

2015 Awards Program

KOA launched with a 2015 awards program that included fifteen qualified finalists. Three 2015 Awardees (see below) were deemed to be particularly high-impact by a generous and highly credible group of 2015 Awards Judges (see below) at the KOA Campfire Hoopla event held in May 2015.

Beginning in 2016 KOA discontinued the approach of highlighting certain beneficiary programs in particular, and is instead focusing on supporting bite-sized needs of all qualified KOA beneficiary members.



2015 Awardees

Nature Vision: “Nature Vision brings place-based, experiential nature education programs directly to schools and green spaces to reach as many students as possible. We work to ensure that all students receive quality nature connections where they need them the most.”

Oxbow Farm & Conservation Center: “We provide dynamic environmental education programming for kids on our 225-acre property in the Snoqualmie Valley. Kids primarily aged 4-12 explore and harvest produce directly from our fields during school field trips and summer camps.”

Seattle ICO: “Seattle ICO works in partnership with nine public schools in King County to provide 60+ wilderness outings for 800 youth participants annually.”

2015 Awards Judges

Manny Chao: Co-founder/Georgetown Brewing Company - Program founder and outings volunteer for a Franklin High School (Seattle, WA) youth-in-nature program, and continuously provides sponsorship support for Seattle area youth-in-nature programs.

Robin Chiles: Leadership Development Director/Metrocenter YMCA - 10+ years helping kids get outside, first with Passages Northwest and now with the YMCA, where she oversees the admissions process for the outdoor leadership programs. Robin has spoken with thousands of parents and kids just before they head out on their first wilderness trip.

Karen Daubert: Executive Director/Washington Trails Association - 12+ years leading nonprofits that provide/promote youth outdoor activities: 9+ years as ED of Seattle Parks Foundation and 3+ years as ED of Washington Trails Association.

Maria Flack: Teacher/Showalter Middle School (Tukwila, WA) - Seattle area youth-in-nature program volunteer for 2 years, then 10+ years as a founder and teacher representative for the program at her Tukwila schools.

Martinique Grigg: Executive Director/The Mountaineers - The Mountaineers is the largest volunteer climbing organization in the U.S. and a leading publisher of books and resources on outdoor recreation as well as outdoor programs for adults and youth.

Garrett Kephart: Member of the Board of Directors at the Seattle Parks Foundation, Sustainable Seattle, the Willowmoor Foundation, and the Keewaydin Foundation - Garrett spent 16 years at Keewaydin Canoe Camp in Temagami, Ontario as a camper and staff, and currently leads their Adult program.

Martin LeBlanc: SVP External Affairs/IslandWood, BOD Northwest Outward Bound, BOD Metrocenter YMCA, VP Emeritus BOD/Children in Nature Network - In addition to his roles listed above, Martin is former Sierra Club Director of everything that involved getting kids outside across the U.S. He is also a regular at White House summits on kids outdoors.