

## **Editors' Note**

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### **Community Impacts of Outdoor Recreation, Education, and Leadership**

The social and community benefits derived from outdoor programs and, more generally, time spent recreating in the outdoors are widely known. This is Part Two of a special issue of the *Journal of Outdoor Recreation, Education, and Leadership (JOREL)* focused on community impacts of outdoor recreation, education and leadership. Collectively, the economic, environmental, and sociological impacts of outdoor programs influence the sustainability and resiliency of communities of all kinds. The purpose of this special issue was to encourage and disseminate recent scholarship focused on the ability of outdoor programs to impact community of all types (e.g., families, educational institutions, municipalities, organizations, informal groups, etc.).

Part One of this special issue (Vol. 14, No. 1, 2022) presented seven papers that explored ways in which outdoor leaders could better design programs for community building (Bobilya et al., 2022). The papers in the current issue focus on the impacts of outdoor recreation, education and leadership on specific communities (i.e., adults with type-1 diabetes, veterans, college students, teachers, and elementary school pupils). This issue includes four Regular Papers and one manuscript in the category of Essays, Practices, Commentaries. These papers include research on interventions designed to achieve objectives important to the specific communities. Together, the findings presented in this collection of papers reinforce the importance of community membership, and remind us how outdoor recreation, education and leadership play important roles in strengthening community building.

In the first Regular Paper, Nerothin et al. present their study of adults with type 1 diabetes who participated in a 5-day backpacking trip in Alaska and British Columbia. The researchers conducted semi-structured interviews with participants near the beginning and end of the trip and identified themes that collectively demonstrate the importance placed by participants on being part of a community of people who shared similar life experiences. The next paper by Hooker et al. also explores an outdoor program that developed community among adult participants facing shared challenges. The program in this study brought veterans with posttraumatic stress disorder on 4-day river rafting trips through Dinosaur National Monument in Utah and

Colorado. Results showed meaningful improvements among participants in depression scores and meaning in life. Together, these first two papers demonstrate the ability of nature-based programs to facilitate community building and positive impacts among peer groups.

Next, Williams continues the theme of using outdoor adventure trips to build community by providing a qualitative case study that investigated a program that gathers together college students who might not normally interact, and brings them on diversity-focused outdoor adventure trips. Williams' study assists our understanding of how collegiate outdoor trips can create the context for learning about diversity thereby resulting in enhanced student connections with diverse peers.

In the fourth Regular Paper, Bolick et al. present a qualitative study that looks at a multi-year investigation into the transference of learning that occurred as a part of an embedded outdoor education residency component within a graduate teacher education program. Their study helps us consider how these immersive experiences aimed at disrupting previous concepts of teaching can contribute to transformation in K-12 classrooms as they transfer lessons from the outdoor experience to their daily practice.

In the final Practices paper of this special issue, Ahl et al. describe an innovative program that introduces urban elementary students to the principles of Leave No Trace (LNT). The paper shares results of an evaluation of the program that suggests participants were effectively introduced to the 7 Principles of Leave No Trace. In addition to the evaluation results, the paper also provides insights into the collaborative efforts of four agencies (a YMCA afterschool program, an elementary school, students from a university's parks, recreation, and tourism department, and the Leave No Trace organization) to develop this program. The paper, therefore not only describes the evaluation findings, but also the program's partnership as it brings together a community of students around the principles of Leave No Trace.

This special issue is confirmation, in part, of the positive impacts of outdoor recreation, outdoor education and outdoor leadership on communities of various kinds. We are grateful for the contributions of the authors and their commitment to this work. We also want to thank the *JOREL* Advisory Board for supporting the publication of this and other unique and timely special issues, Bruce Martin, Editor-in-Chief, for his support throughout all aspects of the process and the reviewers who improved the development of our collective body of knowledge.

As guest editors for these two issues, we appreciate the opportunity to support *JOREL* and hope this two-part special issue has contributed to a broader understanding of the community impacts of outdoor recreation, education, and leadership. The three of us are experienced outdoor educators who have always appreciated the ability of the outdoors to offer a unique space for community building. Serving as guest editors for a special issue certainly requires time and effort, but we feel grateful for the opportunity to have engaged with each of these papers. Through this process, our understanding of the community impacts of outdoor recreation, education and leadership has greatly expanded. We hope you, the reader, will be similarly impacted by this special issue.

## Reference

- Bobilya, A.J., McCole, D., & Lindley, B. (2022). Editor's notes: Community impacts of outdoor recreation, education and leadership. *Journal of Outdoor Recreation, Education and Leadership*, 14(1), 239–247. <https://doi.org/10.18666/JOREL-2022-V14-I1-11118>