

2017-2021 Strategic Plan



**SOCIETY OF OUTDOOR
RECREATION PROFESSIONALS**

February 8, 2017

Vision

SORP is the voice for advancing the outdoor recreation profession.

Mission

To promote, advance, and serve outdoor recreation professionals in research, planning, management, and policy development.

Services

- We provide a support network for outdoor recreation professionals (e.g., planners, managers, researchers, policy makers, and administrators).
- We serve as a conduit for information and technology transfer.
- We advance educational and professional development.
- We promote the scholarship and advancement of students and young professionals.
- We provide leadership on contemporary policy issues relevant to outdoor recreation.

Communications & Marketing

The SORP board must ensure that the society's vision, mission and values are conveyed across its membership and to outdoor recreation professionals, strategic partners, and targeted outside audiences. SORP will also provide relevant information and resources to support and enhance professional development among its members and the larger outdoor recreation profession. We will use a variety of technologies to strengthen the network of outdoor recreation professionals and enhance their expertise; promote professional development; share information, data, and news; and expand technical resources for outdoor recreation professionals.

Goal 1: Ensure communications are timely, relevant and support SORP's vision and mission.

- Ensure consistent graphic style across all of our products.
- Develop an annual communication plan to allow us to think strategically about the timing of our communications.
 - Consider public relations when communicating.
 - Consider appropriate communication outlets such as newsletter, website, and social media.

Goal 2: Enhance opportunities for two-way communication between membership and SORP leadership.

- Consider need for forums, discussions boards and other interactive communication channels to enhance networking among members.
- Highlight board member experiences to encourage more board involvement.
- Continue periodic member surveys to get regular feedback.
- Explore ways of providing meaningful information and opportunities for students and young professionals through various communication outlets.

Goal 3: Increase the awareness of SORP and its activities.

- Increase our role as a conduit of information and providing leadership on contemporary policy issues relevant to outdoor recreation by targeted and timely outbound communication to SORP members and the industry.
- Collaborate with and capitalize on emerging outdoor recreation movements by continuing to serve 20+ year industry leader.
- Support regional collaboration networks or social gatherings.

Membership

SORP is a membership organization and acknowledges its mission is only effective if members are recruited and retained to embody the breadth of outdoor recreation professionals. SORP must work continually to develop membership, manage benefits and services for members, communicate across membership, and engage and retain members as an intentional and proactive process.

To be a viable organization, SORP's members must represent the facets of the outdoor recreation profession – research, planning, management, and policy – as well as students and others in related professions (e.g., public affairs, trail design, landscape architecture). SORP will develop targets to address membership growth and retention.

Goal 1: Demonstrate and enhance the value of SORP to retain current members.

- Implement marketing retention actions.
- Highlight members' projects/achievements in newsletter, social media, etc.
- Actively determine how to plan and incorporate the Lifecycle concepts to address retention issues, member benefits, etc.
- Improve retention rate to 80%.

Goal 2: Develop and implement recruitment strategies.

- Implement marketing plan recruitment actions.
- Develop recruitment strategies to improve the diversity of membership.
- Consider opportunities to expand membership in other countries.
- Continue to use conference and webinars as a recruitment tool.

Professional Development and Education

SORP recognizes that outdoor recreation professionals must possess unique skill sets and must balance a wide array of challenges to ensure that outdoor recreation opportunities remain available and sustainably managed. Offering high-quality professional development and educational opportunities for established and aspiring outdoor recreation professionals are key to this effort. Recognizing today's leaders and mentoring those of tomorrow is necessary to the organization's long-term success.

Goal 1: Provide direct opportunities for professional development to SORP membership.

- Identify professional development products and services that meet members' development needs.
- Continue to make membership aware of professional development opportunities provided by SORP and other organization.
- Continue to host webinars relevant to SORP membership and outdoor recreation professionals.
- Coordinate with the Membership & Communications Committee to provide and/or host opportunities for collaboration and information sharing (e.g. online discussion forums, research highlights) to facilitate professional, interactive feedback on key issues.
- Continue to collaborate with NPS and provide SCORP training.

Goal 2: Continue to expand opportunities for involving and engaging aspiring outdoor recreation professionals at the annual SORP conference and through other means.

- Continue to provide opportunities for presenting/sharing applied research at conference and via webinars. Continue to provide poster session and presentation opportunities for students at the annual conference and ensure that there are incentives for faculty to facilitate and support student participation.
- Continue to develop, promote and evolve the scholarship program at annual conference.
- Support young professionals in service (e.g., SCA, AmeriCorps) at annual conference.
- Continue to offer CEU credits at the annual conference and webinars.
- Coordinate with the Development Committee in finding and securing long-term funding sources to support the Scholarship program.

Goal 3: Participate in formal accreditation in recreation resource planning through the NRPA Council on Accreditation.

- Annually assign a SORP representative (e.g., Academic Liaison) to work directly with the Council to finalize and approve accredited recreation resource planning standards and to serve as a standing representative to NRPA for approving accreditation once it is established.
- Coordinate with Membership and Communication Committee to promote the accredited university programs.

Financial Strategy

SORP recognizes that financial security is imperative to its existence. Programs, events and offerings will be undertaken with full recognition of financial impacts. The board will seek enhancement of its financial status through partnerships, sponsors, and donors.

Goal 1: Develop and implement a 5-Year Business and Budget Plan.

- Identify SORP products and services and associated revenue streams for development and implementation.
- Provide framework to achieve long-term (5-year) financial results that support the organization's strategic goals and objectives.

- Develop a comprehensive funding strategy for SORP.
- Identify specifically funding sources for: Capacity Capital, Membership Scholarships, and Conference Scholarships.
- Evaluate the potential to increase our revenue including metrics and goals.
- Increase investment income returns.

Strategic Partnerships

The effectiveness of SORP in providing national leadership for the outdoor recreation profession requires strategic partnerships and meaningful collaboration. SORP desires to partner with other organizations, businesses, agencies, and individuals who will help advance the provision of outdoor recreation opportunities for the benefit of all people.

Goal 1: Establish and maintain effective communication with local, state, federal, and tribal agencies responsible for outdoor recreation resources.

- Establish and maintain an Outdoor Recreation Leadership Council.
- Seek opportunities to participate and collaborate on joint projects and conferences of mutual interest.
- Invite local, state, federal, and tribal agencies in proximity to conference sites to meaningfully participate in conference planning, presentations, field workshops, marketing, and sponsorships.
- Budget for several board members to annually network with national leaders of federal resource agencies, national non-profits, and department-level officials.

Goal 2: Establish and maintain effective communication with the outdoor recreation and tourism industry.

- Establish contact with the Outdoor Industry Association and explore partnerships of mutual interest.
- Consider SORP sponsorship, membership and/or participation in the national outdoor recreation industry forums, conferences, and trade shows.
- Include outdoor recreation industry and tourism participation in the National Outdoor Recreation Conference, with particular focus on local and state industries that might help in conference planning, programs, marketing, and sponsorship.
- Seek opportunities to collaborate with the outdoor industry on topics of mutual interest.

Goal 3: Establish and maintain effective communication with non-profit organizations.

- Establish and maintain effective communications with closely associated non-profit organizations (e.g., American Trails, Society of American Foresters, NACPRO, NASPD, Organization of Wildlife Planners, American Rivers, RMS, IUFRO, SHIFT, and AORE).
- Consider partnering and jointly hosting of the National Outdoor Recreation Conference.
- Seek out opportunities to collaborate on strategic initiatives of other non-profit organizations.
- Consider the gratis-exchange of membership opportunities or cross promotion of conferences.

Goal 4: Develop and maintain a network among universities with outdoor recreation and related academic programs.

- Engage those colleges/universities within the region of the conference site to meaningfully participate in conference planning, presentation, field workshops, marketing, and sponsorships.
- Encourage local colleges/universities to showcase their programs and successes.
- Collaborate with universities on SORP publications, programs, and other initiatives with outdoor recreation research organizations.
- Promote and invite international academics and researchers to participate in the National Outdoor Recreation Conference.

Goal 5: Maintain national leadership in support of statewide outdoor recreation planning and provide a network and forum for SCORP professionals.

- Investigate a cooperative agreement between the NPS and SORP to be the provider of SCORP-related training.
- Provide expertise, training, and support to planning professionals.

Operations

SORP provides quality services and opportunities to its members and to the profession at large. Towards this end, the organization will strive to operate in an efficient, effective, transparent, and professional manner in all aspects.

Goal 1: SORP will be guided by an active and engaged Board of Directors whose diversity reflects the community we serve.

- The board will diagnose its relative skill sets and connections, and deliberately seek board candidates to address voids and deficiencies.
- Provide training for board members to target skill gaps.

Goal 2: Maintain appropriate balance of volunteer and paid staff to provide continued high level of service to our members and the profession.

- Evaluate additional part- or full-time staffing needs as SORP's needs evolve.
- As part of Financial Strategy, identify funding needs for additional paid staff and actively seek operating revenue.

Approved by the SORP Board of Directors on <insert new date>