

**Summary**

HB10-1131 creates the Colorado Kids Outdoors Grant Program (grant program) in the Department of Natural Resources to provide grants for programs that allow Colorado youth to participate in outdoor activities in the state, including but not limited to programs that emphasize the environment and experiential, field-based learning. The executive director of the Department of Natural Resources (executive director) will adopt rules to implement the grant program, including criteria for selecting grant recipients. An advisory council will assist the executive director in reviewing the applications and creating the criteria. The grant program will be funded through gifts, grants, and donations, which will be deposited in the newly created Colorado Kids Outdoors Grant Program Fund. The executive director will report to certain legislative committees concerning implementation of the grant program, including the amount awarded and the activities that receive funding. The bill directs the Department of Education, in consultation with the Department of Natural Resources, to create and the State Board of Education (state board) to adopt a state plan for environmental education.

Talking Points

- A significant need exists for a statewide environmental education plan. Environmental literacy means having the knowledge and skills to make informed decisions about the environment, which is a desirable attribute for all Colorado youth.
- The Colorado Kids Outdoors Grant Program Fund will allow public and private entities to donate funds for the outdoor grant program.
- From public and private donations, the DNR will provide grants to fund opportunities for young people to engage in outdoor activities.
- The program is targeted at metropolitan and low-income youth.
- The bill creates the five-member Colorado Kids Outdoors Advisory Council to assist the department in the administration of the grant program.
- This legislation brings together state-level leadership and various stakeholders in education and environmental literacy to work together to create an environmental literacy plan.
- An environmental literacy plan will restore and increase field experiences as part of the school curriculum, improve statewide access to existing EE programs and materials, and support classroom instruction.
- Environmental literacy was embedded in the new Colorado Academic Standards, which were adopted by the State Board of Education in December. A statewide plan will help provide the resources and tools needed to implement the new standards.
- The Colorado State Forest Service supports this bill and conservation education efforts.