

# The History of Outdoor Recreation, Leadership and Education

JENNIFER JOHNSON: Welcome to the history of outdoor recreation webinar. I am Jen Johnson. I am a current adventure facilitator with WSU Outdoor Recreation Center here on the Pullman campus. And this webinar is being presented by the WSU Outdoor Recreation Center, as well as Global Connections.

And so thank you for joining us. We are going to go over the backgrounds of what outdoor recreation has been in the US, as well as where we are now. And so here is just a quick overview of what we're going to talk about. We'll talk about some of the key individuals who are involved in the creation and expansion of outdoor recreation in the US.

One is Kurt Hahn, who started the Outward Bound Program, as well as Paul Petzoldt, who started the National Outdoor Leadership School, or NOLS.

And then from those programs, colleges start to pick it up. It started really with the Ivy Leagues. And so some of the early ones were Dartmouth and Harvard, and then expanding to some of the state colleges, such as Adams State was one of the first ones to actually develop an outdoor recreational program at their school.

And then hopefully finish off with what there is now, what current providers there are, as well as what we offer here at WSU. On the Pullman and Vancouver campuses, we have some setups, but we have resources available to everyone.

So that's what we're going to go over. So when we hear this term outdoor recreation, it can mean a lot of things. And it is very broad in scope. So its definition says that it's recreation behavior that depends to some degree on the natural environment or setting. But like I said, it can vary considerably and still be considered outdoor recreation.

And so it could be something as simple as camping, a picnic, versus mountaineering up K2, one of the highest peaks in the world. It can be snow or summer. It can be water or land, kayaking versus hiking. But it's a recreation behavior that gets you out into the environment, to the natural setting, hopefully developing some kind of appreciation for the natural world around us. So that's where, when you hear this term outdoor recreation, it comes from. And again, it can mean a lot of things, but it's getting out into nature.

And so here are just a few statistics of how it's developed over time. It started out very small. Most people just traveled to cities versus actually traveling to a remote area and saying outside. It was becoming more and more popular.

So in 2002, 87% of Americans participated in some outdoor recreation activity. In the same year, 32% visited a national park. We have been growing national parks for decades now. We're

up to 59 here in the United States, but there's also national parks all throughout the world that people can go and visit.

The US, it's also estimated that 900 million outdoor recreational visits were to national lands. And then another 800 million were to state parks. So there's various places you can go. In addition to the national parks, there is national monuments, state parks, and just your park down the street, just getting outside enjoying again the national environment around us.

And so how we break this down is in six periods. And again, we're going to focus mostly on the US. But as outdoor recreation has been developing across the world. It really did start in Britain, which I'll talk about a little bit, but it's expanded to US and it's become very, very popular.

And so these six periods overlap a little, but the first one was what's called the frontier period. So 1750 to 1962. And frontier is what you think, right, colonists traveling across the US, finding settlements, and then actually starting to use those natural resources. More for survival than anything else, but it's getting outside and finding these new areas that have never been explored before.

After that became the acquisition period, 1782 to 1867. And this is, just as it sounds, acquiring lands. And this is where the federal government actually started taking these lands, what was considered public land, and acquiring it for protection and their own use.

And then once we get past the acquisition period, we had the transfer and disposal period, which doesn't sound great. But this was 1802 to 1934. Pretty long period. And this was actually very important because it was transferring these large parts of what was federal land into public domain, to individuals, to states, to private industry, even, so they had more control. They had access to these lands, and it was up to them to decide what to do with them. So that was really important for the start of this recreational use.

And then from there, 1872 to 1934, over about the same amount of time, we shifted to that preservation mindset during the reservation period. And this was beginning with the creation of Yellowstone National Park, the first national park, as well as the Forest Reserve Act of 1891. And that was actually the first thing that created a management system of natural resources, specifically federal land, reservation in the US.

But we're starting this idea of nature is not here just for our use, it's here for our enjoyment. And we should be protecting what we have so that we can continue to use it for future generations. That really hadn't been an idea before then.

The fifth period is what we call custodial management, 1905 to 1962. This was, more importantly, just agencies started to become involved. This is when we created most of the government agencies you hear about today that are charged with natural resource management, like the national parks system, the US Forest Service, and so forth. It was never really done before. Again, it was in the hands of different people, and they had rights to it. But

we got to this idea that we're using this land more and more, we need to be able to control that use.

And then the final period of outdoor recreation was the confrontation and partnership. That is where we are today. It began with the creation of the ORRRC-- three R's in there, I'll talk about them a little bit later. But they're the Outdoor Recreation Resource Review Commission. That's a group that's still in effect today, but they were founded in 1958 by Congress as the key members of outdoor recreation management.

And that really hadn't been an idea before the late '50s, but it was the first significant acknowledgment of this idea of outdoor recreation. And so we've seen, like I said, this growth of outer recreation really began post-world War II. People just really wanted to get outside and enjoy nature. Leveled off a little bit in the '90s, and we're actually starting to see it pick up more and more today, which is really exciting to see.

And so here is just that broken down a little more today what we see happening. So we see that growing population. And as a result, we're using more resources, so we need to protect more land. That's when we start protecting places like Banff, Yellowstone, Niagara Falls, Yosemite, Grand Canyon, places all throughout the US.

People were really interested in getting away from the city, getting to these natural areas and trying to enjoy them. And because of that, it's called the golden age of tourism or golden age of travel. And so, like I said, instead of going to these cities abroad or these cities in the US, we decided to go to lakes. We decide to go to mountains and really try to enjoy the natural world. And that wasn't very common for the 1900s.

And here you can see that government agency I mentioned, the ORRRC, this is one of the most important steps for outdoor recreation because it was the first time outdoor recreation was actually used as a term and had been acknowledged as an important component of our current society. And so, because baby boomers really had this commitment to environmental movement, we started passing really important legislation, such as the Wilderness Act in 1964, the Land and Water Conservation Fund Act in 1965, which led to the creation of these agencies that I talked about earlier, the Bureau of Outdoor Recreation, which looks at funding for outdoor recreation of individuals across the US, and just securing those funds so we know we have places to go.

And so here is some of those most important agencies. When you go to land, and if it's not your own, these are the people who make sure it looks good and it's preserved. And so some are more focused on what we call preservation, which is management directed towards protecting the natural, cultural, historical resources. This is something like the National Park Service, they're very focused on preservation.

Versus conservation. And conservation is focused more on management that's directed towards sustainable use of the natural, cultural, historical resources on that land. And so the

USDA Forest Service, the United States Department of Agriculture, they are more focused on conservation. They feel that as long as we use the resources sustainably, that's a better way to manage the system, and so with a little focus on preservation.

And so you see the big three at the top. The National Park Service, again, they are known to manage the crown jewels of what we call the national parks of public lands. And they're the largest organization and actually manage the most land in the US.

And then we have the USDA Forest Service. Again, they're more focused on the conservation. How can we use the forest timber? How can we use the land for grazing? How can we use the fish for consumption in a sustainable way? So the land is still conserved and used for outdoor recreation, but we can actually use those resources well.

And then the third large one is the Bureau of Land Management. They're actually primarily Western-based land management. They focus on conservation and preservation. So they do use their natural resources, but they also try to protect them to very healthy levels.

And then a few more you've probably heard of. US Fish and Wildlife, they're conservation. They focus on how can we use wildlife refuges and fish hatcheries in a sustainable manner. The US Army Corps of Engineers they're focused on protecting the land and, more importantly, the people around that land. So if an area is really prone to flooding, they usually come in and deal with that in order to protect both the land and the people around it. TVA, Tennessee Valley Authority, as well as Bureau of Reclamation.

So there are all these land agencies whose sole purpose is to protect and conserve the land that we use for outdoor recreation, and make sure that it's here for us as well as future generations to come.

And from that, we get into the fun stuff, the actual recreational use of it. And so it started with this idea that, yes, it's great to go outside and, yes, it's great to pitch a tent and enjoy the outdoors. But there's another level to it. And this is what we call adventure programming and experiential education.

And this is a sub-field under outdoor recreation. And it really focuses on leadership, more than anything else. So this idea of outdoor leadership and programs that can allow that to happen. And this is where WSU, as well as other colleges and outdoor recreation programs, are striving. One of our main goals is teaching adventure recreation activities so that you can go out and experience them in a safe way,

There's a lot of them. They have a lot of components, technical skills you need to learn. And you can get that instruction through qualified individuals and leaders. So like it says, involved leader or facilitator who designs an outdoor program with a specific participant with their benefits in mind. And so WSU, we have adventure facilitators who will take you out onto trips. We do in the winter, mountaineering trips, cross-country skiing, snowshoeing. And we can teach you

how to safely go about this, what equipment you need, the technical skills necessary so then you to go out and lead your own trips and have your own fun.

And so this is the field that we're in now. This is adventure programming or experiential education. And it started with those key individuals.

So Kurt Hahn is our first person who really expanded experiential education. And he called his program Outward Bound, which is still around today. But it started in 1934, actually, in Scotland. And he had this notion that, yes, kids go to school, and that's great. But at the same time, you can tie in natural and environmental studies into the classroom.

And the best way to do that is to put them outside. And they can develop this sense of character, leadership, as well as service to the environment, service to others with their intellectual studies, which was a new idea that no one had really ever tried before. And so he proposed starting this new school in Wales as a one-month course that would foster both physical fitness, as well as enterprise, tenacity, and compassion.

And he called that school Outward Bound. And so its focus is on outdoor leadership. It's developing a set of skills that include both the technical skills needed to enjoy the outdoors, the safety skills, environmental skills. How to leave the environment in the same way that we found it. How do we plan for a trip to make sure we're safe, we have everything we need. How do we manage risk.

And then if you're interested in this, how do you teach how to do all this stuff, the instruction and facilitation methods that go into it-- judgment, ethics, communication, this leadership ability. And that's what Outward Bound was really focused on, was developing these skills in youth. And the best way he felt you do that is to put them into the outdoors, and you move that classroom outside the walls.

And so this is just how they felt themselves now. So wherever you are, sea, mountain, desert, they want to provide training that no institute or no university alone can offer. It's putting students outside of the classroom into these different landscapes, teaching the hard technical skills necessary for survival. And at the same time, you learn skills that are necessary just for life, like leadership, like communication, like compassion.

And so he's been doing this. Again, in 1941 he did his initial course. He put children, mostly college-aged, into these challenging natural settings. It built a sense of self-worth. Again, it says that group dynamics came into play, how the group comes to heightened awareness. And he has done this now for decades.

I included a link, some of his writings are very interesting. He writes about his own personal trips with his family and friends, as well as the courses he's put through. And aims to place the importance of outdoor recreation in the educational setting. And he still gives talks today. You can look them up online that are really, really interesting.

But Outward Bound is still around. It continues to expand. This is currently what they offer in the US. But they also have places throughout the world. It says below, includes India, Caribbean, South America. They're branching out a lot.

You can see there's one close to us, Northwest Outward Bound School that provides courses throughout the year on whatever you might be interested in, whether it's just learning technical skills and mountaineering or learning wilderness first aid, wilderness first responder. If you want to go into the medical side of it, they offer those courses. So your outdoor recreation can expand. It's not a simple hike down the street, it's going into these very remote locations and making sure you're safe when you're out there.

So I've included a link to their program guide at the bottom. But Kurt Hahn was one of those foundational individuals. And Outward Bound was really the start of outdoor recreation that we see today.

And along with Kurt Hahn, we have Paul Petzoldt-- just has a really cool name-- and he started NOLS for the National Outdoor Leadership School in the 1960s. He was, just like Kurt Hahn, one of those early pioneers and outdoor education. He focused not only on the recreational side of it, but what can we get people to learn when they're outside, when they're enjoying the environment around them.

And he started this because he saw the future need for trained outdoor leaders. He saw those trends, more and more people were going outside, which is great, but there's that safety concern to it. And so he decided he really wanted to teach people about leadership in the outdoors.

He honed his own skills through his own trips. And just like Kurt Hahn, you can see a lot of his writings. He published a lot of his trips. He did a lot trips with his brother. And there are some really interesting stories in that.

And this is where it became more and more about connecting with the classroom. And so if I can share the screen, we're going to watch a quick clip.

[VIDEO PLAYBACK]

I've always had the idea about the school. For years, I did the school in small ways, teaching mountaineers, teaching outdoorsmen, teaching hunters, and teaching people, but generally on a much smaller scale.

[MUSIC PLAYING]

(SINGING) All in all, look down the [INAUDIBLE] as they go. No [INAUDIBLE].

I helped set up our town in this country. And there, I realized that in this country that could take young people out in the outdoors, in the mountains, whether over glaciers, and whether we're climbing mountains, or through crossing wild rivers, we just didn't have people in the United States who we could hire to do this. So I thought the best thing I could do for American youth would be to start a leadership school where we could really develop some real outdoor leaders in this kind of education.

It may be a trend towards the future. Of course, we want them to come away with our technical ability to be able to carry out a lifetime recreational need for themselves, or to be able to lead other people in a lifetime recreational need. Or we want them to have the education to be leaders in their community with an understanding of ecology and conservation for the wild outdoors far beyond their legislators at home. We expect these people to be the grain of sand on the beach of future leadership.

Beyond that from an individual standpoint, we know what they get. The main thing is that they get to understand themselves out here. But there's no bluffing, there's no open air, their background doesn't count. They have to deliver. They can't rationalize, they have to face themselves. So maybe for the first time in their lives, they not only see their own strengths, but they see their own weaknesses.

[END VIDEO PLAYBACK]

OK, so that's where his mindset was coming from. That's a really interesting video, if you want to watch the whole thing. This is a clip of it. But it shows actual footage from when he started this program and what he felt was most important for the students to get out of it.

That last line, the students were able to see their own strengths, as well as their own weaknesses. So it's going beyond just learning the technical skills, the trips that they were going on to these glaciers. Glaciering is very dangerous. So learning those skills so they can go into those environments, but also learning about themselves, learning about themselves and their leadership abilities. What are they good at, what are they bad at, what do they need to improve on?

And that's where that classroom came into it. So this experiential education in the outdoors is how he felt outdoor recreation needed to go. Because of the trend with more and more people going outside, he wanted leaders to be there to be able to support these growing populations.

And so he started this National Outdoor Leadership School. It's still one of the largest outdoor recreation programs in the US. He started in a little cabin in Wyoming in the '60s, and it's grown a lot since then. And so today it's this multifaceted wilderness school, supports thousands of students each year all over the world. You can sign up for their courses to become an outdoor leader is what he calls them, leaders who know how to live responsibly in the wilderness, how to take people out, as well as themselves, teach others to respect the environment while they're enjoying it.

So their thing today, today they still focus on teaching leadership in many contexts, from leading during a medical emergency, that wilderness first aid, that wilderness first responders certifications you can get, to leading during a wilderness expedition, those leadership skills. And they even train company executives to helping the industry as a whole better manage this risk in the wilderness.

So they're a giant company now. They have started, again, in 1965. That's when they founded the first one. I thought it was really interesting that the first woman enrolled in the course was only one year later. And that same year, they actually offered this as college credit.

So this is where we're seeing it start to pop into the colleges. It's no longer recreation for fun, it's recreation for learning purposes. They start expanding in the late '60s, start actually publishing journals. They start appearing on television shows trying to get to a wider audience. This is when they started moving abroad, offices in Kenya and Mexico. Again, just trying to develop this further, getting more money, publishing more, trying to get people interested in going outside.

One of our previous webinars is on leave no trace. They were actually the company that first introduced this concept. And they still offer courses in it. And it's just the idea of you're leaving the environment how you found it, leaving no trace. So if you are hiking through somewhere, you're doing it with the least amount of impact possible on the environment. They worked with the Bureau of Land Management and the National Park Service to develop this curriculum, and it's still again offered today.

And again, we just see them continue to develop, continue to grow. They still offer in 2006 their first full-year program, the Year in Patagonia. It's still available. It's obviously changed a little bit, but a whole year in outdoor education and outdoor recreation. And again, this purpose of getting people outside but having a learning concept to it.

And then they just continue to expand, continue to expand. Even today, we're still expanding. It goes all the way to 2020, so there's some in the future there they're hoping to get. But they are one of the top people without outdoor recreation, especially tying in that educational concept.

And because of programs like Outward Bound and NOLS, we start seeing students able to do this on their own and finding interest in it, even. And so like I said, it started in the Ivy League first, Dartmouth as well as Harvard, and then started expanding to some of the state colleges.

And so the reason for this is students started to see the benefits to getting outside. You're stressed in college, in classroom, you have all these things to do. And they knew that there were actual psychological and personal benefits to getting outside.

There's the social benefits, that group dynamics, developing those skills and getting outside with your friends. Getting up from your desk and away from your computer, the physical

benefits of going outside. Spiritual, finding that connection to nature, getting away from cities and cars and other people.

And then from the recreation side and the environmental side, those benefits of getting people to see the value in nature and just leaving it how it is, preserving it to the fullest extent can build that appreciation of it. So we want to protect it.

We saw ecotourism start to grow and all the benefits that can bring to local communities. So outdoor recreation, it's not as simple as, yay, outside. There's everything else that goes into it. And that's what these students really started to see.

And so Dartmouth was one of the earliest college outing clubs in 1909. So you can see an image there, Fred Harris, he was actually the founding member of Dartmouth with some of his colleagues. At the time, they just focused mostly on winter sports, skiing, snow shooting, ice skating. But they quickly jumped off. By the '60s, they were a huge program. They had multiple facilities across campus, they had the finances to lead a bunch of trips, a bunch of programs to get as many students involved as possible. Again, They saw the benefit of connecting students to the outside, getting them outside of the classroom.

Here's some more images from them. 1970, they actually created an entire department of outdoor affairs because the Outing Club just had too many burdens because so many people wanted to be involved. There's a whole department now at Dartmouth that helps them out, trying to get again as many students interested, burgeoning this awareness of environmental issues by getting them into the environment in which they see those.

And so Dartmouth was one of the first colleges to start this. Harvard was quickly behind them. They actually started first a mountaineering club in 1924. It's one of the oldest college mountaineering clubs in the US. And they've done some pretty amazing things.

Post-war in the '50s, they actually took one of the well-known Himalayan expeditions. And then there's a really interesting story in 1953 of some of the Harvard students from this mountaineering club actually going to K2. And they actually saved six other people who were stranded on the mountain and actually got them down to safety. Some really cool, interesting stories from that one, but just college students who want to go outside.

And one of Harvard's main accomplishments is what's called the Harvard Route on Mount McKinley, which is the highest mountain in the world. So seven students in 1963 were actually able to fully ascend that mountain. It's now named the Harvard Route, and it has still not been repeated today.

No one else has been able to do it. Many have tried, some have gotten very close, but no one has actually made it all the way up the wall. So it's a really interesting one. You can hear stories, you can take pictures the whole route, but it's really hard. And that's one of their big ones.

And so after mountaineering started, they also started the Outing Club. So they had two branches, again, just trying to get the Harvard community outside. Having fun in the outdoors, trying to build better appreciation for outdoor recreation.

And then one of the first state schools to get it started out of the Ivy League was Adams State, also in the '20s, so nice and early. Luther Bean was their founder, establishing the Outdoor Club. Their program continues to expand.

And one of their very interesting components is they actually have a minor in apprenticeship you can get. It's called the Adventure Leadership Programming minor and apprenticeship. And it's established to get people who are interested in this outdoor leadership experience, an actual certification and degree in it.

And so a lot of colleges are actually starting to do this. It's not just a simple trip you can go on. But actually if you want your life to go in this direction, you can get certified in it. So Adams State was one of the first ones to do that with their Adventure Program.

And so that leads us to where we are today. So still, Outward Bounds is still expanding. One of the first ones. You can again find it all over, they offer a lot of resources, a lot of courses, same with NOLS. Again, WSU offers scholarships. If you're interested in any of these courses, you can apply for a scholarship or a grant to take some of these courses because we want our students to be safe, and know how to safely go outside.

So if you're interested in wilderness first aid or wilderness first responder, if you're interested in how to mountaineer, all the technical skills that go into that, you can apply through ORC and hopefully be able to take some of these really, really interesting courses.

And so here on campus at WSU, we're little slower on the intake-- 1971 is when we started. Well, we've been around for a few decades now. And just like those other schools, our Outdoor Recreation Center really tries to promote that self-efficacy, that leadership development, building relationships, as well as that environmental stewardship component. The environment is there for us to enjoy, but also to leave as we find it.

And so we offer a variety of things. Rental, we have a rental shop, which is right across from the SRC. You can rent any equipment you might need for these trips-- mountaineering, kayaking, paddle boarding. Whatever you might think of, we have it there. Bikes, we have fix-it shop, as well as the Cougar Bike Program here on campus.

We offer those outdoor programs, those trips and classes that we adventure facilitators lead. So in the winter, it's mountaineering, snowshoeing, cross-country skiing. In the summer, backpacking, kayaking, paddle boarding. You name it, we want to do it.

We also have our challenge program, our challenge course. And there's a ropes course over by the SRC that classes can go to, friends, groups of friends can go to, individuals can go through building that communication, that leadership work in those group dynamics.

And then we also have a climbing wall in the SRC and climbing programs. One of our most popular is Gym to Crag. And so it's learning the basics of rock climbing in the gym, and then actually going out into nature and working on developing those climbing skills outside. And so hopefully you can get involved, really try to strive to not only enjoy the nature, but build this sense of awareness, build these educational experiences through outdoor recreation.

And if you have any questions or if you want any more information, we have our website [urec@wsu.edu](mailto:urec@wsu.edu) with a link to the Outdoor Recreation Center, with anything you might need. And then just check out these clips and these resources I posted it in the PowerPoint. They're a good guide to get started on hopefully where you want to go to expand your outdoor recreational skills.

So thank you for joining us, and have a good night.