In recent years, the LWCF has funded two additional state grant programs with purposes similar to the intent of the 1964 law. The USFS *Forest Legacy Program* has been funded through the LWCF since 2004, and has protected more than 2 million acres of important private forests. The FWS *Section 6 Endangered Species grant program* has been funded through the LWCF since 2003.

GOAL A Invigorate the LWCF to better meet conservation and recreation needs.

Meeting the 21st-century conservation and recreation needs of our nation and the American people will require both an increase in funds and changes in the administration of the LWCF.

The demand for LWCF funds for federal land acquisition and state grants programs exceeds the funding levels appropriated by Congress. Significant opportunities exist for federal land management agencies to acquire inholdings within national parks, forests, refuges, and other federal lands. Growing demand for local parks, open space, and outdoor recreation projects adds to the need for state and local government support from the LWCF.

The use of LWCF funds has changed little since 1964, although the requirements for carrying out successful conservation and recreation projects and programs have changed greatly. Successful implementation of the initiatives identified in this report will require more strategic investment of funds from both the state and federal sides of the LWCF and better coordination among agencies, states, and other federal grant and aid programs linked to the AGO initiative. And these strategic investments must be informed by sound science and access to good information.

Recommendation 5.1 Provide full funding for LWCF programs.

Full funding of LWCF was one of the most common comments shared during the AGO listening sessions, and it received broad support. Full funding would allow federal and state agencies and our partners in conservation and recreation to make lasting investments in the outdoors to provide outdoor recreation opportunities, reconnect people to the outdoors, and conserve open space, wildlife, and forests.

Action Item 5.1a: Provide full funding for LWCF programs. (AGO Council)

Recommendation 5.2 Focus a portion of federal LWCF funds on projects that achieve AGO goals related to large-scale land conservation, urban parks and community green spaces, and river restoration and access.

During the listening sessions, many comments suggested that LWCF funding should be more strategically focused to address the nation's most urgent conservation challenges. There needs to be strong, ongoing investment in the traditional land conservation actions of federal land management agencies, but some portion of the federal LWCF funds could be invested to complement the goals in AGO. This is especially true of those related to large-scale land conservation, urban parks, and community green spaces, and to restoration of and increased access to

“As a grandmother, who with my late husband, enjoyed our great outdoors, I want the next generation to enjoy America’s great outdoors too. As a former grant writer for a tri-state council of governments, I have been privileged to see the fruits of the LWCF in numerous small towns in our area.” (Listening Session Participant, Missoula, MT)

rivers and other waters. People throughout the nation also supported using a small portion of LWCF funds for recreation access to federal lands.

Action Item 5.2a: Implement an interagency process to invest part of the federal LWCF funds in high-yield conservation projects that address shared ecological goals. Use commonly accepted criteria to select opportunities where federal investment would yield the most significant ecological outcomes and community benefits. Ensure that the process is transparent, incorporates input from appropriate government and external stakeholders, and is based on sound science and good information. (CEQ, OMB, USDA and DOI)

Action Item 5.2b: Invest a portion of LWCF funds to increase recreation access to federal lands. (DOI and USDA)

Action Item 5.2c: Coordinate and align investment of federal LWCF funds with federal grant programs to states for land acquisition, as appropriate and consistent with state partner priorities—including NPS *LWCF stateside program*, FWS *North American Wetlands Conservation Act*, and the USFS *Forest Legacy Program*—to achieve AGO priorities related to urban parks and community green spaces, landscape-scale conservation, and recreational blueways. (DOI, USDA, and DOC)

Recommendation 5.3 Broaden guidelines for Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plans (SCORPs) to align with AGO priorities.

States are required to adopt SCORPs and update them every five years to be eligible for the NPS *LWCF stateside program*. This ensures that federal investments in outdoor recreation are consistent with state plans and help accomplish local and state priorities. From state to state these plans vary widely in their quality and utility and many do not address some of the kinds of programs and priorities envisioned in this report.

Action Item 5.3a: Consulting with local and state governments, federal agencies, and stakeholders, develop new guidelines and criteria for SCORPs that focus a portion of the LWCF stateside program on urban parks and community green spaces, landscape-scale conservation, and recreational blueways, in addition to outdoor recreation. (DOI, USDA)

Action Item 5.3b: Establish competitive grants funding for states to amend their SCORPs to meet the new guidelines. (DOI)



NATIONAL PARK SERVICE - SNYDER PHOTO / CENTRAL PARK, NEW YORK

6. Establish Great Urban Parks and Community Green Spaces

“Urban parks are important, all the more so in large cities where they provide what I think of as breathing room. They also keep us in touch with change of seasons. They should be supplemented by plantings of trees and sometimes shrubs on some streets where possible.”

(Listening Session Participant, Bozeman, MT)

In an 1870 essay, Frederick Law Olmsted, the central architect of New York City’s Central Park, extolled the virtues of outdoor space, especially for urban communities. He wrote, “We want a ground to which people may easily go after their day’s work is done, and where they may stroll for an hour, seeing, hearing, and feeling nothing of the bustle and jar of the streets....”²²

Today, urban parks and community green spaces play an even more important role as special public places that promote health, provide economic benefits, and nurture democratic values by inviting casual interaction among citizens. Eighty percent of Americans now live in or near cities and lead even busier lives than previous generations could ever have imagined.²³ For many Americans, our nation’s iconic parks and forests, such as Yellowstone National Park, Tongass National Forest in Alaska, and the Adirondack State Park in New York, are far away and difficult to access. As a result, urban parks and community green spaces are essential for providing places for people to recreate outdoors, to find quiet and solitude, and to generally improve their quality of life. Many such places are also significant and evocative cultural and historic landmarks. For many people, these local, open environments are a stepping stone into the great outdoors that can lead to a lifelong bond with nature and enjoyment of the benefits that come with it. As underscored in the AGO vision, urban parks and community green spaces contribute to the social, physical, and emotional health of America’s communities, and neighborhood parks are among the few public places where communities can readily congregate close to home.

²² *A paper read before the American Social Science Association at the Lowell Institute, Boston, February 25, 1870.*

²³ United Nations World Urbanization Prospects: The 2007 Revision.

“I have worked in urban schools (Houston, TX) for over 10 years. Many of the underprivileged students I have served have never experienced the great outdoors. Please, make urban parks more accessible for all!”
(Listening Session Participant, Bozeman, MT)

Parks and green spaces also generate economic benefits for communities, from higher property values to increased recreation and tourism. Communities have found that conservation of open space and access to recreation and parks improve the business environment. A study of small businesses in Colorado found that quality of life—and particularly access to parks, recreation and open space—was very important to where businesses chose to locate, relocate, or expand.²⁴ By providing places for people to play, exercise, and even grow vegetables, community green spaces can contribute to public health and, by extension, to reduced health-care costs. Parks and green spaces also provide important and cost-effective ecological services, filtering polluted water and air, managing storm runoff, and offering protective shade. Studies show that people exercise more when they have easy access to parks and open space.²⁵ To increase physical activity and combat the obesity epidemic, the Childhood Obesity Task Force recommends increasing the number of safe and accessible parks and playgrounds, particularly in underserved and low-income communities.²⁶ Many communities are developing green infrastructure plans for a network of open spaces that conserve ecosystem values and functions and provide associated benefits to human populations, including adapting to a changing climate.

Even so, as AGO listening session participants made clear, these benefits are not enjoyed equally by all. Some Americans stay away from parks out of fear of crime or violence, both within and on the way to these outdoor places. Others worry about aging infrastructure and the safety of outdoor facilities themselves. Others noted trash and pollution; physical barriers, such as roads and fences; and lack of safe, reliable, and affordable transportation as barriers to outdoor recreating and enjoyment. Different cultural proclivities also make the demographics of using the outdoors uneven. People noted that outdoor facilities in parks and recreational areas are heavily used but often have limited staff to meet the public’s need. Others commented that many Americans do not have access to parks and green spaces close to home.

Across the nation the federal government heard overwhelming support for investing in parks, community gardens and forests, and other green spaces close to where Americans live, work, and go to school.

²⁴ Crompton, John L., Lisa L. Love, and Thomas A. More. *An Empirical Study of the Role of Recreation, Parks, and Open Space in Companies’ (Re)Location Decisions*, *Journal of Park and Recreation Administration* 15, no. 1.

²⁵ Kahn, Emily B., Leigh T. Ramsey, Ross C. Brownson, Gregory W. Heath, Elizabeth H. Howze, Kenneth E. Powell, Elaine J. Stone, Mummy W. Rajab, Phaedra Corso, and the Task Force on Community Preventive Services. (2002) *The Effectiveness of Interventions to Increase Physical Activity*. *American Journal of Preventive Medicine* 22, no. 4S.; Cohen, Deborah, J Scott Ashwood, Molly M Scott, Adrian Overton, Kelly R Evenson, Lisa K Staten, Dwayne Porter, Thomas L McKenzie, Diana Catellier, (1996), *Public Parks and Physical Activity Among Adolescent Girls*. *Pediatrics* 118: 1381-1389.; Cohen DA, McKenzie T, Sehgal A, Williamson S, Golinelli D. (2007) *How Do public parks contribute to physical activity?* *Am J Pub Health*. 97: 1-6.

²⁶ White House Task Force on Childhood Obesity Report to the President, 2010.

GOAL A Create and enhance a new generation of safe, clean, accessible great urban parks and community green spaces.

As America continues to become more urbanized, the need for green spaces close to home increases. Such spaces are good for our health, our ties to community, and our economy. They can be critical to building lasting personal connections with the great outdoors. Launching a new generation of Great Urban Parks and community green spaces will require federal leadership through investment of new funds, better alignment of programs and priorities, leveraging resources from outside government, and providing technical support for local communities.

Recommendation 6.1 Establish the AGO Great Urban Parks and Community Green Spaces initiative by targeting increased funding for the NPS LWCF stateside program to leverage investment in new and enhanced urban parks and community green spaces.

A portion of any increases in NPS *LWCF stateside program* should be used to support creating or enhancing urban parks and community green spaces. These projects would be locally supported with substantial momentum and committed funding. They would benefit from leveraged federal funding to promote further collaboration and to target conservation efforts. In turn, funding for urban parks would enhance other community development and revitalization programs.

Priority areas for investment in urban areas are: (1) Waterfronts that connect urban communities with water and waterside parks and open spaces; (2) Signature parks, such as City Park in New Orleans or Grant Park in Chicago, that serve as community anchors; (3) Renewed green spaces and urban garden spaces that have suffered from urban blight; and (4) Natural areas within a city or community that reconnect people with the outdoors, like Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge in Brooklyn, New York.

Action Item 6.1a: Increase the number of urban parks and community green spaces through partnerships using increased funding within the NPS *LWCF stateside program*. (DOI)

Action Item 6.1b: Increase the number of urban parks and community green spaces by working with partners to develop criteria within NPS's *LWCF stateside program* for new urban parks and community green spaces. (DOI)

Project criteria should include, but not be limited to:

- demonstrated need for and benefits of the project;
- alignment within a strategic conservation plan, such as a green infrastructure plan;



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- identified partnership, collaboration, leverage, and community support;
- demonstrated sustainability and stewardship of the project over time;
- demonstrated plan to provide for safe and accessible routes;
- maximized employment opportunities for young people that connect them to the outdoors;
- multiple identified benefits, such as wildlife corridors/ecosystem connectivity, flood control, economic revitalization, heritage tourism, and outdoor recreation; and
- identified opportunities for outdoor education, place-based learning.

Recommendation 6.2 Support and align federal agency programs and initiatives to promote the creation, expansion, and enhancement of urban parks and community green spaces.

Although the need for parks, green space, and places for outdoor recreation in our cities is growing, other priorities often draw attention and resources away from these important community resources. At listening sessions, participants identified a range of federal programs that, if better coordinated and aligned, could make a difference for community investments in outdoor spaces. These investments would also catalyze investment by non-governmental partners and accomplish a whole greater than the sum of its parts.

Action Item 6.2a: Align and leverage federal investments and actions to expand or enhance urban parks and community green spaces through coordinated efforts. These should include, but not be limited to: the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), DOT, and EPA's *Sustainable Communities Partnership's* regional planning grants; EPA-led *Urban Waters Federal Partnership*; partnership between DPC, White House Office of Urban Affairs, HUD, ED, DOJ, Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) and DOT *Neighborhood Revitalization Initiative*; USFS *Urban and Community Forestry Program*; NPS *RTCA*; DOT *Transportation Investment Generating Economic Recovery (TIGER)* grants. (AGO Council)

Action Item 6.2b: Work with communities and tribes to establish community forests in both urban and rural communities through the USFS *Community Forest and Open Space Conservation Program*. (USDA)

Recommendation 6.3 Target technical assistance support to communities to create and enhance urban parks and community green spaces.

Listening session participants made clear that there is no shortage of community-level interest in leading efforts to create and enhance city and community parks. What is lacking is easily accessible technical



NATIONAL PARK SERVICE - DOVE PHOTO / RIO DE LOS ANGELES STATE PARK, CALIFORNIA

“Urban parks create jobs, spur growth, increase property value, prevent obesity, clear pollution, and build community. Yet they're often dismissed as frivolous in hard times and remain severely underfunded. How can we change the perception that they are not just a “nice thing to have” but an essential part of our urban infrastructure.”

(Listening Session Participant, Washington, DC)

know-how and seed funding. Programs like the NPS RTCA program were frequently cited as particularly effective at helping communities help themselves accomplish their conservation objectives. *RTCA* awards small technical assistance support for community-led natural resource conservation and outdoor recreation projects.

Action Item 6.3a: Support tribal, state and local governments and private sector organizations in the planning and development of urban parks and community green spaces through programs such as the USFS *Urban and Community Forestry Program* and the NPS RTCA. (DOI, USDA, EPA)

Action Item 6.3b: Promote the EPA *Brownfields Program* as a tool to leverage funding for states, tribes, territories, private-sector initiatives, and communities to assess and clean up brownfield sites, redeveloping them for other uses, including as parks and green spaces, especially in underserved communities. Communities receiving EPA *Brownfields Program* funds also frequently benefit from complementary redevelopment funds provided through separate programs managed by the U.S. Economic Development Administration (EDA) and by HUD. (EPA)

Action Item 6.3c: Strengthen federal partnership work on urban waters and support related agency-level programs, such as EPA-proposed *Urban Waters Initiative*. Through federal coordination and community partnerships, these programs revitalize urban waters and adjacent communities, transforming overlooked assets into treasured centerpieces and drivers of urban revival. (EPA, USDA, DOC, and DOI) (*See Recommendation 9.3a*)

Recommendation 6.4 Connect people with urban parks and community green spaces.

Participants emphasized that financial help to communities is essential, but not the only mechanism for creating and supporting urban parks and community green spaces. The federal government can support connecting people to community parks and green spaces in many ways. It can provide education and engagement, promote public-private partnerships, and eliminate or minimize governmental barriers to access. One example is the partnership approach to resource protection and public use and enjoyment offered through the NPS and state and private partners in the Santa Monica Mountains in Los Angeles.

Action Item 6.4a: Accelerate assistance provided to communities for urban parks and community green space planning through existing programs including, but not limited to, the NPS RTCA program, USFS *Urban and Community Forestry Program*, and DOT *Safe Pathways to Schools* to explore opportunities to support safe sidewalks and paths to neighborhood parks as well as schools. (DOI, USDA, EPA, and DOT)

Action Item 6.4b: Work with state, local and tribal governments, including parks and recreation departments, to connect federal parks and other units in urban areas with the public transportation system and pedestrian or bike paths. (DOI, USDA, and DOT)



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7. Conserve Rural Working Farms, Ranches, and Forests Through Partnerships and Incentives

Conservationist Aldo Leopold wrote that trying to accomplish conservation entirely on public land was like trying to keep dry with only half an umbrella.²⁷ Made more than 70 years ago, his observation resonates today. More than 70 percent of land in the contiguous United States is in private ownership—largely as farms, ranches, and forests, with more than 56 million acres held in trust by the United States for Indian tribes and other individuals.²⁸

These privately owned lands are vital to conserving our water resources, ecosystems, and wildlife, to provide recreation for hunters, anglers, and other outdoor enthusiasts, and to preserve our natural heritage for generations to come. Even in areas with large government ownership of land, privately owned lands often provide important wildlife habitat and migration corridors. Through their stewardship practices, farmers, ranchers, and forest landowners play a critical role in helping the nation address climate change and in making sure the air we breathe and the water we drink are clean and healthy.

Despite their importance for the environment and recreation it is becoming ever more challenging for landowners to keep private lands intact. The Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) reports that one out of three acres ever developed in the United States was developed from 1982 to 2007.²⁹ Each year some 1.6 million acres of privately owned farms, ranches, and forests are sold off, in whole or in part, for development.³⁰ The costs to clean air, wildlife, cultural heritage sites, and farm and forest economies are significant.

²⁷ “Conservation Economics,” reprinted in *River of the Mother of God*.

²⁸ Department of Interior report on Context and Complexity of the Indian Trust, 2003.

²⁹ USDA Summary Report: 2007 National Resources Inventory.

³⁰ *Ibid.*

“Multi-partner initiatives to advance conservation across all ownership types within large priority landscapes are a highly effective strategy for conservation delivery. This type of landscape conservation will be particularly important to achieve higher level conservation outcomes, such as watershed protection, climate mitigation, and climate adaptation, where isolated conservation actions will not be sufficient to achieve these larger goals.” (Listening Session Participant, Missoula, MT)

Beyond stepping up the pace of conservation on private lands, it is clear that more strategic approaches and incentives to protecting them are necessary. AGO listening sessions revealed a growing awareness that protecting the nation’s natural and cultural heritage requires working across public, private, and tribal lands at a landscape scale. This “all-lands” approach recognizes that watersheds, wildlife, and ecosystems do not recognize property lines. Conserving large landscapes requires collaboration among landowners; tribes; local, state, and federal governments; conservation groups; agriculture and forestry groups; and other stakeholders. Such “locally grown” landscape partnerships are springing up in regions across the nation and are increasingly vital to 21st-century conservation. AGO can help foster and catalyze these vibrant, community-level efforts to conserve and connect the nation’s landscapes and watersheds to benefit both present and future generations.

Because government resources for this task are limited, it is imperative that our strategies for these lands maximize the conservation benefits from each taxpayer dollar spent. Collaboration among the federal government, local governments, land trusts, landowners, tribes, and others already working to protect local watersheds and landscapes will be necessary to achieve the AGO vision for private lands. Federal agencies can provide technical assistance to local partners and, where appropriate, enter into cooperative agreements to provide both technical and financial assistance. At the same time, cooperation among public land agencies will also be necessary to improve the delivery of financial and technical assistance to landowners. Geographic information systems (GIS) and other science-based tools can help target important lands and resources for conservation and ensure that federal expenditures achieve the goal of increasing ecosystem and wildlife resiliency and function. Collaborative work among public and private entities should draw on existing plans and evaluation measures, such as state wildlife action plans and state forest resource assessments. Success will depend on leveraging resources from all stakeholders, public and private.

Listening session participants made it clear that farmers, ranchers, and forest owners are eager to help protect America’s great outdoors. Many already actively contribute to maintaining and enhancing lands and waters. Nevertheless, although many private landowners have a strong conservation ethic, conservation and resource stewardship must make economic sense. Conservationists and landowners alike discussed the need to maintain traditional markets for food, fiber, and wood products from agriculture and forestry, and to create new sources of revenue from these lands. Developing markets for environmental services and benefits provided by private lands—wetlands, biodiversity, water quality, and mitigation of climate change impacts—will create new sources of income that reward landowners for stewardship and for keeping these lands in agricultural and forestry uses. More incentives can be found by expanding markets for agricultural products, biomass energy, and sustainably harvested wood products. In the foreseeable future, many farms, ranches, and forests will be multifaceted operations that provide a host of profitable environmental services.

Some listening session participants heralded the success of innovative government conservation initiatives such as the FWS *Safe Harbor* program. It provides landowners with regulatory assurances under the Endangered Species Act (ESA) in exchange for carrying out stewardship activities that benefit wildlife. These relatively inexpensive tools are powerful incentives to encourage conservation on private lands. In Montana and other western states, FWS and NRCS are working together with ranchers to encourage conservation of the sage grouse, a candidate for listing under the ESA. They provide landowners with regulatory assurances while also helping fund habitat restoration and other practices. Participants in AGO listening sessions suggested that federal agencies explore similar tools for other regulatory requirements that impact private lands and landowners.

GOAL A Catalyze large-scale land conservation partnership projects through economic incentives and technical assistance.

Across the country, landowners, conservation groups, and state, tribal, and local governments and other partners are joining forces to address local and regional conservation concerns. The first AGO listening session, in Ovando, Montana, was attended by members of three partnerships working to protect the Blackfoot Valley, the Crown of the Continent region, and the Rocky Mountain Front. In Maine, New Hampshire, and South Carolina, participants talked about collaborative work to conserve private forests lands. In Nebraska, participants discussed using incentives to conserve farmland and wetlands. Participants encouraged the federal government to support such ground-level efforts.

Many people also expressed strong support for the long-term conservation benefits provided through existing Farm Bill conservation programs, including the NRCS *Environmental Quality Incentives Program* (EQIP), *Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program* (WHIP), *Wetlands Reserve Program* (WRP), *Conservation Reserve Program* (CRP), *Farm and Ranch Lands Protection Program* (FRPP), and *Grassland Reserve Program* (GRP).

Recommendation 7.1 Support collaborative landscape conservation through competitive processes, including increases in LWCF funding and other programs.

Listening session participants suggested creating a competitive fund to create incentives for landscape-scale conservation as well as focusing on more coordinate expenditures under existing conservation programs. A competitive fund would bolster existing efforts and encourage forming other local partnerships. They also argued that technical assistance for landowners and conservation partners is one of the most cost-effective ways to meet conservation goals.



NATIONAL PARK SERVICE - WALDRON PHOTO / MANASSAS NATIONAL BATTLEFIELD PARK, VIRGINIA

“One thing I see working is collaborative decision-making—or natural resource protection, outdoor recreation planning, etc.—if you want to vie for competitive grants you have to show collaboration: don’t plan in a bubble—it’s not effective.” (Listening Session Participant, Asheville, NC)

Action Item 7.1a: Create the AGO Collaborative Landscape Conservation Initiative through coordinated competitive processes using increases in LWCF and other federal grant programs. (USDA, DOC, DOD, and DOI)

Funds would be targeted on land conservation activities, particularly voluntary purchase of conservation easements, sponsored by a state and diverse local partnerships. Selection of partnerships for funding would be based on criteria that:

- leverage other federal, local, and private resources;
- emphasize the protection of working lands;
- conserve water resources and wildlife;
- use science and mapping to target important lands;
- provide recreational opportunities;
- plan for potential climate impacts and the need for connectivity; and
- other criteria enumerated in law.

Recommendation 7.2 Support landscape partnerships by targeting existing federal dollars, policies, and other resources toward conservation of private and tribal working lands and coordinating expenditures, where appropriate, across federal agencies.

Many listening session participants noted that existing programs could be better targeted to assist and promote landscape-scale conservation and that better coordination is needed across federal agencies and with states and local partners. Many existing federal programs within USDA, DOC, DOD, and DOI contribute significantly to the conservation of working lands within important landscapes. These programs should use the best available science to implement the most effective stewardship practices and conservation actions on the most significant lands. State wildlife action plans, state forest assessments, and other local and regional priority-setting processes should inform these efforts. Federal agencies should work together to coordinate capacity building and resource expenditures wherever appropriate.

Action Item 7.2a: Coordinate and align, as appropriate, federal programs that provide technical or financial assistance to public and private organizations that support and implement collaborative landscape-scale conservation initiatives. Program examples include the NPS *LWCF stateside program*, USDA conservation and forestry Farm Bill programs, and the USFS *Forest Stewardship Program*. (USDA, DOC, DOD, and DOI)

Action Item 7.2b: Maintain the USDA CRP at 32 million acres through the terms of the 2008 Farm Bill and focus part of the program on landscape conservation, including work that benefits wildlife, water quality and quantity, and other valuable resources. (USDA)

Action Item 7.2c: Continue targeting the DOD *Readiness and Environmental Protection Initiative* to conserve land with significant value for the military mission while protecting important conservation resources in partnership with governmental and non-governmental organizations. (DOD)

GOAL B Significantly increase the pace of working farms, ranch, and forest land conservation.

Public input suggested that the federal government should expand tools available to landowners, conservation and historic preservation groups, and state, local, and tribal governments to conserve lands through voluntary, incentive-based approaches. Expenditure of federal funds for landscape partnerships also needs better coordination. One of the most frequent recommendations of the AGO public input process was to extend the enhanced tax deduction for conservation easements.

Many listening session participants and public comments called for changing the estate tax to reduce the tax burden on families who own farms, ranches, and forests. It was argued that when lands are passed down to the next generation, heirs—particularly those that are land-rich and cash-poor—can face the need to sell and subdivide their property to pay the inheritance tax. It is true that the estate tax affects a relatively small portion of landowners, but it affects a significant number of acres. The tax disproportionately affects landowners who own larger parcels that are worth more and, therefore, more likely subject to the tax. The estate tax is also increasingly important because the average age of these landowners is rising.³¹ One criticism of reducing the estate tax is that doing so disproportionately helps wealthy citizens. Structuring policies that conserve lands could provide public benefits associated with land and watershed conservation. Opportunities to amend the estate tax to conserve working lands should be explored.

Recommendation 7.3 Extend the enhanced deductions for conservation easement donations beyond 2011.

Starting in 2007, an enhanced tax incentive allowed landowners a significant tax benefit for donating a conservation easement on their land to a qualified organization. Working landowners receive even greater financial benefit for such donations. This enhanced deduction expired in 2009, but was extended through December 31, 2011, by the Tax

³¹ Butler, Brett and Earl Leatherberry *America's Family Forest Owners*.

Relief, Unemployment Insurance Reauthorization, and Job Creation Act of 2010. When it was in effect in 2007 and 2008, a recent survey showed this incentive helped America's 1,700 local land trusts increase the pace of conservation by about 250,000 acres each year—a 36-percent increase over previous years.³² Extending the enhanced deduction beyond 2011 would further bolster land conservation and resource protection, especially on working lands.

Action Item 7.3a: Work with Congress to extend the existing conservation easement tax deduction provision beyond 2011. (AGO Council)

GOAL C Increase financial incentives for land stewardship for farmers, ranchers, forest landowners, and tribes.

Loss of open space to development and fragmentation is far more likely to occur where development values outweigh returns from agriculture, ranching, and forestry. The government's role in maintaining traditional markets for agriculture and forestry products remains outside the scope of the AGO Initiative, but public input suggested that opportunities exist to encourage new markets from rural lands that could strengthen efforts to maintain rural landscapes.

Recommendation 7.4 Develop and expand new markets, including those for the environmental services provided by working lands, for local agricultural or sustainable forest products, sustainable energy, and others.

New markets for environmental services are developing, including climate mitigation, water quality and quantity, fish and wildlife habitat conservation, wetlands protection, sustainable energy production, and other services. These markets are in various stages of maturity. Many agencies have long supported such efforts and are exploring opportunities and innovations to expand their use. Expanding them will benefit land conservation, environmental stewardship, and landowners and allow for farms, ranches, and forests of the future to derive income from markets for environmental services. USDA and other agencies can provide landowners with technical assistance that increases agricultural and forest productivity while also enhancing land stewardship.

Action Item 7.4a: Support the development and expansion of environmental markets through the Endangered Species Act, Clean Water Act, programs and authorities of USDA, and other laws and foster better coordination across federal agencies to support the development of environmental markets. (USDA, DOC, DOD, USACE, DOI, and EPA)

³² Land Trust Alliance fact sheet on Renewing the Conservation Tax Incentive.



THE NATURE CONSERVANCY - © HELZER PHOTO / RATZLAFF PRAIRIE, NEBRASKA

Action Item 7.4b: Support efforts in the next Farm Bill to develop and expand environmental markets. (USDA)

Recommendation 7.5 Support financial and other incentives to encourage access for hunting, fishing, hiking, recreation, and other outdoor activities on or across private working lands.

Although most recreational opportunities are on public land, private lands also can play an important role in providing recreation. There is a long tradition of hunting and fishing on private lands through open access, lease agreements, or other mechanisms. The USDA *Voluntary Public Access Program (Open Fields)* offers states financial assistance to encourage or provide incentives to landowners to provide access to hunters. Continuing this program and expanding it to new states and tribes will benefit landowners and sports enthusiasts alike. Private landowners in some locations support hiking and snowmobile trails across their property. Depending on the agreement, this might give a landowner additional income, which helps the landowner keep the property as well as maintain recreational resources and access.

Action Item 7.5a: Expand partnerships with private landowners that facilitate access to or across private lands for recreation through programs such as the USDA *Voluntary Public Access Program (Open Fields)*. (USDA and DOI)

Recommendation 7.6 Promote tools such as safe harbor agreements that provide certainty to landowners who agree to carry out stewardship activities that benefit fish and wildlife and protect water resources.

FWS, in partnership with states, tribes, conservation groups, and others, has successfully encouraged private landowners to protect and restore habitat for listed and candidate species under the Endangered Species Act. They accomplished this through safe harbor and candidate conservation agreements with assurances. FWS and NMFS should work with USDA to provide financial incentives through the Farm Bill to help support these efforts.

Action Item 7.6a: Promote the use of safe harbor and candidate conservation agreements and collaborate with FWS and NMFS to streamline permitting processes with agreements and memoranda of understanding that promote conservation objectives. Work with NRCS in combining Farm Bill conservation program dollars where appropriate. (DOI, DOC, and USDA)

Action Item 7.6b: Work in partnership with states to explore the use of safe harbor-like certainty agreements to achieve the goals of improved water quality and continued implementation of voluntary conservation practices, and look for opportunities to pilot such agreements. (EPA and USDA)



NATIONAL PARK SERVICE - MCMAINS PHOTO / GLACIER NATIONAL PARK, MONTANA

8. Conserve and Restore Our National Parks, Wildlife Refuges, Forests, and Other Federal Lands and Waters

Nearly 30 percent of lands in the United States—more than 635 million acres—are managed and protected by the federal government.³³ These federal lands and their waters contain ecosystems as diverse as the coastal mountains of California’s King Range National Conservation Area, southern Appalachian ecosystems of the Great Smoky Mountains National Park, and the tropical rainforests of the Caribbean National Forest in Puerto Rico, as well as an inspiring array of natural, cultural, and historic resources. Some of these exceptional natural and cultural places have been designated as World Heritage Sites. Public lands offer American and international visitors wide-ranging opportunities to make a personal connection to the outdoors. They may do this through the solitude of wilderness or bird watching at dawn, the exhilaration of motorized trails, climbing, skiing, snowboarding, or river rafting, the pride of historic places, or the satisfaction of volunteer service. Our public lands provide water resources, wildlife habitat, recreation access and opportunities, educational value, and other benefits to the American people.

The nation’s mountains, prairies, forests, coasts, deserts, lakes, estuaries, and rivers also provide essential ecosystem services that benefit all Americans. Public lands contain important watersheds that supply drinking water to millions. These lands also sequester significant amounts of carbon annually, thereby reducing atmospheric greenhouse gases. Many of America’s most iconic wildlife species—bison, elk, and grizzly bears, among them—greatly depend on public lands for survival.

³³ USDA report on Major Uses of Land in The United States, 2002.

Likewise, federal lands and waters sustain people, providing recreation, relaxation, and renewal. Be it a hike, bike, or horseback ride along a local trail, a family ski vacation, a visit to a historic or cultural site, or a weekend fishing or boating trip, access to the great outdoors through our public lands and waters improves our quality of life, while also bringing economic benefit to local communities.

There are many important reasons to invest in stewardship of our public lands—most compelling are economic growth and jobs. Outdoor recreation on our public lands generates significant economic activity. Tourism and related visits to public lands are important to the economic vitality of many rural communities. Spending by recreation visitors in areas surrounding national forests is estimated to be nearly \$13 billion annually.³⁴ Visitors who live more than 50 miles from the forest lands account for the majority of these contributions, which also sustain more than 224,000 full- and part-time jobs. Investments in our public lands yield jobs. On average, eight jobs are created for every \$1 million invested in wildlife protection; 30 jobs are created for each \$1 million invested in ecosystem restoration; 17 jobs are created by every \$1 million invested in infrastructure projects; six jobs for every \$1 million for contracting and planning; and 15–22 jobs are created for every \$1 million spent by visitors to DOI recreation facilities.³⁵

The impacts to the economy of these visits are enormous. The NPS alone annually contributes \$6.3 billion in labor income. DOI wildlife refuges provide an estimated \$1.7 billion in sales and \$543 million in employment income.³⁶ Recreational visits to national forests contribute \$13 billion to gross domestic product.³⁷ USACE reports that visitors spend some \$18 billion annually on its lakes and other facilities, leading to 350,000 jobs added to the nation's economy.³⁸

In addition to recreation, many rural communities rely on the federal government's management of public lands for multiple purposes—including forestry, grazing, and renewable and nonrenewable energy—as sources of employment and economic growth. Balancing consumptive and non-consumptive uses of public lands has become increasingly important. Land restoration activities and the emerging area of renewable energy can provide both environmental benefits and jobs for local communities.

Some participants at listening sessions also discussed the importance of conserving inventoried roadless areas on our national forests. In 2001, the Clinton Administration adopted broad protections of roadless areas on national forests that this Administration is now defending in courts.

³⁴ USDA National Visitor Use Monitoring Results: 2005 - 2009.

³⁵ Economic Impact of the Department of the Interior's Programs and Activities; Department of the Interior and USDA Forest Service analysis.

³⁶ Council of Economic Advisors. 2010. Strengthening the Rural Economy.

³⁷ USDA National Visitor Use Monitoring Results: 2005 - 2009.

³⁸ US Army Corps of Engineers fact sheet. <http://corpsresults.us/recreation/receconomic.htm>.

“In the United States, there are wildlife corridor efforts in all 50 states and every congressional district. These corridors are important for the sustainability of every major wildlife group from the monarch butterfly to the pronghorn antelope to the California grey whale—and [these corridors] are found in urban, rural, and wild natural areas. Indeed, because corridors connect core natural areas they epitomize the need for landscape-scale conservation approaches that make our lands and waters permeable for wildlife movement and climate change resiliency. Wildlife corridors are one of a handful of conservation issues that connect all Americans.”

(Listening Session Participant, Missoula, MT)

Because the 2001 rule remains in legal limbo, the Administration has taken steps to ensure that any projects in roadless areas are thoroughly reviewed. If the courts do not uphold roadless protections, the Administration will take other steps to protect these areas. Although this report contains no recommendation with respect to roadless area conservation, protecting roadless areas remains a priority.

Although the federal government manages some of the nation’s most extraordinary lands and waters—places such as Red Rock Canyon National Conservation Area, the Monongahela National Forest, Okefenokee National Wildlife Refuge, and Eglin Air Force Base—federal lands often occur within a patchwork that includes other public and private properties. In some cases, federal forests and grasslands occur in a “checkerboard” pattern of mixed federal, state, tribal and private ownership. There is a growing awareness among federal agencies that protecting large landscapes, wildlife, and watersheds requires collaborative management across ownerships. Federal land managers must partner beyond their boundaries with many landowners and other land managers to achieve the benefits that come from managing land and water resources at a landscapes level, such as the creation of wildlife migration corridors. The need to help wildlife adapt to a rapidly changing climate, which is altering habitats, further highlights the importance of a landscape approach to conservation that emphasizes connectivity.

Federal lands and waters face diverse and increasing threats. Insect and disease infestations have weakened our forests. Examples are the mountain pine beetle on the Arapaho and Roosevelt National Forests, a legacy of fire suppression; and invasive species, such as the tallotree and the Asian gypsy moth. Grasslands and sagebrush ecosystems face similar stresses. Climate change exacerbates these stressors, and considerable impacts on federal lands from a rapidly changing climate are already apparent. To help natural and human communities that depend on public lands and waters in adapting to climate change, it is imperative that management of federal lands and waters be focused on restoration and building resilience in ecosystems and be informed by science. This will help ensure that federal lands continue to fulfill their basic role in providing water resources, wildlife habitat, recreation access and opportunities, and educational and other benefits to the American people.

Many participants in listening sessions noted that some federal lands contain exceptional natural, cultural, or historic features that require special protection. Designation of wilderness and wild and scenic rivers will continue to be important mechanisms to protect outstanding resources for future generations. These designations require congressional action and both the USDA and DOI will continue to work with Congress to support such designations where there is strong local, state, and national support. National monument designations, which do not require congressional authorization, were also the subject of many comments at listening sessions. As discussed below, establishment of a national monument should receive careful consideration, carried out with transparency that ensures local, state, and national input.

As we look to the future of our public lands and waters, we also must celebrate how far we have come. Since first setting aside land that would become Yosemite National Park in 1864, our nation has protected many exceptional places as national parks, forests, refuges, wilderness, and national landscape conservation areas. This year is the 100th anniversary of the Weeks Act, which led to the establishment of new national forests in the eastern United States. In addition, landmark legislation in 1916 established the NPS, the first agency in the world charged solely with the protection and enjoyment of special places for future generations. 2016 marks the 100th anniversary of the NPS and serves as an opportunity to recommit to enhancing our parks and prepare the NPS for another hundred years of service to our country and the world. Based on input from listening sessions and by engaging a broad diversity of stakeholders, the NPS will mark its centennial with diverse new partnerships to ensure that the best examples of natural and cultural heritage are preserved for future generations.

GOALA **Conserve, restore, and manage federal lands and waters to ensure access and enjoyment for future generations while contributing to the protection of a larger natural and cultural landscape.**

Participants in many listening sessions acknowledged the many natural and human-created threats facing our nation's federal lands and waters. Some discussed how invasive species, unnaturally destructive fires, pests and disease, and climate change require more proactive management. Ensuring that our nation's forests, grasslands, and other ecosystems are resilient to disturbances and to a changing climate must increasingly guide federal land and water management. In all cases, federal management decisions must be developed through sound science and implemented with ongoing monitoring and adaptive management. In turn, management actions, such as invasive species control, forest thinning, prescribed fire, and planting native trees and vegetation can provide jobs for local individuals and businesses.

Management of federal lands and waters must also consider neighboring lands. This "all-lands" approach recognizes that watersheds, wildlife, and other important resources do not adhere to property lines. Similarly, the threats facing our lands and waters are not limited to any one national park, national forest, wildlife refuge, or Indian reservation; these threats are felt over broad landscapes. As a result, federal land managers should seek opportunities to engage in partnerships and provide voluntary incentives to neighboring landowners. For instance, the FWS, in cooperation with the NRCS, has worked with farmers, ranchers, and forest owners to conserve working landscapes across the country—a new conservation paradigm that places targeted public lands within a matrix of working private lands. Federal land managers should also continue work with neighboring landowners to look for opportunities to consolidate federal land ownership where federal lands are fragmented

“Our vision... is for the federal government to act as the catalyst for federal, state, tribal, and local agencies and private interests to work together across America to protect a network of critical ecosystems, natural resource areas, and recreation lands from the inner city to wild lands.” (Written comment)

or in a “checkerboard” pattern, where doing so can help federal land managers, benefit neighboring owners, and improve recreational access.

The all-lands model of conservation requires a new generation of science, one that seeks to break down jurisdictional barriers and share data and conservation strategies with the larger land, water, and wildlife community. The DOI *initiation of a network of Landscape Conservation Cooperatives and Climate Science Centers* is designed around this premise and will provide a forum for coordinated planning and implementation of land management approaches. Likewise, the Forest Service is taking steps to integrate climate adaptation and mitigation into management of the national forests through its *National Roadmap for Responding to Climate Change*.

Finally, federal lands must be managed in a manner consistent with their unique designations and to ensure their long-term health. The recommendations that follow focus on conservation and restoration of federal lands, making those lands more resilient to climate change, and protecting wildlife corridors that cross federal lands. Although these are three separate recommendations, it is important that they be integrated into the land management policies and the plans that implement them—both within individual land management agencies as well as across all federal lands and waters. The goal is to have the broad diversity of land and water management agencies work together to achieve common ends, although individual agency actions will be highlighted.

Recommendation 8.1 Manage federal lands and waters within a larger landscape context to conserve and restore ecosystems and watershed health.

To accomplish this recommendation, it will be necessary to provide support and direction to land managers to focus the diversity of funding sources on these challenges and opportunities and to expand authorities so that land managers have the flexibility to support landscape-scale conservation, and enhance the partnerships between federal, state, local and tribal governments; nonprofit organizations; and private landowners.

Action Item 8.1a: Integrate large, landscape-scale conservation into federal land management plans and actions. (USDA, DOD, USACE, and DOI)

Examples include:

- Continue to support the Collaborative Forest Landscape Restoration Fund (\$40 million) to provide matched funding for proposals in high-priority landscapes that support collaborative landscape conservation. (USDA)
- Develop a Forest Service planning rule that emphasizes collaboration with other land management agencies and stakeholders, landscape-scale planning and conservation, adaptive management and sustainability. (USFS)



U.S. FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE - HILLEBRAND PHOTO / SANTA ANA NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE, TEXAS

“America’s Great Outdoors begins when you open your front door and step outside—whether it is onto an urban stoop, a suburban sidewalk or a rural front porch. Before we can reach the National Parks, Trails, or Wilderness Areas, we enter into our neighborhoods, downtowns, community gardens and parks. Appreciating the Great Outdoors means exploring the places where we live, work and play; the places that define the human environment. By first cultivating a sense of stewardship in our communities, we encourage stewardship of cultural and natural resources beyond our immediate surroundings.”

(Written comment)

- Create budget structures to promote landscape-scale conservation and integration among resource programs. (USFS)
- Continue to protect and enhance water resources on federal lands by managing lands to protect and restore riparian areas and aquatic ecosystems, improve water quality, assess watershed condition, and invest resources in areas whose condition can be improved cost-effectively and are important to the public. (USDA, DOD, and DOI)
- Complete and institutionalize a national network of 21 Landscape Conservation Cooperatives to develop the science needed to understand landscape-scale threats and craft landscape-level strategies for managing and responding to those threats. (DOI)
- Incorporate landscape-scale conservation and restoration as a priority in BLM resource management plans and programs. (BLM)
- Expand programs to develop landscape-scale assessment, modeling, and mapping to support conservation planning on federal and private lands. (DOI-USGS)
- Integrate units of the National Park System, Fish and Wildlife Refuge System, and BLM *National Landscape Conservation System* into landscape conservation and restoration activities on public lands as anchors of preservation. (BLM , FWS, NPS)
- Develop or expand existing co-management agreements between tribal and federal land managers where shared management objectives on federal lands provide for landscape-scale conservation. (DOI-BIA)
- Through the USACE *environmental stewardship programs* at existing Corps facilities, plan and implement projects to restore and sustain critical watersheds, wetlands, and environmentally sensitive areas. (DOD-USACE)

Action Item 8.1b: Strategically invest and align federal funds from the LWCF, Farm Bill, and other grant programs, as appropriate, to achieve landscape-scale conservation and restoration goals on public and private lands and to leverage other public and private funds. (USDA, DOD, and DOI) (*Complements Action Item 7.2a*)

Action Item 8.1c: Expand federal land management agency authorities, such as stewardship contracting, USFS integrated resource restoration, and the partnership authority between FWS, NPS, BLM and USFS *Service First*, to complement their ability to achieve large landscape conservation and restoration goals. (USDA and DOI)

Action Item 8.1d: Cultivate and support engaging local, state, and tribal governments, nonprofit organizations, and landowners in regions where federal agencies are conserving and restoring large landscapes through grants, planning, and capacity building. (USDA, DOD, USACE, and DOI)

Recommendation 8.2 Manage federal lands and waters to increase their resilience to climate change.

Public comments noted the importance of managing federal lands and waters to anticipate and mitigate the impacts of climate change. Federal land managers should implement adaptation actions that foster resilience to climate change in land, water, and wildlife. Federal lands can also be managed to mitigate climate change by increasing carbon storage in ecosystems where doing so is consistent with sound conservation and watershed protection goals. On degraded lands where risks from destructive fires, pests, or other threats are heightened, land managers should act to improve resilience while promoting long-term carbon storage consistent with conserving ecosystems and watersheds. In advancing this recommendation, the federal land management agencies will actively engage tribal, state, and local governments, private landowners and nonprofit organizations. This recommendation and associated action items will be informed and prioritized through the recommendations of the Interagency Climate Change Adaptation Task Force.

Action Item 8.2a: Develop science to support decisions related to climate change adaptation and resilience. Improve science available to public land managers through consortia that use information from NOAA *Climate Service*, DOI *Climate Science Centers*, and USFS, NRCS, and other agency work. (USDA, DOC, and DOI)

Action Item 8.2b: Build climate change adaptation and mitigation into federal land management plans and practices. (CEQ, USDA, DOC, DOD-USACE, and DOI)

Examples include:

- Integrate climate change adaptation and mitigation into national forests management through a revised Forest Planning Rule and through implementation of the USFS *Climate Change Scorecard*. (USDA-USFS)
- Use DOI's *Landscape Conservation Cooperatives* to inform management of public lands and resources. (DOI)
- Implement the NPS *Climate Response Strategy* to address the impacts of climate change in parks through science, adaptation, mitigation, and communication. (DOI-NPS)

- Develop science-based inventories and monitoring programs to assess the impacts of climate change on fish and wildlife habitat regardless of land ownership. (DOI, USDA, DOD-USACE)
- Incorporate into BLM *Resource Management Plans* provisions to support carbon sequestration and climate change adaptation. (DOI-BLM)

Recommendation 8.3 **Manage federal lands and waters to create and protect critical wildlife corridors and maintain landscape connectivity in collaboration with other public and private stakeholders.**

Among the primary threats to the nation’s fish and wildlife are habitat loss and fragmentation. Climate change will exacerbate these threats. Developing a comprehensive approach to maintaining and restoring wildlife corridors and habitat connectivity and to protecting fish and wildlife populations have become a conservation priority. Public comments noted the importance of protecting wildlife corridors that cross federal, state, tribal, and private lands. Today, many grassroots efforts to protect wildlife have evolved with collaboration among public and private agencies to expand the commitment to and investment in restoring and maintaining wildlife corridors, habitat, and connectivity for species across the American landscape.

Safeguarding wildlife resources requires sound science and mapping to prioritize management, conservation, and restoration efforts, whose effectiveness must be monitored. Public land management agencies must also partner with private land owners to support management of all lands to address the challenges of climate change.

Action Item 8.3a: Work with states and other partners to use and disseminate scientific data and other information concerning the locations of and threats to critical wildlife corridors to ensure effective investment in restoring and conserving of those corridors. (DOI and USDA)

Action Item 8.3b: Incorporate wildlife corridor conservation and restoration into federal agency plans, programs, and actions. (USDA, DOD, USACE, and DOI)

Examples include:

- Address wildlife and ecosystem connectivity through the USFS *Forest Planning Rule*, BLM *Resource Management Plans*, NPS *Park Management Plans*, and FWS *Refuge Plans*, including the placement of energy projects and transmission lines. (DOI and USDA)
- Update water project master plans and shoreline management plans to identify and sustain important wildlife and fisheries habitat and corridors at USACE and Bureau of Reclamation facilities, such as reservoirs, dams, locks, and river shorelines. (DOD-USACE, DOI)



NATIONAL PARK SERVICE - AUSTIN/JONES PHOTO / YELLOWSTONE NATIONAL PARK, IDAHO, MONTANA, WYOMING

Action Item 8.3c: Coordinate and leverage investment of federal funds to conserve and restore wildlife corridors with other public and private wildlife conservation entities. (DOI, USDA, DOD, and USACE)

GOAL B Advance national, regional, and community-supported work to preserve and enhance unique landscapes, natural areas, historic sites, and cultural areas while ensuring openness and transparency in any land designations.

America is endowed with a vast array of natural and cultural features that reflect both community and national character. Some federal lands contain outstanding iconic, natural, and cultural features that require unique protection. As economic pressures, development, effects of climate change, and other factors mount to threaten the sustainability of heritage resources, locally led partnership initiatives can guide broader decision-making to preserve these places for future generations. This process for increased federal protection of existing federal lands should be accompanied by transparency and public involvement.

Recommendation 8.4 Engage the public to identify and recommend potential sites on existing federal lands for protection under the 1906 Antiquities Act.

Historically, the Antiquities Act is one of the most important tools to achieve national conservation goals. The areas designated under the Antiquities Act by 14 presidents since 1906 include some of the most inspiring and unusual natural and historic features in America. Examples are Olympic National Park in Washington, Devils Tower in Wyoming, the Sonoran Desert in Arizona, the Statue of Liberty in New York City, and the USS *Arizona* Memorial in Hawaii.

During listening sessions, strong support was voiced for the designation of unique places as national monuments as an important way to preserve critical elements of the American landscape and cultural heritage. Some expressed concern that potential designations would circumvent the public review process. All agreed on the importance of transparency in designations, with local input and recognition of local, state, national, and tribal interests, including agriculture, recreation, and access to sacred lands.

Action Item 8.4a: Implement a transparent and open approach to new national monument designations tailored to engaging local, state, and national interests. (DOI and USDA)

Any recommendations should focus on historic and natural features and cultural sites on federal lands that deserve protection under the 1906 Antiquities Act. In the process of making recommendations, the following should be considered:

- public input from local, state, and national interests;

- transparency in development and execution of the designation;
- valid existing rights on federal lands; and
- criteria enumerated in law.

Recommendation 8.5 Identify potential areas for congressional designation that have strong local support.

New land designations are important for protecting outstanding lands and waters, cultural resources, historic sites, and recreation areas and for creating wildlife corridors and restoring intact landscapes. Such designations may only be accomplished by Congress, and involve input from federal agencies. In considering proposals for new wilderness areas, wild and scenic rivers, national parks, national forests, national wildlife refuges, and national conservation system lands, USDA and DOI should work with Congress to ensure that there is meaningful local, regional, and national input before any congressional designation.

Action Item 8.5a: Work with Congress to consider new congressional designations of or additions to wilderness, wild and scenic rivers, national parks, national wildlife refuges, and national conservation system lands. Priority for federal support should be given to sites where strong local, regional and national support exists. (DOI and USDA)

Action Item 8.5b: The NPS will identify key natural areas and cultural themes underrepresented in the National Park System to guide congressional designation of sites that may deserve such recognition and protection. Recommendations for protecting individual sites would still be made through existing procedures that take into account the criteria enumerated in law. (DOI-NPS)

GOAL C Protect America’s historic and cultural resources.

On public lands and elsewhere in regions and communities, historic preservation can have benefits beyond protecting resources. It can serve as a catalyst to reinvigorate communities and economies while instilling pride in local history and traditions. It can add an important dimension to understanding and experiencing national parks and other special outdoor places. Historic preservation and cultural resources protection can attract visitors who support local businesses, increase job opportunities, revitalize urban or rural communities, and encourage reuse of historic buildings. To affirm and reinforce the connection between the American people and America’s great outdoors in all its richness and diversity, build on the linkages between our natural and our cultural heritage.

Recommendation 8.6 Provide financial and technical support to states and local communities, tribes, and private sector organizations for historic preservation and cultural resources protection.

The federal government offers an extensive portfolio of community assistance programs to support tribal, state and local governments, and private-sector preservation efforts, from planning assistance and capital grants to wide ranging technical support. Participants in the public input process strongly encouraged the federal government to more actively support local state, tribal, and regional historic preservation work.

Action Item 8.6a: Increase funding for the Historic Preservation Fund. (DOI)

Action Item 8.6b: Expand support for state, tribal, and community historic preservation efforts for capital projects, planning, interpretation, community-based surveying, and technical assistance that support partnerships and community-based preservation activities. (DOI)

Action Item 8.6c: Establish through legislation clearly defined standards and processes to support a system of regional and community-based national heritage areas that promote locally supported preservation work, promote heritage tourism, and create jobs. (DOI)

Action Item 8.6d: Continue supporting battlefield preservation through partnerships with historic preservation land trusts to fund acquisition of historically significant, threatened battlefields emphasizing Civil War sites, as part of the Civil War Sesquicentennial from 2011 to 2015. (DOI)

Recommendation 8.7 Continue to protect and interpret historic sites and cultural landscapes on federal lands.

Action Item 8.7a: Elevate the importance of cultural resources planning, protection, and interpretation in the federal land management agencies. (DOI, ACHP, USDA, DOD, and USACE)



NATIONAL PARK SERVICE - LADD PHOTO / MOUNT RAINIER NATIONAL PARK, WASHINGTON

“I live in Michigan, a wonderful state that has seen its share of difficult economic times of late. What is a constant source of pride, however, is the natural beauty of the Great Lakes and the thousands of lakes, streams, and rivers that cover the entire state.” (Listening Session Participant, Missoula, MT)

9. Protect and Renew Rivers and Other Waters

Water is life. The more than 3.6 million miles of rivers and streams that wind through our nation provide America’s drinking water, fuel the economy, sustain critical ecosystems, and offer endless opportunities for recreation and enjoyment.³⁹ From the Columbia River to the upper Midwest prairie potholes to the Tennessee and Penobscot valleys, water has shaped the nation’s social, cultural, and economic development and enabled its prosperity. Virtually all of our cities and towns are next to waterways, making these waters an outdoor opportunity close to home for all. Today, American life remains inextricably linked to the rivers and shores on which it was founded.

Federal projects are underway to restore and conserve large-scale, aquatic ecosystems in Florida’s Everglades, Chesapeake Bay, Great Lakes, Gulf Coast, California Bay-Delta, Mississippi River Basin, Washington’s Puget Sound, and many others. Federal, state, and local governments and private organizations and landowners have built effective partnerships to restore and protect these remarkable systems. Under this Administration, a number of these efforts have been given additional emphasis and resources. Because these projects are well underway, this report offers no specific recommendations for these ecosystems. However, these large restoration projects can serve as laboratories for—and have spurred—many smaller watershed-level projects, expanding water conservation whether in wetlands of California’s Klamath Basin Nation Wildlife Refuge or in a city-scale project such as the Los Angeles River. This existing work can further benefit from many recommendations in this report.

³⁹ Environmental Protection Agency Report on National Water Quality, 1998.

“Waterways should be central to AGO themes. Not only waterways in urban areas but also from their source. The upper watersheds are in danger in many areas. Focus on multi-jurisdictional projects that protect the watershed and provide for recreation from the source down. Waterways would also appear as a “new” emphasis and give a refreshed image.” (Listening Session Participant, Missoula, MT)

In AGO listening sessions, participants expressed their passion for the rich natural and cultural history of our waterways, impressive knowledge of their economic and ecological importance, and enthusiasm for their conservation. Hundreds of people described steps they are taking to protect and connect with the rivers and waterways in their communities to promote conservation, recreation, and economic growth and community redevelopment. Interest in water-based recreation, such as kayaking and canoeing, is growing. In December 2006, Congress designated as a national historic trail the routes of John Smith’s explorations of Chesapeake Bay and environs more than 400 years ago. This first national water trail effectively demonstrates both the historic and recreational values of these corridors. Americans across the country are working together at the local level to create navigable, accessible, community-scale water trails that connect communities to their water resources and natural environment close to home.

Unfortunately, not all communities can access their local waterways due to physical barriers, unsafe conditions, or because they are not aware that these resources are close at hand. Federal assistance can empower communities to become aware of, restore, and connect with these rich natural resources. Federal vision can help community water recreation trails connect as a national network for healthy recreation that supports ecological and economic revitalization. Congress has now designated two water trails because of their recreational and historic significance: the Captain John Smith Chesapeake National Historic Trail and the Star Spangled Banner National Historic Trail in Maryland.

GOAL A Empower communities to connect with America’s great outdoors through their rivers and other waterways.

Americans across the country shared stories of working together to create recreation within reach by reconnecting with their local rivers and other waterways. This work also connects their communities to nearby green space and other special places. Recently completed regional water trails in New England and the Pacific Northwest span hundreds of miles and link dozens of cities and towns to the great outdoors. In South Carolina, the new Congaree River Blue Trail links the capital city of Columbia to Congaree National Park with the state’s most expansive swath of wilderness and the largest intact old-growth bottomland hardwood forest in the southeastern United States.⁴⁰ Communities are creating a system of water and biking trails along the Anacostia River in the District of Columbia and Maryland. It will soon connect the National Park Service’s Kenilworth Park and Aquatic Garden to downtown museums and other parks and recreation in the Nation’s Capital.

⁴⁰ Congaree National Park fact sheet. www.nps.gov/cong/naturescience.

Recommendation 9.1 Establish the AGO National Recreational Blueway Trails Initiative to increase access to recreation.

In listening sessions people strongly encouraged the federal government to help communities enhance recreational opportunities in local waterways and adjacent green space, including by creating a national blueways initiative. A *blueway* is a designated community-scale portion of river recognized as a destination for fishing, boating, wildlife watching, and other recreation, which should get special attention for restoration and access.

Action Item 9.1a: Develop a transparent process to designate rivers and waterways as AGO National Recreation Trails Blueways, through existing authorities in the National Trails System Act, as amended. (USDA and DOI, working with DOD, USACE, EPA, and other agencies)

Nominations to the AGO National Recreation Blueway Trails Initiative will be locally driven and will include partnerships with federal, state, and local agencies, tribes, nonprofit organizations, the private sector, private landowners, and other entities.

Action Item 9.1b: Provide technical assistance and leverage investments that help public agencies and nonprofit organizations plan for designating and implementing an AGO National Recreation Blueway Trail, within existing programs and designation. (DOI, EPA, USDA, DOC, DOD, and USACE)

Recommendation 9.2 Facilitate recreational access to the nation's waterways.

In many parts of the country, community access to rivers and lakes for recreation—fishing, boating, and swimming—is limited. Comments from the listening sessions call for the federal government to provide more incentives, expertise, and financial assistance to increase access to waterways.

Action Item 9.2a: Increase access for water-based recreation, including along AGO National Recreation Blueway Trails, by updating existing programs' project selection criteria to consider projects that provide or improve access, including the NPS *LWCF stateside program*. (DOI, USDA, DOC, DOD, and USACE)

Action Item 9.2b: Facilitate information exchange and networking among communities working to improve access to and enjoyment of urban waters through an *Urban Waters Initiative* learning network. (EPA)

Action Item 9.2c: Align and improve efficiency among federal and local transportation and infrastructure agencies to promote community access to neighborhood waterways. (EPA, DOT, USDA, DOC, and DOI)

GOAL B Support restoration and conservation of rivers, bays, coasts, lakes, and estuaries for recreation, healthy fisheries, and wildlife habitat.

Growing awareness of the link between healthy communities and healthy watersheds has shifted the emphasis from large-scale, federally funded water supply, power generation, or flood control to a more comprehensive approach that considers economic, social, wildlife, and recreational benefits. The federal government should integrate federal water resources projects with locally driven watershed protection efforts. Federal agencies should expand support for community-based restoration and conservation of water resources.

Recommendation 9.3 Enhance and restore local waterways and the surrounding land by partnering with state, local, and tribal government, and the private sector to support community efforts.

The public encouraged the federal government to expand support for community-based protection and improvement of the nation's waters. Locally supported restoration projects may result in enhanced fish passage, habitat restoration and connectivity, water-based recreation, flood control, traditional uses, and adjacent land-based recreation. The AGO Initiative will focus and align technical and financial support for community-based water restoration.

Action Item 9.3a: Strengthen federal partnership work on urban waters and support related agency-level programs, such as the proposed EPA *Urban Waters Initiative*. Through federal coordination and community partnerships, these programs revitalize urban waters and the nearby communities. They transform overlooked assets into treasured centerpieces and drivers of urban revival. (EPA, USDA, DOC, and DOI) *(See Recommendation 6.3c)*

Action Item 9.3b: Align federal programs that provide planning and technical assistance to communities and local governments or support increased community stewardship of urban waters, such as NOAA *Open Rivers Program*; the FWS *Fish Passage Initiative and National Fish Habitat Plan*; and EPA *Urban Waters Program*. (EPA, USDA, DOC, DOD, and DOI)

Recommendation 9.4 Coordinate and align federal water resource management programs and resources.

Many federal agencies have water management programs or provide financial and technical assistance for state and local water resources management. Improving coordination among agencies is essential to support existing resource uses and to achieve restoration, habitat, and recreation goals for the nation's rivers, lakes, estuaries, and wetlands. Key opportunities identified in listening sessions include sharing of water data and models; recognizing and planning for emerging challenges, such as

“Water should be a pillar of AGO, project reconnect and restore [to] connect Americans to land and water resources through education and recreation.” (Listening Session Participant, Washington, D.C.)

the impact of climate change on water resources; and coordinating diverse water projects within a watershed to improve the sustainability and resilience of water resources.

Action Item 9.4a: Reduce fish passage barriers in America’s streams and rivers on federal lands by targeting work to restore water quality and critically endangered aquatic species and to expand recreational fishing. (DOI, USDA, DOD, and USACE)

Action Item 9.4b: Identify existing mechanisms for—and ways to strengthen—coordination among water resources management agencies at federal, state, local, and tribal levels. (AGO Council)

Action Item 9.4c: Develop a pilot project with state and local partners to integrate land conservation with watershed-scale water management. (DOD-USACE, EPA, USDA, and DOI)



THE NATURE CONSERVANCY - ©MALDE PHOTO / SILVER CREEK PRESERVE, IDAHO

Working Together for America's Great Outdoors

10. Make the Federal Government a More Effective Conservation Partner

“Inconsistency across agencies, confusing bureaucratic processes and administrative hurdles, rules and regulations that often seem punitive, are poorly explained, and change with land ownership boundaries: these are all obstacles to many people who seek to visit the outdoors. Much of this could be addressed through better communication, both between agencies and from agencies to local communities and the public.” (Listening Session Participant, Lander, WY)

Partnerships will be critical to the success of the America's Great Outdoors Initiative, a fact confirmed by many public comments. People across the nation called for better collaboration between the public and private sectors; state, local, and tribal governments; and between local communities and the federal government to help citizens realize the wide-ranging benefits of a revitalized connection to the outdoors.

No single entity, whether federal, state, local, or private, can provide the resources needed to achieve the breadth and depth of action proposed in this report. American citizens expressed their desire for better coordination among federal agencies and better delivery of services to the public to achieve these goals for enhanced conservation and outdoor recreation. They noted the frustrations that can occur as partners work with the federal government. Some even lose interest because of excessive and uncoordinated procedures and reviews for new proposals. Others want federal agencies to engage underserved communities, as partners with local governments and the private sector, to identify the financial, cultural, and safety barriers to these populations' accessing and enjoying the outdoors. People want strategies to overcome these obstacles.

Members of the public also said the federal government needs to align its existing resources, authorities, and funding to achieve the goals of AGO.

What has clearly emerged is that the federal government itself, with its many agencies and programs for conservation and recreation, must improve how it works with stakeholders. Americans are ready and willing to work with their government to reconnect to the great outdoors. They just want to be met half-way. The federal government can take the following steps to be a better conservation partner and foster the national conversation on the AGO Initiative.

GOAL A Improve federal government performance as a conservation partner.

Connecting people and places across the nation with conservation and recreation work requires commitment and resources from more than just one agency or organization. Partnerships must be created and supported to ensure the success of the AGO Initiative. Collaboration will be encouraged between the public and private sectors; state, local, and tribal governments and the private sector; between natural resource and cultural resource interests; and between local communities and the federal government. This will lead to innovative approaches and will support existing programs for conservation and connectivity in America.

Recommendation 10.1 Establish the interagency AGO Council to achieve more cooperation and collaboration among federal agencies engaged in conservation and recreation.

A common theme of the listening sessions and public comments was that the federal government can be more efficient and effective even without more money or new legislation. We must improve coordination among federal agencies and focus existing authorities, processes, and procedures across all agencies. Lastly, agencies can create incentives to reward and encourage the good work by federal employees.

Action Item 10.1a: Establish the interagency AGO Council co-chaired by the Chair of CEQ and the Director of OMB with a steering committee of senior officials from CEQ, OMB, DOI, USDA and EPA. Other AGO council members shall include senior officials from: DOC, DOD (including USACE), HHS, HUD, DOL, DOT, EPA, CNCS, ACHP, and other agencies as appropriate.

The AGO Council will:

- Coordinate intergovernmental efforts to implement the AGO action plan.
- Report to the President annually on progress on AGO Initiative goals outlined in the action plan.
- Develop a one-stop access to federal agency rules, procedures, programs information, and resources for government officials, private sector, landowners, and individuals.
- Communicate with affected tribes consistent with Executive Order 13175 of November 6, 2009, on consultation and coordination with Indian tribal governments, as well as with other stakeholders.

“Paperwork that accompanies some of the federal programs is a deterrent.” (Listening Session Participant, Charleston, SC)

Action Item 10.1b: Within 180 days of being established, the AGO Council will publish a plan with assignments and timelines to improve agency coordination, align federal programs, and implement this report. (AGO Council)

Action Item 10.1c: Hold periodic listening sessions and maintain the AGO website and Facebook page to sustain public input and engagement. (AGO Council)

GOAL B Amplify the impact of the AGO Initiative by creating the Partnership for AGO.

The President charged the leaders of the AGO Initiative to “Build upon State, local, private, and tribal priorities for conservation...and determine how the federal government can best advance those priorities through public-private partnerships...” Americans echoed his words. Fundamental to 21st-century conservation success must be innovative partnerships and broad-based commitment to conservation and recreation. Public-private partnerships can be nimble, distribute expertise, leverage investment, inspire children, share models, and promote awareness.

Recommendation 10.2 Launch the Partnership for AGO.

Engage leaders from philanthropy, the private sector, conservation, historic preservation, state and local government, tribes, recreation, education, and community groups to establish the Partnership for AGO to support the vision and goals of the AGO Initiative. Working through congressionally chartered foundations, including the National Park Foundation, National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, National Forest Foundation, and the National Environmental Education Foundation, these leaders would report to the President through the AGO Council within six months to build a lasting Partnership for AGO to:

- Engage citizens to implement AGO recommendations;
- Focus philanthropy and other investment on AGO goals;
- Expand private sector engagement with and investment to coordinate in AGO goals;
- Broaden partnerships to coordinate nonprofit, private, and government sector focus on AGO goals;
- Explore alternative financing for operations and maintenance needs of federal agencies;



NATIONAL PARK SERVICE - PEACO PHOTO / YELLOWSTONE NATIONAL PARK, IDAHO, MONTANA, WYOMING

America's Great Outdoors Vision Statement

Americans envision a future in which:

All children, regardless of where they live, have access to clean, safe outdoor places within a short walk of their homes or schools, where they can play, dream, discover, and recreate.

Americans participate in the shared responsibility to protect and care for our unique natural and cultural heritage for the use and enjoyment of future generations.

Rural lands—our working farms, ranches, and forests—are conserved and restored through incentives and local partnerships.

Our national parks, national wildlife refuges, national forests, and other public lands and waters are managed with a renewed commitment to sound stewardship and resilience.

Our natural areas and waterways, whether publicly or privately owned, are reconnected, healthy, and resilient and support both human needs and the wildlife that depend on them.

Communities work together to restore and protect healthy rivers and lakes to provide recreational opportunities and to contribute significantly to a vibrant economy.

- Broadcast best practices for science and planning and innovation in conservation and recreation to reconnect people to the outdoors; and
- Develop ways to evaluate success.

Action Item 10.2a: Engage diverse leaders from philanthropy, the private sector, conservation, recreation, historic preservation, state and local government, tribes and community groups to establish the foundation for the Partnership for AGO as an entity charged with supporting the vision and goals of the AGO Initiative. (AGO Council)



U.S. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS PHOTO / AGO LISTENING SESSION, GODFREY, ILLINOIS

Youth and America's Great Outdoors

What We Heard from America's Young People

The Special Role of Young People

On April 16, 2010, President Obama launched the America's Great Outdoors Initiative (AGO). The President called upon the Departments of the Interior and Agriculture, the Environmental Protection Agency, and the White House Council on Environmental Quality to lead the effort of developing an agenda for 21st-century conservation and for reconnecting Americans to our nation's lands and waters.⁴¹ Senior representatives from these agencies and others convened public meetings across the nation that brought together farmers, ranchers, sporting enthusiasts, conservationists, business owners, tribal, state and local government representatives, parents, young people, teachers and others to share their insights about conservation and about both the challenges facing our lands and waters and innovative, community-based approaches to tackle them.

From the start, President Obama recognized the importance of young people. He directed that "special attention... be given to bringing young Americans into the conversation" and worried about the fact that young people today spend about half as much time outdoors as their parents did. To honor and capture the youth voice, the America's Great Outdoors team launched a series of listening sessions aimed to hear from you—America's young people. We wanted to know how you relate to the outdoors and why it is special to you. We also asked you why the American people are losing touch with the natural world, to identify the obstacles that keep you from spending more time outdoors, and we challenged you to give us your ideas about how they might be

⁴¹ President Obama asked that the following agencies work with the AGO leads to identify existing resources and align policies and programs to achieve its goals: Departments of Defense, Commerce, Housing and Urban Development, Health and Human Services, Labor, Transportation, and Education; and the Office of Management and Budget.

overcome. After hearing from you at 21 youth listening sessions—and through hundreds of comments you submitted online—we have a broader understanding of your passion, commitment, experiences, opinions, and expectations—and some great ideas to help us move forward together.

What Went Into this Report: Listening to You

We organized our first AGO youth listening session in Missoula, Montana, on June 2, 2010, with the help of local youth leaders. The enthusiasm and energy from that meeting led us to host 21 youth listening sessions in over a dozen cities and towns, from Los Angeles, California, to Minneapolis, Minnesota, to Lawrence, Kansas, where we met with students at Haskell Indian Nations University. For each session, we worked with local host committees comprised of local youth leaders, student groups, Job Corps participants and others to help organize the public sessions and to send out public meeting notices aimed at participants between the ages of 16 to 25.

Each of the listening sessions followed a similar framework. A representative from the AGO team began by introducing the America's Great Outdoors initiative and linking our efforts to your town or community. We then divided to breakout rooms, where you joined a facilitated discussion and collectively come up with a set of recommendations that you presented to the whole group at the end of the session. In certain locations, we organized our sessions around specific themes, like historic preservation, recreation, environmental justice, health, and native youth. We have incorporated what we heard in those conversations into this special youth report and into the report to the President, *America's Great Outdoors: A Promise to Future Generations*.⁴²

Your comments coalesced around four themes that describe, or define, your relationship to the outdoors: relevance, access, employment and service, and education. At listening sessions across the country, you described the challenges you face in each of these areas, and proposed thoughtful ideas for how to overcome them. The purpose of this report is to recognize and organize your comments into a youth agenda for America's great outdoors. We wrote this to be a “living document”—one that provides a foundation and impetus for change without prescribing a process. Throughout this process, we have made every effort to preserve the original intent and spirit of your comments. We hope this document captures what you shared and inspires you to keep the conversation going.

⁴² The final report, *America's Great Outdoors: A Promise to Future Generations*, can be found at www.doi.gov/AmericasGreatOutdoors.

Exploring the Special Relationship Between Young People and the Outdoors

To better understand your relationship with the outdoors, we began each listening session by asking *“Where do you go when you are not indoors? What do you like to do there?”*

“I do pretty much anything and everything in the outdoors. My family has a farm—we hike a lot in the backcountry. I sketch outdoors, do whatever else I can get into.” —Hyde Park, NY

“I like to do normal, day-to-day activities outside, in city parks—sports, reading, etc.” —Asheville, NC

Through remarks, discussion, jokes, stories, and even a song—you showed us how much people your age care about, and yearn to connect more meaningfully with the outdoors. You listed several reasons for spending time outdoors: from relaxation, and inspiration, team sports, recreation, and exercise, to discovering historical and cultural sites, to family vacations and school trips. You made it clear that the “great outdoors” means something different to everyone, and that your views of and experiences in the natural world depend in large part upon the circumstances of your childhood and your proximity to outdoor places. For some of you, going outdoors means traveling to remote places like the majestic vistas of the Grand Canyon, the hardwood forests of the northeast, the warm beaches of the Gulf Coast, or the choppy waters of the Puget Sound. Others of you defined the outdoors as any space beyond your front doorstep, including local parks and playgrounds, your school’s sports fields, or a greenway that links one part of your city to another. Many of you who grew up in more rural settings viewed the outdoors through the perspective of your family’s farm or ranch, conveying a deep understanding of—and appreciation for—the streams, trails, and fields that had been core to your identity since childhood. Similarly, the range of what you do in the outdoors ranges from walking your dog and playing games like capture the flag, to organized team sports, to more extreme activities, such as rock climbing, snowmobiling, mountain biking, and motocross. Many of you were devoted campers and hikers, and spoke of your skills in fishing, hunting, and archery. In general, though, you appeared more likely to visit places close to home, often accompanied by friends or family.

The diversity of your responses demonstrates that young people view the outdoors through multiple lenses and that each of your relationships with the natural world is deeply personal and is a product of complex factors, including geographic location and proximity to outdoor places,



NATIONAL PARK SERVICE PHOTO / LEWIS AND CLARK NATIONAL AND STATE HISTORICAL PARK, OREGON AND WASHINGTON

family background, education, and personal interests. You showed us that there is truly no “one-size-fits-all” approach for making America’s Great Outdoors more relevant to today’s youth.

After speaking to you about your relationship with the outdoors, we wanted to learn more about what you do to take care of it. Our second question was *“What do you do personally to protect the environment? What do you see others around you doing?”*

“It’s important to focus on the little things you can do in your everyday life—changing light bulbs, showering efficiently, and recycling.”
—Annapolis, MD

“I started a climate action group at high school. We need young people to set an example and take the lead.” —Annapolis, MD

Several of you expressed your concern for the environment and described yourselves as leading sustainable, “green” lifestyles. From recycling and buying reusable products to turning off the lights and air conditioning, many of you are taking meaningful steps to reduce your impact on the environment. Some of you volunteer in community gardens or co-ops, helping to revitalize and protect the nature in your neighborhoods. Many of you have volunteered for ecosystem restoration projects to improve and enhance local lands and waters. Others of you compost and carpool whenever possible. We also heard about young people who participate in environmental fairs, join or establish student environmental clubs, and undertake other creative efforts to “green” your homes, schools and communities. Several of you expressed a desire to convert your passion for the outdoors into a career— aspiring to jobs in forestry, forest firefighting, conservation, farming, outdoor education, engineering, and cultural preservation. On the other hand, some of you shared a belief that “going green” is a personal decision, and is not something to proclaim or impose upon others. You explained how a rigid or self-righteous stance might offend your peers or family. In the end, most of you agreed on the paramount importance of environmental education to illuminate the multiple meanings and intrinsic value of nature—and to explain the responsibility we share to protect it.

A Youth Agenda for America's Great Outdoors

Through your participation in listening sessions and the comments you submitted online, you explained why you want to connect with the outdoors and described the challenges you face in doing so. You proposed constructive suggestions for breaking down these barriers, and discovered a shared purpose along the way. Together—based on your priorities, abilities, and aspirations—we have begun to shape an agenda for connecting youth to America's great outdoors in the 21st century. This agenda encompasses four key goals:

- A. Make the outdoors *relevant* to today's young people: make it inviting, exciting, and fun;
- B. Ensure that all young people have *access* to outdoor places that are safe, clean, and close to home;
- C. Empower and enable youth to *work and volunteer* in the outdoors;
- D. Build upon a base of *environmental and outdoor education*, both formal and informal.

A. Make the outdoors relevant to youth—make it inviting, exciting and fun.

Although many of you have had extraordinary experiences—and are deeply invested—in the outdoors, you observed a growing detachment from nature among your peers. Studies show that today's youth are spending half as much time outside as your parents did—and over seven hours per day in front of a screen.⁴³ As a result, your mental and physical health is at risk. A decline in physical activity has contributed to soaring obesity rates among America's young people. In the past thirty years, childhood obesity rates have tripled, and now one third of American children are overweight or obese, and therefore more susceptible to heart disease, asthma, cancer, and other health conditions.⁴⁴ Recreation in the outdoors is an antidote to many of these health risks, and research indicates that regular exposure to nature lowers stress, cultivates creativity, and builds self-confidence among young people. Conversely, it has been suggested that excessive “screen time” detracts from social development and concentration, and foster a dependency on overstimulation.⁴⁵

⁴³ Rideout, V. J., Foehr, U., & Roberts, D. F. (2010). *Generation M2: Media in the Lives of 8- to 18-Year-Olds*. Menlo Park: Henry J. Kaiser Family Foundation.

⁴⁴ Daniels, S. R., Jacobson, M. S., McCrindle, B. W., Eckel, R. H., & McHugh Sanner, B. (2009). American Heart Association Childhood Obesity Research Summit Executive Summary. *Circulation*, 2224.

⁴⁵ Richtel, M. (2010, November 21). *The New York Times*. Retrieved December 13, 2010, from “Growing up Digital, Wired for Distraction”: http://www.nytimes.com/2010/11/21/technology/21brain.html?_r=1&scp=1&csq=growing%20up%20digital&st=cse.

Many of you are aware of this nexus between health and the outdoors, and you understand the importance of regular activity to your overall wellbeing. At the same time, you mentioned several reasons why the outdoors is not always relevant, fun, and inviting for today's young people. These include: changing social values, lack of parental interest or familiarity with the outdoors, the inaccessibility of information about destinations both near and far, and about what young people can do when they get there. In addition, many of you admitted that the lure of technology and electronic media often keeps you indoors.

Challenges You Identified

Changing Social Values: “A lot of parents just don’t care. I just took a 15-year-old friend who’d never been camping in her life. I have friends who have never seen snow or gone skiing. It all depends on your family. If they don’t care, you will never get the chance.”
—Philadelphia, PA

Throughout the listening sessions, we observed evidence of a generational shift in the way young people think about and experience nature. Most of the adults we engaged in the general listening sessions told stories of childhoods spent outdoors: farming, hunting, fishing, horseback and bike riding, exploring the woods, and sleeping under the stars. Now, only some of you could personally relate to those experiences. Many more of you describe the outdoors as remote, mysterious, and sometimes, scary. Likewise, several of you told us that you do not have the “skills” necessary to participate in activities like camping, hiking, and mountain biking. More importantly, you said that nobody ever took you outside. Indeed, those of you who had spent a lot of time outside attributed your familiarity with—and appreciation for—nature to the parents, caregivers, teachers, mentors, or camp instructors who had instilled these values in you as young children.

Access to Information: “It’s not just about getting people out there, but how to use it once they are there. Some people see a mountain as a place to ski, some want to hike up it, others just think it’s pretty. You have to show people all of the options to enjoy it.” —Annapolis, MD

In listening sessions across the country, we heard you say that you want to experience and understand the great outdoors, but you need help figuring out where to go, what to do, and how to get there. You complained that government websites are neither user-friendly, nor engaging, and do not answer these questions in a way that makes sense to young people. To communicate with younger generations and help them enjoy the great outdoors, you said, the government must use modern technology and social media tools.

***The Influence of Media and Technology:** “Now that there is more and more technology available, parents have even more challenges to get their kids outdoors. They need to take responsibility and take their kids outdoors.” —Minneapolis, MN*

From Facebook and YouTube to texting, and electronic games, the temptation to spend time in front of a screen has a grip on you. In the absence of technological toys, you said, the outdoors can seem kind of... boring. But, it doesn't have to be that way, we heard. Several of you remarked on the liberation you felt when you left your electronic devices at home—once freed from your phone, you admitted to focusing better on your friends and the world around you. You shared your ideas for how to bring technology into the outdoors through phone applications, online games or contests, and interactive mapping tools. Social networking is an excellent way to coordinate an impromptu snowball fight or game of hide and seek, you told us. These tools will be necessary to make our parks and open spaces more accessible and exciting for people your age.

Your ideas for making the outdoors relevant to youth:

- Bridge the gap between technology and the outdoors by developing innovative tools, like nature-based mobile phone applications, GPS devices, and online challenges.
- Launch a national outdoor youth campaign to raise awareness of the importance of the outdoors to health and our nation's history and economy, including concerts, rallies, and youth summits.
- Keep the conversation going by continuing to hold regional listening sessions for youth.
- Create a user-friendly web portal that shows young people where to go and what to do in the great outdoors.
- Host free events to introduce youth and their families to outdoor activities they can enjoy for a lifetime.
- Help native youth reconnect with their heritage by enabling them to practice traditional outdoor activities, like hunting, fishing and archery

B. Ensure that all young people have access to outdoor places that are safe, clean, and close to home.

Many of you talked about the importance of having safe, easy access to quality outdoor places and experiences. You identified five main challenges related to transportation, cost, safety, time, environmental health, and the quality and cleanliness of public facilities. You explained that these

barriers often make visiting any sort of outdoor space - from national wildlife refuges to city parks—difficult, or unappealing.

Challenges You Identified

Transportation: *“City transportation and general transportation is lacking. We need better public transportation to get around to different areas in the city, and we need shuttles that take people to outdoor spaces further away.” —Albuquerque, NM*

In communities across the country, we learned about the shortage of green space close to home and the resulting dependence on parents or public transportation to reach outdoor destinations. This challenge is particularly acute for the 80 percent of you who live in or near urban areas, where you told us that traffic, fragmented development, limited trail or sidewalk connectors, and minimal mass transit can prevent people from enjoying the parks and open spaces even within their communities. In general, your comments revealed how challenging it can be for families, schools groups, and young people to enjoy the parks, trails, farms, and rivers both close to home and farther away.

Cost: *“It’s expensive to visit—I can’t afford fees, transportation, or programs.” —Philadelphia, PA*

The real or perceived costs of visiting parks and other places discourage many of you from going out to enjoy them. The cost of transportation, the fees, passes and permits and outdoor gear (skis, kayaks, boots, waders, etc.) that may be required present a real obstacle for young people, families and youth groups. Although you recognize that revenue from these sources are essential to the protection and upkeep of our public lands, for some they make visiting such places less feasible.

Safety: *“Urban areas, gang violence—lots of parents don’t have time to go out with their children and refuse to let them out on their own.” —Asheville, NC*

Fear is stopping some of you from spending time outdoors. Some of you are dissuaded by a “fear of the unknown”—listing bad weather, creepy insects, and strange animals as reasons why you prefer to stay indoors. More than a few of you shared eyewitness accounts of muggings, gang violence, and drug use in parks and open spaces near you. You also described the deteriorating infrastructure in these places, citing broken streetlights, overflowing garbage bins, and graffiti-cloaked restrooms, as contributing to an environment of neglect and danger. In addition, you spoke of the lack of safe routes to parks and open spaces. Crime, traffic, and a lack



U.S. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS PHOTO / ANACOSTIA RIVER, WASHINGTON, D.C.

of connected sidewalks and pathways impair your ability to access the outdoor places near you. You told us that your parents share these fears, and sometimes exacerbate them. Safety concerns were especially prevalent among native youth, many of whom viewed vacant lots and empty spaces as havens of illegal activity. There is no doubt that safety-related concerns—from violent crime to broken bones—prevent some of you from viewing local parks as places to gather, relax, and recreate.

Limited Free Time: *“School and social time takes up so much time that there isn’t free time for [young people] to spend outside, and schools have stopped taking them outside for coursework.”*
—Minneapolis, MN

Some of you cited a packed schedule as your primary reason for not spending more time outdoors. With school, sports, jobs, community service and other responsibilities consuming your waking hours, you have minimal free time. And you told us, when you do have a break, getting outdoors is not as easy or exciting as staying in and watching TV or playing a video game.

Environmental Health: *“Pollution prevents us from doing certain activities, like swimming in Lake Washington.”* —Seattle, WA

Many of you expressed concern for the quality of your local environment. Air and water pollution were listed as reasons for not spending time outdoors, particularly in urban and industrial areas. In some communities, you linked pollution to public health, listing asthma and cancer as byproducts of a toxic environment. These conversations were particularly charged among native youth, many of whom complained of a lack of clean drinking water and contamination on their reservations. Many of you noted the prevalence of garbage and illegal dumping of things from old cars to toxic waste in and around public lands and on reservations.

Quality of the Built Environment: *“If a place is dirty, you would rather stay inside. If you are from the city and not used to being in nature in the first place, this will not be a good experience.”*
—Minneapolis, MN

Poorly maintained or outdated infrastructure, including degrading trails and other recreational infrastructure, camp sites, restroom facilities, and visitor centers was another factor that discouraged some of you from visiting parks and outdoor places. We heard that ready access to—and proper signage of—trails is critical to your enjoyment of parks and open spaces. Several of you mentioned that many public lands and facilities are not

sufficiently equipped for people with special needs, and those for whom English is not their first language. Oftentimes the failure to manage the environment and pollution of ecosystems on and off the reservation directly impacts Native populations. The failure to realize and understand the cultural values and the substance needs of Native populations has resulted in a sense of helplessness and a lack of ownership and stewardship of the environment for native populations.

Your ideas for ensuring that all young people have access to safe clean, and close to home outdoor places:

- Create more parks near and in communities, including networks of connected trails, bike paths, and greenways, and urban gardens and community “pocket parks.”
- Improve access to open spaces, both within cities and beyond their limits, by expanding options for public transportation and linking sidewalks and pathways to create safe routes to parks,
- Reduce barriers to using parks by lowering entry fees for young people and families.
- Make outdoor recreation more affordable through innovative concepts like “gear libraries” or other low-cost options for sharing recreational and safety equipment.
- Make parks more welcoming, safe, and usable by cleaning up garbage, and taking better care of existing facilities like trails, signage, and restrooms.
- Work with individual communities to reduce crime and gang activity in neighborhood parks and open spaces, and on native lands

C. Empower and enable youth to work and volunteer in the outdoors.

In cities and towns across the country, you expressed a powerful desire to increase jobs opportunities in America’s great outdoors. You worried because unemployment rates are highest among youth and you face particular difficulties breaking into the job market. According to the Department of Labor’s Bureau of Labor Statistics, the percentage of young people employed in July 2010 was 48.9 percent, the lowest July record for the series, which began in 1948. You shared your particular frustration with the application and hiring processes at federal agencies, and in some cases admitted to giving up on a government job entirely. You asked us repeatedly to streamline hiring systems and to do a better job of coordinating within the government and with partners. Volunteering was another area where you said the government should improve outreach to engage young people who want to make a difference in conservation.

Jobs and Training: “Expand and fund what we already have. Provide jobs for more youth leaders like MCC [Montana Conservation Corps]. We need people with ideas about what we already have in place. Get the Forest Service or BLM into these organizations speaking, and giving slideshows. Get kids excited about this!”
—Missoula, MT

We heard again and again how tough it is to get a job in the federal government. Some of you shared the perception that there are few jobs and internships available through federal agencies. Others of you were aware that such opportunities existed, but did not know where to go to find them. You told us that the time and tedium of the application process often discouraged you from seeking work with the federal government. Those of you who had experiences with the federal Job Corps, spoke very highly of your experiences, and recommended better coordination and support for the efforts of individual conservation corps programs. You also identified a need for increased training and clearer career pathways at land management agencies. In addition, your comments reflected a need to recruit more diverse youth to work on public lands. The more inclusive our agencies, you told us, the more effective and relevant we will be.

Volunteer Opportunities: “Provide training for volunteers and find funds for people to get certifications for their projects and training to learn to lead service projects.” —Hyde Park, NY

“Service learning addresses a lot of issues both indoors and outdoors. [It] provides the opportunity to learn about chemicals, connects with other classes, and affect mindsets.” —Asheville, NC

Another meaningful way that many of you have gained experience in the outdoors is through service-learning, through your schools, religious institutions, hunting and fishing clubs, scouts, young farmer organizations, conservation corps and other programs. Many of you have participated or have friends who joined various youth service organizations, which you unanimously called to expand. You spoke very highly of your volunteer experiences, and articulated a need to coordinate and support organizations like these, which cultivate outdoor skills and build a stewardship ethic.

At the same time, you cited a lack of coordination at the national, state, and local level as a key barrier to engaging volunteers in conservation activities on public and private lands and waters. You said that the federal government must work better with partners to increase opportunities for outdoor service, and train and help manage a robust, multi-generational volunteer corps. Expanding public-private partnerships for service, you said, will improve the quality of our lands and waters, enhance local

economies, bring communities together, and promote greater appreciation of the great outdoors. To build capacity for these projects at the local level, you called upon experienced youth leaders, adults, and seniors to act as mentors and ambassadors to other youth to help build positive relationships with and experiences in the outdoors.

***Working Lands:** “We need to support outdoor environmental areas, including farms and ranches. These areas are open space, wildlife habitat. We need to maintain private lands because they serve multiple purposes. There needs to be more support for farmers and ranchers.”
—Albuquerque, NM*

Some of your comments reflected a deep, personal appreciation of the importance of private working lands to the fabric of our nation, both because of the food and fiber they provide, and also because of the history and culture and wildlife habitat they support. You spoke of how working and volunteering on farms, ranches, and private forest land serves as an important and valuable outdoor experience. You championed the importance of these lands as open space and habitat for wildlife, calling for programs that would support the multiple uses of land and help small farmers and ranchers incorporate sustainable practices to keep their working lands working. You called for programs that show landowners how to support ecosystem functions and wildlife habitat on their property and provide incentive programs that encourage habitat maintenance.

Your ideas for empowering and enabling youth to work and volunteer in the outdoors:

- Increase interest in and access to careers in land and resource management through mentoring, training, and internships for young farmers, ranchers, and conservationists.
- Raise awareness of job and service opportunities on public lands and streamline the application process through better and easier access to information online.
- Build a modern Youth Conservation Corps to engage America’s young people, veterans, and underserved populations in the stewardship and conservation of our lands and waters.
- Bring communities together for environmental cleanups and restoration projects, including work on native reservations, urban gardens, brownfields, and vacant lots.
- Promote inclusion and diversity in outdoor recreation, education, and in conservation related jobs and volunteer opportunities

D. Build upon a base of environmental and outdoor education, both formal and informal.

Many of you spoke with great passion about outdoor education programs you have participated in. From summer camp in the mountains, to overnight stays at a residential learning center, to outdoor retreats with your church group, to adventures on a YMCA ropes course, these experiences had a deep and ongoing impact on you. Yet, you made it clear that these opportunities are not available to everyone. Today's youth spend most of their time at school or in formal afterschool programs, and increasingly less and less of it is spent outdoors. Although you had outdoor recess during elementary school, by high school, you are often in closed campuses. You expressed a hunger for environmental education and a desire to learn about our country's cultural and historic resources, like the national battlefields and monuments that you told us, "bring history alive."

Environmental Education in Schools: "We need more outdoor classrooms—trips to parks, zoos, and nature in our classes."
—Asheville, NC

"Things that take place in the outside world are things that really exist. Things that take place inside the classroom exist in a textbook. We need to be able to connect... Being outside is a real experience as opposed to textbooks in classrooms."—Hyde Park, NY

For most of you, school dominates your lives. One of your most common complaints was the lack of environmental education built into school curriculum and the cutbacks in field trips to the outdoors. For many, the only nature you see during the school day is in the images of your textbooks or the window of your school bus. From what you told us, these trends are worse in tribal schools, where there are virtually no resources for field trips, and little enthusiasm to make outdoor education a part of the curriculum.

Cultural and Historical Literacy: "These places are different from "parks and recreation" outdoor spaces. Historical sites don't force you to learn, but provide a place to learn and social space—a place to communicate, connect, and be social."—Philadelphia, PA

In addition to wanting to learn more about our country's natural resources, you expressed a desire to connect with our cultural and historic resources. Some of you shared stories of visiting historic sites with your school, and you said that experiencing these places in person makes the lessons you learn every day more real and meaningful. Our listening session in Philadelphia focused on historic preservation. There, we heard



NATIONAL PARK SERVICE - WATERS PHOTO / FORT DUPONT PARK, WASHINGTON, D.C.

from people who live in walking distance of some of America's most iconic historic sites, yet had never seen them in person (or, if they had often they were unaware of their historical significance). Meanwhile, those of you who had explored places like Valley Forge or Independence Hall spoke to the great power of these places to inspire, and educate you in a whole new way.

Outdoor Education Beyond the Classroom: “Get kids out and educate them on the ground, at farms. More focus should be on hands-on education, not on test scores.” —Hyde Park, NY

You shared examples of programs that provide meaningful outdoor experiences beyond the school day, but that are becoming less common with resource constraints. Many of you spoke of after school programs that kept you active and healthy as young kids, and about experiences at summer camps and residential learning centers, which created a deep connection to—and comfort in—the outdoors. Unfortunately, these programs are not available everywhere. They often lack sufficient funding, are not seen as a priority in the larger scheme of things, and are unaffordable for many families. And, given the stringency of statewide testing and evaluation requirements, many teachers may not have the time or incentives to incorporate outdoor education into their lesson plans. Even in areas where these programs do exist and thrive, a large share of the population may not be aware of them.

Mentoring and Leadership: “Teaching kids—you don’t need a huge organization or have to take them way out of the city. We can do this in our own neighborhoods.” —Minneapolis, MN

“I would like to gain new skills in outdoor recreation (pitching a tent, starting a fire, identifying plants and animals, etc.), but I am not sure how.” —Hyde Park, NY

Many of you—especially those in high school or younger—want to connect with the outdoors, but do not have anyone to show you the way. Aware of your parents’ busy schedules or their indifference to the outdoors, and hindered by inadequate access to open space, some of you confessed to not knowing where, or how, to have an outdoor experience. You seek mentors and peer leaders to open the world of the outdoors to you, but you don’t know how or where to find them. Native youth expressed a need for mentorship on many levels—calling for support in school, at home, and in their communities.

***Native Youth and Culture:** “We need to get more involved in the old ways—what we did in the past, like hunting, fishing, putting up teepees, maybe doing archery... to help us get back to our roots and preserve our culture.” —Anandarko, OK*

We observed the environmental education gap most profoundly among native youth, who have a keen desire to rediscover their traditional cultures through the land, via recreation and education. At listening sessions in Kansas and New Mexico, you asked for a more diversified and culturally enriched approach to curriculum and instruction, and suggested that sacred sites in your community could be used to help you understand and take pride in your heritage. Likewise, you expressed a desire to be coached in traditional outdoor activities, such as archery, fishing, canoeing, and hunting. At the same time, many of you appeared skeptical that these changes would ever be implemented. You described several barriers to outdoor education, including decrepit facilities, outdated technology, and an overall lack of resources at your schools. In addition, you cited the disorganization and apathy of adults within and outside of your native communities as a primary reason why nothing was changing.

Your ideas for building upon a base of environmental and outdoor education, both formal and informal:

- Expand outdoor education programs to engage more young people in hands-on, place-based learning experiences.
- Provide more opportunities for kids to get outside during the school day, through curriculum-based activities, service-learning projects, and outdoor recess and P.E.
- Link outdoor professionals, including park and forest rangers, to local school districts to educate teachers and students on the significance of their natural and cultural surroundings, and inspire them to get out and explore the outdoors.
- Increase cultural literacy and cultivate civic pride by helping families and school groups visit historic sites and landscapes.
- Leverage grants and other existing resources to make it easier and more affordable for school groups to access public and private lands.
- Use mentor and ambassador programs to bring young people outdoors and teach them the skills necessary to connect with and enjoy nature.
- Increase outdoor learning experiences in native schools, and incorporate more lessons about sacred sites and practices.

Conclusion

When we kicked off our AGO listening tour in Missoula last June, we had little idea where this initiative would take us, who we would meet, or what we would learn. All we knew was that our nation's lands and waters are in trouble, and we were concerned that people our age do not seem to care enough or spend much time enjoying them. After hearing from over 2,000 of you at 21 public youth listening sessions and thousands of online comments, we are grateful for—and truly inspired by—your commitment, passion, energy, and creativity. We have a much deeper understanding of the significant barriers between America's young people and the natural world. From the cost and availability of transportation to the lack of information, from the scarcity of environmental education to the complexity of the federal hiring process, there are many reasons why youth are less engaged in the outdoors than ever before. At the same time, we witnessed a tremendous level of creativity, collaboration, and leadership in each of the places we visited. In cities and towns across the country, you are breaking down social divides, linking non-traditional partners, and taking advantage of cool, new technologies to make your voices heard. The problems we face are real, but the energy and hope you give us is greater.

This report, your report, contains your ideas of why young people today do and should care about our natural and cultural heritage, the key obstacles that keep you from connecting to the outdoors, as well as your best ideas for how to move forward. Thanks to your energy and dedication, the challenges and solutions you raised are helping to frame the national debate on how to make the outdoors relevant and accessible to all Americans.

The report to the President marks the beginning of what we believe will be a long and transformative dialogue and partnership between the federal government and the people we serve. As we begin to implement the recommendations in the report, we will seek new ways of doing business, looking to replicate and expand successful models we witnessed at the local level. We will collaborate with groups in the public and private sectors, and we will pledge to be a better partner by stepping up transparency, efficiency, and coordination. We will continue to engage with people we met over the summer, and will reach out to new audiences as we seek to advance the President's agenda on America's Great Outdoors. We hope you will join us.



LOS ANGELES CONSERVATION CORPS PHOTO / AGO LISTENING SESSION, RIO DE LOS ANGELES STATE PARK, CALIFORNIA

Next Steps

What we will do:

Young Americans spoke, and we listened. Your comments and insights helped shape the report to the President, *America's Great Outdoors: A Promise to Future Generations*, and established a permanent place for youth in the conversation on America's great outdoors. We, as the federal government, want to work with you to make the outdoors more relevant, accessible, and fun for young people today, and in the future. Over the next several years, we will be working with a range of partners to implement the recommendations in the main report. We need you to continue to be a part of this effort. Please stay in touch through the America's Great Outdoors website and Facebook page.



ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY - VANCE PHOTO

Appendix A

What Went Into the Report

On April 16, 2010, President Obama asked the Secretaries of the Interior and Agriculture, the Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency, and the Chair of the Council on Environmental Quality, in partnership with the Departments of Defense, Commerce, Housing and Urban Development, Health and Human Services, Labor, Transportation, Education, and the Office of Management and Budget to develop a new vision for conservation in America drawn from ideas presented through a series of listening sessions held across the country. Public meetings took place throughout the summer of 2010, resulting in tens of thousands of diverse ideas, policy recommendations, and proposals from the American public. In addition to the listening sessions sponsored by federal agencies, citizens and coalitions of organizations organized their own “homegrown” listening sessions that also gave Americans the ability to weigh in on these deliberations. And, many thousands of Americans provided feedback and comments through e-mail and the America’s Great Outdoors website. In all, more than 105,000 comments contributed to the conversation. These comments and recommendations provide the basis for this report to the President, and a starting point for a continuing conversation on conservation in the 21st century.

Multiagency teams conducted more than 50 listening sessions in communities from Seattle to Charleston. People shared experiences about innovative approaches that can provide outstanding examples for the rest of the nation. A full range of interested groups engaged, including tribal leaders, farmers and ranchers, sports enthusiasts, foresters, motorized recreationists, youth groups, businesspeople, educators, historic preservationists, state and local governments, and land trusts. An extra effort was made to engage young Americans through 21 youth focused listening sessions. In addition to offering personal ideas and stories, participants were asked to respond to the following topics:

- (1) **What Works** - What are the most effective strategies for conservation, recreation, and reconnecting people to the outdoors that you are aware of or have used?
- (2) **Challenges** - What obstacles exist to achieve your goals for conservation, recreation, or reconnecting people to the outdoors?
- (3) **Federal Government Role** - How can the federal government be a more effective partner in helping to achieve goals around conservation, recreation and reconnecting people to the outdoors?
- (4) **Tools** - What additional tools and resources would help your efforts be even more successful?

Ideas and proposed solutions addressed administrative changes, program improvements, science application, funding, and best practices. Review

teams then considered ideas gathered from all forms of input, evaluated relevant budget data, and developed proposals related to the goals set forth in the Presidential Memorandum. The result is this report to the President on America’s Great Outdoors, which identifies goals, recommendations, and actions for the creation of a 21st-century agenda for conservation, recreation, and reconnecting people to the outdoors. It also reviews successful and promising collaborative conservation approaches and analyzes available financial resources and programs that could complement those approaches.

List of Listening Sessions

General Sessions

1. Albuquerque, NM
2. Annapolis, MD
3. Asheville, NC
4. Bangor, ME
5. Bozeman, MT
6. Charleston, SC
7. Chicago, IL
8. Concord, NH
9. Fort Pierre, SD
10. Godfrey, IL/St. Louis, MO
11. Golden, CO
12. Grand Island, NE
13. Grand Junction, CO
14. Helena, MT
15. Kissimmee, FL
16. Los Angeles, CA
17. Minneapolis, MN
18. Missoula, MT
19. Nashville, TN
20. Philadelphia, PA
21. Poughkeepsie, NY
22. Prior Lake, MN – Tribal Focus
23. Salt Lake City, UT
24. Seattle, WA
25. Spokane, WA- Tribal Focus
26. Washington, D.C.

Collaborative Sessions

1. Davis, CA
2. New York, NY
3. Ovando, MT
4. South El Monte, CA

Youth Sessions

1. Albuquerque, NM
2. Anadarko, OK – Tribal Focus
3. Annapolis, MD
4. Asheville, NC
5. Berkeley, CA
6. Chicago, IL
7. Godfrey, IL
8. Golden, CO
9. Grand Island, NE
10. Hyde Park, NY
11. Kissimmee, FL
12. Lawrence, KS – Tribal Focus
13. Los Angeles, CA
14. Minneapolis, MN
15. Missoula, MT
16. Philadelphia, PA
17. Riverside, CA – Tribal Focus
18. Salem, OR – Tribal Focus
19. Salt Lake City, UT
20. Seattle, WA
21. Tuba City, AZ – Tribal Focus

Locally Initiated “Homegrown”

Sessions

1. Austin, TX
2. Boise, ID
3. Boston, MA
4. Boulder, CO
5. Cheyenne, WY
6. Freeport, ME
7. Jackson Hole, WY
8. Lander, WY
9. Portland, OR

Appendix B List of Acronyms

21CSC	21st-Century Conservation Service Corps
ACHP	Advisory Council on Historic Preservation
AGO	America's Great Outdoors
BIA	Bureau of Indian Affairs
BIE	Bureau of Indian Education
BLM	Bureau of Land Management
B-WET	Bay-Watershed Education and Training Program
CCDO	Community Capacity Development Office
CDBG	Community Development Block Grants
CDC	Center for Disease Control and Prevention
CELCP	Coastal and Estuarine Land Conservation Program
CEQ	Council on Environmental Quality
CNCS	Corporation for National and Community Service
CRP	Conservation Reserve Program
CSC	Coastal Services Center
DOC	Department of Commerce
DOD	Department of Defense
DOE	Department of Education
DOI	Department of the Interior
DOJ	Department of Justice
DOL	Department of Labor
DOT	Department of Transportation
EDA	U.S. Economic Development Administration
EPA	Environmental Protection Agency
EQIP	Environmental Quality Incentives Program
FACA	Federal Advisory Committee Act
FICOR	Federal Interagency Council on Outdoor Recreation
FRPP	Farm and Ranch Lands Protection Program
FSA	Farm Service Agency
FWS	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
FY	Fiscal Year
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GRP	Grassland Reserve Program
HHS	Department of Health and Human Services
HUD	Department of Housing and Urban Development
JCCCC	Job Corps Civilian Conservation Centers
LWCF	Land and Water Conservation Fund

NCCC	National Civilian Community Corps
NEA	National Endowment for the Arts
NIFA	National Institute of Food and Agriculture
NOAA	National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
NPS	National Park Service
NRCS	Natural Resources Conservation Service
NSF	National Science Foundation
OHHI	Oceans and Human Health Initiative
OIA	Office of Insular Affairs
OMB	Office of Management and Budget
OPM	Office of Personnel Management
OSM	Office of Surface Mining Reclamation and Enforcement
PCFSN	President’s Council on Fitness , Sports and Nutrition
RTCA	Rivers, Trails and Conservation Assistance Program
SCORPs	Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plans
Tiger Grants	Transportation Investment Generation Economic Recovery Grants
USACE	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
USDA	Department of Agriculture
USFS	U.S. Forest Service
USGS	U.S. Geological Survey
VISTA	Volunteers in Service to America
WHIP	Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program
WHOUA	White House Office of Urban Affairs
WRP	Wetlands Reserve Program

Appendix C

Summary of Federal Government Programs

Introduction

Americans are blessed with a vast and varied natural heritage. From mountains to deserts and from sea to shining sea, America's great outdoors have shaped the rugged independence and sense of community that define the American spirit. Our working landscapes, cultural sites, parks, coasts, wild lands, rivers, and streams are gifts that we have inherited from previous generations. They are the places that offer us refuge from daily demands, renew our spirits, and enhance our fondest memories, whether they are fishing with a grandchild in a favorite spot, hiking a trail with a friend, or enjoying a family picnic in a neighborhood park. They also are our farms, ranches, and forests—the working lands that have fed and sustained us for generations. Americans take pride in these places, and share a responsibility to preserve them for our children and grandchildren.

—President Barack Obama

A 21st Century Strategy for America's Great Outdoors
April 16, 2010

Federal agencies have a significant role in managing America's Great Outdoors (AGO), including direct management of 29 percent of the United States land area. Federal agencies also coordinate activities that enhance understanding of our resources through scientific research and education and training programs. Agencies work with local, state, and tribal partners on many of these important activities, including programs that provide opportunities for youth and adults to work and volunteer to help preserve and protect our natural, cultural and historic resources; programs to improve access to outdoor resources; and many other opportunities.

This appendix, based on information provided by agencies to the Office of Management and Budget (OMB), provides a brief overview of federal programs and activities devoted to conserving and enhancing our nation's resources and providing opportunities for jobs, recreation, education, and scientific activities. The information summarized in this appendix will inform policy options to identify programs where resources can be jointly leveraged across the federal government, and to build on community efforts that help accomplish the AGO Initiative's themes and objectives through on-the-ground activities.

Agencies Involved in the America's Great Outdoors Initiative

Corporation for National and Community Service
(www.nationalservice.gov)

Council on Environmental Quality
(www.whitehouse.gov/administration/eop/ceq/)

Department of Commerce (www.commerce.gov)
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

Department of Defense (www.defense.gov)
Air Force
Army
Marine Corps
Navy
Army Corps of Engineers

Department of Health and Human Services (www.hhs.gov)
Office of the Assistant Secretary for Health
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
Administration for Children and Families

Department of Housing and Urban Development (www.hud.gov)

Department of the Interior (www.doi.gov)
Bureau of Indian Affairs
Bureau of Land Management
Bureau of Reclamation
Bureau of Ocean Energy Management, Regulation, and Enforcement
National Park Service
Office of Surface Mining Reclamation and Enforcement
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
U.S. Geological Survey

Department of Labor (www.dol.gov)
Employment and Training Administration

Environmental Protection Agency (www.epa.gov)
Office of Policy, Economics and Innovation
Office of Research and Development
Office of Solid Waste and Emergency Response
Office of Water
Office of External Affairs and Environmental Education

National Endowment of the Arts (www.nea.gov)

National Science Foundation (www.nsf.gov)

Office of Management and Budget (www.whitehouse.gov/omb/)

United States Department of Agriculture (www.usda.gov)
Agricultural Research Service
Farm Service Agency
U.S. Forest Service
National Institute of Food and Agriculture
Natural Resources Conservation Service

Overview of Federal Government Programs

As part of President Obama's America's Great Outdoors Initiative, OMB asked 12 Executive agencies on May 24, 2010, to identify existing federal programs that are consistent with the themes of the AGO Initiative.

The six AGO Initiative themes include:

- (1) **Outdoor Recreation:** Promote outdoor recreation in urban parks, greenways, beaches, trails, and waterways, and create and maintain recreational access to outdoors spaces.
- (2) **Jobs and Volunteer Activities:** Advance job and volunteer opportunities related to conservation and outdoor recreation.
- (3) **Education:** Educate and engage Americans in our natural, cultural, and historical resources.
- (4) **Local/Non-Federal Conservation:** Promote locally led or community-based conservation that builds upon state, tribal, local, and private priorities for the conservation of land, water, wildlife, historic, and cultural resources, including wildlife corridors and connectivity across ecosystems.
- (5) **Federal Land and Water Conservation:** Restore and conserve natural, historical, and cultural resources associated with federal lands and waters.
- (6) **Science-Based Tools:** Develop science-based tools that directly contribute to the conservation and management of federal lands and waters or the provision of recreational activities.

Agencies identified the following information for each program:

- **Primary Initiative Theme** – The Primary AGO Initiative theme out of the six that best fit the program's purpose.
- **Primary Beneficiary** – The level where the benefits are primarily provided, namely, national, regional, state, tribal, or local level.
- **Partners** – Whether or not the program has partnerships with non-federal entities that provide significant cash or in-kind contributions.
- **Program Description** – A brief description of the program, including purpose, activities, and information on whether the program provides direct services, technical assistance, or financial assistance, or a combination thereof.

The 12 agencies reported on a wide variety of programs that are highly diverse in mission, scope, and funding mechanisms. The programs contribute in various ways to the AGO Initiative. Some programs were

national and others were local in scope. Some programs utilized grants and pass-through funding to recipients, others focused on direct on-the-ground land and resource management activities, and yet others funded employees and volunteer activities in support of the AGO Initiative. Some agencies reported amalgamated programs encompassing numerous sizeable sub-programs; others reported on smaller-scale programs with specific mandates and recipients. Some programs fit precisely into AGO Initiative theme categories, and other programs have missions that include, but are not limited to the AGO categories.

The diversity of agencies and programs, as well as variation in agencies' reporting, limits a direct comparison of programs' funding, beneficiaries, and AGO Initiative themes. This appendix describes and displays aggregated information about all programs, summarizes key information about programs within each AGO Initiative theme, and provides brief summaries of selected programs under each AGO Initiative theme. It should be noted that a substantial share of the nation's conservation and recreational activities are supported by non-federal entities, however, this appendix focuses only on a few examples of federal program activities.

Summary of Reported Information

The inventory of federal agencies indicates that:

- Twelve agencies operate 270 programs that help conserve or enhance America's Great Outdoors (*see Figure 1*). Of the 270 programs, the Department of the Interior (DOI) operates the largest share of programs with 99 programs (37% of all programs) followed by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) with 65 programs (24%). The Department of Defense (DOD) administers 51 programs (19%), the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) administers 15 programs (6%), and the Department of Commerce (DOC) administers 13 programs (5%). The other seven agencies account for 27 programs (10%).
- Local and non-federal conservation was identified as the primary AGO Initiative theme for 81 programs (30% of the total number of programs) followed by federal land and water conservation for 66 programs (24%); outdoor recreation for 44 programs (16%); science-based tools for 37 programs (14%); education for 29 programs (11%); and the remaining 13 programs (5%) specified jobs and volunteer opportunities as their primary focus. *See Table 1 and Figure 2.*
- Agencies also identified the primary beneficiary for each program. One hundred and fourteen programs identified the primary beneficiaries as local (42%); 99 specified national (37%); 26 (10%) and 20 (7%) specified regional and state, respectively; and 11 tribal (4%). *See Table 2.*

Table 1. The Number of Programs by Primary Initiative Themes and by Agency

Agency	Outdoor Recreation	Job and Volunteer Opportunities	Education	Local/Non-Federal Conservation	Federal Land and Water Conservation	Science-Based Tools	Total
CNCS	-	2	1	-	-	-	3
DOC	-	-	1	6	4	2	13
DOD	16	1	2	7	22	3	51
DOI	11	7	7	38	21	15	99
DOL	-	1	-	-	-	-	1
DOT	4	-	1	-	-	-	5
EPA	-	-	3	4	3	5	15
HHS	2	-	-	-	1	-	3
HUD	2	-	-	-	-	-	2
NEA	-	-	6	-	-	-	6
NSF	-	-	3	-	-	4	7
USDA	9	2	5	26	15	8	65
Total	44	13	29	81	66	37	270

Table 2. Level Where Benefits Are Primarily Provided for Programs; Local, State, Regional, National, or Tribal

Agency	Local	State	Regional	National	Tribal	Total
CNCS	3	-	-	-	-	3
DOC	6	4	1	2	-	13
DOD	31	-	4	14	2	51
DOI	17	3	18	54	7	99
DOL	1	-	-	-	-	1
DOT	-	3	-	2	-	5
EPA	7	-	1	7	-	15
HHS	1	-	-	1	1	3
HUD	2	-	-	-	-	2
NEA	5	1	-	-	-	6
NSF	4	-	-	3	-	7
USDA	37	9	2	16	1	65
Total	114	20	26	99	11	270

Figure 1. Number of Programs and Percent of Total Programs by Agency
(Total Number of Programs: 270)

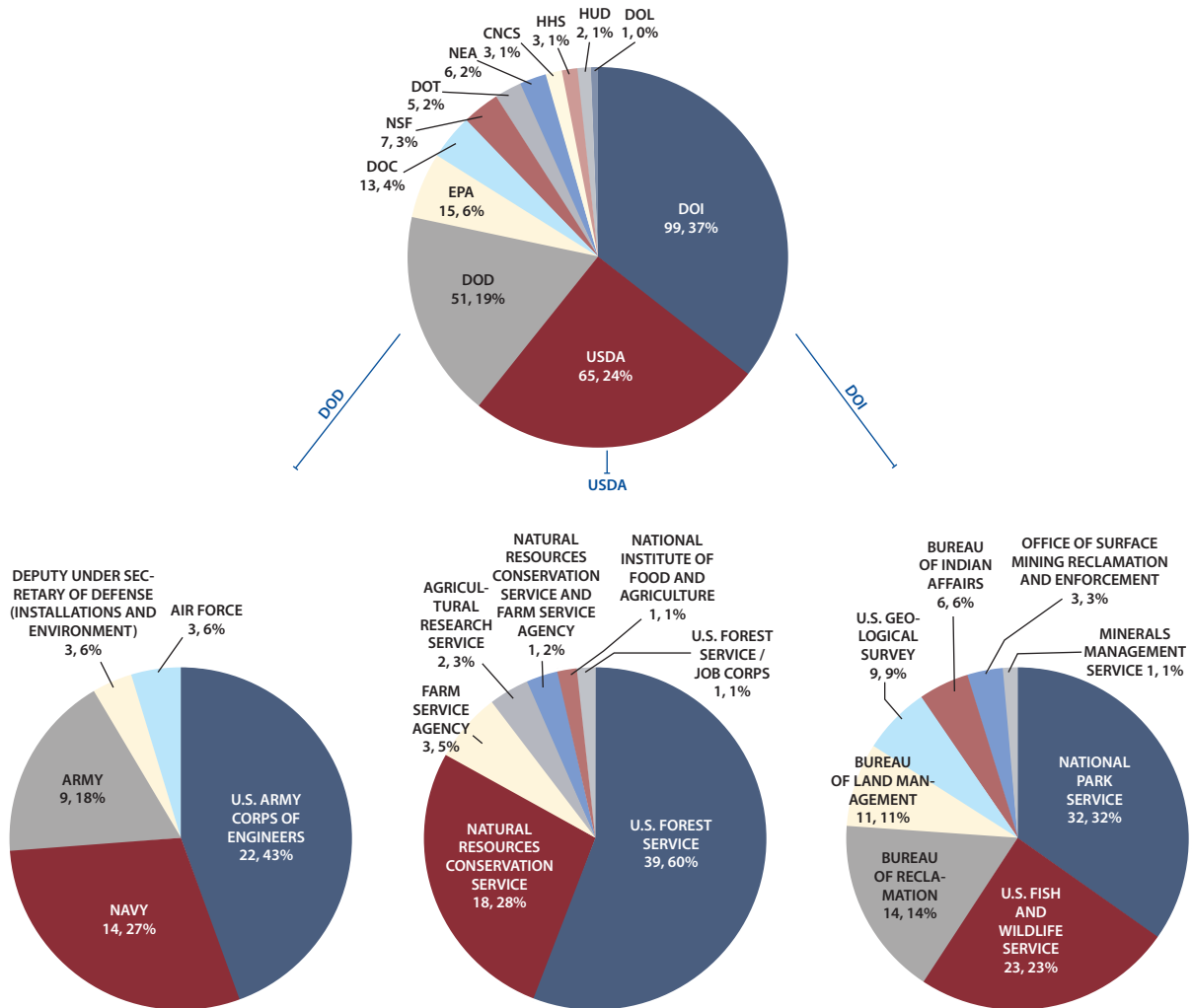
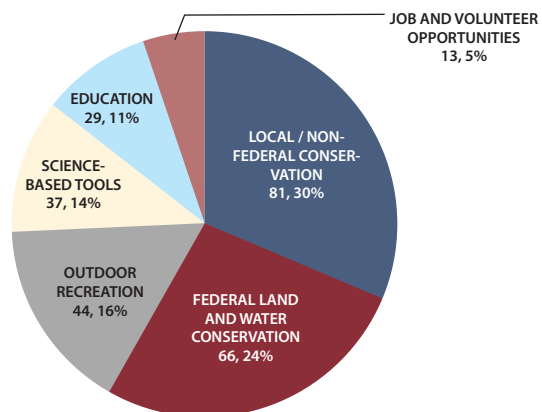


Figure 2. Number of Programs by Primary Initiative Theme and Percent of Total
(Total Number of Programs: 270)



Review of AGO Programs by Primary Initiative Theme

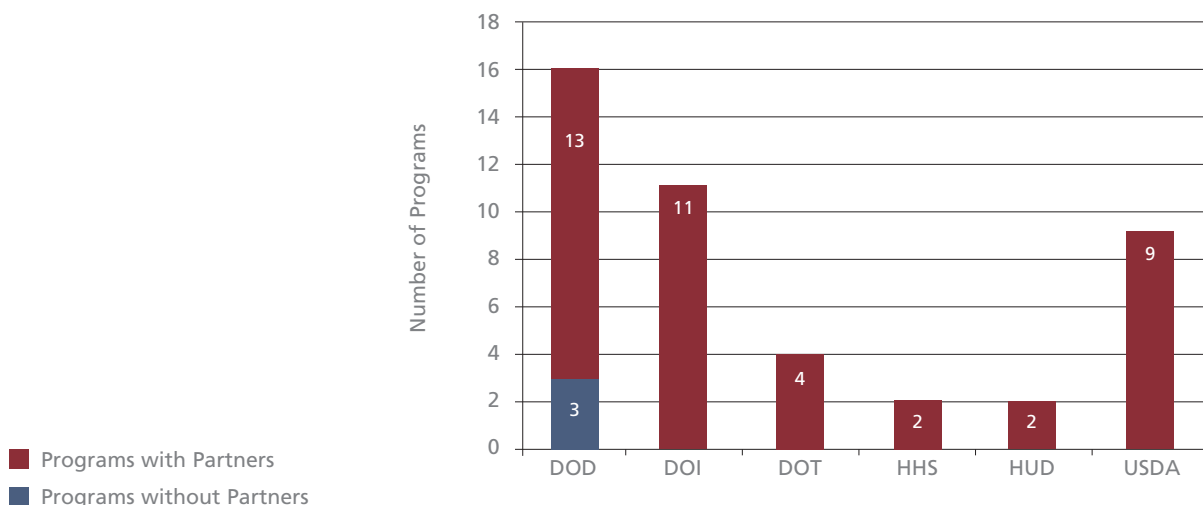
OUTDOOR RECREATION

Forty-four programs were identified by six agencies as having Outdoor Recreation as their Primary Initiative Theme, which represents 16 percent of the AGO programs. *See Table 1.*

- DOD reported the greatest number, with 16 total Outdoor Recreation-focused programs under the Army, Air Force, Marine Corps, Navy, and Army Corps of Engineers (USACE).
- The Department of Transportation (DOT) reported four Outdoor Recreation programs, two of which are transportation infrastructure programs: The Federal Lands Highway Program, and the Transportation Enhancement Activities Program.
- Two land management agencies, DOI and USDA's Forest Service (USFS), have 20 Outdoor Recreation programs between them. DOI has three bureaus with programs: the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS), and National Park Service (NPS). The largest program within the USFS is the Recreation, Heritage and Volunteer Resources, and the Wilderness and Wild and Scenic Rivers programs. For DOI a significant program is the FWS's Federal Aid in Wildlife Restoration program.
- Forty-one of 44 programs receive significant cash or in-kind contributions from partners.¹ The remaining three programs do not receive significant cash or in-kind contributions from partners. *See Figure 3.*

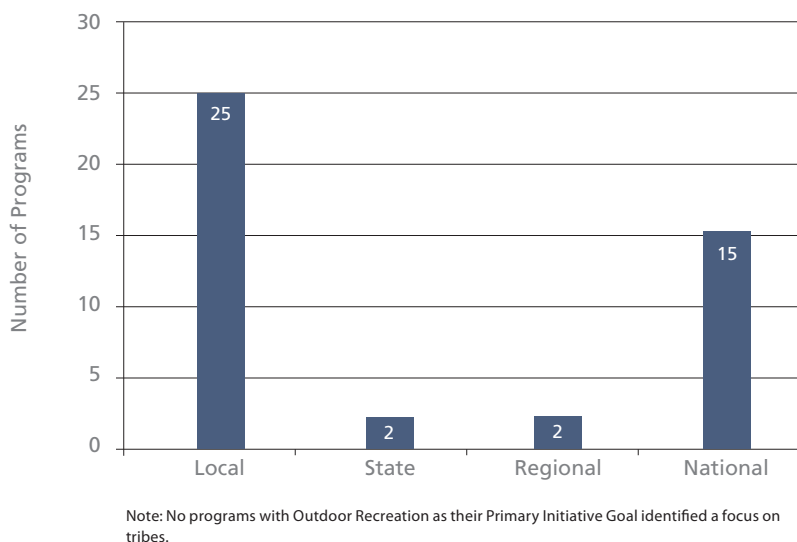
¹ Agencies were responsible for making their own determination of what constituted "significant cash or in-kind contributions."

Figure 3. Programs with Primary Theme of Outdoor Recreation with and without Significant Cash or In-Kind Contributions from Partners by Agency



Information on the geographic focus of beneficiaries for Outdoor Recreation programs is provided in Figure 4. No programs with Outdoor Recreation as their Primary Theme identified any programs focused specifically at the tribal level. Note that some programs, for example the Fish and Wildlife Service’s Federal Aid in Wildlife/Sportfish Restoration programs, while national in scope, provide pass-through funding to states, territories, and tribes.

Figure 4. Programs with Primary Theme of Outdoor Recreation Focusing at Different Levels of Beneficiaries



Examples of Agency Programs

The following, arranged alphabetically by agency, provides examples of programs that identified Outdoor Recreation as the primary AGO theme.

Department of Defense (1 Marine Corps, 1 Air Force, 2 Army, 2 Navy, and 10 USACE programs)

- **Outdoor Recreation (all military services)** - Provides programs, services and facilities to enhance outdoor recreation, including camping facilities, recreation equipment rental, and planned trips for fishing, boating, hiking, and other outdoor activities.
- **Wildlife Conservation (all military services)** - Provides services for both recreational and subsistence purposes as part of installations’ Outdoor Recreation Programs.
- Other DOD AGO programs include the USACE’s Lakes Gateway Program and the Longleaf Pine Restoration Program.

Department of the Interior (3 BLM, 4 NPS, and 4 FWS programs)

- **Outdoor Recreation (all military services)** - Provides programs, services and facilities to enhance outdoor recreation, including camping facilities, recreation equipment rental, and planned trips for fishing, boating, hiking, and other outdoor activities.

- **Federal Aid in Wildlife Restoration (FWS)** - Provides federal assistance in restoring, enhancing, and managing wildlife resources and conducting state hunter education programs.
- **Rivers, Trails, and Conservation Assistance (NPS)** - Provides technical assistance to communities to preserve rivers, protect open space, and develop trails and greenways.
- Other DOI AGO programs include the NPS Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) State Grants Program and the BLM Wild and Scenic Rivers Program.

Department of Transportation (4 programs)

- **Recreational Trails Program** - Provides funds to the states to develop and maintain recreational trails and trail-related facilities for both nonmotorized and motorized recreational trail uses. Funds are apportioned to the states by formula. The states solicit and select projects for funding.
- **Transportation Enhancement Activities** - Provides funds to the states to expand transportation choices and enhance the transportation experience, including pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure and safety, scenic and historic highway programs, landscaping and scenic beautification, historic preservation, and environmental mitigation. Projects must relate to surface transportation. Funds are apportioned to the states by formula. The states solicit and select projects for funding.
- Other DOT AGO programs include the National Scenic Byways Program and the Federal Lands Highway Program.

The Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) (2 programs)

- **Community Development Block Grants (CDBG)** - Provide funding to state and local governments for a wide range of housing, community, and economic development activities. State and local government may devote a small portion of the program's funds to parks and recreational activities.
- **Section 108 Loan Guarantee Program** - Allows grantees to borrow against current and future CDBG funds to undertake public facilities activities including recreational activities.
- Other HUD activities include the HUD, DOT, and EPA Sustainable Communities Initiative. This high-level interagency partnership to better coordinate federal transportation, environmental protection, and housing investments and to identify strategies that will protect the environment, promote equitable development, and help address the challenges of climate change.

Health and Human Services (2 programs)

- **Head Start Body Start National Center for Physical Development and Outdoor Play** - Provides grants to Head Start and Early Head Start programs to increase physical activity, outdoor play, and healthy eating among the children and families served and the staff.
- **President's Council on Fitness Sports and Nutrition (PCFSN)** - Promotes active and healthy lifestyles through sports, physical

education, physical activity, play, and good nutrition, and encourages greater access and use of community based parks and recreation. The Office of the PCFSN aims to get all Americans moving more—all ages and abilities—by addressing barriers to access and connecting existing and new resources in communities across the country. The Office supports both America’s Great Outdoors and the First Lady’s *Let’s Move* initiative to combat the national epidemic of childhood obesity.

U.S. Department of Agriculture (8 USFS programs, 1 FSA program)

- **Federal Lands Recreation Enhancement Fund (USFS)** – Applies user fees from recreation facilities to pay for on-the-ground operation, maintenance, and improvements of recreation sites, habitat, and services to maintain and enhance recreation opportunities and visitor experiences.
- **Voluntary Public Access Program** – The Voluntary Public Access and Habitat Incentives Program (VPA-HIP) provides grants to states and tribal governments to encourage owners and operators of privately held farm, ranch, and forest land to voluntarily make land available for public access for wildlife-dependent recreation, including hunting or fishing under programs administered by states and tribal governments.
- Other USDA AGO programs include the USFS Trails Program, Outdoor Nation, National Get Outdoors Day, EdOut!, Passport in Time kids in the woods and the Voluntary Public Access Program.

JOBS AND VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

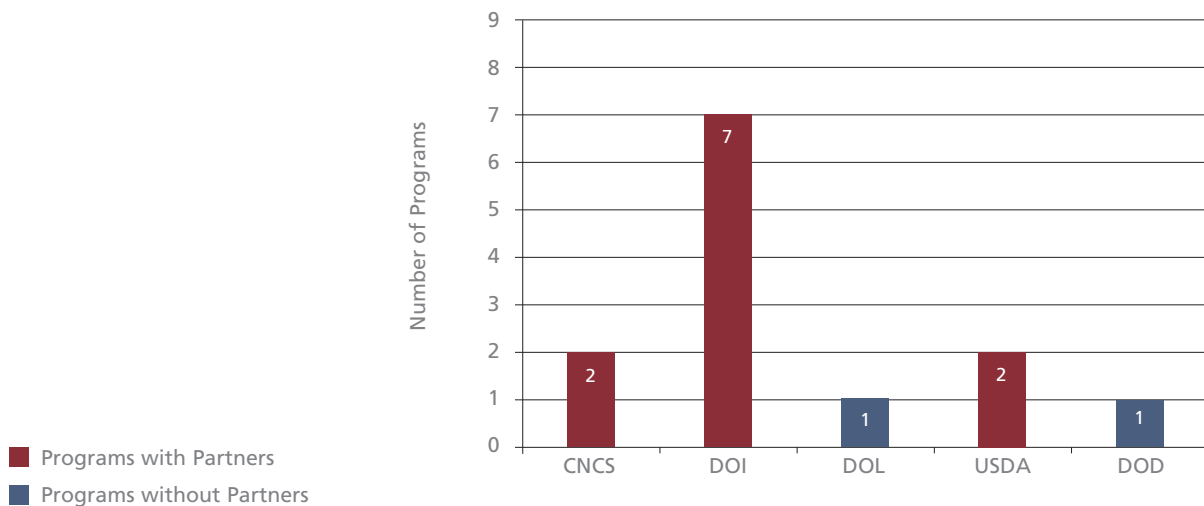
Thirteen programs in four agencies identified Jobs and Volunteer Opportunities as their Primary Initiative Theme. This represents five percent of the AGO programs.

- Eleven of 13 programs receive significant cash or in-kind contributions from partners. *See Figure 5.*
- DOL’s Job Corps program provides at-risk youth with direct services and financial assistance to become more employable, responsible, and productive citizens. The program has a variety of job skills training areas, including providing the skills necessary to protect and restore natural resources. Other areas include manufacturing, construction, finance, and many more. The Job Corps program focuses at the local level.
- DOI reported seven Jobs and Volunteer Opportunities programs from four agencies: BLM, FWS, NPS, and the Office of Surface Mining Reclamation and Enforcement (OSM). NPS has four programs with this initiative theme, while the remaining DOI bureaus each have one. The largest DOI program is the NPS Youth Intern Program.
- The Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS), whose mission is focused volunteer opportunities, reported two pro-

grams as falling within the purview of the AGO Initiative, namely, AmeriCorps National Civilian Community Corps and AmeriCorps state and national programs.

- Three programs are focused at the national-level and nine programs are focused at the local level. No programs with Jobs & Volunteer Opportunities as their Primary Initiative Theme identified a state, regional, or tribal focus.
- In addition to the programs identified by the agencies, several government-wide programs provide students and adults to obtain part-time, seasonal, and full-time federal employment and opportunities to work on a variety of AGO related activities. These programs include the Student Career Experience Program, the Student Temporary Employment Program, and the Federal Career Intern Program.

Figure 5. Programs with Primary Theme of Jobs and Volunteer Opportunities with and without Significant Cash or In-Kind Contributions from Partners by Agency



Examples of Agency Programs

The following, arranged alphabetically by agency, provides examples of programs that identified Jobs and Volunteer Opportunities as the primary AGO theme.

Corporation for National and Community Service (2 programs)

- **AmeriCorps National Civilian Community Corps** – Engages 18-24 year olds in direct, voluntary, service projects in communities across the United States. Drawn from the successful models of the Civilian Conservation Corps of the 1930s and the U.S. military, AmeriCorps NCCC was founded as full-time, team-based residential program that focuses on addressing critical local needs related to environmental stewardship and conservation as well as natural and other disas-

ters, infrastructure improvement, energy conservation, and urban and rural development. Over the last ten years, NCCC members have served with organizations and government agencies to dedicate over 3 million hours to over 1,600 environmental projects – service valued at \$58.5 million.

- **AmeriCorps State and National** - Provides voluntary federal funding to organizations and agencies committed to using service to address critical community needs. Program activities include training AmeriCorps members to serve at environmental sites throughout the country. Members also serve in hands-on conservation projects, assist with community outreach and education on environmental issues, and engage youth in environmental education, habitat restoration and watershed protection activities.

Department of the Interior (1 BLM, 1 FWS, 1 OSM, and 4 NPS programs)

- **Youth Conservation Corps Projects (NPS)** – The Youth Conservation Corps (ages 15 to 18) and Public Lands Corps (ages 16 to 25) are federal programs that engage youth and young adults in the conservation and restoration of public lands and waters. The participants work to restore our nation’s natural and historic resources while gaining work experience, life skills, and education. These programs provide a paid employment opportunity for a diverse group of young people. Through their work, the participants develop an understanding and appreciation for America’s Great Outdoors and historic heritage.
- **Volunteers Program (BLM)** - Provides opportunities for volunteers to support the health and viability of public lands. Volunteer opportunities include as-needed projects, events, and long term efforts (campground and facility hosts).
- Other DOI AGO programs include FWS’s Volunteers Program, NPS’s Volunteers in Parks program, and OSM’s Volunteers in Service to America program.

Department of Labor (1 program)

- **Job Corps** - Job Corps is a national program administered by the U.S. Department of Labor and operates 124 centers across the country. The Job Corps program is the nation’s largest residential, educational, and career technical training program for young Americans. For more than 45 years, Job Corps has helped prepare more than 2.6 million at-risk youth between the ages of 16 and 24 for success in our nation’s workforce. Job Corps’ mission is to provide academic, career technical, and social skills training to young adults to ensure that they attain the credentials necessary to be place in meaningful employment, the military, or further education. Job Corps’ 124 centers are located in both rural and urban communities. The U.S. Department of Agriculture, through an Interagency Agreement with the U.S. Department of Labor, operates 28 centers on public sites throughout the country.

Department of Defense (1 USACE program)

- **Volunteer Clearinghouse** - In addition to engaging partner organizations, The Corps actively engages individuals through the volunteer program. In 2009, almost 60 thousand individuals contributed over 1.4 million hours building and improving recreation facilities, working on conservation projects and providing environmental education and other direct services to visitors. The value of this service is estimated at more than \$30 million. This program is managed nationally through the Corps Volunteer Clearinghouse.

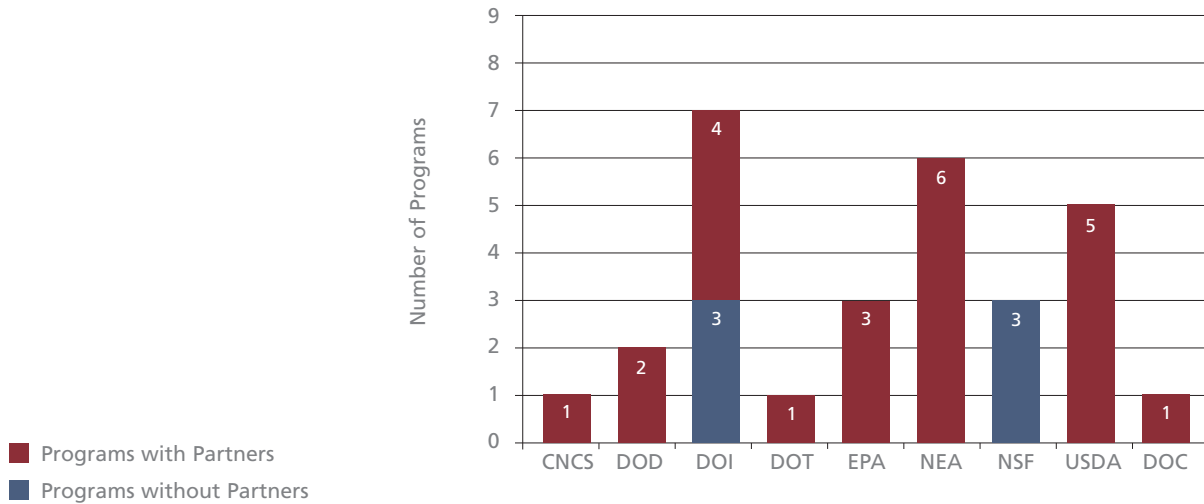
U.S. Department of Agriculture (2 USFS programs)

- **Youth Conservation Corps** - Provides summer employment for young men and women to work, learn, and earn together on natural resources conservation projects
- **Job Corps** - USFS Job Corps Civilian Conservation Centers (JCCCCs) are operated through an Interagency Agreement with the U.S. Department of Labor. The Job Corps CCCs provide training and assistance to approximately 6,200 students to conserve, develop and manage public natural resources and public recreational areas or to develop community projects in the public interest. Twenty-eight JCCCCs span seven USFS regions, 22 forests and grasslands and 18 different states.
- Every year nearly 100,000 individuals volunteer on the national forests performing a wide range of services in multiple areas including recreation, heritage resources, watershed, wildlife, research, facilities and forest protection and management
- Formal partnerships with groups such as the Student Conservation Association (SCA), The Corps Network, HistoriCorps, Passport in Time and others result in thousands of people annually that acquire valuable job training skills while conserving and preserving cultural and natural resources.

EDUCATION AND ENGAGEMENT

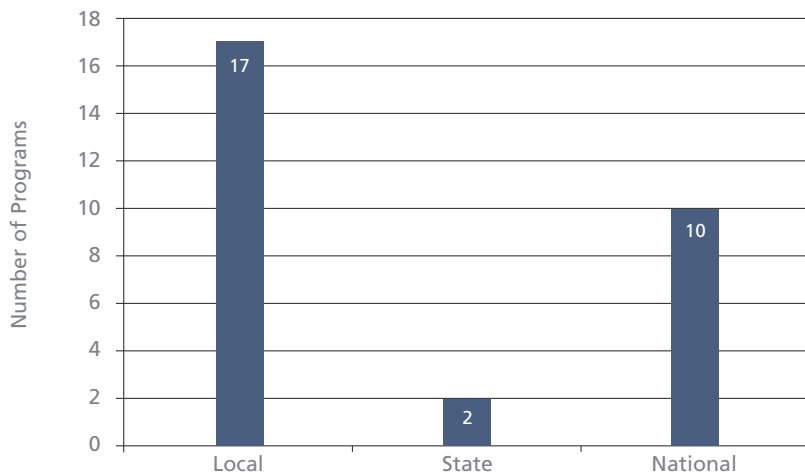
- Twenty-nine programs in eight agencies identified Education as their Primary Initiative Theme. This represents 10 percent of the AGO programs.
- DOI reported seven programs: four from NPS, two from BLM, and one from the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS).
- Twenty-eight of the 29 programs receive significant cash or in-kind contributions from partners. *See Figure 6 next page.*

Figure 6. Programs with Primary Theme of Education and Engagement with and without Significant Cash or In-Kind Contributions from Partners by Agency



Information on the number of programs in each agency focused on the local, state, national, and tribal levels is provided in Figure 7. No education programs identified a regional or tribal focus.

Figure 7. Programs with Primary Theme of Education and Engagement Focusing at Different Levels of Beneficiaries



Note: No programs with Education and Engagement as their Primary Initiative Goal identified a regional or tribal focus.

Examples of Agency Programs

The following, arranged alphabetically by agency, provides examples of programs that identified Education and Engagement as the primary AGO theme.

Corporation for National and Community Service (1 program)

- **Learn and Serve America** – Provides funding to universities, state education agencies, and nonprofits to engage students kindergarten through higher education in service-learning. Grant funds are used to train faculty, develop partnerships between campuses and community organizations, and cover project costs. Projects prompt students to use the knowledge and skills of the classroom to address community problems. Recent grant competitions focused on service-learning in the STEM (science, technology, engineering, and math) disciplines, resulting in a significant investment in environmental stewardship and education. Examples include water monitoring and stream remediation, creating interpretive trails for state parks, and growing vegetables for the school cafeteria.

Department of Commerce (1 program)

- **B-WET (NOAA)** - An environmental education program that promotes locally relevant, experiential learning in the K-12 environment. The primary delivery of B-WET is through competitive funding that promotes Meaningful Watershed Educational Experiences (MWEEs). B-WET currently serves six areas of the country: California, Chesapeake Bay, Gulf of Mexico, Hawai'i, New England, and the Pacific Northwest. NOAA has invested over \$40 million to support more than 530 projects in six regions of the country. For example, in 2008 the B-WET program reached over 125,000 students and 6,000 teachers, through 130 projects. The resources page provides links to information on previously funded projects.

Department of Defense (2 USACE programs)

- **Museums and Visitor Centers** - Almost 100 visitor centers and museums are located on lakes operated and maintained by the USACE. These facilities provide exhibits and displays to educate visitors on the USACE mission, along with environmental and cultural resources in the region. These facilities also host environmental education programs conducted by USACE rangers and others. Many of these facilities are cooperatively operated by the USACE, cooperating associations and other program partners.
- **Recreation and Natural Resource Interpretation** - Provides programs to interpret the environmental and cultural resources of the region and communicate many aspects of the USACE's water resource development mission. Over one million visitors participated in these programs in 2009.

Department of the Interior (2 BLM, 1 USGS, and 4 NPS programs)

- **Parks as Classrooms Program (NPS)** - Introduces students and teachers nationwide to national park resources. Parks work with local school districts to develop educational programs. The program encompasses about 250 parks and is curriculum-based.
- **BLM Youth Initiative (BLM)** - Supports a variety of programs that educate, engage, and employ young people on public lands. These programs spark childhood interest about the natural world, sustain the interest through hands-on education and volunteer experiences during the school-age years, and develop the interest into long-term engagement and stewardship, as well as pursuit of natural resource careers.
- **Other DOI AGO programs** include the NPS's and BLM's Junior/Web Ranger Programs, and the USGS's Enterprise Information Resources Program, which helps integrate and manage scientific data related to Web-Internet services, science publishing, libraries, education, outreach, and information centers.

Department of Transportation (1 program)

- **National Scenic Byways Program** - Provides funds to states and tribes to develop state and Indian tribe scenic byway programs, and to implement projects on America's Byways and state and Indian tribe scenic byways for corridor management planning, safety improvements, byway facilities, and access to recreation, resource protection, interpretive information, and marketing.

Environmental Protection Agency (2 programs)

- **Research and tool development on green infrastructure** - Works with state and local government to develop tools and resources to help implement regional, neighborhood, and site specific green infrastructure approaches.
- Other EPA AGO programs include the American Wetlands Month Program.

National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) (6 programs)

- **Appalachian Gateway Communities Initiative** - Supports technical assistance and workshops designed to stimulate tourism based on the natural, historic, and cultural resources in Appalachian communities that are gateways to national or state parks and forests.
- Other NEA AGO programs include the Governors' Institute on Community Design, the Our Town Program, and the Your Town: Citizens' Institute on Rural Design Program.

National Science Foundation (NSF) (3 programs)

- A number of NSF programs devote some funding that would advance the educational theme of the AGO Initiative. These are the Research Assistantships for High School Students, the Chemistry and Materials Research at the Interface between Science and Art Program, and the Research Experience for Undergrads.

U.S. Department of Agriculture (1 National Institute for Food and Agriculture, 4 USFS programs)

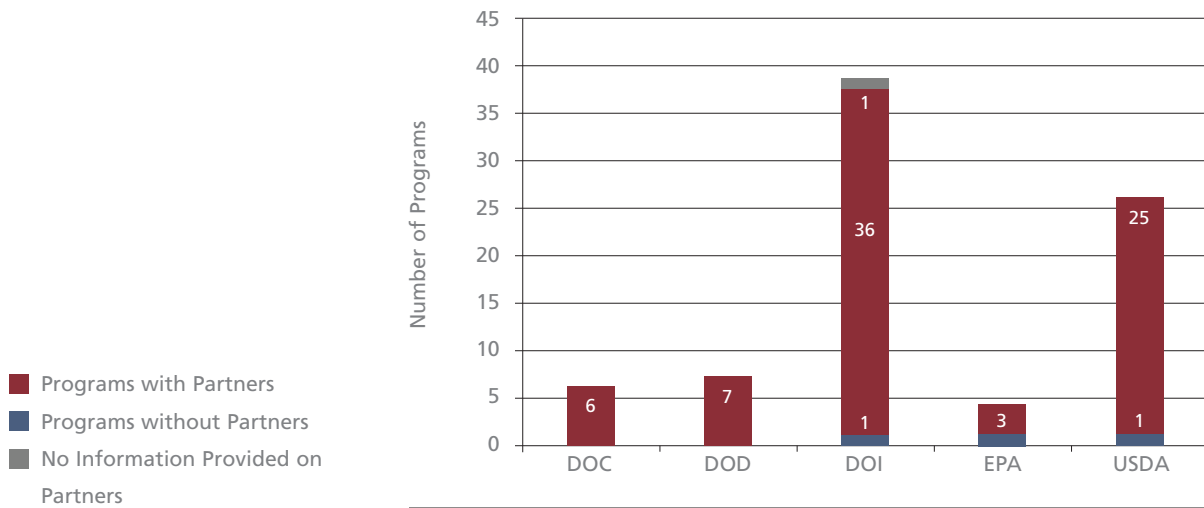
- **Natural Resource Interpretation and Conservation Education Program (USFS)** – Connects children and adults to nature through recreation activities and placed-based learning. .
- **NatureWatch (USFS)** - Provides children and adults the opportunity to safely view wildlife, fish, and plants, and participate in nature activities and programs to raise understanding of these resources and their connection to ecosystems, landscapes, and people. These activities include developing and maintaining permanent wildlife viewing sites; conservation education; providing hunting, fishing, and viewing opportunities; and the development and sponsorship of local and national events such as Kids Fishing Days, International Migratory Bird Day, and Robert Bateman Get to Know program.
- Other USDA programs include the National Institute of Food and Agriculture’s (NIFA) Renewable Resources Extension Act Program, and the USFS’s Symbols Program.

LOCAL/NON-FEDERAL CONSERVATION

Eighty-one programs in five agencies identified Local and Other Non-Federal Conservation as their Primary Initiative Theme. This represents 30 percent of the reported total number of AGO programs.

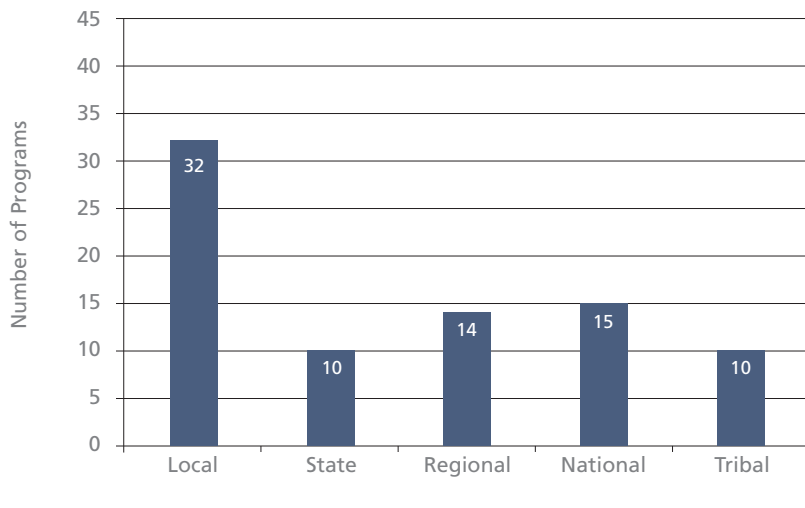
- DOI reported 38 programs from six bureaus – Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA), BLM, FWS, NPS, OSM, and the Bureau of Reclamation.
- USDA reported 26 programs for the Local/Non-Federal Conservation AGO Initiative Theme, including the Farm Service Agency’s (FSA’s) Conservation Reserve Program and the Natural Resource Conservation Service’s (NRCS’s) Environmental Quality Incentives Program, Conservation Technical Assistance program, Wetlands Reserve Program, Conservation Stewardship Program, and Conservation Security Program. Many of these programs provide funding to farmers, ranchers, and other private landowners to support conservation activities on their lands.
- Seventy-seven programs receive significant cash or in-kind contributions from partners, three programs do not and one did not specify. *See Figure 8 next page.*

Figure 8. Programs with Primary Theme of Local/Non-Federal Conservation with and without Significant Cash or In-Kind Contributions from Partners by Agency



Information on the number of programs in each agency focused on the local, state, regional, national, and tribal levels is provided in Figure 9.

Figure 9. Programs with Primary Theme of Local/Non-Federal Conservation Focusing at Different Levels of Beneficiaries



Examples of Agency Programs

The following, arranged alphabetically by agency, provides examples of programs that identified Local/Non-Federal Conservation as the primary AGO theme.

Department of Commerce (6 NOAA programs)

- **Coastal and Estuarine Land Conservation Program (CELCP)** - The Coastal and Estuarine Land Conservation Program (CELCP) provides grants to state and local governments to protect important coastal and estuarine areas that have significant conservation, recreation, ecological, historical or aesthetic values, or are threatened by conversion from their natural or recreational state. The federal grants require matching funds, which leverage additional state, local or private contributions. Through this program, NOAA supports efforts to protect important stream corridors and habitats, reduce the flow of polluted runoff into coastal waters, and provide opportunities for coastal recreation, access, education and nature-based tourism.
- **Coastal Zone Management Grants** – Maintains and improves the nation’s coastal lands and waters through a national network of federally-approved, coordinated, and supported state management programs. This program seeks to maintain the balance between resource protection and coastal-dependent economic activity.
- Other DOC AGO programs include the Open Rivers Program, and the National Estuarine Research Reserve System, and the Community-based Restoration Program.

Department of Defense (1 DOD, 3 Army, and 3 Navy programs)

- **Readiness and Environmental Protection Initiative (DOD)** - Provides funds for partnerships that cost-share land protection and conservation in the vicinity of military installations. This program protects capabilities for military training and testing on DOD lands and supports compatible land uses and sensitive habitat protection on private properties. Other DOD AGO programs include Army, Navy, Marine Corps and Air Force complements to the DOD REPI to work with conservation partners and willing landowners to cost-share easements and other land protection near military installations.

Department of the Interior (2 OSM, 6 BIA, 10 Bureau of Reclamation, 12 FWS, and 8 NPS programs)

- **Aquatic Invasive Species (FWS)** - Contributes to the conservation of trust species and their habitats by preventing the introduction and spread of aquatic invasive species. Supports diagnostics and assessment and helps develop new animal drugs.
- **Upper Colorado River/San Juan Recovery Implementation Program (BOR)** - This program focuses on fish passage, propagation, and habitat restoration activities with a theme of recovery by 2023.
- Other DOI AGO programs include the OSM’s Watershed Cooperative Agreement program, and NPS’s National Natural Landmarks program.

Environmental Protection Agency (4 programs)

- **The Community Action for a Renewed Environment Program** - This competitive grant program offers communities an innovative way to address risks from multiple sources of pollution in their environment.
- **Community Water Priorities** - EPA's Urban Waters initiative will help communities - especially disadvantaged ones - access, restore and benefit from their urban waters and the surrounding land, supporting (through grants and technical assistance) communities' efforts to become active participants in restoration.
- Other EPA AGO programs include Nonpoint Source Grants and Wetland Program Development Grants.

U.S. Department of Agriculture (2 FSA, 6 USFS, and 18 NRCS programs)

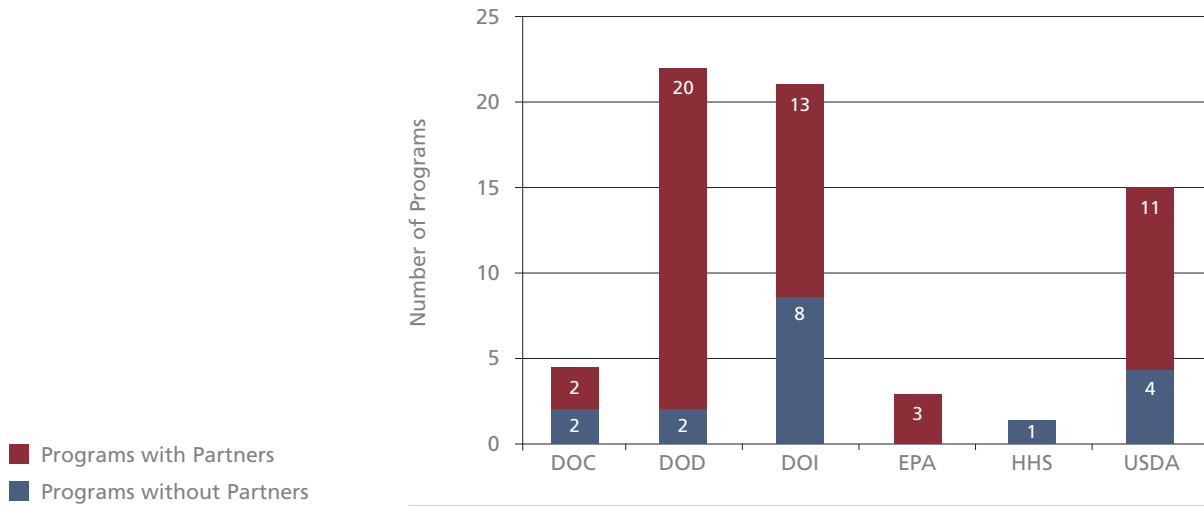
- **Urban and Community Forestry Program (USFS)** - Assists communities with improving the resilience of their forest ecosystems. This program partners with communities in urban, suburban, and rural areas to assist with strategic tree planting and active management of the urban forest.
- **Environmental Quality Incentives Program** - Promotes agricultural production, forest management and environmental quality as compatible national goals through financial and technical assistance to eligible producers for installation or implementation of conservation practices on eligible agricultural land.
- **Forest Legacy Program** - Supports states' efforts to protect environmentally sensitive, privately owned forests from fragmentation and conversion to non-forest uses through the use of voluntary incentives and coordinated management. Conservation easements on private forest lands are sold or donated, and landowners agree to implement sustainable forestry practices and protection of other values on their land. This leads to gains associated with the sale or donation of these development rights and may result in reduced taxes for private landowners who keep ownership of their forest land.
- Other USDA AGO programs include the NRCS's Grasslands Protection Program and USFS Urban and Community Forestry Program.

FEDERAL LAND AND WATER CONSERVATION

Sixty-six programs in six agencies identified Federal Land and Water Conservation as their Primary Initiative Theme. This represents 24 percent of the reported total number of AGO programs.

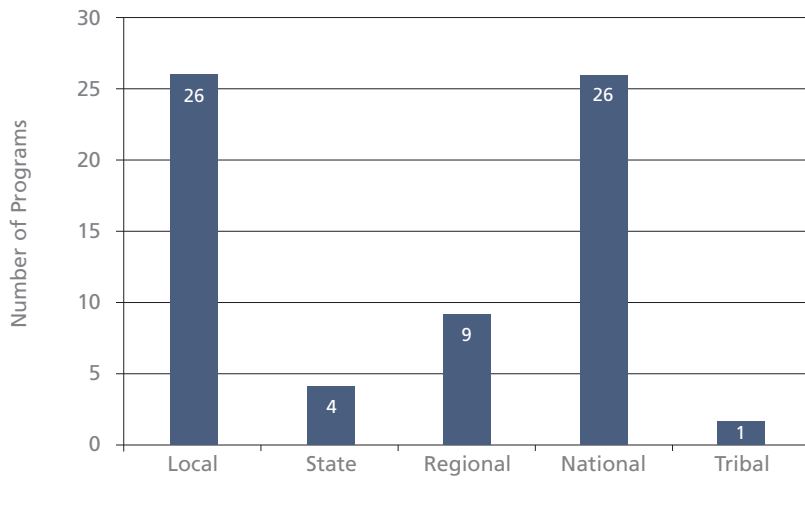
- DOI, DOD, and USDA reported the largest number of programs - 21, 22, and 15, respectively.
- Fifty programs receive significant funding or in-kind support from partners. Seventeen programs do not receive significant cash funding or in-kind support from partners. Additional Information on the number of programs and partnership information by agency is provided in Figure 10.

Figure 10. Programs with Primary Theme of Federal Land and Water Conservation with and without Significant Cash or In-Kind Contributions from Partners by Agency



Information on the geographic focus of Federal Land and Water Conservation programs is provided in Figure 11.

Figure 11. Programs with Primary Theme of Federal Land and Water Conservation Focusing at Different Levels of Beneficiaries



Examples of Agency Programs

The following, arranged alphabetically by agency, provides examples of programs that identified Federal Land and Water Conservation as the primary AGO theme.

Department of Commerce (4 programs)

- **Pacific Coastal Salmon Recovery Fund (PCSRF)** - The Pacific Coastal Salmon Recovery Fund (PCSRF) was established by Congress in FY 2000 to protect, restore, and conserve Pacific salmonids and their habitats, and to address the impacts of the Pacific Salmon Treaty Agreement between the United States and Canada. The PCSRF supplements existing state, tribal, and federal programs to foster development of federal-state-tribal-local partnerships in salmon recovery and conservation by providing grants to the eligible states, tribal commissions, and tribes.
- Other DOC AGO activities include the Office of National Marine Sanctuaries (subprogram of the National Ocean Service).

DOD (2 DOD, 4 Army, 7 Navy, 1 Marine Corps, 2 Air Force, and 6 USACE).

- **Legacy Program (DOD)** - This program awards projects that assist DOD in protecting and enhancing resources while supporting military readiness. A Legacy project may involve regional ecosystem management initiatives, habitat preservation efforts, archaeological investigations, invasive species control, Native American consultations, and/or monitoring and predicting migratory patterns of birds and animals. Since its inception in 1991, Legacy has funded nearly 3,000 projects.
- **Natural Resources Program (all Services)** - All services have a natural resource program. The Army, for instance, provides a combination of services for active management of wildlife and habitat, protection and recovery of threatened and endangered species, watershed management, opportunities for public outdoor recreation, wildlife viewing, educational outreach, and volunteer conservation on 160 installations on over 12 million acres.
- **Cultural Resources Program (all Services)** - Similarly, all Services have cultural resource programs. The Navy, for instance, manages resources found on over 2 million acres in 11 Navy Regions focusing on the historic built environment, tribal cultural resources, archeology, and historic documents. The program provides direct services towards conservation of cultural resources by informing and encouraging public participation in the identification, management and use of archaeological resources, cultural landscapes, and built historic properties.
- Other DOD AGO programs include the USACE's Environmental Stewardship Natural Resource Inventory Program, the military services' Agricultural Outlease program.

Department of the Interior (10 NPS, 5 BLM, 2 FWS, 3 Bureau of Reclamation, and 1 Bureau of Ocean Energy Management, Regulation and Enforcement program).

- **National Wildlife Refuge System (FWS)** - Conserves wildlife populations and biological diversity for the benefit of present and future generations of Americans.
- **Cultural Resource Stewardship (NPS)** - Preserves and protects the sites, buildings, and objects, including prehistoric and historic archeological sites and structures, ethnographic resources, cultural landscapes, and museum collections.
- Other DOI AGO programs include the Bureau of Reclamation's Cooperative Watershed Management program, and the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management, Regulation and Enforcement's Coastal Impact Assistance program.

Environmental Protection Agency (3 Programs)

- **Brownfields and Land Revitalization Research, Training and Technical Assistance Grants** - Funding provided through an interagency agreement with the National Park Service for "Groundwork Trust" grants, which are focused on development of greenspace and urban parkland.
- **National Estuary Program** - Composed of 28 programs along the Atlantic, Gulf, and Pacific coasts, they work closely with federal, state, local, and private sector partners to achieve the goals of the Clean Water Act, including protecting and restoring habitat.
- **Puget Sound** - EPA's Puget Sound program aims to restore the Puget Sound ecosystem to a healthy state by controlling significant sources of pollution, restoring habitat, aiding in the recovery of endangered species, reducing the impacts of population growth, and other activities.

U.S. Department of Agriculture (15 USFS programs)

- **Legacy Roads and Trails** - This program provides for urgently needed road decommissioning, removal or replacement of stream crossing structures that are barriers to aquatic organism passage; and road and trail repairs, maintenance and associated activities in environmentally sensitive areas.
- Other USDA AGO programs include the Cooperative Work program, the Environmental Compliance and Protection program, and the Land Acquisition program.

Health and Human Services (1 program)

- **Administration for Native Americans** - Provides funding for tribes to build internal capacities to develop and enforce their own environmental laws, regulations, and ordinances to address the risks to human health and the environment posed by pollution of air, water, and land.

SCIENCE-BASED TOOLS

Thirty-seven programs in five agencies identified Science-Based Tools as their Primary Initiative Theme. This represents 14 percent of the reported total number of AGO programs.

- DOI reported the most programs with 15, followed by USDA with eight, and EPA with five.
- Twenty-nine of these programs receive significant funding or in-kind support from partners. *See Figure 12.*

Figure 12. Programs with Primary Theme of Science-Based Tools with and without Significant Cash or In-Kind Contributions from Partners by Agency

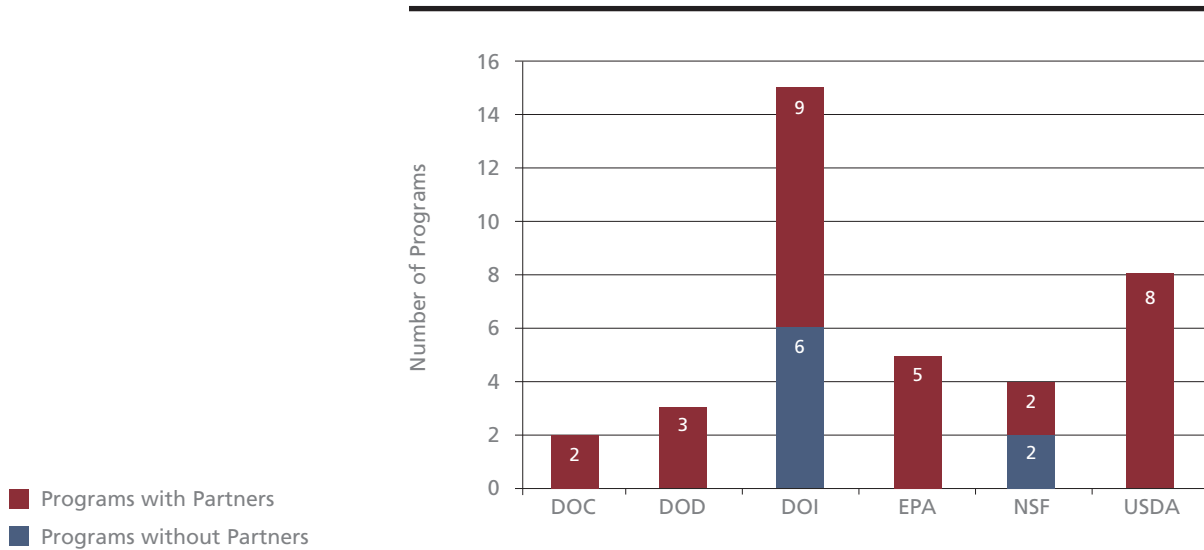
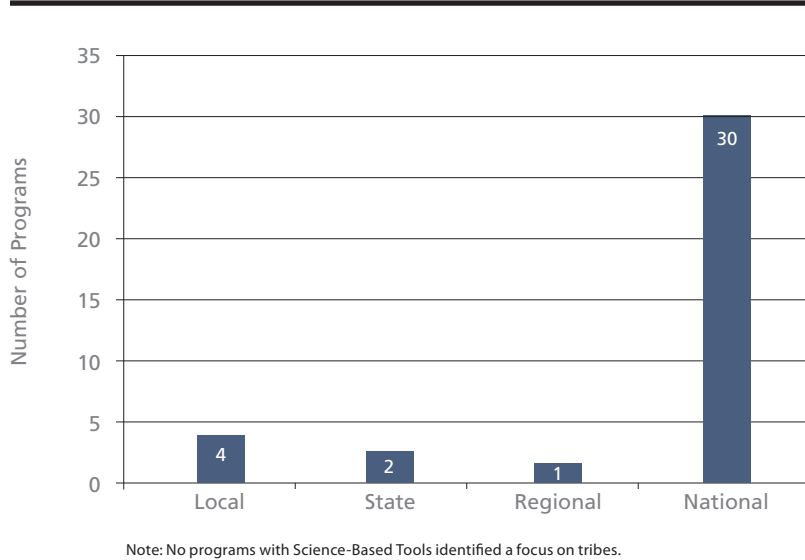


Figure 13. Programs with Primary Theme of Science-Based Tools Focusing at Different Levels of Beneficiaries



Examples of Agency Programs

The following, arranged alphabetically by agency, provides examples of programs that identified Science-Based Tools as the primary AGO theme.

Department of Commerce (2 NOAA Programs)

- **Coastal Services Center (CSC)** - Helps build capacity for informed decision-making related to coasts by providing geospatial data and tools, training, social science information, and partnership building at the national, regional and state levels. CSC transfers successful tools and approaches to coastal managers to ensure that national issues are effectively addressed at regional, state, and local levels.

Department of Defense (3 USACE programs)

- **Aquatic Plant Control Research Program** - Conducts research and development to improve management of invasive species associated with lakes and rivers in the United States thus enhancing the quality of water based recreation opportunities.
- **Recreation Management Support Program** - Provides research and development support to the USACE recreation program. Eleven information management system and evaluation tools have been developed and are maintained to formulate performance based budgets and conduct program analysis and efficiency evaluations. Work is performed by the Institute for Water Resources and the Engineer Research and Development Center in collaboration with a network of university faculty and staff.
- The remaining DOD AGO program is the Stewardship Support Program.

Department of the Interior (1 Bureau of Reclamation, 2 NPS, 4 FWS, and 8 USGS programs)

- **National Cooperative Geologic Mapping (USGS)** - Produces geologic maps and 3-D geologic frameworks that provide data for multiple uses, including resource management and economic development.
- **Migratory Bird Conservation and Monitoring (FWS)** - The Migratory Bird Conservation and Monitoring program works with partners to develop and implement conservation plans that contribute to improved health and sustainability of migratory birds of conservation concern.
- Other DOI AGO programs include the USGS's Coastal and Marine Geology Program, and the USGS's National Geospatial Program.

Environmental Protection Agency (5 programs)

- **Ecosystem Services Research** - Complements EPA's regulatory efforts by providing for a systems approach that will enable routine investments from the private and public sectors to create new financial, social, and natural capital (i.e., enhanced ecosystem services). This program renders benefits nationally, and does not directly target federal lands.

- Other EPA AGO programs include the Land Preservation Program, the Water Quality Research Program, and the Brownfields and Land Revitalization Research, Training, and Technical Assistance Grants.

National Science Foundation (4 programs)

- **Ecosystem Science** - Provides a science base for conservation and ecosystem management.
- **Population and Community Ecology** - Focuses on fundamental long-term ecological research at a coordinated network of over two dozen field sites, working with federal and non-federal entities.
- Other NSF AGO programs include the Long Term Ecological Research Program and the Center for Embedded Networked Sensing.

U.S. Department of Agriculture (1 NRCS, 2 Agricultural Research Service, and 5 USFS programs)

- **Conservation Effects Assessment Project (Agricultural Research Service)** - Provides a scientific basis for the Conservation Effects Assessment Project National Assessment being led by NRCS. Also provides a better understanding of the role agricultural conservation practices play in achieving the nation's environmental objectives, including clean air and water, healthy soils, and functioning habitat for wildlife.
- **Plant Materials Program (NRCS)** - Develop methods and technologies for the conserving natural resources. Plant Materials Centers use vegetation to assist with reducing coastal erosion, improving water quality in lakes and streams, enhancing wildlife and pollinator habitat, restoring range and prairie lands, and selecting plants for low-maintenance landscapes. Plant Materials Center products are used in USDA conservation programs, by other federal and state land managers, and the public.
- Other USDA AGO programs include the USFS's Urban Long-term Research Areas Program, the USFS's Outdoor Recreation Strategic Program Area, and the USFS's I-Tree Program.

List of Federal AGO Programs²

PROGRAM NAME	AGENCY and BUREAU or COMPONENT
Head Start Body Start National Center for Physical Development and Outdoor Play	ACF/Office of Head Start
Air Force Environmental Conservation-Natural Resources Program	Air Force
Air Force Environmental-Cultural Resources Program	Air Force
Air Force Services - Outdoor Recreation	Air Force
Agricultural Outlease	Army
Army Compatibility Use Buffers	Army
Cultural Resources Program	Army
Fish and Wildlife Conservation Program	Army
Forestry	Army
Native Affairs and Natural Resources Advisor	Army
Natural Resources Program	Army
Outdoor Recreation Program	Army
Readiness and Environmental Protection Initiative (REPI)	Army
AmeriCorps National Civilian Community Corps	Corporation for National and Community Service
AmeriCorps State and National	Corporation for National and Community Service
Learn and Serve America	Corporation for National and Community Service
AmeriCorps VISTA	Corporation for National and Community Service
Coastal Services Center	DOC/NOAA/National Ocean Service
National Centers for Coastal Ocean Science	DOC/NOAA/National Ocean Service
Coastal and Estuarine Land Conservation Program	DOC/NOAA/National Ocean Service
Coastal Zone Management Grants	DOC/NOAA/National Ocean Service
National Estuarine Research Reserve System	DOC/NOAA/National Ocean Service

²This list contains programs that are consistent with the AGO Initiative, but are not part of the preceding overview. Full AGO information was not readily available for these programs.

PROGRAM NAME	AGENCY and BUREAU or COMPONENT
Office of National Marine Sanctuaries	DOC/NOAA/National Ocean Service
Regional Ocean Partnerships	DOC/NOAA/National Ocean Service
B-Wet	DOC/NOAA/Office of Education
Community-based Restoration Program	DOC/NOAA/National Marine Fisheries Service
Open Rivers	DOC/NOAA/NMFS
Habitat Conservation & Restoration	DOC/NOAA/NMFS
Pacific Coastal Salmon Recovery Fund	DOC/NOAA/NMFS
Protected Species Research and Management	DOC/NOAA/NMFS
DOD Legacy Resource Management Program	DOD/Deputy Under Secretary of Defense (Installations & Environment)
DOD Longleaf Pine Restoration	DOD/Deputy Under Secretary of Defense (Installations & Environment)
Readiness and Environmental Protection Initiative	DOD/Deputy Under Secretary of Defense (Installations & Environment)
Aquatic Plant Control Research Program	DOD/US Army Corps of Engineers
Recreation Management Support Program	DOD/US Army Corps of Engineers
Stewardship Support Program	DOD/US Army Corps of Engineers
Corps Lakes Gateway	DOD/US Army Corps of Engineers
Boating and other Day Use	DOD/US Army Corps of Engineers
Camping	DOD/US Army Corps of Engineers
Environmental Stewardship - Basic	DOD/US Army Corps of Engineers
Environmental Stewardship - Cultural Resources	DOD/US Army Corps of Engineers
Environmental Stewardship - Endangered Species	DOD/US Army Corps of Engineers
Environmental Stewardship - Master Plans	DOD/US Army Corps of Engineers
Environmental Stewardship - Mitigation	DOD/US Army Corps of Engineers
Environmental Stewardship - Natural Resources Inventories	DOD/US Army Corps of Engineers
Museums and Visitor Centers	DOD/US Army Corps of Engineers
Natural Resource Management Gateway	DOD/US Army Corps of Engineers

PROGRAM NAME	AGENCY and BUREAU or COMPONENT
Park outgrants to states and local agencies	DOD/US Army Corps of Engineers
Partnerships	DOD/US Army Corps of Engineers
Recreation and Natural Resource Interpretation	DOD/US Army Corps of Engineers
Recreation Concession leases to local businesses	DOD/US Army Corps of Engineers
Recreation support to the Military	DOD/US Army Corps of Engineers
Recreational Trails	DOD/US Army Corps of Engineers
Volunteer Clearinghouse	DOD/US Army Corps of Engineers
Water Safety	DOD/US Army Corps of Engineers
Climate Change	DOI/Bureau of Indian Affairs
Endangered Species	DOI/Bureau of Indian Affairs
Fish, Wildlife & Parks - Fish Hatchery Operations	DOI/Bureau of Indian Affairs
Invasive Species/Noxious Weeds	DOI/Bureau of Indian Affairs
Rights Protection Implementation	DOI/Bureau of Indian Affairs
Tribal Management/Development Program	DOI/Bureau of Indian Affairs
BLM Youth Initiative	DOI/Bureau of Land Management
Climate Change and Healthy Landscapes	DOI/Bureau of Land Management
Cultural Resources	DOI/Bureau of Land Management
Federal Land Transaction Facilitation Act	DOI/Bureau of Land Management
Land Acquisition	DOI/Bureau of Land Management
National Monuments and National Conservation Areas	DOI/Bureau of Land Management
National Scenic and Historic Trails	DOI/Bureau of Land Management
Recreation Management	DOI/Bureau of Land Management
Volunteers Program	DOI/Bureau of Land Management
Wild and Scenic Rivers	DOI/Bureau of Land Management
Wilderness	DOI/Bureau of Land Management
Climate Science Centers	DOI
California Bay-Delta	DOI/Bureau of Reclamation

PROGRAM NAME	AGENCY and BUREAU or COMPONENT
Central Valley Project Restoration Fund	DOI/Bureau of Reclamation
Columbia/Snake River ESA Actions	DOI/Bureau of Reclamation
Cooperative Watershed Management Program	DOI/Bureau of Reclamation
Glen Canyon Adaptive Management Program	DOI/Bureau of Reclamation
Lower Colorado River - Multi-Species Conservation Program	DOI/Bureau of Reclamation
Middle Rio Grande Endangered Species Collaborative Program	DOI/Bureau of Reclamation
Platte River Recovery Implementation Program	DOI/Bureau of Reclamation
San Joaquin River Restoration	DOI/Bureau of Reclamation
Trinity River Restoration Program	DOI/Bureau of Reclamation
Upper Colorado River/San Juan Recovery Implementation Program	DOI/Bureau of Reclamation
WaterSMART Program	DOI/Bureau of Reclamation
Yakima River Basin Water Enhancement Program	DOI/Bureau of Reclamation
Fish Health Centers	DOI/Fish and Wildlife Service
Migratory Bird Conservation & Monitoring	DOI/Fish and Wildlife Service
Refuge Inventory & Monitoring	DOI/Fish and Wildlife Service
Office of the Science Advisor	DOI/Fish and Wildlife Service
Aquatic Invasive Species	DOI/Fish and Wildlife Service
Candidate Conservation	DOI/Fish and Wildlife Service
Cooperative Endangered Species Conservation Fund	DOI/Fish and Wildlife Service
Fish Hatcheries	DOI/Fish and Wildlife Service
Joint Ventures Program	DOI/Fish and Wildlife Service
Land Acquisition	DOI/Fish and Wildlife Service
Landscape Conservation Cooperatives	DOI/Fish and Wildlife Service
North American Wetlands Conservation Fund	DOI/Fish and Wildlife Service
Coastal Program	DOI/Fish and Wildlife Service

PROGRAM NAME	AGENCY and BUREAU or COMPONENT
Duck Stamp	DOI/Fish and Wildlife Service
Endangered Species Recovery	DOI/Fish and Wildlife Service
Federal Aid in Sportfish Restoration	DOI/Fish and Wildlife Service
Federal Aid in Wildlife Restoration	DOI/Fish and Wildlife Service
Fisheries Pop Assessment and Coop Mgmt	DOI/Fish and Wildlife Service
National Wildlife Refuge System	DOI/Fish and Wildlife Service
Partners for Fish and Wildlife	DOI/Fish and Wildlife Service
Refuge Volunteers	DOI/Fish and Wildlife Service
State & Tribal Wildlife Grants	DOI/Fish and Wildlife Service
Urban Bird Treaties	DOI/Fish and Wildlife Service
Coastal Impact Assistance Program	DOI/Minerals Management Service
Climate Change Response Program	DOI/National Park Service
Social Science Program	DOI/National Park Service
American Battlefield Protection Program's Battlefield	DOI/National Park Service
Acquisition Grant Program	DOI/National Park Service
Chesapeake Gateways and Water Trails	DOI/National Park Service
Cultural Resource Stewardship	DOI/National Park Service
Cultural Resources Servicewide Programs	DOI/National Park Service
Everglades Restoration	DOI/National Park Service
Federal Land Acquisition	DOI/National Park Service
Federal Lands to Parks	DOI/National Park Service
Historic Preservation Grants-in-Aid to Indian Tribes	DOI/National Park Service
Harpers Ferry Center- Informational Publications	DOI/National Park Service
Heritage Partnership Programs	DOI/National Park Service
Interpretation and Education	DOI/National Park Service
Japanese American Confinement Site Grants	DOI/National Park Service
Junior/Web Ranger Program	DOI/National Park Service

PROGRAM NAME	AGENCY and BUREAU or COMPONENT
National Natural Landmarks	DOI/National Park Service
Natural Resource Servicewide Programs	DOI/National Park Service
Natural Resource Stewardship	DOI/National Park Service
Park Partnership Projects	DOI/National Park Service
Parks as Classrooms Program	DOI/National Park Service
Partnership for Parks Program	DOI/National Park Service
Partnership Wild & Scenic Rivers	DOI/National Park Service
Preserve America	DOI/National Park Service
Recreation Fee Permanent Appropriation	DOI/National Park Service
Rivers and Trails Studies	DOI/National Park Service
Rivers, Trails, and Conservation Assistance	DOI/National Park Service
LWCF State Conservation Grants	DOI/National Park Service
Vanishing Treasures Initiative	DOI/National Park Service
Volunteer-in-Parks Program	DOI/National Park Service
Youth Conservation Corps Projects	DOI/National Park Service
Youth Intern Program	DOI/National Park Service
Youth Partnership Program Stewardship	DOI/National Park Service
Appalachian Regional Reforestation Initiative	DOI/Office of Surface Mining Reclamation and Enforcement
OSM / AmeriCorps VISTA Watershed Development Team	DOI/Office of Surface Mining Reclamation and Enforcement, in partnership with CNCS
Watershed Cooperative Agreement Program	DOI/Office of Surface Mining Reclamation and Enforcement
Biological Research	DOI/US Geological Survey
Coastal and Marine Geology	DOI/US Geological Survey
Geographic Analysis and Monitoring	DOI/US Geological Survey
Global Change	DOI/US Geological Survey
National Cooperative Geologic Mapping	DOI/US Geological Survey
National Geospatial Program	DOI/US Geological Survey

PROGRAM NAME	AGENCY and BUREAU or COMPONENT
Water Resources Investigations	DOI/US Geological Survey
Enterprise Information Resources	DOI/US Geological Survey
Cooperative Research Program	DOI/US Geological Survey
Predicting Landscape Change	DOI/US Geological Survey
Cooperative Watershed Management Program	DOI/Water and Science
Job Corps	DOL/Employment and Training Administration
Federal Lands Highway Program	DOT/ Federal Highway Administration
Paul Sarbanes Transit in the Parks	DOT/ Federal Transit Administration
National Scenic Byways Program	DOT/Federal Highway Administration
Recreational Trails Program	DOT/Federal Highway Administration
Transportation Enhancement Activities	DOT/Federal Highway Administration
Environmental Education Grant Program	EPA/Office of External Affairs and Environmental Education
Research and tool development on green infrastructure	EPA/Office of Policy, Economics and Innovation
Ecosystem Services Research	EPA/Office of Research and Development
Land Preservation	EPA/Office of Research and Development
Sustainability	EPA/Office of Research and Development
Water Quality Research	EPA/Office of Research and Development
Brownfields and Land Revitalization Research, Training and Technical Assistance Grants	EPA/Office of Solid Waste and Emergency Response
Brownfields and Land Revitalization Assessment, Revolving Loan Fund, Cleanup, and Job Training Grants	EPA/Office of Solid Waste and Emergency Response
American Wetlands Month	EPA/Office of Water
CARE	EPA/Office of Water
Community Water Priorities (Urban Waters)	EPA/Office of Water
National Estuary Program	EPA/Office of Water
Nonpoint Source Grants	EPA/Office of Water
Puget Sound	EPA/Office of Water
Wetland Program Development Grants	EPA/Office of Water

PROGRAM NAME	AGENCY and BUREAU or COMPONENT
Administration for Native Americans	HHS/Administration for Children and Families
President's Council on Fitness Sports and Nutrition	HHS/Office of Assistant Secretary for Health
Healthy Community Design Initiative	HHS/CDC
Community Development Block Grants	HUD/Community Planning and Development
Section 108 Loan Guarantee Program	HUD/Community Planning and Development
Encroachment Partnering	Marine Corps
USMC - Personal & Family Readiness - Semper Fit Branch	Marine Corps
Conservation Program	Marine Corps
Appalachian Gateway Communities Initiative	National Endowment for the Arts
Governors' Institute on Community Design	National Endowment for the Arts
Mayors' Institute on City Design	National Endowment for the Arts
Mayors' Institute on City Design 25th Anniversary	National Endowment for the Arts
Our Town	National Endowment for the Arts
Your Town: Citizens' Institute on Rural Design	National Endowment for the Arts
Cultural Resources Program	Navy
Natural Resources Program	Navy
Native Affairs and Natural Resources Advisor	DON/Alaskan Command
Readiness and Environmental Protection Initiative (REPI)	Navy
Natural Resources Program	Navy
Agricultural Outlease	Navy
Forestry	Navy
Operation & Maintenance, Navy; Environmental Conservation-Cultural Resources Program	Navy
Operations & Maintenance, Navy; Environmental Conservation-Natural Resources Program	Navy
Wildlife Conservation, Military Reservations, Navy & Marine Corps	Navy
Navy Outdoor Recreation Program	Navy

PROGRAM NAME	AGENCY and BUREAU or COMPONENT
Ecosystem Science	NSF/Directorate for Biological Sciences
Long Term Ecological Research Program	NSF/Directorate for Biological Sciences
Population & Community Ecology	NSF/Directorate for Biological Sciences
Research Assistantships for High School Students	NSF/Directorate for Biological Sciences
Research Experience for Undergraduates	NSF/Directorate for Biological Sciences
STC: Center for Embedded Networked Sensing	NSF/Directorate for Computer and Information Science and Engineering
Chemistry and Materials Research at the Interface between Science and Art	NSF/Directorate for Mathematical and Physical Sciences
Conservation Effects Assessment Project	USDA/Agricultural Research Service
Environmental Stewardship Research	USDA/Agricultural Research Service
Conservation Reserve Program	USDA/Farm Service Agency
Farm Loan Programs	USDA/Farm Service Agency
Voluntary Public Access Program	USDA/Farm Service Agency
Coupled Human & Natural Systems	USDA/Forest Service
Forest Health Protection – Technical Assistance	USDA/Forest Service
Forest Health Protection – Federal Lands	USDA/Forest Service
Forest Health Protection – Cooperative Lands	USDA/Forest Service
I-Tree	USDA/Forest Service
Outdoor Recreation Strategic Program Area	USDA/Forest Service
Urban Long-term Research Areas	USDA/Forest Service
Community Forest and Open Space Conservation Program	USDA/Forest Service
Conservation Education Program	USDA/Forest Service
Cooperative Work, Knutson-Vandenberg	USDA/Forest Service
Discover the Forest	USDA/Forest Service
EdOut!	USDA/Forest Service
Environmental Compliance and Protection	USDA/Forest Service
Federal Lands Recreation Enhancement Fund	USDA/Forest Service

PROGRAM NAME	AGENCY and BUREAU or COMPONENT
A Forest for Every Classroom	USDA/Forest Service
Forest Health Protection	USDA/Forest Service
Forest Legacy	USDA/Forest Service
Forest Service/Ad Council "Reconnecting with Nature"	USDA/Forest Service
Public Service Campaign	USDA/Forest Service
Forest Stewardship Program	USDA/Forest Service
Integrated Resource Restoration	USDA/Forest Service
Kids in the Woods	USDA/Forest Service
Land Acquisition	USDA/Forest Service
Land Between the Lakes Management Fund	USDA/Forest Service
Latino Legacy	USDA/Forest Service
Legacy Roads and Trails	USDA/Forest Service
Heritage Resources	USDA/Forest Service
Management of National Forest Lands for Subsistence Uses	USDA/Forest Service
Midewin National Tallgrass Prairie Rental Fee Fund	USDA/Forest Service
National Get Outdoors Day	USDA/Forest Service
Natural Inquirer	USDA/Forest Service
NatureWatch	USDA/Forest Service
Outdoor Nation	USDA/Forest Service
Passport in Time	USDA/Forest Service
Recreation Facilities	USDA/Forest Service
Recreation, Heritage and Volunteer Resources	USDA/Forest Service
Reforestation Trust Fund	USDA/Forest Service
Restoration of Forest Lands and Improvements	USDA/Forest Service
Stewardship Contracting	USDA/Forest Service
Symbols program	USDA/Forest Service
Trails	USDA/Forest Service

PROGRAM NAME	AGENCY and BUREAU or COMPONENT
Tribal Relations	USDA/Forest Service
Urban & Community Forestry	USDA/Forest Service
Urban Connections	USDA/Forest Service
Vegetation & Watershed Management	USDA/Forest Service
Wild and Scenic Rivers Program	USDA/Forest Service
Wilderness Program	USDA/Forest Service
Wildlife & Fisheries Habitat Management	USDA/Forest Service
Youth Conservation Corps	USDA/Forest Service
Job Corps	USDA/Forest Service/Job Corps
Agriculture and Food Research Initiative	USDA/National Institute of Food and Agriculture
McIntire-Stennis Cooperative Forestry Research Program	USDA/National Institute of Food and Agriculture
National Water Quality Program	USDA/National Institute of Food and Agriculture
Renewable Resources Extension Act	USDA/National Institute of Food and Agriculture
Plant Materials Program	USDA/Natural Resources Conservation Service
Agricultural Management Assistance Program	USDA/Natural Resources Conservation Service
Agricultural Water Enhancement Program	USDA/Natural Resources Conservation Service
Chesapeake Bay Watershed Initiative	USDA/Natural Resources Conservation Service
Conservation Security Program	USDA/Natural Resources Conservation Service
Conservation Stewardship Program	USDA/Natural Resources Conservation Service
Conservation Technical Assistance	USDA/Natural Resources Conservation Service
Emergency Watersheds Protection Program Floodplain Easements	USDA/Natural Resources Conservation Service
Environmental Quality Incentives Program	USDA/Natural Resources Conservation Service
Farm and Ranch Lands Protection Program	USDA/Natural Resources Conservation Service
Grazing Lands Conservation Initiative	USDA/Natural Resources Conservation Service
Health Forests Reserve Program	USDA/Natural Resources Conservation Service
Resource Conservation and Development	USDA/Natural Resources Conservation Service

PROGRAM NAME	AGENCY and BUREAU or COMPONENT
Snow Surveys	USDA/Natural Resources Conservation Service
Soil Survey	USDA/Natural Resources Conservation Service
Watershed and Flood Prevention Operations Program	USDA/Natural Resources Conservation Service
Wetlands Reserve Program	USDA/Natural Resources Conservation Service
Wildlife Habitat Incentive Program	USDA/Natural Resources Conservation Service
Grasslands Protection Program	USDA/Natural Resources Conservation Service and Farm Service Agency

Appendix D

Summary of Effective Partnerships and Programs

Promising non-federal conservation programs and initiatives exist throughout the United States in great variety. Some of the themes that these efforts focus on are Connecting Americans to the Great Outdoors; the Land and Water Conservation Fund; Great Urban Parks and Community Green Spaces; Conserving Rural Working Farms, Ranches, and Forest Lands through Partnerships and Incentives; Conserving and Restoring Our National Parks, Wildlife Refuges, Forests, and other Federal Lands and Waters; Protecting and Renewing Rivers and Other Waters; and Making the Federal Government a More Effective Conservation Partner. Please keep in mind that the following are just a few examples of such programs. The listed programs are only a small representation of the many, perhaps thousands, of non-federal programs and partnerships that exist in the United States.

Connecting Americans to the Great Outdoors

1. Through partner coalitions or similar organizations, **“friends groups”** can provide needed financial, expert, and volunteer support for federal, state, and local parks, open spaces, trails, and outdoor recreation activities.
2. Tools such as the **Recreational and Public Purposes Act** allow BLM and other federal agencies to lease or sell lands to other public entities at little or no cost to provide parks and recreation areas.
3. **State or regional recreation pass and boat/vehicle registration and licensing programs**, such as various **snow-park programs** or **California’s Green Sticker Program**, have successfully provided resources for recreation, ski, boat, and trail facilities management and access.
4. The **San Francisco Bay Area Transit & Trails Program** provides an interactive web planning tool for taking public transit to recreational trails.
5. The **National Environmental Education Foundation’s Children and Nature Initiative** educates pediatric health care providers about prescribing outdoor activities to children. The program also connects health care providers with local nature sites so they can refer families to safe and easily accessible outdoor areas.
6. The **Prescription Trails New Mexico** program educates health care providers about prescribing walking to patients with diabetes and other chronic disease conditions. The program created a thorough and accurate trail rating system, it relies on collaborative and data-driven program

development, and it operates with little dedicated funding. The Prescription Trails concept began within a grant-funded multi-agency partnership and its development has continued largely through volunteer efforts by partner agencies and individuals, notably New Mexico Health Care Takes on Diabetes, which manages the Prescription Trails Program in New Mexico. New Mexico Health Care Takes on Diabetes and local organizations manage Prescription Trails programs for their communities, develop coalitions to support the work, and decide how to implement activities most effectively.

7. Nonprofit organizations such as **SPLORE, Catch a Special Thrill**, and **Wilderness Inquiry** specialize in providing persons who have disabilities, especially children, with outdoor recreation opportunities that are affordable, customized, and inclusive of people of all abilities.

8. **Outdoor Nation** is a youth-led movement that provides individuals with the tools, training, and social support they need to spur a cultural shift that promotes a nation of people who recreate outdoors.

9. The **Children & Nature Network** encourages and supports people and organizations working nationally and internationally to reconnect children with nature through a wide range of opportunities, including recreation. The network links researchers with individuals, educators, and organizations dedicated to children's health and well-being.

10. The **National Trails Training Partnership** is an alliance of nonprofit trail organizations, federal agencies, training providers, professional contractors, and providers of products and services to enhance training for trail planning, design, construction, maintenance, and management.

11. The **National Off-highway Vehicle Conservation Council** provides education and training programs for off-highway vehicle recreation planning and management and promotes responsible off-highway vehicle recreation and safety.

12. **Leave No Trace, Tread Lightly!, Watchable Wildlife**, and other national nonprofit programs partner with government agencies and corporate interests to promote outdoor stewardship, safety, responsible use, and environmental ethics.

13. The **Step into Cuba, New Mexico, Alliance** is a partnership of 20 organizations that promote healthy lifestyles and prevent chronic disease by providing walkways, trails and social support for walking and hiking in Cuba, New Mexico. It is coordinated by the local Nacimiento Medical Foundation and includes local, state, and national health agencies and funders, as well as three federal agencies—the U.S. Bureau of Land Management, Forest Service, and National Park Service (NPS). It provides a thorough and accurate trail rating system and collaborative and data-driven program development. It operates with little dedicated funding and it is an example of how changes in the built environment can increase physical activity and trail use.

14. The **Urban Wilderness Canoe Adventures (UWCA)** is an outdoor canoe program focused on getting Twin Cities youth on the Mississippi River. Each UWCA trip provides students an opportunity to uniquely experience the Mississippi River while strengthening their outdoor skills and encouraging an active lifestyle. In its pilot year, the UWCA got over 4,500 youth outdoors and on the river. UWCA's goal is to reach over 10,000 youth and family annually, with an emphasis on reaching students from Minneapolis and St. Paul Public Schools and other youth and community-based organizations. The UWCA is a partner program between Wilderness Inquiry, Mississippi River Fund and the National Park Service.

15. **Off-Highway Pals Program (OHPAL)** is a youth-mentoring program operated in partnership with the Off-Highway Motor Vehicle Recreation Division of California State Parks and the California Police Activities League. OHPAL is a fun, physical program encouraging safe and responsible operation of direct bikes, snowmobiles, and all-terrain vehicles (ATVs). Partnering organizations, including the ATV Safety Institute, the Motorcycle Safety Foundation, and the California-Nevada Snowmobile Association, provide rider education curricula and expertly trained OHPAL instructors and coaches. OHPAL also incorporates a variety of educational activities created by California State Parks staff and Tread Lightly! to promote positive land stewardship ethics.

16. The **REI Foundation** encourages active outdoor participation by young people and their families. The Foundation supports communities by funding recovery efforts from natural disasters and local community programs in honor of deceased REI team members. REI has supported a number of nonprofit organizations working to connect kids to nature, including the **Children and Nature Network**, **Northwest Youth Corps**, **Volunteers for Outdoor Arizona**, the **National Audubon Society**, and the **Boys and Girls Clubs**. REI believes that the economic and social benefits of the outdoors make support and funding of outdoor recreation and conservation critical. REI is developing a broad coalition in support of natural spaces and outdoor exploration. REI is also looking at ways to connect public policy with the goal of increasing participation in the outdoors, especially among young people. This includes looking at how outdoor recreation can help with employment, health and wellness, more livable communities, climate change, and protection of our natural resources.

17. **Connecticut's No Child Left Inside** initiative provides the necessary opportunity for children to unplug from technology and unearth the vast opportunities that Connecticut's State Parks and Forests have to offer. A key component of this initiative is the **Great Park Pursuit**, an annual contest now in its fifth season that takes families to state parks and forests for outdoor activities in May and June. Families earn points by attending parks at certain times throughout the summer. These points can later be redeemed for rewards such as camping supplies, free entry into parks, and other donated goods. A special website is devoted for families to check in to and track their progress throughout the summer against other families

throughout the state. Other states, such as Nebraska, New Hampshire and Massachusetts, have incorporated a *Great Park Pursuit* themed initiative. Maryland and Virginia recently launched a similar program called **Explore Your Parks** partnering with outdoor retailer **The North Face** to offer incentives to families that visit Maryland and Virginia state parks.

18. **Park Prescriptions** is a nationwide movement to create a healthier population by strengthening the ties between America's healthcare system and its public lands. In communities across the country, physicians are beginning to prescribe outdoor activity as a means of preventative health care. Working with land managers at the federal, state, and local levels, doctors are taking key steps to make public lands more accessible and relevant to their patients. In New Mexico, a detailed trail rating system developed through the Prescription Trails initiative is making it easier for people to navigate the open spaces near them. Likewise, **Healthways' Silver Sneakers Fitness Program** rewards senior citizens for getting active in the Great Outdoors. These collaborative programs lower the cost of health care and help cultivate stewardship and civic pride among patients of all ages and backgrounds.

19. **Take Me Fishing** is a website created in partnership by the **Recreational Boating and Fishing Foundation** and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. The site makes it easy to obtain a license, to locate places to fish and boat, and to learn about invasive species and aquatic conservation.

20. Existing **Corps programs** around the country engage thousands of youth and young adults in natural resource-based work on projects that address unmet conservation needs. Many states have funded Corps programs for decades, and local communities frequently turn to Corps to train and prepare young people for employment. Corps members **gain abilities that last a lifetime**, including work readiness, educational advancement, and civic engagement, and provide lasting benefits to natural resources and people in their communities. **The Corps Network**, established in 1985, is the voice of the Nation's 143 Service and Conservation Corps. Currently operating in 45 states and the District of Columbia, Corps Network members enroll more than 30,000 young men and women in service every year to improve communities and the environment. The **Public Lands Service Coalition**, founded by the Student Conservation Association, The Corps Network, and the Southwest Conservation Corps is an alliance of more than a dozen national, regional and local nonprofit organizations dedicated to promoting youth service jobs and career development on public lands.

21. There are many non-federal programs that are good models for connecting veterans with natural resource based work and training opportunities. One example is **Veterans Green Jobs (VGJ)**, a national nonprofit organization that provides green jobs education, transition support, and career and enterprise development opportunities for military veterans in a variety of green jobs fields, including home energy efficiency, renewable energy, land conservation, and urban forestry.

22. Hundreds of partners, including friends groups, nonprofits organizations, local community groups, private corporations, and others currently work with public land managers to help **recruit volunteers for service on public lands**. There are also a number of national days of service that help land managers and their partners get volunteers out on our nation's public lands, including **Earth Day, National Public Lands Day, National Trails Day, National Get Outdoors Day**, and many others.

23. **Mentoring programs** have expanded significantly in recent years, focusing primarily on supporting the academic achievement of school aged youth. Because of the success that mentors have had with improving student performance, outdoor enthusiasts are exploring the role that mentors can play in bringing youth to the outdoors and nurturing a sustained appreciation for the outdoors. Two non-federal programs that are good examples of the positive impacts of environmental mentoring are the **American Conservation Corps** and **EnvrionMentors**. ACC gives youth the opportunity to work side by side with park and forest service teams building and maintaining trails, restoring historic buildings, and learning from expert researchers. EnvironMentors is an environment-based mentoring initiative that prepares high school students for college programs and careers in science and environmental professions through the collaborative efforts of volunteer science and environmental professionals, high school students, science teachers, school administrators, government agencies, community organizations, foundations and businesses.

24. **HistoriCorps** is a public-private partnership between **Colorado Preservation, Inc.**, the U.S. Forest Service, and **Volunteers for Outdoor Colorado**. Volunteers and students work with trades specialists, such as log workers, masons, window restorers, roofers, and solar energy technicians, to preserve and adaptively use historic resources on and near public lands.

25. Volunteers in the U.S. Forest Service's **Passport in Time (PIT)** Program work directly on a variety of projects in the national forests and Grasslands, including archaeological survey and excavation, rock art restoration, survey, archival research, historic structure restoration, oral history gathering, and analysis and curation of artifacts. Over the years, volunteers have done everything from stabilizing ancient cliff dwellings, to restoring historic lookout towers, to cleaning vandalized rock art. Since the program's inception in 1989, more than 29,000 volunteers have contributed time valued at more than \$21 million.

26. Through its **Cultural Site Stewardship Program**, the **Southern Nevada Agency Partnership (SNAP)** has joined with the Public Lands Institute of the University of Nevada, Las Vegas (UNLV) to preserve cultural resources in southern Nevada. The region has experienced explosive population growth in the past 25 years. Through the Cultural Site Stewardship Program, more than 450 volunteers monitor and protect cultural sites on nearby public lands. Since the program's inception in 2004, volunteers have logged more than 14,000 hours monitoring at risk cultural sites.

27. **The Student Conservation Association (SCA)** provides a place where college and high school students connect with nature, render hands-on service, gain new skills and perspectives, and launch a lifetime of stewardship. SCA's programs include conservation internships, conservation corps, summer and year round training and service opportunities. SCA provides students with hands-on conservation service opportunities in diverse fields, from tracking grizzlies through the Tetons to restoring desert ecosystems and teaching environmental education at Washington, D.C.'s **Urban Tree House**. SCA internships, available in all conservation disciplines, provide the opportunity to learn from resource management professionals, gain tangible skills and experience and make a substantial contribution to our natural and cultural treasures. SCA provides internships and volunteer opportunities to over 4,000 youth each year, contributing more than two million hours of conservation service per year.

28. **Toyota's Get in Gear Program** promotes volunteer opportunities where Toyota associates live and work, with an emphasis on education, the environment and safety. Toyota funds a number of volunteer based environmental programs that promote community involvement. For example, for the last 12 years, Toyota has supported **National Public Lands Day (NPLD)**, a program of the **National Environmental Education Foundation (NEEF)**, the nation's largest, single-day, outdoor volunteer event in the nation. Toyota also supports capacity building grants to strengthen the ability of **friends groups** to serve public lands in their communities. For over a decade, Toyota has encouraged its employees across the United States to get involved in NPLD activities by helping to care for parks, forests, rivers, beaches, shorelines and other public lands in their communities. In 2010, 3,500 employees volunteered at 39 sites around the country.

29. **Tree City USA** and **Nature Explore Classrooms** are coordinated by the Arbor Day Foundation (Foundation). Tree City USA has grown to become the framework for sustained urban forestry management. The Foundation presents Tree City USA Growth Awards to communities that demonstrate advanced improvements in local tree care. These awards are a valuable tool for informing citizens about the breadth of urban forestry activities. The Foundation's Nature Explore Classrooms help children learn and play surrounded by the wonders of nature. These classrooms are being created to bring the natural world to where children now spend their days, at child care centers, schools, nature centers, and community parks, as well as in parks, and wildlife refuges.

30. **Save Our History** is led by the Arts and Entertainment Television Network's History Channel. The Network provides grants of up to \$10,000 to nonprofit historical organizations and partnering schools to fund hands-on, experiential educational projects that teach students about their local history and actively engage them in its preservation.

31. **National History Day (NHD)** is a highly regarded academic program for elementary and secondary school students. Each year, more than half a million students, encouraged by thousands of teachers nation-

wide participate in the NHD contest. Students choose historical topics related to a theme and conduct extensive primary and secondary research through libraries, archives, museums, oral history interviews and historic sites. After analyzing and interpreting their sources and drawing conclusions about their topics' significance in history, students present their work in original papers, websites, exhibits, performances and documentaries.

32. **Project Learning Tree**, coordinated by the **American Forest Foundation**, encourages teachers and leaders to take children/students/youth outdoors and learn about nature. Educational programs such as these have been able to be sustained and enhanced by federal technical and financial assistance.

33. **Tlingit Tribe Path to Excellence Academy** provides early college/high school Taku Tlingit students with a multi-day cultural, heritage and environmental program, combining traditional knowledge with western-based science. The students participate in educational and cultural events, including learning the Tlingit language, preparing traditional foods (salmon, crab and seal), go on hikes to study the forests, plants, wildlife, geography and streams of the traditional lands of the Taku Tlingit Tribe.

34. **Electronic Field Trips**, sponsored by the **National Park Foundation**, give students the opportunity to learn about a particular topic through national parks they may never get a chance to visit. Each Electronic Field Trip consists of two components: (1) a televised broadcast from a national park featuring National Park Service Rangers and youth hosts, and (2) a website featuring downloadable lesson plans for teachers and interactive games for students. The broadcast and the website complement each other and teach with rich imagery and content in three different modalities. Since 2004, youth have taken Electronic Field Trips to eleven national parks.

35. **The African American Experience Fund** connects all Americans to the considerable contributions of African Americans throughout our country's history that are commemorated and brought to life in the national parks. Since 2001, the African American Experience Fund has raised private funds to support educational, volunteer and community engagement programs in the national parks and historic sites that honor and tell the story of the African American Experience.

36. **Klamath Basin Education and Employment Youth Academy** is an education and employment program that targets high school and college students who have been identified by their schools and communities as having strong interest, the aptitude and the potential for a career in natural resources and/or environmental science fields that are employed by the Bureaus of the U.S. Department of the Interior, the U.S. Department of Agricultural and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, as well as various state agencies.

37. **4-H, the Y (YMCA/YWCA), and Boy Scouts of America** are just a few of the various effective year long/on-going youth programs which have outdoor, environmental stewardship, cultural and historic awareness, citizenship, community service, healthy living, etc., as core elements of their programs. Many of these youth organizations are supported, either directly or indirectly, by government, academic institutions, private and nonprofit organizations. All of these youth programs have successfully worked with youth in outdoor programming, including natural, cultural and historic areas, for over 100 years.

38. Through its **5 Rivers College Outreach program, Trout Unlimited (TU)** has worked with colleges to organize “alternative spring breaks” so that groups of students can gain hands-on experience in hydrology, aquatic ecology, and habitat restoration. TU has also partnered with college mentoring programs to create opportunities for mentors to bring children on fishing trips to local waters. Linking passionate anglers and conservationists through TU’s grassroots network with existing college mentoring programs results in multi-generational connections with the outdoors. TU is also in the process of creating college and university sub-chapters across the country. These groups would familiarize young adults in TU’s mission and enable the next generation of conservationists to get involved and volunteer at watershed restoration projects in their local communities.

39. **Trout in the Classroom** is an environmental educational program in which participating classes raise trout in a classroom tank throughout the school year and then release them into a stream in the spring. The presence of trout in the classroom enhances students’ learning environment and provides unique opportunities for engaging inquiry-based and interdisciplinary projects, including work in science, math, language arts, fine arts, and social studies. Due to crowded schools and overloaded schedules, teachers lack the time and resources necessary to run classroom programs that go beyond required curricula. Truly engaging science and nature study have particularly fallen by the wayside. Meanwhile, most kids have become disconnected from nature, with little or no free time experiences in natural settings. Through Trout in the Classroom, TU works with teachers and partners to bring nature to the students in an inexpensive and widely beneficial manner.

40. **School for Wildlife Conservation.** In 2007 the Wildlife Conservation Society founded the Urban Assembly School for Wildlife Conservation (UASWC) in cooperation with the New York City Department of Education, Urban Assembly and the Phipps Community Development Corporation. Based in the Bronx in one of the poorest and most ethnically diverse areas of the country, this public school’s mission is to engage underserved middle- and high-school students in a challenging curriculum centered on conservation, to successfully graduate students with Advanced Regents Diplomas, and to cultivate the life skills they will need for success in college and beyond. The Bronx Zoo serves as an extended classroom for students and their families, and its scientists, educators, keepers and other staff serves as mentors, role models and teachers. In

2009, The School for Wildlife Conservation after only two years of operation was given a grade of A, the highest score awarded by New York City's Department of Education, on its first ever progress report. The school began with a sixth grade only (six classes), and has added another grade each year since. The 2010-11 school year will see the addition of a ninth grade. Of note, the School for Wildlife Conservation has a yearly attendance rate of 93.6 percent, which is higher than that of the Bronx school district at 89 percent.

41. The **Urban Ecology Center** in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, offers an innovative model for urban environmental education. From its humble beginnings as a neighborhood effort to save a park from crime, it has grown into a one-of-a-kind environmental community center serving tens of thousands of visitors a year. The secret to its success is its replicable Neighborhood Environmental Education Project, which provides neighborhood children and youth with experiences in the natural world. The Urban Ecology Center couples NEEP with a community program that fosters cross-generational mentor relationships as a means to develop a strong environmental ethic. The Urban Ecology Center's experience holds useful lessons for communities elsewhere.

42. **Earth Force** engages young people as active citizens who improve the environment and their communities now and in the future. Through Earth Force, young people get hands-on, real-world opportunities to practice civic skills, acquire and understand environmental knowledge, and develop the skills and motivation to become life-long leaders in addressing environmental issues. Students at Robinson Elementary School in the Tampa Bay area of Florida engaged in a native species restoration project at local Crystal Springs Preserve. Gilpin PreK-8 School in Denver took an inventory of community issues and strengths around water, including identifying storm drains, trash and water quality sampling. Students invited official from public works to talk to them and in turn educated community members about what they had learned.

43. **The Dunes Restoration Project** is a partnership between the California State Park Service and all sixth grade students at Carpinteria Middle School. This service-learning project helps the California State Parks Service restore the local dunes at Carpinteria Beach. It also complements the California State Science Framework. During this yearly project, all sixth graders erect fencing to protect growth of native plants; create informational posters that are displayed in the parks display cases; learn about the indigenous people—the Chumash—and their history; follow a science curriculum that includes a discussion of rocks and minerals found in the Carpinteria area; understand how local geology has affected the history of Carpinteria by taking a geology walk; and study the birds that inhabit the area both seasonally and year round.

44. Since the 1990s, the **National Audubon Society** has partnered with communities across the country to create a network of urban nature centers that serve diverse constituencies and provide opportunities to connect with nature—especially for communities that have not previously had

access to green space. Each Center is providing opportunities for young people and families to take part in activities focused on health, education, and stewardship. In partnership with REI, Audubon piloted strategies to connect more Latino youth and families with nature by working closely with local organizations. Audubon worked with partners in South Phoenix, East Los Angeles, and Seattle to develop best practices on how to assess community needs, attract audiences, provide relevant experiential environmental education, measure success, and replicate innovation. The **Great Backyard Bird Count (GBBC)**, run jointly by Audubon and the Cornell Lab of Ornithology, is an annual four-day event that engages people of all ages in counting birds to create a snapshot of bird populations across the continent.

45. The U.S. Forest Service and the Ad Council collaborated to create a conservation curriculum that inspires students to get outside. **“Finding My Forest”** is a new free resource for teachers, educators and students. Focused on grades 3-8, this project encourages a new understanding and redefinition of “forests,” ranging from their schoolyard outside to national forests around the country. For teachers, it offers a way to make our natural spaces relevant to students. The U.S. Forest Service and Ad Council responded to these problems by not only creating an interactive online curriculum to help teach about forests, but to also offer advice and lesson plans that take kids outside.

46. Each year, the **Sierra Club’s Inner City Outings (ICO)** program organizes over 800 outdoor adventures in 50 communities across the country. Teams of ICO volunteers provide meaningful experiences for urban and underserved youth, teaching them important skills and involving them in activities that build self-esteem and stewardship. These outings encourage healthy recreation and service learning, and cultivate an enduring appreciation for the natural world.

47. **Clearwater’s Classroom of the Waves.** In 1969, singer Pete Seeger launched the sailing sloop Clearwater with the mission of cleaning up the Hudson River. Today, the 106-foot vessel has transformed into an education station, providing hands-on learning opportunities to students of all ages. A typical sail lasts three to five hours (though multiday trips are also available) and introduces young people to sailing and navigation skills, in addition to teaching them about water quality and freshwater ecosystems. Clearwater’s core curriculum has been developed to meet New York State Learning Standards on in a wide variety of topics, and its team of educators works closely with teachers and group leaders to ensure that each student has a meaningful experience.

Land and Water Conservation Fund

1. Over its first 40 years, LWCF has provided more than \$14.4 billion to acquire new federal recreation lands and as grants to State and local governments. For discussion purposes, the LWCF program is often divided into the “stateside” grants to state and local governments and, the “federal side” portion of the LWCF that buys land in new forests, parks, wildlife refuges and other recreation areas owned by the national government.
2. The stateside includes 40,400 grants to state and local governments over 40 years; 10,600 grants for acquisition of park and recreation lands, including 3,200 “combination” projects for both land purchase and initial recreation development; 26,420 grants for development of recreation facilities, in addition to the “combination” projects above; 2,760 grants for redevelopment of older recreation facilities, including improved access for people with disabilities; 641 state planning grants, to produce six “generations” of analytic studies on recreation potentials, needs, opportunities, and policies
3. Seventy-five percent of the total funds obligated have gone to locally sponsored projects to provide close-to-home recreation opportunities that are readily accessible to America’s youth, adults, senior citizens and the physically or mentally challenged. In addition to the thousands of smaller recreation areas, grants have helped to acquire and develop new parks of statewide or national significance such as the Allagash Wilderness Waterway (Maine), Liberty State Park (New Jersey), the Willamette River Greenway (Oregon), Platte River Park (Colorado), Herman Brown Park (Texas), and Illinois Beach State Park.

Great Urban Parks and Community Green Spaces

1. **States** such as **Georgia** and cities such as **New York** set goals for permanently protecting a percentage of their land area as community greenspace.
2. The **City of Chicago** rehabilitated its recreational harbors and lake-shore recreation amenities through bonds serviced by revenues generated from leases and concessionaires.
3. The **City of Franklin, Tennessee**, is part of a public-private partnership to save and interpret extensive portions of Franklin’s 1864 Civil War battlefield, including a historic plantation and other resources on the property and to acquire and protect a historic 200-acre walking horse breeding farm that was begun in 1935. Harlinsdale Farm was purchased

by the City in 2004 for park and recreation use, and now hosts Farm Days and many other events throughout the year.

4. The **Tennessee Riverwalk in Chattanooga, Tennessee**, is part of an effort to conserve vulnerable coastal and flood zone areas as parks, which can save the nation vast sums of money and reduce the loss of life from storms and surges. Beginning in the early 1980s, the city began developing a 12-mile linear riverwalk along the Tennessee River, focusing on leveraging the city's core asset and reconnecting it to the community. The creations included the Tennessee Riverpark, a revamped Coolidge Park, a series of trails, and the preserved the Walnut Street Bridge (an abandoned railroad viaduct) as a pedestrian-only link between downtown and North Chattanooga.

5. The **South Platte River Greenway and Commons Park in Denver, Colorado**, links destinations within metropolitan areas by using trails and greenways along creeks, abandoned rail lines and other corridors can encourage non-motorized transportation as well as recreational movement of people (as well as of wildlife). Converting the former industrial backwater into a trail-based, facility-studded showpiece took nearly 30 years to implement, but its 15 interconnected parks and 100 miles of adjoining greenways attract hundreds of thousands of users (and uncounted birds and other wildlife). The centerpiece is 22-acre Commons Park, constructed as part of a new, walkable neighborhood on a former railyard on the edge of downtown.

6. The **Railyard Park in Santa Fe, New Mexico**, is a new 12-acre park which is revitalizing a bypassed part of the city's core, igniting economic development, invigorating a major transportation hub and providing a natural amenity to improve the quality of life. Part of a long-neglected 50-acre site that now holds retail and residences and the Rail Runner Express commuter train, Railyard Park features outdoor performance space, a children's play area, a farmer's market, community cultural center, a walk-bike trail, a labyrinth and an innovative water harvesting system for irrigation. Railyard Park received funding from private, local and state sources, as well as federal transportation funds.

7. The **Hunts Point Riverside Park in the Bronx, New York**, was created with city funds and has a fishing and recreation pier with a floating dock, a water-themed playground, a central oval lawn and a riverside amphitheater with stone seating and lawn panels. As part of a larger Bronx River effort, the initiative has led to new green jobs, restored natural areas, youth environmental education, and improved water and air quality.

8. The **Bruce Vento Nature Sanctuary in St. Paul, Minnesota**, contains historic caves, natural springs and remnants of the area's industrial past. Protection of the 27-acre marsh has helped increase habitat in a critical urban stretch of the Mississippi River flyway, a corridor used by 40 percent of the continent's migrating birds. The Nature Sanctuary also links two regional trails, and an interpretive center educates city dwellers about the nature around them. Owned by St. Paul, the site is within the Mis-

Mississippi National River Recreation Area. Funds came from city, regional, state, national and private sources.

9. The **Emerald Necklace** is a 68-mile green infrastructure connecting the San Gabriel Mountains to the Pacific Ocean, serving 4 million people. The project is a direct response to public health challenges, and opportunities to restore acres of blighted urban land. The **San Gabriel Rivers and Mountains Conservancy** and a coalition of organizations are working to restore and create habitat opportunities for outdoor education, an active transportation corridor, protect water and air resources, increase access to recreation for residents suffering from chronic health issues, and curtail urban heat island phenomenon. Additionally, the National Park Service San Gabriel Watershed and Mountains Special Resource Study will offer opportunities for collaborative partnership-based approaches to resources protection and public use and enjoyment.

10. **California's Green Sticker Fund**. It is the law to buy a green sticker to put on your license plate if you are driving an Off Highway Vehicle (OHV) on designated public lands. The vehicle must have a green sticker if it was manufactured in 2002 or prior as well as any 2003 or newer OHV that meets California Air Resource Board emission standards. A substantial portion of the money collected from the green stickers goes to help maintain and support State Vehicle Recreation Areas, and to purchase lands to build more of these motorized-only riding parks. The fines for riding without a sticker are more than the sticker itself and sticker enforcement is typically strict but if you have a sticker you are allowed to ride year round. There is also a red sticker fee for OHV's that are for 2003 and newer models that don't meet the California Air Resource Board emission standards. There are only allowed to ride seasonally.

11. **Great Outdoors Colorado** was created in 1992 through a citizens' initiative and uses lottery funds to preserve, enhance, and manage the state's wildlife, park, river, trail, and recreation open spaces heritage.

12. **Program Open Space** is a joint program in Maryland between the State and local governments to acquire land for recreational use and open space conservation. The program uses a mix of federal and state funding sources to acquire land. Maryland's Program Open Space land acquisition is complemented by several other programs. For example, the State's Rural Legacy Program, which works to maintain large areas of working land by providing grants to local governments and land trusts for easements and purchase of lands. Maryland has also conducted a Green Infrastructure Assessment to help the State focus its lands conservation efforts and connect habitat corridors.

13. The **National Atlas of Sustainable Ecosystem Services** addresses the availability and connectivity of green spaces across the nation and will also assess the protection status associated with these green spaces. In addition, the Atlas will assess suitable habitat for suites of species important for outdoor recreation. In partnership with other agencies and the **National Geographic Society**, the Atlas will include data for the conterminous

nous United States, including higher-resolution data for 250 communities with populations greater than 25,000 people. Natural areas surrounding communities provide a vast array of ecosystem services to humans, from clean air and drinking water to recreational opportunities. The Atlas will map ecosystem services including temperature regulation, ambient and near-roadway air pollutant filtration, water filtration and storage, and access to nature and open space. It will integrate demographic and health data and map out a number of urban stresses and risks to human health, including heat waves, flooding, and fecal contamination of drinking water. This community component of the Atlas will include demographic data to identify low-income and other vulnerable subpopulations that may benefit disproportionately from “green” infrastructure and/or are disproportionately underserved.

Conserving Rural Working Farms, Ranches, and Forests Through Partnerships and Incentives

1. Successful **joint use agreements** allow for multipurpose landscapes, which relieve private landowners of liability issues in return for opening their lands for public use.

2. The **Hudson River Valley National Heritage Area** includes 250 communities in ten counties bordering the Hudson River for 154 miles of tidal estuary. This area is approximately three million acres of Hudson Highlands, Catskill Mountains, rolling farmland and compact villages, small cities and hamlets. It contains outstanding natural as well as historic and cultural resources, such as West Point and the FDR estate at Hyde Park. The region extends from the confluence of the Mohawk and Hudson Rivers, south to the northern border of New York City. The Hudson River Valley National Heritage Area is managed by the Greenway Conservancy for the Hudson River Valley, a public benefit corporation, and the Hudson River Valley Greenway Communities Council, a state agency.

3. **Silos & Smokestacks National Heritage Area (SSNHA)** tells the story of American agriculture and its global significance through partnerships and activities that celebrate the land, people, and communities of a 37-county area of northeastern Iowa. Technical tools and assistance help landowners and local communities preserve these cultural and natural assets and present and interpret the agricultural way of life. SSNHA is one of 49 congressionally-designated heritage regions in the nation that have been established by Congress.

4. **Undaunted Stewardship** is an award-winning Montana program that promotes naturally sustained productivity on rangelands, while preserving and providing access to historic sites on private ranchland (particularly those along the Lewis & Clark Trail). The program is led by Montana State University (MSU), the Montana Stockgrowers Association, and the

Bureau of Land Management, in cooperation with the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service. To date, nearly 1.2 million deeded, private lease, federal and Indian trust lands, and state lands are managed to meet standards set by the program. Ten participating ranches have also preserved and provided public access and interpretation to important historic sites associated with Lewis & Clark on their land.

5. Nearly 2,000 **land trusts** nationwide play a vital role in negotiating and supporting recreational opportunities through easements and acquisitions.

6. **State foresters**, in partnership with local communities and the USDA Forest Service, provide technical assistance on the management, protection, and wise use of the non-industrial private forest and the nearly 100 million acres of urban and community forests. These forests provide recreational and stewardship opportunities and connect residents with their natural areas.

7. **State conservationists**, working with state technical committees and the USDA provide assistance on the management, protection, and use of agricultural land.

8. The **Malpai Borderlands Group (MBG)** is a nonprofit organization established in 1994 by a coalition of ranchers who live in the Malpai Borderlands, located in southeastern Arizona and southwestern New Mexico. MBG was organized to bring together ranchers, scientists, and key agencies to implement a series of conservation programs and activities, including land restoration; endangered species habitat protection; cost-sharing range and ranch improvements; and land conservation projects. The group's mission statement is: *to restore and maintain the natural processes that create and protect a healthy, unfragmented landscape to support a diverse, flourishing community of human, plant, and animal life in our Borderlands Region. Together, we will accomplish this by working to encourage profitable ranching and other traditional livelihoods, which will sustain the open-space nature of our land for generations to come.* It is important to note that the mission has two distinct components; the first is an ecological goal to maintain the integrity and health of the land and the second is a socio-economic goal to encourage ranching and other livelihoods that are dependent on the land, all of which will be achieved through a collaborative program. MBG is governed by a Board of Directors and is funded through grants from private foundations, tax-deductible contributions, and, in some cases (e.g., with respect to specific projects) grants from state and federal agencies.

9. The **Wildlands and Woodlands Initiative** works to create and implement a conservation vision across New England. The initiative came together due to concern over the conversion of forests and farms across the region to development. A group of scientists, brought together by Harvard Forest, crafted a vision document for the New England landscape that incorporates both conservation and preservation of forested lands across the region. Their vision is to retain at least 70 percent of New

England in forestland: 90 percent of this land would be “woodlands”—working forests—and 10 percent would be “wildland reserves”—and where nature is left to take its course. The initiative plans to work with willing landowners and local land trusts to implement this vision and double the current rates of conservation in the region. Currently, the Wildlands and Woodlands Initiative is working with several lands trusts in Western Massachusetts to aggregate their projects to a bigger scale.

Conserving and Restoring Our National Parks, Wildlife Refuges, Forests, and Other Federal Lands and Waters

1. Through partner coalitions or similar organizations, “**friends groups**” can provide needed financial, expert, and volunteer support for federal, state, and local parks, open spaces, trails, and outdoor recreation activities.
2. Hundreds of partners, including friends groups, nonprofits organizations, local community groups, private corporations, and others currently work with public land managers to help **recruit volunteers for service on public lands**. There are also a number of national days of service that help land managers and their partners get volunteers out on our nation’s public lands, including **Earth Day, National Public Lands Day, National Trails Day, National Get Outdoors Day**, and many others.
3. Existing **Corps programs** around the country engage thousands of youth and young adults in natural resource-based work on projects that address unmet conservation needs. Many states have funded Corps programs for decades, and local communities frequently turn to Corps to train and prepare young people for employment. Corps members **gain abilities that last a lifetime**, including work readiness, educational advancement, and civic engagement, and provide lasting benefits to natural resources and people in their communities. **The Corps Network**, established in 1985, is the voice of the nation’s 143 Service and Conservation Corps. Currently operating in 45 states and the District of Columbia, Corps Network members enroll more than 30,000 young men and women in service every year to improve communities and the environment. The **Public Lands Service Coalition**, founded by the Student Conservation Association, The Corps Network, and the Southwest Conservation Corps is an alliance of more than a dozen national, regional and local nonprofit organizations dedicated to promoting youth service jobs and career development on public lands.
4. **Yellowstone to Yukon (Y2Y)** is one of the longest running and most comprehensive efforts to achieve large, landscape-scale conservation in North America that spans from Yellowstone National Park up to the Yukon Region in Canada. It embodied three priority principles: protect cores, connect through corridors, and create greater permeability in the surrounding landscape with humans. The lessons from Y2Y inspire

people with a vision: use sound science; give local efforts responsibility to perform stewardship locally, but within a larger context; and to build landscape-level partnerships. Y2Y facilitates nested, regional landscape approaches, such as the Blackfoot Challenge and the Southwest Crown of the Continent, and embraces continental landscape conservation at the community and even international level.

5. In 1980, President Carter recognized the historical significance of the Campaign to King's Mountain by signing a law designating the historical route the **Overmountain Victory National Historic Trail**; the first national historic trail in the eastern United States that recognizes Revolutionary War Overmountain Men and their journey. The trail's mission is to protect, preserve and interpret the route of the Campaign to the Battle of Kings Mountain. The Overmountain Victory National Historic Trail is a cooperative effort of the National Park Service, the U.S. Forest Service, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, the Overmountain Victory Trail Association, local governments, local citizens' associations, local historical societies and the States of Virginia, Tennessee, North Carolina, and South Carolina. Fifty-seven miles of the trail are officially developed for public use, and development continues on the remaining sections. The official sections of the trail were established through agreements with current landowners and often have overlapping designations. All officially certified segments are identified through the use of signs displaying the trail logo (an Overmountain man in profile on a brown and white triangle) or a white triangular blaze. In addition, the cooperators work with Chambers of Commerce and tourism bureaus, community-based organizations and media outlets to write articles to report on trail projects and activities.

Protecting and Renewing Rivers and Other Waters

1. The **Chesapeake Bay Watershed Restoration Initiative** protects and restores the health, heritage, natural resources, and social and economic value of the nation's largest estuarine ecosystem and the natural sustainability of its watershed. The Watershed consists of public and private land managers, including the USDA, communities, military installations, parks, forests, wildlife refuges, monuments, and museums. Progress in restoring the health of the Chesapeake Bay is dependent upon the support of State and local governments, the enterprise of the private sector, and the stewardship provided to the Chesapeake Bay by all the people who make this region their home. The restoration of the **Elizabeth River** is one of the projects that have united the business, nonprofit and public sectors in a partnership to clean up one of the most polluted tributaries in the Chesapeake Bay basin. Since 2000, the **National Fish and Wildlife Foundation's** Small Watershed Grants Program has provided close to \$750,000 in order to fund seven key projects vital to the success of the Elizabeth River Project's overall mission. This restoration project includes a sediment management feasibility study and sediment management plan,

the remediation of three Superfund sites scarred by industrial waste and the creation of a 40-acre “Eco park” to provide public access and improved water quality.

2. The **Anacostia Watershed Restoration Partnership** unites the brainpower and the technical and financial resources of industry, local, state, and federal government, citizens’ groups, and foundations to solve the problems of an urban river with leadership from the Army Corps of Engineers. The Partnership has identified and ground-truthed roughly 3,000 restoration projects that agencies and other partners can undertake for a cleaner river and healthier communities in our nation’s capital.

3. **The Blackfoot Challenge** is a landowner-based group that coordinates management of the Blackfoot River, its tributaries, and adjacent lands in the roughly 1.5 million-acre Montana watershed. Its mission: to coordinate efforts that will enhance, conserve and protect the natural resources and rural lifestyle of the Blackfoot River Valley for present and future generations. While some of the region’s conservation work is aimed at addressing the cumulative impact of a history of mining, logging and heavy grazing, the group also faces the growing threat of landscape fragmentation due to residential and commercial development. While the organization itself does not hold conservation easements, it connects landowners to the public and private entities that do, including the USDA, and it educates landowners about how easements work. For example, concerns about predator activity in the valley led to collective efforts to reduce human-livestock-predator conflict: installing electric fence to non-lethally deter bears from livestock and beehives; hiring a Range Rider to monitor wolf activity and advise landowners on how to reduce wolf depredation; and establishing a central compost facility for livestock carcasses, which can attract predators if left to decay on the range.

4. Founded in 1985, **the Clark Fork Coalition** is dedicated to protecting and restoring the Clark Fork River basin, a 22,000-square-mile area draining into western Montana and northern Idaho. Polluted by years of mining, the Clark Fork watershed encompasses the largest Superfund site in America. The Clark Fork Coalition, in partnership with the State Natural Resources Damage Program, Trout Unlimited, and the Blackfoot River Valley’s Coalition-supported landowner group, the Watershed Restoration Coalition, worked to incorporate community input to create a vision for restoration of the upper Clark Fork that would prioritize key restoration projects, highlight the most urgent threats to fish, wildlife, and habitat in the Upper Clark Fork basin, and create a “map” of where and when to spend the estimated \$130 million in Superfund money destined for cleanup and restoration of the upper Clark Fork. The Coalition works with landowners, other conservation groups, public agencies, and citizens to inventory and monitor riparian and aquatic habitat; identify fisheries limitations and trout population trends; identify and plan riparian restoration projects with private landowners and public land managers; and remove roads and replace culverts to improve fish passage. In addition, the Coalition has also taken their quest for basin-wide conser-

vation to the region's consumers, spearheading a ban on pollution-causing phosphate detergent, and helping establish a farmer's market where local farmers and ranchers can sell their products to nearby consumers.

5. The **Nisqually Indian Tribe** has undertaken a watershed restoration project on the Mashel River in Washington State. The overall objective for the project will be to improve the habitat characteristics that are most limiting to fall Chinook salmon, winter steelhead, and Coho salmon. As part of an effort to develop comprehensive and integrated multi-species management plans for the Nisqually River Basin, the Tribe analyzed fall Chinook salmon and developed a recovery plan that was released in August 2001. Part of the recovery plan was the development of an action plan that identified specific items to be completed over a multi-year period such as a new channel, which puts the creek back into its original floodplain and will keep water cooler and cleaner for salmon, and includes features like logjams that benefit both juvenile and adult fish by providing places for fish to hide, rest and feed.

6. **Southeast Regional Partnership for Planning and Sustainability (SERPPAS)** – a partnership between DOD, USFS, NRCS, EPA, NOAA, USGS, FWS, and the states of Florida, Georgia, Alabama, Mississippi, and North and South Carolina. These partners work together to support regional sustainability and military readiness in the Southeast through compatible resource use, protection of valuable habitats and ecosystems, and sustainable economic development. Partnership successes are achieved through collaborative working relationships, community-driven planning, and stakeholder outreach.

Making the Federal Government a More Effective Conservation Partner

1. **America's Longleaf Restoration Initiative (ALRI)** is an effort to maintain, recover, and restore the longleaf pine ecosystem across its historic range in the Southeast. Longleaf pine forests once encompassed more than 90 million acres of the North American landscape representing a diversity of cultural, ecological, and socio-economic values. Today only 3 percent of that acreage remains. The ALRI partnership's vision is to create a functional and viable longleaf pine ecosystem with the full spectrum of values, inspired through a voluntary partnership of concerned, motivated organizations and individuals. This includes participation from federal agencies, including the USDA, state agencies, private landowners, and non-governmental organizations. The 15-year goal for ALRI is to increase from 3.1 to 8.0 million longleaf acres. This year a landscape-scale longleaf restoration project in Northeast Florida was selected for funding under the Forest Service's Collaborative Forest Landscape Restoration Program. This project seeks to restore forest ecosystems that have been significantly altered by fire exclusion and hydrologic alteration.

2. **Southwest Regional Partnership for Planning and Sustainability (SERPPAS)** – a partnership between DOD, USFS, NRCS, EPA, NOAA, USGS, FWS, and the states of Florida, Georgia, Alabama, Mississippi, and North and South Carolina. These partners work together to support regional sustainability and military readiness in the Southeast through compatible resource use, protection of valuable habitats and ecosystems, and sustainable economic development. Partnership successes are achieved through collaborative working relationships, community-driven planning, and stakeholder outreach.

3. The **USA National Phenology Network** brings together citizen scientists, government agencies, nonprofit groups, educators and students of all ages to monitor the impacts of climate change on plants and animals in the United States. Phenology is the study of the timing of recurring biological phases, the causes of their timing with regard to adapting to biotic and abiotic forces, and the interrelation among phases of same or different species; examples are leafing and flowering, maturation of agricultural plants, emergence of insects, and migration of birds. Many of these events are sensitive to climatic variation and change, and they are simple to observe and record. With sufficient observations and understanding, phenology can be a powerful predictor for other processes and variables of importance at local to global scales, as well as a potential driver of ecological forecast models with both scientific and practical applications. The network harnesses the power of people and the Internet to collect and share information, providing researchers with far more data than they could collect alone.

Appendix E Presidential Memorandum on America's Great Outdoors

The White House
Office of the Press Secretary

For Immediate Release
April 16, 2010

Presidential Memorandum—America's Great Outdoors

MEMORANDUM FOR THE SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR
THE SECRETARY OF AGRICULTURE
THE ADMINISTRATOR OF THE ENVIRONMENTAL
PROTECTION AGENCY
THE CHAIR OF THE COUNCIL ON ENVIRONMENTAL
QUALITY

SUBJECT: A 21st Century Strategy for America's Great Outdoors
Americans are blessed with a vast and varied natural heritage. From mountains to deserts and from sea to shining sea, America's great outdoors have shaped the rugged independence and sense of community that define the American spirit. Our working landscapes, cultural sites, parks, coasts, wild lands, rivers, and streams are gifts that we have inherited from previous generations. They are the places that offer us refuge from daily demands, renew our spirits, and enhance our fondest memories, whether they are fishing with a grandchild in a favorite spot, hiking a trail with a friend, or enjoying a family picnic in a neighborhood park. They also are our farms, ranches, and forests -- the working lands that have fed and sustained us for generations. Americans take pride in these places, and share a responsibility to preserve them for our children and grandchildren.

Today, however, we are losing touch with too many of the places and proud traditions that have helped to make America special. Farms, ranches, forests, and other valuable natural resources are disappearing at an alarming rate. Families are spending less time together enjoying their natural surroundings. Despite our conservation efforts, too many of our fields are becoming fragmented, too many of our rivers and streams are becoming polluted, and we are losing our connection to the parks, wild places, and open spaces we grew up with and cherish. Children, especially, are spending less time outside running and playing, fishing and hunting, and connecting to the outdoors just down the street or outside of town.

Across America, communities are uniting to protect the places they love, and developing new approaches to saving and enjoying the outdoors. They are bringing together farmers and ranchers, land trusts, recreation and conservation groups, sportsmen, community park groups, governments and industry, and people from all over the country to develop new partnerships and innovative programs to protect and restore our outdoors legacy. However, these efforts are often scattered and sometimes insufficient. The Federal Government, the Nation's largest land manager, has a responsibility to engage with these partners to help develop a conservation agenda worthy of the 21st Century. We must look to the private sector and nonprofit organizations, as well as towns, cities, and States, and the people who live and work in them, to identify the places that mean the most to Americans, and leverage the support of the Federal Government to help these community-driven efforts to succeed. Through these partnerships, we will work to connect these outdoor spaces to each other, and to reconnect Americans to them.

For these reasons, it is hereby ordered as follows:

Section 1. Establishment.

(a) There is established the America's Great Outdoors Initiative (Initiative), to be led by the Secretaries of the Interior and Agriculture, the Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency, and the Chair of the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) and implemented in coordination with the agencies listed in section 2(b) of this memorandum. The Initiative may include the heads of other executive branch departments, agencies, and offices (agencies) as the President may, from time to time, designate.

(b) The goals of the Initiative shall be to:

(i) Reconnect Americans, especially children, to America's rivers and waterways, landscapes of national significance, ranches, farms and forests, great parks, and coasts and beaches by exploring a variety of efforts, including:

(A) promoting community-based recreation and conservation, including local parks, greenways, beaches, and waterways;

(B) advancing job and volunteer opportunities related to conservation and outdoor recreation; and

(C) supporting existing programs and projects that educate and engage Americans in our history, culture, and natural bounty.

(ii) Build upon State, local, private, and tribal priorities for the conservation of land, water, wildlife, historic, and cultural resources, creating corridors and connectivity across these outdoor spaces, and for enhancing neighborhood parks; and determine how the Federal Government can best advance those priorities through public private partnerships and locally supported conservation strategies.

(iii) Use science-based management practices to restore and protect our lands and waters for future generations.

Sec. 2. Functions. The functions of the Initiative shall include:

(a) Outreach. The Initiative shall conduct listening and learning sessions around the country where land and waters are being conserved and community parks are being established in innovative ways. These 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 governments, and recreation and conservation groups. Special attention should be given to bringing young Americans into the conversation. These listening sessions will inform the reports required in subsection (c) of this section.

(b) Interagency Coordination. The following agencies shall work with the Initiative to identify existing resources and align policies and programs to achieve its goals:

(i) the Department of Defense;

(ii) the Department of Commerce;

(iii) the Department of Housing and Urban Development;

(iv) the Department of Health and Human Services;

(v) the Department of Labor;

(vi) the Department of Transportation;

(vii) the Department of Education; and

(viii) the Office of Management and Budget (OMB).

(c) Reports. The Initiative shall submit, through the Chair of the CEQ, the following reports to the President:

(i) Report on America's Great Outdoors. By November 15, 2010, the Initiative shall submit a report that includes the following:

(A) a review of successful and promising nonfederal conservation approaches;

(B) an analysis of existing Federal resources and programs that could be used to complement those approaches;

(C) proposed strategies and activities to achieve the goals of the Initiative; and

(D) an action plan to meet the goals of the Initiative.

The report should reflect the constraints in resources available in, and be consistent with, the Federal budget. It should recommend efficient and effective use of existing resources, as well as opportunities to leverage nonfederal public and private resources and nontraditional conservation programs.

(ii) Annual reports. By September 30, 2011, and September 30, 2012, the Initiative shall submit reports on its progress in implementing the action plan developed pursuant to subsection (c)(i)(D) of this section.

Sec. 3. General Provisions.

(a) This memorandum shall be implemented consistent with applicable law and subject to the availability of any necessary appropriations.

(b) This memorandum does not create any right or benefit, substantive or procedural, enforceable at law or in equity by any party against the United States, its departments, agencies, or entities, its officers, employees, or agents, or any other person.

(c) The heads of executive departments and agencies shall assist and provide information to the Initiative, consistent with applicable law, as may be necessary to carry out the functions of the Initiative. Each executive department and agency shall bear its own expenses of participating in the Initiative.

(d) Nothing in this memorandum shall be construed to impair or otherwise affect the functions of the Director of the OMB relating to budgetary, administrative, or legislative proposals.

(e) The Chair of the CEQ is authorized and directed to publish this memorandum in the Federal Register.

BARACK OBAMA

America's Great Outdoors: A Promise to Future Generations
February 2011

Produced by:

Council on Environmental Quality
Department of Agriculture
Department of the Interior
Environmental Protection Agency

In partnership with:

Department of Commerce
Department of Defense
Department of Education
Department of Health and Human Services
Department of Housing and Urban Development
Department of Labor
Department of Transportation
Office of Management and Budget

The full report, *America's Great Outdoors: A Promise to Future Generations*, which includes summaries of federal government programs and effective partnerships and programs, and the Presidential Memorandum on America's Great Outdoors may be downloaded at www.doi.gov/AmericasGreatOutdoors.

Cover photo: *WildLink Bridge* Program, Yosemite National Park, CA.