



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 2009 PLANS ANNOUNCED

Washington, D.C. (January 15, 2009) A consortium of federal agencies and nonprofit organizations and the recreation industry today announced details for National Get Outdoors Day 2009, an annual event to encourage healthy, active outdoor fun across the nation. On June 13, 2009, participating organizations will offer sites for American families to sample both traditional and new types of outdoor activities. Prime goals of the day are reaching first-time visitors to public lands and reconnecting our youth to the great outdoors, and then invite those taking part in the day to visit specific sites for fun "EChO-Events" for opportunities to hike with rangers, learn to fish, and go mountain biking.

In June 2008, more than 60 National Get Outdoors Day events were held, drawing tens of thousands of youth and their families. The events included climbing walls, chances to have pictures taken with Smokey Bear, introductions to fishing and new activities like geocaching and much more.

"We will build upon the successes of 2008, expanding our partnerships and finding new ways to reach families who understand the benefits of active time outdoors," said American Recreation Coalition (ARC) President Derrick Crandall. "There will be some important changes for this June. First, we will use the most successful sites of 2008 as our model for 2009. That includes use of sites in metropolitan areas, including city parks, where access by public transportation and walking is available to many. We'll also expand our efforts to work with organizations that can help us reach those who are not traditional visitors to public lands and waters. We'll continue to work with church youth groups and urban youth service organizations.

"Most important of all, we will feature special exciting recreation opportunities to those who attend National Get Outdoors Day events – we are calling them EChO-Events. Managers of state parks, national forests, national parks, wildlife refuges and more will be with us at the events and offer information on follow-up activities at some of the nation's greatest outdoor places – places readily reachable from the urban National Get Outdoors Day sites. These EChO-Events will include introductions to mountain biking and fly-fishing, hikes with rangers to see wildlife, kayaking and rafting and much more. And we'll arrange for the equipment needed at these follow-up events," said Crandall.

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National Get Outdoors Day events are open to all but specially target urban families who rarely engage in outdoor fun. Active, hands-on recreation opportunities are highlighted. State agencies and enthusiast groups provide rods, reels and casting lessons. Many sites offer orienteering courses, teaching youth about adventure with a compass and map. Kids will put up and take down tents and test sleeping bags. Bikes, boats and RVs are on display and event partners like National Wildlife Federation (NWF) hand out free coloring books and more and share information on other outdoor events, including the Great American Backyard Campout. Information about volunteerism on public lands – and even on job opportunities through AmeriCorps and Forest Service hot-shot fire crews – is available. Crowd favorites include the U.S. Forest Service's Smokey Bear and Woodsy Owl and the NWF's Ranger Rick, all of whom pose for pictures, stroll through the event and use companions to talk about key issues ranging from fire to outdoor ethics.

Further information on the national effort and specific events can be found at www.nationalgetoutdoorsday.org/.