



SOCIETY OF OUTDOOR
RECREATION PROFESSIONALS

ANNUAL REPORT 2024

WWW.RECPRO.ORG



**CREATING SUSTAINABLE OUTDOOR
RECREATION OPPORTUNITIES FOR ALL**

Executive Summary

The Society of Outdoor Recreation Professionals (SORP) experienced remarkable growth and impact in 2024, solidifying our role as a leading organization for people who plan, manage, and provide nature-based outdoor recreation as a public service. Through increased membership, record-breaking attendance at the National Outdoor Recreation Conference (NORC), and expanded engagement opportunities, we have advanced our mission to support professionals dedicated to protecting natural and cultural resources while promoting sustainable recreation.

MEMBERSHIP GROWTH

SORP's membership surpassed 2,000, driven by the addition of new organizational, university, and team memberships and increased interest that surrounded the registration for the 2024 NORC. More individuals, organizations, and teams recognized the value of SORP which enhanced awareness of our efforts to build a sustainable and thriving outdoor recreation professional community.

LARGEST NATIONAL OUTDOOR RECREATION CONFERENCE (NORC)

The 2024 NORC was our largest to date, attracting over 600 attendees and 50 sponsors. With record-breaking proposal submissions, we reached maximum capacity and offered a robust program of concurrent sessions, workshops, and outdoor experiences showcasing the breathtaking Lake Tahoe region. This milestone conference exemplified our dedication to fostering collaboration and innovation within the outdoor recreation community.

IMPACT AND AWARENESS

This year of growth has elevated SORP's influence in the outdoor recreation sector. By offering Continuing Education Credits (CEUs) in partnership with American Trails, we increased participation in both NORC and our webinar series and extended professional development opportunities to more members. Our programs span the United States and we continued to grow our presence in Canada which bolstered our ability to support outdoor recreation professionals on a broader scale.

As we look toward 2025 and beyond, we are committed to sustaining this momentum by expanding programming, increasing engagement, and supporting our members in advancing sustainable outdoor recreation practices. Together, we are building a stronger, more resilient industry for the future.



STATS TO NOTE

2,000+
Members

13
Free Webinars
Hosted

895
Resources on
www.recpro.org

600+
Attendees at the 2024
National Outdoor Recreation
Conference (NORC)

2024: A Year of Growth, Connection, and Exciting Plans for SORP!

NOTE FROM THE PRESIDENT + EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

We wrapped up 2024, feeling grateful and inspired by everything we accomplished together. It's been an incredible year of growth and change for SORP, and we are so thankful to be part of this community of dedicated recreation planners and professionals. We stayed focused on what we did best—supporting outdoor recreation professionals to do their best work—while also embracing new opportunities and innovations. Here are just a few highlights from this past year:

- » **Expanded Our Impact:** This year, we hosted webinar series like Climate Resilient Recreation Planning and Stewarding the Outdoor Recreation Professional and they were a huge hit. It's exciting to see so much enthusiasm around learning and growing together.
- » **Strengthened Membership:** We saw fantastic growth in organizational memberships, with more state and local agencies, universities, nonprofits, and private-sector partners getting involved, alongside our federal land managers. It's great to see even more people supporting SORP's mission.
- » **NORC 2024 in Tahoe:** Our flagship event in Tahoe was a huge success, drawing record numbers of attendees, speakers, and exhibitors. From dynamic keynotes to engaging sessions and amazing networking, it was truly a standout event.
- » **Innovated Education:** Workshops like the Inclusive Spaces Workshop and Visitor Use Management sessions were in high demand, proving just how much interest there is in education that focuses on sustainability and inclusion. We also supported agency-specific training through partnership agreements.
- » **A Stronger Foundation:** We added Rebecca Maguire to our team and Rachel Franchina continued as our Executive Director. We made great strides in strengthening our foundation and positioning SORP for long-term success.

Looking ahead to 2025, we're so excited about what's next. We're committed to:

- » **Bringing More Workshops to You:** We'll continue offering workshops strategically located across the U.S. and Canada, so we can meet you where you are and provide more accessible training and networking opportunities.
- » **Keeping the Webinars Going:** Our webinar series has been a fantastic way to stay connected, and we'll keep it going strong throughout the year to offer even more opportunities for learning and growth.
- » **Preparing for the 2026 National Outdoor Recreation Conference in Duluth, MN:** We're already gearing up for the 2026 conference, and we can't wait to see how this event comes together. Stay tuned for more details!

We encourage everyone to like and follow us on social media to stay up to date on all things SORP! You can find us on Facebook, Instagram, and LinkedIn—it's a great way to stay connected and get involved in our growing community. We can't thank you enough for all your time, energy, and passion. Whether you've been part of our or webinars, donated for our 40th anniversary, or helped make NORC a success, you've helped make 2024 a year to remember. Here's to continuing our journey together in 2025. We can't wait to see where we go from here!



Michael J. Bradley, Ph.D.
BOARD PRESIDENT



Rachel Franchina
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

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 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



Membership

SORP expanded its membership offerings to include organizations/agencies and universities, which significantly grew our reach and impact. These memberships enhanced awareness and access, and made it easier for agencies, universities, and companies to connect with SORP and access our resources.

Organizational and university memberships provide value for multiple employees, students, and professors, while the new company membership adds exclusive benefits for advertising and sponsorship opportunities.

With over 2,000 members, including 242 individuals and 44 group memberships, SORP continues to support a diverse community of professionals dedicated to protecting resources and promoting sustainable recreation access. We're proud to partner with our members to advance this mission!

Organizations with 5 or more members:

- Bureau of Land Management
- Bureau of Reclamation
- Bureau of Recreation and Conservation
- City of Boulder Open Space and Mountain Parks
- Colorado Parks and Wildlife
- Colorado State University
- DJ & A
- Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission
- Forest Preserves of Cook County
- Institute of Outdoor Recreation and Tourism at Utah State University
- Jefferson County Open Space
- King County Parks & Recreation
- Logan Simpson
- Maine Bureau of Parks and Lands
- Michigan DNR
- Missouri Department of Conservation
- National Park Service
- Nebraska Game and Parks Commission
- New York State Department of Environmental Conservation
- NYS Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation
- Parks Canada
- RC Strategies
- SE Group
- Sierra Club
- Tahoe Rim Trail Association
- TAMBA
- Texas Parks & Wildlife Department
- Truckee Meadows Parks Foundation
- U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
- University of Idaho
- University of Minnesota
- University of New Hampshire
- U.S. Forest Service
- Utah Division of Outdoor Recreation
- Vermont Department of Forests, Parks, and Recreation
- Washington Department of Natural Resources
- Washington Trails Association



WEBSITE ENGAGEMENT: YOUR HUB FOR CONNECTION, OPPORTUNITIES, AND KNOWLEDGE

Our website serves as a hub for outdoor recreation professionals, offering community discussions, a job board, and resource libraries.

Community Discussions

We continued to host topic-specific communities on SCORP, Visitor Use Management, and DEIA, along with featured resource libraries and discussion boards for members to connect, share insights, and celebrate successes.

Outdoor Industry Job Board

We added a job board to display career opportunities in the outdoor industry. Members can easily access full postings by logging into their accounts at recpro.org.

Resource Libraries

We updated and expanded the member-only resource library which now contains nearly 900 publications, research articles, and links. We continued to offer free access to resources that benefit the outdoor recreation professional community including the SCORP library, visitor use management, and training opportunities.

Programs

NATIONAL OUTDOOR RECREATION CONFERENCE (NORC)

The 2024 National Outdoor Recreation Conference (NORC) in South Lake Tahoe/Stateline, Nevada, was our largest ever, with over 600 attendees. The event featured a record number of proposal submissions, a full-capacity crowd, and a dynamic program of sessions, workshops, and outdoor experiences that highlighted the stunning Lake Tahoe region.

We are deeply grateful to our partners, including the **U.S. Forest Service** and our Sierra sponsor, **Aramark Destinations**, for their support in making this milestone conference possible. A special thanks also goes to our sponsors and exhibitors, whose contributions were essential to the event's success. Together, we celebrated innovation and collaboration within the outdoor recreation community.

Thank you to our 2024 sponsors:

Lake Tahoe (\$10,000)



Great Basin (\$5,000)



Truckee (\$2,500)



Donner Pass (\$1,250)



Friend (\$500)



INCLUSIVE SPACES AUDIT WORKSHOPS

SORP and the Outdoor Recreation Design Lab hosted two free, in-person workshops in Colorado, funded by a grant from Colorado Parks and Wildlife. These full-day workshops, held at Staunton State Park in December 2023 and Ridgway State Park in April 2024, focused on helping outdoor recreation providers create more inclusive and accessible spaces. Participants were encouraged to use provided resources to conduct audits of their own spaces, contributing insights for both the Colorado Parks and Wildlife report and future workshop improvements. These sessions highlight SORP's commitment to inclusive outdoor experiences and professional development.



STATEWIDE COMPREHENSIVE OUTDOOR RECREATION PLAN (SCORP) COMMUNITY OF PRACTICE

SORP continued its partnership with the National Park Service (NPS) to support the Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP) community of practice. Through quarterly calls and an online community, SORP connects SCORP planners, researchers, consultants, and implementers to share ideas and best practices. Each session includes an NPS update, a state SCORP success story, and time for discussion, helping to promote collaboration and advance SCORP development nationwide.



U.S. FOREST SERVICE PARTNER AGREEMENTS

Washington Office, Recreation, Heritage and Volunteer Resources

National Outdoor Recreation Conference

The bi-annual NORC returned in 2024 in partnership with the USFS. Over 600 attendees gathered in South Lake Tahoe/Stateline, NV to share, connect and learn. The conference theme was Stewarding People, Place, and Play and featured keynote presentations, concurrent sessions, education workshops, and field workshops on designing destination management, climate response and resiliency, DEIA in action, and stewarding the outdoor recreation professional. We were thrilled to have approximately 194 USFS employees in attendance, with 22 presentations presented by 28 USFS staff.

Core Competencies

In our ongoing partnership with the USFS, we established an advisory group that represents a broad cross-sector of agencies, universities, nonprofit organizations, and practitioners to identify core competencies for outdoor recreation professionals who plan and manage nature-based outdoor recreation as a public service. We facilitated six sessions with the advisory group that resulted in a draft outdoor recreation core competency model that will be vetted more widely in 2025. We also researched and documented core competency models from natural resource disciplines (e.g., trails, rivers, wilderness, forestry) and other well-documented competency models (e.g., nursing).

Pacific Northwest Region (R6), Recreation, Lands and Minerals

Region 6 and SORP continued collaborating on the recreation training and technical assistance agreement in FY24. Tasks included identifying additional virtual and in-person training opportunities related to recreation planning, partnerships, communications, data gathering and analysis, and other topics. These were curated in a searchable database on the SORP website and are available to anyone who visits the website. We also identified tools to support mid-level recreation planning in R6 and began work on developing and piloting these tools. Finally, we identified training topics to support employees in a rapidly changing environment and will host virtual sessions throughout 2025.

Intermountain Region (R4), Recreation, Heritage, and Wilderness

Region 4 and SORP entered into an agreement to develop and implement a Recreation Business Planning Training program for the Region. Initial tasks included developed the project work plan and identifying subject matter experts for the training.

WEBINARS

In 2024, SORP proudly offered 13 free webinars, which provided over a dozen engaging online sessions to the outdoor recreation community. These webinars covered vital topics such as *Planning for Wildlife and Recreation*, *Stewarding the Outdoor Recreation Professional*, and *Climate Resilience and Outdoor Recreation*. Designed to inform and inspire, these sessions brought together experts and professionals dedicated to advancing sustainable practices and innovative solutions in outdoor recreation. Thanks to the incredible support of our members and partners, we've been able to make these essential training opportunities accessible to all—empowering professionals to tackle today's challenges and shape a thriving future for our field.

Speakers included:

- Dr. Libby Nelson, University of Montana
- James Brandenburg, Backcountry Hunters and Anglers
- Bill Mangle, ERO Resources
- Dr. Wayde Morse - Professor, Auburn University
- Dr. Lee Cerveny - Research Social Scientist, USDA Forest Service
- Dr. Randy Rosenberger - Professor, Oregon State University
- Liz Vogel, The Wilderness Society
- Sharon Musa, The Wilderness Society
- Rachel Franchina, Society of Outdoor Recreation Professionals
- Margaret Bailey - Advisor, CHM Government Services
- Michael Bradley - Department Chair, Arkansas Tech University
- Parker McMullen-Bushman - Founder, Ecolnclusive Strategies
- Bob Ratcliffe - Retired, National Park Service
- Aleks Pitt, National Park Service Midwest Region Planning Portfolio Manager
- Dr. Chris Armatas, USFS Aldo Leopold Wilderness Research Institute
- Maureen Finnerty, National Park Service Visitor Use Management Project Manager
- Sam Rider, USFS National Recreation Planner
- Andrew White, National Park Service Visitor Use Management Specialist
- Kimberly Leitzinger, BLM Outdoor Recreation Specialist
- Patrick Olstad - Landscape Architect, SE Group
- Isaac Sims - Landscape Architect, U.S. Forest Service
- Frank Aebly, District Ranger, Upper Lake and Covelo Ranger Districts and Berryessa Snow Mountain National Monument - Mendocino National Forest
- Hinda Darner, Fuels Battalion, - Mendocino National Forest
- Frank Lynch, President - Pillsbury Homeowners Association
- Ryan Henson, Senior Policy Director - CalWild
- Paul Truette, President - Mendocino County Blacktail Association
- Dean Joyner, Post Wildfire and Disaster OHV Recovery Alliance
- Gregg Berggren - Carson City Parks, Recreation and Open Space
- Lyndsey Boyer - Carson City Parks, Recreation and Open Space
- Marc Hildesheim - NOHVCC
- Jennifer Jaworski - Chief of Interpretive Services, Huron-Clinton Metroparks
- Amy McMillan - Director, Huron-Clinton Metroparks
- Elizabeth Perry - Assistant Professor, Michigan State University
- Grant Colvin, National Ski Areas Association
- Whitney Potter Schwartz, Outdoor Recreation Roundtable
- Duane Taylor, Recreational OHV Association



Fundraising

CELEBRATING 40 YEARS OF IMPACT

In May 2024, SORP completed its \$40K for 40 Years campaign that raised over \$30,000, with \$11,123 contributed at the 2024 NORC. Special thanks to David Dahlquist for his \$3,000 match at NORC and overall contribution of \$6,000! The funds will support mentorship programs, scholarships, and establish an endowment to secure SORP's future growth.

Looking ahead, we remain committed to supporting outdoor recreation professionals through leadership development, networking, and technical guidance. Your donations make it possible to offer free webinars, scholarships, and mentorship, helping professionals excel in their careers.

Visit www.recpro.org to learn more and support SORP's mission. Thank you for helping SORP continue to lead the field of outdoor recreation.

[Learn more about our fundraiser here.](#)

THANK YOU TO OUR DONORS:

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- Whit Patterson
- Zac Ribbing
- Zoe Houghton
- + Many anonymous donors!



Organizational Sustainability

STAFFING AND CAPACITY

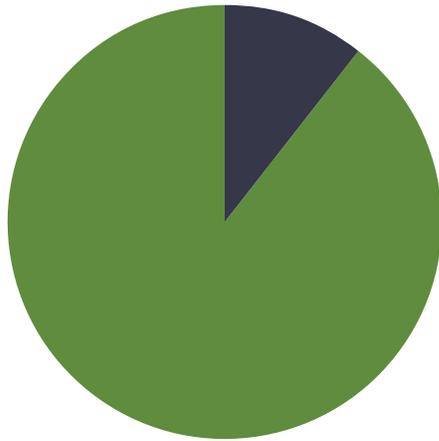
We continued to strengthen organizational sustainability in 2024. Thanks to the Colorado Outdoor Recreation Industry Impact Fund (ORIF) grant we received the previous year, we were able to significantly improve and increase our communications and direct member support. Rebecca Maguire became the Membership and Communications Manager in the summer of 2024. We also worked with several consultants to deliver programs including the National Outdoor Recreation Conference. We can safely say the 2024 NORC's success was a result of Candace Gallagher's skills in conference planning and her expansive network of outdoor recreation professionals through her position at American Trails!

PROFIT AND LOSS

SORP's fiscal year 2024 began on October 1, 2023 and ended on September 30, 2024. We had an incredible year and the net profit will be reinvested in 2025 programs and capacity, organizational sustainability, and new efforts such as a mentorship program and increased presence at key industry events.

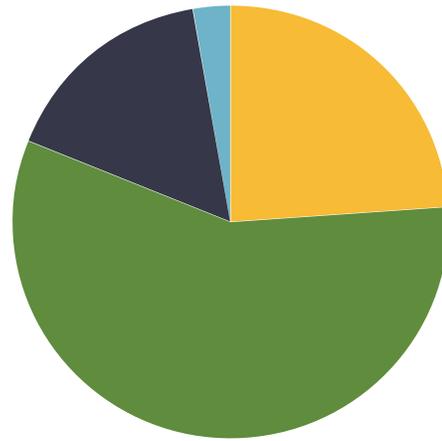


Annual Revenue



● Contributed Income:	\$58,907.49
● Earned Income:	\$495,942.73
● Other:	\$882.08
Total:	\$555,732.30

Annual Expenses



● Operating:	\$72,851.64
● Other Programs:	\$11,873.89
● Personnel:	\$108,430.18
● NORC:	\$257,262.23
Total:	\$450,417.94

Net Income: \$105,314.36



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!

BENEFITS

Webinars: We understand that travel restrictions and budgets can make it difficult to attend conferences and trainings. Members can attend SORP webinars free of charge and they cover a variety of topics.

Training and Conference Discounts: Members receive a discount in NORC, workshops, and other events with a registration fee.

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!

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

E-Newsletter: SORP compiles relevant news, job announcements, research and reports, training opportunities and delivers it to your inbox bi-weekly.

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: Find or share job opportunities on our Outdoor Industry Jobs board / community. Opportunities are also shared in our newsletters.

Personal Service: SORP 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.



TYPES OF MEMBERSHIP

- Professional
- Professional Team
- Student
- Retiree
- Organizations: Small to Large
- Company

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