



## **Moving Outdoors in Nature Act Supports Strategies to Connect Kids with Nature**

*Congressman Ron Kind (D-WI) Introduces Bill to Bolster Federal, State and Local Recreation and Health Initiatives*

WASHINGTON (November 18, 2010) — Congressman Ron Kind (D-WI) today introduced the Moving Outdoors in Nature Act (MONA) in the U.S. House of Representatives. The bill supports federal, state and local strategies that connect children with the natural world.

Thanks to the leadership of Congressman Kind, MONA will help get America's kids healthy and active by connecting children, youth and families with nature through natural play areas, outdoor recreation programs, public health initiatives, outdoor learning environments, service learning and other initiatives.

The legislation (H.R. 6426) will achieve these goals by:

- Directing the president to develop a federal strategy to connect children, youth and families with the outdoors;
- Encouraging states to develop similar state-based strategies that incorporate public health, parks and recreation, transportation, and other initiatives at the local level; and
- Supporting research documenting the health, conservation, and other benefits of active time spent outdoors in the natural world.

The Outdoors Alliance for Kids (OAK) supports passage of MONA, a bill that will help to address the childhood obesity epidemic and shape a new conservation and recreation agenda for the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

Comprehensive policy solutions like MONA are critical as today's children are spending less time outdoors in nature than any generation in history. At the same time, one in three American kids is overweight or obese; more than half of all children in the United States are deficient in Vitamin D; instances of attention deficit disorders are on the rise; and stress, anxiety and depression rates among youth are increasing.

The conditions are right for making lasting changes in the ways children, youth and families relate to nature. In June 2010, first lady Michelle Obama unveiled *Let's Move Outside!*, which expands upon the first lady's initiative to solve childhood obesity within a generation by providing resources for families to get active in nature.

In addition, the Obama administration recently completed more than two dozen listening sessions nationwide as part of the president's America's Great Outdoors (AGO) initiative. The importance of reconnecting children and families to recreation, conservation and the outdoors was a consistent theme in many sessions.

As part of AGO, federal public lands, health, environmental, and other agencies will submit a report to President Barack Obama by the end of the year that makes recommendations for a 21<sup>st</sup> century conservation strategy. Today's introduction of the Moving Outdoors in Nature Act will complement the administration's initiative and could provide the framework for developing a broad-based strategy to reconnect children and their families to the outdoors.

**About the Outdoors Alliance for Kids (OAK):** OAK is a national strategic partnership of organizations from diverse sectors with the common interest in expanding the number and quality of opportunities for children, youth and families to connect with the outdoors. The members of OAK are brought together by the belief that the well-being of current and future generations, the health of our planet, communities and the economy depend on humans having a personal, direct and lifelong relationship with nature and the outdoors.

OAK's steering committee brings together the [YMCA of the USA](#), [REI](#), [Sierra Club](#), [National Wildlife Federation](#), [Izaak Walton League of America](#), [The Outdoor Foundation](#), [National Recreation and Park Association](#) and the [Children & Nature Network](#), collectively representing more than 30 million members and supporters, to address the growing divide between children and families and the natural world.

Learn more at [www.OutdoorsAllianceForKids.org](http://www.OutdoorsAllianceForKids.org).

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