

EXECUTIVE ORDER 09-02

WHEREAS, the natural world is a successful model for many values that human communities seek: continuity, stability and sustenance, adaptation, sustained productivity, renewal without exhaustion of resources, and thriving in an environment of diversity; and

WHEREAS, the Sunflower State is blessed with an abundance of natural beauty and natural resources which must be protected for future generations; and

WHEREAS, we as Kansans envision healthy vibrant cities, suburbs, rural communities, farms, and ranches committed to environmental stewardship, where sustainable natural resource use and management ensures equal benefits for today's citizens and for future generations; where quality of life engenders a pride of place and includes access to natural resources for all Kansans, while respecting private property interests; and where stakeholders participate as partners to protect our natural resources to assure a healthy economy and quality of life; and

WHEREAS, to sustain the rich natural resources in Kansas—including the tallgrass, midgrass and shortgrass native prairies, the playa lakes of western Kansas, the Wetlands of International Importance of central Kansas, the oak forests of eastern Kansas, and millions of acres of diverse land and habitats—requires the stewardship of future generations of Kansans; and

WHEREAS, stewardship of our natural resources, including water, is not possible without a strong sense of connection to and interaction with the natural world; and

WHEREAS, the positive connection Kansas children have with our natural world is critical in ensuring their quality of life, mental and physical health and appreciation of our natural resources; and

WHEREAS, spending frequent time outdoors in unstructured and structured experiences is the best way to develop a connection to nature and the foundation on which to build an environmental stewardship ethic; and

WHEREAS, there is a need to continue and expand outreach that will engage individuals, organizations and minority communities in partnerships with state government in promoting a high standard of life through the conservation, restoration and preservation of natural resources; and

WHEREAS, environmental education increases student engagement in science, improves student achievement in core subject areas, and increases student awareness about individual actions they can take to restore the health of the natural environment; and

WHEREAS, Kansas must renew its efforts to ensure that its children have abundant opportunities to connect with the places they live and grow, to become informed and responsible stewards of the environment, and who are prepared for future environmental challenges and opportunities as individual citizens and as members of the workforce.

NOW, THEREFORE, pursuant to the authority vested in me as Governor of the State of Kansas, I hereby create the Kansas Coalition for Children in Nature (“KCCN”) with the following purposes and charges:

1. The KCCN will promote outdoor experiential activities and environmental education for the young people of Kansas and provide ongoing support for these endeavors. The KCCN will be convened and managed by a Conveners Group which is charged with recruiting KCCN members. The KCCN will be divided into working groups established by the Conveners Group, to provide leadership and input for the major tasks identified under this Executive Order
2. The KCCN Conveners Group shall include the following members:
 - a. The Chair of the Governor’s Natural Resources Sub-Cabinet or designee;
 - b. The Commissioner of the Kansas State Department of Education or designee;
 - c. The Secretary of the Kansas Department of Health and Environment or designee;
 - d. The Secretary of Agriculture or designee;
 - e. One representative of the Kansas Association for Conservation and Environmental Education (“KACEE”);
 - f. One representative of the Kansas Wildlife Federation;
 - g. One representative of the Kansas Recreation and Parks Association;
 - h. One representative of a Kansas business/industry that supports outdoor learning and experiences for children, families and/or communities;
 - i. One representative of a Kansas conservation non-profit organization that supports outdoor learning and experiences for children, families and/or communities; and
 - j. One representative of a Kansas agriculture-oriented organization that supports outdoor learning and experiences for children, families and/or communities.

3. The KCCN membership may include, but is not limited to representatives of:
 - a. Non-profit organizations dedicated to environmental education, including one organization that works with youth in urban areas;
 - b. A Parent Teacher Organization;
 - c. Local governments that have demonstrated leadership in planning for and providing abundant opportunities for outdoor recreation in their communities;
 - d. Kansas Green Schools that have completed a Green School Project (teachers or administrators);
 - e. The formal education community (teacher or principal), to include those that represent urban schools, rural schools and special education interests;
 - f. Organizations representing school administrators and boards of education, such as United School Administrators and Kansas Association of School Boards;
 - g. Early childhood educators;
 - h. Youth-based organizations to include urban youth-based organizations and rural youth-based organizations;
 - i. Governor's Minority Affairs Offices;
 - j. The Kansas Health Policy Authority;
 - k. The pediatric medical field;
 - l. Organizations that provide environmental education in a non-formal setting;
 - m. The business community with demonstrated leadership in supporting children in nature;
 - n. The agricultural community with demonstrated leadership in supporting children in nature;
 - o. Hunting and/or fishing organizations with demonstrated leadership in supporting children in nature;
 - p. Kansas Institutes of Higher Education that work directly in the instruction of preservice teachers and that have demonstrated leadership in supporting environmental/outdoor education;
 - q. Faith-based organizations with demonstrated leadership in supporting children in nature; and
 - r. Additional KCCN members as the Conveners Group and the KCCN deem necessary.
4. The membership of the Conveners Group identified in this Executive Order shall be appointed by the Governor. Such members shall serve at the pleasure of the Governor for two year terms.
5. The KCCN shall be co-chaired by the Chair of the Governor's Natural Resources Sub-Cabinet and the Commissioner of Education or designees.

6. The KCCN shall meet at the call of the Co-Chairs.
7. A majority of the KCCN Conveners Group constitutes a quorum for the transaction of any business. The Conveners Group may adopt any other procedures and by-laws necessary to ensure the orderly transaction of business.
8. The KCCN shall consult with and engage leadership and staff from other Kansas Executive Departments and independent agencies, federal and local government representatives.
9. Staff support for the KCCN shall be provided by the co-chairs' agencies and other state agencies and partners as requested by the co-chairs.
10. The KCCN shall be supported by working groups, to be established by the Conveners Group, to lead the major tasks identified under this Executive Order.
11. The KCCN shall promote the well-being of youth by providing opportunities for increased time spent outdoors and environmental literacy through outdoor experiential activities and formal and non-formal environmental education. The KCCN Conveners Group is charged with gathering input and feedback from the working groups to accomplish the following:
 - a. Develop and implement a plan to support the Children's Outdoor Bill of Rights which provides youth with structured and unstructured opportunities for play, outdoor recreation, learning and scientific study to include:
 - i. Strategies that provide increased support for schoolyard habitat programs, such as Outdoor Wildlife Learning Sites ("OWLS") and Kansas Green School programs, which include the conversion of schoolyards to natural habitats and schoolyard gardens for play and outdoor classrooms;
 - ii. Strategies providing increased support for Kansas Green School projects that include environmental education in the planning and implementation of those projects;
 - iii. Creation of green corridors or "greenways" to connect communities, parks and schools via systems that encourage walking, biking and increased time outdoors by youth and families;

- iv. Greening initiatives that create nature play areas within communities to provide outdoor experiences for children close to home;
 - v. Strategies that increase support for the statewide Youth Conservation Corps, to provide at-risk youth with opportunities to serve in conservation crews in state parks and other public lands in Kansas with the Juvenile Justice Authority and community non-profit organizations;
 - vi. School-based programs that provide voluntary curriculum-aligned programming and service learning which promote collaborations across school systems, local parks and non-profit organizations to offer opportunities for children to engage in learning and service helping to better connect them to the land and our precious natural resources;
 - vii. Increased access to naturalists in state parks and other public lands to provide interpretive activities for children and families to enhance their discovery and enjoyment of Kansas' natural resources;
 - viii. Increased opportunities for underserved communities to access Kansas state, federal and local parks and other public lands with organizations that serve minority students; and
 - ix. Early childhood learning which includes more outdoor and naturalistic play;
- b. Develop and implement a State Environmental Literacy Plan to include:
- i. A review of current environmental education efforts in Kansas schools, including student environmental literacy levels;
 - ii. Identification of curriculum necessary to develop environmentally literate students;
 - iii. Identification of model outdoor field and service learning experiences that can be integrated into the regular school curriculum;

- iv. Professional development opportunities for in-service teachers, pre-service teachers, and non-formal environmental educators;
 - v. Methods to annually measure the progress of public school students toward becoming environmentally literate graduates; and
 - vi. A process for revising or updating the environmental literacy plan every five years, or as needed;
- c. Devise a method of measuring baseline data and increased time spent in nature by children, including an analysis of opportunities and obstacles encompassing the role of parents, schools, community and green space; and using this baseline data, develop an appropriate plan to increase the amount of time children spend in nature;
 - d. Devise a method of measuring baseline children's health data and explore correlations between time spent in nature by children and children's health; and
 - e. Identify opportunities and barriers to support implementation of programs in local school systems and on public lands.
12. The KCCN Conveners Group will present these plans and a status report on their implementation prior to the end of the Governor's term in office, January 10, 2011.

This document shall be filed with the Secretary of State as Executive Order No. 09-02 and shall become effective immediately.

THE GOVERNOR'S OFFICE

BY THE GOVERNOR _____

DATED _____

Secretary of State

Assistant Secretary of State