

## Draft Action Plan

### Connecting People and Communities with Nature

Promote and support existing outdoor activities along the Upper Mississippi River intended to get youth outside and in touch with nature. Technical Section members will provide science-based input into programs and displays based on their knowledge of the River. Cindy Samples, FWS Refuge, to take the lead with support from Recreation Technical Section members

Studies have shown that children are less connected to the natural world and there are physical and mental health implications. A recent study found that “Between 1997 and 2003, only half of American children ages 9 to 12 participated in activities such as hiking, walking, fishing, and beach play.”<sup>1</sup> Children’s play time has moved indoors and they have replaced their green places with screen spaces. Between 1995 and 2005: “The number of 8 to 18 year olds who spend more than an hour online each day increased by 17% for a total of 22%.<sup>2</sup>

Today’s children will determine the future preservation of natural areas. If a child has not put his feet in a stream, will he care to protect it? Reintroducing families and children to nature can be the focus of the Education Ad Hoc committee. Together with the Recreation Technical Section we can create the opportunities that encourage families and children to go to the River to spend time with nature.

Ideas: Link on website for Connecting People with Nature

- Calendar of Events

- Children Activities

- Family Friendly Activities

- Educational Opportunities for Teachers

  - Jeff’s Programs-

  - River Explorer Training –

  - University on the River –

  - Project WET-

  - Other Opportunities???

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<sup>1</sup> Hofferth, S.L. & Sandberg, J.F. (2006). Changes in children’s Time, 1997-2002/3: An Update. [http://www.popcenter.umd.edu/people/hofferth\\_sandra/papers/kidstimefeb06.pdf](http://www.popcenter.umd.edu/people/hofferth_sandra/papers/kidstimefeb06.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> Roberts, D.F., Foehr, U. & Rideout, V. (2005). Generation M: Media in the Lives of 8 to 18 Year Olds. Kaiser Family foundation. <http://www.kff.org/entmedia/entmedia030905pkg.cfm>