

***Last Child in the Woods: A Warning and a Response***

**MAY 22, 2007**

Washington, DC

The USDA Forest Service, the National Forest Foundation, the American Recreation Coalition and ReserveAmerica will host an important presentation for Members of Congress, non-profit community leaders and federal executives on May 22, 2007, featuring Richard Louv, author of ***Last Child in the Woods***, and the Chief of the Forest Service. The event will begin at noon and conclude by 2:00 PM and will be held in the Patio of the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Administration building.

Richard Louv will summarize the findings reported in his book, including a description of Nature Deficit Disorder attributable to a dramatic decline in unstructured, active outdoor experiences. His writings have been the subject of several recent national meetings, including a session in September 2006 at the National Conservation Training Center. Louv describes the factors which have contributed to the decline in outdoor activity, ranging from the lure of new indoor technologies to lifestyle changes to parent fears of child abusers. RADM Kenneth P. Moritsugu, M.D., M.P.H., Acting Surgeon General of the United States, has been invited to comment on the seriousness of the decline in physical activities by Americans and youth, especially, following Mr. Louv's remarks.

Gail Kimbell, Chief of the Forest Service, will then outline steps by the agency and its partners to alter the path reported by Louv under an initiative called "More Kids in the Woods." The Forest Service efforts include a new Challenge-Cost Share program available to field units to initiate and grow programs which provide quality outdoor experiences for America's youth and a national effort to understand what the agency is now doing, and what Forest Service staff and partners think it can be doing, to strengthen the connection between the outdoors and youth. The Chief and others will also report on suggestions generated through a national and five regional forums on recreation issues held during the first four months of 2007.

Participants invited to the presentation will have opportunities to question both speakers and discuss the messages informally at a luncheon following the program in the Patio area.

Following the luncheon, participants will be invited to see displays and hear presentations on key initiatives involving youth and the national forests, including a report on research underway at the Pacific Southwest Research Station under Dr. Debbie Chavez.

Details on the presentation are available at [www.funoutdoors.com](http://www.funoutdoors.com) and [www.nationalforestfoundation.org](http://www.nationalforestfoundation.org).

3/27/2007