



Association of Outdoor Recreation and Education

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ADVOCACY

One major reason to belong to an association is strength in numbers. And that strength in numbers is especially apparent in advocacy—one of AORE’s strategic pillars.

On several different issues, AORE gives individual members a collective, unified voice that is louder and stronger than many smaller voices can be. One educator or one university outdoor recreation department is unlikely to be heard in industry-shaping conversations with the U.S. Forest Service or outdoor vendors. But together, AORE has a seat at the table for these conversations, where we are using our collective voice to advance outdoor recreation and education.

Access & Permitting

AORE’s work with the Coalition for Outdoor Access is paramount in our advocacy efforts. Access to public lands and waterways is vital to provide the “outdoor” component that our programs depend on for their educational and recreational missions, and we have made important progress on that front, including the member toolkit and a permitting database we created to help members navigate access- and permitting-related challenges.

Along the way, we’ve learned that the permitting process is not only complex but also compounded by politics, administrative challenges, and limited funding. Current and former Access and Permitting Committee members are insightful and motivated, and they are providing feedback to decision-makers.

Diversity, Equity & Inclusion

We all know there’s an “adventure gap,” and some demographic and socioeconomic groups are underrepresented in outdoor recreation and education. We have been talking about it in several places, including Rue Mapp’s keynote and other conversations at our annual conference last fall in Roanoke. A survey of AORE members found that they personally value diversity and inclusion highly, but they struggle with how to put good intentions into practice.

The hard part is moving from talk to action, and we’ve done that through the Emerging Leaders Program. Through that program, the National Park Service had helped us bring in young people who represent underserved populations and are poised to lead in our industry.

We have been working toward greater diversity, equity, and inclusion both inside AORE, as an organization, and outside. Inside AORE, we have sought to make sure we promote involvement, innovation, and expanded access to leadership opportunities that maximize engagement across identity groups and professional levels. We embrace diversity of race, color, national origin, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, disability, veteran status, age, socioeconomic status, and outdoor experience and ability. Outside of our association, we are advocating on diversity-related public policy issues that affect AORE member programs’ operations. We provide tools and resources to cultivate a culture of inclusiveness, collaborative practice, and innovation in the outdoor recreation and education field.

Other Advocacy Efforts

Some of AORE's other advocacy priorities include:



We got involved in these issues because we know that third-party, government, and business decisions affect AORE members' ability to program and do their day-to-day work. Each issue is different, and we appreciate the myriad challenges that AORE member programs face. We strive to not only help others who are working on each of these initiatives—including government agencies and other nonprofits—understand the issues at stake but also keep our members informed about them.

