

Interview with Aaron Ostrom From Pacific Outfitters

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00:00:00.510 --> 00:00:14.670

Sean Dougherty: Alright, so we are starting. So, hello, everyone. My name is Sean Daugherty and I am a student at Humboldt State University studying Recreation Administration, with an Emphasis in Outdoor Adventure and Education.

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00:00:15.240 --> 00:00:26.100

Sean Dougherty: Today I am interviewing Aaron Ostrom from Pacific Outfitters. In this interview Aaron will give an account of how COVID-19 has changed the Outdoor Recreation Industry.

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00:00:27.150 --> 00:00:32.100

Sean Dougherty: And the current date is November 16th, 2020 at 2p.m.

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00:00:34.200 --> 00:00:39.450

Sean Dougherty: Alright, so I'm going to start with like some icebreaker questions, and then we'll get into the more complex questions.

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00:00:39.840 --> 00:00:46.560

Sean Dougherty: My first question is, *how long have you lived and or worked in Humboldt County?*

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00:00:47.520 --> 00:00:56.730

Aaron Ostrom: I was born here back in 1979 but then moved away from school and came back in 1998, so I've been here ever since 98.

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00:00:58.770 --> 00:01:03.060

Sean Dougherty: I'm from the East Coast. And I gotta say I love it out here, definitely.

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00:01:03.540 --> 00:01:10.350

Sean Dougherty: So, um, well that answers the second question. And where are you originally from and we could probably skip over the-

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00:01:10.740 --> 00:01:23.610

Sean Dougherty: -third question, I'll go ahead and reword it. So the third question is, *if you are not originally from Humboldt County, what was your first impression of this place?* So, *I'll read you the question is what is your overall impression of Humboldt County?*

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00:01:25.170 --> 00:01:33.300

Aaron Ostrom: I think it's an outdoor paradise. That's why I moved back here. You know, I was born here, but then I grew up down in Santa Rosa and-

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00:01:33.930 --> 00:01:50.010

Aaron Ostrom: -finish high school down there and then came up here for college and, and I have a father up here too. So, I had some family up here. And yeah, it's an outdoor paradise. I love the outdoors. So yeah, quickly became my home.

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00:01:50.970 --> 00:01:53.940

Sean Dougherty: Now, I've been here for six years. I call it my home now.

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00:01:54.210 --> 00:01:58.440

Sean Dougherty: Yeah, I grew up in an area of 6 million people and just skyscrapers and-

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00:01:58.440 --> 00:01:59.460

Sean Dougherty: -everything.

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00:02:00.270 --> 00:02:04.290

Sean Dougherty: All right, a little off subject, but *what is your favorite book?*

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00:02:06.000 --> 00:02:08.190

Aaron Ostrom: Oh, my favorite book. Let's see.

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00:02:10.680 --> 00:02:12.450

Aaron Ostrom: I would say One Second After

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00:02:12.870 --> 00:02:24.270

Aaron Ostrom: Meaning yeah I'm kind of a survivalist geek, you know, and that is One second After pretty much the lights go out and how to survive. So.

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00:02:24.510 --> 00:02:27.990

Sean Dougherty: I'm going to write that down because you're making me want to read this book now.

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00:02:27.990 --> 00:02:28.410

Sean Dougherty: One Second After.

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00:02:28.440 --> 00:02:28.890

Aaron Ostrom: Oh, yeah.

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00:02:31.410 --> 00:02:34.470

Sean Dougherty: Yeah, I'll order it off Amazon this afternoon.

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00:02:34.710 --> 00:02:36.120

Aaron Ostrom: Sure, it's great book.

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00:02:37.860 --> 00:02:47.940

Sean Dougherty: All right, and this I have a sense of humor implied. So what is your favorite National Park, of course, other than the Redwood National Park here in Humboldt County?

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00:02:49.380 --> 00:02:51.480

Aaron Ostrom: Favorite I would say Glacier National Park.

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00:02:51.780 --> 00:02:52.440

Sean Dougherty: Glacier National Park.

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00:02:52.470 --> 00:03:10.950

Aaron Ostrom: Yeah, I tried to, I tried to visit before COVID you know I'd always visit a National Park it at least one every year and I went to Glacier probably about three or so years ago and yeah absolutely outside of Humboldt and the Redwoods that is by far my favorite National Park.

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00:03:12.360 --> 00:03:16.950

Sean Dougherty: I have to get over there. I made it the Yellowstone, but Glacier It's definitely on my list.

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00:03:16.980 --> 00:03:26.370

Sean Dougherty: Alright, so, um, what is your favorite outdoor activity and have you been able to pursue it during the pandemic?

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00:03:27.480 --> 00:03:33.240

Aaron Ostrom: I mean, my favorite outdoor activity is just being in nature being in the Redwoods hiking around.

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00:03:34.680 --> 00:03:49.740

Aaron Ostrom: And all yeah so that's definitely my favorite outdoor activity. I've been tree hunting last few years to as far as fine being famous unmarked trees based off pictures and general coordinates, that's been a-

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00:03:50.550 --> 00:04:02.880

Aaron Ostrom: -keeping me active in the outdoors. I'm an avid mushroom hunter. So that's a keep me active out there. And then we just have so many beautiful trails from the coast in Word. So trying to chip off as many as I can.

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00:04:03.330 --> 00:04:07.650

Sean Dougherty: There you go. When it comes to mushrooms, like the black trumpets.

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00:04:07.890 --> 00:04:10.380

Sean Dougherty: Put them in lasagna. And I'm like, wow.

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00:04:11.280 --> 00:04:12.570

Sean Dougherty: You're making me hungry now.

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00:04:13.200 --> 00:04:19.080

Sean Dougherty: All right, so *if you could change one thing about Humboldt County, what would it be?*

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00:04:20.580 --> 00:04:36.630

Aaron Ostrom: Mm, hmm. Let's see, what would I change? What would I change? I would make it a little bit more affordable to live for a lot of people. It's a, it's hard to find a career job up here. And sometimes it's hard to find a house, you know, so.

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00:04:38.340 --> 00:04:52.620

Aaron Ostrom: You know, I would. It'd be nice to find more, to create more jobs that would be career worthy out here and homes are still I'd say pretty expensive for your first time homebuyer so just make things a little bit more affordable.

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00:04:53.700 --> 00:05:03.780

Sean Dougherty: Nice, nice, you know, you probably already answered this question, but my last question on the ice breakers is, *what do you like most about Humboldt County?*

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00:05:05.460 --> 00:05:11.430

Aaron Ostrom: It's, it's an outdoor Mecca. So everything from the trails to the ocean.

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00:05:12.540 --> 00:05:19.590

Aaron Ostrom: You know, it's just for hunting, fishing, just an outdoor paradise out here so I like everything you can do.

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00:05:20.820 --> 00:05:26.670

Sean Dougherty: I agree, I strongly agree. All right, now it's the more complex questions.

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00:05:28.260 --> 00:05:32.190

Sean Dougherty: All right, so question number one.

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00:05:33.300 --> 00:05:42.660

Sean Dougherty: *How has COVID-19 changed what rural means to you in the context of outdoor recreation in our Community in both positive and negative terms?*

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00:05:44.610 --> 00:05:57.060

Aaron Ostrom: Let's see. I think positive. What I've seen is it's really push more people to get outside and get out into nature to social distance. And that's one of the ways you can socially distance from people and still have fun.

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00:05:57.540 --> 00:06:03.720

Aaron Ostrom: And that's being out in nature. So that's been a positive change that I've seen through COVID.

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00:06:05.760 --> 00:06:09.540

Aaron Ostrom: Yeah, some negative aspects of it would be.

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00:06:11.490 --> 00:06:12.210

Aaron Ostrom: Well-

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00:06:13.230 --> 00:06:15.060

Aaron Ostrom: -sometimes, you got to do with a mask on.

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00:06:16.230 --> 00:06:20.160

Aaron Ostrom: If you can't socially distance.

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00:06:20.520 --> 00:06:34.980

Aaron Ostrom: And also it's brought up a lot of people from out of the area to our area and sometimes they don't treat it the areas how, which we treat it. So, sometimes there's an increase in litter and trash that gets left behind from that.

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00:06:36.660 --> 00:06:42.690

Sean Dougherty: Yeah, that does always frustrate me. I saw somebody throw a beer in the woods and I went and told him, don't, don't do that.

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00:06:42.720 --> 00:06:43.530

Sean Dougherty: Like come on man.

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00:06:44.820 --> 00:06:59.130

Sean Dougherty: All right, so question number two *in terms of mental health, spiritual health, and physical health, through the lens of outdoor recreation what wellness challenges in Humboldt County are a direct result from COVID-19?*

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00:07:02.070 --> 00:07:08.730

Aaron Ostrom: What wellness challenges and Humboldt County are a direct result. What do you mean wellness challenges?

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00:07:08.910 --> 00:07:10.320

Sean Dougherty: Like wellness in the-

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00:07:11.640 --> 00:07:15.060

Sean Dougherty: -in the sense of like, let me read over the question.

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00:07:16.410 --> 00:07:24.840

Sean Dougherty: So like wellness is like basically like, like people's overall health. Like, let's say it's like I'm an old person and I can't get outside.

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00:07:24.840 --> 00:07:30.930

Sean Dougherty: There's the whole virus thing. Like, what challenges am I faced with.

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00:07:32.490 --> 00:07:34.800

Sean Dougherty: In the context of Outdoor Recreation.

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00:07:35.610 --> 00:07:43.830

Aaron Ostrom: Well, you also, you want to make sure that you're doing what you're capable of doing, you know, if you can do a five mile hike and you start off with a-

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00:07:44.550 --> 00:07:49.140

Aaron Ostrom: -you know, a quarter mile hike, you know, start with what you can do and build off that.

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00:07:49.650 --> 00:08:03.000

Aaron Ostrom: You know, just because you're, you enjoy the outdoors. You don't have to be, you know, the next Bear Grylls you can just start with basic trails and after doing that you can graduate to something a little bit more technical.

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00:08:04.020 --> 00:08:10.680

Aaron Ostrom: But out here I think we have enough if you get winded easily or if you have some-

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00:08:12.960 --> 00:08:19.080

Aaron Ostrom: -for whatever reason, I mean you could choose short flat trails or you can go for the longer steeper trails.

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00:08:19.800 --> 00:08:31.080

Aaron Ostrom: For fishing, you can choose to fish off a nice comfortable pier that's wheelchair accessible or you can go out and your kayak off the shores of Trinidad. So I think with Humboldt County-

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00:08:31.620 --> 00:08:44.580

Aaron Ostrom: -we're so fortunate. We're so diverse and what we have to offer recreationally that you know whether you're a disabled person, a young person, a fully able person, you know, we have something for everyone out here.

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00:08:45.660 --> 00:08:46.470

Sean Dougherty: Absolutely.

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00:08:47.730 --> 00:09:08.610

Sean Dougherty: That was a good answer. All right, question number 3. Based from the last question on Rural Communities in America what age group do believe has been effected the most in terms of the outdoor industry from COVID-19 and why? Please provide some examples.

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00:09:09.990 --> 00:09:12.300

Aaron Ostrom: When you say effected, what do you mean by that?

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00:09:13.050 --> 00:09:20.340

Sean Dougherty: Well that's a good question. Well, and let me go back to my question. So, based on my research in rural communities so-

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00:09:21.540 --> 00:09:37.050

Sean Dougherty: -talking about like the age group, like, who is like effected the most in terms of like outdoor recreation like, like earlier we're talking about old people. But what about young people and what are the alternatives and solutions that people can do.

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00:09:38.430 --> 00:09:45.630

Aaron Ostrom: Well, again, it's finding, you know, something that you are able to do and being out here in Humboldt County, I think we got something even for-

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00:09:46.020 --> 00:10:07.740

Aaron Ostrom: -a little kid little, to the elderly, to the disabled or able body. You know, I think we got something for everyone. So it's just about connecting with your local tourism place or your local outdoor shop and finding those areas that will work based on people's needs and abilities.

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00:10:10.320 --> 00:10:19.140

Sean Dougherty: And based from the last question. What do you believe are possible solutions to help this particular age group and all age groups?

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00:10:20.130 --> 00:10:27.330

Aaron Ostrom: Well, I think you know trail restoration and making sure that we have bathrooms in key spots and-

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00:10:28.560 --> 00:10:50.070

Aaron Ostrom: -parking areas and, you know, making sure some trails are accessible for disabled people just, you know, just make sure our trails that we're maintaining our trails and creating a easy access for people and basic amenities, that they would want in order to take that hike or do that activity.

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00:10:52.500 --> 00:11:04.350

Sean Dougherty: And question five. This one's a little complex. So as we are social beings, and we are not meant to live in isolation in this particular field has COVID-19-

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00:11:05.910 --> 00:11:16.260

Sean Dougherty: *-social distancing regulations in a way brought people closer together in the sense of belonging, support, and purpose? If so, how?*

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00:11:18.390 --> 00:11:20.100

Aaron Ostrom: Has it brought people together?

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00:11:21.330 --> 00:11:32.940

Aaron Ostrom: I mean I've, I've been connecting with family members via video more so than I connected, you know, more so now than before COVID, so I think there while-

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00:11:34.530 --> 00:11:41.790

Aaron Ostrom: -Zoom meetings have pros and cons, you know, connecting family members together via video. I think that's and friends. That's been pretty helpful.

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00:11:43.740 --> 00:11:49.530

Aaron Ostrom: And hasn't really been taken advantage of. To this extent before COVID so that I see that being-

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00:11:50.070 --> 00:12:02.070

Aaron Ostrom: -a plus thing, also just the amount of families, I've seen taking walks together and and doing bike rides and doing things where you can't get distracted from the day to day phone technology or internet or-

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00:12:02.430 --> 00:12:10.590

Aaron Ostrom: -you know, kind of forcing you to enjoy time with those loved ones and having good conversations with them. So I see that as being beneficial.

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00:12:13.770 --> 00:12:14.910

Aaron Ostrom: Beneficial means of-

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00:12:16.020 --> 00:12:18.360

Aaron Ostrom: -you know, interacting with your loved ones during COVID.

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00:12:20.880 --> 00:12:31.230

Sean Dougherty: In question number six. *How has this pandemic strengthened reinforced and altered the interest, values, and beliefs affecting this industry?*

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00:12:32.970 --> 00:12:45.240

Aaron Ostrom: The outdoor industry. Well, I think it's definitely exposed people to nature more and what you can do in nature and, and it's given people new passions in life.

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00:12:45.720 --> 00:13:06.030

Aaron Ostrom: And which overall is gonna, is gonna generally turn into a healthier lifestyle mentally and physically just getting away from the cities getting away from the day to day drama being in nature and then whatever you're doing in nature is generally a physical activity so-

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00:13:08.070 --> 00:13:12.870

Aaron Ostrom: I think it's definitely helped people's well being, as far, in addition to their health.

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00:13:15.120 --> 00:13:21.810

Sean Dougherty: And question number seven. This is a complex question. I did have to do some research for this question.

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00:13:22.590 --> 00:13:36.150

Sean Dougherty: So recently, I've read in an article titled *Parks and Approved Mental Health and Quality of Life* "that separation from nature is detrimental to human development, health and well being-

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00:13:36.720 --> 00:13:53.850

Sean Dougherty: -and that regular contact with nature is required for good mental health." *In what ways has this pandemic in the terms of outdoor recreation created this detrimental separation of humans in nature in Humboldt County? And in what ways has it improved the connection?*

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00:13:55.470 --> 00:13:57.330

Aaron Ostrom: Hmm. Loaded question there.

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00:13:58.680 --> 00:14:00.600

Sean Dougherty: It's complex.

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00:14:02.520 --> 00:14:16.530

Aaron Ostrom: Yea, yea I mean I, again, I think being able to escape the day to day reality of what people deal with every day and be in nature. I think that's a form of self counseling or therapy.

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00:14:17.310 --> 00:14:32.040

Aaron Ostrom: Which is going to help your, your mindset and outlook on life too. I know for me I need to get out there that's kind of instead of going to a therapist. I go out in nature, you know, and that helps me with dealing with the day to day things in life and-

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00:14:33.180 --> 00:14:40.290

Aaron Ostrom: And what not. So I think that's good, maybe read part of that question, read that question again. I'll try to pick off little chunks of that.

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00:14:40.350 --> 00:14:41.070

Sean Dougherty: Yeah.

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00:14:44.280 --> 00:14:57.060

Sean Dougherty: *Recently I've read an article titled Parts and Improve Mental Health and Quality of Life* "that separation from nature is detrimental to human development, health, and well being-

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00:14:57.570 --> 00:15:14.700

Sean Dougherty: -and that regular contact with nature is required for good mental health. In what ways has this pandemic in the terms of outdoor recreation created this detrimental separation of humans and nature in Humboldt County? And in what ways has it improved the connection?

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00:15:15.420 --> 00:15:15.870

Aaron Ostrom: Okay.

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00:15:17.250 --> 00:15:23.490

Aaron Ostrom: I mean, I know, I think, I explained on how it makes the connection to a healthy mind and help healthy life.

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00:15:24.600 --> 00:15:25.440

Aaron Ostrom: As far as-

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00:15:27.300 --> 00:15:28.770

Aaron Ostrom: -how it, how it's-

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00:15:30.600 --> 00:15:33.570

Aaron Ostrom: -as far as the opposite of that I'm not quite sure.

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00:15:36.870 --> 00:15:39.420

Aaron Ostrom: I'm not coming. Yeah, just in general-

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00:15:40.440 --> 00:15:49.860

Aaron Ostrom: -being in nature is, you know, is there to help you, give you a good, healthy mindset and healthy life improve your quality of life. Not sure how, what it does to hinder it.

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00:15:52.110 --> 00:15:54.090

Aaron Ostrom: Yeah, that's a tough one. I'm not sure.

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00:15:54.600 --> 00:15:58.170

Sean Dougherty: I couldn't answer that one, to me nature is nothing but positive stuff.

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00:15:58.200 --> 00:15:59.100

Aaron Ostrom: Yeah, yeah.

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00:15:59.430 --> 00:16:00.270

Sean Dougherty: Unless there's like...

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00:16:01.110 --> 00:16:09.900

Aaron Ostrom: I guess maybe if people are, are not researching where they're going and they insert themselves in bad situations.

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00:16:10.680 --> 00:16:14.550

Aaron Ostrom: Part of what I've seen, I guess. I mean, we're, we're-

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00:16:15.660 --> 00:16:19.110

Aaron Ostrom: -I see people maybe get new kayaks, and they take him where-

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00:16:19.980 --> 00:16:27.300

Aaron Ostrom: -they should, they should probably, they should take, they take them in areas or do things in them that aren't quite safe because it's a new activity to them.

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00:16:27.570 --> 00:16:38.430

Aaron Ostrom: And that could get them into trouble a lot of hikers to can get lost if they don't have the proper equipment or if they do get lost. How can they, you know, how can you, what do you do in that manner so-

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00:16:38.970 --> 00:16:49.560

Aaron Ostrom: -while it's great. It gets people in the outdoors, you still need to have a basic understanding of what you're getting yourself into and kind of and what's needed in order to do that safely.

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00:16:53.160 --> 00:16:55.140

Sean Dougherty: Uh a related a side tangent.

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00:16:55.230 --> 00:17:11.820

Sean Dougherty: My first time in the wilderness was in 2014 and I was in Umatilla National Forest. I got lost. I was wearing everything you're not supposed to be wearing. I didn't have water I had soda and to my luck there was a group of backpackers they found me and they helped me out, but now-

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00:17:12.060 --> 00:17:17.160

Sean Dougherty: -yeah, I take classes and like what to wear and like basic general backpacking.

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00:17:17.880 --> 00:17:20.970

Sean Dougherty: When I graduate. I want to get into hunting, but that, that's going to be-

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00:17:21.480 --> 00:17:26.370

Sean Dougherty: -in six months. All right. Um, my last complex question.

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00:17:27.390 --> 00:17:36.450

Sean Dougherty: *As Humboldt County is a vast and rural area and studies show that individuals visiting in a green space or meaning nature surrounding-*

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00:17:37.140 --> 00:17:52.110

Sean Dougherty: *-often show lesser signs of stress. What do you believe will be the long term effects many years from now, in the outdoor recreation industry that are directly linked as a result from the quarantines, shutdowns, and social distancing?*

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00:17:54.060 --> 00:18:03.600

Aaron Ostrom: Well, I think force again forcing them to social distance and doing that in the outdoors and getting people into new activities you know someone-

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00:18:04.170 --> 00:18:12.870

Aaron Ostrom: -who bought a bike after not having a bike for 20 years maybe they take it on and now it's a new hobby. And now, now all of a sudden they're writing regularly. Maybe they're doing-

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00:18:13.260 --> 00:18:26.640

Aaron Ostrom: -races even eventually and really getting into it, someone may buy a kayak just to go kayaking and they may realize, oh, look at these awesome birds and now they're into birding, and now they can do that from a kayak or fishing, so hopefully-

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00:18:27.780 --> 00:18:34.650

Aaron Ostrom: -COVID getting them into the outdoors has presented them with kind of like the gateway to the outdoors and being able to take-

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00:18:37.320 --> 00:18:49.200

Aaron Ostrom: -and really, you know, if they've if they got into it via kayaking, hiking, and biking, you know, really, and got into it just, it became a part of their everyday life now. And yeah.

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00:18:51.480 --> 00:18:56.070

Sean Dougherty: What I like to do is I hike every day in the Arcata Community forest.

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00:18:56.280 --> 00:19:02.880

Sean Dougherty: Growing up in the city it's like me being out here, this is heaven to me, it's like, I love this place.

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00:19:03.330 --> 00:19:18.180

Sean Dougherty: So my final question is, *so let's say it's 100 years from now, what would you like to tell people in 100 years from now about the outdoor world and COVID it and everything we pretty much discussed?*

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00:19:19.680 --> 00:19:24.780

Aaron Ostrom: Well, enjoy to the fullest. And when you're out there enjoying nature just, you know,-

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00:19:26.910 --> 00:19:29.850

Aaron Ostrom: -make sure you respect nature and make sure you treat it-

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00:19:30.870 --> 00:19:46.230

Aaron Ostrom: -as if it's something you wanted to pass down for generations to come. So respect nature, you know, don't destroy it, and cherish it because we want our kids and grandkids and great grandkids all to enjoy it after us. So.

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00:19:46.800 --> 00:19:51.120

Sean Dougherty: Absolutely. Now, that's pretty much all the questions-

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00:19:51.180 --> 00:19:59.790

Sean Dougherty: -for the night and I do appreciate you taking the time to help me. So once I get this into the database system I'll make a copy for you.

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00:20:00.360 --> 00:20:03.330

Sean Dougherty: I'll like touch base by sending it to you through your email.

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00:20:04.020 --> 00:20:19.500

Aaron Ostrom: Okay. And if you're into hunting like right now. During COVID take advantage of it because it's all online. You don't need to take the follow up four hour in person class and hundred question test.

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00:20:20.370 --> 00:20:28.560

Aaron Ostrom: You can do it all online now and when you finish the online portion I think it costs 25 bucks, then you're done. Then you get your hunting license.

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00:20:28.980 --> 00:20:29.820

Sean Dougherty: I'm gonna get on that.

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00:20:30.060 --> 00:20:34.380

Aaron Ostrom: Though, you want to take advantage of that before they go back to the four hour class for sure.

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00:20:34.500 --> 00:20:35.070

Sean Dougherty: Yeah.

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00:20:36.120 --> 00:20:45.120

Sean Dougherty: I'll say, I'm gonna ask you do that like this evening.

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00:20:46.500 --> 00:20:46.770

Aaron Ostrom: Yeah. Yeah, I got my, I got my nine year old setup and he had my nine year olds got his hunting license now so I love.

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00:20:47.940 --> 00:20:48.330

Aaron Ostrom: Cool.

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00:20:48.660 --> 00:20:53.280

Sean Dougherty: Well, I think that's about it. And again, I appreciate your help. And thank you.

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00:20:53.640 --> 00:20:54.840

Aaron Ostrom: Alright. Thanks, Sean. We'll see you.

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00:20:55.350 --> 00:20:56.250

Sean Dougherty: Have a great one man.

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00:20:56.310 --> 00:20:56.940

Aaron Ostrom: You too. Bye.