

## **Resolution on Increased Youth Involvement in the Outdoors**

Whereas, American youth are not spending as much time in nature as they spend on indoor activities, and are losing their connection to the natural world (The Nature Conservancy Connecting America's Youth to Nature);

Whereas, the Outdoor Foundation recognizes the three main obstacles for getting youth in the natural world are time management issues, insufficient parental influence, and the lack of transportation (Outdoor Nations Special Report: Barriers to the Outdoors);

Whereas, the lack of youth involvement in outdoor experience is one of the reasons that the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources has reported that the overall hunting rate in Wisconsin has significantly declined, and is projected to continue through the future (WDNR 2008).

Whereas, studies have found programs that engage youth in wilderness programs can help combat risk factors such as exposure to gangs, drugs, poverty, and family violence (Norton 2014);

Whereas, research from the Nature Conservancy suggests that if American youth are given more opportunities for a meaningful experience outdoors, they will be more likely to value nature, engage with it, and feel empowered to do something about it (The Nature Conservancy Connecting America's Youth to Nature);

Whereas, the National Wildlife Federation has compiled research stating that outdoor exposure has many influential benefits for a child's development of mind, body and spirit, and increased standardized test scores (National Wildlife Federation);

Whereas, the Wisconsin legislature recently passed the Wisconsin Children's Outdoor Heritage Resolution acknowledging a child's right to experience the state's natural resources (EEinWisconsin.org);

Whereas, there are currently a multitude of organizations in Wisconsin committed to youth environmental education such as the Wisconsin Green School Network, Wisconsin Green and Healthy Schools, Kids and Mentors in the Outdoors (KAMO), and the Wisconsin Association of Environmental Education (WAEI);

Whereas, WAEI hosts annual conferences to collaborate with environmental educators across the state, and the Wisconsin Wildlife Federation does not currently attend such conferences;

Now therefore be it further resolved, that the Wisconsin Wildlife Federation at its 2016 Annual Meeting assembled April 8-9, 2016 in Wisconsin Rapids, Wisconsin calls upon the Wisconsin Wildlife Federation to become networked with other statewide environmental educational programs, in the same way they are connected with hunting, fishing, and trapping organizations;

Now therefore be it further resolved that, the WWF send a liaison to the annual WAEE conference in an effort to collaborate with other environmental educators to help consolidate efforts to engage youth in the outdoors;

Submitted by the Conservation Leadership Corps.  
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**Sources:**

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Huck, Jennifer, and Richelle Winkler. *Deer Hunter Demography: Projecting Future Deer Hunters in Wisconsin*. 2008. Web. 20 Feb 2016.

Norton, Christine. *Exploring the Impact of a Wilderness-Based Positive Youth Development Program for Urban Youth*. Texas State University-San Marcos, 12 Nov 2014. Web. 20 Feb 2016.

Health Benefits - National Wildlife Federation. (2016, February). Retrieved February 20, 2016, from <http://www.nwf.org/What-We-Do/Kids-and-Nature/Why-Get-Kids-Outside/Health-Benefits.aspx>

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