

National Geographic

SHELTON JOHNSON: *There was a time when I would see African Americans is such an infrequent rate that, when I saw them, it was just (!!!)... that silence. And that was once every month *or so*, when I first came here. But now, my expectation is that every day I'm here and at my job, I will see an African American.*

TERESA BAKER: In 2013, after visiting several national parks and not seeing people of color, not seeing African Americans, I started to grow concerned as to why that is. So, I asked: is this a problem for the Park Service?

And the Park Service will openly admit to this being a problem. They just don't have the means to solve it. So, it'll take grassroot organizations, such as mine, to come in and engage communities of color in these outdoor spaces.

SHELTON JOHNSON: Their families haven't taken them to places like this because their families don't believe that there's a cultural connection or that these places are places for them.

Because the key thing to keep in mind is that African Americans come out of a history of exclusion, not inclusion. So, it's nice for us to actually receive an invitation, and so that there's a sense of safety that, when we get there, we'll be *treated fairly* and we'll be treated with respect.

There are African Americans, right now, who have become the director of the National Park Service. I'm referring to Bob Sands, and there are African Americans who are right now chief Rangers, but they are, in general, unknown to the larger culture of African Americans. So,

there needs to be a little bit more clarity and an expression of the accomplishments that these pioneers have made.

FREDRIK PENN: Before there was a National Park Service in

1916, it was the US Army that took care of all the national parks. And it *just so happens* that during that period, there was the 9th cavalry, which was an all-black unit.

The Buffalo Soldiers were African American soldiers who were allowed to join the regular US military after the end of the Civil War. So, they went to *Yosemite* and protected it from poachers,

protected it from people who will start forest fires, and part of that whole history has been *sort of lost in the way* American history is taught.

KIEONNE DAWSON: I never saw people that really looked like me on the trail. You know, I was fortunate enough to, *you know*, have a father that was a lover of nature too. And so, at an early age, I remember one of our first national parks, we went to Yosemite. And I was just *blown away*. And we hiked up to the Falls and *I've been hooked*, I've been hooked, ever since.

TERESA BAKER: It's important for people of color to develop or reestablish relationships with the outdoors so that, in 15 to 20 years, when people of color are the number one demographic in the country, we will have established those relationships.

KIEONNE DAWSON: When Olivia is an adult, and she's my age, I really hope that these parks are preserved. Giving her this introduction now, I hope that this seed is planted so deep within her that... we never know... we may be raising one of the world's, *you know*, conservationists. But this is just beautiful, it's beautiful, and we need to protect it.

Radio Canada – #BlackBirders 2020

JOURNALIST: You hear about birds, you see them. In a documentary last year, Christian Cooper shared his passion for birdwatching. Now, he's part of a global conversation about antiblack racism.

CORINNA NEWSOM: *For far too long*, black people in the United States have been shown that outdoor exploration activities, such as *birding*, are not for us.

JOURNALIST: Cooper's experience, the catalyst for an online *call-to-action* for black birdwatchers, scientists and nature enthusiasts to share their experiences using a simple hashtag: #Blackbirdersweek. Corinna Newsom is a co-founder.

CORINNA NEWSOM: An overwhelming number of black people shared photos of them. Everything from recreational outdoor activities to scientists studying birds and other wildlife. I remember waking up and, *like*, scrolling through Twitter first, and I just started falling.

JOURNALIST: Newsom, who studies avian ecology, says that, unfortunately, Cooper's experience isn't isolated.

CORINNA NEWSOM: This is actually an issue that is rooted out in our culture that needs to be dug up.

JOURNALIST: Around the world, thousands have shared their posts in support, including Jacqueline Scott.

(JACQUELINE SCOTT: Look as it's *riding the air currents*.)

Jacqueline Scott, a University of Toronto PhD student researches and writes about black inclusivity in the outdoors.

JACQUELINE SCOTT: You still face the daily racism, *as in*, here you are, you're birdwatching, you're hiking, but it's never with the complete freedom, the complete relaxation.

JOURNALIST: As a group hike leader in the city, and *avid* birdwatcher, she's had her own experiences.

JACQUELINE SCOTT: You're in the campsites or you're hiking the trails, and you hear ceaselessly: "Oh what are you doing here?"

JOURNALIST: That question is familiar to Judith Kasiama in Vancouver. It is why she founded "Color the trails", an outdoor group for people of color in the city.

JUDITH KASIAMA: I hope that we can all *kind of* come together and make this space inclusive. Because nature is inclusive.

JOURNALIST: As the movement *takes flight*, a hope from the black community that this awareness will create change.

(to Shana Reeds, CBC News Toronto)

STEM showcase student with disabilities

EMLYN KOSTER: We should think about a place like the North Carolina Museum of Natural Sciences as being a place, as it is today, of inspiration and reflection. That's what the word Muse means. This is the only museum in the world that is doing what we're doing today and it started one year ago, in October: a National Disability Awareness Month.

I am basically walking around the blindfold on all day, every day, 365 days a year. I really have no idea what I'm doing in life, so I hope to be here and hear some good ideas

SINAH BAHRAM: You'll hear the term STEM *bantered out around* a lot today and STEM stands for Science Technology Engineering and Mathematics. And so, the idea is to encourage kids with disabilities, who are so often underrepresented. Persons with disabilities are heavily underrepresented in these fields. (So we aim) to encourage them to go into these fields, to go into science.

LINDSAY YAZZOLINO: Whether a *kid* decides that they're going to do science or not, is up to them but I feel like it's so important for disability not to be what prevents a student from pursuing a field that they're certainly capable of pursuing, and in this case, the sciences.

SINAH BAHRAM: We've got some awesome panelists *lined up* today, we've got some undergraduate students here as well. And so, just to show that persons with disabilities , regardless of functional limitation, can do whatever they want to do.

YOUNG BOY: I hope to see some people with, like, different physical disabilities come like mine and

YOUNG GIRL: I hope to see other people who have had struggles and how they *get through*.

SPEAKER: I was diagnosed with retinitis pigmentosa when I was 10 years old... and that was in 1981.

YOUNG WOMAN: Whatever disability they have, they should: A) they should not let it define them, and B) they should not let it hold them back.

JUSTIN LEBLANC: So, I'm really decided to see what they *have in mind*. I mean, technically, they are our future. I want them to be prepared and be motivated and *to go for it*.

LINDSAY YAZZOLINO: It's one thing to know, *sort of* inherently, that a feel is *doable*, but *it's another thing entirely* to know how blind people, or people with disabilities, actually do it. *You know*, how we actually *get things done*.

MAN: The most important thing about the STEM Career Showcase for Students with

Disabilities is connecting young people with disabilities with role models that are not only surviving, but thriving and actually, *you know*, pushing the boundaries.

MARK EZZEL: That I think is the real usefulness of something like this. To be able to see people who've been successful who look like you, who have gone through some of the same issues. That's very, very important for a young person, especially a young person with a disability.

JOANN BLUMENFELD: I'm most excited about them seeing their future and their dreams in front of them, and people that have succeeded and the people that they can then become. And hopefully, they'll be here at this conference in 10 years sitting here, speaking to other students.

YOUNG BOY: Events like this are really important for meeting new people, learning about different technologies that help you with your disability.

PANELIST: I have Cerebral Palsy, which means that when I wanted to be an astronaut, that was *not going to happen*. So, astronomy was my way to get to the Stars, that was my ticket to the stars. That's been my passion and one of the things I'm here for today is to encourage you to follow your dream.

(presenter: Thank you let's give our panelists a round of applause)

I'd like to actually thank them, thank all of you for being here today because it shows initiative, it shows that you really are ready to go, so let's first go out and do something together.

STUDENT: Today was such an incredibly thing. It's like being down here, you're seeing all those professionals at what they have chosen to do, I don't think there are enough words in the the dictionary, to describe just how awesome that is.