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1 HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION

2 WHEREAS, The Illinois General Assembly is aware that  
3 scientific research shows that children are increasingly  
4 distanced from nature, even while an increasing number of  
5 researchers and scientists have determined the benefits of  
6 outdoor play for children and that direct exposure to nature is  
7 essential for healthy childhood physical, emotional, and  
8 spiritual development; and

9 WHEREAS, Children's understanding of nature is eclipsed by  
10 their knowledge of television characters; the average eight  
11 year old is better able to identify cartoon characters than  
12 even common plants and animals; and

13 WHEREAS, Addressing the imminent and threatening  
14 environmental issues of our time requires an active citizenry;  
15 providing children with outdoor nature experiences increases  
16 involvement in stewardship of our environment; and

17 WHEREAS, Time spent in nature by children promotes  
18 curiosity, improves the learning of science, and provides joy  
19 and a sense of well-being; and

20 WHEREAS, Actively engaging adults, mentors, and youth  
21 leaders and building their capacity to facilitate

1 opportunities for children to engage in nature discovery and  
2 learning in safe places, with a special emphasis on engaging  
3 underserved and ethnically diverse audiences, as well as  
4 non-traditional partners, is a vital step in this process; and

5 WHEREAS, The State of Illinois has a longstanding  
6 commitment to its natural heritage, connecting its people to  
7 the land and passing traditions on to future generations  
8 through outdoor activities such as fishing, hunting, bird  
9 watching, cross country skiing, and nature walks; and

10 WHEREAS, Bringing nature to children and creating safe  
11 places and programs that provide increased and improved outdoor  
12 nature exploration opportunities for children to promote  
13 discovery and creative play is of utmost importance to our  
14 society; and

15 WHEREAS, The State of Illinois is endowed with a gloriously  
16 diverse landscape, ranging from prairies and woodlands to the  
17 cypress swamps of southern Illinois to the bluffs of the  
18 Illinois valley and spreading across the farmlands of our rural  
19 communities to the backyard bungalows, play lots, and parks of  
20 our cities, all of which must be shared with the children and  
21 families of this State; and

22 WHEREAS, The State of Illinois is rich in educational

1 initiatives, conservation organizations, conservation  
2 districts, forest preserve districts, park districts,  
3 recreation agencies, schools, and civic organizations that are  
4 all actively engaged in promoting environmental education;  
5 therefore, be it

6 RESOLVED, BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE  
7 NINETY-SIXTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ILLINOIS, THE  
8 SENATE CONCURRING HEREIN, that we show our support for the  
9 Children's Outdoor Bill of Rights, which states that every  
10 child should have the opportunity to discover the wilderness,  
11 which includes the State's prairies, dunes, forests, savannas,  
12 and wetlands; camp under the stars; follow a trail; catch and  
13 release fish, frogs, and insects; climb a tree; explore nature  
14 in neighborhoods and cities; celebrate their heritage; plant a  
15 flower; play in the mud or a stream; and learn to swim; and be  
16 it further

17 RESOLVED, That we hereby designate the month of June as  
18 "Leave No Child Inside Month" in the State of Illinois in  
19 furtherance of our support of this important initiative.