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As Summer Hits Its Stride, Recreate Responsibly Coalition Encourages People to Put Safety Front and Center

Amid sustained demand for outdoor spaces, it is increasingly important that everyone recreating outside take actions to protect each other and the wild spaces we all love.

DENVER—With summer taking hold, millions of people are expected to find their way to the nation’s public lands, waterways, and trails, continuing the trend of heightened demand for outdoor spaces that began with the COVID-19 pandemic.

Whether people are planning a water excursion, a back country hike or camping with friends and family this summer, the Recreate Responsibly Coalition encourages everyone to embrace best practices that foster responsible recreation, inclusivity, and shared stewardship as they spend time in the outdoors.

“At its core the Recreate Responsibly movement aims to nurture a ‘culture of caring’—caring for ourselves, for one another, and for the outdoor spaces that help make us whole,” said Eugenie Bostrom, manager of the Recreate Responsibly Coalition. “Nature can be a space of healing for individuals and communities alike. The Recreate Responsibly Coalition is offering a community platform alongside the tools and resources to encourage organizations and individuals to take an active role in caring for one another and the places we play.”

The coalition of more than 2,300 organizations formed in response to heightened demand for the outdoors inspired by the COVID-19 pandemic. With that demand sustaining, the coalition has centered its work on creating community—building an outdoors for all and taking good care of the outdoor places we all love.

New Recreate Responsibly editions emphasize the importance of water and wildfire safety in particular as the summer season drives surging demand for outdoor spaces. The principles behind the Water Responsibly and Wildfire Responsibly editions emphasize the foundation of responsible recreation: know before you go, plan and prepare, build a safe and inclusive outdoors, learn how to respond and make it better, with an emphasis on the importance of respecting these natural elements.
“With more people living near and visiting parks, public lands, and wild spaces than ever before, it’s imperative that we work together to do all we can to prevent catastrophic disasters like human-caused wildfires and tragedies like preventable drownings,” said Bob Ratcliffe, Division Manager, Conservation and Outdoor Recreation Programs, National Park Service. “Nearly nine out of ten wildfires nationwide are human-caused. On the water, understanding our limits, being safe and wearing life jackets can save lives. Educational efforts like #RecreateResponsibly help people understand the risks, encourage everyone to know before you go, and to take precautions"

These new editions, which were released earlier this spring and emphasized by the coalition at the annual Outdoor Retailer Summer Show in Denver, Colorado, underscore the overall #RecreateResponsibly message: We all have a role to play in keeping people, places, and communities safe as we enjoy the outdoors.

The coalition was first convened by representatives from REI Co-op and the Outdoor Alliance in May of 2020 in response to unprecedented demand on public lands and natural spaces during the COVID-19 pandemic. The group has since expanded to include more than 2,300 members representing businesses, government agencies, nonprofits, outdoor media and influencers, as well as state chapters tackling local issues nationwide. The coalition’s common ground is a shared love of the outdoors, a desire to help everyone experience the benefits of nature, and a belief that by sharing best practices, people can get outside safely and help keep our parks, trails, and public lands accessible.

“Collectively, the world has come to understand the immeasurable impact of time spent outside—whether that’s close-to-home or on a bucket-list adventure—on our health, well-being and the social fabric of our shared communities,” said Ryan Chao, president of Rails-to-Trails Conservancy and a member of the Recreate Responsibly Coalition Advisory Committee. “As we look to the future, we have a responsibility to each other and to these precious spaces. It’s up to all of us to make the outdoors safe and welcoming for everyone.”

Media assets and resources available in English and Spanish at recreateresponsibly.org and by following @Recreate.Responsibly Instagram, @RecreatInfo on Twitter and #RecreateResponsibly across social media platforms.

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