

The National Center for Outdoor & Adventure Education (NCOAE) Named 2023 Organizational Member of the Year by the Association for Experiential Education (AEE)

Award is the highest level of recognition for companies in the outdoor education and adventure programming sectors of the outdoor industry.

WILMINGTON, N.C., Nov. 1, 2023: A rising star in the outdoor industry whose commitment to the Association for Experiential Education (AEE) includes earning the organization’s designation as an accredited provider of outdoor education and adventure-based programs, is AEE’s Organizational Member of the Year for 2023.

Wilmington, NC-based The National Center for Outdoor & Adventure Education (NCOAE) joins 23 other organizations — including Deer Hill Expeditions (2019), Thompson Island Outward Bound (2016), Prescott College (2012), and Project Adventure (1997) — in being recognized by AEE since its founding nearly 50 years ago.

“The AEE community supports, shares, and provides inspiration to each other, including examples of best practices, exemplary participant experiences, creative ideas, and so much more,” said Sherry Bagley, AEE’s Executive Director. “NCOAE has built and sustained a phenomenal experiential educational program. As AEE’s Organizational Member of the Year, NCOAE is recognized as a leader in maintaining innovative programming at continuously high standards, demonstrating commitment to and support for the work of AEE, and has exemplified high ethical standards in its operations and programming.”

Founded by Zac and Celine Adair, both of whom graduated from Prescott College’s internationally-acclaimed graduate program featuring coursework in adventure programming and outdoor education, NCOAE has grown into a world-wide leader in the development and delivery of outdoor education and urban and wilderness medical training. Since running its first courses in Pisgah National Forest, the organization now offers outdoor education and wilderness medical training in Alaska, North Carolina, the Pacific Northwest, Ecuador, and Patagonia, as well as custom outdoor education courses across the globe.

“Never in our wildest dreams did we think NCOAE would receive this sort of recognition,” said Zac Adair, NCOAE’s Co-founder & Executive Director. “We were founded on the belief that operating in a vacuum was not only bad for us but bad for our industry. Joining AEE, seeking and maintaining their standards of accreditation, and participating in their world-class networking and professional development is directly tied to our success. We both humbled and honored by this award and will continue to champion the power of experiential education while advocating for best practices in the industry.”

NCOAE and other award winners will be recognized at AEE’s 51st Annual International Conference at the University of Wisconsin-Madison in Madison, WI, November 2-5, 2023.

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About The National Center for Outdoor & Adventure Education (NCOAE)

Since launching its first courses in Pisgah National Forest in North Carolina in 2009, NCOAE has grown into a global leader in outdoor education and adventure-based programming. The Wilmington, NC-based organization is committed to creating and facilitating wilderness-based experiences that foster personal growth, professional development, and acquisition or improvement of technical outdoor and urban or wilderness medicine skills. Accredited by the Association for Experiential Education (AEE) and the Commission on Accreditation for Pre-Hospital Continuing Education (CAPCE), NCOAE provides courses and training throughout the United States and as far away as Patagonia and other destinations across the globe. For additional information, visit: www.NCOAE.org

About the Association for Experiential Education (AEE)

The Association for Experiential Education is a not-for-profit 501(c)3 membership-based organization that is dedicated to building an inclusive and accessible community for experiential education professionals across the globe. Founded in the early-1970s, AEE is a leading voice for best practices in adventure-based programming and experiential outdoor education. AEE members have affiliations in education, recreation, outdoor and adventure programming, the environment, mental health, youth development, programming for people with disabilities, service learning, and organizational development. In addition to organizing and hosting regional and international conferences, AEE maintains the most comprehensive standards for common practices in the industry, resulting in the nation's first recognized accreditation process focusing on experiential adventure programming. For more information about AEE, visit: www.AEE.org

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