

## **DNR Reconnecting Children and Nature**

### **Top ten reasons to be concerned**

1. Children between the ages of 8 and 18 years spend an average of nearly 6.5 hours a day with electronic media - Rideout, V. and Hamel, E. (2006). *The Media Family: Electronic Media in the Lives of Infants, Toddlers, Preschoolers, and Their Parent*. Kaiser Family Foundation. (Note: Remember this was published in 2006 think of how much bigger Facebook, iPhones and iPads have become since then)
2. Children under 13 spend only 30 minutes per week in unstructured play time outdoors – Sandra Hofferth and J. Sandberg (1999), *Changes in American Children’s Time, 1981-1997*, University of Michigan Institute for Social Research.
3. In one generation, the percentage of people who reported that the outdoors was the most influential environment of their childhood dropped from 96% to 46%. – Rachel Sebba (1991). *The Landscapes of Childhood – The Reflection of Childhood’s Environment in Adult Memories and in Children’s Attitudes, Environment and Behavior, Vol 23:4*
4. Children who play outside in natural settings are less likely to suffer obesity and less likely to contract diabetes. - Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) 2007. CDC funds registries for childhood diabetes. Press Release from CDC/ National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention & Health Promotion.
5. Studies have shown that stress levels fall within minutes of seeing green spaces. Even a view of nature helps reduce stress in highly stressed children. Children with these views also demonstrate increased attentional capacity - Wells, N.M. & Evens, G.W. (2003). *Nearby nature: A buffer of life stress among rural children. Environment and Behavior (32) 6, pp775-795.*
6. Children who have regular opportunities for free/unstructured play in the out-of-doors demonstrate greater levels of creativity, cooperation, conflict resolution and leadership. - American Institutes for Research, (2005). *Effects of Outdoor Education Programs for Children in California*. Submitted to the California Department of Education, Sacramento, CA
7. Students who play and learn in outdoor settings perform better on tests, have higher grade point averages (GPAs) and cause fewer classroom disruptions. - Chawla, L & Escalante, M. Student (2007). *Gains from Place-Based Education*. University of Colorado at Denver and Health Sciences.
8. Ninety percent of active adult outdoor participants were introduced to outdoor activities between ages of 5 -18. Outdoor Industry Foundation (2004), *Exploring the Active Lifestyle report*.
9. A positive experience in nature was a significant factor for those who choose to be active conservation stewards. Louise Chawla (2006) *Learning to love the Natural World Enough to Protect It*.
10. People who are active in outdoor recreation tend to be happier than those who are not. USDHHS (2002), *Physical Activity and Fitness: Improving Health, Fitness, and Quality of Life through daily physical activity. Prevention Report, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 16(4)*

**Suggested readings and web sites**

Last Child in the Woods: Saving our children from Nature-Deficit Disorder, Richard Louv (2005)

The Thunder Tree: Lessons from an Urban Wildland, Robert Michael Pyle

Children and Nature Network at: <http://www.childrenandnature.org/>

Michigan No Child Left Inside: <http://www.mi-ncli.org/>

Michigan No Child Left Inside Facebook group

U.S. Department of Agriculture, Forest Service: Discover the Forest at:  
<http://www.discovertheforest.org/>