

## CONVENOR'S SHEET

**The Topic:** Programming that appeals to a society that has less and less “need” for the outdoors and recreation

**Brief Summary** (main points; important perspectives; interesting ideas):

“Last Child in the Woods” great book to read, Premise: our generation, baby boomers, is the last generation to have a meaningful experience with the outdoors. Those experiences are fewer and fewer for today’s youth. Today’s youth have more fear about the outdoors and there is a whole new level of fear (creepy people, etc)

An “off leash area for Kids” to give kids the experience of nature (i.e. building a tree house)

All levels of our society has become less active and seeking the outdoors. (Businesses, schools, park and recreation, etc)

Recreation products need to integrate into the community.

How can we use the “Last Child in the Woods” message to communicate that we have open spaces, trails, etc for people to use as well as allow “free play”. Creativity skill set is enhanced through nature and play. Use this as a talking point to express the Benefits of Parks and Recreation.

Tapping into other resources like preschools, schools, etc. Children see on TV images of children playing alone in a park or running alone in a park and it often sends a mixed message to children about what experiences can happen in the park, good or bad. Parents would not want their children running in the park alone.

Partnerships: Community Education partners with parks for after school to let kids be in a supervised park to have experiences in the park. Somewhat unstructured activities.

Children are not getting out of the “city” and do not have experiences like seeing a real cow verses a cow in person.

Programs today are very structured with directions and we need to create opportunities to let people “explore”. Everything is structured, we need to allow ourselves permission to not structure everything and play.

Transportation is a huge barrier: Busing, the cost! People are looking for grants to overcome this barrier.

Program ideas: Nature Play, Building Forts, Multi generational program (Mom and I ski classes, Grandma and me quilting)

Separation of Nature? Ways to find those fundamental opportunities in nature. How to bring back the fundamental connection to outside. (urban and rural).

Entertainment verse creative programming: plan programs that allow participants to be creative and use their creativity.

Time: it may take time for participants to become comfortable in the “creative play” model rather than the structured program. Trust needs to be built between both the participants and the programmers.

Barrier: getting kids early and building parents trust into your program. Solution: Information at Daycare centers, MOM”s/DAD”s club.

Parents are on top of their kids and it can be a barrier to participation in “creative play” which may not allow their children to gain “experiences and be creative”

Kids today want to be plugged in and is there a way to incorporate the plug in idea to the outdoor experience.

People have different outdoors and we need to help them appreciate the nature that is in their backyard/outdoors.