

## BREAKING BARRIERS: YOUNG WOMEN OF COLOR IN THE GREAT OUTDOORS

Hannah Wright Osborn\*, Program of the Environment, University of Washington

Site Supervisor: Anna McCracken, Young Women Empowered

Faculty Advisor: Dr. Kristi Straus, University of Washington. Dr. Yen-Chu Weng, University of Washington

Women and women of color face societal barriers that keep them from participating in outdoor recreation activities that should be available to everyone equally. Analyzing the barriers such as underrepresentation of women of color in outdoor recreation and lack of outdoor knowledge for example that young women of color face, is important to discuss and identify so that an approach can be created to properly address these barriers. **This case study looks at how an outdoor experiential learning program—Nature Connections— for young women of color ages 13-18 can help relieve these barriers.** I collected qualitative data from surveys, interviews, and a focus group discussion from the youth, staff, and mentor participants in the Nature Connections program. My findings show that there are many barriers keeping young women of color from participating in outdoor recreation, and that Nature Connections is helping to overcome some of these barriers mapping the way for other programs in helping young women of color access the outdoors freely.