

Maryland Partnership *for* Children in Nature FY 2010 Action Plan

October 26, 2009



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Governor



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Secretary



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State Superintendent of Schools

*This is a working document that will be revised to include updated information as it becomes available.

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Connecting Communities and Families to Nature			
No	Recommendations	Planned Activities	Target Date
1.	Incorporate nature play spaces into community health planning, land use planning and community design	University of Maryland School of Landscape Architecture will complete phase 2 of the nature play spaces design process and develop model designs for use in State parks	Spring 2009 Spring Semester 2010
		Morgan State University will identify opportunities for replicating University of MD program for designing nature play spaces in urban settings	Spring Semester 2010
		DNR will identify potential acquisitions using POS funding that will connect children and families to nature, benefit underserved communities, and link Marylanders to, schools, trails, and parks.	Summer 2010
		DNR will work with the Play N' Learn Daycare Center at the Tawes Building in Annapolis to design a nature play area for the toddler and pre-school children. Some native plants were planted in June 2009 at the annual family picnic.	Fall 2010 (Completion)
2.	Establish a Maryland Trail Development Office	DNR will schedule a meeting between the county parks and recreation departments and to determine specific needs of the counties.	Summer 2009
		DNR and MDOT will convene a Trail Summit to bring together trail advocates, including trail users, local and state government planners, parks and recreation professionals, and private sector supporters.	Fall 2010
		DNR and MDOT will identify possible funding options to support a statewide Trail Town program. DNR and MDOT will work with DHCD and DBED to stimulate trail development and economic development.	Fall 2009
	Establish MD Trail Development Office (continued)	DNR and MDOT will increase existing efforts to utilize federal Transportation Enhancement Program monies to support regionally significant recreation trail improvements that connect communities and public lands.	Summer 2009
		DNR and MDOT will examine potential opportunities to utilize federal Safe Routes to Schools grant funds to develop trail connections between schools and public lands.	Fall 2009
		MDOT is launching a new statewide initiative to link 800 miles of trails; this effort includes a new GIS-based trail system inventory database and map of all Maryland.	Summer 2009
		MDOT will work with DNR and local Rec and Parks to expand this trails inventory to include park trails.	Summer 2010

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3.	Develop a strategic park, waterways and public lands Interpretive and Outdoor Classroom plan	MPS will lead an effort with internal and external partners including MDSE, National Park Service and non-profits to develop the plan.	Fall 2010
4.	Develop and implement a comprehensive program to increase access and utilization of public lands and waterways for underserved communities	DNR will research other programs across the country where programs have been developed for underserved communities. Work with Units within DNR including Minority Outreach Coordinator, Public Lands, Diversity Matrix Team, Aquatic Education and State Parks to identify opportunities and challenges for the basis of the Plan.	Spring 2010 (for Plan Development)
5.	Expand Civic Justice Corps model to serve 1,000 at risk youth statewide by 2015 with summer conservation jobs and outdoor enrichment activities	DNR will double CJC membership for next cycle to 500 participants.	Summer 2010

Strengthening Students' Connection to Nature During the School Day			
No	Recommendations	Planned Activities	Target Date
6.	Provide annual, meaningful outdoor environmental experience for every student K-12	MSDE will align programs with the Governor's seven education priorities.	April 2009
		MSDE will Increase number of STEM related internships and strengthen correlation between STEM education and Environmental Education.	Ongoing
		MSDE will ensure students have high quality, rigorous experiences with service providers who are highly trained in science(s) and issues investigation.	Ongoing
		MSDE will Expand course offerings in Career Technology Education	Fall 2010 (Full implementation)
7.	Require for graduation every HS student take and pass an environmental, literacy course of study	Assistant Superintendents have formed a subcommittee to form a position statement regarding establishment of high school graduation requirement.	End of 2009
8.	Establish a comprehensive initiative to green all schools and embed schoolyard habitat as integrated indoor and outdoor instructional components of the curriculum and create outdoor learning experiences for students and members of the community.	MAEOE is enhancing its website to improve access to information on developing schoolyard habitats, be more user friendly and incorporate social networking tools	Fall 2010
		DNR will work with NOAA and MAEOE to identify options for partnering on incorporating a well organized, comprehensive and searchable catalog of outdoor classrooms, outdoor/environmental education professional development opportunities, and service learning programs	Spring 2010
		MSDE will provide a database of example model outdoor experiences for educators	Initiated Summer 2009/ Ongoing

No	Recommendations	Planned Activities	Target Date
9.	Provide professional development for teachers, State Park rangers, naturalists and other service providers	Organizations such as MSDE, DNR, MAEOE and other non-formal environmental education entities will provide professional development for teachers on issues investigation	Ongoing
		MSDE will ensure high quality, rigorous experiences with service providers	Ongoing
10.	Adopt the Maryland Environmental Literacy Standards	MSDE has drafted the Environmental Literacy Standards and is waiting for funding for an outside review.	Pending funding

Increasing Public Awareness			
No.	Recommendations	Planned Activities	Target Date
11.	Introduce the Outdoor Bill of Rights for Maryland Children	Governor O'Malley will publicly endorse the partnership recommendations and action plan.	Summer 2009/ Fall 2009
12.	Launch statewide campaign for Children in Nature to educate parents, teachers, and other leaders and caregivers about the many benefits of outdoor play and learning opportunities	DNR will Launch Children in Nature Website	Fall 2009
		DNR will incorporate Children in Nature messaging into Smart, Green & Growing campaign	Ongoing
13.	Host annual Children in Nature Summit	MAEOE is considering adding to their annual conference a day-long strand focused on Children in Nature	Winter 2011

Financing the Plan			
No.	Recommendations	Planned Activities	Target Date
14.	Develop a Financing Plan to implement the CIN Partnership Plan recommendations and actions	Chesapeake Bay Trust (CBT) plans to convene a group of private and public funders to investigate opportunities for a funding collaborative	Fall 2009
		CBT has worked closely with MDOT, MVA, the Governor's office, and General Assembly leaders to obtain an increase in the voluntary license plate renewal fee (regulations currently under review by AELR committee. CBT has also worked with MDOT and MVA on a marketing campaign to promote Bay plate sales; and with DNR on a marketing campaign to promote the Bay and Endangered Species Check-off program	Fall 2009
		CBT plans to make available \$900,000 through competitive grant programs that support K-12 environmental education projects, including curriculum development, schoolyard habitat projects, and Bay education field trips.	Spring 2010
		CBT will make available an additional \$2 million for grants that support the broader objectives of the Children in Nature plan, including youth training and citizen outreach projects, tree and marsh plantings, citizen-led water quality monitoring, rain garden installations, trail improvements, and volunteer-led stream clean ups. All these projects aim at improving environmental literacy and reconnecting families and communities with the State's rich natural resources. All are supported through revenue generated by Maryland's <i>Treasure the Chesapeake</i> license plate.	Spring 2010
		Through the Chesapeake Bay Program an increase in NOAA BWET (Bay Watershed Education for Teachers) program funding has been requested to support professional development for teachers & administrators, and to meet the student Meaningful Watershed Education Experiences. The request has been made to appropriate more funding both nationally and for the Chesapeake Bay region.	Winter 2010

No.	Recommendations	Planned Activities	Target Date
15.	Devise a method of measuring baseline data and increased time spent in nature	<p>MSDE will develop methods to measure Environmental Literacy Levels of students - Develop baseline assessment of students' knowledge and mechanisms to evaluate increases over the baseline.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ MSDE met with Library/Media, Instructional Technology, Elementary Education, and Teacher Professional Development Coordinators to begin design of electronic portfolio. ▪ Collecting data on number of students participating in Meaningful Watershed Experiences, number of student service learning hours in environmental activities, and number of students participating in approved Investigative and Exploratory Environmental Issues & Actions program. 	Pilot Portfolios Fall 2009
		<p>Develop a mechanism to measure increased time of children spent outdoors in general</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ DNR will conduct an informal survey at State Fair asking citizens about attitudes toward children spending time outdoors ▪ The MD Park Service began collecting data regarding youth participation in environmental education and interpretive program activities 	Fall 2009