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**Contact:**  
Amber Taylor, 703-201-4893  
[amber@sambertaylor.com](mailto:amber@sambertaylor.com)

## **National Public Lands Day to Highlight Connection between Health & Time Spent Outdoors**

U.S. Surgeon General Dr. Regina Benjamin to Speak at NPLD Event in Washington

**WASHINGTON, D.C.** – Being active outdoors is one step to reducing childhood obesity, diabetes, and other health conditions, and volunteers around the country will be taking that step and learning about the outdoors in their communities on [National Public Lands Day](#) (NPLD), September 24<sup>th</sup>.

Since 1994, thousands of Americans of all ages set aside one day – the last Saturday in September – to “lend a hand to public lands” that millions of people use to hike, bike, climb, swim, explore, picnic or simply relax. One-third of America’s land is owned by the public, and NPLD, a program of the National Environmental Education Foundation (NEEF), is a reminder of everyone’s duty to help maintain those lands.

This year, NPLD is also supporting the first lady’s *Let’s Move Outside* initiative and reminding the public that these lands offer a great option for getting active. One of NPLD’s events, at Washington, D.C.’s Rock Creek Park, will also feature a health fair and remarks from U.S. Surgeon General Dr. Regina Benjamin.

“National Public Lands Day fits right in with our National Prevention Strategy to help increase the number of Americans who are healthy at every stage in life,” said Dr. Benjamin. “NPLD offers children and adults an opportunity to give back to their communities at the same time they are outdoors as part of healthy, active living.”

A study by NEEF last year in *Current Problems in Pediatric and Adolescent Health Care* reviews current research on the health benefits of the outdoors, from helping prevent obesity and reducing stress levels, to improving asthma symptoms. Health care providers are educating families on the benefits of staying active and connecting with nature through programs such as the [Children and Nature Initiative](#). There is also a growing body of evidence about the physical and mental health benefits, such as reducing blood pressure and stress, from outdoor activity for adults.

“While volunteers of all ages will be helping to improve their parks on National Public Lands Day, they will also be enjoying America’s natural wonders,” said Robb Hampton, NPLD program director. “NPLD is a gateway to discovering the beauty and opportunity for fun at all our parks. NPLD volunteers can take a hike or bike ride, go swimming, fishing, canoeing, birding or just enjoy playing outdoors.”

Examples of NPLD activities this year include:

- Martin Luther King, Jr. National Historic Site, Atlanta – Volunteers can give a helping hand in restoring historic houses adjacent to MLK, Jr.’s first home, as well as painting and mulching around the site.

- Caesar Creek Lake, Waynesville, Ohio – Local residents can join local scientists and naturalists to document the area’s biodiversity.
- Bill Frederick Park at Turkey Lake, Orlando, Fla. – Before volunteer activities, the public is invited to participate in a 5K walk/run. Volunteers can help build a section of the children’s nature center.
- Upper Macungie Park, Fogelsville, Pa. – Kids and their parents can help pick up litter as they go geocaching, or searching for some hidden treasures along the way.
- Burro Creek Campground, Kingman, Ariz. – An outdoor experience is being planned for Sept. 23-24 including camping and activities, as well as opportunities for volunteers to help maintain fences and the site.

For more information about NPLD, and to find event details in your state, please visit [www.publiclandsday.org](http://www.publiclandsday.org).

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