

118TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

H. RES. 1534

Recognizing the 15th anniversary of Outdoor Afro.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

OCTOBER 4, 2024

Mr. THOMPSON of California (for himself, Mr. HORSFORD, Ms. LEE of California, Mr. GARAMENDI, Mr. COHEN, Ms. BARRAGÁN, Mr. HUFFMAN, Mr. CARTER of Louisiana, Mr. COSTA, and Mr. VEASEY) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Natural Resources

RESOLUTION

Recognizing the 15th anniversary of Outdoor Afro.

Whereas Outdoor Afro started as a blog by Rue Mapp about nature in 2009 and has grown into a cutting-edge nationwide network with volunteer leaders in 33 States and the District of Columbia, guiding hundreds of outdoor events each year based on a simple mission to celebrate and inspire Black-American connections to nature through recreational activities like camping, hiking, birding, fishing, gardening, skiing, biking, environmental education, conservation stewardship, and more;

Whereas, in the past 15 years, Outdoor Afro, a national not-for-profit organization, has cultivated and trained more than 1,000 outdoor leaders, leading thousands of outdoor events and reaching well over 150,000 participants;

Whereas Outdoor Afro has disrupted the false perception that Black Americans do not have a relationship with nature and is inspiring access to the most pristine nature as well as urban nature, including local parks, trails, and open spaces;

Whereas Outdoor Afro not only promotes a healthy lifestyle, it also helps communities find healing and connect to Black history found in many natural areas, and inspires an increased desire to protect vulnerable public lands for all to enjoy;

Whereas Outdoor Afro held its first international expedition in 2018 to climb Mt. Kilimanjaro in Tanzania, which was widely covered in the media;

Whereas Outdoor Afro launched Making Waves in 2019 in response to the alarming and disproportionate number of Black children who drown while swimming as reported by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and the goal is to strengthen relationships with water through lessons provided by certified swim instructors in water safety and basic swimming techniques;

Whereas, since its inception, Making Waves has funded nearly 1,950 Swimmerships™ scholarships and has a 2024 goal of reaching 1,500 new swimmers; to date, 520 new scholarships have been funded in 2024 and 1,000 new swimmers have pledged to learn this lifesaving skill;

Whereas Outdoor Afro has engaged millions of people through digital outreach to 80,000 people per day, and is changing the narrative and visual representation of who can connect with and lead in the outdoors by posting thousands of photos and stories;

Whereas Outdoor Afro’s growing network mostly comprises civically engaged men and women, many of whom plan outdoor activities on behalf of children and senior community members, thereby restoring Black-American leadership in nature at home;

Whereas Outdoor Afro is a leading voice in the Black-American community for advice on where to recreate, which outdoor gear to use, and which causes need the greatest attention;

Whereas Outdoor Afro’s founder Rue Mapp has been featured in publications including the Wall Street Journal, Backpacker magazine, the Seattle Times, the Los Angeles Times, Ebony Magazine, and Sunset magazine, and by National Public Radio (NPR), has received several awards including the Heinz Award for the environment, the Outdoor Industry Inspiration Award, and the National Wildlife Federation’s National Conservation Achievement Award for Communications, and has been recognized by the Root 100 as one of the most influential African Americans in the country and by Family Circle magazine as one of America’s 20 Most Influential Moms; and

Whereas 2024 marks the 15th year since Outdoor Afro has established itself as a community that supports reconnecting Black Americans with natural spaces and one another through recreational activities: Now, therefore, be it

1 *Resolved*, That the House of Representatives—

2 (1) supports the recognition of the 15th anniversary of Outdoor Afro; and

4 (2) commends the leadership of Outdoor Afro
5 for changing the face of conservation by leading the

- 1 way for inclusion in outdoor recreation and nature
- 2 for all.

