

# LATINO OUTDOORS 2020

Connecting *Cultura* and  
Community with the Outdoors

SEPTEMBER 2017



A Strategic Plan to  
promote **CULTURALLY  
RELEVANT OUTDOOR  
CONNECTIONS  
AND LEADERSHIP**



LATINO  
OUTDOORS<sup>SM</sup>





## MISSION

We inspire, connect, and engage Latino communities in the outdoors and embrace *cultura y familia* as part of the outdoor narrative, ensuring our history, heritage, and leadership are valued and represented.

## VISION

A world where all Latino communities enjoy nature as a safe, inclusive, and welcoming place—a world where the outdoors is a place to share and celebrate stories, knowledge, and culture, while growing leadership and an active community of Latino outdoor users, mentors, and stewards.

## ORGANIZATIONAL GOALS

Latino Outdoors is working to accomplish four interconnected organizational goals:

1. Provide Latino families with transformational experiences in nature.
2. Ensure Latinos have an active presence and strong voice in the outdoors and conservation movement.
3. Create support networks and opportunities for Latinos working in conservation.
4. Provide an inspirational platform for sharing cultural connections and narratives to nature that are often overlooked by the traditional outdoor movement.

## CORE VALUES

**FAMILIA** - We focus on and support all families, the values our families provide, and their connections in the outdoors.

**COMUNIDAD** - We acknowledge that we are stronger as a community, embracing diversity.

**CULTURA** - We have a unique cultural narrative to celebrate in the outdoors.

**ACCESS** - We understand there is a need for equitable access to the outdoors for Latino communities.

**SERVICE** - We approach our work through service to our community and ourselves.

For the purposes of this document we recognize we are using the gendered characteristics of the Spanish language. In this case the use of "Latino" in "Latino Outdoors" refers to the "Outdoors" and not signifying that our work is only inclusive of Latino males. We acknowledge the intersectional fluidity of language and identity and the use of Latinx as a gender-neutral alternative to Latino, Latina and even Latin@. As an organization we are adopting the use of "Latinx" in various communication channels to reflect the inclusive identity that is reflective of several of our leaders, which includes individuals who are trans, queer, agender, non-binary, gender non-conforming or gender fluid. This guides our use of #LatinxOutdoors, along with #LatinoOutdoors, #LatinosOutdoors, and LatinasOutdoors.

## LATINO OUTDOORS

Latino Outdoors brings *cultura* into the outdoor narrative and connects Latino communities and conservation leadership with nature and outdoor experiences. We envision the outdoors as a space for the community to be present, share their voices, and showcase how conservation roots have been ingrained in Latino *cultura* for generations.

Conceived in 2013 by José G. González in an effort to find a like-minded community to create a place for his passion: nature, the outdoors, and the Latino community, **LATINO OUTDOORS WORKS TO:**

**OPEN DOORS.** Latino Outdoors brings together first- and second-generation Latino families for community day hikes and camping trips. Annually, we provide hundreds of families with transformational and healing experiences in nature. These experiences open up families to a lifetime of family bonding, enjoyment, and connection to the outdoors.

**OPEN HEARTS.** Latino Outdoors brings together Latino conservation professionals and their allies to create and collaborate in harmony. Through positive connections and networks, Latino Outdoors strengthens and amplifies Latino leadership in the conservation movement through heart-centered gatherings.

**OPEN SKIES.** For young Latinos interested in conservation, there can be many barriers and obstacles. At Latino Outdoors, we believe the sky should be the limit. We actively connect Latino college students and young people to seasoned role models and mentors working in conservation. By strengthening intergenerational connections, we help build strong and resilient networks of Latino conservation professionals, young and old.

**OPEN SPACE.** California Coastal Commissioner Peter Douglas once said "The coast is never saved. It is always being saved." It is this ongoing work of saving our region's precious wild places that desperately needs new voices and united communities. We need more people who feel intensely connected to the natural world. They will be the ones to stand up and roar when the bulldozers come. Without people to love it deeply, open space is always at risk. Latino Outdoors helps to create a deep community love of nature.

**OPEN MINDS.** The human mind is wired for storytelling. Latino Outdoors honors the many rich storytelling traditions in the Latino community and brings this ethic into every aspect of our work. We tell stories of transformation, connection, healing, and learning. Each story asserts our collective Latino identity in nature. We let individuals tell their authentic stories, share their experiences and say "yo cuento" – I count, I matter. The cultural and emotional resonance created from these stories enriches all of us.



VISION 2020

Latino Outdoors, a network and accomplished organization of 5,000 members and volunteers connects 50,000 Latino youth and their families to parks and outdoor experiences from Boston and Chicago to Denver and Los Angeles, with participation in every major city in the country.



## “Vamos Outdoors”- Building Outdoor Connections

Latino Outdoors has nurtured an intergenerational community of volunteers who provide safe, responsible recreational opportunities that connect people to each other and their outdoor space. We provide training and instruction to our volunteers who also act as mentors to our participants. We recognize that we all arrive to the outdoor experience with difficult challenges and it is our philosophy to create an inclusive starting point for all willing to engage.

Our outings strive to provide a unique experience in which we incorporate a framework of connecting people to:

**PEOPLE** - How do we connect people to each other on the outing?

**PLACE** - How do we connect people to the place where the outing is taking place?

**PROCESS** - How do we connect people to the process of going outdoors safely?

**POLICY** - How do we connect people to the topics, issues, and policy initiatives that impact them and the spaces we are recreating in?

### GOALS

1. Build and inspire a Latino community of outdoor users who grow knowledge, skills, leadership, and lasting connections in the outdoors.
2. Engage Latino communities in a wide spectrum of outdoor activities that serve as springboards for independent learning and participation in the outdoors.
3. Support the next generation of Latino outdoor stewards of all ages, inclusive of a family structure, and intersecting with community themes, such as wellness and education.



Photo credit: NPS.



Photo credit: Maricela Rosales



Photo credit: Albert Arevalo

### STRATEGIES

#### OUTINGS PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT

- Expand and scaffold the Outings Program, building a ladder of learning, while serving a wider spectrum of outdoor interests and abilities.
- Experiment with themed and educational outings, identifying topics of interest from the Latino community.
- Integrate cultural practices into outings, for learning and enjoyment, connecting to Latino history and heritage as part of the outdoors experience.
- Leverage and support wellness as a holistic and integrated component, from wellness walks to urban gardening, working across a spectrum of partners and members of the community.
- Reach out and engage a diverse set of young adults in the outdoors through initiatives such as campus clubs and the intentional and supportive use of a Latinx identity.

#### OUTINGS LEADER RECRUITMENT AND TRAINING

- Provide a basic, required level of training for all Outings Leaders and Program Coordinators to assure consistency in outings planning, promotion and delivery across all chapters.
- Assess needs and recruit new Outings Leaders across chapters and in key geographic areas.
- Recruit new leaders experienced in teaching about topics of interest and tap these leaders to co-lead outings, where there are opportunities.
- Build a cadre of trainers who serve as peer to peer teachers building a core leadership training team for emerging and current Outings Leaders.
- Seek guidance and support from partners in designing outings geared to a diverse range of outdoor interests and abilities.
- Consider an Outings Leader certification program to grow and recognize Latino outdoor learning and leadership development.
- Promote experiential training that builds expertise in equity outdoor facilitation.

#### OUTINGS OUTREACH AND MANAGEMENT

- Plan and implement a communications and outreach strategy to reach new Latino communities interested in the outdoors.
- Create a Latino Outdoors Outings Program Guide and online toolkit in support of outings planning, delivery, management, and assessment.
- Develop and implement evaluation systems to measure success and to identify and address challenges and opportunities.

VISION  
2020

World Earth  
Day features  
Latino Outdoors  
Estamos Aqui  
touching 5 million  
viewers.





Photo credit: CJ Goulding

## “Juntos Mejor”- Building Volunteer Leadership and Engagement Together

Latino Outdoors programming taps into the desire to give back, develop leadership skills, and share cultural elements not found in the traditional mainstream conservation movement.

Connecting community members to natural spaces within their communities also develops emotional attachments that affirm our presence. These connections help our constituents develop the desire to advocate and support policies that protect our shared landscapes and public lands.

### GOALS

1. Continue to grow and invest in a Latino Outdoors Volunteer Leadership Network, as a foundation for sustained organizational leadership and success.
2. Expand and support Latino volunteerism in the outdoors for enjoyment, learning, and stewardship.

### STRATEGIES

#### VOLUNTEER PROGRAM PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT

- Establish a volunteer recruitment plan that is aligned with organizational needs and priorities.
- Launch a regular and consistent volunteer onboarding program that includes a standard set of trainings for all volunteers.
- Identify high priority volunteer training needs each year and offer training opportunities and funding annually.
- Establish a skill and knowledge-based peer to peer mentoring program as part of a comprehensive training program to build organizational knowledge and leadership.
- Support regular volunteer learning forums, using easy to access online platforms, to share and celebrate successes, discuss challenges and opportunities, and build cross organizational knowledge and leadership.
- Develop a cadre of internal knowledge experts to increase participation and representation of Latino Outdoors at key forums.
- Expand the Latino Outdoors Volunteer Leadership Network and tap this network to build strategic partnerships and relationships in communities that support Latino Outdoors' priorities.

### VISION 2020

Over one million dollars in scholarships awarded to Latino young adults to participate in high adventures skill building and outings as learners and leaders.



Photo credit: Jaron Latorna



Photo credit: NPS



Photo credit: Michael Estrada

#### VOLUNTEER PROGRAM MANAGEMENT

- Develop a Volunteer Program handbook that outlines policies and procedures guiding volunteer recruitment, coordination, training, evaluation, and recognition.
- Establish volunteer leadership opportunities to build organizational capacity and leadership.
- Provide clear guidance to volunteers in supporting and participating in public policy and similar efforts as the voice of Latino Outdoors.
- Build and support volunteer entrepreneurship throughout Latino Outdoors creating clear policies, procedures, and pathways for creative investments that will advance the mission and vision of Latino Outdoors.
- Host an annual volunteer appreciation event and look for other opportunities to recognize volunteer expertise and contributions.
- Evaluate Volunteer Program annually and implement actions to assure volunteer satisfaction, recognition, and retention.

### BUILDING LEADERSHIP THROUGH PARTNERSHIPS

The work we do is amplified through innovative partnerships and positive risk-taking from organizations open to learning together. From the Latina Trail Crew in Washington led by Coordinator Michelle Piñon, to a Latino Outdoors Fellowship with Teton Science Schools Fellowship in Wyoming with support from leaders Andres Esparza and Alfonso Orozco, to a National Park Foundation supported Summit Seekers program in which Coordinator Albert Arevalo led an East Coast cohort—we have been collaborating for models of success.



## “Strong Raices”- From our Roots, Supporting and Sustaining a Successful Organization

Latino Outdoors acts as a laboratory, designing and testing the systems needed to grow, support, and strengthen our work as an organization, creating outdoor connections for Latinos in every corner of the country. Building Board and volunteer leadership, engaging new partners, expanding Latino Outdoors participation and resources, and diversifying the outdoor movement are all part of our essential organizational work.

### GOALS

- Tell and share stories of Latino heritage to amplify and increase representation of Latino narratives in outdoor spaces.
- Promote greater diversity and inclusion in the outdoors.
- Expand the participation and voice of Latino Outdoors’ leaders in the outdoors movement.
- Expand working partnerships to leverage and amplify organizational investments.
  - Assure capacity resources (funding and staff) are in place to support organizational investments (programs, projects, and volunteers).
  - Engage in organizational planning and management to promote a sustainable organization.



### STRATEGIES

#### COMMUNICATIONS, PARTNERSHIPS, AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

- Develop a communications and social media strategy to build recognition and support of Latino Outdoors and to grow organizational capacity and visibility.
- Enhance Spanish speaking outreach and bilingual programming, ensuring all key materials, both publications and online, are accessible in Spanish and English, as appropriate.
- Engage in Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion efforts when aligned with organizational interests and priorities.
  - Evaluate current partnerships and align with strategic and capacity building priorities.
- Provide training on partnership development and management for volunteers, Board, and staff.
- Engage in targeted high priority public policy and other community and organizational initiatives that build intergenerational Latino connections to the outdoors and conservation movement.

#### RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT

- Establish resource development policy and procedures to assure focus of effort is aligned with organizational priorities.
- Develop and document a multi-year funding strategy tied to strategic organizational needs and priorities.
- Provide for accurate, professional and comprehensive fund management, building credibility and accountability in the eyes of funders and other contributors.
- Evaluate feasibility and benefits of a membership program serving a wide range of supporters including public agency, nonprofit, and business and corporate partners.

#### ORGANIZATIONAL MANAGEMENT

- Create a Board and Leadership handbook that clearly communicates Board of Directors, Volunteer Leader, and staff communication and management protocols.
- Establish clear guidelines to support and facilitate Latino Outdoors communications, outreach, and engagement in communities.
- Develop an employee handbook to guide effective staff management.
- Expand Board member onboarding support to build organizational knowledge.
- Engage in strategic and annual planning regularly as a framework for organizational investments and growth.



VISION  
2020

U.S.A. Health and Wellness annual report features the work of Latino Outdoors as a key partner of health and wellness programs across the country.



## “Escribe lo que nunca debería ser olvidado”

—Isabel Allende

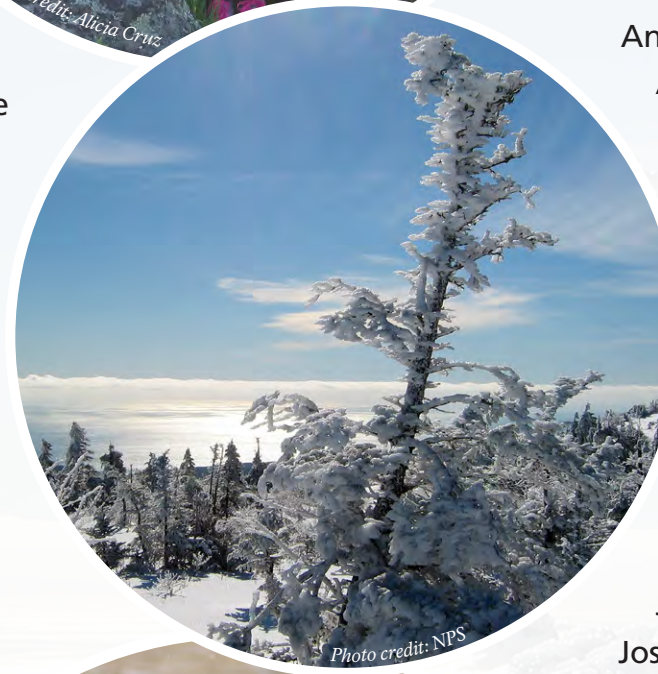
Latino Outdoors did not exist until we willed it into creation. And it survives based on the work of our amazing volunteers, leaders who donate their time and expertise because they believe and know there is greatness in our community and in ourselves. We are helping to expand the narrative of who belongs in the outdoors and what our leadership in this space can accomplish. We are helping to “write that which should not be forgotten”—our heritage, our stories, our leadership, our *presencia* in the outdoors, past, present, and future. *Estamos Aqui.*

**Gracias** to all the individuals and organizations that have supported our work and invested in our long-term growth as an organization. Special thanks to the National Park Service, Rivers, Trails, and Conservation Assistance Program for strategic planning and facilitation assistance and to the California State Parks Foundation for financial support in helping bring our Board and volunteers together to guide this effort. We are also thankful for the contributions of Cynthia Marie Espinosa Marrero and Alfonso Orozco who, through their graduate studies, provided a foundation and thoughtful insights into this plan and our future.

And most of all, *gracias* to each and every volunteer who has contributed time, expertise, experience, *ganar y pasión* to Latino Outdoors. *Si se puede, pero lo estamos haciendo* because of you.

### BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Richard Rojas, <i>Chairman</i>	José G. González, <i>Founder</i>
Midy Aponte	
Jenny de la Hoz	
Christina Gallegos	
Carol Olson	



### VOLUNTEERS 2016-2017

Jennifer Adams	Remigio “Remi” Mateo
Lylianna Allala	Maria F. “Masi” Mejia
Albert Arevalo	Carlos Jorge Miranda
Melissa Avery	Jorge Moreno
Asnoldo Benitez	Angelica Muñoz
Lesly Caballero	Lili Muñoz
Graciela Cabello	Alfonso Orozco
Olga Calderon	Naomi Pacheco
Joe Camacho	Jenny Paredes
Natividad Chavez	Norma Lira Perez
Romy Chavez	Michelle Piñon
Ana Beatriz Cholo	Krystle Ramos
Ana Maria Coca	Raquel Rangel
Alicia Cruz	Xitlaly Reyes
Efraín Delgado	Daisy Rios Reveles
Jacky Elizarraraz	Gretchen Roeker
Andres Esparza	Maricela Rosales
Cynthia Espinosa	Maribel Sierra
Bella Furr	Juan Telles
Elisa Gallegos	Laura Torres
Ruby Jean Garcia	Gabe Vasquez
David Garcia	Monica Vega
Eduardo González	Lizbeth Williams
José G. González	Emilie Winter
Josie Gutierrez	
Nydia Gutierrez	
John Griffith	
Bianca Hernandez	
Olga Hernandez	
Graciela Garcia	
Irlando	
Jaron Latona	
Miché Lozano	

**LATINO OUTDOORS CAMPUS CLUB @ HUMBOLDT STATE UNIVERSITY (HSU)**  
While we serve a diverse audience, there has been a lot of interest from the campus community in redefining what it means to be an outdoor enthusiast. Latino Outdoors leaders Lesly Caballero, Daisy Rios and Ruby Jean Garcia started the effort at HSU with an innovative Latino Outdoors Campus Club with ongoing leadership from club officers Noemi Pacheco, Angelica Munoz, Jose Cabello, and others. This will serve as a model for other schools.



BACK COVER PHOTO CREDITS:  
Left, Alicia Cruz;  
Center, Albert Arevalo;  
Right, Gabe Vasquez.

With assistance from the National Park Service and the California State Parks Foundation







LATINO  
OUTDOORS<sup>SM</sup>