

Trails and Health

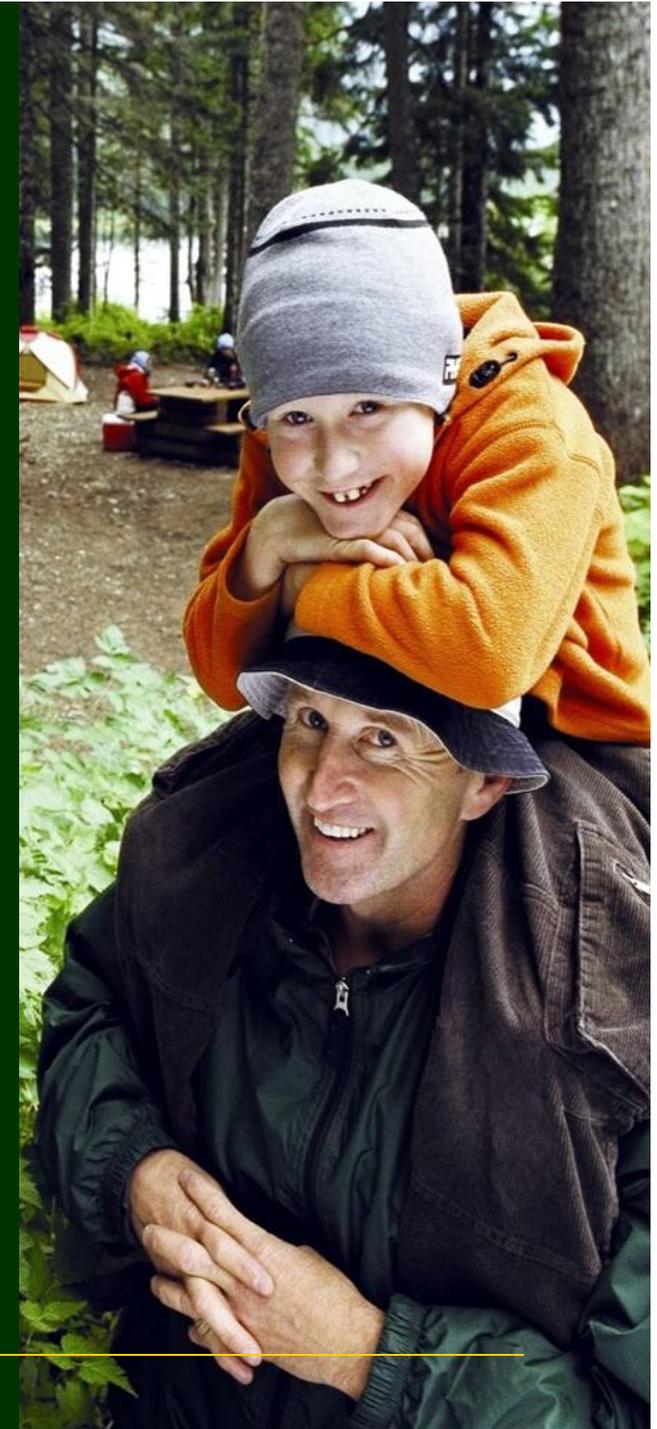
National Trails Conference

Kristen Nelson
September 11, 2007



Trails and Health

Healthier US



President signs Executive Order 13266 June 2002

- Federal agencies directed to use resources to increase personal fitness
- US facing an epidemic of chronic disease
34% of all children are overweight or obese
- 12 Federal agencies sign agreement to promote recreation and volunteerism as part of a healthy, active lifestyle



Trails and Health... National News

U.S. Facing Obesity & Chronic Disease Epidemic

- Obesity #1 health problem overtakes tobacco

Societal Benefits of Recreation

- Physical Activity: Stronger, Faster, Smarter

Restorative Benefits of Nature

- Mental Acuity
- Emotional and Mental Health
- Healing Power of Nature



Trails and Health

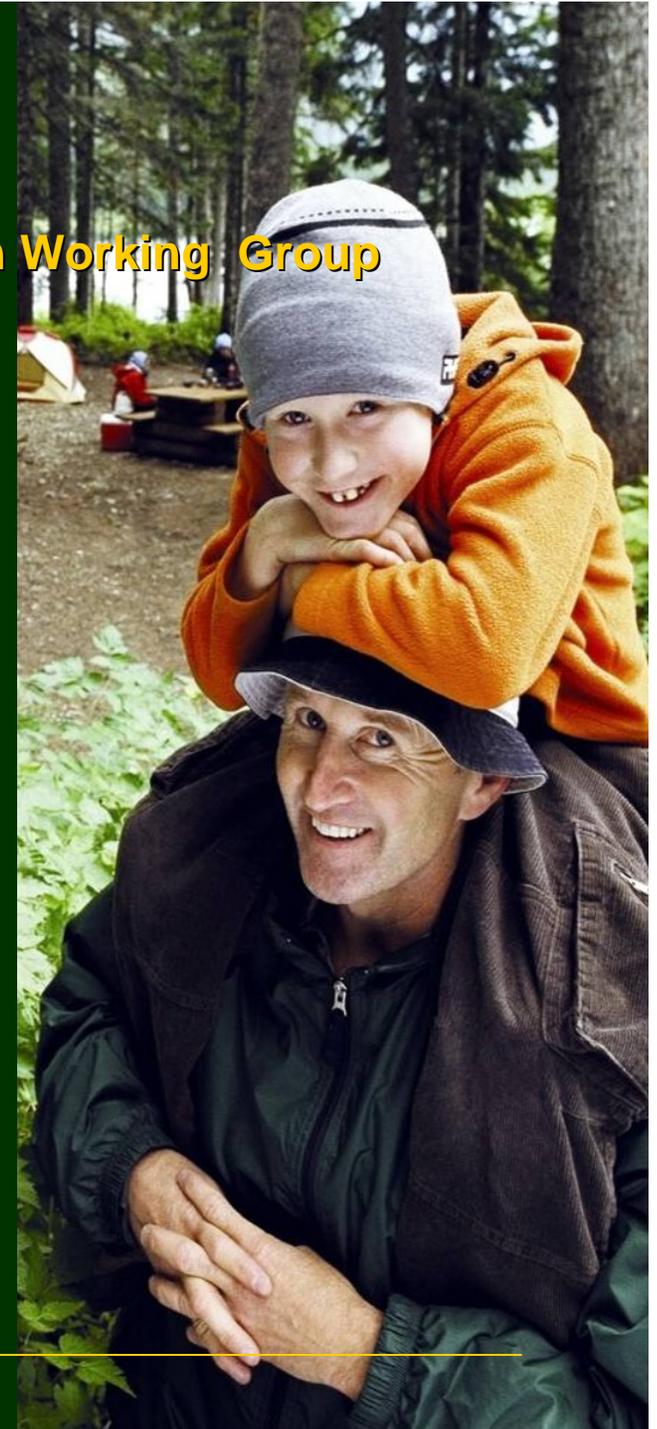
Healthier US...Public Health & Recreation Working Group

Key Messages:

- Outdoor activities are nearby and an easy, fun solution to inactivity and obesity
- Public lands offer thousands of miles of trails for walking, hiking, biking and horseback riding
- Increase awareness that volunteering on stewardship projects is a form of physical activity
- Outdoor activities enhance the physical and psychological health and well-being of



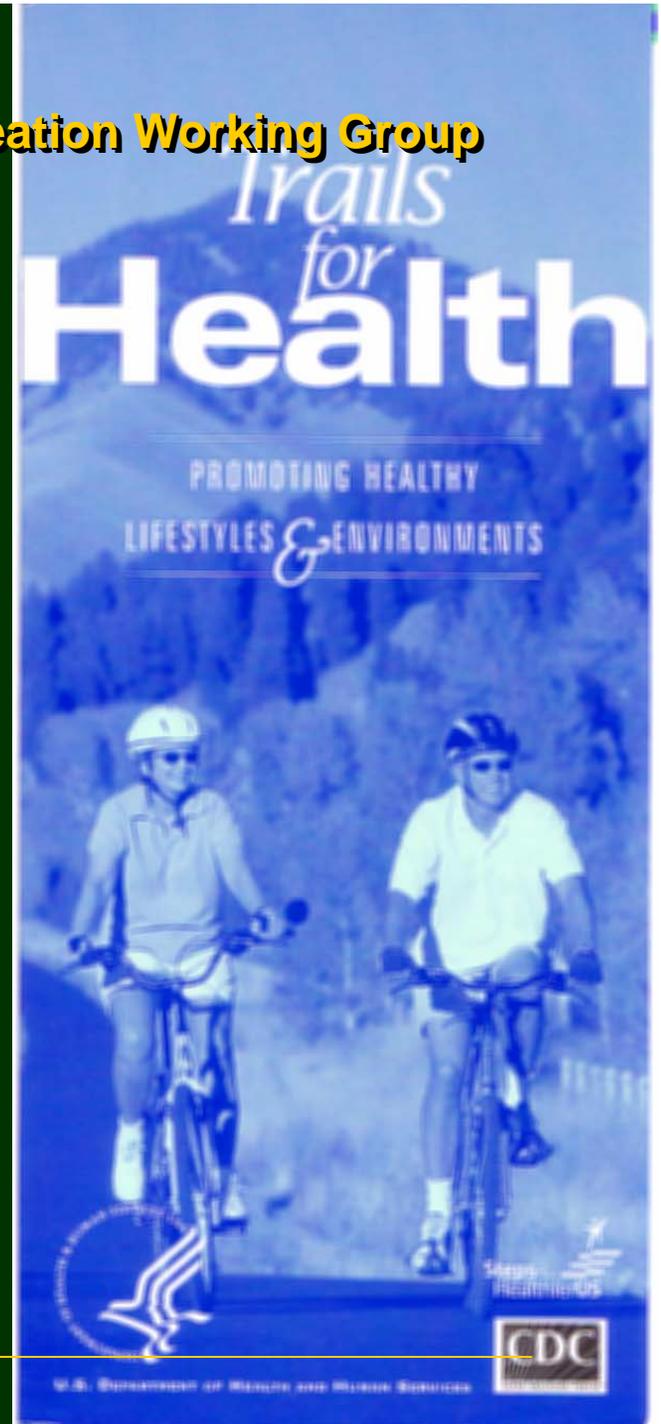
americans



Trails and Health...Health & Recreation Working Group

Activities...

- Two brochures “Trails for Health” highlighting the health benefits of trails
- Promotion of National Trails Day
- Promotion of the designation of national recreation trails
- Promotion of Winter Trails Day
- Promotion of Volunteering as a healthy activity



Trails and Health...Communities and Trails

- The task at hand is to bridge the gap between those who seek out “recreation” but will seldom “exercise”
- Create a seamless network of outdoor opportunities for activity
- Develop partnerships between Health, Recreation and Trail professionals
- Increase community awareness and utilization of parks and trails
- Increase lifetime recreation skill development for youth



Trails and Health...Communities and Trails

Rivers, Trails and Conservation Assistance

Medical Community raised over \$1 Million dollars



Arkansas
River Trail
Rollin' and Strollin'



Trails and Health..Communities and Trails

A Trail for Every Classroom

- Appalachian Trail Conservancy and National Park Service
- Service-learning as an educational strategy to help trail managers engage youth and build sense of stewardship
- Professional development can build capacity in AT clubs and communities to sustain partnerships and engage children



Trails and Health...Communities and Trails



GET FIT with US

- Evolved from National Trails Day in St. Paul, MN
- Forest Service, BLM and Outdoor Industry Foundation formed partnership for communication campaign
- Aimed at sparking diverse community partnerships to promote physical activity

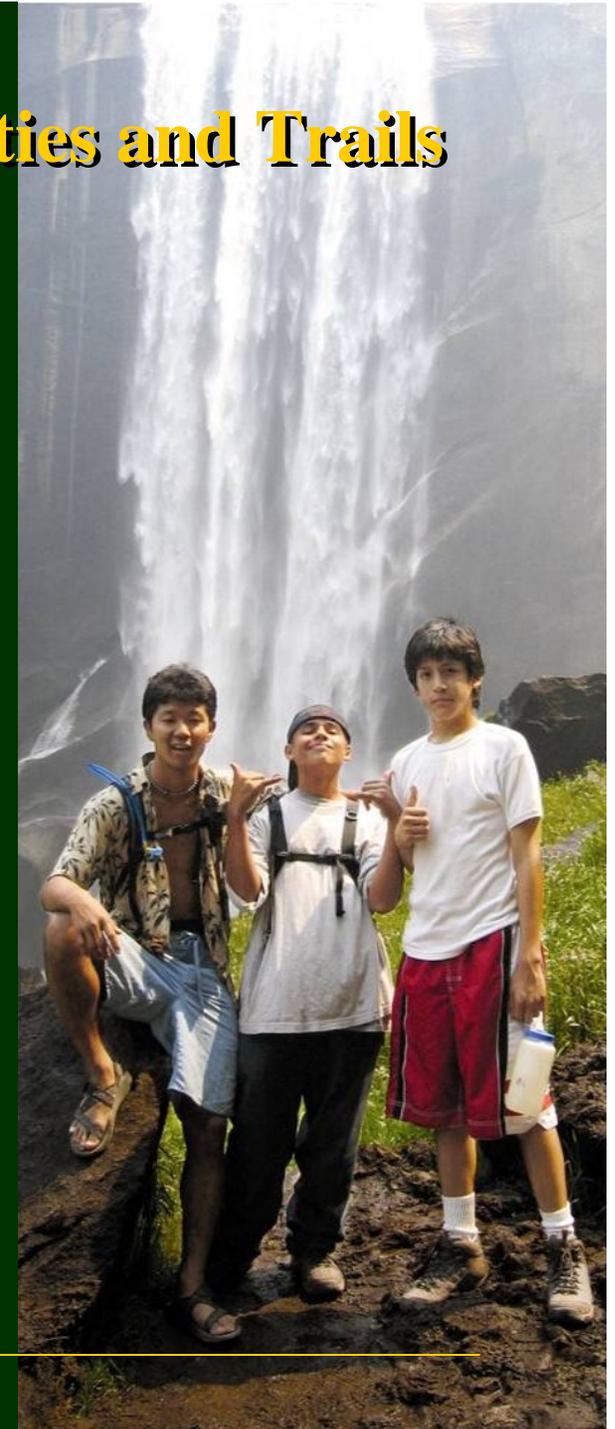


Trails and Health...Communities and Trails



GET FIT GREAT FALLS - Montana

- Community partners hosting fitness fairs and hikes
- “Fit for the Trail” an event that focused on Lewis and Clark and the National Historic Trail
- National Trails Day, sponsored guided hikes
- Winter Trails Day, sponsored snowshoe hikes



Trails and Health...Children and Nature

Richard Louv, *Last Child in the Woods*:

- Physical, Intimate contact with Nature
- Built Environment
- Fear Factor
- Technology

Part of a Larger National Movement

- Healthier US
- Health Prevention
- Education

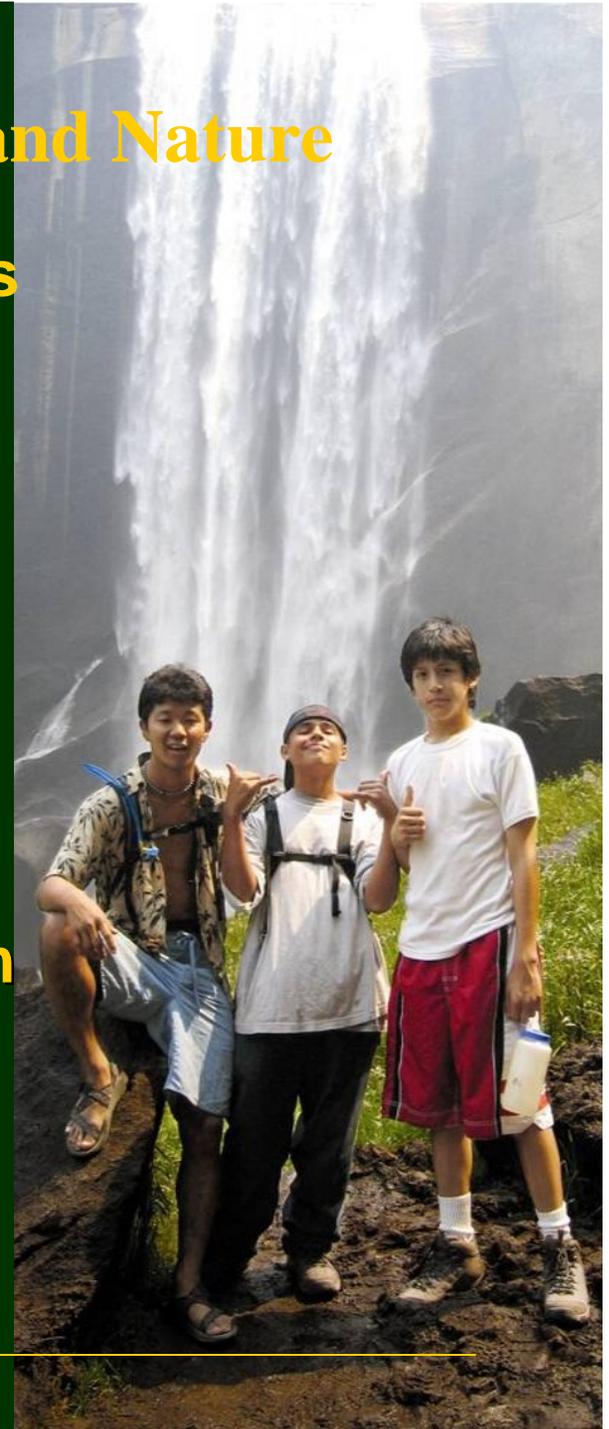
Seizing an Opportunity

- Stimulate new non-federal partnerships where focus is connecting children to nature
- Recruiting the next generation of trail users, stewards and constituents



Trails and Health...Children and Nature

- Forest Service: **More Kids in the Woods** bold national effort that highlights USFS contribution to a critical social issue
- BLM: **Take it Outside**
- Fish & Wildlife Service: **People and Nature**
- The Conservation Fund: **National Forum on Nature**
- Children and Nature Network: website cnaturenet.org



Trails and Health

JOIN US in...

“Reducing that deficit – healing the broken bond between our young and nature – is in our self interest, not only because aesthetics or justice demands it, but also because our mental, physical and spiritual health depends upon it. The health of the earth is at stake as well.”



Richard Louv

