The Nature Principle: Human Restoration and the End of Nature Deficit Disorder
By Richard Louv
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The Nature Principle is a good read. Richard's call for a new way to do conservation and 'a new nature movement' is timely. He outlines why the traditional approach to conservation isn't going to work anymore and why environmental groups need to partner with a range of health professionals, urban designers, educators, policy makers, spiritual leaders and parents to ensure a healthy future for our children. His analysis fits well with the emerging conservation biology literature that for nature and human society to be healthy at least half of nature needs to be set aside as protected areas and/or managed to provide ecosystem services. Clearly, as Richard says, the past approach hasn't worked and we need a different approach for the future.

Richard begins his book outlining why 'nature deficit disorder' is not an issue just for children, and that all humans are suffering from this deficit as we become increasing urban and turned indoors rather turned outdoors. I was touched by his personal examination of why he has 'this bias' toward children/families needing to be outside, in particular his relationship with his dad. He concludes the book with a well-written analysis of the importance of taking walks in the woods and walks around the block. I liked his turn of phrase - "...the environmental challenge of our time - is not only climate change but the change of climate in the human heart, our society's nature deficit disorder..." The body of the book is a somewhat rambling/folksy look at the growing literature, conversations he has had with colleagues and activists, and a research review that illustrates the effect on children/families and society if we don't reconnect with nature and plan our cities accordingly - such as Type II diabetes, obesity, negative behaviours and a polarization with nature. I felt a few times in reading his analysis that he assumed the reader had read Last Child in the Woods [his previous book] and there were occasions that I was looking for a clearer purpose to the analysis. However, as he mentions in his book, we have enough information it is now time to do something about it. His call to arms for a 'movement that moves' is well written, well researched and certainly needed.

Richard's global reputation as a journalist/writer is well deserved. There is a need for a new approach to conservation, parenting, health delivery and the way we live in cities. Richard's book should be read by all who believe this change is needed - both to support nature and to ensure human health.

Review by Bob Peart
Chair, Child and Nature Alliance of Canada
Richard Louv’s underlying belief is that connecting with the natural world is fundamental to human health, well-being, spirit and survival. To support this bold claim, he uncovers what is an extremely persuasive body of evidence – theoretical, anecdotal and empirical – that nature really does have a significant power to restore, heal and energize. If you weren’t already aware of the healing power of nature, you will be even after reading just the first few chapters of this book. The Nature Principle is an extremely well-researched book. The author’s thoughts are well-arranged, and he communicates in an easy and persuasive manner. But it’s no pie in the sky approach. Now, in The Nature Principle, Louv reaches even further with a powerful call to action for the rest of us. Our society, says Louv, has developed such an outsized faith in technology that we have yet to fully realize or even adequately study how human capacities are enhanced through the power of nature. Supported by groundbreaking research, anecdotal evidence, and compelling personal stories, Louv shows us how tapping into the restorative powers of the natural world can boost mental acuity and creativity; promote health and wellness; build smarter and more sustainable businesses, communities, a... Richard Louv is a journalist and the author of seven books about the connections between family, nature, and community.