

Sacagawea, a Lemhi Shoshone woman, served as interpreter and guide for Lewis and Clark and the Corps of Discovery, starting in 1804. As a teenager, she traveled with her infant, helping negotiate passage over lands inhabited by various tribes and securing additional guides and horses for the party. She received no compensation for her services, but her French husband received \$500.

Tie Sing, a Chinese backcountry cook, worked for the U.S. Geological Society as they mapped and explored Yosemite National Park in 1915. Sing fed an expedition of men who would eventually be instrumental in the management of federal public lands, including Stephen Mather, first director of the National Park Service.

The Buffalo Soldiers, an all African American army regiment, were among the first park and backcountry rangers, patrolling Yosemite and Sequoia National Parks both on horse and bicycle. Charles Young became acting military superintendent in 1903, the first African American to hold the superintendent role. Young oversaw the creation of infrastructure and worked to suppress wildfires, poaching, and illegal grazing within the parks.

George Washington Carver (1864-1943) was an African American agricultural scientist, botanist, and environmentalist who developed methods for improving soil in order to maintain sustainable harvests.

In the 1770's, **Brister Freeman and Zilpah White**, freed African Americans, lived around Walden Pond, famed retreat of writer, environmentalist and activist Henry David Thoreau. Prior to Thoreau's residency, Walden was a settlement for people who escaped slavery, and the stories of Freeman and White, among other freed people, served as an inspiration to Thoreau.

African American men were allowed entry to serve in the **Civilian Conservation Corps** (1930-1942) but often faced discrimination, despite New Deal legislation banning the practice. African American enrollment was capped at 10% and thousands of men were turned away. While a few camps were racially integrated, most African Americans lived and worked in segregated camps. Their involvement in the CCC is largely undocumented, though some African American companies worked on special projects. In an area of Forest City, in Rutherford County North Carolina, for example, Company 5423-C workers gullied and fenced over 3,000 acres. They planted hundreds of trees and shrubs to reshape the land and stabilize the erosion. Indigenous peoples also participated in the CCC-Indian Division developing infrastructure on reservations. The CCC-ID was administered by tribal leaders with the assistance of the Bureau of Indian Affairs.

MaVynee Betsch donated all of her wealth, including her home, to environmental causes starting in the 1970s. She convinced the National Park Service to protect 8.2 acres of sand dunes on Amelia Island's American Beach. Her great grandfather had purchased it in the 1930's so Black people could live on and go to the beach in Florida during Jim Crow segregation.

Outdoor Afro continues to give voice to the myriad of African American and Black experiences in the outdoors. One connection that is often talked about is the healing aspect of nature. They support #HealingHikes for those who are healing from traumatic experiences or those who need to de-stress. One Outdoor Afro group recently explored portions of the Appalachian Trail that overlap with the Underground Railroad, following a path that Harriet Tubman may have taken.

Latino Outdoors has been working to tell the myriad of stories about the outdoors in the Latinx community. Latino Outdoors is a network of leaders committed to engaging Latinxs in the outdoors, connecting families and youth with nature, and supporting a community of storytellers to explore and share their personal experiences.

More than 9-in-10 **Latinx voters** (94%) say outdoor activities such as fishing, picnics, camping, and visiting national parks and monuments are important to them and their families. Latinx voters also express strong support for the protection of public lands and waters.

Starting in 1972, **John Francis**, the Planetwalker, spent 22 years refusing to ride in cars walking across the U.S. to spread a message of environmental respect and awareness of the harmful effects of oil spills. For 17 of those years, Francis did not speak. During his vow of silence, he completed three college degrees, including a PhD in Land Management from the University of Wisconsin — Madison, which he walked to from Montana.

Contemporary **Acequia farmers** in Southern Colorado and Northern New Mexico are Indo-Hispanic farmers who have a unique understanding of high desert ecology that informs their farming, seed saving practices, water sharing practices, community relations, and erosion prevention. Though often not marked as “conservationists” by the environmental community, their farming practices and place-based knowledge center around conserving the health of the land and community.

NativesOutdoors is working directly with tribal governments, community organizations, and individuals on increasing access to outdoor recreation and connecting resources and opportunities for Indigenous communities within the outdoor industry.

