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Every Kid Outdoors Act Passes House and Senate

Groups from the Y to the North Face Celebrate Bipartisan Public Lands Package

Washington, D.C.– Today, the U.S. House of Representatives passed the Every Kid Outdoors Act (363-62) as part of the Natural Resources Management Act (S. 47), a bipartisan public lands package. The legislation passed in the U.S. Senate (92-8) two weeks ago and is now headed to the President’s desk for signature.

The Every Kid Outdoors Act formally authorizes for seven years the Every Kid in a Park program (now called Every Kid Outdoors), to encourage children to visit their national parks and public lands. Every Kid Outdoors provides fourth graders with a free entry park pass for themselves and their families to visit all of our federally managed public lands, waters, and shores. In its first two years, the program reached over 2 million fourth graders and leveraged nearly \$5 million in private funding to support transportation costs for children from Title 1 schools across the U.S. Launched in 2015, the program was threatened with cancellation twice by the U.S. Department of the Interior, and even [singled out by former Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke](#) for termination.

The public lands package also permanently authorizes the Land and Water Conservation Fund, the largest source of federal funding for close to home parks, playgrounds, and critical projects that ensure our children have access to nature and opportunities to improve physical fitness. Also included in the package is authorization for the 21st Century Conservation Service Corps, which strengthens career pathways for youth and young veterans in the stewardship of our public lands and waters.

In response to today’s vote, members of the Outdoors Alliance for Kids issued the following statements:

“Today’s historic vote is a win for our kids and our planet. It fills me with great hope to see our elected leaders come together in this time of deep division and pass a bipartisan bill that gets our kids outdoors, creates career pathways for youth and veterans in conservation, and protects and establishes close to home nature access for millions. Thank you to the nearly 100 organizations and tens of thousands of people across the country, including more than 1,000 fourth graders, who voiced their support for the Every Kid in a Park program and ensured today’s victory. The Every Kid Outdoors Act invites every fourth grader in the U.S. to experience their parks and public lands. The members of the Outdoors Alliance for Kids stand ready to ensure the program continues to grow and reach even more kids with park opportunities. — **Jackie Ostfeld, Director, Sierra Club’s Outdoors for All Campaign; Chair, Outdoors Alliance for Kids**

“Getting people outdoors is the highest and best use of America’s public lands. Today’s vote will help get more people outdoors on America’s parks, forests, refuges and other public lands and waters. We commend the

U.S. House of Representatives for permanently reauthorizing the Land and Water Conservation Fund and extending the Every Kid in Park and 21st Century Conservation Service Corps programs.” — **Paul Sanford, National Director of Recreation Policy, the Wilderness Society; Vice Chair, Outdoors Alliance for Kids**

“The passing of the National Resources Management Act is strong confirmation of the bi-partisan nature of public lands and a positive step for the future health of our communities. It helps protect wild places in all 50 states, and will enable more of the [7.6 million jobs](#) across the outdoor recreation economy. Equally exciting is including the Every Kid Outdoors Act, which gives every fourth-grader free access to America’s public land and waters, helping enable a new generation of explorers.” — **Arne Arens, Global Brand President, The North Face**

“Whether a family outing, a school trip or a day at camp, time spent outdoors helps kids develop a sense of belonging in nature and an appreciation of the importance of preserving our lands and water. Our national parks and public lands are unrivaled as spaces where kids can connect with nature and grow their love of the outdoors. We applaud the passage of The Every Kid Outdoors Act which will enable youth-serving organizations like the Y to create powerful community partnerships focused on ensuring all kids, regardless of their circumstances, can experience the wonder of these national treasures.” — **Kevin Washington, President and CEO, YMCA of the USA**

“Congress’ passage of the Every Kid Outdoors Act will make Every Kid in a Park a permanent program once signed into law. In its almost three years of existence, this program had opened the door to the natural beauty of the nation’s parks for countless children, helping them to stay physically active and healthy. With final passage of this legislation, the admirable work of this wonderful public-private partnership can continue and provide opportunities for many more kids to savor the great outdoors through our national parks and public lands.” — **Nancy Brown, CEO of the American Heart Association**

“On behalf of kids and families across the nation, we celebrate the House and Senate passage of the Natural Resources Management Act which will not only benefit millions of 4th graders and their families through the Every Kid Outdoors Act, but also thousands of parks, public lands and waters through the permanent authorization of the Land and Water Conservation Fund. By preserving our parks and providing access to these special places for our children, we will ensure that America’s heritage will be treasured forever.” — **Grace Lee, Executive Director, National Park Trust**

“NRPA is delighted Congress passed the Natural Resources Management Act, also known as the ‘Lands Package.’ Among many other important elements, this bipartisan piece of legislation includes the ‘Every Kid Outdoors Act,’ a program we proudly support, as it provides children with the opportunity to explore our nation’s parks and open spaces, an experience every child should have.” — **Barbara Tulipane, CAE, President and CEO, National Recreation and Park Association**

“The Alliance for Childhood is thrilled about the passage of the Every Kid Outdoors Act and greatly appreciates the commitment of Congress to getting kids outdoors for their healthy development. This legislation will help ensure equitable opportunities for fourth graders to experience active, child-directed play in our natural world. Anchoring the Every Kid in a Park program with Congressional authorization will support life changing opportunities for the children who need it most.” — **Linda Rhoads, Executive Director, Alliance for Childhood**

“GirlTrek proudly supports the Every Kid Outdoors Act. We know how important it is for everyone, especially young people, to have access to our nation’s parks and outdoor spaces. Exploring these beautiful lands opens

up a world of possibilities for some of the most marginalized. We belong in every space enjoying all that the great outdoors has to offer. It's not a privilege; it's our place to be out in nature taking in its splendor. Every Kid Outdoors Act helps to make this possible." — **Vanessa Garrison, Cofounder, GirlTrek**

"The American Camp Association applauds the passage of the Every Kid Outdoors Act which will make permanent the Every Kid in a Park program. This valuable program has granted millions of children access to our nation's vast and beautiful national parks. Hundreds of America's summer camps also utilize parks annually. The passage the Every Kid Outdoors Act will ensure that every 4th grader in the U.S. has a chance to visit, explore and grow their appreciation of national parks. We thank Congress for their important, bipartisan work to advance this legislation." — **Tom Rosenberg, President/CEO, American Camp Association**

"With today's passage of the Every Kid Outdoors Act, we move another step closer to ensuring that all kids and families have the opportunity to learn about, enjoy and play together in the natural world. For the next generation to appreciate, preserve and protect our parks – and consider careers in the green-collar industry — they need frequent, affordable opportunities to discover the joys of nature. We are encouraged by the bipartisan support for the EKO Act and look forward to continuing opportunities to connect young people with a world that fosters their creativity, provides physical and mental health benefits, and helps them understand the world that provides life, food and wonder." — **Susan E. Yoder, Executive Director, Seed Your Future**

"American Hiking Society applauds the bipartisan final passage of the Every Kid Outdoors Act. Providing free public lands access to fourth graders across the country will introduce the next generation to outdoor recreation and foster lifelong service to and enjoyment of our most treasured natural resource." — **Kathryn Van Waes, Executive Director, American Hiking Society**

"The Campaign for Commercial-Free Childhood lauds the passage of the Every Kid Outdoors Act. Time outside and in nature is critical to children's healthy development. And in today's screen-saturated world, it is more vital than ever to ensure that all children have an opportunity to experience our nation's incredible natural resources." — **Josh Golin, Executive Director, Campaign for a Commercial-Free Childhood**

"Every child, regardless of their zip code or the amount of money in their bank account, deserves to have regular, easy access to the outdoors, to play, learn, explore and grow. The Every Kid Outdoors Act opens the doors for all 4th graders to explore our public lands and waters, experiencing the rich cultural and biological diversity of our beautiful country. The California Outdoor Engagement Coalition applauds the bipartisan support of the Every Kid Outdoors Act." — **Jenny Mulholland-Beahrs, Director, California Outdoor Engagement Coalition**

"Avid4 Adventure proudly celebrates the passing of the Natural Resources Management Act. We applaud the bipartisan support for this bill, which clearly demonstrates that people from all states and a diversity of backgrounds agree that protecting our wild places and empowering kids to lead active and healthy lifestyles in the outdoors are vitally important for our continued success as a nation." — **Paul Dreyer, CEO, Avid4 Adventure**

"Now more than ever, it is reassuring to see bipartisan support to give future generations the same opportunities we enjoyed to experience the great outdoors. The Natural Resources Act is a critical step in creating appreciation for, and the emotional connection to the great outdoors." — **Bruce Ward, President, Choose Outdoors; Advisor, Colorado Outdoor Recreation Industry Council**

“On behalf of our national network of environmental and outdoor educators, we join our partners and colleagues in celebrating the bipartisan passage of the Every Kid Outdoors Act. By providing access to public lands for every fourth grader and their family, this bill offers an unprecedented opportunity for young people to have meaningful learning experiences that can foster deep connections to our natural resources.” — **Judy Braus, Executive Director, North American Association for Environmental Education**

“Our nation’s wildlife heritage will only endure if we ensure future generations can get outside and experience the wonder of wildlife firsthand. The bipartisan Natural Resources Management Act is a common-sense proposal to achieve this vital goal. We’re proud common sense prevailed on this critical piece of legislation and that Every Kid Outdoors is included.” — **Josh Falk, Children and Nature Programs and Policy, National Wildlife Federation**

“The American Horticultural Society (AHS) applauds the passage of the Every Kid Outdoors Act, which will help bring the proven benefits of being in nature and the outdoors to millions more children and youth. This act will serve as an important accelerator for the AHS’s work with garden- and nature-based educators to nurture the next generation of plant lovers and earth stewards through regular encounters with the natural world and, ultimately, to create a happier, healthier, and more sustainable future for our citizenry. We are grateful to Congress for the bipartisan approach that led to this act's passage.” — **Beth Tuttle, President & CEO, American Horticultural Society**

“Great job to OAK for taking the lead and getting this legislation passed. We need to keep going in connecting ALL our kids to nature, forever! Frequent and unstructured nature play (not lead by adults and guided by their own imaginations and discoveries) with visits to all our truly wild places, will grow their minds long-term, as well as their bodies. Parents and teachers need to let our kids lead to show us what they “see” in nature and teach us to new ways to protect it, from their new, and completely unbiased, perspective. We can learn so much from them as well.” — **David Molzan, Director, Friends of the Assabet River National Wildlife Refuge, Inc.**