

Connecting with Youth: the Urban Wilderness Canoe Adventure Model

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Urban Connections St. Paul MN





What is UWCA?

Purpose of UWCA

Partners

**Role of Forest
Service**

Evaluation

Spreading the Word

Have an adventure right in the heart of the Twin Cities!

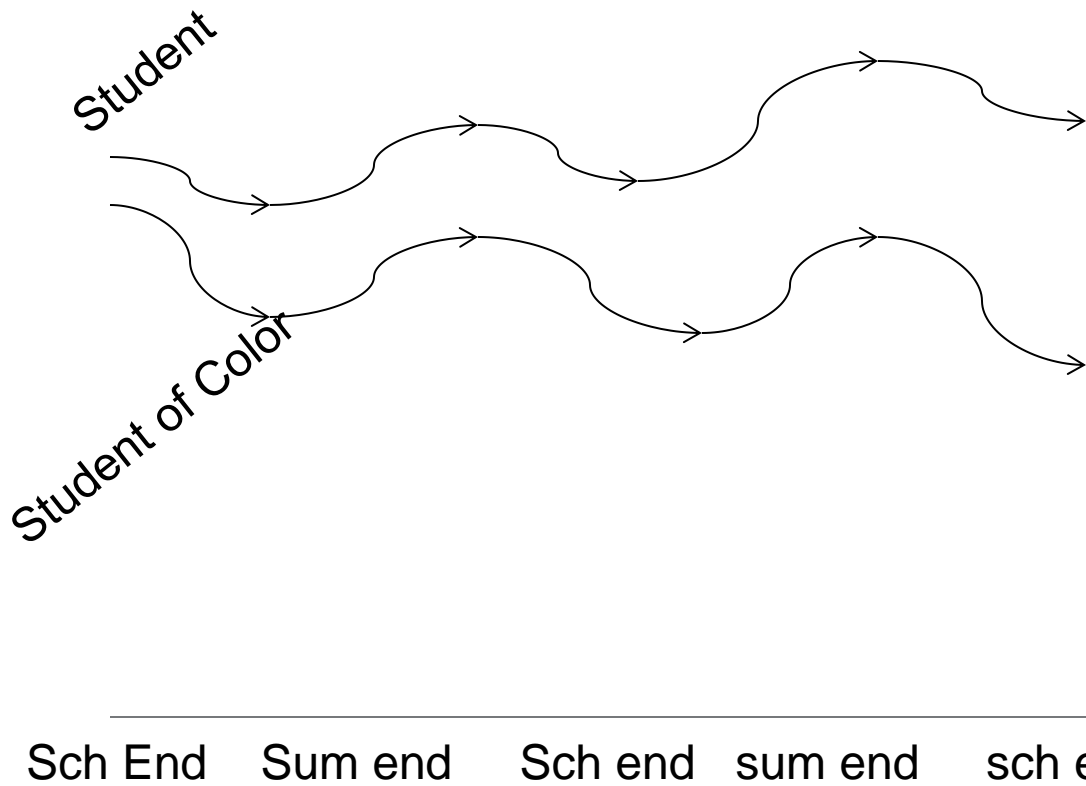


Motivating Factors for Partner Participation in UWCA

1. Address the achievement gap in graduation rates between white students and students of color.
2. Teach a stewardship ethic to our youth—what you do at home impacts the Mississippi River
3. Teach the value of our public lands as a play to play, care for, and possibly build a career around.



BEST
PRACTICE



Ever widening achievement gap, made worse by summer learning loss.



UWCA Partner- National Park Service
Mississippi National River and Recreation Area



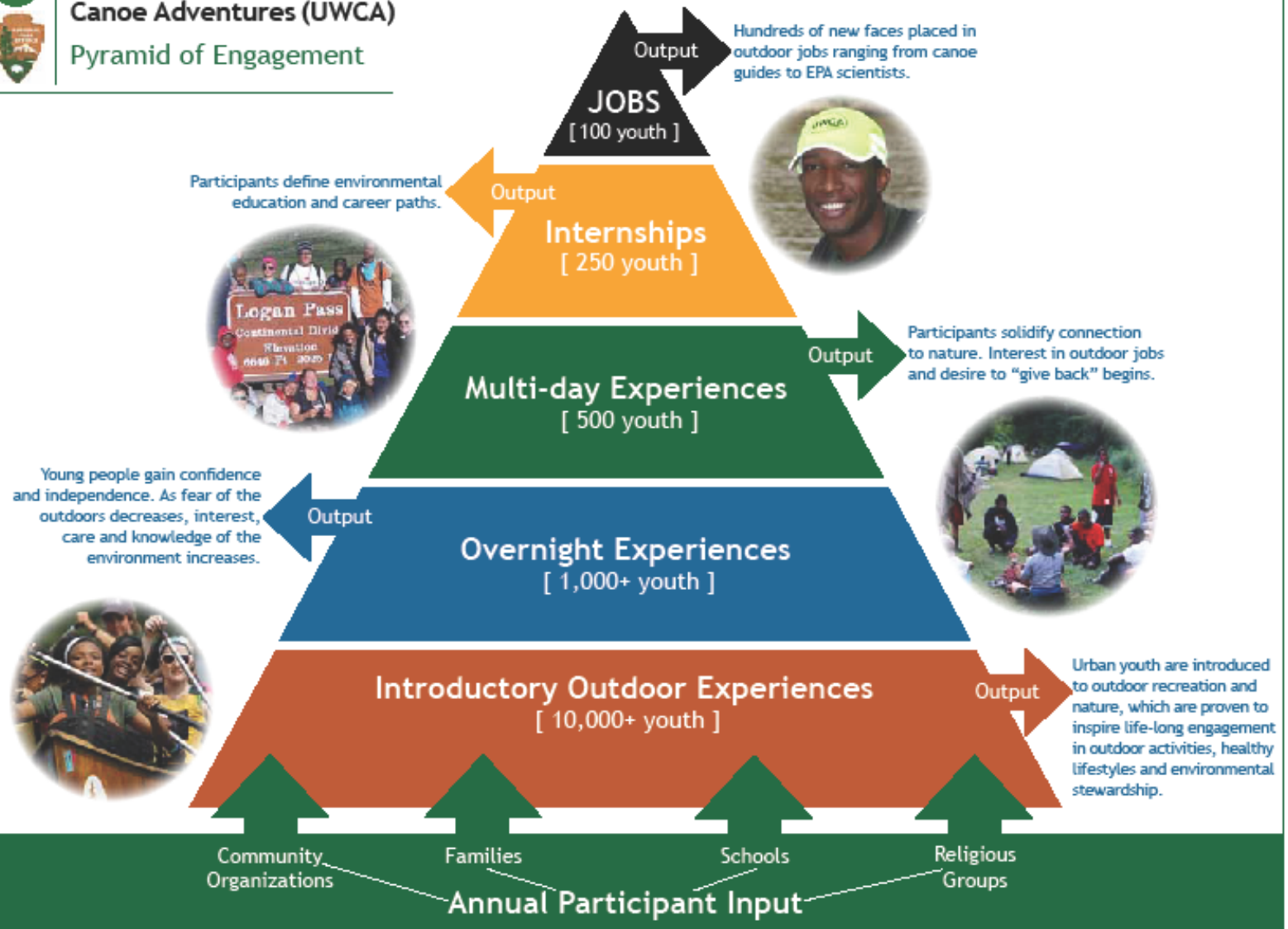
Wilderness Inquiry—connecting people from all walks of life to the natural world through shared outdoor adventures.

PARTNERS INVOLVED IN UWCA






Urban Wilderness Canoe Adventures (UWCA) Pyramid of Engagement



Having fun on the Mississippi!



A scenic view of a lake with two wooden canoes in the foreground. The canoes are light brown with white logos of a tree and a mountain. The text "WILDERNESS INQUIRY" is visible on the side of the front canoe. In the background, a man and a child are fishing from a rocky shore. The lake is surrounded by a dense forest of tall trees. The sky is clear and blue.

Stepping out further,
canoeing and camping
“up north.”



A grand adventure to Glacier National Park

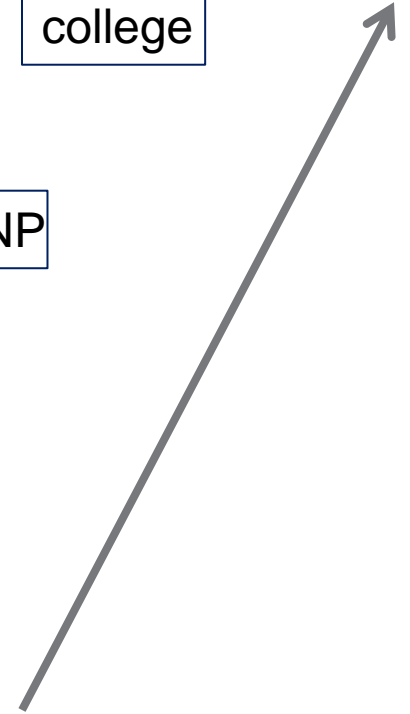
Faith's
journey

ARTIC
college

Glacier NP

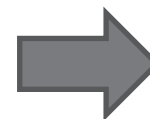
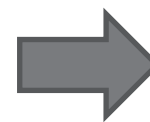
Local camping

Canoeing on Miss River





Urban Wilderness Canoe Adventures (UWCA) Pyramid of Engagement



Intern
Local contacts



The mission of **Urban Connections** is to grow and foster mutual relationships that connect urban residents and the Forest Service using local green spaces and partnerships.





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TEACHERS REACTION TO OVERNIGHT LOCAL OVERNIGHT CAMPING TRIP:

“I think the students got to know each other well and got to know me better. I’ll never forget the bus ride home. I felt like there was almost a peace or sadness because, I think out in the woods, they really felt AMAZING and CONFIDENT, almost like they were a TEAM OF WINNERS. And I don’t think they often feel that way. They really felt positive and they don’t always feel that way here in school.”



2012 survey by UMN Center for Applied Research & Educational Improvement

- 3 in 10 students had no prior experience related to the Mississippi River
- 92% teachers agreed or strongly agreed that the river trip was a valuable experience for all students
- 88% student agreed or strongly agreed that they worked with others as a team
- 92% teachers believe the outdoor experience supported academic learning



BEST
PRACTICE

EDUCATIONAL THEMES SUPPORTED BY A UWCA EXPERIENCE:

**Science and
Engineering:**

Bridge spans

Life cycle of mussels

Aquatic insects

My street is a river

Water cycle

Design a boat

**Natural & cultural
history:**

Sedimentary layers

Waterfall on the move

Fur trade

Lumber and sawmills

Fossils

US-Dakota history



How are we doing in addressing the STEWARDSHIP ETHIC?

“UWCA has impacted my life by showing me a side of nature that I have never seen, and giving me the chance to enjoy the beauty of nature ... I pay closer attention than I have before picking up litter and watering dried trees, grass and other plants.”



How are we doing in developing SELF AWARENESS AND CONFIDENCE?

“My level of confidence is higher. For me, it was that I stopped seeing barriers. I can see other people’s barriers, and my own too, you can take steps to address them.”





SHOUT OUT

Paul Labowitz, MNRRA
Park Superintendent

Wilderness Inquiry
pictures









BEST
PRACTICE