

# **The Future of Outdoor Recreation Research and Education in the United States: Preliminary Outcomes of a National Strategic Planning Process**

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The purpose of this presentation is to describe and report on preliminary outcomes of a national strategic planning process currently underway in the United States to chart a course for outdoor recreation and tourism research and education for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.

This strategic planning process is supported by the following assumptions:

- Rapid ecological and social changes challenge resource managers to provide sustainable outdoor recreation services to the American public.
- Managers need science-based knowledge to address a variety of outdoor recreation management challenges.
- We must work together to craft a bold vision for outdoor recreation research and education that addresses significant societal needs (health and wellness; economic competitiveness; community revitalization, ecological impact and change).
- We must strengthen the sources of funding needed to support these investments for enhancing scientific and educational capacity.

Initiated by the USDA Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service, this national strategic planning process is following a participatory path to engage a broad spectrum of professional outdoor recreation and tourism stakeholders in crafting a five year strategic plan. In February 2007, a national steering committee of 27 diverse individuals was convened to coordinate this planning process. This steering committee will meet for a two day workshop in May 2007 to develop a framework for an emerging strategic plan. In addition, two professional societies will be engaged with scheduled roundtables at the April 2007 Northeastern Recreation Research Conference and the June 2007 International Social Science and Resource Management Symposium to gather input from diverse stakeholders.

This presentation will report on preliminary outcomes of this national strategic planning process for outdoor recreation research and education as well as look for opportunities to integrate this national-level planning in United States with other global efforts to strategically plan for the future of outdoor recreation research and education.