



# 2021 ANNUAL REPORT



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Occupying the intersection of the outdoor industry and outdoor recreation and education, the Association of Outdoor Recreation and Education (AORE) empowers individuals and organizations across the U.S. as they work to connect people to the outdoors in settings such as colleges and universities, for-profits, military agencies, and non-profit organizations.

Through AORE, members are able to connect and support each other, exchange insights, develop effective strategies, explore resource-sharing, and work collectively to advance issues that shape the industry as a whole.

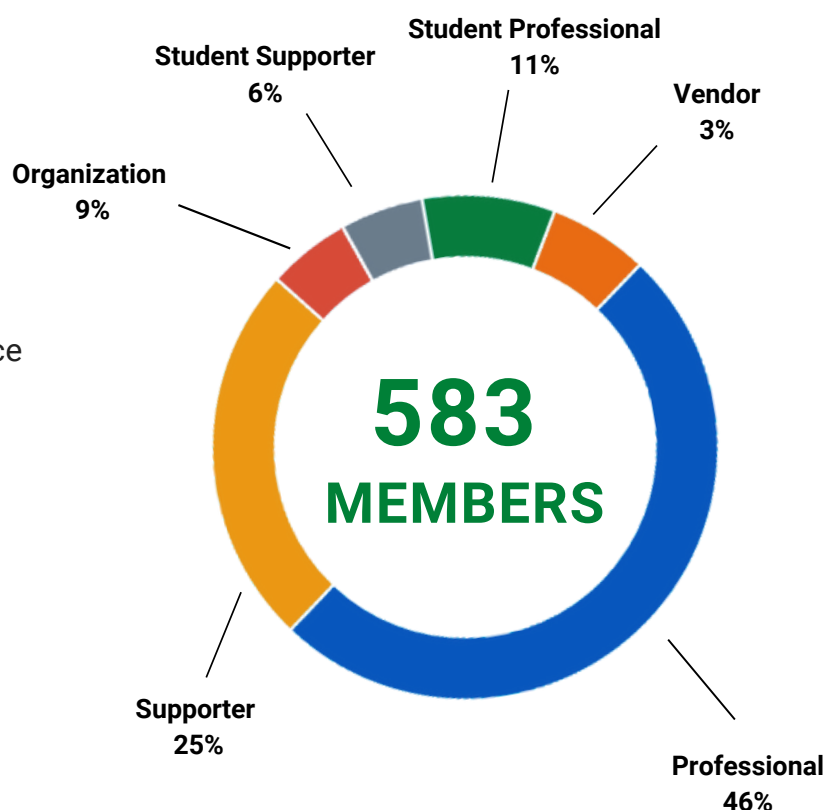
### AORE MEMBER

"When I joined AORE five years ago, I was new in my career and to the industry. I was nervous about finding my place. But at the conference, there was an instant feeling of being welcomed into the community. People valued my thoughts, opinions, and experiences. I'm still inspired by the ideas, passion, and creativity of AORE members."

## MEMBERSHIP AS OF DECEMBER 31, 2021

AORE serves several different types of members. Each one of them brings a unique set of strengths, ideas, and perspectives to our vibrant community!

At the end of the year, we had a total of 583 members engaged with the association. We're thankful for the chance to bring these exceptional individuals together through the programs and services we deliver.





# HOW WE ANCHOR OUR WORK

**Professional Development:** AORE connects members to high quality programs, tools, trainings, and certification opportunities in a wide range of learning formats, ensuring that current and aspiring professionals have access to the education and resources they need to be relevant in their current job and achieve their goals.

**Career Advancement:** AORE provides a nurturing space for members to ask career questions and access the tools, education, and support needed to choose a focus area, navigate the job market, advance within the profession, and find the right environment that will allow them to flourish and become their best selves.

**Networking:** AORE offers opportunities for members to engage and form authentic relationships in a variety of different settings that are inclusive and accessible in order to grow a thriving, supportive community of diverse voices that will help enrich the field of outdoor recreation and education as a whole.

**Advocacy:** AORE leverages its national influence to advocate for critical issues impacting membership and ensures that current and aspiring professionals are informed on the latest industry news, research, best practices, and funding opportunities with the goal of advancing the outdoor recreation and education industry.

## CONNECT. LEARN. GROW.



# BOARD CHAIR STATEMENT

## Greetings AORE!

**2021.** How do you summarize a year that had no real feeling of a start or an end? Lingering effects of the pandemic, heavy location-based decision making, and some significant historical events made up the year that was 2021.

I am pleased to say that despite the still unknown ahead - AORE continues to manage to move the needle forward. The National Office Staff as well as the Board of Directors took time in 2021 to start to really reimagine what the future holds for AORE. If you were able to attend the Annual Business Meeting (ABM) live over zoom, you were able to engage in a generative discussion about where AORE is heading, and what you see as the future of this industry we call the outdoor education and recreation space.

Getting down into the weeds I have to point out that for the year the National Office reduced in size down to three; our steadfast Executive Director Jeannette, our truly behind the scenes bookkeeper, Amy Stevens, and our rockstar Membership & Administration Manager, Jenny Hill. The amount of time and effort on their part throughout 2021 was phenomenal. The amount of opportunities for engagement for the membership and those beyond the membership (you can see the details of those numbers in this report) was beyond what I had envisioned or anticipated for the year. If you haven't gotten a chance to engage with those sessions/events please see the online learning library for recordings and I encourage you to reach out to the speakers and build the relationships that keep our community strong.

As you may or may not have realized, historically AORE receives most of its funding from an in-person conference, since the last one was in 2019, there had to be major shifts in the organization, the Board along side Jeannette worked to create the plan in 2020 and I am happy to report that the plan has done its job and is keeping us on track. A special thank you has to go out to the past board in 2020 especially Kellie Gerbers, past chair, and Sarah Harper-Burke, past treasurer, for their work on creating, refining, and starting the implementation of the financial plan with Jeannette for the "get past the pandemic" version of AORE.

2021 is celebrated with the creation of the Nomination Committee as well as the JEDI (Justice, Equity, Diversity, & Inclusion) Task Force. Though 2022 may be the first fruits of that labor from those groups. I sense we are only beginning to feel the effects of the pandemic in terms of workload for individuals and organizations, as volunteerism is currently at a stall or low not just for our association but in general. I encourage you to reflect on the things that have truly helped you get to where you are and see if maybe you can reach out a helping hand wherever it is you are involved and find a way to volunteer. I do want to take a moment to thank those who currently volunteer for the association, whether you serve on the board, on a committee, chair a committee, have been a session monitor, presenter, or just did work to spread the word about AORE. Thank you!

I hope as this next year returns to some kind of normal for you - whatever that may look like - that you take an opportunity to shake things up from "normal" as well. As always, let me know what you need, and be sure to get outside and take someone with you!



**SASHA GRIFFITH**  
**Board Chair, Jan '21 - Dec '22**



# EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR LETTER

**Dear Members,**

For those of you that I have not seen in person since the pandemic started, I miss you. For those of you who joined AORE during the pandemic, I can't wait to meet you. I'm happy that you are a part of AORE. I know you chose AORE because you are, or aim to be, a leader and that others follow you because of your competence and confidence. With the responsibility to lead others, you need the tools, trainings, and techniques to ensure that the programs you offer are the highest quality and best value for those you instruct.

**BE EMPOWERED. GET CONNECTED. STAY RELEVANT.**

AORE's vision of a vibrant community where all can connect to the outdoors requires that we remove barriers and increase accessibility and develop informed and empowered members. We need a collaborative and active volunteer community as well as intentional and outcome driven programs. We need to increase quality and access to ample and affordable professional development.

AORE continues to develop strategies that will positively impact the outdoor community, improve access to the outdoors for marginalized communities, and be a national leader in cross sector collaboration with positive effects in equality, health, education, environmental action, and economic impact. Outdoor recreation and education is evolving and we recognize members' concerns and fears of not being relevant. Outdoor facilitators are critical to the outdoor industry because people rely on them for safety and responsible recreation.

Like you, we want to provide tools to ensure a positive outdoor experience for those you lead. We want you to be in the know; with access to leaders across the industry for up-to-date trends in outdoor recreation and to stay connected to a community of peers. For over 30 years, AORE has been advocating for its members on a national level through direct participation in efforts like Coalition for Outdoor Access, Outdoor Recreation Roundtable, Together Outdoors, and the Outdoor Industry Association.

AORE believes that professional development is dynamic, not static. Wherever you are along your path from an excited outdoor enthusiast to an experienced outdoor recreation ambassador, I celebrate your investment to expand your learning and be a part of the conversation.

I'm excited to hopefully see you again in person soon!

**Adventure On!**

**JEANNETTE STAWSKI**  
Executive Director



# MEMBERSHIP OVERVIEW

## Hello AORE Members!

**Year two of a global pandemic is over!** Knowing that we weren't going to be able to host an in-person conference in 2021, Jeannette and I wanted to go heavy with virtual programming - to ensure that our members would still have access to quality professional development. When we laid out our plan for 2021 and put it in front of members, there was some initial doubt that a staff of two could pull it off, but I'm happy to report that we held nearly 60 virtual events (check out the breakdown below) in addition to two inclusive summits. Additionally, we unveiled our new Online Learning Library - a one stop shop to view recordings from all of our sessions in a much more user-friendly way. None of what we accomplished in 2021 would have been possible with you as members for being willing to share your expertise with the rest of the AORE community! Thank you for your continued support!

**Thanks!**

**Jenny Hill**

**AORE's Manager of Membership & Administration**

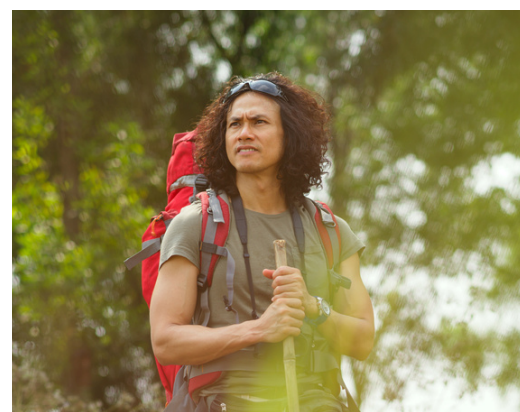


**Jenny Hill**

**Manager of  
Membership &  
Administration**

[Learn more about AORE member benefits by clicking here or contacting Jenny at \[jhill@aore.org\]\(mailto:jhill@aore.org\)](#)

## VIRTUAL PROGRAMMING HIGHLIGHTS





# MEMBER IMPACT

We strive to continually develop and share the tools and resources that our members need the most to be competitive and relevant in their work. In addition to the many programs and events we deliver throughout the year, members receive the latest updates on industry news, challenges, and trends. Career toolkits, resume reviews, mock interviews and industry job postings are designed to support members at all career levels. Multiple options exist for virtual learning as well as networking opportunities, advocacy and support around public lands access, industry discounts, peer mentorship, and much more. Below are more highlights of what we offered to our membership in 2021.

**Message Boards:** Chat with members across the country on 13 message boards to gain insight, advice, and support on topics such as risk management, wilderness medicine, access & permitting, organizational programming, and diversity, equity, and inclusion.

**Online Learning Library:** Watch conversations with leadership about industry challenges and trends, and year-round initiatives. Access webinars on everything from how to navigate AORE resources to information on advocacy issues such as the SOAR Act.

**Association Chats:** These sessions were created so that both AORE leadership and members could come together to discuss industry current events, challenges and member questions. The first half hour is designed to have a thought leader present information on the topic of discussion. The second half hour of the chat is an open forum.

**93**  
**MESSAGE BOARD TOPICS**

**197**  
**JOB POSTINGS**

## MEMBER TESTIMONIAL

"I use member message boards as a decision-making tool to determine best practices for issues I'm faced with at work. They also bring to light other relevant topics that were not on my radar, allowing me to strategize further."



# AORE Inclusive Summits



## In 2021 AORE hosted two Inclusive Summits!

Based on feedback we received from our virtual conference in 2020, AORE began developing an Inclusiveness Summit. Our first effort was in April of 2021, a two-day summit that was intentionally designed to deliver education through four one-hour thought leader sessions, each followed by a one-hour breakout room experience that allowed attendees to debrief, practice techniques and have meaningful discussion. We had 6 featured speakers and then used breakout rooms that attendees selected based upon identity to process and connect.

In November, AORE hosted a three-day Inclusive Outdoor Recreation Summit AORE to provide attendees with a wider recognition of exclusionary practices within outdoor recreation and education and to help them gain better understanding of how they can actively work to make change as leaders in the industry. With four different educational formats applied to each day's topic, attendees partook in advocacy messaging, applied professional development, small group discussions and explored career advancement barriers and opportunities.

**37**  
**Speakers**  
**Shared their**  
**Expertise!**

**375**  
**Registered**  
**Attendees!**

**23**  
**Hours of**  
**DE&I**  
**Content!**

## ATTENDEE TESTIMONIAL

"The Summit had a great balance of philosophy, storytelling, and concrete actions one could take. I attend so many of these and this work weighs so heavy on me personally and professionally, so I was happy to get to laugh, be frustrated, and feel joy throughout."



# OUR STAFF LED COMMITTEES ENRICH OUR MEMBER BENEFITS

AORE's six staff led committees are overseen by national office staff, co-chaired by volunteers, and supported by a host of other members behind-the-scenes. In total, 64 members served on these committees in 2021.

Guided by our executive director and national office team, these dedicated individuals help to operationalize the work plan through a variety of annual and standing projects that are designed to advance the association toward its strategic goals. Their collective efforts play an integral role in supporting our staff as they develop and outline AORE's next chapter of growth within the outdoor recreation and education space.

We appreciate the diverse perspectives, backgrounds, and expertise that each one of our committee volunteers brings to the work. They truly enrich our community, allowing AORE to extend even more opportunities, information, and resources to members.

## COMMITTEE CHAIRS

- **Access & Permitting:**
  - Christina Spohn
- **Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion:**
  - Kelsey Brackley, Crystal Welcome & Steve Sassaman
- **Environmental Stewardship:**
  - Steven Koster & Sandra Townsend
- **Professional Development:**
  - Kyle Kraft-Culkin & Sam Albert
- **Recognition Committee:**
  - Kaileigh Hennard & Caeley Grady
- **Research & Publications**
  - Andrew Szolosi & Erik Rabinowitz

# 64

## COMMITTEE MEMBERS



# YEAR IN REVIEW

AORE's intention in 2021 was to focus on membership engagement and serving to connect members to people, programs, and professional development they need to be successful in their work. An increase in AORE's fund development capacity will allow for future strategic communications and rebranding efforts to broaden AORE's appeal beyond its current membership composition and to connect and collaborate with wider, and more diverse individuals and organizations.

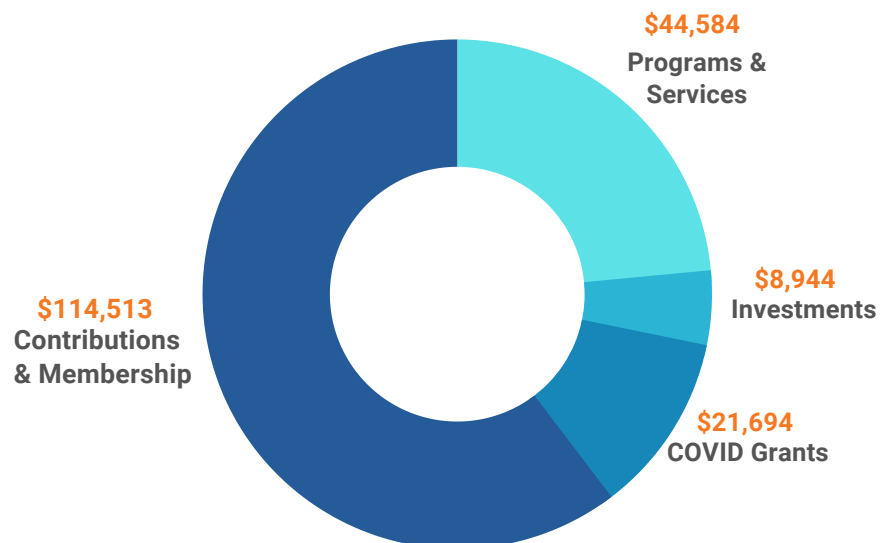
AORE invested its financial, staff, and volunteer resources, as well as reserves, in intentionally creating and deepening connections, and networks for membership. As a convener of ideas and resources, AORE provided developmental and networking experiences for outdoor professionals.

Membership Engagement consisted of new messaging to current members and seeking new audiences to convene. We focused our work on:

- Helping current members better understand and use the tools, resources, and networks that are available to them
- Intentionally supporting professional development needs through virtual programming

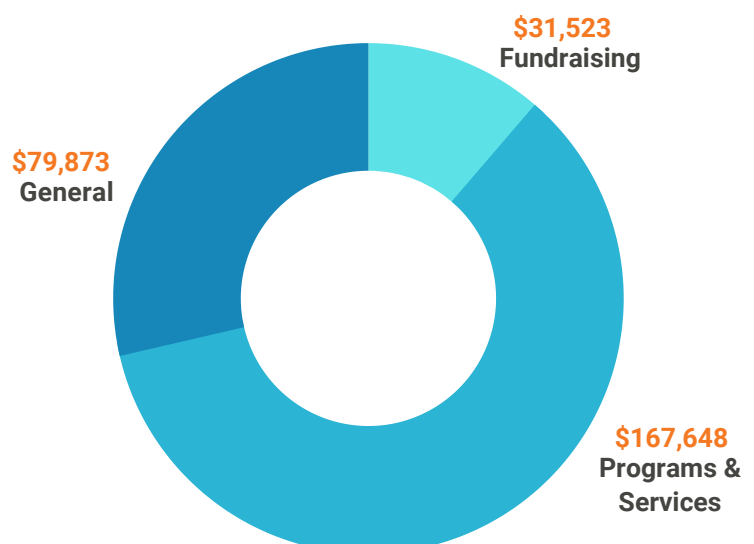
**TOTAL  
INCOME**  
**\$189,735**

AORE's income includes membership, donations, conference, and interest.



**TOTAL  
EXPENSES**  
**\$279,044**

AORE's expenses include staff, infrastructure, direct costs related to programming, and operational costs.





# STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION

## ASSETS

JANUARY 1

DECEMBER 31

Cash	\$105,138	\$39,774
Savings	\$138,281	\$102,538
Accounts Receivable	\$514	\$146
Prepaid Expenses	\$7,458	\$6,000
Depreciation	\$0	\$0
Investments	\$378,871	\$400,398
<b>Total Assets</b>	<b>\$630,262</b>	<b>\$548,856</b>

## LIABILITIES

JANUARY 1

DECEMBER 31

Accounts Payable	\$17,298	\$2,705
Other Liabilities	\$29,324	\$34,386
<b>Total Liabilities</b>	<b>\$46,622</b>	<b>\$37,091</b>

## NET ASSETS

JANUARY 1

DECEMBER 31

Unrestricted Net Assets	\$583,640	\$511,765
<b>Total Net Assets</b>	<b>\$583,640</b>	<b>\$511,765</b>

## NET LIABILITIES & ASSETS

JANUARY 1

DECEMBER 31

<b>Total Liabilities &amp; Net Assets</b>	<b>\$630,262</b>	<b>\$548,856</b>
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# OUR VENDOR MEMBERS STRENGTHEN OUR COMMUNITY

When vendors maintain a strong and consistent presence within our community, they foster authentic connections with members and build loyalty for their brand over time. We extend our deepest thanks to the loyal vendors we've partnered with for many years and are humbled to also welcome so many new faces into our AORE family in 2021. We couldn't do it without you!

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- Acadia Mountain Guides
  - Adventure Cycling Association
  - ALPS Mountaineering
  - Big Agnes
  - Black Diamond Equipment
  - Camp Chef
  - Carhartt
  - Desert Mountain Medicine
  - Deuter
  - Eldorado Climbing Walls
  - Everlast Climbing
  - G Adventures
  - Kelty
  - Liberty Mountain
  - LOWA Boots
  - Mad Rock Climbing
  - Mountain Hardwear
  - Mustang Survival
  - National Outdoor Leadership School (NOLS)
  - Osprey
  - Professional Climbing Instructors Association (PCIA)
  - Ropes Park Equipment
  - Sawyer Paddles & Oars
  - Springfield College
  - USC Spirit
  - Wholesum Food Calculator
  - Wilderness Medical Associates
- 

**Thank you to our 2021 Sponsors!**



***Platinum Sponsor***



***Silver Sponsor***



***Gold Sponsor***



# PARTNERING FOR A PURPOSE

## Vendors and Sponsors

AORE is a leader in supporting professionals and students who work in outdoor recreation and education with professional development, career advancement, networking, and advocacy. With its diverse membership, our association has a strong voice on issues related to the larger industry. We leverage this national influence to advance critical improvements in areas where we feel there is potential to deepen the benefits for our members and those they serve. This established presence also allows us to provide immense value to companies who wish to invest in long-term, multi-faceted partnerships with AORE and take their own visibility to the next level within this growing field.

Our vendors and sponsors are an important part of AORE's framework. We collaborate with companies to tailor opportunities so that they meet their varying needs. This might be as simple as promoting special deals to our membership and exhibiting at our annual conference or it could develop into something more robust like sponsoring specific events and programs, broadening access to opportunities for members through the funding of scholarships, or investing in AORE's institutional capacity so that it can strengthen operations and infrastructure. We also partner with organizations who wish to help advance the association's strategic initiatives because they see direct alignment between our respective missions.

Vendors have personally told us how much they value the face-to-face interaction they are able to have with members through our programs and how loyal those individuals are to the brands they know. It is an exciting time to engage with our vibrant community. We look forward to exploring new partnerships in the years to come as AORE continues to expand its reach in the outdoor community.



**LEARN MORE ABOUT OPPORTUNITIES  
FOR PARTNERSHIP AT [AORE.ORG](https://aore.org)!**

# THANK YOU TO OUR GENEROUS DONORS!

## Ambassador (\$10,000+)

Anonymous  
Patsy Kott  
Abigail Rowe

## Advocate (\$2,500)

Sasha Griffith  
Matthew Marcus  
Tim Moore  
Jeannette Stawski  
Russell Watts

*\*List reflects cumulative  
donor giving histories.*

## Sustainer (\$1,000)

Tom Adams  
Mackenzie Brady  
Mike Doyle  
Karen Dyer  
Kellie Gerbers  
Jason Gosch  
Kent Grier  
Todd Grier  
Sarah Harper Burke  
Gregory Hawkins  
Mitch Hoffman  
Bryan Karban  
Jason Kurten  
Genevieve Marchand  
Heather Martin  
Eric Neumann  
Jeremy Oyen  
Paul Sanford  
Jenn Velie  
Jim Wall

## Friend (\$500)

Elizabeth Andre  
Todd Bauch  
Evan Bollig  
Christopher Bullard  
Silvia Chan  
Guy deBrun  
Austin Dyer  
Taylor Freeman  
Lance Haynie  
Karel Hilversum  
Rodney Ley  
Tim Mertz  
Dave Myers  
Bill Pierce  
Amanda Preperato  
Erin Rausch  
Brian Shirley  
Margie Silverstein  
Daniel Swan





# DONORS DRIVE AORE'S VISION TO NEW HEIGHTS

Unrestricted donations are critical for AORE's continued success. Funding of this nature allows us to invest in the organization's health and encourage growth - from adopting new best practices, identifying new skillsets and perspectives to seek out in future board candidates, and streamlining association governance. We're also able to advocate for critical industry issues through research, advancing diverse perspectives, and strengthening connections and communication between national practitioners. Donors are also helping us to establish endowed funds to increase access to industry learning and development opportunities for professionals and students.



## SMALL EFFORTS ADD UP!

Has AORE helped you professionally? Consider making a small gift to help other members experience the same success. Our donors fund a variety of goals and initiatives, including:

- Support AORE's Board in furthering the mission and vision of the Association.
- Support AORE's programming on issues of public lands access, permitting, diversity, equity & inclusion and environmental stewardship.
- Maintain endowed funds for student and professional development and a general contribution fund for distribution to various projects and campaigns as determined by the association.
- Contribute to a Memorial Fund that provides scholarships in the name of past members who have made a lasting impact on AORE and the industry as a whole.



**VISIT [AORE.ORG/GIVING](https://aore.org/giving) TO MAKE A ONE-TIME GIFT  
OR SET UP A RECURRING DONATION!**

# BOARD OF DIRECTORS



AORE's board of directors follows a strategic model where our volunteer leadership sets the association's high-level priorities and the executive director and national office staff then determine the best tactics for achieving those priorities. AORE's board of directors consists of an executive team, regular board members, and specialized internal committees that are chaired by a current board member and advise the board chair on matters relating to financial advisory, governance, membership, board nominations and development.

Our Board of Directors is elected by AORE's membership. These volunteers are practitioners, academics, and supporters who represent a range of skills, perspectives, and backgrounds that have been identified as critical for achieving our association's goals for future growth within the outdoor recreation and education space. We are thankful for all that these committed volunteers have done to help AORE embark on a bold new path with a strong vision for leading the industry.

## EXECUTIVE TEAM

### Chair

Sasha Griffith

### Treasurer

Sarah Harper Burke

### Vice Chair

Victoria Lopez-Herrera

### Secretary

Bryan Karban

## BOARD MEMBERS

Renee Alston-Maisonet

Karel Hilversum

George Mallin

Jeremy Oyen

Joey Parent

Nicole Pokorney

Morgan Costello (Student)

# MEET AORE'S NATIONAL OFFICE STAFF

Our national team is responsible for the development and delivery of AORE's programs and services as well as day-to-day operations, marketing and communications, member engagement, volunteer management, and taking the lead on aligning stakeholders around concrete strategies and goals.

There is much to celebrate as we look to the future growth and achievements of the association. This forward momentum wouldn't be possible without the dedication of these passionate individuals who advance AORE's strategic goals!



**Executive Director**  
Jeannette Stawski



**Manager, Membership &  
Administration**  
Jenny Hill



**Bookkeeper**  
Amy Stevens



**Social Media Coordinator**  
Adrienne Band



# 29 YEARS OF EXCELLENCE



## EMPOWERING LEADERS IN OUTDOOR RECREATION AND EDUCATION

1100 North Main Street, Suite 108  
Ann Arbor, MI 48104

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### CONTACT US:

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