



## *“Step Out Into the Real World”*

### **An Opportunity to join WDFW’s Youth Outdoors Initiative**

## **We’re focusing on young people**

Many young people increasingly live in a ‘virtual world’ of high-tech gadgets and artificial light. They don’t often unplug and step outside. For many reasons, they simply don’t engage in the challenges or enjoy the pleasures of outdoor activity.

Evidence abounds to document the costs of this inactivity in poor health, obesity, and alarming rates of disease among young people who should be our healthiest and fittest citizens. What may be worse is the growing disconnection between our student-age citizens and the values and benefits of conservation and outdoor recreation.

We’re concerned about these trends, and we know you are, too.

That’s why the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife and the citizen members of our state Fish and Wildlife Commission have begun the Youth Outdoors Initiative.

It’s often difficult for the older generation to motivate young people to go outside. By hearing directly from young adult leaders about how to address these challenges, we believe we’ll generate great ideas for bringing more young people outdoors.

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## **We’ve made a great start**

In October 2013, we assembled a group of bright, energetic, young outdoorsmen and outdoorswomen to share their thoughts on how to reach their peers with our message.

We identified these youth leaders through our extensive network of contacts among the state’s fishing, hunting, public service and conservation organizations. In all, we reached out to 75 regional and statewide youth-focused organizations.

To our delight, our youth leaders showed unabashed enthusiasm for this concept. They urged us to create a permanent youth advisory group. In an impressive written report, they suggested specific strategies for recruiting more of their peers into outdoor activities.

Encouraged by the outcome of this initial work, we are ready to make a longer-term commitment to this effort. We plan to initiate a permanent youth advisory council, and with the members’ help we will develop robust strategies for youth-oriented activities. We plan to promote communication and outreach, citizen science efforts, and environmental education to get more kids involved in outdoor activities.



*Washington  
Department of*  
**FISH and  
WILDLIFE**



## How can you get involved?

Please join us as we work with our young leaders to introduce more youth to outdoor activities and stimulate them to “Step Out into the Real World.”

The initiative requires energy and resources from external partners, and we are soliciting contributions of time, ideas, and personal participation. Further, state law permits WDFW to accept funds on behalf of this project to support our conservation mission.

The first priorities of the council will include establishing

systems and exploring ideas the young people have already generated for better connecting youth with conservation efforts and outdoor activities throughout Washington.

Whether developing independent and capable personalities, increasing young people’s health, building Washington’s outdoor economy, or encouraging a more involved citizenry required to support our state’s wildlife protection, rehabilitation or conservation efforts, your support for this youth council is a commitment to the future.

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## We need your help

We’re inviting a wide range of outdoor-related businesses and associations, non-profit groups and community leaders to join us in this effort.

Outdoor recreation represents a multi-billion dollar industry whose future depends on the participation of young people, and we all have a stake in the health, competence, and well-being of future generations.

WDFW and our Commission are making a large investment in the Youth Council, but we know we need a broad-based

coalition of partners to give this initiative the energy and momentum it needs to succeed. Your participation and contributions will go a long way to ensuring the success of the Youth Council as it helps to identify strategies to connect our younger generations to the real world.

We intend to lead the nation in involving youth in the outdoors, and to do it by building partnerships across Washington.

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The registration required by Washington’s Charitable Solicitation Act is on file with the Secretary of State’s Office. Additional financial and other information is available by contacting (360) 902-2650, the Secretary of State’s Office at 1-800-332-4483 or by visiting <https://www.sos.wa.gov/charities/>.