



Great Lakes Stewardship Initiative Announces the Michigan Children & Nature Coalition

[MICHIGAN] - The Great Lakes Stewardship Initiative (GLSI), in partnership with the Children & Nature Network, and with support from the Kresge Foundation, is launching a coalition to increase support for youth engagement with nature across the state of Michigan. The Michigan Children & Nature Coalition will develop collective statewide capacity to increase youth engagement with nature through supportive public policy, funding, community engagement, and collaboration amongst diverse stakeholders.

GLSI, a national leader in the field of place-based education with six regional hubs throughout Michigan, is taking the lead in developing a coalition-based model for organizations, service providers, state and municipal leaders, and other stakeholders to engage, learn, and act. The effort will strive to expand equitable statewide support for youth engagement with nature by increasing access to existing natural spaces and restoring nature to the most accessible places, such as schoolyards and child care centers. GLSI is prioritizing the formation of a coalition that represents diverse perspectives, and can identify opportunities and needs related to nature access as well as relevant forms of engagement with nature. GLSI Executive Director, Caleb Carlton, explains:

"The needs and opportunities related to connecting our youth to nature are diverse and varying across the state, and we recognize that successful strategies and solutions in one community or region may not be relevant or applicable elsewhere. We also know that access to nature can be universally beneficial, for all ages, as a component of our communities and daily lives. Connecting to nature through learning, play, and many other forms of engagement can improve and sustain physical and mental wellbeing, increase connections to community, inspire and inform career pathways, and spark joy, curiosity, wonder, and a personally meaningful sense of place here in Michigan. The children of our state deserve well supported, equitable, and relevant pathways to benefit from engaging with nature throughout childhood.

In forming this coalition, we are striving to bring leaders and stakeholders together who represent diverse voices, skills, capacities, needs, and solutions from across the state. In doing so, we aim to work as a collective statewide force to elevate the importance of getting our children outside and discovering lifelong connections to nature, while also developing skills and knowledge that support stewardship of Michigan's natural and community resources. The coalition's primary goal will be to lead efforts that result in equitable expansion of the resources available to communities, school systems, municipalities, families, and service providers that increase access to nature for Michigan's youth."

GLSI is currently conducting a statewide analysis of exemplary youth nature engagement and access strategies, programs, partnerships, and resources that may inform priorities and strategies of the coalition's work. The leadership team is also gathering information about potential members' interest in joining the coalition, and about how they might like to be involved. You can connect with the coalition and inform the work ahead by completing the [Michigan Children & Nature Coalition Survey here](#) and joining the coalition's [free online community hub here](#). To get in touch with GLSI, please email coalition@greatlakesstewardship.org.



About

The **Great Lakes Stewardship Initiative** (GLSI) develops knowledgeable and active stewards of their communities and the Great Lakes region through place-based education, community development, and environmental stewardship. The GLSI works toward its goals through a statewide leadership team and six regional hubs located throughout Michigan. GLSI Hubs, working through GLSI's Place-Based Stewardship Education model, help organize and sustain school-community partnerships, provide regional leadership and professional development for place-based education and environmental stewardship, and support community development efforts connected to nature access and engagement. Stay informed and connected to GLSI and the Michigan Children & Nature Coalition at greatlakesstewardship.org, on [Facebook](#), and GLSI's [The Place Space](#), a free community platform for place-based education and all things GLSI.

The **Children & Nature Network** believes, and research proves, that regular time outdoors is essential for children's healthy development. The non-profit organization leads a global movement of leaders, educators, practitioners and parents working to ensure equitable access to the benefits of nature everywhere children live, learn and play. Learn more at childrenandnature.org and get connected on [LinkedIn](#), [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#) and [The Trailhead](#), a free online community for global children and nature leaders.

The **Kresge Foundation** is a private, national foundation that works to expand opportunities in America's cities through grantmaking and social investing in arts and culture, education, environment, health, human services and community development, nationally and in Detroit, Memphis and New Orleans. In collaboration with our partners, we help create pathways for people with low incomes to improve their life circumstances and join the economic mainstream.