

# Un Año Outdoors

2022



## 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.





“Nature reminds me that messy is beautiful, and there is no one right way to do things. [It reminds me] to grow and to bloom and to prosper. That is what is so important to me about being in the outdoors.”

— Claudia Pineda Tibbs, Latino Outdoors Advisory Board Chairperson



## About Us

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Nearly ten years ago, Latino Outdoors (LO) began as a blog by José González, an artist, educator, and environmentalist who immigrated to the United States as a child. By sharing his passion for both the outdoors and *la cultura latina*, José hoped to highlight the connection between the two and in doing so, help bring forward a more visible portrayal of the Latine outdoor experience. José struck a chord with the blog and it began to unfold from there.

Today, LO is a [national community](#) dedicated to delivering outdoor experiences, sharing outdoor narratives, and fostering outdoor leadership. The more than 200 volunteers that power Latino Outdoors are present in over 30 [locations](#) spanning 19 states and the District of Columbia. This growing network of outdoor leaders is supported by LO's staff, Advisory Board, and José, who as LO's Founder, remains as deeply committed to building a more diverse outdoorist community as he was on day one.



Photo by Wynn Wiley







Photo by Verónica Miranda, LO Volunteer, San Francisco

## 2021 Recap: *Healing Forward*

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[2021](#) was a year of healing, hybrid programming, and heritage. Emerging from the long winter of separation, we took incremental steps back towards in-person events. Starting in the spring, we were finally able to reconnect *juntos* outdoors. By the end of the year, over 100 different LO leaders had led 1,762 participants on 121 outings across the country. All the while, we carried over some of 2020's strategies and initiatives that kept us together while we were apart, including webinars, online presentations, films, and blog posts. [Family heritage](#) was a common thematic

thread running through much of this virtual programming. After a one year hiatus, we held our annual national leadership campout again, hosting it in Redwood National and State Parks with 49 volunteers and staff members [participating](#). The Latino Outdoors *comunidad* continued to grow with the addition of four new regions, 55 new volunteers, and 17,000 online followers. With three new staff members bolstering the existing team of three, we stepped into 2022 feeling ready for the challenges and opportunities that LO's ninth year would bring.







**THE THREE PROGRAMS** of Latino Outdoors center experiences, narratives, and leadership. They work together and complement one another. *Vamos Outdoors* (Let's Go Outdoors) is focused on fostering outdoor engagement primarily through organized group outings. *Yo Cuento Outdoors* (I Matter/ I Tell a Story/ I Count Outdoors) is aimed at expanding the collective narrative of outdoor recreation, conservation, and environmental education to be a more rich, diverse, and complete story. *Creemos Outdoors* (We Grow Outdoors) supports LO community members' development as leaders in the outdoors.



LEFT TO RIGHT

Photo by Victoria Rodríguez, LO Volunteer, Los Angeles

Photo by Laura Flores, LO Volunteer, Albuquerque

Photo by Sully Moreno, LO Volunteer, Seattle

#### VAMOS OUTDOORS

*"Birds have no borders. They fly free and that's exactly how we felt on our birding hike yesterday: free. Free to be ourselves on the trail. Free to switch between English and Spanish when we couldn't think of the right word."*

— Wendy García, LO volunteer in San Diego, CA

We rang in 2022 able to connect in person, eagerly heading out on the trail on the second day of the year. LO Portland spent the day hiking to Mt. Hood National Forest's frozen Tamanawas Falls, sharing *pan dulce* and holiday traditions along the way. A little further south that same day, LO San Francisco Bay Area hiked along the Marin Headlands within Golden Gate National Recreation Area, watching as dolphins played in the surf. Each participant celebrated the new year by eating twelve grapes while setting intentions for the twelve months ahead.



Photo by Morgan Wordes, LO Volunteer, New York City

The intention we set as an organization was to continue to build *comunidad* outdoors, celebrate the intricacies of *latinidad*, and expand access to the outdoors *para todos*. And we did. More people joined us outdoors in 2022 than in any previous year—143 different LO leaders helped lead over 250 outings for more than 4,600 participants. In the summer we kept cool in the water. In the winter we bundled up and donned our snowshoes. *Gracias* to the generosity of Columbia Sportswear, our volunteers in colder climates stayed warm with their winter jackets. The uniqueness of each outing reflects the unique natural beauty of where it takes place and the individuality of the people behind the experience. Sometimes, outings happen in nature that's close to home like LO New York City's collaboration with Feminist Bird Club and Audubon during the annual Great Backyard Bird Count. Experienced birders and newcomers strolled through Central Park on a chilly Sunday morning to enjoy the presence of non-migratory birds right in the middle of Manhattan. Throughout the year, we hiked, paddled, swam, birded, biked, climbed, danced, skated, and enjoyed moments outdoors *juntos*.



Vamos Outdoors grew in 2022 to include new initiatives.



*Semillitas* (Little Seeds) Outdoors sprouted in the spring. The inaugural edition of this week-long annual [celebration](#) of children in the outdoors consisted of 20 child-centered outings hosted in ten different states, as well as a [coloring book](#) created by Latina artist, anthropologist, and mom, Adrianna Alejo Sorondo, a [panel on careers in the outdoors](#), and three on-line conversations. *Conversamos con mamás* about what it's like to recreate with small children, a mother and her young son shared tales from their backpacking adventure, and we held space for our *semillitas* to speak in their own words about their outdoor experiences and aspirations.

*Orgullosamente* (Proudly) Outdoors also debuted in 2022. To celebrate Pride in June, LO LGBTQ+ leaders and allies from our teams in Seattle, Missoula, Colorado, San Diego, Fresno, and San Francisco Bay Area organized a series of outings that took participants canoeing, birding, hiking, picnicking, and *plantita*-caring. With long-time LO volunteer, José Cabello, proudly leading the way, the inaugural *Orgullosamente* Outdoors also included a speaker panel featuring Latinx LGBTQ+ advocates, four outdoor LGBTQ+ online conversations, and dozens of social media posts and messages highlighting Latinx outdoor pride.

Exploring from home is also a way to connect with the outdoors. In January, we teamed up with Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District for our first webinar of the year, treating viewers to tips for viewing wildlife, and discussing the importance of large predators, like mountain lions, in an ecosystem. LO *Libros*, a book club led by volunteers and open to everyone, met online to discuss books by Latine and BIPOC authors writing about nature, culture, and the outdoors, including *Braiding Sweetgrass* by Robin Wall Kimmerer. Between discussing our love for both literature and nature, *aprendiendo* about apex animals, bolstering our backpacking know-how, coming to a better understanding of pollinator conservation, and more, the Latino Outdoors *comunidad* enjoyed plenty of learning and growth from home during the year.

## Yo CUENTO OUTDOORS

Our stories are powerful. Sharing them is integral to building community. Through stories, we seek to amplify the intricacies and diversity of our *comunidades*, build awareness about the outdoor issues that matter to us, and advocate for the people and places we love.



Photo by Sarah Garcia, Vamos Outdoors Participant, Los Angeles

The blog came first. It is a collection of stories celebrating our Latine identities and our love for the outdoors. At 216 posts and counting, our Yo Cuento blog paints a nuanced picture of outdoor *latinidad* and remains a core component to our storytelling. A few of 2022's contributors included a wildlife biologist living his dream at a [wolf conservation center](#), a [marine science educator](#) who worked with endangered sunflower sea stars, a child with a mission to save monarch butterflies, and LO's team in Colorado [celebrating Día de los Muertos](#) through movement and *comunidad*. Each story helps us climb ever closer to that mountain meadow splashed in a super bloom of *cuentos* y color. When connecting with each other

these days, we no longer think twice about oscillating between virtual and in-person spaces. Our storytelling spans both. Sometimes we gather virtually around the campfire and other times we do so [in real life](#). As our collection of blog posts grows more and more representative of our varied personal relationships with the outdoors, the ways in which we amplify those stories have also expanded, including through live conversations online, podcasts, virtual panels, video messages, briefs by email, and short films. By the end of 2022, the community that tunes into LO's storytelling stood at nearly 100,000 across our various social media platforms, an 18% increase from the previous year.





“Being outdoors makes me feel happy.  
I love the outdoors.  
My mission in life is to help save the monarchs.  
[I’m meant to help.”](#)

— Liam López-Wagner, 7-year-old Founder of Amigos for Monarchs

We hosted dozens of online conversations and panels during the year. Among other topics, LO leaders and friends discussed inclusivity in the outdoors for [disabled and gender nonbinary](#) community members, Latina leadership in environmental advocacy, and the experiences of Latinx park rangers. Through our words and images, we contributed to our own campaigns and initiatives, such as *Semillitas* and *Orgullosamente Outdoors*, and to those of cherished partners like Hispanic Access Foundation’s Latino Advocacy and Conservation Weeks.

As *nuestra comunidad* and the ways we reach it have grown, we’ve continued to [speak up](#) for inclusivity and joy in the outdoors while amplifying kindred voices and organizations.

We approach advocacy by centering [people’s connections to places](#) through storytelling, while building greater awareness of the process that leads to policies for protecting and increasing equitable access to those places. National monument expansion and new designations, funding for state-level outdoor equity grant programs, and K-12 environmental literacy were some of LO’s advocacy priorities for 2022. We likewise manifested our support for green schoolyards, investment in local parks, the federal government’s Every Kid Outdoors Program, and [GreenLatinos’ Latino Climate Justice Framework](#). As the year drew to a close, we welcomed an Advocate for Equity and the Outdoors to our staff and stood firmly with other allies behind the need to center Indigenous Peoples’ voices and priorities as a way to move forward in conservation and rethinking our relationship with nature.

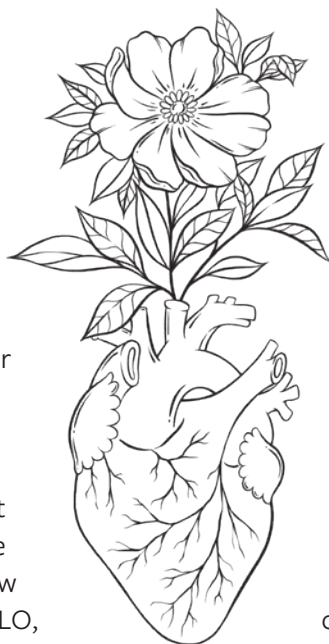


Photo by María Céleri, LO Volunteer, Baltimore

## CRECEMOS OUTDOORS

Diversity is essential to a healthy ecosystem. We take this lesson from nature to heart and aim to contribute to a more diverse and robust community of outdoor enthusiasts and stewards by investing in Latinx outdoor leadership and Latino Outdoors' volunteer network.

When speaking about the heart and power of Latino Outdoors, we must bring up our volunteer network in the same breath. This year, nearly 90 new volunteer leaders found their way to LO, and thanks to some of them, Latino Outdoors found its way to new communities in Austin, Baltimore, Boston, Houston, Louisville, Philly, and San Luis Obispo. Throughout 2022, staff provided new and many existing volunteers with orientation and refresher training sessions



on LO's framework and process for organizing and leading outings. Additionally, 54 volunteers participated in one or more other learning opportunities to build their leadership capacity. A few of these opportunities included a two-day Latinx summit on the Appalachian Trail in Georgia in collaboration with the Appalachian Trail Conservancy, a course with Yosemite Conservancy to become Leave No Trace trainer-certified, and several wilderness first aid (WFA) sessions. In these WFA trainings, our volunteers became better prepared to lead safe outings by learning to recognize, treat, and prevent injuries and illnesses that are common in the outdoors. We even partnered with California State Parks and NOLS to host a WFA [training](#) at Los Angeles State Historic Park with the city skyline in plain sight.



Another professional development resource available to our volunteer network and also to LO's larger community is the Jobs+ Opportunity Board on [latinooutdoors.org](http://latinooutdoors.org). More than 2,000 jobs, internships, fellowships, and scholarships were shared during the year, helping to connect our communities to career opportunities all over the country in outdoor recreation, environmental education, and conservation.



Photo by Michael Ocasio, LO Volunteer, Baltimore

We welcomed the summer by gathering for our annual LO Leadership Campout. The 2022 edition took place in Yosemite National Park, which sits on the homelands of seven traditionally associated tribes: Southern Sierra Miwuk Nation, Bishop Paiute Tribe, Bridgeport Indian Colony, Mono Lake Kootzaduka'a, North Fork Rancheria of Mono Indians of California, Picayune Rancheria of the Chukchansi Indians, and the Tuolumne Band of Me-Wuk Indians. LO leaders representing 14 of our regional teams, the entire national support staff, and nearly half of our Advisory Board came together to learn, reflect, and build solidarity. Attendees helped remove invasive plants from an area of the park undergoing ecological restoration, hiked iconic Yosemite Valley trails, received an introduction to rock climbing on the park's famed granite monoliths, and participated in workshops ranging from mindfulness in the outdoors to outdoor photography to empowerment through ethical storytelling. We were challenged to grow by a difficult group conversation that took us beyond Indigenous land acknowledgments. In his singular way, renowned storyteller, Ranger Shelton Johnson, welcomed us and helped us understand the bigger story behind the park's diverse group of protagonists. It was a joyful celebration by 55 members of the Latino Outdoors *comunidad*.



## Volunteer Spotlight

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Melanie Gárate started volunteering with Latino Outdoors in 2021. In early 2022, she began building LO's team in Boston, which is now nine members strong. Melanie is as quick to dance *cumbia* during outings as she is to speak out on issues that are important to her—ocean conservation, climate action, and community. During the summer, she used her marine biology expertise while helping lead a series of outings to Boston Harbor Islands National and State Park. Through exploration of these unique islands just off the city's coast, Melanie and her teammates nurtured connections between people and between people and place. Melanie also moderated the *Agua es Vida* panel during Latino Conservation Week and lent her voice to an Instagram Live *Conversando* Outdoors talk on climate resilience and conservation advocacy. We are so glad she found her way to Latino Outdoors. ¡Mil gracias, Melanie!





## Mil Gracias | Many Thanks

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The movement towards an outdoors that we all can enjoy and protect needs many different people and organizations to make that vision a reality. Over time, the number and variety of foundations, sponsors, public entities, and community groups that support LO's efforts as part of this movement have grown to reflect the rising movement itself.

[During 2022](#), we collaborated and connected with well beyond 300 [organizations and groups](#), more than in any prior year. The following list reflects some of the breadth of the year's collaborations:

American Hiking Society	National Park Service
Arnold Arboretum of Harvard University	National Recreation Foundation
Athletic Brewing Company	Nature <i>Niños</i> New Mexico
Audubon Mid-Atlantic	New Mexico Outdoor Recreation Division's Outdoor Equity Fund
Avalonia Land Conservancy	Oregon Coast Visitors Association
Bob Marshall Wilderness Foundation	Osprey Packs
Boston Harbor Islands Partnership	Outdoor Afro
C&S Wholesale Grocers	Outdoor Asian
<i>Caminantes</i> Louisville	Parks California
Capital One	Patagonia
<i>Centro Del Pueblo</i> Humboldt County	Pisces Foundation
Clif <i>Contigo</i> at Clif Bar	Rails-to-Trails Conservancy
Clif Family Foundation	REI
Colorado Parks & Wildlife's Outdoor Equity Grant Program	REI Cooperative Action Fund
Columbia Sportswear	Resources Legacy Fund
Community Initiatives	Save the Redwoods League
Earthjustice's Latino Caucus	She Moves Mountains
<i>Empoderate</i> Center - <i>La Clínica Del Pueblo</i>	Sierra Club
Evil Queen LLC	Stanley/PMI Worldwide
Georgetown Brewing Company	Stillwater Sciences
Get Outdoors Nevada	Texas Outdoor Family
Guide to Indigenous Baltimore	The Nature Conservancy
Hispanic Access Foundation	The North Face
<i>Itacate</i> Foods	The Schmidt Family Foundation
Jacob and Terese Hershey Foundation	The VF Foundation
Justice Outside	Tracy Aviary
Kelson Foundation	Travel Fashion Girl
League of United Latin American Citizens LULAC Council No. 4359	Waverley Street Foundation
Lululemon	We Hike to Heal
Massachusetts Audubon	Western Conservation Foundation
Maxwell/Hanrahan Foundation	William and Flora Hewlett Foundation
MendoParks	Wyoming Latina Youth Center
<i>Mi Xantico</i>	Wyoming State Parks
Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District	Yellow Bike Project
National Park Foundation	YETI

## Gracias Outdoors

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*Gracias* to the birds for reminding us what it means to be free. *Gracias* to the mountains for reminding us to stand firm in our beliefs. *Gracias* to the rivers for reminding us to be playful. *Gracias* to the oceans for reminding us to explore our depth. *Gracias* to the night sky for reminding us of our vastness. And *gracias* to the campfire for reminding us to gather in community.



Photo by Liz López, LO Volunteer, Sacramento



# Looking Ahead

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**Time.** It wears you down, yet also serves as the path towards restoration and growth.

**Movements** take time. We begin with incremental steps. [Our values](#) guide us as we move. Sometimes, we're not even aware that a particular step brings us closer to the change that we need.

We take the time to get to know ourselves and each other.  
We take the time to face the past and acknowledge how we can do better in the present.  
We take the time to call each other in.  
We take the time to be patient.  
We take the time to learn from one another.  
We take the time to correct our missteps.  
We take the time to heal.  
We take the time to show gratitude and appreciation.  
We take the time to cultivate solidarity.  
We take the time to grow in community.

And for a moment, we look back at the steps we've taken and are heartened to see that we're moving in the right direction.

Stepping into the tenth year of Latino Outdoors, we will endeavor to stay the course, resist the algorithms of homogeneity and division that sometimes tether themselves to growth, and continue leaning into the values that have served as our North Star from the very first step.

We welcome you on this path together with us.

#CrecemosOutdoors10

Photo by Michael Ocasio, LO Volunteer, Baltimore





Latino Outdoors is a space for the community to be present, share our voices, and showcase how an ethic of conservation and roots in nature have been ingrained in *la cultura latina* for generations.

[latinooutdoors.org](http://latinooutdoors.org)