



SOCIETY OF OUTDOOR  
RECREATION PROFESSIONALS

## Resources for Effective Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plans (SCORPs)

### Purpose

Each state completes a Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP) on a 5-year cycle in order to apply for and receive funding for providing access to outdoor recreation through the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF). The purpose of this briefing is to document the resources needed to effectively set up, manage, and complete SCORPs regardless of budget, capacity, or approach (e.g., in-house or outsourced).

### Background and Context

In March 2023, the Society of Outdoor Recreation Professionals (SORP) hosted a SCORP Workshop to foster connection, learning, networking, and professional development among SCORP planners, researchers, and consultants. Workshop participants heard case studies about the planning process, implementation, and data collection and analysis - including opportunities for consistent demand data using an updated approach to the National Survey on Recreation and the Environment (NSRE 2.0). Participants then identified discussion topics for the following questions

- What are the biggest needs for SCORP data collection?
- What are the biggest SCORP planning and implementation needs to address as a community?
- For the NSRE 2.0:
  - What would facilitate your use of these data for SCORP?
  - What are the barriers and constraints?
  - What resources or institutional support is needed for success?
  - What partnerships & agreements would be needed?
  - What is the sampling interval and level (e.g., state, county)?

### SCORP Needs and Resources

**Toolbox:** Participants identified a need to house templates, case studies, best practices, examples, resources, contacts, etc. in one place. The toolbox should include information on contract administration and RFPs for outsourcing all or part of a SCORP, survey design and implementation, supply/asset inventory, and other topics.

**Consistent and Longitudinal Data:** Currently, both supply and demand data collection and analysis varies state-to-state and often changes within the state during each planning cycle. While there are state-specific needs for some data, workshop participants identified benefits to having consistent and longitudinal data including increased validity, documentation of trends, and public understanding and buy-in. The NSRE 2.0 approach, if adopted, would support this need.

**National Park Service Involvement:** For several years, the NPS has had limited capacity to support SCORP efforts primarily due to the passage of the Great American Outdoors Act (GAOA) and subsequent focus on distributing and administering LWCF funding to implement GAOA<sup>1</sup>. The agency is currently hiring additional state and local assistance staff. Workshop participants expressed a need to work with NPS staff more closely throughout the SCORP lifecycle to improve communication, review and approval timelines, and overall coordination.

**Elevate the Importance of Outdoor Recreation:** Ultimately, the outcome of a successful SCORP is enhancing access to the outdoors for each state's residents and visitors. Workshop participants - and other entities such as the Outdoor Recreation Roundtable and the Confluence of States - recognize the important role SCORPs have in defining and promoting the benefits of outdoor recreation and how it intersects with public health and wellness, transportation, environmental justice, and natural resource management. There is an opportunity to increase awareness, integration, and support across multiple disciplines using a comprehensive approach to SCORPs.

## Roles and Next Steps

SORP was established in 1983 to support SCORP planners and has a long history of facilitating support and training for the SCORP community. SORP will continue this role in partnership with the NPS, Federal Interagency Council on Outdoor Recreation (FICOR), National Association of State Outdoor Recreation Liaison Officers (NASORLO), Confluence of States, and Outdoor Recreation Roundtable. Specific next steps include:

- Convene a work group to identify specific actions and funding needed to effectively support the SCORP community
- Work with the Confluence of States and ORR to complete a SCORP Assessment Report
- Host virtual engagement and training sessions in July 2023 as a follow-up to the SCORP Workshop to 1) do a deeper dive into topics such as 10-year SCORPs and data collection/NSRE 2.0, and 2) introduce the SCORP Assessment Report and opportunities to increase awareness and buy-in at state and national levels

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<sup>1</sup> Joel Lynch, NPS Chief of State and Local Assistance Programs Division