

# Youth Recruitment and Retention Committee



# Objectives

- Mission: To determine how IDNR can increase youth participation in outdoor activities
- The committee traveled to Springfield, Godfrey, Rockford, Moline, and Glencoe to solicit public input and discuss recommendations to accomplish mission.

# Youth Involvement in the Outdoors

- Outdoor recreation among youth is declining
- Outdoor recreation decreases the risk of obesity, depression, and ADHD.
- Youth involved in conservation now will appreciate the environment throughout their lives.

# Trends

- Outdoor recreation among youth declined 12% in 2006-2007.
- Girls participation declined from 77% to 61% and boys fell from 79% to 72%.



# Why?

## Why DO they?

- FUN
- Family, friends, and relatives
- Outside is a good place to hangout or play

## Why DON'T they?

- Lack of interest
- Lack of time
- Too many other responsibilities
- Prefer screen media (TV, computer, video games)



# What are we doing?

- IDNR has many youth programs
- Other organizations trying to address
- Partnerships throughout the state



# Barriers

- No interest
- Lack of Opportunity
- Uninformed

# No interest

- The outdoors do not hold the mystery and appeal to young people as they once did.
- Must compete with video games, organized activities, school work, and other responsibilities.



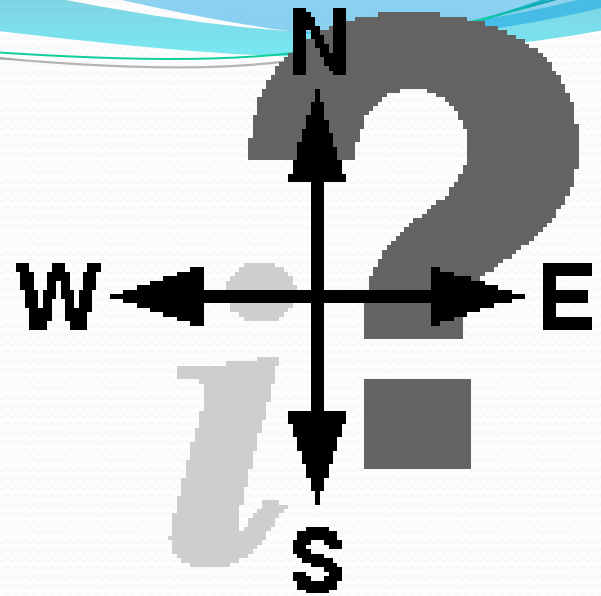
# Lack of Opportunity

- The increasingly urban population of the State does not allow for children to have outdoor experiences as readily.



- Most State Parks and open land are far outside the metropolitan areas.

# Uninformed



- Often children and parents are uninformed and afraid of the natural world.
- Even if they wish to participate in outdoor activities, they may not know how or where to go.

# RECOMMENDATIONS

- Educate
- Market
- Mentor
- Access

# Improve educational opportunities and resources to make youth aware of conservation issues and outdoor activities

## Examples:

- Improve parents' and children's understanding of nature and the outdoors.
- Educate children on conservation and natural resources in a formal setting, like school.
- Improve educational resources and their availability to organizations and schools

# Advertise existing programs offered by the department

## Examples:

- Improve publicity and visibility of IDNR's existing outdoor programs.
- Launch a formal marketing campaign advertising the joys of outdoors.
- Use social networking and technology to meet kids where they are.

# Develop, with non-government partners, a mentoring program that will pass on the hunting and outdoor traditions

## Examples:

- Certify mentors on certain outdoor skills and provide their contact information to the public.
- Assemble a volunteer corps ready to share their passion for the outdoors that can run programs at IDNR sites and visit classrooms.

# Increase access to give greater opportunities for youth to recreate outdoors

## Examples:

- Improve availability and activities specifically for youth and families at State Parks.
- Give incentives to landowners who open up their property for youth activities.

# Thank you to the committee

- Richard Mark, Chair, Natural Resources Advisory Board
- Michael Howard, Co-Chair, Fuller Park Community Development
- Glynnis Collins, Prairie Rivers Network
- Elizabeth Hagen-Moeller, Environmental Education Association of Illinois
- Kent Adams, National Wild Turkey Federation
- Aaron Kuehl, Pheasants Forever and Quail Forever
- Tim Presley, Presley Outdoors

“...if we can teach our children to honor nature's gifts, the joys and beauties of the outdoors will be here forever.”

-Jimmy Carter