



MOUNTAINFILM

FOR STUDENTS

THIS LAND

DIRECTOR Chelsea Jolly
Whit Hassett
DURATION 10 min

Runner Faith Briggs represents the new school of conservationist. No longer worshipping at the feet of Henry David Thoreau, conservationists today include women, people of color and indigenous communities — those whose love for public lands, diverse voices and journeys of empowerment fuel bold feats of activism. Like running 150 miles through national monuments at the center of controversial political maneuvering, Briggs, who once considered conservation a privileged realm, now dons the mantle with pride as she redefines its very definition.



Standards

COLLEGE AND CAREER READINESS ANCHOR STANDARDS FOR READING

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.R.1 / Key Ideas and Details

Read closely to determine what the text says explicitly and to make logical inferences from it; cite specific textual evidence when writing or speaking to support conclusions drawn from the text.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.R.8 / Integration of Knowledge and Ideas

Delineate and evaluate the argument and specific claims in a text, including the validity of the reasoning as well as the relevance and sufficiency of the evidence.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.R.9 / Integration of Knowledge and Ideas

Analyze how two or more texts address similar themes or topics in order to build knowledge or to compare the approaches the authors take.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.R.10 / Range of Reading and Level of Text Complexity

Read and comprehend complex literary and informational texts independently and proficiently.

COLLEGE AND CAREER READINESS ANCHOR STANDARDS FOR SPEAKING & LISTENING

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.SL.1 / Comprehension and Collaboration

Prepare for and participate effectively in a range of conversations and collaborations with diverse partners, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.SL.2 / Comprehension and Collaboration

Integrate and evaluate information presented in diverse media and formats, including visually, quantitatively, and orally.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.SL.3 / Comprehension and Collaboration

Evaluate a speaker's point of view, reasoning, and use of evidence and rhetoric.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.SL.4 / Presentation of Knowledge and Ideas

Present information, findings, and supporting evidence such that listeners can follow the line of reasoning and the organization, development, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.SL.5 / Presentation of Knowledge and Ideas

Make strategic use of digital media and visual displays of data to express information and enhance understanding of presentations.

Key Vocabulary

public lands, equity, marginalized communities, access, intersectional environmentalism, access, running

Subject Interview



FAITH BRIGGS

Why did you become a filmmaker and how did you get started?

I spent most of the summers of my life attending and later working at a summer camp for inner-city youth age 6-13 in upstate New York. Doing that work, I realized how deeply media impacts every aspect of our lives, especially when we are younger. I also saw how negative the stories and narratives BIPOC youth and communities were consuming about ourselves. I wanted to change the narrative. I studied film theory in college and picked up a camera towards the end of my time in undergrad and I was immediately hooked. For my first independent project, outside of a school setting, I did a kickstarter campaign in order to afford a camera.

When you made the film, did you have a specific audience in mind?

We had a wide audience in mind while making the film because it weaves together so many interconnected topics. Our approach was that if you are talking about the outdoors, you also need to be talking about access. If you are talking about access, you also need to be talking about the history that created a lack of

access. If you are talking about history you need to be talking about human rights. And if you are talking about human rights, you need to bring it back to the present moment because we are currently struggling for equitable access to clean air, clean water and green spaces for everyone. These are ongoing issues, not historic issues. We felt that anyone concerned about clean air and clean water, anyone with a love of the outdoors, anyone who is curious about history, this was a film for them.

healthy environments for all of us. We compiled a number of resources on www.thislanddoc.com

What's the next big adventure or film project on the horizon for you?

Whit and Faith worked together on another film in 2020 called *We Hike to Heal*. I am hoping my next adventures will include more trail running, more bikes, and maybe a podcast.

“These are ongoing issues, not historic issues.”

When editing the film, was there anything you wished you could have included in the final cut?

We all fell in love with a scene at the DMV where I passed my driver's test and got my license. It was a fun moment and I called my sister and she was so excited for me. In the end, we cut it out because it wasn't super related.

What are some of the challenges you encountered while making this film?

The idea of how important it is to have an intersectional approach to conservation conversations is getting more widely understood every day. It's so great to see this. At the time we were pitching the film, many people couldn't see how it all tied together. Finding people who understood the vision and supported our journey was difficult. But once we found people who were having the same conversations and felt like they were essential, we were able to raise the funding we needed to make the film.

Is there an action you hope people are inspired to take after seeing this film?

We believe that next steps can be done on an individual level, on a community level, and on a national level. We can invite people out to share our passions. We can educate ourselves by researching and learning more. We can get politically active, inform ourselves about who our local representatives are and reach out to see what they are doing to encourage

What is one piece of advice you can give students that you wish someone had shared with you?

Just make things! If you are interested in making films, just get started. You don't have to have a fancy camera and great equipment, you can use a phone, or an old camera from a second hand shop. I didn't know it when I was getting started, but there are a ton of community media organizations that exist that can help support young filmmakers hoping to get into the field. Many of them try hard to be super affordable and have free or cheap classes on editing and story. Don't count yourself out before you get started. Figure out what stories aren't being told that are important to you. Challenge yourself to really focus on an important message and story. With the right story, everything else falls into place. And just make things as much as you can! Showing a potential funder or potential subject that you have the ability to bring a project from beginning to end goes a long way!

Filmmaker Interview



CHELSEA JOLLY

Why did you become a filmmaker and how did you get started?

I had gone back to school to study graphic communications in hopes of bringing a voice to underrepresented women and landscapes in my beloved outdoor community. Filmmaking was sort of a byproduct of my advocacy work. When I started to fully realize the power of film in effecting change on a larger scale it became my focus. I was lucky to have friends and mentors in the filmmaking world giving me guidance and support to get started and I went from there. I took every job I could to learn about filmmaking and have worked my way to finally getting paid to make films about the things I feel are important.

When you made the film, did you have a specific audience in mind?

Yes, we definitely started out with some target audiences in mind within the public lands, conservation, and social justice space, but throughout production the audience seemed to keep expanding. This conversation felt relevant to a range of advocates, and environmentalists as well as anyone curious about history in the outdoors and learning about

allyship. Pretty much anyone interested in outdoor spaces and willing to listen to different voices within that community.

When editing the film, was there anything you wished you could have included in the final cut?

I would say making a short documentary can sometimes be like trying to make a haiku out of an encyclopedia. There were so many amazing things said in those interviews and moments captured that I would have loved to have included, but

something there to help them become more active in this conversation.

What's the next big adventure or film project on the horizon for you?

I am currently working on an environmental piece about Biomass Utilization in the Sierra Nevada. I've also been working on a film about indigenous youth surfing in Alaska and am hoping to return there soon, though traveling has become a bit more complicated these days.

“Try to focus less on “what” and more on “who” you want to be in the world.”

alas there's only so much you can fit into 11 minutes. If I could have picked one off the top of my head, I would have kept the scene of Faith getting her driver's license for the first time at the age of 30, I feel like it showed so much of her journey and commitment to making this film happen while supporting our team.

What are some of the challenges you encountered while making this film?

There were a lot of challenges logistically with this film around continuously changing landscapes and how to access our subjects running over long distances. It took a lot of patience, creativity and problem solving to keep up with the elements. There were a lot of conflicting GPS coordinates and maps that would leave our film crew and runners on separate roads to nowhere at times. From rainstorms to mountain biking with a full camera kit that felt like more of a lightning rod, we were lucky to have such an optimistic and adventurous crew on our side.

Is there an action you hope people are inspired to take after seeing this film?

I hope that anyone who watches this film is inspired to think differently about their role in the outdoors and find a way of supporting environmental and social justice that make the most sense for them. I would encourage people to go to our website and click on some of the action and learning links to see if there's

What is one piece of advice you can give students that you wish someone had shared with you?

I wish someone would have told me sooner to pay more attention to what kind of questions I was asking myself in life while choosing my career. Try to focus less on “what” and more on “who” you want to be in the world. Seeing the intersection between your objectives and your identity can have a huge impact on your work. Be as specific as you can possibly be in setting your goals, because what you can and will accomplish will surprise you beyond measure when you pay attention to the details.

Filmmaker Interview



WHIT HASSETT

Why did you become a filmmaker and how did you get started?

I would catch 5 Point Film Festival while living in Colorado, and it really lit a spark in a strong way, but had no idea of how to even start as I had come from a science background. Fast forward a few years, I was attending graduate school for environmental science and started flying a drone to do survey work, but was quickly hooked on the creative filmmaking and photography side of it. Through my work primarily as a drone pilot on film projects, I was able to learn and expand to be more involved in the storytelling side of filmmaking. I love the ability of filmmaking to share meaningful stories and ignite change.

When you made the film, did you have a specific audience in mind?

I think this film is for anyone who is concerned about the outdoors and access to the outdoors, and curious about inclusivity and the history of our public lands.

When editing the film, was there anything you wished you could have included in the final cut?

While travelling through these National

people to learn more about public lands, and to vote on environmental and social issues around them that they can directly impact.

What's the next big adventure or film project on the horizon for you?

I recently made a film with our producer and subject Faith Briggs, called *We Hike to Heal*, and recently I've become more involved in teaching storytelling and documentary filmmaking to students.

“I love the ability of filmmaking to share meaningful stories and ignite change.”

Monuments, there was just so much history of the land, peoples, and politics that we just didn't have time to dive into in a 10 minute film.

What are some of the challenges you encountered while making this film?

A couple years ago when we started this process, we had a hard time raising the funds we needed to support the film that understood our vision, as it combined conservation with inclusivity, which was hard to pitch. We had to film on a really thin budget to start, in time however we found brands and organizations to align with and support us along the way.

Is there an action you hope people are inspired to take after seeing this film?

I hope this film increases awareness on the ground level, by being more inclusive in our communities and extending an invitation to others to participate in a meaningful way. I also hope it encourages

What is one piece of advice you can give students that you wish someone had shared with you?

I remember being really inspired by female filmmakers, and the collaboration side of film to tell meaningful stories. If something really lights you up inside, pay attention. Even if it feels way out of reach — just be persistent, commit to really working hard for what drives you, and trust that intuition.

Pre-Screening Activities

Pre-Screening Activity 1

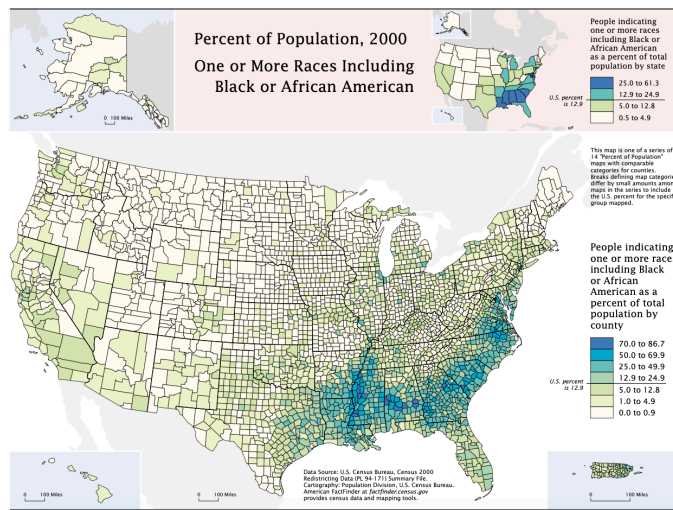
To engage student interest, and activate prior knowledge, as well as practice critical thinking/questioning skills, it would be interesting to present the maps below alongside each other:



From National Parks Service, this map which shows **America's National Monuments**



From Maps of the World, this map which shows the **US National Parks**



From 2000 Census data, this map (found on page 45) shows **where the majority of Black or people who indicated more than one race are living in the US**



From the U.S. Department of Interior, Indian Affairs, this map which shows the **Map of Indian Lands in the United States**

Pre-Screening Activity 1 (cont.)

Initially, it might be visually easier to first observe these maps individually, and ask the following questions for each map:

- **What do you notice? Where are the majority of the National Monuments/National Parks/people who identify as Black or more than one race/Native American Reservations located?**
- **Why do you think the majority of the National Monuments/National Parks/people who identify as Black or more than one race/Native American Reservations are located where they are?**
- **Where are the least amount of National Monuments/National Parks/people who identify as Black or more than one race/Native American Reservations located? Why do you think that is?**

After reviewing the maps individually, it would be interesting to display them alongside each other on your computer screen (which can either be projected or shared in Zoom), and ask students the following questions:

- **Where does it appear that the majority of the National Parks and Monuments are located?**
- **When looking at the Southwest United States, where do you notice the majority of the National Monuments are located? Where are the American Indian reservations located in relation to these National Monuments? What does that tell you about that land?**
- **When looking at the Census data map on race, where do the majority of people who identify as Black or more than one race live? Where are the majority of National Parks and Monuments located? Do you think Black people or people who identify as more than one race can easily access the National Monuments and Parks? What might be some other barriers to visiting a National Park or Monument?**

Pre-Screening Activity 2

If you would like, prior to watching the film, *This Land*, this article, titled **“We’re Here. You Just Don’t See Us”** by Latria Graham for OutsideOnline.com (May 1, 2018) covers the long history of laws and customs that have “whitewashed our finest public lands.” As an outdoor enthusiast, proud Southerner, accomplished writer, and birder, Latria beautifully covers these complex issues, while weaving in her personal experiences of growing up in rural South Carolina and her experience in the outdoors during and post-college.

This personal essay is longer, but it would be recommended to read this essay prior to watching the film as it gives so much background information to Faith E. Brigg’s documentary and will deepen your students’ understanding of the film.

Since the article is longer, it would be recommended to read as a class, pausing along the way to let your class reflect and open up for discussion. Some recommended stopping points (quotes in order) in the article, and also questions to guide discussion are as follows:

“There’s reality behind some of these beliefs, but the big takeaway—that black people dislike the outdoors—is wrong.”

- **Why do you think it is a stereotype that Black people do not like the outdoors?**
- **What stereotypes of people are expected to participate in the outdoors?**

“African Americans don’t always go where white people do. Swimming pools used to be segregated in the South and other parts of the country, so it wasn’t easy to join a team and practice your freestyle kick. Skiing? Not in the cards if you’re poor and live in an inner city. Beaches? In many places, blacks were banned by law or custom. And national parks weren’t especially welcoming, either; many were created as an escape from urban sprawl, at a time when urban was shorthand for blacks and immigrants.”

- **Where have you learned about segregation? What do you know about segregation?**
- **Do you think segregation still exists today?**

“16 percent of African Americans said they hadn’t visited a national park because they thought the parks were unsafe.”

- **Why do you think African Americans would feel unsafe in a National Park?**

“I would not experience real backcountry wilderness—the kinds of places Outside celebrates—until I went off to Dartmouth in 2004. That’s also when I started learning about the various things that black people don’t do.”

- **What kind of “real backcountry” experiences do you think Latria is referring to?**
- **When she refers to the “various things that black people don’t do,” what is she referring to?**

Pre-Screening Activity 2 (cont.)

“According to the 2010 census, 55 percent of respondents who identified as black lived in the South, which has only nine national parks unevenly scattered throughout the entire region, including Great Smoky Mountains in Tennessee, Hot Springs in Arkansas, Mammoth Cave in Kentucky, and Shenandoah in Virginia. Then there are the Biscayne, Everglades, and Dry Tortugas parks, clustered together deep in South Florida. In the extreme southwest corner of Texas—which barely counts as the South—sit Big Bend and Guadalupe Mountains. The states of Delaware, Maryland, Georgia, Alabama, Louisiana, Mississippi, Oklahoma, and West Virginia don’t have any national parks at all. For most people living in those areas, visiting a national park means at least a day’s drive. Park visitors also must find places to eat and sleep, at a time when most African American survey respondents list time and money as two of the most significant barriers to getting outside”

- Why do you think there are so few National Parks in these areas?
- What does that communicate to the people of that region? Do you think people in these states and areas are more, or less likely to get outside?

“If there’s one thing about being black in America that scares me still, it’s how quickly circumstances can deteriorate. One moment you’re a customer, the next a robber. Every time I watch black people bleed on TV, bodies slumped on pavement, I realize how easily it could have been me.”

- Can you think about how Black people are portrayed in the news?
- What does Latria mean, when she says “how quickly circumstances can deteriorate?”

“People who monitor the statistics can tell you the cost of everything—the programs and outreach initiatives—but don’t necessarily understand the value. A child’s first exploration of the natural world isn’t quantifiable. It’s hard to put a price on learning to read the sky or the ability to smell the wind and distinguish the scents it brings.”

- If public land and National Parks are meant for everyone, how do we ensure that all people have access to this kind of experience?
- Why do you think a child’s first exploration of the natural world is so important?

“People of color are still often left out of the conservation decisions and planning that affect their communities. Creating equitable outdoor experiences means dedicating money, energy, and resources to programs that have been denied us for decades. For this to happen, well-meaning white people must abandon the post-racial, colorblind fantasy they would like to believe in.”

- Think about the demographics of people who are making decisions on conservation and planning locally and nationally. Do you think there is enough diversity to make decisions that are equal to all?
- In the last two paragraphs of the essay, what are Latria’s calls to action? What text evidence supports her calls to action?

Discussion Guide

GENERAL/OPEN PROMPTS

1. Do you think it is important to preserve land? What is the meaning of public lands?

EXPLORING SELF

1. Faith E. Briggs is a runner, and to connect with the land, the world, and each other, she runs. What do you do to help yourself feel more connected to the world, to the land, and to other people? Do you think you can feel as connected to someone on a computer screen vs. time spent outside? Why or why not?
2. In the film Jen Catillo, an Ultrarunner & Immigrants Rights Advocate states “I don’t want to talk about gender and politics and race in the outdoors on a trail in the mountains, but until change, then we have to.” What do you discuss with your friends? Do you discuss your feelings and views about gender, politics, and race with your friends? Why or why not?

EXPLORING THE WORLD

1. In the film Faith E. Briggs states “public lands are for everyone, even if you live across the country. Being a public land owner, we get a say in what the world we occupy looks like.” Do other nations have public lands? Why do you think the idea of private lands exist and is so ingrained in American society?

EXPLORING FILMMAKING

1. Faith E. Briggs, the filmmaker, and runner featured in the film introduces herself as an athlete, advocate and filmmaker. Why do you think she chose to use those words in that order?
2. Do you think the filmmaker Faith E. Briggs was effective in communicating her message in the film? What was her message and motivation for making the film?
3. At the end of the film, Faith E. Briggs made a point to state the following: “We had the incredible opportunity to film in the stunning homelands of the Shasta, Ute, Mescalero, Apache, Mansos, Yavapai and O’Odham Nations. The importance of acknowledging the true history of this land cannot be understated and we thank our nation’s first stewards.” Why do you think it was important to thank these indigenous groups? Have you heard of these indigenous groups prior to this? Why do you think it is important to know the names of the people who lived on the land before us?

EXPLORING SOCIAL ISSUES

1. In the film, filmmaker Faith E. Briggs states: “I never thought of myself as a conservationist. I actually used to think that conservation was a really privileged thing and that you know, that, people from historically marginalized communities, I had to think about people first. The battle now is saying, no I am a conservationist and redefining what that means.” What does she mean when she says that she is redefining what it means to be a conservationist? Do you see an intersectionality in making public lands accessible to all and their preservation?
2. Faith E. Briggs states that “if you come from a group that has historically not been welcome, it’s going to take an effort to make you feel welcome. It just doesn’t happen overnight.” What does that welcoming look like? How do we make the outdoors a more equitable and accessible place for everyone?

SENSE OF WONDER

1. Do you think the media showing more people of color in the outdoor industry and accessing public lands would increase participation in the outdoors/public lands? What other marginalized populations need to be shown in the outdoors?
2. Think about gender and race demographics in your favorite sports. Why do you think there is overrepresentation in some sports and underrepresentation in others?

Activities

Activity 1

Instagram and other social media tools can be an effective way to communicate just about anything. There are several inspirational, educational and informative Instagram accounts, focusing on educating people on the topic of intersectional environmentalism, which is the idea that environmentalism and social justice are not separate entities, but share a synergistic relationship with a shared vision ([@organeyez.co](#), [@intersectionalenvironmentalist](#), [@climateincolour](#), [@kameachayne](#)).

Besides being an easy way to access information on nuanced topics that do not receive enough press, these accounts focus on appealing graphic designs to relay their message, using the multiple photo options on Instagram to post snippets from essays they have created.

For this activity, students will review the accounts, read an article, and then create a visually-appealing Instagram post to relay the message of the article to the class. Students have full liberty on how they want to present the information. They could create a **poster(s)**, a **Google slide**, **act out their Instagram post**, use **Adobe**, or **tell you what they learned**. The goal is to expose students to nuanced topics, while practicing critical reading and thinking strategies to increase comprehension.

To start, every student in your class probably already has Instagram. Tell them to look up these four accounts and divide into groups based on which Instagram account they like most. There doesn't have to be a huge justification of why they like one account over another, some people might find some of the graphics easier to read/understand or find them more visually appealing. Once in a small group, students would find one post to share with the class, and what they learned from the post.

After the students have divided into groups, the students have the options below of material to choose from to create their own Instagram post (and decide what their Instagram handle will be!).

If you have other sources you would like to use instead, go ahead! This is just a recommended list. Also, dependent upon the age group/ reading ability/time you would like to dedicate to this activity, students could complete activity using one source, instead of dividing up into small groups to read separate sources.



1. Students could rewatch *This Land*, and create a post to support Faith E. Briggs' content and message while focusing on the question: How does creating access to public spaces for all benefit the conservation movement?
2. The article, "[Trump's EPA Concludes Environmental Racism Is Real.](#)" by Vann R. Newkirk II for The Atlantic (February 28, 2018)
3. The article, "[White People Own 98 Percent of Rural Land. Young Black Farmers Want to Reclaim Their Share.](#)" by Tom Philpott for Mother Jones (June 27, 2020)
4. The article, "[We are still here': Native Americans fight to be counted in the U.S. census](#)" as adapted by Newsela.com, from The Guardian (February 11, 2020). (Newsela.com is a free tool, you can access through your school's Google Drive account or email. You can change the Lexile Score or translate into Spanish).

When students are done reviewing their source and designing their post, they should present their material to the class. Please share your students' work with us at studentprograms@mountainfilm.org or on Instagram ([@Mountainfilm](#)).

RECOMMENDED EXTENTIONS

The website for the film, [This Land](#), has a lot of resources to further your education around public lands and equity. Click on **Take Action** from the homepage, to find the tabs for either **Join a Community**, **Learn** or **Get Involved**. The **Learn** tab is divided into five categories: *Read*, *Listen*, *Watch*, *Follow* and *Attend*. The **Get Involved** tab has a wealth of information on current legislation being proposed to create resolutions to climate change, including [The Green New Deal](#), the [Climate Equity Act](#) and [Clean Future Bill](#).

Want to learn the historically-accurate details of segregation in America? This short-documentary from 2019 (17:19), titled [Segregated by Design](#) (free online!) breaks down the myth of de-facto segregation and discusses the unconstitutional policies at a federal, state, and local level designed to segregate metropolitan areas. Narrated by Richard Rothstein, author of [The Color of Law: A Forgotten History of How Our Government Segregated America](#), uses a combination of graphics and animation to clearly explain this complex history that is often not covered in your standard history textbook.

Mardi Fuller, avid hiker and Black activist, discusses what it's like to be a female of color on the trail, in her beautiful essay, titled [A Place of Freedom and Belonging in the Great Outdoors](#) for Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC, July 2020)

Latria Graham (author of the article in the pre-reading activity) wrote an article titled, [“The Power of Birding in the South.”](#) which covers Black Birders Week (May 31, 2020- June 5, 2020) and its founders, as well as explaining her relationship to birding. (For Garden & Gun, June 12, 2020)

From the organeyez.co blog, [“Wilderness as a Colonial Construct”](#) (July 16, 2020), gives background information on the history of the wilderness movement in the United States.

The history of Madison Grant, one of the Nation's first environmentalists, and white supremacist, as detailed by the article [“Environmentalism's Racist History”](#) by Jedediah Purdy for the New Yorker (August 13, 2015)

The book, [Dispossessing the Wilderness](#), by Mark David Spence (4 ½ stars on Goodreads.com) covers the policies of Indian removal in the creation of National parks like Yellowstone, Yosemite, and Glacier.

The book, [An Indigenous Peoples' History of the United States](#), by Roxanne Dunbar-Ortiz (4.5 stars on Goodreads.com) is the first history of the United States told from the perspective of indigenous peoples. “Spanning more than four hundred years, this classic bottom-up peoples' history radically reframes US history and explodes the silences that have haunted our national narrative.”

The book, [A Manufactured Wilderness: Summer Camps and the Shaping of American Youth, 1890-1960](#), by Abigail A. Van Slyck (4.5 stars on Goodreads.com). Abigail examines the American phenomenon of summer camps and suggests that “camps provided a man-made version of wilderness, shaped by middle-class anxieties about gender roles, class tensions, race relations, and modernity and its impact on the lives of children.”

The book, [Black Faces, White Spaces: Reimagining the Relationship of African Americans to the Great Outdoors](#), by Carolyn Finney (4.5 stars on Goodreads.com). In her book, Carolyn Finney seeks to answer the question “Why are African Americans so underrepresented when it comes to interest in nature, outdoor recreation, and environmentalism?”

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