



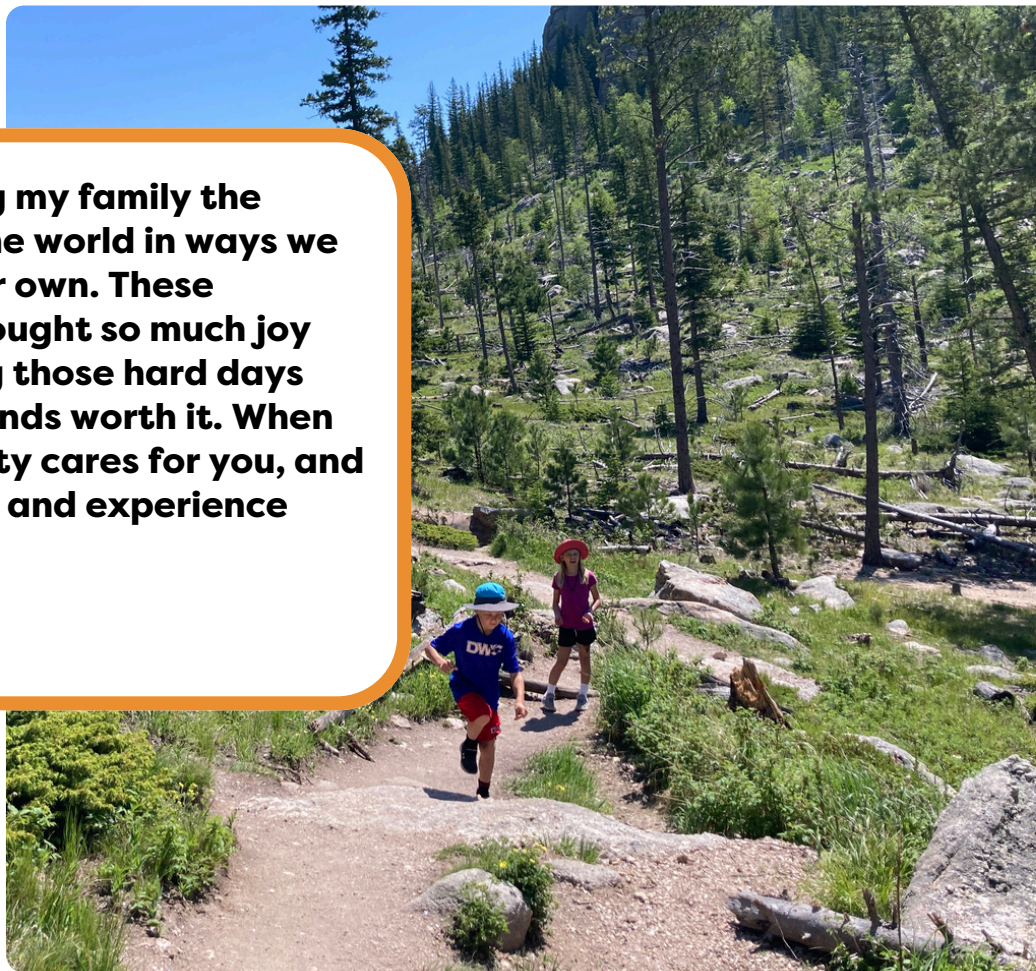
# 2025 Impact Report

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**“Thank you for giving my family the opportunity to see the world in ways we could never do on our own. These experiences have brought so much joy into our lives. Making those hard days without family or friends worth it. When you know a community cares for you, and wants you to explore and experience wonderful places.”<sup>1</sup>**

- Active Duty Air Force Spouse



<sup>1</sup>Blue Star Families' post-program outdoor survey  
<sup>2</sup>Wilderness Inquiry's post-trip survey

# Executive Summary

**With a shared vision that every military family should have access to the outdoors no matter where they're stationed, the Military Families Outdoors (MFO) program** ensures military families across the country make outdoor engagement a core pillar of military family wellness and long-term force readiness, through engaging programs in national parks, public lands, and waterways.

In 2025, more than 10,000 military connected individuals participated in an array of outdoor experiences such as guided hikes, camping trips, environmental education programs, and water-based recreation. These programs are designed to align with national health and wellness priorities and administration efforts to build thriving families and resilient communities.

MFO provides a critical upstream solution to ensure the health and well-being of military families by addressing key health factors that impact quality of life. By increasing opportunities to enjoy nature-based experiences, we proactively support physical, spiritual and mental health, strengthen family resilience, and foster a sense of belonging. These are all important factors in sustaining the All-Volunteer Force and ensuring positive long-term outcomes during and even beyond military service.



Military Families Outdoors, administered by Defense Health Agency and the National Park Service, brings together the expertise of Blue Star Families, Wilderness Inquiry, Armed Services YMCA, and The Center for Health & Nature to provide engaging outdoor wellness experiences for Service Members and military families across the country. These partnerships ensure high-quality, expert-led programming tailored to the needs of military-connected communities.



# Impact Snapshot

**13,500+**

**Service Members and Families served in 2025**

**9,388**

participated in introductory, facilitated outdoor recreation

**526**

military-connected individuals took part in the MFO cohort model

**591**

engaged in near-nature & extended family adventures

**3,000**

received MFO Adventure Kits or participated in virtual programs



**195+**

programs and events hosted by program partners

**“I am glad this program exists for military families. It’s a great way to get people out and learn about the community we live in. This program has taken me and my family on amazing adventures that we will cherish forever.”<sup>1</sup>**

- Active Duty Army Spouse or Partner



## Post-program surveys from MFO Partners reflect the key benefits of the MFO program:

According to Blue Star Families Outdoors’ post-trip survey:

**96%**

of respondents say they agreed or strongly agreed that they feel a **sense of belonging in the outdoors**<sup>1</sup>

**87%**

of respondents say they agreed or strongly agreed that they understand more about how parks and public lands can **improve their/ their family’s physical fitness**<sup>1</sup>

**95%**

of respondents say they agreed or strongly agreed that they understand more about how parks and public lands can **improve their/ their family’s mental health**<sup>1</sup>



**292+**

**new social connections were made**<sup>1</sup>

In Wilderness Inquiry’s post-trip survey, participants rated the following statements:

**92%**

I feel more **connected** to myself, my family, and/or my community.<sup>2</sup>

**90%**

I feel more **open to challenge** and trying new things.<sup>2</sup>

**89%**

I feel more **confident in my ability to access the outdoors** on my own and/or with my family.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Blue Star Families’ post-program outdoor survey

<sup>2</sup>Wilderness Inquiry’s post-trip survey

# Program Reach

In 2025, MFO held programs designed to help military families experience the outdoors—whether exploring National Parks or discovering ways to have backyard adventures—families learned new ways to get outside together!



**35**

unique locations spanning both urban areas and national parks

## Military Families Outdoors Programs by State



# Programs & Initiatives



**Military Families Outdoors provides a continuum of nature-based, health-promoting experiences in national parks, public lands, and waterways through:**

1

## **Inviting Awareness and Engagement**

Ensuring that military families are aware of and have access to nature-based health resources and programs

2

## **Introducing First Steps in Nature**

Providing short-dose outdoor experiences from day trips and drop-in events that introduce military families to the benefits of nature in an accessible and welcoming way

3

## **Engaging Deep Outdoor Immersion**

Offering overnight, and cohort-based outdoor programs beyond introductory experiences that help families form deeper connections with nature and each other

4

## **Empowering a Lasting Outdoor Lifestyle**

Creating lifelong outdoor enthusiasts by helping military families incorporate nature into their daily lives



# Program Highlights

## Grew awareness through:

### MFO Adventure Kits

Designed for military families, the kit included a Junior Ranger book and badge, Outdoor Bingo Card, picnic blanket, and nature journal.

500

MFO Adventure Kits Distributed



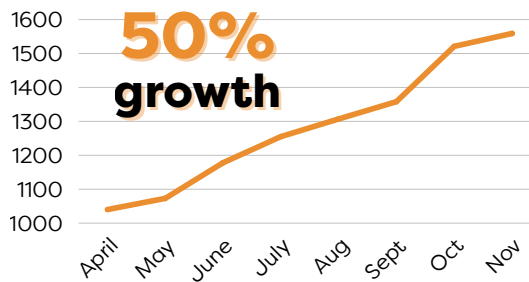
119,000+ people reached across partner social media channels

126,000 visits to the MFO website

## Mingle & Chat in the Blue Star Families Neighborhood\*

Led a webinar that shared expert tips with Military families on how to de-stress during PCS season.

### Members in the Military Families Outdoors group in the Blue Star Neighborhood



\*The Blue Star Neighborhood is a platform that allows military families to connect with other members, find events, share stories, and access trusted resources to navigate military life.



## Built an understanding and ease of the outdoors through:

### Nature Near You Guides

Guides for each BSF chapter location that highlight local parks and natural spaces where military families can explore, recharge, and thrive.

### PCS Route Guides

Common PCS routes to make MilFams moving experience (or road trip) an adventure full of fun, learning, and exploration.

### Skills-building Videos

Tips such as building a shelter, packing for a hike, and starting a fire.

### Blog Content

Outdoor apps and downloadable resources to make nature fun.



## Introduced families to nature experiences through:

### Canoemobile

A traveling outdoor classroom that brings canoes to urban waterways, engaging families in hands-on education experiences.

26

Canoemobile events



**“I appreciated the fact that it was an inclusive event that allowed my disabled son to participate in multiple ways. Accessible outdoor activities are such a blessing for our family.”<sup>2</sup>**

- Active-Duty Army Spouse/Partner



12  
Near-nature trips

### Near-Nature Experiences

Three-day recreation experiences that include hiking, paddling, outdoor exploring, and conservation education.

### Summer Day Camp/Ranger Week

A summer day camp experience that gives military children a chance to build confidence, make friends, and explore the outdoors.

17

ASYMCA Ranger Weeks

1,980 participants

## Deepened connection to the outdoors through:

### Extended Trip Adventures

Wilderness Inquiry-led multi-day immersive adventures that take participants deep into natural settings to foster connection, and confidence through exploration.

30

Extended Trips



### Full-Spectrum Cohort Model

Designed to encourage sustained participation and bonding among military families.

**“I saw my family truly challenge themselves and succeed. I feel as though I saw their true physical potential and ability to break free of screens and home comforts.”<sup>2</sup>**

-Active-Duty Military Army



17

events across all cohorts

119

families impacted

<sup>1</sup>Blue Star Families' post-program outdoor survey

<sup>2</sup>Wilderness Inquiry's post-trip survey



# Adventure Starts Here

