

March 2013

Call for participation

Nature Play and Learning Areas Registry

Nature Play and Learning Areas Guidelines is a project conducted by the National Wildlife Federation and the Natural Learning Initiative, NC State University, with the support of national partners. The aim is to develop national design and management guidelines for nature areas in children's outdoor play and learning environments. **The Guidelines Project is currently soliciting and compiling a registry of Nature Play and Learning Areas to support and potentially illustrate the best practice criteria specified in the Guidelines. [To register, click here.](#)**

Nature Play and Learning Areas Guidelines: *Project Overview*

The purpose of the Nature Play and Learning Areas Guidelines Project is to improve children's overall healthy development, wellbeing, and capacity for informal learning by bringing nature to their daily outdoor play and learning environments. The guidelines will show owners/managers of places where children and families spend their time (including residences, childcare centers, schools, parks, stream corridors, public gardens, museums, nature centers, zoos, botanical gardens, arboreta, and urban infrastructure – streets, plazas, etc.), how to integrate nature into outdoor play and learning facilities. The guidelines will identify and describe the core elements of nature play and learning areas and demonstrate how to address design, management, liability, and accessibility issues. The aim of the project is to support the rapidly growing children and nature movement by focusing on the following goals:

1. Develop comprehensive guidelines for designing and managing nature play and learning areas, located where children spend the majority of their time;
2. Promote guideline utilization by professional associations, governments, regulatory bodies and others;
3. Provide technical support and training for those who create, use, and manage nature play and learning areas;
4. Develop a user-friendly website to publicize the guidelines, provide updates, offer collateral information, and allow adopters to register and publicize nature play and learning areas as they are constructed.

Project Registration

The purpose of registration is to enable the Guidelines project to identify a selection of best practice examples of Nature Play and Learning Areas, to share these examples, and to create a virtual community of practice where knowledge, experience, and inspiration is shared. Some demonstration sites may be used to illustrate the Guidelines publication.

To become a registered project, please review and respond to the following criteria:

1. The project must be an outdoor area designated for nature play and/or learning located in a residence, childcare center, school, park, stream corridor, public garden, museum, nature center, zoo, botanical garden, arboretum, urban infrastructure – street, plaza, etc.), or equivalent everyday child (and family) environment.

2. Of particular interest are installed projects already in use or projects with at least the first phase installed and in use. However, any project with an established groundbreaking date may also be registered.
3. Projects with minimum design intervention but managed for nature play and learning, such as areas in forest preserves or nature centers or urban park areas managed for wild naturalization are appropriate for registration.
4. Cost-effective projects are particularly relevant. Guidelines need to illustrate a range of cost-effective or low-cost solutions that underserved communities can view as feasible; for example, a small, volunteer built, early childhood project. A broad range of projects is welcomed.
5. Be willing to share design drawings, in-use and final product photos, with photo-releases where necessary.
6. Commit time to completing a simple, standardized project evaluation, designed for easy administration, extendable at the discretion of the responder.

What the Guidelines Project can offer Registered Projects

The following are concrete benefits of becoming a registered project:

1. For projects still in process, the Nature Play and Learning Area Guidelines may help shape the design and management protocol.
2. Access to an evaluation tool to assess guidelines effectiveness and project performance.
3. National and possibly international exposure to the children and nature movement by being featured in the Natural Play and Learning Area website.

How to become a Registered Project

Step One: Complete the online survey. [Please click here to access survey.](#)

Step Two: Submit Letter of Agreement – See below for sample letter.

Step Three: Provide supporting documentation, i.e. conceptual design, schematic design, construction documents, etc.

Nature Play and Learning Area
Demonstration Site Registration
Letter of Agreement (example)

Organization name:

Contact name and
title:

Address:

City, State, Zip:

Phone:

Email:

Professor Robin Moore
Natural Learning Initiative
College of Design, NC State University
Campus Box 7701
Raleigh, NC 27695-7701
919-515-8345
robin_moore@ncsu.edu
www.naturalearning.org

Date: _____

Dear Professor Moore,

(Describe role of registrant and project)

We are very excited about the Nature Play and Learning Area Guidelines project and would like to register our project.

This project is a Natural Play and Learning Area for (Name of department or institution responsible for project, i.e. Parks and Rec Department, Nature Museum, Home Owner, etc) at (location of Nature Play and Learning Area, include hyperlink to project website).

(Offer further information about the project, i.e. timeline, how you will utilize the guidelines, aspects of the project that are especially appealing to you, etc).

With this letter we agree to participate as a demonstration site for the Natural Play and Learning Area Guidelines, under development by the National Wildlife Federation and the Natural Learning Initiative, through funding from the U.S. Forest Service. We understand that (name of project)'s inclusion in the Guidelines is subject to review by the project steering committee and that completion of the online registration is a requirement for consideration.

Hopefully you will find our project is a good match with nature play and learning area best practice criteria. We have completed the online survey. (Any final comments).

Sincerely,

Name

Position, Firm or organization

Enclosures (list any designs, plans, photos, etc., attached)