



Oregon State
University

Center for the Outdoor Recreation Economy

OSU Portland Center | CORE

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Lee Davis, founding executive director of Oregon State University's Center for the Outdoor Recreation Economy, is stepping down from his position. Lee, who has been with the university for over four years, will pursue new ventures and work more directly with the outdoor industry and agencies nationally.

Davis has been an integral part of OSU's success in supporting the outdoor recreation economy and his leadership has helped advance the university as a hub for research and program innovation in this field.

Davis's professional and personal commitment to the outdoor industry spans decades, including serving as the past executive director of the Mazamas, a nonprofit education organization founded in 1894 with a mission of inspiring everyone to love and protect the mountains. In the last several years, Davis supported state legislative efforts to create Oregon's Office of Outdoor Recreation (House Bill 3350) and Oregon's Outdoor Recreation Day (House Bill 2143). He also helped to organize and build the Oregon Outdoors Coalition and collaborate on federal legislation with Oregon U.S. Senator Ron Wyden's office.

Earlier this year, CORE helped the Outdoor Recreation Roundtable (ORR) develop the [ORR Rural Economic Development Toolkit](#) to support rural communities in building their outdoor recreation economies, leading information sessions for government agencies and industry leaders about the importance of economic and workforce development for the outdoor recreation economy.

"The outdoor recreation industry has incredible potential, both as a driver of economic opportunity and as a means of making outdoor activity more welcoming and accessible," said Davis. "The industry is being held back by a growing skills gap and an ad hoc training structure. By joining ORR and working with industry associations, CORE serves as an inclusive and rallying force for the outdoor recreation industry, those seeking career opportunities, and everyone who will benefit from more time outside."

"I have had the honor of working alongside Lee Davis during the formation of CORE. His vision was instrumental in making CORE a reality," said Rich Duncombe, past director of OSU's Impact Studio and now a senior university advisor in economic development and industry relations. "Lee's vision and extensive relationships created CORE and he will be missed. OSU is committed to moving forward to serve the industry and partner broadly to realize this vision."

Kate Porsche has agreed to serve as interim director, effective immediately. Kate previously worked in local government, focusing on economic development, workforce issues, and creating stronger communities. Through this work she focused on job creation, helped business to prosper, and the communities she served to thrive. She is the past President of the Oregon Economic Development Association and completed her bachelor's and master's degrees in public policy at OSU.

Going forward, CORE will be working to streamline delivery of its existing educational programming and accelerate development of courses, credentials, and degrees that can be offered for academic and professional credit.