



## ABOUT BLUE SKY FUNDERS FORUM

Since its establishment in 2014, Blue Sky Funders Forum has grown from a hopeful idea to a vibrant network – drawing a wide range of funders and partners, sparking meaningful collaborations, and providing strategic vision for a stronger field. Blue Sky membership has doubled to 35 current members, with more than 500 funders engaging in programs or events hosted. Funding trends for environmental literacy, outdoor experiences and connections to nature have steadily grown in this time (\$98 million reported in 2018 grants).



Blue Sky launched **Rethink Outside™** in 2019 – a shared narrative co-generated through a multi-year, inclusive process engaging close to 700 individuals to move the vital work of connecting people with the outdoors from a ‘nice to have’ to an absolute necessity. The Rethink Outside messaging framework continues to gain traction as Blue Sky engages funders, partners, and practitioners through stories, trainings, shared resources, and webinars.

## PLANNING PROCESS

Since March 2020, Blue Sky staff and board engaged in listening, reflection and visioning sessions (in partnership with HunterKemper Consulting) to build on the founding strategic framework drafted in 2015. The board identified success factors that are essential to maintain while planning for continued growth:

- **Authentic relationships.**
- Commitment to **collaborative engagement** with funders, nonprofits, and researchers.
- Broad interest in the movement and **co-generation.**
- **Professionalism and integrity.**
- Willingness to **think broadly, explore creative new approaches**, and respond proactively.
- **Clarity of purpose** and **connecting role** of Blue Sky.

Robust stakeholder input was gathered through surveys in August-September 2020 (total 139 respondents including Blue Sky members, non-member funders, Blue Sky advisors, and nonprofit partners), followed by member and advisor conversations in the fall. An equity and inclusion audit was conducted (in partnership with Youth Outside) to inform the emerging strategic plan.

## THE NEXT THREE YEARS

Blue Sky’s 2021-2024 Strategic Plan is grounded in our commitment to racial equity and justice. The bold vision outlined responds to our evolution in exploring racial equity and justice within the Blue Sky Funders Forum, and frames our goals ahead to increase funding for the field, funder engagement from allied fields and under-funded geographic regions, and the co-creation of shared tools and resources to strengthen the movement to connect people with nature.

Blue Sky staff and board welcome your engagement, and encourage you to ask questions, provide feedback, and most importantly hold us accountable as we work towards our vision **that every person – regardless of race, identity, or community – has the right and opportunity to experience meaningful connections in the outdoors that improve quality of life, health, and social wellbeing.**

## MISSION

To inspire philanthropy that supports thriving communities by advancing equitable opportunities for meaningful outdoor experiences and connections to nature.

## VISION

Every person – regardless of race, identity or community – has the right and opportunity to experience meaningful connections in the outdoors that improve quality of life, health, and social wellbeing.

## STRATEGIC GOALS



Inspire philanthropy

Connect and convene funders to **build philanthropic support** for meaningful outdoor experiences and connections to nature.

Champion racial equity and justice in philanthropy

Highlight and advocate for **dismantling systemic racism that limits access** to funding and opportunities for power-building in the field.

Facilitate learning and collaboration

Facilitate connections, empower stakeholders to develop shared tools and resources, build capacity, and share best practices to **strengthen the movement** to connect people with nature.

Strengthen and thrive

Ensure that Blue Sky has the **resources, talent, and processes** to advance its strategic priorities.

**CONNECT AND ENGAGE WITH THE BLUE SKY FUNDERS FORUM!**