



NORTH CAROLINA  
**TRAILBLAZER**  
**OUTDOOR CLUBS**



# PROGRAM GUIDE

GEAR UP FOR ADVENTURE!



A young woman with curly hair, wearing a backpack and a plaid shirt, sits outdoors looking at a map. The background is a blurred green forest.

## OUR IMPACT

Students Impacted **260,000+**

Grants Awarded **800+**

Funds Awarded to  
Schools & Nonprofits **\$5,700,000+**

# OUR WORK

## Mission

To encourage and strengthen young North Carolinians’ connection to nature by providing opportunities to engage with the outdoors.

## Vision

To see North Carolinians engaging with the state’s diverse natural resources and developing a lasting appreciation for the outdoors.

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# THE GOAL OF OUR CLUBS

To provide structure and support to North Carolina students who wish to pursue outdoor activities, develop leadership skills, and cultivate comradery.

To see a future where North Carolina's students learn the skills and develop the confidence to be stewards of the outdoors.

Trailblazer Outdoor Clubs are the newest program from the N.C. Youth Outdoor Engagement Commission, **aimed at North Carolina's high schoolers**. Accepted clubs will be given **exclusive access to a grant** that can be used to fund field trips and purchase equipment.

Our strategic programming initiatives are designed to address the barriers to the outdoors that young North Carolinians face today. Outdoor experiences vital to mental and physical wellbeing and afford students the opportunity for an alternative style on hands-on learning.



Our goal is to kickstart Trailblazer Outdoor Clubs in all 100 counties, providing opportunities for both students and teachers to meet people with shared interests.



# GRANT ACCESS

Access to a Trailblazer Outdoor Club grant provides you with the funds to kickstart a high school club and provide opportunities for students to get outdoors throughout the school year. **Most importantly - you don't need to be experienced!** Whether you're an avid outdoor enthusiast, or trying it out for the first time, our Trailblazer Outdoor Clubs are welcome to all.



## What Can You Do With A Grant?

We support a variety of outdoor activities, all of which can be pursued in a Trailblazer Outdoor Club with grant funding.

Archery	Bird Watching	Camping	Canoeing
Caving	Fishing	Hiking	Horseback Riding
Hunting	Kayaking	Rafting	Rock Climbing
Service Learning	Skiing	Snowboarding	Sport Shooting

While our club grants fund a variety of outdoor experiences and equipment, there are some activities that we do not fund. Our club grants **cannot fund sports activities and sports equipment** (with the exception of those listed above) or maintenance and upkeep of outdoor structures (trails, classrooms, etc.) If in doubt, you may reach out to us for clarification on whether certain activities are permissible to pursue with the club funds.

# CLUB STRUCTURE

## Advisors & Student Positions

The club advisor is the faculty member tasked with leading the club and will be responsible for **scheduling club meetings, planning trips, purchasing equipment, and grant reporting at the end of each semester (more on that later)**. You may decide to have multiple advisors, or just one - it's entirely up to you!

Electing student members to roles within the club can provide an excellent way for students to **develop leadership and communication skills**.

You may choose positions such as President, Vice-President, Secretary, and Treasurer. You don't have to use those titles, feel free to get creative!

Having these positions in your club is not mandatory, but we encourage you to provide your students the opportunity to be active in in planning and maintaining the club.



## Flexibility is Key

We strive to provide as much flexibility as possible. We understand that every high school is different and that access to particular activities can be restricted by location, experience, and student interest.

Remember: while we encourage clubs to push their limits and try out new activities, there's no obligation to go outside your comfort zone.





## CLUB SUPPORT

### We're Here to Guide You

If you have been successfully awarded a Trailblazer Outdoor Club grant, you may be wondering what's next?

We will work together to create a **mutually agreed upon work plan** for the academic year, that lays out **how the awarded funds will be spent**.

The club advisor and the students may decide to allocate 100% of the funds to purchasing camping, fishing, or archery equipment. You may choose to fund guided field trips to State Parks or recreational areas. Mixing it up with a combination of equipment and travel funding might be in your club's best interests.

**However you decide to spend the money, we will work with you to ensure that the club's initial plan meets our guidelines and is a realistic goal.**



## TEACHER RESOURCES

As club advisor, you may be an experienced trip planner and club organizer, with a variety of outing ideas and club recruitment strategies already in mind, or this could be your very first time organizing a field trip and leading a club. Either way, we have resources to assist you and will be continuing to build these out.

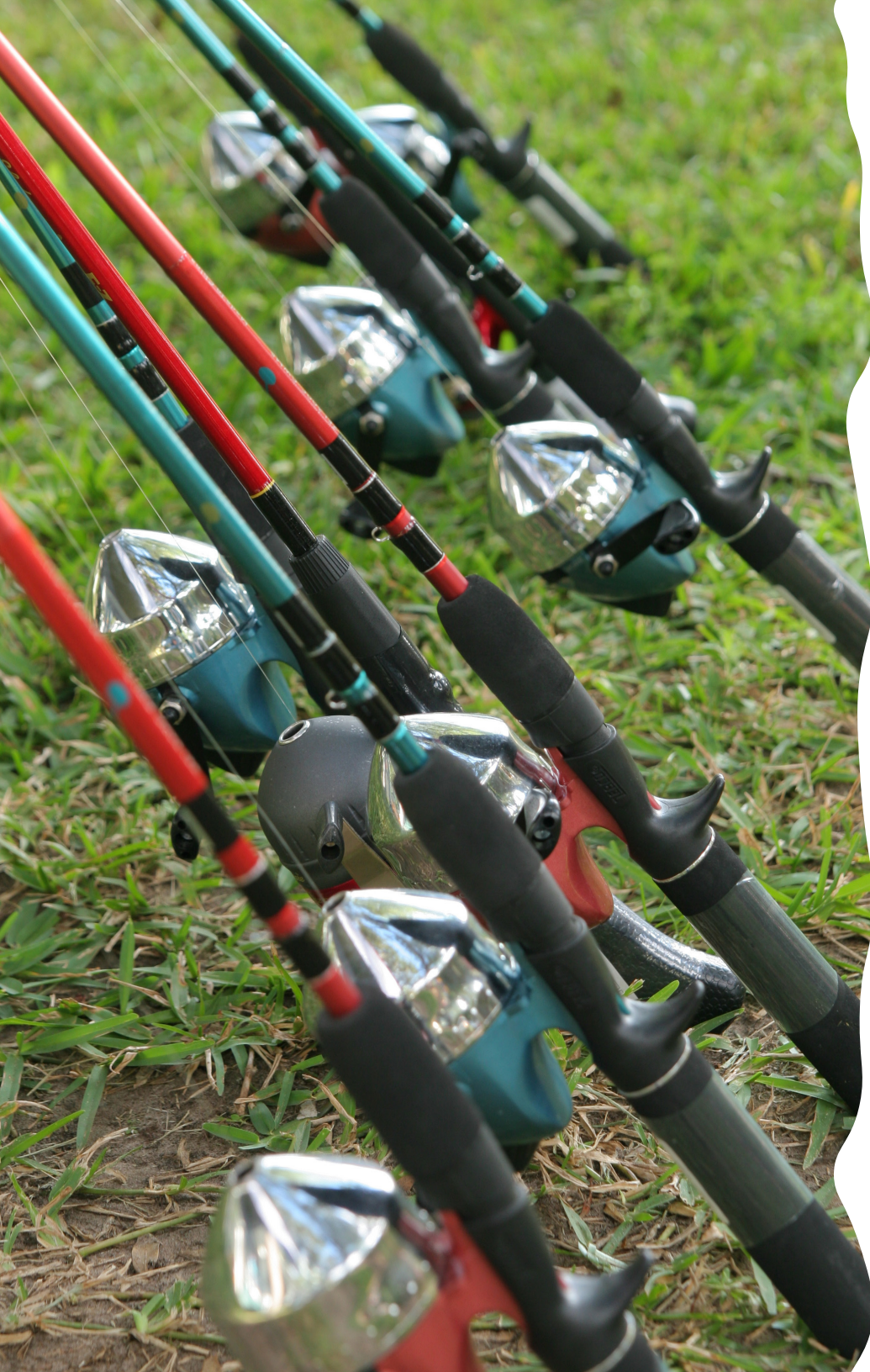
### VIRTUAL LEARNING CONTENT

We have a wide selection of informative videos, covering a range of topics. Your club members (and you!) can learn about knot-tying, day hike tips, wildlife identification, or take a virtual tour of North Carolina's State Parks.

**Visit: [GoOutside.nc.gov](https://GoOutside.nc.gov) and navigate to the Virtual Learning Content (Resources)**







## FIELD TRIP IDEAS

If you'd like to learn about North Carolina's amazing outdoor locations and resources, check out the **interactive map** on our clubs resource page. There you will find links to additional resources from supporting state agencies.

**Visit: [GoOutside.nc.gov](https://GoOutside.nc.gov) and navigate to the Field Trip Ideas tab (Resources)**

## PLANNING & RECRUITMENT

Additionally, you can find a **downloadable sample curriculum**, designed to give you an annual roadmap of activity ideas in which the club could participate.

Your students may already have a lot of interest in outdoor activities - fantastic! If not, you may want to check out our recruitment resources to assist you in generating club interest.

You can find downloadable club posters, sign-up sheets, evaluation forms, blank curriculum calendars, and donor support flyers on our website.

**Visit: [GoOutside.nc.gov](https://GoOutside.nc.gov) and navigate to the Clubs Resources tab (Trailblazer Outdoor Clubs)**



## Maximize Learning Experiences

We suggest club meetings follow a formula that allows students to first learn, then practice, and finally utilize skills.

### Example Fishing Trip:

**Phase 1:** Learn about knot tying

**Phase 2:** Practice knot tying with fishing line

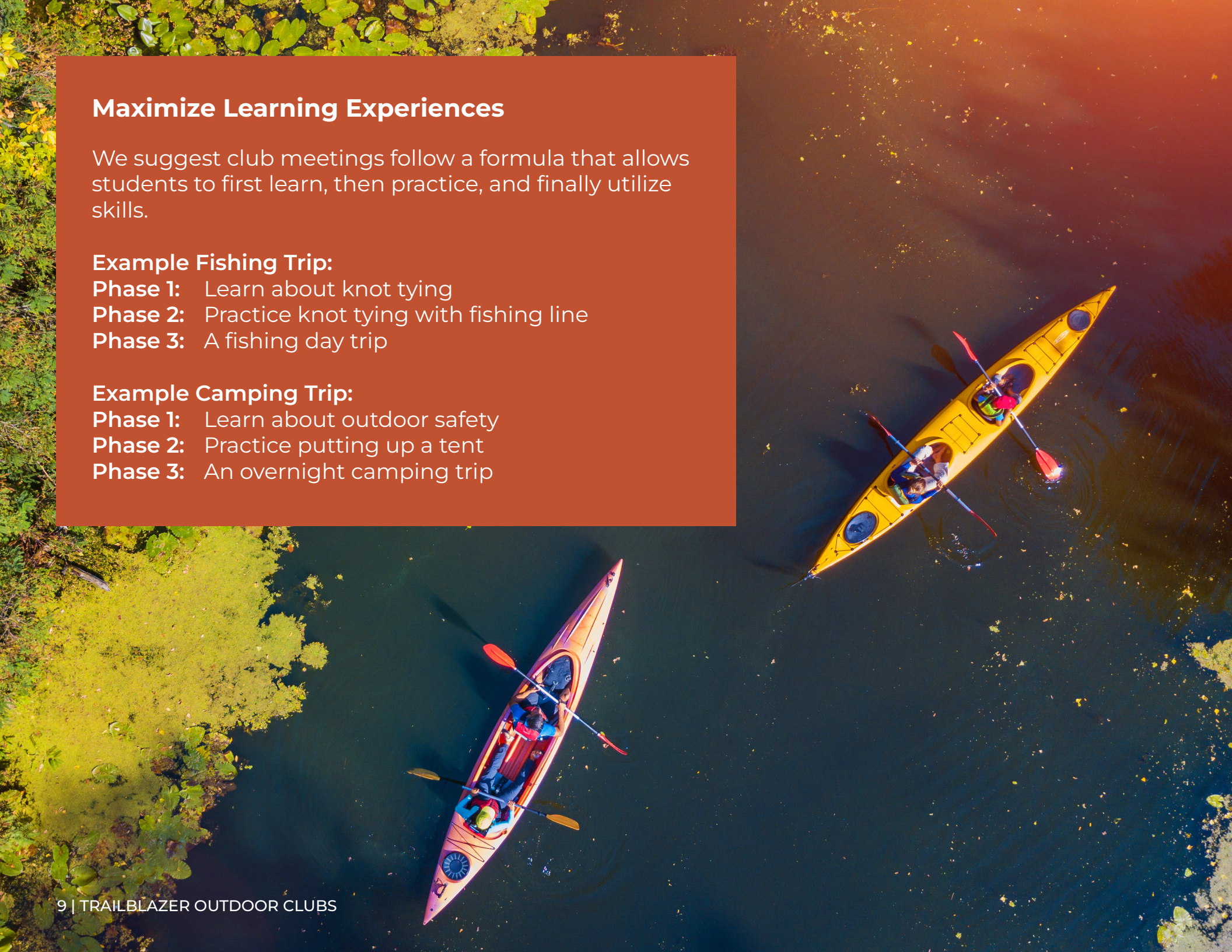
**Phase 3:** A fishing day trip

### Example Camping Trip:

**Phase 1:** Learn about outdoor safety

**Phase 2:** Practice putting up a tent

**Phase 3:** An overnight camping trip





# GRANT REPORTING

## WHAT WE NEED FROM THE CLUB ADVISOR

**Photos, videos, testimonials:** All of these are incredibly useful to us in sharing your club's journey with our stakeholders and on our website, social channels, and in our printed materials.

**Proof of payment:** We require proof of purchase for our grant reporting process. Two forms of proof is best, e.g. if you send an invoice, also provide us a copy of a check stub. We will actively work with club advisors to ensure we've got everything we need, but it will be a club advisor's responsibility to keep track of expenses.

**Club advisors will be required to report on club activities and provide the above documentation to us at the end of each semester.**





# SUSTAINING THE CLUB

## KEEP THE MOMENTUM GOING

To continue supporting the clubs beyond the inaugural year, it is highly recommended that club advisors and members determine a strategy for fundraising or club sponsorship.

The N.C. Youth Outdoor Engagement Commission has rolled out sponsorship levels, that give donors the option to make one-time or recurring gifts to the agency as a whole or specific schools.

We have provided downloadable flyers explaining our sponsorship levels, that you may present to community organizations and businesses.

Communicating this sponsorship information, in tandem with photos, videos, and testimonials of your club's outdoor successes, can facilitate a dialogue about the benefits of Trailblazer Outdoor Clubs and pave the way for continued support.

**Visit: [GoOutside.nc.gov](https://GoOutside.nc.gov) and navigate to the Clubs Resources tab (Trailblazer Outdoor Clubs) or visit the Sponsorship page for further information.**






## INCORPORATING OUR OTHER PROGRAMS

As your club takes shape and you become more confident with outdoor activities, it may be beneficial to utilize our other programs to complement your students' learning experience.

**Outdoor Activity Patch Program** - North Carolinians aged 18 and under can earn collectible patches for completing outdoor activities, including but not limited to hiking, camping, fishing, and archery.

**Go Outside (GO) Grants** - As mentioned previously, the Trailblazer Outdoor Club funding is not intended for upkeep of outdoor learning structures (greenhouses, trails, classrooms, etc.) but a GO Grant can fund up to \$15,000 for the construction such structures. Additionally, they can fund up to \$3,000 for off-campus field trips and \$2,500 for on-campus outdoor programs respectively.

**Visit: [GoOutside.nc.gov](https://GoOutside.nc.gov) for further information.**

A large group of approximately 25 students, mostly teenagers, are posing for a group photo on a sandy beach. They are arranged in several rows, with some standing and some sitting or kneeling in the front. The background shows the ocean under a clear sky. The students are dressed in casual outdoor attire like t-shirts, hoodies, and shorts. Some are making hand gestures like peace signs.

McDowell Early College High School on a fishing trip to the coast - made possible with funds from a Go Outside (GO) Grant.



# MOVING FORWARD

## GEAR UP!

In teens, the benefits of hands-on outdoor learning and reduced time on electronic screens has been well researched. Unfortunately, there can be many geographic and socioeconomic barriers that prevent teens from experiencing the great outdoors.

The work you are doing to form a club to benefit your students is commendable and we hope that both you and your students enjoy the exciting challenges that lay before you.

You may have questions along the way and we're here to help!

For questions about:

### **Club Applications & Grant Reporting**

Program Director, [Alan.Pomeroy@nc.gov](mailto:Alan.Pomeroy@nc.gov)

### **Club Materials & Resources**

Outreach & Engagement Manager,  
[Noel.Griffin@nc.gov](mailto:Noel.Griffin@nc.gov)

### **Club Sponsorship**

Fundraising & Finance Manager,  
[Layne.Randolph@nc.gov](mailto:Layne.Randolph@nc.gov)





# STAY UP TO DATE

## FOLLOW & SUBSCRIBE

We love seeing and sharing the adventures of our grant recipients - follow our social channels **@ncoutdoortrailblazers** and **@gooutsidenc** and tag us in your photos!

A Trailblazer Outdoor Club newsletter will be available to club advisors so that you can learn what other clubs have been up to and learn more about our future events. We're planning to provide the opportunity for clubs to meet each other (and us) at a gathering!

We will be reaching out to club advisors with information on newsletter subscription and networking events in the near future.







We see a future where North Carolina's students **learn the skills**  
and **develop the confidence** to be stewards of the outdoors.

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