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Mountain BizWorks Welcomes Eight Outdoor-Focused Businesses into Fifth Cohort of its Waypoint Accelerator Program

ASHEVILLE, NC—NOVEMBER 8, 2023—Mountain BizWorks welcomes the 5th cohort of its annual [Waypoint Accelerator](#) Program, launching November 2023 and continuing through March 2024. The first of its kind on the East Coast, the Waypoint Accelerator provides promising early-stage outdoor businesses with targeted support and resources to help elevate them to the next waypoints of their growth journey. The Waypoint Accelerator program is powered by a collaboration that includes the [MADE X MTNS Partnership](#), [NC SBTDC](#) and [Outdoor Business Alliance of WNC](#).

Since 2019, the Waypoint Accelerator Program has helped nearly 40 participating companies grow and diversify their revenues, expand their teams, accomplish game-changing projects, and realize big dreams. Through a collaborative network of peers and mentors, in-depth training and coaching, access to growth capital, and dedicated time set aside to focus on the future of the business, Waypoint provides companies with the support, knowledge, clear vision, and resources needed to thrive.

“The quality and momentum of this 5th cohort of early-stage outdoor companies indicates that WNC remains the Outdoor Industry Capital of the East, and a prime place to start and grow an outdoor business,” says Outdoor Business Alliance of WNC Executive Director and Waypoint Accelerator Facilitator, Matt Godfrey. “A strong culture of collaboration, mentorship and partnership will help these entrepreneurs thrive and forge their best path to healthy growth.”

The companies that comprise Waypoint’s 5th Cohort were selected from a highly competitive pool of applicants. “Each year it is exciting to see a diverse group of entrepreneurs learn together, share ideas, and celebrate successes. Their friendships and collaborations last far beyond graduation. Waypoint Accelerator participants continue to be integral stakeholders in the strong outdoor recreation economy and community that has long been cultivated in Western North Carolina,” says MADE X MTNS Partnership Director, Amy Allison.

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Waypoint Accelerator 5th Cohort participants include:

- [ARCA Works, LLC](#) crafts premium whitewater kayaking paddles that are lighter, stronger, and redefine performance on the water.
- **Blue Ridge Elder Adventures** provides nature-based adventures for the elders in our community by offering skilled therapeutic services and accessible transportation to community events and parks of WNC.
- [High Country Guide Service & Chosen River Outfitters, LLC](#) provides professional guided fly fishing trips in the Boone area and surrounding streams, and fishing trips to Alaska, since 2011.
- [Lucky Crow Hat Company](#) is a female owned and operated headwear company located in Marion, North Carolina, specializing in custom patch hats for both corporate customers as well as outdoor retailers along the East Coast.
- [Mountain Bike Skills Factory](#) delivers high quality mountain bike skills instruction through private lessons and group clinics in the mountains of North Carolina, with the most experienced and highly certified instructors in the USA.
- [Peter Ripmaster](#) is a public speaker, 50 marathons in 50 states finisher, Iditarod Trail Invitational Champion, author, and Ultra Runner ready to take his message of perseverance and mindfulness to the masses.
- **Riverskate** is a next-generation whitewater stand up paddling board company custom-made in WNC for those who want to unlock new levels of performance on the river.
- **Silva & Soma** is a backpacking guide service based in Boone, NC, offering nature retreats in the backcountry, as well as wellness gatherings in the front country including naturalism walks and guided forest bathing.

More information about the Waypoint Accelerator program is available at waypointaccelerator.com.

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About Mountain BizWorks

Mountain BizWorks envisions a thriving Western North Carolina in which small business owners and aspiring entrepreneurs have access to the resources needed to make their dreams a reality—a region where collaboration, creativity, innovation, and investment generate opportunity and prosperity for all. For more information, visit mountainbizworks.org.

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About Outdoor Business Alliance of WNC

Founded in 2013 by a small group of gear manufacturers, Outdoor Business Alliance now includes more than 80 members, and is made up of businesses and organizations representing the entire outdoor industry in Western North Carolina. Members include: Gear Builders, Experience Providers, Skills Instructors, Outfitters, Retail Shops, Supporting Businesses, and Nonprofits. For more, visit outdoorbusinessalliance.org.

About MADE X MTNS Partnership

The MADE X MTNS (Made By Mountains) Partnership is working to expand the outdoor industry and economy across North Carolina's Appalachian region and catalyze rural development by building vibrant outdoor communities, growing outdoor businesses, and amplifying outdoor culture. For more information, visit madexmtns.com or [@madexmtns](https://twitter.com/madexmtns).