America's Great Outdoors Comments From Comment Cards Location: Helena, Montana Date: June 2, 2010

President Obama launched a national conversation about conservation in America at the White House Conference on the Great Outdoors on April 16, 2010. The President understands that protecting and restoring the lands and waters that we love and reconnecting people to the outdoors must happen at the local level. Therefore, President Obama directed the principal leaders of the Initiative to travel across the country to listen and learn from people directly involved in finding grassroots solutions to conserve our lands, waterways, historical and cultural resources and to reconnect Americans with the Outdoors. The President indicated that the sessions should engage the full range of interested groups, including tribal leaders, farmers and ranchers, sportsmen, community park groups, foresters, youth groups, businesspeople, educators, State and local government, recreation and conservation groups and others. The President placed a special priority on engaging with America's youth. Below are comments from the comment cards collected at the Listening Session. Please feel free to use the ideation tool at http://ideas.usda.gov/ago/ideas.nsf/ if you would like to share your thoughts.

Comment Card Questions:

- 1. What are the most critical conservation challenges facing our nation today?
- 2. What are the best strategies to address these challenges?

Source of Comments	Organization	Comment (Verbatim for Comment Cards)
Comment Card Challenges Question	No Available Organization Name	People and water: loss of watersheds; loss of wetlands; overuse of water in agriculture; overuse of water for lawn, fountains, pools, landscaped artificial waterfalls in urban settings
Comment Card Strategies Question	No Available Organization Name	We need a Governors Water Summit in Washington D.C. to address water uses and conservation- best practices for use, limits on distribution if necessary, awards to States with working effective conservation innovations as regards to water.

General Comment	No Available Organization Name	Something that worked: Last year, I worked as a volunteer to a 2nd and a 4th grade classroom on a combined outdoor education project. Their teachers read them my manuscript, Wood Lily, throughout the year (the story is about an 11 year old girl living alone in a forest cabin) and we did related art activities from the book. In May, we had a full day of classes at a campground near McDonald Pass just outside of Helena. People from the Helena District Forest Service and two retired Scientists staffed a number of sectionals. The students rotated from station to station and learned about Pinebark beetles, timber, and geology, anthropology of this area, birds, wild flowers, and insects. The love it! The adults reinforced the "leave no trace" forest use their. School administrators sometimes need to be convinced of the value of such a project. Our Principal was <u>not</u> one for those.
General Comment	No Available Organization Name	Yes, we need to get children and youth back in touch with nature. Along with getting them in the woods, we need to revive the old philosophy of respect for the environment-regard for the plants and animals whose habitat we are sharing. Use of public lands is creating two philosophical camps; public land for extreme high impact recreation and public land for quiet traditional recreation with low impact. This all gets down to a lack of educating experiences and guidance from one generation to the next. Currently, there is a gap in teaching traditional values in how to be a low impact recreationist. Motorized use of access roads brings the hunters and quiet user in contact with the thrill seeker on a dirt bike, ORV, or in a loud pickup. A fellow I met last fall during hunting season lost his shot at an elk when a teen on a dirt bike blasted through between him and his quarry. In another instance, two riders leading a pack horse were suddenly set upon by four ORV's speeding petal to metal up the trail behind them. The riders spooked the pack animals and pursued them laughing and yelling through the woods! The two philosophical camps come onto public trails with objectives that

		are 180 degrees apart. At my cabin in the Helena National Forest I have seen dirt bikers and ORV riders at least twice a week. The come with a supply of "adult beverages" and their firearms and ammunition. They come for rough play. They like risks, speed, flying dirt and mud. They pit their machines and themselves against nature. The trail becomes an obstacle course, a race track, where they can test themselves. For the most part they are males testing their manhood-teenage boys. The latest game is to shoot repeatedly at a tree along the trail 4-6"in diameter until it falls. Another games; to spray insulating foam or spray paint willy nilly on signs, gates, stumps, trees, rocks. I obtained a copy of the June '09 AGO report (GAO-09-509) that suggests "OHV recreation is not sustainable unless we have adequate financial resources and personnel to deal with it." The popularity of OHV use on public lands has grown by leaps and bounds and the Forest Service, National Park Service, and Bureau of Land Management cannot keep up with monitoring. A relayed problem is the increased use of access roads for dumping and drug "grow camps". A letter from Region One Forest Service Transportation Planning engineer to me, dated Jan 7, 09 states that at that time \$10 million was budgeted for road maintenance. Road patrol worked out at 765,000 acres per officer. Clearly some changes in number of roads must be made.
Comment Card Challenges Question	Nature Conservancy	Big demand, insufficient funding. On the Rocky Mountain front and in the Blackfood Valley, there is 150,000 acres of "easement demand". Investments in easements on ranches contributes to local agriculture/ rural economics, secures America's beef/food supplies, and keeps wildlife habitat intact.
Comment Card Strategies Question	Nature Conservancy	 Keep good agency partners in rural communities to facilitate conservation practices and transactions. make conservation funding consistent/dependable/permanent (land& water conservation fund, farm bill programs- GRP, FRPP, WRP, WREP, etc.)

Comment Card Challenges Question	Humanity	Energy! Energy! Energy! Dirty and dangerous oil, coal, and nuclear profiting greatly and destroying our environment
Comment Card Strategies Question	Humanity	Clean Alternative Energies Now- Not 50 years in the future. We have the technology but not the political will!
Comment Card Challenges Question		Gated roads, keeping the roads open would allow for "clean up" of forest, helping deter fireflies and keep folks warm.
Comment Card Challenges Question	Montana Land Reliance	Incentivizing Private landowners to conserve America's special places.
Comment Card Strategies Question	Montana Land Reliance	Make permanent the enhanced tax treatment of private conservation easements. Enhance funding for support programs like FRPP, WREP, LWCF
Comment Card Challenges Question	No Organization Available	Greed. Big corporations destroying the land and water. Corporations such as oil, mining, CAFO, nuclear power, and logging.
Comment Card Strategies Question	No Organization Available	The U.S. Government needs to be a leader! A leader nourishes everyone and everything.
General Comment	No Available Organization Name	More of the meetings need to be held in the rural areas of Montana, where they are more susceptible to feeling the impacts economically, when more land be designated for wilderness or similar uses.
Comment Card Challenges Question	MT Wilderness Assn	Energy development, unbridled motorized travel, lack of information and education, lack of funding for lead management agencies, apathy
Comment Card Strategies Question	MT Wilderness Assn	Get programs in the schools, more funding for conservation programs, Government working with grassroots organizations, listening
General Comment	MT Wilderness Assn	Thank you. Let's have more information sessions such as these. What are the next steps?

Comment Card Challenges Question	вна	Opportunity for recreational diversity- We're making enemies out of 4-wheelers, motorists, snowmobilers, ranchers, horsemen, bicyclists, etc. by closing off access. They all need a place or they'll have no reason to fight for any kind of conservation. Consider National Recreation Areas (like in OR, CA and elsewhere) to satisfy some of those.
Comment Card Strategies Question	ВНА	Diversity in levels of conservation protection. Increased unbiased federal oversight and regulation of resource development (i.e. coal, oil, gas). We don't need another catastrophe like in the Gulf to realize our Federal Shortcomings. Allow more anonymous volunteerism in policing the lands. Without enough Federal employees to cover every acre have a more open door policy. Example: some of the argument among motorized/non-motorized traffic is missing/deteriorated signs-allow citizens to return signs to restricted areas to prevent further conflict.
General Comment	Custer Battlefield Preservation Com	Contract with NPS- turnover 3500 acres free and clear to Little Big Horn National Mon.
General Comment	MT Nature Conservancy	Thank you for your commitment to conserving open and working lands, wild and agricultural lands. I appreciate your seeking local and fresh ideas. I would encourage you to also recommit to programs and policies that are already proven effective. Voluntary conservation on a local level relies on LWCF funding ass an engine to spur local investment like the bond funds in this county. It spurs other private and state funding. Please consider making this permanent. Tax incentives are an essential piece and the third-leg strong partnerships with private conservation groups.

Comment Card Challenges Question	MT Nature Conservancy	Development pressure both from urban sprawl, and energy. Specifically the ill considered new transmission lines to Nevada. Why would we squander MT to support more neon lights in Las Vegas?
Comment Card Strategies Question	MT Nature Conservancy	Think long term.
Comment Card Challenges Question	City/County of Butte	Missed opportunities for fed, state, and local government agencies to work together across boundaries to create comprehensive heritage and recreation areas. Further support and promotion of NPS- National Heritage Areas.
General Comment	City/County of Butte	We have the opportunity to use our history to provide the motivation to get people out into the outdoors. By connecting these heritage and natural resources, we can tell a very powerful story-that people must see.
Comment Card Challenges Question	USFS	Privatization/Development of lands providing connectivity to adjacent public lands. Loss of a viable/sustainable timber market. Loss of habitat diversity due to both development and emerging insect/disease issues. Younger generation's detachment from the outdoors.
Comment Card Strategies Question	USFS	Adequate and sustained LWCF funding-community involvement-consensus building-continued investment in involving children in the outdoors there land management agency programs.
Comment Card Challenges Question	No Available Organization Name	Balancing short-term and long-term costs and benefits. Sometimes, short-term benefits do not justify long-term costs. Note: \$ is not the only cost/benefit!!! Education-there are many misunderstandings and misconceptions regarding the environment. One example-global warming (it is happening-saying it is not happening is detrimental)
Comment Card Strategies Question	No Available Organization Name	Science education concentrating on data, ecological concepts-not belief systems of parents

Comment Card Challenges Question	Americorp-Montana Conservation Corp.	Awareness and funding. Making the future generation aware of what needs to happen to preserve our lands and how to be "stewards" of our beautiful outdoors.
Comment Card Strategies Question	Americorp-Montana Conservation Corp.	Create more education based programs for young adults. Create opportunity!
Comment Card Challenges Question	Montana Conservation Corps	Apathy due to lack of education to lack of exposure to the outdoors. People are not passionate about conservation because they don't understand how they are impacting the environment and/or the outdoors is not an integral part of their lives.
Comment Card Strategies Question	Montana Conservation Corps	Empower teachers with conservation materials to connect youth with the outdoors. Support connecting youth with volunteer and non-profit conservation opportunities.
General Comment	Sustainable Obtainable Solutions	Collaborative grass roots efforts can and do work, especially when awareness, education and outreach accompanies the effort. Fed laws management agencies can assist by providing data and information so groups can make intelligent choices and recommendations.
Comment Card Challenges Question	Montana Conservation Corps	Lack of education and accessibility. The younger population, which is rapidly growing is growing even more quickly away from outdoor experiences available. (sic) Support authorization and full appropriation of the Public Lands Service Corps Act and Youth Corps Act of 2010. Increase and sustain funding for programs that help connect people and the outdoors.

Comment Card Challenges Question	Montana Conservation Corps	Supporting the programs that help to serve our youth in areas which will both encourage their development and ability for them to be stewards of their (our) public lands. Conservation Corps and other programs which incorporate national service and an introduction to issues facing public lands are a step in the right direction. Drawing youth and young adults into programs which are supported by federal land management agencies will give them a stronger education and an ability to be more engaged citizens.
General Comment	Montana Sierra Club	We need a dramatic shift in how we regard our public lands. Unfortunately, our current orientation is to open them to exploitation by private interests for their own, private profit. Instead, we need to regard our public lands as the last remaining natural and wild places, the last places where intact ecosystems continue to function, the last places where people can walk in the quiet and unmechanized natural environment. It is especially important to conserve and protect these lands in our era of climate change, which threatens the plants, animals, and people of these lands.

General Comment	Montana Fish, Wildlife, and Parks	1) Please continue to support and fund the Americorps and Conservation Corps programs. It helps connect youth to nature and the outdoors, builds job skills, and supports community service. 2) Please continue to support the national Leave No Trace outdoor ethics program as a means of promoting responsible outdoor recreation and stewardship of public lands. 3) Establish federal and state funding sources and mechanisms to match local money with children and nature initiatives. Improve recreation management funding in agencies and streamline the ability of local, state, and federal agencies to develop programs that effectively bring partners together to protect recreational river corridors and opportunities and other public lands across jurisdictional boundaries.
Comment Card Challenges Question	Montana Sierra Club	Global warming is threatening America's great public natural places. We need to stop regarding these as places that private corporations can exploit for their own profit. Instead, we need to protect their natural character and keep motorized vehicles and industrial activities out of our public lands.
Comment Card Strategies Question	Montana Sierra Club	Use good science to manage our public lands in the ways that best protect their natural ecological character.
Comments Card Challenges Question	Elkhorn Working Group and Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation	1) Growth in human population 2) Increased demand to use public land/assets.
Comments Card Strategies Question	Elkhorn Working Group and Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation	2) Better management or elimination of domestic livestock grazing on public land.
Comments Card Challenges Question	NA	1) Multi-use of natural resources. 2) When areas are closed to motorized or wheeled vehicles, most of the public is shut out. 3) Conserving ranching use conserves outdoor space.

Comments Card Strategies Question	NA	 A) Noise of motorized vehicles is significant challenge (sic) reducing noise should be a priority B) Maintain multi-use C) Conservation easements
Comments Card Challenges Question	National Parks Conservation Association	1) Fund the National parks especially science and education 2) Fully fund LWCF 3) Loss of wildlife habitats and critical migration corridors
Comments Card Strategies Question	National Parks Conservation Association	1) Crown Managers Partnership: 20 land management agencies in MT, BC, and Atlanta working together to coordinate management of the large complex Northern Crown landscape. 2) Crown of Continent Geotourism Council: collection of hundreds of business people including organizations, local governments in MT, Atlanta, and BC working together to develop sustainable local economies around the Northern Crown: www.crownofthecontinent.net
Comments Card Challenges Question	NA - Rancher	Government takeover, wilderness land, road closures, bureaucrats
Comments Card Strategies Question	NA - Rancher	Stop shutting (sic) down roads and putting land into wilderness. Let the people use it. Let them have easy access to it.
General Comment	NA - Rancher	Thank you for listening. Stop the Forest Service road closures and wilderness take overs. Make it easy for the public to use our public lands.
General Comment	Self	A meeting in eastern Montana would have been nice.
Comments Card Challenges Question	Self	All areas have different conservation challenges but funding manpower is the largest issue.
Comments Card Strategies Question	Self	Trusting the land managers on the ground or local control to manage and make decisions.

General Comment	Montana Conservation Corps	What works? The education of our youth. Once ou youth get a taste of the outdoors they become passionate, and they get work done. I can't tell you how many young adults have come to work for MC for a fun summer job and have caught on to the excitement and made careers out of conservation and environmental work and the number of people the impact is amazing.
Comment Cards Challenges Question	Rim Country Land Institute	Fragmentation, sprawl, and agricultural abuse of or lands.
General Comment	Rim Country Land Institute	The most important thing that the U.S. governmen could do to help conservation in the West is: raise the monthly grazing charge from \$1.35 to fair market value.
General Comment	MT DEQ	Thanks to the administration for holding the listening sessions. Open government and transparency are key to solving our environmental programs. Yes we can. Suggestion hold an evenir listening session so the little guys working stiff can attend.
Comments Card Challenges Question	MT DEQ	1) Pollution and polluters we must hold responsible parties responsible 2) Climate Change
Comments Card Strategies Question	MT DEQ	1) Hold responsible parties responsible tougher government regulation 2) Policy change to address climate change ie. Greenhouse gas regulation 3) Transparency, public involvement and government accountability
General Comment	Montana Land Reliance	Thanks for hearing my comments. Allow private non-governmental non-profits to hold conservation easements with LWCF funds. Remove the private cash match required by the FRPP for conservation easements.
Comments Card Challenges Question	Montana Land Reliance	Rural subdivision is negatively impacting agricultur and wildlife habitat.

Comments Card Strategies Question	Montana Land Reliance	1) Allow private land trusts to hold conservation easements purchased with LWCF funds. 2) Allow donated match for FRPP conservation easements rather than private cash match.
General Comment	Montana State Parks, Montana Fish, Wildlife, and Parks	Equitable funding of the stateside LWCF program. Declining over the years. Stateside LWCF funds many local community protests that could not be funded locally. Funds from stateside LWCF goes to important heritage state park sites Bannack, Lewis & Clark Caverns State Parks> recognized National Heritage Sites.
General Comment	Prickly Pear Land Trust	This is an idea on how to connect people to the outdoors. Awareness of outdoor activities is a major problem. It would be great if there was a website for a national calendar of outdoor events. People could search by state/city to find outdoor activities near where they live or where they are visiting. Organizations could submit or post themselves their activity, with the details, why they are having the activity and contact information. This website would have to be greatly advertised so organizations across the country know they can post an event and citizens know they can find information there. It could be similar to an outdoors Craig's List
Comments Card Challenges Question	Montana Conservation Corps	1) Money! Disproportionate funding from federal government to other areas (security, health care) that may provide immediate benefit and results, but are no more important than environment/conservation issues that threaten our future. 2) Awareness and education this listening session is like preaching to the choir; there are hundreds of millions of people that are totally in the dark on environmental and conservation issues. They need to become aware/addressed.

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Comments Card Strategies Question	Montana Conservation Corps	Redistribute funding to match a sustainable, long term solution to benefit conservation efforts and the sustainable economy that arises from it. Also, increased education. Visibility for unexposed communities can help increase interest for conservation issues and therefore help support funding for the local programs discussed today.
General Comment	Tax payer Citizen and Outdoor Person	MT. has enough wilderness area- also against federal ownership. Need our forest "open" and mud "closed" Leave historical buildings and cabins standing on Pouhand. Important to have access to forest service roads and trails- a hiking b. snowmobiling c. 4 wheel divers d. ATV use e. horses f. hunting g. lakes. Recently joined an ATV club and have enjoyed seeing clean up of the trails- keeping the trails open and working with the forest service on hand, it works
General Comment	Orion the Hunter Institute	We must address the education of our resources professionals. We must include: conservation history, public trust, responsibility and ethics.
Challenges	Orion the Hunter Institute	Modify the budget process. Resource utilization (example logging) and site reclamation (road removal) must be in a single appropriation process.
Strategies	Orion the Hunter Institute	Confront the budget and planning deception- budget honestly and appropriate accordingly.
Challenges	Orion the Hunter Institute	Marginally functional regulators and custodians they have been fiscally reduced and politically compromised
Strategies	Orion the Hunter Institute	Provide the regulators and custodians insulation form political interference and the dogmatic beliefs held by transient office holders.

Challenges	Helena Hunters and Anglers Association	Marginally function public custodians and underfunded agencies that do not have a union for healthy public lands. Politics has demanded and undermined function and historic landscapes. Careful management to avoid damaged to public lands must be re-energized: look at livestock grazing. Excessive networks contribute to sedimentation; water quality problems.
Strategies	Helena Hunters and Anglers Association	Appoint strong individuals with scientific background and clear sense of history and how our public lands have come to our time. To connect landscapes focus on identifying and protecting linkage corridors for wildlife and ecosystems.
Challenges	Ruby Watershed Council/ Ruby Valley Conservation District	one- finding sustainable energy sources- fossil fuels and finite!! Two- increasing demands and decreasing supply of clear water three- education real facts for real people and communication.
Strategies	Ruby Watershed Council/ Ruby Valley Conservation District	Apply funding to research and qualified staff. Continue working from the ground up- great idea with the look at environmental issues from a watershed session perspective - ridgeline to ridgeline.
General Comment	Ruby Watershed Council/ Ruby Valley Conservation District	The mission statement of the Ruby Valley Conservation District is "protect the land and preserve our heritage"- I believe this is the role of the federal government as well. A tool to make this initiative work is to remove funding from things that are nor working- like the war on drugs, the wars in the middle east, and subsidies for wall street. Put that money into funding the agencies, people and programs that scientists employed. Replace retirees with apprentices rather than "saving money" by not hiring another biologist for a period of time, for instance.

General Comment	Montana Conservation Corps	Use the good will, motivation and concern for the environment and our public lands on the part of American citizens, especially youth/ children, to overcome some of the work that they long to do and that needs to be done to protect these resources. National Parks Forest Rangers can help facilitate this by partnering with local, non-profit and other groups to get Americans out in the land. Imagine that you could go to a National Park or forest or state park and on any given ay find a program, sanction by the par, where you and your family could help preserve the park (e.g. paint a picnic shelter, pick up trash, pull weeds, build a trail, ect). Our parks are underfunded and in need of repair. If we can budget the money to get the work done then ask citizens to help. This will get people involved, give them a since of ownership and
		involved, give them a since of ownership and accomplishment and ensure that future generations grow up learning how to care for our national treasures.
General Comment	CFCSU	It was great who was there. However please notify who is not there. Where are the voice of the stock, rowers, the farmers, ranchers, mayors, commissioners, mechanics, snowmobiles, ect. The working man can't make a 9:00 am meeting!! The federal government needs to go to them they are the target they need to be included. Also please beware the "evidence of the extreme" This is the scenario where one bad producer or recreationalist is used as evidence to shut down a whole industry, o r at least regulate it out of existence. Please resist judging "all of us" by the "worst of us".

General Comment	Helena Hunters and Anglers Association	Move as swiftly as possible away from oil and coal use, encourage thoughtful development of renewable energy. Encourage individuals home use do solar and or wind energy. Avoid transporting electricity long distances- use and generate it locally. Focus on healthy wildlife population and distributions- "A healthy environment for man is a a livable environment for wildlife" Keep as much wild land WILD as possible- even reclaim areas back to wild state (good wildlife, habitats) truly road less areas don't contribute to water quality problems or habitat fragmentation, or attribute wildlife species or noxious spray. Apply presidential executive orders to maintain and protect soils and vegetation set up to the plate and apply protective measures to assure that we have functional and healthy ecosystems- they must not be compromised for the sake of pushing people into the outdoors. Introducing people to the outdoors must be orderly and educational so the landscapes we are introducing people too are not ultimately sacrificed though our use or abuse. Stop "out" sourcing efforts that should be taken cared by dedicating knowledge, federal scientist/ employees. Take pride in the agencies; encourage them to take action to restore watershed and landscapes. Listen to people and communities but when even more importantly, please listen to the earth and its needs.
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