



IT TAKES A COLLECTIVE

Building Outdoor Opportunities for Katahdin Youth



Introduction

In 2024, the Katahdin Collaborative hired the Data Innovation Project, from the University of Southern Maine, to conduct an evaluation of the Katahdin Region Outdoor Collective (KROC). The evaluation was designed to answer evaluation questions about the KROC program's implementation process and impact from its first three years of operation. This report summarizes the KROC evaluation findings and recommendations.

What is KROC?

The Katahdin Region Outdoor Collective (KROC) is a group of nonprofits, individuals, businesses, and government organizations with a shared belief in the profound impact of outdoor experiences on youth wellbeing and the future vitality of the Katahdin region. KROC's collaborative efforts result in year-round opportunities for young individuals to foster a deep connection to nature, cultivate leadership skills, and become future land stewards.

HOW KROC STARTED

KROC emerged from the broader community-driven development efforts that began with the 2018 [Katahdin Gazetteer](#), which envisioned a revitalized and sustainable future for the Katahdin region. This process inspired the creation of the [Katahdin Collaborative](#), a network of regional partners dedicated to advancing that vision.

Building on this foundation, a group of stakeholders applied for and received [Working Communities Challenge \(WCC\) funding](#) from the Federal Reserve Bank of Boston in 2022, securing a three-year grant to “*increase social connection and create economic well-being in the Katahdin Region by investing in young people living and thriving here through vibrant, inclusive, livable-wage career paths in outdoor recreation.*”

As the WCC effort evolved, it became clear that multiple interconnected initiatives were needed to support the region's growth. Under the guidance of the newly hired Katahdin Collaborative Initiatives Director, Tracey Perry, the network restructured into three teams:

- **Livability** (addressing housing, food security, and inclusivity)
- **Entrepreneurship and Economic Development**
- **Outdoor Recreation**

The Outdoor Recreation Team carried forward the original WCC work of investing in young people living and thriving in the region through careers in outdoor recreation, resulting in the Katahdin Region Outdoor Collective (KROC) initiative.

OPERATION AND COORDINATION

KROC operates as a collaborative initiative within the larger Katahdin Collaborative Network. The *Outdoor Sport Institute* and the *Friends of Katahdin Woods and Waters* provide KROC coordination and backbone support. Partner organizations contribute a wide range of resources, including staff time, equipment, funding, and other in-kind support, to strengthen the shared effort. By coordinating their programs and aligning their strengths, these partners are able to exceed what any single organization could offer on its own.

Partners and Collaborators

BACKBONE ORGANIZATIONS

Provide **essential support** without which a project could not be carried out. (ex. Substantial staff time, payroll, grants management, IT systems, insurance, etc.)

- Outdoor Sport Institute
- Friends of Katahdin Woods and Waters

COLLABORATORS

Bring **effort and capacity** to projects.

- Millinocket Memorial Library
- Individual volunteers

CONTRIBUTORS

Occasionally involved in projects by bringing valuable information, resources, and/or experience.

Nonprofits

- Elliotsville Foundation
- Northern Forest Center
- Katahdin Children and Families Foundation
- Friends of Baxter State Park
- Maine High Adventure

Government Entities (Federal, State, and Local)

- Katahdin Woods and Waters National Monument
- Maine Forest Service
- Baxter State Park
- East Millinocket and Millinocket Recreation Department
- Island Falls Recreation Department

Schools

- Stearns Middle School and High School
- Schenck High School
- Katahdin Christian Academy
- Medway Middle School
- Granite Street Elementary School
- Opal Myrick Elementary School
- Katahdin Schools
- Katahdin Higher Education Center

Businesses

- Maine Quest Adventure
- New England Outdoor Center

PRIMARY KROC STRATEGIES



BUILD RELATIONSHIPS with area schools and other potentially aligned organizations (Recreation departments, towns, etc.)



Develop **MUTUAL TRUST** between caregivers and program staff through communication and clear expectation setting



Plan and implement **YOUTH ENGAGEMENT EVENTS/ OPPORTUNITIES**, including but not limited to, outdoor recreation career exploration, overnight outdoor trips, and day programs, both in school and out of school



Create, connect, and expand **LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT PATHWAYS** for young people in the outdoors



Support **YOUTH MENTORSHIP OPPORTUNITIES** connected to the outdoors



Evaluation Design

The evaluation team worked with KROC partners to articulate the program's theory and develop the evaluation questions outlined below. Partners sought feedback from collaborators on how KROC was functioning in practice and how it could be improved. These interests shaped the **process evaluation questions**, which guided the evaluation team's examination of program operations and implementation. Partners also wanted to understand how youth experienced KROC and whether participation led to personal change. These interests informed the **outcome evaluation questions**, which focused on changes in participants' knowledge, skills, and perceptions.

METHODS & ANALYSIS

To best answer the evaluation questions outlined in the sidebar, the evaluation team used a mixed methods evaluation design, which employs qualitative and quantitative methods. However, this evaluation prioritized qualitative data collection methods because KROC partners have had trouble in the past gathering participant feedback through surveys. The evaluation team conducted key informant interviews with KROC partners and collaborators (n=12) and two KROC youth participant focus groups that included a short exit survey (n=7). KROC's program records were also used to estimate the program's growth and reach.

The evaluation team recorded and transcribed the interviews and focus groups and analyzed the transcripts in NVivo 15. They entered the paper exit surveys into Qualtrics and analyzed the results using Microsoft Excel.

PROCESS QUESTIONS

- How have KROC partners worked together to design and deliver programming to Katahdin region young people?
 - ↳ What are the barriers and facilitators of effective collaboration and implementation?
 - ↳ What are the barriers and facilitators to building trust among partners and collaborators?
- To what extent is relationship building a part of the KROC model?

OUTCOME QUESTIONS

- To what extent is KROC achieving its stated short-term participant outcomes? In particular:
 - ↳ Increased willingness and confidence to recreate outside,
 - ↳ Increased awareness of local outdoor recreation opportunities,
 - ↳ Increased awareness of career development opportunities and general outdoor recreation career pathways,
 - ↳ Participants feel they matter to the KROC partners' staff and mentors, and the broader community.
- To what extent are KROC participants seeking out, applying to, and participating in outdoor recreation opportunities?

Findings

Drawing on program records, interviews, and youth focus groups, this section highlights who is participating in KROC, the ways young people are growing through their involvement in outdoor activities across the Katahdin region, and what KROC has learned in practice.

PROGRAM PARTICIPATION

KROC has engaged 160 participants in total since beginning in 2023: 39 in 2023, 87 in 2024-2025, and 34 in 2025-2026. Important to note, these counts are duplicated and do not represent unique participants. Youth who took part in multiple years were counted once per program year. Furthermore, each program year included different ranges of months—2023 represents the calendar year, the 2024-2025 program year went from January 2024 through mid-June 2025, and the 2025-2026 program year counts only included data from June-November 2025 and will increase by the end of the program year, May 2026.

KROC engages both young people from the Katahdin region (76%) and young people from outside the region (24%). Participation by young people from outside the region increases during the summer, when many families stay at second homes and vacation rentals.

KROC has offered a mix of programs over the years—day trips and overnight trips (hiking, mountain biking, paddling), and other engagement opportunities, such as volunteering or going on campus tours. On average, KROC participants participated in a little under two trips per program year. Due to being in the region year-round, local participants tended to participate in more programs on average (ranging from 1.6-2.4) when compared to participants from outside the region (ranging from 1.6-1.9). The overall average increased from 2023 to the following years in part due to KROC partners implementing more nuanced attendance tracking.

2023-2025 AT-A-GLANCE

KROC Program Participation

PARTICIPATION

160 total participants

76% from
within the Katahdin region

24% from
outside the region

PROGRAMMING

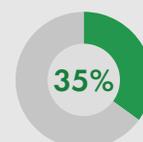
On average, KROC participants participate in almost...

2 trips/program year

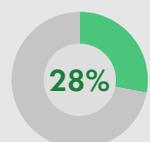
KROC offers a mix of...



DAY TRIPS



OVERNIGHTS



OTHER

such as volunteering

PRELIMINARY YOUTH OUTCOMES

This section outlines how KROC helps youth develop technical outdoor skills, confidence, social-emotional abilities, and a deeper connection to their local environment. Consistent exposure to outdoor activities, supportive peer and adult relationships, and meaningful skill-building opportunities contribute to their personal growth.

Increase in technical outdoors skills

Given that KROC's programming is focused on introducing young people to outdoor activities (e.g., camping and hiking) and specific skill-based outdoor sports (e.g., mountain biking, whitewater paddling, etc.), focus group participants and adult interviewees noted the ways in which KROC participants' outdoor skills and experience increased because of the program.

“[I learned] how to do things outdoors. Just do everything out there. Like I don't think I knew how to set up a tent before I came on this.”

— KROC PARTICIPANT

The focus group participants reported learning core camping and outdoor skills, such as how to set up tents and identify plants like poison ivy. They developed paddling and navigation skills, including specific canoe and kayak strokes, steering techniques, and understanding environmental factors like tailwinds, headwinds, rock bars, and sand bars. In addition, participants built technical abilities, such as fixing flat tires and identifying mechanical issues.

Confidence to recreate outside

As a result of KROC participants' increase in outdoor knowledge, skills, and experiences, these young people reported gaining confidence in their technical abilities and feeling more comfortable recreating outside. KROC programming was designed around skills progression and scaffolding. Students begin with foundational skills and build on them over time. Temporary supports help students master new skills and are gradually removed as independence increases. One interviewee described a participant who joined a rock climbing trip that would likely have been far outside her comfort zone without prior exposure to KROC programming the previous summer. The interviewee noted that “she was comfortable enough to reach out and have this other new experience,” highlighting the confidence gained through her participation.

“[I'm] more confident to go outside now. Like before I didn't know what to do...and now I know what I can do, and I know how to do it.”

— KROC PARTICIPANT

Engaging with the outdoors beyond KROC

Many focus group participants reported that the time they spent outdoors had increased when compared to before they participated in KROC programming. Some participants described themselves as spending most of their time indoors before KROC; “playing on my VR” or “watching shows” or “kind of do[ing] nothing.” One participant described herself as antisocial where she “just stayed inside and didn’t talk to anyone.” When asked to reflect on how much they engage with the outdoors now, most noted an increase. One participant exclaimed, “Yeah, I go outside as much as I can!”

Several participants described how changes in their perceptions of the outdoors led them to spend more time outside. One shared, “I can’t remember how I used to see it, but it just seemed boring to me, but now it seems fun. Energizing. And just it looks fun, like it has all these activities.” Another participant observed a change in their perception of risk, “I thought the outdoors was kind of scary at first, like we could always get hurt. Then they kind of taught me how to be safe and it was so much fun and like I had so much fun being able to hike, camp with the people that I’ve spent a lot of this time with. [sic]”

When participants met other young people interested and energized by the same activities, they would spend time together outdoors beyond KROC. Some participants shared they were trying to get friends they made elsewhere to do things outside with them, but it was more challenging. One participant explained, “I’ve been trying to get my friends to come out more often, but they’re kind of like always in hibernation, I’m telling you. They just like to stay inside.” Therefore, having or lacking like-minded friends plays a meaningful role in mediating how much participants can bring what they learned from KROC into other parts of their lives.

CHANGE IN AWARENESS OF OUTDOOR RECREATION OPPORTUNITIES

Becoming more aware of the local outdoors and outdoor recreation opportunities also helped KROC participants engage with the outdoors beyond KROC programming. When responding to the exit survey question, “Because of KROC, I know places around here where I can do things outside,” 43% of participants responded that they had more knowledge and 57% indicated that they have much more knowledge. The focus group participants also described getting more familiar with the area, as well as developing a more positive view of the local area. One participant shared, “I found the area more beautiful than I thought it was,” another participant explained how KROC “...opened my eyes more to it. I didn’t know half of the stuff was here. Now I do.” Participants also knew more about what kinds of outdoor recreation activities could be done in the region. For example, participants learned that there are trails designed specifically for mountain biking behind the high school or that Millinocket stream wasn’t just a river that goes through town, you can also paddle its whitewater.

“We’ll walk around town, we’re going our bikes, biking trails. I mean, if there is a chance to go out on the water, we’ll go on the water, we’ll do anything we can, anything to entertain ourselves. We’ll just hang out there for a minute, go get food, anything.”

— KROC PARTICIPANT

“Maybe just going up trails with my friends or going for a walk...So I’m going out anywhere I can, because I love being in the woods.”

— KROC PARTICIPANT

Respect for and appreciation of nature and the outdoors

All the focus group participants reported that KROC made them care *more* (14%) or *much more* (86%) about the *woods and waters near my community* in the exit survey. Two participants expressed that their experiences with KROC had deepened their respect for and appreciation of nature. One participant mentioned learning more about nature and the importance of preserving it. The second participant emphasized showing respect for the outdoors through actions like picking up trash and learning how to enjoy outdoor activities safely and responsibly.

Increase in social emotional skills and abilities

Participants described developing a wide range of socio-emotional skills and abilities through their participation in KROC. They helped plan trips, organized games, created packing lists, and mapped routes. Those tasks helped them practice decision-making, problem-solving, leadership, and planning while balancing their personal needs versus wants and adapting when things went wrong. They also mentioned that KROC helped them learn to be away from their families while on overnight trips.

Working together to cook, clean, and plan taught them cooperation, listening to others, and being considerate of group needs. Several participants noted becoming more social, confident, and comfortable interacting with others, with one mentioning that even their family noticed these changes. When asked what they learned about themselves since being part of KROC, most respondents described a belief in their ability to do things—that they can do things outside or they can do “anything”, or that they can do the things they set out to do.

A sense of belonging

The focus group participants described an overall sense of belonging at KROC where they felt connected to their peers and the adult leaders. They saw themselves as capable contributors within a supportive group “family.”

PEER RELATIONSHIPS

Most focus group participants reported that they made new friends through KROC. One participant thought that belonging was the primary reason other young people should consider joining; “People who don’t go out should start coming on these trips just like, you know, to get more social and get friends and stuff.”

ADULT RELATIONSHIPS

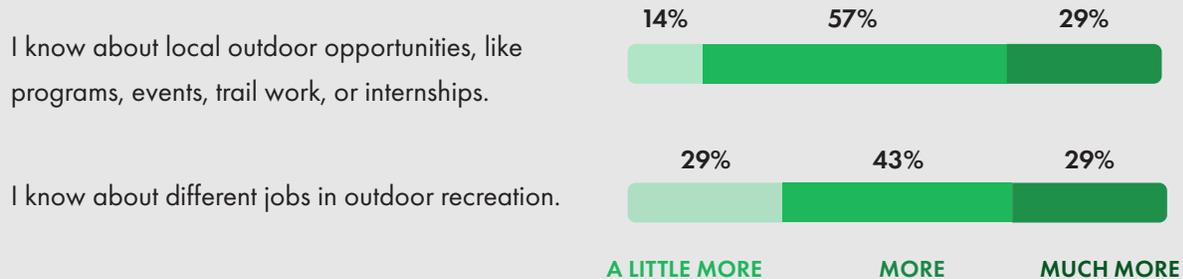
Participants described very positive relationships with the KROC leaders. Participants emphasized that KROC leaders were kind, supportive, fun, and easy to connect with. They appreciated that leaders were helpful and patient teachers, explaining things clearly, showing how to do tasks, and offering guidance without being strict or controlling.

They also valued the leaders’ personal connections and genuine care, noting that staff talked with them about everyday interests like movies, sports, and hobbies. That personal connection helped build trust and friendship and made trips more fun. Some shared specific examples of leaders going above and beyond, such as giving their family a ride when needed.



Through KROC, **100% of survey respondents learned at least a little more about opportunities and jobs in outdoor recreation.**

Because of KROC....

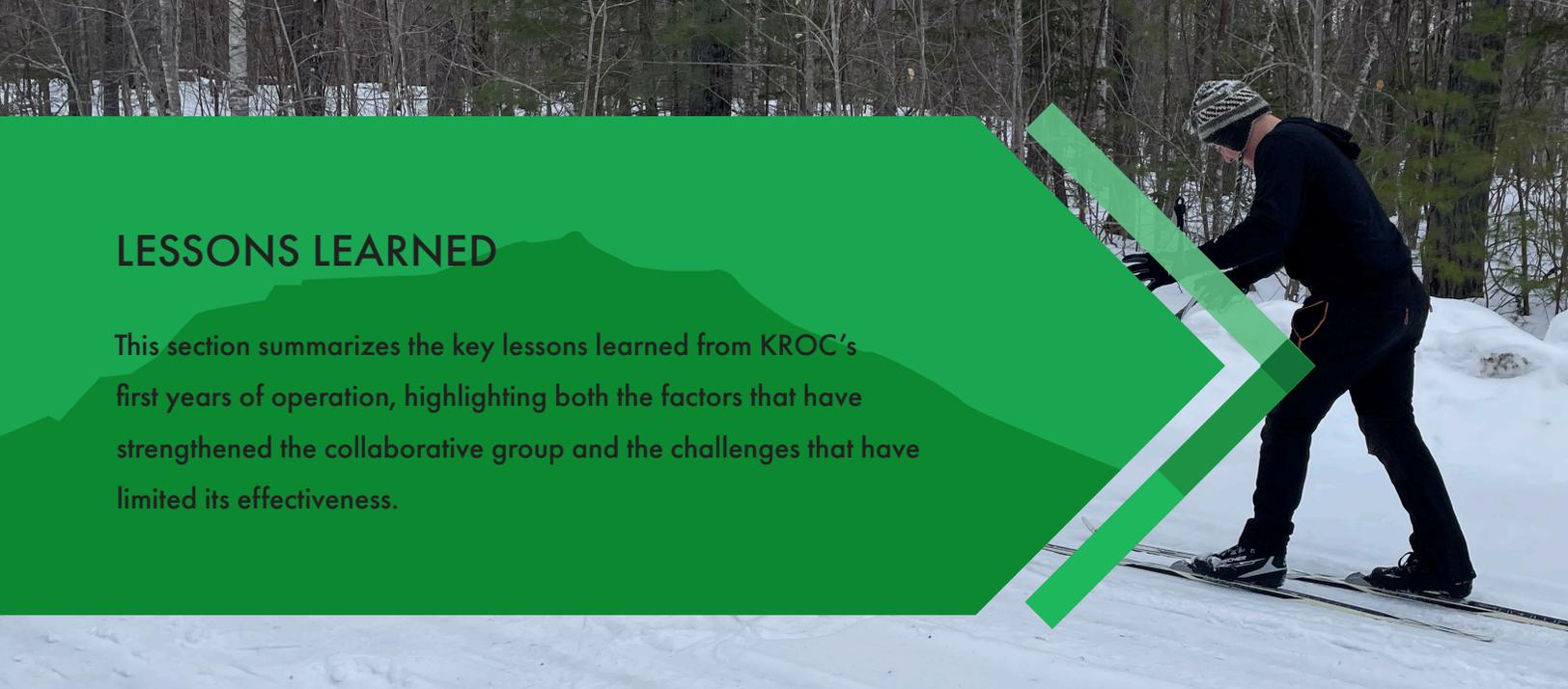


Knowledge of and exposure to local outdoor work opportunities and careers in outdoor recreation

Through KROC, young people learn about local leadership and work opportunities, such as internships and trail crews, and peer leadership roles through university visits and interactions with professionals like park staff and wilderness guides. In those interactions, KROC partners aimed to expand young people’s notions of what’s possible in outdoor recreation. One teacher claimed KROC inspired their students to pursue similar work after high school, while another interviewee mentioned KROC participants who got involved in a local trail maintenance crew. A third interviewee lauded how older KROC participants can grow their leadership experience by supporting local vacation camp programs.

Only a few students agreed that their KROC activity had helped them grow as leaders. This may be due to the group consisting of mostly middle school and late elementary-aged students who are not yet of legal age to work and who would have had fewer chances to make use of the non-work-based opportunities. Of the focus group participants who were of working age, one shared that they were getting curious about different careers with the support of a KROC leader and another shared that they had tried trail crew that summer and although they enjoyed it, they did not see that as a long-term career option. In their case, a KROC volunteer got them excited about a cooking program at a technical school in the region. Nevertheless, all exit survey respondents reported gaining at least *a little more* knowledge of local outdoor opportunities and different jobs in outdoor recreation.





LESSONS LEARNED

This section summarizes the key lessons learned from KROC's first years of operation, highlighting both the factors that have strengthened the collaborative group and the challenges that have limited its effectiveness.

What helps KROC succeed

ALIGNED MISSIONS AND GOALS

Interviewees noted how KROC operates as a flexible, interdependent network where team members step up for one another and for the shared mission of the work, regardless of organizational allegiance, title, or formal role. Although KROC partners are representing organizations with slightly different missions and approaches, they felt the common goal of getting more local young people engaged in outdoor activities and connected to more caring adults aligned and galvanized their collaborative work.

STRONG FOCUS ON RELATIONSHIP BUILDING AND TRUST

→ With Schools

Building strong relationships with local schools has been essential to making KROC's work possible. Staff spend considerable time in classrooms across the Katahdin region getting to know educators, supporting lessons, and offering hands-on activities like bike repair or ski maintenance. These ongoing school visits not only help bolster outdoor learning opportunities but also create consistent points of connection for young people who might not otherwise access such programming. Educators are enthusiastic partners, frequently sharing KROC opportunities with students and collaborating to integrate outdoor learning into the school day.

→ With Parents and Caregivers

Building relationships and trust with parents has shown to be an important factor in KROC's ability to recruit and retain participants. Some interviewees noted that after almost three years of operating, more people in the community know what KROC generally is and therefore more parents are willing to send their children on KROC trips. KROC has also learned that clear communication and transparency are essential. Parents appreciate knowing what their children will be doing, especially when equipment, travel, or other risks are involved, and having the chance to voice concerns or set boundaries. Lastly, creating welcoming opportunities for parents—such as taking the time to stop and chat with a parent or inviting them to help prepare food or volunteer during programs—helps to strengthen relationships and builds a sense of shared ownership. When parents feel connected, they not only support their own children's participation but also spread the word to others.

→ With KROC Partners and Collaborators

Interviewees also noted how important it was to prioritize relationship building within the core KROC partner group, which increased trust and the sense that they could depend on each other to show up or step up throughout the ebb and flow of the work. Interviewees also saw relationship building as a way to welcome and pull new staff into the work.

A WILLINGNESS TO HELP, BE FLEXIBLE, AND BACK EACH OTHER UP

KROC staff from different organizations moved fluidly between organizations to co-teach, fill in as drivers, or lead hikes depending on what was needed to run a KROC event. When one partner was at capacity, others would “pick up the slack,” ensuring programs continued without interruption. They would also pool or share certain resources, such as *Friends of Katahdin Woods and Waters* renting a passenger van for KROC summer programming or *Outdoor Sport Institute* providing the gear and supplies for day and overnight trips. Interviewees often felt that collective commitment has kept KROC responsive, flexible, and especially collaborative.

CONTINUOUS QUALITY IMPROVEMENT TO RESPOND TO PARTNER AND PARTICIPANT NEEDS

KROC partners reported regularly coming together to use continuous quality improvement to strengthen the coalition’s collaborative capacity, improve program design, and make implementation easier for partners and participants. Those conversations on how to improve program implementation would in turn deepen trust and coordination across organizations.

EFFECTIVE FACILITATION WITH A FOCUS ON PLANNING AND OPEN COMMUNICATION

KROC partners listed group facilitation, clear planning, and open, consistent communication as facilitators of the group’s effective collaboration. Interviewees pointed to skilled facilitators who had been with the project early on and who could “step back” to see the big picture, and guide complex multi-organization work by organizing meetings, tracking progress, and keeping partners aligned around shared goals. Planning tools such as shared calendars, spreadsheets, and contact lists helped everyone stay informed, avoid overlapping events, and identify opportunities to collaborate. Consistent communication through Zoom check-ins and documentation, kept the inner and extended KROC partners connected and included.





What limits KROC's effectiveness

MAINTAINING ONGOING FUNDING

Organizational directors mentioned the ongoing challenge of funding the year-round staff who contribute to KROC as well as temporary staff like paid interns who play a helpful role in KROC summer programming.

CAPACITY OF STAFF MEMBERS

KROC's core members and staff from partner organizations are particularly busy during peak seasons (summer), which can make coordination challenging. Furthermore, some organizations have dedicated budgets that allow their staff to participate more fully in KROC activities, while others are fitting KROC tasks around their regular job responsibilities.

DIFFERENT PRIORITIES AMONG THE ORGANIZATIONS

Although the shared mission and goals of KROC have helped the group collaborate effectively, KROC members mentioned that the slightly different missions and priorities of their various organizations could also cause confusion. Some partner organizations that did other youth programming saw their programs' recognition and identity get muddled or mistaken with KROC, both internally and externally.

LACK OF A CLEAR POINT PERSON FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF KROC COLLABORATORS AND CONTRIBUTORS

Some interviewees outside the core KROC group of partners shared that they were not always clear who could field their questions and requests for support and collaboration, and to whom they could give feedback. Many interviewees also shared that they were not clear on the boundaries of KROC and its constituent partners.

OVERCOMING REGIONAL HISTORY

KROC and its partners have found some local families more hesitant to participate. Some interviewees saw their hesitance as part of a lingering wariness of perceived outsiders since the paper industry left the region. Others mentioned that some people still felt upset about how the Katahdin Woods and Waters Monument was created and how some individuals went about their community building work. Therefore, some locals were reluctant to trust KROC's newer community building effort.



Recommendations

The following recommendations are intended to help KROC build on its strengths, address gaps, and continue evolving in ways that support young people, families, and the broader community.

CONTINUE TO PRIORITIZE

It is recommended that KROC partners continue to prioritize the following aspects of their work and efforts:

THIRD SPACES

Many of the interviewees noted how the *Outdoor Sport Institute's Katahdin Gear Library (KGL)* serves as a space where young people in the Millinocket area wander in, can work on their bikes, hang out, and see a familiar adult's face. Even in this evaluation, the KGL played a crucial role because it was the quiet, air-conditioned space where the evaluation staff did the focus groups with KROC participants. For those reasons, many interviewees expressed a strong interest in developing a similar space for young people and families in the northern part of the region. At the time of writing, a partnership between the *Outdoor Sport Institute, Elliotsville Foundation, Mount Chase Lodge,* and the *Patten Veteran's Memorial Library,* is working to develop such a space.

EXPANDING PROGRAMMING IN THE NORTHERN REGION

Interviewees recognized that there was not an equal distribution of resources and opportunities between the north and south parts of the Katahdin region. For this reason, they wanted KROC partners to continue trying to bring more to the northern part. In particular, they saw an opportunity to engage children from 2nd through 5th grade more, beyond the vacation camp KROC partners already do with this age group, through outings such as afterschool hikes.

COMMUNICATION AND PLANNING

Interviewees recognized that communication and planning had improved among KROC partners and noted that many members of the group were more action-oriented, sometimes at the expense of intentional advanced planning. Likewise, when the group did focus on planning, some people felt fatigued by it. These findings suggest that KROC partners should keep working to find the middle ground between planning and action by continuing to use its communication processes to build shared understanding. Going forward, interviewees suggested determining who would be responsible for maintaining these processes and documents. Furthermore, KROC school partners would like to know about KROC summer programming sooner so they can help get the word out to parents before the end of school.





OPPORTUNITIES TO EXPAND IMPACT

OFFER MORE BEGINNER PROGRAMMING

Several interviewees appreciated the introduction to camping trip that ran in the summer of 2025 and wanted to see more entry-level programming to get more novice young people exposed to the outdoors.

CONSIDER PROGRAMMING THAT'S GEARED TOWARDS FAMILIES AND OLDER ADULTS

Many interviewees recommended that KROC expand its focus to intentionally engage families and older residents in outdoor activities, noting that youth participation often sparked interest among caregivers who may not have spent much time outside previously. Several interviewees described examples, such as families renting bikes together, adults going paddling with their children, or older residents participating in walking groups, that show how low-barrier, family-friendly programming can activate new groups and build new community connections.

DEVELOP MORE YOUTH LEADERSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

Several interviewees suggested designing a structured leadership development framework among partner organizations. Ideally, that framework would start cultivating young people in leadership roles in middle school and extend beyond high school.

MAKE CONNECTIONS AND BUILD RECOGNITION THROUGH LOCAL EVENTS

One interviewee shared that they appreciated that KROC partners came up to the Patten Pioneer Days, and a couple interviewees suggested KROC partner organizations come to more local community events to help build connections and name recognition with more children and parents.

KROC PARTICIPANT RECOMMENDATIONS—MORE TRIPS, MORE TRIP OPTIONS

When asked how KROC could be improved, focus group participants resoundingly suggested that KROC should offer more trips. Several made specific trip requests, such as “an actual fun whitewater trip, like with whitewater canoes and stuff,” or an outdoor rock-climbing trip. Another participant wanted trips that went further into the backcountry; “More out there, like away from, just away from everything. Less chance of seeing other people.” Participants’ continued willingness to take trips demonstrates how eager they are to keep building and progressing their outdoor skills and experiences.

Conclusion

In just a few years, the KROC group has expanded access to high-quality outdoor experiences, strengthened partnerships across schools and organizations, and fostered growth in youth skills, confidence, and belonging. At the same time, KROC's partners have shown a deep commitment to reflecting on their work, learning together, and adapting to challenges, an approach that has allowed KROC to remain responsive and resilient amid shifting needs and funding landscapes.

The recommendations outlined in this report offer pathways for the KROC initiative to deepen and broaden its impact, including strengthening internal systems, expanding opportunities across the region, and intentionally engaging families and older residents. As the collective continues to evolve, its core strengths of relationship-building, flexibility, and a shared belief in the power of outdoor experiences, position it well for sustainable growth. By building on this foundation, KROC partners can continue to nurture confident, connected young people and play an important role in fostering vibrant communities in the Katahdin region.

