



2010 Summit Report



hosted by
Parks Foundation
 CLARK COUNTY

Presented by *Jan and Steve Oliva* & **FIRSTENBURG Family Foundation**

With generous support from



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Summit 2010 Overview

Reaching the Summit

More than 350 people attended the inaugural Nature Play Summit. The event, which was held at the Vancouver Hilton, was generously sponsored by Jan and Steve Oliva and the Firstenburg Family Foundation, with support from Community Choices, Support for Early Learning & Families (SELF), Clark County Public Health, Washington Recreation and Parks Association, Vancouver-Clark Parks and Recreation, and Vesta Hospitality.

Schuyler Hoss, Regional Representative for Washington State Governor Chris Gregoire, issued a formal welcome from the Governor in the main ballroom to start the day.

Richard Louv, author of "Last Child in the Woods", the seminal treatise on the potential harmful consequences resulting from the disconnection between children and nature, was the luncheon keynote speaker. "As children, we all had a special place we could go to be at one with



Kids playing at newly constructed Nature Play area at LeRoy Haagen Community Park.

nature. As adults, oftentimes, that special place is where we go in our minds to find calm and peace in our lives," Louv said. "Children also need that special place."

Louv's presentation, citing the effects of "nature deficit disorder" on kids today, resonated with the crowd of professionals and community members. Attendees included parents, educators, library and parks professionals, elected officials, recreation equipment manufacturers and distributors, and health providers.

Louv addressed the staggering number of children currently being medicated for ADHD (attention deficit hyperactivity disorder), and the lack of funding for studies that could, theoretically, substantiate and scientifically utilize the calming properties of nature. His premise is a warning that without the awareness



Mr. Louv graciously autographed copies of his book, "Last Child in the Woods," for a long line of inspired audience members.



Overview continued

of adults who remember their early connection with nature, the next generations will suffer an irretrievable loss.

The keynote took place between breakout sessions in the morning and afternoon. A total of sixteen sessions covered topics such as “Best Practices for Creating Naturalized Play Environments,” “Supporting Schools’ Sustainable and Educational Goals with Nature Play,” and “Connecting Youth to Nature through Gardening.”

The luncheon and summit served as the culmination of a series of events focused on bringing the Nature Play message to citizens of Clark County.

On Saturday, June 19, Vancouver-Clark Parks and Recreation coordinated a work party to construct a new Nature Play area at LeRoy Haagen Community Park (9th Street and NE 136 Ave). About 50 volunteers spent the day turning a patch of grass into a place for kids to connect with nature. Funding for the construction for the park was provided by the Firstenburg Family Foundation with in-kind support from Frontier Landscaping and Landscape Management & Services.



Thank you volunteers!

Then on Monday, June 21, the Parks Foundation’s annual meeting and luncheon welcomed National Wildlife Federation, Regional Education Manager Courtney Sullivan as keynote speaker. Courtney shared information about the National Wildlife Federation’s “Be Out There” program and specifically focused on ways parents can introduce their children to the wonders of nature.

“Nature Play is a safe, non-formal type of play. Playing hide and seek in the woods; walking across fallen logs; counting bird calls; watching a butterfly float from flower to flower; creating stories of great outdoor adventures; or just watching the clouds sail by,” said Parks Planning and Development Manger, Jane Tesner Kleiner. “It all starts with an accessible natural area close by and a healthy imagination. Our department is committed to doing all it can to instill Nature Play in the lives of our community’s children.”

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Summit Survey Results

Activity

Comments

Keynote lunch with Richard Louv

Excellent inspiring speaker
 Have the books - loved hearing him "live"
 Incredible
 Encouraged to think deeper
 Informative
 Awesome

Where Children Play

Video was wonderfully filmed
 Thought provoking

Nature Playgrounds

Many insights
 Great information on continuum of nature playgrounds
 Enjoyed historical context
 Good foundation information
 Excellent knowledge in designing play spaces

REI's Peak

Good tangible resource - practical
 Great ideas to help children learn to respect nature
 Relationship to early learning is missing
 Great to hear about a free resource

Place Matters

Enjoyed movie and built-in discussion
 Fantastic facilitator
 Thought provoking documentary

Nature Grounds

Loved the photos
 Needed to hear more about available research
 Seemed like a sales pitch

Supporting Schools

Nice visuals with good examples to follow
 Hope this is soon the norm for schools

Outdoor Experiences

Great and simple activities to take back to our sites
 Just as engaging for adults as it would be for children
 Interesting way to teach about senses
 Liked hands-on exercise



Survey Results continued

Activity

Comments

Outdoor Curricula

A great design plan
Great examples of learning and playing in nature
Loved the ideas
Was more about landscaping than curriculum

Books & Stories

Creative and fun - useful handouts
Greater age range would be nice

Portland Children's Museum

Nice to see what nature play is being developed
Very ambitious project

Land Trust Role

Potential future partnership
Inspiring to hear & see stores of land conservancy

Urban Green Spaces

A great resource
Very interactive and informative
Too specific to the organization

Gardening

Participant sharing was helpful
Focused towards teachers
Great icebreaker

Intertwine

Lots of food for thought
More interesting than helpful
Excellent diversity of speakers

Finding Nature

Would be a great field trip

Overall Comments

Enjoyed keynote
Excellent summit - great diversity of sessions
Lots of good ideas
Engrossing subject matter
Very well-rounded conference
Summit seemed commercial
Good information to take back
Super day
Great day to get inspired