

GET OUTDOORS USA!

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CAMPOUT AT CONNECTICUT STATE CAPITOL CELEBRATES NATIONAL GREAT OUTDOORS MONTH

Get Outdoors USA! and No Child Left Inside Introduce Connecticut Youth to the Great Outdoors At June 21-22 Campout in Bushnell Park

Hartford, CT – Today Get Outdoors USA! and Connecticut’s “No Child Left Inside” initiative are hosting an overnight campout in the shadow of the Connecticut State Capitol for more than 30 Connecticut youth. The event celebrating Great Outdoors Month and the first day of summer is designed to introduce young people to the healthy fun of the Great Outdoors.

Study after study shows that spending time outdoors yields lifelong mental, physical and spiritual benefits – and that leisure-time patterns are established early in life. Sadly, America is raising a generation of young people that choose to spend their free time inside on the computer or in front of the TV. Get Outdoors USA! and Connecticut’s “No Child Left Inside” are dedicated to reversing the trends in declining outdoor activity and increasing awareness about the need to help American children seek out healthy, active outdoor lifestyles and embrace America’s Great Outdoors.

Connecticut Governor M. Jodi Rell launched the State of Connecticut’s improved outdoor offerings through the award-winning “No Child Left Inside” initiative. The program, which raises awareness of the recreational activities available at the 137 State Parks and Forests is directed by Commissioner Gina McCarthy and the Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection. The program is credited with attracting families to the state’s parks and building enthusiasm for the outdoors among children.

“We are delighted to have Connecticut youth participating in this summer campout and learning about the many enjoyable ways to spend time in the great outdoors,” said Commissioner McCarthy. “In fact, this campout highlights another campout we are having Saturday night to conclude the Great Park Pursuit, our family state park adventure contest which is a key element of the ‘No Child Left Inside’ initiative.”

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“The campout is designed to provide basic outdoor skills in a fun environment that will inspire a lifetime of outdoor activities. We will introduce our campers to a range of active pursuits, including fishing and hiking,” said Derrick Crandall, President, American Recreation Coalition. “Our hope is that we can ignite a love for the great outdoors in these youth and that they will be inspired to pursue outdoor activities at the diverse public parks and outdoor recreation sites that cover literally one in three acres of this nation.”

Commissioner McCarthy and Mr. Crandall will welcome the campers to the campsite in Bushnell Park at 4:30 p.m. on Thursday, June 21. The youth will learn to set up tents and will participate in informational sessions about outdoor safety. Attending youth will also participate in games, star-gazing activities, and campfire songs. On the morning of June 22, the youth will prepare a pancake breakfast, learn how to use a fishing rod, try their hand at geocaching activities using handheld GPS units that utilize special navigational satellites, and get a chance to see turtles, snakes and owls from the Lutz Children’s Museum.

Connecticut is a special supporter of Great Outdoors Month. Governor M. Jodi Rell has issued a state proclamation declaring June as Great Outdoors Month, supplementing the national proclamation. She joins 20 fellow governors and more than 50 national organizations in celebrating our outdoors legacy and getting people outside to benefit from healthy, active lifestyles.

The No Child Left Inside campaign was created by the Connecticut DEP to raise awareness of the recreational activities available at the state's 137 State Parks and Forests, attract families to the parks and build enthusiasm for the outdoors among children. More information that initiative is available at - www.nochildleftinside.org

Get Outdoors USA! is a national movement dedicated to helping children live healthy, active outdoor lives. Through outdoor activity children receive benefits of mind, body and spirit and are able to experience the national treasures that belong to all Americans. The American Recreation Coalition launched Get Outdoors USA! in April 2007. More information about the organization is available at www.getoutdoorsusa.org.