



American Academy
for Park and Recreation Administration

www.aapra.org | info@aapra.org

Welcome Academy

APEX ASCENT: ELEVATING THE CLIMB, DEFINING THE PEAK

ALL ACADEMY MEETING

Wednesday, December 10, 2025
11am PT | 12pm MT | 1pm CT | 2pm ET



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Elizabeth S. Kessler, MBA, CPRE, President (Trail Name: Artemis)
Executive Director, McHenry County Conservation District

Trailhead Meet-Up
Meet Your Fellow
Academy Adventurers,
Trail Angels & Trail Guides



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Today's Agenda

- **Apex Ascent: Mapping Our Route**
 - Historical Background
 - Recommendations
 - Campfire Conversations & Trailblazer Takeaways
- **Next Steps - Critical Path**
 - What's Ahead
 - How to Get Involved



Mission

An Academy of distinguished park and recreation administrators, scholars committed to research, professional development and the use of best practices.

Vision

To inspire, influence and advance the Park and Recreation Profession.

Values

Leadership: We are viewed as thoughtful leaders and as a resource for the profession.

Impactful: We use our collective wisdom and experience to improve the parks and recreation profession.

Innovative and Progressive: We are a learning community that embodies continuous improvement within the changing needs of the profession.

Belonging: We commit to justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion by actively seeking to create safe, secure, and supportive environments.



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Pledge

AAPRA commits to promote, nourish, and embody an inclusive and equitable environment, strengthen our commitment to promote justice, equity, diversity and inclusion, combat systemic and structural racism, and promote a culture of equality for all, through our knowledge advancement, research, education and scholarly efforts.

We commit to:

- reveal relevant opportunities
- elevate equity
- activate diversity
- lead inclusively



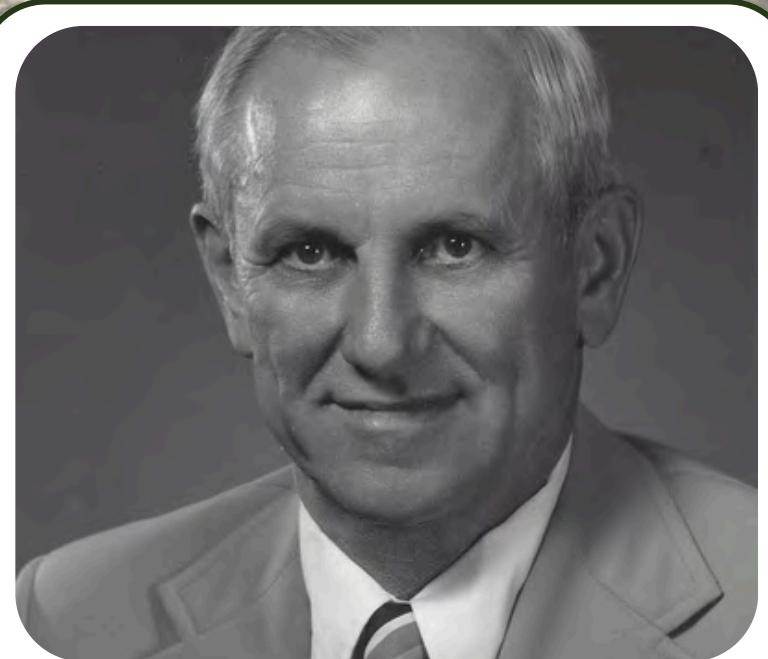
So... What IS the Academy?

Leadership of and for the Profession.

The American Academy for Park and Recreation Administration (AAPRA) is an organization of high-level experienced professionals and educators dedicated to advance parks and recreation.

We mentor professionals, acknowledge high performing park and recreation agencies, (local, state and armed forces), further scholarly research to advance the profession.

Building A Strong Foundation



Frank Vaydik
Director, Kansas City, MO
Convened First Meeting of AAPRA



Mary Grogan
Director, Modesta, CA
*Founding Member
NRPA & CPRS President*



Pauline desGranges
Director, San Diego, CA
Founding Member



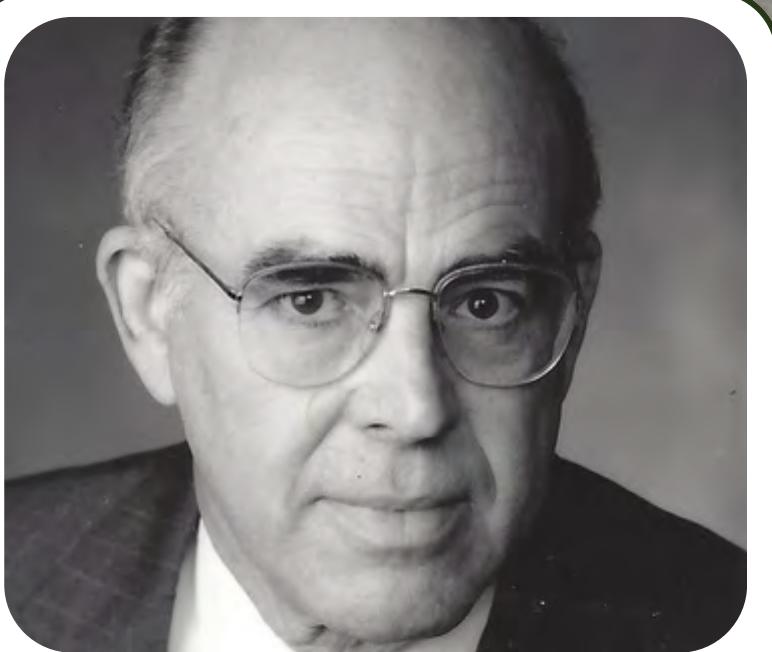
Richard Trudeau
East Bay Regional Park
District, Oakland CA
Founding Member



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Trail Guides



Robert F. Toalson
Champaign Park District, IL
AAPRA Executive Director
1985-1997
The Foundation Rock



John Potts
Champaign County
Forest Preserve District, IL
AAPRA Executive Director
1998-2009
The Shaping Rock



Richard Grodsky
Executive Director,
Elmhurst Park District, IL
AAPRA Executive Director
2009 - 2015
The Keystone



Jane Adams
Executive Director, CPRS, CA
AAPRA Executive Director
2016 - Present
The Stepping Stone



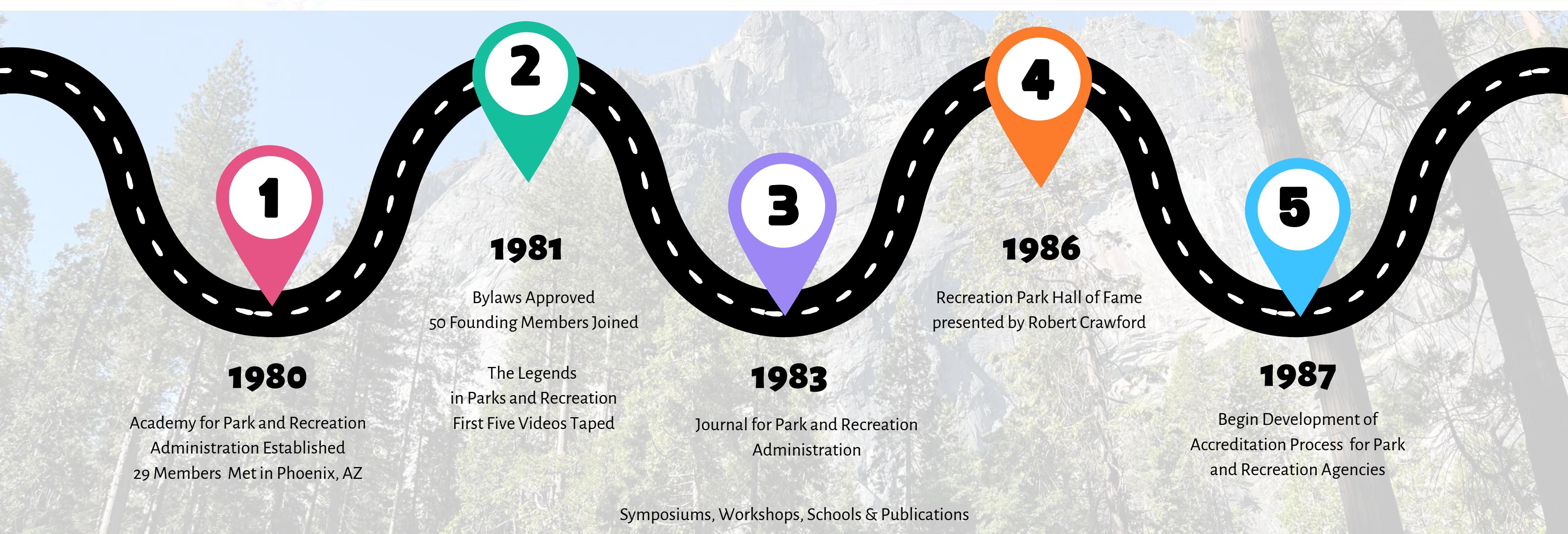
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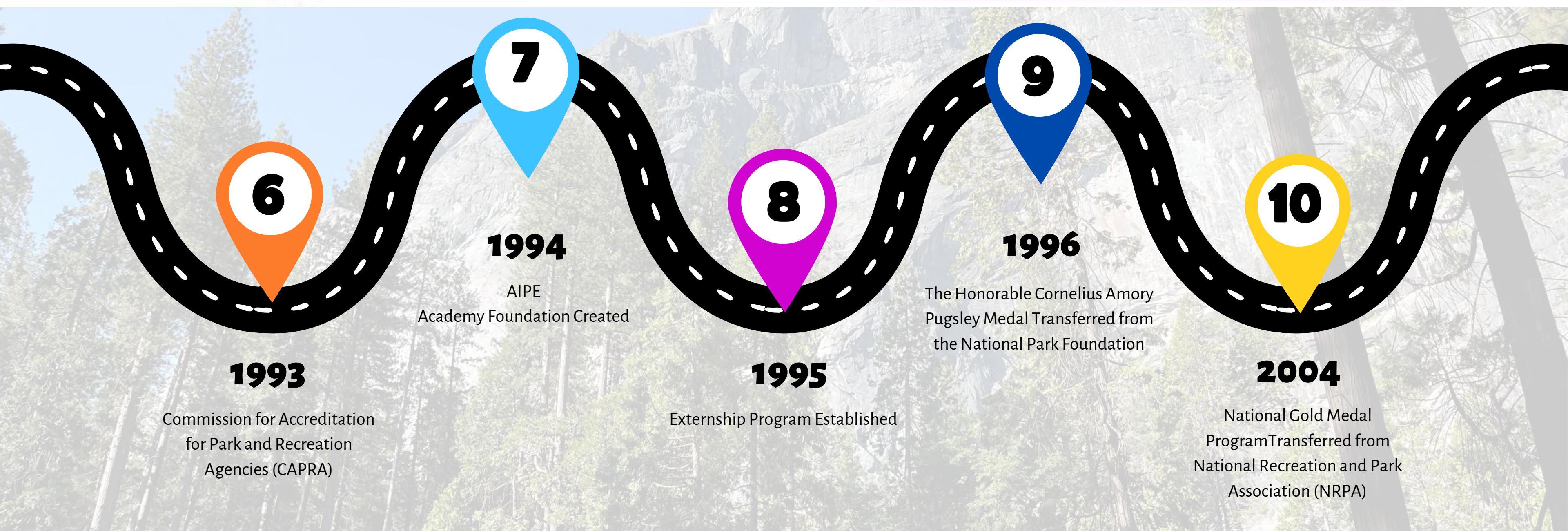


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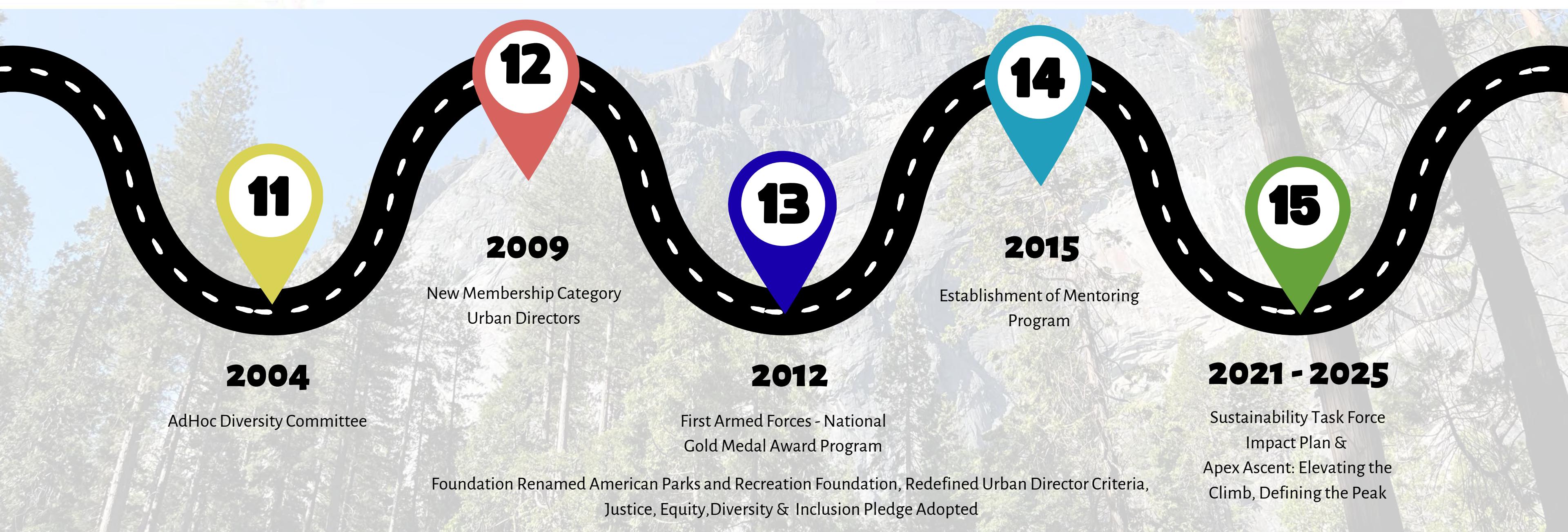


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MILESTONES

Building A Strong Foundation

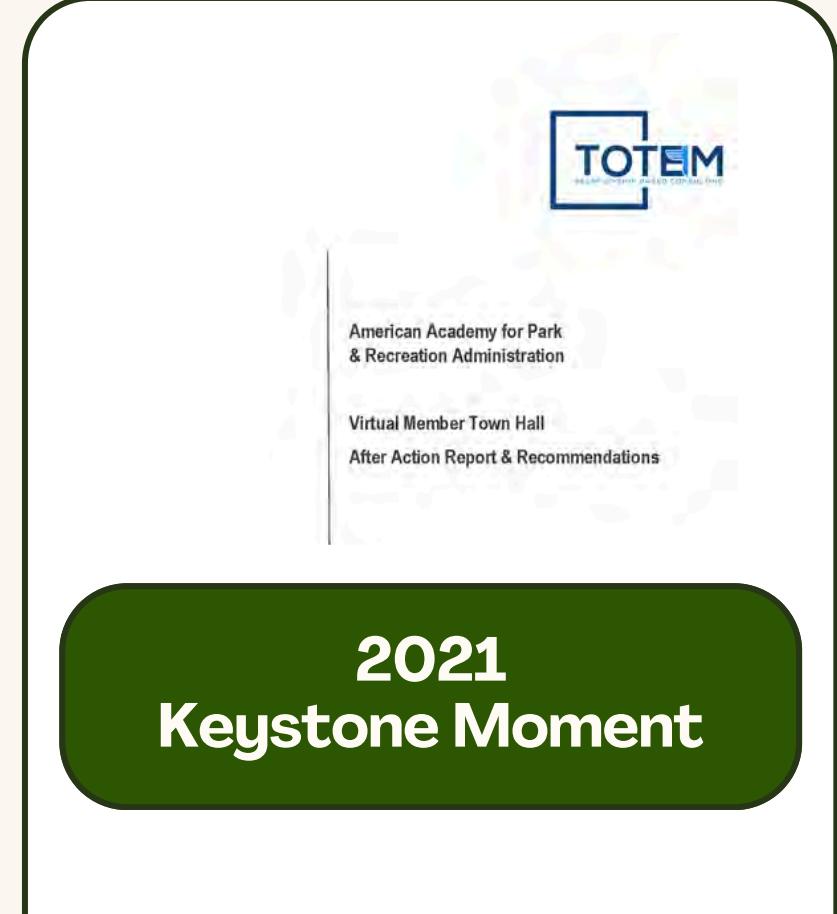
It's All About the Rocks



1980
Rock Solid Start



2020
40 Years



2021
Keystone Moment



2025
The Ascent Ahead



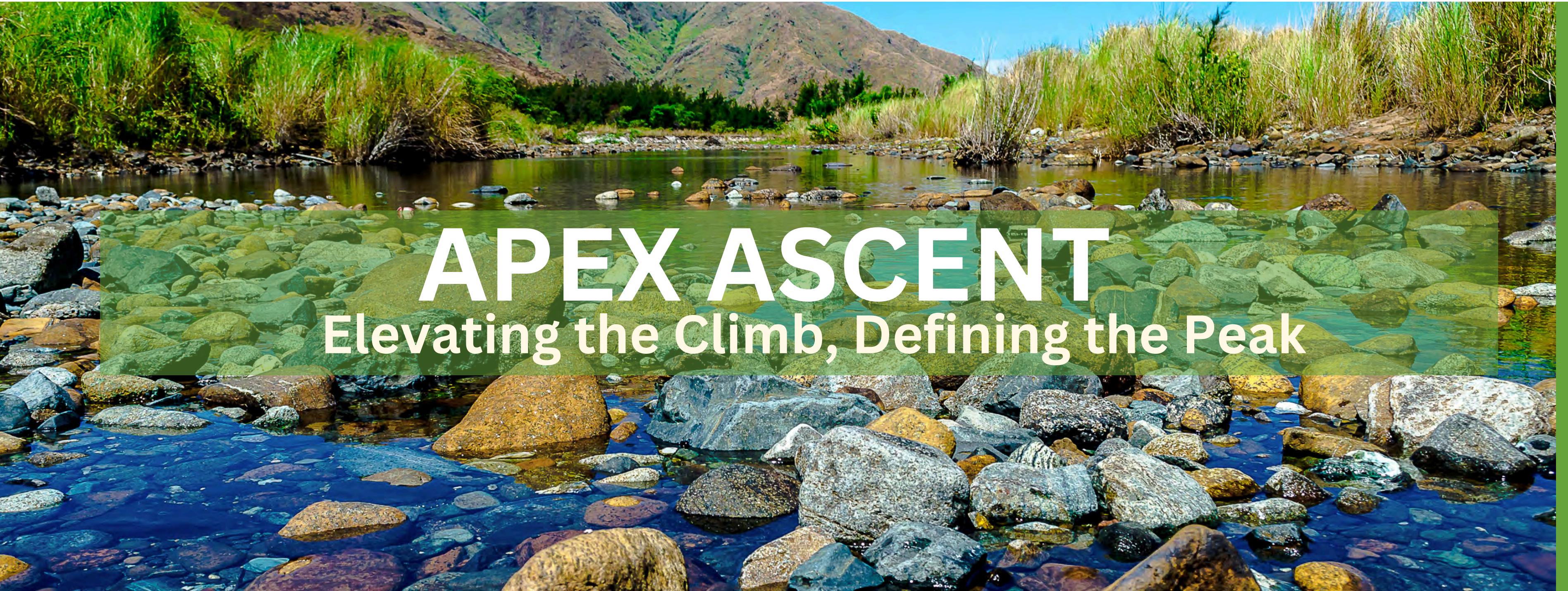
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APEX ASCENT

Elevating the Climb, Defining the Peak



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Today's Trail Guides

Board of Directors

- Elizabeth S. Kessler, MBA, CPRE, President
- Jodie Adams, CPRP, PTR, PPR, President-Elect
- Cindie Sullivan, CPRP, Past President
- Michael J. Kalvort, CPRE, Treasurer
- Stacey Laird Dicke, CPRP, Secretary
- Stacie Anaya, CPRP
- Rick Atkins, CPRP
- Darrell Crittendon, CPRP
- Deb Jordan, Re.D.
- Bernita Reese, M.S., CPRP
- Dina Trunzo, CTRS

Independent Contractors

- Jane H. Adams, Executive Director
- Brit Kramer, CAE, Red Barn Communications, LLC
- Shelley Dahle, Red Barn Communications, LLC

Sustainability Task Force

- Elizabeth S. Kessler, MBA, CPRE, President
- Michael J. Kalvort, CPRE, Treasurer
- Robert Armistead, CPRE
- Janet Bartrik, CPRP (President 22-23)
- Michael Klitzing, CPRP

Executive Committee

- Elizabeth S. Kessler, MBA, CPRE, President
- Jodie Adams, CPRP, PTR, PPR, President-Elect
- Cindie Sullivan, CPRP, Past President
- Michael J. Kalvort, CPRE, Treasurer
- Stacey Laird Dicke, CPRP, Secretary
- Jane H. Adams, Executive Director, Ex-Officio

Conversations That Matter: Master Class Series

- Tracey M. Crawford, CPRP, CTRS (President 23-24);
CTM Task Force Chair





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COMMITTEE - TASK FORCE LEADERSHIP

INNOVATION

- NATIONAL GOLD MEDAL
 - Chair: Stacey Laird Dicke, CPRP (26-27)
 - Vice Chair: Michael Kies, CPRE (26-27)
- CAPRA
 - Committee Members
- CONVERSATIONS THAT MATTER
 - Chair: Tracey M. Crawford, CTRS, CPRP
 - Vice Chair: Tara Eggleston-Stewart, CPRE

PREPARE FUTURE LEADERS

- CAREER DEVELOPMENT
 - Chair: M. Jean Keller
 - Vice Chair: Karen Hesser, CPRP
- EXTERN
 - Chair: William (Bill) McAdam, CPRP
 - Vice Chair: Anthony (Tony) Lopez, CPRE
- JEDI
 - Chair: Roslyn Johnson, CPRP
 - Co-Chair: Lisa Sheppard, CPRP
- MENTORING
 - Chair: Nancy Kaiser, CPRP
 - Vice Chair: Tara Gee, CPRP

PREPARE FUTURE LEADERS

- LEGENDS
 - Chair: Christine (Chris) Dropinski, CPRP (25-26)
 - Vice Chair: Dr. Melissa Weddell (25-26)

SUPPORT & SOCALIZE RESEARCH

- BEST PAPER
 - Chair: Christopher (Chris) Beth, CPRP
 - Vice Chair: Dr. Stephanie T. West
- RESEARCH FOR THE PROFESSION
 - Chair: Dr. Denise Anderson
 - Vice Chair: Dr. Ellen Drogin Rodgers



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COMMITTEE - TASK FORCE LEADERSHIP

ACKNOWLEDGE STEWARDS & DOERS

- PUGSLEY MEDAL
 - Chair: Lewis Ledford
- ROBERT W. CRAWFORD NRPA HALL OF FAME
 - Committee Members

OPERATING

- MEMBERSHIP
 - Chair: Rebecca A. Benná, CPRP (25, 26-28)
 - Vice Chair: Dr. Michal Anne Lord (24-26)
- BRANDING & SOCIAL MEDIA
 - Chair: Jill Geller, CPRP
 - Vice Chair: Kim Reser, CPRP

OPERATING

- BYLAWS
 - Chair: Dr. Terry Robertson
 - Co-Chair: Cory Styron, CPRP
- NOMINATING
 - Chair: Cindie Sullivan, CPRP
- NRPA COORDINATION GROUP
 - President: Elizabeth S. Kessler, CPRE
 - President-elect: Jodie Adams, CPRP
- NRPA ADVOCACY COMMITTEE
 - AAPRA Representative: Jason Anselment

OPERATING

- URBAN DIRECTORS
 - Chair: Michael Kirschman, CPRP
 - Vice-Chair: Crystal R. Ross
- INDUSTRY COUNCIL TASK FORCE
 - Chair: Jodie Adams, CPRP – President-elect

INVESTMENT TASK FORCE

- Chair: Michael J. Kalvort, CPRE - Treasurer

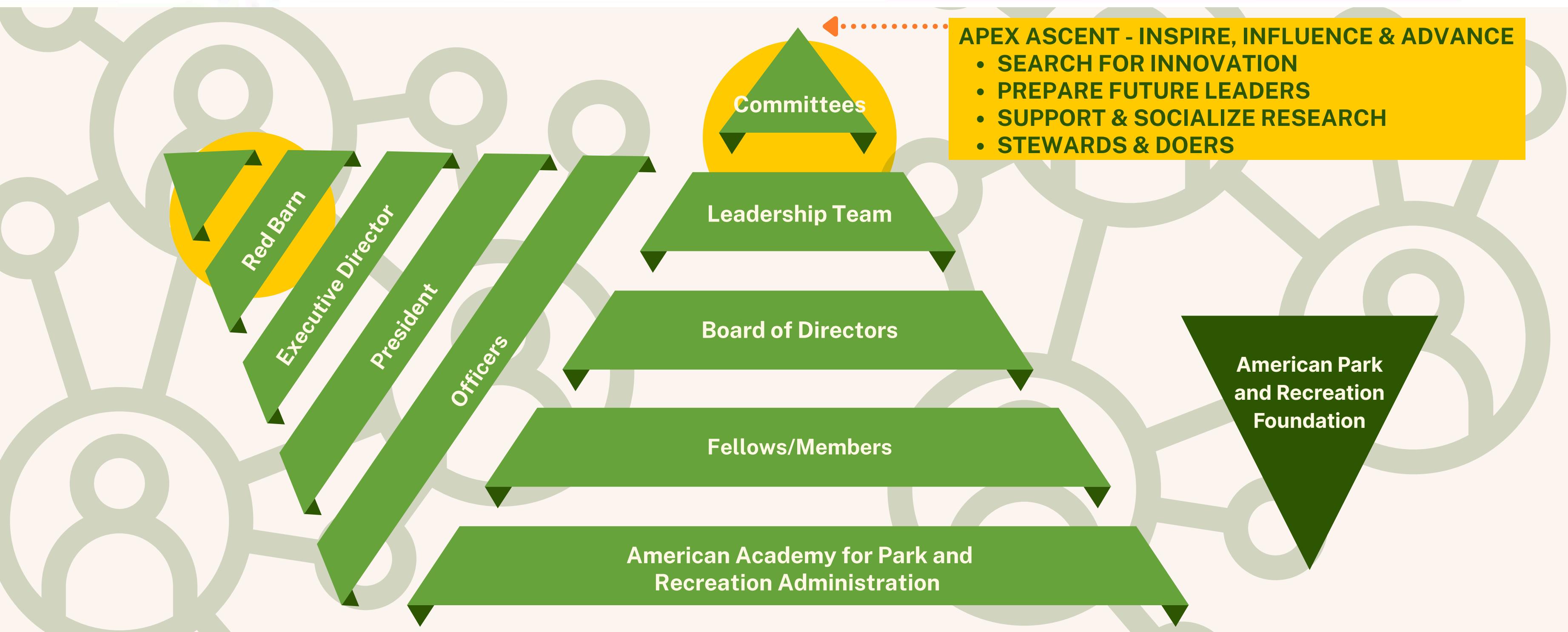
FOUNDATION - APRF

- AMERICAN PARK & RECREATION FOUNDATION
 - President: Chris Nunes, PhD., CPRE
 - Vice President: Jason Anselment



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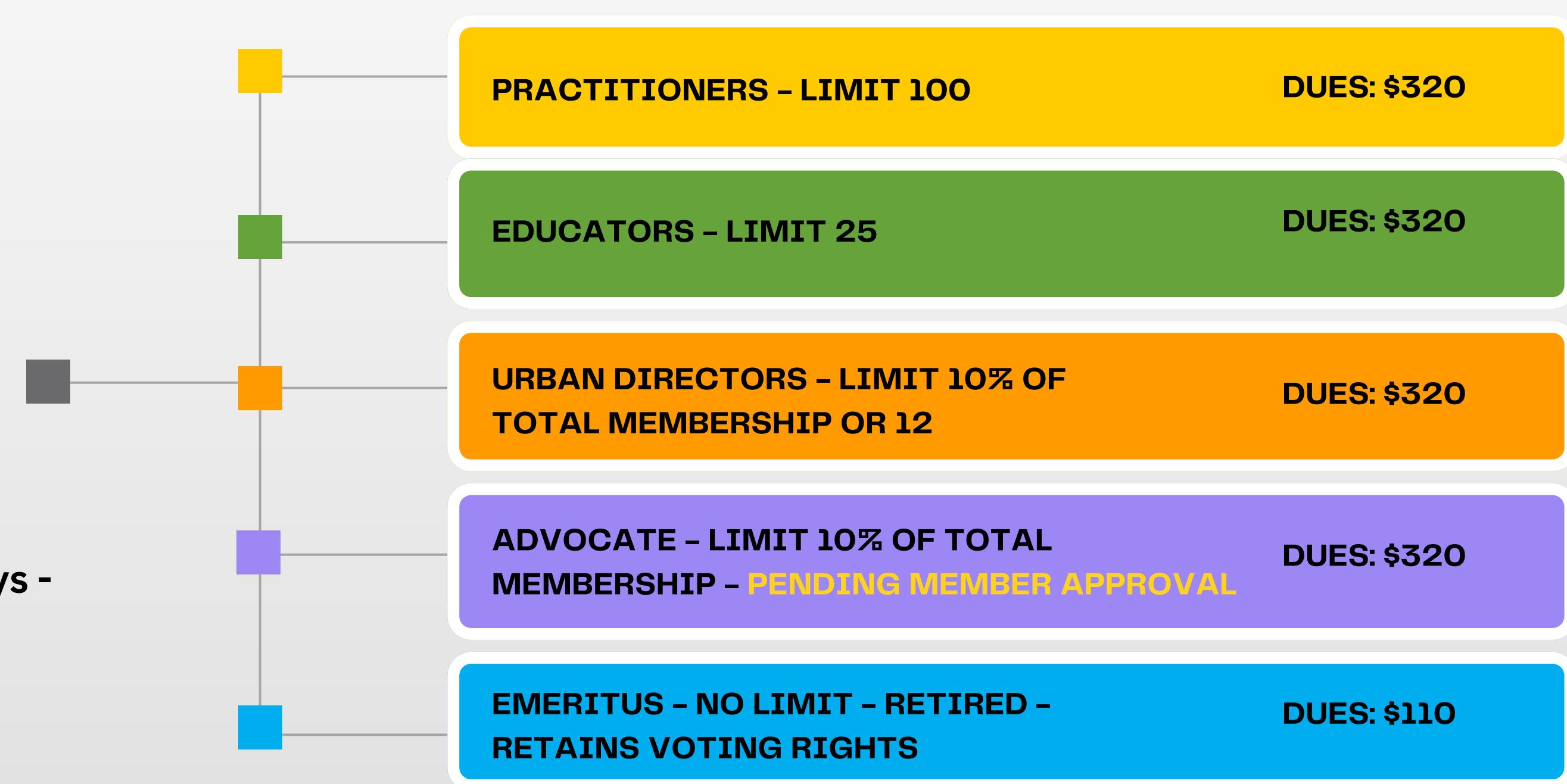




MEMBERSHIP STRUCTURE & DUES

Membership Year:
January-December

Dues Invoiced in January
Payment due within 30 days -
pay online or with check





LISTENING SESSIONS



SERVICE TO THE
PROFESSION



PERMISSION TO
BE DIFFERENT



RELEVANCY



DEFINED BY
ACTION



INVESTMENT IN
FUTURE LEADERS

WHAT WE
HEARD

Top 10 Initiatives from the 3-Year IMPACT PLAN



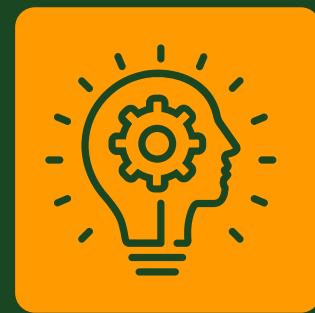


Guiding Framework



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SEARCH FOR INNOVATION

National Gold Medal Awards Program & Commission for Accreditation on Park and Recreation Agencies (CAPRA)



SUPPORT & SOCIAZIE RESEARCH

Research for the Profession, Journal of Park and Recreation Administration (JPRA) & Best Paper



OUR BIG ROCKS



PREPARE FUTURE LEADERS

Externships, Mentorship, Career Development & Justice, Equity, Diversity & Inclusion (JEDI), Legends in Parks and Recreation



ACKNOWLEDGE STEWARDS & DOERS

Honorable Cornelius Amory Pugsley Medal & Robert W. Crawford Hall of Fame



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Search for Innovation



- **National Gold Medal Award Program** - Honors public park and recreation agencies throughout the United States and armed forces recreation programs worldwide that demonstrate excellence in long-range planning, resource management and innovative approaches to delivering superb parks and recreation services. AAPRA is governing organization and administrator.
- **CAPRA - Commission for Accreditation of Park and Recreation Agencies** - In partnership with the National Recreation and Park Association, CAPRA is the only national accreditation program and is a valuable measure of an agency's overall quality of operation, management and service to the community. AAPRA appoints (5) five representatives to the Commission.



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Preparing Future Leaders



- **Extern Program** - Focus on mentoring young professionals, paired at NRPA conference and receive financial support for their attendance. AAPRA members serve as Mentors.
- **Mentoring Program** - Pairs seasoned professionals with young professionals, students and new directors to provide development opportunities from April through November.
- **Career Development** - Develops resources for professionals who are being promoted to supervisory positions and professionals in supervisory positions who are advancing to organizational leadership.



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Preparing Future Leaders



- **JEDI** - Dedicated to fostering an inclusive environment for all AAPRA Fellows through programs, initiatives that combat systemic and structural racism, and promotes a culture of equity for all, through knowledge advancement, research, education and scholarly efforts.
- **Legends of Parks and Recreation** - Video recordings of leaders in parks and recreation, recordings posted on AAPRA website, AAPRA membership NOT required to nominate or be nominated.



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Support & Socialize Research



- **Research** - Conducts surveys based on identified needs of practitioners. Utilizes researchers who have expertise in those areas.
- **JPRA** - AAPRA owns the Journal of Park and Recreation Administration. Members receive electronic access.
- **Best Paper** - Recognizes Masters Thesis/Special Project or Dissertation which are alternated annually. AAPRA provides cash prize to author.



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Stewards & Doers

- **Honorable Cornelius Amory Pugsley Medal** - Honors individuals for lifetime achievements in parks and conservation, AAPRA membership NOT required to nominate or be nominated
- **Robert W. Crawford Hall of Fame** - Partnership with National Recreation and Park Association, selects individuals who have made outstanding and lasting contributions to the advancement of recreation and parks. AAPRA appoints (4) four representatives who assist this joint committee.





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Operational Committees

- **Board of Directors** - Elected by the AAPRA membership, provides governance, oversight and fiscal stewardship of the AAPRA. President, President-Elect, Past President, Treasurer, Secretary and (6) six at-large Directors.
- **Branding & Social Media** - Ensures consistent use of AAPRA branding, develops and oversees strategies for AAPRA's presence on social media platforms, helps generate and curate engaging mission-driven content, strengthens connections with current and potential members and encourages interaction and participation through social media channels (i.e., LinkedIn).
- **Bylaws** - Reviews and maintains governing documents, recommends amendments, ensure compliance, supports organizational effectiveness.





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Operational Committees

- **Leadership Team** - Shares updates, challenges, and needs of their committee, ensures committees work aligns with AAPRA's overall mission and strategy and annual priorities, contributes to discussions that require insights and collaboration across committees. Consists of Co-Chairs of each Committee/Task Force.
- **Membership** - Stewards the AAPRA's membership base including recruitment, selection, engagement and retention. Comprised of President and (6) appointive members with no less than 3 years of AAPRA membership.
- **Nominating** - Identifies and recruits leadership, ensures diversity and balance, vets and recommends candidates and ensures dual slate. Chaired by Past-President with (5) five members, a majority of whom are Past Presidents.



AAPRA PARTNERS - THANK YOU

OPEN	AAPRA E-NEWSLETTER
MUSCO LIGHTING	NATIONAL GOLD MEDAL AWARD PROGRAM
DAVEY TREE EXPERT COMPANY NATIONAL PARK FOUNDATION	HONORABLE CORNELIUS AMORY PUGSLEY MEDAL
USTA	CONVERSATIONS THAT MATTER-MASTER CLASS SERIES
NATIONAL RECREATION AND PARK ASSOCIATION	NATIONAL GOLD MEDAL AWARD PROGRAM, COMMISSION FOR ACCREDITATION OF PARK AND RECREATION AGENCIES, ROBERT W. CRAWFORD HALL OF FAME, CAREER DEVELOPMENT VIDEO & TOOLKIT
OPEN	EXTERNSHIP PROGRAM
LANDSCAPE STRUCTURES, INC	LEGENDS OF PARKS & RECREATION, ANNUAL AWARDS DINNER
SAGAMORE-VENTURE PUBLISHING	JOURNAL OF PARK AND RECREATION
PENNSYLVANIA RECREATION & PARK SOCIETY	CAREER DEVELOPMENT VIDEO & TOOLKIT

**Separate 501(c)(3) with its own
Board of Directors.**

**Provides scholarships to NRPA
schools.**

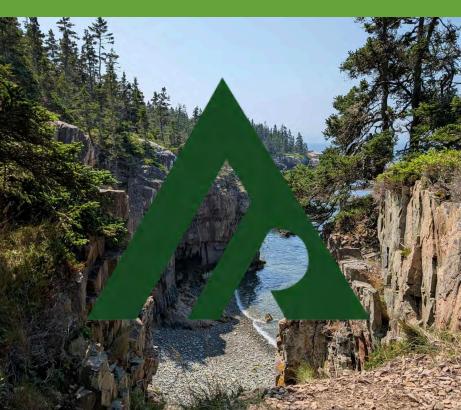
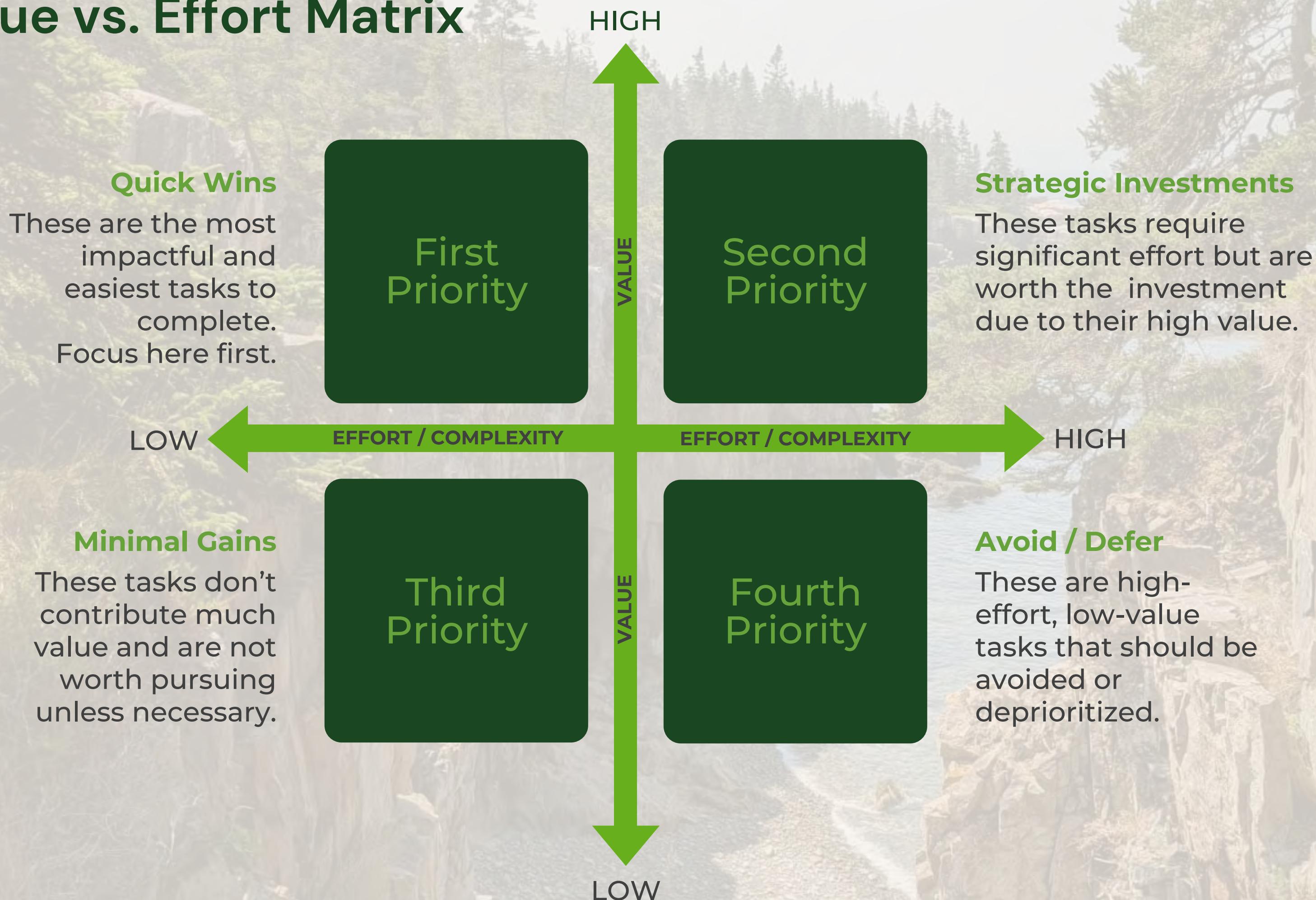
**All members are respectfully
asked to make an annual
donation to APRF. While the
specific amount is not of
primary importance, achieving
100% participation reflects our
commitment and collective
responsibility.**

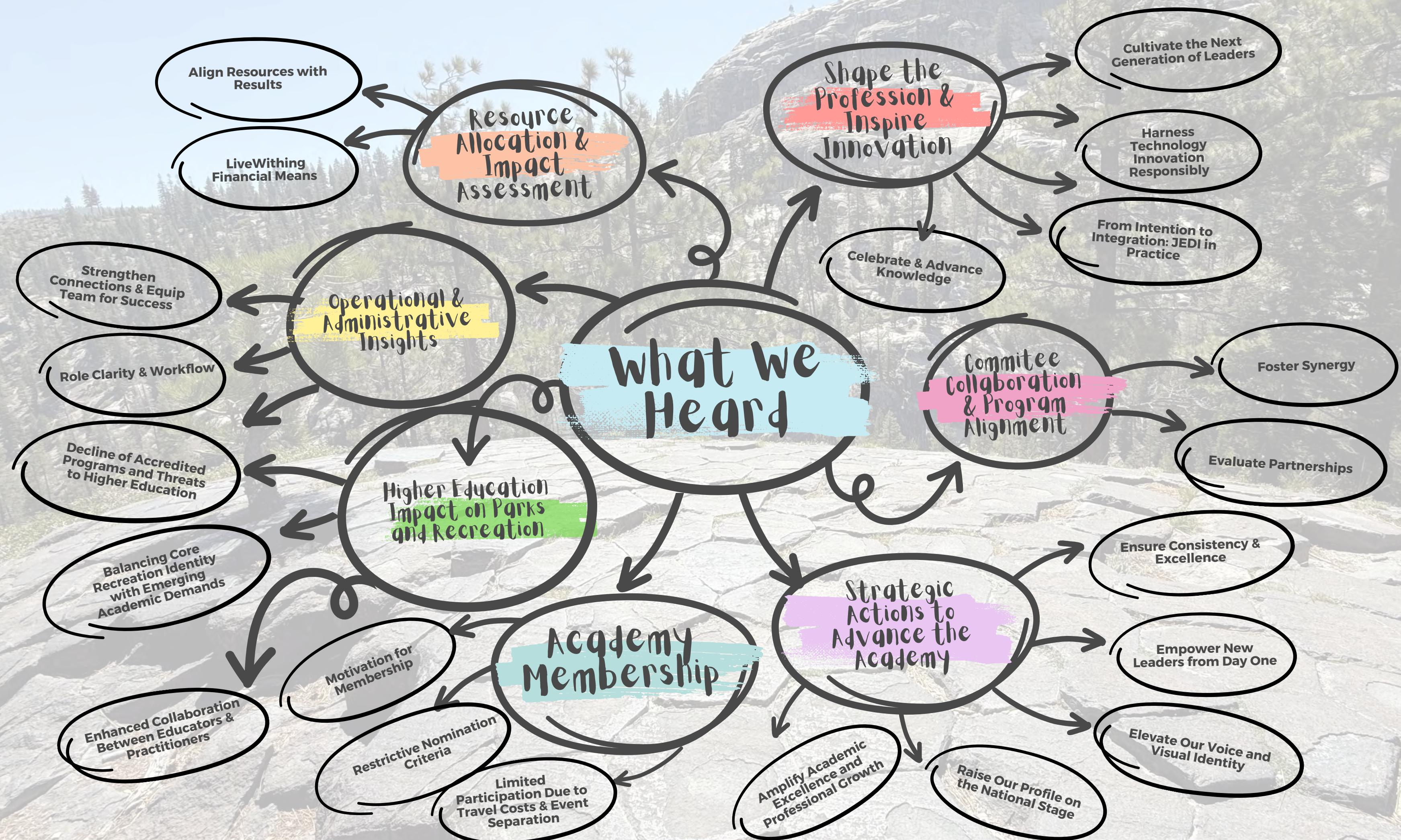


**American
Parks & Recreation
Foundation**

RESEARCH • INNOVATION • GROWTH

Value vs. Effort Matrix





SHAPE THE PROFESSION &
INSPIRE INNOVATION

INNOVATION

ELEVATE OUR PRESENCE

PROMOTION

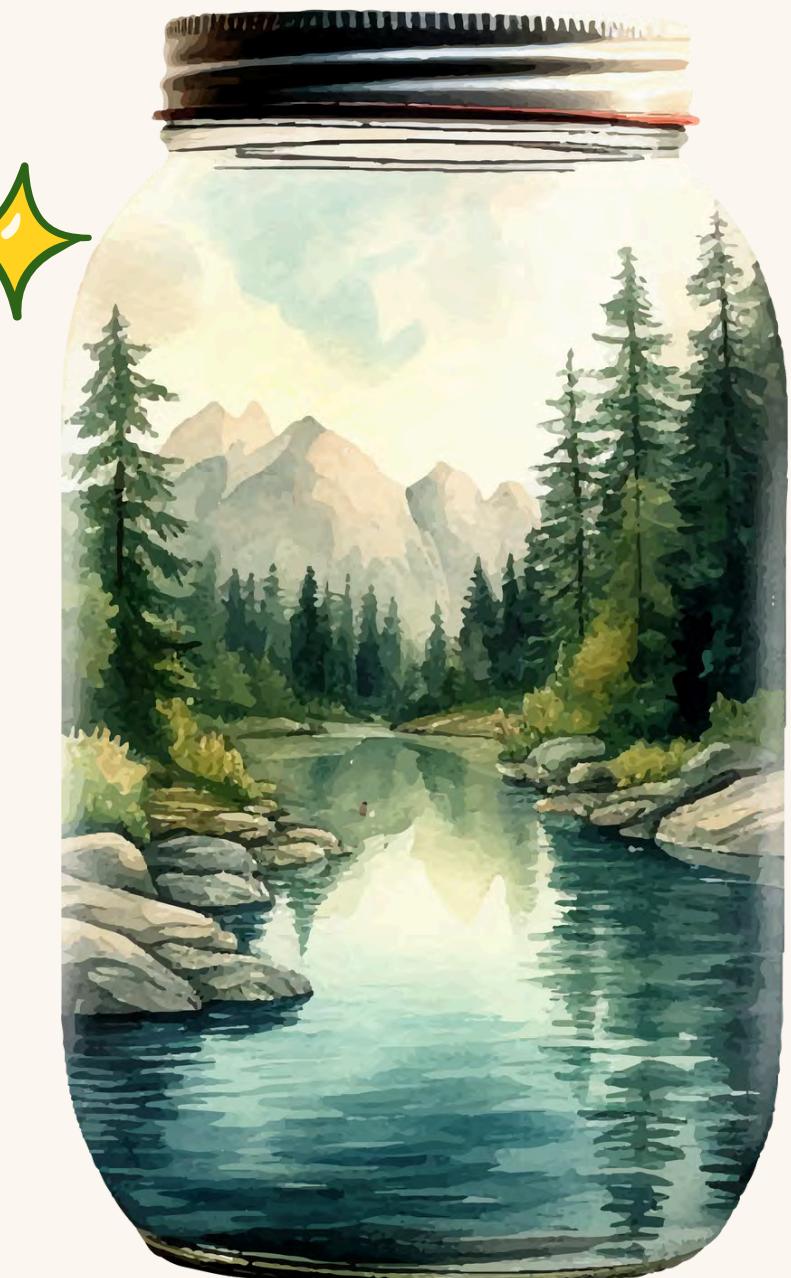
RIGHT SIZE THE ORGANIZATION
FOR IMPACT

MEMBERSHIP

RESOURCE ALIGNMENT &
EXPLORE NEW REVENUE

RESOURCES

KEY FINDINGS



OPERATIONAL & ADMINISTRATIVE
INSIGHTS

INFRASTRUCTURE

PHASE 4: IMPLEMENTATION
REINFORCE VISION & MISSION

These efforts are not a departure from what makes the Academy special—they are a bold recommitment to what makes it matter. We exist to **INSPIRE**, **INFLUENCE** and **ADVANCE** the field of parks, recreation and conservation. As a body of distinguished professionals and educators, we are dedicated to research, mentorship and the elevation of best practices that shape the future of our field.



APEX ASCENT : 2026 - 2028

GOALS

**SEARCH FOR
INNOVATION**

**PREPARE FUTURE
LEADERS**

**SUPPORT &
SOCIALIZE RESEARCH**

**ACKNOWLEDGE
STEWARDS & DOERS**

SUMMIT ANCHORS (OBJECTIVES)

**INNOVATION:
SHAPE THE PROFESSION**

**MEMBERSHIP:
RIGHT SIZE THE ORGANIZATION**

**RESOURCES:
ALIGN RESOURCES WITH
RESULTS & EXPLORE NEW
REVENUE SOURCES**

**PROMOTION
ELEVATE OUR PRESENCE**

**INFRASTRUCTURE:
OPERATIONAL & ADMINISTRATIVE
INSIGHTS**



**INNOVATION:
SHAPE THE PROFESSION &
INSPIRE INNOVATION**



**MEMBERSHIP:
RIGHT SIZE THE
ORGANIZATION FOR IMPACT**



**RESOURCES:
RESOURCE ALIGNMENT &
EXPLORE NEW REVENUE SOURCES**



**PROMOTION:
ELEVATE OUR PRESENCE**



**INFRASTRUCTURE:
OPERATIONAL &
ADMINISTRATIVE INSIGHTS**

MISSION

An Academy of distinguished park and recreation administrators, scholars committed to research, professional development and the use of best practices.

VISION

To **INSPIRE, INFLUENCE** and **ADVANCE** the Park and Recreation Profession.



APEX ASCENT : 2026 - 2028

OBJECTIVES

1.0 INNOVATION: SHAPE THE PROFESSION

CLIMBING HOLDS (KEY INITIATIVES)

- 1.1 - Analyze trends and best practices from the National Gold Medal and CAPRA to inform strategic priorities, raise standards and inspire innovation.
- 1.2 - Transition Career Development Task Force into Career Development Committee.
- 1.3 - Convene an annual Think Tank to address key issues or trends in parks and recreation and produce a white paper to inform policy, practice and curriculum.
- 1.4 - Expand professional dialogue by offering more webinars and structured conversations between practitioners and educators.
- 1.5 - Examine decline in higher education programs (accredited and non-accredited) and assess impact on profession's pipeline, research and leadership development.

SUMMIT (IMPACT)

Members gain access to forward-thinking research, trends and best practices. Increased collaboration between practitioners and practitioners fosters innovation. Members see the Academy as a thought leader and convener of critical professional conversations. Expanded professional networks and deeper cross-sector relationships. Opportunities for members to contribute to nationally recognized white papers and influence policy.



APEX ASCENT : 2026 - 2028

OBJECTIVES

2.0 MEMBERSHIP: RIGHT SIZE THE ORGANIZATION

CLIMBING HOLDS (KEY INITIATIVES)

- 2.1 - Expand Membership Committee to become the Membership & Development Committee.
- 2.2 - Expand Membership Category to include Advocate Membership.
- 2.3 - Create and implement strategic, targeted membership campaign to fill vacancies.
- 2.4 - Implement timely, personalized follow-up for membership renewals to address attrition.
- 2.5 - Renew and refine Educator Membership eligibility requirements.
- 2.6 - Create messaging prospectus for Emeritus Membership to honor service and encourage ongoing contributions.
- 2.7 - Determine optimal membership numbers for max. organizational impact.
- 2.8 - Establish Associate Membership Category for Externs.
- 2.9 - Adjust Practitioner and Educator Nominations to allow for self-nomination.

SUMMIT (IMPACT)

Prospective members feel welcomed, informed and valued during recruitment. Clear accessible nomination process that supports inclusivity and diversity. Members experience ongoing engagement and recognition throughout their tenure. Emeritus members feel honored while remaining connected to mission. Members understand role and potential contributions to the Academy's initiatives.



APEX ASCENT : 2026 - 2028

OBJECTIVES

**3.0
RESOURCES:
ALIGN RESOURCES
WITH RESULTS AND
EXPLORE NEW
REVENUE SOURCES**

CLIMBING HOLDS (KEY INITIATIVES)

- 3.1 - Explore investment strategies for excess reserve funds to strengthen long-term sustainability.
- 3.2 - Shift organizational culture from primarily advisory to hands-on action oriented engagement.
- 3.3 - Identify and pursue funding diversification strategies including partnerships, sponsorships and earned income.
- 3.4 - Identify and prioritize areas requiring administrative support.
- 3.5 - Develop Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) for programs, membership and financial health.
- 3.6 - Maintain current membership dues for two-years in response to member feedback and economic conditions.

SUMMIT (IMPACT)

Members feel their involvement has tangible outcomes with visible impact. Programs and services are delivered efficiently with appropriate administrative backing. Members perceive value in dues relative to benefits and opportunities provided. Academy operations financially stable, transparent and sustainable. Strategic partnerships and sponsorships enhance program reach and resources.



APEX ASCENT : 2026 - 2028

OBJECTIVES

4.0 PROMOTION: ELEVATE OUR PRESENCE

CLIMBING HOLDS (KEY INITIATIVES)

- 4.1 - Transition Branding & Social Media Task Force to Standing Committee with a formal change and annual objectives for sustained oversight.
- 4.2 - Implement structured social media strategy that includes content planning, scheduling and consistent posting on LinkedIn.
- 4.3 - Provide committee oversight to ensure messaging is aligned with Academy values and strategic goals.
- 4.4 - Modify Management Services Agreement to include services for posting on Social Media.

SUMMIT (IMPACT)

Consistent, professional and engaging presence online. Improved awareness of Academy activities, achievements and opportunities for involvement. Stronger brand recognition within parks and recreation profession. Members feel pride of being part of a highly visible and respected organization.



APEX ASCENT : 2026 - 2028

OBJECTIVES

5.0 INFRASTRUCTURE: ORGANIZATIONAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE INSIGHTS

KEY INITIATIVES

- 5.1 - Identify key leadership and administrative roles with associated responsibilities.
- 5.2 - Establish emergency backup protocols for unexpected absences or transitions.
- 5.3 - Maintain a living succession planning document and transition protocols.
- 5.4 - Maximize the use of existing and new tools for efficiency and ensure all members receive adequate training.
- 5.5 - Assess current administrative support structures for alignment with mission and financial stewardship.
- 5.6 - Develop position profiles and knowledge transfer plans, including decision making authority and system access.
- 5.7 - Document key workflows and create Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) for Committees, Officers/Board Members, Executive Director and Red Barn.
- 5.8 - Make SOPs easily accessible to Fellows/Members.
- 5.9 - Create a succession timeline and readiness plan.

SUMMIT (IMPACT)

Members and Leaders clearly understand their roles, responsibilities and operational workflows. Consistent and smooth organizational functioning regardless of leadership transitions. Increased efficiency and confidence in using organizational tools and platforms. Seamless onboarding of new members, leadership, board members, officers and staff. Strong sense of preparedness and resilience within the Academy.



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Next Steps - Critical Path

- Membership
 - Full Membership - Recruitment
 - New Category: Advocate Members (Bylaws Vote)





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Next Steps - Critical Path

- Engagement
 - Increased Confidence and Use of Technology and Talent
 - Superpowers
 - Committee Assignments
 - Advocacy - NRPA Action Alerts





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ONLINE TOOLS FOR MEMBERS



- **Wild Apricot** - Online member directory.
- **Basecamp** - Online project management: platform for communication, scheduling meetings, tracking work streams, document storage.
- **Website** - Digital hub for informing, e-commerce, and promoting online presence.
- **LinkedIn** - Professional networking platform for career development, job searching and professional networking.
- **Submittable** - Online Platform to collect, review and manage applications.
- **Zoom/Teams** - Online Platform for virtual meetings.
- **Social Media Tool Kit** - Resources to amplify the AAPRA and APRF presence.



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Wild Apricot for members

Personify, Inc.

Designed for iPhone

★★★★★ 4.8 • 10.9K Ratings

Free



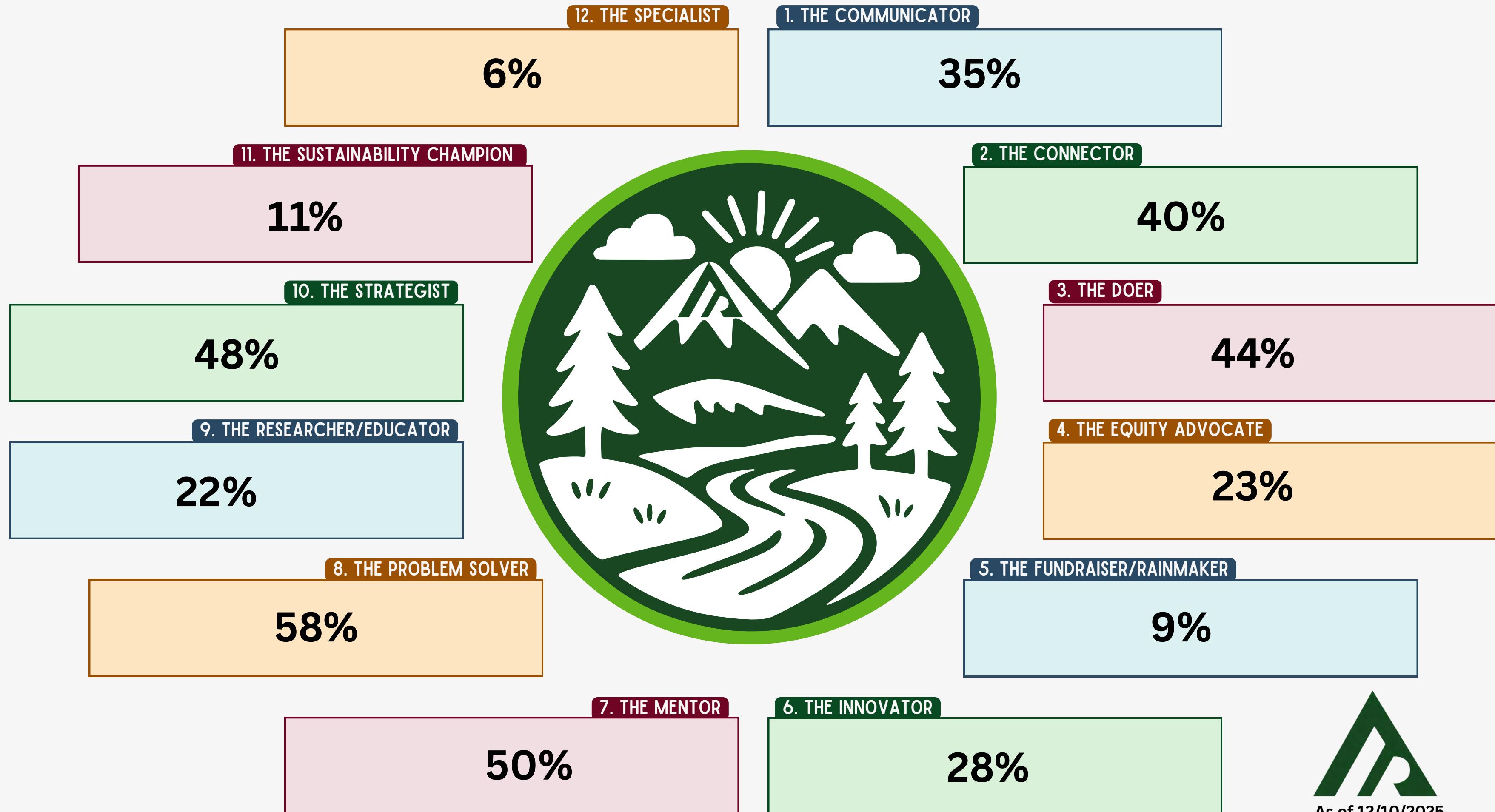
Establish login at <https://aapra.wildapricot.org/Sys/Reset/PasswordRequest>
Search for "Wild Apricot for Members" in the App Store
Download the app and log in with your login information

Basecamp - Project Management

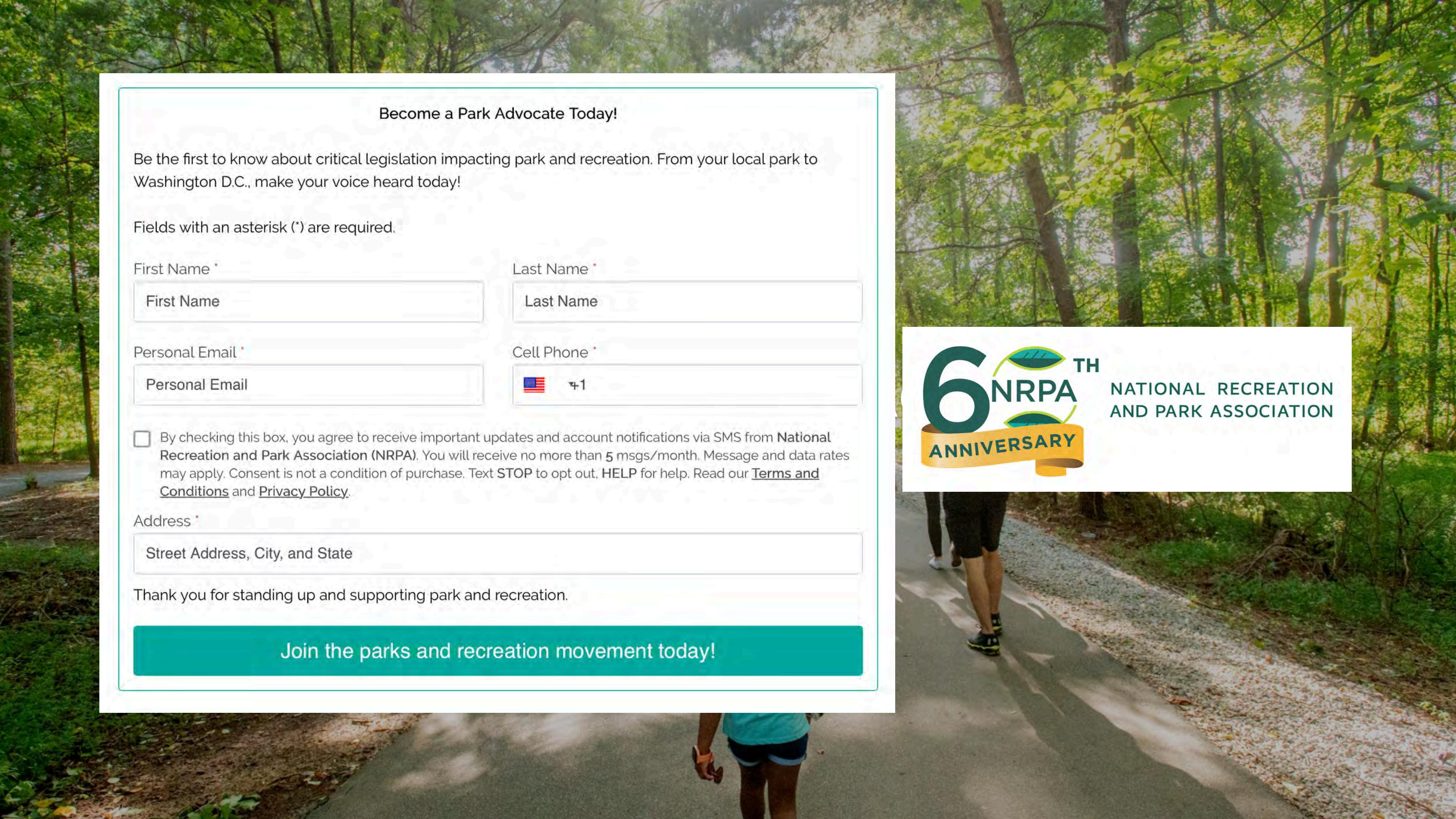
Project & Team Communication



Establish login at <https://basecamp.com>
Search for "Basecamp" in the App Store
Download the app and log in with your login information



88 Individuals Responding



Become a Park Advocate Today!

Be the first to know about critical legislation impacting park and recreation. From your local park to Washington D.C., make your voice heard today!

Fields with an asterisk (*) are required.

First Name *

Last Name *

Personal Email *

Cell Phone *

By checking this box, you agree to receive important updates and account notifications via SMS from National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA). You will receive no more than 5 msgs/month. Message and data rates may apply. Consent is not a condition of purchase. Text STOP to opt out, HELP for help. Read our [Terms and Conditions](#) and [Privacy Policy](#).

Address *

Thank you for standing up and supporting park and recreation.

Join the parks and recreation movement today!



NATIONAL RECREATION
AND PARK ASSOCIATION



American Academy
for Park and Recreation Administration

www.aapra.org | info@aapra.org

Next Steps - Critical Path

- Succession Planning - Built to Last
 - Development of SOPs
 - Identification of Sponsors/Partners
 - RFP - Association Management Services





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2026 Academy Ascents

- Cross Pollination Rock Alignment
 - Branding & Social Media Committee
 - Career Development Committee
 - Executive Committee
 - Investment Task Force
 - Industry Council Task Force
 - NRPA Coordination Group
- Conversations That Matter
- Gold Medal
- Technology & Tools
- Feedback - Annual Meeting & Awards Dinner

What Are the Conversations That Matter: Master Classes?

Conversations That Matter: Master Classes (CTM: Master Classes) deliver timely, thought-provoking, and practice-shifting dialogue for park and recreation leaders.

These sessions are designed to:

Inspire innovative solutions

Challenge assumptions and spark new thinking

Foster meaningful professional connections

Provide actionable strategies to elevate impact in communities

Participants walk away with tools, clarity, and confidence to influence change within their agencies.

Guiding Principles & Core Features

Guiding Principles

- Position the Academy as a *thought leader* by elevating bold, challenging, and relevant conversations.
- Present topics of substantial importance to advancing the parks and recreation profession.
- Proactively solicit issues from members, practitioners, and industry leaders.
- Create space for *facilitated dialogue* through breakout groups.

Course Features

- Expert-led sessions featuring seasoned leaders
- Practical frameworks and real-world examples
- Facilitated dialogue and peer-to-peer breakout discussions
- Action-planning to connect insights to organizational practice
- Resources and templates for continued learning and application

Our Partners



2026 CTM: Master Classes – Calendar

Adapting Language,
Preserving Values
(JEDI Committee)

January

Environmental Resilience
(Research to Practice
Committee)

February

April

May

July

September

From Evidence to Impact:
Advancing Health and
Well-Being with
Recreation and Sport
(Research to Practice
Committee)

(USTA)

(USTA/NRPA)
Equity in Practice
(Research to Practice
Committee)



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GOOD PEOPLE DOING EXTRAORDINARY WORK.
It's Time To Go For Your National Gold Medal Award

2026 CALL FOR ENTRIES

NATIONAL GOLD MEDAL AWARD
2026
FOR EXCELLENCE IN THE FIELD OF
PARK AND RECREATION MANAGEMENT

OPEN TO:
Public Park and Recreation Agencies
and Armed Forces Recreation Programs

APPLY:
November 4, 2025 - March 13, 2026

GOVERNED BY:
American Academy
for Park and Recreation
Administration

IN PARTNERSHIP WITH:
 **NRPA**
NATIONAL RECREATION AND PARK
ASSOCIATION
 **MUSCO** *Lighting*
We Make It Happen.

National recognition for your agency
Increase confidence in your agency's capacity
Boost agency's reputation & credibility
Add to your agency's legacy

For more information and to apply
<https://aapra.org/National-Gold-Medal-Award>

Next Steps - Critical Path

- Gold Medal Ambassadors
- Medal Mining - The Gold Medal Nuggets



AAPRA All Members



Message Board

- All Academy Meeting - Registration Required...** 28
- Basecamp Training** 8
I just attended the first Basecamp Boot...
- Happy Thanksgiving** 14
Giving Thanks to Our Talented & Dedicate...
- Share Your Thoughts: AAPRA's Annual Membership Meeting & Awards Dinner...**

Chat

- Hi Elizabeth, I am not available to join next wee... 5:14pm
- Elizabeth S. Kessler 5:14pm
Thanks Jayne. Appreciate you sending a chat ...
- Elizabeth S. Kessler 5:15pm
Bill Thank you. We will be thinking abou...
- Elizabeth S. Kessler 6:08pm
Syd understand you are another candidate...
- DK 7:53pm
Hi Elizabeth -

Docs & Files



Schedule

- WED, DEC 10**
All-Member Academy Meeting - Apex Ascent: Mapping the Route
1:00pm - 3:00pm
- THU, DEC 11**
AAPRA Basecamp Boot Camp
11:00am - 12:00pm
- MON, DEC 15**
AAPRA Basecamp Boot Camp

To-dos



Organize work across teams. Assign tasks, set due dates, and discuss.

Make a to-do list

Project Activity

YESTERDAY

AAPRA All Members



Steve W. commented on [All Academy Meeting - Registration Required](#)

7:43am





[View all projects in a list](#) · Press [⌘J](#) anytime to jump

AAPRA
AAPRA Board
AAPRA Board of Directors

AAPRA
AAPRA Executive Committee

AAPRA
**AAPRA Leadership Team
(Committee/Task Force...)**

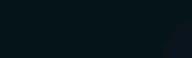
AAPRA
AAPRA All Members



AAPRA
AAPRA Pugsley Committee

AAPRA
**AAPRA Investment
Task Force**

AAPRA
AAPRA NRPA Coordination



RECENT PROJECTS

AAPRA
AAPRA Best Paper

AAPRA
**AAPRA Branding and Social
Media Committee**

AAPRA
AAPRA Bylaws Committee

AAPRA
**AAPRA Career Development
Committee**

AAPRA
**AAPRA Conversations
That Matter**

AAPRA
AAPRA Extern Committee

AAPRA
**AAPRA Foundation
Task Force**

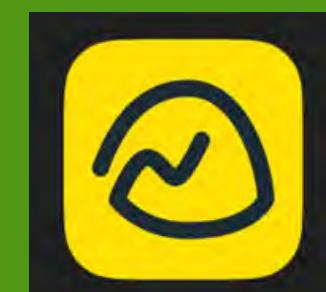
AAPRA
AAPRA JEDI Committee

AAPRA
AAPRA Legends Committee

AAPRA
**AAPRA Membership
Development Committee**

AAPRA
**AAPRA Mentoring
Committee**

AAPRA
**AAPRA National Gold Medal
Award Committee**



BASECAMP BOOT CAMP

American Academy for Park and Recreation Administration



BONFIRE

CAMP AREA



PROJECT STRUCTURE



- Project Boards
 - Organize Committees/Task Forces
- Tools
 - Message Board
 - Campfire/Chat
 - To dos
 - Schedule
 - Docs & Files





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Your Feedback
**Urgently
Needed**

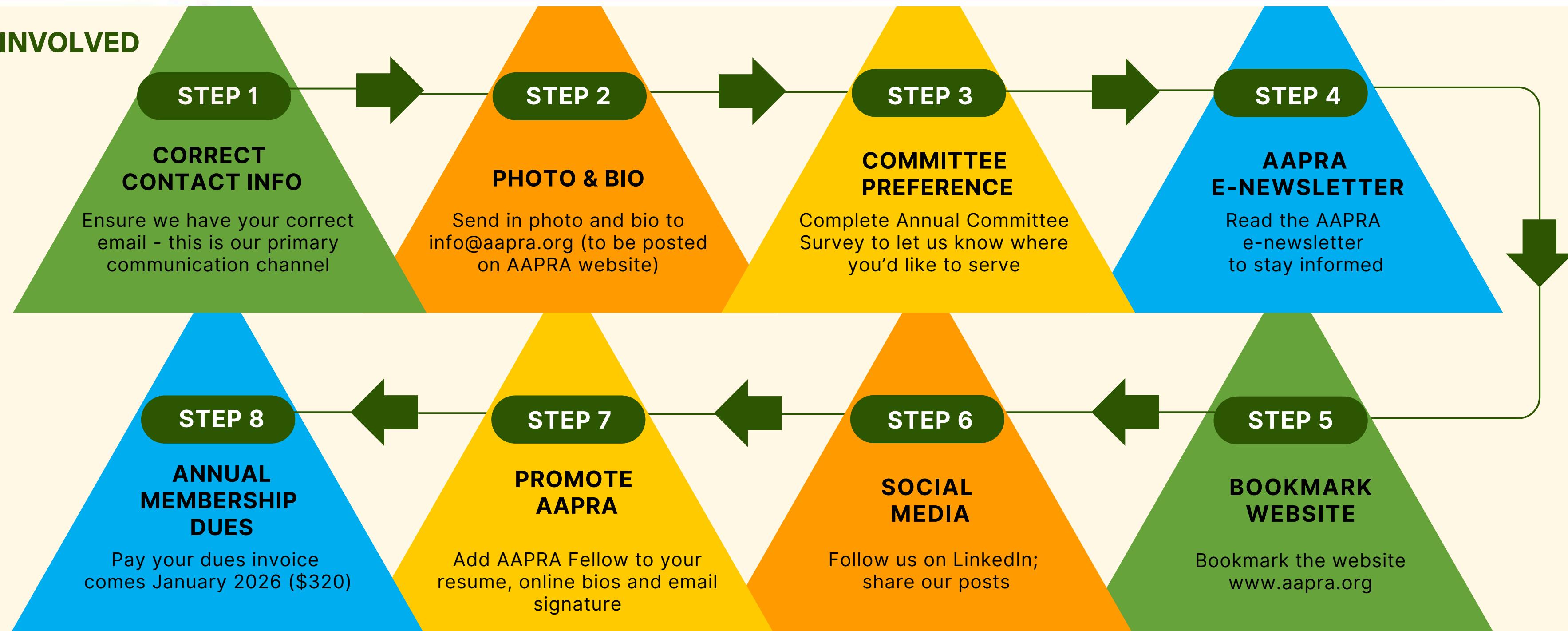
**ANNUAL
MEETING** **AWARDS
DINNER** **OTHER
IDEAS**



American Academy for Park and Recreation Administration

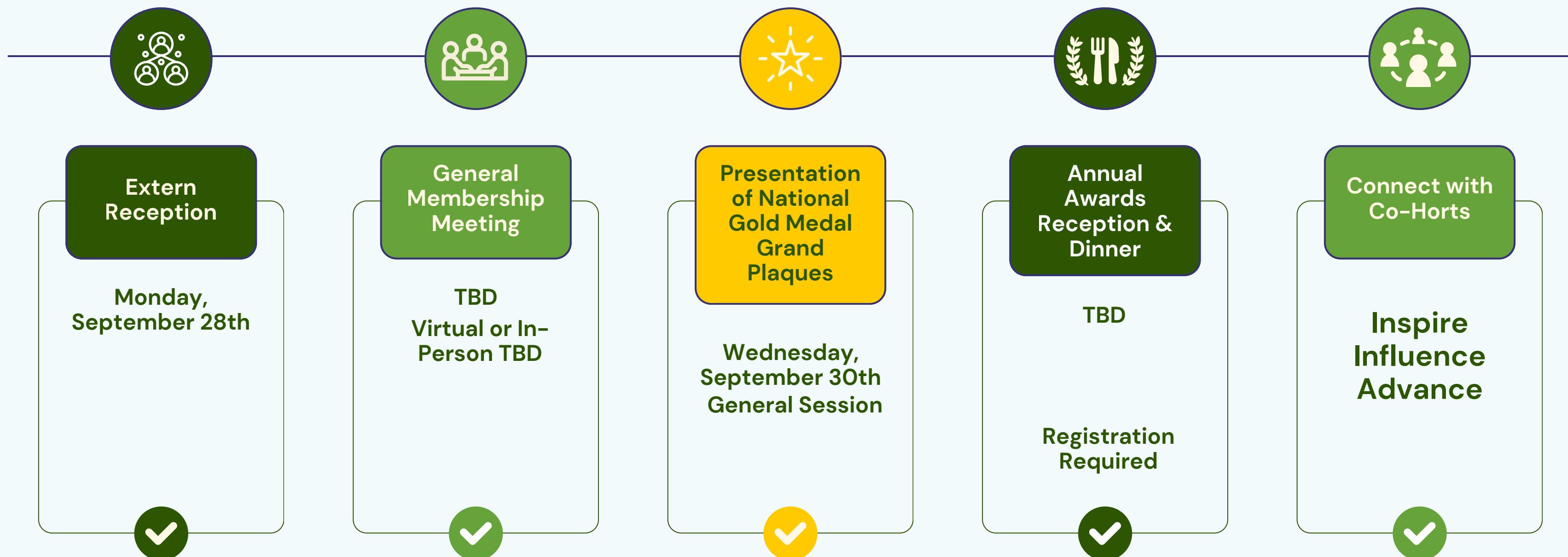
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GET INVOLVED





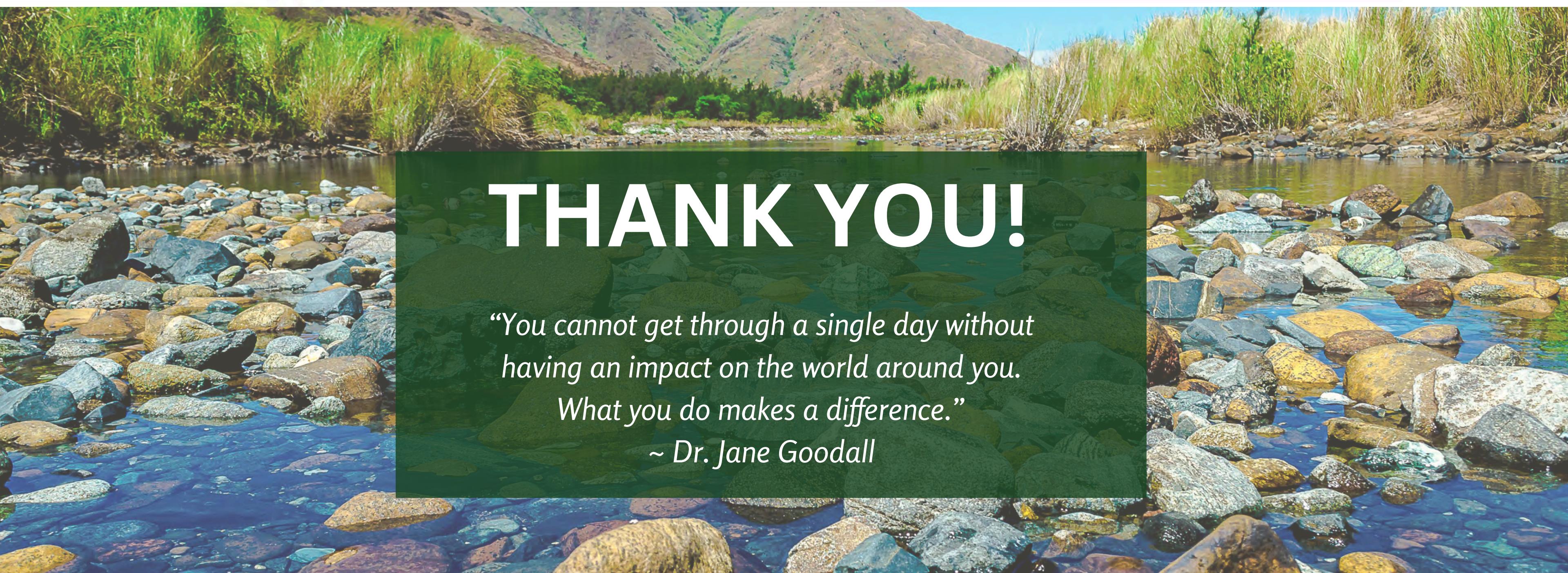
Upcoming AAPRA Activities- See You on the Trail!





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THANK YOU!

*“You cannot get through a single day without having an impact on the world around you.
What you do makes a difference.”*

~ Dr. Jane Goodall