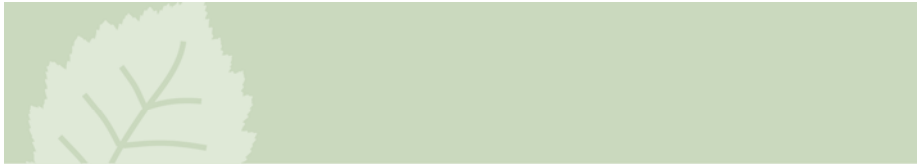




Building a Movement to Reconnect Children & Nature

**Cheryl Charles, Ph.D.
President and CEO**

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**Healing the broken bond
between our young
and nature is in
everyone's
self-interest, not only
because aesthetics or
justice demand it, but
also because our
mental,
physical and spiritual
health depend upon it.**

Richard Louv
*Last Child in the Woods: Saving
our Children from Nature-
Deficit Disorder*



Mission

- The mission of the Children & Nature Network (C&NN) is to build a movement to reconnect children and nature.



What We Do

- **Communicate**
- **Network**
- **Synthesize**
- **Engage**
- **Initiate and Innovate**



Definition of Children and Nature-Centered Experiences

- Nature-centered experiences for children are those that instill wonder and engender curiosity; take place in outdoor settings ranging from backyards to neighborhoods to city parks to wilderness; and occur in the form of guided activities as well as unstructured nature play in children's ev



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C&NN Five-Year Goals

- Reverse the societal trend of the past three decades in which children and youth have become disconnected from direct experience in the outdoors in their everyday lives.
- Build widespread, cross-sector community support throughout the US and all major regions of the world.
- Show demonstrable, measurable success.

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Examples of Measurable Objectives

- Reach more than half the nation's parents in a public awareness campaign.
- Obtain the endorsement of influential physicians and medical associations to prescribe "nature play" for children.
- With allied organizations, reverse the trend of childhood obesity in five years.
- Engage major builders and developers to design and redesign communities that are children and nature-centered.
- Secure the commitment of one-third of the nation's mayors and one-half the nation's governors to support children and nature-centered places and programs.
- Establish children and nature initiatives in 100 urban regions, 50 states and 50 nations.

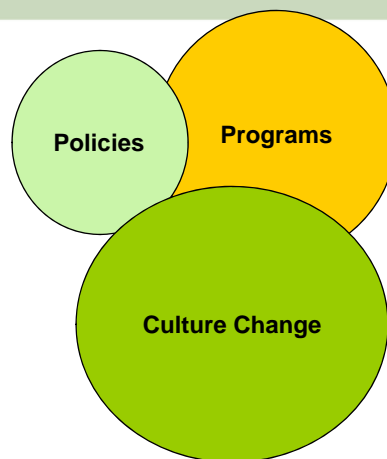
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Tipping Points

Once a new idea is accepted by a group of "innovators" and "early adopters," together typically representing 5 to 13% of the population, it becomes self-sustaining.

Based on the work of Everett M. Rogers, *Diffusion of Innovations*



What Research Says: The Deficit

- Children are spending 40 to 65 hours or more a week attached to electronic umbilica.
- Fewer than 1 in 5 children walk or ride a bike to school.
- Childhood obesity has increased from 4% in the 1960s to 20% today.
- Children have less time for unstructured, creative play in the outdoors than ever before in human history.

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What Research Says: The Benefits

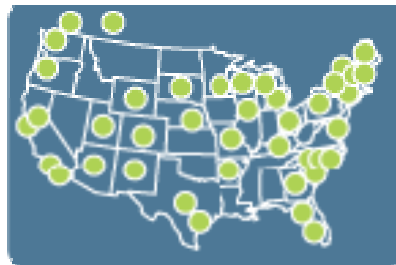
- Children are happier, healthier and smarter when they connect with nature.
 - **Happier:** Nature play increases self esteem, improves psychological health and reduces stress. Children learn self-discipline and are more cooperative.
 - **Healthier:** Nature play improves physical conditioning and reduces obesity.
 - **Smarter:** Nature play stimulates creativity and improves problem solving. Children do better in school.

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Mapping the Movement

- Since April of 2006, more than 50 communities nationwide and in Canada have launched children and nature initiatives and campaigns.



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C&NN 2008 Priorities

- **Growing Public Awareness**
- **Providing Access to State of the Art Resources**
- **Disseminating Principles of Children and Nature-Centered Design**
- **Supporting Community Leadership and the Grassroots**
- **Engaging Leadership within and among Sectors**
- **Developing New Generations of Natural Leaders™**
- **Filling the Gaps by Identifying Trends and Areas for Additional Research**

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Things We All Can Do

- **Take a child outside!**
- **Make re-connecting children and nature a priority.**
- **Educate parents, grandparents and other caregivers about the cognitive, physiological, and emotional benefits to children who play in the out-of-doors on a regular basis.**
- **Urge day care centers and schools to integrate outdoor experiences throughout the school curricula—and to reinstate recess where it has been eliminated.**

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Things We All Can Do, cont.

- **Encourage nature-based, children-friendly spaces and places throughout our communities.**
- **Reinstate schoolyard habitat projects and outdoor classrooms where they have been eliminated.**
- **Support and encourage community gardens.**
- **Get a creative group of attorneys together to help solve liability issues and concerns.**
- **Engage physicians to encourage them to prescribe nature-play, because it is good for children.**

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Things We All Can Do, cont.

- Educate architects, builders, community planners and civic leaders about the need for areas of native habitats in planned developments and existing neighborhoods so children have places to play that foster their imagination.
- Build new partnerships, and support existing efforts, to bring the resources of the private sector together with public agencies in bold, balanced and conserving ways to achieve a sustainable future.

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Things You Can Do

- Join the Movement!
- Be a part of bringing together your community to launch your own initiative to reconnect children and nature.
- Refer to the *C&NN Community Action Guide: Building a Movement to Reconnect Children and Nature from the Ground Up* on the C&NN web site at www.cnaturenet.org as a model.

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For Additional Information, contact:

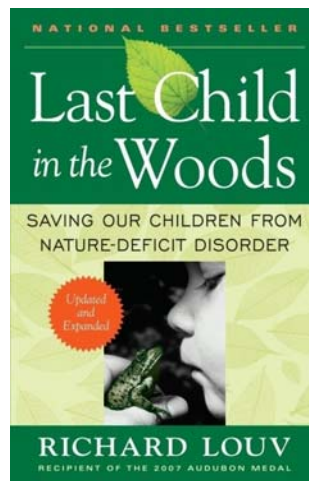
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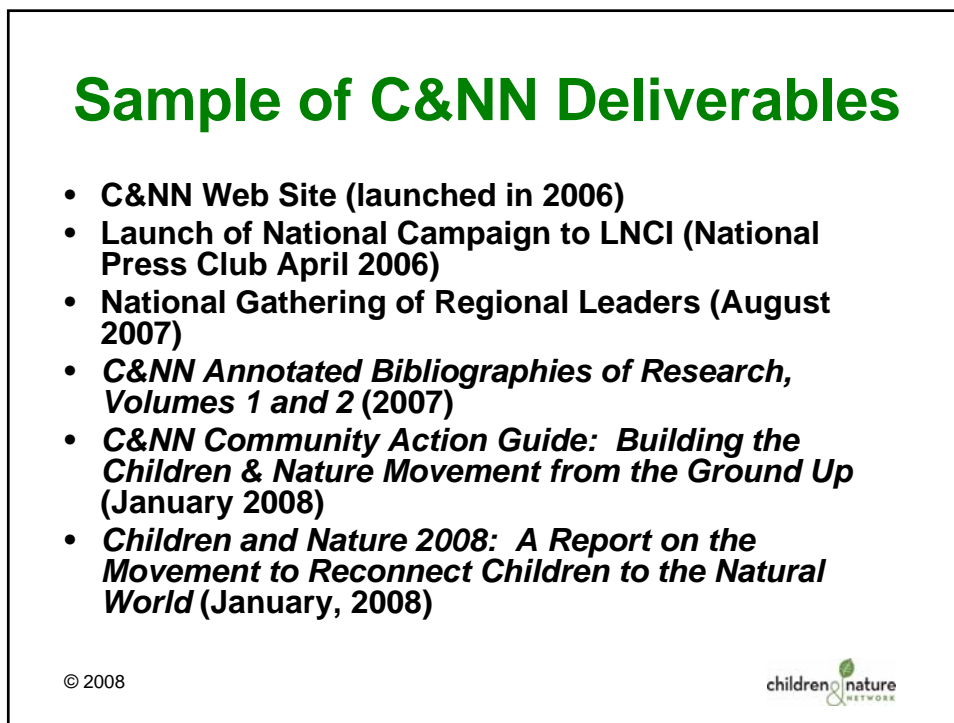
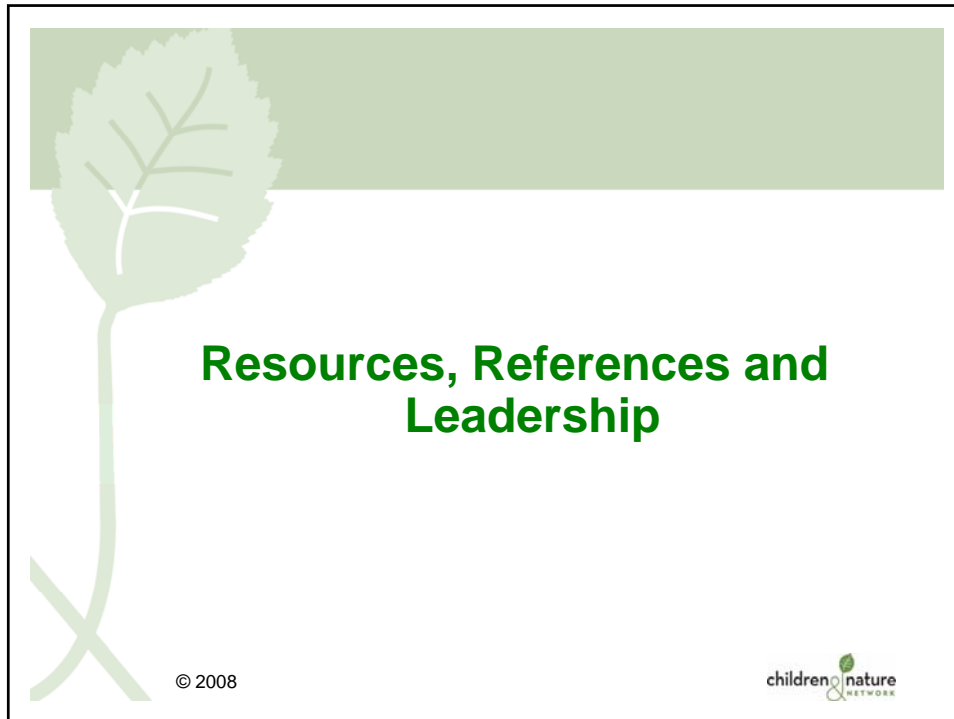


A Book that Launched a Movement



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First Annual C&NN Awareness Month Launched April 2008



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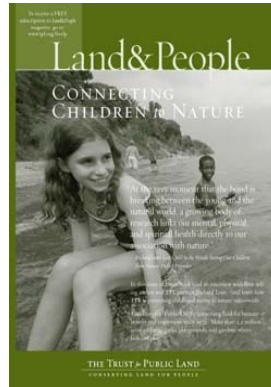
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