

# C&NN 2008 Grassroots Gathering Concurrent Sessions

## Natural Leaders: Growing Youth Involvement

Juan Martinez, Sierra Club, lead facilitator; with Brother Yusuf Burgess, C&NN Board; Martin LeBlanc, C&NN Board and Sierra Club; Page Lambert, C&NN Senior Associate, recorder. As we work to develop a nation-wide movement to reconnect children and nature, there are people between the ages of 18 and 30—those we call Natural Leaders—who are already actively engaged and leading the way. Brought to the C&NN 2008 Grassroots Gathering with special funding from the Sierra Club, the Natural Leaders team will help the children and nature movement develop and define the strategies and solutions for engaging youth and ensuring that their voices and values are a core component of the growing children and nature movement. In the second session, the Natural Leaders team will develop recommendations and a plan for action to create a Children and Nature Natural Leaders Network designed to inspire and connect youth leaders in the United States and beyond.

## Designing and Building Naturally Better Play Spaces

Susie Wirth, Arbor Day Foundation, and Jeanne McCarty, RealSchoolGardens, presenters; John Thielbahr, Washington State University, facilitator; Bob Peart, C&NN Senior Associate, recorder. Susie Wirth, Education Director of the National Arbor Day Foundation, will offer a presentation about the Foundation's Nature Explore program, the opportunities for making it available, and ways to apply it in homes, schools, neighborhoods and communities. Jeanne McCarty, Executive Director of RealSchoolGardens, will describe effective ways to use gardening as a way to reconnect children and nature. The session overall will focus on exploring and sharing successful efforts from the field of designed spaces, with an emphasis on natural play grounds and school gardens. The conversation will help identify tools and resources participants can draw upon once they return home.

## Connecting with Health Care Professionals

Dr. Joseph Baust, Murray State University and NAAEE, facilitator; Nancy Herron, Texas Parks and Wildlife, Janet Ady, US Fish and Wildlife Service, Paul Hai, Adirondack Ecological Center, SUNY, presenters; Kathy Louv, recorder. Research shows a critical relationship between unstructured play in nature and children's health – physical, mental and emotional. Participants in this session will explore how we can effectively reach health care professionals with this important message, and how they, in turn, can distribute this information to the public to influence behavior and bring us closer to the necessary tipping points for change. An important part of the discussion will be to define "health care professionals" (e.g., pediatricians, school nurses, etc.). During this session, participants will share success stories, and will recommend effective strategies for creating systemic partnerships to achieve tangible results.

## Implementing the C&NN Community Action Guide

Dr. Cheryl Charles, C&NN, Jen Wright, Kalamazoo Nature Center, Marilyn Wyzga, New Hampshire, Jeff Williamson, Arizona, Bob Peart, British Columbia, presenters; Mary Roscoe, recorder. "Think globally, act locally" is a mantra of grassroots movements, and ours is no exception. This session will go into practical detail about how to implement the processes described and detailed in the *C&NN Community Action Guide: Building the Children and Nature Movement from the Ground Up*. The Kellogg Foundation has provided support to C&NN to implement these processes as models in three Michigan communities, one of which is Kalamazoo. New Hampshire, Arizona and British Columbia are using comparable models and will share their approaches as well.

## Natural Allies: The Parents' Campaign

Rafael Reyes, ecoAmerica, and Brigitte Griswold, The Nature Conservancy, presenters; Mary Roscoe, recorder. One of the barriers we face in effecting cultural change is parents dis-inclined or ill-prepared to lead their children outside. ecoAmerica, the Children & Nature Network, The Nature Conservancy and other partners are launching a major campaign to "leave no child inside" using social marketing, web resources, communications media and other strategies. This session will provide up-to-date information about the campaign, and will provide an opportunity for C&NN's grassroots leadership to offer recommendations for how best to be engaged and involved in this campaign. The second session will build on the earlier session, providing additional opportunities for the C&NN grassroots to develop recommendations for supporting and helping to implement this major campaign to "leave no child inside."

## Nature Clubs for Families

Ashley and Chip Donahue, KIVA, Amy Pertschuk, C&NN, presenters; Mark Pertschuk, facilitator; Dean Stahl, journalist, recorder. Ashley and Chip Donahue of Roanoke, Virginia, recently featured on The Today Show along with Richard Louv, will present the story behind their family's launch of their "Kids in the Valley Adventuring (KIVA)" initiative. KIVA is one example of a "do it yourself, do it now" approach to children and their families being outside together that serves as an inspiration for C&NN's Nature Clubs for Families initiative, being funded and sponsored by REI. Amy Pertschuk will provide more detail about the plans for C&NN's initiative, and will ask for examples of other similar efforts underway. In the second session, Mark Pertschuk will facilitate a discussion to develop specific recommendations for ways in which the Nature Clubs for Families initiative can be enlarged and implemented more broadly. This "ideas to action" conversation will include assessing the feasibility and impact of the suggestions and recommendations.

## Shining a Light with More and New Allies

Avery Cleary, Hooked on Nature, facilitator; Liz Baird, North Carolina Museum of Natural Sciences, recorder. Reaching out and forging alliances with individuals and organizations within all sectors of society is a key to our ultimate success, however are there potentially powerful partnerships we are overlooking? During this session, participants will brainstorm potential new points of partnership, define strategies for reaching out, and assess the feasibility and impact of pursuing these suggestions and recommendations.