Nature & Play Symposium Features National Speakers

As part of the week-long opening activities for the new Springfield-Greene County Botanical Center, a "Convergence of Nature and Play" national symposium is being held Wednesday, Oct. 13 and Thursday, Oct. 14 at the Center, 2400 S. Scenic.

The symposium brings together recognized experts in designing compelling play environments that inspire children to connect with nature while being physically active. On-site classes, as well as off-site visits within the Springfield-Greene County area, will demonstrate best practice design principles for schools, parks, trail facilities and nature preserves.

Symposium registration is closed, however media are welcome to cover the two days.

Highlights include

- 8:30 a.m., Wednesday: Keynote Address: Children in Nature, Robin Moore, Director, Natural Learning Initiative, North Carolina State University; Botanical Center Classroom
- Noon, Wednesday: Innovative Trails Systems that Engage Children & Families, Robin Moore; Terry Whaley, Ozark Greenways; Lisa Moore, PlayCore; Botanical Center Classroom
- 1:45 p.m., Wednesday: School-Park Partnerships: An In-depth Case Example of Excellence, Jodie Adams, Springfield-Greene County Park Board; Dr. Peggy Riggs, Springfield Public Schools; Botanical Center Classrooms
- 3:15 p.m., Wednesday: Green & Environmental Management Systems, Jim Sluiter, Audubon International; Botanical Center Classrooms
- 8:30 – 11 a.m., Thursday: National Demonstration Sites, Guided tours that feature national demonstration sites for school, park, trail facility and nature preserves; Bus tour

Robin Moore is professor of Landscape Architecture, College of Design, for North Carolina State University and an expert in the design of play, learning and education environments. He holds degrees in architecture from London University and in city and regional planning from MIT, where he first became interested in integrating environmental design and child development.

Mr. Moore is former chair of the Environmental Design Research Association and has held faculty appointments at UC Berkeley and Stanford University. His most recent publications include “Natural Learning” (1997), co-authored with educator Dr. Herb Wong, and “Healing Gardens for Children” (1999). Pursuing this interest for 30 years, Moore has conducted a series of action-research projects in both North and South America and England.

Jim Sluiter (pronounced “Slight-er) is the Staff Ecologist for the Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary Programs, assisting golf course superintendents and property managers in identifying and implementing environmental stewardship projects around the world.
Sluiter received his degree in recreation and land management from the State University of New York at Cortland. Prior to his current position, he spent more than eight years working for the U.S. Department of the Interior as a National Park Ranger in a wide array of National Parks and Historic Sites in Iowa, New York, Florida, Virginia, California, Alaska and beyond. Sluiter brings a wide breadth of knowledge of North American wildlife and ecosystems to Audubon International’s worldwide environmental management and education programs.

Media

For more information, media contact: Jodie Adams, Director of Parks, 417-864-1329; or Bob Nelson, Public Information Administrator, cell - 417-839-2005.