

CHILDREN AND THE OUTDOORS

State Policy Solutions Guide

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There is growing awareness of the disconnection between children and the natural world and a growing desire to find policy solutions to the problem.

Over the past 20 years the time kids spend outside has fallen by fifty percent, and the time the average child spends plugged into electronic media each day has grown to more than six hours. The rate of obesity among adolescents over the same period has more than tripled. At the same time, we have an increasing body of research pointing to the developmental, health and educational benefits of learning and playing in natural settings. Reconnecting children with nature is in fact a solution to many of the problems faced by children today.

There are numerous actions that state policy makers can take to reconnect children and families with nature. A review of policy responses to date uncovers a variety of “No Child Left Inside” initiatives ranging from proclamations, to grant programs for visits to public lands, to environmental education programs. Each of these responses is valuable, but all and even more are necessary if we hope to have a fundamental and lasting impact on the next generation’s connection with the natural world. The National Wildlife Federation’s campaign to develop an effective, comprehensive response to the problem of nature deficit will mobilize policy across multiple fields, including the areas of public health, education, parks and recreation, and city planning.

Because the issue spans multiple disciplines, what is needed is a comprehensive state plan that coordinates all of the policy tools that a state can bring to bear. This document is the first effort at developing a comprehensive state policy response to the problem, and begins by identifying the most innovative and effective state-level policy responses from across the country. It then provides model language for Governor’s or legislative proclamations, governor’s executive orders, and legislation that implement a comprehensive state policy response to the challenge of connecting children with nature.

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For a summary of research, see “Connecting Today’s Kids to Nature: A Policy Action Guide,” National Wildlife Federation (2008), available at <http://www.nwf.org/kidsreport>; “Benefits of Nature for Children’s Health,” a fact sheet compiled by Louise Chawla and Debra Flanders Cushing available at <http://thunder.cudenver.edu/cye/courses/Benefitsofnature-FactSheeti-April2007.pdf>; and Richard Louv (2005), *Last Child in the Woods: Saving Our Children from Nature-Deficit Disorder*, Chapel Hill, NC: Algonquin Books. See also resources from the Children and Nature Network, available at www.childrenandnature.org.

LEADING STATE POLICY INITIATIVES TO CONNECT CHILDREN WITH NATURE

- I. **Proclamations** - Proclamations are useful to call public attention to the issue of nature deficit and to the state's commitment to address the issue through policy measures. There are many inspiring examples of proclamations by governors or state legislatures. In addition to the examples listed, Appendix I includes a model governor's proclamation.
 - a. California Governor's Children's Outdoor Bill of Rights²
 - b. Michigan Governor's No Child Left Inside Day³
 - c. Great Outdoors Month Proclamation issued by 39 state governors in 2008⁴

- II. **Public Health** - There is growing evidence of the public health benefits of contact with nature.⁵ Most state departments of public health have obesity prevention programs and nature play is a recognized strategy for preventing childhood obesity.⁶ The following acts will advance public health priorities while increasing the amount of time children spend in the natural world.
 - a. Create a program at the State Department of Health to provide training and support materials to pediatricians on the importance of one hour daily outdoor play. Model support materials have been developed by the Texas Pediatric Society.

 - b. Create model ordinances and provide technical support for counties and municipalities to require Health Impact Assessments of new real estate developments. Health Impact Assessments are policy tools which assess the likely impact that a development project will have on public health measures, and as a practical matter encourage inclusion of trails, bicycle lanes, and other design features which promote physical activity. The Centers for Disease Control encourages use of such assessments.⁷ Legislation has been introduced in three states and in Congress to encourage their use.⁸

 - c. Require school districts to adopt a school wellness policy that includes at least 20 minutes of daily outdoor recess time and 150 minutes per week physical education. Under the federal Child Wellness and WIC Reauthorization Act of 2004, school districts receiving federal nutrition funds must adopt a school wellness policy which encourages physical activity and sound nutritional practices. A model policy has been produced by the National Alliance for Nutrition and Activity.⁹

² The text of the proclamation can be found at <http://www.calroundtable.org/cobor.htm>

³ The text of the proclamation can be found at http://www.michigan.gov/gov/0,1607,7-168-23442_25488-162823--,00.html

⁴ Information about the campaign can be found at <http://www.greatoutdoorsmonth.com/>

⁵ Frumkin, Howard (2008). "Nature Contact and Human Health: Building the Evidence Base." In *Biophilic Design*, edited by S. Kellert, J. Heerwagen, and M. Mador. Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons.

⁶ Burdette, Hillary L & Whitaker, Robert C. (2005). "Resurrecting Free Play in Young Children: Looking Beyond Fitness and Fatness to Attention, Affiliation, and Affect," *Arch Peatr Adolesc Med* 159:46-50, available at <http://archpedi.ama-assn.org/cgi/content/full/159/1/46>

⁷ <http://www.cdc.gov/healthyplaces/hia.htm>

⁸ The federal Healthy Places Act of 2007 is available at <http://www.govtrack.us/congress/billtext.xpd?bill=h110-398>, and the California Healthy Places Act of 2008 is available at http://www.leginfo.ca.gov/pub/07-08/bill/asm/ab_1451-1500/ab_1472_bill_20070223_introduced.pdf

⁹ The text of the model policy is at <http://www.schoolwellnesspolicies.org/>

- d. Launch a public awareness campaign on the benefits of outdoor play for children's health.
- e. Amend the state's minimum child care center standards to include standards for outdoor natural play areas at child care and early childhood learning centers and a 30 minute outdoor play requirement. National Wildlife Federation and the Natural Learning Initiative are developing national guidelines for natural play areas at child care and early childhood learning centers that will be available by the end of 2009.

III. Parks & Wildlife - State departments of parks and wildlife are natural leaders in any campaign to connect children and families to nature because they are stewards of most of a community's green space, and are experienced providers of programming for children and families. Legislative or executive action can enhance the ability of state parks & wildlife programs to bring children quality nature experiences.

- a. Provide funding to state parks and wildlife departments and municipal parks departments for:
 - i. Promotional activities that bring children and families to park lands and natural areas. An example is the Connecticut No Child Left Inside program.¹⁰
 - ii. Conservation education programs and interpretation, including training in outdoor skills and sports. An example is the Texas Outdoor Family program.¹¹
 - iii. A grants program to support schools and nonprofit organizations to organize visits by children to state parks and other natural areas. Examples of programs like this are the Texas Community Outdoor Opportunity Grants Program and the Washington State No Child Left Inside program.¹²
 - iv. Construction of natural play areas. New Mexico State Parks Division is constructing a natural play area at a visitors center, and the National Wildlife Federation and the Natural Learning Initiative are working with the National Association of State Parks Directors to develop national guidelines for natural play areas at parks which will be available by the end of 2009.
- b. Support the development of greenbelts and trails by:
 - i. Requiring the creation of a state trails master plan.
 - ii. Providing technical assistance to counties and municipalities to develop master plans.
 - iii. Providing technical assistance to developers wishing to connect to public trails.

¹⁰ Information about the program can be found at <http://www.nochildleftinside.org/>.

¹¹ Information about the program can be found at <http://www.tpwd.state.tx.us/learning/bof/>.

¹² Information about the Washington program can be found at <http://www.parks.wa.gov/NoChildLeftInside/>.

Maryland, Florida, and Colorado have state trail master plans.¹³ Florida is developing a program to provide technical assistance on trail design for developers.

- c. Establish and fund Conservation Corps programs that support young people in doing construction and maintenance work on public lands.

IV. Public Education - Schools have a tremendous opportunity to reconnect children with nature because of the proven educational and developmental benefits of contact with nature, because of the significant time children spend at school, and because school yards are often the nearest green spaces.¹⁴ The following policy actions are recommended:

- a. Require the state education agency to create a state environmental literacy plan that guides environmental education in the state and includes requirements for regular outdoor learning experiences. A guide on developing a state environmental literacy plan is available from the North American Association for Environmental Education.¹⁵ Information about the pending federal No Child Left Inside Act, which would provide federal funding to implement environment literacy plans, can be found at www.nclcoalition.org.
- b. Establish an environmental education grant fund to support outdoor learning experiences. The New Mexico Classroom Initiative is an example of this.
- c. Require outdoor learning environments such as schoolyard habitats and natural play areas at newly constructed schools by amending state laws establishing school facilities standards. Create incentives for construction of schools in compliance with the standards developed by the Collaborative for High Performance Schools, which include incentives for green landscaping and school gardens.¹⁶
- d. Create a school recognition program for schools that incorporate environmental education in the curriculum, model best practices on the campus, and address community problems. Leading programs are the Maryland Green Schools program and the Wisconsin Green & Healthy Schools Program.¹⁷
- e. Establish a certificate in environmental studies for undergraduate teacher preparation.
- f. Provide teacher in-service training in environmental studies.
- g. Require at least 20 minutes of daily unstructured recess.

¹³ The Colorado program is described at <http://www.americantrails.org/resources/planning/COplanup.html>. The Maryland program is described at <http://www.mdot.state.md.us/Planning/TSIP/index.html>. The Florida program is described at <http://www.dep.state.fl.us/gwt/about/system.htm>

¹⁴ For a summary of research, see "Student Gains from Place-Based Education," a fact sheet compiled by Louise Chawla and Myriam Escalante available at <http://thunden.cudenver.edu/cye/factsheets/Factsheet2.pdf>

¹⁵ <http://naeeenvlteracyplans.ning.com/>

¹⁶ School construction standards can be found at <http://chps.net/>

¹⁷ The Maryland program is described at <http://www.dnr.state.md.us/education/greenschools.html> and the Wisconsin program is described at <http://dnr.wi.gov/org/caer/ce/greenschools/>.

- V. Transportation and City Planning** Urban planning decisions have a tremendous impact on a child's opportunity for contact with the natural world, determining whether a park is located within walking distance from home, whether a stream is left as a wildlife corridor or pushed underground in a culvert, whether it is possible to walk or bike safely to school. A number of policy tools are available to accomplish this.
- a. Promote adoption of green landscaping municipal ordinances encouraging planting of native and adapted trees and plants. Washington State's Evergreen Cities bill establishes an exemplary process for tailoring green landscaping ordinances to different localities.¹⁸ The Sustainable Sites Initiative Guidelines also provide helpful direction.¹⁹
 - b. Require states, cities, and counties to include complete streets which safely accommodate pedestrians and cyclists as a part of their general plans. A model bill is the California Complete Streets Act which became law in 2008.²⁰
 - c. Develop a Safe Routes to School program which enhances the federal Safe Routes to School grant-making program by
 - i. Appropriating additional funds.
 - ii. Establishing separate grant-making practices for infrastructure and non-infrastructure proposals.
 - iii. Requiring grant recipients to utilize best practices.²¹
 - d. Create incentives for property developments meeting the LEED for Neighborhood Development standards, which incorporate energy conservation measures, protection of green space and wildlife habitat, and promotion of physical activity.²²

¹⁸ The bill text is available at <http://apps.leg.wa.gov/documents/billdocs/2007-08/Pdf/Bills/House%20Passed%20Legislature/2844-S2.PL.pdf>.

¹⁹ The guidelines are available at <http://www.sustainablesites.org/>.

²⁰ The bill is available at http://www.leginfo.ca.gov/pub/07-08/bill/asm/ab_1351-1400/ab_1358_bill_20080930_chaptered.pdf

²¹ State policy best practices identified by the Safe Routes to School National Partnership can be found at <http://www.saferoutespartnership.org/state/5638>.

²² Information about the LEED ND standard can be found at <http://www.usgbc.org/DisplayPage.aspx?CMSPageID=148>

APPENDIX I: MODEL GOVERNOR’S PROCLAMATION

A governor’s proclamation or legislative resolution is a useful tool for calling attention to the problem and the state’s commitment to address the issue. The following model is drawn from proclamations issued by the governors of Michigan and California and a resolution pending before the legislature of Illinois.

WHEREAS, scientific research shows that children are increasingly distanced from nature, even while an increasing body of research documents the benefits of outdoor play for children and that direct exposure to nature is essential for healthy childhood physical, emotional, and spiritual development; and

WHEREAS, STATE has a longstanding commitment to its natural heritage, connecting its people to the land and passing traditions on to future generations through outdoor activities such as fishing, hunting, bird watching, hiking, and skiing; and

WHEREAS, STATE is endowed with a diverse natural landscape, ranging from FEATURE to FEATURE to FEATURE to FEATURE, all of which must be shared with the children and families of this State; and

WHEREAS, STATE is rich in educational initiatives, conservation organizations, conservation districts, park districts, recreation agencies, schools, and civic organizations that are all actively engaged in promoting environmental education; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, BY THE GOVERNOR/ASSEMBLY, that we show our support for the Children's Outdoor Bill of Rights, which states that every child should have the opportunity to: 1) discover the wilderness; 2) camp under the stars; 3) follow a trail; 4) catch and release fish, frogs, and insects; 5) climb a tree; 6) explore nature in neighborhoods and cities; 7) celebrate their heritage; 8) plant a flower; 9) play in the mud or a stream; and 10) learn to swim; and be it further

RESOLVED, That we hereby designate DAY/MONTH as (“Get Outdoors STATE!”, “Leave No Child Inside DAY/MONTH”, “No Child Left Inside DAY/MONTH”, “Children in Nature DAY/MONTH”) in the STATE in furtherance of our support of this important initiative.

APPENDIX II: MODEL GOVERNOR'S EXECUTIVE ORDER

A governor's executive can be a powerful tool for implementing many of the policies outlined above. It can also be an effective way to develop a comprehensive state plan to connect children and nature which integrates policies across multiple agencies. The following executive order draws from an executive order issued by the governor of Maryland in 2008.²³

AN ORDER ESTABLISHING THE GOVERNOR'S COUNCIL ON CHILDREN AND NATURE

WHEREAS, To sustain the rich natural resources in STATE--including the FEATURES, FEATURES, and FEATURES--requires the stewardship of future generations of STATE; and

WHEREAS, to sustain the natural world and safeguard wildlife requires the stewardship of future generations; and

WHEREAS, stewardship is not possible without a strong sense of connection to the natural world; and

WHEREAS, America's children are losing their connection with our natural world, an alienation that threatens the future of our nation's great natural resources and the quality of life for future citizens, diminishes use of the senses, creates attention difficulties and causes higher rates of physical and emotional illness and obesity; and

WHEREAS, spending frequent time outdoors in unstructured and structured experiences is the best way to develop a connection to nature and the foundation on which to build an environmental stewardship ethic; and

WHEREAS, environmental education increases student engagement in science, improves student achievement in core subject areas, and increases student awareness about individual actions they can take to restore the health of the natural environment; and

WHEREAS, increasing contact with nature has measurable health benefits for children;

NOW THEREFORE, I, NAME, as Governor of STATE, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the STATE Constitution, and all other applicable laws, issue the following Executive Order, to take effect immediately:

Section 1. COUNCIL ON CHILDREN & NATURE

The Governor's Council on Children and Nature is established to develop a state plan to promote outdoor experiential activities, environmental education, and environmental stewardship for STATE'S young people and to build a coalition of ongoing support for these endeavors.

Section 2. COMPOSITION & RESPONSIBILITIES OF COUNCIL

(a). COMPOSITION. The Council shall consist of 15-20 members appointed by the Governor. Members shall serve a term beginning on XXXXX through XXXXX. All appointees shall serve at the pleasure of the

²³ The executive order can be found at <http://www.gov.state.md.us/executiveorders/01.01.2008.06eo.pdf>

Governor, and the Governor may fill any vacancy that occurs. Membership of the Council shall reflect a broad spectrum of interested parties, including, but not limited to:

- a. Elementary, secondary, and public university representatives;
- b. Representatives of non-profit organizations dedicated to environmental education;
- c. Advocates for persons with special needs;
- d. Physical fitness and sports organizations;
- e. Representatives of the pediatric medical field;
- f. Parks and recreation experts;
- g. Business community and corporate interests;
- h. State and local government representatives; and
- i. Private citizens of STATE.

From the members, the Governor will appoint a Chair. The Chair will act as the Governor's leading voice with state agencies and the public and private sectors on matters that relate to children and nature. The Council shall meet at a time and place designated by the Chair.

Section 3.

b) RESPONSIBILITIES -The Council shall develop a state plan of action to promote outdoor experiential activities, environmental education, and environmental stewardship for STATE'S young people. In addition, the state plan shall provide program and policy recommendations for ways to coordinate and streamline private sector activities with all relevant public sector programs in the STATE AGENCIES.

i) ELEMENTS OF STATE PLAN OF ACTION-The state plan of action shall consist of, but not be limited to, the following elements:

(1) Development and implementation of a plan to provide youth with structured and unstructured opportunities for play, outdoor recreation, learning and scientific study to include:

- (a) The development of a Governor's Recognition program, recognizing all public schools which practice exemplary environmental stewardship through facility management, environmental education, and community conservation projects;
- (b) Support for outdoor classroom programs that provide curriculum-aligned programming and service learning opportunities on public lands in cooperation with local county school systems, local parks and non-profit organizations, such as LEADING PROGRAMS;
- (c) Strategies which provide increased support for Schoolyard Habitat Programs, which support the conversion of schoolyards to natural habitats for play and outdoor classrooms;
- (d) Creation of trails to connect communities, parks and schools via trail systems that encourage walking, biking and increased time outdoors by youth and families;
- (e) Greening initiatives that create nature play areas within communities to provide outdoor experiences for children close to home;

- (f) A statewide Civic Conservation Corps to provide at-risk youth with opportunities to serve in conservation crews in State Parks and other public lands in partnership with the STATE AGENCY and community non-profit organizations;
- (g) Increased opportunities for under-served communities to access State Parks and public lands through partnerships with organizations that serve minority students;
- (h) The expansion of public awareness and access to existing programs that encourage experience of nature through activities in STATE's state parks, greenways, and trails through STATE PUBLIC AWARENESS campaign;
- (i) Strategies for promoting public health and combating child obesity through physical activity in nature and the out of doors.

(2) Develop and implement a State Environmental Literacy Plan to include:

- (a) A review of current environmental education efforts in STATE schools, including student environmental literacy levels;
- (b) Identification of curriculum necessary to develop environmentally literate students;
- (c) Identification of model outdoor field and service learning experiences that can be integrated into the regular school curriculum;
- (d) Professional development opportunities for in-service teachers, pre-service teachers, and non-formal environmental educators;
- (e) Methods to annually measure and report at the State and local level, progress of public school students toward becoming environmentally literate graduates; and
- (f) A process for revising or updating the environmental literacy plan every five years, or as needed.

2) COUNCIL REPORT -The Council shall compile its findings and present an initial draft of its state plan of action to the Governor by XXXX. A second draft of the state plan shall be due to the Governor no later than XXXX. By XXXX, the Council shall submit the final, comprehensive state plan to the Speaker of the House of Representatives, the President of the Senate, and the Governor.

Section 4. COMPENSATION FOR COUNCIL MEMBERS

Members of the Governor's Council shall serve without compensation, but may receive per diem and travel expenses while attending Council meetings to the extent allowed by STATE STATUTE, and to the extent that funds are available. Per diem and travel expenses shall be paid in accordance with STATE STATUTE. The STATE AGENCY shall provide administrative support for the Governor's Council on Children and Nature.

Section 5. INTERAGENCY COOPERATION

All agencies under the control of the Governor are directed, and all other agencies are requested, to render full assistance and cooperation to the Governor's Council on Children and Nature.

APPENDIX III: MODEL STATE LEGISLATION

The following is a model comprehensive state bill to connect children and nature, pulling together many of the policies outlined in the policy overview of this guide. Because the bill treats different subject matter that typically are divided among multiple committees in state legislatures, it may be more practical to introduce as separate bills the titles of the model bill. Nonetheless the model bill demonstrates what a comprehensive treatment of the children and nature issue would to look like.

CONNECTING CHILDREN TO NATURE ACT An ACT

To promote our children’s connection to nature by supporting opportunities in education, public health, recreation, and planning, and for other purposes.

Be it enacted by _____:

TITLE I TITLE, FINDINGS, PURPOSES, AND DEFINITIONS

Section 101 Short title. This act may be cited as the “Connecting Children with Nature Act.”

Section 102 **Legislative findings.** The (state) legislature finds that—

(a) A direct childhood experience in nature before the age of eleven promotes a long term connection to nature, a connection that is currently dwindling as children spend half as much time outside as they did 20 years ago and six and a half hours a day in front of a television or computer screen;

(b) Resource stewardship is not possible without a strong sense of connection to the natural world, and as national forest visits and national parks visits decline in recent years, that connection is being lost;

(c) Experiencing our nation’s natural splendor contributes to healthier lives for our citizens and a deeper appreciation for the greater outdoors, and those who take advantage of the opportunities afforded them in the outdoors generally live longer, healthier, fuller lives than those who do not;

(d) Children between the ages of three and twelve now only spend one percent of their time outside, compared to twenty-seven percent of their time watching television, and as the amount of time in front of a television increases so does the prevalence of overweight children between the ages of six and eleven which has more than doubled in the past twenty years; and

(e) Spending time outdoors is beneficial to our children’s physical and mental health and has been proven to decrease symptoms of ADHD, improve motor-skills, increase science test scores, result in a better nights sleep, reduce stress, increase creativity, improve mood and reduce children’s risk of developing myopia.

Section 103 **Purposes.** The purposes of this Act are—

(a) to increase the amount of time children spend in nature

(b) to establish educational and recreational programs accomplishing the same

- (c) to promote urban design and parks features accomplishing the same
- (d) to improve our children’s physical and mental health through time outdoors
- (e) to ensure that all children in the State have the ability, pursuant to this body’s proclamation of a Children’s Outdoor Bill of Rights, to discover the wilderness; camp under the stars; follow a trail; catch and release fish, frogs, and insects; climb a tree; explore nature in neighborhoods and cities; celebrate their heritage; plant a flower; play in the mud or a stream; and learn to swim;

Section 104 **Definitions.**

(a) “Health impact assessment” means a combination of procedures, methods, and tools by which a policy, program, or project may be judged as to its potential effects on the health of a population, and the distribution of those effects within the population.

(b) “Natural Play Area” means a play area that has been designed in accordance with recognized national guidelines to capture the health, developmental, and educational benefits of play in nature.

TITLE II PUBLIC HEALTH

Section 201 **Training and Support for Pediatricians and Children’s Health Professionals.** The State Department of Health shall establish a program to provide training and support materials to pediatricians, school nurses and other children’s health professionals on the health benefits of outdoor play for children.

Section 202. **Health Impact Assessments.**²⁴ There is hereby established within the State Department of Public Health, the Health Impact Assessment Program, to guide and support the practice of conducting health impact assessments throughout the state. To accomplish this end, the department shall be responsible for all of the following:

- (a) Identifying and evaluating international model practices in health impact assessment.
- (b) Developing materials and information for the purpose of providing guidance to eligible entities in relation to land use and transportation planning in the state, including access and quality of play areas for children.
- (c) Evaluating needs for research and analytic tools to evaluate and forecast health effects resulting from land use and transportation plans and projects.
- (d) Providing training and technical assistance to local agencies electing to conduct health impact assessments.
- (e) Establishing a funding program to support the conduct of health impact assessments by eligible entities.
- (f) Establishing a funding program to develop and validate analytic tools to forecast potential health effects of land use and transportation planning and policy outcomes.
- (g) Evaluating health impact assessments implemented in the state.
- (h) Maintaining a database of health impact assessments conducted in (State).

²⁴ The federal Healthy Places Act of 2007 is available at <http://www.govtrack.us/congress/billtext.xpd?bill=110-398>, and the California Healthy Places Act of 2008 is available at http://www.leginfo.ca.gov/pub/07-08/bill/asm/ab_1451-1500/ab_1472_bill_20070223_introduced.pdf

Section 203 **Outdoor Environments at Child Care Centers.** The State Department of Health shall amend the state's minimum child care facility standards to include the following:

- (a) requirement and standards for outdoor natural play areas at all child care facilities
- (b) at least two hours of outdoor play time daily

TITLE III PARKS AND RECREATION

Section 301 **Outdoor Recreation Grants Program.**²⁵ The outdoor recreation grant program is hereby created.

(a) The Department of Natural Resources shall establish a grant program to provide opportunities for state and local agencies and non-profit organizations to engage children and families in outdoor recreation and conservation education programs. Eligible applicants to the grant program shall include existing and new programs. Participating school programs shall be fully aligned with the state's essential academic learning requirements for science.

(b) The program shall be phased in beginning with the schools and students with the greatest needs in suburban, rural, and urban areas of the state. The program shall focus on students who qualify for free and reduced-price lunch, who are most likely to fail academically, or who have the greatest potential to drop out of school.

(c) The agency director shall set priorities and develop criteria for the awarding of grants to outdoor recreation and conservation education programs considering the following criteria:

- (1) Programs that contribute to the reduction of academic failure and dropout rates;
- (2) Programs that make use of nationally accredited environmental education curriculum;
- (3) Programs that contribute to healthy life styles through outdoor recreation and sound nutrition;
- (4) Various state agency public lands as venues and use of agency personnel as a resource;
- (5) Programs that maximize the number of participants that can be served;
- (6) Programs that will commit matching and in-kind resources; and
- (7) Programs that create partnerships with public and private entities.

(d) The director shall create an advisory committee to assist and advise in the development and administration of the outdoor education and recreation program. The director should solicit representation on the committee from the office of the superintendent of public instruction, the department of fish and wildlife, the business community, outdoor organizations with an interest in education, and any others the commission deems sufficient to ensure a cross section of stakeholders.

(e) The outdoor recreation and conservation education program account is created in the custody of the state treasurer. Funds deposited in the outdoor recreation and conservation education program account shall be transferred only to the Department to be used solely for the Department's outdoor recreation and conservation education program purposes identified in this section including the administration of the program. The director may accept gifts, grants, donations, or moneys from any source for deposit in the outdoor education and recreation program account. Any public agency in this state may develop and implement outdoor recreation and conservation education programs. The

²⁵ <http://apps.leg.wa.gov/documents/billdocs/2007-08/Pdf/Bills/House%20Passed%20Legislature/1677-S2.PL.pdf>

director may make grants to public agencies and contract with any public or private agency or person to develop and implement outdoor education and recreation programs

Section 302 **Natural Play Areas at State Parks.** The Natural Play Areas at State Parks Grant program is hereby created. The Director shall establish and implement the program by rule establishing criteria for construction of natural play areas at state parks considering the following:

- (a) recognized national guidelines for natural play areas
- (b) projected use of the natural play area
- (c) availability of funding

Section 303 **Greenways and Trails.** The Department of Natural Resources shall establish a office of Greenways and Trails. To accomplish this end, the department shall be responsible for all of the following:

- (a) Identifying and evaluating model practices in trail master plan development
- (b) Developing a state trail master plan
- (c) Providing training and technical assistance to local public agencies electing to develop local trail master plans
- (d) Providing training and technical assistance to private entities wishing to develop trails linking to the state trail master plan
- (e) Establishing a funding program to support the development of a state trail master plan and construction of trails designated on the master plan

TITLE IV PUBLIC EDUCATION

Section 401 **State Environmental Literacy Plan.** The State Department of Education shall create a state environmental literacy plan.

- (a) The state environmental literacy plan shall:
 - (1) establish content standards, content areas, and courses where instruction in environmental literacy will take place;
 - (2) establish graduation requirements that ensure graduates are environmentally literate;
 - (3) establish programs for professional development of teachers to improve environmental content knowledge, skill in teaching about environmental issues, and field-based pedagogical skills;
 - (4) establish measurements of environmental literacy of students.
- (b) There is hereby created an environmental education fund in the Department of Education. The fund shall be established and implemented by rule, and shall be used to implement and achieve the goals identified in the state environmental literacy plan.

Section 402 **Schoolyard Habitats.** The state Department of Education shall amend new school construction, modernization, and renovation standards to require every new school or renovation project exceeding fifty percent of the value of the old structure to include schoolyard habitat outdoor learning environments, and natural play areas. The standards shall be based on nationally recognized guidelines.

Section 403 **Teacher Certificate in Environmental Studies.** The State Department of Education shall establish a teacher certification in environmental studies.

Section 404 **Physical Activity in Schools.** The State Department of Education shall require that all public schools provide at least 150 minutes per week of physical activity for all children grades Kindergarten through middle school. Activities counting toward the 150 minute requirement must be scheduled in at least 30 minute intervals.

Section 405 **Recess in Schools.** The state Department of Education shall issue regulations requiring all primary schools to provide at least 20 minutes daily recess for all children.

TITLE V TRANSPORTATION AND CITY PLANNING

Section 501 **Green Landscaping Ordinances.**²⁶ The State Department of Natural Resources shall establish a program promoting the adoption by municipalities of green landscaping ordinances encouraging the planting of native and adapted trees and plants.

Section 502. **Complete Streets Program.**²⁷ Commencing January 1, 2011, upon any substantive revision of the circulation element, the legislative body shall modify the circulation element to plan for a balanced, multimodal transportation network that meets the needs of all users of streets, roads, and highways for safe and convenient travel in a manner that is suitable to the rural, suburban, or urban context of the general plan. For purposes of this paragraph, “users of streets, roads, and highways” means bicyclists, children, persons with disabilities, motorists, movers of commercial goods, pedestrians, users of public transportation, and seniors.

Section 503. **Safe Routes to School Program.**

(A) (i) The Safe Routes to Schools Fund is established separate and distinct from the General Fund. Interest earned by the Safe Routes to Schools Fund shall be credited to the fund. Moneys in the fund are continuously appropriated to the Department of Transportation to implement a safe routes to schools program as described in part b of this section.

(2) The department may apply for, accept, receive and disburse gifts, grants, donations and other moneys from the federal government or from any other source to carry out a safe routes to schools program. Moneys received by the department under this subsection shall be deposited in the Safe Routes to Schools Fund.

(3) The department, in consultation with the Transportation Safety Committee, may award grants from the Safe Routes to Schools Fund to applicants who comply with criteria adopted by the department under part b of this section.

(B) (i) The Department of Transportation, in consultation with the Transportation Safety Committee, shall establish a safe routes to schools program to assist communities in identifying and reducing barriers and hazards to children walking or bicycling to and from school.

²⁶ <http://apps.leg.wa.gov/documents/billdocs/2007-08/Pdf/Bills/House%20Passed%20Legislature/2844-S2.PL.pdf>.

²⁷ http://www.leginfo.ca.gov/pub/07-08/bill/asm/ab_1351-1400/ab_1358_bill_20080930_chaptered.pdf

- (2) The department may provide the following kinds of assistance:
 - (a) Grants;
 - (b) Technical services and advice;
 - (c) Public information and education; and
 - (d) Evaluation and measurement of community programs.
- (3) If the department awards grants under this section:
 - (a) The department shall award grants for all of the following:
 - (i) Education;
 - (ii) Engineering; and
 - (iii) Enforcement;
 - (b) No one grant is required to include moneys for all the components specified in paragraph (a) of this subsection; and
 - (c) The department shall adopt rules specifying criteria that will be used in awarding grants.
- (C) City and county governing bodies shall work with school district personnel to identify barriers and hazards to children walking or cycling to and from school. Any city, county or school district that has developed or is preparing to develop such a plan may apply to the department for assistance in developing or carrying out the plan.
- (D) The school districts shall work with cities and counties when making school siting decisions to ensure that the decisions place priority on factors that facilitate walking or bicycling to and from school by children.

TITLE VI AUTHORIZATION AND APPROPRIATIONS.

Section 60i. There are authorized to be appropriated to carry out this NUMBER dollars for fiscal year YEAR and each of the NUMBER succeeding fiscal years.

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