

**Originating Committee:** Education and Outdoor Recreation

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**Intended Recipient:** CFM Affiliates

### **Affiliate Volunteerism for Youth Engagement in Nature**

**WHEREAS**, growing research suggests that a majority of adults who are likely to care about natural resources formed “an emotional connection to nature as a child.” (Schultz, 2000); and

**WHEREAS**, on average, today’s children spend only about half the time playing outside as their parents did. (The Guardian 2017); and

**WHEREAS**, limited opportunities for children to play in and investigate the outdoors have narrowed the chances of a child forming a meaningful connection with nature; and

**WHEREAS**, shortened or eliminated recess periods, increasing urban development, and increasing time spent playing video games or browsing the internet contribute to reduce children’s chances to get outside; and

**WHEREAS**, outdoor sports and hobbies could demonstrate to children that the outdoors are dynamic and exciting spaces; and

**WHEREAS**, children may lack role models or peers involved in outdoor activities such as fishing, birding, hunting or gardening that would serve to introduce them to pastimes spent in nature; and

**WHEREAS**, children may not realize they have a passion for outdoor recreation until they are introduced to an activity that creates a spark; and

**WHEREAS**, through a broad range of conservation affiliates Conservation Federation of Missouri (CFM) membership is representative of the diverse array of conservation interests throughout Missouri; and

**WHEREAS**, CFM members have expertise in conservation related areas or activities they are passionate about and could share to encourage children to get outdoors; and

**WHEREAS**, CFM member volunteers could serve as role models to encourage children to get outside or as liaisons linking children to youth conservation groups to help forge initial connections between children and the outdoors; and

**WHEREAS**, CFM members could demonstrate how fun the outdoors are first hand by being active in local schools. Members could highlight their own love of the outside world giving show and tell style

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presentations in school assemblies, or by volunteering to connect a school with a local conservation group, or the Discover Nature Schools Program; and

**WHEREAS**, many CFM affiliates could create or adapt existing events to encourage children to share in the members' appreciation and understanding of the outdoors, outdoor activities and conservation-related activities; and

**WHEREAS**, the Conservation Federation of Missouri invites CFM affiliates to engage youth by participating in Discover Nature Schools, inviting youth and children to affiliate organization events and volunteer to put on programs at local schools. Such action will provide pathways for children to become involved in outdoor activities and build a passion for conservation they may never otherwise be exposed to; now, therefore, be it

**RESOLVED** that the Conservation Federation of Missouri assembled at the Capitol Plaza Hotel, Jefferson City, MO, this 11<sup>th</sup> day of March, 2018, strongly encourages affiliate organizations to engage youth by inviting children and young people to affiliate events, getting involved with Discover Nature Schools, and offering to give programs or speeches at local schools. Such volunteerism will foster a new generation of conservation-minded Missourians and encourage children to make meaningful connections with the outdoors.

Searchable key words: Volunteerism, Affiliates, Children, Youth, Education, Schools,

**Expires:** March 11<sup>th</sup>, 2023