



# Portland Parks Foundation



**PORTLAND PARKS FOUNDATION  
2022 JOEY POPE AWARD FOR  
PARKS LEADERSHIP**

The **Portland Parks Foundation** mobilizes support to improve Portland's system of parks, natural areas, and public spaces.

**We help people help parks.**

We accomplish this mission through delivering leadership, partnership and funding that advances a commitment to excellence, accessibility and good stewardship of our parks. Our primary partner is **Portland Parks & Recreation**.

**RANDY GRAGG**  
Executive Director

**JESSICA GREEN**  
Program and Operations  
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**AMY CARLOW**  
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**SABRINA BOUTIETTE**  
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Guided by her belief that parks and the outdoors are for everyone and an essential part of Oregon life, Josephine “Joey” Pope has devoted over four decades of her life to activism, philanthropy, and leadership in making Portland’s parks system more accessible to all.

In the spirit of Joey’s legacy, The Portland Parks Foundation, in partnership with the Pope family, has established an endowment fund to support emerging leaders advancing accessibility and innovation in Portland’s parks system.

This award includes a \$10,000 grant plus wrap-around support from PPF to advance the goals of the recipient and their organization.



Nominations were made through an online form open to everyone and promoted through the Foundation’s email newsletter and social media accounts and direct outreach. They were accepted between March 1, 2022 through March 31, 2022.

**9 nominations were submitted.**



**JOEY POPE  
AWARD  
FOR PARKS  
LEADERSHIP**

Nominees

Awardee

# Pamela Slaughter

## People of Color Outdoors

**Pamela Slaughter** founded People of Color Outdoors (POCO) where black, indigenous and all people of color can enjoy and learn about nature in a safe, welcoming, caring community. POCO blends networking, outdoors career options, environmental education, history, and outdoor skills—and, “of course, fun”—while bird watching, fishing, canoeing, bike riding, and overnight camping. Still working as a realtor and using little more than email and a Facebook page, she has rallied 3,000 constituents and partnerships with, among many others, Metro, Columbia Slough Watershed Council, Audubon Society, and the Nature Conservancy.

### Increasing equitable access and innovative partnerships

Over the years, Pamela has evolved POCO from simple meet-ups for people of color to a growing program of environmental and cultural education. Since inception, POCO has hosted over 200 outings ranging from hiking, birding, canoeing, snowshoeing, biking and camping. As POCO continues to grow, Pamela has added youth summer camps and training opportunities for POCO members to take specific skill training coursework in order to lead future POCO outings.

Support this work and learn more:

[www.pdxpocoutdoors.com](http://www.pdxpocoutdoors.com)



Nominee

# Chad Brown

## Love is King

**Chad Brown** founded Love is King (LIK) to expand the access and safety in the outdoors for BIPOC and other marginalized groups so that they have “the opportunity to roam further and bolder in the outdoors and create wonderful memories for themselves without having to face any aggression.” Just two years old, LIK creates opportunities for recreating, hunting, and fishing in backcountry wilderness, public lands and urban parks while leveraging Chad’s own experiences as a veteran, fly fisherman, photographer, and filmmaker to bring local and national media attention to the work. Chad is also the founder and president of the nonprofit Soul River Inc.

### Innovative programming and partnerships and advancing equitable access

An example of LIK’s innovative partnerships includes their co-created training template for volunteer ambassadors with Forest Park Conservancy (FPC) to recognize, interrupt and resolve racist, harmful behavior in our outdoor spaces. Wearing an official patch alongside their FPC logo, these “stalwarts of safety” will help Forest Park be recognized as a place where people from all walks of life can feel safe and welcome—potentially a model to be adopted statewide and nationally.

Support this work and learn more:  
<https://loveisking.org/>



Nominee

# Gabe Sheoships

## Friends of Tryon Creek

**Gabe Sheoships** is the Executive Director of Friends of Tryon Creek. He sits on the Portland Planning Sustainability Commission and on the boards of Nesika Wilamut, Willamette River Network and the Center for Diversity & the Environment and Freshwaters Illustrated. For the last decade, Gabe has worked to decolonize environmental education and the management of park lands from an indigenous perspective and to create more inclusion in parks and programming for BIPOC communities and other historically excluded groups. Among his many efforts, he worked with Parrot Creek Child and Family Services to develop a program in which youth in rehabilitative treatment perform indigenous land management and restoration work.

### Innovative programming and developing new techniques in a changing climate

In his 18 months as Executive Director at Tryon Creek, Gabe spearheaded Strategic Pathway, a decolonizing framework based on core values of Relationships, Reciprocity, Investment, and Authentic Narratives. A local advocate of Indigenous Cultural Burning as a land management technique, Gabe is building relationships between local indigenous practitioners, scientists, and land managers to explore how it can be applied to park lands in the context of climate change.

Support this work and learn more:

<https://tryonfriends.org/>



Nominee

# JoAnn Vrillakas & Derron Coles

## Leach Botanical Garden & The Blueprint Foundation

**JoAnn Vrillakas** from Leach Botanical Garden and **Dr. Derron Coles** from the Blueprint Foundation are two of many partners in the coalition leading the Back 5 Community Enhancement Project: the rehabilitation of a five-acre parcel adjacent to Leach Botanical Garden. Major rehabilitation work is typically done by consultants and contractors using heavy equipment, but with Back 5, Vrillakas and Coles have created a collaboration with Wisdom of the Elders, African Youth and Community Group, Johnson Creek Watershed Council, and David Douglas High School. The effort enables students of color to engage deeply with the land while creating a pathway to environmental and science leadership through a workforce development and mentorship model for future restorations.

### Innovative workforce development and partnerships

The Back 5 Community Enhancement Project trains BIPOC youth and families in ecology/natural resources, the scientific method, fieldwork, critical thinking, collaboration, and leadership. The multi-year restoration/habitat enhancement project centers workforce development opportunities in all of their events to eliminate the opportunity gap for BIPOC youth in environmental careers in the Portland Metropolitan Area. After students go through the program themselves, they are given an opportunity to continue as mentors and educators with a chance to design events themselves.

Support this work and learn more:

<https://www.leachgarden.org/>

<https://www.theblueprintfoundation.org/>



Nominee

# Pacific North West Council of Water Protectors



**Pacific North West Council of Water Protectors** (PNWCWP) is a coalition of indigenous and nonindigenous supporters who carry forward the fire that began at Standing Rock to protect our sacred water and maintain the sovereignty of tribal nations. The council is guided by Indigenous elders on organization protocols, spiritual practices, and direct actions by council members. “You have to heal within yourself in order to have a better life,” says chair Rose Linda Looking, Assiniboine Sioux originally from Ft. Peck Reservation, Montana.

## Innovative programming and advancing cultural understanding

At the heart of PNWCWP’s work is its annual three-day Medicine Gatherings at Oxbow Park where families and children learn about issues threatening water, land, and people with speakers, poets, and musicians, pairing direct experience foraging medicinal plants and preparing traditional native feeds. After pivoting online last year, the Gathering will reconvene in August.



Support this work and learn more:  
<https://www.pnwcwp.com/>



Nominee

# Prashant Kadad

Dance United

**Prashant Kakad** is a multi-disciplinary artist who works through music, dance, and art to find common links to celebrate life and our commonalities by creating a safe and inclusive space for people from every background and culture. He has previously collaborated with Sunday Parkways, Movies in the Park, and Multnomah Library to launch inclusive dance lessons and performances and education about Indian culture. Most recently, he produced a Festival of Color event in Old Town Portland.

## Innovative programming and advancing cultural understanding

Prashant is developing Dance United to work with such organizations as the Immigrant & Refugee Community Organization, Micro Enterprise Services of Oregon, and the India Cultural Association to produce free, immersive, multidisciplinary events with DJs, singers, visual artists, and dancers to enjoy the serenity and peace of nature while creating a welcoming and safe space for low-income populations, communities of color, and other historically marginalized groups.

Support this work and learn more:

<https://www.facebook.com/danceunitedpdx/>



Nominee

**Rob**

**Whitson**

**Troll City Boathouse**

**Rob Whitson** leads the Troll City Boathouse (TCB) which provides daily rentals of stand-up paddleboards, kayaks, and pedal boats inside Cathedral Park for use on the Willamette River. Started in 2017, TCB has been at the forefront of making the Willamette River more accessible for recreation by making various forms of self-propelled boating easier. The beachfront service includes life jackets and brief beginner instruction to all participants. Among other activities, TCB has collaborated with Willamette Riverkeepers on its Willamette River Festival by offering discounted rentals to festival attendees.

**Increasing access & parks programming**

Portland Parks & Recreation recently invited Troll City Boathouse to submit a pilot proposal to (PP&R) to provide more public access to recreational activities on the Willamette River with additional seasonal daily rentals of water craft. Pending approval by PP&R, the 1- to - 2-year pilot will demonstrate if there is a demand.

Support this work and learn more:  
[Facebook.com/trollcityboathouse](https://www.facebook.com/trollcityboathouse)



Nominee

# Urban Nature Partners PDX

**Urban Nature Partners PDX** connects 4th-8th grade youth from historically marginalized Portland neighborhoods with multi-year mentorships and access to meaningful outdoor experiences. Founded by Kristin Bowling in 2014, UNP's mission is to remove barriers to outdoor access by supplying youth with basic outdoor gear and supplies, information about and transportation to neighborhood parks and greenspaces, and adult guidance. UNP fills a gap in services for upper elementary and middle school youth in the Portland metro area by providing services that are relationship-based, long-term, culturally relevant, and driven by youth choice instead of curriculum.

## Innovative programming and advancing equitable access

UNP mentors come from environmental and education backgrounds and work together to create a mentorship experience that is based on the individual, unique needs of the community members they are paired with that lasts for several years. UNP also partners with larger outdoor and environmental organizations to offer free summer camps for their youth. Although the model is based on youth from 4-8th grade, UNP also creates inclusive outings for the entire family. During a time when many small nonprofits closed, UNP pivoted to providing not only modified programming, but direct assistance and information in many forms to UNP families to keep them safe.

Support this work and learn more:  
[www.urban-nature-partners.org](http://www.urban-nature-partners.org)



Nominee

# Vanport Placemaking Project

**The Vanport Placemaking Project's (VPP)** mission is devoted to the heritage of Vanport and the Indigenous, Black and other people who have lived there. The history of the site has gone 72 years with its minimal historic recognition mostly focused on the dramatic flood event of 1948 that destroyed Vanport. VPP will recognize those who shaped the cultural history of this land, ranging from the Multnomah, Cascade, Clackamas, and Clowwewalla, and others who first lived there to the 40,000 residents of Vanport who initiated many Oregon firsts, among them, integrated schools, 24-hour daycare, and the first Black Portland school teacher and Multnomah County sheriff.

## Advancing accessibility

VPP is working to expand the signage it's developed to recognize significant locations and historical heritage with creative art that uses non-verbal, intuitive ways to portray the lives of the people who lived there. They are using modern technologies to advance accessibility, such as an audio box for those with visual disabilities and an augmented reality app to let users view a location-based superimposition of "what was here" over existing landforms.

Support this work and learn more:  
[www.vanportplaces.org](http://www.vanportplaces.org)

