
Outdoor Afro

where Black people and nature meet



ABOUT OUR NETWORK

Outdoor Afro celebrates and inspires Black connections and leadership in nature. Our network also reconnects Black people with the outdoors through outdoor education, recreation, and conservation. Some examples of our year-round activities range from fishing, hiking, biking, kayaking, gardening, skiing, and more.

To create these intergenerational experiences, Outdoor Afro trains a select group of applicants each year to participate in its annual training: Outdoor Afro Leadership Training or OALT. OALT equips volunteers with the essential tools to guide local communities in nature safely and sustainably. The training is organized by staff and experienced volunteer leaders who share the organization's history, values, best practices, and industry knowledge, including:

- trip planning basics
- health impacts of nature
- conservation ethics
- risk management
- effective social media storytelling

Select partners and guest speakers are invited to the training to provide field insights, and share inspiration and encouragement. After training, volunteer leaders create and guide monthly trips that foster local program collaborations, and help strengthen community relationships with land, water, and wildlife. The volunteers center joy and healing, while also disrupting a false perception that Black people do not have a relationship to nature. Key areas of our work:

- changing the visual representation of who gets outside
- bringing together people who care about building community
- creating Black outdoor leaders for now and for the future
- highlighting Black excellence and Black expertise in nature
- reconnecting Black people with nature through recreational activities
- harnessing the value of connecting people together and connecting people to nature in the same conversation

In 2019, Outdoor Afro launched Making Waves in response to the alarming number of Black children who drown today tied to the historic prohibition of Black access to beaches and public pools. It is Outdoor Afro's goal to help every Black child and their caregiver in its sphere of influence learn how to swim, and develop a positive relationship with water. In 2021, Making Waves partnered with global footwear brand KEEN to offer Swimmerships™ (swim lesson scholarships) with a big goal of helping 1,000 kids and caregivers swim in 2023. Outdoor Afro welcomes everyone to join and support its many year-round events, programs, and campaigns.

BY THE NUMBERS

What started as a kitchen table blog by Founder and CEO Rue Mapp in 2009 is now the nation's leading organization where Black people and nature meet. Headquartered in Oakland, California, Outdoor Afro incorporated as a 501(c)(3) in 2015. Now in its 14th year, our not-for-profit organization includes:

A 60,000 participation network
1,200-plus online/in-person events
100-plus selected and trained volunteer leaders nationwide
60 cities across the country
32 states with local networks, including Washington, D.C.

CONNECT WITH US

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