Recreation Access and Stewardship Fund (RASF)

An America Outdoors Association Program

Program Overview

The **Recreation Access and Stewardship Fund (RASF)** is a voluntary, outfitter-led client contribution program designed to strengthen America Outdoors' ability to protect access, modernize permitting, and advocate effectively for the outfitting industry.

RASF enables participating outfitters to collect a small, clearly disclosed, voluntary contribution from clients at the time of booking or invoicing. These contributions are passed through to America Outdoors and reinvested directly into federal advocacy, policy work, and member services that benefit the entire outfitting community.

The program is intentionally simple, flexible, and proven. It is modeled on long-running programs used successfully by the Idaho Outfitters & Guides Association and Canadian provincial outfitter associations, with decades of demonstrated client acceptance and operational feasibility.

Why This Program Matters

The Industry Reality

America Outdoors' advocacy workload has expanded significantly in recent years—particularly around EXPLORE Act implementation, permitting reform, liability protection, wage and hour issues, and public lands policy. These efforts require sustained investment in staff capacity, legal counsel, lobbying, research, and coordination.

Traditional funding sources—namely, membership dues and one-time fundraising activities—alone are no longer sufficient to support the scale and consistency of work required.

The RASF Solution

RASF provides a **stable, diversified, industry-aligned funding stream** that:

- Reduces reliance on time-intensive fundraising efforts
- Aligns funding with client demand for access and stewardship
- Allows outfitters to participate without increasing their own operating costs
- Strengthens America Outdoors' long-term advocacy capacity

A stronger America Outdoors benefits all outfitters—whether or not they participate directly—by improving permitting outcomes, protecting access, and elevating the industry's national voice.

How the Program Works

1. Add a Voluntary Line Item

Participating outfitters add a single line item to client invoices or booking systems, such as:

> **America Outdoors Recreation Access & Stewardship Fund: $1 per guest per day (voluntary)**

The amount is customizable and clearly identified as optional.

2. Collect the Contribution

Clients pay the contribution alongside their trip cost, similar to other fees or use charges. Participation is voluntary, and clients may request removal at any time.

Experience from similar programs shows opt-out rates are typically *very* low when the purpose is clearly communicated.

3. Remit Contributions

Collected funds are remitted to America Outdoors on a schedule selected by the outfitter:

- Quarterly
- Semi-annually
- Annually
- Monthly

Outfitters choose the schedule that best aligns with their cash flow and operational rhythm.

4. Optional 25% Dues Credit

Participating outfitters may request that **up to 25% of their annual RASF contributions** be applied as a credit toward their America Outdoors membership dues for the following year.

The credit is optional—members may instead choose to treat all contributions as pure donations.

Contribution Amounts & Flexibility

RASF is intentionally flexible to accommodate different business models.

Common examples include:

- Rafting or fishing day trips: $1 per person per day
- Half-day adventures: $0.50–$1 per trip
- Multi-day expeditions: $1 per person per day
- Guest or dude ranches: $5–$10 per stay
- Hunting outfitters: $50–$100 per hunt
- Lodges or premium experiences: $5–$20 per guest per day

Outfitters may:

- Use different amounts for different activities
- Adjust amounts over time
- Participate seasonally or for part of the year

There is no minimum contribution requirement.

Client Communication & Transparency

Clear, straightforward communication is central to RASF's success.

On Invoices

The contribution should be listed as a separate line item and clearly labeled as voluntary. Invoice language templates are available to help outfitters choose a tone that fits their brand.

If Clients Ask

A simple explanation is sufficient (for example):

> “This small, voluntary contribution supports America Outdoors’ work to protect access, maintain stable permitting structures, and support the outfitting industry. We’re happy to remove it if you prefer.”

Opt-Out Requests

If a client requests removal, the contribution should be removed immediately and without friction. Most reservation systems allow this with a single click.

Implementation & Technical Setup

Reservation Systems

RASF can be implemented in all major reservation and booking platforms by adding a custom fee or line item. Setup is typically a one-time process requiring only a few minutes.

Platform-specific guidance is available for systems such as Resmark, FareHarbor, Rezdy, Arctic Reservations, Xola, The Fly Book, and others.

Manual Systems

Outfitters using manual invoicing or spreadsheets may participate by adding the line item directly to invoices and tracking collected amounts separately.

Support Available

America Outdoors provides:

- Step-by-step implementation support
- Invoice language templates and input
- One-on-one setup assistance
- Ongoing support as needed

Accounting & Tax Considerations

RASF contributions are **pass-through donations**, not business income.

Key points:

- Contributions are not taxable income to the outfitter
- Sales tax is not applied to the contribution
- Contributions should appear after taxes and fees on invoices
- Funds are typically recorded as a liability until remitted

Outfitters should consult their accountant for bookkeeping specifics, but the program is designed to align with standard accounting practices.

Remittance & Tracking

Outfitters track collected contributions through their reservation system's fee reports or a simple spreadsheet.

When remitting, outfitters provide:

- Business name and membership number
- Contribution period covered
- Total amount remitted
- Dues credit election (yes or no)

America Outdoors confirms receipt, tracks annual totals, and provides a year-end summary for records.

Dues Credit Policy (Summary)

- Contributions are tracked on a **calendar-year basis (January–December)**
- Up to **25% of total contributions** *may* be applied to the following year's membership dues (this must be elected and is not automatic)
- Credits are calculated annually and applied to renewal invoices
- Credits *do not* roll over beyond the next membership year
- Partial or no credit application is allowed at the member's discretion

This structure ensures simplicity, transparency, and predictable accounting.

Participation Is Optional

RASF is entirely voluntary:

- Participation is optional for outfitters
- Contributions are optional for clients
- Outfitters may pause or discontinue participation at any time

There are no penalties for non-participation or withdrawal.

Getting Started

1. Review this Program Guide and the Implementation Resources
2. Complete the RASF Enrollment Form
3. Add the voluntary line item to your reservation or invoicing system
4. Select a remittance schedule
5. Begin collecting contributions

America Outdoors will confirm enrollment, provide resources, and support implementation at every step.

Our Commitment to You

America Outdoors is committed to making RASF:

- Easy to implement
- Flexible for different business models
- Valuable for participating members
- Effective in strengthening industry advocacy

Protect access. Strengthen the industry. Enable your clients to invest in the places they love.

America Outdoors Association