

Engaging Youth

The Myths, The Realities &
The Horse's Mouth



Myths & Perceptions



Youth are easily bored, we have
to *work* to capture and keep
their attention.



Youth are not accustomed to **or**
comfortable in the outdoors.



How **we** learn is not how **they** learn.



It is difficult to get youth to commit, they have a general lack of commitment.



Youth appear to have a very tight social network that they are really strongly dependent on.
They will only participate in activities that their friends are doing.



We have to use social networking tools like Facebook for events and list who will be there in order to attract young people.



Young people have a strong need for instant gratification.



In order to attract young people to events, there needs to be a *risk* or *thrill* component. Youth like to push the envelope and experience dangerous elements.



Youth have idealistic tendencies; they like being green, getting involved, and doing their part.



Youth have a variety of motivations.



America's Great Outdoors: Youth Report



Youth Report Recommendations

- Make the outdoors **relevant** to today's young people: make it inviting, exciting, fun
- Ensure that all young people have **access** to outdoor places that are safe, clean, and close to home
- Empower and enable youth to **work and volunteer** in the outdoors
- Build upon a base of **environmental and outdoor education**, both formal and informal



Make the outdoors **relevant** to today's young people: make it inviting, exciting, fun

Best Practices:

- Ask young people what they want, involve them in planning.
- Incorporate skills and experiences that build towards their future
- Link the outdoors to their home community



Ensure that all young people have **access** to outdoor places that are safe, clean, and close to home

Best Practices:

- Partner! Community based organizations, youth-serving organizations, etc.
- Provide readily available materials that show where trail/parks locations are and how to get there
- Create Opportunities within the Urban Core



Empower and enable youth to **work and volunteer** in the outdoors

Best Practices:

- Work and volunteer opportunities should be as diverse as your audience—don't just use their labor, use their mind!
- Adjust your opportunities to their schedules—after school and weekends
- Don't make youth an afterthought, design the opportunities with youth in mind
- Acknowledge the culture of the experience



Build upon a base of **environmental and outdoor education**, both formal and informal

Best Practices:

- Provide scholarships for summer camps & programs, bring programs to partners
- Shift away from “traditional” Environmental Education and towards Environmental Sustainability
- Allow time for enjoyment—relax, take it in!
- Education around community building, justice, and the future of urban areas



Questions & Discussion

