



American Recreation Coalition

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

NEWS

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National Get Outdoors Day Preview Announced

A preview of the first-ever National Get Outdoors Day will be held in the Washington, D.C. suburbs on May 31, two weeks before events will be held across the nation to help all Americans – and especially American families with children – discover opportunities for healthy fun. The preview will be hosted by the National Capital Area Council of the Boy Scouts of America at Camp William B. Snyder with the involvement of dozens of national and regional organizations.

National Get Outdoors Day, which promotes the fun and value of time outdoors, is a signature event of “Great Outdoors Month,” the designation given annually to June by the White House and governors across the United States. For the last two decades, Americans have turned indoors and to less physically active leisure pursuits. Visits to national parks and most other public recreation sites have declined and obesity has increased rapidly among the American people, with significant health consequences, including projections of life expectancy declines of 2-5 years for today’s youth. The USDA Forest Service and the American Recreation Coalition have each pledged \$100,000 to the inaugural National Get Outdoors Day in an effort to reconnect children and nature and to reverse these dangerous trends.

National Get Outdoors Day sites will be open to the general public, with a special outreach to local community segments that currently benefit less from the use of public lands and waters, including urban, economically disadvantaged and minority families. National Get Outdoors Day sites will include a welcome center to greet the public as they arrive and to direct them to appropriate displays and activities at the site. Each National Get Outdoors Day event will have a mix of information centers and “active fun” areas – places where guests, and especially kids, can use a fishing pole, go geocaching, help pitch a tent and more. The sites will offer photo opportunities with celebrities like Smokey Bear and other interesting attractions, including birds and reptiles. Pictures will be e-mailed to guests as paperless souvenirs to keep and to share through social networks. In addition, each National Get Outdoors Day event will have a sign-up center for youth to become part of programs and organizations designed to strengthen their connection to the outdoors. Recruiting organizations will include the Boy Scouts of America, the Boys and Girls Clubs, and the educational Web Ranger program. National Get Outdoors Day sites will also provide Internet tips for discovering activities and places to enjoy the Great Outdoors.

According to Derrick Crandall, Co - Chair of the National Get Outdoors Day Coordinating Council, the preview event at Camp Snyder in Haymarket, Virginia, will build public understanding and awareness of this new annual event, which will be held on June 14, 2008, and on the second Saturday of June in subsequent years. Many of those planning June events will attend the Camp Snyder preview and a follow-up meeting to discuss final preparations.

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Pictures of the Virginia event will be circulated to the media to generate interest and press for the June 14 events.

“Local National Get Outdoors Day events will involve more than 75 organizations, including a hosting partner for each event. We are delighted by and grateful for the involvement and leadership of our hosting partner in Virginia, the Boy Scouts of America. BSA helps 3.2 million youth through Cub Scouts, Boy Scouts and the co-ed Venturing program. Other National Get Outdoors Day sites will benefit from hosting partners ranging from city park agencies to the USDA Forest Service to ski areas. Each event will be unique, but they will all share a common mission to connect people to the outdoors,” said Crandall. “The preview event in Virginia will rely upon Virginia State Parks, the Forest Service and recreation businesses ranging from retailers to manufacturers. The participants will learn how digital photography, hand-held GPS units and Google Earth can make traditional activities like camping and fishing even more fun.”

Crandall noted that Camp Snyder has abundant parking, is readily accessible from Interstate 66 and the Nation’s Capital, and offers opportunities on-site for fishing, mountain biking, high-ropes courses, bird watching and hiking. He also pointed out that the Camp, which now serves some 3,000 campers each summer, has expansion options for year-round operation.

Details on National Get Outdoors Day are available at www.getoutdoorsusa.org.

About Get Outdoors USA!

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

About American Recreation Coalition

American Recreation Coalition (ARC) is a Washington-based non-profit organization formed in 1979. Since its inception, ARC has sought to catalyze public/private partnerships to enhance and protect outdoor recreational opportunities and the resources upon which such experiences are based. ARC conducts research on a regular basis, organizes and conducts national conferences and meetings and disseminates information through a variety of newsletters, columns and other media regarding recreational needs and initiatives. ARC also monitors legislative and regulatory proposals that influence recreation and works with government agencies and the U.S. Congress to study public policy issues that will shape future recreational opportunities. For additional information visit: www.funoutdoors.com