

Feds make it easier for kids to get outdoors

By Katie Arnold, *Outside*

As a kid, Sally Jewell spent a lot of time outside. Her parents took her to her first national park when she was 4 years old, and by age 15, she'd scaled Mount St. Helen's with a group of friends.

But the current Secretary of the Interior, now 60, isn't as interested in recounting her childhood adventures as she is in trying to ensure that all American kids have the same opportunity to get outdoors that she had. Her latest initiative seeks to help young people from disadvantaged backgrounds experience the wilderness. Her new Secretarial Order aims to do just that, by making it easier, faster, and less costly for youth organizations to obtain permits to explore public wild lands on overnight or multi-day trips.

Jewell has issued similar orders, like one from 2014—the year after President Obama appointed her to the post—that sought to expand recreational, education, volunteer, and career opportunities for kids and veterans on public lands by encouraging the DOI to work with business and nonprofits. The new order goes a step further by targeting a very specific demographic. All participants must be under 26 years old, and 70 percent of the group must meet one or more of the following criteria: live in foster homes, have limited English proficiency, have run away from home or are homeless, live with disabilities, are at risk of dropping out, or are former juvenile delinquents or at risk of delinquency.

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