

June 12, 2009

USDA Forest Service Sponsors National Get Outdoors Day

Encourages Kids to Get Outdoors on June 13th

Washington D.C.-- In an effort to reconnect kids with nature and attract new diverse communities to outdoor activities, the USDA Forest Service has partnered with state, local and federal land management agencies to celebrate National Get Outdoors Day ('GO Day') on June 13. More than 80 locations nationwide are providing a variety of free recreational events designed to introduce children and new segments of the American public to the great outdoors while fostering a deeper appreciation for natural resources.

"We want every child in America to have the opportunity to experience the great outdoors, whether it is in a remote mountain wilderness or a city park," said Forest Service Chief Abigail Kimbell. "Our hope is to instill a curiosity about nature in children which will lead to a deeper appreciation of the environment and our precious natural resources."

National Get Outdoors Day is co-sponsored by the Forest Service and the American Recreation Coalition. The annual event has been designated to better engage urban and multicultural youth in nature-based activities and to attract first time visitors to public lands.

Planned events for GO Day range from the large, interactive visual projects such as the Wyland Foundation murals and artscapes about water and forests on the Capital Mall, to a multi-partner living classroom event at Kingman Island in Washington, D.C. Across the country, forests, parks and recreation areas have free activities planned for outdoor family fun.

Aligned partners for the event include:

- Wyland Foundation - founded by world renowned artist Wyland, the foundation uses art and science to teach young people about our forests and ocean. A kick-off event titled - FOCUS (Forests, Ocean, Climate - and US) - is a nationwide campaign in partnership with the Forest Service, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), and the Wyland Foundation that will take place on June 11, 2009 on the National Mall at the USDA People's Garden and Whitten Parking Lot. USDA Secretary Tom Vilsack and Forest Service Chief Abigail Kimbell will participate in the event.
- Scholastic, Inc. - a leader in education, Scholastic has created a microsite on their social network where tweens will find a safe place to learn about GO Day and its related activities and goals.

A special addition this year is to feature exciting recreation opportunities called EChO Events. These events will be a follow up to the GO Day events and will take place before the end of summer 2009 at state parks, national forests, national parks, wildlife refuges and more. Activities



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include: mountain biking, fly fishing, hikes with rangers to see wildlife, kayaking, rafting and more.

More information on National Get Outdoors Day and Kids in the Woods can be found at: <http://www.nationalgetoutdoorsday.org> and www.fs.fed.us/kidsclimatechange.