LAST CHILD IN THE SMOKIES

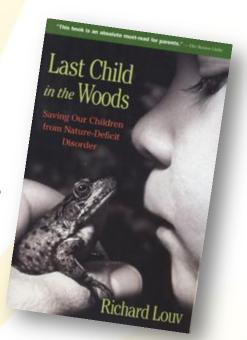
GREAT SMOKY MOUNTAINS SUSTAINABLE TOURISM SUMMIT APRIL 28, 2008 | KNOXVILLE, TN

Sutton Bacon
President & CEO
Nantahala Outdoor Center
828-488-2175 x 100 (direct)
sutton.bacon@noc.com



"Developers and environmentalists, corporate CEOs and college professors, rock stars and ranchers may agree on little else, but they agree on this: no one among us wants to be a member of the last generation to pass on to its children the joy of playing outside in nature."

Richard Louv, "Last Child in the Woods"





ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY - A CHANGING CONTEXT

- In the past thirty years, we have radically changed the way we raise our children and altered our attitudes toward the outdoors. At no other time in our history have so many children been so separated from direct experiences in nature.
- Children of the digital age have become increasingly alienated from healthy, human-powered outdoor recreation with disturbing implications, not only for their physical fitness, but also for their long-term mental health.
- Not only is multiculturalism the new look of popular culture, it is also the sensibility of life for children these days. Yet, the profile of outdoor enthusiasts today does not reflect the diversity of America.
- Today's children are the future stewards of our environment. Young people
 who grow up without spending time in nature are much less likely to be
 strong champions of the environment when they are older.

NANTAHALA OUTDOOR CENTER

THE SYMPTOMS OF "NATURE DEFICIT DISORDER"

Stranger Danger

- 43% of parents believe the world is no longer a safe place to raise children
- In 1973, 60% of children walked to school vs. 13% today.
- The area in which children are free to roam has shrunk by 89% in 20 years.

Time

- Overworked parents and highly scheduled households leave little unstructured play time.
- Between 1981 and 2007, the amount of play time for children ages 6-8 decreased by 25%

Video Games

- The proliferation of video games, activities, and distractions for children are causing shifts in our culture
- Children between the ages of 8-10 spend nearly 45 hours per week plugged in electronically

Outdoor Participation

- The number of outdoor outings declined by 30% from 2000 to 2005.
- Visits to national parks grew steadily until 1987, peaking at an average of 1.2 visits a person per year. By '03, the number of people visiting those parks dropped by 25%.



"I like to play indoors 'cause that's where all the electrical outlets are."

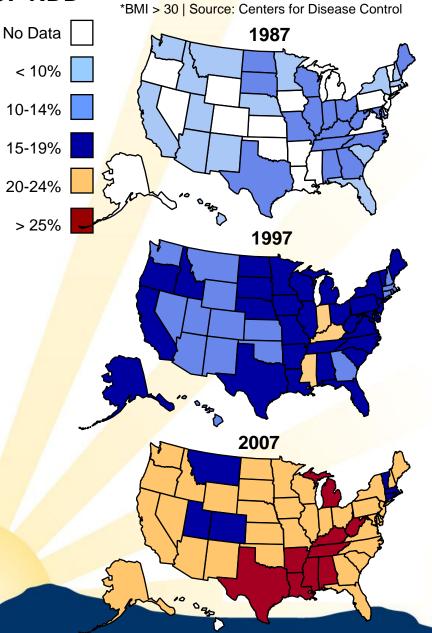
- A fourth-grader in San Diego



THE PHYSICAL AND MENTAL EFFECTS OF NDD

Just as intimacy with nature is waning, a growing body of evidence shows that obesity, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), depression and diabetes in children are on the rise.

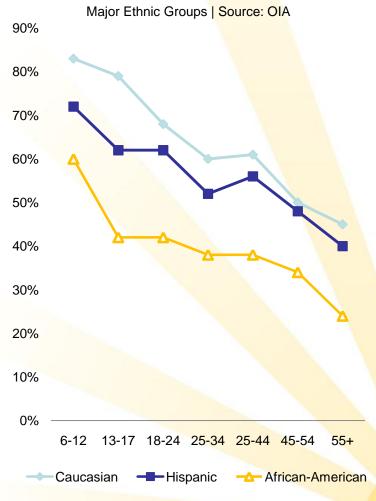
- The number of children and adolescents now considered overweight or obese has reached 17 million. Six out of every ten overweight children already have at least one risk factor for heart disease.
- A study of 5- and 6-year-olds showed that children in the United States gain up to three times as much weight during summer vacation as they do while in school.
- The number of children diagnosed with Attention
 Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) has
 skyrocketed by 33% from 1997 to 2002. From 2000 to
 2003, spending on ADHD drugs for children under
 five rose 369%.
- More than three million American children today have significant depression symptoms; our children are lonelier and more disconnected than the children of previous generations.



Childhood Obesity Trends

THE GROWING DISCONNECT BETWEEN NATURE AND MULTICULTURALISM





- There were approximately 73 million people under the age of 18 living in the United States in 2003.
- The age group is becoming more racially and ethnically diverse. Only 60% are Caucasian, while 19% are Hispanic and 16% are African-American.
- The proportion of Hispanic youth has grown the fastest increasing 60% since 1990. 46% of the Hispanic population is under the age of 25 relative to 33% of the Caucasian population.
- Hispanic outdoor participation is below that of Caucasian, while African-American outdoor participation lags substantially
- African-Americans have lower participation in "gateway" activities. The consequence is evident in lower African-American participation rates throughout adulthood.

Engaging the ethnic youth population will increase overall outdoor participation in the future.

NOC IS A LEADING YOUTH RECREATION PROVIDER

- NOC provides human-powered outdoor recreation activities for over 100,000 children annually, more than Outward Bound and NOLS combined
- Youth paddle over 600,000 river miles each year, enough for 24 trips around the world
- Our youth programs include: whitewater rafting, kayaking instruction, high and low ropes courses, mountaineering, fishing, and climbing
- We also own and operate a summer camp at the Ocoee, Horn's Creek Resort, which hosts 20,000 campers each year, and features a water park, zip line, blob, and lodging for 500
- We work with a variety of non-profit organizations, such as Camp Coca Cola and the Adventure Amputee Camp





HIGHLIGHTING TWO SPECIAL GROUPS

Camp Coca-Cola





Adventure **Ampute**e Camp





OUR NEXT STEP...THE NOC FOUNDATION



YOUTH INSIDE OUT FOUNDATION

NANTAHALA OUTDOOR CENTER

The mission of the NOC Foundation is to help tomorrow's outdoor enthusiasts and conservation stewards reflect the diversity of America and have better access to these healthy, human-powered outdoor activities.

- Increase access for youth and minority involvement in the outdoors through the development of a scholarship fund
- To provide educational outreach regarding environmental stewardship
- To actively serve our local communities, river corridors, and recreation areas through service projects
- To allow a platform to enable staff to rally behind internal and external causes

SOME IDEAS YOU CAN USE TO TURN TODAY'S YOUTH INTO OUTDOOR ENTHUSIASTS...

- Reserve a space in your retail environment or attraction for children to play.
 Integrate opportunities for experimentation with outdoor activities. If you are tight on space, provide a coloring book with an outdoor recreation theme.
- Work with local schools to host field trips in your area. Take groups of students for hikes in your neighborhood park. Invite a naturalist.
- Partner with local youth groups and agencies that work with underserved populations, such as the Boys and Girls Clubs.
- Schedule hiking, biking and paddling trips for families and children. Team up with local outfitters, who have spent years developing safe programs and activities for youth, to offer special guided trips.
- Sponsor community service projects in the outdoors that families can do together like trail maintenance and park clean-up projects. Partner with local volunteer agencies to generate interest and promote projects.



MY CHALLENGE TO YOU...

Today's youth are tomorrow's leaders. We will have a generation planning the fate of our forests and streams who have never been in them.

As tourism leaders with access to one of America's greatest natural treasures and public lands, I challenge you to make a difference for our two most precious resources – children and nature.

Take a child outside, partner with great local businesses and organizations, and together, we can solve Nature Deficit Disorder so there will never be a "Last Child in the Smokies."