Inspiring a New Generation

SOLUTIONS FOR CONNECTING YOUNG PEOPLE WITH NATURE
The 2014 IUCN World Parks Congress (WPC) featured the largest ever delegation of young people at a WPC. Leaders of all ages were inspired by a new generation.
Inspired by the impressive array of successful initiatives occurring across all societies and all regions to connect young people with nature.
Inspired by the collective power of citizens that is being harnessed around the world to work in new and exciting ways for nature.
Sessions organised by young people and focused on the Inspiring a New Generation theme were among the best attended and most talked about at the IUCN World Parks Congress.
Six key themes emerged around connecting a new generation with nature, creating a sense of passion about the natural world, and empowering young leaders of today and tomorrow.

This is what we heard...
1. We need to find and share the fun in nature...
And enable young people to engage with nature on their own terms, creatively and unconditionally.
Inspiring Solution: Creative Expressions

Sharing personal connections with nature through art, like musicians George Woodhouse and Baba Brinkman have done, can spark interest and empower young people to act collectively for the future.
Australian scouting organizations, like many park agencies worldwide, are implementing adventurous activities that are specifically focused on helping young people to connect with nature in ways that are meaningful to them.
Resource Africa’s theatrical presentations simplify complex processes and also make people laugh, which in return opens them up to new ideas about resource management and conservation.
Inspiring Solution: #NoWallsOutHere

The #NoWallsOutHere initiative is a social media based project designed to encourage engagement with nature; for youth, by youth.
Inspiring Solution: The Garage Sale Trail

A fun and social approach has helped the Garage Sale Trail redirect stuff from landfills equal to about 3 times the height of Mt. Everest.
Inspiring Solution: Know your audience

The Garage Sale Trail has worked in large part because:

• it is **relevant** to its audience,
• it is based on **reality**, not perception,
• and **collective** rather than individual experience and action.
2. We must bring children into nature at an early age...
Because meaningful emotional connections to nature in childhood are the foundations of support for nature conservation later in life.
The new Every Kid in a Park Pass initiative provides free entry to National Park Service sites for all U.S. 4th graders and their families, to help engage and create the next generation of park visitors.
Inspiring Solution: Bush School

Bush School in Sydney, Australia successfully demonstrates how self-directed play in a wild, unmanaged play space can foster a love of nature.
At the sector-leading and internationally recognized Mindstretchers Nature Kindergarten in Scotland, children spend 80% of their day outdoors in all weather.
Equipping people for fun, Nature Play NSW helps get kids outside by engaging families first.

Remember the fun of rolling down a grassy hill?

Find a hill and re-live your childhood, bring the kids if you dare. Your kids will love it!
Inspiring Solution: Giant Floor Map

Giant Floor Map is a very popular experiential learning program available to Canadian schools that teaches students about the important stories and places in the Parks Canada system.
The **Fuse** project brought industry professionals and school-aged children together to develop inspiring solutions to questions of conservation and sustainability.

*Inspiring Solution: Fuse*
Junior Ranger programs, like those offered by EUROPARC and Korea National Park Service, provide opportunities for young people to socialise, learn, acquire skills and to have fun in local protected areas.
3. We need to engage other sectors: health, tourism, corporate, technology, and more...
So that they too can become champions of connecting young people with nature.
Inspiring Solution: Project Ocean

Fish meets fashion in Project Ocean, a successful partnership between the Zoological Society of London and Selfridges department store.
Inspiring Solution: DOC – Air New Zealand

The Department of Conservation and corporate partner Air New Zealand work together to promote and protect unique wildlife and special landscapes.

- Featuring Bear Grylls
- Bookings increased by almost 70% over the season
- Social integration far greater reach than DOC can do alone
Inspiring Solution: National Geographic BioBlitz

The annual National Geographic BioBlitz brings together communities, families and scientists at a U.S. National Park Service site, a model that is easily replicable at other scales.
Inspiring Solution: Canada’s Coolest School Trip

Canada’s Coolest School Trip sends one lucky class on an all-expenses paid voyage to visit Parks Canada places, thanks to partners Arm & Hammer, Air Canada and the Parks Canada Agency.
The **Learn, Inspire** campaign brought artistic “ambassadors” to Bahuaja Sonene National Park, Peru to help raise public awareness through their park-inspired art, design, culinary events, music and more.
We need to approach urban parks, museums, zoos, etc. as urban “gateways” to nature...
So that nature can be accessible to the majority of the world’s population that now live, work and play in cities.
Inspiring Solution: Learn to Camp

Parks Canada’s Learn to Camp program brings the camping experience locally to you in urban settings like the Rouge Valley in the greater Toronto area – the site of Canada’s first National Urban Park.
Inspiring Solution: Urban Wildlife Refuge

With its **Urban Wildlife Refuge** program, the USFWS is engaging urban communities in meaningful ways to create a connected conservation constituency.
Thousands of urban students have participated in the award-winning Bush Builders programme and helped increase the city’s biodiversity one garden, bird house or lizard lair at a time.

Inspiring Solution: Wellington Zoo Bush Builders
Interpretive programs for youth and a free “Transit to Trails” bus program help to connect the local community with *Vista Hermosa Natural Park* in Los Angeles.
The very popular Nature Nocturne sees the Canadian Museum of Nature transformed into a dance club once per month, complete with DJ, drinks, food, and of course, nature exhibits.

Inspiring Solution: Nature Nocturne
5. We need to embrace technology as a means to connect young people with nature...
And maximize its potential to bridge the gap between people and nature on both a personal and global level.
In New South Wales, new initiatives like WilderQuest and Wild About Whales combine digital and real-life encounters to inspire love and care for nature among audiences.
Leading artists, like Leah Barclay and the Sonic Explorers project, integrate audio and video media cleverly to provide a multisensory experience of protected areas through presentations and the internet.
iNaturalist is a global citizen science tool that uses technology for sharing biodiversity information and connecting people of all ages to nature, protected areas, and each other. It is an excellent tool for supporting bioblitzes and other park activities.
Inspiring Solution: CocoMaps

CocoMaps is a youth-led online platform that empowers young people to create a future in which all people are connected with nature.
6. We must empower young people as current and future leaders in inspiring a new generation...
So that they can engrain the importance of connecting people and nature across all sectors of society.
Inspiring Solution: The Young Peoples Pact

A legacy of the IUCN World Parks Congress, the **Young Peoples Pact** is a commitment from young people around the world to parks, people, planet.

Photo Credit: WPC Global Youth Ambassadors
Jane Goodall Roots & Shoots programs targeted at Aboriginal youth, such as those in Australia and Canada, help participants develop self-respect and confidence in themselves through nature-based projects.
Inspiring Solution: Crissy Field Centre

Based in Golden Gate National Park, the Crissy Field Centre programs encourage new generations to become bold leaders for thriving parks, healthy communities, and a more environmentally just society.
The award-winning Students on Ice provides students, educators and scientists from around the world with inspiring learning opportunities, while also fostering youth and aboriginal leadership development.
Inspiring Solution: Empowered Young Leaders

Young conservation leaders around the globe are taking action for conservation, like Vedharajan Balaji, founder of OMCAR and the Palk Bay Centre for Environmental Education in India and Daniela Benavides, founder of ConCIENCIA in Peru.
The Parks Canada Youth Ambassadors program engages two students every year to find creative and innovative ways to connect Canadian youth with parks and nature.

Inspiring Solution: Youth Ambassadors
Six themes for inspiring a new generation

1. Find the fun in nature
2. Bring children into nature at an early age
3. Engage other sectors (corporate, tourism, health...)
4. Utilise the urban gateway to nature (museums, urban parks, zoos, etc.)
5. Embrace technology as a means to connect young people with nature
6. Empower young people as leaders in inspiring a new generation
Recommendations for change

Underpinning the six ING themes is a strategy of innovative approaches and recommendations to inspire a new generation.

To learn more, visit: http://worldparkscongress.org/drupal/node/169
Recommendation 1
Establish a taskforce

Through a WCPA-CEC led InterCommission Task Force (or similar mechanism) that engages partners across sectors such as health, outdoor recreation, citizen science, technology, and education, launch an integrated global programme within IUCN's Intersessional Programme 2016-2020, to connect young people to nature, thus contributing to the achievement of CBD Aichi Targets 1 & 11.
Recommendation 2
Collaborate on policy, strategies and action

IUCN and at least 50 protected area management authorities, in collaboration with partners across sectors, adopt organizational policy, strategy, communication and action planning aimed at facilitating youth, urban dwellers, multi-cultural groups, and other new audiences to engage with nature and parks on their own terms, creatively and unconditionally.
Establish a global framework of metrics to measure and evaluate increasing youth and public engagement in protected areas and nature, including identifying baselines and gaps in knowledge on the connection between people and nature and the relationship between this connection and outcomes such as health, education, and conservation gains.
Recommendation 4
Put in place nature programmes for kids

In partnership with the Education and Childhood Development sector and others, put in place a growing number of programmes that ensure all children have had at least one transformational experience in protected areas and nature at an early age.
Recommendation 5
Scale up on-line platforms

Young people operationalise and scale up on-line platforms such as Cocomaps, CoalitionWild and NoWalls as well as social media and other mechanisms such as citizen science that showcase innovative programmes and partnerships and share the experiences and passion of a new generation connecting with nature.

Photo Credit: Rebecca Koss
Empower young people to be current and future leaders through their own efforts with support by IUCN, protected area agencies, NGOs and other sectors, through programmes that mentor and reward young conservation professionals ensuring real and meaningful contributions to decision-making and strategic thinking. Action the WPC 2014 Young Peoples’ Pact to ensure young people have an active, powerful and fully integrated voice.
Deepening the relationship between people and nature and strengthening support for protected areas through direct and meaningful experiences will have a positive impact on every facet of society.