

Rue Mapp Bio

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Rue Mapp (39) is the founder of Outdoor Afro, a community that reconnects African-Americans with natural spaces and one another through recreational activities such as camping, hiking, biking, fishing, gardening, and skiing, using social media to create interest and to partner with regional and national organizations that support diverse participation in the great outdoors.

Along with a background of working in conservation organizations and as an entrepreneur, Rue has a wealth of knowledge and experience to inspire health, community development, and environmental stewardship through meaningful outdoor experiences.

Growing up in Oakland, California, Rue knows first-hand how repeated outdoor engagement can have a profound effect on a young person's life. During her childhood, Rue split her time between urban Oakland, California and her families' working ranch in the Northern woodlands, where she cultivated a passion for natural spaces, farming, and learned how to hunt and fish.

Her exposure to outdoor youth programs in regional and National Parks, and local conservation job opportunities as a teen developed in her a lifelong passion for the outdoors that is now a motivating example for others in her family and community.

In 2010 an invitation to President Obama's historical White House Conference on America's Great Outdoors, and subsequent invitation to take part in a White House think tank for Michelle Obama's Let's Move campaign, provided her timely insight on the new national imperative to help more Americans engage with our vast natural spaces.

In August of 2010, Rue was appointed the Youth Investment Program Officer at the Stewardship Council, where she oversees its grantmaking program that funds programs to connect underserved California youth to the outdoors. She serves on the Board of Advisors for the Children and Nature Network, and is a fellow with the Center for Whole Communities. She was also distinguished as one of five "Faces of Conservation" selected bi-annually by the Wilderness Society.

In the two years since Outdoor Afro was founded, the site has grown tremendously in popularity. It won a 2011 Black Weblog Award for Best Green/Nature Blog, and is now an official partner of the American Camp Association (ACA) to support their national camp diversity initiatives.

Additionally, Rue is sought out frequently on behalf of Outdoor Afro for speaking engagements, guest blogs, and television and radio interviews, to provide expertise on how to connect African-Americans of all ages to the outdoors.

Rue received her bachelor's degree from the University of California, Berkeley, and a certificate from the Mills College Institute for Civic Leadership Program that informed her of the design of social change and public policy.

As the mother of three active children, Mapp is a seasoned and regular practitioner of getting youth outdoors in a sustainable, varied way. She is also an avid birder, cyclist, and enjoys exploring local California's parks and open spaces with her family.