



## OPERATION ROAM

July 13 to July 24 2021

Atigun Gorge - Arctic Circle

**The More You Roam. The More You Know.**

**“Climate change is a human rights issue not only because its devastating impacts affect the enjoyment of human rights, but also because it is a man-made phenomenon which can be mitigated by governments.”** *Kumi Naidoo Secretary General of Amnesty International*

**Love is King** and the **Alaska Wilderness League** are excited to announce a formidable partnership. On July 13<sup>th</sup> 2021 we're launching our inaugural expedition of our *Advanced Leadership Experience Program* called OPERATION ROAM. We see knowledge as the most powerful **Weapon of Mass Conversation**. We believe in the interconnectedness of *daily human life, social justice, environmental justice and climate change*. We can no longer afford to separate these critical conversations into silos. The issues of environmental justice and social equity are disproportionately impacting people of color, Black, Latino and especially our Native American community.

Our mission is tragically simple, connect black, indigenous, and people of color (BIPOC) who would normally not have an immediate stake in each other's interests, culture and future and find common ground and converge their movements for the greater good. The more we connect and collaborate the more **empathic equity** we build. Our objective is to leverage that **empathic equity** to collectively tackle both environmental and social issues.

### **Our Destination > The Arctic National Wildlife Refuge**

The Arctic National Wildlife Refuge, located in northeastern Alaska is our country's largest wildlife refuge, over nineteen million acres. The Arctic Refuge is also home to some of the most delicate and at risk ecosystems on the planet and threatened by both climate change and fossil fuel development within the Refuge. The rate at which Alaska's temperature has been warming is twice as fast as the global average since the middle of the 20th century, and indigenous people in the Arctic are experiencing the impacts at a disproportionate rate. Climate change impacts in the arctic include increased wildfires, drought, flooding, and erosion as well as decreases in wildlife populations and changes in migratory routes, all of which pose significant threats to the food security and way of life for arctic indigenous communities.

For more information go to [www.alaskawild.org](http://www.alaskawild.org)



## The Voice of Heroes Being Heard

### Bernadette Demientieff

Executive Director of the Gwich'in Steering Committee

*"The Gwich'in and the porcupine caribou herd have had a spiritual and cultural connection since time immemorial," Our identity is non negotiable, we will never sell our culture and our traditional lifestyle for any amount of money. I'm just trying to protect my children birthright, their future and their way of life. "* Bernadette Demientieff

The Gwich'in Steering Committee was formed in 1988 in response to proposals to drill for oil in the Sacred Place Where Life Begins, the coastal plain of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge. Gwich'in elders recognized that oil development in caribou calving grounds was a threat to the very heart of our people. They called upon the chiefs of all Gwich'in villages from Canada to Alaska to come together for a traditional gathering – the first in more than a century where it was decided unanimously that the Gwich'in would speak with one voice against oil and gas development in the birthing and nursing grounds of the Porcupine Caribou Herd. As the executive director of the Gwich'in Steering Committee, Bernadette stands strong to protect the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge-Coastal Plain, the Porcupine Caribou Herd and the Gwich'in way of life.

Our **ROAM** Leadership Team and Bernadette Demientieff will unite, collaborate and discover the real world issues of **The Arctic National Wildlife Refuge**; the people, the politics, the human rights struggles, the cultural consequences, the environmental impact and the significance of climate change. Our objective is to develop creative and strategic methods to support the Gwich'in as they lead the effort to protect their sacred lands in the Arctic Refuge.

Learn more about Bernadette Demientieff and the Gwichin Steering Committee  
<https://ourarcticrefuge.org/>

The Members of **OPERATION ROAM**  
**LFP Leadership Field Program**

This is our first Operation Roam and our first step in building empathetic equity and ensuring we collectively begin to tackle both environmental and social issues. Our Leadership Field Program is grounded in putting advocacy into action and elevating sense of interconnectedness.

Our accomplished group of established BIPOC leaders has the experience, the stamina, the commitment and passion to take charge of change. Our leaders will hone their outdoor survival skills, experience living off the land and be immersed in an opportunity of place-based learning.

They'll join forces with Bernadette Demientieff and the Gwich'in steering committee to learn first-hand about the issues and personally experience the vulnerable natural environment and natural resources of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge. Our purpose is to probe, discover and ignite a meaningful dialogue that intertwines justice for vulnerable communities, vulnerable ecosystems and social inequalities.

Our Leadership Field Program requires our participants to collaborate together to develop a strategic Environmental Justice and Social Justice "Action Plan." Together they'll gather insights, ideas and beliefs and collaborate to craft an actionable tactical strategy that will put "change in motion." This is the home work, literally the work they take home, the work that fuels the movement.

## Meet the Leaders



**Dudley Edmondson**

Dudley Edmondson is an established, filmmaker, presenter and author. Mr. Edmondson set out to create a set of out- door role models for the nation's African American community by writing his landmark book, *Black & Brown Faces in America's Wild Places* (AdventureKeen Publications 2006) Dudley is also a filmmaker, presenter and noted photographer whose photography has been featured in galleries and nearly 100 publications around the world. Mr. Edmondson has also been immersed in the effort to help the conservation sector become more inclusive, being one of the first to highlight the involvement of African Americans in the public lands system. In 2010 Dudley's book and conservation work landed him an invitation to the White House for the signing of America's Great Outdoors Initiative. In 2012 the U.S Secretary of the Interior appointed Dudley a Judge for the Federal Migratory Birding Hunting and Conservation Duck Stamp. Recently the Minnesota House of Representatives appointed Dudley to the Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council, which is tasked with making funding recommendations to the legislature for the protection and restoration of Minnesota prairie, wetlands and forest habitats using Clean Water Land and Legacy funds.





**Tamara Layden**

Tamara is an ecologist with over eight years of experience in academia and the nonprofit sector. She currently manages a freshwater ecology lab at Reed College and also serves on the Environmental Professionals of Color leadership team. Tamara is passionate about supporting ecosystem and community resiliency through scientific research, community development, and social justice and wildlife advocacy. She has a variety of experience in the environmental field and is committed to wildlife conservation and cultivating an inclusive community of scientists, land stewards, and outdoor enthusiasts. Tamara plans to continue her learning through a master's degree in Ecology at Colorado State University, with an emphasis on building ethical collaborations at the intersection of western science and traditional ecological knowledge.



**Courtney Lancot**

Courtney is the owner and founder of The Unpopular Black, through which she encourages Black adventure by providing representation, information, and access to the outdoors and adventure activities. Her work includes exploring outdoor places and spaces unpopular to the Black community, organizing Black adventure trips, while simultaneously educating through social media and her non-profit the National Black Adventure Directory. Courtney's foundation belief is that nature heals and we all need more of it. For more go to [www.theunpopularblack.com](http://www.theunpopularblack.com)



**Stephanie N. Sanford**

Stephanie spent her childhood outdoors at her paternal grandparents farm. It was there she assisted her Grandfather taking care of the farm animals, gardening with her Grandmother and enjoyed hiking, camping and anything that included nature. At 36, being quarantined Stephanie found going back into nature was the only way to relieve her of the pressures 2020 presented us all with. In August, Stephanie invited friends to join her hiking and Black Girls Hike Too and a community of black women hiking began. One of Stephanie's objectives with this passion project is to debunk myths that black women are "afraid" of the outdoors. Black Girls Hike Too! is a bold declaration Stephanie is making to say we can hike, camp, swim, kayak, canoe, hunt, fish and take up space in the great outdoors as well. More @ [www.instagram.com/blackgirlshiketoo](https://www.instagram.com/blackgirlshiketoo)



**Mic. Crenshaw**

Mic Crenshaw was born and raised in Chicago and Minneapolis. He currently resides in Portland, Oregon. Crenshaw is an independent Hip Hop artist, respected emcee, poet, educator, and activist. Crenshaw is the lead U.S. organizer for the African HipHop Caravan and uses cultural activism as a means to develop international solidarity related to Human Rights and Justice through Hip Hop and Popular Education. In his teenage years, Crenshaw actively confronted white supremacist gangs that were a growing part

of the hard-core music scene. Mic eventually moved to Portland, where he quickly became one of the most respected artists in the Northwest. His community efforts have had both local and international impact. In addition to his highly-acclaimed work in spoken word and Hip Hop, Mic co-founded GlobalFam, a non-profit (EducationWithOut Borders 501c3) project to create and maintain a computer center for disadvantaged youth in Burundi, Central Africa. Over 400 people have received free training through this non-profit, and his organization is now expanding, generating revenue and creating jobs. Mic also partnered with Education WithOut Borders (EWOB), which supports education, music and art initiatives in Portland and beyond and serves as an umbrella for the local Books For Prisoners chapter and GlobalFam itself. Mic Crenshaw has toured and collaborated with Dead Prez, Immortal Technique, Rakim and other Hip Hop legends. Mic was voted in 2016 Portland Oregon's best Hip Hop Artist. Since 2012, Mic has toured in Cuba, Russia, Germany, Zimbabwe, Tanzania, South Africa, Kenya and other countries where he facilitated Hip Hop Cultural Exchange opportunities for youth. Crenshaw is currently a Teaching Artist in Residence at multiple schools and a co-producer of the It Did Happen Here Podcast and the Rose City Rising City Wide Youth Hip Hop Compilation.

## Our Love is King – Operation ROAM Facilitators

**Monica Scherer** - Director of Outreach for the *Alaska Wilderness league*. She develops and manages volunteer efforts for all the Leagues campaigns across the continental United States and coordinates efforts between partner organizations. She strives to empower and support individuals and organizations to engage in meaningful actions on behalf of Alaska's public lands. Monica joined the League in January of 2007 as a field organizer and later started the Alaska Wild Educator Network, growing it currently to more than 1,000 educators across the country. Prior to working at the League, she worked at the League of Conservation Voters and for Representative John Dingell (D-MI). She has a B.S. in Environmental Policy and Behavior from the University of Michigan and a law degree from Widener University.

**Chad Brown** - Chad is the founder and president of Soul River Inc., a nonprofit organization that focuses on connecting veterans and introducing diverse urban youth of color to the outdoors, nature conservation and growing young leaders into advocacy for our public lands, wildlife and freshwater. Chad is also founder and president of a second nonprofit *Love is King* that he leads with the mission to dismantle the hate, bigotry, ignorance and racism in the outdoors for BIPOC and all marginalized groups to have the opportunity to roam further and bolder in the outdoors and create wonderful memories for themselves without having to face any aggression. The focus of Love is King is increasing the access and safety in the outdoors. Brown is also a Navy veteran, accomplished documentary style portrait photographer, creative director operating Chado Communication Design and Soul River Studios.

### **Alejandro Orizola - Field Medic**

Alejandro was born and raised in Northern California, a resident of Oakland the last 14 years. He graduated from California State University Sacramento with a degree in history, focusing on California's rich past. Alejandro has worked the past 20 years in state service, currently working for the California Environmental Protection Agency in the Office of Environmental Equity.

Alejandro enjoys fly fishing, camping/backpacking, softball, Barcelona futbol, traveling and spending time with his animals. He's most passionate about environmental justice, conservation and stewardship, preferring to spend as much time possible in nature.

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