

Getting Kids Outside

What's Happening in Kansas?

Kansas Wildlife & Parks Commission Meeting

14 October 2010

On behalf of Jerry Hover
Shari L. Wilson, Commissioner
and Statewide Partnerships
& Planning Director,
KACEE



Across America, More and More People are Banding Together to Get Kids Outside

- **More than 1,800 organizations are members of the No Child Left Inside Coalition, including 14 from Kansas:**
 - Climate and Energy Project
 - Dillon Nature Center
 - Dyck Arboretum of the Plains
 - Kansas Association for Conservation & Environmental Education
 - Kansas Natural Resources Council
 - Kansas Wildlife Federation
 - Kaw Valley Heritage Alliance
 - Konza Environmental Education Program
 - The Land Institute, Climate and Energy Project
 - Lee Richardson Zoo
 - Rolling Hills Wildlife Adventure
 - Sedgwick County Zoo
 - Sunset Zoo
 - WATER Center



Children's Outdoor Bill of Rights

- Many states have adopted these statements as ways to encourage families to spend time outdoors.

Kansas Children's Outdoor Bill of Rights (1 Jan. 2008)

- 1 Discover Kansas' past
- 2 Splash in the water
- 3 Play in a safe place
- 4 Camp under the stars
- 5 Explore nature
- 6 Learn to swim
- 7 Play on a team
- 8 Follow a trail
- 9 Catch a fish
- 10 Celebrate their heritage

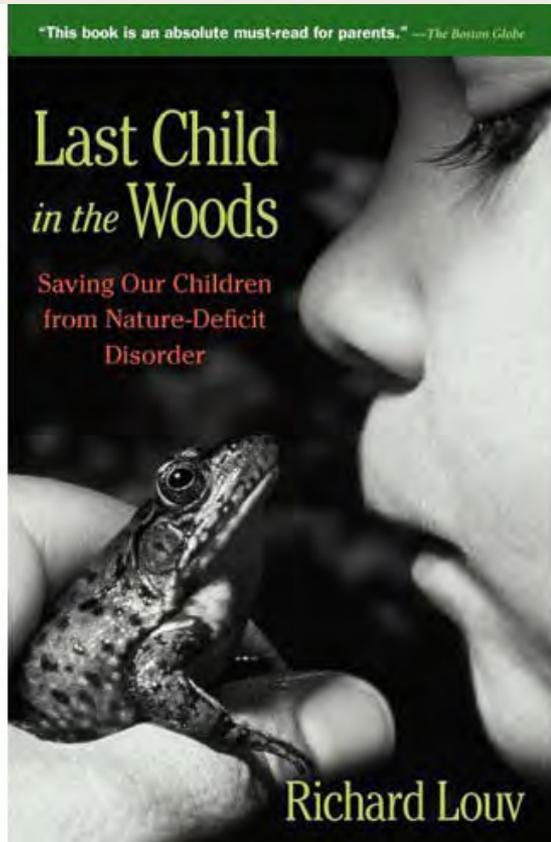


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- The number of grassroots leadership campaigns reported by the Children & Nature Network as of October 2010.
- The actual number is likely much higher.



Why Does It Matter if Kids Go Outside?



- Reduced contact with nature leading to increases in ADHD
- Correlation with rises in childhood obesity
- Negative impacts on cognitive and conceptual development
- Makes compelling case for children to spend more time outdoors in structured and unstructured settings



Who Will Care About the Outdoors?

- Estimated % of time today's children spend indoors: 90%
- Average daily hours children aged 8-10 spend on TV, video games, & computers:
6-10 hours
- Approximate decline since 1995 in the proportion of children ages 7-11 who swim, fish, or play touch football: 33%
- Drop in average annual overnight visits to U.S. national parks from 1987 – 2003: 25%
- Drop in sales of children's bicycles 2003-2004: 20%
- Drop in Little League participation since 1997: 14%



- 9 million children ages 7 to 19 are obese
- 25% of Kansas children are obese or overweight (2009)



What Kansas is Doing

- Kansans for Children in Nature
- Kansas Green Schools Program
- Archery in the Schools
- ECO-Meet Program
- OKKids
- g2g Outside
- goPLAYkansas.com
- EE Week
- Take Me Fishing
- Kansas School Gardens Initiative
- Outside for a Better Inside
- Kansas WildLifer Challenge
- Kansas Wetlands Education Days



Kansas Green Schools Program

- Green Schools integrate efforts to reduce schools' ecological footprints, make school environments healthier, and get the whole community thinking about solutions
- More than 330 schools are currently involved



Archery in the Schools

- Training and equipment provided to the schools



- Kids get to participate in a sport—everyone succeeds!
- Approx. 170 Kansas schools participate in the program, sponsored by KDWP
- Goals are to increase interest in shooting sports and engage students in education through an activity that interests them.



ECO-Meet

- Competition among high schools
- Tests in 4 areas: habitat, scavenger hunt, interpretation, and a focused test on a particular group of animals.
- Began in Kansas in 1991.
- 9 ECO-Meets in 2009 and 2010.
- Sponsored by KDWP and Kansas Wildscape.



Photo by Tom Hein



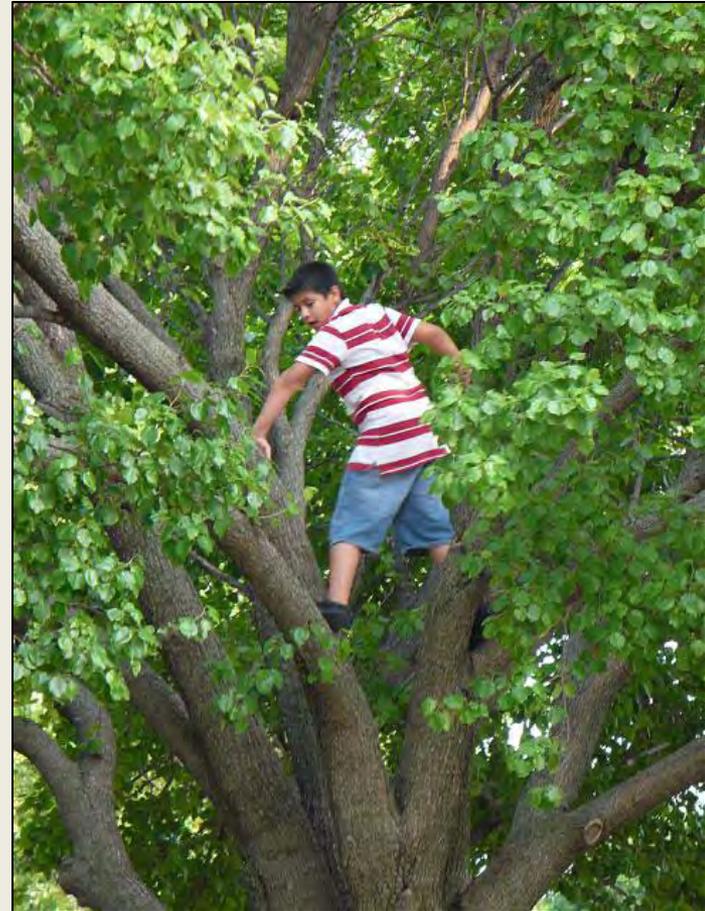
OKKids

- **Outdoor Kansas for Kids Program** provides a way for families to explore outdoor activities at local and state parks.
- Since 2001, more than 75,000 kids have participated (2009).
- Sponsored by Kansas Wildscape and KDWP State Parks.



g2g Outside

- Take a Child Outside Week
- 24 – 30 September every year
- Designed to help break down obstacles that keep children from discovering the natural world
- KSU Extension-Sedgwick Co., KDWP, City of Wichita WATER Center
- Wichita-Sedgwick Co. focus
- Grassroots—little to no funding
- Uses social marketing and contests to encourage participation
- Initiated in Summer 2009



goPLAYkansas.com

New program encouraging kids and families to play outside



- Website has a search function for recreation sites
- Electronic newsletter
- Blog



School Gardens

**Prairie Moon Waldorf
School, Lawrence**



**The number of school
gardens in Kansas and
nationwide is
skyrocketing.**

- **Green Schools Grant to prevent/reduce nonpoint-source pollution.**
- **Curriculum taught the students about water quality, nutrition, and how to take care of a garden.**
- **The garden was an intergenerational project.**
- **A new grant from KS Dept. of Agriculture will help coordinate school garden efforts.**



National EE Week

- The largest organized environmental education event in the U.S.
- Goddard High School held an Earth Festival last 2 years
- High school students taught elementary students
- 10 – 16 April 2011



Take Me Fishing

- Fishing Clinics sponsored by KDWP
- Mainly geared toward younger children for whom this may be their first time fishing
- Also: Aquariums in Schools



"takemefishing"



Kansas WildLifer Challenge

- New program from Kansas Wildscape, KDWP is also a sponsor
- Challenges kids to do specific activities outdoors
- Rewards them when they complete the activities
- All ages can participate; more than 90 are already signed up!



Wetlands Education Days



- **Great Bend 2nd graders participated in the first-ever event at KS Wetlands Education Center**
- **Learned about plants and animals that depend on healthy wetlands**
- **Most activities took place outside (until it rained!)**



Kansans for Children in Nature

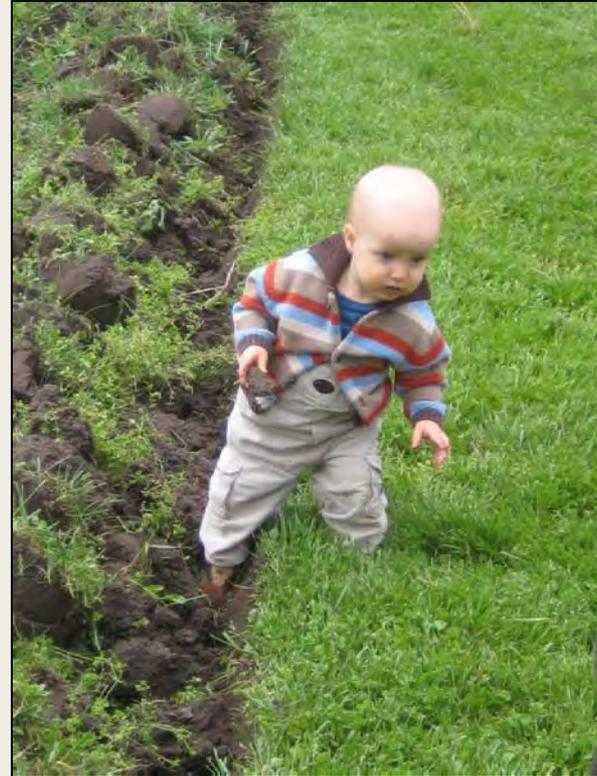


- Formed by Gov. Sebelius to identify barriers and make recommendations to get more kids outside
- Ten Convening Organizations, 3 Working Groups:
 - Environmental Education
 - Outdoor Experiences and Recreation
 - Health



Draft KCN Plan

- 8 Goals, 3 Categories:
- Early Childhood Experiences
 - Goal 1. From birth, kids engage in outdoor learning and nature play.
 - Involves parents, early childhood educators, and the health community



Draft KCN Plan

- **K-12 Education Experiences**
 - Goal 2. A Kansas Environmental Literacy Plan will help kids learn about and appreciate the environment.
 - Goal 3. Outdoor learning spaces at schools will become an integral part of K-12 education.



Draft KCN Plan

- **K-12 Education Experiences**

- **Goal 4. Schools will have resources to implement green school projects and curriculum.**
- **Goal 5. Increase physical activity and outdoor experiences in schools and on public lands.**



Draft KCN Plan

- **Community Experiences**
 - Goal 6. Develop facilities and programs that encourage outdoor activity.
 - Goal 7. Increase collaboration between community organizations and schools for outdoor programming and service learning.



Draft KCN Plan



- **Community Experiences**
 - **Goal 8. Increase access to parks and other public lands.**





Web Links

- Kansans for Children in Nature: kcn.ksoutdoors.org
- KACEE: www.kacee.org
- No Child Left Inside: www.cbf.org
- Children & Nature Network: www.childrenandnature.org
- Kansas Green Schools Program: www.kansasgreenschools.org
- Archery in the Schools: www.nasparchery.com
- Kansas ECO-Meet: www.kansasecomeet.org
- Kansas Wildscape: www.kansaswildscape.org
- g2g Outside: <http://g2goutside.wordpress.com/>
- goPLAYkansas.com
- School Gardens: www.schoolgardenwizard.org and www.kidsgardening.com (12 Kansas schools registered)
- EE Week: www.eeweek.org
- Kansas Dept. of Wildlife & Parks: www.kdwp.state.ks.us
- Kansas WildLifer Challenge: www.kansaswildlifer.org

Outdoor/Environmental Education

- Co-Chaired by Formal and Non-Formal Educator with committee of 17 educators
- Dual overall goals of **increased outdoor learning** and **environmental literacy**
- Addressed in five areas of the KCN Draft Plan



Goal 1. From birth, kids engage in outdoor learning and nature play.

Involves parents, early childhood educators, and the health community

Highlighted Recommendations:

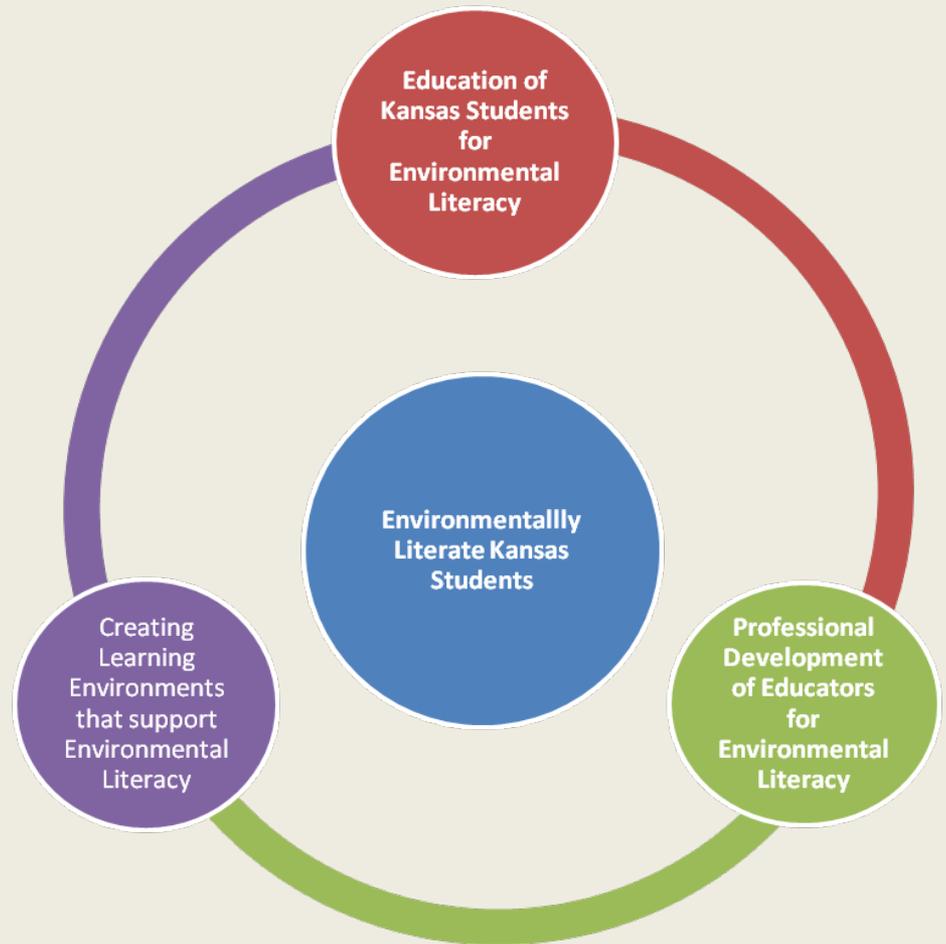
- Environmental/Outdoor Education Professional Development for Early Childhood Educators
- Early Child opportunities in Kansas Green Schools Program (networking, resources, grants)



Goal 2. A Kansas Environmental Literacy Plan will help kids learn about and appreciate the environment.

- Completed with funding from EPA
- Team of 15 educators, agency, business and NGO representatives
- Draft for public comment at:

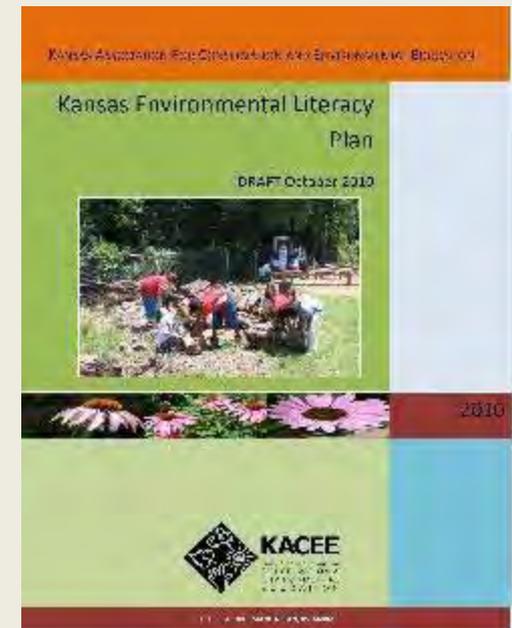
<http://www.kacee.org/environmental-literacy-plan-kansas>



Highlights of Recommendations

Environmental Literacy Plan for Kansas

- Inclusion of environmental high school course as approved science requirements for graduation
- Tracking of environmental education benchmarks in core curriculum
- Connections to 21st Century Learning Skills
- Strong EE professional development for formal and informal educators
- “Significant Outdoor Experiences”



Goal 3. Outdoor learning spaces at schools will become an integral part of K-12 education.

- Integration of Outdoor Classrooms into Kansas Green Schools Program
- Establish sustainable funding for KGSP
- Develop “Model Kansas Green Schools” program with achievement goals and recognition



Goal 7. Increase collaboration between community organizations and schools for outdoor programming and service learning.



- Utilize KSDE Volunteer Commission to integrate EE related service learning in K-12
- Incorporate service learning into KGSP, including grants
- Provide instructional examples that link EE service learning and core curriculum
- Work with parks, zoos, nature center to partner with schools on EE service learning opportunities