



Diversity of Declaration

We the people, mission is to inspire, empower and activate a humanitarian movement that will mobilize citizens of all colors to carry out our humanitarian obligation that will raise our collective consciousness, educate and support welcome access and safety in the outdoors through love, empathy, respect without discrimination. We exist because people of color deserve a voice, deserve an advocate and deserve action to ensure the Freedom to Roam is unhindered and unlimited in all outdoor spaces.

1. Data from the US Forest Service, National Park Service, and Fish and Wildlife Service suggest deep inequality in the ethnic/racial mix of visitors to our public lands. While the most recent US census shows that non-Hispanic whites make up approximately 63 percent of the US population, they comprise between 88 and 95 percent of all visitors to public lands (Figure 1). African Americans comprise only 1 to 1.2 percent of all visitors and Hispanic/Latinos between 3.8 and 6.7 percent; both groups are underrepresented as visitors to public lands relative to their presence in the population at large.
2. African Americans and Hispanics/Latinos are spending time outdoors, as many survey's suggests, but little in national parks, national forests, and national wildlife refuges?

Barriers to Participation in Outdoor Recreation

Researchers and outdoor advocates have pointed to several potential barriers to minority enjoyment of public lands.

3. **Affordability and Access.** Visiting remote national parks such as Glacier or Yellowstone can be expensive and time-consuming, presenting significant obstacles to lower-income Americans, especially hourly workers with limited vacation time. Even closer-to-home sites such as state parks often have entrance fees, and some outdoor recreation activities—including camping—require expensive equipment.
4. **Early Childhood Experiences.** Some experts writing on this topic have highlighted that early childhood experiences of engaging with the natural world can shape a person's views of self-confidence and enjoyment of nature well into adulthood.
5. **Cultural Factors** can facilitate participation in outdoor activities by some groups but inhibit it for others.
6. **Discrimination and White Racial Frames.** Prior to the 1964 Civil Rights Act, African Americans were banned from, or segregated at, public recreation sites, including national and state parks. This legacy lives on, and many minorities report feeling excluded at parks where interpretive exhibits and historical information often feature only white Americans. The problem is exacerbated by a lack of diversity among park rangers and other employees: 83 percent of National Park Service employees are white; 62 percent are male. The outdoor recreation industry is no better.
7. **Historical Trauma and Concerns of Physical Safety.** In a 2018 study, survey participants were asked to describe why African Americans might be fearful of visiting forests. According to the paper, 66 percent of participants did discuss thoughts and experiences which suggest that the historical trauma of slavery and lynchings in Jim Crow era is associated with the environment for many African Americans.
8. All of the above suggests a very real concern exists in communities of people of color regarding not having significant community support or not feeling safe in our public lands.

Ready to listen. Ready to talk. Ready to make change. Let's Partner up!