

# AMERICA'S GREAT OUTDOORS: Administration Announces Federal Council Dedicated to Promoting Outdoor Recreation

WASHINGTON, D.C. – The Obama Administration today announced the creation of a new federal interagency council to coordinate and promote outdoor recreation opportunities on public lands in partnership with federal, state, and tribal agencies.

As part of President Obama's America's Great Outdoors Initiative, the Department of the Interior, Department of Agriculture, Department of the Army, Department of Commerce, and the White House Council on Environmental Quality signed a Memorandum of Understanding to establish the Federal Interagency Council on Outdoor Recreation (FICOR). The FICOR Memorandum was announced today at a White House event with the Wildlife and Hunting Heritage Conservation Council, the Sport Fishing and Boating Partnership Council, and other wildlife conservation and outdoor recreation organizations.

"With the outdoor industry contributing an estimated \$730 billion to the U.S. economy, outdoor recreation is a vital part of growing our nation's economy and creating jobs," Salazar said. "The Federal Interagency Council on Outdoor Recreation will help achieve the goals of the America's Great Outdoors initiative to reconnect Americans – especially our young people - to the natural world. By ensuring the federal government is coordinating its policies and programs with our state, local and tribal partners, we can better fuel our nation's spirit of adventure and economy."

"Through community-led 21<sup>st</sup> century conservation, President Obama's America's Great Outdoors initiative aims to reconnect American families with the outdoors that are vital to the health of our communities and economy," said Nancy Sutley, Chair of the White House Council on Environmental Quality. "The Federal Interagency Council on Outdoor Recreation will ensure that the Federal Government is a smarter, better partner for Americans, making it easier to access opportunities to explore and enjoy the outdoors."

"America's Great Outdoors initiative provides a great opportunity for Americans to reconnect with our country's amazing forests and grasslands," said Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack. "Together with the rest of the Obama administration, USDA is working to revitalize our rural economies and communities, many of which neighbor the 193 million acres of forests and grasslands managed by the U.S. Forest Service. The Forest Service offers a huge array of programs to help families and individuals connect with their natural environment and learn about how to conserve our vital natural resources. AGO is also important in our efforts to offset childhood obesity through outdoor activities and healthier lifestyles, led by the [Let's Move! Outside](#) campaign launched by First Lady Michelle Obama."

"Americans are fortunate to have diverse opportunities to recreate on our federal lands and waters," said Jo-Ellen Darcy, Assistant Secretary of the Army, Civil Works. "The Corps of Engineers manages 12 million acres of lands, hosts 370 million recreation visits a year, generates \$18 billion per year for our nation's economy, and supports 350,000 jobs. The Federal Interagency Council on Outdoor Recreation will provide a framework wherein our agencies will work together to improve the quality and access of the public's recreation experiences. The Corps and the staff at our 422 recreation sites are pleased to be able to work with the other federal partners to make this happen."

"The America's Great Outdoors Initiative encourages our citizens to get outdoors and rediscover adventures in our own backyard. From coasts and mountains to farmlands and forests, our country is rich in cultural and natural treasures. We must continue to do all we can to make sure we have healthy and accessible lands and waters to enjoy for generations to come," said Commerce Secretary Gary Locke. "Outdoor recreation and tourism related businesses have become powerful elements of rural and urban economic development. Hunters, anglers, bird watchers, boaters, and others who enjoy outdoor recreation spend billions of dollars on their activities."

The purpose of the FICOR is to:

- Coordinate recreation management, access and policies across multiple agencies to improve public enjoyment and recreational use of federal lands;
- Provide the public with reliable and up-to-date web-based information, on outdoor recreation that is easily accessible with modern communication devices; and to evolve and promote the federal interagency

[www.recreation.gov](http://www.recreation.gov) website to become a one-stop portal for information and resources about federal and federally supported outdoor recreation opportunities, locations, permit and reservation requirements, access, routes, features, and transportation options;

- Streamline and align policies and procedures among federal, state, local, tribal and other outdoor recreation providers;
- Improve engagement of young people and their families in outdoor recreation through healthy, active lifestyles;
- Target underserved and disadvantaged communities for both access and engagement in the benefits of and opportunities for outdoor recreation;
- Identify ways to improve access to and benefits from our parks, refuges, and other public lands, waters, and shores for persons with disabilities; and
- Identify partners outside the federal government who can promote outdoor recreation and provide additional resources and access.

The new council will work closely with the existing Federal Advisory Committee Act bodies and will work to strengthen the relationship between health and the outdoors through the First Lady's *Let's Move!* initiative and the President's Council on Fitness, Sports, and Nutrition.