

# MEMBERSHIP PROGRAM REVIEW PRELIMINARY & FINDINGS & NEXT STEPS



## 1. INDUSTRY OVERVIEW

An overview of market trends, along with the current member base, including demographics and behaviors.

## 2. SWOT ANALYSIS

Analysis of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats of our own brand.

## 3. PEER ORGANIZATIONS

A list of peer organizations emerging in the industry.

## 4. PEER ORG PROFILES

A detailed profile of a key peer organization, including branding, marketing, strengths and weaknesses.

## 5. MARKETING COMPARISON

Compare our business to peers in branding, content strategy, and paid advertising.

## 6. OPPORTUNITIES

An analysis of gaps in the market that our business can capitalise on and strategic recommendations.



### VOLUNTEER IMPACT

Volunteers skew younger (more under 55 participate). Volunteers are 2x more likely to donate money than non-volunteers – showing the synergy between volunteering and giving.

### ONLINE DONATIONS ARE ON THE RISE

Online donations are projected to grow at an annual rate of about 13% through 2025, reflecting donors' increasing preference for digital channels.

### PUBLIC SUPPORT FOR PARKS

Over 75% of Americans say teaching youth to be environmental stewards is very important. 88% support local parks implementing sustainability practices.

### FOUNDATION GIVING INCREASE

Foundations are expected to ramp up their giving, offering nonprofits more opportunities to secure grants and large-scale funding.

# MARKET TRENDS

### SOCIAL MEDIA INFLUENCE

Nonprofits are leveraging social media, short-form video, and collaborations with influencers or ambassadors to expand their reach. Smaller, more authentic influencers often drive higher engagement.

### TECHNOLOGY INVESTMENT

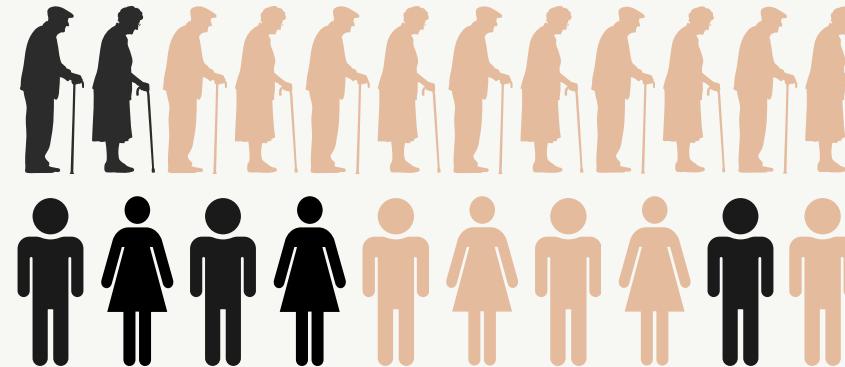
AI-driven tools (e.g., chatbots, advanced email segmentation) and data analytics are increasingly common, helping nonprofits personalize outreach and improve donor retention.

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# CURRENT MEMBERSHIP

## MEMBER BASE SIZE



- Approximately 9368 memberships spread across 8 different levels
- The Park Partner and Park Steward tiers have the highest number of active memberships, making them the backbone of the membership base.
- January sees the highest join rates (1,612 new members historically), with additional spikes in May and December.
- A modest but stable cohort remains for 10, 20, even 30+ years, indicating a loyal segment worth cultivating.

## PSYCHOGRAPHICS

- Environmentally conscious and philanthropic; highly value conservation and park stewardship.
- Motivated by tangible benefits (e.g., park store discounts, tote bags) but also interested in mission impact.

## BEHAVIOURS

- Strong awareness of benefits (80%+), but only ~30% feel these benefits truly motivate them to renew.
- Tend to respond well to event invitations, volunteer opportunities, and merchandise.
- Love for parks – recreation, spiritual inspiration

## HOUSEHOLD SIZE

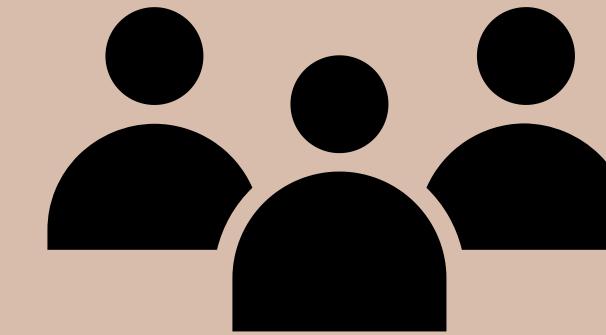


LOCATION: GOLDEN GATE AREA

AGE : 30 - 55+



# PAIN POINTS



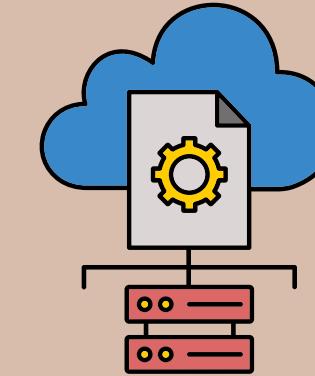
DEMOGRAPHIC IMBALANCE



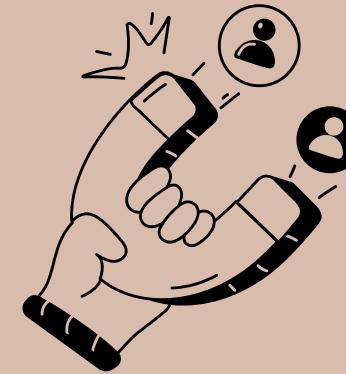
LOW BENEFIT MOTIVATION



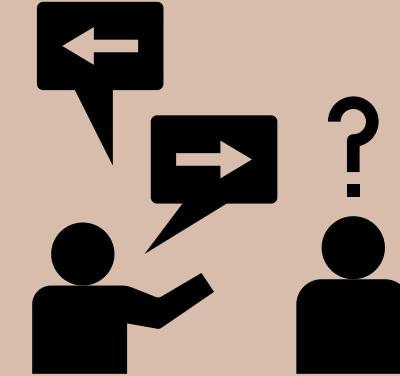
DECLINING NEW MEMBER ACQUISITION



DISPARATE DATA SYSTEMS AND  
DIGITAL INFRASTRUCTURE



POOR FIRST-YEAR MEMBER  
RETENTION



INCONSISTENT RETAIL STORE  
CONVERSION

# SWOT ANALYSIS

<p><b>STRENGTHS</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Established Organization &amp; Mission:</b> The Parks Conservancy has a long history (since 1981) and a strong mission.</li> <li><b>Significant Impact:</b> The organization has provided substantial support to the Golden Gate National Parks, demonstrating its effectiveness.</li> <li><b>Large Volunteer Base:</b> The Conservancy has engaged a very large number of volunteers.</li> <li><b>Existing Membership Base:</b> The organization already has a base of 9,000 member households to build upon.</li> <li><b>Awareness of Benefits:</b> A high percentage of current members are aware of their benefits.</li> <li><b>Retail Presence:</b> The Conservancy has a presence in park stores, which can be leveraged for membership acquisition and engagement.</li> </ul>	<p><b>WEAKNESSES</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Low Motivation from Benefits:</b> Despite awareness, only about 30% of members feel motivated by the current benefits.</li> <li><b>Older Membership Base:</b> Survey data indicates a skew toward older members, suggesting a need to attract younger demographics.</li> <li><b>Limited Brand Recognition:</b> There are limitations in brand recognition and marketing efforts.</li> <li><b>Data and System Challenges:</b> There are challenges related to data gaps and system integration.</li> <li><b>Potential for Information Overload:</b> Some feedback indicates members feel there are too many emails/newsletters.</li> <li><b>Inconsistent Membership Card Usage:</b> Members don't frequently carry membership cards, and retail staff rely on the "honor system".</li> </ul>
<p><b>OPPORTUNITIES</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Membership Growth Potential:</b> The primary goal is to triple the number of member households in five years, indicating a significant opportunity for expansion. (drive towards growth)</li> <li><b>Re-engagement of Lapsed Members:</b> There's an opportunity to bring back members who have lapsed.</li> <li><b>Digital Engagement:</b> There are opportunities to improve digital engagement, as highlighted by the success of digital strategies in organizations like the National Parks Foundation and Surfrider.</li> <li><b>Refining Tiers and Benefits:</b> There is a focus on refining membership tiers and benefits to enhance their appeal.</li> <li><b>Partnerships:</b> Potential partnerships, such as with the National Park Foundation for webinars, could expand reach and engagement.</li> <li><b>Event Enhancements:</b> There is an opportunity to enhance member events to drive engagement.</li> <li><b>Address "Underperforming" Counties:</b> An opportunity exists to target growth in specific geographic areas.</li> </ul>	<p><b>THREATS</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Competition:</b> Other membership organizations compete for members' support.</li> <li><b>Changing Member Preferences:</b> Shifts in customer preferences or behaviors could impact membership demand.</li> <li><b>Economic Conditions:</b> Economic downturns could affect members' willingness to donate.</li> <li><b>Operational Inefficiencies:</b> Internal limitations or inefficiencies could hinder growth.</li> </ul>



## PEER ORGANIZATIONS

### **Marine Mammal Center**

Focuses on the rescue, rehabilitation, and release of marine mammals, offering members a direct connection to animal welfare and conservation efforts.

### **Surfrider Foundation**

Advocates for the protection and enjoyment of the world's ocean, waves, and beaches through a grassroots activist network.

## PEER ORGANIZATIONS

### **National Parks Foundation**

The official charitable partner of the National Park Service, supporting all national parks across the United States.

### **Yosemite Conservancy**

Directly supports the preservation and enhancement of Yosemite National Park, an iconic and globally recognized natural landmark.

## PEER ORGANIZATIONS

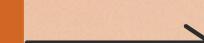
### **Sempervirens Fund**

Protects and permanently preserves redwood (*Sequoia sempervirens*) forests, wildlife habitat, watersheds, and other important natural and scenic features of California's Santa Cruz mountains,

### **California State Parks Foundation**

Protects, improves, and advocates for all of California's state parks.

ORGS / PEER ORGS/ PEER



## PEER ORG ONE.

# MARINE MAMMAL CENTER

### BUSINESS OVERVIEW

- The Marine Mammal Center is the world's largest marine mammal hospital, located in Sausalito, California.
- Established to advance global ocean conservation through rescue and rehabilitation, scientific research, and education.

### PRODUCTS / SERVICES

- Rescue and rehabilitation of sick, injured, and orphaned marine mammals
- Scientific research on marine mammal health and ocean conservation
- Educational programs for youth and adults
- Public viewing and tours of the hospital
- Online and on-site gift shop
- Membership program with various tiers
- Symbolic animal adoptions and patient sponsorships

### BRAND POSITIONING

- The leading global center for marine mammal rescue, veterinary care, and scientific research, inspiring ocean conservation through its work.
- Their messaging emphasizes the interconnectedness of ocean health and human well-being



### MARKETING STRATEGY

- Emotional Appeals: Sharing stories of rescued animals to connect with audiences
- Tiered Membership: Offering benefits like discounts, newsletters, event invitations, and behind-the-scenes access
- Symbolic Adoptions & Sponsorships: Providing opportunities for direct support of individual animals
- Digital Engagement: Active presence on social media (Facebook, Instagram, X, YouTube) and email marketing
- Partnerships: Collaborating with corporations and foundations for sponsorships
- Events: Hosting patient release celebrations and fundraising events.

### STRENGTHS

- World's largest marine mammal hospital with significant expertise
- Strong brand recognition and positive public perception
- Direct impact on animal welfare creates emotional connection with supporter
- Active engagement with a large online audiences

### WEAKNESSES

- Relies heavily on donations and grants, which can be unpredictable
- Operational costs for animal care can be high
- Potential for negative perception from some groups regarding keeping animals in captivity, even for rehabilitation
- Geographic limitation since primary operations concentrated in coastal California and Hawaii



## PEER ORG TWO.

# SURFRIDER FOUNDATION

### BUSINESS OVERVIEW

- A non-profit grassroots organization dedicated to the protection and enjoyment of the world's ocean, waves, and beaches for all people, through a powerful activist network

### PRODUCTS / SERVICES

- Advocacy and campaigning on issues like plastic pollution, ocean protection, beach access, coasts and climate, and clean water
- Local chapter network organizing beach cleanups, water testing, and community action
- Educational programs and resources
- Membership program with various tiers
- Online store selling merchandise

### BRAND POSITIONING

- A leading environmental organization known for its passionate activism and effective grassroots network, fighting to protect coastal environments and ensure public access



### MARKETING STRATEGY

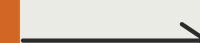
- Grassroots Mobilization: Engaging a large network of volunteers and local chapters
- Tiered Membership: Offering benefits like discounts, newsletters, event invitations, and behind-the-scenes access
- Campaign-Focused Marketing: Raising awareness and driving action on specific environmental issues
- Digital Engagement: Active presence on social media (Facebook, Instagram, X, YouTube) and email marketing
- Partnerships: Collaborating with corporations and foundations for sponsorships.

### STRENGTHS

- Large and engaged membership base (over one million supporters)
- Strong grassroots network enables effective local action
- Proven track record of campaign victories
- Strong brand recognition and credibility within the environmental community
- Low Entry Point: Membership starts at very accessible price points

### WEAKNESSES

- Relies heavily on volunteer efforts, which can fluctuate
- Potential for internal disagreements or challenges in coordinating a large, decentralized network
- May face opposition from industries or government entities whose practices they challenge
- Coastal Development Pressures: Increasing commercial interests along shorelines



## PEER ORG THREE.

# NATIONAL PARKS FOUNDATION

### BUSINESS OVERVIEW

- The official non-profit partner of the National Park Service (NPS), chartered by Congress to support the preservation and enhancement of America's national parks

### PRODUCTS / SERVICES

- Fundraising for national parks through individual and corporate donations
- Providing grants and programmatic support to the NPS for conservation, education, and visitor experience projects
- Building strategic partnerships with corporations and foundations
- Membership program with various tiers
- Membership program ("Champions Society") with tiered benefits

### BRAND POSITIONING

- The leading national philanthropic organization dedicated to supporting and protecting America's treasured national parks for present and future generations
- Their tone is generally inspiring and emphasizes the "Wonder" of national parks



## PEER ORG THREE.

# NATIONAL PARKS FOUNDATION

### MARKETING STRATEGY

- Partnerships: Extensive collaborations with corporations (Subaru, Coca-Cola, L.L.Bean) and foundations
- Tiered Membership: Offering benefits like discounts, newsletters, event invitations, and behind-the-scenes access
- National Campaigns: Large-scale initiatives to raise awareness and encourage visitation and support.
- Digital Engagement: Active on social media platforms and utilizing email newsletters
- Highlighting Impact: Showcasing the results of their fundraising and project support

### STRENGTHS

- Official partnership with the National Park Service provides credibility and reach
- Strong relationships with major corporations and foundations
- Proven track record of campaign victories
- National scope allows for broad impact across the entire park system
- Significant financial resources and fundraising capacity

### WEAKNESSES

- Can be perceived as a large, national organization, potentially lacking the local connection of smaller groups
- May face challenges in balancing the needs of over 400 diverse national park sites
- Reliance on corporate partnerships could lead to scrutiny regarding alignment of values
- High Entry Point: Champions Society starts at \$1,000/year



## PEER ORG FOUR.

# YOSEMITE CONSERVANCY

### BUSINESS OVERVIEW

- The official non-profit partner of Yosemite National Park, dedicated to supporting projects and programs that preserve the park and enrich the visitor experience

### PRODUCTS / SERVICES

- Fundraising for critical park needs, including trail restoration, wildlife protection, and visitor programs
- Operating bookstores and offering guided adventures and art classes within the park
- Managing volunteer programs
- Publishing the Yosemite Conservancy Magazine
- Membership program ("Friends of Yosemite" and "John Muir Heritage Society") with tiered benefits

### BRAND POSITIONING

- The trusted philanthropic partner for Yosemite National Park, inspiring people to support its conservation and ensuring its accessibility and enjoyment for all
- Their tone is passionate about Yosemite and aims to connect people with the park



### MARKETING STRATEGY

- Tiered Membership: Offering benefits like discounts, event invitations, park passes, and recognition
- Highlighting Impact: Showcasing specific projects funded by donations
- In-Park Engagement: Operating bookstores and offering programs that directly connect visitors to the Conservancy's work
- Digital and Print Communications: Utilizing their website, social media, email newsletters, and the Yosemite Conservancy Magazine
- Encouraging User-Generated Content: Using hashtags like #YosemiteConnect

### STRENGTHS

- Exclusive focus on the iconic Yosemite National Park
- Long-standing history and strong reputation
- Proven track record of campaign victories
- Direct connection to a beloved and highly visited national park
- Engaged donor base passionate about Yosemite

### WEAKNESSES

- Geographically limited focus compared to national organizations
- Success is closely tied to the popularity and visitation of Yosemite National Park, which can be affected by external factors (e.g., wildfires, government shutdowns)



## PEER ORG FIVE.

# SEMPERVIRENS FUND

### BUSINESS OVERVIEW

- California's first land trust, established in 1900, dedicated exclusively to protecting the redwood forests of the Santa Cruz Mountains

### PRODUCTS / SERVICES

- Strategic land acquisition to preserve redwood forests
- Establishing conservation easements with private landowners
- Ecological restoration and stewardship of protected lands
- Public outreach and education about redwood forests
- Encouraging donations through various methods

### BRAND POSITIONING

- The leading voice for the preservation and restoration of the redwood forests in the Santa Cruz Mountains, emphasizing their ecological importance and resilience
- Their tone is passionate and focused on the long-term health of the redwood ecosystem



## PEER ORG FIVE.

# SEMPERVIRENS FUND

### MARKETING STRATEGY

- Donation-Centric Approach: Primarily focuses on direct appeals for financial contributions
- Monthly Giving Program: Encouraging recurring donations through "Forest Sustainers"
- Legacy Giving: Promoting gifts through wills and trusts
- Highlighting Impact: Emphasizing the lasting impact of donations on redwood forest protection, wildlife, and climate change
- Digital Communications: Utilizing their website and email newsletters

### STRENGTHS

- Deep expertise and singular focus on a specific and iconic ecosystem
- Historical significance as California's first land trust
- Strong commitment to ecological restoration and long-term forest health
- Established relationships with landowners and conservation partners in the region

### WEAKNESSES

- Geographically limited focus
- Lack of a traditional membership program with tangible benefits might limit broader engagement
- Relies heavily on donations, which can be influenced by economic conditions and donor priorities



## PEER ORG SIX.

# CALIFORNIA STATE PARKS FOUNDATION

### BUSINESS OVERVIEW

- A member-supported non-profit organization dedicated to protecting, improving, and advocating for all of California's state parks

### PRODUCTS / SERVICES

- Advocacy for state park funding and policies
- Facilitating park improvements and restoration projects
- Inspiring stewardship and public engagement in state parks
- Supporting local park partners and community groups
- Membership program with tiered benefits
- Providing information and resources about California state parks

### BRAND POSITIONING

- The leading statewide voice advocating for the protection and preservation of California's diverse state park system for the benefit of all
- Their tone is often passionate and emphasizes the importance of parks for all Californians



## PEER ORG SIX.

## CALIFORNIA STATE PARKS FOUNDATION

## MARKETING STRATEGY

- Membership Program: Offering benefits like camping discounts, newsletters, tote bags, and event invitations
- Advocacy Campaigns: Mobilizing members and the public to support state park funding and policies
- Highlighting Impact: Showcasing successful park improvement projects and advocacy efforts
- Targeted Programs: Developing initiatives like the "Quails and Trails Membership" to engage specific demographics
- Digital Presence: Utilizing their website, social media, and email communications

## STRENGTHS

- Statewide focus allows for broad impact across a large and diverse park system
- Established partnership with the official California State Parks agency
- Large membership base provides significant advocacy power
- Strong track record of advocating for and improving state parks

## WEAKNESSES

- Managing the diverse needs of 280 state park units can be challenging
- May face challenges in balancing the interests of different park user groups and conservation priorities
- Relies on both membership dues and donations, which can be influenced by economic factors and state budget priorities





## 1. BRANDING ELEMENTS

- **Marine Mammal Center:** "Critical first responder," interconnectedness of ocean/mammal/human health, "hero" narrative (e.g., partnership with Dawn Saves Wildlife), state-of-the-art facilities.
- **Surfrider Foundation:** Passionate community, grassroots activism, fun/inclusive environment, problem solvers. "The Ocean Needs More Friends" rallying supporters to become "friends of the ocean"
- **National Parks Foundation:** "Official nonprofit partner," "Together, We Make Parks Possible," "Wonder Calls," stewardship. Iconic #FindYourPark brand
- **Yosemite Conservancy:** Sole nonprofit for Yosemite, official partner, inspiring support, long-term commitment. "Protect Your Wild"
- **SemperVirens Fund:** California's first land trust, majestic redwoods, ecological role, accessibility. "Great Park Vision"
- **California State Parks Foundation:** Leading statewide voice, independent/member-supported, inclusivity, forward-thinking. #ReimagineBigBasin

## 2.

### STORYTELLING & DIGITAL ENGAGEMENT

- Storytelling is crucial for most, highlighting impact and individual stories (animal rescues, park projects) to create deep emotional engagement.
- Use of quizzes, challenges, and user-generated content (Yosemite Conservancy's personality quiz) to actively involve audiences.
- Some have newsletters (Marine Mammal Center, CA State Parks Foundation, Yosemite Conservancy (magazine), SemperVirens Fund (blog)).

## 3.

### DIGITAL ADVERTISING & SOCIAL MEDIA OPTIMIZATION

- Strategic use of Facebook and Instagram ads (e.g., promoting events or matching gift drives) drives event attendance and membership conversion.
- Utilization of Google Ad Grants to capture search traffic for key terms, ensuring visibility for donation and membership opportunities.
- Collaborations with influencers and creative native ads help extend digital reach and attract younger audiences.

## 4.

### FUNDRAISING & MARKETING INTEGRATION

- All organizations integrate fundraising into their marketing.
- Tiered membership/donor programs are common.
- Partnerships (corporate, foundations) are a significant source of support.
- Events (tours, releases, etc.) are used for engagement and fundraising.
- Symbolic giving weaves rescue stories directly into fundraising appeals

# OPPORTUNITIES / OPPORTUNITIES / OPPORTUNITIES / OPPORTUNITIES / OPPORTUNITIES / OPPORTUNITIES



## GAPS IN THE MARKET

- GGNPC's digital content and interactive online experiences are underutilized.
- Limited use of influencer collaborations compared to peers.
- Current benefits are well-known but not sufficiently motivating (~30% find them compelling).
- Different acquisition channels (online, direct mail, park stores) show varying performance and retention rates.
- Disparate data systems hinder a unified member view.
- Membership data indicates a predominantly older base with limited younger representation



## RECOMMENDATIONS

- Enhance Member Value Proposition
  - Revamp Benefit Tiers
  - Increase Engagement through Events
  - Improve Communication & Digital Access
  - Re-evaluate Premiums
- Implement a Dynamic Marketing and Acquisition Strategy
  - Increase Digital Focus
  - Targeted Campaigns
  - Leverage Park Retail
  - Explore Partnerships
- Optimize Data Management and Personalization
  - Integrate Systems
  - Leverage Data Analytics
  - Enhance Data Collection
- Enhance Member Retention
  - Improve First-Year Engagement
  - Promote Monthly Giving
  - Re-engage Lapsed Members
- Enhance Visitor Centre Membership Experience
  - Clear Communication
  - Streamline Processes
  - Exclusive Incentives



# BRAINSTORMING / PROTOTYPING / BRAINSTORMING / PROTOTYPING / BRAINSTORMING

## SCALING STRATEGY

1. TARGET MICRO-INFLUENCERS BEFORE THEY BLOW UP
2. BUILD AUTHENTIC RELATIONSHIPS, NOT JUST TRANSACTIONS
3. CREATE ARTIFICIAL SCARCITY WITH LIMITED DROPS
4. FOCUS ON COMMUNITY OVER CORPORATE BRANDING
5. STAY RIDICULOUSLY CLOSE TO CUSTOMER FEEDBACK

## BAY AREA EVENTS FOR IN-PERSON OUTREACH

- MAJOR RUNNING RACE
  - BAY TO BREAKERS
  - DIPSEA RACE
- TRIATHLONS AND OUTDOOR SPORTING EVENTS
- COMMUNITY FESTIVALS AND FAIRS
  - OUTSIDE LANDS
  - HARDLY STRICTLY BLUEGRASS
  - PACIFICA FOG FEST
  - HALF MOON BAY PUMPKIN FESTIVAL
- LOCAL OUTDOOR RECREATION GATHERINGS
  - SUNDAY STREETS

## PARTNERING WITH INFLUENCERS AND LIKE-MINDED BRANDS

- COMMUNITY OUTDOOR LEADERS
  - OUTDOOR AFRO
  - LATINO OUTDOORS
- ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATORS & CONTENT CREATORS
  - KRISTY DRUTMAN OF BROWN GIRL GREEN
  - QUEER BROWN VEGAN (ISAIAS HERNANDEZ),
- LOCAL OUTDOOR LIFESTYLE BRANDS
  - ALLTRAILS – “GOLDEN GATE TRAILS CHALLENGE”
  - CLIF BAR
  - PATAGONIA
  - NORTHFACE
  - REI

## EXISTING EDUCATION PARTNERSHIPS AND PROGRAMS

- GOLDEN GATE RAPTOR OBSERVATORY (GGRO)
- SAN FRANCISCO UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT (SFUSD)
- PROJECT WISE (WATERSHEDS INSPIRING STUDENT EDUCATION)
- CRISSY FIELD CENTER YOUTH PROGRAMS
- CITY COLLEGE OF SAN FRANCISCO (CCSF)
- SAN FRANCISCO STATE UNIVERSITY (SFSU)

