



## **WTA DEI Plan Progress Report: 2018-2020**

*“Diversity and inclusion work is not swift: it is an iterative process of awareness building, information gathering, analysis, vision development, planning, and action. There is no magic shortcut. We start by creating a safer, braver space and a forum for deep learning, honest exploration and open dialogue.”*

-- Queta González, Director of Center for Diversity & the Environment

## Introduction

In early 2018 WTA's leadership, board and staff came together to develop a detailed three-year plan to strengthen and advance diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) throughout our organization, our partnerships and our programs. The plan was meant to provide a set of long-term goals, strategies and actionable steps that WTA could take to advance our organization's commitment to DEI and was intended as a living document, to be updated based on progress and learnings along the way.

This report outlines the progress made over the past three years towards these goals. It brings together the key milestones, accomplishments and lessons learned during this phase of WTA's DEI journey. The report is organized around the five goals that orient our commitment to DEI:

1. WTA is an inclusive and equitable organization, where staff, leaders, members and program participants of all identities feel they belong and are valued.
2. Washingtonians experience fewer barriers to getting outside and a broader range of people feel represented and included in the hiking community.
3. WTA communications and programs are accessible, culturally relevant, and inclusive.
4. Leaders in the WTA community are confident in their ability to foster an inclusive hiking community, where people of all identities are represented and feel welcome.
5. WTA is a respectful and reciprocal partner to community-based organizations.

As with any journey, there have been ups and downs along the way and we've done our best to capture both the achievements and learnings that we encountered as we undertook this work. A "Lessons Learned" section at the end includes more details about what we've seen work and what hasn't, as well as some initial thoughts on what we intend to carry forward or change in the next phase of our equity journey.

We hope this report proves useful to other organizations in their own DEI journeys and we remain committed to working within our organization, as well as with our community and partners, to build a more equitable and inclusive world. The goals, strategies and lessons in this report will serve as the foundation for our next three-year DEI plan in 2021-2023.

## **WTA's Commitment to Diversity, Equity and Inclusion**

We at WTA believe that time spent in nature is good for our hearts, minds and bodies and that everyone deserves equitable opportunities to benefit from hiking and to feel represented and welcome in the hiking community. Yet we also recognize that social inequities impact all aspects of our lives, including engagement with the outdoors. Significant, systemic barriers and bias prevent many people from enjoying the many benefits of hiking and time in nature.

As a historically white-led organization, we know it is our work to help dismantle institutional racism and build towards a more equitable future. As a result, WTA is committed to:

- Fostering an inclusive hiking community, where people of all identities are represented and feel welcome;
- Cultivating an inclusive culture and environment at WTA where staff, volunteers, and program participants of all identities feel valued; and
- Advancing equitable access to trails so that barriers don't stand in the way of people getting outside

More information about the work WTA does to create a more welcoming and inclusive outdoor environment can be found on our website at:

<https://www.wta.org/our-work/trails-for-everyone/trailsforeveryone>

## **About this Report & Next Steps**

The goals and strategies included below were informed by planning in late 2017 and early 2018 including multiple workshops with WTA staff and board as well as survey-based feedback from almost two thousand WTA stakeholders including members, volunteers and partners. WTA worked closely with the Avarna Group, a leading inclusion and equity consulting firm that specializes in work with outdoor organizations, to engage stakeholders and develop the plan.

In early 2021 we will be using the goals and lessons learned from this report to develop a new DEI plan, laying out our organizational priorities and strategies for the next three years of our DEI journey. This plan will be made available on our website and will serve as the basis for our future efforts.

Any questions about this report, our approach to DEI or our organization's experiences over the past three years should be directed to [jloucky@wta.org](mailto:jloucky@wta.org).

**Goal 1: WTA is an inclusive and equitable organization, where staff, leaders, members and program participants of all identities feel they belong and are valued**

Our focus under Goal 1 was to ensure that WTA’s internal policies, practices and culture were more inclusive and equitable. Overall we saw significant progress, particularly in our efforts to build equity into our HR processes and team structures. We still have room for improvement in several areas, including outreach and recruitment from underrepresented communities for organizational hiring.

**Building equity in HR processes:** We made significant progress building equity into our recruiting, hiring and training. This included developing an org-wide transparent compensation philosophy in 2018 and expanding our DEI training materials for staff and volunteers, including annual staff DEI training. We also took steps to weave equity into our job descriptions, hiring and onboarding, including standardizing job levels across the organization and updating all job descriptions to include cultural competency qualifications. Finally, we took some initial steps towards more deliberate outreach to BIPOC communities by expanding recruiting for core leadership hires through broader community & partner outreach.

**Building equity into team structures:** We completed a cross-organization assessment and found that additional staff capacity was needed to expand community partnerships, so we created a new team (Community Partnerships & Leadership Development) to help strengthen these relationships and coordinate WTA’s DEI plan. As part of our goal of creating an inclusive culture we also created a “Change Team”, a standing group of staff representing all functional teams at WTA who come together regularly to discuss and advance our DEI work. In addition we created dedicated space for WTA’s BIPOC staff to come together and support each other regularly.

**Strengthening equity on WTA’s Board:** WTA’s board has been taking steps to integrate DEI practices into their recruitment and ways of working. In addition to regular DEI competency trainings the board has focused on mitigating bias in board selection by establishing clear criteria for board candidates that includes commitment to DEI. The board has also focused on codifying and practicing more inclusive norms and behaviors into the board culture as a whole, with the goal of increasing diversity and inclusion on the board.

**Key milestones under Goal 1:**

- Launched annual staff survey to measure and track staff satisfaction (2017-2020)
- Developed and rolled out an org-wide transparent compensation philosophy (2018)
- Standardized job levels across the organization and updated all job descriptions to include cultural competency qualifications (2019)
- Implemented bi-annual WTA community Equity and Inclusion Assessment (2017 & 2019)
- Established criteria for board candidate selection that includes demonstrated commitment to DEI (2019-2020)
- Held facilitated DEI sessions to build more inclusive Board norms & behaviors (2019-2020)

## **Goal 2: Washingtonians experience fewer barriers to getting outside and a broader range of people feel represented and included in the hiking community**

This goal focused on WTA's external efforts working with state, local and community partners to understand and address barriers preventing some communities from getting outside or feeling welcome in the outdoors. The work under this goal has evolved into our [Trails for Everyone](#) campaign and now includes a wide range of program activities and partnerships.

**Expanded Community Partnerships:** One of our biggest priorities over the past three years has been to expand and deepen our relationships with partner organizations that represent and serve underrepresented communities in the outdoors. We believe that collaborating with community organizations helps us better understand barriers to accessing the outdoors and allows us to use our platforms to amplify their messages through shared storytelling. Relationships with organizations like GirlTrek, Outdoor Afro and Latino Outdoors allowed us to reach and support communities we wouldn't otherwise have been able to. Based on feedback from partners we expanded Outdoor Leadership Training program resources to better support the Tacoma/South Puget Sound region and to prioritize program support for historically underrepresented communities.

**Equity-Focused Advocacy & Engagement:** In parallel WTA worked at the local, state and federal levels to support equity-focused policy changes, particularly advocating for increased funding for historically under-resourced communities and areas. We participated in a variety of coalitions having conversations about the importance of prioritizing DEI, including the Recreate Responsibly Coalition, and we used these opportunities to bring in communities and organizations that would be the most impacted by those policies. Additionally we engaged with elected officials on issues relating to trails and underfunding of public lands.

**Inclusive Storytelling:** One early focus was to increase the diversity of storytelling and topics across WTA's communications channels to better reflect the variety of interests in the hiking community. We did this by reaching out to contributors from under-represented communities and paying for their work. In the summer of 2020 we also made a public stand against racism and created a resource page to share the great work of so many organizations both locally and nationally.

### **Key milestones under Goal 2:**

- Led [five legislator hikes](#) highlighting equity issues related to trails in their districts (2019)
- Supported [King County Levy – Land Conservation Initiatives](#) (2019)
- Collaborated with local tribes to create a [land and treaty rights acknowledgment statement on the hiking guide](#) and to [support tribes in projects that impacted them](#) (2019-2020)
- Supported [Every Kid Outdoors funding](#) (2020)
- Made [public commitment to stand against racism and anti-racism resource page](#) (2020)
- Launched [Trails for Everyone campaign](#) (2020)
- Expanded Outdoor Leadership Training program & gear lending library to South Puget Sound (2020)

**Goal 3: WTA communications and programs are accessible, culturally relevant, and inclusive.**

Goal 3 focused primarily on our public communications platforms (including our website, magazine and social media channels) as well as our public programming (including trail events, the gear lending library and outdoor leadership trainings). Our goal was to ensure that our communications and programs were inclusive and welcoming for the full range of participants and that they contributed to a more inclusive outdoor community.

**Inclusive Member Engagement & Communications:** One of our first steps we took in 2018 was to update our communications style guide and editorial process to better reflect WTA's equity values, creating specific guidance on appropriate language use, images and content. We continue to do annual audits of our public communications to track and increase the diversity of our articles, blogs and stories. In an effort to make all community members feel welcome and included we recently made changes to our membership structure to reduce barriers to entry and increase accessibility of being a WTA member.

**Inclusive Programs:** We sought feedback from program participants to strengthen our ability to provide inclusive environments for volunteers, youth and community leaders. This feedback led us to expand our [shared identity](#) trail work parties from one day to weeklong events and to strengthen our trainings on [integrative risk management](#) and inclusive norms and behaviors to volunteer trail crew leaders. We have also developed an internal system to track inclusive behavior and incidents of bias for all trail events which we plan to roll out organizationally.

**Key milestones under Goal 3:**

- Expanded internal editorial and communications style guide to incorporate equity values into language, image use and content (2018)
- Created dedicated fund to compensate contributors from under-represented communities for telling their stories (2019-2020)
- Removed registration fees for Hike-a-Thon to lower barriers to participation (2020)
- Increase in storytelling around the value of equity and [tools to help WTA community become stronger allies](#) (2019-2020)
- Hosted 59 "shared identity" trail events, programming for participants of like identities (including [youth events](#), race and ethnicity, [all-girls events](#), non-binary, and more) (2018-2020)
- Distributed 26 community partner grants and supported 296 outings with gear lending (2018-2020)
- Offered [Intro to Trailwork](#) events to help new volunteers experience a work party in a low pressure and inclusive environment (2019-2020)

**Goal 4: Leaders in the WTA community are confident in their ability to foster an inclusive hiking community, where people of all identities are represented and feel welcome.**

One of the most challenging goals of this DEI plan was our efforts to increase the skills and confidence of our community members to foster an inclusive hiking community. Our approach was to begin with our internal hiring and training processes for trail crew leaders, staff and ambassadors across the state. We then explored opportunities to better track and respond to incidents of bias on trail, and finally began to explore ways to increase the diversity of crews on trail by piloting a paid “Leadership & Inclusion Crew” to give young adults from underrepresented communities greater opportunities to learn and participate in trail activities. Although we’re proud of the progress we made we believe there is still much more work to be done to advance this goal.

**Volunteer Leadership:** One of the first steps we took was to implement DEI trainings for trail crew leaders, assistant crew leaders, WTA ambassadors and youth ambassadors across the state. To engage more deeply with trail crew leaders we launched regional roundtable gatherings in 2019 which led to gender caucus roundtables focused on ensuring inclusive behavior and accountability. These roundtables continued in 2020 in a virtual format which allowed for greater geographic participation.

**Elevating Community Perspectives:** One of our primary efforts to create a more inclusive hiking community was to elevate the experiences of WTA [youth leaders](#), [youth voices](#) and [perspectives](#) in magazine articles, blogs and partner award nominees. We received significant positive reactions from community members and partners alike. More recently we decided to pilot the first “Leadership & Inclusion Crew”, giving a group of 5 young leaders from underrepresented communities (primarily BIPOC and LGBTQ+) an opportunity to learn trail leadership skills while being paid a living wage. The initial crew has been a huge success and we look forward to continuing this program in the future.

**Broadening the definition of “hiker safety”:** Over the past year we have also begun to broaden the definition of volunteer & hiker safety to include incidents of bias on trail. These changes have been reflected in our internal incident tracking systems and we hope to roll out a more public version as well.

**Key milestones under Goal 4:**

- Added qualifications regarding commitment to DEI and ability to foster inclusive environment to all crew leader job descriptions and volunteer position descriptions (2018)
- Modified incident reporting system to include emotional safety and behavioral incidents to more effectively track and respond to these incidents (2018)
- Began to refine incident tracking systems and Manager on Call (MOC) escalation protocols to include incidents of bias and racism on trail (2020)
- Launched initial Leadership & Inclusion Crew with 5 young leaders from underrepresented communities

## Goal 5: WTA is a respectful and reciprocal partner to community-based organizations

Our fifth and final goal was focused on strengthening and deepening our organization's partnerships with community-based organizations, particularly those representing BIPOC communities in the outdoors. Our approach was to first strengthen our internal systems to engage and partner with community organizations, and then use those systems to deepen our relationships with core partners. Throughout the process we tried to solicit feedback from partners on what sorts of support would be most helpful to them and then use that feedback to proactively adapt our programs and opportunities to provide support. In general we saw a lot of success under this goal, particularly over the past year when many of our stronger partner relationships allowed us to direct support and programs more effectively.

**Strengthening Internal Partner Engagement Systems:** Our first step was to better understand the depth and maturity of our existing relationships with [community partners](#). We did this by creating a new process to audit and track engagement with organizations and to solicit feedback regularly. We used this feedback to develop and update a partnership toolkit for staff, helping broaden their knowledge of the types of support we can offer to community partners. Finally we used the input we had received to direct the latest expansion of our Outdoor Leadership Training program and related Gear Library to South Puget Sound.

**Deepening Core Partnerships:** Over the course of the past three years we were able to deepen existing relationships and expand new partnerships with community organizations such as GirlTrek, Outdoor Asian, Young Women Empowered, Interim WILD and [Latino Outdoors](#). By tailoring program approaches to partner needs and building in opportunities for feedback we were able to deepen trust and evolve these relationships into mutually-supportive and communicative partnerships. Several of these partnerships have led to new opportunities to collaborate via shared storytelling and program recruiting. We look forward to continuing to build on these relationships in the future.

### **Key milestones under Goal 5:**

- Asked for feedback from program partners on how we can provide the greatest support (2019 and 2020) - See "*Community, Partners and Program Participant Testimonials*" section below for examples of partner feedback
- Expanded gear library resource to Pierce County to serve more communities in the South Puget Sound region (2020)
- Made [adjustments during COVID pandemic](#) to focus on deepening relationships with existing partners and explore alternate approaches to lending gear for longer time to core community partners (2020)
- Created new priority gear request process for gear library to better support organizations who serve low income and students of color (2020)



## Organizational Lessons Learned

As with any journey, we learned a lot along the way about what worked and what didn't. Overall we feel proud of the progress we have made, but we acknowledge that there remains significant work to be done. In particular we've learned:

- **DEI is shared work across the organization** - Each team in our organization has contributed to progress towards these five DEI goals, and having members of each team come together regularly to discuss DEI accomplishments and challenges was an important way we shared the work. It was important to have staff capacity to help maintain momentum of the work and create space for questions and discussions related to the goals and plan.
- **Leadership support is critical** - Support from organizational leadership and the board was critical in the initial development and adoption of WTA's DEI Plan. Having a dedicated senior leader supporting DEI efforts on an ongoing basis was important both for thought-partnership and guidance. Sometimes additional input and decisions were needed from WTA's board or organizational leadership to allow us to move forward, for example with our [public statement](#) to stand against racism.
- **It takes time to make changes and evaluate new processes** - Relationships and trust take time to develop but were at the heart of nearly all of our successes. It took dedicated effort and a willingness to listen to partner needs and to adapt our programs and approach to meet those needs. Taking a relationship-based approach to supporting community partners, program participants and staff was slow but necessary. You can't do this sort of work quickly!

## Goal-Specific Lessons Learned

In addition to lessons learned as an organization, we learned quite a bit about specific approaches and challenges in each particular goal. These lessons are detailed briefly below.

### Goal 1 Lessons Learned:

- **Helpful to create opportunities for BIPOC staff to come together** - Creating space for BIPOC staff to come together in a non-white space and to connect has been important, particularly in a majority-white organization. Building a safe, respectful and collaborative environment for BIPOC staff has helped improve staff morale across the board.
- **Continued investments of time and budget are needed to keep moving the work forward** - WTA has ensured that a dedicated portion of staff time and funding are available for both internal DEI work and external learning opportunities, such as conferences and workshops. This has allowed us to move forward as an organization.

### Goal 2 Lessons Learned:

- **Amplifying the work of others takes time, trust and compensation** - It takes time to build relationships and trust with others to help them feel supported in sharing their messages, and writers and photographers that help us elevate diverse voices in the WTA community deserve adequate compensation and support.

- **A public DEI Commitment & Resources page is an important part of the work** - We got a lot of comments and engagement after putting our DEI statement and resources online. Taking the step to make a public statement and to create space on our website for these resources proved helpful and inspiring to others.

#### Goal 3 Lessons Learned:

- **Regular program assessment & participant feedback is critical for making relevant changes** - Regular feedback from program participants and staff resulted in adjustments to improve experiences for trail activities as well as partnership support. We don't always know what is working vs. what isn't without asking.
- **Creating inclusive programs & content is an org-wide effort** - It's not enough to create opportunities for underrepresented groups to participate in activities, we also need to pair that with broader inclusivity work (trainings for volunteer crew leads, guidance on appropriate language use, etc.)

#### Goal 4 Lessons Learned:

- **DEI training curriculum needs to continue to evolve** - As volunteers stay engaged for multiple years the training curriculum should adapt and continue to provide opportunities for leaders to stretch and grow. We hope to continue to build and strengthen our trainings and curricula related to DEI and interrupting bias to offer more tools to our staff, volunteers and community members. Our hope is that many of these resources will ultimately be available online for anyone who is interested.
- **Lingering resistance to WTA's DEI work may be a natural point to part ways with community members who don't share those values** - Our commitment to DEI and to offering an inclusive volunteer experience doesn't resonate with all in our community. We had some hard conversations, but ultimately if WTA is going to move this work forward we need all leaders committed to stepping up and being engaged in this work with us.

#### Goal 5 Lessons Learned:

- **Better outreach to partners pays off in program recruitment & hiring** - Our existing partners and relationships were a key driver in recruitment for increasing diverse applicant pools when hiring new positions and offering new program opportunities. We can't do the work effectively without strong community relationships & partnerships.
- **Better tracking of partnerships and engagement helps us direct resources effectively** - Tracking our partnership engagement internally has helped us understand who and how often we are engaging with community groups as well as where there are gaps. This has helped us identify areas that have been particularly helpful to partners and opportunities for us to "double down" or to improve on in the future.

## Community, Partners and Program Participant Testimonials

In addition to the various milestones accomplished under each DEI goal, one of the key ways our organization defines success along our DEI journey is through input received from our community, organizational partners and program participants. Examples of the sorts of comments, testimonials and feedback we have received are included below.

### Community Feedback

*"There were several things that inspired us as regards Washington Trails. Your continued work to protect and preserve our Washington natural areas and trails is always important to us. We also like that you offer gear and training for underserved youth to be able to experience the outdoors. We really liked your partnerships and focus on making the outdoors more welcoming to everyone this year. A lot of us have never experienced exclusion when hiking or camping, so learning about the barriers others have experienced is really important if we are to address and correct these issues."* - New WTA Leadership Circle donor, 2020

*"Thanks for all the great work you do. Love the emphasis on diversity and outdoor recreation for all people, and the thoughtful planning and trail work that supports hiking opportunities close to urban centers."* - WTA Community Member

*"I love the work that WTA is doing to make the outdoors and trails a safe space for everyone ... I couldn't imagine not being welcomed in nature!"* - WTA Community Member

*"Thanks for all of the great work you do. Love the emphasis on diversity and outdoor recreation for all people, and the thoughtful planning and trail work that supports hiking opportunities close to urban centers."* - WTA Donor, 2020

*"Saw an all woman WTA crew removing a tree stump on the Lower Big Quilcene River trail! Inspiring. Way to make the best of a crappy time. Thank you, WTA."* - WTA Donor, 2020

*"The old guard of volunteers won't like all this so I'm sure you'll lose some friends, but it's a hugely important thing that you're doing with diversity and inclusion so keep on keeping on and thank you."* - Trail Volunteer, 2019 Equity and Inclusion survey response

*"I don't think the organization is quite there yet on DEI, but I definitely see a positive change in mindset and awareness and see that efforts are being made. It takes a while to turn a ship around."* - 2019 Equity and Inclusion survey response

*"I have been impressed and grateful for WTA's stance on DEI and the actions that have been taken to embrace the values of diversity, equity, and inclusion, especially in the past year or so. Thank you."* - 2019 Equity and Inclusion survey response

*"Just wanted to let you know I thought the Winter 2019 issue was great. Over the last couple of years, I've been somewhat critical & questioning of the "balance" of magazine content and the effectiveness of some of the articles focused on "diversity". The variety of articles in this issue*

*didn't "lecture" the reader but gave us splendid examples of the value which race, age & gender diverse individuals are contributing to our trails and to the enjoyment, mental & physical health of a much wider population."* - Long time WTA member and crew leader

*"What an excellent article in the latest edition of Washington Trails [Fall 2020]. You were spot on with your focus how we can -- and should -- look after each other on the trail in more ways than traditional safety measures. The attention, seriously undertaken, by WTA to do what's not only right, but smart, in how we participate together is outstanding. Many thanks!"* - WTA member

### **Program Participant Feedback**

*"Everyone was so wonderful. I appreciate how accessible this project was for a first-timer while also providing a serious challenge to rise to. The experienced folks had a lot of great advice and were really welcoming. I had no idea what to expect prior to signing up. I was SO happy about the intentional inclusivity in the messaging and it definitely showed up on the work sight too, so thank you. Outdoors should be for everybody and I love that WTA has embraced this and is actively working to make it happen. By calling out the importance of having a safe space, I felt like I was free to focus on the work rather than worrying about navigating close-minded interactions. Thank you!"* - Trail Volunteer 2020

*"My transgender son participated in a Youth Volunteer Vacation this summer. He had an amazing time and his trip leaders were fantastic. Thanks for making this an inclusive organization!"* - Parent of Youth Volunteer, 2019 Equity and Inclusion survey response

### **Partner Feedback**

*"The Outdoor Leadership Training program has reshaped the conversation around resources in our region."* - Y.E.T.I Community Partner

*"Wow, this is awesome! This time has been very difficult for our families in many different ways. One of the hardest things to deal with is not having any Summer activities for our kids this year. Summer is usually when most families look forward to our youth and family programs. I am honored that WTA has awarded North Seattle Family Resource Center (NSFRC) with the mini grant. I am also pleased to find out, we are able to redirect the funds to go to what's needed. WTA, has been a long running partnership and very supportive of NSFRC and we appreciate that. Once again, thank you for all of your support!"* - Community Partner & 2020 Funding Assistance Recipient

*"Thank you for the mini grant! That's great news and we will definitely use it to support our youth this summer. Since we are unable to lead the youth out on trips as a group, we have been working to equip the youth with gear and expertise so they can become leaders in their households to take trips in the outdoors. I think that applying the funding in that direction would be the most direct way to honor the spirit of the mini grant."* - WILD program at InterIm CDA, 2020 Funding Assistance Recipient

## Social Media Community Feedback

*"Thank you for this article. It's nice to see another perspective. I also have curly hair, but now having a biracial daughter, I see that the struggles I have with frizz are different than the struggles she has."* - response to [My Hair Was Made for Wild Adventure](#)

*"Thanks, Chelsea, for sharing your very personal story with WTA. Yay for your natural crown!"* - response to [My Hair Was Made for Wild Adventure](#)

*"Thank you for this article. It was necessary. I remember witnessing an Asian hiker getting scolded for not being appropriately attired and prepared. I was a bit shocked and didn't know how to react or defend her. But, we crossed paths again when I got the chance to share some much needed water with her. It's so important to be welcoming and kind. We never know how that might impact someone's life."* - Response to [Throw Wide The Gates](#)

*"Yes! Thank you WTA for speaking up for the injustices in our country! Proud to stand with you to stand up for the rights of all people!"* - Response to [We Stand in Solidarity](#)

*"I appreciate this statement. It's very important that the white community understand the privileges that we have and most likely don't even think about the fact that our brothers and sisters of color do not have. It does extend into the outdoors. It extends into all aspects of our lives. We have to rise up and make changes so that everyone is included."* - Response to [We Stand in Solidarity](#)

*"I appreciate this statement! Much more than you can possibly imagine."* - Response to [We Stand in Solidarity](#)

*"So great that WTA is embodying their values by supporting underrepresented groups to enjoy the outdoors in a supportive event. Nature is a great place for connection, healing and community. I'm grateful that WTA works to make that accessible to more people."* - Response to [Refuge Outdoor Festival](#)

*"Thanks for this! Stories of POC being targeted when enjoying our state and national parks are common. No wonder most of us stay away! Real help like this is needed to make nature accessible to us. And it's a great opportunity to educate those that don't realize what a real problem it is that we face. Thanks for your ally-ship and for recognizing and responding to the need that is there! Kudos WTA!"* - Response to [Refuge Outdoor Festival](#)

*"I love WTA and love seeing them support creating spaces for communities of color. It clearly states that allies are welcome. I think we often underestimate how exhausting it can be to be a person of color in the PNW. I'm excited to see this event and proud of the WTA for supporting it."* - Response to [Refuge Outdoor Festival](#)