

# PARTNERSHIP SPOTLIGHT: THE NANTAHALA OUTDOOR CENTER

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**T**HE NANTAHALA OUTDOOR Center (NOC), founded in 1972 by Horace Holden and Payson and Aurelia Kennedy, started out as a small gas station and motel called the Tote' n Tarry in Bryson City, North Carolina along the banks of the Nantahala River. It has since grown to offer more than 120 land- and river-based itineraries of adventure and activities for families spanning seven locations in four southeastern states. The founders shared a passion for the river and its camaraderie and believed that their enthusiasm for the outdoors could change lives.

NOC outpost river locations have long been a fond meeting place for families and friends, a practice spot for Olympic athletes and aspiring paddlers, and home to decades of alumni and staff. Guests return year after year, often bringing friends, grandchildren, and loved ones to embark on their next river adventure.

The dedicated staff at each outpost, all deeply passionate about rivers and outdoor recreation, is one of NOC's greatest assets—the guides and river managers are second to none. NOC has long been committed to training and hiring guides to be the best in outdoors and hospitality professionalism, knowledge, and personal accomplishments. Guides are fueled by a passion for the river and are renowned for connecting guests to the natural world through fun, engaging and authentic interactions. They work extremely hard to make outdoor experiences accessible to everyone, regardless of age, skill level, or background.

The guiding principle at NOC is focused on exposure—participation in outdoor activities will naturally lead to conservation and protection of natural resources. By guiding and supporting people

on river- and land-based outdoor adventures, they're more likely to protect the places that they love. NOC has introduced scores of people to the great outdoors and will continue to do so for decades. 2022 marks the 50th anniversary of NOC—celebrations throughout the year will commence, so stay tuned and go celebrate with them!

NOC has been a tremendous supporter of American Whitewater for decades. Most recently they initiated a 'Round Up' program in April 2021 where NOC guests/customers were offered the opportunity to "Round-Up" their purchase amount to the nearest dollar at three of NOC's retail locations, River's End Restaurant on the Nantahala Campus, as well as six Outpost store locations in the Southeast. A total of \$15,000 was raised for American Whitewater's Southeast Forests and Flows initiative.

