

Rue Mapp

an awarded leader, speaker,
and public lands champion

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Rue Mapp candidly documents her personal experiences while pioneering and shifting a new visual representation of Black people in the outdoors. The outdoorswoman transformed her kitchen table blog into a national nature-inspired enterprise and movement. Today, Mapp is the founder and CEO of where Black people and nature meet: Outdoor Afro. For more than a decade, the not-for-profit organization has continued to celebrate and inspire Black connections and leadership in nature across the United States. Mapp's work in nature and outdoor-related fields started in her hometown of Oakland, California, and has since grown to inspire international headlines.

Mapp is an awarded and inspirational leader, speaker, public lands champion, outdoor gear designer, and published author. She established for-profit enterprise Outdoor Afro, Inc. in 2021 and subsequently launched a 22-piece hike collection with outdoor retailer REI Co-op. Her first national book titled "Nature Swagger: Stories and Visions of Black Joy in the Outdoors" was recently released with American publisher Chronicle Books on Nov. 1, 2022.

Over the years, Mapp has been recognized with many awards and distinctions. In 2021, she was recognized as an AFAR Travel Vanguard Award recipient, National Geographic 2019 Fellow, Heinz Awards Honoree, and National Wildlife Federation Communication Award recipient (received alongside President Bill Clinton), among many other recognitions. The White House also invited Mapp to participate in the America's Great Outdoors Conference, which led to her participation in the launch of former First Lady Michelle Obama's "Let's Move" initiative.

Mapp's career and community impact through Outdoor Afro aims to lift up the natural world and those who connect with it. Her advocacy for conservation continues to earn international media attention, including The New York Times, Good Morning America, NPR, NBC's TODAY, Forbes, Oprah Winfrey, and "MeatEater" with Steven Rinella.