

NEWS RELEASE

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FOREST SERVICE ENCOURAGES KIDS TO GET OUTDOORS

Washington, D.C., Feb. 1 -The Forest Service is kicking off a national "Get Outdoors" campaign, to encourage children and their parents to take advantage of recreational opportunities on national forests to develop a healthier lifestyle and learn about conserving natural resources.

"We want every child in America to have the opportunity to experience the great outdoors, whether it is in a remote mountain wilderness or a city park," said Forest Service Chief Abigail Kimbell. "We are already working with partners around the country with some great successes and look forward to more."

The campaign will be announced at a press conference at the Outdoor Recreation Village, during Super Bowl XLII festivities in Glendale, Ariz.

The event will be attended by USDA Natural Resources and Environment Under Secretary Mark Rey. At the Outdoor Recreation Village, the Forest Service and the American Recreation Coalition will announce details of the campaign including a June 14 National "Get Outdoors Day" and the Forest Service will also announce funding for this year's "More Kids in the Woods," a program that engages children in recreation and experiential learning.

In 2007, the Forest Service provided a half-million dollars challenge cost-share which when combined with its partners' funding provided 1.5 million dollars to the "More Kids in the Woods" program. Partners include other federal agencies, non-profit educational and recreational institutions, schools, colleges, museums, and communities. More than 23,000 children have benefited by this campaign, allowing them to get close to nature, some for the first time. The Forest Service will do even more in 2008 with another half-million dollars to be matched with partners again. For a list of 2007 "More Kids in the Woods" projects see:

<http://www.fs.fed.us/recreation/programs/woods/index.shtml>. To make your outdoor recreation plans go to Recreation.gov.

The mission of the USDA Forest Service is to sustain the health, diversity, and productivity of the nation's forests and grasslands to meet the needs of present and future generations. The agency manages 193 million acres of public land and is the largest forestry research organization in the world.