



April 4, 2013



The Honorable Deval Patrick
Governor of Massachusetts
State House
Room 360
Boston, MA 02133

Dear Governor Patrick:

We thank you for proclaiming June as Great Outdoors Month in Massachusetts last year (copy attached), and invite you to again join all 49 of your fellow governors in celebrating the importance of the Great Outdoors to your state's economy, to America's health and to our national character. We ask you to proclaim **June 2013 as Great Outdoors Month** for Massachusetts. State, federal, nonprofit and private entities are working together to continue the tradition of Great Outdoors Month in 2013. Together we can strengthen the connection of Americans to the Great Outdoors, leading to a healthier Massachusetts and nation and a shared appreciation of our outdoors legacy.

June has become a special, annual celebration of America's Great Outdoors. Great Outdoors Week was first recognized in 1998 by President Clinton and evolved into Great Outdoors Month under President Bush. The tradition continues, and has expanded, under President Obama. Great Outdoors Month highlights the benefits of outdoor activity – including annual economic impact of more than \$650 billion – and showcases the splendor of our shared natural resources, including forests, parks, refuges, and other public lands and waters. A draft proclamation is attached for your consideration.

June opens the active summer vacation and recreation season and also hosts significant events engaging the public in outdoor recreation in your own state: National Trails Day[®], National Fishing and Boating Week, Welcome to the Water on National Marina Day, the Great American Backyard Campout, and volunteer events under Take Pride in America[®]. Great Outdoors Month helped launch the tremendously successful National Get Outdoors Day partnership, which will host events for a sixth year at sites across America on Saturday, June 8.

The Great Outdoors proponents will have a lot to celebrate this June, including a new appreciation for the important role our Great Outdoors plays in a sustainable economy. We now understand that the Great Outdoors is a key means for the nation to regain an appropriate share of the international tourism market – where success will mean hundreds of thousands of new jobs. We also have better evidence that active fun outdoors can be a potent tool in controlling healthcare costs, combating obesity, diabetes, heart disease and more. Encouraging more time in the outdoors is also becoming an important educational strategy.

We urge you to demonstrate your personal interest in encouraging the people of Massachusetts to embrace healthier lifestyles by enjoying time on our national public lands. Great Outdoors Month is also an opportune time to focus on the importance of helping children spend time outdoors through a