



Every Kid Outdoors (EKO) Act

The Every Kid Outdoors (EKO) Act of 2017 establishes a program to provide free access to public lands for a year to all fourth graders. It also facilitates partnerships between federal public lands agencies, State parks agencies, and non-governmental organizations to increase access to public lands and outdoor recreation among historically underserved groups by providing transportation and other services.

The incredible beauty and rich history of America’s public lands bring millions of visitors from around the globe to our hiking trails, campsites, and historic lodges every year. Yet many Americans have never experienced the wonder of a National Park, National Forest, or National Monument due to access challenges such as cost or distance.

In order to connect a new generation of Americans with the rich natural and cultural history in our public lands, the Obama Administration implemented an “Every Kid in a Park” initiative to increase attendance and access to our public lands. The Every Kid Outdoors Act builds on that program, authorizing a free park pass program for fourth graders and establishing a program that creates a shared experience for all American schoolchildren by highlighting the historical, cultural, and recreational value of our public lands during their fourth grade year.

The EKO Act helps schoolchildren understand and value the heritage of our public lands so they might grow to become stewards of those lands. Children who may have never been to a National Park or Forest before can develop new skills, build healthy habits and breathe clean air. This will help build the next generation of explorers who will support our outdoor recreation economy, which provides jobs supporting our public lands, often in rural communities.

The bill increases access to federal lands for schoolchildren and builds a sense of pride in our public lands, by:

1. Providing free passes to all federal public lands for fourth graders and accompanying family members for a year, beginning in September of the fourth grade year and expiring the following August;
2. Allowing for collaboration with State Parks departments that wish to offer their own EKO pass to State public lands;
3. Allowing for the provision of visitor services related to the EKO program; and
4. Allowing for partnerships with non-governmental entities, which may partner to provide transportation or other services to increase access among fourth graders.