

112<sup>TH</sup> CONGRESS  
1<sup>ST</sup> SESSION

# H. R. 3353

To authorize the Secretary of the Interior to carry out programs and activities that connect Americans, especially children, youth, and families, with the outdoors.

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## IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

NOVEMBER 3, 2011

Mr. KIND introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Natural Resources, and in addition to the Committee on Energy and Commerce, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned

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## A BILL

To authorize the Secretary of the Interior to carry out programs and activities that connect Americans, especially children, youth, and families, with the outdoors.

1        *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*  
2        *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3        **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4        This Act may be cited as the “Healthy Kids Outdoors  
5        Act of 2011”.

6        **SEC. 2. FINDINGS.**

7        Congress finds as follows:

1           (1) Children today are spending less time out-  
2 doors than any generation in human history, as evi-  
3 denced by studies that show children enjoy half as  
4 much time outdoors today as they did just 20 years  
5 ago, while spending more than 7½ hours every day  
6 in front of electronic media.

7           (2) The health of our children is at risk as evi-  
8 denced by the growing obesity crisis where, during  
9 the 20-year period between 1991 and 2011, the  
10 childhood obesity rate has more than doubled and  
11 the adolescent obesity rate has tripled, costing the  
12 economy of the United States billions of dollars each  
13 year.

14           (3) Our military readiness is declining as nearly  
15 1 in 4 applicants to the military is rejected for being  
16 overweight or obese, which is the most common rea-  
17 son for medical disqualification.

18           (4) Research has shown that military children  
19 and families are facing increased stress and mental  
20 strain and challenges due to multiple, extended de-  
21 ployments. Military family service organizations have  
22 developed programs that connect military children  
23 and families with positive, meaningful outdoor expe-  
24 riences that benefit mental and physical health, but

1 they lack sufficient resources to meet increasing de-  
2 mand.

3 (5) In addition to the negative economic impact  
4 of childhood obesity, the outdoor retail industry,  
5 many local tourist destinations or “gateway commu-  
6 nities”, and State fish and wildlife agencies rely on  
7 revenue generated when individuals spend time out-  
8 doors to create jobs in local communities.

9 (6) Over the past several years, urbanization,  
10 changing land use patterns, increasing road traffic,  
11 and inadequate solutions to addressing these chal-  
12 lenges in the built environment have combined to  
13 make it more difficult for many Americans to walk  
14 or bike to schools, parks, and play areas or experi-  
15 ence the natural environment in general.

16 (7) Visitation to our Nation’s public lands has  
17 declined or remained flat in recent years, and yet,  
18 connecting with nature and the great outdoors in  
19 our communities is critical to fostering the next gen-  
20 eration of outdoor enthusiasts who will visit, appre-  
21 ciate, and become stewards of our Nation’s public  
22 lands.

23 (8) It takes many dedicated men and women to  
24 work to preserve, protect, enhance, and restore  
25 America’s natural resources, and with an aging

1 workforce in the natural resource professions, it is  
2 critical for the next generation to have an apprecia-  
3 tion for nature and be ready to take over these re-  
4 sponsibilities.

5 (9) Spending time outdoors in nature is bene-  
6 ficial to our children’s physical, mental, and emo-  
7 tional health and has been proven to decrease symp-  
8 toms of attention deficit and hyperactivity disorder,  
9 stimulate brain development, improve motor skills,  
10 result in better sleep, reduce stress, increase cre-  
11 ativity, improve mood, and reduce children’s risk of  
12 developing myopia.

13 (10) Children who spend time playing outside  
14 are more likely to take risks, seek out adventure, de-  
15 velop self-confidence, and respect the value of na-  
16 ture.

17 (11) Spending time in green spaces outside the  
18 home, including parks, play areas, and garden, can  
19 increase concentration, inhibition of initial impulses,  
20 and self-discipline and has been shown to reduce  
21 stress and mental fatigue. In one study, children  
22 who were exposed to greener environments in a pub-  
23 lic housing area demonstrated less aggression, vio-  
24 lence, and stress.

1           (12) As children become more disconnected  
2 from the natural world, the hunting and angling  
3 conservation legacy of America is at risk.

4           (13) Conservation education and outdoor recre-  
5 ation experiences such as camping, hiking, boating,  
6 hunting, fishing, archery, recreational shooting, wild-  
7 life watching, and others are critical to engaging  
8 young people in the outdoors.

9           (14) Hunters and anglers play a critical role in  
10 reconnecting young people with nature, protecting  
11 our natural resources, and fostering a lifelong un-  
12 derstanding of the value of conserving the natural  
13 world.

14           (15) Research demonstrates that hunters who  
15 become engaged in hunting as children are among  
16 the most active and interested hunters as adults.  
17 The vast majority of hunters report they were intro-  
18 duced to hunting between the ages of 10 and 12,  
19 and the overwhelming majority of children are intro-  
20 duced to hunting by an adult.

21           (16) A direct childhood experience with nature  
22 before the age of 11 promotes a long-term connec-  
23 tion to nature.

24           (17) Parks and recreation, youth-serving, serv-  
25 ices-learning, conservation, health, education, and

1 built-environment organizations, facilities, and per-  
2 sonnel provide critical resources and infrastructure  
3 for connecting children and families with nature.

4 (18) Place-based service-learning opportunities  
5 use our lands and waters as the context for learning  
6 by engaging students in the process of exploration,  
7 action, and reflection. Physical activity outdoors con-  
8 nected with meaningful community service to solve  
9 real-world problems, such as removing invasive  
10 plants or removing trash from a streambed,  
11 strengthens communities by engaging youth as cit-  
12 izen stewards.

13 (19) States nationwide and their community  
14 based partners have some notable programs that  
15 connect children and families with nature; however,  
16 most States lack sufficient resources and a com-  
17 prehensive strategy to effectively engage State agen-  
18 cies across multiple fields.

19 (20) States need to engage in cross-sector agen-  
20 cy and nonprofit collaboration that involves public  
21 health and wellness, parks and recreation, transpor-  
22 tation and city planning, and other sectors focused  
23 on connecting children and families with the out-  
24 doors to increase coordination and effective imple-  
25 mentation of the policy tools and programs that a

1 State can bring to bear to provide healthy outdoor  
2 opportunities for children and families.

3 **SEC. 3. DEFINITIONS.**

4 In this Act:

5 (1) **ELIGIBLE ENTITY.**—The term “eligible enti-  
6 ty” means—

7 (A) a State; or

8 (B) a consortium from one State that may  
9 include such State and municipalities, entities  
10 of local or tribal governments, parks and recre-  
11 ation departments or districts, school districts,  
12 institutions of higher education, or nonprofit or-  
13 ganizations.

14 (2) **LOCAL PARTNERS.**—The term “local part-  
15 ners” means a municipality, entity of local or tribal  
16 government, parks and recreation departments or  
17 districts, Indian tribe, school district, institution of  
18 higher education, nonprofit organization, or a con-  
19 sortium of local partners.

20 (3) **SECRETARY.**—The term “Secretary” means  
21 the Secretary of the Interior.

22 (4) **STATE.**—The term “State” means any of  
23 the several States, the District of Columbia, the  
24 Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, the United States  
25 Virgin Islands, Guam, American Samoa, the Com-

1 monwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, any  
2 other territory or possession of the United States, or  
3 any Indian tribe.

4 **SEC. 4. COOPERATIVE AGREEMENTS FOR DEVELOPMENT**  
5 **OR IMPLEMENTATION OF HEALTHY KIDS**  
6 **OUTDOORS STATE STRATEGIES.**

7 (a) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary is authorized to  
8 issue one cooperative agreement per State to eligible enti-  
9 ties to develop, implement, and update a 5-year State  
10 strategy, to be known as a “Healthy Kids Outdoors State  
11 Strategy”, designed to encourage Americans, especially  
12 children, youth, and families, to be physically active out-  
13 doors.

14 (b) SUBMISSION AND APPROVAL OF STRATEGIES.—

15 (1) APPLICATIONS.—An application for a coop-  
16 erative agreement under subsection (a) shall—

17 (A) be submitted not later than 120 days  
18 after the Secretary publishes guidelines under  
19 subsection (f)(1); and

20 (B) include a Healthy Kids Outdoors State  
21 Strategy meeting the requirements of sub-  
22 section (c) or a proposal for development and  
23 submission of such a strategy.

24 (2) APPROVAL OF STRATEGY; PEER REVIEW.—

25 Not later than 90 days after submission of a



1 Healthy Kids Outdoors State Strategy, the Sec-  
2 retary shall, through a peer review process, approve  
3 or recommend changes to the strategy.

4 (3) STRATEGY UPDATE.—An eligible entity re-  
5 ceiving funds under this section shall update its  
6 Healthy Kids Outdoors State Strategy at least once  
7 every 5 years. Continued funding under this section  
8 shall be contingent upon submission of such updated  
9 strategies and reports that document impact evalua-  
10 tion methods consistent with the guidelines in sub-  
11 section (f)(1) and lessons learned from implementing  
12 the strategy.

13 (c) COMPREHENSIVE STRATEGY REQUIREMENTS.—  
14 The Healthy Kids Outdoors State Strategy under sub-  
15 section (a) shall include—

16 (1) a description of how the eligible entity will  
17 encourage Americans, especially children, youth, and  
18 families, to be physically active in the outdoors  
19 through State, local, and tribal—

20 (A) public health systems;

21 (B) public parks and recreation systems;

22 (C) public transportation and city planning  
23 systems; and

1 (D) other public systems that connect  
2 Americans, especially children, youth, and fami-  
3 lies, to the outdoors;

4 (2) a description of how the eligible entity will  
5 partner with nongovernmental organizations, espe-  
6 cially those that serve children, youth, and families,  
7 including those serving military families and tribal  
8 agencies;

9 (3) a description of how State agencies will col-  
10 laborate with each other to implement the strategy;

11 (4) a description of how funding will be spent  
12 through local planning and implementation sub-  
13 grants under subsection (d);

14 (5) a description of how the eligible entity will  
15 evaluate the effectiveness of, and measure the im-  
16 pact of, the strategy, including an estimate of the  
17 costs associated with such evaluation;

18 (6) a description of how the eligible entity will  
19 provide opportunities for public involvement in devel-  
20 oping and implementing the strategy;

21 (7) a description of how the strategy will in-  
22 crease visitation to Federal public lands within the  
23 state; and

1           (8) a description of how the eligible entity will  
2 leverage private funds to expand opportunities and  
3 further implement the strategy.

4           (d) LOCAL PLANNING AND IMPLEMENTATION.—

5           (1) IN GENERAL.—A Healthy Kids Outdoors  
6 State Strategy shall provide for subgrants by the co-  
7 operative agreement recipient under subsection (a)  
8 to local partners to implement the strategy through  
9 one or more of the program activities described in  
10 paragraph (2).

11           (2) PROGRAM ACTIVITIES.—Program activities  
12 may include—

13           (A) implementing outdoor recreation and  
14 youth mentoring programs that provide oppor-  
15 tunities to experience the outdoors, be phys-  
16 ically active, and teach skills for lifelong partici-  
17 pation in outdoor activities, including fishing,  
18 hunting, recreational shooting, archery, hiking,  
19 camping, outdoor play in natural environments,  
20 and wildlife watching;

21           (B) implementing programs that connect  
22 communities with safe parks, green spaces, and  
23 outdoor recreation areas through affordable  
24 public transportation and trail systems that en-

1 courage walking, biking, and increased physical  
2 activity outdoors;

3 (C) implementing school-based programs  
4 that use outdoor learning environments, such as  
5 wildlife habitats or gardens, and programs that  
6 use service learning to restore natural areas  
7 and maintain recreational assets; and

8 (D) implementing education programs for  
9 parents and caregivers about the health benefits  
10 of active time outdoors to fight obesity and in-  
11 crease the quality of life for Americans, espe-  
12 cially children, youth, and families.

13 (e) PRIORITY.—In making cooperative agreements  
14 under subsection (a) and subgrants under subsection  
15 (d)(1), the Secretary and the recipient under subsection  
16 (a), respectively, shall give preference to entities that serve  
17 individuals who have limited opportunities to experience  
18 nature, including those who are socioeconomically dis-  
19 advantaged or have a disability or suffer disproportion-  
20 ately from physical and mental health stressors.

21 (f) GUIDELINES.—Not later than 180 days after the  
22 date of the enactment of this Act, and after notice and  
23 opportunity for public comment, the Secretary shall pub-  
24 lish in the Federal Register guidelines on the implementa-  
25 tion of this Act, including guidelines for—

1 (1) developing and submitting strategies and  
2 evaluation methods under subsection (b); and

3 (2) technical assistance and dissemination of  
4 best practices under section 7.

5 (g) REPORTING.—Not later than 2 years after the  
6 Secretary approves the Healthy Kids Outdoors State  
7 Strategy of an eligible entity receiving funds under this  
8 section, and every year thereafter, the eligible entity shall  
9 submit to the Secretary a report on the implementation  
10 of the strategy based on the entity’s evaluation and assess-  
11 ment of meeting the goals specified in the strategy.

12 (h) ALLOCATION OF FUNDS.—An eligible entity re-  
13 ceiving funding under subsection (a) for a fiscal year—

14 (1) may use not more than 5 percent of the  
15 funding for administrative expenses; and

16 (2) shall use at least 95 percent of the funding  
17 for subgrants to local partners under subsection (d).

18 (i) MATCH.—An eligible entity receiving funding  
19 under subsection (a) for a fiscal year shall provide a 25-  
20 percent match through in-kind contributions or cash.

21 **SEC. 5. NATIONAL STRATEGY FOR ENCOURAGING AMERI-**  
22 **CANS TO BE ACTIVE OUTDOORS.**

23 (a) IN GENERAL.—Not later than September 30,  
24 2012, the President, in cooperation with appropriate Fed-  
25 eral departments and agencies, shall develop and issue a

1 national strategy for encouraging Americans, especially  
2 children, youth, and families, to be physically active out-  
3 doors. Such a strategy shall include—

4           (1) identification of barriers to Americans, es-  
5 pecially children, youth, and families, spending  
6 healthy time outdoors and specific policy solutions to  
7 address those barriers;

8           (2) identification of opportunities for partner-  
9 ships with Federal, State, tribal, and local partners;

10           (3) coordination of efforts among Federal de-  
11 partments and agencies to address the impacts of  
12 Americans, especially children, youth, and families,  
13 spending less active time outdoors on—

14                   (A) public health, including childhood obe-  
15 sity, attention deficit disorders and stress;

16                   (B) the future of conservation in the  
17 United States; and

18                   (C) the economy;

19           (4) identification of ongoing research needs to  
20 document the health, conservation, economic, and  
21 other outcomes of implementing the national strat-  
22 egy and State strategies;

23           (5) coordination and alignment with Healthy  
24 Kids Outdoors State Strategies; and

1           (6) an action plan for implementing the strat-  
2           egy at the Federal level.

3           (b) STRATEGY DEVELOPMENT.—

4           (1) PUBLIC PARTICIPATION.—Throughout the  
5           process of developing the national strategy under  
6           subsection (a), the President may use, incorporate,  
7           or otherwise consider existing Federal plans and  
8           strategies that, in whole or in part, contribute to  
9           connecting Americans, especially children, youth,  
10          and families, with the outdoors and shall provide for  
11          public participation, including a national summit of  
12          participants with demonstrated expertise in encour-  
13          aging individuals to be physically active outdoors in  
14          nature.

15          (2) UPDATING THE NATIONAL STRATEGY.—The  
16          President shall update the national strategy not less  
17          than 5 years after the date the first national strat-  
18          egy is issued under subsection (a), and every 5 years  
19          thereafter. In updating the strategy, the President  
20          shall incorporate results of the evaluation under sec-  
21          tion 6.

22 **SEC. 6. NATIONAL EVALUATION OF HEALTH IMPACTS.**

23          The Secretary, in coordination with the Secretary of  
24          Health and Human Services, shall—

1           (1) develop recommendations for appropriate  
2           evaluation measures and criteria for a study of na-  
3           tional significance on the health impacts of the  
4           strategies under this Act; and

5           (2) carry out such a study.

6 **SEC. 7. TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE AND BEST PRACTICES.**

7           The Secretary shall—

8           (1) provide technical assistance to grantees  
9           under section 4 through cooperative agreements with  
10          national organizations with a proven track record of  
11          encouraging Americans, especially children, youth,  
12          and families, to be physically active outdoors; and

13          (2) disseminate best practices that emerge from  
14          strategies funded under this Act.

15 **SEC. 8. AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.**

16          (a) **IN GENERAL.**—There are authorized to be appro-  
17          priated to the Secretary to carry out this Act—

18                 (1) \$1,000,000 for fiscal year 2013;

19                 (2) \$2,000,000 for fiscal year 2014;

20                 (3) \$3,000,000 for fiscal year 2015;

21                 (4) \$4,000,000 for fiscal year 2016; and

22                 (5) \$5,000,000 for fiscal year 2017.

23          (b) **LIMITATION.**—Of the amounts made available to  
24          carry out this Act for a fiscal year, not more than 5 per-  
25          cent may be made available for carrying out section 7.



1       (c) SUPPLEMENT, NOT SUPPLANT.—Funds made  
2 available under this Act shall be used to supplement, and  
3 not supplant, any other Federal, State, or local funds  
4 available for activities that encourage Americans, espe-  
5 cially children, youth, and families to be physically active  
6 outdoors.

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