The Purpose and Mission

Outdoor Nation is a first-of-its-kind, nationwide initiative created by the Outdoor Foundation to engage and activate young adults in the outdoors. Built on the belief that lasting cultural change must be led by those most affected by the outcome, Outdoor Nation empowers campus communities to mobilize and motivate a new generation of outdoor enthusiasts.
The Vision

College campuses have long been places that spark change. Outdoor Nation is committed to influencing college students and helping them to establish an active outdoor lifestyle that lasts a lifetime.

By 2020, Outdoor Nation aims to annually engage 100+ campuses and 40,000 college students and young outdoor community leaders.

Outdoor Nation believes an active outdoor lifestyle is an antidote to our nation’s inactivity crisis and waning support for public lands. Building a peer-led movement can drive a deep impact in behavior and cultural change.
Strategy

Outdoor Nation Campus Challenge leverages the assets and natural infrastructure of college campuses, as well as students’ passion and energy, to promote and encourage outdoor activity.

After the Campus Challenge catalyzes campus outdoor communities, Outdoor Nation will continue to partner with schools year-round through other outdoor adventure campaigns. These campaigns will be designed to deepen Outdoor Nation’s impact, strengthen schools’ outdoor programs, and ultimately build a network of collegiate outdoor enthusiasts.
Building Outdoor Communities

We seek to build and support a community of outdoor enthusiasts on the campuses where we work. Our vision of a strong campus community includes a diverse range of campus leaders, including:

**Campus Staff** – Endorse the work of Outdoor Nation and champion the mission. Outdoor Nation supports staff to ensure the success of Outdoor Nation programs.

**Student Leaders** – Outdoor Nation recruits enthusiastic leaders committed to sharing their love of the outdoors.

**Participants** – The larger campus community that we seek to invite into the outdoors.

**College Administration** — Deans, presidents, and administration help drive lasting change on campus. Often they can prioritize the importance of an active outdoor community.
The Challenge

Outdoor Nation Campus Challenge was designed to spark and grow outdoor communities and inspire an active outdoor lifestyle. Through a month-long competition, and with the support of our sponsors, we focused on creating an environment that incentivizes college students to take the first step toward getting outside and to further develop their existing love and appreciation for the outdoors.

The 2017 Outdoor Nation Campus Challenge was the largest to date, with 92 campuses across 32 states competing, which resulted in:

Participants: 25,000
Outdoor activities logged: +120,000
Hours of outdoor activity: 60,000
The Challenge History

Born out of an event series from 2010-13, Outdoor Nation targeted the mission to focus on college campuses. In 2014 Outdoor Nation launched the Campus Challenge. Over the last four years, the program has evolved and grown to where we are today.

2014
10 campuses
8,500 participants

2015
57 campuses
19,000 participants

2016
89 campuses
16,500 participants

2017
92 campuses
25,000 participants
The Road Map

Spring 2017
- Schools register for the Outdoor Nation Campus Challenge. Schools accepted. Based on their application are assigned to Division 1 or Division 2

Summer 2017
- Onboard and train campus staff and student leaders through toolkits and webinar trainings. Outreach to campus administration and plan custom events

Fall 2017
- September 18, 2017 - Campus challenge kickoff
- October 15, 2017 - Campus challenge ends
- October 17, 2017 - Winners announced

The Tools

- Campus Challenge app
- Monetary support
- Product & items from sponsors
- Communications & PR toolkits
- Promotional print & digital resources
The Impact

In just four short weeks, the Outdoor Nation Campus Challenge inspired 120,000 outdoor activities led by 25,000 college students on 92 campuses.

- Students logged hiking activities 13,000 times.
- 7,500 Climbing entries were logged.
- Over 2,200 outdoor service project entries were created.

For the first time, the Campus Challenge allowed schools to create custom activities. Student leaders and campus staff created nearly 450 custom outdoor events to rally their campus community to compete and get outside.

The revised 2017 Outdoor Nation App was used by all 25,000 users to compete in the Challenge.

- In-app entries were viewed more than 11 million times.
- Push notifications were sent from Outdoor Nation and school organizers.
Participant Survey

To measure impact and engagement, Outdoor Nation conducted a survey of Challenge participants as part of a rigorous evaluation process to understand and analyze program results.

Survey responses showed a strong endorsement of the initiative as an effective way to increase outdoor participation, raise awareness of outdoor opportunities, and engage new audiences on campus.

Sixty-seven percent of Campus Challenge participants were inspired to organize others to get outdoors.

Ninety-six percent of Campus Challenge participants would compete in the Challenge again.

Eighty-seven percent of Campus Challenge participants believe the Challenge drives lasting interest and participation in outdoor recreation on their campus.
In a post-Challenge survey, participants were asked about their individual outdoor experience level before and after the Campus Challenge.

With a significant drop in individuals that categorized themselves as “Beginners” in pre and post Campus Challenge responses.

The Challenge was effective in moving people to their next outdoor experience level – beginners to intermediates, intermediates to advanced.

We believe increasing individuals’ perceived outdoor experience level increases their confidence and furthers their pursuit of outdoor activities.
The Social Reach

Instagram: During the Outdoor Nation Campus Challenge, #OutdoorNation garnered over 35,000 uses

Twitter: During the 4-week window, @OutdoorNation attracted 101,000 un-paid impressions

Facebook: Official School accounts, club pages, and Outdoor Nation all shared the story, images, and events during the Campus Challenge
Our 92 campuses had numerous Outdoor Nation Campus Challenge stories picked up by student newspapers and local media outlets.

Campus leaders utilized Outdoor Nation-provided press release to spread the story of the Campus Challenge to their communities.
For this mid-sized school in Ohio with an active outdoor club, the Outdoor Nation Campus Challenge was an additional spark to engage more people in the community. Miami University was participating the Outdoor Nation Campus Challenge for the second consecutive year, and saw increased participation and campus engagement.

What was a memorable moment from the Campus Challenge?

"REI week encouraged my friends and me to do outdoor activities that we may not typically do. For example, one day focused on the activity of outdoor yoga so my friends and I went out to an open field and did about 30 minutes of yoga. This is not the outdoor activity I would normally participate in."

How has Campus Challenge impacted your campus?

"The Campus Challenge was a way to unite students of common outdoor interests, advertise available on-campus outdoor facilities and resources, and encourage outdoor activity. I noticed a vast number of students whom I had never seen climbing before coming to the wall for the first time because of this challenge."
In just their first year, the Stingrays of Sac State put up an incredible fight in their third place finish.

How has Campus Challenge impacted your campus?

“There are already so many people doing outdoorsy things on and around our campus and our goal was to bring that community together. We noticed that even those outdoorsy participants logged more activities than they normally would have.” – Jael, Sac State Staff

What would it look like if more people on your campus loved the outdoors like you? How would it change your community? What can we do to get there?

“It would change the community around me by changing how we perceive ourselves in the outdoors. My hope is that everyone would start to recognize that the outdoors is not just something that we visit every once in a while but rather something that we are an essential part of.” – Ross, Sac State Student
How has Campus Challenge impacted your campus?

“Outdoor Nation has taken on a life of its own at TWU. Since we have started doing the Campus Challenge, hammocking has become such a huge part of our campus community. Even our president gets behind it. The university has implemented a health and wellness initiative, and they see the Campus Challenge as a major piece of that. This is even part of our admissions and marketing for the school.”

- Karrie, TWU Staff
Southern Utah University (SUU) set out to reclaim their 2015 title again in the 2017 Campus Challenge. The campus community fully embraced the mission. “President Wyatt decided on the very first day to do a hike and a run every single morning. He led a 6 a.m. hike every morning with anyone who wanted to come participate. Students got to come and hike with the president, even if they showed up in their pajamas because they had been studying all night.” said Nikki Koontz, the Outdoor Nation staff leader at SUU.

Student leaders and staff organized a series of outdoor activities for their community. Their “Campus Campout” was a huge success. “We had the first ever campout on campus. We got the chief of police on board, and we had 45 people register their tents and had over 150 people attend. The president sponsored and stayed the night. We played a movie and had sunrise yoga. It was super, super awesome.”

Events like this motivated and connected their community with the outdoors. “The Campus Challenge really did make an impact on our campus. I made new friends, and I know other people did too. By making individuals happier, better people, the rest of campus will start to be that way too,” said Sara, a SUU student and Campus Challenge participant.
The Road Ahead

2017 was the largest Outdoor Nation Campus Challenge yet, and we’re just getting started. We believe in building this movement on campuses across the country. Our goals for the coming year are to deepen our impact, grow young leaders, and continue to build a truly Outdoor Nation.