



NOC Advocates Active Outdoor Lifestyle for Children

Rafting, Paddling, Zip Lines & Events Promote Youth Fitness

Bryson City, N.C. (July 8, 2014)— Each year Nantahala Outdoor Center (NOC) engages approximately 60,000 kids in outdoor activities, and this summer is sure to boost that number. With a passion and a mission to reconnect children with nature through fun and healthy activities, NOC is unplugging kids from their electronics and giving them the opportunity to develop a lifelong appreciation for outdoor exploration, personal development and environmental stewardship.

NOC is committed to promoting a healthy lifestyle and reversing trends causing “nature deficit disorder,” a term popularized by Richard Louv, journalist and author of eight books about the connections between family, nature and community. Louv explains that, “thoughtful exposure of youngsters to nature can even be a powerful form of therapy for attention-deficit disorders and other maladies. As one scientist puts it, we can now assume that just as children need good nutrition and adequate sleep, they may very well need contact with nature. Ongoing studies show that a little bit of exposure to nature decreases ADD symptoms — even in kids as young as 5.”

NOC’s Current and Ongoing Commitments:

Rafting and Zip Lines

NOC is one of the largest providers of entry-level outdoor experiences in the country, giving kids their first taste of an active outdoor lifestyle that can lead to a lifetime of fitness and exploration. With 7 rivers to choose from, kids as young as 3 years old can go whitewater rafting with the most experienced guides in the nation. Beginners can enjoy easy float trips with swimming breaks on the Pigeon River, and kids with more experience can paddle down the Nantahala, Ocoee, French Broad, Nolichucky, or Chattooga Rivers in half- or full-day excursions. NOC’s Zip Line Adventure Park is another family-friendly activity where kids can negotiate wobbling sky bridges, confusing spider webs, tight ropes and 13 additional obstacles on a 2-hour challenge course.

The North Face Explore Fund Grant

NOC’s non-profit partner Nantahala Racing Club (NRC) is one of 10 finalists to receive The North Face Explore Fund Grant for 2014. The grant would directly support NRC’s mission to connect underserved children with the outdoors. Voting is taking place at <http://bit.ly/2014explorefund> until July 18, 2014, and anyone can vote once per day to make this important funding a reality. Winners will be announced by The North Face in late July. As a finalist NRC is already guaranteed to receive \$10,000, but the additional funds would enable the club to take programming and outreach to another level: engaging more than 200 additional youth in nearly 4,000 hours of healthy outdoor recreation in the form of after-school kayaking sessions, family whitewater weekends, and educational training programs. Explore Fund video: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4BB1iU_sWAg

The Junior Olympics: August 9-11

Whitewater paddlers aged 18 and under will converge on the Nantahala for three fun days of paddling and racing August 9 – 11. Sponsored by USA Canoe/Kayak, the Junior Olympic event is appropriate for any skill level. Featuring competitions in all three whitewater disciplines (freestyle, slalom and downriver), the Junior Olympics will also include a fun Ducky Cross through the 2013 Wave, Stand up Paddle Giant Slalom, and off-the-water community events such as a

run and other social activities to encourage camaraderie among participants, families, and the community at large.

Fighting National Trends

The work being done by NOC to empower youth through outdoor recreation is vital on a regional and national level. It surrounds children with the positive aspects of a supportive community and the importance of building healthy relationships, and it introduces kids to the great possibilities of outdoor fitness and environmental awareness that exist in their own backyards and beyond.

In a nation where obesity rates have more than doubled in children and quadrupled in adolescents in the past 30 years, NOC's programming provides consistent, supportive, goal-focused opportunities that encourage general fitness through recreation and an overall commitment to self-improvement that will have lifelong benefits for children.

These programs and others can be found at www.noc.com.

*Cited from: <http://www.cdc.gov/healthyyouth/obesity/facts.htm>