



PENNSYLVANIA OUTDOOR RECREATION ASSOCIATION

Organization Backgrounder

ORGANIZATIONAL HISTORY

The Pennsylvania Outdoor Recreation Association (PORA) represents nearly five decades of leadership in Pennsylvania's outdoor recreation industry. Founded in 1978 as the Pennsylvania Ski Areas Association (PSAA), the organization served as the unified voice for Pennsylvania's ski industry for over 40 years, building strong legislative relationships, developing workforce programs, and advocating for business-friendly policies.

In 2024, following a comprehensive strategic planning process and unanimous membership vote, PSAA evolved into PORA to reflect the changing landscape of outdoor recreation. Many ski areas had expanded into year-round destinations, and the broader outdoor recreation economy was experiencing significant growth. The rebrand positioned the association to serve all outdoor recreation providers while maintaining its strong foundation and industry credibility.

This evolution aligned with Pennsylvania's establishment of the Office of Outdoor Recreation in 2023, making Pennsylvania the 23rd state to formally recognize outdoor recreation as a key economic sector.

MISSION AND FOCUS

PORA serves as the primary business association for outdoor recreation providers across Pennsylvania, focusing on four core areas:

Advocacy and Representation: PORA provides a unified industry voice in legislative and regulatory matters, working to ensure outdoor recreation businesses can operate effectively and grow sustainably. The association maintains strong relationships with state legislators and has supported the expansion of the legislative ski caucus to include all outdoor recreation sectors.

Workforce Development: Addressing critical staffing challenges, PORA executes career awareness programs, skills training initiatives, and the PAthtoOutdoorRecJobs.com job board. The association is a recognized continuing education provider with the Pennsylvania Department of Labor and Industry. PORA has registered over 4,000 job seekers on its platform.



Business Support: Members receive access to risk management resources, industry training programs, networking opportunities, and business development support. PORA facilitates knowledge sharing and best practice development across the diverse outdoor recreation sector.

Economic Development: PORA supports initiatives that strengthen Pennsylvania's outdoor recreation economy, including the upcoming launch of the PA Outdoor Adventure Pass program designed to connect families with outdoor experiences while driving business to local providers.

MEMBERSHIP AND SCOPE

PORA currently represents over 30 outdoor recreation providers across all 67 Pennsylvania counties. Members include ski resorts, outdoor activity providers, adventure recreation businesses, and other companies offering outdoor experiences to consumers.

The association maintains its strong roots in Pennsylvania's ski industry while expanding to welcome diverse outdoor recreation providers. This approach leverages the established infrastructure and relationships built over 45+ years while creating new opportunities for cross-sector collaboration and growth.

Geographic representation spans from urban areas like Philadelphia and Pittsburgh to rural communities throughout central and northern Pennsylvania, reflecting the statewide distribution of outdoor recreation resources and businesses.

KEY INITIATIVES AND PROGRAMS

PA Outdoor Adventure Pass (Launching 2025): A statewide program targeting 4th and 5th grade students and their families, designed to make outdoor recreation more accessible while supporting local businesses. The pass will provide discounted access to participating outdoor recreation providers across Pennsylvania.

Workforce Development Programs:

- Career awareness events at schools and community organizations
- Skills training seminars including lift maintenance, snowmaking, and risk management
- Job board platform connecting employers with qualified candidates



- Partnership with educational institutions and workforce development organizations

Legislative Advocacy:

- Active engagement with state legislators on issues affecting outdoor recreation businesses
- Support for policies that promote business growth and operational efficiency
- Advocacy for workforce development funding and training programs
- Regulatory guidance and support for members

Educational Events and Training:

- Annual conference bringing together industry professionals
 - Webinar series on relevant business topics
 - Risk management training and certification programs
 - Networking events and professional development opportunities
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ECONOMIC CONTEXT

Pennsylvania's outdoor recreation economy contributes \$19 billion annually to the state's gross domestic product, ranking 8th nationally among all states. The sector employs hundreds of thousands of Pennsylvanians and generates \$7.7 billion in wages and salaries annually.

Outdoor recreation represents 2.7% of all jobs in Pennsylvania, with significant economic impact in rural communities where outdoor recreation businesses often serve as anchor employers and tourism drivers. PORA members contribute substantially to this economic impact through direct employment, visitor spending, and community investment.

The association's work supports not only direct outdoor recreation businesses but also the broader ecosystem of lodging, dining, retail, and service providers that benefit from outdoor recreation tourism and participation.

STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS

PORA maintains collaborative relationships with key organizations supporting Pennsylvania's outdoor recreation sector:



- **Pennsylvania Office of Outdoor Recreation:** Partnership on workforce development, economic development initiatives, and policy advocacy
- **Pennsylvania Department of Labor and Industry:** Recognition as approved training provider and collaboration on workforce development
- **National Ski Areas Association:** Continued membership supporting ski industry members
- **Regional Destination Marketing Organizations:** Partnership on connecting visitors with outdoor recreation providers and supporting regional outdoor recreation promotion
- **One+ Strategies:** Professional lobbying and advocacy services

These partnerships amplify PORA's impact and provide members with access to broader resources and opportunities beyond what the association can provide independently.

LEADERSHIP

Executive Director Lutricia Eberly brings diverse experience in outdoor recreation, membership organizations, and business development. Her background includes leadership roles in Girl Scouts, ski resort sales and marketing, and outdoor program development. She oversees the association's strategic direction, member services, and external relationships.

The **Board of Directors** consists of outdoor recreation industry professionals elected by the membership. Board President Ladora "Lori" Phillips serves as General Manager of Ski Big Bear at Masthope Mountain and brings extensive experience in resort operations and industry leadership.

RECENT ACHIEVEMENTS

- Successful organizational transition from ski-focused to comprehensive outdoor recreation association
- Launch of statewide jobs website resulting in over 4,000 registered job seekers
- Expansion of legislative ski caucus to include all outdoor recreation sectors
- Development of strategic partnership with Pennsylvania Office of Outdoor Recreation
- Creation of innovative PA Outdoor Adventure Pass program
- Establishment of comprehensive workforce development programming
- Maintenance of strong legislative relationships and advocacy effectiveness



LOOKING FORWARD

PORA is positioned for continued growth and impact as Pennsylvania's outdoor recreation economy expands. Key focus areas include:

- Successful launch and scaling of the PA Outdoor Adventure Pass program
- Expansion of membership across diverse outdoor recreation sectors
- Enhancement of workforce development programs to address industry staffing challenges
- Strengthened advocacy efforts supporting business-friendly policies
- Development of additional economic development initiatives supporting rural communities
- Continued partnership development with state agencies and industry organizations

The association remains committed to its core mission of supporting outdoor recreation providers while adapting to serve the evolving needs of Pennsylvania's dynamic outdoor recreation industry.

For additional information, interviews, or resources, contact:

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