

ANNUAL REPORT 2023

CREATING SUSTAINABLE OUTDOOR

RECREATION OPPORTUNITIES FOR ALL



SOCIETY OF OUTDOOR
RECREATION PROFESSIONALS

WWW.RECPRO.ORG

RACHEL.FRANCHINA@RECPRO.ORG

Society of Outdoor Recreation Professional's Commitment to Justice, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (JEDI)

SORP believes that access to meaningful and transformative outdoor experiences is a basic right for all people.

Just as biodiversity strengthens ecosystems, diversity of human thought and experience within our organization strengthens our efforts to support Outdoor Recreation Professionals for the benefit of the communities that they serve.

In order for SORP to achieve its mission “to promote, advance, and serve outdoor recreation professionals” we commit to celebrating diversity, working towards equity, and practicing inclusion in all of our work.

We will continue learning and adapting to best support a robust community of outdoor recreation professionals. We acknowledge that we will make mistakes, and that we will use those mistakes to grow as an organization.

This Means...

- Recognizing that privilege associated with the dominant or majority culture manifests itself in overt and covert ways, including in the outdoor recreation profession.
- Challenging assumptions about what constitutes an outdoor recreation professional.
- Understanding that different perspectives mean a stronger, healthier, and more adaptive organization.
- Ensuring that diversity, equity, and inclusion principles are core values in all of the work we do.

SORP commits to:

- Creating spaces and programs where everyone feels safe, recognized, valued, and included.
- Facilitating a learning culture where outdoor recreation professionals can grow and expand their commitment to justice, diversity, equity, and inclusion, and non-judgmentally share successes and challenges with each other.
- Growing our practice of justice, equity, diversity, inclusion, and accessibility in SORP's programs and offerings by evaluating successes and lessons learned, and progressively expanding efforts based on best practices.
- Actively seeking members and recruiting board members who bring different backgrounds, perspectives, and identities to the outdoor recreation profession.
- Selecting conference locations and venues that foster a welcoming and inclusive physical, social, and learning environment.
- Partnering with diverse, allied organizations in related fields to expand our relevance and knowledge base.
- Establishing and supporting a justice, diversity, equity, and inclusion committee for the organization.

About the Society of Outdoor Recreation Professionals (SORP)

VISION

The Society of Outdoor Recreation Professionals creates sustainable outdoor recreation opportunities for all.

MISSION

SORP provides leadership for the outdoor recreation profession through skill development, networking, and technical guidance.

VALUES



*Justice, Equity,
Diversity, and Inclusion*



Sustainable Recreation



People



Community



Collaboration



Skill Development

LEARN MORE



Note from the President

2023 has been an absolutely incredible year of change, growth, and evolution for SORP and I am truly honored and humbled to have been a part of it! We stayed true to what we do best, like supporting all recreation planners and professionals to do their best work. We have also innovated a lot as an organization and diversified our revenue streams with the launch of several new regional workshops, seeking more grants and foundation support, instituting organizational memberships with near complete participation from our federal land manager partners, and securing Rachel Franchina as our permanent and on-going Executive Director.

Engagement with members is STRONG as well with our Visitor Use Management Workshop, Inclusive Trails/Spaces Workshop, and SCORP Planning Workshop each either selling out or coming close. We've also experienced record levels of interest in joining the SORP Board and in our call for educational sessions for NORC 2024 in Tahoe. Registration for NORC 2024 has just opened, and I can't wait to see where we go next.

This association exists for and because of our members, volunteers, and supporters and I cannot thank each and every one of you enough for your time, contributions, and passion for delivering sustainable recreation. Onward!

Note from the Executive Director

As a former board member (2013-2021) and now the Executive Director, I cannot be more proud of how we are serving our members and the broader SORP community. The increase in recreation use across all facets of outdoor recreation during the pandemic also highlighted the importance of investing in the people who plan, manage, and provide nature based outdoor recreation as a public service - YOU! SORP is well-positioned to provide opportunities for connection, professional development, and policies that support outdoor recreation professionals.

We launched several new programs and resources in 2023 to better support outdoor recreation professionals including organizational memberships, a new website featuring online communities and technical resources, and topic-based workshops. We are always looking to highlight our members, their stories and accomplishments, and help our evolving industry. We hope you'll continue to engage in our new communities, follow us on social media (we are now on Instagram!), reading our bi-weekly newsletters, and participating in virtual and in-person programs.

We hope to see you all at the 2024 National Outdoor Recreation Conference in Lake Tahoe!



Drew Pollak-Bruce, CPRP
BOARD PRESIDENT



Rachel Franchina
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

The increase in recreation use across all facets of outdoor recreation during the pandemic also highlighted the importance of investing in the people who plan, manage, and provide nature based outdoor recreation as a public service - YOU!

Membership Enhancements

INTRODUCING ORGANIZATIONAL AND UNIVERSITY MEMBERSHIPS

We started offering organizational and university memberships in 2023. These memberships provide an excellent value to agencies and other entities that have multiple employees who benefit from being a part of the SORP community. University memberships provide benefits to a cohort of students and professors. We are proud to have the following organizational and university members:

- Arkansas Department of Parks, Heritage and Tourism
- Arkansas Tech University
- Bureau of Land Management
- Bureau of Reclamation
- City of Boulder Open Space and Mountain Parks
- Clemson University
- Colorado Parks and Wildlife
- Forest Preserves of Cook County
- Institute of Outdoor Recreation and Tourism at Utah State University
- Logan Simpson
- Maine Bureau of Parks & Land
- Missouri Department of Conservation
- National Park Service
- Parks Canada
- SE Group
- Tennessee Valley Authority
- Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation - Recreation Resources Division
- Trans Canada Trail
- U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
- University of Idaho
- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
- U.S. Forest Service
- Utah Division of Outdoor Recreation

NEW WEBSITE & COMMUNITIES LAUNCHED

We launched a new website and SORP community platform at the end of August. The website now focuses on communities – both member-only and open to the broader SORP network – to help facilitate conversations and professional development. Communities include:

- DEIA (diversity, equity, inclusion, accessibility)
- Destination Stewardship
- NORC (National Outdoor Recreation Conference)
- Outdoor Industry Jobs
- SCORP
- SORP Members
- Students
- Visitor Use Management



MEMBERSHIP GROWTH

These membership enhancements along with changes to SORP programs and services helped us double membership from just over 600 members to over 1,200 members. SORP is committed to providing excellent service to members and continuing to ensure the membership reflects the diversity of people who work in the outdoor recreation profession.

1,200+ Members



Programs

WORKSHOPS

SCORP Workshop

The March 2023 SCORP Workshop explored best practices and lessons learned for SCORP data collection and analysis, planning, and communication. The workshop outcomes included a summary document entitled [Resources for Effective Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plans](#) and a summer [2023 SCORP webinar series](#).

We launched a [SCORP community](#) on the new website and re-initiated the SCORP Community of Practice and hosted the first quarterly meeting in December 2023.

Visitor Use Management Workshop

In August we hosted our first Visitor Use Management workshop with over 140 virtual and in-person participants. We heard case studies, discussed challenges and opportunities for VUM implementation, and identified ways to support each other to share and elevate visitor use management work across the U.S. and Canada. After the conclusion of the workshop, SCORP members are able to access resources such as presentations and notes in the [Visitor Use Management community](#).

Inclusive Spaces Audit Workshop

SCORP and Outdoor Recreation Design Lab hosted two Inclusive Spaces Audit Workshops. The first was part of the International Trails Symposium in Reno, NV. Over 30 people participated in a field-based session that looked at opportunities to improve access and inclusion at trails and trailheads. In December, we hosted a full day classroom and field session with over 25 attendees. Funded by a grant from Colorado Parks and Wildlife (CPW), the workshop focused on empowering outdoor recreation providers to make their spaces more inclusive and accessible to a broader range of users. This workshop was expanded from a half-day format to a full day to incorporate time for understanding key concepts and pre-field observations.

Participants were encouraged to use the resources provided during the day to conduct an audit at their respective outdoor recreation spaces. Shared resources and notes are listed and accessible to all within the SCORP [DEIA community](#).

How did you know you wanted to become an outdoor recreation professional?

Watching David Attenborough and Jaques Yves Cousteau inspired me to be a conservationist, and as I became a professional natural resource planner, much of my work naturally intersected with outdoor recreation along the way.

Scott Babcock
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

WEBINARS

In 2023 we offered 27 online sessions, free of charge to everyone. We are here to serve the outdoor recreation community through these types of training opportunities and thank our members and partners for helping make these important training sessions possible.

Each month had a themed topic/series. Series included:

- Public Health and Access to the Outdoors
- Destination Stewardship
- Indigenous Values in Action
- We All Belong Outside
- DEIA in Action
- Outdoor Recreation Policy
- Planning for Wildlife and Recreation
- Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plans (SCORPs)
- Climate Resiliency for Outdoor Recreation

Speakers included:

- Taishya Adams, Outdoor FUTURES Initiative Mukuyu Collective, LLC
- Diana Allen, National Park Service
- Keith Baker, Chaffee County (CO) Commissioner
- James Bradenberg, Backcountry Hunters and Anglers
- Sharon Bucciono, University of Wyoming and NRDC
- Diana Carter, New York State Parks
- Maribel Castenada, Confluence of States
- Bobby Chappell, Tourism Impact Services
- Dawn Collins, Arizona State Parks
- Erica Dickerman, U.S. Forest Service
- Stacy Duke, U.S. Forest Service and Indiana U
- Kiana Etsate-Gashytewa, Partnership for the National Trails System
- Carin Farley, Bureau of Land Management
- L Fisher, Continental Divide Trail Coalition
- Brad Garmon, Michigan Office of Outdoor Recreation
- Rachael Habash, Walk with a Doc
- Alexandra "Alex" Hernandez, National Park Service
- Dr. Lincoln Larson, North Carolina State University
- Donald Ledbetter, National Park Service
- Stacey Levine, TN Healthy Parks Healthy Person
- Hilary Lewkowitz, Colorado Tourism Office
- Pam Machuga, National Park Service
- Bill Mangle, ERO Resources
- Anne Marshall, Tennessee Bureau of Conservation
- Vonda Martin, North Carolina State Parks
- Libby Metcalf, University of Montana
- Josh Nadas, U.S. Forest Service
- Joe Namaan, Twenty31 Consulting
- Jessica Newton, Vibe Tribe Adventures (Urban Trekker Program)
- Samantha Odegard, Upper Sioux Community
- Kathryn Palano, Clinical Specialist in Neurologic Physical Therapy
- Cassandra Prenn-Vasilakis, Hipcamp
- Bill Quackenbush, Ho-Chunk Nation
- Brett Rannow, U.S. Forest Service
- Michal Rosenoer, Hipcamp
- Wendy Sailors, Alaska Dept. of Natural Resources
- Paul Sanford, The Wilderness Society
- Amanda Grace Santos, U.S. Forest Service
- Danielle Shannon, U.S. Forest Service
- Ryan Sharp, University of Tennessee
- Jason Swann, Outdoor FUTURES Initiative and Rising Routes
- Charles Thomas, Outward Bound Adventures
- Kyle Trujillo, Ancestral Lands Conservation Corps
- Jessica Wahl Turner, Outdoor Recreation Roundtable
- Stuart West, National Park Service
- Brenda Williams, Quinn Evans





2024 NORC NATIONAL OUTDOOR RECREATION CONFERENCE

NORC 2024

Planning for the 2024 National Outdoor Recreation Conference (NORC) is well underway. In 2023 we opened a call for proposals from August to October 2023. The program work group looked for presentations that conveyed durable transformative solutions of any scale that support outdoor recreation destinations, local communities, and the outdoor recreation workforce. Our goal for NORC 2024 is to present a program that is solutions-forward and equity-centric. Our call for proposals was a success with over 200 submissions. Selected presenters were notified in December of their selection. Schedule and registration for NORC 2024 are available January 2024.

Additional announcements were made in 2023 in preparation for the 2024 conference, including calls for scholarships applications and award nominations. SORP has also worked to secure exhibitors and sponsors for the week-long event in **South Lake Tahoe, Stateline, Nevada from May 6-9, 2024.**

To learn more about the upcoming conference, please visit www.2024NORC.org

**ATTENDEE
REGISTRATION**

**SPONSOR / EXHIBITOR
REGISTRATION**

What is your favorite SORP memory or experience?

A conference field trip to Mt. Saint Helens. We were given an exclusive management tour and saw first-hand how the ecology and landscape had been recovering from the eruption 20 years prior. Herds of elk were present and it just gave me inspiration about my career.

Tim Bradle
TEXAS STATE PARKS



Organizational Sustainability

STAFFING AND CAPACITY

In June we shifted from a part-time contracted Executive Director to a SORP employee Executive Director. This allowed us to expand organizational capacity by focusing on member growth and retention, program development, and strategic partnerships.

We received two grants to support organizational sustainability:

- \$7,500 from Colorado Parks and Wildlife to deliver two Inclusive Spaces Audit Workshops in Colorado (one in December 2023 and one in Spruin 2024)
- \$32,000 from the Colorado Outdoor Recreation Industry Impact Fund (ORIIF) to expand capacity and support job growth in Colorado

While SORP serves outdoor recreation professionals across North America (and beyond), our headquarters are in Colorado where our Executive Director resides. The ORIIF grant allowed us to hire a part-time Communications and Operations Support employee based in Colorado starting in September 2023. This position greatly enhanced our overall communications and social media presence as well as support to members.

Additional capacity was also supported by contracts for transition support to a new website and member platform (commonly known as a customer relationship management, or CRM) and National Outdoor Recreation Conference planning support.

We also signed two challenge cost share agreements with the U.S. Forest Service. These multi-year partnership agreements document mutual benefits between SORP and the U.S. Forest Service to support professional development for agency employees working in outdoor recreation and related fields.

How did you know you wanted to become an outdoor recreation professional?

I took a gap year before starting college and worked as an outdoor educator at YMCA Camp Chingachgook in Lake George, New York. I couldn't believe there was a profession where you could spend time outside in beautiful places, continuously learning and helping to share your passion for nature with others.

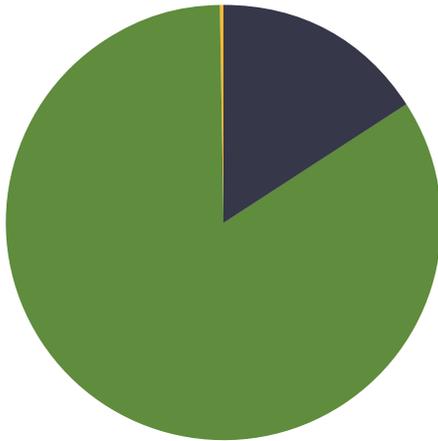
Chris Zajchowski
UNIVERSITY OF IDAHO



PROFIT AND LOSS

SORP's fiscal year 2023 began on October 1, 2022 and ended on September 30, 2023.

Annual Revenue



- Contributed Income: \$22,268.60
 - Earned Income: \$116,229.46
 - Other: \$0.07
- Total: 138,498.13**

Annual Expenses



- Operating: \$91,926.63
 - Programs: \$14,299.25
 - Personnel: \$25,258.54
- Total: \$131,501.42**

Net Income: \$6,996.71



What do you hope we'll celebrate about outdoor recreation in the next 40 years?

I am most hopeful that we will be celebrating restorative land management practices and dismantling and rebuilding systems that provide a truly equitable outdoor recreation industry that leads with stewardship of the resource.

Lisa Luukkala
SUPERIOR HIKING
TRAIL ASSOCIATION

Fundraising

CELEBRATING 40 YEARS

In Spring 2023, SORP launched a \$40 for the 40th Anniversary Campaign with a target to raise \$10,000. Three former Board members answered the call, and we quickly exceeded the target of \$10,000. In the fall of 2023 we decided to do a reboot of the 40th Anniversary Campaign with a new target set at \$40,000.

The goals for this campaign focused on keeping SORP and its membership viable into the future. The three goals for this campaign are:

1. Support and build the next generation of outdoor recreation professionals.
2. Create opportunities for innovation and engagement within the outdoor recreation landscape.
3. Rebuild and stabilize SORP's Operating Endowment.

Donations are still being collected to help support our goals. You can donate at donorbox.org/40kfor40years.

While celebrating 40 years, we are also celebrating our membership! We wouldn't be where we are today without you. Your journeys, dreams, and milestones are what makes our profession so special. We are sharing member stories on our social media channels and will continue to do so into 2024. Help us celebrate the past, present, and future of the Outdoor Recreation Profession through your stories — [you can still submit your story here](#).

THANK YOU TO OUR DONORS:

- Al Nedved
- Aleks Pitt
- Alexandria Lipton
- Ann McVay
- Anne Marshall
- Arielle Courtney
- Becky Kelley
- Chad Schneckenburger
- Chas Van Genderen
- Christopher Douwes
- Chris Zajchowski
- Dakota Anderson
- David Dahlquist
- Dawn Collins
- Deborah Caffin
- Dick Westfall
- Elizabeth Perry
- Floyd Thompson
- Gina Pearson
- Glenn Haas
- Gregory T Rice
- Hal Hallett
- Jamie Fields
- Janit Llewellyn
- Joe David Rice
- John Baas
- Joshua Nadas
- Kelly Grissman
- Kevin Chesley
- Kristine Komar
- Lisa Luokkala
- Margaret Bailey
- Mason Smith
- Michael Hill
- Monika Derrien
- Rachel Franchina
- Rex Turner
- Rick Just
- Robert Ratcliffe
- Roger Lewis
- Ryan Shazor
- Sam Rider
- Sandi Miller
- Sergio Capozzi
- Stephen Holland
- Terry Bemis
- Tim Bradle
- Tony Bebbber
- Wayne Sames
- and former Board members

What is your favorite SORP memory or experience?

When I participated in the Rafting program in the river Ganges in 2013.

Dr. S.K.Sharma
DOON VALLEY
INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL





Not a Member? Join SORP Today!

The Society of Outdoor Recreation Professionals creates sustainable outdoor recreation opportunities for all. No other professional organization is positioned to support outdoor recreation professionals with the same depth and breadth of expertise as SORP. Our focus is the complex interactions between outdoor recreation, tourism and natural, historic, and cultural resources. We are confident that you will see a positive return on investment when you become a SORP member!

TYPES OF MEMBERSHIP

- Professional
- Professional Team
- Student
- Retiree
- Organization

BENEFITS

Webinars: We understand that travel restrictions and budgets can make it difficult to attend conferences. Members can attend SORP webinars free of charge.

Training and Conference Discounts: The National Outdoor Recreation Conference is the only conference that supports the training needs of professionals that manage nature-based outdoor recreation.

Resource Library: Members have exclusive access to a robust technical resource library curated by topic such as climate change, DEIA, stewardship, outdoor recreation economy and much more!

Communities and Discussion Forums: Our new website features topic-specific communities such as SCORP, Visitor Use Management, and Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Accessibility. Members can ask for advice, share examples, and celebrate each other's accomplishments!

Communities of Practice: SORP provides resources, discussion forums, libraries, and a place to connect for professionals involved in specific focus areas such as SCORPs, VUM, and DEIA in Action.

Outdoor Gear Pro Deal: SORP members can save up to 60% on brands like Smartwool, Otterbox, Merrell, Diamondback, Carhartt, Old Towne and many, many more.

E-Newsletter: SORP compiles relevant news articles, job announcements, research and reports, training opportunities and delivers it to your inbox every other week.

Tools: Keeping up to date on new recreation planning and management tools, concepts, processes, handbooks, and policies is difficult. SORP collects, organizes and maintains a wide variety of resources to help you do your job better and save you time.

Job Announcements: Have a position to fill in your office? We have our Outdoor Industry Jobs board / community. Jobs shared in the community will be added to our newsletter.

Personal Service: As an outdoor recreation professional, you will soon discover that your colleagues have much in common and the profession is smaller than others. The Society of Outdoor Recreation Professionals is a welcoming group of professionals with an intentional effort invested in developing a sense of community. SORP prides itself in offering a personal and friendly association atmosphere.

Support SORP

Your gift will make all the difference in helping outdoor recreation professionals acquire the skills and resources they need to succeed in this rapidly evolving landscape.

DONATE



SOCIETY OF OUTDOOR RECREATION PROFESSIONALS