



SOCIETY OF OUTDOOR
RECREATION PROFESSIONALS

ANNUAL REPORT FY2025

WWW.RECPRO.ORG



CREATING SUSTAINABLE OUTDOOR RECREATION OPPORTUNITIES FOR ALL

Executive Summary

The Society of Outdoor Recreation Professionals (SORP) continued to grow and strengthen its impact in 2025, solidifying our role as a leading organization for professionals who plan, manage, and provide nature-based outdoor recreation as a public service. SORP advanced its mission to support members dedicated to protecting natural and cultural resources while promoting sustainable recreation.

MEMBERSHIP GROWTH AND ENGAGEMENT

Membership remains the foundation of SORP’s community. In 2025, we saw steady growth in university and organizational memberships, bringing together colleagues from across the outdoor recreation field to learn, share, and grow together. With more than 2,200 members, including individuals, students, agencies, and companies, SORP continues to foster collaboration, professional development, and knowledge exchange.

NEW PODCAST: PLANNING THE WILD

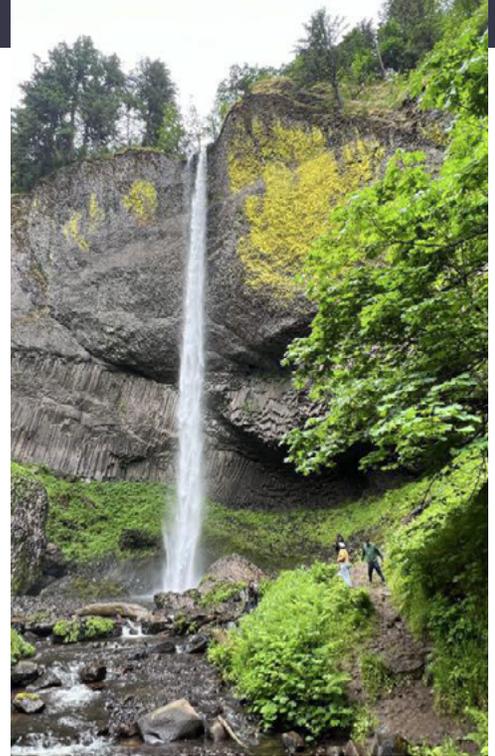
In partnership with the U.S. Forest Service, SORP launched Planning the Wild, a podcast for professionals working to enhance recreation experiences on national forest lands in the Pacific Northwest. Each episode features practical strategies, expert interviews, and field-based insights to support effective planning and management of recreation resources—from navigating NEPA and forest planning processes to designing sustainable infrastructure and managing visitor use.

In 2025, six episodes were released, providing resources for both new and seasoned recreation planners. Episodes can be accessed at www.recpro.org/podcast

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

SORP continued to support outdoor recreation professionals through two Visitor Use Management trainings, including our first virtual session, the launch of a six-month Mentorship Program connecting early- and mid-career members with experienced leaders, and an Inclusive Spaces Audit Training & Workshop, helping organizations foster equitable and welcoming recreation environments. These initiatives strengthened skills, collaboration, and professional networks across the field.

As we look toward 2026 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

2,200+
Members

15
Free Webinars Hosted

147
Attendees at Visitor Use
Management Trainings

1,147
Attendees at
SORP Webinars

Strength and Resilience in 2025

NOTE FROM THE PRESIDENT + EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

As we reflect on 2025, we are deeply grateful for the strength, resilience, and commitment of the Society of Outdoor Recreation Professionals community. Our members, partners, volunteers, and donors are the foundation of SORP's work, and your continued engagement makes it possible to advance sustainable and accessible outdoor recreation opportunities on public lands.

Thank you to our members for sharing knowledge, participating in trainings and webinars, and supporting one another across agencies, organizations, universities, and communities. We are equally thankful to our partners and funders whose collaboration and investment allow SORP to respond to emerging needs and expand access to high-quality professional development.

This year brought real challenges for many outdoor recreation professionals, particularly those working in federal agencies. Capacity constraints, uncertainty, and changing conditions required resilience and adaptability. We recognize the dedication it takes to continue serving the public and stewarding natural and cultural resources during such times. We also recognize how difficult it was for many people to move on from careers they dedicated their lives to as public servants.

These challenges also highlighted an opportunity for SORP to step into a stronger leadership role. In 2025, we focused on creating reliable, practitioner-centered spaces for learning and connection—through trainings, mentorship, webinars, podcasts, and communities of practice. By coming together across sectors and career stages, we strengthened our collective ability to adapt and lead with shared values.

Looking ahead, SORP remains committed to investing in people, fostering collaboration, and providing practical tools that support outdoor recreation professionals in an increasingly complex environment. Thank you for being part of this community and for the important work you do every day. More than ever before, our collective strength in the outdoor recreation sector is needed to support the health and wellness of our communities. We look forward to continuing this journey together.

With appreciation,



Lisa Luokkala
BOARD PRESIDENT



Rachel Franchina
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

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



Collective Strength



Sustainable Recreation



People



Community



Collaboration



Skill Development

LEARN MORE



Membership

SORP continued to encourage organization, agency, and university memberships in 2025, helping expand our reach and strengthen connections with partners across the outdoor recreation field. These group memberships increase awareness, broaden access to SORP resources, and make it easier for teams and institutions to engage with our programs.

Organizational and university memberships provide value for multiple employees, students, and faculty, while company memberships offer exclusive benefits for advertising and sponsorship visibility.

With more than 2,200 members, including 205 individuals and 50 group memberships, SORP supports a diverse community of professionals committed to protecting outdoor resources and advancing sustainable recreation access. We're proud to partner with our members to move this mission forward.

SORP conducted a membership survey to better understand the needs and priorities of our community. The survey highlighted interest in increased diversity and inclusion within the industry, enhanced professional development and educational resources, and featuring more stories and peer experiences. Feedback from the survey will help guide SORP's efforts to expand engagement, support members across career stages and regions, and ensure all members feel valued and connected.

SORP saw an increase in renewals and new memberships in the last few months of FY2025, as individual and student membership rates increased at the start of FY2026 (October 1, 2025). Rates across all membership levels have remained unchanged for many years; this adjustment will help sustain high-quality programs and member services.

University and Organizational members:

As of 12/31/2025

- 52Eighty Creative
- Alaska Dept. of Natural Resources
- American Trails
- Arkansas Tech University
- Avid Trails
- Bureau of Land Management
- City of Apache Junction
- City of Boulder Open Space and Mountain Parks
- City of Fort Collins
- Clemson PRTM
- COB Natural Lands
- Colorado Parks and Wildlife
- Colorado State University
- CRO Planning & Design
- Dakota County Parks
- DJ & A
- Federal Employees
- Florida Dept. of Environmental Protection
- Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission
- Forest Preserves of Cook County
- Friends of the Blue Hills
- Gopher Sign Company
- Institute of Outdoor Recreation and Tourism at Utah State University
- Jeffco Parks and Open Space
- Logan Simpson
- Maine Bureau of Parks and Lands
- Michigan DNR
- Minnesota Department of Natural Resources
- Missouri Department of Conservation
- National Park Service
- NC State University
- Nebraska Game and Parks Commission
- Nevada State Parks' SORP membership
- NYS Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation
- Oregon State University
- PA Bureau of Recreation and Conservation
- Parks Canada
- RRC Associates
- SE Group
- SherCo Parks
- TCT Trail Team
- Texas Parks & Wildlife Department
- The Trustees
- TN Dept of Environment and Conservation
- U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
- University of Idaho
- University of Montana
- University of Tennessee - Outdoor Recreation and Conservation Lab
- University of Vermont
- U.S. Forest Service
- Utah Division of Outdoor Recreation
- Vermont Department of Forests, Parks, and Recreation
- Wapello County Conservation
- Washington State Recreation and Conservation Office
- Washington Trails Association
- Western Colorado University Center for Public Lands

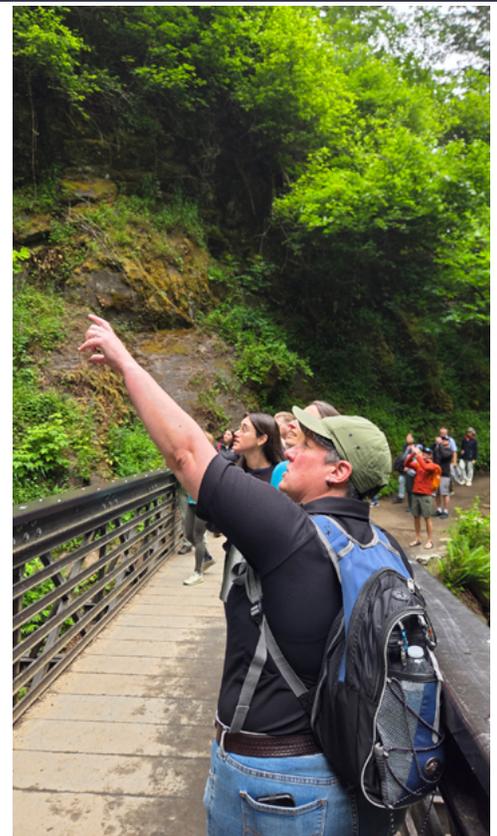


Programs

VISITOR USE MANAGEMENT TRAINING

SORP hosted two Visitor Use Management (VUM) trainings, bringing together recreation planners, land managers, and researchers to build skills, share knowledge, and apply practical strategies for sustainable recreation management. In June, more than 100 participants attended the in-person VUM Training and Symposium in Vancouver, Washington, which included a two-day immersive training, a full-day symposium with 17 sessions, and hands-on field workshops on iconic regional landscapes. The event emphasized the application of the VUM Framework, field-based learning, and inclusive approaches to recreation planning, including a keynote dinner and plenary sessions centering Tribal voices and co-stewardship principles.

In September, SORP delivered its first-ever virtual VUM Foundations Training, designed as an interactive, collaborative experience rather than a passive online course. Participants worked in small groups on case studies spanning diverse management contexts, from high-visitation trails to urban parks, practicing the VUM Framework by defining desired conditions, setting indicators, evaluating thresholds, and discussing monitoring strategies. The virtual format reinforced collaboration across agencies and regions, helping participants translate VUM concepts into real-world planning while fostering shared understanding and professional networks.



INCLUSIVE SPACES AUDIT TRAINING & WORKSHOP

In August 2025, SORP hosted an Inclusive Spaces Audit Training & Workshop in Poultney, Vermont, supported by a grant from the Vermont Outdoor Recreation Economic Collaborative (VOREC). The training brought together recreation managers, nonprofit leaders, volunteers, and community partners from across the region to learn how to deliver inclusive audit workshops in their own organizations and communities.

Participants explored the development of the Inclusive Spaces Audit framework, examined the historical and structural barriers that have made outdoor spaces inaccessible, and practiced techniques to facilitate open dialogue and safe sharing. Small-group exercises, including drawings and skits, allowed participants to creatively demonstrate strategies for fostering inclusive and welcoming outdoor recreation environments.

This workshop reflects SORP's ongoing commitment to equity, accessibility, and professional development, equipping participants to help communities create outdoor spaces that are inclusive for all.

MENTORSHIP PROGRAM

In 2025, SORP launched its inaugural Mentorship Program, a six-month, semi-structured initiative designed to foster professional development, leadership growth, and meaningful connections among outdoor recreation professionals. The program pairs early- and mid-career mentees with experienced mentors, encouraging collaborative goal-setting, shared learning, and network-building without requiring a specific project or deliverable. Participants are supported with guidance, tools, and templates to cultivate inclusive, cross-generational relationships and strengthen the broader outdoor recreation community.

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE PARTNER AGREEMENT

SORP formalized its long-standing collaboration with the NPS's Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) program through a multi-year partner agreement. SORP and the NPS will be developing tools and training for SCORP practitioners, including the continuation of quarterly SCORP community of practice sessions. Look for the return of SCORP University in 2026!

U.S. FOREST SERVICE PARTNER AGREEMENTS

Outdoor Recreation Professional Competency Framework

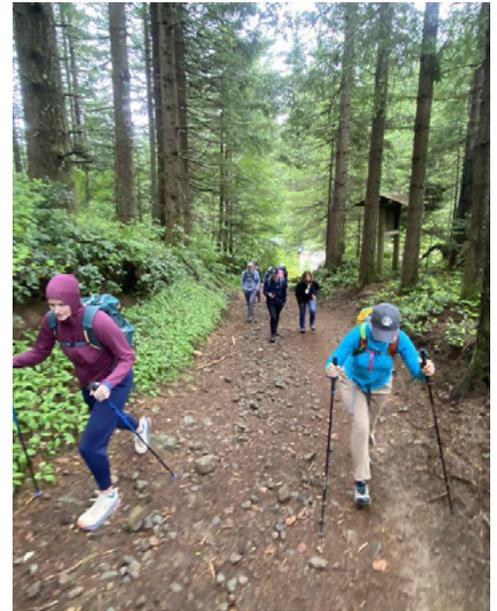
SORP and the USFS, along with an advisory group representing agencies, universities, and nonprofit organizations, continued work on identifying core competencies for outdoor recreation professionals. The team collaborated with Indiana University's Eppley Center for Parks and Public Lands to conduct a research-based evaluation of the draft competencies. Over 100 outdoor recreation professionals provided feedback that will help define the skills needed for the people who plan and manage outdoor recreation as a public service.

Planning the Wild Podcast

SORP launched Planning the Wild, a podcast produced in partnership with the U.S. Forest Service, Region 6, for professionals and partners working to enhance outdoor recreation on national forest lands in the Pacific Northwest. Each episode features practical strategies, expert interviews, and field-based insights to support recreation planning and management, from navigating NEPA and forest planning processes to designing sustainable infrastructure and managing visitor use. The podcast provides a valuable resource for both new and experienced professionals seeking to make informed, impactful decisions that benefit people and the land.

NATIONAL OUTDOOR RECREATION CONFERENCE (NORC)

Planning for the 2026 National Outdoor Recreation Conference (NORC) in Duluth, Minnesota is already well underway. Many sponsors and exhibitors were secured before the end of FY2025, and initial preparations in 2025 focused on developing the program, launching scholarship applications, and opening award nominations. We are excited to continue building a dynamic conference that brings together outdoor recreation professionals to share knowledge, celebrate innovation, and strengthen our community.



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It was wonderful to connect with folks across the country who are doing similar work. I've never been to a conference that was so specific to what I do for work. I loved that we had so many breakout sessions to choose from.

2024 NORC Attendee

WEBINARS

In 2025, SORP proudly offered 15 free webinars, which provided engaging online sessions to the outdoor recreation professional community. These webinars covered vital topics such as *Destination Stewardship & Management*, *Navigating the Outdoors: Facilitated Recreation, Policy, Permitting, and Partnerships*, *Sustainable Funding for Outdoor Recreation*, and *Thriving Through Change – Leadership & Resilience in 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. Natalie Ooi, Associate Teaching Professor, CU Boulder Masters of the Environment and Outdoor Recreation Economy Graduate Programs
- Matt Nunez, Senior Program Manager, Colorado Outdoor Recreation Industry Office
- Guinevere Nelson, Douglas County Extension Director, CSU Extension
- Cassandra Prenn-Vasilakis, Senior Manager, Government and Community Relations, Hipcamp
- Nastassja Olson, Travel Oregon
- Kate Porsche, OSU Center for Outdoor Recreation Economy
- Paul Sanford, The Wilderness Society
- Dustin Smucker, UC Santa Cruz Adventure Rec
- Wilson Obenhaus, University of Northern Colorado
- John LaCroix, Race Director at Human Potential Running Series
- Steven Foy, Nantahala Outdoor Center
- Dustin Smucker, UC Santa Cruz Adventure Rec
- Jeannette Stawski, Association of Outdoor Recreation and Education (AORE)
- Lori McCullough, CEO of the Great Outdoors Fund
- Sean Noonan, BLM San Luis Valley Field Office
- Trevor Robinson, USFS Siuslaw National Forest
- Hanne Beener, Policy and Planning Manager, TREAD
- Cailin O'Brien-Feeney, Senior Director for Outdoor Recreation, Quantified Ventures
- Allison Smith, ERC Fellow, Mountain BizWorks
- Carissa Patrone Maikuri, ERC Fellow, Rural Communities Assistance Corporation (RCAC) in collaboration with Plumas County
- Zachary Gately, Grant Manager, Plumas County Taylor Sarman, Economic Recovery Corps Fellow Wallowa Resources
- Courtney Wynn, Economic Recovery Corps Fellow
- Alexandra Calloway-Nation, ERC Fellow, Wind River Development Fund
- Essence Sage Oyos, ERC Fellow, Mesa Grande Business Development Corporation (BDC)
- Marc Wilken, ERC Fellow, Pennsylvania Wilds Center for Entrepreneurship
- Ben Lawhon, Recreation Solutions Group
- Chris Perkins, Outdoor Recreation Roundtable
- Doug Vilsack, BLM Colorado State Lead
- Christy Tafoya, Retired NM State Parks Director
- Brian Joyner, NPS Rock Creek Park Superintendent
- Greer Van Dyke, Windrose Consulting

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Great job - I thought the pacing of the itinerary and the interactive, class type sessions were excellent. The speakers were excellent as well.

2025 VUM Training & Symposium Attendee

Organizational Sustainability

STAFFING AND CAPACITY

We continued to strengthen organizational capacity and sustainability in 2025. At the start of the year, we welcomed Angie Braley as our Training Specialist, bringing expertise to expand SORP's professional development offerings. Rachel Franchina, Executive Director, leads overall strategy and program development, while Rebecca Maguire serves as Membership and Communications Manager, supporting engagement and direct member services. Candace Gallagher, Conference Coordinator, continues to apply her extensive experience and network to ensure the success of our National Outdoor Recreation Conference.

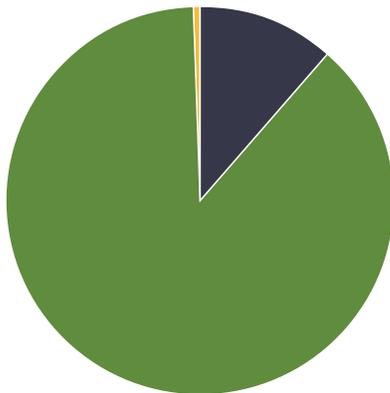


FINANCIAL STABILITY

SORP's fiscal year ran from October 1, 2024 to September 30, 2025. Due to the strength of previous years' net profit, we were able to invest in staff capacity and program development such as visitor use management training and the mentorship program. While our reimbursable partnership agreements remained in effect, the changes to federal agency capacity did impact anticipated products and SORP's ability to get reimbursed for deliverables.

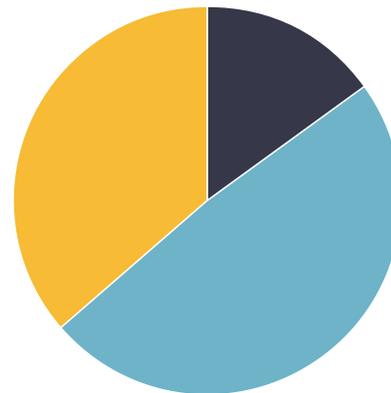


Annual Revenue



● Contributed Income:	\$28,209.80
● Earned Income:	\$213,253.35
● Other:	\$987.97
Total:	\$242,451.12

Annual Expenses



● Operating:	\$46,049.38
● Other Programs:	\$148,735.53
● Personnel:	\$110,453.09
● NORC:	\$0
Total:	\$305,238.00

Net Income: -\$62,786.88

ESTABLISHING AN ENDOWMENT

SORP established a permanent endowment at the Rose Community Foundation to provide sustainable funding for our mission and support outdoor recreation professionals for generations to come. We are grateful to our generous donors who made this possible and welcome contributions of any size to grow this lasting legacy. 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.

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!

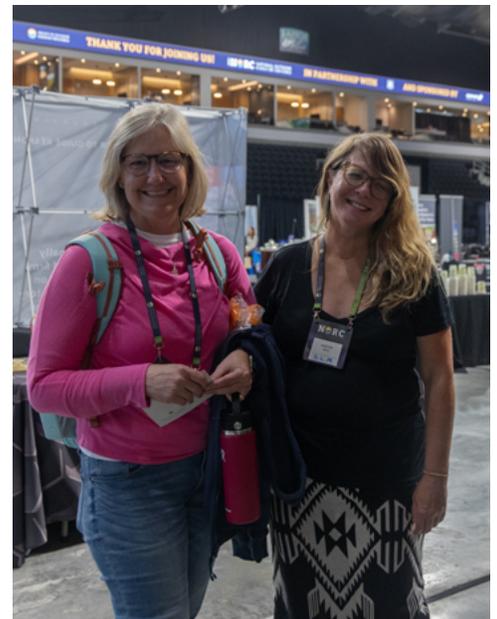
Outdoor Gear Pro Deal: SORP members can save up to 60% on brands like Smartwool, Otterbox, Merrell, Diamondback, Carhartt, and many, many more.

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

“

This is the most valuable organization I have ever joined. Keep it up!

SORP Member